



# The CONNservator

Newsletter of the Office of the Public Records Administrator

February 2008

Volume 8 Number 1

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## Fiscal Year 2008 Cycle 2 Grants Awarded

The Office of the Public Records Administrator announces an additional forty-eight targeted grant awards of \$376,000 from the Historic Documents Grant Program for FY2008 Cycle 2.

Targeted grants range from \$7,000 to \$17,000. The awards consist of \$5,000 for Inventory and Planning grants to conduct Records Management, Preservation Planning or Disaster Planning Surveys; \$205,029 for Organization and Indexing to improve indexing or automate access; \$121,755 for Preservation/Conservation grants; \$3,750 for Program Development grants to implement a records management program; and \$40,466 for Storage and Facilities grants to upgrade records storage and environmental monitoring equipment.

These grants brings the total number awarded in FY2008 to 148 for \$1,517,847; \$379,847 in Competitive Grants and \$1,138,000 in Targeted Grants. For a complete list of Cycle 2 grantees, please turn to page 6.

## Records Management and Historic Preservation

Eunice G. DiBella, Public Records Administrator

I was asked recently to explain the relationship between records management and historic preservation. Archivists and records managers think in terms of the life cycle of records which is: the various phases records go through from creation to maintenance and finally to disposition. This end phase is either destruction or permanent archival retention.

When a record is created, its creator is not usually thinking about the historical value of the document. Over time, however, records can attain historic value because of their content, value, use, or age. Improperly managed or poorly evaluated records will not survive in the long run, which poses a danger to the preservation of these historic documents.

In 2006, the Historic Documents Preservation Grant Program introduced a new component, the competitive grant that

included two broad categories of archival management and records management. These competitive projects must be larger in scope than targeted projects and affect the entire organization, not just one office. This issue features two articles written by town clerks describing the outcomes of their competitive grants in these two areas. While the grants were different in scope and focus, they had similar outcomes that positively impacted their historical records.

The town of Hebron received a competitive grant for an archival management project. This grant focused on organizing a small group of historic/archival records discovered during an inventory in preparation for a Preservation Planning survey. These records are now organized and available to citizens and researchers.

Southington received a grant to address a

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wide range of records management issues within the town hall. The Town Clerk reported that as a result of this project, they were able to legally dispose of a staggering 14 tons of paper, freeing up much needed space, and improving the retrieval of necessary documents for their daily operations. In the process of evaluating the records, they discovered many historic documents. After consulting with State Archivist Mark Jones, the town eventually transferred these archival records to the State Library for permanent retention.

The grant program has also had an effect on the operation of my office. We have become much busier approving disposal records and evaluating historic records. Our statistics indicate a 35% increase in the number of disposal requests that we handle. It is an old adage that a "tree well tended bears fruit." We can certainly see the fruits of our labor.

## Welcome



The Office of the Public Records Administrator would like to introduce our newest staff member, Public Records Archivist Jeff Collins. Although Jeff will be working primarily with the State Agencies, he will be assisting with the workshops and other training.

## Uncovering A Tercentenary Gold Mine

Carla Pomprowitz, Hebron Town Clerk

In the spring of 2002, the Town of Hebron applied for and received a targeted grant from the Connecticut State Library's Historic Documents Preservation Program to support a Preservation Planning Survey. In preparation for this survey, we inventoried three vaults and storage areas. During the inventory, staff discovered several boxes of documents dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Most of these documents had been carefully placed in cardboard file drawers but were housed in a building with no heat or any type of climate control.

Once staff completed the initial inventory, the consultant from the Northeast Document Conservation Center [NEDCC], hired under the targeted grant, conducted the preservation planning survey. Her report included a recommendation that the town conserve this important early collection of town records by organizing and re-housing and preparing a finding aid for the collection.

When the Competitive Grant became available last year, we submitted an application. As luck would have it, we received the good news that our application was successful. Hooray!

**While it could have been monotonous, this process was a lot of fun. I can't count the number of times we uncovered documents that had us laughing out loud.**

We enlisted the help of professional archivists, Cynthia Swank and Peter Parker, at the Inlook Group. Without them, we would not have known where to start. First, we moved the documents from the house to a vault near the selected work area. Next, we ordered archival supplies such as acid free folders and boxes. Finally, we recruited a number of volunteers to do the processing.

Our budget could not support paid staff for this project so I decided to put together a volunteer group, carefully choosing people that I knew personally, could trust with the collection, were familiar with the town history, and would commit to a project of this magnitude. Also the town would benefit from having residents with hands on experience and the knowledge gained from working with professionals on a preservation project.

