



"THE STONE HOUSE MUSEUM"

Belchertown Historical Association  
Belchertown, Massachusetts  
1903—2025

Fall 2025

Volume 25, Issue 2

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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

**2025 Calendar**  
Please share!

**Stone House Museum**  
**Open May through October**  
**Saturday @ 2 - 5 pm**  
Admission: **FREE** for Members;  
\$5 adults, \$4 seniors, \$2 children  
Call us to arrange private tours.

**Halloween 'n History—October 26**  
Graveyard tours in the Mount Hope Cemetery from 5-7 PM, weather permitting.

**Yuletide—**  
**November 1**  
10 AM—3 PM

**Please consider donating a themed basket, handmade items (especially tree ornaments), or baked goods. We will be getting the rooms ready the week of October 27.**

*If you can help us, please call, or text Sally Shattuck at 413-230-2022.*

*We also need volunteers to work on November 1st for a two hour shift.*

*If you can help us, please call or text Denise Smith at 413-537-3030.*

**Drop off dates for donations are:**

Monday, October 27, 4-6 PM

Thursday, October 30, 4-6 PM,

**2026 SAVE THE DATE!**

February 7 Murder Mystery Dinner  
The BUCC players will present Murder by Cupcake at Tony and Penny's in Ludlow. Watch our website and Facebook for ticket information.

The museum will reopen May 9th. Details of the opening and the events scheduled will be published in our Spring newsletter and online at the webpage and Facebook..



## CAPTIVATING ALL AGES AT THE MUSEUM

Greetings, friends, and Happy Fall!

What an stimulating spring and summer we have had at the Stone House this year! It is exciting to be part of an organization that is so vibrant and inspires so many people!

Our traditional Opening Day was wonderful, although the cloudy weather kept many from our "Old Bag Sale." Many thanks to **Dianne Genie and Beth Jacobs** for their tireless work, which continued to bear fruit when the bags were offered at the Tag Sale weekend on the Common. We made some new friends, and got our season of tours underway!

This year begins the formal celebrations of our country's 250<sup>th</sup> celebration! We contributed in sponsoring a wonderful visit from the "Marquis de Lafayette," with a wonderful reënactment of the Marquis' triumphant visit to New England many years after the Revolutionary War, and we so appreciate **Caren Harrington's** help in making the "Living History Day" surrounding this a meaningful moment in our town's history!

Dwight Day was a very meaningful and important event, and people still comment and ask questions about it. The reënactors reading letters and poetry were wonderful, and thanks so much to **Cliff McCarthy, Elizabeth Pols, and Michael Carolan** for all their work making this event happen!



*Spending a cool summer evening with friends at the cocktail party.*

Our annual Cocktail Party was as much fun as always, and we re-acquainted ourselves with old friends and made some new ones. Special thanks are due to **Denise Smith**, who plays a great rôle in organizing this event; almost everyone "won a prize" at the end of the evening!

Alas! Weather did not permit our Ice Cream Social, although we remain committed to this fun-filled community event. And then—

It was on to the Fair, and what a special weekend it was! Our usual straws booth was popular with young families, but the great news was that **OUR WONDERFUL STAGE-COACH WAS IN THE PARADE ONCE AGAIN!** For many years, the Stagecoach in the parade was an annual tradition, but with fewer and fewer people owning teams of trained draft

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## Museum Highlights

### Living History Day and the Marquis de Lafayette

What a great resource we have in our former curator, **Caren Harrington**. To honor Lafayette's visit, our living history day event focused on 18<sup>th</sup> century living, highlighting **The Green Valley Homestead Reenactment Group**. Visitors could immerse themselves in history while engaging with the living historians as they demonstrated 18<sup>th</sup> century life during one of the most important periods in American history. A master tinsmith, militia groups, an herbalist apothecary discussing plants for healing, ladies hand sewing textiles for clothing their families.

Many thanks to **Cliff McCarthy** for arranging a visit with the Marquis de LaFayette to come thru Belchertown on his grand tour. This reenactment was the beginning of celebrations of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Revolutionary War. Lafayette, a French general, played a critical war in helping the patriots win the war. He was invited to return to America 10 years after the war and was welcomed in many cities and towns. On June 14<sup>th</sup>, Lafayette arrived in Belchertown and was driven by horse and carriage to the town hall where he was greeted by a crowd of townsfolk welcoming him. As history dictated, he spoke with Dr. Estes Howe and then danced with Susannah Dwight Shaw. Little Susan Shaw presented him with a bouquet of wildflowers. The Green Valley Homestead Reenactment Group were there in period costume, including Amy Lanham portraying Susannah. Another thanks goes out to **Muddy Brook Farm in Amherst** for providing the carriage, horse and driver.



