



# Winter Newsletter

Volume24

January 2008



## Goodwins Honored

by Pauline M. Golec

John and Catherine Goodwin, Society members and leaders, were recent recipients of Community Teamwork Inc. President's Local Heroes Award. Their more than a century of service to the community was acknowledged by a capacity audience at CTI's Annual award dinner.

Some, just some, of John's many affiliations and activities include long involvement with the Boy Scouts, pipe organ tuner and player, and membership in railroad historical societies (served as National Secretary of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society). A life-long member of St. Anne's Episcopal Church, he had formerly been its treasurer.

Catherine had served on the Board of Directors of the Lowell Mental Health Association, the Florence Crittenton League, and the International Institute. She is a past president of the Whistler House Museum of Art, where her

interest in folk art and Lowell artists led to valuable research.

But their contributions in the area of local history is a hallmark of the Goodwin team. Both have served on the Society's Board of Directors and John has also been president. A former college professor of textiles, John was an early advocate of bringing the National Park Service to Lowell. Catherine's interest in cemeteries resulted in her writing and rewriting the popular *Mourning Glory*, a history of Lowell Cemetery. Her tours of this cemetery, where she is a trustee, are legendary. Both Catherine and John have shared their knowledge of local history with many, including both professional and amateur historians. They have presented programs on a variety of topics. Local history extends beyond the city boundaries and the Goodwins belong to the Chelmsford and Dracut Historical Societies.

John and Catherine's efforts to make local history known and relevant are gifts to the community--gifts and their ripple effects which will continue as their legacy.

## Lowell Historical Society Seeking Increased Participation

The Lowell Historical Society is seeking to establish a list of members interested in serving on the Board and/or on Board sub-committees. If interested please send a brief resume highlighting your particular interests and experience to: LHS PO Box 1826 Lowell, MA 01853 Attention: Marie Sweeney. The Board of the Historical Society includes:

- |                              |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Denise Cailler, Pres.        | Jack Perry        |
| Cliff Hoyt, Vice Pres,       | Stephanie Donahue |
| Lewis T. Karabatsos, Tres.   | Gray Fitzsimons   |
| Marie P. Sweeney, Clerk      | Pauline Golec     |
| Martha Mayo, Librarian       | Tom Langan        |
| Shirley Rathbun, Genealogist | Dora St. Martin   |
| Phil Belanger                | John Goodwin      |

# Growing Up in Lowell VII

## 50ish Years Ago

### Best Time of Our Teen Lives in Lowell

by Bob McCarthy

St. Stanislaus School '54 & Keith Academy '58

*(Caution: Don't track down old schoolmates who are involved with the Lowell Historical Society, Pauline Golec, for example, as you might be corralled into writing one of these memory pieces).*

June '54 onward - I was having cold sweats thinking about going to jail in a couple of months...Keith Academy, a former jail...remember? I was one of the half-breeds... Irish-Polish, graduating from the now sadly closed, after almost 100 years, St. Stanislaus School. (Was one of the 'oldest' graduates, having been there since age 2 so that Mom could work in one of the Massachusetts Mills off Bridge Street, making ankle supports for W.W.II paratroopers. I have a flash memory of napping under her sewing machine. Dad was off in the Philippine jungles; a Star 'flag' hung in our window.) Despite St. Stan's Polish basis, my class reflected ethnic Lowell of that time with the likes of Dick Tavares (Portuguese-Polish), Frank Georges (Greek-Polish), and a future athletic star for KA, French-Polish Tom "Chip" Boudreau...my long competitor for grades...well, in addition to, among others, that girly-girl, Helen Gazda. I hear she later became Irish and Assistant Superintendent of the Lowell Public Schools. Chip married that goddess, Jackie Bourgeois. Dang, his too-early death...what? fiftyish? was a real shaker-upper.

