



## BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### FALL NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, Issue 4 – October, 2026 – December, 2026

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## From the President's Desk

Where has the summer gone? It seems to come and go so quickly.

We again are spending time at the Farmers' Market, which has brought us new faces at some of our events and new members. With the predicted bad weather recently, the Mum Festival canceled their weekend. However, we are proud to say the Bristol Historical Society kept the Photo Contest going by relocating it to our building where all the photos were dry and could be viewed by the public. Judging was done and winners were chosen.

In July, our Third Thursday program was held on a Saturday. It was the 250 Years of Buttons; a very interesting program.

One of our members, Al Goodwin, is a former DJ who has quite a collection of vinyl records, all sizes. On 'National Vinyl Day' which was August 12th, Al presented a wonderful program 'spinning the tunes' from as far back as the 40's for all to reminisce and enjoy. That was quite an evening!

The Gaming Club is becoming more popular and brings us many new faces. We look forward again to their Convention in November. December brings our Christmas Fair to the delight of all!

Our daily "In Retrospect" segment this year will end soon, and I'm told the next edition will be just as great as the previous ones. So many comments and people enjoying what our past was like and being able to share with our grandchildren.

With October not far away, we look forward to our Cemetery Tours, a Federal Hill Walking Tour with a new route, and something new – a Stamp Show with something for everyone - stamp aficionados or not. Check for dates for all these programs inside!

It has been quite a year! We have celebrated 250 years of America! As we move forward, we do so thanking our members, friends, supporters, and community partners for their support as we think about making history for the next 250 years. Happy Holidays to all!

Thank you,  
*Noreen Zurell, President*

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**Second Vice President:**

Rit Carter

**Recording Secretary:**

Pam Wilson

**Treasurer:**

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Bristol Sports Hall of Fame

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Maya Bringe

**Development:**

Ellen Zoppo-Sassu

**Historian:**

Eleanor Wilson

**Newsletter Editor:**

Noreen Zurell

## WEST CEMETERY LANTERN TOUR

When this issue comes out, there will still be a chance to attend this fun annual event. During this evening guided walk through West Cemetery, you will be introduced to notable cemetery “residents” who will share some of their history with attendees. This is an engaging way to spend an evening and learn a little Bristol history. Tours take place in West Cemetery on **Friday, October 2, and Saturday, October 3**. On both nights, tours leave from the Barnes Memorial Chapel at 6:00, 6:20, 6:40, 7:00, 7:20, 7:40, 8:00. Registration is required. For those who want to attend an indoor tour, our Dress Rehearsal is Thursday, October 1 at 7:30pm and open to the public. The suggested donation is for both the rehearsal and the cemetery tour is \$10.

To register, go through the link on the West Cemetery Lantern Event on our website ([www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org)), email [president@bristolhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:president@bristolhistoricalsociety.org), or scan the QR below.



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Annual Membership drive started June 1st and to date we have only 32 remaining members who were mailed reminder notices last week. Their membership will expire October 1st. Thank you all for the great responses. We have also added 9 new members: Lee McFadden, Brendan McFadden, Shawn McFadden, Aaron Castro, Joanie Hermann, Andrea Perez-Meneses, Emily Phillips, Tom Angels and Tamar Wells. Membership dues were increased by \$5.00 this year, which hadn't been done since before 2020. We sadly lost one member as of this writing, Rick Leach.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We usually don't know our members' birthdays however this is a special one! Long time Bristol Historical Member James Cleveland will be 100 on October 17, 2026! We wish Jim a wonderful day and a year of good health!

## ANNUAL DINNER

The 2026 Annual Dinner was a celebration of Bristol's history and community. Everyone was able to catch up, bid on silent auction items, and have a wonderful meal, catered by the Rusgroves of Main Street Pint & Plate. Everyone enjoyed a competitive but good-natured round of Bristol Trivia - congratulations to winners Marilyn Simmons and Andrew Collins. Our 2026 scholarship winner, Kazimiera Cavallari, read her winning essay about Bristol Brass. Our Volunteer of the Year Award recipient was Jason Messier and our Community Service Award Winner was Brian's Angels. Lynda Russell was given a special award to recognize her contributions to the preservation of Bristol history. Thanks to all who attended and volunteered to make the evening a success!

