

# Belchertown Historical Association The Stone House Museum

*Keeping Belchertown History Alive  
2026 Program*



**Open: May-October Saturdays 2-5**

*Tours are offered year-round by appointment.*

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# Welcome from the President

Greetings, and welcome to the 2026 season of the Belchertown Historical Association!

Ever proud of the rôle our Association has played in preserving our town's history, we are excited to announce this season's events and to share our enthusiasm for the history of our beloved town. The annual activities and events described in this booklet make a yearly rhythm to which we live our lives as a historically conscious community. We invite you to join us on our annual journey, and we hope your time with us is filled with joy, pleasure, excitement, and inspires reflection on the importance a historical perspective has in our modern world.

As you peruse this program, we hope you will not only be impressed by the diligence with which we care for the historical treasures that have been entrusted to us, but will also realize the extent of the resources we need to respond to the many new opportunities and challenges we continually encounter. From the exciting work of adding artifacts to our collection, renovating the museum, designing new exhibits, and making history "come alive," to the unsung but vital functions of weeding, cleaning and fundraising, our tasks are many and never-ending. Above and beyond our usual undertakings, the restoration of the Washington District Schoolhouse continues to present many new and difficult—albeit exciting—challenges, and this past year we were excited to sponsor the return of our cherished Stagecoach to the Belchertown Fair Parade.

We welcome all willing volunteers, and humbly invite you to support our efforts by joining the membership of our Association. A membership form can be found on page 37 of this booklet.

Our important work would be impossible to accomplish without the contributions of our generous benefactors, and on behalf of our Association I take this opportunity to personally thank those who have supported our efforts with donations to this, our seventh program booklet. I am humbled and gratified by the abundant outpouring of beneficence from our local business community. I ask that when you patronize our local sponsors (and you should!) that you thank them for their support of our Association and our program booklet.

We hope that you enjoy your visit to the Stone House Museum, and that you will become a regular visitor at our many events. It is our sincere wish that the memories you create while visiting us will forever make us part of your history, and make you part of ours!

**Tom Stockton**

President, The Belchertown Historical Association



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**2026 Program Committee**

Mary F. Knight, Thomas Stockton, Denise Smith,  
Erica Morrison-Brazitis, Sally Shattuck,  
Maureen Austin, Mary Ann Brennen, Susan Cameron,  
Amy Lanham and Tish Poulter

Special thanks also to all the volunteers who contribute their time, talents and support to the Stone House Museum.

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# The Belchertown Historical Association

The Belchertown Historical Association was informally organized in the 1890s to preserve and study the history of the town. The association was formally established in 1903 and used the town library to house artifacts and books. The acquisition of the Stone House enabled the association to open in 1922 as a museum to house all its own artifacts. The museum is supported by membership dues, admission fees, investment income, and fundraising activities. The historical association and museum are governed by a Board of Trustees elected by the membership.

## The Board of Trustees

The current Board of Trustees is as follows:

**President: Thomas Stockton**

**Vice Presidents: Denise Smith and  
Erica Morrison-Brazitis**

**Secretary: Sally Shattuck**

**Treasurer: Maureen Austin**

At Large Members:

**Mary Ann Brennen, Susan Cameron,  
Amy Lanham and Tish Poulter**

## Annual Association Meeting—April 26

The 2026 “Call to the Meeting” of the Belchertown Historical Association will be held virtually on April 26, 2026 at 4pm.

The 28th day of April, 1740 was the date of the first legal meeting ever held in Cold Spring, the settlement which later became the Town of Belchertown.

At this meeting, the President of the Association shares some of the successful projects the Board of Trustees has worked on during the past year, acknowledges volunteers for their hard work, and presents goals for the year ahead. Members of the Association elect trustees and officers of the Board, vote on any changes to the by-laws, and discuss any other business matters of concern put forth on the agenda.



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# Opening Day at the Museum—May 9



The Stone House Museum is scheduled to open for the 2026 season on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. This annual event showcases the museum and special exhibits and reveals the history and creativity of Belchertown, past and present.

Activities from 9am to 2pm offer shopping opportunities, including a plant sale with both annuals and perennials, a tag sale, and our legendary Old Bag Sale. Tours of the Stone House Museum (free to all), the Memorial Garden, and the Demonstration Garden are also provided throughout the family-friendly day.



## **Museum Hours:**

### **May-October Saturdays 2-5**

Admission is FREE for members (Form on page 37)

Non-members: \$5 adults, \$4 seniors, \$2 children.

The museum is also open for special tours and group tours by appointment all year.