During those teen years I have memories of being a cowboy/frontiersman exploring (without the tether of a cell phone) the back country of Parker's pasture between Rt.3 and Stevens St. or exploring with my Red Ryder (that actually did ricochet once between my eyes!) through the underbrush across from the Harvard Brewery along Hale's Brook (now obliterated by the Connector) up to the 'poor farm' off Chelmsford St, or almost 'wetting our pants' during a winter adventure watching our group's 'lead man' (future LHS football star) Herky McGrade step through the Brook's ice as we almost made it to shore keeping our shoes dry, or pedaling our Uno-Speed, clunky, non-titanium bikes the 15ish miles without bike lanes to Concord on Patriot's Day. Anybody remember watching Vincent Price through the red-blue glasses in one of the first 3-D thrillers, House of Wax, at the Whatchamacallit theater on Paige St. up from Keith's Theater, or eating potato chips that came in a box from Pete's on the Boulevard, or seeing drag racing blossom with the opening

of the VFW Highway at Bridge St., or sticking a firecracker in the hole of a street pole followed by a marble and using a 'punk' to light the fuse that hung out?

Who could've predicted that we would never eat anything close to Nichol's batter-fried Fish ('n Chips) on Bridge St. (next to my grandparents Pater's Meat Market) or it wouldn't be safe to hitch hike or that we wouldn't have to be home when the street light came on, but I digress.

I'd venture to guess that all of us teens of the era didn't realize until much later, that Lowell was the best place for any teen to live at any time. After school, it was packing into Brigham's or the Epicure or having the Peacock Lady (Bless her heart) seat us at the Dutch Tea Room. This was a great opportunity for those of us guys who were "athletically challenged" as the jocks had to stay at school to practice...if you get my drift. I never quite figured out who stood out more... the kids from Lowell High in their cool street clothes or us guys from KA with our required shirts and ties and the gals from "Saan Jaan", Keith Hall and Notre Dame (that's "a" as in "arm" in Dame) in their developmentally suppressing jumper uniforms.

For our extra curricula, we now needed more money than we got cutting grass or running errands. We moved on to real after school/summer jobs...hoeing/baling hay on a farm way out on Marsh Hill Road in Dracut, painting yellow sign poles on Rt. 3, dishwashing at Tewksbury State Hospital if our Dad had some political pull for those 6 week summer job "appointments", driving a Diamond/Yellow Cab for hours until 2 AM, or working in a dental lab making molds from teeth impressions...if you got dentures lately, the process is still the same!

Most of all, it was time to leave behind Ma Whitney at the Hi-Hat prepubescent awakenings that occurred side-by-side roller skating on Saturday afternoons to an organ's rendition of the Blue Tango. We were moving on to the weekly record hops at the gyms of the Immaculate, KA, etc. to do cheek-to-cheek slow dancing to the likes of Earth Angel or Only You ...frustratingly broken apart by Rock Around the Clock or possibly by a "good" brother at KA.

Remember? Gals sitting along the sides of the dance floor...guys standing in the dim lit back and at times cruising down the sides to surreptitiously check out the possibilities....the DJ from WCAP on a stage spinning 45s and taking requests. No such thing as air-conditioning....gals fretting that their doos would go flat or frizzy or not being asked to dance...guys sweating lest they be seen walking across the floor, asking for a dance, and being turned down....a guy's first lesson about who's in charge.

For guys, this was all preceded by putting on navy blue pegged pants, rubbing on some Vaseline (don't get ahead of



me) or a dab of Brylcreem for a good DA if you didn't have a wiffle, putting on a splash of Dad's Old Spice and a Seidel ID bracelet, knotting a narrow, blue tie on a French-cuffed!! pink shirt, slipping on an off-white sports coat, and pocketing plenty of Beechnut gum...yes Dad, I have a handkerchief. For gals, it would be sacrificially sitting under a plastic hair-drying dome while deciding whether to wear a puffed out crinoline dress/skirt (that took up a whole car) or a girdled-tight (but still appropriate in length) skirt with a fuzzy angora sweater for her charming ensemble. Gawd, it would be awesome to whiff freckled Mimi LeCam's Tweed perfume sitting by the now gone reservoir on Fairmont St., or go gaga watching Capt. Evelyn Coughlin smart-stepping in a parade down Merrimack Street in her navy blue, brass-buttoned LHS Girl Officer's uniform, white tennies, and saber.

