



The Black Tavern

Historical Society of Dudley

Dudley Hill P.O. Box 143

Dudley, Massachusetts 01571

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

Tel. 508-943-8782

Newsletter January 2021

Board of Directors

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Vice-Chair: Robert Grzyb

Treasurer: William Moseley

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Nancy Roy

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Pam Williams

Events for 2021

Unfortunately we have had to postpone all of this past year's programs and at that time we had hoped to be able to reschedule these programs for the 2021 season, but it now appears that will not be possible until conditions change. When the time comes that we may make some decisions we will keep you posted as to when future programs may once again be held. Thank you for your understanding.

Message from the Chair

2020 What can I write that hasn't already been said about "the year that wasn't"? It's hard to imagine a country as great as the United States has been so impacted by a virus that has changed the way we interact with one another. That brings to mind all the events that the Black Tavern and Dudley Hill has witnessed over the years. Think about it: this is the second pandemic the Tavern has witnessed. It was standing on Dudley Hill during the pandemic of 1918, 100 years ago. The Tavern & the country survived that one and will survive this one too. It will stand for future generations to come.

In keeping with the state protocols for Covid 19, the Black Tavern is currently not available for rentals.

Because of COVID restrictions, the Tavern's social calendar was severely impacted. We don't schedule programs in January and February, so when March came along we had to cancel our monthly program, never guessing that all our programs for the year would follow suit. There was NO Third Grade Visit, NO Strawberry Festival and NO Craft Fair, all the programs the Tavern and Dudley Hill look forward to every year. In March, we officially closed the Tavern: NO programs, NO rentals, NO just getting together. Maybe it was the Year of NO. Needless to say this impacted our finances, but thanks to your memberships we were able to stay afloat. Since no one knows how long this altered state is going to last, I am making a plea to PLEASE renew your membership, we depend on them. I know these are difficult times for many, but our membership fees are low and haven't increased. So please continue your support of the Tavern, and let's begin this year on a YES!

Even though we couldn't host events we kept the Tavern in view, especially with the

beautiful geraniums on the porch as you drove by in the summer. We also participated in the Pearle Crawford Library Scarecrow contest. A group of our creative members constructed a tableau of Hezekiah & Becca Healy, encouraging people to vote. We won for Best Representation of the Town of Dudley! We also sponsored a Food Drive in conjunction with Tammy Ducharme TMD Small Business Group and the First Congregational Church UCC. The Tap Room was filled with many boxes of food that were distributed to the St Vincent de Paul Food Pantry (Sacred Heart Parish), Webster Dudley Food Share, Blessed Backpack Brigade and It Starts at Home Inc. In these difficult times, these gifts of food were truly needed and appreciated.

Once again, the Janet Malser Humanities Trust awarded a grant to us. This time, it was to replace the very inefficient furnace for the Tavern. The new one isn't just pretty (blue) but very efficient, thus using less oil and helping us to lower our energy costs. As utilitarian as this gift was, I am sure Janet Malser would be pleased...we certainly are and we are grateful.

During this very unusual and trying year, I don't know how we would have gotten through it without the dedication of Bob and Chris Ducharme. As always

always they were on top of every situation. Though the Tavern was closed, they were there to monitor any little thing that took place. Even a closed tavern needs cleaning, and the grass mowed! The Tavern remained a beautiful image during a dark time and the porch offered a great place to just sit...socially distanced! I know every year I thank them for all they do, but this year, being as weird as it was, they deserve an extra big Thank You.

As of this newsletter, no one knows when it will be safe to resume activities, even though a vaccine is now being issued. But as soon as it is safe to get together, you can be assured the Black Tavern and all who support it will right back out there. A summer evening on the porch watching the sun set will be much more appreciated.

Stay Well – Stay Safe

Linda Bazinet, Chair

Caretakers Report

Well, this has been one hell of a year hasn't it? With all that has been going on, with very few activities taking place at the Tavern, with all the cancelations of our scheduled events and no rentals, maintenance at the Tavern must still take place. In the winter months of January and February I traditionally try to get caught up on interior work in both the Tavern and the

apartment. This year was no different as I painted a bedroom, kitchen, and living room in the caretaker's apartment. These rooms had not been repainted since we restored the apartment before Chris and I moved in 11 years ago. I also did some carpentry work as I built and installed skirt boards in the apartment stairway. I always try to keep the apartment updated so there will be less work to do before the next caretaker comes in.

As February rolled around, it was decided that we should look into replacing the current 35 year old Tavern heating boiler. We were hoping to apply for a grant from the Janet Malser Humanities Trust in order to help with funding this replacement, so we started getting quotes in order complete the grant application. The Trust has been very generous in helping us with projects in the past.

