



# AVERY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Officers' & Committees' Reports  
(edited for this web site)  
presented at the Annual Meeting  
July 21, 2007  
at Seamens' Inne, Mystic Seaport, Mystic, CT

## President's Report

Good afternoon and welcome to the 112<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting of the Avery Memorial Association. I'm Stephanie Lantiere, your President. I've had a very busy and productive first year in office, and would like to thank my hard-working board for all their efforts in the past year. We started almost immediately after last year's reunion, and worked straight through the end of last summer, through the winter and spring, up to today. We had four well-attended board meetings since the July 2006 Annual Meeting.

Most of you may remember that my platform theme last year was "*Honor the Past by Preserving its Future.*" Recently I was able to have some of my close friends donate two new display cases and a three-drawer legal size file cabinet, which will help display and preserve many of our important artifacts that were stored away, and preserve many of our important documents. We also had a brand new office chair given to us for free.

Last year, I promised that I would have an inventory done. We now have a computer and have hired Alice Sheriff as curator for the Ebenezer Avery House and she is working on computerizing the collection. Also, merchandise for sale has been inventoried. My husband Joe drew up a new computerized floor plan of the House to help with the inventory.

Last year, I promised that the bylaws were going to be updated. It was a lot of hard work, and you will be voting on their acceptance today.

Last year, I promised to publish more newsletters. This past year, we have published three large newsletters, edited by my husband Joe. Membership applications were included in each newsletter.

Last year, I promised to publicize our Association by letting related organizations hear about us. We had several articles published in local newspapers. I had fliers about the Association displayed at the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) in September in Boston, and at the Connecticut Society of Genealogists (CSG) Seminar in October in Cromwell.

Last August, my husband Joe created the new Avery Memorial Association web site. Since then, the website has been visited by over 2,000 people and is in the process of updating it.

In March, we met with the State of Connecticut concerning a new agreement for the Ebenezer Avery House. A draft was given to us at our June board meeting. We are still working on this with the state.

In April, I put up a display table for the Association at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference (NERGC) in Hartford, and gave out information about our Association. We also bought an ad in the conference program book. I also supplied Association information to the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which was placed in their Chapter Guidebooks.

Over the past few months, I called on the phone over 200 members, and also e-mailed quite a few, just to re-open the lines of communication with many of our new and lifetime members.

On July 8<sup>th</sup>, I met with the graphic artist to work on a tri-fold Association flyer of all three Avery sites. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, I attended a Capital Improvement Grant Program meeting in Hartford with the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism.

My husband Joe is creating the Association's first Operations Manual. Also on eight days this summer, he is portraying Joseph Potter, Colonial American Magician, at the Ebenezer Avery House – educational entertainment at no cost to the Association.

Our goals for the upcoming year include:

1. Increasing membership
2. Identifying and pursuing grant opportunities
3. Uprighting and repairing of some more gravestones.
4. Continuing to computer update the Avery genealogies and House Inventory.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Lantiere, President

### **Vice President's Report**

This has been a wonderful year for the Avery Memorial Association. We could not have had a better leader than Stephanie Lantiere who has worked tirelessly since the moment she was elected to the Presidency.

Stephanie and her husband Joe immediately began to put our house in order, making many trips to the Ebenezer Avery headquarters to clean, refurbish and make necessary improvements. Joe has produced 3 excellent newsletters over the course of the year.

Our Association has also been extremely fortunate to have the dedicated services of Stevens Avery, who has labored long and hard to provide us with the legal foundation that we need in order to proceed into the future. He has reinstated our Avery-Morgan Cemetery's 501(C)(13) status. He is also in the final stages of obtaining the Association's 501(C)(3) status that will enable us to reap the benefits of this new classification.

George Avery has updated the by-laws of our association in conformity with our new directions. He and Stevens have also led your board in important discussions with the State of CT Park Service on whose land our family headquarters stands. These complex talks are ongoing and not yet resolved, but we are grateful to have George as our very own pro-bono lawyer.

