

# NEWS

*A newsletter to inform, celebrate, promote and contribute to the community of Brookfield.*

## A YEAR OF TOWN HALL EVENTS

Aug 3, 2002

- \* Brookfield Town Hall acquired at an auction by a group seeking to make it once again a community space

September 7, 2002

- \* A Birthday and Rebirth Celebration for Brookfield's Town Hall IN the building itself!
- \* Seven Town Hall committees formed (see page 4 for a list of committees and their members)

October 31, 2002

- \* Halloween party, and haunted house for trick-or-treaters

January 1, 2003

- \* Ice skating party with hot food, ice hockey games

February 15, 2003

- \* Meet at the Town Hall for a snowshoe trek by moonlight, led by Brookfield naturalist Linda Garrett

March 23, 2003

- \* Vershare, Maple Corners Community Center at Pond Village Church

May 4, 2003

- \* Harold Luce, etc. at Pond Village Church
- \* Events committee report

June 3, 2003

- \* Weekly Tuesday night jam sessions begin

August 3, 2003

- \* Summer festival all over Pond Village to celebrate the Town Hall!

## The Old Town Hall: Where Are We Now?

BY JOHN ROE

Have you noticed all of the media attention Brookfield's Old Town Hall (OTH) project has garnered in recent months? Even though the long process of renovating the building has just begun, events are already taking place there, and we have had notable successes in raising the funds needed for the renovation. Here is a short update on the project to date.

The genesis of the OTH project occurred several years ago, when an informal group of residents felt the unused building should be restored to its former glory as a community center. However, the project was not truly born until the galvanizing

focus of having the building put up for auction last summer. The informal group, now starting to resurrect the Brookfield Community Partnership name, had four initial goals for the project: secure the building, raise some initial working capital, show some early successes, and create the organizational structure that would both involve many people but also successfully drive a large complex project to completion.

At \$95,000, we were the successful bidders at the auction. Two community people, with the help of a bank loan, are acting as interim financiers and have given the Brookfield Community Partnership (BCP) a year to raise enough money to buy the building outright. The Partnership currently leases the building for \$600 per month.



A crew from the building renovation committee.

The Partnership needed initial working capital to cover things like the auction down payment, dump fees, and the lease. Our target of \$14,000 was raised in the two weeks before the auction, and several other later unsolicited gifts brought the total to just under twenty thousand dollars. An impressive start.

Initially seven working committees were created to involve as many people as possible in the different aspects of the project. The currently active committees and the names and phone numbers of their chairs are listed on page 4 in this newsletter. The six-person steering committee has been meeting weekly since September to direct and coordinate all aspects of the project. This committee has made three key decisions that shape the next phases of the project. One was the decision to create a new nonprofit that would not only renovate the Old Town Hall, but also strive to broadly strengthen the sense of community in Brookfield by sponsoring events to bring people together. The second key decision was to increase the scope of the project to address the expansion of the library, possible expansion of space for town offices, and provide the Brookfield Historical Society a place to display Brookfield's history and store some of its valuable papers. Third, we would design a highly organized capital campaign to raise the necessary funds.

One of the defining aspects of a capital campaign as compared to most other community fundraising is its highly individualized solicitation effort. Instead of just generally asking residents for donations, the fundraising committee is estimating each individual's and foundation's likely financial capacity as well as their level of interest in the project. We also divide the fundraising into discrete phases that focus on particular aspects of the overall project. The committee then tries to match donor interest and capacity to a particular time and need of the project.

In the first months of the project the need was for a significant gift from a respected entity to give the OTH project credibility and momentum. We were successful in reaching that goal through the largest grant the Preservation Trust of Vermont / Freeman Foundation has ever given a community project of this type - \$50,000.

The second phase of fundraising was a \$35,000 target to pay for the professional help needed to create a well thought-through project design. This included preliminary architectural drawings with cost estimates, and civil engineering work; both of these are critically necessary to raise public money grants and very large foundation and individual donations. The fundraising committee exceeded this goal in three months by raising \$39,000. Foundation grants provided \$11,000 and individual donations approximately \$28,000. Currently we are working on yet another phase - money needed to acquire the building. In June we were awarded \$65,000 from the VT Housing and Conservation Board, and the committee is now contacting Brookfield people and local foundations to raise the remaining \$25,000 before the end of September.

As BCP forges ahead with the fundraising, the Old Town Hall is already nearly a beehive of activity. Even before the building was acquired, a group of volunteers had cleaned it up. The Partnership has sponsored three community events: a Halloween party, a New Year's Day ice skating party, and a moonlight snow-shoeing outing in February. An evening of fiddle music and pot-luck dessert was also a success. Work parties have cleared brush from around the building, removed flooring to expose the original wide staircase to the lower floor, and taken down walls to reveal the true size of the auditorium. One can now easily visualize the building's potential as a community center as the large open space is now as it used to be when it served as a place for Saturday night dances, weddings, Town Meeting and the like. Probably most amazing for a building without electricity



New Year's celebration on the ice behind the Town Hall.

and running water, a community group has organized weekly musical jam sessions every Tuesday at seven. These have been very well attended, and have resulted in the donation of a nice piano for the building.

