

Open house focus: Saving vintage school

By June W. Kennedy

An open house will be held at the Parkerville Schoolhouse No. 5 (Nonset Club) on Sunday, April 23 from 1-5 p.m. All townspeople are invited.

The Westford Board of Selectmen is inviting suggestions for future use of this building, located at the corner of Carlisle Road and Route 225. Parker Village residents are sponsoring the open house to determine how much interest and commitment there is in both preserving this historic schoolhouse and in continuing its use as a meeting place for social and educational functions.

Old-timers who attended this one-room district school and who later became Nonset Club members will be on hand to informally reminisce. Refreshments will be served. Carpooling is suggested.

Parkerville Schoolhouse No. 5 was built in 1880 and served the pupils of Parker Village until it closed in 1928. In 1930 when the town wanted to sell it, local residents petitioned to use it as a clubhouse, and the Nonset Club was formed.

Members installed a furnace and have kept the building

painted, roofed and repaired in exchange for its use. The town has continued to own and to insure the building. The Nonset Club Wednesday night whist parties, holiday and birthday parties for youth, meetings, receptions and even a wedding, have kept the old schoolhouse alive with activity.

Now nearly 60 years later, the members of the Nonset Club are few in number.

In response to an inquiry from a party interested in purchasing the structure for a single-family residence, the Board of Selectmen is currently obtaining proposals for its potential use. The building is solidly constructed, but has no plumbing. Potential use of the building would require some restoration.

Parkerville School No. 5 (Nonset Club) is pristine — a classic example of a one-room schoolhouse complete with a two-seater. The raised platform which housed the teacher's desk and where students gave recitations is still there. Even the pump remains in the schoolyard.

Of the ten district schoolhouses that flourished at the turn-of-the century, Parkerville School No. 5 is one of two still owned by the town; Tadmuck School No. 1 now is used as a senior center on Boston Road.



Photo courtesy of June Kennedy

Built in 1880, Parkerville Schoolhouse #5 served pupils until 1928, then was a meeting place for the Nonset Club. The fate of the one-room school is now subject of discussion.

Now Parker Village residents are expressing a need for a meeting place in the south part of town. A petition is circulating for the preservation and use of the Parkerville School No. 5. (One is available at the J.V. Fletcher Library for those who wish to sign it.)

It is interesting to note that the town of Acton regrets not having retained any of its one-room schoolhouses. Jennie Johnson, Parker Village resident and a fourth-grade teacher in Acton, initiated a living history curricu-

ulum for that town, whereby all fourth graders spend a day at a one-room school — complete with hornbooks, slates, hoop rolling and use of a two-seater. Unfortunately, all students have to be bused out of town for the program.

For further information concerning the building, contact Scott Ferson, assistant executive secretary to Selectmen, at 692-5501.