



January, 2005

Connection

Linking the leaders of the Valley with knowledge and education

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Whitin Community Center Announces New Construction



New pavilion honors the many contributions of Gerry Gaudette

The Whitin Community Center (WCC) Board of Trustees has announced plans to build the Gerry Gaudette Pavilion in historic Whitin Park. Mr. Gaudette was a staunch advocate for the Whitin Community Center and was Chairman of the Board of Trustees before he passed away in September 2003.

According to Mrs. Barbara Gaudette, "Gerry really supported the improvements planned for Whitin Park. The pavilion was a very important thing for Gerry and he would have loved to see it built and enjoyed by the public. Building it now will fulfill one of his dreams."

An effective leader, Gerry Gaudette led numerous professional and civic organizations throughout the region. He was active in Alternatives Unlimited and former Chairman of The Central Massachusetts Chapter of the American Red Cross. He also served on the Board of Trustees of the Milford-Whitinsville Regional Hospital, the Whitinsville Social Library as well as the Whitin Community

Center. He was an inaugural commissioner of the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor. He also served on the Northbridge Charter Commission and on a number of other town committees.

As an outdoor facility, the Gerry Gaudette Pavilion will enhance the Whitin Community Center's summer youth programs and it will be useful to the public as a place for picnicking and personal respite.

The pavilion will cost an estimated \$90,000 - \$100,000 to build. As of November 30, 2004, \$38,799.92 has been raised. The Gaudette family will match 1:1 every dollar donated to the project. Please make your 100% tax-deductible contribution to: Whitin Community Center with notation to the Gaudette Pavilion Fund. Send contributions to: WCC, 60 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA, 01588 or drop your contribution off at the WCC reception desk. For more information, please call Alison Specter at (508) 234-8184 ext. 312.



stART on the street

This summer, I was an ARTIST. Normally, I am an artist, but this summer, this summer I was an actual ARTIST!

Can you feel the difference?

I am on the Board of Directors for “stART on the street,” a one-day festival that takes over part of Main Street, literally the street, in Worcester for an entire Sunday. Now, I had been working getting artists lined up, arranging food vendors, meetings,... but it wasn't until June when it hit me... I was going to need some art.

I looked through my stash of wonderful creations and realized a) I am too in love with my own stuff and b) the stuff I'm not in love with... not sure would capture the

hearts of anyone saner than I. So we were off to a summer of paint, clay, beads and well, monsters... the soft sculpture kind.

In the flick of a paintbrush, the summer was over and it was September 19, 2004 - show time!

We staggered to the sight at 8:00 a.m. to prepare for the arrival of over 100 vendors, from clay, to glass, clothing to music they arrived and were ready to thrive... and to sell.

Despite winds of around 950 miles an hour (hey, that's what the vendors with tents called it), food vendors without permits (Here's another \$40, Mr. Inspector sir!), and my children at first selling more artwork than I... (need to work the cute factor more

by Cynthia Lavallee

next year) the day was a smashing success. We had over 10,000 visitors, (up 2,000 from the year before) no incidents and artists from all over the region coming together to see and be seen. More importantly, a couple actually had an argument over where they were going to place one of my paintings; both wanted it in a different room (As opposed to some of my other pieces which are exhibited in fine closets throughout America).

Want in?

Contact me at oneofakind@rielley.com or visit: www.startonthestreet.org. The next festival is September 25, 2005. It's free for vendors and buyers alike. Come play!

Alumni On The Move

Colin Novick

In his work at the GWLT, along with their partner organizations, released the park plan for Blackstone Gateway Park to the public at a big press hu-hah here in Worcester. Speakers included Rep Jim McGovern, City Manager Michael V. O'Brien, and Mike Creasy.

Over 60 folks attended with an overfilled parking area. GWLT are negotiating the canoe access with the state Public Access Board and are receiving \$5k from the corridor for an information sign for the park area.

Copies of the report are available in a PDF format on CD for folks who are interested, \$2 if mailed, and free emailed if your email account can handle it!

Contact Colin at: colin@gwlt.org.

Christian Derosiers

Congratulations to Christian. He got married October 16, 2004, to Nagibe Dirani from Michigan. Christian has also been invited to join the Board of Directors of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Sue Barker

Congratulations to Sue Barker. Sue's new title is Executive Director of the Washington County Regional Planning Council. She starts on January 3, 2005, and her office will be at the URI Bay Campus about 7 miles from her home and certainly within cycling distance on nice summer days!



Asa Waters Restoration Celebrates 10th Anniversary

by Catherine Elliott

The Asa Waters Mansion Task Force will celebrate its Tenth Anniversary in 2005. The Task Force is a volunteer board that set out 10 years ago to save and refurbish the historical Asa Waters Mansion in Millbury, Massachusetts.

Members include: Sandy Cristo, Armand White, Carol Vulter, Grace Laflash, Mary Griffith, Linda Pothier, and Jeff Dore. They also are members of the Friends of the Mansion (the fundraising arm) headed by Dolores White.

The history of the Mansion is extraordinary. It was built in 1826, was home to renowned gunsmith and entrepreneur Asa Waters, II. Designed and constructed by famous New England tradesmen, this house was one of the most beautiful in the country. Being sold out of the Water's family in the early 1900's, the Mansion's glamour significantly dwindled as it eventually migrated to a terrible state of disrepair.

The work of this group of volunteers resulted in a decision to save the house, and through much determination this historical gem has been saved for all to enjoy. The Task Force and its fundraising arm known as the Friends of the Asa Waters Mansion have worked tirelessly to restore the Mansion to its days of grandeur.

Enjoy casual elegance in a relaxed atmosphere. Today the Mansion now hosts a multi-

tude of brilliant cultural events open to the public such as art exhibits, antique shows, art festivals, and living history days. Over the past year the Mansion has been opened for Afternoon Teas and guided tours. It is also home to the Millbury Historical Society that houses its museum on the second story of the Mansion.

The Mansion is now also a site for school groups and individuals to learn about the area's heritage including New England architecture and entrepreneurial efforts during the early history of the Blackstone Valley and the Industrial Revolution. Architectural scholars visit the Mansion to study its design and construction.

Once coming close to demolition, this architectural jewel was recently featured in Bride and Groom Magazine as one of the most beautiful and unique wedding sites in the area. It has become the heart of community activity as families now come to the Mansion to mark the most important milestones in their lives: weddings, children's christenings, family reunions, retirement parties, and to gather to find solace after the loss of loved ones.

Book the Mansion for your next business meeting, retreat or workshop. Businesses can lease the Mansion for \$75 per hour during the week, this includes use of the entire Mansion and includes use of our tables and chairs plus

a customized set up for their meeting. Non-profit rental rates are even less expensive -- \$75 for a 3-hour block of time.

The annual Christmas festival during the Chain of Lights celebration has become a momentous event as multitudes of children see Santa Claus for the first time.

The result of the work of the Asa Waters Mansion Task Force and Friends is a great success story. It is a story of individuals' persistence and dedication against all odds to make a dream come true. And it is a story of the rewards of volunteerism. Their insistence and commitment to saving this cultural center is exemplary.

LBV Alumni Connection

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Mary Lou - On The Ropes



Mary Lou Anderson, LBV Grad, not only talks the talk, she walks the walk.

Mary Lou took her turn on the ropes course at Grafton Job Corps at the opening session of the Blackstone Valley Youth Leadership Academy. 25 participants from 10 schools in the Blackstone Valley have enrolled in this new leadership program sponsored by the BVCC Education Foundation. Mary Lou is the Program Coordinator.

Congratulations Mary Lou!