

THE BLACK TAVERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DUDLEY

2012 Newsletter Digital Version

**138 Center Road
P.O. Box 143
Dudley, MA 01571**

Built In 1804

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Linda Bazinet, Chairperson
Hugh Cushing, Vice Chair
Peg Pedersen, Treasurer
Linda Branniff, Clerk

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The Board of Directors of the Black Tavern sadly note the passing in 2011 of Director Raymond Stockley. Ray was a charter member of the Tavern and was the first Chairman of the Board of Directors in 1983. His participation in the Tavern's activities is sincerely missed.

Former Board of Directors member Peggy Comstock Coccia passed away in Naples, FLA during 2011. She was also on the membership committee at the Tavern for many years.

2012 TAVERN EVENTS

March 15, 2012

"The Art of Maple Sugaring:" by Valerie Paul, Blackstone Valley Park Ranger.

April 19, 2012

"A Look Back At Trolley Conductors" by Ken Ethier

May 5, 2012

Public House Fundraising Dinner

May 12, 2012

Black Tavern Annual Yard Sale at 7 a.m. at the Barn.

May 31, 2012

"Gardening With Heirlooms" by Christie Higginbottom, OSV

June 21, 2012

Strawberry Festival at the Dudley Grange with. Tavern Antique and Collectible Show—4 p.m.

August 2012

Barn Dance at The Tavern Barn

September 20, 2012

"Introducing Robert Frost" By Stephen Collins

October 18, 2012

"Haunted History of New England" by Christopher Daley

November 15, 2012

"Whispering Indian,"
Documentary Film

December 2012

To Be Announced.

Held at the Tavern at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Another year, another "Letter from the Chairman." I want you to know that this is no easy task. How many times can I write about how great the Tavern is looking! Guess what, here I go again. When something is working, why not brag about it. The Tavern has had another busy and productive year, thanks to the many volunteers and community support that the Tavern receives. I don't want to go into depth on some of these accomplishments, because they will be covered by the different committee chairs, but I do want you to know that each and every person who has given their time, financial support or donations of services has contributed to the Tavern's success.

So briefly, work on the interior continues as we fine tune paint, lighting and furnishings. After a visit to Old Sturbridge Village to view their collections, Bob Ducharme, our master craftsman, built a new cupboard for the Hearth Room: another example of fine workmanship and more in keeping with what we think would have been in the Tavern originally. The major project of the year was the east wall of the barn. With a grant from The Janet Malser

Humanities Trust, we were able to hire R. Rheault of Oxford to remove the old siding, do some structural work and re-side the exterior with pine siding to replicate the front and north walls of the barn. With this generous grant we were also able to install lighting in the barn. We are in the final stages of insuring handicap accessibility and the occupancy permit, so that when warm weather arrives we look forward to offering programs in this wonderful facility.

The many improvements to the Tavern and barn are reflected by the many compliments of how warm and inviting it appears to those who cross over Dudley Hill in their travels. This is also seen in the increase in rentals over the past year. It is so rewarding to have so many people using and enjoying the Tavern.

As you will read further on in this newsletter, our monthly programs have continued and once again we co-sponsored a program with the Fischer Institute of Nichols College. A wonderful partnership. Our annual Third Grade visit was held in June and it's always a toss up who enjoys it more, the kids or us. Through their "Pennies for Preservation", community service project, they once again gave us a check towards a needed project. Over the past 10 years these contributions have totaled over \$10,000.00. A wonderful help to our ongoing project lists.

What would June on Dudley Hill be without the Annual Grange Strawberry Festival. We participated by having our Second Annual Antique & Collectible Sale and Tavern Tours.



Our Antique and Collectible Sale

We also were open for tours of the Tavern when the Grange held their Apple Festival in October.

As you know, keeping the Tavern going and growing takes money. Thanks to all of you and a very successful Membership Drive (remember to renew your membership), donations, our Annual Yard Sale, Antique & Collectible Sale and sale of Tavern gifts (do you have your Tavern t-shirt?) we are able to continue the mission of maintaining and improving the Tavern.