### Dwight Day 2025

This summer we invited folks to come back to Dwight Chapel and learn more about the rich history of the community of Dwight. Last year's event was so well attended the board supported the program committee in hosting another event. The day's events featured history presentations, live music, nature talks, children's activities, food, trivia, antique autos and a cemetery tour at the once well-known, nineteenth-century railroad destination and farming community in North Belchertown. The afternoon concluded with a concert by Americana recording artists **Tracy Grammer and Jim Henry**. The portrayal of Amherst Poet Emily Dickinson & Dwight's own author, **J.G. Holland**, was astounding.



### Our New Fence and Shed



The new picket fence installed around the property last fall, by Fitzgerald Fence, was painted this spring by the Cameron Painting company. They will oversee the upkeep of the fence every 3 years. While the cost of the fence and painting was our biggest project last year, it makes the grounds of the museum look stunning!

The trustees have purchased and installed a new storage shed from Shed Works. It is located behind the Sentinel building and allows us to store tables, chairs and tents that were previously kept in the cellar or



schoolhouse. The easy access allows us to move these heavier items in and out for events and gives us more space in the cellar.

### Washington District Schoolhouse

Work continues on the refurbishing of the schoolhouse. This fall the sheetrock is being installed by Preferred Drywall and Mass Save is spraying insulation at almost no cost to us. The next step will be air conditioning and heating so we can make use of the schoolhouse year round, not just as a schoolroom, but for lectures, art exhibits and more.

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horses, and the increased value of the Coach, it has not been in the parade for many years. Personally, I have to admit that as a youth this was always the highlight of the fair for me, and the main attraction at the Stone House! Our 1869 Concord Coach did not actually run through Belchertown, but is similar to those that plied the "Bay Road" between Northampton and Boston in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stopping at the "Cold Spring" on Rt. 181. This year we hired the excellent, professional services of Muddy Brook Farm and their trained team of horses to again have our Coach in the parade, and the outpouring of community support has been phenomenal! This is a great opportunity for us to support the efforts of the Fair Committee, and to be a visible presence to the Town.



*Our very special 1869 stage coach in this year's fair day parade*

This fall, we look forward—weather permitting—to our annual Grave Yard Tours on Oct. 26, and then—all too soon!—to our annual Yuletide event on Nov. 1! And specially this year, we have a return, on a limited basis, of our popular "Candlelight Christmas Tours," which will highlight our beautiful museum and the traditional festivities associated with Yuletide in New England. Please see the separate articles for each of these events.

And, when winter does eventually knock on our door, please look for information about our annual Murder Mystery Dinner, again being held at Tony and Penny's in Ludlow.

We always enjoy seeing members, friends, and well-wishers, and hope to see many of you and make new friends during the upcoming season.

Tom Stockton

## Yuletide



The holiday season is almost upon us. Are you ready? Our annual **YULETIDE** event will be held at the museum on Saturday, November 1st from 9 AM to 3 PM. There will be a wide variety of raffle baskets, baked goods and more of our gently used old bags.

The Trustees hope that many of you who have donated items to our yuletide event in years past, will come forward again to support us. Your generous donations of baked goods or raffle baskets enable us to maintain our beautiful Stone House Museum, an integral part of our town's history. You can drop off your donations at the museum on Monday Oct. 27 from 4-6PM or Thursday, November 30 from 3-5pm. If you have any questions please contact [sallyshattuck54@gmail.com](mailto:sallyshattuck54@gmail.com).

## Victorian Candlelight Tours

The Belchertown Historical Association welcomes you to attend our **Victorian Candlelight Tours at the Stone House Museum** this holiday season. Tours will be led by interpreters wearing traditional Victorian dress. The house will be filled with garlands, candlelight, music, craft activities and the smells of home-made treats.

Tours will be held on Sunday November 30, Saturday December 6 and Friday December 12. Tours will begin at 6, 7 and 8 PM. For tickets information call 413-230-2022 or visit our website [stonehousemuseum.org](http://stonehousemuseum.org). Limited tickets available.





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## Halloween 'n History Graveyard Tours

The Association will be holding its annual Halloween graveyard tours in the Mount Hope Cemetery on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, from 5-7 PM, weather permitting. Inhabitants of the cemetery that impacted Belchertown's history will come "to life" represented by members of the community in period costumes.

Tours will start from the United Church of Christ parish house where guests can listen to a storyteller share tales of Halloweens past. Visitors will enter the cemetery led by a tour guide, stopping at tombstones to hear residents from the 19<sup>th</sup> century tell about their lives in this rural community.

It would not be surprising to catch a glimpse of an occasional spirit or lost soul wandering among the tombstones. The event is free, donations being collected toward continued reconstruction of the Washington District Schoolhouse.

This is not a trick or treat event.



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.

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