

Sarah Hale Presentation
Themed Goodies

It is with great sadness that the Newport Historical Society accepted the resignation of Priscilla Hagebusch at their July 2025 Board meeting.

According to her letter, Priscilla had been a member of the Newport Historical Society since 2011, and will continue her membership. However, she has been “helping/joining way too many groups” and she is ready to “have some time to do more creative art activities.” Priscilla (or Pris as everyone calls her) has definitely been a valuable asset to the Newport Historical Society community. Her first article in the society newsletter, the Mill Town Messenger” was April of 2013. The article was about “The Bradford Chair” that had been donated to the NHS. She continued to write articles for the newsletter, eventually becoming its producer, a job she continued until July 2025. Pris even put out newsletters during the Pandemic, at a time when even the Society Museum had to close. Check out Pris’ last article on Kathan Gardens in this edition of the Mill Town Messenger.

Priscilla Hagebusch

Leaves a Legacy at the Newport Historical Society

Submitted by Pam LaFountain



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MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR

THE SUNSHINE TOWN

Newport Historical Society is again offering our famous “**Magical History Tour**” this fall with a limited number of openings. Please visit our website for dates details and to reserve a seat on the bus.

Kathan Gardens

Beautifying Newport since 1955

By Priscilla Hagebusch

Residents of Newport have enjoyed a beautiful town, filled with flowers, trees, and greenery of all kinds since the 1955 arrival of Ollie and Anne Kathan at the top of “Claremont Hill” on Elm Street.

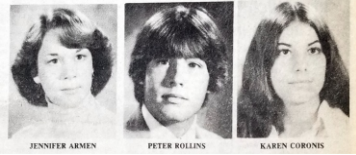
Ollie Kathan was drafted towards the end of World War II, returning home to study Horticulture at the University of New Hampshire. In 1951, he married Anne Johnson, who was a business major. Previously, they lived in Agawam, MA, for two years, where Ollie worked for a firm that grew roses, then they moved to Wendell, NH. **Kathan Gardens** was born in 1953 in Wendell, in a chicken coop! Their move to Newport in 1955, minus the chicken coop, sparked a long and successful history. Over the years, the Newport site of **Kathan Gardens** grew from one greenhouse to sixteen. The Kathan family also grew, with children Nancy and Dennis, joining the family alongside the expanding business.

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Armen, Rollins, Coronis
Newport honor grads

Argus Champion
Wednesday June 6, 1979

**WHEN
NEWS
WAS ON
PAPER**



Ollie's skill and hard work were demonstrated by his service to Newport's Budget Committee, the Beautification Committee, (which he helped found), the Conservation Committee, the incorporation of the Sugar River Bank, and membership in the NH Plant Growers' Association. He donated and planted the gardens on the Little Common in Newport, hosted garden club events, and pruned the shrubbery at the Richards Library at no expense to the town.



Andrew, Jill, Kristie and Dennis

Ollie was also cited with a State Beautification Award, and recognition by the N.H. Federation of Garden Clubs, for his work in rebuilding Newport's Large Common.

Kathan Gardens located on Elm St.



When retirement time rolled around in 1988, Ollie and Anne handed the business reins to their son, Dennis and his wife Jill (Violette). They retired in 2021, and in late 2023, the business was purchased by Croydon residents Amie and Callie Freak. They plan to honor its legacy and **Kathan Gardens** has continued to grow. The new owners opened a lovely coffee shop/cafe called **Henry's Garden Cafe**, in what was formerly the Kathan family home. The cafe offers coffee, baked goods, sandwiches, soft drinks and ice cream. The nursery features a spacious, well-stocked gift shop. Similar to the Kathans, the Freaks also offer

extensive landscaping services. It seems Newport will continue to be a BEAUTIFUL town, thanks to Kathan Gardens.

Nettleton House Museum

Check our website and calendar for Museum Open Hours, Meeting Information, Appointments, Research and Tours.

The Newport Historical Society

NHS Board Members:

Dean Stetson, Paula Johnson, Pam Lafountain, Mike Loftus, Lionel Hebert, Ann Stout, Tom Nulty, April Anderson, Donna Menard, Laura Kessler, Lee Branch

Membership and Public are invited to Business Meetings held on the 2nd Monday of the Month.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Newport Historical Society is to bring together those people interested in the history of Newport New Hampshire and Sullivan County New Hampshire. This mission includes: collecting, preserving and displaying objects of historical significance; providing educational programs; supporting historical research; fostering public interest; supporting the Society and the Newport Historical Society Museum.

