

A light History of the **TOWN AND COUNTY CLUB**

Hartford, Connecticut

1925 - 2015





The grand staircase is an imposing presence in the entrance hall and a masterpiece of fine mahogany woodwork, with closely spaced spiral balusters going up the stairs and continuing in a balustrade surrounding the upper landing.

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*"An organized center for women's work,
thought and action; advancing the interests of
women; promoting science, literature, and art;
providing an accessible place of meeting for its
members; promoting social intercourse by such
means as the members of the corporation shall
deem expedient and proper for that purpose;
and for acquiring and maintaining a club
house and grounds."*

Articles of Association
May 21, 1925



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Welcome to a *light* History of the Town & County Club, updated to Spring 2015, our ninetieth year.

We have adapted material from earlier histories and have given the book a fresh look by the addition of photographs and a re-design of the text.

For those who want to read the definitive history produced in 2005, we have made it available on the Club web page (www.towncounty.com). For today's members, we offer this new version, also available on line.

We hope that these highlights from the past 90 years will illuminate our present, as the Town & County Club continues to attract strong and achieving women to its mission of fostering "cultural, intellectual and social development."

Signed,

Susan Aller, Chair

Barbara Barrett

Joyce Buckingham

Marnie Cooper

Liz Payne

Sally Richter

Barbara Ulrich

*With valuable assistance from Ellen Zeman, Deborah Willard,
Gay Ayers, Susan R. Barney, and Michael Duval*

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501(c)(3)***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOUNDERS - 1925

PRESIDENTS - 1925 - 2015

1 WE BEGIN - 1925 - 1930

3 THE FOUNDING

6 A GOLDEN ERA - THE 1930'S

7 IN SPITE OF "THE REPRESSION"

10 WORLD WAR II - THE 1940'S

11 WAR AND PEACE

14 COMPLACENT YEARS? THE 1950'S

15 MARKING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

18 ROLLER COASTER YEARS - THE 1960'S

20 WE ARE STAYING HERE

23 WE ARE GOLDEN - THE 1970'S

- 24 BIG BUSINESS MEETS GRACIOUS LIVING**
- 27 MANY MANAGERS - THE 1980'S**
- 28 UPS AND DOWNS LIKE AN ELEVATOR**
- 31 VISIONARY WOMEN - THE 1990'S**
- 32 RAISING THE ROOF**
- 35 TURNING THE PAGE - 2000-2005**
- 36 A NEW CENTURY BEGINS**
- 39 PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE - 2005-2009**
- 40 HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION**
- 43 WE ARE STILL HERE - 2009-2015**
- 44 GOING STRONG AT 90**
- 47 COMMON THREADS, by Sally Richter**
- 51 THE LYMAN HOUSE**

FOUNDERS

1925

Priscilla C. Aldrich	Hartford
Georgia F. Barton	Hartford
Helen B. Chapman	Hartford
Julia W. E. Darling	Simsbury
Harriet M. Dustin	Hartford
Louise H. Fisher	Hartford
Ellen Earle Flagg	Hartford
Ruth Cheney Goodwin	Hartford
Ruth C. Jaynes	West Hartford
Josephine Hamilton Maxim	Hartford
Carrie K. Parker	West Hartford
Gertrude C. Robinson	Hartford
Lila Rose	Hartford
Helen Damon Smith	Hartford
Katharine F. Wadsworth	Middletown
Grace Hall Wilson	Hartford

PRESIDENTS

* maiden names are printed in *Italics*

1925-28	Annie Eliot <i>Trumbull</i>	
1928-32	Josephine <i>Hamilton</i> Maxim	(Mrs. Hiram Percy)
1932-36	Frances G. <i>Welch</i> Williams	(Mrs. Bernard T.)
1936-39	Julia Loomis <i>Havemeyer</i>	
1939-42	Julia Lincoln <i>Ray</i> Andrews	(Mrs. James Parkhill)
1942-45	Dorothy "Dora" R. <i>White</i> Lewis	(Mrs. Richard B.)
1945-47	Cary <i>Hoge</i> Mead	(Mrs. George Jackson)
1947-50	Florence <i>Marvin</i> Hatch	(Mrs. James W.)
1950-53	Elizabeth <i>Cannon</i> Van Dyke	(Mrs. Tertius)
1953-56	Rose Agnes <i>Swift</i> Critchfield	(Mrs. Howard E.)
1956-58	Dorothy <i>Clark</i> Thomson Archibald	(Mrs. Wm O. Thomson, Mrs. Clark Thomson, Mrs. Thomas Lane Archibald)
1958-61	Elizabeth Hope <i>Richardson</i> Roberts	(Mrs. Douglas J.)
1961-63	Gwendolyn "Gwen" <i>Miles</i> Smith	(Mrs. Allan Kellogg)
1963-66	Sybil <i>Smith</i> Young Barringer	(Mrs. Lincoln R. Young, Mrs. Victor C. Barringer, Jr.)
1966-68	Dorothy <i>Davis</i> Tennant	(Mrs. Robert)
1968-70	Virginia <i>Tuttle</i> Spencer	(Mrs. Oliver W. Means, Mrs. Clayton B. Spencer, Mrs. Edward Carleton, Mrs. Russell T. Foster, Mrs. Ellsworth Strong Grant)
1970-73	Margreta "Greta" <i>Swenson</i> Cheney	(Mrs. Kimberly)
1973-75	Helen Johnson <i>Hannay</i> Dixon	(Mrs. Ralph C. Dixon, Mrs. Helen H. Dixon)

1975-77 Martha *Boyle* Morrisson (Mrs. Reeves)

1977 Josie *Conant* Manternach (Mrs. Bruce W.)

1977-78 Wilma "Billie" Louise *Strawn* Sharpe (Mrs Carleton F.)

1978-80 Mary Goldthwait *Graves* Hammitt Hoffer (Mrs. John
Coe Hammitt, Mrs Frederic Staples Hoffer)

1980-82 Naomi "Noni" *Tackella* Fairlie (Mrs. Chester W., Jr.)

1982-83 Shirley *Walker* Brodigan (Mrs. George D.)

1983-85 Ruth *Hensel* Allen (Mrs. John C.)

1985-87 Margery "Marge" Mitchell *Pape* Weed (Mrs Chester A.)

1987-89 Gevene *Landrith* Brown (Mrs. Richard B.)

1989-91 Ellen Maria *Tuomi* Zeman (Mrs. Peter Michael)

1991-93 Eleanor D. *Cross* Flynn Cartland (Mrs. Frederick J.
Flynn, Mrs. John Everett Cartland, Jr.)

1993-95 Eleanor "Elly" Marie *Winzler* Hayes (Mrs. Donald J.)

1995-97 Orpha Joan "Joann" *Hamilton* Kidd (Mrs. James
Lambert)

1997-99 Katharine Allen *Hamilton* Steinwedell (Mrs. Peter T.)

1999-2001 Eleanor "Eleo" *Pope* Abel Ammen (Mrs. Walter L.
Abel, Mrs. David L. Ammen)

2001-03 Eleanor *Emerson* Zajac (Mrs. Thomas M.)

2003-05 Sally L. *Martin* Richter (Mrs. Dale A.)

2005-07 Mary *Tennant* Sargent (Mrs. Joseph Denny)

2007-09 Christine *McHale* O'Connell DiBenedetto
(Mrs. Vincent)

2009-11	Susan <i>Bivin</i> Aller	(Mrs. Robert Lundeen)
2011-13	Nancy <i>Gateley</i> Dean	(Mrs. Paul D. III)
2013-15	Dale <i>Anderson</i> Ryan	(Mrs. David Thomas)
2015-	Nancy A. Brennan	

Annie Eliot Trumbull

First president of The Town & County Club

1925-28



FARMINGTON, CONN. R-5

I am interested in the plan to organize a Club in Hartford for social and cultural purposes, as outlined in the letter of invitation issued by the Committee of Fifty. I would be glad to join such a Club.

I understand that for the purpose of acquiring and improving property for the said Club it is proposed to issue debenture bonds of one hundred dollars (\$100) each to an amount not exceeding \$100,000, said bonds to bear interest at five per cent., payable semi-annually.

In consideration of the subscriptions of others, I hereby agree to take and pay for at par and when issued one (1) of said bonds, having a par value of \$ 100.00

Hartford, Conn.
March 1925

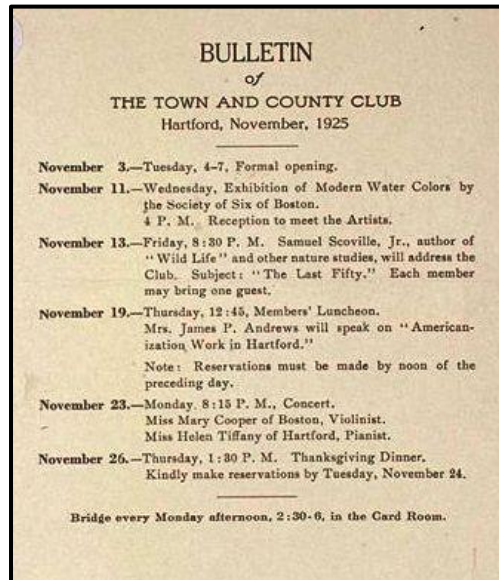
Theodate Pope Riddle L.S.

