

# **The Hampton Union**

## **Gazebo worth the wait**

**BY LARA BRICKER**, Hampton Union Staff Writer

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HAMPTON — Community members rejoiced Monday morning as the first shovels of dirt were turned in Marelli Park, signaling the start of construction on the much anticipated gazebo and beautification project.

A sizable crowd gathered under overcast skies to witness the culmination of several years of hard work by members of the community and the Hampton Gazebo and Marelli Park Beautification Project Committee.

"It seems like I've been doing this my entire life," said Bob LaBonte, project chairman. "This is the project that will build on the revitalization of the downtown. All the people involved will be proud to be part of the project."

Nine people, including those who have donated their services to help build the gazebo, to a young Brownie who collected pennies, were invited to participate in the official ground-breaking. Grasping shiny gold shovels the nine dug and churned clumps of dirt.

Contractor Vic Lessard grasped a shovel, but the small shovel was only a prelude to what Lessard had planned for later in the morning. Lessard with his sons Kenny and Keith are doing all of the excavating and site work for free. Immediately after the ceremony they brought in an excavator to prepare the site for construction.

Lydia Wolter, 7 1/2, represented her Brownie Troop 481, as she held onto

a shovel nearly twice her size. The Brownies raised money with "Pennies for the Park."

"We each got a coffee can and we had to fill it with pennies," Lydia explained.

Foss Manufacturing was the largest donor to the project with a \$10,000 check. Kevin Sexton, senior vice president of Foss, was invited to dig some dirt at the ceremony.

"That large donation really put the wind in our sails of this fundraising," LaBonte said.

Dorothy Rogers, one of the projects earliest and strongest supporters, also helped break ground. LaBonte, Former Rotary President Geoff Merrill, Gazebo Committee member Fred Rice, Selectmen Chairman Brian Warburton and Gazebo Architect Rich Correll were invited to turn the dirt.

Correll has devoted countless hours to the plans for the gazebo and park, LaBonte said, adding that the local architect spent more time on the gazebo than at his job.

Paul Corbett, president of the Hampton Historical Society, said the project is something the town can be proud of for many years. LaBonte recognized Marilyn Wallingford and the other members of the Garden Club and Shade Tree Commission who offered ideas for landscaping.

Correll introduced a host of local people who have donated their services or offered a reduced price to help build the gazebo.

"We're bringing the community together," Correll said. "We're not just building another gazebo."

The committee has raised over \$55K for the project but needs another \$35K to complete landscaping in the park, Labonte said.

The committee has received significant contributions from some local

businesses including: Wheelabrator, \$2,500; the Hampton Rotary Club, \$4,000; Kiefel Technologies just donated \$3,750; Susan Martel, \$2,500; Seabrook Station, \$2,500; First and Ocean Bank, \$2,000. An anonymous donor gave \$5,000.

So many engraved bricks in the park have been sold for \$100 per brick, that a Sept. — cut off date has been set.

The project should be done by late fall.

\$1,000 Donors include: Stan Brown, Frank and Barbara Fay, Bob and Dottie Light from Hoyt's Office Products, Lilly Software and Liberty Lane Corporate Center

\$500 Donors include: Lil's Grill, Marelli's Market, Custom Travel, The Atlantic News, Glen French, Donahue, Tucker and Ciandella, Glyn Eastman, Funarama, Green and Company, Hampton Water Works, The Oxford League, Palmer and Sicard, Roy Family Hotels, Seacoast Newspapers, Widow Fletcher's Tavern, Seacoast United Soccer, The Galley Hatch and Cassandra and Ryan.

Builders: Ken Bisson, General Contractor; E.J. Cote and Associates, Surveying; Vic Lessard and Sons, excavation; Dion Construction, concrete work; M & M Masonry, brick and paving work; W.S. Goodrich, brick materials; Roger Syphers, center town seal; White's Welding, steel welding; Novel Iron Works, steel; Avcon, railing material; Chadsworth Columns, columns; M.J. Murphy and Sons Inc., copper roof; J.A. Hammond, plaster ceiling; Clark and Clark Painting, painting; Parsons Electric Company, electrical work; Rockingham Electrical Supply Company, electrical lighting and supplies.