

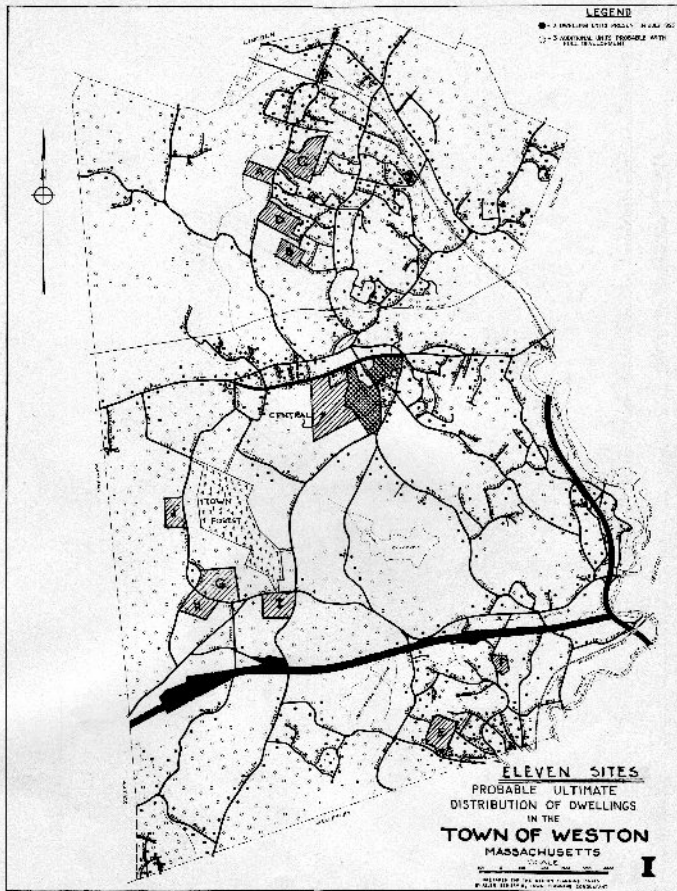
WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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What Weston Avoided



Map from "Off to School, But Where?" the 1956 Report of the Special School Site Committee recommending that Weston build new elementary schools on the north and south side of town. The map shows potential sites. Voters rejected the plan to decentralize elementary schools.

Table of Contents

What Weston Avoided: A Political History of Weston
from the Post-World War II Years to the Late 1990s
by Deborah Ecker

Part One: Decentralized Schools.	3
Part Two: A Sewer System.	9
Part Three: Limitations of Proposition 2 1/2	22



Weston 300: A Year to Remember, *by Pamela W. Fox*

The Year in Review.	25
Weston Legacy Trail	35
J. Ward Carter Civic Award Recipients.	40

The Weston 300 logo was created by Dusty Rhodes and her staff at Conventures. See page 25 for a review of Weston's tercentennial year.

What Weston Avoided

A Political History of Weston from the Post-World-War II Years to the Late 1990s *by Deborah Ecker*

Author's note: I presume to write about this period because our family lived in Weston for 47 years, 1957 to 1998, and I participated in several of the events described. My strong interest in local governments in general explains my interest in issues beyond those in which I played a role. During the 1980s, oral histories were recorded of residents who grew up in Weston during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At that time I hoped those conducting the histories would also capture the recollections of residents who had been active in policy decisions that established the town's direction during the post-World War II years. These articles are an attempt to make up for the loss of those participants' accounts, to the extent that town records permit.

Currently there is a consensus among Weston residents of a high level of satisfaction with the town. They appreciate the extensive conservation holdings, high-ranking schools, strong property values, open Town Meetings, and Weston's reputation for good government. Most property owners chose this town instead of other Boston suburbs because of these assets, even when it meant paying a premium in housing prices. The following three articles record what I consider to

have been the important choices citizens made during the years following World War II, when Weston transitioned from rural community to suburb. While this could well be chronicled through a narrative about many good policy decisions, it struck me as I reviewed Weston Historical Society documents and annual Town Reports that in many instances, when Town Meeting members were presented with choices, they managed to avoid ones that could have led to very different consequences.

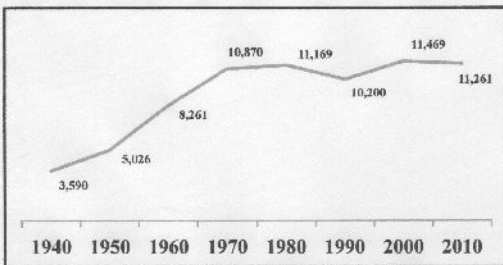
This series of articles addresses three major choices that Town Meeting rejected:

1. Decentralized schools
2. A sewer connection with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC)
3. Proposition 2 1/2 restrictions

What Weston Avoided: Part One Decentralized Schools

by Deborah Ecker

Author's note: In 1956, Town Meeting was asked to vote on whether new schools should be located in three different areas of town or one central location. In my opinion, this vote established the character of Weston as we know it today. This Town Meeting took place the year before our family moved to town. This account is based on the 1956 Town Report and official documents. The decision to have a centralized school system meant that residents would have a sense of Weston as one unified town rather than a coalition of south, central, and north side neighborhoods. Parents driving their children to after-school play times, school events, and PTA meetings would meet and get to know each other wherever they lived throughout the town. This would not have happened if the town had been divided into three separate elementary schools. Townwide friendships are important because they bring a unity of interest to Town Meetings. There are differences of opinion, but voters are not biased by their geographical location.



U.S. census data shows a steep increase in the population of Weston between 1940 and 1970, followed by almost no growth after 1970.

Background

In 1952, the Weston School Committee predicted that three additional elementary schools would be needed to accommodate future growth in the school population and tentatively decided they should be located in three different areas of town. Informal options were obtained for the “Jennings land” north of Glen Road, owned by the town, and on a site of about ten acres lying west of Merriam Street near Aberdeen Road, owned by Weston College. The first of the new elementary schools, Country, was built in the center and opened in February 1955. At that time, the Brook School complex was also an elementary school.

In a report of 1955, School Superintendent Dr. Calvin E. Gross addressed objections already being expressed about decentralization:

I have come to the conclusion that the argument that decentralized schools would detract from the wholeness of the Town is a myth. There is a limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain active acquaintanceship. An unceasing and ever-larger parade to the center of Town for social and recreational activities could result in the deterioration of the relationships which we cherish and seek to preserve. . . . I think it is only natural that neighborhood loyalties and ties would contribute to and strengthen a larger cohesiveness within the Town. . . . Decisions taken now will affect the whole future of Weston.

Recommendation to Decentralize Schools

At a Special Town Meeting on May 14, 1956, the school committee requested authorization to prepare plans for constructing, equipping, and furnishing three new schools, to be located in the center, south, and north sides of Weston. Town Meeting voted to create a special school site committee of seven citizens “to study and investigate the whole matter of sites for new public school buildings including the problem of centralization or decentralization of the schools.” Committee members were J. Robert Ayers, chairman, Arra Avakian, Ruth Glover, Rudolph Helgeson Jr, Robert Hutchinson, Marie Sullivan, and Eugene Hanson.

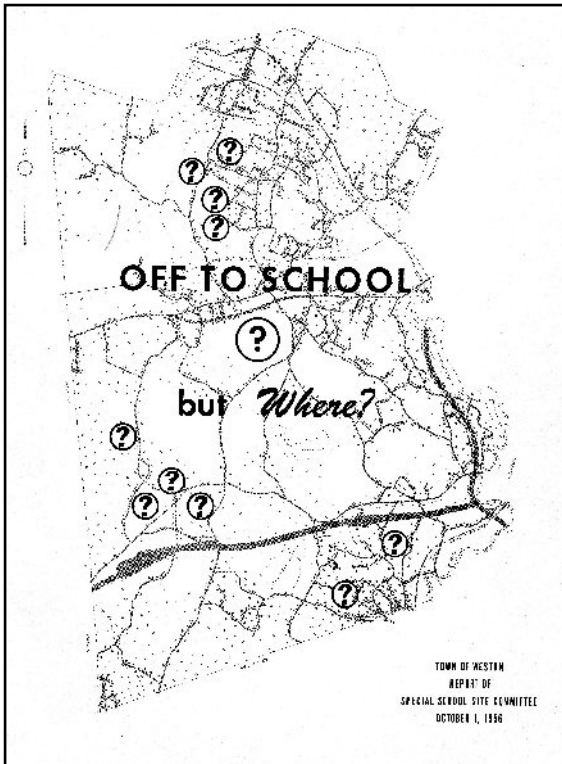
The special site committee conferred with school and town officials and retained Donaldson Ray McMullin of Weston as a coordinating consultant to review cost estimates and potential sites. They examined 11 different locations and narrowed the choice to three: 1) 27 acres east of Merriam Street and north of Fox Chase Lane; 2) 25 acres of Jennings land north of Glen Road at the end of Gail Road; and 3) 15 acres at the corner of Pine and Highland Streets. If the centralized school option were to be chosen, they recommended the schools be located on a parcel of 25 acres then owned by the town and slated for future cemetery development, combined with about 52 acres of Harvard University’s Arnold Arboretum land just west of the new Country School.

The report “Off to School but *Where?*” issued October 1, 1956, recommended acquiring the Merriam Street and Pine Street parcels and proceeding immediately with plans for a Merriam Street school serving the north side. One committee member, Eugene Hanson, expressed a minority view against decentralization. A Special Town Meeting was called for November 19th.

Town officials must have considered the vote for decentralization to be “in the bag.” Besides the land-takings having the support of the school committee and special site committee, the planning board weighed in prior to Town Meeting with a unanimous report endorsing the site committee recommendations.

The planning board report explained that, with the concurrence of the selectmen and school committee, it had arranged for a professional town-planning consultant, Allen Benjamin, to undertake a study of Weston’s future school needs and problems. Benjamin recommended decentralized schools based on existing zoning laws and his predictions for growth:

... it is estimated that there will be about 4100 to 4500 dwellings, or about 14,500 to 16,000 persons, in the town within 35-45 years. There will then be a Town considerably more than twice (240%) the number of dwellings and people than there were in 1955. Almost one-half (46%) of this total growth will occur within the next 10 years. [Editor’s note: In 2012, Weston had 11,608 residents and 3,632 houses]



A summary and restatement of Benjamin’s report, sent to each household before the Special Town Meeting, asserted that decentralized schools would accomplish the following:

- 1) better serve the educational needs of the town.
- 2) offer convenient centers for neighborhood non-school activities such as recreation.
- 3) reduce the volume of bus and other school-generated traffic.

Cover of the 1956 report sent townwide and including potential sites for new schools on the north and south sides.

- 4) “avoid possible termination of the Harvard Arboretum activity and the consequent sale and residential development of their residual land, which is considered likely if the most logical area for centralization is acquired (one-half of Harvard’s holdings.) The decentralized plan, on the other hand, will reduce the amount of private land available for development by about thirty acres, if the most favorable sites are acquired.”

Also supporting decentralization was the “Crackerbarrel,” an unofficial organization made up of citizens interested in town government. Crackerbarrel members discussed the upcoming motion at one of their Sunday evening meetings. Four members of the site committee attended as guests and presented their reasoning. Meeting minutes record the discussion:

There was little disagreement with the conclusions of the Site Committee majority report. Some points brought out in the discussion were as follows:
The taking of a third site at this time is very important because of the rapid increase in the price of land.

A hint of what might happen at Town Meeting is evidenced in the Crackerbarrel secretary's note: “There was a feeling among those present that there should be a more positive attitude about the advantages of decentralization.” This suggests more rumblings among dissenting residents than town records reveal, given that only one member of the seven-member Special School Site Committee had voted in opposition to decentralization.



Country School, designed by Hugh Stubbins & Associates, was the first of the new post-war elementary schools. The design won the prestigious J. Harleston Parker award for the most beautiful new building of the year in the Boston area. (Photo by Gottschleisner, Inc, 1955, courtesy of Library of Congress)

Town Meeting Rejects Recommendations

It took two Special Town Meetings to settle the issue. The first took place on November 19, 1956. The *Town Crier* described the night this way:

Both the Upper and Lower Town Halls were filled. Automobiles were parked all over the center of Town. A light on the desk of Moderator Francis G. Goodale kept flashing, as persons in the other room called for the microphone. Comments and arguments were brisk throughout. The issue was whether to have all Weston elementary schools on one big college-like campus, or spotted in various neighborhood localities elsewhere in Town.

