
 Holliston Historical Society
NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022



In April, Isabella Stewart Gardner visited the Historical Society. Actor Jessa Piaia portrayed the “Patroness of the Arts” for a near-capacity crowd, happy to be at an in-person event once again!

Dates to Remember.....

June 19—Father’s Day Car Show and Breakfast (p. 4)

September 16—Pie Night (p. 5)

September 18—41st Harvest Fair (p. 5)

October 21—Oktoberfest Dinner and Band (p. 6)

Holliston Historical Society *NEWSLETTER*
Summer 2022 • Volume 29, Number 2

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<http://www.Hollistonhistoricalsociety.org>

Mary Curran, Editor

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Officers

President	Nancy Lamb
Immediate Past President	Paul Saulnier
External Vice President	Jane Gilfoy
Internal Vice President	Sheila Adams
Secretary	Anne Tobin
Treasurer	Don Bates

Directors-at-Large

Pam Kyrka, Melissa Ford,
Pat Pereira, Ben Clarkson

Permanent/Standing Committee Chairs

Finance	These committee positions will be voted on by the board at the July 11 meeting. The Officers and Directors (above) as well as the Endowment and Web Services Chairmen (below) were elected at the Annual Meeting on May 22 for a term that begins on July 1. Currently, Bea Hait is the External VP and Jane is a Director at Large until July 1.
Nominations	
Education & Programs	
Collections	
Property Management	
Library & Archives	
Membership	
Publicity and Publications	

Endowment Fund Chairman

David Grosjean

Web Services Chairman

Mary Curran

Annual Committee Chairs

Gardens and Landscape	Sheila Adams
Car Show	Paul Saulnier
Harvest Fair	Jane Gilfoy and Victoria Shotten
Decorations	Joanna Hilliard



A Note from Our Acting President

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our Potluck Dinner and Annual Meeting. The company was good and the dishes delicious and varied. Reports given by the Board members and committee chairpersons showed that the Society is active and doing well. Maintenance of the house has included repair to the porches, roof and one chimney. The property and gardens are well maintained by our remarkable Property and Rental Manager, Victoria, and are in demand for weddings and other celebrations.

We are happy to be able to hold events in person again. In June, we will have our Father's Day Car Cruise and Breakfast. Pie Night, the Harvest Fair and Oktoberfest come in the fall. These events can only take place with the help of volunteers and bring benefit to the Society and to the many volunteers. We welcome all to come join us.

Volunteers are also needed to help us in planning for the future. A Long-Range planning committee is being formed to envision where we might want to be in 5, 10 or 20 years. We would value your input and would like your ideas and comments. You may contact us through our website drop-down menu and accessing "Contact Us."

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at our events.

Sheila Adams, Acting President

UPCOMING EVENTS

19th FATHER'S DAY BREAKFAST CRUISE

JUNE 19, 2022

8AM to 10 AM

Hosted by

Holliston Historical Society

547 Washington St (rt. 16), Holliston, Mass.

Free to all cars and motorcycles of interest.

Trophies will be awarded.

Full breakfast & snacks available.

Sponsored & trophies awarded by:

Corcoran & Havlin Insurance Group/Hagerty Insurance

Quality Auto Body, Keystone Automotive

Authentic Auto Body, Hometown Automotive

Roadmaster Motors, Vintage Motorsports

Rose's Automotive, Medfield on the Charles

BDR Automotive, AH Car Storage

"Jid" Kamitian Family

Kidde-Fenwall Inc.

Mark Dellicker Construction Company

Green Plumbing & Heating

Thomas Chipman Electrical Contractor

W. A. Bernard, Inc., Fine Homes & Additions

For a complete listing of car shows, go to:

<http://www.carshownationals.com/>

41st Harvest Fair

The date is Sunday, Sept. 18 (rain date Sept. 25) from 10:00 to 4:00. Crafts, antiques, collectibles, music by Always in Season, food, baked goods—including our much loved and anticipated apple pies—silent auction and open hours at the Asa Whiting House will be offered.

