

Historian's Notebook

by George Blanchard

September 21st is the 71st anniversary of the "Great New England Hurricane."

I was looking through my mother's papers and found a copy of a letter she wrote to her sister in Chicago, describing what she went through that day. We lived in a 14 room house with a large attached shed and barn which was originally my grandfather's farm on Salisbury St. what is now Butternut Hill Drive. She mentions Leon (my dad), Hartwell (my brother), and 90 year old Aunt Nell. I was 8 years old at the time.

"Leon has gone to choir, George is abed, and Aunt Nell is sitting here by the stove. It has been a cold rainy day and the fire feels good. We still haven't got our electricity. The dear old kerosene lamps have been a godsend.

"To say it was terrifying is putting it mildly and as fast as things happened, to keep them from Aunt Nell, kept me humping. George was a brick though naturally had reason to be frightened.

"It began to rain again quite hard after he had gotten into the bus at school and in very quick time the wind blew fierce and oh how the windows rattled, especially the upper pane in the left front bay window. I succeeded in putting in a lot of tiny nails as the putty was mostly off, and that held throughout but the lower sash blew in or out - gone anyway.

"The first window to go was in the upper hall and George helped me find boards in the barn. We only had a flashlight for when the first tree fell I turned off the electricity. My wasn't it lucky that we had boards to

turn to but how I hated to make holes in the beautiful cherry woodwork. The boards were all widths and lengths and we stuffed in cloth too.

"It all seems like a nightmare, but there was so much going on inside I never saw a tree fall and, if you believe me, 9/10ths of the trees here are down flat; apple, pear, cherry and those mammoth ones by the house. Somehow they seem like people and our children and grandchildren will never see such magnificent trees. The most terrible of all is the loss of life and especially those that are still missing.

"Oh, if only Leon would come; he usually got home around quarter of 5 and it was 5 past 6 when I heard him at the window. The bus he was on got as far as Park Ave. and how he managed to reach the house without getting struck was a miracle for he said trees and limbs were falling around him.

"By that time 5 windows had gone upstairs you can never know the strength it took to shut and lock the various doors in each room, even so, how they rattled because of the suction. In the meantime I had been to the attic twice, wondering if the skylight was OK and thankful to see it was. It was while I was upstairs that Aunt Nell hollered up 'the dining room window has gone and the shade too' - where they went I haven't discovered. She grabbed a bottle of ink which was mighty level headed and also wanted to take pictures off the piano but didn't dare to linger. I got a chair for her by the kitchen stove and then went into the room. You never saw such a mess; papers, magazines and even the

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dining room chairs went over on their sides. She was lucky for over her chair and the table was part of the plaster ceiling.

"Then I went upstairs again and found bedroom ceilings down. I surely thought the skylight was off but no, 6 of the 7 windows were gone and that caused such a suction that it burst the ceilings. In all 19 windows were gone. The middle and main part of the roof was tin and that blew off and landed 100 feet away. Leon could hardly lift it and thought it probably weighed 250 lb.

"The large tree that went over is what kept the front door from bursting in. It formed a screen.

"And goodness knows why the barn escaped. The big door buckled and part was torn off. Eleven windows, sash, frames and all blew out but very little damage to the barn. Because the buildings were so well made they are still standing."

An addition to the letter, dated October 2 - "Hurrah, my electricity is back on. My we were fortunate to have kerosene lamps. Much better than candles would have been these 11 days. But those lamps wouldn't make the washing machine go!!"

I remember the storm vividly - 71 years later. We were unable to stay in the house and moved to a third floor apartment on Highland St. near Elm Park. Quite a difference from a large house and barn on 10 acres of land to a city apartment with no yard. At least we had Elm Park even though we were not allowed to play ball there, but that's another story.

The buildings were all taken down piece by piece a year and a half later.