The best frappes were at Glennies It was so popular that you quite often had to use the overflow parking lot across the Boulevard by the bath/boat house where you could check out the submarine races FOR FREE.... but again I digress.

A hundred plus bucks for a Big Name concert today...HA! On Friday nights just before "Goodnight Sweetheart, Well It's Time To Go" at the Holy Trinity Polish Youth Center on High Street, the newest gym, we would have 15 minutes of The Four Lads, The Four Freshmen, or Jerry Vale who'd come by from gigs at the Blue Moon or some club around Boston....and all for our 50 cents admission! On Saturday nights, if we were lucky to look the age, we could step into a completely different musical era with our "steady" at the Commodore Ballroom for dancing to Bob Bachelder's live, tuxed, twenty-odd piece big band sound and sway to the classics.

I don't think any teen generation anywhere in the intervening years has been able to enjoy life being between the two greatest forms of music and dancing...one being born and the other passing on. Gawd, we were so blessed with places to have fun...no rampant alcohol or drugs.... OK, some of us smoked cigarettes..ah Lucky Strikes...no drive-bys, not to be confused with drive-ins. Lastly, if we were really lucky, we might see how we personally spent the weekend by reading "Teen Talk" written by cute/perky Peggy O'Brien in Sunday's *Lowell Sun*. Bitter-sweet memories are made of this. Thanks to many, many other un-named Gals and Guys who lit up my life.

[*"Baab" is now a "reetieyud" Clinical Psychologist (like his yearbook said) living in New Mexico "weighya" there aren't any frappes, tonic, "oa awesum lobsta rolls" but where red and green chile is the state veggie. His email addy is [albugbob@comcast.net](mailto:albugbob@comcast.net).]*

## Notes from the Publication Committee

by Pauline M. Golec, Chair

Have you read any good books lately, specifically any Lowell-related books? Although this column is usually about the Society's nonfiction publications, I offer the following personal observations about two books of fiction, each of which features a girl in her early teens who comes of age in Lowell.

*South Station*, a fairly recent book, written by first time novelist Alice Barton takes place during the middle 1940s. Southern born Honey Lee Murphy, whose father is killed in World War II, arrives in Lowell with her mother to live with her paternal grandmother. Mother soon bolts. Coping with her double loss, Honey, nevertheless, has a lot going for her; her Nana loves her and she has beauty, loyal friends, top rank in the Lowell High School Girl Officers Battalion, enamored suitors, and a college scholarship. But Honey, moral and churchgoing, wants something else. This causes conflict and turmoil. What finally happens? I won't tell for fear of spoiling the ending for potential readers.

Set 100 years earlier, *Lyddie* was written by Katherine Paterson, recognized author of several books for children and young adults. This novel is about 15 years old. As the story unfolds, Lyddie's father has deserted his debt-ridden, poor Vermont farm and family. Her mother, suffering from mental illness, has run off with the two youngest children. Brave and barely literate, Lyddie is determined to earn money to save the farm, unite her family, and become independent. She believes she will accomplish all by becoming a "mill girl" in Lowell. Through hard work in the early days of the Industrial Revolution and various experiences with memorable characters, Lyddie does save the farm and becomes a changed person with different aspirations.

For Lowell natives of a certain age, *South Station* evokes memories of rigid expectations, certain rituals (hot dogs and beans on Saturday, Field Day) and places (specific streets, stores, churches). Indeed, the book teems with sometimes superfluous "place dropping." Although a careful reader of *Lyddie* will find a suggestion that Lowell was a woolen rather than cotton manufacturing center, there are strong realistic descriptions of a weave room and the lives of the mill operatives. *South Station* could be read by teens, while *Lyddie*, targeted for middle school, has mass attraction. I thought Honey Lee a sympathetic character but lacking in the dimensionality and appeal of the plucky Lyddie.