You are invited to attend—and volunteer—at this, our most important fundraiser of the year for a shift of two hours (or more!) in any capacity, such as the popcorn machine, beverages, food service line, bake table, silent auction, vendor assistance, and more. If you can only do an early shift, starting at 6:30 a.m. you could help guide vendors to their spots. If you can only do a late shift, we need help with clean up starting at 4:00 p.m. To volunteer, please contact Bill Hatch at 508-429-5362.

How about coming to Pie Night on Friday, Sept. 16 starting around 5:00 p.m. to help peel the apples, roll pie crust and fill the pies? After the pies are assembled, we can sit and enjoy pizza and beverages. On Saturday we will need help to bake the pies. Please contact Mary Curran at 508-429-5929 if you would like to help on Saturday in that capacity. We are also looking for someone to assume the coordination of Pie Night starting next year. Hands-on training available now.

If you cannot volunteer for Pie Night or the Harvest Fair, how about contributing a baked good for the Society's Bake Table? You may drop off your baked item at the barn on Saturday morning or the morning of the Fair.

Questions? Contact Harvest Fair Coordinators Victoria Shotton at 617-407-0896 or Jane Gilfoy at 508-380-5579.



Upcoming Events, continued

Oktoberfest at the Historical Society is Back!

Save the date: Friday, October 21 at 7pm for the return of the Double Eagle Oktoberfest Band, a German-inspired meal, and wine, craft beer or soft beverage. The band will have you tapping your feet, singing along and hitting the dance floor with multiple breaks to raise a glass and sing: "Ein Prosit der Gemütlichkeit."

If you'd like to assist with planning this year's event, please contact Bea Hait, beateh1@aol.com or 774-292-9098.

—Beate Hait



Treasure Shop at the Harvest Fair

The Treasure Shop debuted at the Harvest Fair last year, and items were also for sale at our Open House in December. We will have a Treasure Shop booth at the Harvest Fair this year. Once again, we are asking for your contributions.

If you have items such as antiques, collectables, or newer objects in very good condition that you might like to donate, please contact:

Sheila Adams at adamssjt1@aol.com or

Melissa Ford at melissaford905@gmail.com

Annual Meeting May 22, 2022

More than 50 people attended our annual meeting and pot luck dinner this year, including several new members. It was wonderful to see everyone. It felt celebratory to be socializing and eating a shared meal—without masks—after what has been an extraordinary time for both the world and for the Historical Society. After the delicious meal, Sheila Adams called the meeting to order. Committee heads shared the work that has been ongoing over the past year. The Society has come through this challenging time thanks to the hard work of many. We look forward to resuming more of our typical activities in the coming year. The slate of candidates for positions on the Board of Directors was unanimously approved. Our new year begins on July 1st. See page two for a list of current and future board members. Finally, Sheila presented the awards.

All three awards were given this year. The President's Award may be given to a Society member who has exhibited extraordinary Society service for a significant length of years. That person is Don Bates. As Sheila pointed out, Don "has been a non-stop worker since he joined the Historical Society and quickly made himself essential," most notably "when we suddenly lost our beloved Treasurer, Bill Tobin, Don stepped up to fill the position." Thank you, Don, for all you have done, large and small, to keep our finances and our property in great shape.

The Member of the Year award is given to a member or members who have exhibited extraordinary service during the President's current term. In Sheila's words, Jane and Bruce Gilfoy "have contributed so much to our Society in a short time." Bruce films many of our programs to air on HCAT. In the Meeting Room, "you will see the results of Jane and Bruce's expertise in the framing and mounting of our maps and sports photos." Jane has

also been very active with the Collections Committee, Hospitality, and as a Director. Thank you Jane and Bruce!

