

October 2004 News Letter

Outlines Of Things-To-Come Taking Shape

While there are still many mountains of dirt and debris at the Putnam Park Entrance area, the work done during October is showing the footprints of things to come. The stone walls along Rt. 107 are under construction. The boundaries of the new parking lot and park entrance are now being outlined with Belgium block. There is also a Belgium block apron being laid at the driveway entrance just off the road.

The utility company crews are installing new poles further back off the road to permit a wider road bed. The septic system and leach fields are being constructed for the new rest rooms where the old road used to be in front of the pavilion.

The new intersection at routes 58 and 107 is almost completed. Gone is the old "Y" intersection which was dangerous to drivers leaving the park. The new curbing and storm drains are completed.

The worst of the mess is behind us. Now things will be in the landscaping phases which will show improvements at each future stage.

We have updates in this issue about Dan Cruson's lecture, and the original time line of the 1893 Pavilion plans and construction.



UNDER CONSTRUCTION



New parking lot coming soon



New park entrance coming soon



Watch monthly News Letters for progress updates.

October FAN's Meeting

The October meeting of the Friends group was held on Monday, October 11th at the Redding Town Hall.



Discussions held included:

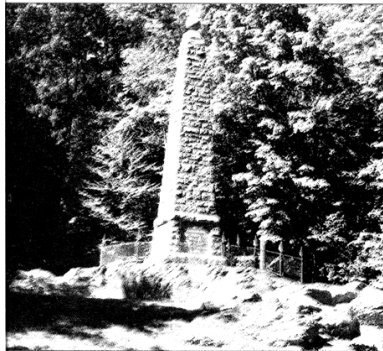
1. Annual *Winter Walk At the Park* will not be held this year due to the construction projects.
2. Kathleen von Jena will submit a proposal for artifacts recommended for curation and restoration.
3. Friends of CT State Parks is celebrating its 10th Anniversary. Also, discussed *A Shared Landscape, A Guide and History of Connecticut's State Parks & and Forests.* We will purchase copies when we get storage facilities.
4. Jeanine Herman was once again unanimously elected as the president of the Friends & Neighbors of Putnam State Park for the coming fiscal year. Congratulations, Jeanine.

Cruson Gives Lecture

Dan Cruson, who has run the archaeological digs at Putnam Park for the past six years, gave a well publicized talk at the Bethel Municipal Center on Weds., October 20th. Dan told the story of the "unearthing the treasures of Putnam Park", and the artifacts found which related to the Continental Army's winter encampment during 1778-79 at what is now Putnam Park.

Digging up secrets

'Archaeological Treasures of Putnam Park' lecture reveals more history



The monument at Putnam Memorial State Park. Honoring the men who suffered the harsh winter encampment, it was built in 1888, a year after the campground became a memorial park. Dan Cruson, who has conducted several archaeological digs at the park, will discuss its history and recent findings in a special lecture in Bethel Oct. 20 at 7 p.m.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED
BY JAIME FERRIS

The fires have long since been extinguished, the huts reduced to mere piles of stone, and generations of trees have grown considerably since Revolutionary War troops camped at Putnam Memorial State Park—Connecticut's Valley Forge. Located on the Bethel-Redding border, the park remains a picture of the American Revolution era and, as excavations of the past six years have revealed, the history of the park is changing.

Those interested in the findings unearthed at the park can satisfy their curiosity through a special Oct. 20 program titled "Archaeological Treasures of Putnam Park," a slide lecture to be presented by Joel Barlow High School teacher and Newtown town historian Dan Cruson. Sponsored by the Bethel Public Library, the free lecture focuses on the park's history and archaeo-

logical findings, and is to be held at 7 p.m. at the Bethel Municipal Center.

Putnam Memorial State Park was Connecticut's first state park, established in 1887. Closed in the early 1990s, but paths had to be re-established. It was then, Mr. Cruson realized, "The area hadn't been touched—this was virgin ground." He contacted the Connecticut DEP, got the proper paperwork and approvals and, as he said, "The rest is history." For six years, Mr. Cruson has directed excavations at the park as a field school for his anthropology students and as a service to the public, who can often find the group at the park uncovering its secrets.

"I was 7 or 8 when I used to go up to the park with my grandfather for picnics," he recalled of his interest in the park. "I remember walking down Company Street [where only firebacks remain] and

Please see **Unearthing**, Page 3

Birth of the Pavilion

Danbury News - 1893

Several years ago, Bethel Town Historian Pat Wild scoured the old Danbury News copies from 1893. The information below was copied from small blurbs or snippets of local news which was common in the news formats of the day. The following relates to the 1893 Pavilion:

- Sept. 5, 1893 Plans for pavilion drawn up and approved. Estimated cost - \$2,000
- Sept. 22, 1893 Contract awarded to Gilbert Brothers of Bethel
- Oct. 9, 1893 Foundation done
- Oct. 26, 1893 Structure raised

Talk about streamlined bureaucracy in those days Wow!

The Pavilion-Visitors Center

The foundation has been completed. The joists have been installed and the crew has only to install the vertical steel posts which will support the first floor. These support beams have to be installed before the pavilion is re-assembled on top of the base.

The game plan is to reconstruct the frame and roof of the building within the next four weeks. Once the crew gets under roof they can then work through the winter months.

The finished building will mirror the original pavilion shown in the photo in the upper right. It will have a skylight with windows as well as windows in the front and rear gables.



Guard House & Pavilion in 1907



Oct. 2004. Digging out bottom walk-out level of the cellar.



October 2004. Pete Hansen, Project Supervisor lowers joists for the construction of the first floor.



October 2004. The joists are complete, and the grading around the foundation is being completed.

Next Meeting

The next FAN's Meeting will be on Monday Evening **November 8th** at the Redding Town Hall. The meeting will start at **7:00pm**. Please come and join with us in the planning of events and projects at Putnam Park.



