

Bethlehem Historical Association

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2021



Celebrating BHA Volunteers

BHA is completely run by volunteers who support our mission.



Although we were unable to interact in person for a year, our volunteers continued to find ways to fulfill our mission without a hitch. When the building was closed, they used the time to get it cleaned and painted. They created new exhibits, researched and recorded what they learned. They developed new programs. When public programming came to a halt, they found other ways to reach the community.

In this issue, we invite you to read this year's Annual Report to the Town. Then meet the volunteers who worked to make it all happen.

ABOVE: A few of our volunteers in front of the schoolhouse. Left to right in rear: Susan Leath, May Ann Shubert, Karen Beck, Deborah Croscup, John Smolinsky, Chris Philippo, Bill Seyler, and Sharon Sestak. In front: Vickie Folger and Linda Davies.

Our Mission

- To stimulate an appreciation of the historical heritage of the Town of Bethlehem
- To discover, collect and preserve any material which may help illustrate the history
- To cooperate with town government and with private enterprise in achieving the preservation of historic buildings
- To disseminate historical information concerning the community and its residents.

President's Annual Report

June 1, 2020 – May 31, 2021

When our fiscal year began June 1, 2020, the Bethlehem Historical Association had been shut down in accordance with pandemic restrictions since the middle of March. The museum was closed and all events, including our annual meeting, had to be cancelled.

On September 1, in response to a significant decrease in local COVID cases, the Trustees unanimously voted to open the museum on Sunday afternoons starting September 13, pending all pertinent COVID restrictions be in place. It was arranged. We were open just three Sunday afternoons when, on October 7, a strong storm hit the area. Its damaging winds ripped the power and phone lines from the building. Ten days later, the repairs were completed, but then an alarming spike in COVID cases caused us to remain closed. A total of fifty-five visitors had come to the museum in just the three two – hour sessions we were able to be open and receive them.

Finally, on the first Sunday in May, conditions allowed us to again open the museum to the public. With restrictions now lifted, we are optimistically planning to resume our speaker series and public events in the upcoming season.

Building and Grounds Improvements

Volunteers continued to work throughout the long shutdown. This was accomplished either by working at home or in the museum, masked and socially distanced. The buildings and grounds greatly benefited from the time and opportunity afforded by the otherwise difficult situation.

- Both museum rooms were thoroughly cleaned and freshly painted.
- The windows were washed, inside and outside.
- The front gardens were planted and tended.
- The Carriage House was thoroughly cleaned, reorganized and new shelving was added.
- Throughout the summer, various volunteers researched, designed, and constructed all new exhibits.
- Exhibit space was improved by the remodeling of the “big wall”, the replacement of heavy glass with lightweight plexiglass on three cases, the addition of a new, triangular exhibit unit and installation of new corkboards.

Building and Grounds Issues

The Highway Department was regularly advised of needed repairs. In April a new bilco door was

installed.

On May 8, a meeting, organized by Supervisor VanLuven, was held for the purpose of getting a general assessment of the building's physical condition. Town officials and BHA representatives met with Beth Mosall, an architect trained in historic restoration. There are significant issues in need of attention. The Town will prioritize those needs and apply for grant assistance to address them.

The person who has cleaned the museum bathroom for many years is no longer able to continue on any dependable schedule. As of this date, there is no solution..

Shortage of parking space during events continues to be a serious issue.

A lack of appropriate storage space and an adequate work area are ongoing challenges.

Communication

Our newsletters and yearbook were produced and distributed on schedule including an extra newsletter issue.

To communicate with our members in a more efficient, professional manner, we began to use the e-mail platform, *Mail Chimp*.

Our website was significantly reorganized, updated, and enhanced.

Community Engagement

Several members participated in *Bethlehem Forward* meetings. Two BHA members serve on the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee, advocating for formation of a town historic preservation commission.

A local girl scout, with some BHA support, created a new walking tour of the Four Corners/ Elsmere area. It was introduced to the community on May 22. Isabella Richards earned a Gold Badge, the highest achievement in girl scouting, for her outstanding efforts.

