

# BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

Vol. 7, Issue 1 - March, 2022 - May, 2022

### *From the President's Desk*



[www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org)

P.O. Box 1393 / 98 Summer Street  
Bristol, CT. 06011-1393/860-583-6309

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We have recently endured the New England phenomenon I like to call “fake Spring.” For a day or two, it’s a sunny, hopeful 60+ degrees, the snow melts, and most of us rush outside to enjoy the day. Alas, fake Spring is almost always followed by a cold snap and wintry mix, and this year was no different—winter appears to be back for a little while longer.

Although we’re hunkering down for a little more cold on the outside, the signs of Spring are very real inside the Historical Society lately. Third Thursday programs resume on April 17, with Rit Carter’s fascinating walk through the Theodore Buessel sedition case. Interesting collection items have come in as people start their Spring cleaning, and a new textile exhibit has been coming together over the past few of Saturdays: You should be able to stop in and see a display of many decades of clothing worn by a variety of Bristol’s working women.

We are looking forward to the Spring Tag Sale on May 7, and a sure sign that Spring is on the way is that Mary Jo Phelps, who was the winner of our Bristol Brain Twister, also dropped off a few tag sale donations as she picked up her prize. (A Bristol historian and organized!) The 12-Days-of-Christmas-themed questions and answers are inside so that you can test your Bristol knowledge as well.

One more date to save is June 11<sup>th</sup>, when the Bristol Historical Society will be honored to dedicate our Spring Open House to the remarkable Loretta Teevan, who taught from 1955 to 1998 in both the Bristol Central and Bristol Eastern High Schools. Sadly, Loretta passed away last month, and Bristol students lost a longtime friend. If you had Miss Teevan as a teacher, then you wrote an “I Meet Me” or another personal essay for her. She kept those and returned them, often years later, when she felt the time was right. Friends of Loretta’s have these letters and hope to return as many as possible on June 11<sup>th</sup>. In honor of her commitment to Bristol’s students, we will dedicate many of our displays to information on the history of Bristol’s schools.

Stay warm and we will see you in the Spring!

*Maya Bringe, President*

**BHS SPRING TAG SALE! - SATURDAY, MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2022 – 9AM-2PM**  
**Indoor / Outdoor – Something for Everyone! Don’t Miss It!**

*If you have something you’d like to donate, please drop it off during  
Museum open hours on Wed. or Sat. 10am – 2pm before Apr. 30<sup>th</sup>.*

## **PASTA SUPPER FUNDRAISER UPDATE**

On Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm our annual pasta dinner fundraiser was held at Marilyn's Pub. Those who dined in and those who ordered take-out were treated to a wonderful meal topped off with Noreen Zurell's delicious cupcakes for dessert. For those who could not attend that made a donation to the Scholarship Fund -THANK YOU!

The support of Bristol Historical Society's members and friends enabled us to reach our goal in providing this year's scholarship, which will be presented at our annual dinner in August.

*Save the Date – Thursday, February 16, 2023, for next year's fundraiser.*

*With sincere appreciation,  
Eleanor Wilson, Program Chair.*

## **ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE**

The Annual Meeting for the Society will be **Wednesday, June 22, 2022**. Voting will take place for the following offices:

President

First Vice President

Director of the Board (multiple openings)

Members can make nominations for these positions during the nomination period which begins on **Friday, May 9, 2022**, and closes **Monday, May 23, 2022**. Nomination forms will be available by mail, in the office during open office hours. or on our website ([www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org)). Candidates must be members in good standing and must have been members for a year to be considered. At the close of the nomination period, the Committee will confirm with nominees that they are willing to serve and publish member nominations and its own slate of candidates by **June 1, 2022**.

Last year, because of the pandemic, nomination forms and ballots were sent out to all members in good standing, and we anticipate that that will be the case again this year for those not yet comfortable with a large indoor meeting. **Ballots must be returned by noon on June 22<sup>nd</sup> to be counted.**

The full set of bylaws with the latest amendments is available at [www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org) and in the office at the Society at 98 Summer Street. If you have questions about the open positions or the election procedure, please contact Steve Vastola, [veeman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:veeman@sbcglobal.net), chair of the Governance Committee.

