

THE BALLARDVALE GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALLARDVALE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Vol. 19, No. 2

BallardVale, Massachusetts

Fall-Winter 2022

Hunting in Pole Hill

Break out the orange outerwear for you and your dogs — it's hunting season in Pole Hill. I was surprised when I learned there is any hunting in my "back 40," as I have come to call it. I first noticed trail cams early one September — I'm sure my mug is on some pictures as I veered off trail in front of the camera waving hello! Then one day I saw (well, almost didn't see) a well-camouflaged hunter walking the trails with the tools of his sport: a case holding his bows and arrows and a tree stand. I was a distance away, but the fall foliage was thin and it was easy to see from one trail to another.

So I went back home to educate myself about hunting season. I found that bow hunting is allowed on town-owned lands and reservations, roughly from October 3 through December 31. Suffice it to say, yes, we have hunting in Pole Hill.

I wonder what area residents think about hunting in Pole Hill? Those who use Pole Hill for exercise, quiet walks of contemplation along the bank of the Shawsheen, watching the trains cross the old stone bridge, do they have concerns about hunting? Are they for or against it? Are the 34 acres in Pole Hill big enough to safely hunt?

Answers will vary depending on who you ask. Some reasons supporting hunting are the overabundance of deer and damage caused by deer and ticks. They are probably good reasons: I often see deer in our area of BallardVale, certainly in Pole Hill. Deer often visit my yard. I see them on trail cams I have set up! I enjoy watching them munching apples from my tree and consuming the poison ivy along the back of my property.



Abbot is ready for a safe walk in the woods.

The deer have not decimated my shrubs or flowers. I have lost the beginnings of sunflowers, zinnias, and some hostas to rabbits and chipmunks, but that's my fault for not protecting the plants. More worrisome have been several accidents with drivers hitting deer, one recently on Center Street. I saw an accident on Dascomb Road where two deer were hit. This is a real concern in the fall when deer are on the move, so drive with care.

That said, wildlife, walkers, and hunters have to share Pole Hill. I try to discover where the tree stands have been set up, wear my orange clothing, and make noise. The hunters, having the strategic advantage of height, usually see you before you see them. Still, always let safety guide you in the woods: stay on the trails, be aware of your surroundings, and wear bright colors in the fall. I hope on January 1, I will continue to see "my deer" walk through my yard and my "back 40" and see their scat and footprints in the snow! If not, I hope the hunter(s) safely bagged their deer and enjoyed their time in Pole Hill. — Teresa Padvaiskas

No Organizer, So No Tree Lighting. But a Big Thank You from Diane

There will not be a BallardVale Tree Lighting and Carol Sing this year, as we have no organizer. Diane Derby, the retiring organizer, wants to thank the many people who have helped make the B'Vale Tree Lighting the wonderful event that it was.

She sends big THANKS to:

Richard Bowen, who was the original chair of the BallardVale Historic District Commission (BVHDC) and the person who had the idea for the B'Vale Tree Lighting almost 20 years ago. He was also our MC for the Tree Lighting for many years — **MP Bogan** for the wonderful Tree Lighting sign used yearly to announce the Tree Lighting—



Carolers at last year's tree lighting.

Perry Raffi (with some help from Richard Bowen) for many years of putting lights on our tree — **Brian Major** and **Paul Shay** for taking over the tree lights on what has become a tall tree — **Paul Shay** for loaning us a great sound system — **Bill Ferris** (and his company Christmas Décor) for decorating the tree with colorful lights during our two years of the pandemic. His efforts to help us through the dark days were greatly appreciated — **Brian Major** for leading our singing with his incredible voice and great personality — **BVHDC Members**, both past and present, for providing hot chocolate, cider and cookies — **Neighbors** who brought plates of goodies to share — **Anna Kantzios**, who did a fantastic job of organizing last year, and added a popular craft table — **Cyndi Abraham**, who made our song books and helped buy the batteries and battery candles — and Last, but certainly not Least, one more big THANK YOU to **Steve Derby**, Diane's husband, who handled all the electrical components and some of everything else, including spending several hours (in the cold) going down to the Green to help set up, and again for the Tree Lighting and the takedown.

Diane can't thank everyone enough for their help!

Fire Station Open House

Planned to coincide with Ballardvale Day, an open house for the new William T. Downs Fire Station gave the crew on duty a chance to welcome visitors and show off the spacious new facility. The old station, built in 1871, could accommodate two horse-drawn fire wagons in its heyday but in the 21st century only one specially adapted truck and a rescue boat. The new station was designed to house more and larger equipment, and visitors admired two tall trucks in addition to the boat. Upstairs are private quarters for the crew, while the first floor features a separate office, a community room for training and meetings, and a well-equipped fitness room. Compared to the old station, said fire fighter Lt. Jeff Gaunt, "the difference is night and day."



Todd Richardson and Jeff Gaunt at the fire station open house.

Ballardvale Day Buzz

A perfect fall Saturday greeted exhibitors and visitors at the second Ballardvale Day, held on the Ballardvale Playground on October 15, as community groups spread the word about their opportunities.

"We fund programs to help the youth of Andover, and anyone can submit a grant request." **Rebecca Anoli, vice president, Andona Society, andona.org**



Rebecca Anoli, Andona vice president, explained the organization's goals.