Detailed information about the special events noted in this program will be published in the local newspaper—the Belchertown Sentinel, and on the museum's website [www.stonehousemuseum.org](http://www.stonehousemuseum.org) and Facebook page [@TheBelchertownStoneHouseMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/TheBelchertownStoneHouseMuseum) well in advance.

# The Stone House Museum

The museum, located at 20 Maple Street near the center of town, is owned and operated by the Belchertown Historical Association. The Federal style home was built in 1827 by **Jonathan Dwight** as a wedding present for his daughter, Julia Diantha. The house remained in the Dwight family throughout the 19th century. By the early 20th century, there weren't any more Dwights in Belchertown to live in the house. One of the relatives contacted the Belchertown Historical Association to see whether it might be interested in acquiring the house and property to maintain as an historical museum. Fortunately, BHA gave her an enthusiastic yes. She then donated the money to them to purchase the house.



Taking care of the house has been the primary condition of that gift. As such, recently the dining room and best parlor have been repapered with historically correct paper. The downstairs hall and the upstairs hall have been repainted.

On the upper floor is our special exhibit of the Revolutionary War as we commemorate the 250th anniversary starting with the battles of Lexington and Concord.

The Stone House property includes three buildings which were not here during the Dwight's time: the Ford Annex, the Sentinel building and the Washington District School.

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# The Washington District School

Washington District School, the last intact one-room school-house 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 our story. 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.

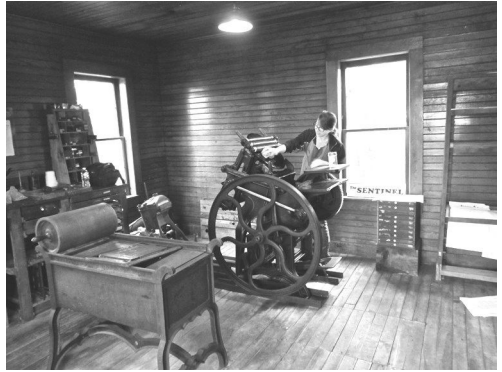


Work on the inside has started and the list of “to do’s” is very long (and costly), but it includes: modern connections for Wi-Fi, installing heat and air conditioning, overhead lights, etc., insulating the building, refinishing the floors, building a staircase to the basement, enclosing the utility section of the room, setting up the coat area of the room; adding drywall and paint. With your help, this is becoming a reality!



# The Sentinel Building

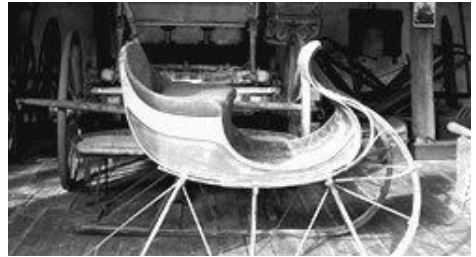
The Blackmer Building is where the Belchertown Sentinel newspaper was printed by Lewis Blackmer starting in 1915. In May 1968, the building and printing press were purchased at auction by **Peter Dearness** who then donated them to the historical society.



Mr. Blackmer's printing press has been refurbished several times. When possible, demonstrations of the press happen on Opening Day and Living History Day. There is also a proof press, which provides the last chance to proof read before printing, as well as ephemera related to the Sentinel and other artifacts.

# The Ford Annex

Belchertown carriages were prized for their fine craftsmanship both in this country and abroad. After visiting the Stone House to view its carriages, **Henry Ford** donated the funds to build this structure in memory of his associate, **Gaston Plantiff**, who was a Belchertown native. Ford was concerned that our world-renowned carriages were sitting



on the lawns exposed to the weather. In addition to the carriages made in Belchertown, the museum collection includes an 1869 Concord Stagecoach—which is similar to those that once passed through town on the way to Boston. Also on display is a hearse, sleighs and a wide selection of period machines, farm implements, spinning wheels, looms, a cobbler's bench and equipment, ice cutters, stoves, and even a bathtub.

# The Museum Gardens

The Remembrance Garden was created in 2001 by volunteer **Becki Smith** to honor her parents, Mr. & Mrs. William Smith, and their love of nature. It has grown and expanded over the years to honor the memories of many special people. The garden can be found between the Sentinel Building and the Ford Annex, and is beautiful to behold, home to lovely perennials and spring bulbs, with a background of rhododendrons. Benches were added so people could just sit and relax amidst the beautiful flowers and comforting shade.



***We honor those who have gone before us.***

***Our past is following in their footsteps.***

***Our future is continuing their important work.***

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**The Stone House Demonstration Kitchen Garden** serves to show our members and visitors the normal crops and herbs that would be found in a nineteenth century family garden.

