



The Brookfield Citizen

Community Identity Through Communication

Published Monthly by: A.P.P.L.E. Seed, Inc.

Average People Promoting a Loving Environment

PO Box 411 Brookfield, MA 01506

Funded in part by Jeppson Memorial Fund for Brookfield of Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the Brookfield Community Club

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS SATURDAY ISSUE

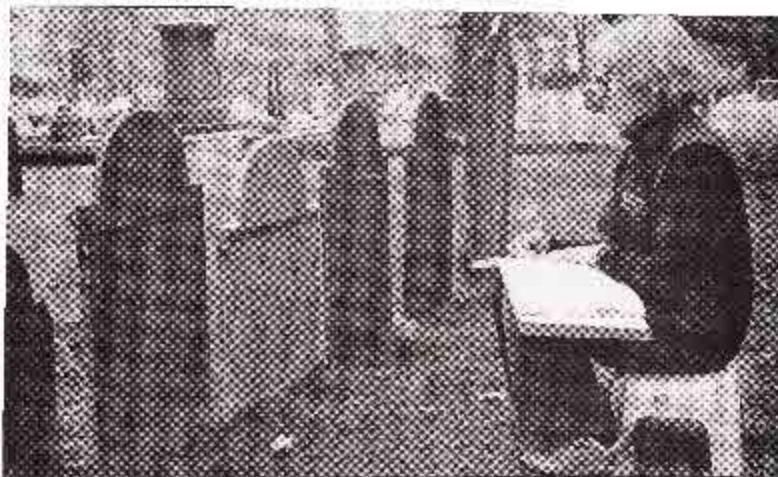
CEMETERY HAPPENINGS

Peter Masuzzo, Cemetery Commissioner

For what is believed to be the first time since its construction, the historic granite archway will be completely cleaned, restored, re-pointed and sealed the spring! This has been a project that actually began over 5 years ago with the acceptance of the Preservation & Management plan for the cemetery, and its inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places. Since then, a complete structural engineering and stability study was undertaken, a capitol fundraising campaign was accomplished, the top of the archway was repaired, a culvert drain was installed in front of the arch, and a request for proposal for the restoration was written and bid. We are pleased to have the Dario Fiorentini Company perform the work for the amount of \$25,980. Unfortunately, the bids for the repair and restoration of the iron gates came in at over \$38,000. For now, we have decided to look at a type of restoration for the gates that would be less costly.

In November, the firm of Fannin-Lehner completed the restoration and repair of 16 historic gravestones and a cataloged assessment of each

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Minnie Fannin documenting a line of conserved stones in Brookfield Cemetery, Brookfield, MA

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Brookfield 2020, a "Perfect Vision" for the Future

The Master Plan for the town of Brookfield is taking form after eight months of work by town residents and professional assistance by consultants from the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission. This plan will help the townspeople assess many areas of community life and also help the various boards and departments of the town plan for the future.

The half way mark is in sight. Several public forums in October and December 2008 have served to engage the townspeople in the economic development, housing, and open space/recreation chapters of the plan.

Comments and input from residents whom attended these public forums have started to patch together a destiny for Brookfield and have provided direction to the Master Plan committee. Surveys taken last summer from all households have been compiled and some analysis has revealed that the rural nature of the town is an important aspect of the town. Another area of consensus is the need to preserve open space for recreation and to keep land in its natural state. The survey showed that Brookfield's tax rate was the least-liked aspect.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan is in progress and the committee anticipates that it will be finished by the end of June 2009. Yet to be addressed are the Land Use and Zoning chapters, Transportation, and Public Services and Utilities chapters. The committee hopes to wrap up the entire plan by the end of 2010.

Funding for the first phase of the Master Plan has been fulfilled by two generous donations. An anonymous family foundation generously donated \$5,000 which was matched by a generous donation from two residents of Brookfield for a total of \$10,000. The remaining cost of Phase I, which consists of the Open Space and Recreation Plan and the Housing Chapter, will be paid for with town funds appropriated at town meetings in 2006 and 2008.

The committee is working with a grantwriter who is diligently seeking funding, however this economy and the lack of donations have put a damper on funding for Phase II. The committee therefore requests that any donations be sent to: Ms. Donna Neylon, c/o Treasurer, Brookfield Town Hall, 8 Central Street, Brookfield, MA 01506.

Meetings are scheduled for 6:30pm the first and third Wednesdays of the month at the town hall. Residents are highly encouraged to attend and participate.

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Cemetery

stone. Some of the work was featured in an article in the January 2009 *New England Antiques Journal*. Take a walk over in the original burial ground section and see how nice they look. The stones are located nearer the front wall by the large pine and spruce trees there.

Cemetery Commissioner for the past several years, John McDavitt, will not be seeking re-election for another term. Thank you John for your past volunteer service and for taking care of the gravesite flags. Art Jay will be running for the 3 year term. Art is a history buff too, and was a volunteer during the gravestone cleaning project we did a few years ago. Welcome Art!