In March, Chris began spring cleaning in the Tavern, cleaning the bathroom, hallway, hearth-room and tap-room. She took down all the curtains, washed them and rehung them. In preparation for anticipated rentals, she then sanitized all chairs, tables, bathroom, and kitchen. After finishing that, as luck would have it, the Governor announced new Covid protocols that would preclude rentals of the Tavern for gatherings. Just a beginning sample of what was

to come. In April, yard work was begun. After sheltering in place it was great to get outside and work in the yard. Lawns and gardens were raked, lawns were de-thatched, aerated, limed and fertilized. A new flag was purchased to replace the wind-tattered one that flies from our beautiful front flagpole. In May we were awarded a grant from the Janet Malser Humanities trust to assist with the funding to replace the Tavern heating boiler. The boiler replacement was scheduled for September.

We had already postponed our March and April programs and were hoping that, perhaps, we could resume our remaining programs in the fall, but as May and June came around we were finally coming to the reality that our entire schedule of programs was not going to happen. Work was still happening around the Tavern though, as I installed a new sidewalk on the Tanyard Road side of the apartment, scraped and re-stained the back deck, repaired lattice beneath the front porch, and serviced the lawn tractors.



New sidewalk on Tanyard Road side of apartment.

On August 24th a windstorm took down a large section of a very large maple tree in the back yard of the Tavern. Marc Moseley and his dad, Will, cut up the downed section of the tree and Will split the firewood and stacked it behind the barn. A remaining section of the tree loomed over the barn and after being checked out by a sub-committee of the board, it was deemed a hazard and the decision was made to get quotes from a professional tree service to remove it.



Fallen tree after August windstorm

In September, new bath shower hardware was installed in the apartment replacing the parts that were leaking and a new furnace was installed in the Tavern replacing the old one installed when the Tavern was restored in the 1980's.



New Tavern furnace

In early October, Bartlett Tree Experts were hired to remove the large maple tree behind the barn. The tree was cut down and the logs and large truckload of chips were left on site. Once again Will and Marc Mosely cut up the large sections into manageable sizes and Will spent several days cutting and splitting up the pieces into firewood. Bob Ducharme, along with the help of his grandson Tristan, spent several days spreading the wood chips in gardens, pathways, and washed out areas of the back yard.



Bartlett Tree Experts removing tree behind the barn



A great team! Father & son, Will and Marc Mosely, hard at work

It's been a tough year, but things still need to be done around the Tavern. We have had to cancel all our programs. We lost two of our major fundraisers, the Publick House Dinner and the Annual Craft Fair, and we don't

know what next year will bring. But we do know with your membership and your continued support in the future we can weather this storm.

Bob Ducharme

On the positive side

This has been a year we would like to forget, but despite being a down year, October brought a couple of positive events to the Tavern. At our socially distanced June Meeting we asked the board members for suggestions to somehow try to keep the Tavern active. Tim Cushing suggested that during these difficult times we do a food drive and Linda Bazinet suggested that we participate in the Pearle Crawford Library Scarecrow contest. Both turned out to be not only good ideas, but great successes.

Scarecrow Contest

Bob Ducharme built the framework for two scarecrows and a group including Bob and Chris Ducharme, Linda and Deb Bazinet, Nancy and Scott Roy, Tom and Lee Boyd, and Pam Williams dressed the two scarecrows as Hezekiah and Becca Healy with the theme of "Hezekiah and Becca remind you to vote" and placed them along with 18th century campaign signs for John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on the front porch. We won first place for historical category.



Our winning entry in the Pearle Crawford Library scarecrow contest.

Food Share

Tammy Ducharme aka TMD Small Business Group, agreed to let us partner with her food drive that she was doing. We had drop off on the Tavern porch October 22-25. Tom Boyd enlisted the Dudley Congregational Church UCC to become part of the endeavor. Tim Cushing had a banner made which hung from the Tavern front porch and posters were displayed around town. Over the four days, we collected over \$2,000 worth of food and \$180.00 in cash. We were overwhelmed by the generosity shown by members and townspeople. Tammy divided the food among four groups: Webster-Dudley St. Vincent DePaul, Webster-Dudley Food Share, Blessed Backpack Brigade, and It Starts at Home. We also put together six Thanksgiving meals with a \$20.00 Price Chopper gift card. It was a great feeling to be able to help these organizations and see how they appreciated this endeavor.

Bob Ducharme



The tap-room at the Tavern full of donated food items.