Special thanks to **Peg and Lew Louraine** for the work they have done to bring historic gardening methods to life. Research is done constantly to be sure the seeds or plants that are nourished in the plots are appropriate for a progressive gardener of the time.



Some of the plants have been donated by Belchertown residents whose families have cherished them for generations!

Volunteers are in the garden regularly, and visitors are welcome to drop by, and may be invited to cut a few herbs to carry home with them and enjoy. Help is always welcome. The single shortcoming of the garden is that there is no “family” as such in residence to water or weed or shoo off the rabbits!





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# Doris Dickinson Archives



The Belchertown Historical Association has an archive in the Stone House Museum with over two hundred boxes of historical documents and records that provide a chronological history of Belchertown from its beginning in the early 1700s up to the present day. The acquisition of these materials began on the day the Association was formed in 1903.

Included in the archives are: almanacs, diaries, and autograph books; public records from businesses, community organizations, and churches; military records from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, and World War II; historical records from Town government, the Belchertown Fair & Cattle Show, and the Clapp Memorial Library; news clippings, speeches and pamphlets, post cards and greeting cards, photo albums and scrapbooks, maps, hotel registers, and more.

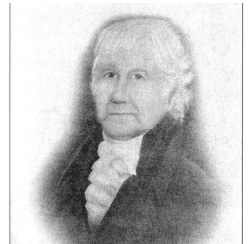
Contact our archivist **Cliff McCarthy** to get information about specific items or to donate to our collection. Email [info@stonehousemuseum.org](mailto:info@stonehousemuseum.org).

## Genealogical Database

Genealogical records of Belchertown families are used extensively by those tracing their family trees. Our database includes records on more than 17,000 people who have lived in Belchertown and their ancestors. In addition to the database, the archive holds letters, diaries, photos, manuscripts, newspapers, scrapbooks, published books, and other materials.

Over the years, we have collected vital and unique information regarding Belchertown and the families that have made this place their home.

Contact our archivist **Cliff McCarthy** to get ancestry information. Email [info@stonehousemuseum.org](mailto:info@stonehousemuseum.org).



Justice Dwight and the The Dwight Homestead



# Research Requests

Do you have a local history mystery?  
A family legend?  
An object you can't identify?  
A story about your home or the people who once lived in it?



Check out [www.stonehousemuseum.org/research](http://www.stonehousemuseum.org/research) to review a list of our Archival Holdings and our Genealogy Database index. Or, you can reach out to Belchertown Historical Association archivist **Cliff McCarthy** and ask for his help in trying to solve your mystery. Email: [info@stonehousemuseum.org](mailto:info@stonehousemuseum.org).

Research in the Stone House archives is by appointment only.

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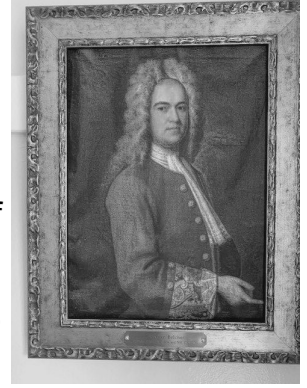
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# Updates in the Museum

We continue to try to build our collection with important artifacts that will help us tell the story of Belchertown's past.

Featured in exhibit room is this copy of one of the very few portraits ever painted of **Governor Jonathan Belcher**. It was donated to the museum.



Our current special exhibit features on events leading up to the 250th anniversary of the War of Independence, the U.S. Semi-quincentennial.

The room showcases Belchertown in the Colonial / Pre-Revolutionary War period into the Revolutionary War. This will be a multi-year exhibit.

Contact [info@stonehousemuseum.org](mailto:info@stonehousemuseum.org) for volunteer opportunities at the museum.



# Memorial Day

The Belchertown Historical Association takes part each year in the Memorial Day commemoration at the Quabbin Park Cemetery for the lost towns of Greenwich, Prescott, Dana, and Enfield.