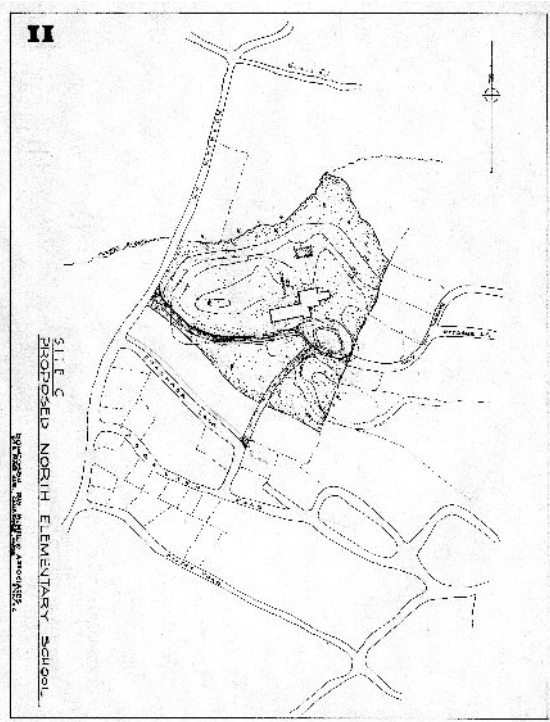
J. Robert Ayers, chairman of the Special School Site Committee, made a motion to adopt the policy of decentralizing the sites of its future elementary schools. After lengthy discussion, the Ayers motion was defeated by a standing vote of 399 against and 363 for decentralization, a margin of only 36 votes.

The meeting was adjourned until November 29. That night, an overflow crowd estimated at 1,400 filled the high school (now Field School) gymnasium and cafeteria. Eugene Hanson, the single member of the Special School Site Committee opposed to decentralization, made the motion "that the Town continue the policy of centralization of the sites of its elementary public schools." This time the vote was 807 in favor and 559 against, a comfortable margin of 248 votes against decentralization.

Town Meeting then unanimously voted to appropriate \$60,000 to enter into negotiations with Harvard University for the purchase of land on School Street just west of Country School, to proceed with the building of a new elementary school on that land, and to commence preliminary planning for a second elementary school on the same land. Woodland School opened in January 1960, and no additional elementary school buildings were needed.

The final vote on centralization vs. decentralization made the Boston newspapers, for example, the *Boston Herald* of November 30: "Weston citizens voted 807 to 559 last night to build a new elementary school in a central location. It was the biggest town meeting turnout in the town's history and marked the first time a secret ballot was used in the voting." In another news story, the unusual secret ballot was explained this way:

Mr. Goodale announced he was going to call for a secret ballot because of the heated controversy which had marked the issue. Pointing out this was the first time in his memory such a ballot had been held in a Weston town meeting, he said that since Nov 19 he had received a number of calls from town meeting members who expressed concern over a standing vote. Some of them, he said, told him they were fearful their votes might jeopardize their jobs.



Site plan from the 1956 report, showing the potential school site on Merriam Street north of Fox Chase Lane.

Why Did Decentralization Fail?

We can only speculate on what brought voters out and caused such a defeat of a proposal strongly recommended by the town's elected officials. John Glover, chairman of the planning board, was correct when he told Town Meeting attendees that their vote “amounted to a vote of no confidence in town committees.”

The “Off to School but *Where?*” report listed a number of objections to decentralized schools and attempted to address them. Regarding “sectionalism,” the committee noted that concerns about sectional rivalry “can be neither proved nor disproved,” but that modern educators felt such rivalries do not begin until junior high. Regarding “aesthetics,” the committee argued that neighborhood schools would not adversely affect property values of surrounding residences and that “many people are anxious to move to a neighborhood near a school.” Regarding curriculum, the committee argued that part-time school activities such as music, choir, and art would not be affected. The need for “parental chauffeuring” to schools in different locations would be offset by the fact that many children would be able to walk or bike to a nearby school. It appears that the committee was unable to allay these concerns.

*Author’s note: I doubt if the value I later perceived was voiced at the time: that centralization would result in parents getting to know each other, thereby creating a one-town attitude. Instead, my guess is that Weston’s newcomers wanted to make sure there would not be one school district that would have the reputation as the one in which to buy, while theirs would be the one to avoid. Evidence of this possibility came from realtors who advertised land and houses located near the border with Wellesley as being in a prestigious location. Whatever the reasons, the narrow avoidance of decentralization of Weston’s schools falls into my category of **What Weston Avoided** in becoming the attractive town it is today.*

What Weston Avoided: Part Two

A Sewer System

by Deborah Ecker

Author's note: We take it for granted, but think how it looks to a visitor driving west on Route 20, coming to a town with a totally different look. There are no commercial properties or signs lining the road, no apartment buildings, only low-rise, single family houses on tree-covered lots. It's the look that makes Weston the town we cherish. This visual character did not just happen. To manage growth after World War II, Weston changed its zoning bylaws and began purchasing conservation land. This article is about another way Weston retained low density—through avoidance of a central sewer system.

The Problem: Pollution in the Town Center

The first official notice about pollution in the Town Center was in 1931, when the Massachusetts Department of Public Health recommended to the Weston Board of Selectmen that an engineering investigation be made for a sewage system in the thickly settled parts of town.¹ The department cited wastes from the McManus ice cream plant. The request was repeated in a letter of 1934.

Not until the 1960s did the first of three successive sewer committees begin to try to correct the problem. By the time the controversy ended decades later, in 1990, it was the business community—not the town—that found a solution. This is a summary of those decades of studies and controversy.

The first solution, proposed by consultants in 1964, included a recommendation to dispose of the effluent under the Town Green. It is not surprising that this was overwhelmingly opposed.

First Sewer Committee Recommendation (1966)

In 1965 the Town Moderator appointed the first of three sewer committees, consisting of Chairman Wm. R. Dewey, Robert Long, Dr. David Reid, Edmund Walsh, and William White. The February 1966 report of the Special Sewage Study Committee, mailed townwide, begins by citing “the critical sewage situation already existing in the town center.” Because there was a waiting list for connection to the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) system through Waltham, the committee recommended a local collection system and treatment plant. The report states: “If connection with Metropolitan, either direct or through Waltham, had the same availability and cost, there is little doubt that the Committee would have recommended this course.”

The proposed treatment system would handle town offices, businesses in the town center, and school properties south of the by-pass. The challenge was finding an acceptable location for the wastewater discharged from the plant. The first proposed disposal area was located in the Jericho Town Forest just north of the railroad tracks at the end of Warren Avenue. This promptly met opposition, of which I was a part.

Dr. William Elliston was Chairman of the Conservation Commission. I was a Commission member and also on the board of the Weston League of Women Voters. I recall Dr. Elliston tipping me off about the undesirable use of the Town Forest, because contaminants could flow from the disposal site into the marsh contiguous with Cherry Brook. He was distressed that Ms. Alvah Boynton, who had donated the proposed site to the town, had granted permission to override restrictions she had imposed with her gift.²

The potential for contamination was serious because this part of the Town Forest was in the drainage area for the City of Cambridge water supply. In 1884 the Massachusetts State Legislature had authorized Cambridge to take water from Hobbs and Stony Brooks and their tributaries, with the result that a large part of Weston must be protected from pollution.

In looking back, it is puzzling that the sewer committee would even consider a Jericho site for a leaching field. Today this would not happen because the forest has been officially identified within the Stony Brook Reservoir Drainage Area. A later sewer committee report shows Cherry Brook only 1000 feet from the 1966 proposed disposal site. Even earlier sewer committee reports had statements that any disposal area had to be as far away as possible from tributaries to the Cambridge Water Supply.

Yet E.W. Ward, of Haley and Ward, Inc., the committee's consulting engineer, in his Report on Sewerage wrote "The lands presently owned by the Town known as Town Forests . . . offer an area suitably removed from direct discharge into streams leading to the Stony Brook watershed . . ." ³ The report continues "In our opinion an adequate and suitable area is available at this location for disposal of primary treatment plant effluent without direct discharge to any water course."

I arranged for League members to interview Mr. Ward. The following quote is from notes of that meeting:

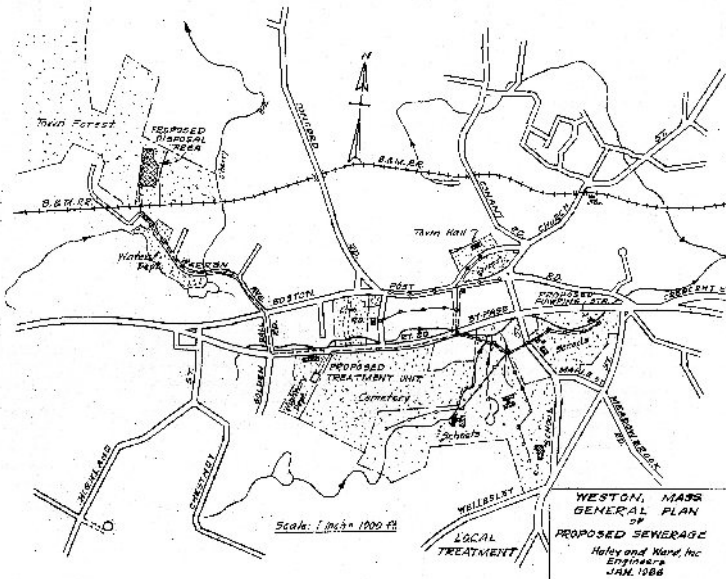
We commented that it seemed to us that . . . prospective donors of land to the town might be hesitant to do so in view of what happened to the town forest (if a sewage bed were installed). He said this would be to the town's advantage. If he were in a position to advise the town on this matter he would tell them to not take any land as a gift at all. It ties the town's hands. Then they have problems like this, they can't use it as they want to. Better to get it all developed, he said. He also added that the proposed site in the town forest is a "dump." "You can't stand there 10 minutes," he said, "without being eaten alive by the ants."⁴

I also arranged for an agent from the U.S. Soil Conservation Service office in Acton to check out the situation. Three League members, including myself, accompanied him on his field visit. My notes record that he could see why the esker would have been considered suitable, but in his opinion there was too much gravel. The site would allow too fast a run off for proper filtration, and there was no question that drainage would flow through the adjoining marsh into Cherry Brook. We walked other areas, and throughout our tour the agent dug borings.

The visit ended with the agent suggesting two alternative disposal sites: another Town Forest location closer to Gun Club Lane and a second site northwest of the abandoned Massachusetts Central Railroad tracks, between Coburn Road and what was then called "the dump." I followed up by inviting Board of Selectmen chairman, Bud Koester, to look at the alternative sites. My notes record that "Bud was not very interested in the Town Forest location [we] had come up with and when he stood in the woods at the dump area site he looked up and said 'My god. Phil Coburn lives up there. He'd have a fit.'"⁵

The Committee gave up on the Town Forest site because of what had become numerous objections: from the Town Forest Committee, from citizens at a public hearing; and from Ms. Boynton, who reversed her earlier approval to lift restrictions. The search continued for an acceptable site within the town for effluent disposal. One was a 38-acre site on Arnold Arboretum land, where effluent was proposed to be used in spray irrigation. The state Department of Health turned down that idea.

A town treatment system was still considered preferable because of the high cost of joining the MDC system. During the next few years, further studies were also made to find a lower cost route to the MDC treatment facility in Waltham.



The 1966 sewer committee report included this Haley and Ward plan for a sewage system serving the commercial center, town buildings, and schools, with a disposal area in Jericho Town Forest.