On a sad note, Ray Stockley passed away in March. Ray was a life long member of the Tavern, serving as its first Chairman. His knowledge and love of the Tavern will long be remembered.

As always I wish to thank all the many volunteers and people who have contributed to the Tavern over the past year. There are many, too many to name, but I think those who know the everyday goings on at the Tavern, will not feel slighted when I say a special Thank You to Bob & Chris Ducharme, our Caretakers extraordinaire. They go above and beyond to keep the Tavern, its rentals, it's grounds and over all well-being what it is.

Linda A. Bazinet

DUDLEY HILL HAPPENINGS

This year saw the dedication of the Congregational Church's restored clock and carillon.. Every hour, on the hour, the clock can be heard chiming accompanied by a short musical piece on the carillon. A beautiful addition to the atmosphere of the Hill.



Congregational Church

This year again Dudley Hill had some very sporty cattle in the field across from Keekamoochaug Brook Farm on Healy Road (home of the Moseleys). The very nice looking belted Galways, who were boarding there for the summer, gave a glimpse of what Old Dudley must have been like with its many fields of cattle.



A Belted Galway Visitor

The little yellow house on Dudley Hill has a new owner and looked quite nice with new yellow paint on the façade and white Christmas lights displayed this year. It is the old Penniman house.

The hill lost another of the old homes on the common this year when Mrs. Sally Healy Walker's house was demolished.



Mrs. Sally Healy Walker's Home

2011 Maintenance at the Black Tavern

The year of 2011 has been a busy year in our effort to upgrade and maintain the Black Tavern.

In January we continued our ongoing effort to make the Tavern more energy efficient by weather-stripping door and window openings and placing foam board in fireplace openings when they are not in use.

In February, in continuation of our ongoing energy efficiency upgrade program, we had the existing heating system converted to two zones making the heating of the Tavern during events more balanced and efficient. Later in the month, after the meeting room renovation was completed, new period-appropriate lighting was installed on the walls and at the same time we added two new exit signs and emergency lighting to replace the old ones, which were

no longer working. Meanwhile throughout the winter months, Bob has been busy constructing new raised panel doors, replacing woodwork, and re-facing cabinets in the apartment.

In March we replaced the old stove in the Tavern kitchen. We were unable to control the heating temperature on the old one, and repair was nearly as expensive as replacing it with a newer more efficient model.

As spring arrived in April, the daffodils we purchased last fall were pushing through the thawing ground and we began to see the Tavern grounds come alive once again. Lawns were raked of leaves, fertilized and seeded where needed, gardens were rototilled, and flowers planted. Groundcover was planted on the south lawn to make maintenance easier on the steep banking. Gutters on the apartment ell that came down as a result of the winter's snow and ice were replaced.

In May, mulch was purchased and placed in all garden areas beautifying the grounds and Thursday workdays were started once again. Workday crews got busy cleaning out the annex and barn areas in preparation to the final phase of the barn renovation. At this time we were notified that we would be awarded a grant by the Janet Malser Humanities Trust that would allow us to complete renovation of the rear and final wall of the barn along with the wiring and lighting of the annex and barn. The beginning of the summer season at the Tavern was heralded on Memorial Day with Chris Ducharme's now famous "Memorial Day Breakfast on the Porch."



Completed east wall of barn

In June, we saw the completion of the barn restoration by R.C. Rheault Construction Co. and the wiring by Bateman Electric Co. The furnace for the Tavern apartment was 20 years old when it was installed during the Tavern restoration during the 1980's. Over the past year several pricey emergency repairs had to be made. It was decided that a new furnace was needed. The new unit was installed by Wm. Jolda & Son, bringing all heating systems on the Tavern property into the 21st century. Later in the month, using lumber salvaged from the old fire escape behind the barn, Bob Ducharme constructed 5 picnic tables that were placed around the property in time for the Strawberry Festival. The remaining lumber was used to construct a deck behind the apartment.