## PROGRAMMING

### RECAP OF SUMMER PROGRAMS

Our July 11th program presented by the Acorn Button Club was an interesting program as part of our America 250 celebration. Button collecting dated back to the time of the founding of our country and they hold a special and fascinating place in textile industry.

Bristol Historical Society member, Al Goodwin's Golden Oldies proved to be a nostalgic and pleasant evening on National Vinyl Day, August 12th. Many feet were tapping and many of our audience members were singing along (softly) to the popular songs from the 40s, 50s, and 60s. Al provided trivia, prizes and a good time was had by all!

Bob Adamczyk, both in and out of character, portrayed Henry Lee Beach. "Mr. Beach's Odyssey" took us along his 82-day trip in 1902 by ship, train and horse-drawn carriage across the ancient civilization sites of the Mediterranean and a land tour across Europe. Excerpts from Beach's collection of papers and letters written to his wife were shared. Another excellent program into Bristol's past!

Ellie Wilson, *Program Committee Chair*

### OCTOBER-NOVEMBER PROGRAMS

Our Third Thursday programs continue and on Thursday, October 15th our guest for the evening is Rick Spencer, who has Bristol roots. Rick is no stranger to performing here in Bristol, appearing in both Bristol libraries and even here at the Bristol Historical Society in the past. His program is a combination and a theme-based history lecture. So, get ready to learn about "Bristol's Musical Time Machine."

On Thursday, November 19th our final Third Thursday for 2026 will end with a program by City Historian, Tom Dickau. His topic is "Bristol through the Years, 1785-2026" an appropriate presentation to conclude Bristol Historical Society's America 250 celebration.

For both programs, doors open at 6:30 pm. Programs begin at 7 pm. Refreshments will be served. Additional parking is available behind the building. Programs are free to members with a suggested \$5 donation for non-members.

A sincere thank you to all who have attended our programs during this past year. Your support is greatly appreciated and if you have any program suggestions, please let us know.

Ellie Wilson, *Program Committee Chair*

# STAMP AND POSTCARD SHOW

Save the date! **Sunday, October 4, 2026, 9am to 2pm** at the Bristol Historical Society Museum. Admission free. This event is hosted by the Bristol Historical Society, the Manchester Philatelic Society, and Bristol's America 250 committee.

While supplies last, free gifts will be given out, courtesy of the Mystic Stamp Company. Shop the 10 dealers who will be in attendance. There will be door prizes. Learn about Maynard Sundman of Mystic Stamp and Littleton Coin fame, who started selling stamps when he lived in Bristol. America 250 USPS Pictorial Postmark available, cachet covers available for sale. Postcrossing meetup **12 to 2pm**, and postcards will be available for sale. Get your photo taken with a Revolutionary War soldier (Colonial Re-enactor Tom Angels of *History Without Walls*), **11am to 2pm**. View an art show of art made from old postage stamps, courtesy of students at Northeast Middle School. Activities for youth, including making art with stamps, a scavenger hunt, starting a stamp collection, and designing your own postcard.

Something for everyone and you don't need to be a collector to have fun. For only a few dollars, you can have some nice memorabilia from the event. Contact Steve Vastola at 860-944-6567 or [s.j.vastola@gmail.com](mailto:s.j.vastola@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



The flyer is a vertical rectangular poster with a red border and a white background. At the top left, there is a magnifying glass focusing on a US postage stamp featuring a portrait of George Washington. To the right of the magnifying glass, the title "STAMP & POSTCARD SHOW" is written in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. Below the title, a white box contains the text "To celebrate America's 250th Birthday". The location "The Bristol Historical Society Museum" and address "98 Summer St. Bristol, CT" are listed, followed by the time "9am to 2pm". A large blue box with white text displays the date "OCT 4, 2026". To the right of the date, a list of features is provided, including dealers, door prizes, a kid's area, art displays, stamp displays, collecting information, a postcrossing meetup, and a commemorative postmark. At the bottom left, logos for Bristol Connecticut and the Bristol Historical Society are shown, along with text indicating sponsorship by the Bristol Historical Society, the Manchester Philatelic Society, and the Bristol America 250 committee. A blue box at the bottom contains contact information for Steve Vastola.

