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Madison Speaks

James Madison, the fourth president, and "The Father of Our Constitution," made the following statement: "We have staked the whole of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God."

How have we gotten to the point that everything we have done for 220 years in this country is now suddenly wrong and unconstitutional?

Parties Unfocused

With the current ban on automatic weapons due to end soon, it seems as though our political parties are clearly unfocused. President Bush said, "If Congress will pass legislation extending the bill, I will sign it."

That is like saying, "If we get snow tomorrow in Texas I'll give insurance to the mil-

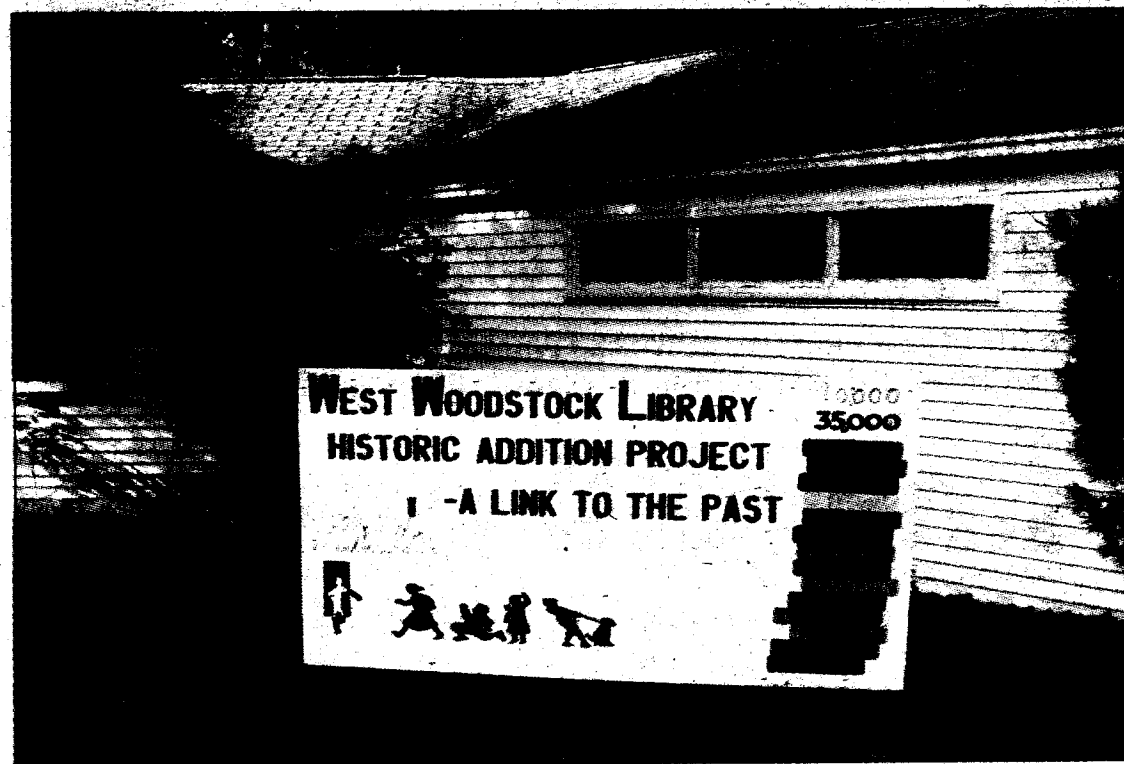
West Woodstock Library New Addition, Law Office Renovation Result of Community Efforts

BY C. L. KELLY
THE REMINDER

WOODSTOCK — This past summer, West Woodstock library (WWL) patrons have been detoured around the yawning gap of a once intact small front yard in order to access the one story white clapboard structure. But the slight inconvenience will be worth it, because as summer yields to early fall, the slow incremental process of an addition designed to add more room to the tiny library is gradually taking shape.

"It's been very cramped," said chairman of the building committee, Gail White, about the original building. "You'd be surprised how many books are on the shelves. The existing library has about 5,000. We have a spectacular children's section."

The approximate third of an acre that houses the existing library presented just enough room for the erection of an 1820's historic law office that was previously dismantled, and a new section that will connect the one-room law office to the library.



STACKING UP. About \$30,000 have been raised through donations, fund raisers and matching funds from Quinebaug Shetucket Heritage Corridor for West Woodstock Library's new addition that will connect to the soon-to-be erected and restored historic John F. William's law office. Photo by C. L. Kelly.

"We plan for this connection to house 2,000 books," said White, who has been a Woodstock resident and neighbor to the library for seven years. "This will give

us more elbow room as the existing shelves were made for books that were smaller. Modern books just take up more space."

The John F. William's law

office, which was used from the early 1900s through the 1950s as a library by the West Woodstock community, is similar in design

(See "Library" inside)

Library Expansion Underway

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Sure footing. Cement footings that have been meticulously placed in the ground for West Woodstock Library's new addition and erection of the dismantled John F. William's historic law office, await the placement of foundational walls. Volunteers and subcontractors have helped and will continue to help with the moderately priced project. Photo by C. L. Kelly.

— and size to the McClellan law office that was donated by Woodstock to Sturbridge Village.

According to White, who is also educational curator at Roseland Cottage, just a handful of these original law buildings exist in Connecticut.

"They're used as sheds and then they fall apart," she said. "We're going to restore the interior as it was in the 1820s. Early historical books and displays will be put in there. We're going to use it as an historical reference space."

The former law office was in a lamentable condition before the building committee hatched the idea of moving the building closer to the existing library and renovating it through the assistance of Peter Hamm, of Historic Restorations, Ltd., Wales, MA. "That is why it had to be dismantled," White said. "It just didn't have the strength to survive the travel down the road. Yet, every possible piece that was practical to be saved was saved."

Besides preserving the antiquated law office, the association's goal to expand and improve the existing facilities was championed by Quinebaug Shetucket Heritage Corridor, which through two grants (historic preservation and partnership) provided a total of \$15,000 to match monies either funds raised or donated to the association. Volunteer hours also counted towards the matching fund requirement. Ongoing donations and fund-raising will be necessary to complete the project, which also includes replacing an "ancient" and woefully inadequate gas burner for winter heating.

"This will answer our needs for years to come without being extravagant," White said. "We've been very prudent."

The building committee chair also credited generous contractors for stretching the ample individual donation dollars even further. "We've been able to purchase materials at a reduced rate," she added, naming helpful companies and individuals: Marcus Johnson of Senexet Landscaping, Mason Chuck McWilliams, Jolley Concrete, Chase Building Supply and Eastford Building Supply.

"Without the great community support we've received, we would be unable to do this project," White admitted.

The library is also revamping their card catalog system.

"We had to do a complete inventory to put everything on the computer," said Librarian Pat Pelloth about the preparations for an electronic database that will offer a more easily accessed search and tracking system. "Craig Tyler is someone from our board who is very knowledgeable about computers and he's inputting the information. It will probably take a year."

The library would like "computer-savvy" volunteers who could donate one to two hours per week assisting with these efforts. Also, enthusiastic volunteer workers with carpentry skills are needed to help with the new connection construction, whether that means seeing the project through to its end, or committing only an hour or two.

Please call Gail White at 974-1875 or WWL at 974-0376 with questions or to volunteer. The West Woodstock Library is located at 5 Bungay Hill Connector, Woodstock Valley. The library's email is: wwlibrary@access-4-free.com. The library plans to host a fundraiser some time in October.

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