The 2020 Craft Fair (that wasn't)

Like everything else that faced cancellation in 2020, the craft fair was scheduled to happen on October 3, 2020 and then the covid-19 pandemic hit. An email was sent to all crafters in the spring to notify them of the cancellation. The crafters were given a choice to either receive a refund or to have their payment held for October 2021. Out of the 39 paid spots, 15 crafters wanted their payment held for 2021, 19 crafters asked for and received refunds, and 5 crafters to date have not responded.

In the spring, there were some who thought we made this decision too early and that this virus might be gone by October. Crafters plan all year for the events in which they intend to participate, so we thought it only fair to give them plenty of notice. We now know, of course, that this was the right choice.

Medical personnel are hopeful that the vaccines to protect us will most likely be available in time for us to have our 8th Annual Craft Fair on October 2, 2021, the first Saturday of that month. Contracts will be sent to the crafters who received refunds as well as to any other crafters who are interested in joining us. A separate reminder, and thank you, will be sent to the fifteen crafters who generously had us retain their fee for 2021. Please email karenmoseley2134@gmail.com with the contact information for either you or someone you know who creates craft items to sell, so that a contract with all the pertinent information can be sent to you or to them.

Karen Moseley

Some Good News

There was some **good news** in the past year. First, the Janet Malser Humanities Trust funded our request for a new furnace! It is a beautiful addition to the cellar and a vast improvement: another important upgrade from the trust that keeps on giving to our community! Second, we received a substantial donation from the Casavant Family Charitable Trust.

This trust has provided gifts over the years and is dissolving, so this is the last donation we will receive. We thank the Casavant family, which includes direct descendants of Hezekiah

Healy, for their wonderful support through the years. In a year that did not allow us to generate income, these donations have made a huge impact, and show that people who cared about the Tavern have provided for it in their estate planning. We are grateful to them for their faith in what we do for the community.

Ed Bazinet

In Memoriam: Michael Branniff



How do you say goodbye to someone who has been an important part of your organization? We struggle with this question now as we consider the impact the passing of Mike Branniff has had on the Tavern and the Town of Dudley. Whether it was his dedicated protest with a sign, walking along Center Road in support of the 1805 house, or his meticulous researching and transcribing of historical documents, Mike was able to focus his, and our, attention on things that constituted parts of Dudley's

rich history. His unique perspective and ability to remember details, people and events from earlier times was always available to us quickly by phone or email. That is gone.

A Dudley native and Army veteran, as Clerk of the Dudley Historic Commission Mike worked tirelessly to acknowledge past people and events, through reenactments, monuments and stories. We have his transcriptions, and some memorials have been erected to keep the history going, including one he conceived to honor our servicemen at Andersonville. The current task of saving Stevens Linen Mill is made easier through his many years of promoting the tax credits needed to attract developers. The preservation of town documents was one of his most successful projects, and continues to this day. And, after a decade of work, the Dudley Hill Historic District has been placed on the National Register. His involvement was indispensable to all these efforts.

We will rely on his true collaborator, his wife, Linda, to assist us going forward. Both Mike and Linda have been longstanding members of the Tavern Board of Directors. Adieu, Mike.

Ed Bazinet

New addition to our board

This past year the Black Tavern Historical Society has added a new member to our Board of Directors.

Pam Williams has joined our board this past summer, and she has already become an active member. Pam's husband Dick is a direct descendant of Tavern builder Hezekiah Healy, and Pam's late father in law, Art Williams, was one of the founding members of the original group that purchased and restored the Black Tavern back in the 1980's. Welcome aboard Pam!

With that being said, the Black Tavern Board of Directors is always looking for additional members to serve on our board and should you feel that you would be interested in joining our group, please contact Linda Bazinet at 508-943-5509 or Bob Ducharme at 508-943-8782.

Bob Ducharme

Thank You

It is with deep appreciation and gratitude that the Black Tavern Historical Society and Board of Directors thank you for your kind donations. It is comforting to know numerous donors take pride in our wonderful building and enjoy the free programs we offer to the public. 2020 was unique and challenging for all of

us in many ways. We look forward to membership renewals again this year, in hopes of a time when we can gather together to enjoy our programs and actually visit with one another again. Most all of our presenters are committed to perform once we get permission to open our doors once more.

Nancy Roy, Chairperson

If you have not yet renewed your 2021 membership, please use the form on the back of this newsletter to do so. Thank you.

Change on the Hill

Change is coming to our neighborhood on Dudley Hill. Several years ago fire consumed the Stockley home located on Center Rd. just south of the Tavern. Since that time the barn located on the property has fallen into disrepair. It was recently brought to our attention that the property was purchased by Nichols College and that they applied to the Dudley Historical Commission for a permit to remove the barn.

