

Ellington Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

March 2021

Preserve the Past...Build the Future

President's message

Greetings,

A former colleague once shared a thought provoking quote, "The only constant is change..." Indeed our beloved Nellie McKnight Museum and the Ellington Historical Society have experienced its share of change in recent days, and we have so much to be grateful for as the year comes to a close and spring awaits. Indeed, we should be proud of our many accomplishments: a beautifully restored front porch, an incredible restoration and paint job, a renovated barn that now houses our unique Farm Exhibit, new and updated bylaws, saving the front gable of the Cogswell School, secured grants for the farm exhibit, reconstructing both entrances to the outbuilding, and finally a complete redesign and rethinking of our museum space.



Looking ahead: 2021 and Beyond



Built in 1875, the Cogswell School enjoyed students who lived near the southern border of Ellington. After the Cogswell School closed in 1947 students attended the newly constructed Center School while the Cogswell enjoyed several “acts” for years after, the most notable being the home of the Valley Fish Market. Thanks to Matthew and Ed Mangold, and their incredible crew of volunteers, we were able to save at least a piece of this historic structure. The iconic front window and beautiful front facade will hopefully be restored as part of a plan to rebuild this beautiful one room schoolhouse on the

Nellie McKnight Museum property. We are grateful to former EHS president and legendary architect, Bob Dawson. Bob is currently working on a site plan and architectural drawings of Cogswell School in order to reconstruct the school for future community use. Our goal is to be period-accurate and we look forward to hearing from anyone who had the privilege of attending Cogswell School. We are working on rolling out a major pledge and fundraising campaign to make our new learning center a reality.

Sidewalk and Driveway

We have a new, safe sidewalk in front of the museum thanks to the Town of Ellington. It offers better access to the front porch of the museum. David Stavens, owner of [Barber Utilities LLC](#), has offered to install our very first driveway on the Nellie McKnight Museum property. For years, Nellie wore a path back to her barn where she parked her car. Today, with an increase in traffic, we look forward to having a safe passage to the rear of the museum and easy dropoff for visitors. Although the recycled materials that will make up the driveway are not indicative of what would have been used in the late 19th or early 20th Century, the driveway will alleviate mud issues and allow easier access to the property. We are so grateful for the continued community support from people like David Stavens.



Museum Updates

We are forever appreciative of all the efforts throughout the years to help preserve and maintain the numerous room displays throughout the Nellie McKnight Museum. Visitors from across Connecticut and beyond have enjoyed learning about our beloved Nellie McKnight and what life was like for a person living in New England during the late 19th and 20th Century. Change, however hard, is necessary in order to obtain funding to maintain the upkeep of the museum. Thanks to a handful of dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout this past fall and winter (no heat), our museum has some very exciting new features. These features include exhibits, a new archive room, a new children's room and an expanded gift shop. Read more about these exciting changes, below, and be sure to follow our progress updates and future events on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and our [website](#)

Mark Maciolek



Archives at the Museum

We now have a dedicated room with adequate shelving to house the archive collection, which consists mostly of printed material, in the museum. The next step is to study the best and most economical way to maintain a constant temperature and humidity level in the room year round to prevent deterioration of the documents. [Homestead Comfort](#) will be accessing the situation and present the board with a plan of action this spring

We could also use help in sorting through boxes of uncategorized materials. **Please let us know if you could help with this endeavor.** It is actually quite a pleasant task as the collection is very diverse, interesting and can be done at your leisure.

