



Belchertown Historical Association
Belchertown, Massachusetts
1903—2022

March/April 2022

Volume 22, Issue 1

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

DEDICATED TO THE MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORT THE ASSOCIATION'S MISSION

2022 Calendar

Save the dates and share them with family, friends, neighbors!

BHA Virtual Annual Meeting
Sunday, April 24 @ 5:30 pm
on Zoom and Facebook Live. Please join us at this important meeting. The Zoom link will be published on the museum Facebook and Website pages on 4/21. Questions? Email or call info@stonehousemuseum.org, or call Tom at 413.323.7452. **A quorum is required for this meeting.**

Annual Membership time! Please renew membership and invite others to join your lead. Fees remain the same.

Opening Day at the Museum
Saturday May 7 @ 9 - 2 FREE
Join us on the Museum grounds for mini house tours, Old Bags, Crafts and Artists, and Plant sales—just in time for Mother's Day! Help needed!

Stone House Museum
Open May through October
Saturday @ 2 - 5 pm
Admission: **FREE** for Members;
\$5 adults, \$4 seniors, \$2 children

Members Only Cocktail Party
Friday, June 17th @ 6 - 8 pm
Museum grounds—fingers crossed!

Open May through October
Call us to arrange private tours.

Volunteers needed:
We are looking for cleaners, dusters, house-sitters and docents during the summer months. We also need individuals with experience in fundraising and development. Email: Info@stonehousemuseum.org

TURNING THE CORNER? HOPEFUL.

A Message from President Tom Stockton

Dear Friends,
How long was winter? In some ways it seems that it's been two years long! Can you believe it? But I have seen robins, red-wing blackbirds, and that means Spring is springing, and we pause, quickened by the hope of new life, hoping for a slow return to whatever our new "normal" will be. The excitement for the new season is tempered by the stunning realization that this pandemic has now lasted more than two years, and we struggle to conceive of a post-pandemic future—individually, and as members of social groups and organizations. We still don't know how this will affect our lives, our incomes, or our plans, hopes, and dreams.

But while it is all-too-easy to be glum as we reflect on all that we **couldn't** do in the past year, **STILL**, a lot has been happening with regards to the maintenance and preservation of our Museum, our finances, and of course, the social life of the Belchertown Historical Association. We pause now to look back on all the important work members have been doing during the long winter months, and to consider the current state of our Association.

ALAS! Our wonderful, almost-monthly events that give a rhythm to our Association's year couldn't happen again! Life seemed to be returning to normal with our last summer's cocktail party, but the Fair, the Living History, in-person Yuletide, Mur-

der Dinner—we've missed these annual milestones in our lives, and we've missed the personal contacts that go along with them. The lack of normalcy was especially apparent around the time of our Yuletide (non-)event. **HOWEVER, WE ADAPTED**, and many thanks are due to trustees Erica Morrison-Brazitis and to Mary Knight for giving us a virtual Yuletide presence with our second Facebook Yuletide auction. This was a fun and successful event, which may become a regular feature in our calendar.



Over the winter much work has been done by the Museum and Fundraising Committees, all of whom have worked tirelessly in their respective areas to make sure that the museum will be on a firm footing for the coming season. As we are necessarily closed, the Museum Committee is devoting an **incredible amount of energy and work** to restoring the interior of the house, and to give it a much-needed facelift—and **just in time for the 100th Anniversary year of the opening of the Stone House Museum!** Period-appropriate wallpapers and repairing plaster are only the beginnings of the work that has been going on, and it's very exciting to see this amount of energy in the house. We continue to be grateful for the income from the Edward & Eleanor Schmidt

Continued on Page 3

Opening Day Event is Back! May 7th—Please join us!

Saturday, May 7 is our annual Opening Day event for the Stone House Museum with history and creativity of Belchertown's past and present! Activities will run from 9am to 2pm and admission is Free. Just in time for Mother's Day, we will offer a variety of shopping opportunities. We expect a great selection of local artists and crafts people selling their original, local items; perennials from your neighbors' gardens will be in abundance; and of course our famous 'gently used' bags will be for sale. **So pass the word to everyone you know that this event is not to be missed!** Here are some other ways members and friends can help:

OLD BAGS need to come out of hiding and be cleaned up for our Old Bag Sale. This is a very popular sale and your donations of bags of all varieties are welcomed. There will be drop off bins at the Making Waves Hair Salon, Looks to Kill, and Easthampton Savings Bank If you have any questions please call **Erica Morrison- Brazitis at 413-537-3218.**



and bulbs as well as perennials. We will also be needing some volunteers on the day of the sale to help move plants around and work at the sales table. **Please give Sally a call at 413-230-2022.**

CRAFTS and ARTWORK—Please help us pass the word to all of those talented people in our area! Attendees at our Opening Day event look forward to seeing and buying locally hand-made items. Details about renting space and displaying wares are available from **Denise Smith at 413-537-3030**, or email her at **dsmith39@charter.net**.



SCHOOLHOUSE ITEMS

One of our schoolhouse fundraisers is a Belchertown Cat's Meow figure, Washington District School. The replica shows the building in its previous location in South Belchertown and sells for \$15.00. We also have a Cat's Meow figure of our historic stagecoach, which sells for \$15.00. The price for both pieces is \$25.00. The schoolhouse is available at Rannsaka and the Town Clerk's office. Both pieces will be available on Opening Day as well. Also on sale will be our Washington District Schoolhouse Tees—light gray with the Schoolhouse logo. The cost of the t-shirts is \$15 for sizes S-XL and \$18 for 2XL.

PARTICIPATE—The Stone House Museum is a unique treasure in Belchertown. The Belchertown Historical Association's mission is to help collect, preserve, and present our local history. Your support helps us enrich the community, both culturally and educationally.



PLANTS—We need your donations of plants to fill our tables for the PLANT SALE! If you are able to get out into your yards and dig around among your spare bulbs, plants, shrubs and trees we would really appreciate it. As always, if you need me to come and dig them for you, just get in touch with me.

Digging up your plants a few weeks in advance of the sale will help them look their best. Keep them in a warm, sunny place and they will have time to recover and look healthy for the sale. Variety is always welcome, but we still love our old faithfuls like forsythia, bee balm and daisies. We welcome vegetable plants, ferns, trees, shrubs, houseplants



In Memoriam

The on-going successes and the hard work necessary for the Belchertown Historical Association to maintain a calendar full of events and fundraising would not be possible without the dedication of all our friends. Over the course of the last year we have lost three members who supported the Stone House Museum and the association. Charlie Howard, June Henneman and Jane Gabbie all passed away in the last 12 months, each at the age of 103. We were fortunate to have their help and support for such a long time.



President's Message continued from page 1

Trust that has enabled us to acquire some really fascinating Belchertown artifacts and continue our restoration of the Schoolhouse. We are planning on a full report at our Annual Meeting, via Zoom, at 5:30 on April 24th.

With regards to the Washington District Schoolhouse, the authentic, cedar shake roof looks wonderful, the siding has been repaired and painted, and the installation of the steps and stonework to finish the outside **are done!** Soon work can commence on the interior of the building! This whole process is extremely complicated, and we continue to be extremely grateful to Bill Austin for all his help and guidance. The restoration work continues, and we are grateful to

the help of Ken Hislop, who assisted us greatly with finding our old cess-pit and helping to get us connected to the new sewer line on Maple Street. We continue to need **help with fundraising**, as none of us is an expert in this. We are so grateful for the more than 100 people who have contributed to this project, but we still estimate that the whole project will cost about \$150,000 more than we have raised.

In terms of special fundraising, we are not printing a new program book this year either, but will continue to proudly distribute our beautiful **third** annual program booklet, which we published year before last. Remember that, with guidance from Mary Knight, we produced a very attractive booklet that describes our museum and annual events, with brief articles about new acquisitions and the resources at the Stone House. We remain excited and humbled by the support of the many local businesses that supported us in this endeavor by purchasing ads in our program, and sponsored our events, but we do not feel we can ask our hard-pressed businesses for donations this year either, especially considering that the events they have sponsored were largely cancelled! However, the programs still represent our Museum and our annual events (when they can take place) and we will make them available to the public when it is safe to do so. These brochures will be available around town and will be available at all of our events. **PLEASE** let our local sponsors know that you appreciate their support of our local museum!

As a hopeful new beginning, WE ARE PLANNING TO HAVE OUR TRADITIONAL OPENING DAY ON MAY 7! (See separate article.) **This will** be the first opportunity to see the newly-renovated Dining Room and Front Parlor. We are all so grateful to Trustees Randi Shenkman, Sally Shattuck, and Erica Morrison-Brazitis for their truly tireless work in making these once-in-a-generation renovations happen, and the house looks truly splendid. We can't wait for you all to see the dramatic results!

It's always a great year to be involved in local history, and the trustees and museum committee have been involved in too many projects to fully mention here. We hope that, when it is safe to be out and about again, we will see an increase in attendance at the museum—and please don't forget that we are always looking for cleaners, dusters, house-sitters and docents during the summer months. If you have time during the week or on Saturdays and an interest in becoming more involved with our museum please contact me at (413) 323-7452.

As spring progresses, we hope to be able to resume some of our traditional springtime activities at the Stone House. We are hoping for a good turn-out at our THIRD (can you believe it?) Virtual Annual Meeting at 5:30 on April 24th. Please watch for future updates; as outdoor activities become safe, we certainly hope to see you all around the grounds of the Museum!

Staying Busy at the Stone House

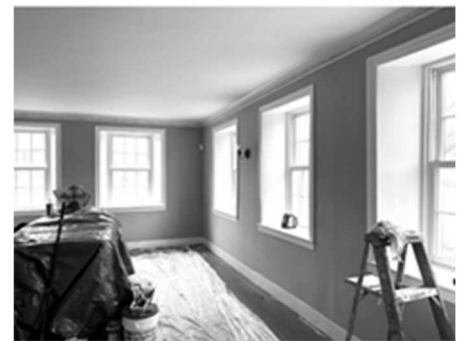
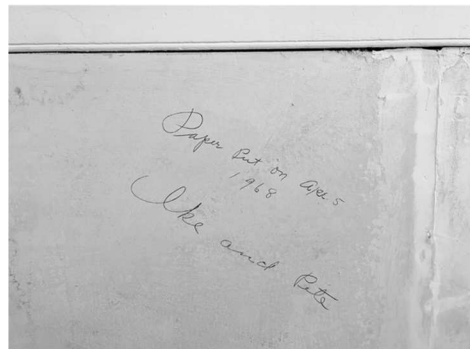
By the end of 2020, a few trustees who had isolated, been inoculated and masked since March, 2020, decided we needed to get out of our houses. We knew we had lots of work to do at the museum. Together and separately, we picked up with the projects we had left unfinished.

Among the projects was the re-wallpapering of the dining room. Historically correct, both in material (plain paper wallpaper) and in pattern (a designed using during the early – mid 1800's), wallpaper was chosen by **Sally Shattuck, Erica Morrison-Brazitis and Randi Shenkman**. The board approved the pattern, and the paper was ordered. The three trustees hired a professional to repair the ceiling and the walls which were in poor condition. When the walls were done, Sally, Erica and Randi got to work putting up the wallpaper. More correctly, Sally and Erica put up the paper and Randi was the helper.

Now, work has begun on the best parlor. The walls and ceiling were repaired and then primed to be ready for the new wallpaper for this room. We decided that this job was too big for us to do ourselves, so the board approved hiring professionals to do this job. The custom wallpaper has arrived and will be hung this month.



Past Dining Room and Best Parlor



Above, The best parlor being prepped for new wallpaper. Note the signatures from 1968.

To the left, the process of wallpapering the dining room.



Opening Day will be May 7th and you will get to see the redone rooms then. Please join us!

Washington District School

Washington District School, the last intact one-room schoolhouse in Belchertown, was acquired in 2016 by the Belchertown Historical Association through a donation from Andrey Korchevsky of Bell Properties. We believe it well worth our efforts to preserve this building; it will be a vital link in telling the story of Belchertown to future generations. We also continue to learn much about the town and its residents by investigating the schoolhouse's history. When the restoration is completed, the Historical Association plans to use the new building for lectures, exhibits, educational programs, and other functions.



With the help of a grant from the Community Preservation Committee, the structure was moved from Bardwell Street to the museum grounds. Repairs were done to the building, and on September 23, 2017, it was placed on a new foundation. The moving and restoration of the schoolhouse is a very complicated project and we could not have moved forward without the dedication of several local supporters, led by Billy Austin, and including Tony Trifone, Rob Hislop, and Ken Hislop. So far, the cellar floor was poured, a new chimney was built, siding on the building was prepared for painting, and an interior hearth was added. Next, was the restoration of the exterior of the building, in order to stabilize it for future years. The authentic, cedar-shake roof was installed, the siding has been repaired and painted, the windows and front door are being replaced with period-appropriate replacements, and the installation of the steps and stonework finish the outside work. We are now connected to the new sewer line on Maple Street as well.

We are continuing the extensive process of fundraising in order to pay for the restoration of the schoolhouse. Over 100 individuals have contributed to this effort and we are extremely grateful for every dollar! We still need \$150,000.

Won't you join us in this important and exciting endeavor?


- We are looking for volunteers to serve on a development committee focused on raising capital. We hope to have your help, cooperation, and maybe some willing hands to complete a project which is exciting and significant to the entire town. **Contact Tom at 413-323-0946 or email us at info@stonehousemuseum.org**
- Donations for the moving, restoration, maintenance, and continued use of the Washington Street School can be sent to the Belchertown Historical Association, P. O. Box 1211, Belchertown, MA 01007 - please specify Schoolhouse in the memo line of your check... or donate online at www.valley-gives.org/organizations/belchertown-historical-association
- In addition to donations, we also need your memories, stories, and any pictures of yourselves and/or your family members who attended this or other schools in Belchertown. Contact info@stonehousemuseum.org.



Our Valued Sponsors

**Belchertown Historical Association
The Stone House Museum**

*Keeping Belchertown History Alive
2020 Program*



Open: May-October Saturdays 2-5
Tours are offered year-round by appointment.
20 Maple St. (Route 202)
Belchertown, MA 01007-1211
www.StoneHouseMuseum.org 413.323.6573

Please acknowledge and thank these generous supporters!

A Boilard & Sons Inc
A Healing Touch Therapeutic Massage
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Austin Brothers Valley Farm
Beers & Story Funeral Home
Belchertown Photos
Bell & Hudson Insurance Agency, Inc,
Benchmark Custom Homes, LLC
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Christopher Heights of Belchertown
Cold Spring Discount Liquors
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Ginny Brook Farm
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New England Small Farm Institute
Noonan Energy Corp.
Quabbin Service Center
Quabbin Valley Acupuncture
Roadhouse Café
ShedWorks Inc.
Snows Self Storage
Station 5 Salon
Sunraise Printing
Tilton Automotive
Valley Dentists of Belchertown

Belchertown History Quiz

1. Traditionally, Belchertown citizens turned out to rake the common on what holiday?
2. Name the four Belchertown men who were killed in World War One.
3. The "cold spring" which gave the town its early name is located on property currently owned by whom?
4. Until the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the Belchertown Fair or Cattle Show has been held continuously since 1856, except for 1916 & 1918. Why was the Cattle Show not held those years?
5. What was the name of the hotel in the center of town that burned down twice in two years?
6. Nelson Holland, a farmer on Enfield Road, built a business by specializing in what product?
7. Arthur Howard, another Belchertown farmer and horticulturist, developed successful varieties of petunias and what fruit?
8. The Belchertown Methodist church used to hold an annual service for the parishioners of the Methodist Church in what Quabbin town?
9. Belchertown residents Dr. Charles Robinson and his wife, Sarah Lawrence Robinson, went west before the Civil War, where he became the first governor of what state?
10. Gaston Plantiff, northeast sales manager for the Ford Motor Company and friend of Henry Ford, was also known for his success in racing. What did he race?

Answers below. Do you have some facts to share? Email them to info@stonehousemuseum.org

Thank to Cliff McCarthy, Archivist
1 Patriots Day 2 Chaucney Walker, John Jackson, George Hannum, Warren Wright 3 University of Massachusetts
4 1916 -- to prevent the spread of polio; 1918 -- World War I 5 Highland Hotel 6 Turkeys 7 Strawberries
8 Enfield 9 Kansas 10. Bicycles

Save us postage! Send in your dues and donations today!

Membership Form Belchertown Historical Association

The BHA, a nonprofit organization, exists primarily on income from membership, event admissions, contributions and bequests. Members enjoy unlimited visits to the museum, subscription to our newsletter, discounted admission to special events, and deep satisfaction in knowing they are preserving the past for generations to come.

Check one:

New Membership Renewal Membership Life Member (Donation only)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

If this is a gift membership, provide giver's name:

Member Categories

- \$5 Student (under 18)
 \$10 Senior ((65+)
 \$20 Individual
 \$35 Family (children <18)
 \$50 Friend
 \$100 Patron

- \$250 Individual Life Member
 \$400 Couple Life Member
 Life Member = no annual renewal

Corporate Matching Program

Double your tax-deductible donation by attaching a matching gift form from your employer.

Member Dues enclosed:

\$ _____

Please check off categories on left

Donation \$ _____ Direct this gift to

School House renovation

Other: _____

Specify In Honor or In Memory of:

Annual Membership and Spring 2022 Fundraising Drive

While the membership dues are low, we depend on this revenue stream to help with administrative costs.

We also invite donations to help us renovate the School House and as honor/memorial gifts. Each will be recognized as directed.

Please also invite relatives, neighbors, friends and colleagues to be part of our mission:

"The Belchertown Historical Association exists to preserve historical artifacts pertaining to the Town of Belchertown; to maintain the Stone House Museum; and to foster knowledge of and interest in the history of Belchertown by opening the Museum to the public and by offering educational programs, lectures and events."

Thank you for all you do. Our important work would be impossible to accomplish without your support.

Send completed form and tax-deductible donation payable to the Belchertown Historical Association to:

**The Belchertown Historical Association
PO Box 1211
Belchertown MA 01007-1211**



BELCHERTOWN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 20 MAPLE STREET, PO BOX 1211
 BELCHERTOWN, MA 01007-1211
 VISIT US AT THE STONE HOUSE,
 CALL US AT 413 323-6573 OR
 EMAIL INFO@STONEHOUSEMUSEUM.ORG

ARCHIVIST: CLIFF MCCARTHY

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MEMBERS NEWSLETTER AND MUSEUM
 WEBSITE EDITOR: MARY F. KNIGHT,
MFKNIGHT@CROCKER.COM

CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING!

The Annual Meeting of The Belchertown Historical Association will be held on Sunday, April 24th at 5:30. We needed to make a decision, so due to the current pandemic, the meeting will again be held “virtually” (on the internet) using Zoom and Facebook live. Please note that there is nothing prohibiting this in our bylaws, and although a physical meeting with our customary desserts would be preferable, we must adapt to our current realities in order to have our legally required Annual Meeting in a manner that is safe for all.

The annual meeting is an opportunity for the trustees of the museum to update the membership on fundraising events, projects, new additions to the museum and archives and any changes to the board of trustees. We value your suggestions and thoughts concerning our growing collection of museum buildings and look forward to seeing your faces on the screen, even though we can't be meeting in person.

The Zoom link will be published on the museum Facebook and Website pages on 4/21. To be added to an invitation /reminder email, contact us at info@stonehousemuseum.org, or call Tom at 413.323.7452. **A quorum is required for this meeting.**



**Annual Membership Renewal and
 Spring Fundraising Form Inside
 *****!**

BELCHERTOWN HISTORICAL
 ASSOCIATION
 20 MAPLE STREET
 PO BOX 1211
 BELCHERTOWN, MA
 01007-1211