Above, an application from famous architect Theodate Pope Riddle to buy a membership bond. Below, drawing by Mary



WE BEGIN: 1925-1930

- **1925 February 6:** Thirteen women met to discuss forming a women's city club that would purchase the Mark Twain House---then on the market---to adapt for use as a clubhouse.
- **February 16:** More women joined the group, and a Committee of Fifty formed, elected **Annie Eliot Trumbull** chairman, and embarked on a campaign to recruit 500 members and raise \$100,000 so the Mark Twain House could be purchased.
- **April:** The committee felt the Mark Twain House was too difficult to adapt to use as a club. So, with 460 enthusiastic women who had pledged \$70,500, they decided instead on the Colonial Revival Theodore Lyman home at 22 Woodland Street.
- **May 14:** The T&C inaugural meeting was held at the YWCA. Attendees adopted a constitution, elected 27 women to the Board of Governors, and authorized buying the Lyman House.
- **May 21:** "Founders' Day"---**Annie Eliot Trumbull** presided over the first meeting of the Board of Governors. Sixteen women signed the Articles of Association, incorporating the Club.
- **Summer:** The 1895 house, built by architects Hapgood & Hapgood, was redecorated and furnished as a clubhouse.
- **November 3:** The house opened to members, with tea at 7 P.M. A calendar of events announced luncheons, guest speakers, art exhibits, bridge, musical programs---and Thanksgiving dinner!
- **1926** The gardens and lawn behind the house were converted to a parking lot. Membership stood at 500, with a long waiting list.
- **1928 Josephine (Mrs. Percy) Maxim** became president. Discussions began about building an attached "auditorium."



Our first busy month started with a formal opening and ended with Thanksgiving dinner.



Earliest photograph of the Lyman House, built in 1895

THE FOUNDING



In 1925 the prosperous city of Hartford, Connecticut, boasted several private social clubs for men only; but at a time when women also were becoming leaders of business, cultural, political, and social organizations, there was no similar gathering place for them.

It was in this atmosphere that thirteen spirited women came together on February 6, 1925, to discuss creating "an organized center for women's work, thought and action" and "advancing the interests of women...."

Accomplishing their work of creation in nine months---as women often do---they became The Town and County Club, Inc. and on November 3 inaugurated their new clubhouse, the 1895 former Theodore Lyman residence at 22 Woodland Street, Hartford.

Who were these founding women? Many had husbands who were leaders of Hartford business and industry. But that did not eclipse their own careers as founders and officers of important political organizations, social service agencies, and arts societies. These were busy, involved, productive women, for whom the Town and County Club became a haven of friendship and renewal.

Our first president, Annie Eliot Trumbull (1925-28) was not married. She campaigned for women's suffrage and was involved in the Union for Home Work, while actively pursuing her career as an author of novels, poems, and plays---and as an amateur actress.

Our second president---Josephine Hamilton Maxim (1928-31)---was married to the automotive pioneer and inventor Hiram Percy Maxim. She was founding president of the Connecticut

League of Women Voters and served on various Hartford boards of health, education, and public welfare.

The first Board of Governors numbered 27 members. There were seven standing committees: Membership, Finance, Grounds, Arts & Interests, Library, Decoration & Furnishing, and House---the latter met weekly "to manage the clubhouse and employ and discharge servants."

A cook and small staff prepared meals, struggling to maintain acceptable quality while dealing with original kitchen equipment from the Lymans' house that included a wood-burning stove and ice boxes. No wonder, then, that in 1926 because "the quality of her work was suffering a bit" the cook was given a week's vacation for a well-earned rest.

On the positive side, the cook and her staff made jams and jellies to serve with tea; and flowers from the Lymans' garden graced the tables. A porch on the east side of the house (demolished when the kitchen addition was built in 1930), was screened in and made into a gracious summer dining room.

The house, as with all big homes, required time, money, and upkeep. And because it served 500 women, it also needed rules. One of these, in the original House Rules of 1925, stipulated that "Guests shall not be brought to the library or the members' restroom." And another reads, "Dogs shall not be allowed in the Club House." For years, a "No Talking" sign hung in the library. At first, the empty shelves of the library were an embarrassment to the well-educated members; and it was suggested that curtains be put over the glass doors "to hide our apparent illiteracy" until purchases and donations solved the problem.

The founders acquired some of the Lymans' larger pieces of furniture when they bought the house: we believe the curved sofa in the middle parlor is one of these. (*see photo below*) But from the beginning, members donated furniture and decorative pieces to make the house attractive and comfortable. Beautiful lamps, mirrors, and paintings still remind us of these generous women. Of course it was necessary to buy new items, like chairs for the assembly room (now called the gallery). In her annual report in 1927, Miss Trumbull noted that these chairs were a bit small for the "stylish stouts"---a term then used for the dress sizes we now call "women's" or "plus."

The Lyman family's gardener, John Jones, stayed on when the Club bought the Lymans' house. He was a man who knew every tree and plant on the property, but who apparently didn't care much for the women who quickly decided to tear up the east lawn and flower beds and turn them into a parking lot. He probably took shelter in the Lymans' carriage barn (demolished in 1965) while a contractor dug up his beloved grass and shrubs, made driveways, walkways to the house, and installed lighting. When the work was finished, \$50 was spent to install a telephone line to the carriage barn, so the ladies' chauffeurs could be summoned to bring their cars to the door.



A GOLDEN ERA: The 1930's

- **1930 Spring:** Founding member **Mabel Johnson** (also the club treasurer) personally funded a \$50,000 mortgage to build an auditorium (our ballroom), a new kitchen, and a dining room.
- **Summer:** Much of the south lawn---where members had held parties---was excavated for the foundation of the new ballroom. Removal of a two-story porch on the back of the house made way for the kitchen addition.
- **October 31:** The ballroom opened with an evening reception.
- **1931** As the Depression deepened membership declined, and the initiation fee was dropped from \$75 to \$40 to attract new members. To bolster income, members were urged to use the Club more often, especially for parties.
- **1932 Frances (Mrs. Bernard T.) Williams** was elected third president. Her impressive credentials included civic and political leadership. She brought innovation to the Club at the depth of the Depression, and did it with charm, grace, and competence.
- **1936 Julia L. Havemeyer** succeeded Mrs. Williams and ushered in a "golden era" of memorable events. At home, she held salons to encourage young artists and musicians. At the Club, she gave an annual party for members, provided interesting speakers, and sometimes gave programs herself, showing slides of her travels. She took personal charge of elegant flower arrangements and table settings.
- **1937** Thirty-five dozen annuals were planted "that our house may be gay." The next year's historic hurricane blew down four big trees, damaged fourteen others, and decimated bushes and perennials.

IN SPITE OF "THE REPRESSION"



The Great Depression hit in 1929, the Club's fourth year. Despite this, members moved ahead with the new ballroom, dining room, and kitchen addition that transformed the house into the building we know today.

Helen Damon Smith was the recording secretary during that momentous time, and her minutes are full of zest and humor. For example, as the ballroom was being designed, she noted that the decorations committee was so smitten with marbleizing wood that soon "they might marbleize all the members." Door frames in the ballroom foyer still retain that faux painting.

Later, when the ballroom was completed, a huge problem presented itself: the floor. The secretary wrote, "it is an absorbing quandary---the one blot on our fair name. It still exudes, it fluctuates, and generally disappoints. On opening night, it was somewhat disconcerting to find that in addition to carrying away happy memories, we were also taking with us on silver slippers and evening dresses, rich black material..." The architects agreed to re-lay the floor, and when the last coat of wax was applied, the secretary noted, "so long has this erring floor been our conversational darling, that we are bereft, now that it wobbles no more, but is firm under foot."

The opening night party was just one of many gala affairs the women put on in the early years. In 1931 their annual party promised to be "a cross between a rout and a fiesta." And in 1935 they held a *bal-de-tête*, which the secretary described thus: "It was a felicitous occasion. With the aid of good music, we had a Grand March, several waltzes, and a long Virginia reel. Two charades of

much amusement and originality, with a supper added, ended the animated party. As for head dresses, there was every kind that ever sprang from the head of Jove.” That same year, bridge expert Ely Culbertson spoke to an enthusiastic audience.

Members held a party in 1932 during which a musical ensemble of piano, two accordions, and a drum major led a parade of members in Colonial dress.

In 1939 the Club celebrated fifteen years of operation. The annual budget was \$22,575. That year there were 1,002 overnight stays in the guest rooms, which---with no elevator---were reached by walking up two flights of stairs. Members considered installing an elevator, but the \$7,000 price tag stopped them cold.