Lee Moore, who in addition to most ably filling the vacancy of Secretary, has assumed the duties of overseeing the Ebenezer Avery House on behalf of the board. He has met with alarm companies & purchased computer equipment, and because he lives close by in Ledyard, he has made himself available whenever needed.

The advent of Ebenezer Avery House Curator Alice Sheriff is living proof that good things do happen to good family associations. We have had the great fortune to obtain her services from spring to fall, to organize and care for the House and its contents. You will be impressed with the current state of the House when you visit, and hopefully you will feel confident about donating some of your family treasures in the future.

Richard Marquardt continues to be our trusted treasurer. He has overseen the rapid changes in our financial structure, which were mandated by the board to put your Association on a sound footing.

Fred Burdick is the curator of our Avery- Morgan cemetery, and he could not have joined us at a more opportune time, as our ancestral stones cry out for tender loving care. Fred is an expert on this subject and is another godsend for the Association. Please take a look at the CD of the gravestones and the accompanying booklet that Fred produced last year.

As if all this good news wasn't enough, we now have our very own family historian in the person of Vincent Pitts. He brings a background of experience in this work and will be another valuable resource to the Association. The Groton Avery Clan has been a part of every aspect of the history of this nation from its very beginning. This is why it is so vitally important to keep the AMA alive and thriving.

Next year, as chairman of the Long-Range Planning Committee, I will come before you with an outline of our mission & goals for the Association. Hopefully you will feel as positive as your board does about our future & will want to be a part of making this happen.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Avery

Vice President

### **Audit & Finance Committee**

#### **Audit**

The accounting firm of Doherty, Beals & Banks, P.C., Certified Public Accountants, has been retained to do the following:

1. Compile from information provided by the Treasurer and by me, a Fiscal Year 2007 year-end balance sheet and the related statements of income, retained earnings and cash flows of the Association for the year ended June 30, 2007.
2. Review the system of internal control and make suggestions for improvement if needed.
3. Review the bookkeeping records and processes and make suggestions for improvement if needed.

Financial statements were prepared by Richard Marquardt, our Treasurer, with input of the accounting firm. Re-formatted and more comprehensive financial statements are being prepared by the accounting firm for our adoption and future use. We anticipate they will assist in meeting the compliance guidelines for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organizations for which status we are applying. Fred Burdick, who is a nominee for our board, recommended this accounting firm and has had a good experience with them.

### Budget

It is our objective to increase investment income, merchandise sales, membership dues and Ebenezer Avery House visitors' donations to cover our operational expenses. Our primary emphasis in seeking donations will be to fund capital expenditures.

### Grants and Fundraising

Two other areas of primary responsibility for the Finance committee are Grants and Fundraising. Grants will be actively pursued following the obtaining of 501(c)(3) status. A list of potential grants has been compiled and will be evaluated to ascertain which ones should be sought. Similarly, minor fundraising initiatives will be identified and the most promising pursued. Development of a capital campaign will be tied to the establishment of goals and objectives.

Other Association matters attended to this past year are as follows:

1. Reinstatement of the Association's 501(c)(13) tax exempt status. We were informed last August that this tax-exempt status of the Association, as a cemetery company, had been suspended. We filed for reinstatement in December and were notified in February that we are currently tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(13). Cathy Blaisdell Johnson assisted materially by obtaining certified copies of our organizational documents from the Secretary of State's Office.

2. Increases in Property and Liability Insurance Coverages and Additions of Officers and Directors Insurance. We were able to obtain policies issued by The Hartford, a regular company, for property and liability coverages at a lesser cost while significantly increasing our medical payments and fire and adding liability coverage at the Monument site. We now have a separate Officers and Directors policy.

3. Change in Brokerage Account Relationship. Our brokerage account was moved from Stock Cross Financial Services to A.G. Edwards' Southport, CT office.

4. Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S Number). Application was made recently for a D-U-N-S Number. It will be needed in applying for Grants.

5. New Agreement for Ebenezer Avery House. The State of Connecticut advised the Association early this year of its desire to enter into a new agreement with the Avery Memorial Association concerning the Ebenezer Avery House. Discussions are continuing.