Connection to MDC System Approved at Town Meeting (1971)

In 1968, Regis College contacted the selectmen indicating the college's interest in cooperating on the issue of sewage disposal. This changed the financial calculations, because Regis gallonage alone was double the maximum that the committee had worked out for a local disposal plan. There was no possibility of finding an area within the town large enough to take both. With Regis College financial participation "it became clear that the solution to the Weston sewage problem was joining the MDC sewer system."⁶

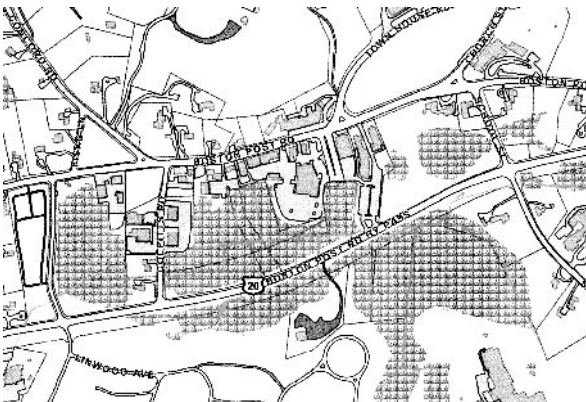
The sewer committee, now composed of Chairman Wm. R. Dewey Jr, Edmund Walsh, and William White, issued a report on February 24, 1971, with the following recommendation:

In view of the continuing need for sewerage facilities to serve the center of Town (including business properties, churches, public schools, and other public buildings and community buildings), the demonstrated desire of Regis College for extension of sewerage facilities to its property on Wellesley Street, and the probable future growth of requirements from these sources as well as new property development, the Sewer Committee recommends: THAT THE TOWN CONSTRUCT A SEWERAGE SYSTEM CONNECTED WITH THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT SEWER SYSTEM IN WALTHAM

The 1971 report cited favorable cost considerations from having one large customer and also suggests that the MDC connection would allow for additional housing options in Weston:

With the increased pressure for housing and suggested multiple housing units, it is hardly prudent to invest in a small local sewer system, however much it would be nice to retain the "goodies" in sewage effluent (nitrogen, phosphates and trace metals) for Weston Forest land benefits.

The MDC connection would be to the South Charles Relief Sewer of the MDC on Prospect Street in Waltham. The 1971 Town Meeting approved the town's becoming a member of the Metropolitan Sewerage District and approved all warrant articles required for implementation.



Complications arose. The federal government issued a ruling that there could be no more connections until the district's disposal system into Boston Harbor was upgraded.

The extensive wetlands south of Boston Post Road in the town center are shown here on the current GIS map.

New Sewer Committee Formed to Proceed with MDC Connection (1976)

By the mid-1970s, the ruling prohibiting new MDC connections had been lifted. A new sewer committee was appointed, with George Bates, chairman; Richard Albrecht; and Mary Sullivan. In an interview for this article, Bates noted “our mandate from the selectmen was to carry out the 1971 Town Meeting vote to connect to the MDC system.”

The next Report of the Sewer Committee, dated April 14, 1976, recommended that Weston connect to the Waltham system at the newly expanded facility near Bear Hill, a shorter and less expensive route. The report noted that 90% of the cost would be reimbursed by federal and state governments. Regis College would participate and share costs. The system would serve the town center, elementary schools, Regis, and the junior and senior high schools. The report noted extensive Board of Health tests in the center showing “serious pollution of the brooks flowing from both the north and south sides of the Boston Post Road.”

The 1976 May Town Meeting again approved connecting to the MDC, this time via the less expensive Bear Hill route.

Opposition Grows

Because state and federal guidelines for obtaining grants required that communities retain a professional consultant to develop the required data, the sewer committee hired the engineering firm Camp Dresser McKee (CDM). That summer, CDM sampled town ponds and watercourses and found that contamination problems were confined to the town center. The report evaluated existing disposal systems at the schools and concluded that some would experience problems in the next five to 15 years because of poor soil conditions. CDM evaluated various solutions including an in-town septic tank system to serve the commercial district, with effluent discharged through leaching chambers on land near the end of Golden Ball Road. A similar system would serve Brook School and also Field School when necessary.

The CDM analysis found that the two best alternatives, the MDC connection and the in-town system, were about equal in cost if federal aid were not considered. They pointed to advantages of an in-town system (local control over future fees, cost effectiveness) while also concluding that the MDC connection would provide a long-term solution for present and future sewage disposal needs.⁷

Although connection to the MDC system had twice been approved, at Town Meetings in 1971 and 1976, opposition was gaining strength. A letter from Douglas Henderson to Environmental Protection Agency administrator John McGlennon on December 21, 1976, begins as follows:

I am spokesperson for an unofficial group, comprising a significant number of citizens of the Town of Weston. This group came together to try to determine whether acceptable alternatives could be found to the town's wastewater disposal problem, other than joining the MDC sewer system. In October we gathered 637 signatures of Weston voters to a petition to place this problem before a special town meeting.⁸

According to Henderson, public meetings that November were well attended, with residents unanimously favoring the local solution: "No one spoke or wrote in favor of the MDC connection, and many expressed direct opposition to it."

The Fourth Sewer Committee Report (December 24, 1976)

A Special Town Meeting was scheduled for January 10, 1977. Prior to the meeting, the sewer committee issued another report with this statement of purpose:

Since almost six years have passed since the Town originally voted to connect with the MDC and since the subject of sewage has become so controversial, the Sewer Committee decided it would be best to open the whole subject for a new vote. Hopefully the Sewer Committee will receive clear instructions so it can proceed with its work or be discharged. This subject has been studied for 12 years at a total cost to the Town of \$120,000 to date. It is time for a decision.

The committee recommended proceeding with the MDC connection provided that capacity be reduced by decreasing pipe size from 12 to 8 inches. The purpose of this limitation was "to assure the Town that this system will not provide an excessive reserve capacity which might stimulate unwanted growth."⁹ The committee considered the MDC option more cost effective than a local system given the availability of substantial state and federal funds.

The report lists eight immediate consequences of doing nothing, including the concern that "several businesses in the Town Center could be closed because they are polluting the streams . . . since no private solution seems possible." Brook, Country, and Woodland Schools might not be able to extend the life of their systems. Brook School could not be converted to provide elderly housing. Also the town would lose the opportunity to construct a disposal system with up to 90% of the cost paid for by government.

Town Meeting Defeats the MDC Sewer Connection

In advance of the January Special Town Meeting, Douglas Henderson and Hugo Uytterhoeven issued an "Open Letter to the Residents of Weston on the Sewer Issue." The letter asserted: "the MDC sewer connection is likely to produce major development consequences in the years ahead. In the final analysis, it poses

Health officials say sewer is needed



Weston's commercial district is located between ledge outcrops on the north side of Boston Post Road and wetlands to the south, making the use of septic tanks and leaching field systems infeasible in most cases. (Weston Town Crier, November 6, 1990)

"You really don't want the retail center to smell like an outhouse," Ingeborg Uhlir said

PHOTO BY NICK RIZWICK

not a technical nor economic, but a political decision concerning land use and growth."¹⁰ The letter made a further powerful political statement:

Many Weston residents feel that the proposed MDC sewer connection with its enormous excess capacity will create unstoppable pressures toward unwanted development. It removes sewage disposal problems for marginal land. It permits more intensive construction by eliminating capacity constraints of subsurface disposal sites. It destroys our most powerful natural and legal defense, as well as justification, for low-density zoning. It creates, by raising land values, an irresistible economic incentive for more intensive development of Weston's remaining open land. Sewers and development go hand in hand . . . Those of us who wish to preserve and maintain Weston's current character feel that to defeat the MDC sewer connection is the surest and safest way to avoid its likely undesirable land use consequences.

The 1977 Special Town Meeting rescinded the 1976 vote for the MDC connection, voting instead for the in-town system described by CDM.¹¹ The final vote, subject to an amendment requiring that federal funding be obtained, was 689 in favor of a local system and 159 opposed.

Subsequently, sewer committee members Richard Albrecht and Mary Sullivan resigned and Susan Dumaine and Doug Henderson were appointed to fill the vacancies. George Bates remained as chairman.

Search for a Leaching Field Site

Later in 1977 it was determined that the proposed Golden Ball Road location for the leaching field was not suitable due to high ground water levels. The sewer committee asked CDM to evaluate alternate sites. The search continued without success until 1980, when a promising site was found on town-owned land on the east side of Merriam Street.

Detailed hydrogeological testing was performed on the Merriam Street site, with favorable results obtained in 1982. These results were submitted to the state to obtain approval of the site as a leaching field. The Clean Water Act required additional testing and review by the state. For several years the state continued to review the site and request additional information. It became increasingly unlikely that state officials would approve the site unless a treatment plant was added to the plan, since it was difficult if not impossible to prove conclusively that pollution from the site would not flow into the Cambridge watershed, particularly during periods of heavy rainfall and high water tables.¹²

In the meantime, business owners in the center looked for alternatives. Victor Pesek, a Weston resident and engineer, proposed updated holding tanks to replace the supermarket holding tank, which had been installed in 1966, and to replace cesspools and tanks on the north side of Boston Post Road. The tanks were replaced.

Showdown over Holding Tanks

The sewer committee consulted with town officials, property owners, and residents and, in 1986, recommended against construction of an in-town system as previously voted. The reasons included the difficulty of finding a suitable leaching field, the increased cost of adding a treatment plant, and the fact that the town was no longer eligible for federal and state aid. The sewer committee felt that, until such time as a sewage disposal system including a treatment plant might be built, the use of “properly constructed holding tanks when necessary should be an acceptable alternative.”¹³

Over the next two years, the Weston Board of Health, chaired by Henry Brown, became increasingly concerned about the use of holding tanks. In an effort to pressure the town to find a long-term solution, the board took the position that it would not approve any new or replacement holding tanks.

The *Weston Town Crier* covered the issue in a January 14, 1988, front page article headlined “Showdown coming on holding tanks?” Selectmen board chairman Richard Murray was reported as saying he had “not yet received any evidence indicating there is a sewage pollution problem at Town Center” and “It’s a sealed system. As long as it’s monitored and pumped out on a regular basis, it should be of no concern to the environment.”¹⁴ To which Brown countered: “When Dick

Agreement on Sewage Plant

Selectmen ask for funds to ease Center sewer ills



Selectmen say they support a request by Health Board Chairman Henry Brown for a Town Meeting appropriation to design a sewage treatment plant.

By Susan Campbell
After months of discussion, the Board of Selectmen and the Health Board are in agreement—a sewage treatment is needed to handle the Center's 2.2-year sewage disposal problem.

This cooperation came last week when selectmen agreed to ask Town Meeting to appropriate \$100,000, or some such sum, for the design of a sewage plant on Merrim Street or some place in town.

The change in events leaves unresolved the question of whether J. Bildner & Sons supermarket will reopen as scheduled March 29, several weeks before the May Town Meeting.

The health board says it will not approve a new holding tank serving Bildner's and other businesses until the appropriation is made. Some feel this does not leave out the possibility of using the holding tank until that time. Health Board Chairman Henry Brown will not comment.

"FEASIBLE & NECESSARY"

Selectmen Chairman Richard Murray said last week the board had not changed its position that there is no sewage problem in the Center.

Murray says the board has opposed building a treatment plant in the past because it was not feasible. "The Board of Health, however, feels that it is feasible and necessary now."

"This is a major issue for them. They feel it's their responsibility. I think we don't have a choice but to support them in this."

At a selectmen's meeting January 19 Murray, expressing the opinion of the board, said there is no sewage problem in Town Center and called a waste treatment plant "no solution."

"I'm not saying there isn't a problem," Murray said last week. "The problem isn't just as bad as it's said to be. There is a problem. Otherwise there wouldn't be the [Power Committee] study."

THE ELUSIVE ALTERNATIVE

For 13 years the Sewer Committee researched an alternative to holding tanks in the Center: primarily constructing a sewage treatment plant on Merrim Street. In 1986 the committee advised against a treatment plant there

because of its proximity to the Cambridge watershed.

Since then the 15,000 gallon waste disposal holding tank which now serves Bildner's and six other Center businesses has been deteriorated to be leaking. The tank was installed in 1966 as a temporary measure until the town hooked up with the then Metropolitan District Commission sewer system.

Meanwhile, Bildner's is scheduled to re-open March 29 following four months of interior renovations. The supermarket is said to generate nearly 90 percent of the sewage for the large tank.

