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Residents celebrate town's history at Belmont Bandstand



LONGTIME BELMONT neighbors and friends Polly Murphy and Alyce Jewell shared memories and displayed Murphy's unique artwork of Belmont Village's special places. COURTESY

BELMONT — Memories were the theme of a Belmont summer gathering at the historic Bandstand and Village, organized by the Heritage Commission with major partners Lakes Region Community College, Culinary Arts Program and the Senior Center.

More than 50 friends enjoyed a picnic on the Village green, sharing recollections of favorite events and concerts. Several, including lifetime Main Street resident Alyce Jewell, brought postcards and pictures from family albums showing activities spanning the years.

Polly Murphy, whose husband Tom served as Belmont Postmaster for more than 20 years, displayed some of her artwork with signature Belmont sites including the 1833 Mill, Bandstand, Library and the Gale School.

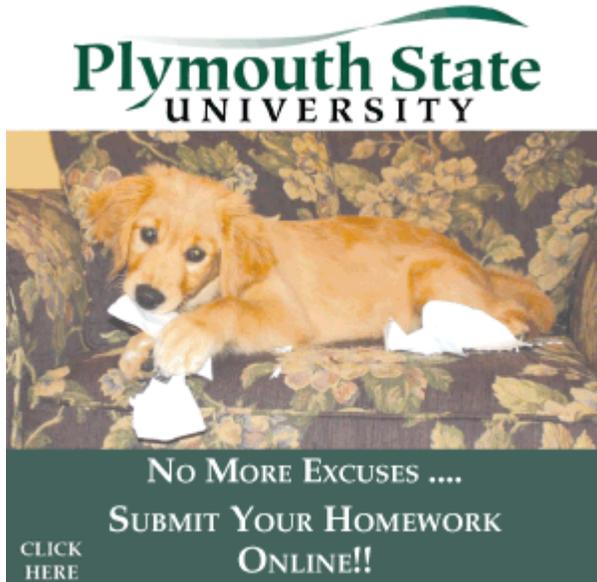
Wallace Rhodes, town historian for the Belmont Historical Society, brought the signature props for the day, including a drum and uniform from the former town band.

Songster Jackie Lee entertained, and several attendees were interviewed by veteran journalist Ray Carbone, assisted by videographer Bob Daniels of Laconia and LRPA-TV. The gathering will be aired later this month in feature productions on the public access cable station.

Belmont's Bandstand will very shortly be moved and secured at a temporary location near the Belmont Mill, as the town begins extensive Village changes.

The Victorian-era structure, considered one of the most important in New Hampshire, will have a full condition review, with plans for stabilizing, repairing and restoration — overseen by the volunteer seven member local board.

Built in 1908 the bandstand was moved in the late 1920s to make room for the library. The library is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural distinction. The bandstand was nominated for that distinction in 1980, and currently remains eligible.



Contributions from Belmont Shaw's, Belmont Glass, Carbone Productions, Cotton Hill Consulting, the Jewell family, LRPA-TV, LRL Enterprises, Tilt'n Bakery and Weeks Farm helped make the day possible, along with support from Town staff including administrative, fire, parks and recreation and public works.

Preserving the bandstand, and its generations of memories, are continuing priorities of the Belmont Heritage Commission. Special activities will continue through Old Home Day and in October, during New Hampshire History Week.

For details contact belmonthistory@gmail.com or call 528-5667.

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