Our cemetery has been fortunate in avoiding the type of vandalism that has occasionally occurred in other cemeteries. It is nice to see that the townspeople have always been supportive and take pride in the cemetery. If you should ever see anything that you think is out of the ordinary, please notify the police. No one is allowed in the cemetery at night.

Now that spring is here, Memorial Day will be here soon as we honor our veterans and remember our loved ones. Please be sure to visit the cemetery, and as always respect his historic hallowed ground.

1% of sales to local non-profits

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Louise Chandler Means, Philanthropist, at 96

Louise Chandler Means of Auburn, formerly of Brookfield, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut, died on Friday, March 13, 2009 at 96. Mrs. Means was a well-known philanthropist in the Brookfield, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut, communities.

Born in Philadelphia in 1912, she was the daughter of Thaddeus Rich, an acclaimed violinist and assistant conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra, and Almira Chandler Williams. She was visiting Paris as a teenager in May 1927 with her mother when Charles Lindbergh made his historic transatlantic flight. Nearly three-quarters of a century later, Mrs. Means vividly recalled that event and how proud and excited she felt to be a young American in Paris at that moment.

She married Blanchard W. Means, the long-time chair of the Department of Philosophy at Trinity College in Hartford. Their one child, Louise Blanchard "Weesie" Means, survives her.

After her husband's 1973 death, Mrs. Means became responsible for the management of Elm Hill Farm in Brookfield, which had been in her husband's family since the 18th century. At its peak, the farm was a huge operation of nearly 1,300 acres, 8 houses, a substantial apple operation, one of the country's top Morgan horse stables, and a large purebred cattle operation. One of its cows, "You'll Do Lobelia," was selected by the Borden Company as its mascot at the 1939 New York World's Fair and became the celebrated "Elsie," going on to achieve magazine, television and movie fame like that of a pop idol today.

Deeply concerned about the future of the farm that she came to love, Mrs. Means envisioned its preservation as a place where the public and especially developmentally disabled individuals like her daughter could enjoy its natural beauty. She ensured this in the 1990s by donating the 1,055 acre Elm Hill Wildlife Sanctuary to Massachusetts Audubon Society, and by establishing the Blanchard Means Foundation, Inc. for the developmentally disabled with the family home, stable, horses and corral as a tribute to her late husband. The foundation, which operates Elm Hill Center, had been affiliated with Hope Homes of Stow, Ohio, but recently became affiliated with Rehabilitative Resources, Inc. of Sturbridge. It provides equestrian therapy and day programs for the developmentally disabled.

Dr. Gerard Bertrand, President of Massachusetts Audubon Society at the time, recently spoke of the significance of Mrs. Means's gift. He said that it remains the largest single outright gift of land in Massachusetts to Audubon and filled a critical gap in Audubon's holdings in the state. The sanctuary contains a diversity of habitat ranging from crops and open fields to varied woodlands that supports great biodiversity of birds and mammals ranging from bobolinks and goshawks to fishers, otters and bears.



Farm as a wildlife sanctuary and historic farm has provided many benefits. By placing most of the area under an agricultural preservation restriction, Mrs. Means secured for future generations the historic character the Elm Hill Farm Historic District, designated in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. An unpaved portion of the original Boston Post Road runs through this district, looking today as it did when General Henry Knox brought along the same road by ox-drawn sledges from Fort Ticonderoga to General Washington the famous cannon that forced the British from Boston in 1776. Elm Hill Center has become a volunteer focus of the Brookfield community, hosting numerous community and inclusive events.

Mrs. Means also donated the Blanchard W. Means Scholarship at the University of Hartford's Hart School of music, dance and theater, and the Blanchard W. Means Memorial Lecture and Prize in Philosophy at Trinity College in Hartford. Her gift to Trinity makes possible an annual philosophy lecture by a distinguished professor from another college or university, dinner and prize to an accomplished philosophy major. Mrs. Means has also been a major benefactor of the Brookfield Congregational Church and an Overseer of Old Sturbridge Village. Until 2003, she was an active board member and chair of the Blanchard Means Foundation, Inc. She was also a Trustee of the Julius Hart Musical Foundation.

Mrs. Means was proud of her membership in The Musical Club of Hartford, The Town and County Club, National Association of Teachers of Singing, Society of Mayflower Descendants, Saturday Morning Club of Hartford, and The Magna Charta Dames and Barons.

"Weesie" Means lives in a home with other disabled individuals built on former Elm Hill property through the efforts of Hope Homes, Rehabilitative Resources and the Blanchard Means Foundation. This fulfills the plans and dreams of both Blanchard and Louise who began planning the benevolent future of Elm Hill Farm over 50 years ago.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, July 11 at 11:00 a.m. at the Brookfield Congregational Church, followed by a reception at the Blanchard House at Elm Hill Center, 26 East Main Street, Brookfield. Friends and the community are invited. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in the name of Louise Chandler Means to Blanchard Means Foundation, P.O. Box 28, Sturbridge, MA 01566.