Dining use increased, and the grateful women gave so generously to the employee Christmas fund that bonuses grew and there was money put aside for emergencies.

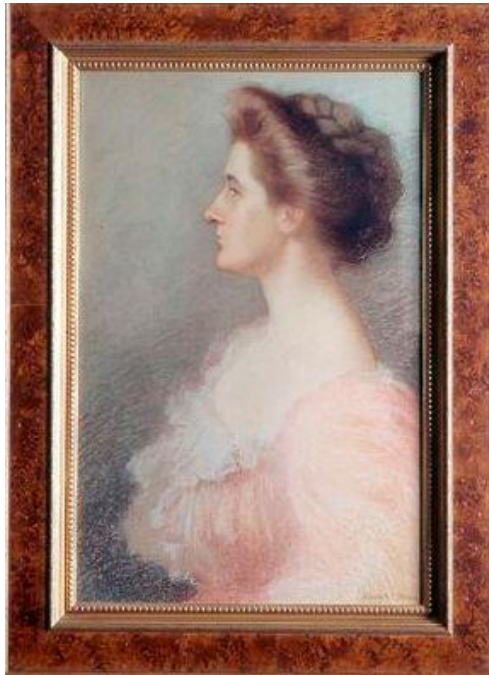
A display in April called "Talents, Mental and Manual" showcased the efforts of 130 members. It included flower arrangements, plaster plaques, quilts and needlepoint, paintings, jewelry, and homemade soap! (That's *soap*, not soup.)

Never ones to ignore current affairs, including the looming specter of war, they invited experts to lecture about "British Public Opinion and the European Situation" and "The Rise of Air Power."

These women in the Thirties were living in difficult days – the “Repression” as they managed to joke about it. Yet they continued to build, learn, and have fun.



The east entrance to the ballroom (top) is framed by delicate columns. In 1930 Mabel Johnson (below) took out a \$50,000 mortgage in her name to help the Club finance the new addition, that also included a kitchen and the member dining room.



WORLD WAR II: The 1940's

- **1939 Julia (Mrs. James P.) Andrews** served as president in the last two years of peace and the first year of war.
- Improvements were made to the house, including the conversion of a second-floor porch into an *al fresco* dining space. But summer heat sent members scurrying back into the house.
- Members entertained themselves with charades, costume parties, and amateur theatricals. One highlight was the Walt Disney party with members dressed as penguins, little pigs, and blue fairies, echoing favorite films.
- Cornelia Otis Skinner, John Mason Brown, and Franklin Pierce Adams---all nationally known wits and writers---gave programs.
- The active Arts and Interests Committee planned art exhibits and a great variety of readings, book reviews, and speakers.
- **1942 Dora (Mrs. Richard B.) Lewis** became president four months after Pearl Harbor.
- Austerity reigned; food supplies dwindled as well as the staff, many of whom took lucrative jobs in defense plants or joined the armed services. Rationed coffee was served in smaller cups, with less sugar, although afternoon tea remained a comforting tradition.
- Presidents **Cary (Mrs. George J.) Mead** and **Florence (Mrs. James W.) Hatch** led the Club as World War II ended and peace returned.

WAR AND PEACE



As World War II began, Dora (Mrs. Richard B.) Lewis was elected president and led the Club through the years of rationing, austerity, and changes to house and gardens that marked her term.

Many of the changes were temporary for the duration of the war---shortages of food and staff having the most impact---and the members continued to gather, even at night when the heavy blackout curtains were pulled. Members themselves created programs to entertain each other, since less money was available for outside speakers; and the Library Committee stopped subscribing to travel magazines, noting that "no one could travel anyway." To help the war effort, the Club sold an old iron fence for scrap.

(This may have been the fence on the east boundary that blew down in December 1939. The women had worried about what to do with the dilapidated fence when nature solved the problem.)

In 1945 the war ended, and the Club threw a grand celebration in honor of that historic event and the Club's 20th anniversary. Not all members were sanguine about how the Club was doing, however. In 1946, one woman resigned, citing "poor table, poor secretary, no lift, no liquor."

Alcoholic beverages (and gambling!) had been prohibited in Article VII of the Bylaws since the founding in 1925. Prohibition was then the law of the land. After repeal in 1933, discussion began about changing Article VII to allow liquor service. But multiple votes in the 1930's and 40's failed to gain the majorities needed to repeal it. A vote in 1949, with the majority still against the change, put an end to the debate for another five years.

John Jones, the Lyman family gardener whom the Club "inherited" in 1925, stayed on the job until 1942; by that time most members were driving their own cars, and he probably agreed with a paving contractor's opinion that "a ladies' parking space has a special set of problems." "Bumping" was reported in the minutes, and women were advised to park in the center of marked spaces to avoid these awkward encounters.

In 1945 Cary (Mrs. George J.) Mead became president, followed in 1947 by Florence (Mrs. James W.) Hatch. The final years of the 40's were marked by deferred maintenance projects, including re-configuring the parking lot and driveways, complying with fire department safety regulations affecting emergency lighting, exits, and signage, and re-hanging doors to open outward in accordance with code.

The most dramatic change in the house was modernization of the kitchen, which had retained some of its original 1895 appliances. Among other improvements, a modern freezer was purchased to replace the soda cooler used during the war years. Renovations were made possible with a bank loan of \$9,000, repaid by an annual assessment of \$5 per member.

A significant milestone occurred in 1945, when the original bonds---purchased in 1925 to establish the Club---matured. Over the years some bonds had been bought back and others generously donated to the Club, but there were still 350 outstanding. The Finance Committee offered to issue new 15-year bonds at 4% interest or redeem the old ones at \$100 per bond. Members could choose; but the record notes that many "loyally turned in their old bonds for love" rather than for reimbursement.



Afternoon tea continued during the war, still served elegantly, but with less sugar. Below, a member shows her big car, like the ones involved in "bumping" in our parking lot.



COMPLACENT YEARS? The 1950's

- **1950** At our 25th anniversary party, guests dressed in vintage clothing from 1925 and celebrated the Club's longevity.
- Parking continued to be a problem as cars increased in number and size. The perennial garden was sacrificed to paving in 1952.
- **Elizabeth (Mrs. Tertius) Van Dyke** presided over serious conversations about paths to world peace and other topics by inviting authoritative speakers to present programs.
- **1954** Finally, a successful "champagne vote"---after trying many times---allowed the bubbly to be served at ballroom events.
- **1955 Rose (Mrs. Howard E.) Critchfield** enjoyed a peaceful first year as president, but in her second term advised the Club to take stock of its programs and not become complacent. Big changes were impacting the neighborhood and economy.
- **1956** Founding member and long-time finance chair Mabel Johnson, who had personally taken out a \$50,000 mortgage to build the ballroom, gradually lowered the interest rate to 3%, and in 1956 forgave \$10,000 of the principal.
- **Dorothy (Mrs. Thomas L.) Archibald** led the Club through the final "complacent years," aware of storm clouds gathering.
- As the decade ended, **Hope (Mrs. Douglas J.) Roberts** dealt with serious problems: a budget deficit, decreasing membership, increasing maintenance costs, and changes to the neighborhood.

MARKING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS



We celebrated our quarter century anniversary in 1950 with a costumed assemblage of members wearing outfits reminiscent of our founding year 1925.

Florence (Mrs. James W.) Hatch led the Club into the Fifties as modernization continued. In 1951 we purchased an electric dryer, and thereafter our laundress no longer hung the banquet-size tablecloths or the dozens of table napkins and guestroom sheets and towels on lines in the back yard. It was more convenient, but she mourned the crispness of linens dried in fresh air and sunshine.

The issue of changing our liquor policy bubbled up again in 1954 in the form of "the champagne vote" to change Article VII of our Bylaws. Elizabeth (Mrs. Tertius) Van Dyke, as president, urged the change, remarking that the ballroom might be rented more frequently if champagne or champagne punch were allowed to be served in the ballroom at events given by members. The Board subsequently approved. They noted, "It is certain that the use of champagne could not lead to serving liquor, as was feared by some of our members...." They were right for seven years. A full liquor license was not granted until 1961.

In 1956, Mabel Johnson---a founding member and major benefactor--celebrated her 25th year as chair of the Finance Committee, and at the same time reduced the principal on the ballroom mortgage, which she held in her name, by \$10,000.

The late 50's and early 60's were a time of major changes to the neighborhood around the Club and to our membership and

finances. One by one the substantial mansions that lined Woodland Street (and which had been home to three future Club presidents as well as many members) were demolished. In their place condominiums and office buildings with parking lots sprang up and significantly altered the character of the street.

A budget deficit in 1959-60 sounded the alarm. Members were moving to the suburbs and leaving the Club; a budget based on a membership of 500 could not be sustained as numbers slid to 475 in 1960 and even further the next year.

