

NOVEMBER 2024

**LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**



The Billerica Historical Society has been busy the last few months. We have had a number of open houses, had our tent at the Farmers Market and at Yankee Doodle.

Rich Kunicki oversaw our latest Community grant project which was for a sump pump and dehumidifiers to be installed in the house basement.



Our latest Community Preservation grant from the Town was to go towards the work completed on the new upstairs bedroom (It is being turned into an 18th century bedroom complete with rope bed.) and repair to the bathroom ceiling. The grant also provides for work on building a memorial brick patio, a stone wall, and outdoor stairs to the barn basement.

Michele DeParasis coordinated a number of successful Dining to Donate functions at local restaurants.

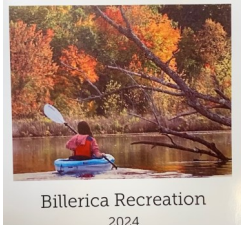


Six volunteers meet each Friday to continue our on-going cataloging effort. Over the winter we will be changing out the collections in the

display cases in the barn.



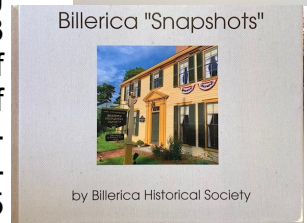
Many items have been collected for our time capsule to be opened in 2124. They include such things as: newspapers from JFK's assignment, "Man Walking on the Moon", the Blizzard of 78, Billerica memorabilia, Shutterfly photo books of the Billerica Minute Men, Billerica Recreation Dept., and "Snapshots of Billerica Today." We also included Market Basket and O'Connor's sale flyers, the Billerica Council on Aging Outlook brochure, 2023 Billerica Annual Report, golf balls from Billerica's golf courses, newspapers celebrating Billerica's 350th anniversary, and a KN95 mask.



Billerica Recreation 2024



by Google Photos



by Billerica Historical Society

Most recently we had our Annual Meeting at the Bennett Cultural Center. At the Annual Meeting, we had the election of officers for the coming year:

President - John Bartlett  
 Vice President - Dick Hawes

Treasurer - Rick Manley

Secretary - Cathy Burns

Directors -

Michele DeParasis

Diane Douglas

Alec Ingraham

Mary Jones

Rich Kunicki



(Mary Jones and Alec Ingraham were unable to attend the meeting and therefore not in the photo.)

At the meeting, I gave an overview of the contents of our new time capsule. I have also taken that same talk to the Council on Aging.

We thank all of the members of the society who have donated their personal memorabilia to be included in the time capsule. We have tried to include items that would be of interest to Society members in 100 years.

The COA has invited me to speak again about Billerica, so I plan to do Billerica Trivia on Dec. 19. Sign up with the COA to join us for the event.

Regards, John Bartlett

## Fundraising

Fundraising events have helped to bring in funds to cover some of our expenses, however, much more is needed. The current and future fundraisers include:

### The Memorial Garden

The Billerica Historical Society is selling personalized, engraved bricks that will enhance the walkway in our new Memorial Garden.



Each brick may be purchased for \$100.

Donating a commemorative brick paver to be added to the new Memorial Garden in the Clara Sexton House is a great way to recognize a family or loved one, honor a veteran or first responder, remember someone close to you, or salute an organization.

The bricks will be engraved with your personalized message and included in the pathway in our new Memorial Garden. This is an ongoing promotion. You may add additional bricks in the future.

### Dining to Donate

Michele DeParasis is setting up dates with local restaurants to host a Dining to Donate event. When you show the appropriate flyer for the event, the restaurant will give us 20% of the bill. This is a fun and easy way to raise funds.

### “Snapshots of Billerica”

Diane Douglas assembled a Shutterfly book of “Snapshots of Billerica” for the 2124 time capsule. Copies will be printed and available for sale in the near future.

### Gift Shop Sales

Nancy Sheffer has taken over managing the gift shop. We are currently selling T-shirts, replicas of period toys, plates, and historic books.



# Come Join Us for an OPEN HOUSE



Come join us on **Saturday, December 7 from 4-7 PM.** The Billerica Colonial Minute Men and Victorian Carolers will be in attendance. The Billerica Garden Club will “deck the halls” and there will be cider and cookies for all. This event is **FREE** but any and all donations will be greatly appreciated. While

you are here, go upstairs and check out the newly staged bedroom.