The volunteer group selected consisted of Dorothy Taggart, Historian of the First Congregational Church of Hebron; Jean Raymond, Historian of the Gilead Congregational Church; Merris Williams, Hebron resident and genealogist; Marie Billard, whose family has lived in Hebron for more than 9 generations; and

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Managing the Record Chaos

Leslie Cotton, Southington Town Clerk

Record storage problems had plagued the Southington Town Hall for years. The symptoms were obvious everywhere: piles of records scattered in various offices and storage areas around the building. The result was inefficiency and strained customer service. Staff felt overwhelmed and was unable to see a solution to the ever increasing amount of paper. Department heads never had the time to adequately address the problem.

In 2002, the Town approved a Records Management Ordinance as the first step in developing a records management program. As part of the ordinance a Records Advisory Committee was instituted. Members of the committee are the Town Clerk, as the Records Management Officer, the Town Attorney, Finance Director and the Town Manager's executive secretary. Although not a member by ordinance, the IT Director is also on the committee.

50 or more years.

In 2007, I jumped at the opportunity to apply for one of the first competitive grants and was thrilled when the town received \$49,860. We used the grant money to jumpstart our town-wide records management process.

**The ten departments that participated ... feel the tremendous impact ... on their individual offices. Since the beginning of the project, we have disposed of 31,615 lbs or over 14 tons of paper.**

The goal for the grant was two-fold. First, it would allow Southington to develop a long term town-wide records management program. The project would develop written policies and procedures and train department heads and record coordinators in the

new procedures after they were adopted. Second, it would create a records center to address the existing storage problems.

Town Hall department heads and staff alike became excited at the possibility of "getting out from under" the piles of old records. The engineering department probably was the most resistant. They were convinced every piece of paper had to be in their office space "just in case" they needed it. But we worked with them and kept prodding them and they finally came around.

We decided to refurbish the basement vault as our "new" records storage room. As we began uncovering the files in that room, State Archivist Mark Jones came to look at the records. Mark was thrilled with some of the items he found in the room. We subsequently transferred many of them to the State Library as we did not have the space to house those records locally. I am pleased that they are now being carefully preserved and



The basement storage area before the start of the competitive grant.

But the records problem was so widespread; it was difficult to know where to begin. That same year, we used our targeted grant to hire a consultant to conduct a preservation survey that gave us some direction, but we were only able to make small strides. In 2005, we applied for another a targeted grant to have a records management survey conducted for my office and an old vault in the basement of the town hall. The basement vault contained piles of records from several offices around the building. Many of those records dated back



The Town Hall basement storage area after the completion of the competitive grant

*(Continued on page 5)*

*Hebron Archival Management Grant (Continued from page 2)*

Crawford Westbrook, an insightful retired historian who resides in East Hartford.



The documents as they looked before the project began. They were tightly packed into drawers and boxes.

The first thing we learned is that this kind of work is far from glamorous. We started by unfolding the documents and sorting them into four major categories or records series. As we examined each document further, we then decided into which sub-series it best fit.

The Inlook Group had earlier analyzed the collection and recommended these basic records series: *Town Records*, *Taxes*, *Financial*, and *Legal*. The sub-series within each series cover a vast array of information. For example, within the Town Records are Town Clerk Records, Highways and Roads, Deeds, Elections, Selectmen's Business, Church Records and School Records. We uncovered documents relating to highways, animal control, boundary agreements, school records, town bills, deeds, abatements, assessments, collections, militia, warrants, overseers of the poor, vitals, and some very interesting ecclesiastical and church records.

We then organized them chronologically, and flattened them by using weights. This process took two weeks to complete. We broke it up into two one week sessions with a break in between. Much of this time, Cynthia and Peter worked alongside us as we tried to determine to which record series each document belonged.

While it could have been monotonous, this process was a lot of fun. I can't count the number of times we uncovered documents that had us laughing out loud. The way of speech is captivating and amusing in itself. The volunteer's interest in these records never waned and the stories that they told while we worked was an oral history in itself.

We found evidence of people being run out of town,

arrests warrants for public drunkenness, counterfeiting and actual counterfeit money, and references to bastard children. One woman was divorcing her husband for being a drunk and having numerous affairs, naming at least eight women with whom he had allegedly consorted.

We followed people from town to town through town bills. A town would write asking to be reimbursed for the care of a certain person claiming to be a resident of Hebron. Later we would find that the same individual had moved again, received assistance, and Hebron was again billed. Hebron would respond that this person was not a Hebron resident and refuse to pay. We tracked the movement of a few people this way.

After sorting and flattening, we placed the records in archival quality folders and boxes. The boxes are stored in a vault with reasonable climate control. We kept at it until the last document was opened, identified, and properly housed. All the boxes are properly identified as to their contents. The final record series are *Town Records, 1747 – 1944*; *Taxes, 1784 – 1926*, *Financial, 1778 – 1938*, and *Legal, 1773 – 1970*.