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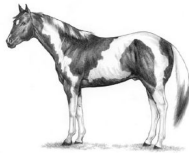
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# Living History Day—May 16

The Board of Trustees is very excited to announce our Living History Day activities for the whole family being held on Saturday, May 16. Reenactors will be outside the museum showcasing life during the Revolutionary War with exhibits of sewing, cooking, cheese making, dyeing, tin smithing, school lessons, and other crafts. The museum will be open for



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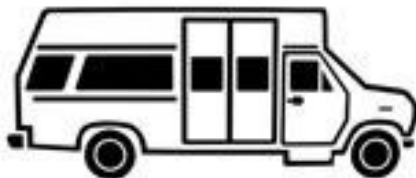
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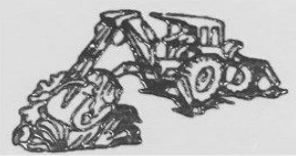
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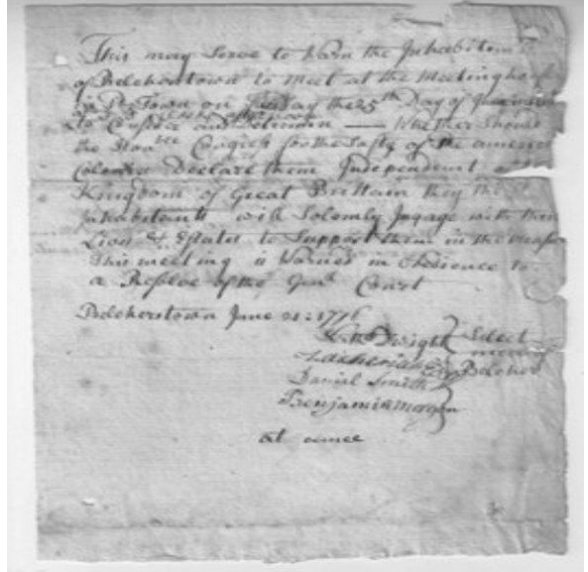


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## 250 Years Ago in Belchertown

In early 1776, Belchertown, like most of Massachusetts, was caught up in the spirit of independence. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* had been published in January, the Massachusetts Provincial Government had drafted a new constitution, and towns and cities were preparing to declare their position on the issue of independence from Great Britain. On June 25, 1776, a town meeting was held to consider this last question and by "a univercel vote" the residents voted to support independence and pledged to "firmly Ingage with their Lives and Fortunes" to assist the cause.



This document memorializes that event. Prominent among the names recorded on this document is Nathaniel Dwight, who was a scion of the town's influential Dwight family. An innkeeper, he was a member of the Board of Selectmen and also Town Clerk, at the time. A month earlier, he had been chosen by a town meeting as a delegate to the Watertown Congress. At that time, it was also "voted that said Nathaniel Dwight shall go armed as there is every danger of invasion by the King's troops that are now stationed at Boston, there being about 4000 men and the Governments of Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire have 30,000 men that are stationed round about Boston."

### Belchertown Photos: *Belchertown Votes for Independence*

# Members Only Cocktail Party—June 28



Join us on Sunday, June 28 (5-7 pm) for an evening of cocktails, and mingle with other members while sampling the varied appetizers under the tents. What could be better than raffle prizes, good food, delicious drinks and friendly faces on an early summer evening? We can't guarantee warm temps, no rain or mosquitos but we can guarantee a good time!! This is an opportunity for the Board of Trustees to treat and thank the members for their continued support of the organization. Keep an eye out for your invitation!! Not a member yet? See page 37!

# Ice Cream Social—July 26

Free and open to all on Sunday, July 26, we will have another Ice Cream Social on the Museum Grounds (weather permitting)!



# Lecture Series at the Museum & Library

The Belchertown Historical Association supports lectures on topics of historical interest. Information about upcoming lectures will be published in the Belchertown Sentinel and on the museum's website and Facebook pages.

**Suggestions for speakers are welcome!** Contact the Museum Committee at [info@stonehousemuseum.org](mailto:info@stonehousemuseum.org)



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An advertisement for 'Wayne Buxton' featuring a white pickup truck with a trailer. The truck has a sign on the front bumper that says 'OVER SIZE LOAD'. In the background, there are several large, dark-colored sheds or barns. The text 'Wayne Buxton' is overlaid on the right side of the image. At the bottom, the phone number '413-289-4696' and the company name 'SHED MOVER, LLC.' are prominently displayed, along with the email address 'shedmoverwayne@gmail.com'.

# Belchertown Fair— September 25-27

Each year, the Association takes part in this special town event on the Belchertown Common. We hold a traditional “straws” game, and are available to share information about the town, answer questions from visitors to the fair, and sell gift items. We are hoping once again to be represented in the parade by our wonderful 1869 stagecoach.



# Halloween ‘n History— October 25



Historic Belchertown figures from the distant past will come alive on the last Sunday in October, from 4-6pm, weather permitting.

Group tours will be given of historic Mount Hope Cemetery for some fun-filled, hands-on history learning assisted by our live reenactors, portraying figures from Belchertown’s past—but don’t rule out other ghostly apparitions throughout the cemetery!

Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.