The summer months of July and August saw the Thursday workday crews continue work on the annex. Windows were reglazed, primed and painted and the annex was scraped of old paint, primed and painted as well. The inside of the barn was given a good cleaning in preparation for its use. The barn was made handicapped accessible through the efforts and donation of stone curbing by R.C. Rheault Construction, backhoe work by Mark Berthiaume, stone dust

donated by Hylka Construction Co. and railings donated by Miller Fence Co. With these donations of time and materials the driveway was graded so as to make a handicapped accessible ramp into the barn without detracting from it's period appearance.



A new look for the annex

During September many areas of the foundation were sealed with hydraulic cement to alleviate some of the water that was leaking into the basement during severe rainstorms. Much debris was cleared from the yards after hurricane Irene. The construction of the new hutch for the hearth room was completed and it was moved into the Tavern. The material used in construction of the hutch was leftover barn flooring purchased with funding from our own Dudley elementary school students.



New hutch in Tavern hearth room

In October, using old barn siding material, Bob constructed a picket fence that was placed on

the south end of the Tavern yard. A new door was purchased to replace the broken exit door at the rear hallway of the Tavern. A new door frame was constructed and the door installed to open outward replacing the old one that opened in. A "panic bar" was then purchased and installed; now bringing us in compliance with code for a public building. Bateman Electric installed two new dedicated circuits in the Hearth Room. This was done to alleviate tripping of circuit breakers when several crock-pots were plugged in as well as precluding the need to run an extension cord to the apartment during functions. The Tavern was "buttoned up" for the winter..

November began with tree work as the Halloween snowstorm damaged about 25 trees on the property. Nearly an entire week was dedicated to cutting and removing brush from the tree damage. It was decided that the extremely large diseased spruce tree at the back of the Tavern should be removed as well before another storm would drop it on the building. In early December Denis Panu Arborist was hired to remove the tree. He also chipped an enormous brush pile we had accumulated...



Spruce tree in Tavern back yard

In addition to the maintenance listed above, individual members of the BTHS and Thursday work crews have performed many other "minor" jobs throughout the year. The efforts of all involved have been greatly appreciated.

Bob Ducharme

A Year to Remember

The Black Tavern Program Committee was pleased to have presented a broad variety of educational and entertaining opportunities throughout 2011. Beginning in March, the committee featured a fascinating presentation on the first steamship to cross the Atlantic. John Laurence Busch, author of "Steam Coffin" captured the audience with the trials and tribulations of building, marketing and sailing the first steamship to set out across the sea. His book is a compelling historical account of the evolution of steamship travel in the 1800's.

On a cool evening in April, historian and Civil War re-enactor, Bob Ducharme, dazzled all in attendance with a first hand experience of a day in the life of a Civil War soldier. Dressed in full regalia of Union soldier, Andrew Yeomans of the 15th Mass Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Bob conveyed a captivating explanation of the uniform, the weaponry, the lodgings, and even the diet of a Union soldier. The fortitude and courage of those very young men will not be forgotten.

May's Tavern event offered an open house and tours to showcase the recently restored

BARN REPORT 2011

Tavern interior. The period renovations in the Tap and Meeting rooms, done with tender loving care by Hugh Cushing and other volunteers, provided much pleasure to young and old alike.

In June, during the Strawberry Festival, the Tavern opened its newly renovated barn to feature the second annual "Antiques and Collectibles Sale." All enjoyed viewing the barn interior, some browsed among the treasures while others found a treasure or two to adorn their own abodes.

The year would not be complete without the annual spring visit of the third graders, most of whom enjoyed a room-to-room tour with history lessons given by Tavern volunteers dressed in period attire. Each student departed happily with a traditional Joe Frogger cookie, and (hopefully) with some tidbits of local history.