I had fun reading *South Station*, but I found reading (and rereading) *Lyddie* to be a rewarding and enriching experience.

# LHS Corporate Memberships

The Lowell Historical Society proudly acknowledge our Corporate members (both 2007 & 2008) who demonstrated their organizations's commitment to the preservation of Lowell's past and the dissemination of information to keep Lowell's heritage alive in the future. The following organizations have made this commitment:

**Anstiss & Co. PC**  
**Belanger & Foley, Inc**  
**CarStar Atlantic Collision Center**  
**Central Plaza Realty, LLC**  
**Evan Coravos, DMD, PC**  
**D.J. Reardon Co.**  
**D'Youville Senior Care**  
**Enterprise Bank**  
**Frank P. McCartin Co., Inc.**  
**Law Office of Elizabeth Broderick**  
**Lowell All-Americans Baseball**  
**Lowell Co-Operative Bank**  
**Lowell Five Cents Savings Bank**  
**Lowell General Hospital**  
**Mazur Park Apartments**  
**Wyman's Exchange, Inc.**

We would like to add the listing of your company here in the future.

## 2008 Corporate Membership

Enclosed is a \$100 tax deductible gift for a Corporate Membership in the Lowell Historical Society.

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State : \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Number of Employees: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to Lowell Historical Society, PO Box 1826,  
Lowell, MA 01853

## From Factory Floor to Living Room Preservation in Lowell as Economic Development

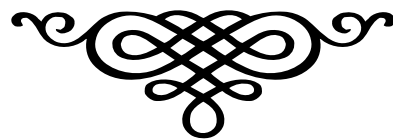
The Lowell Historical Society is proud to sponsor Peter Aucella's presentation: From Factory Floor to Living Room. History of downtown Lowell office buildings and factories converted to living spaces.

Date: Saturday, February 9, 2008, 2:00 p.m.

Location: Pollard Memorial Library  
401 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 01852

Peter J. Aucella has been the Assistant Superintendent for Development, Lowell National Historical Park since 1995. He is involved in development of canal walkways, the restoration of an historic railroad depot, expansion of the Park's vintage trolley system, and working with the City and private developers on the rehabilitation and reuse of historic commercial, residential and industrial buildings.

Mr. Aucella holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's in Public Administration, both from Northeastern University, and a Law Degree from Suffolk University School of Law. He has held positions at the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Massachusetts Bureau of Transportation Planning and Development and was the Community Development Coordinator for two mayors of the City of Malden. He served as Director of Economic Development on the staff of former United States Senator Paul Tsongas.



## Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. Whose home was the original St. Joseph's Hospital?
2. What invention was demonstrated in Lowell in 1877?
3. When was Lowell High School's basketball team, New England Champions?
4. Where was the first known public speech by a woman in America given?
5. Who served as a Representative in Congress from the Lowell District the longest?

Answers are on the Page 5.

# EBAY Auctions of Lowell Interest

**James Cook Insurance Envelope:** This Patriotic / Advertising envelope, dated October 3, 1861, was from the insurance company belonging to James Cook, Lowell Mass. James Cook had been the Mayor of Lowell in 1859. Additionally, he was the Uncle of James C. Ayer of Cherry Pectoral & Sarsaparilla fame (and Ayer Lofts). In 1835, James Cook invited the young Ayer to come to Lowell to live so that his nephew could expand his education. James Ayer ended up establishing his company in Lowell and the rest is history. The price was \$61 plus 1.25 shipping.