Both the house and the loyal staff were showing signs of aging. Dues were increased by \$20 for resident members in 1960, but with decreasing membership, the additional revenue didn't solve budget problems. Especially troubling were the major maintenance issues surfacing as the Clubhouse reached its half-century mark. A \$5,000 plumber's bill only added to the distress as the Club pondered its future.

Staff changes had been few and far between since the beginning, but now a series of retirements and illnesses became even more unsettling.

One happy note on which the presumed "complacent decade" ended occurred in 1959 when duplicate bridge became a regular part of the Club's program. Profitable from the start, it led the way for a stream of new activities that included member-guest bridge luncheons, theater parties, and Board of Governor teas.

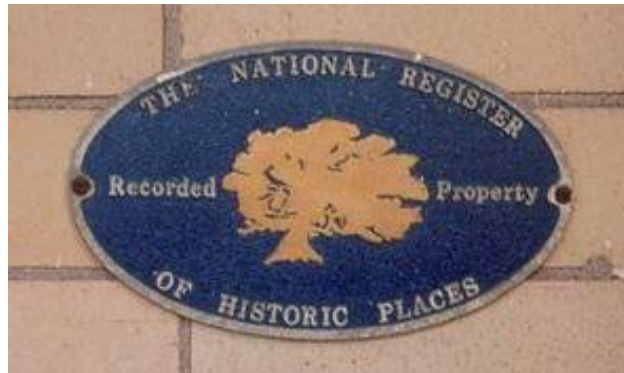
In the 60's changes came to Woodland St. as grand houses, like the Garvan House next door to the Club, were demolished and high-rises like Regency Towers and Woodland House dwarfed remaining historic homes on the street.



Founded during Prohibition, the Club didn't permit alcohol until 1954 when it voted to allow champagne in the ballroom. A full liquor license was granted in 1961. Here, Manny Pantano, our bartender since 1993, pours.

ROLLER COASTER YEARS: The 1960's

- **1961** Financial crises loomed over the decade as it began. A full liquor license was obtained in 1961, but it didn't reverse the deficits in food service.
- In her first tumultuous year as president, **Gwen (Mrs. Allan K.) Smith** worked with three different executive secretaries and six bookkeepers.
- **1962** Reevaluation doubled our property taxes, and serious talk began about moving the Club. This was discussed again in 1969 and 1972.
- Past President Dorothy Archibald underwrote assembly room furnishings, including customized pegboard and lighting, in honor of Muriel Alvord.
- **1963** Financial pressures eased and staff stabilized at the start of **Sybil Young (Mrs. Victor C., Jr.) Barringer's** term.
- **1965** The Regency Towers apartment built next door took away a 6-foot swath of our driveway and parking--which surveyors said was on their property. To compensate, they paid for a privacy fence, but had it installed (illegally) with the back side to us.
- **1966** Membership reached its maximum of 500 again.
- Under **Dorothy (Mrs. Robert) Tennant**, the kitchen was updated and the ballroom sound-proofed.
- The IRS warned that we were jeopardizing our tax-exempt status by having too much income from non-member functions.
- **1969** President **Virginia (Mrs. Clayton B.) Spencer** oversaw the demolition of the Lyman's 1895 carriage barn to make way for our current smaller garage and give us more parking space.



Our "historic place" designation came in 1975.



When our Gillett Street neighbor's carriage house collapsed under the weight of snow in January 2011, it reminded the Club that the Lymans had a similar barn/carriage house---torn down in 1969 to make way for our current small storage garage. It had stalls for horses and cows, room for carriages, a bedroom for a stable hand and was topped by a hipped roof, dormers, and a cupola.

WE ARE STAYING HERE



The first three years of the 1960's tested the resolve of members to keep the Club in its Woodland Street location as they weathered the chaos of neighborhood demolition and construction. Throughout the decade, members periodically considered relocating, perhaps to the Cooley house (later Sullivan) on Prospect Avenue in West Hartford. Immanuel Congregational Church was said to be interested in buying our property. But each time the issue arose, a decision was made to stay, improve, and love 22 Woodland Street.

It seemed that everything was happening at once: the Club's financial situation worsened when membership numbers dropped, property taxes doubled after a reevaluation, insurance costs increased, and deferred maintenance on the aging house became an urgent priority. The only good financial news in 1960 was Mabel Johnson's forgiveness of the final debt on the ballroom mortgage. In gratitude, the Club named the ballroom for her, and her portrait hangs nearby.

As worthy descendants of the founders, members used their intelligence to find solutions to these mounting problems and set the Club on a path toward long-term health. They hired the University of Connecticut Extension Service to advise on running a profitable housekeeping and dining operation. Careful revisions of job descriptions, salaries, sick pay, and holidays had their desired effect---in spite of disruptive staff turnover in 1961-62.

By the spring of 1963, President Gwen (Mrs. Allan K.) Smith reported that the Club had "passed over the troubled waters" and was heading toward a more tranquil future. The minutes of the Annual Meeting reported that she was given "a rising, clamoring...grateful vote of thanks for her two arduous, time-consuming and valiant years in office." A great sigh of relief was heard throughout the Club.



From the library to the teacup room to the exquisite wood carvings, every aspect of the house delights the eye.





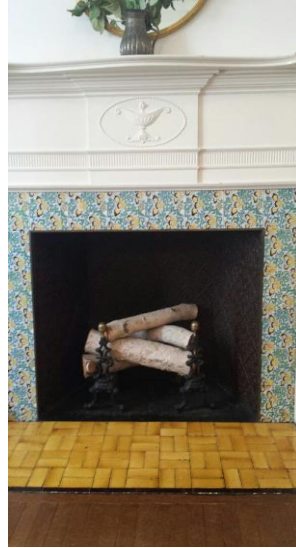
The middle parlor (above) glows in lamplight, while on the third floor, the largest of our guest rooms (below) invites visitors to relax.





The ballroom, redecorated in 2014, and the member dining room, with its hand-painted murals, offer gracious spaces for programs, festive parties, and fine dining.





There are seventeen fireplaces in the Lyman House, each one a triumph of woodwork, tile, marble, mosaic, and fire-back design



The next year saw a profit on the balance sheet and money was put back into reserve funds. During Sybil (Mrs. Victor C., Jr.) Barringer's term as president, many maintenance issues were addressed. The house was painted, the driveway resurfaced, and downstairs rooms refreshed by paint, upholstery, and furnishings. Some work was paid for from current funds, but several generous members loaned money, without interest, to complete the projects. A member assessment repaid these loans in 1968.

As a culmination of long-term planning, the Club hired its first Club Manager---Miss Ann Barnes---whose job description included supervising staff, dining service, and maintenance of the house and grounds. She held this position until 1971, when she was succeeded by her assistant, Miss Edith Crockett.

The Club observed its 40th anniversary in 1965 with a big birthday party. Choosing to transcend the popular culture of the day (Beatles, mini-skirts, and protests), we celebrated our history with a skit written by past president Elizabeth Van Dyke called "Good Old Daisies." The performers were past presidents, playing themselves.

By 1966 membership had returned to its maximum of 500, with a waiting list. Happily, this meant that sound finances would enable updating the kitchen and soundproofing the ballroom, both long overdue.

Tireless work by committees, the support of loyal staff, and a studious focus on future planning carried the Club through the ups and downs of the 60's---and left a remarkable legacy for today.



Original architectural details like the oval window in the sun porch and the exterior columns complement antique pieces like the tall case clock, gift of the Murphy family. Below, the lectern made from our historic beech tree.



The elevator entrance has a new look after its 2014 makeover.



WE ARE GOLDEN: The 1970's

- **1970** Taxes almost doubled as the result of another reevaluation by the city. Our lawyer recommended selling the house and relocating to achieve a more streamlined, efficient operation.
- **Greta (Mrs. Kimberly) Cheney**, as president, led the charge to save the house. Members voted resoundingly to stay where we had "a gracious atmosphere" rather than move to a modern building.
- **1971** When Club Manager Ann Barnes resigned, her position was filled by Edith Crockett and her assistant Cora Fugge.
- Our first auction---predecessor of Summerby's---was held to sell unused items found in the house. Proceeds totaled \$245.
- **1973** A pension plan for full-time employees began. The premium for the first year was paid for by a committee of former presidents.
- In **Helen Dixon's** term, members were first given the option to list their own names in the directory, without naming their husbands.
- **1975** In our golden anniversary year the Lyman House became a Historic Monument on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **1976** A \$20,000 bequest from Marjorie (Mrs. Morse S.) Allen was used to enclose the sun porch and plant a memorial garden.
- The Club ended the decade financially and socially stable, thanks to the able leadership of four presidents: **Martha (Mrs. Reeves) Morrisson, Josie (Mrs. Bruce W.) Manternach, Billie (Mrs. Carleton F.) Sharpe, and Mary (Mrs. Frederic S., Jr.) Hoffer.**

BIG BUSINESS MEETS GRACIOUS LIVING



A *déjà-vu* moment came in 1970 when the Club received a new property assessment that threatened to nearly double our taxes. Once again discussions of moving to a less costly location--and into a more stable neighborhood--occupied many meetings.