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Stephen Burrows | 5 |
| Kara Healey | 9 |
| Tom Murray | 12 |
| Rick Robillard | 15 |
| Rebecca Schultzberg | 19 |
| Freja Hansen | 20 |
| Marilyn Kerr | |
| Lynne O'Brien | 21 |
| Connie Stewart | 22 |
| Noelle Demers | 25 |
| Tara Pavao | 28 |
| Michele Merenda | 29 |
| Lynne Roethel | |
| David Maas | 30 |

UNITED TO HOST I.H.N.

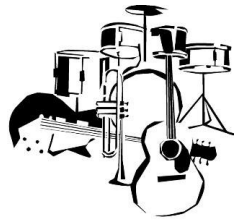
Our church will be hosting homeless families for the Interfaith Hospitality Network the week of September 6-13, 2009. Volunteers are needed to serve as hosts, cook dinner, or unload supplies. If you are interested in serving, or just want to find out more about I.H.N., stop by the information table in the church parlor after worship, or call co-coordinators Tim Camp at 508-798-6997, or Dr. Mary Flynn at 413-687-1393.



**JAZZ Brunch — Sundays
Music Festival**

**September 20, 27
October 4**

on the lawn at United, immediately following worship until 12:30 p.m.



Come and enjoy the weather, the music, and the food (rain or shine)

FREE

Everyone is invited!!

A NIGHT OF GOSPEL MUSIC

A fundraiser to benefit
AIDS Project Worcester

Friday, September 25

United Congregational Church



Doors open at 5:30 p.m.
Program at 6:00 p.m.

Purchase tickets at
AIDS Project Worcester
85 Green Street,
Worcester, MA

Tickets are \$20 in advance and
\$25 at the door

**The Business of Life/End of Life
Planning Workshop
September 19 10 a.m.-12 noon
FREE**

**All Saints Church, Corner of
Pleasant & Irving Sts.,
Worcester, MA**

Brief presentations on the following three sections will be provided:

- **Medical Directives, Proxies, and Hospice**
- **Planning Your Services**
- **Preparing to Write Your Will**

For more information, and to sign up, please contact The Rev. Kevin Bean at 508-752-3766 x13 or kevin@allsaintsw.org

THE FOOD CUPBOARD NEEDS



**CANNED MEATS & FISH
CANNED BEANS • SOUPS
MAC & CHEESE • PASTA & SAUCE
CEREAL • POWDERED MILK
CANNED FRUITS & VEGGIES
PEANUT BUTTER**

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS



A BIG THANK YOU goes to all who have provided cold drinks and sweets following worship this summer!

In September, our regular coffee hour provided by teams will resume after church each Sunday. We are looking for a volunteer to assist Miriam Montalvo, making 6 teams.

Additional volunteers are also welcome. The coffee, cream, juice, and paper products are supplied by the church. Your job includes starting the coffee, providing snacks, and to serve and clean up. With 6 teams, each team serves coffee once every 6 weeks. Call the church office if you would like further information. 508-752-3785.

**The
GREEN ROOSTER
CoffeeHouse**

Doors open 7:30
All shows 8:00 p.m.
508-798-3010



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|--|---|
| | BE SURE TO WATCH FOR AN EXCITING NEW SEASON STARTING IN OCTOBER! |
| | Thanks for dropping in! We always need volunteers. |

W A Y S (Workdays for Adults and Youth in Service) is the **Mission Travel Bureau** of the **Worcester Area Mission Society, UCC**. We are committed to creating an environment in which adults and youth may foster relationships while using a diversity of skills and talents to offer much needed services requested by local residents and area agencies.

Current Calendar

September 26, 2009

Central Massachusetts WAYS day
October 17

WAYS/MACUCC Youth Group
Workday in Central Mass.

October 9-12

Meeting Ground, Cecil County MD

January 2-9 & 9-16, 2010

MACUCC partner church in
Louisiana

March 6-14

La Romana, Dominican Republic

April 17-24

MACUCC partner church in
Louisiana

May 1

Central Massachusetts WAYS day
July 10-17

Native American Reservation,
Yakama Christian Mission, WA

July 24-29

Worcester Area Local Mission
Retreat

For more information, please call the church office/508-752-3785

For ticket information call 508-755-3773 or email info@aidspjorctworcester.org