



Braintree Historical Society Inc.

News-Letter

31 Tenney Road, Braintree MA 02184 – www.braintreehistorical.org – 781-817-5552 781-848-1640

September, 2023

A Message from the President:



Dear Members and Friends,
History in general, and Braintree's history in particular, is inspiring. The adversity faced by people who came before us teaches important lessons in courage, persistence,

individual achievement and teamwork. The accomplishments, and sometimes the failures, of the past guide and inspire us as we live in the present and plan for the future.

At the Braintree Historical Society, we hope to again shine a light on Braintree's historic people, events, buildings, artifacts and documents. The Covid pandemic, and other circumstances, have hampered our ability to host events and visitors in recent years, but we are committed to reenergizing our activities. The four buildings under the Society's care and the contents of two of those buildings, provide a great resource for us in attempting to highlight Braintree's history.

The General Sylvanus Thayer House, our most well-known building, has hosted thousands of student visits for more than fifty years. We plan to continue that tradition and to also make the Thayer House open to the general public on a much more frequent basis. We do not have a set schedule yet, but we hope to have the Thayer House open at least one Saturday per month beginning soon.

The Gilbert Bean Barn and Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center will be opening at least one day per week soon, as repairs to the building are nearing completion. The Barn/Resource Center building, which is at 31 Tenney Road, will be hosting exhibits in the near future and will be open for historical research by appointment.

The Barn/Resource Center is also the base of operations for the Society's popular "Plaque Program", by which owners of historic homes in Braintree can request a plaque for their homes.

We will be working to get the French House on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Gallivan House has had substantial interior improvements made recently. More details on the Gallivan House plans will be announced soon.

Perhaps most importantly, a sincere THANK YOU to the many people who have volunteered their time, talent and treasure to the Society. The Society is a non-profit all volunteer organization. It only exists because of the support it receives from many caring people. Some contributions of time and financial resources have been large, but large or small every contribution is much appreciated, and deeply needed.

Steve Leonard

MEET THE SOCIETY'S NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

At the Society's Annual Membership Meeting, held on 1 June 2023, the following members were elected to the Board of Directors. So you can get to know them a little better we present them here:



Stephen P. (Steve) Leonard, President, is a lifelong resident of Braintree who learned early in life about volunteering and community service from his family. Steve's father served on the Braintree Town Finance Committee and on the Town Personnel Board and his mother was a frequent volunteer for a variety of Town

and other events. Having begun his career as an attorney in private practice in Quincy Square, Steve is retired from the legal profession after 35 years working for the Federal government, first with the Treasury Department and then the Department of Homeland Security. Steve has an interest in American history and the history of Braintree and enjoys playing golf and traveling in the United States, including visits to the nation's national parks.



Sonya (Sunny) Shaw, Vice President, has been a resident of Braintree for 46 years, a former Town Meeting member, a Fair Housing Director, Director of the Marge Crispin Center and Founder & Director of the Kids Clothes Closet. A teacher for over 40 years, Sunny is an elected Trustee of the Thayer Public Library. She

is a wife, mother and very proud grandmother of five.



Thomas M. Kent, Sr. (Tom) Treasurer, is a long time (45year) resident of Braintree, who ironically, grew up in and graduated from Milton High School, class of 1971. He graduated from Harvard College, class of 1975 and received his Master's from New York

University in 1977. He is a CPA and is a retired

partner with the PwC accounting firm. He served on the Board of Thayer Academy for 10 years, including two as Chair. He has been involved with the Braintree Historical Society for some 7 years.



Alan Flowers, Corresponding Secretary: Alan has had a life long love of history. He was born and raised in Dorchester and went to Boston Latin School. He earned a BBA and MBA from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and worked at State Street Bank for 38 years. He has lived in

Braintree since 1980 with his wife Barbara. They have 4 children who all attended Braintree Public Schools. Alan was a member of Braintree Town Meeting and served on the Finance Committee.



Pepe Goodhue, Clerk, is a retired from more than 30 years as an Office Manager and an OB GYN Administrator at New England Baptist Hospital. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Braintree Art Association for the last 3 years and the Braintree Farmer's Market for the last 5 years. Pepe

has been a volunteer with the Braintree Community Youth Center for the last 15 years; serves as a RIDE coordinator for the American Cancer Society and volunteers for the Trustees of the Kitchen at the Boston Public Market. Over the past year, Pepe has also undertaken the process of organizing our Society files and, in the process, learning much about the Town's and Society's history.

DIRECTORS TO 2024:



Aziz Karsana: Biographical Sketch not available at press time.

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Arienne Whitehouse has been a wife for 58 years, mother of 4, and grandmother of 1. She has lived in Braintree most of her life with the exception of 12 years in Weymouth. Before retirement she was employed as a draftsman for a mapping company in

Braintree as well as a CADD drafter and designer with surveying and mapping and engineering companies. She is the family genealogist and has spent many years researching generations of the family. For the last several years she has assisted with research for the “Braintree Remembers Braintree in World War I” project for the American Legion. She is now assisting with the research for the plaque project for the Historical Society. She has been a member of the Braintree Historical Society for many years but this is the first time serving on the board. In her spare time she can be found in her garden, making scrapbooks, greeting cards or other crafts.