Despite the oppressively muggy afternoon in August, the "Boys of the Town" provided a lively and spirited medley of Celtic tunes for the summer concert. As family and friends sat on blankets or lawn chairs, and partook of the Grange Snack Shack refreshments, some were moved enough to dance to the fiddling of Hunter Foote who ambled through the audience displaying his virtuosity. The Black Tavern board wishes to express its gratitude to both the Dudley Cultural Council and to Carolyn Earp whose generosity made this concert possible.

In September, Bob Ducharme gave a riveting presentation entitled "Brothers in Arms;" in which two sets of brothers who had lived in and around the Black Tavern, expressed their Civil War

experiences in beautifully written letters sent home to their loved ones. We are grateful to the families who had the foresight to preserve these letters.

In October, the Tavern participated in the Grange Apple Festival by offering tours of the Tavern and the barn, and peddling some of its wares on the Tavern lawn. The beautiful fall day brought friends and families out to enjoy the festivities.

November being Native American month, the Tavern showed a documentary film, "Hiding in Plain Sight." This film, produced by Bay Path College students in collaboration with the local Nipmuc Tribe, insightfully depicted the Nipmuc Indian's success in retaining their heritage through multiple challenges.

December's event, "Songs of the Season," enlivened the holiday spirit with vocalists Teri Canty, and Lorraine and Bennett Hammond. Their diversity of songs accompanied by guitar, dulcimer and harp created a mood of warmth and good cheer to the delight of all.

The Program Committee thanks all the volunteer bakers for providing refreshments throughout the year, and a special thanks to Chris and Bob Ducharme, who make everyone feel at home at the Tavern.

Sandy Peterson

Reserve the Tavern now for your upcoming baby shower, small wedding, birthday or anniversary. Call Chris or Bob Ducharme at (508)-943-8782.

The year 2011 was a busy year for work on the Black Tavern Barn and a great deal was accomplished. The barn committee sheathed the south gable (above the annex roof) with shiplap sheathing, making this area weatherproof and giving it the appearance of the rest of the barn.



Shiplap Sheathing

After receiving a grant from the Janet Malser Humanities Trust for \$20,000.00 (thank you David Butler) we put the East side out to bid. R.C. Rheault Construction Co. restored the east side, repairing or replacing the beams that were cut by the windows of the dormitory, replacing the siding that had been removed to install these windows, removing the old emergency exit stairs on the outside rear of the barn, installing slider windows along the top of the rear wall, resheathing the whole outside of the wall, replacing the pitch door in the rear of the drive bay, replacing the doors and windows of the basement and re-roofing the overhang.



Back of Barn Renovations

While this work was going on, Bateman Electric installed basic electric service to the barn.



New Barn Electric Service Panel

This included outlets on all four walls, track and spot lighting on the drive bay tie beams and installing a combination exit sign and emergency lighting unit to the left of the barn doors (from the inside).



New Emergency Lighting

With a donation of curb stones from R.C. Rheault, a donation of stone dust from Hylka Construction, and a donation of time and the use of his backhoe by Mark Berthaiume, the barn committee raised the driveway of the barn to the level of the top of the entrance stone at a 1/12 pitch, creating a permanent handicap entrance ramp.



Handicap Ramp at Front of Barn

We have received a set of handicap railings from Miller Fence Co. (another donation), and we will install them in the spring. This will complete the ramp and allow us to get our occupancy/use permit from the town.

The members of the board had a workday this fall and completely cleaned the barn, removing all of the vestiges of insulation from the tops of the beams. The board has also begun to mount various agricultural tools to the walls of the barn to be part of a permanent display.

Finally, thanks to the work of Phil Warbasse of Chenot Associates, the barn and annex have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. A plaque has been permanently placed on the front wall of the barn commemorating this.



The New Plaque on the Barn

As you can see it has been a very busy and productive year for the Black Tavern Barn, as well as an expensive year. The Barn Account is nearly empty as of this writing, but the work,

expense and time spent on this project this year accomplished a great deal. Please come by and see the Barn in its restored state.