## **ANNUAL APPEAL**

The 2021–2022 Annual Campaign is well underway! If you have not already, please consider donating this year. Annual Campaign funds allow us to bring programs and events to the public throughout the year, to preserve artifacts in our collection of the city's history, and to maintain the largest artifact in our collection: Bristol's first public high school, which remains the oldest municipal building in the city still open to the public. With your support, we can continue to preserve the past for current and future residents of Bristol.

## ***HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FEDERAL HILL?***

Do you know where Bristol's Irish mine workers went to church in 1855? Do you know where the Old Lebanon Evangelical Swedish Lutheran Church stood? Do you know what occupies its building now? If you would like to take a walk around Federal Hill this spring, please consider stopping in at BHS and picking up a copy of the children's Scavenger Hunt instructions from our Scavenger Hunt this past fall. Whether you bring your children or not, it's an interesting walk through Bristol's past.

We have driving tour instructions in the building as well. And if you have a group that would enjoy a guided walking tour, please contact the office during open hours, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, 10-2 and we would be happy to set up a tour date for you.

## ***COLLECTIONS***

We recently received a Class binder from J.J. Jennings school of all class reunions from 1941 – 1949 containing photos of each class.

We are still looking for the Gone with the Wind Lamp and our textile collection would like vintage women's pants suits.

## ***RESEARCH***

If you have a question of a historical nature, please feel free to email it to: [research@bristolhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:research@bristolhistoricalsociety.org).

## ***2022 BHS ANNUAL DINNER***

Mark your Calendar! This years' dinner will have some changes...a few of which can be shared now. The date will be Wednesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. The place will be the Great Room at the Bristol Historical Society. Stay tuned for more to come.

## ***MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL INFORMATION***

Membership renewal starts June 1<sup>st</sup> and runs thru June 30<sup>th</sup>. The past few years we have included the renewal form when we mailed out the nomination ballots in the beginning of June. This has worked very well with 95% of our annual members renewing. However, because of high postage rates we cannot mail back your membership cards unless you send us a stamp when you send back your ballot should you want your card right away. We will however include your card in the Annual Appeal mailing which is made in the fall.

## ***2022 BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP - \$1500***

Do you know a Bristol student who could benefit from our scholarship? If so – please encourage them to check with their school guidance dept. for the application.

Applicant must be a legal resident of Bristol who plans to attend a two or four-year college/university; have an interest in pursuing a study of history is preferred but not required and has a minimum 3.0 (B) average for 7 semesters.

## **TRUTH, LIES, & LUST:**

### **HOW BRISTOL REV. THEODORE BEUSSEL WAS LED TO SEDITION**

The date is May 27, 1918, and the United States is at war in Europe. As far as Bristol is concerned at that precise moment, there are over 1,000 Bristol boys serving, with 11 dead, 13 missing, and 16 wounded.

A little closer to home, the Red Sox lose to the White Sox 6-4 at Fenway Park.

President Wilson urges a series of tax increases to raise war revenue.

And about half a mile from the Bristol Historical Society at 157 Queen St. on the second floor of a boarding house, a party starts around 7 PM.

There are four people in attendance, William Sterling Kerr and his wife Marie C. Kerr from Maine. They are hosting the party.

The others are twenty-four-year-old Leonore C. Murphy, a nurse from Boston, and Theodore Beussel, a Reverend at the German Lutheran Zion Church on Judd Street in Bristol.

The three-hour party is full of merriment as they play music, dance, eat, drink wine, and the men “toast the women they love.”

However, everything is not what it seems. Before nightfall of the following day, Theodore Beussel will be arrested by federal agents for making seditious utterances against the United States. He will never set foot in Bristol again.

Eventually, Reverend Beussel will be found guilty on three counts of sedition and sentenced to 30 years in prison. As a result, he will be removed from the church, lose his home, and his US citizenship will be revoked.

What did Reverend Theodore Beussel say in a room with only three other people, resulting in his American dream being destroyed? *Come to the Bristol Historical Society on April 21 at 7 PM to find out.*

### ***Bristol Sports Hall of Fame***

The Bristol Sports Hall of Fame maintains a very comprehensive website, ***bshof.org***. On the website there is a process to nominate individuals or organizations for possible induction. The public can also view all past inductees including most of their induction speeches.