**STAMP & POSTCARD SHOW**

To celebrate  
America's 250th  
Birthday

The Bristol Historical Society Museum  
98 Summer St. Bristol, CT  
9am to 2pm

**OCT 4, 2026**

**Featuring:**

- Dealers
- Door prizes
- Kid's area
- A display of art made from stamps
- A display of stamps from the Bicentennial
- Information about collecting
- Postcrossing meetup 12 noon to 2pm
- Commemorative Postmark available

Sponsored by the  
the Bristol Historical Society,  
the Manchester Philatelic Society  
and the Bristol America 250 committee

For more information  
Call or text Steve Vastola 860-944-6567 or  
email [s.j.vastola@gmail.com](mailto:s.j.vastola@gmail.com)

## BHS GAMING CLUB NEWS

Save the date! **November 7 & 8.**

Experience the **Dire Consequences Gaming Convention** in its second year at The Bristol Historical Society. Presented by the BHS Gaming Club & Ribhian Games!

D&D, Call of Cthulhu, Burn 2d6, Enclave, Heptaverse 2d10, Unmatched, Shadowdark, Mothership, Delta Green and others!

Free admission for gamers under 21 thanks to the generosity of fine folks at the Bristol Rotary Club mini grant program! Please contact Jay Messier at [seventhwarlord@yahoo.com](mailto:seventhwarlord@yahoo.com) to get your admission code!

Snacks, coffee, soft & adult beverages available.

Register: <https://tabletop.events/conventions/dire-consequences-2026>

For more info:

Jay Messier: 860-841-1141 [seventhwarlord@yahoo.com](mailto:seventhwarlord@yahoo.com)

## FEDERAL HILL WALKING TOUR

Join us for a updated Federal Hill Walking Tour, Sunday, October 18. We're adding a new "leg" to our previous walking tour, so if you have joined us before, you will still see something new! Tours leave at 1pm, 1:30, 2:00, and 2:30.

Each tour participant will receive a new expanded booklet with information about the sights so they can recreate either to last year's original or this year's updated tour on their own.

No registration is required. Parking is available in the BHS rear lot. Suggested donation for the event is \$5 for BHS member and children under 14 and \$10 for nonmembers.

## COLLECTIONS

The Collections Committee would like to thank Tamar Beach Wells for her donation of a treasure trove of information, photos, and documents from the Beach family. The information has given us information about not only the Beach family, but other Bristol families that intersect with the Beaches. We are extremely grateful for the family documents we have received over the years!

## ANNUAL APPEAL

Our Annual Appeal will be appearing in your mailboxes in October! Gifts to the Annual Appeal typically support a wide range of needs, including heating, electricity, insurance, maintenance, special events, educational materials, and community outreach. Please consider a donation to the society. If you wish to make a donation, one can also be made anytime online at [www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bristolhistoricalsociety.org). We are always grateful for the support of our members—you have made so much possible in this historic building.

# BRISTOL SPORTS HALL OF FAME

The Bristol Sports Hall of Fame annual induction program will be held on Friday, Nov. 20 at the Double Tree in Bristol from 6:30 – 9:30 pm. The Class of 2026 consists of Jackie Adams Cheney, John Benoit, Kelly Harrigan, Bob Kalat, Sara Plourde-Zirkle, Tom Roberts, Don Soucy and Jillian Sullivan.

Tickets for the induction are \$50 and can be purchased by contacting Pat Parente at 860-919-8087. Tickets may also be purchased online at [www.bshof.org](http://www.bshof.org). For additional information about the induction, contact Sarah Larson at 860-877-6169 or at [slarson0315@gmail.com](mailto:slarson0315@gmail.com).