Nellie's Mercantile On Main

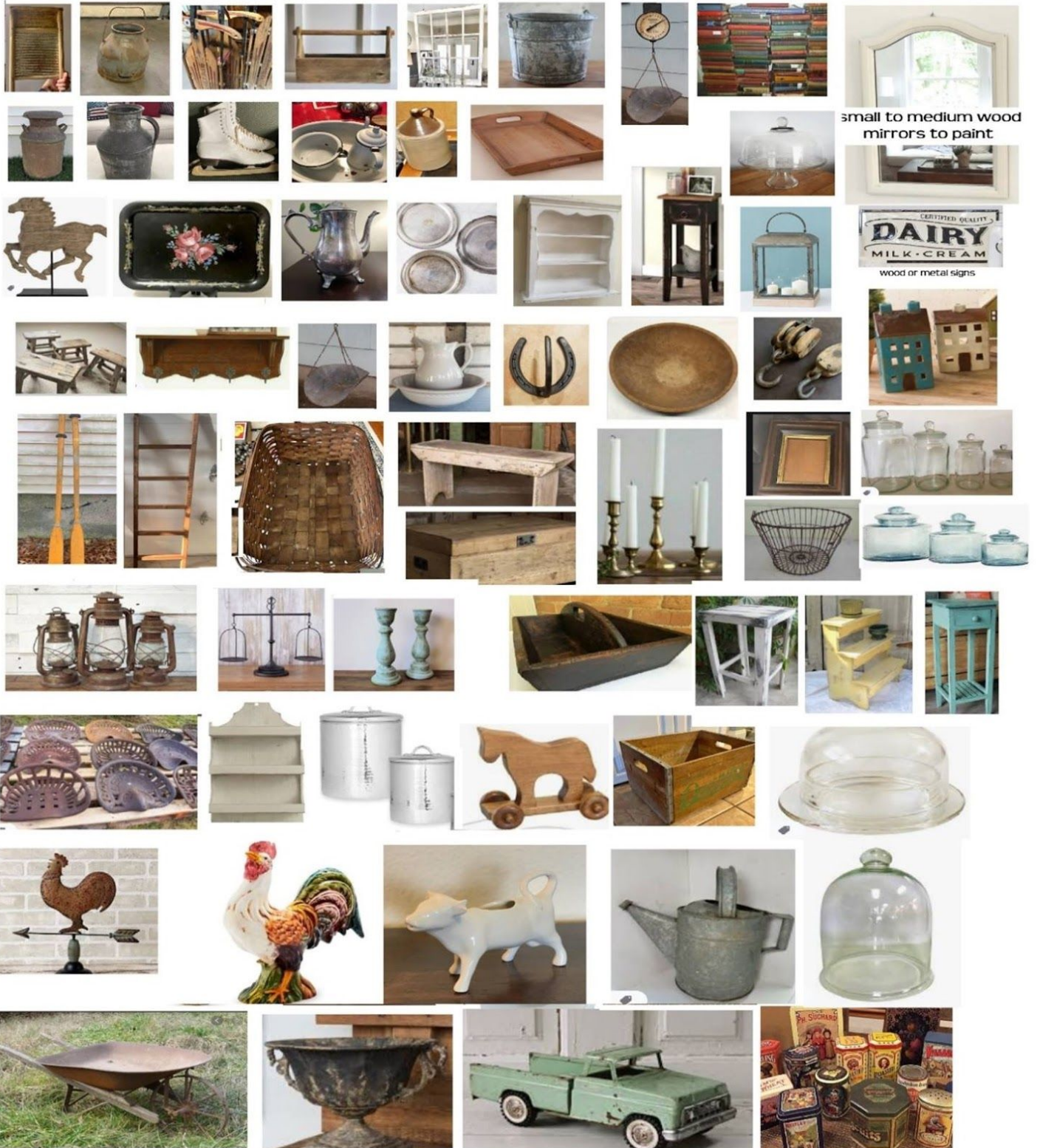
One of the many things that Nellie McKnight was interested in was to one day run a gift shop. Although she did not accomplish that in her lifetime we have done it for her. Nellie's Mercantile on Main will be opening to the public in May thanks to the insight and generous gifts of both time and products from Jennifer Smyth and Kay Luginbuhl. Our hope is for the shop to bring a consistent flow of much needed funds to maintain the property and hold programs for the community. The gift shop has a country and vintage theme with many specialized Ellington branded items along with products from local artisans. There is also a permanent Christmas room. Members will be invited to a "soft opening" at the end of April. Stay tuned.



Vintage Flea Market May 8th

We are seeking donations of specifically **vintage** items to be sold at our first fundraising event of the year, a Vintage Flea Market on Saturday May 8th. Check your attics, cellars, garages and barns and send us an email at ellingtonhistoricalsociaty@gmail.com if you have items to donate large or small. We can help with pick up and restoration of items.

We will also need volunteers to help set up on May 7th and with sales on May 8th. **Can you help?**



Children's Room

The small upstairs southwest facing room has been converted into a children's room with an adorable exhibit utilizing the toys, cribs and clothing from our collection. Thanks to Dianne Trueb and Mark Wasielewski for the scraping and painting of the walls, floor and ceiling to prepare this room for viewing.



Grant Seeking

We will be applying for a Connecticut Humanities Capacity Building Grant for the purpose of obtaining professional help to complete a 3-5 year strategic plan for the Historical Society. With so many needs and ideas the strategic plan will help to pinpoint and prioritize our needs along with implementing the goals. Fingers crossed!

How can you help?

- Get **ONE** person to [join](#) the Historical Society.
- Share, like and comment on our [social media posts](#).
- Make all your Amazon purchases through [Amazon Smile](#). Designate EHS as your non-profit.
- Volunteer** some hours to help with an Historical Society event or project.
- Make a [donation](#) to EHS either monetary or items for our Vintage Flea Market

We look forward to seeing you at:

