



Braintree Historical Society Inc.

News-Letter

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November 2019

Letter from the President:



Dear Members, Volunteers,
Contributing Organizations and
Companies,

As the Society closes in on
the first six months of the fiscal
year, the Society's Board of

Directors and volunteers have taken major steps
forward working together as a team and partnering
effectively with community stakeholders.

First and foremost, however, I must express that
it is with great sadness that we extend our
condolences to the family and friends of recently
deceased Nancy Nicosia, the Society's Historian,
Board Member and longtime, invaluable contributor
to the Society, to her church, St. Francis of Assisi,
and to the Town of Braintree. A woman with
exceptional faith and an unwavering positive
outlook, Nancy's contributions to all will never be
forgotten. We move forward remembering and
honoring her legacy.

The Gullivan House Historic Preservation
Restriction Agreement has been finalized; the
Thayer House Roof Replacement Project is poised
to start; long-overdue painting of the Asa French
House trim and other repairs on the Society's
properties continue and the MA Department of
Professional Licensing has agreed that the newly
identified \$8,200 in 2015 elevator late inspection
fines was more appropriately reduced to \$100 upon
consideration of supporting documentation provided
by the Society. The resolution of the Preservation
Restriction Agreement and the most recent elevator
fine resolution clear the way for unimpeded forward
movement.

Continued on page 2

Golf In Braintree

Membership Meeting – Wed. Nov. 13

At the upcoming November 2019 membership
meeting, John Donovan, author, researcher and golf
enthusiast, will present a history of Braintree's two
golf courses.

The first, a six-hole course, was located on a
dairy farm near Five Corners. The course was
established in 1900 but was only played on for a
few years.

The second, a nine-hole course with built in
1932. It is located in South Braintree on the
Hollingsworth family farm. The golf course was
purchased by the Town of Braintree in 1955. In
1971 the Town course was expanded to 18 holes.
Now known as the Braintree Municipal Golf
Course, it is considered one of the finest courses on
the South Shore.

Join other Society members at 6:15 to 7:15 for
light refreshments on the evening of November 13,
2019, followed by author Donovan's talk at 7:15.

Do You Believe in Ghosts & Spirits?

The Society is excited to host its Second Annual
Ghost Hunt & Paranormal Investigation coming up
on Saturday, November 16th, organized by
Geoffrey Campbell of the Plymouth Ghost Hunters.
For former Braintree resident, Geoffrey, this event
is one of many contributions to the Society by
Geoffrey and the Campbell family, whose late
father, Gordon, was a past Society President.

Following last year's very popular event, this
year has expanded to include Investigators, Matt
Continued on page 2

President's Letter continued from page 1

The first six months of the fiscal year have seen a significant increase in Society events and event participation, all focused upon ensuring that each event reaches out to new participants and assures much needed revenue for the Society's operating budget. The Braintree Beer Garden's relocation to the Society's grounds for every Saturday afternoon, weather permitting, in September and October has been not only a steady revenue stream, but it has brought unprecedented exposure to the Society's Barn Museum, resulting in book sales and donations. Families of young children and others are, for the first time, becoming aware of the Society, its properties, its collection and the resources it has to offer.

Plans are actively underway to secure additional required revenue to make long overdue repairs to all of the Society's buildings to assure their long-range stability.

To increase visibility, the Society continues to update and expand its website and facebook page and has added Twitter and Instagram to its communication strategies. In addition, for those of us who came of age when the internet was only an idea, this is the third edition of the Society's reestablished Newsletter in the past six months. New committees and task forces are forming and beginning initiatives to revise and strengthen the Society's bylaws, policies and procedures, and to increase critically necessary fundraising – all necessary to strengthen the Society's infrastructure. As the Society approaches the end of the calendar year, a new and critically needed strategic planning initiative is also getting underway to guide the Board and the Society in a well-defined forward path for the next five years. The goal is to develop a well thought out flexible plan to strengthen the Society as it moves forward.