Notwithstanding our lawyer's recommendation that the Club sell its house on Woodland Street and find property that would turn the Club into a "modern, streamlined, efficient operation," members under the determined leadership of Greta (Mrs. Kimberly) Cheney voted overwhelmingly to stay put. The appeal of our gracious house clearly outweighed modern efficiency in a different building.

That decision came with its own set of requirements, however. Chief among them was the need to establish a firm financial base, and this was solved in part by large increases in dues and initiation fees. Rental income, although further limited by the IRS, remained important; but new and exciting arts and interests programs and special dinners went a long way to improve the bottom line.

Members stepped up to help with what had been staff responsibilities, and that relieved some pressure on the budget. Edith Crockett became manager in 1971, assisted by Cora Fugge; and they were grateful for members who volunteered to help in the office and with housekeeping, as well as for husbands who worked on the grounds.

At about this time, Asylum Hill, Inc. was formed. Sponsored by business leaders in the neighborhood, this group began initiatives to upgrade and stabilize Asylum Hill through community cooperation. The Town and County Club appointed a Community

Relations Committee to support these efforts by researching the remaining historic houses, including our own Lyman House.

When Helen Dixon became president in 1973, sights were set on the Golden Anniversary two years away. A detailed survey of the house made it clear that a lot of work was needed to make the house shine for this big celebration, and an assessment made it possible without spending reserves held for taxes and inflation.

After new wiring and a smoke detection system were installed, the house was painted inside and out, ceilings repaired, furniture reupholstered, and mirrors, chandeliers, rugs, and other decorative items placed. The day before the renovated clubhouse reopened for the anniversary, members of the House Committee spent hours with lemon oil and Q-Tips removing plaster dust from the intricately carved woodwork in the library and on the staircase.

The cherry on the anniversary cake came in November 1975 when the house was granted the status of Historic Monument on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1976 Marjorie (Mrs. Morse S.) Allen left a legacy of \$20,000 to the Club in memory of her cat Grimalkin. This generous gift enabled us to convert the open-columned entrance facing Woodland Street into what is now our sun porch, and it also paid for a memorial garden in the parking lot island, designed by member and pioneering landscape architect Mary Edwards.

When Martha Morrisson's term ended in 1977, Josie (Mrs. Bruce W.) Manternach began a term that was cut short by her illness and death later that year. The vice-president, Billie (Mrs. Carleton F.) Sharpe, filled out her term.



Today the Club is well-positioned to offer members and outside groups a wide variety of social events and facilities for business and professional gatherings.



MANY MANAGERS: The 1980's

- **1978 Mary (Mrs. Frederic S., Jr.) Hoffer** led the Club into the 1980's, dominated by staff changes and neighborhood instability.
- **1979** Manager Edith Crockett resigned and moved out of her rooms on the third floor. Manager Grace Einsel was hired in 1980.
- Long-time cook Emma Kufta resigned in 1981, leading to a succession of short-term cooks.
- Volatility in the neighborhood made heightened security a priority. The Club hired a guard for the parking lot after dark. Alarm systems were updated, and two male students were hired to live on the third floor to provide night-time security.
- Naomi "Noni" (Mrs. Chester W., Jr.) Fairlie followed by Shirley (Mrs. George D.) Brodigan and Ruth (Mrs. John C.) Allen carried the Club into prosperous years when membership reached a limit of 508 with a waiting list.
- **1986** Although reserves paid for some repairs, it was necessary to take out a 20-year mortgage to finance new construction and an elevator. This was approved during the presidency of Margery (Mrs. Chester A.) Weed.
- When Manager Grace Einsel left after six successful, eventful years, debate ensued about the advisability of hiring a man for the first time to be our manager. James P. Standish was chosen and became the first in a continuing and current line of professional men hired to be the Club's general manager.
- President Gevene (Mrs. Richard B.) Brown kept activities on an even keel---and kept members informed---while construction of the new kitchen and elevator caused inevitable upheavals.

UPS AND DOWNS LIKE AN ELEVATOR



Nights must have been lonely for the Club's dauntless manager Edith Crockett when she lived in her rooms on the third floor during the 1970's. Sturdy and efficient, Miss Crockett ran the Club's business during the day. At night she was "watchman" for the 26-room house and its empty parking lot, which by then was a lonely survivor of the 19th century on Woodland Street.

In May 1979, Miss Crockett unexpectedly announced her resignation to President Mary (Mrs. Frederic, Jr.) Hoffer. Unable to find another live-in manager, the Club hired two mature male students to live on the third floor and patrol the house at night. The Club converted a utility closet to a kitchenette and installed a shower in one of the bathrooms to give them a virtual apartment.

The search for a full-time manager ended in March 1980 with the hiring of Mrs. Grace Einsel. She skillfully generated member participation---and consequently increased income---by staging creative parties and entertainments. One memorable event was the "Farewell to the Bathtub" party in 1983, when Mrs. Einsel and her husband Richard decorated a vintage tub that had been removed from an upstairs bathroom and serenaded it before it was taken away by a lucky buyer of antiques.

By 1984 membership stood at 508, with a waiting list. Food service showed a profit; our reserve fund held \$130,000, and there was a contingency fund of \$40,000. With such good financial news, it was decided to consider major improvements to the house that had been discussed for years.

With the hiring of James Standish in 1986, the Club got its first professional (and first male) General Manager. He helped

transition the Club into a more business-oriented world of computers and employee benefits, restaurant operations, and environmental concerns. His experience with architecture and mechanical systems supported the major changes that were made to HVAC, the roof, and other house-related projects during his five years as manager.

Under Margery (Mrs. Chester A.) Weed, an *ad hoc* committee worked with architect Roger Clarke to define necessities that would further modernize the aging house. The wish list included a new kitchen convenient to both dining room and ballroom, an efficient bar close to the dining areas, handicapped access, and an elevator, as well as air conditioning for the entire house. After a year of hard work, the committee presented a package proposal to the membership, and in 1986 all projects---except the air conditioning---were approved, contingent upon obtaining a twenty-year mortgage.

We celebrated a happy occasion in 1987: the 100th birthday of charter member Amy Ogden Welcher (who died in 1992 at 104.)

Construction took many months, but at last---during Gevene (Mrs. Richard B.) Brown's term as president---the Club inaugurated its new kitchen and bar; and members who had fueled the controversy over the elevator tried it out and reluctantly admitted it had been a grand idea! It was noted that some of the most vocal opponents were finding stairs difficult to climb and were among the first who needed to use it to get to the second floor. Overnight guests in the third-floor bedrooms also appreciated the convenience.



Celebrating our 80th anniversary



*2012 scholarship winners with committee
members Carol Gurlie and Louise Fisher.
2012 Scholarship Winners with committee*

VISIONARY WOMEN: The 1990's

- **Ellen (Mrs. Peter M.) Zeman** became president at a critical time in the life of the Club. Taxes and expenses continued to climb, but membership declined.
- New categories of membership were offered, including junior and dining. Men were admitted in 1993 when **Eleanor (Mrs. Frederick) Flynn (later Mrs. John E. Cartland)** presided.
- In 1989 John Bates began his career with the Club as Dining Room Manager and later as Assistant Manager of the Club.
- An active Community Relations Committee supported the Asylum Hill community and built a scholarship program for women.
- Under president **Eleanor (Mrs. Donald J.) Hayes** a consulting firm made recommendations for stabilization and growth.
- To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Lyman House in 1995, the Club held a festive "Top to Bottom" party. Later that year we welcomed former First Lady Barbara Bush as a speaker and overnight guest. John Bates starred as auctioneer in the first Summerby's Auction.
- President **Joann (Mrs. James L.) Kidd** streamlined the Board and promoted a surge in membership.
- In 1996 the century-old tile roof of the house was replaced, paid for almost entirely by volunteer contributions of more than \$225,000 to an Anniversary Fund Appeal.
- The decade ended under **Katharine (Mrs. Peter T.) Steinwedell**, who led growth in community involvement and directed a massive HVAC and environmental project to modernize the house.

RAISING THE ROOF



The decade of the 1990's began with familiar concerns about tax increases. But the years also brought something new: declining membership due to the opening of life-care communities like The McAuley, Duncaster, and Seabury, which were becoming home to more and more of the Club's older members.

It became clear that creative approaches to membership development were needed. New categories of members were offered, dining and junior and special associate--the latter being for widowed spouses of members. In 1993 men were admitted in their own right. By the middle of the decade, we had hired a membership development director, Jean Graham, and innovative promotions were bringing our numbers back to a healthy level.