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# Yuletide at the Museum— November 7

The Stone House Museum becomes a winter wonderland of holiday beauty on the first Saturday in November. The doors are open to welcome visitors to experience Christmas in a 19<sup>th</sup> century home and to do their holiday shopping.

The house is adorned with greens, berries, and pinecones, and is filled with the aromas of cookies, pies, and hot apple cider. An array of crafts, old bags, baked goods, gift baskets and raffle items are donated by members of the Historical Association.

Join us at this wonderful shopping event and fundraiser. Everything from homemade jams and sweets to hand crafted gifts and themed baskets!



# Tours of Christmas Past

The Stone House Museum hosted a new event in 2025, Victorian Candlelight Christmas Tours. Caren Harrington and other members of the Green Valley Homestead Living History Group greeted visitors to the museum wearing their traditional Victorian dresses. The house was decorated with trees, garlands, ornaments and candles inspired by traditions established by Queen Victoria. Guests were given a tour of the house while learning about old traditions including Father Christmas, the Christmas tree, and sampling the favorite beverage of the time, wassail. This event was so well attended that the trustees are bringing it back for another year. Dates and times are not yet available, so watch for more information in the fall. Tours are by reservation only.



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*Weekly Mass Saturdays 4 pm*

***Rev. Thomas T. Stockton***

***Rt. Rev. Brian R. Marsh***

[www.stbarnabasbelchertown.org](http://www.stbarnabasbelchertown.org)

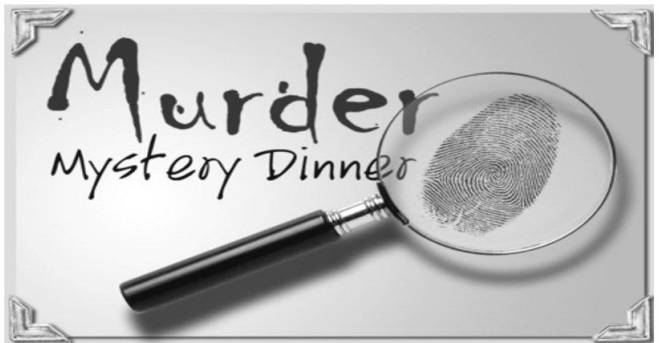


# Murder Mystery Dinner—February 2027

One of the first events of the calendar year is our annual Murder Mystery Dinner. “A good time is had by all” as we lift our spirits for an evening of fun.

We collaborate with the BUCC players - actors from the Belchertown Congregational Church ([www.belchertownucc.org](http://www.belchertownucc.org)) to provide a dinner theatre event of good food and good entertainment, and the evening serves as an important mid-winter fundraiser for both organizations.

Details about the 2027 Murder Mystery Dinner will be published in the Belchertown Sentinel and on the museum’s website and Facebook pages.



## *Hope United Methodist Church*

*31 Main Street, P.O. Box 933  
Belchertown MA 01007*

*Pastor: Rev. Michelle S. Grube*

*church phone: 413-323-7584  
e-mail: [btownhopeumc@gmail.com](mailto:btownhopeumc@gmail.com)  
website: [www.hopebelchertown.org](http://www.hopebelchertown.org)*

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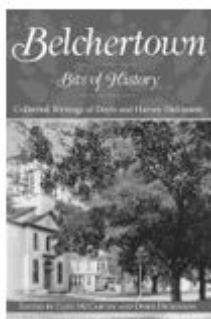
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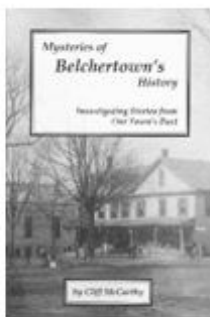
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**Books, Figurines and CD available for purchase at the Stone House Museum or contact [info@StoneHouseMuseum.org](mailto:info@StoneHouseMuseum.org)**



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# 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

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

### Life Member

- (no annual renewal)
- Individual: \$250
- Couple: \$400

### Corporate Matching Program

Double your tax-deductible donation by attaching a matching gift

**Member Dues** enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please check off categories on left*

**Additional Membership Donation** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify In Honor or In Memory of, or specific purpose of this donation.

- I am interested in volunteer opportunities
  - I am interested in learning about bequests to the Belchertown Historical Association
- Contact me by** \_\_ phone \_\_ email

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**

***I wish to become a sponsor of the Stone House Museum as it continues its mission to keep history alive!***

Please fill in and return by mail with your check to:  
The Belchertown Historical Association  
PO Box 1211 Belchertown MA 01007-1211

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donations are tax deductible as permitted by law.  
Full page sponsors will be listed in event promotions.  
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