The Society continues to welcome your support, your ideas, your input and your help as the newly elected Board and expanding group of volunteers move forward, unified with a new energy and purpose. Reach out and join a committee or a task force, help out with events or do both. We have something for everyone. It is truly a busy and exciting time to be a part of the Braintree Historical Society.

Ghosts & Sprits, continued from page 1

Warner and Rachel Hoffman, Investigator and Demonologist, James Annito, Investigator, Author and Sensitive, Sam Baltrusis, Investigator, Lecturer, Founder and Host of Spooky Southcoast, Tim Weisberg and Investigator and Psychic Medium, Stephanie Burke.

A new feature, a series of lectures starting at 3:00 will be followed by a dinner break, rotating tours at 6:30 in groups of 8 to 10, and full group debriefing at the Society's Barn to end the evening. The Plymouth Ghost Hunters company and other investigators will bring with them a wide variety of sound, photographic and video detecting equipment to record sights and sounds unexplainable by typical means.

Early registration indicates that this year's "hunt" will include at least twice the number of participants that attended last year's inaugural tour. All proceeds from this popular event benefit the Braintree Historical Society

What's New In The Society's Library and Genealogical Resource Center?

Library foot traffic continues to increase, both with local researchers and visitors traveling from other places in the country. Email requests are also on the increase for information about Braintree and Braintree ancestors. New materials are arriving weekly to add to the Society's collection of Braintree-centered, history-related books, documents and photos.

Over the course of the last two months, a commemorative space has been created to house the files of the American Legion Post 86 Braintree Remembers Project. This important collection, once in place, will include individual files of more than 500 men and women, connected in some way to Braintree, who participated in WWI, in some cases making the ultimate sacrifice for their country. (See other related information in this Newsletter.)

The Society has also agreed to archive the records of Braintree's Time Capsule Committee and to do so in memory of Nancy Nicosia, who played a founding role in the creation of the Time Capsule on the Town Green and who continued to serve as the Society's Historian until her recent passing.

The Rotary Club will also add its business and historical records to the Society's files to centralize them in one permanent location. This addition will add significantly to the Society's extensive collection of materials on several past and current Braintree civic organizations.

Recently donated items include approximately 30 Braintree High School reunion photos and a collection of Braintree Women's Club papers, photos, articles and handbooks.

Older Braintree phonebooks, often useful in researching the history of Braintree people and property, have found a new home on the Library shelves. Librarian, Claudia Shutter is in the process of converting some of the Society's genealogical reference aids into a digital format for faster and easier use. The main focus is to digitalize one set of information that assists researchers in connecting one's Braintree family name with other families who are related by marriage.

Library volunteers have also found time to contribute materials to the current Farm to Table exhibit and the upcoming exhibit which will feature items in the Society's collection that have historically provided light to indoor and outdoor spaces after the sun has set. Finally, library staff added their talents to September's Heritage Day by hosting, for the first time, a craft table to make decorative handheld fans for children and adults. This very popular table was constantly busy attracting young boys and girls as well as adults.

The Society's Website and Social Media Initiative Moves Ahead

Over the past two months, the Society has moved forward in leaps and bounds with the organization's website and new ways of communicating with the public.

Volunteers, Kari Mofford & Yvonne Dhimitri, have joined Aziz Karsan as Society website administrators significantly lightening the responsibility of our Webmaster and Treasurer. Yvonne has redesigned, updated and streamlined the website at braintree-historical.org. Older information is archived and the information on the home page is fresh and up to date. The website still under development now includes the ability to purchase some of the Society's books online, a

feature that is very convenient for purchasers who are not nearby. We hope to have other items from our Gift Shop available through online purchasing before the holidays.

Both Kari and Yvonne are actively updating the Society's facebook page with new and interesting information, photos and videos. Viewers can find it by simply searching in facebook.com for Braintree Historical Society.

The Society now has an Instagram page under Yvonne's oversight in which she posts new photos and information at least once weekly. Viewers can find it by searching for Instagram.com/braintreehistoricalsociety/.

