

For Immediate Release
Contact: Terri Wilson 860-798-0918
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Photos attached

Avon Historic Site Opens for Tourist Season, June 5 **Family friendly OPEN HOUSE of** **1865 Pine Grove Schoolhouse**

The Avon Historical Society announces the re-opening of the 1865 Pine Grove Schoolhouse, 3 Harris Street (West Avon Road/Route 167), for the summer tourist season on Sunday, June 5. It will be open to the public every Sunday through September from 2:00 – 4:00pm.

Due to the pandemic, the site was closed in 2020 and 2021. To celebrate the new tourist season, the public is invited to a family-friendly open house! There will be new things to see inside the schoolroom, a puzzle (for all ages) to solve about artifacts on display as well as greeters to explain the building's history. In addition, weather permitting, members of Avon's Brownie Troop 66703 will be on site offering a small take-home craft/activity for children visitors and some of their Girl Scout cookies and punch for everyone to enjoy.

The Pine Grove Schoolhouse, built in 1865 as Schoolhouse No. 7 and still standing on its original location, is owned by the Town of Avon. It was in use as a school until 1949 when it became a nursery school, a branch of the town library, and meeting place for the Boy Scouts Explorer Troop 122. The Avon Historical Society restored the building in 1976 and interprets it as a schoolhouse of 1900 with bolted desks, hand slates, textbooks, and other educational memorabilia of the time.

"Although the building was closed during the pandemic, the Society was very busy continuing its mission and continue to involve the community," said Terri Wilson, president. Over the past two years they installed a Little Free Library next to the schoolhouse that is available 24/7 for the public. Books for all ages are contained inside and everyone is welcome to take a book/share a book as they would like. In addition, the Brown family of Avon installed a geocache on the property. At the request of the Society, the Town of Avon Public Works installed a National Register of Historic

Places roadside marker on the front of the property. It was donated by a grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation of Syracuse, NY which supports the celebration and preservation of community history through their roadside marker grant program nationwide.

Over the past fifteen years work has been ongoing on site. Thanks to foundations, local companies and private donors, the Society continues the upkeep of this wonderful historic treasure. For example, lead paint was remediated from the exterior in 2009 thanks to a grant from the former Farmington Savings Bank Foundation. The almost 100-year-old outhouse was restored and placed near its original location in 2012 thanks to a grant from J&A Construction. Locally quarried stone steps were added to the side door. Donations of a grant from CT Trust for Historic Preservation (now Preservation Connecticut), a local McDonald's franchisee and very generous individual donors, 112 panes of 19th century glass were restored and replaced in the windows of the schoolhouse in 2014. All this was timed to have the house ready for its 150th birthday celebration in 2015 in which former students and their families enjoyed an afternoon of reminiscences and storytelling.

For more information on this site and to watch a video about the schoolhouse and West Avon filmed during the pandemic, visit: <https://avonhistoricalsociety.org/pine-grove-schoolhouse/>

For those interested in local history and genealogy, they are encouraged to visit the Marian Hunter History Room at the Avon Free Public Library, 281 Country Club Road, by making an appointment at 860-673-9712.

Photos of Pine Grove Schoolhouse courtesy Avon Historical Society