#### Application for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status

An application for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is being prepared by the Finance Chair and is largely complete. The revised by-laws, when approved, will be an important part of the application, as will the financial statements for the last four years. It becomes effective on the date of filing, pending a favorable determination by the IRS. Classification as either a Public Charity or a Private Foundation will be sought.

#### Long Range Planning

The initial meeting of the Long Range Planning committee was held in February. Members are Stevens Avery, George Avery and Dean Avery, Chairman. An outline form plan, created by Stevens Avery in July 2005. entitled “Avery Memorial Association – Plan for Vitalization and Growth,” was adopted as a guide. Its focus is on Mission and Purpose, Action Plan and Financial Stabilization and Growth.

Respectfully submitted,

Stevens Avery

Chairman

Audit & Finance Committee

#### ***Ebenezer Avery House Committee***

The Ebenezer Avery House has been one of the main focuses for the Board of Directors this past year. Since it is the main attraction for family members and tourists alike, it is well deserving of our extra attention. As you well know, it is located on the grounds of the Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park, which has been responsible for maintaining the exterior of the house and the grounds. The interior of the house has been given new life. With a cast of volunteers from Board members to other concerned family members like Red Marquardt, Cathy Johnson, Lois Blaisdell, Dottie Avery and others, we’ve had file cabinets reorganized, curtains hung, retail inventoried and displayed, and hand railings installed. We finally joined the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the purchase of computer equipment, digital camera, and a phone/answering system.

Our greatest new asset we acquired was not an artifact or a monetary donation, but the wonderful talents of our new curator, Alice Sheriff. She came to us with years of experience as a curator, archivist, teacher and tour guide. She has already begun to inventory furniture and artifacts, describing in detail the time period, condition of the piece, who donated it, and is accessioning it all in our new computer...using a program called *Past Perfect*, which was installed by my computer geek hero, Fred Burdick.

Of course we welcome donations to help defray some costs, but also some volunteer labor is appreciated for carpentry, or other maintenance & repair related situations that may arise. So, volunteers, please call me.

The Ebenezer Avery House is the mantel of our family heritage, with a past of historical importance, and needs all the care we can give it.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lee Moore, Chairman

### **Ebenezer Avery House - Curator's Interim Report**

Period Covering May 26, 2007 through July 15, 2007

Since opening for the Summer 2007 season, the Ebenezer Avery House has seen much activity:

**Visitors:** 462 persons (from 31 states) have visited and received guided tours.

**General Maintenance/Cleaning:** The interior of the house has been cleaned on a regular basis.

**Inventory:** An inventory has been started and is currently ongoing to catalog AMA's collections. To date 136 pieces (of approximately 375) have been located, evaluated and entered into the Past Perfect (computer software) Museum Collectors' Program.

**Climate Control/Stabilization:** 6 small aerodynamically designed fans have been purchased and placed in the rooms of the house to improve/increase overall air circulation and humidity control. Daily readings and monitoring of temperature and humidity are conducted. Numerous artifacts have been moved in order to stabilize the pieces from further deterioration. An air conditioner has been donated from a future member and will be installed to further improve stabilization.

**Publicity/Promotion:** The Trillium Garden Club held their Flower Show at the house on Monday, June 25, 2007. Arrangements were coordinated with the time period/color schemes of the rooms. The integrity of the collections was maintained. Special Features writer Larry Greene wrote an informative article on the house/park on May 27, 2007. It appeared in area the week Special Features sections.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alice D. Sheriff, Curator

## **Genealogy Committee**

With a little creative use of the computer we were able to restore an old backup disc of Avery information on old version of the Family Treemaker program. This was restored and updated to a current version of Family Treemaker that both Dottie and I happen to have. While we were trying to add update information as provided by members several discrepancies were noted and no documentation of the original information that was entered was found.

A few examples of the discrepancies would be... the original information entered did not include any ancestor that died in childhood, and only some of the parents of spouses were entered. At the time of the original entry the original Family Treemaker lacked any of the current amenities. We can now enter military information, occupations, land and probate information and countless other categories. The old version only had one field for notes and everything that was of interest was placed there.