Brown says it is left to Town

Meeting to decide which of the alternatives must be approved by the health board. "We'll have to see if we can operate with the existing tank until Town Meeting."

"The Board of Health will not issue a new tank permit until Town Meeting votes the appropriation," says Brown. "I'm confident the town will make the right decision."

In meeting with the selectmen, Brown said he also hopes to work with the Sewer Committee to come up with a more accurate figure to place on the warrant for the preliminary design plans. He estimates preliminary engineering designs will cost \$100,000.

Brown says he hopes to have the Sewer Committee's recommendation of where to build the plant. "It really falls in their jurisdiction, they have done a awful lot of work on this."

CASE ESTATES?

George Bates, who chairs the Sewer Committee, says he will not comment on the matter until he receives official notification of Brown's request.

While Brown says the health board is considering locating the plant on Merrim Street, he says the treatment plant design could be used for any land in town, in the event Merrim Street is found unsuitable, he says CDM's report is "very developable."

Murray says: "At the time of the Sewer Committee's recommendation in 1986, [the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering] said they did not have the expertise to guarantee whether a plant could be built on Merrim Street."

"I would hope now it's not as feasible as it appeared then."

"We still don't know whether the DEQ will approve [Merrim Street] or the Cambridge water board for that matter," says Selectman Jean Francoeur. She adds that the state probably will not make a determination until they see the design for what we propose to build there."

Brown says: "I think technology has advanced such that now we could have clear drinking water coming out of the plant. [Technology had] reached that point before."



Henry Brown: His sewer proposal gains ground.

Meeting to decide whether Bildner's can reopen. Last month the board notified a permit to open a new tank until the town took definite steps to solve the sewage issue.

But Murray says he is worried Bildner's may not be willing to take re-opening and move out. "What we do know is this town needs a supermarket every damn day."

BILDNER'S HOPEFUL

Sandy Tiscuity, Bildner's vice president and general manager, says Bildner's is still striving for a March 29 re-opening. "We're hopeful we'll be able to open at that time, and hope the issue is resolved by then."

He says Bildner's still must serve a number of permits before re-opening,

says there is no problem, he's looking for raw sewage to be flowing in the streets. . . ."¹⁵

The following week, land-owner David Bradley was reported as saying he was being held "hostage" by a Board of Health decision to deny a permit for a new temporary or replacement holding tank system for his Center Street property, which Bradley planned to remodel for J. Bildner's & Sons Supermarket.¹⁶

Smaller Sewage System Proposed and Defeated

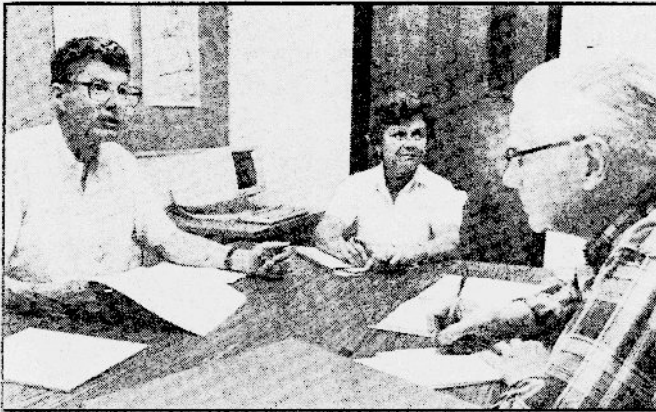
Because of concerns over holding tanks, the sewer committee, working with CDM, developed yet another proposal: a smaller sewage treatment plant for the town center only. Property owners expressed their support and willingness to pay the major portion of the cost. The sewer committee agreed to present this proposal at the 1989 May Town Meeting.¹⁷

The \$2.4 million cost would be apportioned amongst the properties served by the system, including the library (now Old Library), Josiah Smith Tavern, fire station, and Town Hall. The town

Weston Tab article of February 23, 1988 talks about the town plan to build a treatment plant. The "agreement" mentioned in the headline proved illusory. Top photo: selectmen Dick Murray, Jean Thurston, and Harold "Bus" Willis. Center: Henry Brown, chairman of the Weston Board of Health.

would pay 12% of the cost, with the remaining 88% paid by private property owners. The treatment plant was to be located on Merriam Street.

Before the proposal could go to Town Meeting, a ballot vote was needed to exempt the borrowing from the Proposition 2 1/2 limit. Almost 2,000 voters turned out for Weston's town election on Saturday, May 6. Question Three, to exempt borrowing necessary for a municipal sewer and sewage treatment facility, was voted down by a narrow margin of 965 against and 926 for, with 107 blanks. If the proposal had reached Town Meeting floor, a two-thirds majority would have been required to authorize the bond issue.¹⁸



Sewer committee members c. 1989. (l-r) George Bates, chairman; Susan Dumaine, and Douglas Henderson evaluate another plan for sewage disposal in the center (Photo by Chris Stanley, Weston Town Crier, September 1989.

The Sewer Committee will meet within the next few weeks to discuss the possibility of a new sewer proposal.

PHOTO BY CHRIS STANLEY

Business Owners Build Private Treatment System

After the 1989 sewer proposal was defeated, the Board of Health softened its policy on holding tanks, as reported in a June 1 article in the *Weston Town Crier*:

In a change from its past policy, the Board of Health said Tuesday evening that it would support placing holding tanks in the town center as a solution to the sewage disposal problem there. Until this point, the BOH has repeatedly said that it would not approve holding tanks as a solution. In particular the board has cited a June 1988 letter from the state Department of Environmental Quality Engineering [DEQE] that said that tanks are not a viable long-term solution to the problem.¹⁹

Board of Health chairman Henry Brown was quoted as saying: "I'm willing to get plans from all those (property owners) who want tight tanks in two months and submit them to the state for approval."

According to the article, Susan Dumaine asked the Board of Health to take a leadership role in asking DEQE to accept tanks. Doug Henderson pointed out

that the state DEQE cannot order the installation of a town center sewer without paying for it, under state law. Henderson called the holding tanks the “common sense solution” to the sewage problem.

Meanwhile, David Bradley installed an upgraded holding tank for his Center Street property that met Department of Environmental Quality’s approval, by the simple measure of the agency’s providing no response to his application.²⁰ Other businesses did the same. The long-disputed problem was on its way to being resolved.

In the end Weston’s sewer debate went beyond quiet closure to an “all’s well that ends well.”

- Several years later, when the state closed down the business community’s holding tanks, they joined together and installed a treatment system.
- In 1997, town center businesses replaced their first treatment system with the current solar aquatic greenhouse, a state-of-the-art zero-discharge system. Gravity sewers move soluble wastes to the greenhouse from all business properties on the south side of Boston Post Road between the Omni and #510. The wastes are processed through grinder pump stations and treatment tanks. Snails digest contaminants, and evaporation from effluent is utilized by plants in a greenhouse. The system handles 3,000 gallons per day and is fully approved by the Town’s Heath Agent.²¹

Once again, although it was not easy, Weston managed to solve a problem that could have resulted in undesirable consequences. As Hugo Uytterhoeven advised in the 1970s, sewers present “an irresistible economic incentive for more intensive development of Weston’s remaining open land. Sewers and development go hand in hand.”



In this photo of Weston’s solar aquatic greenhouse, David Draugelis, the licensed operator, is pictured in front of a banana tree that takes its nourishment from treated effluent. In the summer, the blending tanks are covered with primroses. (Photo by Pamela Fox)



Solar aquatics is a process that replicates nature's cleansing action, by which plants and microbes purify waste. Inside the 40' X 70' greenhouse, there are 16 gravity-fed tanks. The system is operated by the Ecological Engineering Group. (Photo from Water Environmental Resources Foundation website)

Postscript: Wastewater Treatment Projects at the Turn of the 21st Century

by Pamela W. Fox

In 1998, the Board of Selectmen, acting under authority of legislation obtained by Regis College, voted to make a Grant of Easement to Regis for installation of a sewer line on Wellesley Street and Sibley Road as part of a plan to meet the wastewater disposal needs of the college via a connection to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) sewer system in Waltham. Granting the easement revived fears of resulting dense development. The following comment is from the 1999 *Town Report*:

A number of residents subsequently raised questions regarding the Board's action in executing the Grant of Easement and the feasibility of on-site water disposal options available to Regis. . . . A group of residents placed an article by petition on the Warrant for the December Special Town Meeting seeking to deny ratification of the Selectmen's actions. Town Counsel expressed the opinion that the denial would have no effect. The Selectmen noted that there was not a basis to overturn the action of a prior Board, and by a narrow margin the petitioners' motion was defeated.²²

The Regis sewer connection was completed in 2001. The following year, two sections were added to the town by-laws (Article X: 3, 4) requiring a Town Meeting vote for any new sewer connection or enlargement of an existing connection.

At the May 1999 Town Meeting, voters appropriated funds for a new wastewater disposal system to serve the new Community Center, Field School, and Case House, as well as a separate system to serve Country and Woodland Schools.

Also in 1999, preliminary site identification for a new system to serve Town Hall was underway, with the objective of avoiding siting the system in the Town Green. In the end, no alternate location was found. The town chose a Bioclere

system with a small but not unobtrusive “mushroom” structure that resulted in less disturbance to the topography and vegetation of the Town Green.

Plans for the renovation of the Old Library and Josiah Smith Tavern are dependent on a solution to the septic issue. Testing has shown that Tavernside Playground west of the tavern is the only leaching field site for the JST. For certain uses, the front yard of the Old Library would work for that building; otherwise a joint system will be required.

The author thanks Pam Fox for her edits and Postscript, and George Bates and Hugo Uyterhoeven for their assistance with this article.

Endnotes

(1) Report of the Sewer Committee, April 14, 1976 p. 2: “A letter from the Mass. Department of Public Health to the Weston Board of Health dated December 12, 1934 discusses the pollution problems in the center of Weston and the situation has only become more critical in the intervening years. For those newcomers in Town who may feel we are rushing into this project, a quote from this letter may be of interest: ‘The problem of the disposal of wastes from the McManus ice cream plant is another illustration of the urgent need of a sewage system in the thickly settled parts of the Town of Weston, and in this connection the Department calls your attention to its recommendations contained in a communication to the Board of Selectmen of Weston under date of February 13, 1931, that an engineering investigation be made for a sewage system in the thickly settled parts of the town.’”; (2) Report of Sewer Committee, February 24, 1971, indicates that later Ms. Boynton withdrew her willingness to remove restrictions on the land she donated: “Subsequent to this action and appropriation of funds by the Town, legal difficulties in the use of the contemplated disposal area in the Town Forest arose, which ruled out this possibility; and additional more remotely situated areas, owned by the Town but without the restrictions of the original site, were investigated . . .”; (3) Report of Special Sewage Study Committee, February 23, 1966. (Haley and Ward report included within 1966 report.); (4) “Interview with Mr. Warren Ward of Haley & Ward, March 2, 1967,” on behalf of the Weston League of Women Voters, Local Affairs Committee, written by Deborah (Mrs. Hoyt) Ecker, p. 2 (WHS files); (5) Letter, Deborah Ecker to Harold Hestnes, Chair, Board of Selectmen, May 8, 1978, p.1 (WHS files); (6) Report of the Sewer Committee, Feb. 24, 1971, p. 9; (7) Report of the Sewer Committee, Dec. 24, 1976; (8) Douglas Henderson to John McGlennon, EPA, Dec 21, 1976 (WHS files); (9) Report of the Sewer Committee, Dec. 24, 1976, p.15; (10) “Open Letter to the Residents of Weston on the Sewer Issue on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee” by Douglas Henderson and Hugo Uyterhoeven, January 15, 1977, p. 1 (WHS files); (11) Ten years later, the September 1987 Board of Health meeting minutes recorded the vote against an MDC connection as having been made at “the unrepresentative Special Town Meeting in January 1977.”; (12) Report of the Sewer Committee, April 14, 1989, p. 3-4; (13) *Ibid* p. 4; (14) *Weston Town Crier*, January 14, 1988, front page report by Tom Whalen; (15) *Ibid*; (16) *Weston Town Crier*, January 21, 1988, front page report by Tom Whalen; (17) 1989 sewer committee report, *op.cit.*, p.4; (18) 1989 *Town Report*, p. 154-55; (19) *Weston Town Crier*, June 1, 1989, front page article by Amy Resnick; (20) Letter, Deborah Ecker to Douglas Henderson, June 16, 1990: “I called Dave Bradley yesterday. . . and learned that their lawyer advises them that under MA state law a request for approval which does not

get an answer is considered to be approved after x amount of time, and they are planning to proceed on that basis.” (21) Case Study: Weston Massachusetts Solar Aquatic System,” Water Environmental Research Foundation website; (22) 1999 *Town Report*, p. 28.