Priscilla

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Pris Demonstrates a Yoke at Unity Farm Day 2024

In addition to the newsletter, Pris's duties have included being a member of the Board since around 2013; preposing, then running a Publicity/Advertising/Programs committee; a monthly docent volunteer along with her husband Jerry on Sundays at the NHS Museum, selling Historical Society items at the Farmers Markets, Board Secretary in the early 2020s, and even hosting some of the monthly Board meetings at her home. If you have gotten a thank you note from the Newport Historical Society in the past few years, most likely it was the words of Priscilla Hagebusch. Pris also was a docent at the recent Corbin Mansion tours. However, what most of us on the Board will remember about Pris is her contagious laugh, her unwavering passion for local history, and her absolutely delicious snacks that she provided at all of our meetings. Pris mentioned in her resignation letter that she believes she made about 165 plates

of goodies throughout the years!!!!

Speaking of her goodies, Pris doesn't just make goodies for meetings. At our Society presentations, she would "cook" up some "themed treats." My favorite being for the Parlin Field presentation, airplane cookies surrounded by meringue clouds landing on a lighted runway. She also researched old cookbooks looking for recipes of the time period for the Sarah Hale presentation.

When she is not volunteering at the Historical Society, Pris is also active at the Newport Thrift Store/Newport Service Organization, Richards' Library and the Library Arts Center. I am pretty sure she has the record for making the most pies for the Apple Pie Crafts Fair, over 20!



Parlin Field Presentation Themed Goodies



Pris in the Kitchen of The Corbin Mansion

No article about Priscilla would be complete without mentioning her husband Jerry who himself has been very active on the Newport Historical Society Board serving as Vice President and helping with many of the financial issues; a job he also helps out with in other local organizations. Jerry, though more soft-spoken than Pris, always offered his expertise and advice on a number of issues.

What will this "active" lady do with all her free time now? I was thrilled to see her at a recent Library Arts Center class on rug hooking, where Pris was trying out a "new creative arts activity." So, although she is no longer a member of our Board, I do hope we will all still be able to hear that "bubbly, roaring laugh" at town events. She is, and I hope always will be, a

friend to cherish.



Bob Dombrowski, Newport resident and member of the NHS recently

"Mothers Helper"
Honoring Dorothy "Dottie" Collins (Age 100 this October 10, 2025)
Contributions by Bob Dombrowski, Dottie, Maura and Dean Stetson

contacted us at the Museum with an artifact and wonderful story about long-time neighbor who happens to be turning 100 this year.

The item Bob donated to the Museum is a very unique folding ladder/ironing board that belonged to Dottie's Mother- Goldina Hurlbut.

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“Mothers Helper”

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“My mother lived in a house at 90 South Main Street. There was an apartment adjacent to it. The ironing board was kept in the cellar. I remember being married and living on Bradford Road and Mother used it.” Dottie never recalled using the ironing board when she was young. All her ironing was done upstairs, not in the cellar. When asked what she used for an ironing board, Dottie stated a ‘modern one’ and an electric iron. Dottie had only suspicions where the ladder/ironing board came from; she

said it must have “come down from her Grand Cole”. She did not believe it was bought at the store; but she couldn’t think of who would have made it.

Bob bought the ladder/ironing board when Dottie Collins’ mother Goldina died. Goldina had lived, as



Dottie said, on South Main Street. When asked if it was manufactured or handmade; Mr. Dombrowski said he believed it was handmade. He commented that it had to be about 150 years old or more at this time. One of the indicators of its age are its old nails; they have square heads; not round. In examining the wooden ladder, it was questioned if it was machined, everything was so uniform. Bob pointed out different imperfections that needed to be fixed due to its age and use. With the details of the craftsmanship seen in this item, it definitely was not mass produced. Mr. Dombrowski said he’d like to see it go to the historical society in honor and recognition of Goldina and Dottie’s legacy to our community of Newport.



Thank You David Lantz for Sponsoring the October 2025 printed edition of *The Mill Town Messenger*
 Read more about the legacy of M.J. Harrington & Co. and the Lantz family and their contributions to the community of Newport now for over 77 years. The article is in the October 2021 edition of the Mill Town Messenger found on the Newport, NH Historical Society website.

Just for Fun: While you are there, find out more about our newsletter sponsor and see how much you know about the history of the M.J. Harrington & Co.



Membership and Donations:

www.newportnhhistory.org



The Newport Historical Society welcomes you to be a member.

Your membership empowers the organization through participant numbers.

It gives clear feedback to the shared interest in our mission.

Donations and Contributions give the NHS the ability to serve our community better.

Your support enables the NHS to continue to collect, catalogue and make available the artifacts that exhibit our local culture and community. *The NHS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.*