

Heublein Highlights

FRIENDS OF HEUBLEIN TOWER

SUMMER 2010

DID YOU KNOW?

- You get 41,700 hits on Google when you enter "Heublein Tower."
- You can see over 50 miles in all directions from the Heublein Tower's observation room.
- The Heublein Tower sits on Talcott Mountain State Park which spans over 557 acres in Avon, Simsbury and Bloomfield.

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Camelot's Shining Glory

By Kathryn Hoidge, with thanks to Carl Sieracki, Farmington Valley Post, September 21, 2000 and October 12, 2000

Don't let it be forgot That once there was a spot For one brief, shining moment ... That was known as Camelot

John G. Martin was born in 1905 to Percy Martin and Alice Heublein Martin. He was the grandson of Gilbert and Louise Heublein. He studied in Cambridge, England. He emigrated from England in 1928, became a citizen of his adopted land, and served with distinction in World War II. In 1948, while in California, he met and married Jane Weeks. She was a beauty contest winner at age 15 and was on her way to Hollywood. She was under contract to RKO Studios, then run by Howard Hughes. Jane Russell was also a starlet at that time. The Martins met Jane Russell because of her work with Korean orphans who were children of United States servicemen. Mrs. Martin was an orphan herself and had an affinity for those who the Korean government would not recognize. The WAIF Adoption International Fund placed many children into loving American homes – and for that matter homes around the world. The Martins friendship with Jane Russell endured through the years.

Jane Weeks career spanned the years and she appeared in many magazine advertisements, 22 film and stage productions. She appeared in the well known film, "The Man Who Came To Dinner". Another accomplishment to her credit was that she became one of the founders and a trustee of the American Shakespearean Festival Theatre and Academy in Stratford, Connecticut.

In 1949, newlywed, the Martins built a house in Burlington, Connecticut on Johnnycake Mountain. John was drawn to the property because it seemed reminiscent of his roots in England. John was a simple man, enjoying the house and grounds and the casual lifestyle that Johnnycake provided. He was not taken in by appearances or sham. No three-piece suit needed to impress!

John G. Martin, grandson of Gilbert Heublein, was the founder of the John G. Martin Foundation. The Friends honor Mr. Martin and thank the Foundation for its support over the years.

The couple decided to start a game farm and brought John Kier from Scotland to be the manager. They raised pheasants, partridge, quail and peacocks which they sold to executive clubs, restaurants and steamship lines. The farm was the site of many parties, and hosted many celebrities and artists. Many friends thought of it as "Camelot" and Jane and John were great hosts. Jane Russell visited many times during these years. Frequently on the menu was barbecued wild goose, coon and squirrel pie, barbecued quail or peacock from the nearby grounds. The evenings sometimes ended with Dom Perignon or Harvey's Port, or Hines Cognac and, of course, John Kier's bagpipes. In 1963, John Martin and John Kier began importing Charolais cattle. By now the farm included more than 900 acres in Burlington. The Charolais stood eight feet tall and were all beef with hardly any fat to speak of. They were raised for breeding and some weighed 2,500 pounds or more. This was a productive enterprise! Naples, Florida became their retirement home but they came to Johnnycake in the summer. In April of 1986, 913 plus acres of the ranch was sold to a real estate developer. The rest of the estate including their house was sold when John Martin passed away at the age of 80, on May 29, 1986. Jane Weeks Martin died in Naples, Florida two years later on April 13, 1988. She was 70 years old. Johnnycake, in 2000, was divided into 50 building lots with new homes on Charolais Way. While the John Martin era ended, there is still a strong sense of the man at the Heublein Tower. He spent much time there in younger years, enjoying the out-of-doors and spending time with his grandparents. We remember his accomplishments and marketing instincts and his business techniques that made the Heublein Company famous for Smirnoff Vodka. But most of all, we salute him for his love of people!!

Ask everyone if he's heard the story, and tell it strong and clear, if he has not. That once there was a fleeting wisp of glory,

called Camelot!

Today's Technology Preserves the Past



Scanning and storing precious photos and documents keep the past alive.

Over the years, the Friends of Heublein Tower have received many donations of artifacts, including furniture, photographs, maps and other memorabilia from many sources, including the family members, private collectors and the John G. Martin Foundation.

Recently, the staff of Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection have begun the delicate process of archiving and cataloging the treasure trove of photographs and other documentation that has been collected over the years.

This job requires a painstaking attention to detail to

ensure the proper storage methods are used so the material will be preserved for generations to come.

Museum archival specialists from the Connecticut DEP are directing the process. A staff specialist is scanning and documenting each item.

The specialists are working collaboratively with Friends' co-president, Kathryn Hoidge to uncover the origins of many of these items. Ms. Hoidge is pleased to see the cataloging process.

"The Friends are excited to work with the DEP on this important project. The Heublein Tower is an integral icon in the Farmington

Valley. Having knowledgeable professionals work with our Board to preserve and protect these artifacts will ensure our ability to showcase the Tower for the enjoyment of the next generation of visitors."

Proper archival storage methods are in place to ensure that these priceless artifacts are saved for future generations.

Understanding the Tower's rich history gives us an appreciation for days gone by. Gilbert and Louise Heublein would certainly be surprised that the history of their lives would be so interesting to us today!