Lastly, Sheila presented the John Mason Batchelder Award for Excellence in Education to Leslie McDonnell. As per our by-laws, *“The Board shall have the option of granting this award by unanimous vote to the person(s) (Society member or non-member) or organization(s) whose exceptional service increases the Society’s educational standing and goodwill by focusing on: historical research; educational programs; educational grants; historical conservation; or community outreach.”* Sheila remarked that in her capacity as Director of the Holliston Public Library, Leslie “has not only maintained the central services of the library but has adopted and adapted to technological changes that are transforming the information world.” She started new programming for adults and children, supports varied book clubs, and adjusted for COVID so that patrons could still check out books and materials. Sheila continued:

The Society is so appreciative of Leslie’s willingness to partner with us on various programs including the Rail Trail talk at the Library, the Lizzie Borden program at the Society and others. During the lock-down, she shared Zoom programs with us, most recently Ted Reinstein’s program on baseball’s Negro League. She gave the Society local history books that were no longer needed when the library went digital. Leslie has been an asset to the town and a great friend of the Historical Society. As Nancy Lamb said, “She is a jewel.” We will all miss you but wish you a happy retirement.

—*mec*



Don Bates (right) was given the President's Award for his many years of extraordinary service to the Historical Society. Sheila Adams presented the award at the Annual Meeting on May 22, 2022.

Bruce and Jane Gilfoy (standing) receive the Member of the Year award.



Sheila (right) reads her remarks to Leslie McDonnell, recipient of the John Mason Batchelder award for Excellence in Education as Don Bates looks on.

18th Century Days Report

18th Century Days returned this year to its regular in person program after a two-year hiatus due to Covid. We planned for 209 students to attend over five days, this year being what we refer to as a Montessori year. (This means the 3rd and 4th grade Montessori classes also attend, which happens every other year due to the way their history curriculum is taught.) Two third grade classrooms attended each day (averaging around 35 students daily), with the three Montessori classrooms attending on Friday (67 students). 51 parent volunteers signed up via the Sign-Up Genius link that was sent to all the third grade parents. Five Society members volunteered their time as well, with readying supplies, teaching workshops, and set-up and clean up. I would like to extend my thanks to Rick and Joanne Brown, Sheila Adams, Judy Grosjean, and Carol Kosicki.

I was very ably assisted this year by my two coordinators, Karla Alfred and Catie Ehret. These two amazing women jumped right in wherever they were needed and helped to make everything run as smoothly as possible. Judy Grosjean also assisted on Monday, despite being in the middle of her family's move to Acton. On Friday I was helped out by Sarah Fitzgerald and Jennifer Dayton, and Karla and Catie came down at the end of the day to clean up. As a bonus, we got a new family membership when Karla and her family joined the Historical Society.

I was so happy to be able to welcome the children back this year, and I believe they all had a wonderful time. I have heard that some of the children said this was their favorite field trip and wished every day could be like this. Additionally, there was the post on the "I'm Holliston Happy" Facebook page by a third grade parent, which racked up over 300 likes, about how much fun her child had that day. Hearing things like this makes all the hard work worth it.

—Terri Chamberlain

Holliston Historical Society has a presence at the Town Hall!



Upon entering the Holliston Town Hall from the front door, our new collections cabinet is located to the left of the Select Boards' office. It was the idea of our Internal Affairs Guru, Paul Saulnier, that we expand our presence within the town.

A generous member supplied the cabinet. It was our Collections Committee charge to decide the first collections to be shown. Committee members Ginny Bates, Jane Gilfoy, Carol Kosicki, and

Pat Pereira chose to showcase two important businesses in Holliston in the mid-1800's.

The Daniel C. Mowry Straw Hat Factory on Elm Street and The F.A. Stone Boot Manufacturer at the corner of Central and Winthrop Streets were chosen. Pictures and artifacts from these historic establishments adorn the shelves.

Muscle to move the cabinet was supplied by Paul Saulnier and Eric Dickinson. Many stairs, doors, corners and a glass cabinet survived the move. Changing the exhibit should not be as arduous!

—Pat Pereira

Around the Grounds

Mark Dellicker performed a miracle on the barn door. It now opens and closes with ease. Thank you Mark.

John Gagnon has completed the reconstruction of both porches on the Asa Whiting House paid for by a grant from American Rescue Plan Act as approved by Holliston's ARPA Committee. We are grateful to all who helped to preserve this historic structure.

