

EAST HADDAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2021

Dear Members,

Well, it finally happened...Spring has arrived with her full pallet of yellows, greens, reds, and pinks as the sun shines more brightly for longer daylight hours and the earth warms with new life. I hope that most of you have received your vaccinations, and are starting to enlarge your circle of travel - still wearing masks and practicing social distancing, I hope. Despite all the restrictions imposed this winter by the ongoing pandemic, the Board of Trustees has remained busy with a number of new initiatives as we look forward to the eventual re-opening of our town's history museum. Here is a synopsis of what we've been up to:

Strategic Plan: As you may recall, the Board successfully applied for a CT Humanities grant which allowed us to hire museum consultant Kathy Carughwell-Varda to facilitate the process of creating a three-year strategic operating plan. This task has been completed and the plan has been uploaded to the website for public viewing. (www.easthaddamhistory.org) Please take a look at it. The board identified six goals. Each goal is supported by action steps to achieve these goals. The strategic plan goals are as follows:

1. Work to become a cultural center for the East Haddam community
2. Work towards the financial stability for the East Haddam Historical Society and to increase fundraising capabilities
3. Redesign and re-envision exhibit areas to engage the community, share important stories, and provide programs that support the exhibits and the mission of the EHHS
4. Promote the EHHS and expand its reputation through collaborations with other cultural heritage organizations, community businesses, and groups
5. Preserve, research, and present the historic museum collections and archives for the benefit of the community
6. Provide training, revise roles and responsibilities for the members of the Board of Trustees to help them serve to the best of their capabilities and meet best standards and practices in the museum field.

The Board of Trustees is committed to implementing our strategic goals over the next three years. To achieve this outcome, the BOT recently applied for a CT Humanities grant (*Phase 1/Interpretive Plan*) that will allow us to methodically begin the review of our current exhibit area, the reinterpretation of our galleries to provide a more cohesive and engaging presentation of local history, and one that meets the needs and interests of our community. Since we are not located in a historic building, we feel it is important to explore whether the interior footprint of the building is conducive to our goals and what changes, if any, we should make to the interior footprint to maximize our potential to interpret and present East Haddam history. (strategic goals # 3, 4, 5)

Another task undertaken as a component of strategic planning was to review the Statement of Purpose in the by-laws, last approved in 2015. As a result of this process, a new mission statement was agreed upon by the board. This mission statement is now on the masthead of our website landing page and will drive all decision-making. Here's the new mission statement:

The East Haddam Historical Society illuminates and preserves the stories of the people and places that shape our community

Logo: We also want to design a new logo that we can use to brand and market EHHS throughout the community. If any member has experience in designing logos and would like to volunteer to work on a new logo design, please contact one of the trustees.

Website: Many thanks to Cassandra Ciullo who is our webmaster. She has re-designed the website to be more user-friendly and interactive (membership dues and museum store purchases can now be made using Paypal). Lots of videos on East Haddam's history have been uploaded for your viewing pleasure. Please visit the museum store to buy books and gifts - including the first of what we hope to be a series of East Haddam-themed jigsaw puzzles. The first one for sale is near-and-dear to the hearts of many long-time Moodus residents - a picture titled *Old Moodus Center, c. 1938*. Many thanks to Ken Simon for his expertise in digitizing the original photograph, and to Marianne Halpin for sourcing a vendor to make the puzzle.

Moodus Drum & Fife Corps: The next time you happen to be visiting the Municipal Building, please look at the display on the Moodus Drum and Fife Corps in the glass case outside the selectman's office. The EHHS maintains this display case, and this is the 5th semi-annual exhibit. Thanks to Marianne Halpin and Joanne Maynard for creating this wonderful display about our famous and beloved Drum and Fife Corps.

Zero Boys: The mini-documentary series that details the history of the *Zero Boys* - 1959 Hale-Ray undefeated and unscored upon boys state championship soccer team - has been completed by H-R alums Justin Bellucci and Eliot Francese. This project was jointly funded by the EHHS and Hale-Ray Alumni Association. Information about a gala Opening Night showing will be forthcoming.

Saving Land, Saving History: As you know, the mini-documentary series entitled *Saving Land, Saving History* that was written, produced, and directed by Ken Simon, was a collaboration between EHHS and East Haddam Land Trust with support from the Eight Mile River Watershed Council and CT Humanities. The entire series has been uploaded to our website for your viewing pleasure. This project was recently recognized by the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO) with an Award of Merit. In the letter informing us of the award, the CLHO cited that the committee "...was impressed with this collaboration between two non-profit organizations - an excellent example of how resources can be maximized by organizations who can find a common vision and purpose. The committee also noted how the walks in the woods promoted by the films presented a safe activity for the East Haddam community during the pandemic." Congratulations to everyone who was involved in this award-winning collaborative project!

Museum Re-opening: The board will discuss at the April meeting a process for the re-opening of the museum. Marianne Halpin, museum executive director, has been in conversation with the executive directors of area historical societies about their plans. We will announce the date of the museum opening, along with a program/events calendar, in the East Haddam News.

Museum Docents: Marianne is also taking the names of people who are interested in attending a training session to learn how to be a museum docent. Being a docent at the EHHS museum is a great way to become familiar with the exhibits and collections, and to meet new people. If you are interested in becoming a museum docent, please contact Marianne @ 860.759.3049.

Membership: Thank you to all members who have renewed their 2021 memberships, and welcome to all new members. One of the board's goals is to grow the membership (currently around 300). We're especially hoping to attract new families in East Haddam to become members. So, please accept our challenge to invite at least one new person to join the EHHS. Membership can be given as a housewarming gift, a welcome-to-the-neighborhood gift, a graduation gift, or as a gift for any occasion. Just click on the Membership link on the website for the application and payment options.

Happy Spring and I hope to see you all soon at the Museum!



Bruce Sievers
President
Board of Trustees