

Heritage Commission

**It is a privilege to serve the community's future,
in part, by celebrating its past.**

Discovery, transition and progress in preserving the Bandstand headlined 2012 activities. The year also brought media headlines recalling the 20th year anniversary of the Belmont Mill fire, and celebrating the Bandstand with regional, statewide and national publicity for those community landmarks.

Projects continued to support our founding mission:

“To promote the proper recognition, use and protection of the unique historic and cultural resources of Belmont, and also integrate preservation planning as a partnership with individuals, businesses, Town boards and other appropriate groups ...”

BANDSTAND PRESERVATION PROGRESS

The 1908 Bandstand was a year-long focus, celebrated with a summer gathering just before its temporary relocation. The event featured memories and music, and partnership of local organizations, businesses and volunteers. Lakes Region Community College's Culinary Arts students and faculty ably hosted and prepared the picnic fare on the Town Common. Lakes Region Public Access Television - LRPA-TV – videotaped and produced three 30 minute cablecasts, for its audience of 50,000 MetroCast subscribers in Central New Hampshire. An historic segment, “Belmont Village Bandstand Memories” by videographer-editor Bob Daniels featuring interviews by veteran journalist Ray Carbone, received favorable public comment throughout the year.



Photo Courtesy of Linda Frawley

The beautiful, Victorian era Bandstand was moved with care on August 8th – for the second time in its history. Although the precise date of its first move is not known, it was before the February 4, 1928 dedication of the “new” Library, generously donated by the late George Duffy of Worcester, Massachusetts and his brother, Walter – of Franklin. The first relocation made room on Mill-owned land known as the Town Common for library construction. More than eight decades later, its recent move from the Tioga River bank was a first step for preservation, and necessitated by Village infrastructure projects.



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Bandstand restoration including stabilization, final relocation on a masonry foundation and other repairs is expected to begin in the summer of 2013. At year's end the Heritage Commission, along with Selectmen were reviewing contractor proposals for the first project phase. That work will be followed by electrical installation, possible roof replacement and a full repainting, as funding is available. Work will follow historic preservation guidelines of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to maintain eligibility for funding and a new nomination to National and/or State Registers of Historic Places.

PENSTOCK DISCOVERY

November Village excavation unearthed sizable pieces of century-old penstocks, once part of the community's water delivery system, supplying the Mill and village residents. First wooden and then metal penstocks were nearly one-third mile long, carrying water from the Tioga River and Badger Brook – transporting through a system including six dams – and bringing millions of gallons of water annually to create hydroelectric power.

Mill records and Belmont Historical Society photo archives helped document the discovery, and outstanding efforts from area businesses, helped remove and store the artifacts for safekeeping. The story garnered major media attention with feature stories and photographs published in the *New Hampshire Union Leader*, *The Citizen*, *Laconia Daily Sun*, *Winnisquam Echo*, *Weirs Times* and *New Hampshire Preservation Alliance* newsletter over several months. The Heritage Commission is investigating possibilities for educational, interpretive or artistic reuse.



Photo Courtesy of Shayne Duggan

For the second year, annual Community Heritage Awards were jointly presented with the Board of Selectmen, publicly acknowledging community contributions to foster Belmont tradition. Honored recipients were:

Belknap County Youth Services – Community Volunteer Excellence

Carignan Clock Company – Village Business Storefront

Susan & Joseph Rhodes – Renovation Excellence, Village Residence

Blaney Auto Crushing, Peter Harris, Rusty's Towing and Recovery Service, and Sleeper Welding – Penstock Recovery and Preservation



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The Heritage Commission also lauded the Belmont Fire Department for heroism on August 14, 1992 during the nearly devastating fire at the Mill complex. Their efforts helped save the main building and its iconic bell tower, for continued and new uses. Fire Chief David Parenti accepted limited edition commemorative glass sun catchers, featuring the storied village belfry, on behalf of all past, current and future Town firefighters on the 20th anniversary.

TRANSITION

Following Town Meeting support to expand the Commission by two additional members, residents Alyce Jewell and Kelly Rolfe were appointed by Selectmen in September. Their longstanding interest in local history, volunteer experience and past involvement in supporting the Province Road Meeting House, Village Revitalization Committee, PlanNH Charrette organizing group, and past Deck the Village Christmas festivals – among other efforts - will measurably complement heritage initiatives.

Other changes were marked by a first election of new officers since the Commission was founded at the 2004 Town Meeting. Throughout his life, Wallace Rhodes has distinctively contributed to all historic and heritage endeavors in and about Belmont. While we will miss his leadership as Chairman, he continues to be our major researcher and historian, besides serving as Vice Chairman. As 2012 ended, he shared most positive news, that his original Heritage Commission project, to have the State contribute and install a New Hampshire Historical Marker telling the Belmont Mill story, was nearing final approval. The distinctive sign will be the first for our community.

As always, we remain appreciative for wide-ranging interest and support of the Commission and Heritage Fund. Please contact us with comments, questions or suggestions at Belmonthistory@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Linda Frawley

Linda Frawley, Chairman

Wallace Rhodes, Vice Chairman

Kelly Rolfe, Secretary

Margaret Normandin, Member

Shayne Duggan, Member

Ronald Cormier, representing Board of Selectmen