A \$60,000 bequest from the estate of long-time member Grace Swift Nye was used in part to fund a professional analysis of the Club. In 1994 a Committee for the Future was formed, and Marketing Leverage, Inc. was hired to conduct an in-depth study. One of the first recommendations of the study was to abbreviate the Club's mission statement to read that the Club "shall create and maintain for its members an environment which fosters cultural, intellectual and social development." Applied to all areas of the program, staff, and house, many changes resulted.

The newsletter was redesigned to provide information for members and also to become a recruitment tool. More programs and activities were planned and scheduled for working women, who were being actively recruited. Dining memberships encouraged business entertaining. John Bates had brought his creative style to the supervision of the dining room when he was hired in 1989. His role expanded in 1995 when he proposed a "Summerby's Auction," riffing

on the name Sotheby's. With items donated by Club members and a live auction conducted by John, this popular event generates enough income each year to have a major impact on projects to improve the house, such as parlor and dining room makeovers.

The consultants had also encouraged us to celebrate "Women of Vision." We invited former first lady Barbara Bush to speak (her sister, Martha Rafferty, was a member). The guest room where she stayed---protected by Secret Service men!---is referred to by her name.

Made aware by the consultants that socializing was not sufficient reason for many younger and working women to join the Club, our Community Relations Committee expanded the Club's vision by starting outreach projects with neighborhood children and establishing a scholarship fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for adult women students. This significant initiative benefited women with financial need who were studying at colleges in the Greater Hartford region. (As of 2014, scholarships totaling \$144,169 had been awarded to 85 recipients ranging in age from 24 to 60-plus.)

Two major restoration projects literally saved the house during the decade. The first was replacing the original red tile roof in 1996. This job was paid for by more than \$225,000 of voluntary donations in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Lyman House. (Hands-on President Joann Kidd climbed the scaffolding to supervise construction.) The other critical work was upgrading the complex HVAC system, air-conditioning the entire house, and removing hazardous materials. This expensive project required an assessment of \$1,200 per member spread out over three years. Unfortunately, many members resigned because of this and therefore never benefited from the enhancements to the house that current members are enjoying to this day.



*John Bates, our
auctioneer
extraordinaire,
presides over the
Summerby's
Auction, as well
as our dining
room and other
festivities. Below
are details from
the murals on the
dining room
walls, painted in
2007.*



TURNING THE PAGE: 2000-2005

- **Eleanor "Eleo" (Mrs. Walter L.) Abel (later Mrs. David L. Ammen)** took the helm in turbulent times. Town Meetings were initiated to encourage dialogue between the Board and members.
- In 2000, the Lyman Endowment Fund was established for preservation of the Lyman house. In 2010 the Fund's assets of \$40,000+ were moved into the 501(c)(3) Lyman Heritage Preservation Foundation endowment.
- Major staff changes took place in 2001. Manager James Standish resigned. John Bates became Acting Manager until Bruce Hall was hired. Susan R. Barney began a long career as full-time Membership Director and later, also, as newsletter editor.
- Under **Eleanor (Mrs. Thomas M.) Zajac** as president, the Club responded to another financial crisis with new approaches to governance and re-organization of restaurant and bar operations.
- The 2001-02 Board of Governors donated new dining room china. Interest from the Lyman Endowment Fund restored the beautiful mosaic tile floor in the sunroom.
- Another assessment in 2002 brought a rash of resignations.
- **Sally (Mrs. Dale A.) Richter's** presidency solved issues of management and personnel, member satisfaction, and clubhouse maintenance. She dealt with three managers in her two-year term.
- The last surviving charter member of the Club, Margaret Zacher (née Butler), died in 2003. The same year, 100-year-old Concordia Gregorieff became our first Centennial Member.
- Stephen St.Peter began his seven-year term as General Manager.

A NEW CENTURY BEGINS



In the first five tumultuous years of the 21st Century, the Club was led by three Presidents (Eleo Abel, Eleanor Zajac, and Sally Richter) and the staff worked under four different General Managers (James Standish, Bruce Hall, Jonathan Jensen, and Stephen St.Peter).

Many expenses over which the Club had no control--property taxes, utility rates, insurance, debt for the HVAC system, etc.--brought challenges to our finances and generated tension among the Board, members, and staff. Typically, good sense and good will prevailed, and from these crises many progressive solutions emerged.

Town Meetings were inaugurated to provide a forum for dialogue between the Board of Governors and the membership about complex issues. A survey by the Long Range Planning Committee resulted in timing more programs to accommodate working women. Saturday night dining and a smoke-free environment were among other changes. A Governance Committee applied its expertise to Club organization, recommending more collaborative approaches to activities and revisions to the nominating process. An active Restaurant and Bar Committee took a close look at dining operations, working to turn around major financial losses.

In 2000, recognizing that the Club needed to provide for future needs in preserving the 1895 Lyman House, a group of members launched the Lyman Endowment Fund, whose income was designated for just that purpose. The Fund grew to more than \$40,000 by 2010, when its assets were moved, by Board approval, to the endowment of the Lyman Historical Preservation Foundation, a 501(c)(3) fund established in 2007.

In the spring of 2001 James Standish, General Manager since 1986, resigned and John Bates became Acting Manager until Bruce Hall was hired in the fall of 2001. In the same year, Susan R. Barney joined the staff as full-time Membership Director. Her job grew to include the monthly newsletter and other communications.

Another fiscal crisis loomed in 2002, and the only solution was to levy an assessment of \$600. As before, the specter of an assessment precipitated a number of resignations and caused even more concern about the viability of the Club. However, with Sally (Mrs. Dale A.) Richter as the driving force, the Board of Governors set out three goals to assure members were receiving good value for their loyalty to the Club. The goals posited financial stability, operational efficiency, and membership growth and retention.

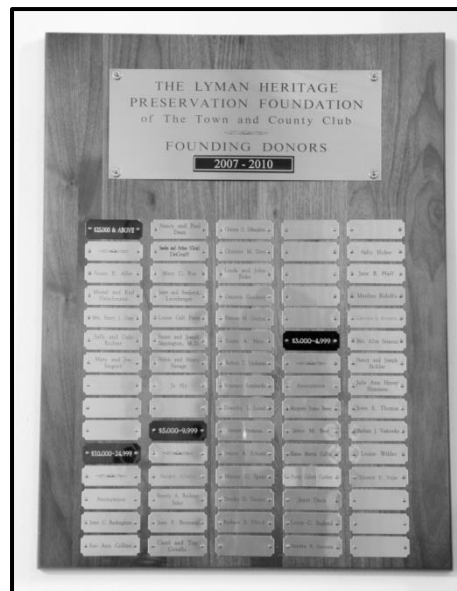
Working diligently, the Board and Long Range Planning Committee made great advances in all these areas. A new computer system, implemented by Interim Manager Jonathan Jensen in 2003 after Bruce Hall resigned, helped control expenditures in food service operations; and by 2004---with a new minimum, careful budgeting, and cuisine by Chef Shannon Murphy---the dining room was operating profitably.

A major membership initiative in 2003-2004, called "Renew the Tradition," brought in 111 new members!

Another new General Manager, Stephen St.Peter, was hired in May 2004, bringing his three decades of experience in the hospitality industry. He also introduced an internship program to the Club, which brought two trained hospitality interns from abroad to live and work at the Club on one-year contracts.



Above, the 2014 Board of Governors, with 5 past presidents seated in front. Below, the plaque naming founding donors to the Lyman Heritage Preservation Foundation.



PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE: 2005-09

- The Club celebrated its 80th anniversary in May 2005 with a "Top to Bottom" party. An award from the Hartford Preservation Alliance in 2006 honored our stewardship of the Lyman House.
- Modernization of investment policies and re-financing of the mortgage helped offset rising utility costs and declining membership. Board leadership was provided by President **Mary (Mrs. Joseph D.) Sargent**.
- General Manager St.Peter proposed converting the Barbara Bush guest room into an exercise room, citing a trend by city clubs to eliminate overnight guest rooms. Members decided money would be better spent on wheelchair accessibility than a gym.
- Record receipts from Summerby's Auction in 2006 and 2007 paid for refurbishing the downstairs rooms, including hiring artists to paint murals on the dining room walls.
- In May 2007 the IRS approved creation of the Lyman Heritage Preservation Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation dedicated to preserving the Lyman House and grounds.
- Newly-elected president **Christine O'Connell (Mrs. Vincent DiBenedetto)** applied her analytical skills to strategic planning and financial controls.
- To preserve records of the Club's past, an Archives and History Committee was formed. The Lyman Foundation furnished a third-floor room to make a secure place for archival collections.
- In 2008, the Community Relations Committee began tutoring at Noah Webster School, and the Scholarship Committee awarded a total of \$10,000 to eight adult women students.

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION



Change, usually for the better, has been a keynote of the Club since its founding, and the second five years of the 21st Century saw many innovations and improvements in programming, management controls, and building usage.