Respectfully submitted for the Barn Committee,
David Proulx, Chairman

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Thank you, thank you, **thank you!** Thanks to your kindness and generosity, the Black Tavern Membership Committee was able to add a significant number of new members to our listing.

The past year's membership drive was extremely successful and netted us over \$7,000! With these monies, we were able to help with the furnace replacement, pay for entertainment, and provide for the upkeep of the Tavern. We urge you to renew your membership, or join us, and help us continue improving the Tavern for your use and enjoyment.

If you have not received a renewal form, a membership form may be found on the last page of this newsletter for your convenience or to pass along to a friend. It is also online at:

www.theBlackTavern.com.

Thank you again, for your generous support.

Nancy Roy

From the Innkeepers

As a result of the facelift to the Black Tavern by many volunteers over the last couple of years the "Gem on Dudley Hill" has come to life and 2011 has seen rentals of the Tavern quadruple. Over the past year the Tavern has been the venue for birthday parties for folks from the age of 1 to 80, wedding and baby showers, christenings, wedding receptions, and college rentals for speakers. In addition the Tavern has hosted numerous other functions such as Boy Scout eagle court of honor reviews, Dudley Selectmen's meeting, Dudley Historical Commission speakers, as well as our own monthly historical programs. Fees received from the increased rentals have allowed us to fund several upgrades, which in turn enhance the possibility of receiving additional rentals in the future.

Over the past year we have purchased new banquet tables and replaced some of our older card tables and chairs. These additions allow more flexibility on how the Tavern could be arranged for various functions. A new stove was purchased for the kitchen area replacing the malfunctioning one we had. A new dedicated electrical circuit for crockpots and warming trays was installed in the hearth room. This alleviated the problem of insufficient circuitry for warming food by the renters or caterers. Trash pick up was added as a service provided to renters precluding them from having to take their trash home with them thus enhancing the possibility of more rentals. This fall the new hutch for the hearth room was completed, finishing

the upgrade of new period-appropriate furniture in that room.



The Black Tavern, Christmas eve

Other activities that have showcased the Tavern throughout the year were: the second year of "Wednesdays on the Porch" during the summer months, email updates of happenings at the Tavern, Tavern tours upon request, the completion of a written history and self-guided tour of the Tavern, and finally the display of Christmas eve luminaries highlighting the Tavern on the hill during the holiday season.

The Black Tavern is available for rental throughout the year. Should you be interested in holding your event in this wonderful old 19th century gem, contact Bob or Chris Ducharme at 508-943-8782

Downsizing? Cleaning out unwanted "stuff?" Send it to the **Tavern Yard Sale** (no electronics or clothes, please). Call 508-943-8782 or 508-943-5509 to arrange drop-off or pickup. The Yard Sale will be held on May ____ 2012 at the Tavern Barn.

After many years of editing the Newsletter, this year Bob Ducharme has turned the task over to Linda Branniff. Thanks to Bob for all his work.

TAVERN TRIVIA

1. Hezekiah Healy, builder of the Black Tavern, needed spirits for his business and owned interest in a still.
2. Becca D. (Healy) Williams, Hezekiah's daughter, raised bombyx mori (silk worms) when she lived at the Tavern in the mid-1800s. Some of the cocoons were found in the walls when the Tavern was renovated by the charter members.
3. When Hezekiah Healy died in 1818, the Tavern contained 71 chairs, 5 candle stands, and 13 tables of different kinds. ..
4. The Tavern's wonderful front porch was added to the building in 1898 by Rev. Charles Goodell.
5. When the Black Tavern Historical Society was first established, they had their own bees making honey to help with the fundraising.
6. Harness maker Zebulon Morris used to make his harnesses in a corner of the Tavern's store-post office that is now the Museum Room.
7. Warren Goodell manufactured shoes in the Annex at one time and employed 23 people in 1860. They made 28,000 pairs of shoes that year.