What Weston Avoided: Part Three The Limitations of Proposition 2 !

by Deborah Ecker

Author's note. The 1970s were a crunch time for local spending. The baby boom had put pressure to expand and spend on local schools. In the mid-1970s there was a recession in which Massachusetts industries were particularly hard hit. It was called, I believe, "the engineer's recession" because so many MIT-type professionals were laid off. Pre-Proposition 2 !, school committees did not have to go through town finance committees or selectmen in the preparation of their budgets. They had autonomous authority to present their budgets to Town Meetings. By 1979, in the western suburbs, the increase in school spending was continuing at the same fast clip as in the growth years even though the baby-boom enrollment had ended and there were declines in the numbers of pupils, with further drops being forecast. It really did seem, even to this pro-government spender, that it was time for spending to slow. By 1979 the high-tech surge was still in its early stages and had not produced the robust revenues from which the state later benefited. This benefit began soon thereafter, in the early 1980s, from the unearned portion of the state income tax (dividends, and interest), thus allowing the increases in local aid that followed the adoption of Proposition 2 !.

In the 1980 general election, when the choice was between presidential candidates Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, Massachusetts citizens voted for a referendum question called Proposition 2 ! . This restriction on increases in property taxes was promoted by Citizens for Limited Taxation (CLT), the equivalent of today's Tea Party. Barbara Anderson, at that time a colorful newcomer to Massachusetts, was CLT's effective spokesperson. The Proposition also had the backing of the Massachusetts High Tech Council. It was opposed by a wide range of other organizations and prominent politicians, yet it won by a comfortable margin and is now considered sacrosanct.

That Weston's handling of Prop 2 ! from the first year of its implementation is presented here as "What Weston Avoided" reflects the view that our town's spending should not be restricted by a state regulation. Weston's subsequent

strong financial support of its schools and of the acquisition of open space have been major contributors to high property values and an attractive community.

How Proposition 2 ! Works

There are two ways that Prop 2 ! works to limit increases in property taxes: first, by establishing a ceiling; and second, by limiting annual increases. The ceiling, which limits total property tax revenues to 2.5% of a municipality's total assessed valuations, does not apply to Weston because the town's residential property values are so high. The ratio between the amount to be raised and total property tax assessments has never been close to 2.5% percent, hovering between 1 and 1.5%.

The limitation that could be a challenge to Weston finances is the 2.5% limit on increases in annual expenditures. The original provisions required an override for any increase in annual expenditures greater than 2 ! percent, to be approved only at a biennial General Election, with the further requirement that 30% of eligible voters (not just those voting) must participate in the override vote.

Even before the November 1980 vote, tax experts recognized that the wording of the Proposition was seriously flawed; but once filed, it could not be corrected. This left it to the Legislature to forge amendments, and the law was changed in several ways. The key amendments affecting Weston were as follows:

- a) Authorization allowing two-thirds of the Board of Selectman to propose an override referendum question for any Town Meeting;
- b) Changing approval of an override question to a majority of those voting
- c) Addition of a "Growth Allowance" equal to per parcel increases in value greater than 50 percent over the previous year
- d) Addition of an override to exempt payments on municipal debt for capital expenditures.

Weston Finance Committee Plans for Passage

Members of the Weston Finance Committee at that time were Chairman Joseph S. Junkin, J. Harold Flannery, Arthur L. Goldstein, Halcott G. Grant, George E. Manning, Corinne S. Richardson, Mary M. Sullivan, William H. Wrean, and myself. I was on the staff of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. After the new law was adopted, I worked closely with Barbara Anderson, persuading her that "the way it is written it is like a tea kettle, it will simply steam over; that if you want it to survive you have to be open to changes." My insider connection gave the Finance Committee more time to plan for Weston's Fiscal Year 1983 budget. The steps committee members adopted that first year gave the town an advantage not only in 1983-84 but for many subsequent years.

The Weston Finance Committee's most innovative plan was not to present the referendum question to Weston voters until the election just prior to, and part of,

Town Meeting. In other towns, officials thought they had to know months in advance of their Town Meetings whether citizens would approve an override, in order to develop the appropriate budget. They scheduled their override referendums for January and February. Indeed, Weston's Executive Secretary and Accountant J. Ward Carter had many objections to the finance committee's plan, leading to the compromise that each agency would be required to submit three budget requests: one with a decrease in expenditures, one with no increase, and one with a 2.5% increase. The idea was that if voters rejected the override on Saturday, a scramble would allow a reduced budget to be put before voters at Monday night Town Meeting, or at a postponed date if necessary.

Weston's late timing on the referendum question held several advantages. Each member of the finance committee made a commitment to meet with three organizations to explain the reasons for the override. The May date meant that there was time for public meetings and more importantly, that there was time for the committee to consider agency requests and develop supportive arguments.

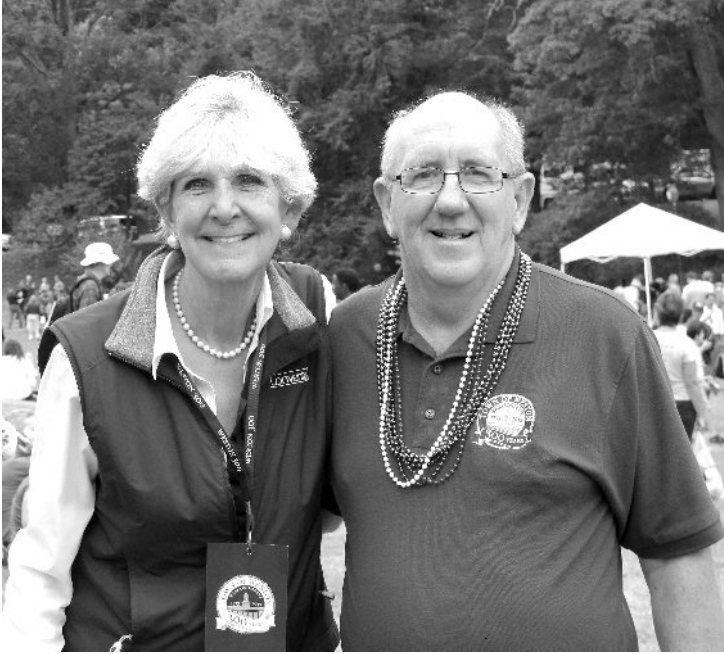
The Weston Finance Committee had another reason for moving promptly to support an override in that first fiscal year budget and again in subsequent years. By increasing the base year on which the 2.5% is calculated, there is a cumulative increase in allowable expenditures not subject to the override requirement. Only 25 of the state's 351 cities and towns sought overrides that first year.

Proposition 2 ! Overrides in Weston

Since FY1983 Weston has put 15 General Override questions to voters. All but one was approved. This record is in contrast with the state average, where out of close to 5000 General Override questions, only 55 percent were approved. Even compared to our neighboring towns of Lincoln, Wayland and Wellesley, Weston's approval record is matched only by Wayland. Wellesley lost more than half the questions put to voters, and Lincoln one-quarter. In addition to Weston's use of the General Override, each year it has put forward a referendum question to exempt costs of borrowing for capital outlay projects.

Since 1983 the cost-of-living index has been greater than 2.5% for all but five years. Without overrides the result would potentially have been a diminishment in the town's ability to support schools and other important programs and services. Why this would have been only a potential diminishment is that Weston, unlike many Massachusetts towns, could take advantage of the "Growth Allowance" provision. The town has consistently had above-average increases in its property valuations from new construction.

The extent to which Weston avoided the disruptive political discourse that accompanied Proposition 2! in other towns and achieved nearly unanimous support of its annual budgets, has allowed citizens to discuss and reach consensus on the other issues that face voters each year on the Town Warrant. It is a conciliatory citizenry that forms the critical base for a successful community.



Dusty Rhodes, Chair of the Weston 300 Committee, with committee member and Weston Recreation Department Director Doug MacDougall at the Founders Day Parade. (All photos in this article by Pamela W. Fox unless otherwise noted)

2013: A Year to Remember

by Pamela W. Fox

Author's Note: 2013 seemed a long way off when, in January 2011, the Board of Selectmen appointed the first Weston 300 Committee, with Ed Coburn as chairman. As a member of this original committee, I can attest that planning proceeded slowly. We organized a logo contest that brought in designs from residents of all ages, including the winning design submitted by Dusty Rhodes of Conventures. This was the first time I had heard of Dusty. I was impressed with the design—by far our most polished entry. The original committee collected information on community organizations, held meetings to solicit ideas, and set goals including the idea of a “lasting memorial.”

Previous anniversaries had been celebrated in May or June and had included a parade. But finding a parade date after the weather warms up and before residents start leaving for the summer proved elusive. Memorial Day weekend was chosen but ran into opposition from those who did not want the solemnity of the day and traditional parade to be refashioned, joined by those who set aside

that weekend for holding family reunions or opening summer houses. With high school graduation in early June, it was difficult to find time for a spring parade.

As a result, the committee decided on a fall parade on the weekend after the Golden Ball Antique Show. Two other special Saturdays were planned: a January Winterfest to kick off the year and a June 1 Field Day.

Dusty Rhodes Appointed Chair

In March 2012, as the tercentennial year loomed, Ed Coburn resigned as chairman because of his nomination to the Board of Selectmen. As his parting accomplishment, Coburn persuaded Dusty Rhodes to take over leadership of the 300th celebration.

Rhodes is the founder and president of Conventures, New England's leading special events company. In its 36 years of existence, Conventures has planned and carried out more than 5,000 special events in Boston and New England, including the largest women's running event in the United States, the Tufts 10K (now in its 36th year), and three Tall Ships Festivals – events that rank among the largest public celebrations in New England History. She is known for her ability to bring together big picture strategies with critical small detail planning and teamwork.

Rhodes moved quickly to reorganize the committee and form the private non-profit Weston 300 Legacy Trail Trust to raise money for both the celebration and a lasting memorial. Her organizational ability and experience made possible a succession of events that were outstanding for their imaginative flair and flawless execution.

To carry out this year-long series of spectacular events, Rhodes put together a talented and hard-working team. Doug MacDougall, Weston's indefatigable Recreation Director, displayed a cheerful willingness to carry out almost any idea. Dee Frieberg took care of just about everything. Marion Packs was responsible for publicity, volunteers, and editing. Committee members were involved in carrying out each event, assisted by literally hundreds of volunteers who “planned, painted, fundraised, set up, broke down, cleaned up, and did just about everything you can imagine.”

Weston 300 Committee

Dusty Rhodes, Chair

Diana Chaplin

Robin Peakes Coutts

Mark Curelop

Elizabeth Eaton

Ann Fain

Deirdre Freiberg

Elizabeth Hochberger

Aubrey Kief

Douglas MacDougall

Lee Marsh

Marion Packs

Tom Wintle

Weston 300

Host Committee

Chairs

James Beams

Franklin Kettle

J. Michelle King

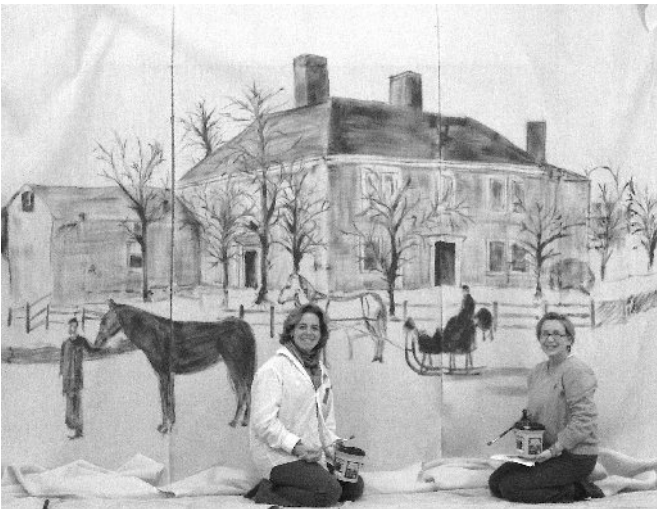
Kelly Renner



Commemoration and Reception

In January 2013, crimson-colored street banners appeared in Weston Center along with a large plywood snowman announcing the upcoming Winterfest and holding a sign “Think Snow.” But the ground stayed bare. The weather forecast for the January 12 date called for a rainy warm front with temperatures in the mid-40s. It was so warm that water in the two temporary skating rinks on the Town Green would not freeze. The committee postponed the Winterfest for two weeks but went ahead with the Commemoration ceremony.