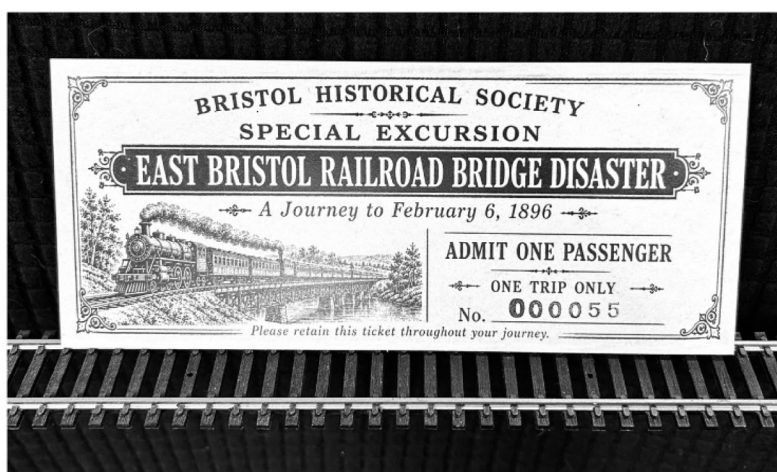


## INTO THE RIVER

On **Friday, November 6th at 7pm**, the Bristol Historical Society will host Into the River, a fully immersive program recounting the 1896 Pequabuck River Bridge Disaster, in which six railroad workers died when the bridge they were replacing collapsed into the icy Pequabuck River. Presented by Rit Carter, the program combines layered audio, video, period inspired visuals, and a hand built 16 foot reconstruction of the Howe Truss bridge to bring the night of the collapse to life. Select industrial artifacts recently recovered from the disaster site will also be on display, offering a rare physical connection to the world of 1896.

Visitors will experience the story through atmosphere, sound, and light, creating a reverent, immersive reflection on one of Bristol's most significant historical events.

Thanks to generous grants from Thomaston Savings Banks and The Bristol Edition, admission to this program is free. However, reservations are encouraged! To register, email [president@bristolhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:president@bristolhistoricalsociety.org) or call the office at 860 583 6309.

