



## *In this issue of the Mill Town Messenger*



*We would like to recognize Arnold and Ann for their contributions to our community of Newport that will continue for many years to come.*



With each passing car we hear the clapping of the floorboards and the occasional honk of the horn that celebrates the love we share for our Corbin Covered Bridge.

### *Our Agrarian Society Holds True.*

#### *As we emerge...*

...from the short days of Winter, we look forward to longer and more bountiful days ahead.

These are the days that we look at our seed catalogues and consider... our next bout with Mother Nature in the garden this year.



**WATCH US GROW!**

#### *It is also a time...*

...that we are asking you to plant some seeds and watch our Historical Society grow.

The special insert in this issue of the *The Mill Town Messenger* highlights our Membership and fundraising campaign this Spring and asks for your participation as members, donors and sponsors to help seed our mission .

### *At our Website:*

Fun in the Snow for the Whole Family - The Toboggan Chute  
Story by Pamela LaFountain



Plus a slideshow of Newport's first Toboggan Chute

Click Here:

[www.newportnhhistory.org](http://www.newportnhhistory.org)

## A Tribute to a Friend: Remembering Ann Stout

A True Newport "Treasure"

by Pamela LaFountain

The news of the passing of Ann St. Martin Stout hit me like a lightning bolt; like one of those times when you ask the person who just uttered those words to repeat them. You couldn't possibly have heard correctly. Although I have known Ann most of my life, it was only the past few years when our passions for two Newport organizations, the Newport Historical Society and the Library Arts Center had drawn us together into a renewed friendship.



Ann Zora St. Martin was born on March 5, 1958 to Zora and Alfred St. Martin. She joined an older brother Michael and later the family grew with the birth of twins Andy and Thomas, and sister Lisa. The family learned early the importance of their Greek roots and were extremely proud of the accomplishments of those early immigrants. An active parishioner of St. Patrick's Catholic Church,



Ann's faith-driven actions led to her life's foremost accomplishments centered around family and friends, education and the arts, as well as a passion for writing.

Ann attended Newport schools and graduated from Newport High School in 1975, one year early. According to the school yearbook, Ann participated in track and field, school musicals and was a member of the National Honor Society. She was crowned Winter Carnival Queen in 1975. It was also

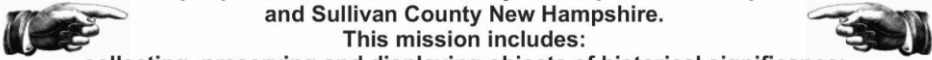
in high school where she met her future husband, Greg Stout. The two were married in the fall of 1976 and began raising a family.

Ann and Greg had seven children and six grandchildren, most of whom she homeschooled for over 15 years. Her passion for learning, especially topics like art, literature, and cultural history made her a natural teacher. It was during this time that she co-founded Mount Royal Academy in 1993. While raising her family, Ann began writing. She wrote columns in the *Argus Champion* and *Eagle Times* and contributed articles to the *Newport Times*, the *Intertown Record*, and the *SooNipi Magazine*.



Ann wrote and published two books, *An Alphabet Book of the Sunshine Town*, and a history of the stained-glass windows of St. Patrick's Church in Newport, NH. She also wrote articles for the Newport Historical Society newsletter, and blogs for the society's website along with serving on the organization's Board of Directors.

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**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.**

***The collective interest of a community keeps the community strong.***

By Dean Stetson

In this way, YOUR participation through membership in the Newport Historical Society gives us the ability to continue serving OUR community. Numbers are powerful and have meaning.

In a volunteer-based, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization like the Newport Historical Society your support helps maintain the Nettleton House Museum and its archived items. Your membership in numbers helps to validate our work. Your financial support fuels our passion to serve the community and allow us to continue the mission of the NHS.



The Board of Trustees at the NHS are focused on access to our collections and offering the benefits of our cultural heritage to our community.



***There are many ways to contribute to the NHS.***

The NHS is proud of our updated website and the opportunities to provide increased access. Through the efforts of the team, we are now able to offer an on-line payment option.

We would like to thank those individuals and businesses that recognize the importance of the mission of the NHS and contribute through grant funding support, donations and membership.

We encourage you to become part of the Newport Historical Society Membership today!