Upon inspection, the Historical Commission deemed the barn unsalvageable and granted a permit for its removal. The college has stated that they have no immediate plans for the property.

Bob Ducharme

In Appreciation of Our 2020

Business Sponsors

The Black Tavern Board of Directors is most grateful to all the businesses who generously donated to support our publicly offered programs. Your contributions not only allow us to continue to offer high quality events to the community, but they also support our mission to promote the rich heritage of Dudley and surrounding areas. We heartily thank:

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Removing a 1931 Pontiac from the Stockley Barn

Happenings in the new Dudley Hill Historic District

After becoming a National Registered district in late 2019, the Town of Dudley Historical Commission began planning a celebration for June 2020. You know that didn't happen! It will hopefully be done in summer 2021, but it might have to wait for the fall craft fair. Signs for the "Historic District" will be installed at both ends of the district, and at the four way stop of Center Road and Dudley Oxford Road. Signage will also be added to Village Cemetery as part of enhancements being planned to survey that site, rebuild the stone wall, remove the chain-link fencing, restore the original granite post fencing, and plant trees and shrubs to enhance its historic feel. The Janet Malser Humanities Trust is partnering with the Town of Dudley in this project. If you want a good place to walk, come to the Tavern porch and pick up a copy of the "walking tour" of the district, available in the rack near the front door. Copies are also available at the Pearle L. Crawford Library.

Ed Bazinet

Editor's Note-

Unfortunately many of our members are unaware of the many beautiful gardens located in the Tavern's back yard. Should you choose to follow up on Ed's suggestion of taking the "Walking Tour" next summer, we invite

visit the back yard.

Because I have additional space in this newsletter, I have included some photos of our "Little Piece of Heaven."

Scenes from the Tavern Back Yard



Lower shade garden



Civil War soldiers memorial garden



Shade garden swing



Flower/vegetable garden

The Tavern's Assistant Caretaker, Tristan, helping his "Pap" in the back yard



Chain-sawing the tree



Shoveling Wood Chips



Mowing the Lawn

Healy Society

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2020 Donations Black Tavern Historical Society

The Black Tavern Historical Society is most grateful to the individuals and businesses who have supported it financially and/or "in kind."
Every effort has been made to ensure these lists are accurate and complete. If there are, however, any errors or omissions, we apologize and ask that you notify the Society at P.O. Box 143, Dudley, MA 01571. Thank you.

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Sarah Williams Banks by daughter Barbara Gurney
Norman B. Lavoie by Carol Ann Eaton
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Michael Branniff by Bob & Chris Ducharme
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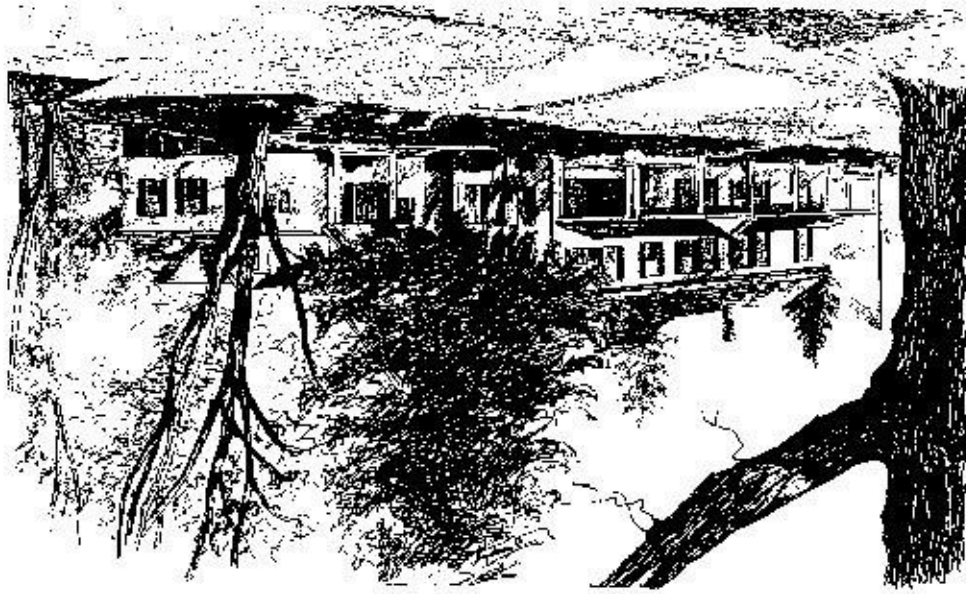
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Membership Committee
Black Tavern Historical Society
P O Box 143
Dudley, MA 01571

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**Black Tavern Historical Society
P.O. Box 143
Dudley, MA 01571**

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