Both Yvonne and Kari have also activated the Society's dormant twitter account and continue to work on this new feature at twitter.com/BraintreeHisto1.

Please check out these exciting new and updated communication efforts. The Society continues to seek volunteers to help with print media. If you're interested in either print media or social media, please email us at braintreehistoricalevents@gmail.com

The Braintree Historical Commission's New Member

Until his death in January 2018, Past Society President Paul Carr served as a member of the Town of Braintree's Historical Commission. Following Mr. Carr's death, the position remained open through August of this year.

The process for filling the vacancy requires that the Society's Board nominate two candidates from which the Town's Mayor selects one, after which the Town Council votes. Of the two candidates recommended by the Society, Mayor Sullivan nominated current President, Bob Harris, to represent the Braintree Historical Society on the Braintree Historical Commission.

At the Braintree Town Council meeting on September 3, council members voted to approve the Mayor's nominee after which Dr. Harris completed the required onboarding paperwork.

Other Commission members include Elizabeth Mees, Chair, Ronald Frazier, Vice Chair, Kate Nedelmann Herbst, Santina Giannino and Rayna Rubin.

The Society looks forward to working with this Town Commission in the future.

A Tribute to Nancy Guiliano Nicosia



Nancy Nicosia who had been an active force in Braintree for 93 years departed this life on 16 September 2019, after having left her mark on the Town of Braintree, along with many, many personal and civic accomplishments. She had been involved with the Braintree Historical Society as far back as the moving of the Thayer House, as well as the School Program, to conducting trips to West Point and chairing historical events.

Nancy was born at home and resided in her beloved town of Braintree her entire life. Nancy often said that South Braintree Square was her playground growing up. In later years she worked at her father's store in the square, Guiliano's Grocery.

Nancy was valedictorian of her Braintree High School, Class of 1944. She remained in Braintree after marriage and began her lifelong passion of volunteer service.

When her children were young, she was a Cub Scout Den Mother, Camp Fire Leader, treasurer of the South Braintree Little League Mother's Club, and President of the Noah Torrey PTA.

She volunteered at the Sylvanus Thayer Birthplace School Program, ultimately becoming its Chair. She remained with this program for 45 years, demonstrating Colonial life to Braintree's fifth graders. For many years she was the head tour guide.

She was a lifelong communicant and served as a Christian Doctrine teacher, greeter, choir member and Parish Council member at St. Francis of Assisi Church. She was a long-term Braintree Town Meeting member. Nancy was a vital member of the Braintree High School Building Committee in 1972, and she co-chaired Braintree's 350th Anniversary celebration in 1990. She was also a member of the town's Time Capsule Committee.

She also served as Venerable of the Braintree Sons of Italy Ladies Lodge and held office with many other local organizations including her involvement with the Braintree Grange for more than 60 years. She was a member of the Italian-American Club. She recorded audio books for the blind.

In all, she was a member of 36 organizations.

Nancy was honored by the Town of Braintree in 1996 as Outstanding Citizen of the Year. She was one of the first recipients, in 1985, of the Braintree Historical Society's Gilbert L. Bean Award for Outstanding Service and Devotion to the Society. The Norfolk County Teachers Association presented her with the Distinguished Service Recognition Award for her volunteer service to Braintree students.

Nancy is survived by Nancy Martino (married to Vincent, former president of BHS) and Robert Nicosia (married to Denise), along with grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Nancy was the first to volunteer her time and talents and the last to criticize or complain.

A funeral Mass was held at St. Francis of Assisi Church.

Nancy requested that donations in her memory be made to Braintree Historical Society.

Update: A New Roof for the Thayer Birthplace



As reported in the September 2019 newsletter, in June of this year, the Massachusetts Historical Commission awarded the Braintree Historical Society half of the projected construction cost of replacing the failing Thayer House roof.

The Society contracted with Wendall Kalsow of McGinley, Kalsow & Associates, Inc, architects with considerable experience in historic restoration, to complete the State-required blueprints and specifications for the roof replacement project. The plans, submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission in late August were approved, as was the final draft of the construction contract, also prepared by architect Kalsow as required.