DIRECTORS TO 2025:



Christopher Griffin was born and raised in Braintree where he attended Braintree public schools until the 8th grade. He is a graduate of Boston College High School and Merrimack College. From 2011-2019 he served as Assistant to the Mayor in the administration of Mayor Joseph C.

Sullivan. Since 2019 he has worked for the Braintree Recreation Department. He has been a member of the Historical Society Board of Directors since 2014, is a past member of the Braintree Town Democratic Committee (2012-2020) and Director of Division 2 for Braintree Babe Ruth baseball from 2014-2022. In his spare time he enjoys the Red Sox, Patriots, traveling (mostly to the UK), reading historical fiction novels, and both US and UK history.



Wesley Painter has worked extensively in the historic preservation field for the last 8 years. His efforts include New York City’s archives at Greenwood Cemetery under Head Historian Jeff Richman, and projects with the Historic District

Council and Village Preservation of Greenwich Village, restoration and conservation of historic furniture in Brooklyn, and historic research for The Circular Church cemetery in Charleston, SC. A longtime advocate and contributor to cemetery preservation along with historic properties, Wesley has a deep passion for preserving history for the next generations.

DIRECTORS TO 2026:



Gail Saccone has been a resident of Braintree for 10 years. Prior to that, she lived in Hingham for 42 years. She is a retired School Psychologist. “I joined the Braintree Historical Society 4

years ago in order to learn more about Braintree and to meet new people in town.” She has volunteered for the past four years in the Research Library doing organizational work and cataloging pictures and memorabilia. She commented “I’ve enjoyed my time there and I welcome the opportunity to step into a Director position so that I can help work to further the Historical Society’s mission.”



Derek Manning is the father of two “wonderful” boys, Aidan (17) and Kieran (13) and has been “happily” married to Chandra since 2001. Derek as worked in historic preservation for the past 17 years and exceeds the Secretary of the

Interior's Professional Standards for Architectural Historian. Much of Derek's career has been with the Federal government and he currently works as a preservation carpenter for the National Park Service and restores historic park properties throughout the northeast.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT



Robert (Bob) Harris, Immediate Past President now goes on as **Chairman of the Nominating Committee**. He has had a 50-year career in human services. With a doctorate in psychology, he has worked with children and adults

with special needs and their families and supporting staff across a variety of settings. For the latter half of his career, he has functioned in senior administrative roles to stabilize, rebuild and expand floundering programs and to launch new programs. As President he worked to resolve several issues.

A Special Thank You to the following:

In May, the Society sent out what amounted to an emergency appeal to take care of some very pressing matters. This was included along with a dues notice as they had not been sent for several years.. We are happy to report that the following individuals made contributions in addition to their dues:

Walter Opanasets	John Donovan
Alan & Barbara Flowers	Dick Fletcher
Judith & David Chambers	Jane Bickford
Sean & Cynthia Hastings	Michael Perfetti
Claire Currier	Jennifer Wysocki
Jane Cotton DiFiore	IMO Mildred Cotton
George Lewald	Frank Collins
Gloria & John Pelose	Joanne McCarthy
James Keelon	John Dennehy
Cheryl Edgar	John Thompson
Steven & Sarah Sciascia	Bill & Diane Lowry
Cindy and Jim Manganello	
Adrienne Whitehouse	Shaw's
Thomas & Debbie Kent	Pepe Goodhue
Margaret V. Penniman	David & Sunny Shaw
John Carroll Poland Trust	(plus restricted)
Al & Carmela Varraso	Claire & Dan Riley
Thomas Quinn	David Parr
Marilyn & Robert Thayer	Natalie Lee
Ben and Terry Feehan	
Ron & Mary Frazier	IMO Gib & Mary Bean
Garrett Moran & Mary Penniman	Family Fdn.
David Parr	(Acquisitions Fund)

About this News-Letter

This Braintree Historical Society News-Letter does not replace The Lantern, which was written for many years by Ruth Powell. Ruth felt it was time to give it up at age 92 and it has not been continued, at this time. Past President and Treasurer, Ron Frazier has taken on the task of News-Letter editor. This publication will serve as a means of communicating what has happened at the Society, and what will be happening, and is planned to be published quarterly in order to keep the membership informed.

SUPPORT OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS

Our Corporate Members are those businesses in the community who have demonstrated their support the Historical Society. As such we should patronize them when we can and let them know we appreciate their support for the Society.

\$2,500 and above FOUNDATION LEVEL

Quirk Auto Dealerships

\$1,500 and above PARTNERSHIP

The Braintree Knights of Columbus and the Braintree Knights 1462 Foundation (\$2,000)

\$500 PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

Adams Street Enterprise LLC

Blue Hills Cemetery

\$250 EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Williams Energy

\$100 CORPORATE MEMBER

Braintree Chiropractic

Braintree Rug Company

Braintree Rifle and Pistol Club

Herbst Law Group LLC

Glow Beauty Boutique

Something about our volunteers in the next News-Letter

This news-letter is a benefit of BHS membership For membership information, call 781-848-1640 or visit www.braintree-historical.org

BRAINTREE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

31 Tenney Road

Braintree MA 02184

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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