The scrapbook section contains extensive information on the following organizations; Bristol Girls Club (1928-1979), Bristol Boys Club, (1907-2007), Wilson Field, Forestville Boys Club, CT Senior League Baseball Champions, Bristol Girls Little League Softball, Bristol Slo-Pitch Softball, Bristol High Schools State Championship Teams, Bristol Little League, Bristol Red Sox, Woman Sports In Bristol, Bristol Boxing History, Forestville Boys Club 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary program, McCabe Waters Little League, Greene-Hills Sports, Bristol Soccer Club, Bristol Champlains, Bristol Youth Soccer (1975-1995), Challenger Division Little League, Forestville Little League, St. Anthony’s High School Sports, Edgewood Little League. West End Athletic Club, BSHOF 2000 calendar, Bristol Midget Football, Bristol Hobos, Bristol Tramps, Soap Box Derby, Pequabuck Golf Club, Eastern Region Little League, American Legion Baseball, and Bristol Boys & Girls Club OM Keystone Association.

The BSHOF annual scholarship golf tournament will be held on Monday, July 25 at Pequabuck Golf Club. For more information, please contact Don Soucy at 860-384-0256 or at [drs.1947@yahoo.com](mailto:drs.1947@yahoo.com).

## ***Congratulations to Mary Jo Phelps,***

*who was the winner of our 12-Days-of-Christmas themed Bristol Brain Twister. She had the most correct answers to the following questions. See if you know the answers, which appear on the next page.*

1. Though it is not a partridge, this bird is 9–11 inches long, gray above, red brick colored below, and the male’s song is a rich carol. Can you name him?
2. There are more than two doves and two turtles, but can you name two places where such creatures might roam freely here in Bristol?
3. In the West End of Bristol, there were once three French hens. Today only one is left. Can you name these three institutions with similar names?
4. Four calling birds: Once there was a place in town where the flowers became famous, and it was run by four Birds. Can you name the place and/or the Birds?
5. Where five rings intersect, these two won gold. Can you name them?
6. More than six geese have been spotted in several places around Bristol. Can you name at least two of those places?
7. There is more than one place to do a swan dive in town. Can you name two?
8. There were once eight places a maid might be found milking. Can you name any two of the eight? (Five would make you a Bristol historian!)
9. Nine ladies dancing! Add 40 more and think of one of Bristol’s oldest institutions. Can you name the place where you might have found 49 ladies dancing?
10. Lords a-leaping! At one time Bristol was in love with fraternal organizations. At any given time, more than 10 such organizations existed. Can you name three? (Six or more would make you a historian as well.)
11. Eleven pipers piping. Bristol has always been a musical town. One group continues this tradition and gives free concerts. Can you name them?
12. Twelve drummers drumming...and the musical tradition continues. Excluding the answer to number 11, can you name at least 3 musical bands that once existed in Bristol?

## ***Answers to the Bristol Brain Twister:***

1. American Robin.
2. Indian Rock, Barnes Nature Center. (There are a few other park-like places that might work.)
3. St. Ann's Church, St. Ann's Convent, and St. Ann's School.
4. The place is Bristol Nurseries and the Birds are Arthur, Arthur Jr., Kenneth, and Robert Bird.
5. Sarah and Karen Josephson, duet synchronized swimming gold medalists.
6. There are a lot of options for this in town: Memorial Boulevard, Rockwell Park, Page Park, and many others.
7. Giamatti Center, Page Park Pool, Rockwell Pool, in addition to a couple of other private pools.
8. Roberge, Redman, Elton, Gifford, Peplau, Echo Farm, Anderson, Newell. A few others might qualify.
9. The Lake Compounce carousel.
10. Elks, Eagles, Lion, Moose, Improved Order of Redmen, 2 IOOFs (Improved Order of Odd Fellows), Oneida Club, Mason, Knights of Columbus...
11. The answer we were looking for the Bristol Brass and Wind Ensemble. However, we did accept the names of groups that had played in some of the other free concerts in town.
12. Bands include: the Bristol Band, the New Departure Band, Ingraham's, Swanston's, Bert Orr, the Bristol Symphony, and others...