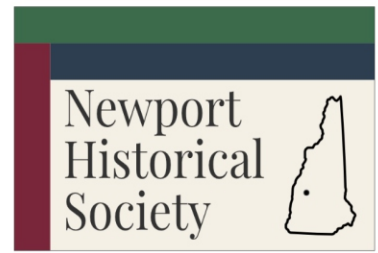
***Our new website went live in 2025! Visit us at: [newportnhhistory.org](http://newportnhhistory.org)***

- Gift shop items now shown on the website*
- Online membership signup*
- Secure Online Donation*
- Monthly blog posts sent to the subscriber list*
- Quarterly Mill Town Messenger newsletters mailed to members*
- Updated IT support*
- Additional Laptop for Museum Research*
- Regular social media posts*
- Museum Archive software Upgraded*
- Security and fire protection in the museum was upgraded*
- Education programs at Richards Free Library and Summercrest Senior Living.*
- Tours of the Corbin Mansion*
- Magical History Tours*
- Booth at the Newport Apple Pie Crafts Fair*
- Replace handicap ramp from parking lot*
- Participate in Newport's 250th Anniversary celebrations for the USA.*
- In Process: Upgrade PastPerfect museum software to web edition*
- Future goal: Link the PastPerfect collections to our website for online viewing*
- Future goal: Repair the museum's parking lot surface*

With your generous support, in 2025 we were able to achieve many of the items. Also included are goals for the coming year.

# Newport Historical Society

## Membership Invitation – 2026



### Look Back to History, Look Forward with Your Membership

As we begin a new year, we invite you to join or renew your membership in the Newport Historical Society. Your support preserves Newport’s rich history and keeps our museum, exhibits, and programs thriving for generations to come.

#### Membership Levels

- Individual – \$15
- Family – \$25
- Supporter – \$50 (family)
- Patron – \$100 (family)

*Membership starts at \$15, but many members choose to give \$50 or \$100 to help sustain Newport’s history.*

**Note:** We continue to honor existing Lifetime Members. This category has been discontinued for new memberships.

#### Member Benefits

- Receive our *Mill Town Messenger* newsletter (mailed or online).
- Invitations to NHS events and programs.
- Recognition as part of our community of history stewards.

#### How to Join

- **By Mail:** Return the form below with your check payable to *Newport Historical Society*, P.O. Box 413, Newport, NH 03773.
- **Online:** Donate securely via PayPal on our Membership Page at <https://newportnhhistory.org/membership/>. You can also scan the QR code to the right.
- Every contribution—large or small—makes you part of our mission to preserve and share Newport’s story.



**Thank you for your continued support. Together we look forward to preserving and sharing the history that has helped make Newport what it is today.**

<p><b>Newport Historical Society, 2026 Membership form</b></p> <p>Date: _____ New Membership [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] or Renewal [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]</p> <p>Name(s): _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p>Payment Method: Cash [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Check [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]</p> <p>Total Enclosed: \$ _____</p> <p>Mail to: Newport Historical Society, P.O. Box 413, Newport, NH 03773</p>	<p><b>Membership Levels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual - \$15</li> <li>• Family - \$25</li> <li>• Supporter - \$50 (family)</li> <li>• Patron - \$100 (family)</li> </ul> <p><i>Membership starts at \$15, but many members choose to give \$50 or \$100 to help sustain Newport's history.</i></p> <p><b>Note:</b> We continue to honor existing Lifetime Members. This category has been discontinued for new memberships.</p>
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Remembering Ann Stout  
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Ann was also a photographer for the local newspapers.



In the past few years Ann also co-wrote the script for Newport Magical History Tour. Also, the



Newport Chronicle "When the News Was in Print" and helped organize the Open House at the Historical Society in 2024

She periodically put pieces of her art and photography in gallery shows at the Library Arts Center in Newport. Like many things Ann did, she got fully involved in the Arts Center serving as a gallery attendant, on the Board of Directors, and she taught letterpress classes. Her new found passion for letterpress came about when she acquired materials from the Barrett Press, a long-time printing company in Newport that was liquidating their equipment. This equipment she donated to the Library Arts Center. She went on to purchase a letterpress for her home and became a member of the Amalgamated Printing Association.

For me, I guess I could say, if it wasn't for Ann, this article would not have been written by me. While serving as docents at the Newport Historical Society a few years ago, Ann introduced me to the Richards' Library Digital Archives, and I have been researching and writing ever since.

There have been many women in Newport's history who have left a lasting legacy on the culture and history of the town, and I would put Ann St. Martin Stout in the company of those women. She was determined to make the community a place we could all be proud of. Through her deeds, actions, opinions and openness, Ann will forever be a Newport "Treasure."



Font used in this article is Times New Roman Ann's Favorite.