The teachers who run our successful in-person fourth grade program have developed a kit of materials, including artifacts, to supplement the second-grade curriculum. This kit is available for loan by second grade teachers in the district.

In May, we presented a virtual tour of the museum via Zoom to the *Women Who Care* group at the Presbyterian Church.

This spring a new program for children was created to give parents an opportunity to provide their children some cultural enrichment in a safe environment during the pandemic. We developed several play-based learning activities and offered ninety- minute sessions that could be reserved at the museum for a family's exclusive use. We are

Volunteer Round Up

Introducing our Executive Committee: The Officers, Trustees and Committee Chairs



Researching and making discoveries, using creative talents, finding and caring for treasures, planning events – all done while having a good time with interesting people. That’s volunteering for BHA.

Karen Beck
President, Ephemera Collections, Newsletter Editor



Being a part of BHA is to help express and promote the importance of local history. I enjoy being a part of this congenial and dedicated organization.

Wendy Brandow
Fundraising Co- Chair, Charter Member



I thoroughly enjoy volunteering for the Bethlehem Historical Association. You could not find a more friendly and dedicated group of people to work with.

Jan Cornell
Corresponding Secretary



It’s fun to see the amazement on the children’s faces when they learn the uses of the artifacts. One child said, “Where do you get this stuff? I want to buy some!”

Debbie Croscup
Trustee, Young Historian



As a BHA member, I have come to appreciate our wonderful town's history much more and met some of the greatest people I know! Helping to bring Bethlehem’s history to second and fourth graders at BC has brought me joy and allowed me to see first-hand what a special community we share!

Linda Davies
Trustee, Young Historian



I enjoy volunteering to spend time in a worthwhile purpose, to share in the camaraderie of friends, and in the case of the Bethlehem Historical Association, to learn more about our town's history.

Vicki Folger
Vice President, Trustee, Out & About Coordinator

now adapting that program for post quarantine conditions.

Historic Research, Documentation & Preservation

Collection committee members are in the process of reviewing and updating records as well as systematically photographing each object in the collections.

All ephemera is now organized into archival envelopes, file folders, and boxes. The long process of analyzing and coordinating that information as well as the transcribing and digitizing of correspondence and diaries continues.

The historic markers in town have been inventoried. A map indicating their locations has been created and restoration of markers that need repair or painting is in the works. An application for an additional marker noting Elisha Hurlbut's influential support for women's suffrage was submitted. The town has potential for additional markers.

Membership and Administrative Matters.

The current membership renewal effort is underway and to date indicates again that our loyal members have stuck with us despite the lengthy unfortunate circumstances.

Members approved the recommendations of the nomination committee. They re-elected Karen Beck to her fourth term as president. We are pleased to welcome two new trustees to our board, Andrew Reilly and John Smolinsky.

BHA is financially dependent on membership dues and donations. The fundraising committee held a successful virtual bake sale in lieu of their traditional Election Day sale at the Schoolhouse.

The association continues to be an all-volunteer organization. The town is fortunate to have such a hard-working group of people dedicated to maintaining this wonderful community asset.

We believe having a well-defined, congenial relationship with the Town is critical

- To ensuring BHA's future.
- To maintaining and developing the Cedar Hill Schoolhouse and property.
- To celebrating and sharing the history of Bethlehem.

We look forward to working with the town on this worthwhile effort in the upcoming year.

Respectfully Submitted by
Karen Beck
June 21, 2021

We thank you, our members! Nothing would be possible without the loyal support you give, even when we have to shut down and can offer so little in return. We have now opened our doors, and look forward to good times as together we explore and share the history of our Town of Bethlehem



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Volunteering for the Bethlehem Historical Association has given me a voice in my community and a way to contribute to its enrichment and the preservation of our shared history. Besides, its fun to volunteer with wonderful like-minded citizens.

Sue Gutman
Collections Committee



Being a part of BHA has been so fulfilling for me over the years. I think I started out on the display committee back in 1996. Local history is important, and BHA works hard to preserve it. While the people involved have changed over the years, the commitment to history carries on.

Susan Leath
Publicity, Newsletter Editor, Town Historian



After attending a few interesting talks and events, I joined, and then became involved by volunteering for projects of interest such as the teas and speaker programs. Fellow volunteers are dedicated to preserving the history in the town and are fun to work with.

