The Preservationist

Newsletter of the Bedford (Mass.) Historical Society

Founded in 1893

April 2008 Volume 115, Number 6

Visitors at our Open House on April 12 after Pole Capping. We enjoyed talking with the crowd of people who came to see some of our treasures in the police training room (left) and the hallway outside our office (right).

Our potluck is the best luck

We have the best darned potluck dinner in town, if we may say so ourselves – and we do! What's not to like about sitting down to several dozen homemade dishes, topped by an array of homemade desserts, all made with loving care? We end the program year in May with our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner. After-dinner music will be provided by the Bell Ringers of our host, the First Church of Christ, Congregational.

Please bring a dish of your choice with enough to serve 8. If you aren't sure what to bring, just remember that it's better to have too many main dishes than too many desserts.

Wednesday, May 28, 6:30 PM (NOT 7:30 PM as usual)
First Church of Christ, Congregational
25 The Great Road, Bedford

The best bargain in town

The price of gas is going up. The price of food is going up. Even the price of stamps is going up yet again. What hasn't gone up is the price of your annual membership dues. Now more than ever, it's one of the best bargains around. The modest amount we charge for dues helps us continue to offer talks on local history, maintain our collections, and keep on collecting and sharing the stories of Bedford.

If you're an annual member, please bring a check to the Annual Dinner on May 28 or mail it to us at 2 Mudge Way, Bedford MA 01730. Not sure about your membership? Please check the address label on the back of this newsletter for your membership status and expiration date. See Page 5 for a renewal form.

While you're at it, won't you consider upgrading your membership to the Supporting or Patron level? It's a little thing that will help a lot. Thank you!

The Preservationist is published seven times yearly for the purpose of sharing topics of interest for the education and enjoyment of the Society's members and the community in general. Comments, suggestions and contributions of relevant articles are welcome and should be addressed to: Editor, ***The Preservationist,*** 2 Mudge Way, Bedford MA 01730.

Alethea "Lee" Yates, Editor
(781) 275-3294 (home)
(781) 275-7276 (BHS office)
Email: bedford-history@usa.net

Bedford Historical Society, 2007-2008

Officers

Alethea Yates, President
Jan van Steenwijk, Vice President
Phyllis Cooke, Secretary
Don Corey, Treasurer

Directors

Carol Amick ('08)
Norman Toti ('08)
Julie Turner ('08) - Board Secretary
Don Corey ('09) - Board Chair
Miriam Brown ('09)
Jan van Steenwijk ('09)
Marion Bryan ('10)
Marietta Ellis ('10)
Donald Jenkins ('10)
Doris Crowell ('11)
Neil Leary ('11)

Committees

Activities: Jeannette Pothier
BOD Liaison to Executive Board: Don Corey
Hospitality: Phyllis Cooke and Marietta Ellis
Membership Secretary: TBD
Merchandise/Ways & Means: TBD
Newsletter Editor: Alethea Yates
Nominating:
Wilma Johnson (appointed by Executive Board, '08)
Carol Amick (appointed by Membership, '09)
Julie Turner (appointed by President, '07)
Program: Cecile Walker
Sunshine: Sharon McDonald
Welcoming: Lois Jenkins
Finance Committee:
Don Corey (Board Chairman, Treasurer)
Mike Seibert ('08)
Neil Leary ('09)
Frank Gicca ('10)
Alethea Yates (BHS President)

New members

We are delighted to welcome several new members to the Society.

Nancy and Val Asbedian
Richard LeSchack and family
Carleton-Willard Village

Welcome, all!

Sunshine here

Please write or call our Sunshine person, Sharon McDonald, if you know a Society member in need of some sympathy, some cheer, or perhaps just a few kind words from all of us.

s_mcd_bos@yahoo.com
781-275-5643

Sharon will send a sunbeam in the form of a card or note on behalf of the Society.

Helpers for Plant Fair

A few helping hands are needed at our sales booth on Saturday, May 17, 10 AM to 3 PM, for the Plant and Craft Fair on the Common. No experience needed. If you can work from 9-11, 11-1, 1-3, or any portion thereof, that will be a big help. This event is always fun, and it's a good way to enjoy the springtime and see some Bedford folks as we all emerge from winter hibernation. Come lend us a hand and then pick up some plants for your garden. You'll be helping both the Society and First Parish, the sponsors for this event. Call our office at 781-275-7276 for information.

Extended Archives hours

Our office hours have been extended as of the first of the year. Our room in the Stearns building (a.k.a. the Police Station building) at 2 Mudge Way is *usually* open at the following times:

Monday, 9 to 12 and 1 to 5
Tuesday, 9 to 1
Wednesday, 9 to 1

Other times by appointment.

It's best to phone ahead before you stop by because we do step out for errands now and then. Please call our NEW PHONE NUMBER, 781-275-7276.

In memoriam

We were recently saddened by the loss of two long-time members, Marcelle Schnitger and Dorothy Rogers. Both contributed to the Society in a variety of ways. We particularly remember Marcelle for the hours of devoted effort she gave to our Archives, and Dorothy for her lovely, handmade colonial clothing and colonial music. Our thoughts and prayers go to their families.

New historic area?

The Two Brothers Rocks - Dudley Road area may soon be named to the National Register of Historic Places. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has just awarded an $8,000 Survey and Planning Grant to the Town of Bedford. This grant will be used to help complete the National Register application process.

The Two Brothers Rocks are one of the oldest inland monuments in the state, and Dudley Road area in Bedford and Billerica was one of the earliest settled in these two towns. National Register status would give these sites the recognition they deserve. Our thanks go to the Bedford Historic Preservation Commission for their work on this project.