Please visit our website and read Ann's article from the October 1994 issue of the Sooniipi Magazine. **Peace and History in a Covered Bridge**



Keeps us informed of the Good News of our community. It has been around for many years and in



Bethany Rexford has joined the staff of the Rec Dept. as Secretary following the retirement of Lorraine St. Cyr. Beth is a newcomer to our community, moving from Whitefield, NH with her husband, Jeff, and 4 year old daughter, Jessica.

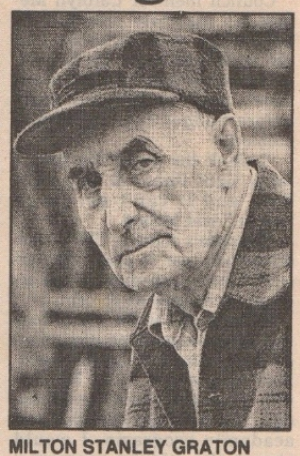
a couple of different forms. The first publication of the "Town Times" was in November of 1992. The newsletter has always tried to supplement community activities and people with municipal affairs – especially before the



tax bills came out. Newport's history is not only about people and events that have happened in the distant past. History in many cases may be viewed in a more recent scope of time as well. One of the joys of researching the archives of the NHS are the "characters" we run across.

We are making history every day but often you do not see the effect we have on the community and each other until you look back. In a 1994 previous edition "The Newport Times" the 6-page newsletter to the residents of Newport welcomed "Newcomer" Bethany to the Newport Recreation Center. Now some 32 years later, history has shown the results of Beth sharing her gifts to generations of Newporters.

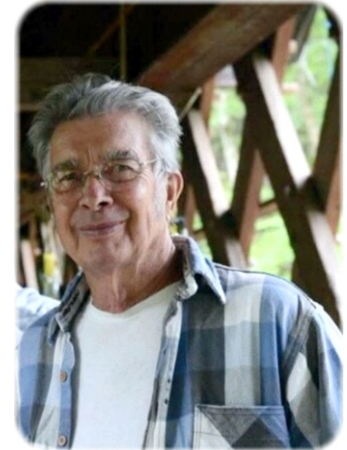
***The Last of the Covered Bridge Builders*** is a book written by Milton S. Graton



MILTON STANLEY GRATON

on the science and art of bridge building. The family name of Graton is well known in Newport. And should you have an interest in the learning more about the restoration work done by generations of this family there is no lack of publications and various media presentations about them.

There is no way we could commit enough space in this newsletter to describe their business, how they went about their work, done by generations that last for generations. Graton and Associates and the town of



Newport had a very special challenge – and relationship with the reconstruction of the *Corbin Covered Bridge* as well as *The Eagle Block* .

***For further information about Arnold and Milton Graton and their work,*** a good place to start would be this article found online at the “Bridgehunter’s Chronicles” as part of NH’s Cove Bridge Series Part VII: Honoring ArnoldGraton.

<https://bridgehunterschronicles.wordpress.com/2023/06/27/nhcovered-bridge-series-part-vii-honoring-arnold-graton/>

Newport’s well chronicled tale of its own “Phoenix rising from the ashes” was spearheaded by a few, debated by many and became a success through the creative efforts and sweat-equity of so many in our community. Today, some 32 years later, countless numbers of folks from all over the world have stopped for a few moments to gaze at the scenic beauty of our New England Landscape and the serene river setting is joined on either side of the river with the graceful wooden structure. All leave with a warm reminiscent feeling no other place invokes.



This is the gift Arnold and all those who contributed to the rebuilding of the Corbin Covered Bridge have left for us and our children.

See Arnold’s official obituary reprinted from the Dupuis Funeral Home.

[www.dupuisfuneralhome.com/obituary/ARNOLD-GRATON](http://www.dupuisfuneralhome.com/obituary/ARNOLD-GRATON)

There is no way we could commit enough space in this newsletter to recognize Arnold’s work and the efforts made by so many still in our community.



(bk l-r) Tommy Estabrook, Katy Callum, Madeline Schissel, Ethan Black, Jeff Anderson, Agnes and (frnt) Sophie Schissel, Charles Estabrook, Chris Anderson Margot Estabrook photo

## Fun in the Snow for the Whole Family - The Toboggan Chute

by Pamela LaFountain

Growing up in Claremont, NH on Green Mountain, I can remember those winters when my parents would load me onto the family toboggan and my dad would pull me up the hill. Then the three of us would pile onto the sled, my dad first, then me, and my mother in the back and down the hill we would go. The rudimentary steering would often allow us to make a few small turns, but generally our path would take us straight down the hill, rolling over to one side to stop ourselves before heading onto the road. We would be joined by friends and neighbors and those toboggan parties became a real source of simple enjoyment. Some brave souls would even toboggan down the road, a hill with a slight turn at the end. The fun ended when one winter, while tobogganing, my father's toboggan rolled over, catching his knee underneath the sled, an injury which bothered him for years.