As we celebrated our 80th birthday, Mary (Mrs. Joseph D.) Sargent was elected president, nearly 40 years after her mother, Dorothy (Mrs. Robert) Tennant, served as president (1966-68).

Costly building projects dominated the next two years. The exterior of the house was painted and the trim repaired. Utility bills soared. We refinanced our mortgage and changed our investment policy. With careful attention to expenses, and improvement in the quality of food and wine, the restaurant and bar showed a profit.

Summerby's Auction in the summer of 2006 brought record proceeds, and they were used to freshen the interior of the house. The design firm Special Touches adapted Chinese motifs for the dining room and painted a mural of delicate birds and vines on yellow walls. New carpeting, upholstery, ceiling, lighting, and a sound system enhanced our dining experience even further.

Our stewardship of the Lyman House merited an award in 2006 from the Hartford Preservation Alliance.

The international internship program continued, bringing a succession of young hospitality-trained men from such countries as Saudi Arabia, the Czech Republic, India, Vietnam, China, Hong Kong, and France. Club members enjoyed their youthful perspective and professional assistance in the dining room.

In May, 2007, at the start of Christine O'Connell's term as president, the IRS approved the Club's application for a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation, to be named The Lyman Heritage Preservation Foundation (LHPF). Donations to the Foundation are to be used only for "the preservation of the Lyman House and grounds, and [to promote] education about the Lyman House's historic significance in the literary, architectural, and cultural heritage of Hartford and the Asylum Hill neighborhood." Past Club President Sally Richter spearheaded the years of preparation leading to this achievement, and she became the Foundation board's first president. In November 2007, a "Top to Bottom" party celebrated the Foundation and launched a three-year campaign to build its funds. Three months later, its assets totaled \$347,000 in donations from ninety members.

Membership decline in 2007 prompted the Membership Development Committee to swing into action, with increased activities designed to attract and retain members. More than 20 new members joined within a few months.

Lyman Foundation to the rescue! One of the first projects of the new LHPF was to fund a condition assessment of and a ten-year repair plan for our 17 roofs (not counting the main roof that had been replaced in 1996). Several needed immediate repairs, and the Foundation allotted \$20,000 for this work.

As the Club looked to the future by updating its strategic plan and conducting a self-evaluation of the Board of Governors, it also looked to preserve its past by appointing an Archives and History Committee and furnishing a third-floor room to house the materials collected. The LHPF invested in this project by purchasing desks, a computer, shelving, and archival supplies.

Our active Community Relations Committee extended its outreach to recruiting tutors for the nearby Noah Webster public school. In addition to tutoring first-graders in reading, the committee

also collected books for the Mark Twain branch of the Hartford Public Library.

Scholarships totaling \$10,000 were awarded to eight adult women students at the annual scholarship luncheon in 2008. The Scholarship Committee spent many hours analyzing applications and deciding on amounts to be given. The funds came from Club members' tax-deductible donations to our donor-advised fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Along with all the serious business of operating a club came many interesting and entertaining events, including a carol sing and formal gala at holiday time, chamber music by a quartet from the Hartford Symphony, and a wedding fashion show (at which long-time member Liz Payne modeled her wedding gown of 54 years earlier). And to top off her presidency, Christine O'Connell married Vincent DiBenedetto in an elegant ceremony at the Club, the first president to be married while in office.

When Susan (Mrs. Robert L.) Aller became president in 2009, she quoted an earlier president who had asked, "Are we an anachronism?" and "Are we relevant?" "YES," she responded, "And YES." She added, "Welcome to the unique pleasures of your Club. Bring friends. Eat here a lot!" These remarks echoed other presidents who encouraged growth in membership and profitability in dining service---both of which are essential to the Club's solvency.

Among house projects that year were the transformation of the men's room outside the ballroom to a wheelchair-accessible unisex room, refurbishing of the presidents' room---where portraits of past presidents line the walls---and an updated inventory of house furnishings with accompanying appraisals for valuable items.

WE ARE STILL HERE: 2009-15

- As the Club moved forward in the 21st Century, its transition to a modern business operation necessitated new equipment and new approaches to management.
- President **Susan (Mrs. Robert L.) Aller** saw the emergence of a number of new interest groups designed to engage more members and attract newcomers. Among others, the Biography Book Group and Writing for Pleasure began.
- General Manager St.Peter resigned in June 2011, and a search committee chose Michael Duval, who had long hospitality and culinary experience, to succeed him. He began on September 1.
- **Nancy (Mrs. Paul D.) Dean** became president at a time of transition in staff and membership. She ably steered the Club to adopt better financial controls and oversaw the transformation of systems to new and more efficient technology.
- Major landscaping changes began in 2011, as hazardous trees were removed and plans were commissioned by the Lyman Foundation for an overall redesign of the grounds.
- In the summer of 2013, with **Dale (Mrs. David T.) Ryan** as president, the first phase of the design plan was completed, renewing the house's landscape facing Woodland Street.
- The next summer, the long-hoped-for restoration of the ballroom brought an Art Deco elegance to that important space.
- Employees Sandra Ralston (30 years), John Bates, and Mary McGovern (25 years) were honored for their faithful service.
- In May 2015, our 90th year, a new president is elected.
- To be continued . . . for at least another 90 years.

GOING STRONG AT 90



New programs emerged to accommodate changing demographics and interests: the Biography Book Group, Thursday Evenings with Friends, and a Writing for Pleasure group. A committee spent months collecting recipes from members and then published them in a beautiful spiral-bound cookbook.

Another successful Summerby's Auction and a generous bequest from Concordia Gregorieff (our Centennial Member who died in 2007 at the age of 103) generated funds to complete some projects on our perpetual wish list. We also asked member Norma Glover, an expert on clean and renewable energy, to conduct an energy audit as a prelude to making our aging house more "green" and efficient.

When Nancy (Mrs. Paul D. III) Dean became president in 2011, she was faced with the critical task of finding a new General Manager to replace Stephen St.Peter, who had resigned after more than six years on the job. This time a professional search firm found a pool of candidates, then a Club committee conducted extensive interviews and finally announced its decision to hire Michael Duval, whose qualifications in hospitality and culinary management made him the top choice.

Always seeking to find better and more efficient ways to operate, the president led investigations into how other city clubs were run and what made them successful. This creative approach helped us to modernize our business systems, examine our programming, and adapt them to appeal to current and prospective members. We moved into the world of e.blasts and on-line newsletters and even had to write a policy on the use of electronic devices in the house ("silent mode, out of sight, be considerate").

In the summer of 2012 several trees in the back parking area, which had been pronounced "declining" or "hazardous" by arborists, were cut down. While members mourned the loss of these old sentinels, the largest tree---a magnificent beech--was sent to City Bench, where Zeb and Ted Esselstyn milled the wood into lumber. A unique lectern from this tree was commissioned by the LHPF, which presented it to the Club in 2014 for use in the gallery.

By the time a new president, Dale (Mrs. David T.) Ryan, was elected in 2013, a number of projects begun earlier were nearing completion. The third floor guest rooms received makeovers that allowed the Club to proudly offer them at somewhat higher---but still reasonable---rates for overnight stays. A much-needed renovation of the ballroom sound system was made possible by generous members who responded to a "quiet campaign among friends." The new archives room received finishing touches from LHPF funds, making it possible for the Archives Committee to continue the task initiated by dedicated past president Ellen Zeman and others.

In 2012 the LHPF had commissioned a comprehensive plan by landscape architects and design experts Richter & Cegan, Inc., for the grounds of the Lyman House. The LHPF funded construction of the first phase of this plan, the area around the Woodland Street entrance, in the summer of 2013. By removing overgrown vegetation and adding appropriate foundation plantings, a low granite wall and a small patio, the design re-introduced our historic house to the street and established it as a reliable anchor in the Asylum Hill neighborhood. To further beautify the site, 500 daffodil bulbs were planted around the wall in the fall of 2014.

The summer of 2014 saw another long-awaited project of beautification: the restoration of the ballroom to a 1930's Art Deco elegance. The unusual "sprung" floor that makes dances so pleasurable was stenciled and refinished. Designed by Robin Jones of LCR, the ballroom project was funded by a combination of the

Club's capital account, the "Cause Within a Cause" at Summerby's Auction, and a quiet fundraising campaign among members.

And time marched on. Grown men and women put on bibs and feasted on lobsters; a contest was held to name the upstairs guest rooms; a seminar taught members how to navigate eBay; the Board of Governors' secretary reported that a member had given her report "wearing an attractive set of antennae." Amid the festivities, we were ordered to install an expensive grease trap removal system in the kitchen, and another old roof sprang a leak above the ballroom.

Our loyal members celebrated or tolerated all these events, from the funny to the frantic, holding true to the spirit of our forebears, who have experienced similar ups and downs since 1925.