The records after flattening and re-housing in archival folders and boxes.

The Inlook Group also helped to develop a database to serve as our finding aid using a coding system for proper retrieval of specific document types. For example: Town Records is Series I, Town Clerk Records is Sub-Category 1 in Series 1 where there are two boxes, 1.1A and 1.1B. Deeds would be Series 1, Sub-Category 3 and three boxes, 1.3A, 1.3B and 1.3C. With this complete, the information has been preserved and protected. These records are available to the public by appointment.

We needed a name for the collection. The 300<sup>th</sup>

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*Hebron Archival Management Grant (Continued from page 4)*

Anniversary of Hebron's founding is May 26<sup>th</sup> 2008. I think this monumental anniversary is what inspired me to tackle this project. It was my way of paying respect to those who had a part in shaping our community and to those who had the foresight and understood the importance of saving these records for more than 250 years. Therefore, we decided to call them *The Tercentennial Collection of Hebron Records*.

This project was a great success. It never would have come to fruition without the Competitive Grant award, professional guidance from the Inlook Group and the dedicated and enthusiastic group of volunteers that hung in there right to the end. The town is forever in their debt.

*[Editor's note: The topic for the annual workshop on June 12, 2008 is archival management projects such as the one described above. For more information, turn to page 8.]*

### **Regulating Morals in 19th Century Connecticut**

*(Transcribed from a document in the Tercentennial Collection)*

*To the Sheriff of the County of Tolland his deputy or other of the constables of the town of Hebron in said county.*

*Greeting*

*Whereas Abraham Jones & Nancy Jones wife of said Abraham were on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of June 1825 before Abner Hendee Esquire a Justice of Peace in & for said County duly convicted & found guilty of occupying a house of bawdry & ill fame on a certain statute Law of this State entitled "An act for the suppression of houses of ill fame" & duly committed to the work house in said Hebron according to Law & said Abraham Jones neglects to pay the cost of (infraction) at \$9.55. These are therefore by authority of the State of Connecticut to command you that of the goods or chattel of the said Jones within your precincts you cause to be levied & the same bring disproved of as the Law directs & paid according to Law the aforesaid sum of \$9.55 with 17 cents more for this writ & therefore also to justify your own fees for want of such goods or chattel to be by said Jones shown unto you or found within your precincts for justifying the aforesaid sums you are hereby commanded to take the body of the said Jones & (him) commit unto the keeper of the Gaol in Tolland in said County who is hereby commanded to receive the said Jones & him safely keep until he pay the aforesaid sums & is duly (released/ redeemed) According to Law hereof paid out but due service & return make of this writ within 60 days next coming written at Hebron July 30<sup>th</sup> 1825*

*Abner Hendee Justice of the Peace*

## **Congratulations!**

Louisa Trakas, Town Clerk of Plainfield, has received an Annual Preservation Award for 2007 from the Plainfield Historical Society. Society President Marjorie L. Hoskin presented the award to Louisa on November 28, 2007. The society makes these awards "to individuals and organizations that have made a valuable contribution towards preserving the heritage of Plainfield."

Louisa received the award as a result of her work through a competitive grant to preserve the town's official records as well as "other records of interest to both historians and persons researching their family histories and for providing storage for the Town Historian's photograph collection and other historical materials."

Good job, Louisa.

*Southington Records Management Grant (Continued from page 3)*

made available at the State Library to anyone who is interested in the Town of Southington's historical information.

Each department sorted through their files and boxed up inactive records, submitted requests for records that could be disposed of according to the retention schedules, updated the records databases, and transferred inactive records to the new records center.

A year and a half later, the ten departments that participated in the project feel the tremendous impact the program has had on their individual offices. Town staff see first hand that a streamlined records management program increases efficiency, improves customer service and is an effective planning tool, making government more cost-effective. Of course we constantly hear the excuse "we don't have the time." But, slowly now they are beginning to see the results. The Town Engineer was in my office a couple of

*(Continued on page 8)*

## **Site Visits Available**

Kathy Makover, Field Archivist, is available to meet with you at your office to assist with grant, vault or other records issues. To request a site visit, please contact her at (860) 566-1100 x303 or by email at [kmakover@cslib.org](mailto:kmakover@cslib.org)