After the Brookfield Community Partnership has acquired the building in September, renovation will start in earnest. While we do not have detailed estimates yet, we expect the overall cost of the total project to be between seven and nine hundred thousand dollars. Since that amount of money will take a few years to raise, we are asking our architects, Black River Design, to design the renovations so that they can be phased without undoing prior work. The basic floor plan sketches are nearing completion, and will be shared with the community—keep your eyes open for an announcement. Our goal is to have some basic structural repair and enough renovations done this fall to make the building usable for larger gatherings. Even though it may take several years to complete this ambitious project, it's worth it.

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#### **Birthday Presents for the 101 year-old Town Hall: Funding from a variety of sources brings the Historic Building back to Community Use**

The Brookfield Town Hall was inaugurated on August 28, 1902, and auctioned off almost 100 years later, on August 3, 2002, to a group holding the building in trust until the Brookfield Community Partnership (BCP) could raise the funds to purchase the building. In a year's time, financial support for the building has come from individuals as well as foundations in the form of grants and gifts for various purposes - to help fund the purchase of the Old Town Hall by the non-profit BCP, for architectural plans and structural engineering services, and for renovating the building. Support for the Town Hall project has come from the following sources to date:

- \$65,000 - VT Housing and Conservation Board
- \$50,000 - Preservation Trust of VT and the Freeman Foundation
- \$25,000 - anonymous gift
- \$20,000 - individuals
- \$6,000 - VT Community Foundation
- \$5,000 - Lamson-Howell Foundation

Many heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed funds, and also time and labor, to the Town Hall!

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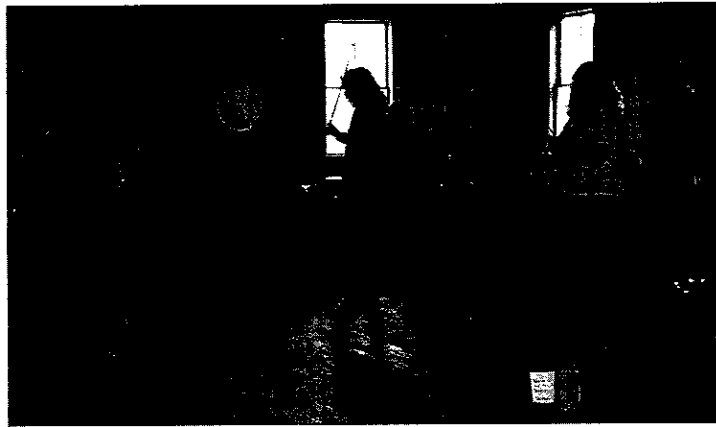
## Join the Jam!

BY ANITA KELMAN

The windows are propped open with scraps of lumber. The lights are powered by a marine battery. The "sanitary facilities" consist of a port-o-potty on the side of the building. But this hasn't stopped our intrepid jammers nor the enthusiastic audience that arrives every week to listen, and even dance.

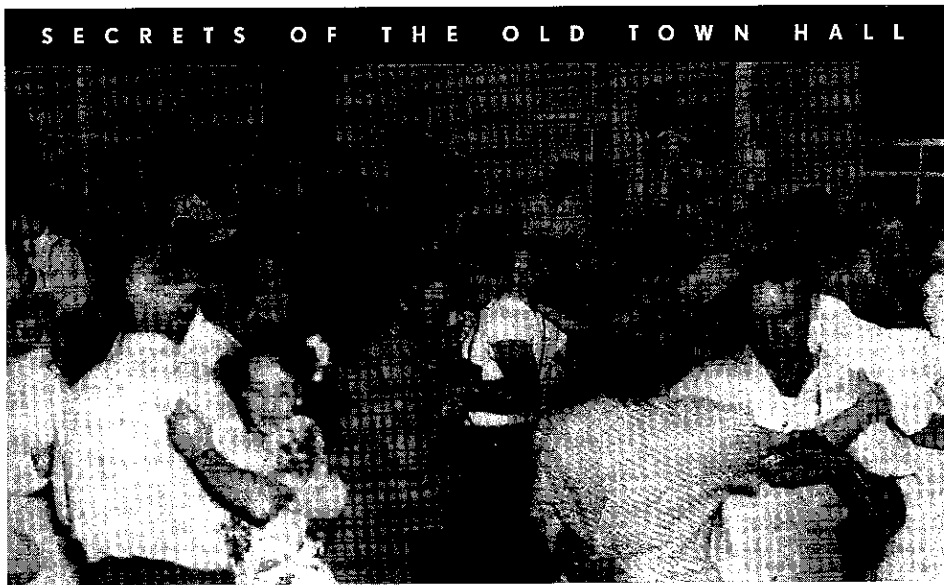
Starting the first Tuesday in June, the jam at the Old Town Hall has been a weekly session of fun and music. A range of instruments have been played, including fiddle, guitar, mandolin, flute, dulcimer, piano, banjo, harmonica, spoons, etc. Tunes played have been among those found at traditional New England jams, including Celtic, French Canadian, Old-Time and Bluegrass styles. Musicians have come from as close as four doors away to as far as the Northeast Kingdom.