Construction bids, submitted by the September 20 deadline, were reviewed the following week. David J Campbell of CVC Installations in Beverly, MA was chosen as the lowest qualified bidder for the project and subsequently approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Commission contracts were subsequently signed, followed by CVC Installations and the Society signing the construction contract.

Contractor, David J Campbell, has 20 years of experience in historical preservation construction and was recommended by McGinley, Kalsow & Associates, Inc.

The roof replacement project requires the replacement of 10 matching bricks and matching mortar in the center chimney which may be complete as this newsletter is going to press. Alaskan cedar roofing shingles have been approved and ordered and are on their way from Washington

state. The roof replacement is anticipated to start once the new shingles have arrived.

Derek Manning, Board member and Historic Preservation Specialist, Bob Harris, Board President, Wendall Kalsow, architect and Paul Holtz, Massachusetts Historic Commission architect, will work together with contractor, David J (Jeremy) Campbell, to oversee this project.

The Birthplace, a property on the National Register of Historic Places, will be 300 years old in 2020. The replacement of the roof is a huge kickoff for this important milestone for the Thayer Birthplace and the Society.

The Society and private donors, Carl and Mary Ellen Zanghi Kilmer, who are funding the balance of the project costs, are excited to see this project get underway. We all look forward to this important step in preserving the Thayer House for future generations to come.

At Long Last ...

The Gallivan House Historic Preservation Restriction Agreement Is Complete

As we indicated in the Society's June Newsletter, the Gallivan House, the brick Neo-Georgian home directly across the street from the Town Green, was purchased by Braintree Historical Society in 2005 to join the General Sylvanus Thayer Birthplace, the Asa French House and the Barn and Resource Center at 31 Tenney Road, as one historic campus. The home has remained unused for a majority of time since its purchase.

In 2013, the Society was granted Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to replace the Gallivan House roof, which had failed and was causing escalating water damage to the interior of the home. The Society agreed, in 2013, to complete a Preservation Restriction Agreement with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, as a condition of receiving CPA funds, in order to preserve the property and restore the Doctor's Office as a small museum example of an in-home physician's office typical of the 1930s.

Working with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, current Society President Bob Harris, completed a draft of the Agreement which met Commission's requirements for final notarized

signatures. At the request of the Braintree Historical Commission, Town Solicitor, Nicole Taub, reviewed and approved the final draft and, on August 12, 2019, Mayor Sullivan signed the Agreement, followed by Ruth Powell, representing the Braintree Historical Society and Jane Barney, Thayer Birthplace Endowment Trustee. On September 3, 2019, Town Councilmembers signed the agreement followed by the Braintree Historical Commission on September 8, 2019, and Brona Simon, Executive Director and Clerk of the Massachusetts Historical Commission on September 11, 2019 on behalf of Massachusetts Secretary of State, William Francis Galvin.

On September 17, 2019, Bob Harris and former Vice President, now Corresponding Secretary, Cheryl Edgar, retrieved the signed and notarized original copies of the Agreement and registered it with the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds in Book 37158, page 384. After distributing registered copies to all stakeholders, this process was at long last complete.

With the completion of this long-awaited process, the Massachusetts Historical Commission has "... irrevocably grant(ed) ... (the Gallivan House) ... Preservation Restriction Agreement ... in perpetuity".

The remaining \$1,900 balance of the Community Preservation Act Gallivan roof replacement funds, justifiably withheld since 2013 until the Agreement was in place, has been released to the Society. Historically, the CPC has been an invaluable resource to the Society to fund critical restoration work on the Society's Thayer House, French House and Gallivan House. The reopening of the potential funding resource is a huge step forward for the Society and for the long-term preservation of the important historical Braintree properties.

The Braintree Remembers Project of Braintree American Legion Post 86 A Living Memorial

In April 2017, American Legion Post 86 Historian, Patrick Leonard, Jr. first proposed what has become the Braintree Remembers Centennial Project to honor the memory of the service and sacrifice of the men and women of Braintree who served in World War I.

