



BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SPRING NEWSLETTER
Vol. 10, Issue 1 – March, 2025 – May, 2025

From the President's Desk

www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org

P.O. Box 1393 / 98 Summer St.
Bristol, CT. 06011-1393
860-58306309

President:

Noreen Zurell

First Vice President:

Lisa Doyle-Bell

Second Vice President:

Rit Carter

Recording Secretary:

Marilyn Simmons

Treasurer:

Jason Messier

BOARD MEMBERS:

Steve Cowdell

Ken Hintz

Andrea Kapchensky

Ty Mellon

Joe Pinette

Jackie Vigue

Don Zurell

BOARD LIAISONS:

Memorial Military Museum

Carol Denehy

Bristol Sports Hall of Fame

Eleanor Wilson

Past President:

Maya Bringe

Development:

Ellen Zoppo-Sassu

Historian:

Eleanor Wilson

Newsletter Editor:

Noreen Zurell



We are deeply saddened to have lost one of our BHS presidents, former Bristol City Historian, and hometown hero, Bob Montgomery. Bob's granddaughter, Ciara Licht, is following in his footsteps as a writer. She wrote a moving tribute to her grandfather, some of which is contained here in what follows. We wish to extend to her and to her family our deepest condolences.

Bob has always been dedicated to Bristol. He graduated from Bristol Eastern High School in 1963 as an impressive athlete. With his love of sports, he began writing about local sports in 1987. In 1997, he helped create the Bristol Sports Hall of Fame with John Fortunato and served as its first president. History was very important to Bob. When the city historian, Dorothy Manchester, passed away, Bob was crushed. He felt that it was important to still have Bristol's history live on through the columns of the Bristol Press, so he asked the editor of the paper if he could take on the role of Bristol historian. Because of some of those pieces, in 2016 the Korean War Veterans organization awarded him their "Man of the Year Award." Then in 2017, the City of Bristol selected him for its "Hometown Hero" award.

Throughout his lifetime, Bob took on many volunteer positions, one of which was as the President of the Bristol Historical Society. He took pride in writing about the men and women who shaped and built our town. He loved informing Bristol's citizens about town events and spotlighting special individuals.

Bob Montgomery is Bristol and Bristol is and will always be Bob Montgomery. Bob, we will miss you, think of you often during historical events and will know you are at peace.

DON'T MISS IT! OUR ANNUAL TAG SALE!
SAVE THE DATE!!

The annual tag sale is scheduled for Friday May 30, from 9am to 1pm and Saturday, May 31, from 9am to 12pm. The Society is now accepting any donations of items from members and friends. Please deliver items during our hours of operation on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10am to 2pm. We will be calling our Tag Sale volunteers to help set up and pricing of items. If you signed up to be on the committee, expect a call soon!

BHS ANNUAL APPEAL CAMPAIGN

The 2024–2025 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. Donations can be made at www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org and are tax deductible.

BHS ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting for the Society will be held at **6 pm, Wednesday, May 28, 2025**. Voting will take place for the following offices:

Treasurer
Secretary
Director of the Board (multiple openings)

All members can make nominations for these positions during the nomination period which begins on **Monday, April 14, 2025**, and closes **Tuesday, April 29, 2025**. Nomination forms will be available by email, in the office during open office hours, or on our website (www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org).

Candidates must be members in good standing and must have been members for one (1) 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 **May 7, 2025**.

If you have any questions about the election process, please contact Maya Bringe (maya.bringe@gmail.com). The full set of bylaws with the latest amendments is available at www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org and in the office at the Society at 98 Summer Street.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Beverly Redman, Pam Wilson, Larry Bryant

RECENT PASSINGS:

Roy Gilley, Joyce Galske, Carol Zukowski, Lois Saman, and Bob Montgomery

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL INFORMATION

Membership renewal starts June 1 and runs through June 30. This year we will be mailing out the renewals to you at the end of May. Membership cards for annual renewals are always mailed in the fall mailing. However, when you come to any event, please ask in the office because your card should be available after your renewal has been received.

PROGRAMMING NEWS

Black History Month. On Wednesday, February 19 a panel discussion celebrating Black History in Bristol explored topics on how the Great Migration from the south affected Bristol.

This was an opportunity for everyone to understand the roles that black individuals played in shaping society.