Movie mystery

We recently received an inquiry from Frank Judge of Bedford, NH. He believes that a movie was once filmed in Bedford and he would like to know the title, if anyone remembers it. He recalls that it was about a married woman who had a child late in life. Her husband worked at a mill. The movie was shot in the late 50s or early 60s in the vicinity of the railroad station and the nearby mill. Can you tell us anything about this movie?

Colonial-style gown for sale

Are you looking for a colonial-style gown? A lovely one is available and is currently on display in the hallway outside our office. Come see it and try it on, then contact the owner, Joan Jordan, at 978-667-6426. Best offer. The two-piece gown is in a dusty rose color with floral panels and lace trim. Synthetic fabric. Available separately are a green, unlined woolen cloak, a lacy mob cap, and a muff.

The John F. Brown Memorial Fund

The Society is in talks with the Town about using the John Brown Memorial Fund to straighten some of the gravestones in the Old Burying Ground and we expect the work to begin soon. Generous friends and neighbors have donated more than $4,000 to honor John's memory. Restoring the town's first cemetery was a project very dear to him and the work made possible by the fund will, we think, be a fitting tribute.

Donations are still being accepted and may be sent to the Bedford Historical Society, 2 Mudge Way, Bedford MA 01730-2138.

BHS calendar

We're planning quite a few activities in the coming months:

Saturday, May 3 from 9AM to noon: Cleanup at the Job Lane House, 295 North Road. We'll help prepare the Job Lane House for its opening day. We are the official sponsors of the Parlor, the room adorned with beautiful Rufus Porter murals. All are welcome to pitch in for the "cleaning bee." We always have a good time. Come on over and bring your dustcloth!

First two weeks of May, third grade tours of historic Bedford Center. Each year every third grader in town comes to Bedford Center for a tour of historic sites. They visit the Historical Society, the Old Burying Ground, the Town Common, Fitch Tavern, and the Stearns Mansion. On another day they all visit the Job Lane House. We're proud to help our young citizens gain an appreciation for Bedford's history. Volunteers are needed when they visit us. No experience needed; we'll provide a script for you to follow. Contact us for details.

Saturday, May 17, Plant and Craft Fair on the Common. We'll set up our sales booth with a full selection of our Bedford books, maps, Bedford Flag stamps, and memorabilia. You'll also find an excellent selection of annual and perennial plants, plus crafts of every description. 10 AM to 3 PM, rain or shine. Sponsored by the First Parish Church of Bedford.

Monday, May 26: Memorial Day. As part of Bedford's Memorial Day observances, three of our members will be giving talks: Don Corey at the Shawsheen Cemetery, Bob Slechta at the Old Burying Ground, and Lee Yates at the World War I memorial on the Common. Please join us as we remember

Bedford people who served our country over the years. Watch the local paper for details.

Saturday, June 14: Two Brothers Rocks tour. Society member Bob Slechta leads a walk to the Two Brothers Rocks historic site, soon (we hope) to be named to the National Register of Historic Places. See the Rocks and learn the history of this historic part of town. Check our next newsletter for time and starting location. This program is presented under the auspices of the Bedford Historic Preservation Commission as part of the Riverfest celebration (see www.sudbury-assabet-concord.org.)

Monday, June 16: Bedford Farmers' Market. Join us for the opening day of the new Bedford Farmers' Market. We'll set up shop at the Community Table with a full selection of our Bedford books, maps, Bedford Flag stamps, and memorabilia. Other vendors will offer an array of fresh, local produce. Monday, 6/16, 2-6:30 PM, Bedford Depot Park, at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and South Road. See www.bedfordmarket.org for details.

Bedford then and now

More selections from our Archives, paired with recent photographs of the same sites.

The New York Pharmaceutical Company's factory (left) has become condominiums on Sweetwater Ave. (right). Dr. William R. Hayden made patent medicines at the factory and ran Bedford Springs as a resort, complete with a hotel, spring houses, observation tower, and a steam launch on Fawn Lake.

The house at 137 Shawsheen Rd. as seen from the bridge on Page Road, circa 1929 (left) and today (right). This house is believed to have been built on or near the site of the Shawshine House, an Indian trading post of early days. Note that the porch, the barn, and the right-hand end of the house have been removed.

Bryan Nash of the Bedford Minutemen seems happy to have been "arrested" by British Regulars once again for the seditious act of capping the pole in Wilson Park on Pole Capping Day, 2008

The Bedford Minuteman at Pole Capping, 2008

Sharon McDonald shares her expertise on the Bedford Flag with interested visitors at the library

Membership Application and Renewal Form

This is (please check one):

____ A new membership

____ A renewal

____ **A gift subscription**

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

City: _____

State:_____ Zip:_____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Dues (please check one):

__ Student:	$3.00
__ Individual:	$10.00
__ Couple or Family:	$15.00
__ **Supporting or Business:**	**$50.00**
__ **Patron:**	**$250.00**
__ Life – Individual:	$150.00
__ Life – Couple:	$200.00

Donation

I would like to contribute the following amount to aid the Society: $ _____

I would like to contribute the following amount to the John F. Brown Memorial Fund for the Old Burying Ground: $ _____

Total enclosed: $_____

Bedford Historical Society, Inc.
2 Mudge Way, Bedford MA 01730-2138
781-275-7276
bedford-history@usa.net

The Preservationist
Bedford Historical Society
2 Mudge Way
Bedford MA 01730

PRSRT STD
US Postage Paid
Bedford MA 01730
Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 30

Are your dues up to date? Please check the mailing label for your membership status

For our annual members, ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE!
Please see Page 1

What's old is new – and old again. Bedford's Minuteman Company on the Common, 1971.
Photos donated by David W. Crosby