



Laconia Area Community Land Trust

Mechanic School Open & Fully Occupied

Thresholds Newsletter



Pictured from left to right: Gloria Paradise, Community Development Finance Authority; Armand Bolduc, Laconia Mayor Pro-Tem; Linda Harvey, LACLT; Mrs. Jane Kneur, former pupil, Clair Monier, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, and Mrs. Claire Clark, former pupil.

The Mechanic School ribbon cutting ceremony held on October 27, 2006, drew quite a crowd. The diverse group consisted of 75+ neighbors, former students and teachers, city officials, project partners, LACLT staff, members, supporters, tenants, and the press.

LACLT outgoing Board President, Bob Curtis, welcomed the group. He revealed that the school, which originally cost \$14,000 to build in 1906, had just been completely rehabbed by LACLT for \$1.3 million. Bob expressed our pride in preserving this historic school building and giving it new life as permanently affordable rental housing--a community asset.

Laconia Mayor Pro-Tem, Armand Bolduc, spoke on behalf of the City of Laconia. He fondly recalled working at the school as an electrical contractor during a 1961 remodeling. Bolduc called LACLT's revitalization of the school, "a good addition to the neighborhood".

Next to speak was Clair Monier, Executive Director of the NH Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA). Monier said NHHFA was happy to partner once again with LACLT on this project. She expressed her hope that onlookers understood how difficult projects like this Mechanic School project were to complete. "They take a great deal of community support and perseverance." she said.

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Mechanic School Continued

Gloria Paradise, Housing and Community Facilities Director of the NH Community Development Finance Authority (NHCDFA) told the audience, “The CDFA was excited to have been involved in creating rental units affordable to people who live and work in the community”. She said LACLT’s application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding scored so competitively it received \$425,000 of the \$4.5 million budget allotted for the entire state. She said “It’s all about bringing federal tax dollars to Laconia and to NH”. She asked the audience, if they ever had a chance to do so, to “Tell a politician that CDBG grants are a good thing because we need more in NH.”

We were so fortunate to locate the next speakers, Mrs. Claire Clark and Mrs. Jane Kneur, who were both pupils at the Mechanic School in the early 1940’s. Mrs. Clark wrote a very special poem specifically for the occasion which appears below. Mrs. Kneur painted a picture for the crowd as she recalled faded, but good, memories of jumping rope, holiday parties, and songs of Thanksgiving and Christmas. She said her wonderful school days inspired her to become a teacher. For future residents at the Mechanic School, she read a slightly modified version of Bless This House, which appears on the next page.

The program concluded with the formal ribbon cutting followed by an open house with refreshments.

Mechanic Street School By Mrs. Claire Clark



Pictured: Mrs. Claire Clark

I scurry up the hill to Mechanic Street,
The falling autumn leaves rustling at my feet,

In a rush of memories, who is that I see?
A little girl with pigtails, is that really me?

The schoolhouse looms above me, so massive and so tall,
Funny how the world’s so big when you’re so very small,

Oh! She looks foreboding to a child of six,
Standing guard upon the hill with her face of bricks,

I swing back the oaken door and see the kids I knew,
Lining up in single file the way we used to do,

There’s Russell, John, and David; Mary, Jane and
Beth,
Some I’ll long remember, some I’ll soon forget,

The old bell clangs, we all join in,
“My Country Tis of Thee”,

And that is how the day began in 1943.



Picture taken at the Mechanic Street School in 1943

**Modified Version of Bless this House
Read by Mrs. Jane Kneur at the
Mechanic School Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

Bless this building, oh God we pray
Make it safe by night and day
Bless these walls so firm and stout
Keep you warm and trouble out
Bless the room and chimney's tall
Let thy peace be over all
Bless this door that it may prove
Ever open to joy and love



Pictured (not in order): Former Mechanic School teachers and students Ed Brady, Claire Clark, Jerri Dean, Kirk (Dick) Dougal, Olive Smith Haddock, Marion Harris, Jane Murgatroy Kneuer, Sue Page, and Sandra Stafford

LACLT Welcomes New Board Members



Pictured: LACLT's Board of Directors: Front from left to right, Chair, Patty Pike; Secretary, Karen Gallant; Linda Morse; and Ellen Castro. Rear from left to right Dwight Barton; Elaine Miller; Carol Bickford; Kim Cedarstrom; and Treasurer, Stephan Nix. Not pictured Vice Chair, Nancy LeRoy and Kimmel Norwood.

employed and operates Miss Bubbles Cleaning Service. Ellen is a LACLT tenant who lives at Millview. Ellen will serve as Vice-Secretary and Tenant Representative. Kim Cedarstrom lives in Meredith and is a Business Broker with NH Business Sales. Kim will serve as a General Representative. Elaine Miller lives in Laconia and is the Office Manager at Laconia Savings Bank. Elaine will serve as a General Representative. We look forward to working with these new Board Members who come to us with a variety of backgrounds and skills that will benefit LACLT in the coming year.

We were forced to say goodbye to three long-term Board Members in October due to Board term limits. As we said goodbye and expressed our deep gratitude to Board Chair, Bob Curtis; Board Vice Chair, Denise Hubbard; and Board Member, Peter Brothers, we welcomed four new Board Members.

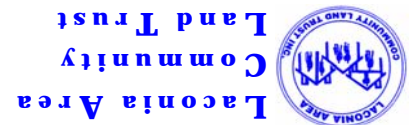
Please join us in welcoming Carol Bickford, Ellen Castro, Kim Cedarstrom, and Elaine Miller to our Board.

Carol Bickford lives in Meredith and is Vice President of Secondary Markets at Meredith Village Savings Bank. Carol will serve as Vice-Treasurer and General Representative to the Board. Ellen Castro is self em-

HomeBuyer Resource Center Offers New Workshop

We are offering a new workshop called **GET THE FACTS**. This 2-hour class is designed for those wondering if it is possible for them to buy a home. In this class, we separate the myths from the facts and help attendees decide if homeownership is right for them. If they decide homeownership is an option, our **FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR** is a great next step in preparing for the entire home-buying process. Get the Facts Workshops are sponsored by Freddie Mac and local banks. The complete seminar and workshop schedule is available on our web site, www.laclt.org.

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Linda L. Harvey



LACLT Working to Protect Against Predatory Lending

LACLT is pleased to announce its participation in the **DON'T BORROW TROUBLE New Hampshire Campaign**, a public education initiative aimed at preventing predatory lending practices in NH. The Campaign seeks to educate families and individuals about how to avoid predatory lending scams and about available community resources. Unfortunately, predatory lenders do not have horns and tails. They seem like nice, friendly, helpful people. The toll free DON'T BORROW TROUBLE help line has been established at 866-623-1302 to offer families a safe place to call before signing anything that puts their home at risk. Information is also available at www.dontborrowtroublenh.org. LACLT is one of seven partners state-wide offering free counseling. The campaign is administered locally by the NH Housing Finance Authority with funding provided by Citizens Bank, Freddie Mac, and HUD.

Our Mission: To assist low and moderate income households achieve economic self-sufficiency through the development of permanently affordable housing opportunities and associated support programs.