Thank you Ellen Zoppo-Sassu and Melina Floyd for organizing the event highlighting this important segment of Bristol's history.

The Scholarship pasta fundraiser was again held at the Parkside Restaurant on February 20 from 5-7pm.

Although our turnout is usually around 40, those attendees are true supporters of this annual fundraiser and we thank you!

Proceeds from the evening are applied toward the \$1500 Scholarship awarded at our annual dinner which is held in August. Scholarship forms are available at each of the three high schools in Bristol.

Donations to the Scholarship Fund can be sent any time during the year.

UPCOMING THIRD THURSDAY PROGRAMS

March – Women's History Month

On **Thursday, March 20** the first Third Thursday program for the year 2025 begins with a special program co-sponsored by the Memorial Military Museum and the Bristol Historical Society.

In the fall of 2024, the Bristol Women in the Military Committee was established to honor Bristol's female veterans, a subject never documented or honored before in Bristol's history.

This committee, comprised of BHS, MMM members and others have been working hard researching countless families of those brave women who have shared their stories.

One story led to a wonderful surprise that will be shared on March 20, and that story is of Michelina Masterbone who was believed to be Bristol's last surviving WWII female veteran until her recent death. So mark your calendar because this is a program you won't want to miss.

This committee's goal is to preserve the stories for every woman who has served or is currently serving for future generations. If you have a female family member or know of someone serving or has served, please contact Carol Denehy (860-583-5466). The program is free, but monetary donations would be appreciated.

Doors open at 6:30pm. Additional parking can be found in the back of the building. Refreshments will be served.

April Program

Please note the date! Because of the City's Easter service, the date has been moved up a week to **April 10**.

The topic of our April program is "Tories, Spies, and Traitors" a momentous, dangerous, and controversial time in our nation's Revolutionary War history.

Perhaps you have visited Tory's Den, a 4.4-mile loop, near Terryville, CT. The leader of the Tory group in the area was Stephen Graves, who was considered the most wanted Tory at that time.

The program is free to BHS members with a suggested \$5 fee for non-members. Doors open at 6:30pm and parking is available behind the building and refreshments will be served.

Preservation Week Observed

Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 10am – 2pm

In celebration of Preservation Week (April 27–May 3, 2025) we encourage Bristol Residents to come to the Bristol Historical Society on Wednesday, **April 30** between the hours of 10am and 2pm and bring any item by that you wish to donate or allow us to copy for our collection. Help preserve Bristol's History! If you have saved memorabilia, now is the time to pass it on!

"Preservation Week was created by the American Library Association and partner organizations in 2010. The week raises awareness in the archival community. Memories and treasures should last a lifetime and be passed on. It inspires actions to preserve personal family, and community collections and also raises awareness the rolls libraries and historical societies play in providing on going preservation and information."
(ALA)

MAY Program

Save the date of **May 15, 2025**, for our Third Thursday program. Rit Carter will present his program on the runaway slave, Henry Boswell, also known as Henry Bosworth depending on the research source.

He was born into slavery in Virginia and came to CT after the Civil War. During his time in Bristol, he was employed by Dr. Woodward.

The program begins at 7pm and is free to members of BHS with a suggested donation of \$5.00 for non-members. Doors open at 6:30pm and parking is available behind the building and refreshments will be served.

BHS GAMING CLUB

The BHS Gaming Club continues to grow! We are 20 members strong and running three different tables of roleplaying games! Dungeons and Dragons: Heroes of Ribhus setting and a rotating game feature at table 3!

This month's featured game is Enclave: A Tableless Roleplaying Game, which will be moderated by the game's designer! All ages and experiences are welcome. Our next meetings are **March 22, April 19, and May 17, 10am-2pm**

Contact Jay Messier at 860-841-1141 with any questions about the club or games!

VALENTINE BINGO!

The first annual BHS Valentine Bingo was held on Sunday February 2, 2025, at the Bristol Polish Club. This themed Bingo featured eleven prizes with a value of over \$250.00 each. Tickets were sold online in advance and at the door. A crowd of over 180 Bingo Players and supporters of BHS were in attendance. The event also featured a silent auction, a teacup raffle, a 50/50, and a bake sale. Those in attendance also enjoyed the foods prepared in the Polish Club kitchen. Besides being a financial success, the event provided a wonderful time was had by all. The committee would like to thank the Bristol Polish Club and Bingo caller Dawna for allowing BHS to spread its Bingo wings in their club. The committee was made up of Maya Bringe, Janet Mellon, Tyrone Mellon, Jay Messier, Pam Messier, Marilyn Simmons, and Noreen Zurell. Also helping with the day of the Bingo were Andrea Kapchensky, Joe Pinette, and Jackie Vigue.