**Old Souvenir China Shoe:** This is an Old Souvenir China Shoe made in Germany but is a Souvenir of Lowell. It is 4 inches tall and is pink with gold text and accents. The price was \$86.25 plus \$4.60 shipping



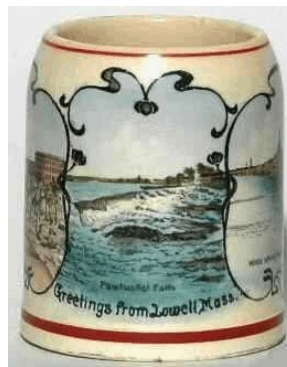
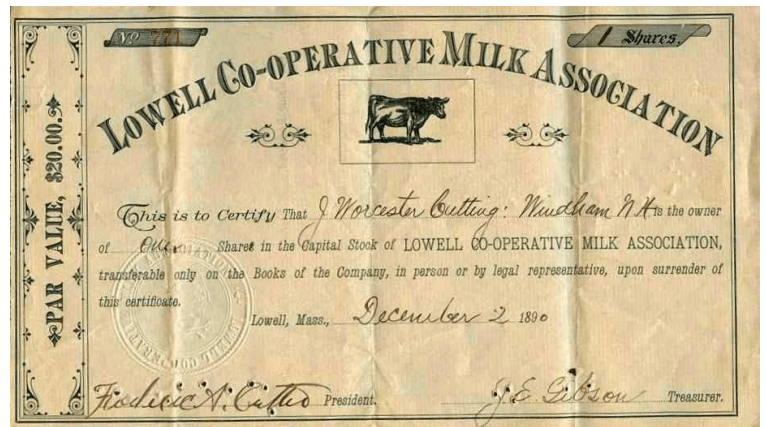
**Souvenir Stein, Lowell Mass.:** →→→ →→→  
3 1/8" Tall souvenir stein for LOWELL MASS. with three color scenes. Front scene - has Greetings from Lowell Mass. below a picture of Pawtucket Falls, side scenes of Mill along the River Bank and Lowell textile school. The bottom is marked "Made in Germany". It was in excellent condition with no chips or cracks. The price was \$110 + \$5.50 shipping

**Hood's Sarsaparilla Poster:** The poster (41 1/2H x 28W inches) is dated 1896 and is by artist Willliam H. Bradley (1868-1962). The poster is mounted on board and

has some tape stains through margins. The poster was lithographed in five colors. The C.I. Hood factory is still standing over on Thorndike St. with the word Hood's still faintly visible on the tall smoke stack. The price was \$9,000 including buyer premium plus shipping.



**Milk Association Stock Certificate:** Lowell Milk Co-op Certificate for one share with a value of \$20. The share was originally issued to J. Worcester Cutting on December 2, 1890 and later sold in February of 1899. The eBay price was \$32 plus shipping.



## Answers to Trivia Questions:

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Lowell Historical Society

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**The preservation of Lowell history depends heavily on your membership. If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal for 2008, please do so as soon as possible.**

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## *Lowell Historical Society*

*The Lowell Historical Society's Mission is to collect, preserve and publish materials related to Lowell and to promote the study of the history of the City.*

*We are located at the Boott Cotton Mills Museum, 115 John Street, Fourth Floor, Downtown Lowell Massachusetts 01852.*

*The office is open 9:00 am to 12:00 Noon on Monday and Wednesday. The site telephone number is 978-970-5180 or on the Web at: <http://ecommunity.uml.edu/lhs>.*

## **Calendar of Events**

**Program:** **Cotton & Slaves: The Fiber that Changed American Slavery** - Cotton fueled mills at Lowell; it contributed millions to the national economy; it also demanded a high human price. Susan O'Donovan explores the hidden costs. Sponsored by the Parker Lectures

**Date:** Sunday, January 27, 2008, 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** National Park Visitor Center, 246 Market St., Lowell

**Program:** Peter Aucella's presentation: **From Factory Floor to Living Room Preservation in Lowell as Economic Development** (see article on Page 4)

**Date:** Saturday, February 9, 2008, 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** Pollard Memorial Library  
401 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 01852

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**Program:** **100th Anniversary Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church** - The centennial of the opening of Lowell's Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, a National Register of Historic Places property, will serve as a backdrop for discussing the history of the city's early Greek settlers and their community.

**Date:** Saturday, March 15, 2008, 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** UML South Campus Room 222, Student Union, Wilder St.