What I am working on now is using the Avery Genealogies and going through page by page and verifying the information that was entered in to FTM and adding a source (this tells us where we got the information) to the facts, birth, death, military service etc. Taking all the general information out of the notes and putting it into the proper categorize fact fields. This is a slow and time-consuming process...but I am almost finished with the fourth generation.

When I have completed the entry of the Avery Genealogy, the plan is to take all the data provided by members, and add and document the sources, creating a great tool for Dottie and any future genealogist to look up information and where that information came from. FTM also has the ability to create charts and more importantly the book format for a possible future update and reprint of the Avery Genealogy.

If anyone has any information to contribute that would help in documenting the source facts regarding the Avery Family, any additional information or errors you may have come across in the book, these contributions would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted, Lisa Favale

## **Membership Committee**

As of June 30, 2007 we have 352 members; there are two hundred sixty six (266) Life Members and 86 regular members. We have many members who have not rejoined possibly due to increase in dues, addresses changed and did not notify us, plus deaths. Please let us know if someone you know that belongs to the Groton Avery Clan has passed away. Thank you for helping us to keep our records up-to-date. A special thank you to our President, Stephanie Lantiere for all the contacts she has made to our members. She obtained address corrections and information on members who have passed away. People forget to contact us.

Respectfully submitted, Betty Brustolon, Membership Chair

## **Monument Committee**

The Avery Memorial Association is charged with maintaining the real property and the monument located at 880 Poquonnock Avenue, Groton, Connecticut. The Chair believes that it would be prudent to have a survey conducted in order to ascertain exactly what the Association is responsible for in regards to its property.

Your Chair periodically goes to the site and cleans up accumulated, miscellaneous trash. However, it is very apparent that a major property clean up is needed. The vegetation and brush is overgrown, and trash such as broken bottles, old bed mattress, etc., needs to be removed. It is believed that such a clean up might keep loiterers away from the property and thus keep trash to a minimum. Your Chair did contact the Groton Town Police approximately one year ago and the site has been included for drive-by checks. Anyone that is interested in the clean up is encouraged to contact the Chair; it is hoped that this can be done in the fall of 2007.

Another item that your Chair has been attempting to rectify concerns the well. Your Chair learned that at some point during the 1970's the Town became concerned that the well posed a safety threat in that someone could climb it and fall down into it. Your Chair was told that since no Association contact person could be located, and in response to this concern, the Town placed a concrete catch basin on top of the well. While the basin certainly works, it is anything but aesthetically pleasing. Through a series of phone calls, your Chair was put in touch with an individual with the Ledge Light Health District as this is the agency that has jurisdiction over wells. Your Chair has also been in contact with the Town of Groton Public Works. Both of these departments are willing to work with your Chair to coordinate the removal of the basin in order for the Association to cap the well. Your Chair believes that she has located a contractor who can provide this service.

It appears that at the present time the monument and the stone walls surrounding the monument are intact and no repairs are needed. The area surrounding the monument is mowed on a periodic basis. It is anticipated that the archeological project conducted by Mr. Theodore S. J. Davi Ph.D. that commenced in July 2006 will continue in the fall. Any individuals that are interested in assisting should contact your Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Blaisdell Johnson, Chair

Home: 860-537-1715 ~ Work: 860-724-6667

E-Mail: [cblaisdell@wolfhorowitz.com](mailto:cblaisdell@wolfhorowitz.com) or [cblaisdell79@comcast.net](mailto:cblaisdell79@comcast.net)

## **Publicity Committee**

I look forward to promote the Avery Memorial Association. We have made progress in a short time and had a nice article recently of our July 21, 2007 Annual Meeting, and other activities I worked on for The Resident, a freely distributed publication, in the Connecticut/Rhode Island area. I have also contacted other media outlets about the Annual Meeting. What I hope to accomplish is better dissemination on information on our association on the Internet, publications, and encourage networking with other historic/genealogical type groups as well as non-groups in these categories to encourage awareness of us. Cable TV needs to be used as a source in the local New London County area. Also there are events such as one at Mashantucket in October that we could attend and have a table and promote our association. Any suggestions, ideas, and help are welcome. I need to know what is sent out to media, so I can coordinate it better. My thanks for this opportunity to serve the Avery Memorial Association.