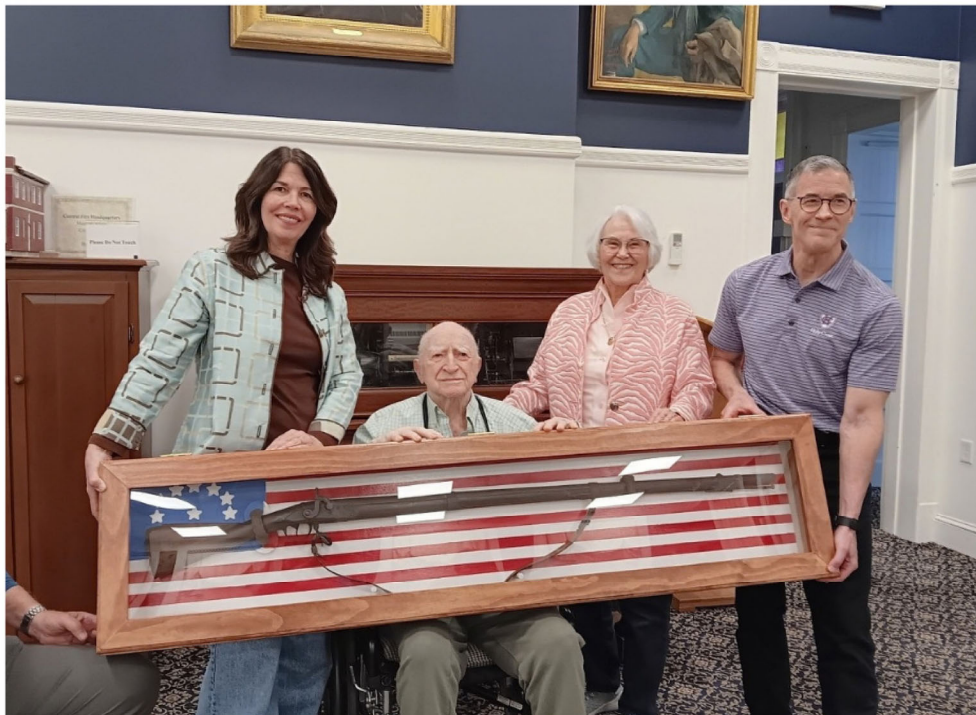


# MEMORIAL MILITARY MUSEUM

The Memorial Military Museum is marking its 50th anniversary this year! Founding a museum “To Honor and To Preserve Bristol’s Military Heritage” was a project for the US Bicentennial. The museum’s collection began in 1976 with three donated items from a Bristol WWII veteran’s widow. The collection has grown to well over 3,000 artifacts that represent stories of veterans from the Civil War to the present. But ironically, for 50 years there was not even one Revolutionary War artifact representing a Revolutionary Patriot!

As our nation has been celebrating our Semiquincentennial this year, Bristol resident and World War II veteran, Jim Cleveland, donated a Revolutionary War rifle in honor of Memorial Military Museum founder, Jack Denehy. Jim was 13 years old when his mentor, Harry Stone, gave him the rifle but not knowing the name of his ancestor who carried it. A timely gift to celebrate the museum’s half century mark! The museum’s thank you gift to Mr. Cleveland was a booklet created by the museum’s genealogist. Harry Stone’s ancestor Aaron Dudley Stone served with Captain Danial Hand from Madison under the command of George Washington during the Battle for Long Island and New York.

We celebrate all the veterans, their families and friends who have supported the museum for half a century. Thank you.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### October

- 1 West Cemetery Lantern Tour Dress Rehearsal at BHS, 7:30pm
- 2 West Cemetery Lantern Tour, 6-9pm
- 3 West Cemetery Lantern Tour, 6-9pm
- 4 Stamp & Postcard Show at BHS, 9am to 2pm
- 5 BHS/Worthwhile Reads Gaming Club, 5pm
- 10 BHS @ the Farmers Market, 10am-1pm - Come see us!
- 15 Third Thursday: A Bristol Pop Time Machine, 7pm
- 18 Federal Hill Walking Tour, 1-3pm
- 24 BHS Gaming Club, 11am to 2pm
- 28 BHS Board Meeting, 6:30

### November

- 2 BHS/Worthwhile Reads Gaming Club, 5pm
- 6 Into the River, Special Program, 7pm
- 7 Dire Consequences Gaming Convention, 9am to 11pm
- 8 Dire Consequences Gaming Convention, 9am to 3pm
- 14 BHS Gaming Club, 11am to 2pm
- 19 Third Thursday: Bristol Through the Years, 7pm
- 27 White Elephant Holiday Boutique opens! 10am to 2pm

### December

- 5 20th Annual Holiday Craft Fair, 9am to 3pm (snow date: Dec. 6)
- 7 BHS/Worthwhile Reads Gaming Club, 5pm
- 9 Board Meeting, 6:30pm

## ANNUAL HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR

Save the date! Our 20th Annual Holiday Craft Fair is **Saturday, December 5th from 9am to 3pm**. Admission is FREE. The fair features an array of creative crafters, vendors, a bake sale and a Christmas ("White Elephant") Boutique, where gently used holiday items are available for purchase.

As you prepare to deck the halls, we ask that you keep the Society in mind and consider donating any unwanted holiday items for resale at our fair. Donations can be dropped off during open hours on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10am to 2 pm. Bake sale donations can be dropped off at BHS on Friday, Dec. 4th from 10am to 12 noon and 6pm to 8pm, or on Saturday, Dec. 5th from 8am to 9am.

Thank you for your perennial support. It makes our annual fair a success and supports the endeavors of The Bristol Historical Society throughout the year!

Please note: Our Christmas Boutique will have a Black Friday Preview Sale on Friday, November 27th from 10am to 2pm. The Boutique will continue to be open after the Holiday Fair during open hours through December 19.

*Mary Houle, Holiday Fair Chairperson*