



# Barrington Preservation Society

DISCOVER • PRESERVE • RESTORE

Spring 2011

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Marion Willey

Carole Villucci, *Museum Director*

Sydney Montstream-Quas,  
*Newsletter Editor*

## **Barrington Preservation Society Museum**

Lower Level, Peck Center

## **Hours**

Wednesdays, Thursdays  
& Saturdays  
11:00 – 3:00 or by  
appointment

## **Phone**

(401) 289-0802



*Presenting the \$12,500 check to BPS President Kent Phillips are Elaine Tobey (widow of Joel Tobey), Robert DiMuccio (AMICA President), Kent, and Vince Burks (AMICA Sr. Assistant Vice-President of Corporate Communications)*

## **AMICA Gift a Welcome Surprise for the Preservation Society**

In December, AMICA Insurance presented a check for \$12,500 to the Barrington Preservation Society in memory of Joel N. Tobey, whose service to AMICA spanned more than 40 years and culminated with him serving as president, chief executive officer and chairman of the board of directors. Joel was a lifelong resident of Barrington and ardent supporter of his community until his death in September. He also was a strong supporter of the Barrington Preservation Society and its mission to preserve and protect all things historical about Barrington.

At the presentation, President Kent Phillips said he was absolutely floored to learn of the donation, and said the money would go into the Preservation Society's endowment to help fund some of the many projects the BPS has underway, including providing educational programs and lectures, creating plaques celebrating the history of 100-year-old homes and historic sites along the East Bay Bike Path, and supporting a software program designed to help catalogue historic artifacts collected throughout town.

## SAVE THE DATES!

### March 30th

6:00 – 8:00 pm

#### **Reception for “What’s Cooking?”**

exhibition in the BPS Museum

### April 10th

2:00 pm

#### **Old House Soul documentary**

in the Barrington Public Library  
Auditorium

### May 11th

7:00 pm

#### **Plaque Presentation** in the

Barrington Public Library Auditorium

### June 4th

2:00 – 4:00 pm

#### **Family Day** at the BPS Museum

### September 24th

7:45 am – 8:30 pm

#### **Barrington Community School**

**trip** to the restored Strawberry Banke  
in Portsmouth, NH

## Letter from the President

It is finally spring; can you believe the winter we had? It snowed during the holidays and we didn't see the grass until March. As you will see in the newsletter, it has been busy at the Barrington Preservation Society and we are pleased to report our activities to the membership.

It was announced by the Barrington Town Council in January that Council Vice President Jeff Brenner will be the Town's new liaison to the Barrington Preservation Society, replacing long serving Kate Weymouth. We thank Kate for the untiring support of the Society and the wealth of knowledge that she brought to the responsibility. We look forward to working with Mr. Brenner on such upcoming issues as the Belton Court property and Central Bridge #182.

The Society expresses its deepest sympathy to long-serving museum volunteer and friend, Burr Sebring, on the passing of his loving wife, Kit. We also recognize the passing of Janet Bryan, a long-time BPS plaque committee member.

At the annual meeting in January held at Tyler Point Grille, the following officers of the Society were elected:

Kent Phillips, President – *class of 2014*, Jean Douglas, 1st Vice President – *class of 2014*  
Philip Redden, Treasurer – *class of 2013*, Maureen Soutter, Secretary – *class of 2014*

At the end of the year I received notice of resignations from the Board from Steve Story (1st V.P. and Finance Chair), Pamela Hilton (Secretary), Carole Pace, and Priscilla Givan. On behalf of the Board, I thank them for their service and am comforted that each has assured me that they will continue being active volunteer members of BPS. See new Board members below.

You will notice in our Save the Dates section of this newsletter that our committees are busy preparing for programs for the new year. Please take the time to mark your calendars. Join us for these worthwhile events.

Kent Phillips, *President*

*New members of the Preservation Society Board of Trustees  
(left to right) include Maureen Soutter (Secretary),  
Jean Douglas (Past President), David Stonestreet (Finance Chair),  
Van Edwards (Past President), Ceci Sartor, and Charlotte Morse.  
Not pictured – Concie Danforth.*



## Barrington Receives “Preserve America” Designation

In January, Barrington was honored when Mrs. Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States, designated Barrington as one of the nation’s newest Preserve America Communities. “President Obama and I want to congratulate all of the Preserve America Communities and thank them for their commitment to protecting and strengthening America’s culture and natural heritage,” Mrs. Obama said.

Barrington Preservation Society led the Town’s application process last year. Included in the application was an example of how public and private cooperation resulted in the creation of the Bike Path Signage Project. In that project, RIDOT, RIDEM, the Town of Barrington, and the Preservation Society collaborated to erect seven historical markers along the East Bay Bike Path in Barrington plus one more sign at the Civic Center Historic District. These signs have received acclaim throughout the state. Funding for the signs came from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, The Bay Team, and Fuel Belt, Inc.

Communities designated through the program receive national recognition for their accomplishments in preserving our special places and telling the nation’s story. Benefits include use of the Preserve America logo on educational and promotional materials, a community sign, listing in a web-based directory that showcases Barrington’s preservation efforts, and other support. Many Preserve America Communities are featured in “Discover Our Shared Heritage” National Register travel itineraries.

More than 850 Preserve America Communities have been designated in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. Territories, including historic neighborhoods within large cities and tribal communities.

### Belton Court Future Rests in Town’s Hands

In February, the Town of Barrington executed a purchase and sale agreement to acquire the Zion Bible property on Middle Highway for \$5.2 million. The purchase is subject to approval by Town residents at the Financial Town Meeting to be held on May 25.

Located on the property is Belton Court (“the Castle”) which was the former residence of Frederick Stanhope Peck, a very important figure in Barrington until his death in 1947. Mr. Peck was President of Asa Peck and Company which bought and sold wool and woolen waste. He was also Vice President of National Exchange Bank in Providence, of Lawton Spinning Company, and of Eastern Coal Company. Built in 1905, this Colonial Revival mansion was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

Belton Court is located on property formerly owned by Barrington College and Zion Bible College. Over the years, it has suffered neglect, abuse, and vandalism and will require significant added investment to make it a functioning facility. To date, no plan has been developed for the mansion.

The Barrington Preservation Society supports this acquisition by the Town and will be working with Town officials in an effort to obtain a positive vote at the meeting in May.

### Central Bridge #182

In October 2010, the Barrington Preservation Society received notice from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) that it would be seeking bids in September 2011 for the replacement of Central Bridge #182 (the White Church Bridge). The original bridge was built in 1940, after being destroyed by the 1938 hurricane. The reconstruction is expected to be completed in mid-2013, at a cost of \$11 million. The bridge will be approximately its current length and have three lanes for traffic.

The Barrington Preservation Society is concerned about the impact of this construction on the County Road Historic District which includes the Congregational Church, the Second Congregational Church Parsonage, and the John Martin House at 123 Massasoit Avenue, the oldest residence in Barrington. The Society has been assured by RIDOT that the only impact will be visual during construction and that there will be no “taking of private property.”

Your Preservation Society will continue to monitor the project to assure that the above commitments are kept. Stay tuned for mid-year 2013.

Olney and Phoebe Arnold Cottage at 15 Appian Way



## Owners of Two Historic Homes to Receive Plaques

Come to the Library Auditorium on May 11 at 7:00 pm to hear a presentation about two historic homes that will receive Barrington Preservation Society plaques. Both homes date from 1872, but are distinctly different in architectural style, reflecting the vitality of this late Victorian era.

The first is the GEORGE W. BARNUM HOUSE at 583 Maple Avenue, originally called Bacon Avenue. To our surprise, all deeds refer to Bacon Avenue up to 1907! Barnum purchased a large lot from the Narragansett Brick Company and his son Isaac Barnum purchased land on the south side of the street. Isaac Barnum built 610 and 624 Maple Avenue between 1883-1885. Both Isaac Barnum houses have already been plaqued.

The second is the OLNEY and PHOEBE ARNOLD COTTAGE at 15 Appian Way. Arnold was one of eight businessmen from the Rhode Island towns of North Providence, Pawtucket, and Smithfield plus Worcester, Massachusetts, who bought 31 waterfront acres from patriarch Alfred Drown in 1869. Drown described this property as “the southern half of my farm...” The Arnolds built a charming, small cottage with Stick Style trim on Lot #14, laid out on the “Map of Cottage & Villa Lots at Annananuck, Drownville Station, Barrington” by N.B. Schubarth in 1869. A photograph of this summer house is on the west wall of our Town Hall Council Chamber.

The BPS plaque program recognizes buildings that contribute in a positive way to the appreciation and understanding of Barrington’s heritage. To be eligible, your house must

- *be at least 100 years old,*
- *be well maintained,*
- *retain the integrity of the original design. This is very important as additions to historic houses are increasingly popular and may overwhelm or conflict with the original design.*

The use of vinyl, aluminum or similar siding will make the house ineligible. Sandblasting is also strongly discouraged.

If you are interested in a BPS plaque for your home, please visit the BPS Museum to pick up an application or call Marion Willey, Plaque Committee Chair, at 245-5336. The application fee is \$25 and the plaque fee (including deed research, probate records, taxes, photography, and maps) is \$300. Requests are presented to the BPS Board of Trustees for approval before research can start. It takes an average of six months to complete this process before our annual plaque presentation in the spring.

Don’t miss this popular event. It is your chance to honor historic homeowners and learn more about our local history!

**GO** to our website,  
**www.barrpreservation.org**, for information about Museum exhibits, a photo gallery, town history, and more!



*Pam Hilton and Carole Villucci (looking dashing in their period dresses), Bernard Scola, and Kent Phillips enjoyed last year’s Barrington Memorial Day parade. The Preservation Society hopes to participate again in this year’s parade as well, so look for us there!*



*Some of the cereal packages from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century that are displayed at the BPS Museum for the What's Cooking? exhibit*



## MUSEUM NEWS

### **What's Cooking? Preparing and Storing Food 1740 – 1940**

A Preservation Society Museum exhibition from March 16 – August 16

Imagine cooking on an open fire in the 1700s, or on a cast iron wood burning stove from 1890, or mixing dough in a steel bread maker from 1904, or using hand carved wooden utensils from the earliest days of cooking. Think about storing sugar in a large wood firkin from 1880, and using hand painted pottery for storing molasses and other thick liquids.

Did you know that cereal was the first health food fad? Check out the cereal packages at the Museum from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century featuring wonderful graphic designs and illustrations. Come to the Museum and envision yourself using the Glendale gas stove and Frigidaire refrigerator from the “modern era” of 1934, both on display.

Museum hours for this exhibition are Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 11:00 am–4:00 pm and by appointment. Interested in a group tour for your school or community organization? Call 289-0802 to make arrangements.

*Museum exhibition reception for What's Cooking? is Wednesday, March 30 from 6:00-8:00 in the Museum. Special refreshments will be served.*

### **Museum awarded RI Council for the Humanities grant**

BPS Museum was awarded a RI Council for the Humanities (RICH) grant in March. This grant will support the initiative to digitize the Society's collection and disseminate the archived system to the community. Related educational programs will include teacher workshops and presentations for use in the classroom and prior to a visit to the Society's Museum.



RHODE ISLAND  
COUNCIL  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

### **Interested in volunteering?**

BPS Museum loves volunteers. You may give one hour per week or more. Opportunities include research, gallery guides, helping with programs, school tours, filing and copying, etc. Call Carole Villucci at 289-0802 or e-mail [cvillucci@barrpreservation.org](mailto:cvillucci@barrpreservation.org) to discuss your field of interest.

### **FAMILY ART DAY**

Saturday, June 4, 2:00–4:00 pm in the Museum

Look at objects in the What's Cooking? exhibition, learn how they were used, choose your favorites, and then create a still life pastel painting or collage inspired by what you see using your own imagination. All ages welcome and all materials provided.



**FREE admission!**

# Strolling through \*Strawbery Banke

Saturday, September 24

In 1630, Captain Walter Neal and his small band of English settlers sailed into the area that is now known as Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Searching for a place to establish a plantation and a base for future commercial endeavours, they chose a site along the west bank of the Piscataqua River and named it Strawberry Banke because of the abundance of wild strawberries they found growing near the water's edge. Today those wild strawberries have disappeared, but the neighborhood which grew and experienced many changes over the years has been restored and named the Strawberry Banke Museum in honor of its first residents.

This fall, join Barrington Community School and the Barrington Preservation Society to discover four centuries of history and culture in one of America's oldest and largest outdoor, living history museums, depicted as it evolved through more than 350 years of social and architectural change.

There is a morning departure from Barrington Town Hall parking lot at 7:45 am with an 8:30 pm return. Fee: TBA in Barrington Community School summer brochure, available late April.

***\*Strawbery is the way it is spelled; it's not a typo!***

**Barrington Preservation Society**  
P.O. Box 178  
Barrington, RI 02806

Non Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit Number 1  
Barrington, RI 02806



## Join the Barrington Preservation Society!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

New member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are tax deductible and qualify members for discounts on museum purchases, including reproductions of archival photographs.

## Membership Categories

Student \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$35 \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting \$50 \_\_\_\_\_

Business \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Sustainer \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Patron \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip and send this form with a check payable to:

**The Barrington Preservation Society**

P.O. Box 178, Barrington, RI 02806