Mary Kelle
Speaker Series Chair



I am most recently involved with inventorying the collection. It is fascinating, a real treasure trove of history and a peek into the lives of previous generations. Through my volunteer work with BHA I have made new friends and strengthen old friendships.

Nancy Newkirk
Recording Secretary



I love talking and giving the history of Bethlehem to guests, members, and sometimes distant cousins, on Sundays at the Museum.

Dawn Pratt
Hospitality Chair



I enjoy stumbling on colorful, if un-momentous, bits of history like the news that in 1854 a Bethlehem lager beer seller draped his sign in black crepe when a Temperance League Committee pressed the enforcement of a Sunday closure law.

Chris Philipppo
Trustee, Researcher

Even More Volunteers

We also want to recognize these very special volunteers for the time and talent they bring to BHA:

Bill Ketzner shares his passion for history by enriching our newsletters with his popular, lively articles, often taking a fresh approach on a topic,

Helen Warner brings her sense of fashion and fun to the collection committee inventory work and to dressing the mannequins just right.

Eileen Wolck faithfully tends the flowers in front of the Schoolhouse as she also watches out for the welfare of our resident garter snake.

Jill Knapp has updated our website and keeps the information current. She is also responsible for the attractive formatting and carefully selected illustrations that make our Mail Chimp notices so organized and appealing.

Don Newkirk has cheerfully donated his time and carpentry skills to make many needed improvements. Don has solved storage problems by building new shelving, improved exhibits by installing cork boards and creating a new display structure and much more.

Heartfelt 
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Feeling inspired?

*We are always seeking volunteers!
Exhibits. Education. Collections. Publicity.*

*Research. Writing. Graphic Design.
What would you like to do history-wise?*

Give us a shout.

*Email BethHist1965@gmail.com or
call Karen Beck at 439-9260*



Volunteer Round Up

Introducing our Executive Committee: The Officers, Trustees and Committee Chairs



"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." MARCUS GARVEY

Andrew Reilly
Trustee



BHA is important to the town for keeping its history alive through its displays, writings, and pictures.

Linda Schacht
Registrar, Fundraising Co-chair



My main "jobs" are as greeter at public programs and as membership chair. It's so nice to put a face with a name and to talk about what's going on at BHA, particularly the benefits of having a membership!

Sharon Sestak
Membership Chair, Greeter



During the last year when we hardly saw anyone face to face, I was often struck by how many people were doing so much work to keep the BHA going, particularly on a continuing basis. That's pretty amazing to think about.

Mary Ann Shubert
Treasurer



As a volunteer, I most enjoy researching our town's history through early diaries, photographs, church records and maps.

Bill Seyler
Trustee, Buildings & Grounds Chair



I am interested in helping BHA build the documentation, add to the artifacts, and educate others about Bethlehem origins, culture, people, and development patterns.

John Smolinsky
Trustee



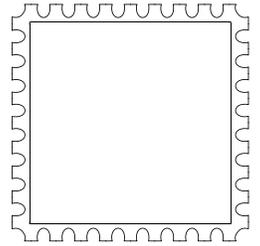


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Cedar Hill Schoolhouse Museum

P.O. Box 263

Selkirk, NY 12158



The Bethlehem Historical Association

Cedar Hill Schoolhouse Museum
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BethlehemHistorical.org

OFFICERS

President: Karen Beck
Vice President: Vicki Folger
Recording Secretary:
Nancy Newkirk
Corresponding Secretary:
Jan Cornell
Treasurer: Mary Ann Shubert

TRUSTEES

Debbie Croscup, Linda Davies, Vicki Folger
Chris Philipppo, Andrew Reilly, Bill Seyler,
John Smolinsky

Newsletter Editors

Karen Beck & Susan Leath

Speaker Series Returns in September!

*Dr. John Pipkin will present a talk on the history of Washington Park. This will take place at the Delmar Reformed Church on Thursday, Sept. 16 at 2 PM.
All are welcome!*

Stop by the schoolhouse!
The museum is open
Sunday afternoons from
2 to 4 PM.



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