Weston was incorporated on January 12, 1713. The celebration kicked off exactly three centuries later at the Commemoration, which was held in the Weston High School auditorium. The well choreographed program began with a reading of the Town Proclamation by Weston High School teacher Dr. Cort Mathers in his role as Isaac Jones, grandson of one of the original incorporators. Joe Shortsleeve of WBZ TV, a 20-year resident of Weston, emceed the event, which featured commentary by town and state dignitaries, musical performances, and the presentation of the J. Ward Carter Civic Awards (see page 40).



Above: Brian Donahue receives the J. Ward Carter Civic Award at the January 12 Commemoration. Left: Decorations for the reception at Town included a mural of Golden Ball Tavern painted by Weston artists Lee Hulings and Susie von Rosenvinge. (Photo by Marion Packs)

Following the ceremony, guests headed for a reception at Town Hall. Searchlights silently announced that this reception would be unique, a feeling immediately reinforced by the glittering party atmosphere. improvisational jazz by Weston High School musicians, and, by special dispensation, the open bar. The event was universally praised as the best Town Hall party in living memory.

Winterfest



Two weeks later, it was a wintry 25 degrees but there was still no snow on the ground. The Weston 300 Committee was undaunted. Snow making equipment produced enough snow for sledding, which was much enjoyed by the younger set. The sky was bright blue and sun sparkled off the man-made snow. The two ice skating rinks, by now frozen solid, were used for pick-up hockey and figure skating, including performances by accomplished members of the Boston Skating Club. Callope music filled the air.

In the center of the Town Green was a series of ice sculptures by Rhode Island artist Eric



The Winterfest had to be postponed from January 12 to the 26th because warm temperatures had melted the ice in the temporary skating rinks. Weston 300 Committee member Marion Packs poses behind an ice sculpture of the Weston 300 logo.

Fontecchio. The largest, fashioned after the Weston 300 logo, proved to be a popular backdrop for photos. Participants relaxed by the fire pits and roasted marshmallows over an open fire. Sleigh rides would have been impossible but the committee provided the next best thing: a large hay wagon pulled by draft horses.

Land's Sake education director Doug Cook lead a group into the woods behind First Parish Church to demonstrate how to tap maple trees for sap. Everyone enjoyed free hot cocoa and Weston 300 cake, created for the occasion by Omni Foods.

Field Day and Grand Celebration Concert

For the June 1 Field Day, the weather cooperated, sort of. Yes, it was 92 degrees instead of the historical average of 71. But this did not deter festival participants. For the kids, there were rides, games, crafts, and two colorful inflatable “bounce houses,” not to mention baton twirling, fencing, musical performances, and Davey the Clown. A donation of \$10 per person and \$30 per family helped defray the cost of the full day of activities and evening concert.

The Weston Historical Society was one of some 30 entrants in the Festival Marketplace, where businesses and organizations showcased their activities and sold everything from Ogilvies root beer to fine art from Florentine Frames. A film festival ran all day in the high school auditorium, and Weston alumni congregated in the school library for a reunion and class photos. The new science wing was the setting for an outstanding student art show. Food trucks sold pizza, lobster salad sandwiches, and other favorites; and Weston Public Library and Weston Recreation Center co-sponsored an ice cream social for hungry crowds before the evening concert.

Local artists created picnic tables that were auctioned off for the benefit of the Legacy Trail Trust. In the all-day Wet Paint Auction, under the direction of Larry Grob assisted by Rebekah Gardiner, 22 artists set off in the morning for their favorite scenic spots and worked “au plein air,” returning with paintings that were auctioned off in the afternoon.





(Above): Historical society board members David Cail and Ilene Horowitz at the WHS booth; (Below): Yvonne Posa with her “Land’s Sake Sunflower,” picnic table, one of many created by artists to be auctioned off. Yvonne later painted another sunflower table that was donated to Land’s Sake. (Right) Davey the Clown performs his magic.

The day ended with a spectacular “Pops-style” concert on the football field, with tables and bleacher seating. Christopher Memoli, Director of Music for Weston Public Schools, orchestrated the evening. Dr. Therese Provenzano directed a combined community chorus, reported to be 300-strong, performing gospel music and an original Weston 300 composition by musician Linda Kilburn. The finale, Tchaikovsky’s rousing 1812 Overture, was performed by a combined Weston High School Chamber Orchestra and Rivers Conservatory Youth



In a dramatic montage at the evening concert, Weston High drama students took roles of local figures. (l-r) Bennet Karel as Gen. Charles Jackson Paine, Sammy Hooper as Weston High School principal Charles "Boss" Eaton, Samantha Marchiony as Anna Maria Melone, and Clark Eglinton as Philip Coburn.

Symphony and accompanied by cannon fire and a spectacular fireworks display praised as "the best ever."

Founders Day Parade and Fall Festival

Rain was in the forecast for Saturday, October 5, but the sky was just overcast, making the day ideal for photographers. The Founders Day parade stepped off at 12 noon from the DPW headquarters and followed a one-mile route down Golden Ball Road to Boston Post Road and from there to the Town Green. Leading the way were Weston police and fire departments with their colors, along with town officials. From the reviewing stand opposite the Josiah Smith Tavern, announcer Mitch Finnigan provided color commentary.

The parade was divided into seven divisions and featured eight floats, created by each of the five Weston schools, town employees, Regis College, and Parmenter Community Health Care in Wayland. Each school had a theme: Country (agriculture), Woodland (the importance of apple orchards in early Weston), Field (construction of their new school), Weston Middle School (Today) and Weston High School (the Future). Cynthia Chapra of Weston Garden Club drove her decorated tractor and Land's Sake showcased its new John Deere. Weston Community Gardeners dressed as carrots walked alongside a wagon decorated with a large zucchini and filled with costumed children.

Participating bands included Middlesex County Volunteers Fife and Drum, Worcester Brass Band, Traveling Dixie Hobo Band, William Diamond Jr. Fife &



Drum Corps, Lincoln Minute Men, Weston High School Band, and Boston Windjammers. Bands alternated with antique cars, horses ridden by the National Lancers, the Gangi Strutters baton twirlers, Clowning for Kids, and Davey the Clown.

Among the groups that walked the route were costumed members of the Isaac Jones family of the Golden Ball Tavern, Weston High School alumni, and Weston Cub and Boy Scouts. Long time Weston-based businesses participated, most notably with a float by Anza Farm featuring live sheep and pigs. One of the Ogilivies fleet of blue trucks advertised its “94 years young family business.”

On the Town Green, the Founders Day Festival featured games, refreshments, music by the Reminiscent, and baton twirling—with batons ablaze—by Weston

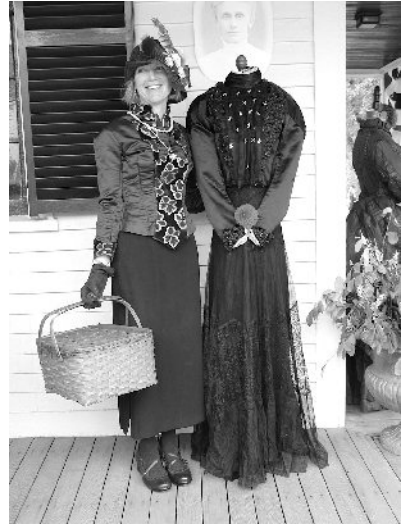


*Left page
 (Above): The Weston Middle School float represented Weston of today.
 (Below): The Founder's Day parade reviewing stand on the Town Green was decorated with red, white, and blue bunting, along with pumpkins and giant mums provided by the Weston Garden Club.*



*Right page
 (Above) The Woodland School float celebrated the historic importance of apple orchards in Weston;
 (Center): B.L. Ogilvie & Sons, one of Weston's oldest businesses, brought one of its blue trucks to the parade. (Below): Weston Garden Club members Ginia Ziobro and Caroline Ellis march with other club members and a decorated tractor.*





(Above left) Volunteer Julie Greenberg with Weston 300 Committee member Dee Freiberg; (Above right) Addie Fiske on the porch of the Josiah Smith Tavern, with 19th century dresses owned by her grandmother; (Center) The Weston Historical Society set up a display on the JST porch; (Below, left to right) Volunteers Rose Hattabaugh, Sheila Burkus, and Theresa Levinson helped with homemade pies, which were sold by the slice. Weston Selectman Ed Coburn sampled each entry and chose a winner.



Weston 300 Committee member and WHS board member Elizabeth Eaton (left) with John Skillman, Katherine Clark, and Joe Mullin. A few weeks later, Clark was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives for the 5th District.

High School junior Olivia Kane. Talented cooks contributed pies sold by the slice. Selectman Ed Coburn sampled them all and chose Ellen Touart Grob's linzer torte as the day's winner. At 3 pm, festival goers relaxed on the grass around the painted number 300 and posed for a town-wide photograph taken from the top of the fire truck ladder.

Closing Ceremonies at Thanksgiving

The closing ceremony for the tercentennial year took place on Thanksgiving Day at the traditional Weston-Wayland football game. In this special tribute to past Thanksgiving Day games, players, captains, and coaches were honored at a pre-game ceremony, with many past football team captains present. The Weston High School marching band gave a special half-time performance featuring brief fireworks. Dusty Rhodes passed the official Weston 300 flag to town dignitaries for installation at Town Hall. The festivities included a much deserved thank you to the Weston 300 Committee for making this year-long 300th birthday party a tremendous success.

A Lasting Memorial: The Weston Legacy Trail

In addition to funding the festivities, the non-profit Legacy Trail Trust will oversee creation of a mile-long Legacy Trail on the Case Campus. The natural trail, enhanced with benches, statuary, and plantings, will connect the campuses of the Community Center, Case House, new Field School, Library, and Woodland and Country Schools. Plans for the trail will be announced this spring, with groundbreaking expected to occur this summer.



The Weston Historical Society tercentennial exhibition, “The Farmers’ Precinct: Three Centuries of Weston History,” was on display at Weston Public Library for the month of January and at Weston Town Hall auditorium (above) for the summer. Many school groups visited the exhibition when it was at the library.

The Legacy Trail Trust is selling personalized brick pavers to raise money and beautify the trail. They are available in two sizes, large (8” X 8”, \$100) and small (8” X 4” \$50) and will be placed throughout the trail. Buy one and “be part of history.”

Other Tercentennial Events

In addition to events sponsored by the Weston 300 Committee, Weston organizations did their part to add to the celebration year and, in the case of the Weston Historical Society, to infuse historical content into the mix.

January 5 to 29: Weston Historical Society tercentennial exhibition “The Farmers’ Precinct: Three Centuries of Weston History,” at Weston Public Library. (See *WHS Bulletin*, Fall 2012, available at westonhistory.org.)

March 2: Tribute Gala at Weston Country Club, the main fundraising event for Weston 300, open to all and attended by residents of all ages. Talented committee members designed the elegant Art Deco invitation and decorations. The moveable feast included a variety of specialty foods, live band, and open seating. A memorable time was had by all!