"The land trust creates affordable housing in perpetuity, and anyone in Andover can apply for help with mortgage and rent payments." **Denise Johnson, director, Andover Community Trust, andoverclt.org**

"Andover TV is available on three channels, and our equipment and facilities are available to residents over 18 — we will train you." [The three channels are: Public (Comcast 8, Verizon 47), Education (Comcast 99, Verizon 43), and Government (Comcast 22, Verizon 45).] **Nicholas Leonard, Andover Television, andovertv.org**

"The committee is working to extend access to the river along a multiuse path." **Ralph Mason, board member, Andover Trails Committee, andovertrails.org**



Mike Timko encouraged people to enjoy AIVIS reservations.

"Public enjoyment has been our mission for the past 127 years, and we welcome volunteers." **Mike Timko, past president, Andover Village Improvement Society (AVIS), avisandover.org**

"We are here to help residents protect the historic character of the neighborhood." **Sandra Frechette, member, BVHDC, andoverma.gov/317/Ballardvale-Historic-District-Commission**



Tony Serio, the new director of AYS, described plans and programs for young people.

"A lot of what AYS has done is really important. And we are going to continue that." **Tony Serio, director, Andover Youth Services, andoveryouthservices.com**

"Since the invasion we've been helping folk artists throughout Ukraine connect with buyers for their one-of-a-kind creations. We hope our business can make it better for some." **Vlad Serontenko, owner, Baluka Shop, baluka.shop**



Some popular nesting Ukrainian folk-art figures from the Baluka Shop.

"Scouting is about fun and service — especially fun. It's not just about knots anymore." **Greg Finley, scoutmaster, Boy Scout Troop 76, troopwebhost.org/troop76andover**

"Check our website for a calendar of events like paddling adventures and also for maps — come out and explore the river." **Brian Henderson, president, Shawsheen River Watershed Association, shawsheenriver.net**

"The new food pantry at the Ballardvale United Church is open 24/7 for taking what you need and dropping off donations. It's a huge step toward addressing food insecurity in our town." **Jan Holden, Chester Street neighbor, Community Food Pantry, bvuc.org**



The new 24/7 food pantry at the Ballardvale United Church.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Ron and Cyndi Abraham believe their colorful Victorian, set back on a two-acre lot off Andover Street, may be the oldest of Ballardvale's historic homes. Although Andover Historic Preservation lists 250R Andover Street as built in the 1880s, Ron was told his home actually dates back to 1775.

One thing is sure, Ron and Cyndi's pink and plum-colored home is one of the Vale's more unique properties. Since purchasing the home in 1989, they have continued to transform the home and its grounds into an impressive showpiece with handcrafted stone walls, handsome cobblestone



walkways with arches and miniature bridges, and gazebos framed by gardens and frog ponds. Vintage statues and antique lamp posts, gas pumps, and whimsical lawn ornaments are scattered about the property, which overlooks Poms Pond. The front features a fountain in the center of an enormous sunken island, once was used as a horse-walking circle. The property also has several storage structures including a full-size barn Ron built himself.

The ongoing landscaping work is a labor of love and a much-needed escape for Ron, who is on call 24-7 with Elm Street Automobile Center on Lupine Road. Ron has owned and operated this business for 50 years and grown it into a fleet of six tow trucks and two flatbed trucks. Car repairs keep him busy during the day, but his towing contract with the Andover Police Department keeps him up most nights, ready to jump into action whenever he hears an accident report on his police scanner.

Ron, who grew up in South Lawrence, has been a member of the Ballardvale Historic Commission since its inception. Cyndi worked for many years in the administration

office of Andover Public Schools. She grew up in the Vale on Woburn Street, not far from South School, and recalls that she and her sisters would play in the sandpits behind the house she lives in now and always admired it. Cyndi remembers dressing up in her Sunday best and walking to St. Joseph's Church on High Vale Lane. She also remembers taking piano lessons with Mrs. Redding and dance lessons with Joan Jedrey. "Ballardvale was a great place to grow up," she says. "It's like a family — everyone knew each other."



Wagging the Trail

A friendly reminder from the Conservation Commission that both conservation land and AVIS reservations follow the town's bylaw that requires dogs to be leashed. Have fun with your pups outdoors, but on leash — and please don't forget the poop bags.

FAQs

Ask the BVHDC (BallardVale Historic District Commission)

Is there something I could use as guidance on what work on the house would require approval from the commission?

You can use the BallardVale Historic District (BVHD) brochure for guidance. It tells you that when you are contemplating work that is “visible from a public way” you should notify the BVHDC by filing an application for changes to be made. Further information, including a list of the exemptions, can be found in the BVHD bylaw (located in the Miscellaneous Bylaws of the Town of Andover Zoning Bylaw, found at andoverma.gov).

Haunted BallardVale

The Sunday before Halloween, excited small goblins gathered at the playground for a favorite village tradition — the BallardVale Costume Parade. The annual event is organized by Jan Holden, who leads the parade up Center Street for a bit of trick-or-treating.



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Questions? Suggestions? Feedback?

If you have a question for the BallardVale Historic District Commission or a suggestion for a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue of the BallardVale Gazette, please contact the editors:

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BallardVale Historic District Commission

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CALENDAR

November 2 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Meeting held virtually — 7:00 p.m.

December 7 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Meeting held virtually — 7:00 p.m.

January 4 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Meeting location TBD — 7:00 p.m.

February 1 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Meeting location TBD — 7:00 p.m.

March 1 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Meeting location TBD — 7:00 p.m.