Men from Braintree served in virtually every major campaign of World War I after September, 1917, in all branches of the United States Armed Forces and in combat in both the British and Canadian Armies. Fourteen Braintree men lost their lives in World War I and more than twenty were wounded in battle or were victims of poison gas attacks; some suffering lifelong injury. A Braintree man was captured while serving in the British Army and was a prisoner of war in Germany for more than two years. Three Braintree women were United States Army Corps nurses. Nine women from Braintree were among the first in our Nation's History to enlist in the United States Navy.

In all, over five hundred men and women, who either were born in Braintree, lived in Braintree, or had other strong personal ties to our Town, served in the armed forces in World War I. Over thirty memorial ceremonies honoring the men and women of Braintree who served in World War I were held between 2017 and 2019 by American Legion Post 86 with close to two dozen additional Braintree organizations participating.

To honor the memory of our brave men and women with Memorial Observances, and to research, document, organize, preserve and make available for genealogical and historical research all that data and more, has been and continues to be the goal of the ongoing Project.

The "Braintree Remembers" Project was developed to observe the 100th Anniversary of the United States Declaration of War against the German Empire on April 6, 1917. The project proposed to American Legion Post 86 by Post Historian, Patrick J. Leonard, Jr., centered on the development of individual Memorial Ceremonies in honor of each of the men from Braintree who lost their lives in World War I. The project slowly grew to encompass much more.

In addition to Post Historian Leonard, four people were of invaluable assistance in doing the research, including Adrienne Whitehouse, a skilled researcher on Ancestry.com, Jake Gately, who located information on Ancestry.com and in countless newspaper articles about Braintree people and other related topics, Eric Cocca, Principal Clerk at the Braintree Town Clerk's Office, who provided data available in Town Records, and Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk, Director of Historical Services at the Adjutant General's Office of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who provided detailed official military information on the service of close to four hundred Braintree people who served in World War I.

Memorial Observances were held on the Veterans Mall, at the Post 86 Headquarters, the Braintree Yacht

Club, the Braintree Town Hall, meetings of the Braintree Rotary Club, the Masonic Temple of Delta Lodge A. F. and A. M., the Braintree Council 1462 Knights of Columbus, the Holy Name Society of St. Clare's Church, the Thayer Academy, St. Michael's Cemetery in Avon, Pond Street Cemetery in South Braintree, Blue Hill Cemetery and the First Congregational Church and the South Congregational Church.

Participants in ceremonies included Braintree Post 1702 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Braintree Chapter 29 Disabled American Veterans, the Braintree Veterans Council, Braintree BSA Troop 22 scouts and leaders, Braintree Girl Scouts, the Massachusetts Division of the Salvation Army, and BCAM-TV staff, with cooperation of the Thayer Public Library.

With the cooperation of Thayer Public Library Director, Therese Stano, exhibits were placed in the display cases at the library to acquaint visitors with the project. The support of Fred Hanson of The Patriot Ledger for the project is also gratefully acknowledged.

Joseph H. Reynolds, Chief of Staff for Mayor Sullivan and formerly a Captain in 26th "Yankee" Division, participated in many ceremonies, supported by Christopher Griffin and Stephen Leary of the Mayor's Office. Individual Invocations and Benedictions delivered at each ceremony by Braintree Chapter 29 Disabled American Veterans Chaplain Russell F. Dupuis, Sr.

Post Historian Leonard, "Braintree Remembers" Project Coordinator, proposed that project files be archived as a permanent collection at the Braintree Historical Society. Post 86 Commander Pete Vidal and the Post Executive Board and the Historical Society President, Bob Harris, and the Society Board approved the proposal.

With the support of James Lee, Assistant

Superintendent of Braintree Public Schools, Dr. Gorman Lee, K-12 Social Studies Director for the Braintree Public Schools and staff will work with Braintree High School students to create a computer database listing of the over five hundred people included in the archives.