## 2008 Cycle 2 Grant Recipients

### *Targeted Grants*

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Andover	Preservation Microfilming Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000.00
Bethlehem	Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00
Bristol	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000.00
Canterbury	Records Management Survey Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000.00
Chaplin	Archival Supplies On-line access and retrieval Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00
Columbia	Archival Storage Equipment On-line access and retrieval Archival Supplies	\$7,000.00
Danbury	Index Re-creation	\$12,000.00
Deep River	On-line access and retrieval Paper Conservation On-line access and retrieval Archival Supplies	\$7,000.00
Derby	Paper Conservation	\$7,000.00
Durham	Archival Supplies Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000.00
East Granby	Paper Conservation	\$7,000.00
East Lyme	Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00
East Windsor	On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
Eastford	Archival Supplies On-line access and retrieval Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00
Ellington	On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
Fairfield	Paper Conservation	\$12,000.00
Franklin	Paper Conservation	\$7,000.00
Goshen	Archival Supplies Archival Storage Equipment Preservation Microfilming	\$7,000.00
Granby	On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
Hampton	Computer Equipment/Software	\$7,000.00
Hartland	On-line access and retrieval Archival Supplies	\$7,000.00
Harwinton	Index Re-creation Paper Conservation	\$7,000.00
Kent	Paper Conservation On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
Killingly	Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00

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<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount</b>
New Haven	Preservation Microfilming	\$17,000.00
North Haven	On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
North Stonington	Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00
Plainfield	Paper Conservation Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000.00
Plymouth	Preservation Microfilming Archival Storage Equipment Archival Supplies	\$7,000.00
Pomfret	Computer Equipment/Software	\$7,000.00
Putnam	Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00
Roxbury	Computer Equipment/Software	\$7,000.00
Sharon	Preservation Microfilming Archival Supplies	\$7,000.00
Somers	Index Re-creation On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
Southbury	On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
Southington	On-line access and retrieval	\$12,000.00
Sprague	On-line access and retrieval Archival Supplies Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000.00
Sterling	On-line access and retrieval Records Management Implementation	\$7,000.00
Suffield	Preservation Microfilming Computer Equipment/Software Document Reformatting (Microfilming & Imaging) On-line access and retrieval	\$7,000.00
Trumbull	Paper Conservation On-line access and retrieval	\$12,000.00
Union	On-line access and retrieval Computer Equipment/Software	\$7,000.00
Vernon	On-line access and retrieval	\$12,000.00
Voluntown	Preservation Microfilming Archival Supplies Paper Conservation	\$7,000.00
Washington	Paper Conservation Archival Supplies	\$7,000.00
Weston	Archival Storage Equipment Computer Equipment/Software Document Reformatting (Microfilming & Imaging)	\$7,000.00
Windham	Paper Conservation	\$7,000.00
Wolcott	Paper Conservation Document Reformatting	\$7,000.00
Woodbridge	Index Re-creation	\$7,000.00
<b>Total Awarded</b>		<b>\$376,000.00</b>

**NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ADMINISTRATOR**

Connecticut State Library  
231 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106-1537  
Return Service Requested

Phone: 860-566-1100 x301  
Fax: 860-566-1118  
Email: [lpower@cslib.org](mailto:lpower@cslib.org)  
Web Site: [www.cslib.org/publicrecord/histdoc/](http://www.cslib.org/publicrecord/histdoc/)

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This newsletter is published semi-annually by the Office of the Public Records Administrator. Please send submissions to:

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## Financial Report

### Historic Documents Preservation Fund

Receipts FY2008	\$ 753,602
Interest accrued FY2008	\$ <u>31,757</u>
<b>Total income FY2008</b>	<b>\$ 785,359</b>

*(as of December 2007)*

### Grants to Towns & Municipalities

Grant funds received <i>(70% of income)</i>	\$ 549,751
Grant balance carried from previous FY	\$ <u>2,311,732</u>
<b>Total Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$2,851,483</b>

*(as of December 2007)*

Grants Awarded FY2008	
<i>Targeted</i>	\$ 1,138,000
<i>Competitive</i>	\$ <u>379,847</u>
<b>Total Awarded</b>	<b>\$ 1,517,847</b>

<b>Grant Funds Available for FY2009</b>	<b>\$ 1,333,636</b>
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### *Southington Records Management Act (Continued from page 5)*

weeks ago and actually complimented me for being willing to take on the "records disaster" that existed in town hall. The department managers are committed to continuing the process so that they are not buried under piles again. Since the beginning of the project, we have disposed of 31,615 lbs or over 14 tons of paper. Records retrieval from the center is now a simple process.

In 2008, we plan to apply for another competitive grant to continue our project. The remaining four departments in town hall, having witnessed the benefits, are literally "begging" to be incorporated into the plan.

## Reminder Dates/Upcoming Events

### **Municipal Treasures: *Unlocking the Secrets in Your Town's Archival Records***

**Date:** June 12, 2008  
**Location:** The Van Block Facility of the Connecticut State Library, Hartford, CT  
**Instructors:** State Archivist Mark Jones, Assistant State Archivist Bruce Stark, Government Archivist Paul Baran

(Registration information will be forthcoming)