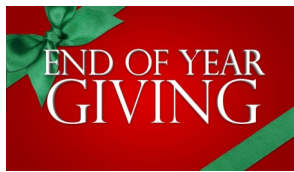
## 2024 Membership Drive

It is time to renew your membership in the historical society. The dues are:  
Senior/Student is \$25  
Individual is \$30  
Family is \$50

## Help Support the Billerica Historical Society

Please consider becoming a Preservation Patron in one of the following ways:

Corner Stone	\$1,000
Landmark	\$500
Founders	\$250
Members	\$100



Last year, your various contributions raised over \$5,000. These donations allowed us to work toward balancing our Sexton House operational budget and was greatly appreciated.

Monetary donations can be sent to:

Billerica Historical Society  
PO Box 381  
Billerica, MA 01821

## Engine Bells Become Church Bells from the *Boston and Maine Railroad Magazine*, Volume 19; March, 1951; Number 3

*“Twenty locomotive bells which have rung out their warning tones for many years over the thousands of miles of Boston and Maine territory in Northern New England are to finish out their careers summoning worshippers to religious services.*

*Nineteen of the bells have been shipped to far off Haiti to serve as chapel bells at French Oblate Missions. The other bell will stay alongside the Boston and Maine tracks in the tower of the Baptist Church in Ayer, Massachusetts.*

*Transition of the bells from railroad locomotives to the role of church bells is a direct reversal of what occurred in New England a century ago. Some of the earliest locomotives on railroads which became part of the Boston and Maine system were provided with bells from impoverished churches in Spain and Portugal.*

*In addition to the bells for 20 churches, the Boston and Maine has sold several locomotive bells to the Pocahontas Coal Company and C. H. Sprague & Sons Company to serve a ship bells on coal-carrying vessels plying the Atlantic Coast. Other bells have been sold to the Salvation Army at Canton, a Boy Scout Camp at Amesbury, Green River School at Greenfield, Fresh Air Camp at Norwich, Vt., the Railway Historical Society of Plainfield, N.J., and a summer hotel at Jaffrey, N.H., and to numerous individuals for use at private camps throughout Northern New England.*

*The bells weigh about 120 pounds each, plus an additional 200 pounds for their yokes. Because of the widespread requests for them a flat price of \$40.00 each was established.”....*

In 1951, according to the article 23 more steam locomotives were scrapped at the Boston and Maine Reclamation Plant in Billerica.

Bell and yoke are visible in the picture taken at Iron Horse Park in North Billerica.



By Alec Ingraham

**Clara E. Sexton Memorial  
House Museum,  
circa 1723  
Headquarters of the  
Billerica Historical Society**

36 Concord Road  
Billerica, MA 01821

(978)667-7020  
Billericahistory.org



**BHS Officers and Board 2023-2024**

**Officers:**

President	John Bartlett
Vice President	Richard Hawes
Treasurer	Rick Manley
Secretary	Cathy Burns

**Directors:**

Michele DeParasis	Diane Douglas
Alec Ingraham	Mary Jones
Richard Kunicki	



**Follow us on Facebook:**

- Billerica Historical Society
- Billerica Scrapbook

**Upcoming Events**

**Dec. 7:** Christmas Open House, 4-7 PM

**Dec. 19:** John presents "Billerica Trivia" at COA

**Billerica Minute Man T-shirts**

The historical society is currently selling T-shirts with the BHS logo on the front and the list of the minutemen who marched to Merriam's Corner on April 19, 1775 on the back.

Sizes include:

Men's - Medium, Large, XL - \$20  
XXL, and XXXL - \$25

Women's V-neck - Medium,  
Large - \$25

To order, send request, size,  
number of shirts, cost of shirts  
plus \$5 for shipping to:

Billerica Historical Society  
PO Box 381  
Billerica, MA 01821



**Book & Gifts:**

Hazen's History of Billerica  
Sexton House Cookbook  
Commemorative Spode Plate

\$55.00

\$3.00

**\$10.00**

**SALE PRICE**

Billerica Historical Society  
PO Box 381  
Billerica, MA 01821