As this book comes to an end in 2015, we welcome our forty-first president, Nancy A. Brennan. She stands in a long line of women dating back ninety years who said Yes to the challenge of leading the Town and County Club into the future. Some of our presidents had smooth sailing; others had rough seas to navigate. Personal styles ranged from those who rocked the boat to those who steered a steady course. But always---always---the members of the Club have banded around our leaders and each other in support and friendship, giving tangible evidence of our willingness to work together for the continuity of this Club we cherish.

And so onward

COMMON THREADS: 1925-2015

by Sally Richter, President, 2003-2005

What would those women in 1925 think if they could see their clubhouse now? What would they think of us, the current members? They would no doubt be flummoxed by something called a “cell phone and electronics policy.” And why, they might wonder, is there a recurring controversy over the wearing of something called “jeans”? In spite of the vast changes in the Club and in women’s lives since 1925, there are common threads woven through ninety years which have made the strong fabric of our Club life: the Lyman House; the generosity of our members; care for our community; and the provision of a haven for intellectual stimulation, friendship, and fun.

The Lyman House

Various Long Range Planning Committees over the past two decades have asked for input from our membership about the Town & County Club. What did they like, what needed changing, what could be added? Our beloved Lyman House, now a venerable 120 years of age, is always at the top of the list of what members love about the Town & County Club. The Woodland Street of 2015 is very different from the elegant street of mansions in 1895. That our “mansion” remains, and that member stewardship of the graceful home has been constant and caring, is a tribute to many. We were challenged more than once in the 60’s and 70’s to bolt for the suburbs and leave Woodland Street to suffer a decline with more surface parking and unremarkable architecture. But we stayed. Today the Lyman House remains an anchor in the historically significant Asylum Hill/Nook Farm neighborhood and a tribute to those strong women who maintained their commitment to a city club

in Hartford. Sometimes dragging the lovely home into modern times was agonizing: an elevator, air conditioning, adapting to current fire and safety codes, computerized dining orders, Wi-Fi, and a web site all brought expense and controversy. Our founders would have wondered at these adaptations to the 21st century. They most likely would be proud.

Generous Members

The Lyman House has benefited from the enormous generosity of its members from the very beginning. They donated furnishings, silver, and carpets as well as time and energy in running the Club. In 1929 Mabel Johnson personally funded the mortgage for the ballroom, and was the treasurer of the Club for more than two decades, a thought that makes recent finance chairs blanch! Miss Johnson forgave the balance of the loan in 1960. Several members gave legacy gifts, including one which financed the enclosure of the front entry, now the sun porch. In 1996 generous members voluntarily gave over \$225,000 to replace the tile roof on the house. In 2000, an endowment fund was created to which members contributed \$45,000 over the years until 2007 when the Lyman Heritage Preservation Foundation was established. Members have contributed over \$600,000 to LHPPF, which has enabled major roof repairs, new fencing on the east side of our property, and renovated landscaping at the house entrance facing Woodland Street. Donations to the Lyman Heritage Preservation Foundation, which also has a separate endowment fund, continue to fund other projects to keep our beloved Lyman House in good shape.

Generous Members, Part II: Reaching Out to the Community

The founders of the Club were women who led many organizations that helped meet the needs of the less fortunate in Hartford, and today many of us volunteer in similar groups. In 1972 a Community Relations Committee was formed, as an adjunct to the

Program Committee, to “educate our members about the community and to provide them with an opportunity for giving and serving.” The committee has evolved over the years into a standing committee of the Board of Governors. Current activities include tutoring in neighborhood schools, collecting gifts for children of Asylum Hill at Christmas, and donating books to local schools. Perhaps the most remarkable evidence of giving back to the community is the Scholarship Fund, begun in 1999, which awards a scholarship to women over the age of 24. The fund is held by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and is unique in targeting mature women students. To date, eighty-five scholarships have been awarded, thanks to generous contributions by Town & County members. The Community Relations Committee’s most recent project is the organization of forums held at the Club where many representatives of the Asylum Hill neighborhood meet and discuss a common theme.

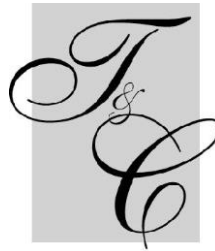
The Changing Role of Women

In 1925, in addition to the stated purpose of “creating an organized center for women’s work, thought and action...”, the women looked upon the Club as a haven from their responsibilities at home: dealing with servants, societal protocols of calling cards and visiting, formal dining and dress. Our lives today would be as foreign to them as are theirs to us. With a large percentage of working women, meetings today are more often at breakfast or after five. Conference calls enable those who cannot attend to participate. We are a much more diverse group, coming from many communities and backgrounds. The informality of today is in stark contrast to the formality in those beginning decades. Would the early 20th century woman have understood “business casual”? Sport coats? Colored jeans vs. denim? Today’s member, though freed from those early rigid social customs, ironically has even more demands on her time,

juggling work, home, family, and volunteer responsibilities. And nary a servant in sight.

Plus ça change...

Ask a new member why she joined the Town & County Club and you will get many answers: I was looking for a new place to meet interesting people, my friend asked me to join, I had a recent life change (retirement, widowhood, new in the area) and I was ready for a new community. Ask that same woman five years later what her experience was. In addition to their undying love for our beautiful historic house, members express satisfaction in their involvement on committees, stimulation from book groups and speakers, delight in reconnecting with old friends and making new ones, and enjoyment at interacting with women of different generations, backgrounds, and experiences. Demands on women's lives have changed, and yet they have not: in addition to family and work there is the need to have a haven for one's "self"—from a quiet dinner to a fun gathering. Ninety years ago women founded the Town & County Club to help fulfill their lives. How fortunate that we continue to benefit many times over from their energy and foresight.



THE LYMAN HOUSE

What's not to love about the house at 22 Woodland Street in Hartford's Asylum Hill neighborhood? For ninety years---since 1925 ---Town & County Club members have cared so much about the buff-colored brick and limestone mansion that they have consistently voted to stay, in spite of taxes, maintenance costs, swings in the economy, and membership ups and downs.

Built in 1895 for the Theodore Lyman family, it was designed by architects Melvin and Edward Hapgood. At the time, Woodland was a prestigious residential street, lined with magnificent houses. The Lymans moved into their new home with their four young children and owned it for thirty years. Mr. Lyman died in 1920, and Mrs. Lyman in 1925, at which time their grown children sold the house ("for \$1 and other valuable consideration"---actually \$80,000) to the women of the newly-formed Town & County Club.

Theodore Lyman was a real estate attorney whose ancestor Richard walked from Massachusetts with Thomas Hooker's band in 1636 and helped settle what would become the city of Hartford. Theodore's grandfather built the family fortune from a lumber business, trading with the West Indies. His father continued in that business until he became a director of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company---and its largest shareholder. Theodore not only practiced law but also served on boards of several banks and other companies.

Entering the house for the first time is an awesome experience. Here are the answers to the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions): *16,800 square feet, 26 rooms, 17 fireplaces, 10-foot ceilings downstairs, a different wood for the trim in each of the downstairs rooms, a ballroom added in 1930, an elevator installed in 1987, air conditioning in 1999.*

It is evident that the synergism between the Lymans and the Hapgoods resulted in a uniquely elegant house that has no equal in Hartford today. Architecturally, the house is an example of the Colonial Revival style, without trying to be historically accurate. The exterior is the work of Edward Hapgood; his cousin Melvin Hapgood was the artistic genius behind decorative elements inside the house.

The house delights at every turn. With a nod to many styles of architecture, there are columns and pilasters in Doric and Ionic style, Adam-style fan windows, and double-hung windows with single large panes of glass. Each downstairs room has a unique fireplace and is trimmed with a different wood: quarter-sawn oak in the spectacular library, white mahogany in the front parlor, birdseye maple in the receptionist's office, and intricately turned balusters of mahogany leading up the grand staircase to a landing with a long window seat below a Palladian window. Sliding pocket doors, recessed shutters on most windows, and quarter-sawn oak floors in varied parquet patterns continue the impressive use of wood.

The seventeen fireplaces reveal remarkable craftsmanship and materials. On the main floor, each fireplace has a different marble surround, with elaborate moldings and mantels. Decorative tiles are used for surrounds on the second and third floor fireplaces. Fire regulations prohibit burning wood, but three downstairs fireplaces have been fitted with attractive gas logs.

A research paper by Stephen B. Swigert documents the work in Hartford of the Hapgoods, and describes in detail the interior and exterior of the Lyman House. Another beautiful narrative of our house and the Lyman family was written by Susan R. Barney, our long-time membership development and communications director. Both papers are available to read in the Club archives. The papers are also on the Club's web page at www.towncounty.com



Seasonal decorations mark every holiday and fulfill the hope of early members that "our house may be gay."





In 2013 the Lyman House received a fresh new look when a low curving wall, a small patio, and tasteful landscaping were provided by the Lyman Heritage

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