So, I can clearly understand when the Newport Outing Club, responsible for organizing the first few winter carnivals, decided to build a toboggan chute, making this popular family sport a little bit safer.

Toboggans, for those of you who might not know about this fun, yet sometimes dangerous sport, is a long sled of wood with a curve up in the front. It looks like a giant candy cane from the side. The first to use toboggans were most likely Native Americans as the origin of the word *toboggan* is the Abnaki word *dabôgan*, meaning sled. Ironically, the toboggan became a popular vehicle for bringing injured skiers down a mountain safely.



The first mention in the newspaper archives of a toboggan chute was in the winter of 1916 as preparations for the 2nd Newport Carnival were being formulated. George A. Wilmarth and six other men with four horses were building the chute, which they predicted would be finished that first week of December. That first chute would be on the farm of Jesse Barton, east of the highway, about a mile north of the center of town; later this area would be called Wilmarth Park. For a more recent association, it was located on the western side of the Pinnacle (mountain), on Sichel land, north of the high school, but south of Cary Street. A sugar house located near the chute

would be converted into a warming shack. According to the builders, toboggans "could reach several miles per minute," faster than "a motorcycle passing a Kansas cyclone."

This first chute was carved into the ground, with a straight path, almost ½ mile long. Onlookers gauged that the toboggans could reach a speed of 60-74 miles per minute, and was believed to be the longest and fastest in New England. Newporters bragged that it rivaled the toboggan chute of St. Moritz, Switzerland. A starter, Alfred Clark monitored the traffic on the chute, making sure only one sled was on the chute at one time. His son, Pleamon Clark served as the caretaker of the chute. This toboggan chute was used for the 1917 Winter Carnival, and organizers made sure there were extra toboggans available, so that everyone could try out the "slide of mirth" (mirth meaning "great joy, amusement & happiness). Electric incandescent lights and Japanese lanterns lit the toboggan chute, so that sledders could use the chute at night events.



### ***Here are the rules for the first toboggan chute:***

1. The toboggan chute must not be crossed, otherwise there is danger of serious accident.

2. Not more than 4 persons should coast on the same toboggan.

3. Hands and feet should be kept from projecting over the sleds of the toboggan to avoid injury.

4. Shout before you start and be sure the track is clear.

*It should be mentioned that although the toboggan chute was mainly associated with the Winter Carnival events, it most likely was open to Newporters at other times during the winter.*

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By 1919 the toboggan chute located on the Pinnacle was becoming too dangerous. Because it was carved out of the hillside, as snowy weather turned to colder weather, the frozen ground would become like a sheet of glass and many accidents occurred, most involving hands and fingers. Warmer weather would cause the chute to be too slow. It was decided a new wooden toboggan slide would be safer. Use of the Pinnacle slide would be confined to the bottom ½ of the slide.

The new wooden toboggan chute was located on the Cutting Farm, now owned by Billy B. Van. Its first use would be for the 1919 Winter Carnival. The chute would be erected "reaching back some 50 feet from the brow of the hill and ending in a spacious starting platform." The track would be kept iced and would provide the riders with "a hair-raising" experience. Of course, safety was also a major concern. Bumpers would be erected to keep "the heavy weights" from sliding into the river. The whole chute would be brightly lit by 1922 with electric lights provided by the Newport Electric Co. The chute would cost about \$500 and the committee overseeing its construction and operation would be George L. Edes, Cleon L. Johnson, and Robert E. Gould. The Van Meadows chute would be constructed yearly from 1919 to 1924.



By 1921 the Outing Club had accrued a debt of \$700 and it was suggested that the toboggan chute be sold. However, instead volunteers from the Club chose to have a "Raising Bee" to rebuild the structure, a money-saving endeavor. Another cost-cutting action occurred in 1922, when Billy Van built a new shed on his property. The starting platform began on the top of the building. This platform could remain throughout the year without having to be reconstructed yearly.

Then in 1924 when Van needed to build a new house on his property for his farm superintendent (some accounts say it was a hen house), it became necessary to find a new location for the toboggan chute. The place chosen was the Playground on Meadow Road (across from the LaValley Family Community Center today) It would be built on the northwest corner of the land. The location closer to town made it easier for kids to use the chute.

But tobogganing was on its way out, as children chose to maneuver their own sleds and the tobogganing chute was abandoned. Families went back to the "old way" of tobogganing, using the natural hills in town like the one below the Moose Lodge.