March 10: Weston-Wayland Interfaith Action Group celebrates Weston’s Diversity, in honor of Weston’s 300th and WWIAG’s 25th Anniversary. Pot luck



Benoit Mizner Simon & Co. real estate agency was one of many Weston businesses, organizations, and individuals to make scarecrows to help Weston Community League Garden Club reach its goal of 300 scarecrows for the 300th.

dinner and program at Weston Middle School.

April 25: Weston Garden Club, Weston Community League Garden Club, and Country Garden Club hosted a joint meeting at First Parish Church with lecture by Pam Fox entitled "Designing Weston: The Olmsted Brothers and Their Contemporaries."

May 5: Open House and Choral and Organ Concert at Campion Center, with Weston Community Chorus under the direction of Dr. Therese Provenzano; and Kevin Galie, Music Director for the Blessed John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, who performed on the 1926 Weston-made Hook & Hastings organ in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

May 6: Weston 300 Golf Tournament at Pine Brook Country Club. All golfers were welcome to register and



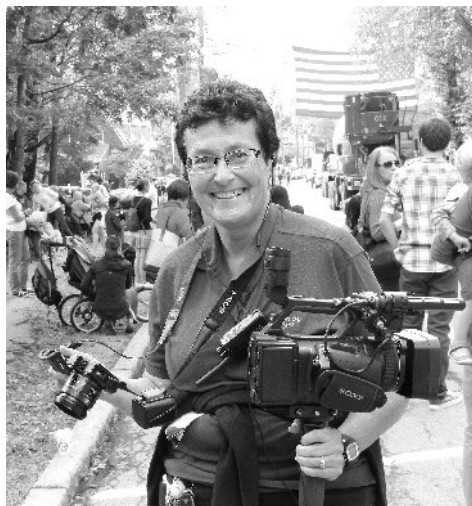
Isaac Jones's large family made an appearance at the Founders Day parade and Golden Ball Tavern open house. Karen Valovcin created most of the costumes. (l-r; Valerie Lehr; Carolyn McGuire, Ellie McGuire, Karen Valovcin, Hilary Gallagher, Emily Byrne, Otto Plank, Beth Fowler, Jim Parmentier, Janie Plank, Cort Mathers, David Valovcin. Front children: Abby, Katie, and Caroline Byrne, Sean Balbale.) (Photo by Deborah Carrell)

pay an entry fee. It was a perfect day, and golfers met after the game for awards and a light lunch.

June 13: Weston Garden Club tour of nine private gardens throughout the town.

June 13 to September 3: Weston Historical Society tercentennial exhibition re-installed at Weston Town Hall.

October 5: As part of the Founders Day parade and festival, the Golden Ball Tavern Museum held an open house featuring re-enactors, weaving demonstrations, music, crafts and games for kids, and, of course, a birthday cake.



Gloria Cole, Director of the Weston Media Center, filmed all the Weston 300 events for broadcast on local cable channels.

October 1 to 30: The Women's Community League Garden Club set the goal of 300 scarecrows for the 300th. Pat Gowdy, who spearheads scarecrow making every Fall, encouraged participation from downtown businesses, organizations, and town government. Scarecrows by the dozens stood in front of the Field School and Scout House and lined the Town Green. According to Pat, tour buses were spotted passing through Weston to photograph our creations.

Fall 2013: The Provisional Group of the Weston Garden Club planted a crescent-shaped Colonial Garden at Land's Sake. The design by Weston native Michele Fronk Schuckle incorporates flowers and plants that Weston's original settlers might have used.

September 4 to November 22: Exhibit of clay miniatures of buildings in the Town Center created in 1984 by Weston residents under the direction of artist Mary King and all privately owned. Assembled by Pam Swain, at Weston Public Library. (See page 48)

October 24 and 26: Weston Middle School Drama Club play "Treasuring Our Past: Stories of Weston," written and produced by Weston Middle School drama teacher Laurie Katz and social studies teacher Abe Mills with historical assistance from Pam Fox. The original 1986 play, based on oral history interviews, was enhanced with new scenes about the organ factory, the colorful Hillcrest Boys of the Case Estates, and the story of Norumbega Tower. Preparation for the play included a field trip to the sites of each scene and a visit by Tom and Jack Williams, who shared memories of life in Weston as Hillcrest Boys and World War II soldiers.

December 7: Women's Community League Holiday House Tour, featuring a collection of antique, mid-century Modern, and newly constructed Weston homes decorated for the holidays

The following Weston 300 events were planned but later cancelled for a variety of reasons: Movie Night, Tennis Tournament, Tour De Weston, Monster Dash Road Race, Fashion Show, and Memory Road Show.

Items Produced for the 300th Anniversary

Flavors of Weston: Recipes & Recollections, Friends of the Weston Public Library 300th anniversary cookbook, with favorite recipes and historical anecdotes. Available for sale at Weston Public Library.

Weston 300 Calendar, with photos by Jonathan Dietz, Barbara Elmes, Mark Curelop, Dan Wims, and Kenneth S. Barron.

A Weston Timeline, book by Pamela W. Fox, produced with financial support from Weston Historical Commission. Available for sale at the WHC website.

Historical articles including "300 Pieces of Weston Trivia" in the Spring and Summer 2013 issues of *Wellesley Weston Magazine*; and 26 "Chronicles" in the *Weston Town Crier*, by Pamela W. Fox. (Chronicles will be available on the Weston Historical Society website, www.westonhistory.org)

Video programs on local history topics, the Weston Historical Society exhibit, and Weston 300 events, produced by the Weston Media Center.

"Three Hundred Years," an original song debuted at the Grand Celebration Concert, music and lyrics by Linda Kilburn.

"Tavern to Tavern Trek" brochure produced by the Weston 300 Committee for the Founders Day Parade and Festival, highlighting 18 historic sites between the Josiah Smith and Golden Ball taverns, written by Pamela W Fox.

"Weston 300 Quest" a three-part scavenger hunt developed by David Hutchesion and the Board of the League of Women Voters. Answers were posted on the League's website.

Commemorative items: baseball caps, hats, blankets, calendars, lanyards, polo shirts, coffee mugs, travel mugs, golf balls, pins, medals, signs, and much **more**.

J. Ward Carter Civic Awards

The Weston 300 Committee created the J. Ward Carter Civic Awards to recognize those whose contributions to the Town of Weston are exemplary. The commemorative awards are named after J. Ward Carter, who dedicated 52 years to the Town of Weston, serving as Executive Secretary then Town Administrator.

The committee engaged a number of leading citizens to serve on a nominating committee charged with analyzing potential awardees based on their contributions in the 25 years since the 275th, including historical contributions that

1. Greatly enhanced the quality of life in Weston;
2. Improved the cultural, civic and/or business status of the Town, and/or
3. Demonstrated extraordinary commitment to one's community well beyond normal civic expectations.

Award Recipients:

Alfred L. Aydelott

George P. Bates

Priscilla N. & Edward M. Dickson

Brian Donahue

H. Kenneth Fish

Pamela W. Fox

Kathleen B. McCahan

Edwin J. Taff

Frances B. Tucker

Joan B. Vernon

Harold B. Willis Jr.

Text for the following biographical sketches is taken from the Weston 300 Commemoration program of January 12, 2013.



ALFRED L. AYDELOTT

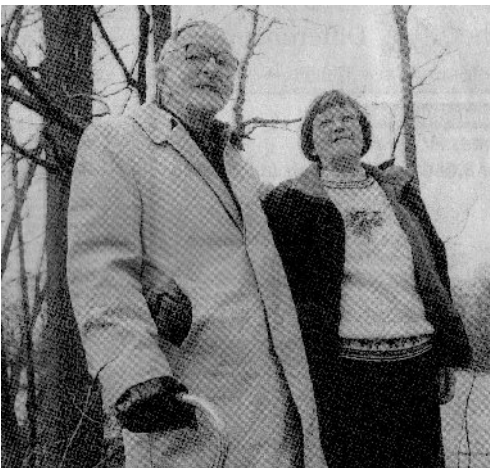
The unofficial town architect, Al Aydelott has staunchly shaped the development of Weston for many years. At one time or another, Al has served on just about every historic preservation and planning board in Weston. In the 1970s, Al pitched in with his father-in-law Howard Gambrell to rehabilitate the Golden Ball Tavern and helped found the Weston Historical Commission, to which he was appointed in 1985 and where he continues to serve today. Al has guided improvements to our schools from his seat on the Weston Schools Facilities Study Committee, spearheaded creation of the Crescent Street Historic District, and grappled with

the conundrum of the Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library for many years including seven as a member of the official Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library Study Committee from 2002-2009. Perhaps most importantly, Al has served for

15 years as a member and chair of the Weston Planning Board, guiding the development of Weston with tenacious equanimity, patience and humor. Al has been for decades the ultimate Town caretaker, relentlessly defending the architectural and natural heritage of Weston, so preserving our rural and historic character.

GEORGE P. BATES

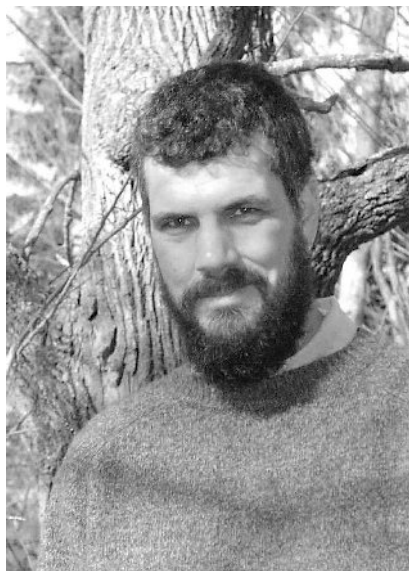
From the time of his arrival, George Bates's name has been synonymous with conservation and land stewardship in Weston. Most notably, for over 50 years, he has been the principal force behind developing, mapping, and protecting the system of trails throughout the town, a lovely reminder of Weston's agricultural and rural traditions and a legacy for present and future generations of residents to enjoy. His ardent fundraising on behalf of the Weston Forest and Trail Association as well as the Town have enabled the purchase of innumerable conservation easements and parcels; once acquired, he undertook to record and monitor each so as to assure its legal preservation and prevent against encroachments. As a long-time member and Chairman of the Conservation Commission, George has overseen complex and often controversial wetlands matters, and has interfaced with residents, Town officials, neighboring towns, and other governmental agencies with unfailing wisdom and grace.



PRISCILLA N. & EDWARD M. DICKSON

Polly Dickson is passionate about making Weston a more inclusive community. As a life long resident, Ed was active in Town government and politics, serving for many years as a Selectman and then as a State Representative. While interested in preserving the character of the town through their donation of land for open space, the Dicksons were also committed to making the resources of the town more accessible to others;

increasing the social and economic diversity of Weston was a high priority. Through their actions they directly contributed to the availability of affordable housing options. Owning a variety of homes throughout town, they rented or sold them to individuals and families who otherwise would not be able to live in Weston. Most notable was their generous donation of land for the creation of Dickson Meadow, a mixed income cluster development adjacent to their own home on Highland Street. Polly and Ed were steadfast in pursuing their goal to increase affordable housing in Weston through this project. Despite many obstacles, 18 units were completed at Dickson Meadow in 2002, 8 of which were sold to low or moderate income buyers. Polly has been described as the “social conscience of the town,” not only for the dedication she and Ed showed over the years to providing more affordable housing opportunities in Weston, but also for her strong commitment to the METCO program as well as her involvement in the Weston/Wayland Interfaith Action Group. As a founding member, she has been an integral part of the group with her keen interest in building community by promoting greater understanding of religious, individual and cultural differences. Polly is someone who cares deeply about our community and is outspoken in her desire to make Weston more welcoming to others.