So very many people, from so many organizations, did so much, each in their own unique way, to support this project. When the final story of the project is written all will be included and their contributions to the archive detailed as a matter of historical record.

The Dedication Ceremony of the "Braintree Remembers" World War I Memorial Archive will take place in the Braintree Historical Society Library on Sunday, November 10, 2019 at 2PM. The public is welcome.

What's Been Happening? Heritage Day, The Society Craft Fair and More



September 14 and 15 saw the return of the Society's popular annual Heritage Weekend. The 6th Annual Farm to Table Dinner, cosponsored with Sustainable Braintree, on the evening of the 14th, saw its biggest crowd yet. Guests were treated to wonderful appetizers, dinner and dessert prepared with local grown ingredients by Fasano's Catering. The highlight of the evening's very short "business" meeting was the presentation of the first Annual Certificate of Appreciation to outgoing Mayor Joseph C. Sullivan for his long-standing support of Sustainable Braintree, the Braintree Historical Society and the Town of Braintree.



Heritage Day on Sunday, September 15th, opened with the Second Annual Turning of the Cannon Wheels Ceremony, led by Geoffrey Campbell in period dress and supported by Scouts from Troop 138 and members of the 9th Infantry Militia under the leadership and direction of Joe Paluzzi. A one quarter turn of the recently restored 18th century cannon wheels is required annually to preserve their longevity.

This popular event, advertised early and broadly, saw a large, steady crowd with families arriving the

moment setup ended. Pony rides, a blacksmith, candle making, butter churning, and quill pen writing continued again this year, with the addition of fan making, a treasure hunt and a new Farm to Table Exhibit in the Society's Barn, among many other activities. The Society is excited to see the resurgence in the popularity of this event.



On Saturday, October 5, the Society sponsored its first Outdoor Craft Fair on the Society Grounds from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM with local crafters staying as long as they wanted as visitors kept arriving. Under the direction of Society Vice President and Event Chair, Sunny Shaw, crafters lined the sidewalk on Washington Street in front of the Thayer House and the Gallivan House beginning at the same time as the Farmers' Market in the Town Hall parking lot across the street.

The visibility of this location drew a large number of visitors from passersby, from the Farmers' Market and from early arrivals for the Braintree Beer Garden held on the grounds of the Society between the Thayer and Gallivan Houses and the Society's Barn. Crafters expecting to end early were encouraged to stay longer than expected as shoppers continued to visit amidst the other popular events going on in the center of Town.

Attendance and proceeds for the Farm to Table Dinner, under the exceptional leadership of Cheryl Edgar, Heritage Day and the Craft Fair under incomparably energetic leadership of Sunny Shaw and the Braintree Beer Garden under the sponsorship of Kay Lorenz Young of Braintree's Craft Beer Cellar and Avi Shemtov of Tapped Beer Truck contributed significantly to the Society, which relies on memberships, donations, the Town of Braintree, and these and other types of fundraising for its ongoing

efforts to preserve Braintree's history for the enjoyment of everyone.

Upcoming Events:

Mark your calendars. We look forward to seeing you!

Sunday, November 10, American Legion/Society Event Dedication of the Braintree WWI Military Service Archives 2:00 PM Braintree Historical Society Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center (the Barn) 31 Tenney Road, Braintree, MA

Wednesday, November 13 Society Event, Membership Meeting (open to the public) Social Hour 6:15 PM, Talk 7:15 PM Local Author, John Donovan will give a talk on the History of the Braintree's Two Golf Courses.

Saturday, November 16, Society Event Paranormal Tour of the Thayer House, the Gallivan House and the Barn 3:00 PM

Sunday, December 8, Society Event Barn Holiday Tree Decorating (Time TBD)

December 29 Society Event Thayer Holiday Open House (Time TBD)

June 7, 2020 Society Event Celebration the Sylvanus Thayer Birthplace & 235th Birthday – Celebration of New Roof; Grand Reopening of Exhibit Space.

**This news-letter is a benefit of BHS membership
For membership information, call 781-848-1640 or visit
www.braintree-historical.org**

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