We have just started enjoying our piano, which was generously donated to the Town Hall by Andy Stewart and Mary Jo Slattery



Harold Luce, musicians and Maggie the dog gather for the weekly jam session.

of Enfield, NH. It has been very rewarding for the musicians to learn to play with others who they haven't played with before as well as to share and learn new tunes. It is always amazing to see how much talent there is around here, and to know how fortunate we are to be able to enjoy it. The acoustics in the Town Hall are terrific, and we are looking forward to many years of music once again being played within its walls. All are welcome, every Tuesday night at 7 pm!



HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN YOU IDENTIFY IN THE ABOVE PHOTO OF A REGULAR SATURDAY NIGHT DANCE IN BROOKFIELD'S OLD TOWN HALL? A PRIZE TO THE PERSON YOU CAN IDENTIFY THE MOST PEOPLE CORRECTLY! SECOND AND THIRD PRIZES GO TO RUNNERS-UP. SEND YOUR GUESSES TO ELINOR GRAY AT EGRAY@INNEVI.COM, OR CALL ELINOR AT 276-3036. THE CORRECT ANSWERS—AND THE PRIZE WINNERS AND SPECIAL PRIZES! — WILL BE REVEALED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.

## Gala September 27 Concert at Chandler to Benefit Brookfield Town Hall

Singer-songwriters Bobby Gosh of Brookfield and Carol Hall of New York City, will appear together in a benefit concert for the renovation of Brookfield's Old Town Hall, on Saturday, September 27, at Chandler Music Hall in Randolph. Gosh and Hall last appeared together locally in a sold-out concert in 1980 for the benefit of Chandler. More additions to the concert will be announced at a later date, but we do know that fiddler Harold Luce, who performed at dances in the Old town Hall in the 1940's, will also appear.

Bobby is currently active as a songwriter and producer of his own projects in his state-of-the-art recording studio, and also as a producer of music for a stable of international clients. His son Erik, who is also his recording engineer, will record the concert, live, for a possible CD release.

**Keep posted for exciting concert details!**

## JOIN!

One of the best things about Brookfield's Old Town Hall has been the opportunities it has created to bring people from all around, and of all ages, together. This year there have been many get togethers for building renovation work parties, planning for events and fundraising, as well as actual events and weekly jam sessions. Please join your neighbors and meet new ones by becoming part of one of the Town Hall committees. Current members are listed below; call one of them, or the Chair of the Committee, to sign up. And if you'd like to receive regular updates on Town Hall events and happenings, send your email and/or phone number to [curtisk@sover.net](mailto:curtisk@sover.net) and you will be added to the email list. If you prefer to be called, call Curtis Koren at 276-3103, and you will be added to the phone list.

### Old Town Hall Committees as of April, 2003

#### STEERING

Ted Elzey  
Elinor Gray  
Curtis Koren  
Ed Koren  
Steve Reid  
John Roe

#### EVENTS

**Chair: Larry Thompson 728-6205**  
[larry@innevi.com](mailto:larry@innevi.com)  
Amy Borgman  
Kevin Dunwoody  
Linda Garrett  
Kristin Husher  
Anita Kelman  
Linnea LaPerle  
Merradee Lyons  
Laura Rochat  
Clarissa Spivakovsky  
James Tazelaar

#### BUILDING RENOVATIONS AND GROUNDS

**Chair: Steve Reid 276-3722**  
[steve@sover.net](mailto:steve@sover.net)  
Dave Alexander  
Charlie Ayers  
Jon Binhammer  
Jon Boright  
Kevin Dunwoody  
Carl Emmons  
Charen Fegard  
Bobby Gosh  
Neil Husher  
Ron LaPerle  
Gordon B. Pettingell  
Gail Reitzel  
Tom Whitney  
Greg Wight  
Beth Urie (*Landscaping*)

#### PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

**Chair: Norman Runnion 276-3029**  
[nrunnion@sover.net](mailto:nrunnion@sover.net)  
Joanna Bodenweber  
John W. Cole  
Curtis Koren

#### FUNDRAISING

(*Grants and Individual Donors*)  
**Chair: John Roe 728-3403**  
[jhroe@innevi.com](mailto:jhroe@innevi.com)  
Bob Barton  
Jon Binhammer  
Billi Gosh  
Elinor Gray  
Curtis Koren  
Steve Reid

#### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**Chair: Jean Mallary 276-3316**  
[jean.mallary@innevi.com](mailto:jean.mallary@innevi.com)  
Nina Gaby  
Joanna Bodenweber/Geoff Fried  
Mike Fiorillo

#### BUILDING USE PLANNING

(*work completed*)  
Joanna Bodenweber  
Richard Fink  
Nina Gaby  
Linda Garrett  
Anita Kelman  
Marylou Maeder  
Gail Reitzel  
Laura Rochat  
Linda Runnion  
Jame Tazelaar  
Judi Tazelaar

**Don't Forget — For regular updates, notices of events, and other Town Hall news, send your email and/or phone number to Curtis Koren at [curtisk@sover.net](mailto:curtisk@sover.net), or 276-3103**