—Paul Saunier



Doesn't the reconstructed porch look inviting? It is even nicer in color!

—mec

SPRING LILAC BUSHES

Lilacs bushes are relics of old homesteads. They are known for their longevity, since many live to be over 100 years old, their fragrance, and their color. Driving along a country road you may see what appears to be randomly growing lilacs, a sure sign that once a house or farm graced that property. Brought over to America by colonists in the 17th century, they quickly became a popular planting ; George Washington and Thomas Jefferson both grew them in their gardens. Known as the “Queen of Shrubs” lilacs are one of the hardiest and most fragrant of the flowering bushes planted around old homes. They came to symbolize spring and renewal because they are early bloomers, and magical because of their sweet scent. During the Victorian age, lilacs were a symbol of old love, worn by war widows, and placed in the window as a sign of remembrance.

A more practical but less known reason to plant lilacs was to cover the stench of decomposing matter emanating from the outhouse! Before the days of indoor plumbing, outhouses were placed away from the main house. The arrival of Spring also brought with it the newly fragrant smells of manure and decomposing waste. Lilacs were often planted next to the outhouse door to cover this fact of nature. When the compost built up inside the outhouse, a new pit was often dug close by and the building lifted and moved over it. On the top of the old rotting compost pile a lilac tree was planted! In old homesteads a whole row of lilac bushes may indicate the progression of outhouse placement from one location to the other before indoor plumbing was introduced. As an historical note to the past, a lilac bush was planted at the Historical Society, can you find it?

—*Joanne Brown*
Garden Committee member

Honor to the Brave

Have you ever looked closely at the monument to the right of Town Hall? The picture below on the left was taken in about 1909 when the Soldiers' Monument was the only monument by Town Hall. If you stop to look at the monument today (below right), thanks to whomever recently trimmed the bushes, you can see the inscriptions around the base of the monument.

The inscription on the back side of the monument reads:
"Erected by the TOWN OF HOLLISTON in Memory of her soldiers who died in the War for the Union, 1867".



On all four sides of the upper portion of the obelisk are the names of the 53 men from Holliston who died in the Civil War or died shortly after returning home due injuries or sickness from the war. The monument also lists the names of the battles and places where they fought and the names of Southern prison camps where they died. Some of the men were buried in Holliston such as B. F. Hawks but most were buried where they died such as W. G. Gaylord. Both Priv. Hawks and Corp. Gaylord served in Co. B 16th Mass Infantry known as the Winthrop Guard. The bulk of this company was men from Holliston.

B. F. Hawks (Benjamin F. Hawks), 20, enlisted on 7/2/1861 and was discharged on 4/7/1862 on Surgeon's Certificate of Disability. He never recovered and died 10/19/1862. He was buried at Central Cemetery in Holliston. He has a military head stone and

there is a Post 6 GAR marker on his grave. Post 6 was the Holliston post in the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the fraternal organization of veterans of the Union. Post 6 placed markers on the graves in Holliston of all Civil War veterans not just the ones that died. Many of the Post 6 GAR markers still exist and can be seen in several cemeteries in town.

W. G. Gaylord (William Gardner Gaylord), 31, also enlisted on 7/2/1861. He was wounded 8/29/1862 at 2nd Bull Run (Manassas, VA) and died 9/5/1862 at Judiciary Square Hospital in Washington, DC. He was buried at the U.S. Soldiers' Home Cemetery in Washington, DC. (It became the US Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery). President Lincoln could see the cemetery from his "Summer White House".

The picture on the left is the headstone for B. F. Hawks. The picture on the right is the National Cemetery with W. G. Gaylord's headstone on the left.



The military records of all the Holliston men who served in the Civil War can be found in the book: *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War*. It is indexed by name. Both the town library and the Historical Society have a copy of this multivolume book.

—Carol Kosicki

Note: W. G. Gaylord is my great-great-grandfather.

**Holliston Historical Society
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