The fundraising committee will be meeting again in the near future to finalize next year's Bingo date(s) and theme. Did I hear the "Luck of the Irish"?

Be on the lookout for our annual tag sale to be held on May 30 and 31, at our Summer Street location and our first annual "Christmas in July" sale, July date TBD.

Again, thanks to all who planned, worked at, and attended the Bingo.

Ty Mellon

MEMORIAL MILITARY MUSEUM

Memorial Military Museum 2005: Year of the Woman



With this year marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, we will be honoring Bristol women who volunteered to serve in the US military during that era. In 1942, there was a dire shortage of men to serve in combat. For the first time in our history, in 1942, the government enacted laws to organize women's branches of service in the Navy, Army, Coast Guard and Marine corps. As stated in an Army manual: "Your Job is to Replace Men. Be Ready to Take Over." Meet the Bristol women who bravely accepted that challenge. As WAVES, WACS, SPARS, and US Marine Corps Women's reserve, they were trained in traditional male jobs and duties on military bases for "the duration (of the war) plus six months." How they performed those duties forever changed the role of military women to this day.

Join us to meet our extraordinary WWII service women in the first three series of programs:

Women's History Month: Bristol Salutes Stateside Women: **Thursday, March 20, 7:00 PM**

Part One: Our Hometown Women

Part Two: Documentary of Bristol WAVE Michelena Masterbone

National Nurses Day: Bristol Salutes Bristol Hospital and Military Nurses: **Saturday, May 3, 1:00 PM**

Flag Day Celebration: Bristol Salutes All Veterans: Open House to "Honor a Veteran"

Saturday, June 14, 1:00PM

Free Admission Refreshments Served

BRISTOL SPORTS HALL OF FAME



The Bristol Sports Hall of Fame is very sad to announce the passing of Bob Montgomery at the age of 79. Bob was co-founder of the HOF along with John Fortunato in 1997. Their vision and dedication to help preserve Bristol's rich sports history has endured for the past 27 years and has enabled the HOF to continue to grow and provide meaningful programs for both students and adults.

Bob was elected into the BSHOF "Class of 2014" and remained a director until his passing. Bob took over the role as City Historian a number of years ago and kept the history and more importantly the stories of Bristol and its people alive in his columns in the Bristol Press and recently in The Bristol Edition.

Bob knew many people and never had a bad word about anyone. He did many good deeds for others that most people didn't know and never sought recognition for it. He will be missed by all including his HOF family. May he RIP.



SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Do you know a college-bound Bristol senior with an interest in history? The Historical Society gives a scholarship each year of \$1500 to a Bristol resident heading to a two- or four-year college/university. Applicants in one of the local high schools can find the application in their guidance offices and those who do not attend a local high school can find the application online at our website at:

bristolhistoricalsociety.org/bhs-scholarship-fund/

Applicants are not required to have an interest in pursuing history in the future but must have a minimum of a 3.0 average for 7 semesters. Applicants will be asked to write an essay based on a historical topic in one of the Society's annual ornaments or a business represented in the Made in Bristol exhibit, with the exception of the Lake Compounce exhibit. Ornaments can be viewed at the Society during our open hours Wednesday and Saturday from 10am to 2pm or call 860-583-6309 to arrange a time to see the ornament collection. Applications will be due **April 4th**.

ANNUAL DINNER UPDATE

Save the date: The 2025 Annual Dinner is Wednesday, August 6 in the Bristol Historical Society Event Room! The social/cocktail hour will be at 5pm, with dinner at 6pm. Catch up with old friends, bid in a silent auction, enjoy and mini-program, and celebrate our Scholarship winner, our Volunteer of the Year, and our Community Service Award winner. We hope to see you there!

MARCH GAME DAY!

Join us for a Family Game Day! **March 9, 1–3pm**. Shake off the winter doldrums with some light-hearted board games with friends at BHS!

Bring your favorite game, favorite friends, and snacks.
We will have behind-the-scenes tours and indoor winter fun for all!