Please contact me directly at 20 Maple Court, Ashaway, RI 02804-1300  
Tel. (401) 377-4643 ~ E-mail: [scottbillhirst@yahoo.com](mailto:scottbillhirst@yahoo.com)

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bill Hirst

Publicity Chairman

## **Nominating Committee**

At the July 2006 Annual Meeting, elections were successfully held to provide the Association with a full complement of Officers and Directors. President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer were elected for 2 year terms, concluding in July 2008. Directors were elected to staggered terms of 1-, 2-, and 3-years. Our elected Officers and Directors were all introduced at the beginning of this meeting.

In Fall 2006, Carolyn Clark resigned as Secretary. Lee Moore was named by the Board as Acting Secretary to fulfill the term until '08 elections.

As the '06 –'07 Fiscal Year continued, various new appointments were made by the Board, for volunteers to fill Committee Chairs. Other Committee Chair appointments continued to be filled by people who had served in past year(s). Committees include Audit & Finance, Ebenezer Avery House, Genealogist, Membership, Monument, Publicity, By-Laws, Nominations, Historian, and Cemetery. In most instances, each Chair served as a “committee of one.” As of today, a significant Committee Chair will be unoccupied. Betty Brustolon chooses not to continue Membership Secretary, and retires *again!* Anyone interested in volunteering for this position should please speak to either Stephanie Lantiere or me. In preparation for this Annual Meeting, notices have been in the Newsletter, asking for additional people to serve on the Board in a Director’s position. One term for a Director’s position concludes as of this Annual Meeting, and we will shortly hold an election to fill that Directorship.

In all, the Association has benefited significantly this past year from a renewed spirit of volunteerism and commitment. As our activities grow and develop, the search will continue for more members to accept leadership roles, strengthening our commitment to preserve our Avery heritage.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy C. Kilburn

Nominations Chair

### **Historian**

Generally speaking, the historian's role encompasses two broad and intertwined responsibilities:

1. To serve as a resource for Avery history for members of the Association, historical or patriotic societies, Church associations, etc., or other researchers, in some aspect of Avery history.
2. To encourage research in all aspects of Avery history by members and other interested parties, and to make the results of that research available through presentations at annual meetings and other gatherings, publication in the Avery newsletters, etc.

The following projects will have priority in coming months:

1. Examination and classification of the papers and documents currently kept at the Ebenezer Avery House. These seem to be primarily minutes of annual meetings, miscellaneous correspondence, and financial records. Consultation with the House curator about the best means of preserving these documents.
2. Preparation of a catalogue or index of Avery research materials. The Avery Memorial Association has no facility for the long term preservation of historical documents, letters, papers, etc., and we will encourage members with such materials to donate them to appropriate research centers, such as the NEHGS, Boston, or local historical societies. There is, however, no general guide to the whereabouts of such materials. We need to create one by contacting institutions where such materials are known to exist, and by asking members to advise us of materials that may have been donated to such institutions. The catalogue will include a listing of books, e.g. biographies, genealogies, etc., on Avery-related subjects.
3. Encouragement of additional research on the Avery family and its many contributions to American life. The many articles published over the years in the Avery Advocate and the Avery newsletters on activities by Averys in all walks of life forms a good archive or basis for "broadening the narrative." We need to encourage members to continue to contribute. We should also develop certain special themes, e.g., The Averys and the Civil War, the Averys and the Industrial Revolution, the Averys and Westward Migration.

4. Publication of some of this research in house publications such as the newsletter, and also perhaps in anthologies, e.g. "An Avery Scrapbook," available to members or to visitors to the Ebenezer Avery House.
5. Exploration of a "DNA" project that might help answer questions re the ties, if any, between the Groton Avery clan and some of the other families of similar name who also settled here in colonial times, for which no documentary records exist to establish relationships.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vincent Pitts, Historian