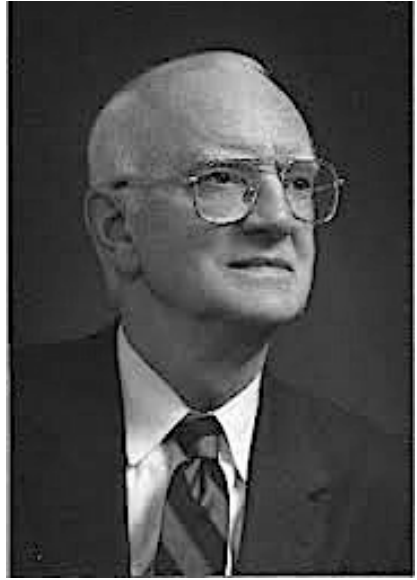
BRIAN DONAHUE

Brian Donahue has built his life around his love of environmental and agricultural history. His service to the Town has been continuous since the mid-‘70s, first as a director of Green Power Farm, and then as one of the founders of its successor, Land’s Sake Farm; he has been a member of the Conservation Commission for over 11 years, serving for a time as its chair; and he has served on the Community Preservation Committee for more than 10 years. Over the years, management of Weston’s forests has been a particular passion. In his capacity as professor of environmental studies at Brandeis University, Brian has involved dozens of students in researching Weston’s land use and environmental history as well

as the environmental issues it faces today. He is the author of an award-winning book, *Reclaiming the Commons*, which weaves together centuries of Weston farm history with a present day account of Green Power, Land Sake, and the advent of community farming in the post World War II era.

H. KENNETH FISH

Ken Fish was an activist and an ardent Democrat whose personal passion for social justice he imparted to the Town of Weston through more than forty years of relentless commitment and effort. When Ken and his wife Imogene came to Weston in the 1960's they found a fairly isolated and homogeneous community and decided to make change. In the 1960's it was Ken who brought forth Roxbury-Weston Programs and then the Roxbury-Weston Pre-school; Ken who convinced the town to participate in the then-new Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) and Ken who later would establish the Weston-METCO Scholarship Fund to support the participants in the METCO program. In the 1970's it was Ken who organized Weston Community Housing Inc. that would build Merriam Village in the mid-70s and then double its size in the 1990s. And in the 1990's it was Ken who established the Weston Affordable Housing Foundation that would promote, protect and actually build new affordable housing in the Town, and still today spark the further charity of other residents and inspire creation of the new Weston Housing Trust. In all of these areas, Ken certainly collaborated with many others who are equally worthy of our recognition and gratitude. But all would agree that it was Ken who actually made it happen. Ken was all about diversity and inclusion, about opportunity and a fair chance. The institutions he established are now deeply ingrained in the Town's character, and we are all proud together of their accomplishments.



PAMELA W. FOX

Pam helped us all to love our history. From the time she came to Weston, Pam has selflessly devoted herself to improving the quality of life in Weston by raising up and advocating for the cultural and historic riches of the town, promoting the preservation of Weston's architectural, historic and cultural heritage. Pam has years of public service on the Town's Planning Board and Community Preservation Committee, as President of the Weston Historical Society

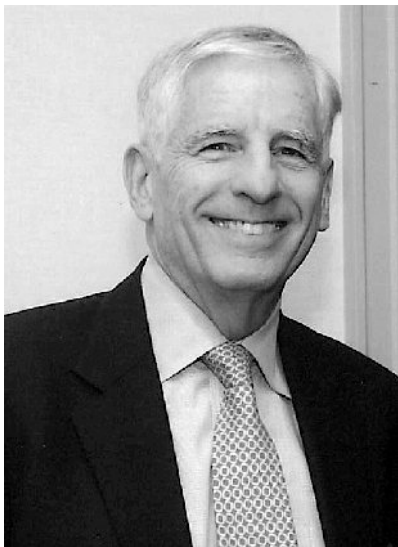
and as the long-term editor of its Bulletin. And Pam has years of related activities, curating art shows and producing programming on Weston's history for the local Weston Media Center. Perhaps her most well-known accomplishment is her magnificent book, *Farm Town to Suburb*, published in 2002, which is the modern "bible" of Weston's history and architecture. Pam refreshed our interest and concern for what is valuable and worthy of preservation in our Town, and so has shaped our present and our future.

KATHLEEN B. MCCAHAN



Every community needs a Kay McCahan. She has her finger on the pulse of the community and is willing to "step up" in a multitude of ways. Never shying away from controversial issues, Kay's steady and effective leadership has paved the way for crucial community decisions about preserving Weston's natural resources and the rural character of the town. She chaired the Open Space & Recreation Planning Committee, and in the early 1990's she helped found the Weston Land Trust. She guided the lengthy process to determine how best to use the Case Estates land for future generations, chairing the Case Estates Review Committee. Also involved in Weston's adoption of the Community Preservation Act, Kay served on that committee during its early years. When it became apparent in the late

1990s that the MWRA intended to construct a 115-million gallon, below ground, covered facility in Weston to replace the existing 205-million gallon "open" Norumbega Reservoir, Kay was again a "go to" person as a member of the Working Group, the forum for Weston's participation in the process. During that lengthy project, she chaired the sub-committee charged with negotiating public access rules for the reservoirs to ensure both the necessary protections for water supplies and public enjoyment of the outdoor recreational resources. Further, Kay established the Friends of Weston Reservoir to monitor public use of its trails and to supply mutt mitts to dog walkers. With her active involvement in so many arenas, Kay has left an imprint on our community through her perseverance and talent for bringing people together to examine complex issues, develop strategies and build consensus for their adoption.



EDWIN J. TAFF

For many years Ed Taff's name has been synonymous with WEEFC, the Weston Educational Enrichment Fund Committee, which was established in 1985. WEEFC's mission, then and now, is to solicit tax-deductible donations from the community members to provide grants for school enrichment programs. Timing was everything. With a watchful eye on what was happening in California, Ed's motivation to establish an educational foundation grew out of his concern that Proposition 2 1/2, the tax cutting law passed in Massachusetts in 1981, would negatively impact funding for the Weston Public Schools. Careful to build a collaborative relationship with the schools, Ed was determined that the committee be a permanent sub-

committee of the WPS, and that a member of the school committee serve on WEEFC to ensure that grants would be compatible with the WPS curriculum and standards. While mindful of tight Town budgets, but resisting use of WEEFC funds for ordinary school expenses, Ed, with the support of the committee, steered the awarding of grants to projects that were creative and enhanced the curriculum. In its first year, WEEFC raised close to \$30,000, proving its viability, and funded 14 projects prioritized by administrators, including purchase of equipment, developing nature trails and establishing a Speakers' Fund for the High School. In subsequent years, teachers were encouraged to join the process and submit ideas for mini-grants for more stimulating and exciting projects. Each year, more money has been raised with more interesting projects funded. This past year, WEEFC raised \$320,000 to cover well over 100 projects at all levels, including some new enrichment opportunities such as the Amazon Rainforest Project and DeCordova Museum trip at Country School, the creation of a new robotics club at Field School, an intergenerational history project at the Middle School, and the purchase of cameras for the new digital photography lab the High School. For 17 years Ed led and nurtured WEEFC, which continues to be an integral part of the Weston Public Schools, allowing teachers, students, parents and administrators to "dream" about "what ifs" and broaden the experience of our students. It's hard to imagine the Weston Public Schools without WEEFC.



FRANCES B. TUCKER

In 1972, Fran Tucker had an idea, and she acted on it. She read in a magazine about a neighbor to neighbor program in England which provided the type of services that extended families used to fulfill, especially in emergencies. She saw the need for such a program in Weston. Fran inspired some of her fellow parishioners at St. Peter's and recruited others to join her in establishing FISH - Friends in Service Helping. Initially, FISH services were fairly broad and included help with

meals, shopping, baby-sitting, telephone checks on those living alone, and rides to appointments. The notion that one person could easily help another became a commitment for Fran Tucker, who took charge and established the framework for FISH, the organization that exists today. Tireless in her efforts to match need with volunteers, for 32 years Fran was diligent keeping track of volunteers and collecting requests for services via phone calls. Over time, the scope of FISH services narrowed to providing transportation to medical appointments. In collaboration with the Council on Aging, which fields the requests, FISH coordinators match available drivers with residents needing rides. Thanks to Fran for her commitment to the idea that neighbors can help neighbors and for her leadership in establishing an organization that offers an important service in our community, providing an average of 300-350 round trips each year for seniors.

JOAN B. VERNON

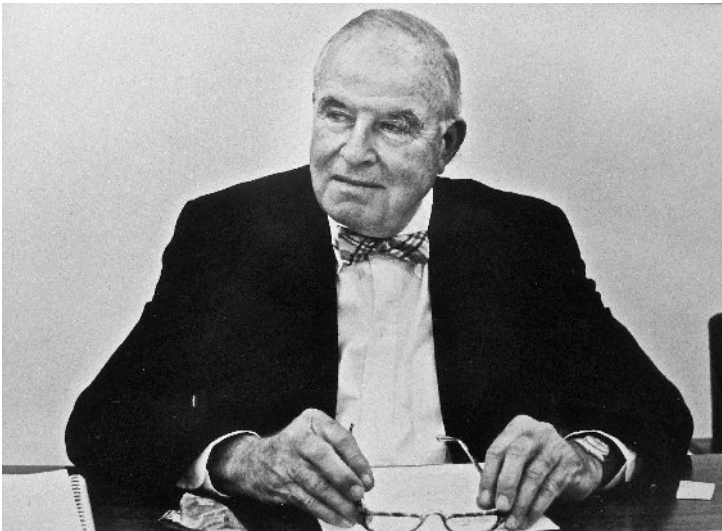
Whether in office or not, Joan Vernon made it her mission to pay attention to all aspects of the operation of Weston town government and address what needed to be fixed. After serving on the Finance Committee, she served on the Board of Selectmen, the Youth Commission, the Board of Health, and again on the Board of Selectmen. She regularly and enthusiastically recruited other Weston residents to run for Town office and then provided ongoing support and coaching to those who did. Sometimes in office but often not, Joan spearheaded citizen committees to respond to major town issues: The Committee to Study Uses and Space Needs for Public Lands and Public Buildings, The Assessment Review Committee, and The Building Facilities

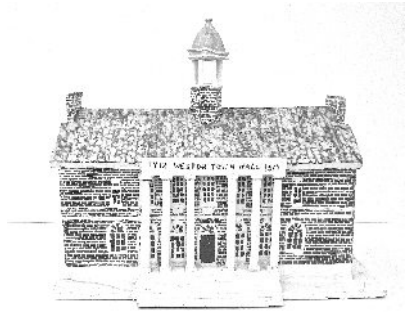


Committee (that ultimately resulted in the formation of the current Permanent Building Committee, putting an end to Weston's long history of difficulties with construction of municipal and school buildings). Most notably, she created and chaired The Committee to Examine Town Governance that quietly and efficiently addressed the looming concern of how to manage the transition "when Ward Carter retires" by successfully restructuring Weston's town government to its present Town Manager form.

HAROLD BUCKLEY WILLIS, JR.

Born and raised in Weston, Bus Willis forever stamped his character on our town in the nearly 2,000 acres of Town Forest, conservation land and other open space preserved in Weston through his efforts. In the long tradition of the Willis and Fiske families, Bus was active in town affairs for over 40 years. He served on the Committee to Investigate and Report on the Matter of a Town Forest from 1956-1959, on the Open Areas Committee from 1960-1961, on the Conservation Commission from 1963-1981 (as Chair from 1968-1981), and on the Board of Selectmen from 1981 until his death in 1991. In the 1970's, he led the Conservation Commission, through the combined efforts of Hugo Uytterhoeven, Kenneth Germeshausen and William Elliston, on an ambitious open space program that culminated in the Town acquiring some 1,200 acres of land at an average cost of about \$4,000 an acre. Specific jewels for which he is remembered are the 92-acre College Pond recreation area, purchased in the late 1970's, and the 38-acre Land Sake's farmland acquired from Harvard in the mid-1980's. Bus was an outdoorsman. He loved the woodlands and fields of the Weston in which he grew up, and he saved them from development so that we could love them too.





With Grateful Thanks

*To **Hillary Hanson Bruel** for her gift of a clay model of Weston Town Hall (photo above). Hillary was part of a 1984 intergenerational group that sculpted clay replicas of buildings in Weston Center under the direction of artist Mary King, as part of a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.*

*To **Elizabeth Rafuse Farquharson** for her gift of a school desk and also an inscribed book given to her grandmother by teacher Anna Coburn.*

*To **Jean Jones** for her gift of an American Legion Weston Post 214 cap and pin belonging to her late husband, Harry Jones.*

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