2010 Tower Toot

*"Save the date for
Tower Toot 2010:
October 16th
and 17th
Two days of
foliage, food and
fun!"*

The Friends of Heublein Tower hosted another successful annual fund-raiser, This year was a two-day event, held on both Saturday and Sunday, October 16th and 17th.

On Saturday we had many intrepid hikers brave the high winds and cold weather to listen to Ron Kwas & Freddi Meier of "Scha Musi" entertain with their wonderful German music. Visitors sipped hot

cider and enjoyed a bratwurst or two to keep warm.

On Sunday, kids enjoyed face painting and eating cookies provided by the volunteers from the Friends.

The Tower gift shop was bustling with sales of hiking staffs and other Tower memorabilia. Thousands of hikers joined friends and family on a lovely hike up through the refurbished trail

through the Talcott Mountain State Park. Their efforts were rewarded with a spectacular autumn foliage view of the Farmington River Valley from the Observation room.



Scha Musi entertains the crowd

Our Lights Shine On!



Energy efficient? Restored antique whaling lanterns? Stone piers with canopy lights?

What do all of these items have in common at the Heublein Tower?

You guessed it, the Friends are refurbishing and installing lights and electricity at the Tower.

The antique whaling lanterns have been completely restored. The original glass panes have been replaced with clear Lexan which can with-

stand the high winds whipping at the two doors into the Tower.

The four stone piers will soon be showcasing the copper topped canopy lights recreated by Jay Willerup, co-president along with Kent Robbins and Steve Read, directors. Electricity will be soon be restored to the stone piers, updated to today's modern standards.

The familiar red beacon on top of the Tower, will soon be replaced with an high output

LED bulb that will last thousands of hours and yet use less energy than the current light. While not a requirement by aviation authorities, this red beacon is a familiar sight to anyone looking at the Tower at night.

These changes are exciting and show how thoughtful restoration and renovation can support our environment today and the future.

The Perfect Gift

Are you searching for the perfect gift? Search no more!

Visit the Heublein Tower Gift Shop for a unique birthday, holiday or anytime gift for that special someone.

Janet Carville, our gift shop manager, has several wonderful Heublein Tower items for sale. "We have specially designed jewelry and holiday ornaments that showcase the

beauty and grandeur of the Tower," says Ms. Carville. "Our visitors are always interested in Heublein Tower memorabilia and the gift shop is the place to find it. All of our gift shop proceeds benefit the work of the Friends."

Another extremely popular gift idea is the wide array of posters showcasing the Tower. You may choose from the

original architect's rendering of the Tower to a watercolor and black and white line drawing prints faithfully rendered by local artists. For those who collect Cat's Meow® buildings, we offer a lovely plaque.

Mugs, T-shirts, sweatshirts and hats are all available for purchase. Visitors are encouraged to browse and enjoy the many gift items available.



A Facelift for the Sun Porch

This year the Friends have been refurbishing the Sun Porch. The wicker furniture has been freshly painted. New cushions for the wicker chairs and chaise lounge are sewn. The wall and ceiling paint color is analyzed and ready for repainting this winter season. The effect will be a stunning

recreation of the room as it was many years ago. "In the early days of the Heublein Tower, the custom was to have a sleeping porch that was completely open to fresh air," notes Kathryn Hoidge, co-president. "The Heublein family would have enjoyed the wonderful mountain air on

their sun porch." In later years, this practice fell out of favor and the sun porch was closed with large doors which could be opened in good weather. New weather tight doors have now been installed to allow visitors to imagine what this room was like in the early years of the Tower.



Box 991 , Avon, Connecticut 06001

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Become a part of Connecticut's History-
become a Friend of Heublein Tower!

www.friendsofheubleintower.org



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The Friends of Heublein Tower, Inc., a non-profit preservation society, was established in 1984, for the purpose of restoring for public use the state-owned Heublein Tower landmark to its original and authentic 1914 splendor.

The Friends' mission is to restore for public use the Connecticut state-owned Heublein Tower landmark to its original and authentic 1914 splendor. By providing time, talent and financial assistance, the Friends of Heublein Tower supplements the state of Connecticut's efforts in restoring, improving and interpreting the Heublein Tower and its surrounding grounds. The restored Tower serves as a museum and a place of learning for the educational benefit of the public.

A Collaborative Partnership

We'll bet that when you think of a state parks you think of the wide open spaces of untamed wilderness out in the western states of the U.S. However, think again!

Our home state of Connecticut has many natural resources which are artfully managed by our state's Department of Environmental Protection. The Friends of Heublein Tower's Board of Directors works closely and collaboratively with the Department of Environmental Protection to ensure the visitor experience is of the highest quality.

Jay Willerup and Kathryn Hoidge, co-

presidents, have high praise for our DEP partners. "The DEP partners with the Friends in every way. In today's economic environment, the DEP depends on the many Friends organizations throughout Connecticut to support the work in our state parks. We appreciate these collaborative efforts."

The DEP is responsible for the many state parks throughout CT. Heublein Tower is located in Talcott Mountain State Park and is an icon in the Farmington Valley. Our joint work and continued partnership ensure that the citizens of Connecticut and

our many international visitors have an enjoyable visit to the Heublein Tower.

For more information on the work that the DEP is doing for our Connecticut state parks, visit them on the web at <http://www.ct.gov/dep/site/default.asp>.

**Heublein
Tower,
Talcott
Mountain
State Park**

