

The BallardVale Gazette

Newsletter of the BallardVale Historic District Commission

Volume 4, Number 1

BallardVale, Massachusetts

March 2004

TREE LIGHTING

A winter snowstorm on the first weekend in December blanketed the Northeast in deep snow and kept most people indoors or busy shoveling. But on Sunday evening, a hardy group of approximately twenty BallardVale residents, put down their shovels and met on the Green to sing holiday carols, drink hot chocolate and light the tree. BallardVale Green neighbor Perry Raffi had cleared a space around the tree for revelers with his snow blower, so no one had to stand knee-deep in the snow. "It feels great to get out after being indoors all weekend", said one neighbor. "This is perfect weather for getting in the holiday spirit!" And so it was! Another holiday season was welcomed on the Green.

AHS FUNDRAISERS

The Andover Historical Society will be holding several fundraising events this summer including the annual "Gates and Gables Tour" on June 5 and the first-ever "Family Road Rally" on June 12. The Society also has tickets available for its "Antique Sportscar Raffle", sponsored by Woodworth Motors of Andover. Grand prize is a 1972 MGB Roadster, currently on view in the Woodworth Motors showroom. Tickets are \$100 each, and a maximum of 250 will be sold. Drawing will be held on June 19, 2004. Buy your winning ticket now! In addition, the video "BallardVale In Its Heyday" compiled and narrated by Ruth Sharpe is now on sale at the Andover Historical Society for \$15.00. Call the AHS at 978-475-2236 or visit them on the web at www.andhist.org for more information.

SPRING SOCIAL

The BallardVale Historic District Commission is pleased to announce the first annual Spring Social and Award Evening. This year's social will be held on Thursday, April 1, at 7pm at 200 Andover Street in the center of BallardVale. The evening's events include a discussion led by Ray Gibbons about, and a display of, pottery made during the 19th century in the mills of BallardVale; a presentation by Jim Sheldon on the work of 20th century American artist Charles Sheeler; a viewing of Ruth Sharpe's video "BallardVale In Its Heyday"; and the presentation by Richard Bowen of the Ruth Davis Sharpe Preservation Award.

The establishment of the Ruth Davis Sharpe Preservation Award is intended to recognize individuals, businesses or organizations who have made a contribution to preserving and protecting the historic character of BallardVale. The Commission hopes to honor Ruth Sharpe, who passed away one year ago this January, and to carry on her lifelong love of learning and sharing by establishing this award in her name. Please come and join friends and neighbors for a fun and informal evening of history, education and hors d'oeuvres on Thursday, April 1, 2004. If you need transportation, please call Diane Derby at 978-475-0125.

MAILING LIST

If you know someone who would like to receive the *BallardVale Gazette*, please contact Diane Derby, 978-475-0125 or derby01@comcast.net to add their name and address to the mailing list.

MEET FRIENDS OF BALLARDVALE

The *BallardVale Gazette* spoke with Karen Herman, Chair of the Preservation Commission in Andover for the first in a series of informal interviews with people around town.

Karen Herman served as President of the Andover Historical Society from 1983-1987, and served on its board for 17 years. She was appointed to Andover's Preservation Commission in 1987 by the Town Manager when her term as AHS president came to an end. She has served a Chair since 1994. She is also an artist and a member of Off Broadway Artists Cooperative in Lawrence.

BG: How did you get interested in preservation?

KH: I've always been interested in history and culture, in material culture. I have a degree in history and a master's degree in Bilingual/ ESL Studies. I'm also an artist. My husband and I have lived in historic homes for a long, long time, and have renovated homes and made them our own while respecting their history. All of those things blend together very well, I think, and led me to preservation.

BG: What are the main responsibilities and activities of the Preservation Commission?

KH: The Commission administers the Demolition Delay By-Law, which allows the imposition of a 12-month delay period, on everything registered on the historic building survey, and the Dimensional Special Permit for Historic Preservation, which allows the subdivision of a lot so that a historic house can be moved to it and preserved. We're excited because the Special Permit is becoming popular. We've approved two this year, with another two or three applications in the works. People are considering it, and it often creates more affordable housing. We also hear in an advisory way all hearings involving exterior architectural

changes for historic structures. We host the annual Preservation Awards, and are currently working to update the historic building survey.

BG: You were appointed in 1987?

KH: Yes. John Sullivan was the Chair at the time. I came on as Secretary, and took over from him when he retired. Much of our time was focused on creating the Demolition Delay By-law, which came into effect in 1991. In 1993-94 we initiated the BallardVale Historic District Study Committee in large part because John Sullivan had a strong love of BallardVale. We thought that of all the historic areas, there was probably the best opportunity to make that happen in BallardVale.

BG: Why is that?

KH: BallardVale is small and it's a community in and of itself. It has a community feeling, and always has. We thought, it has a special quality about it, it's cohesive, and it's threatened by industry, the railroad and the highways...all the things that really encroach on a community that can have a negative impact. And it was largely intact, with a few small exceptions, as it had always been. We started with BallardVale first and Shawsheen Village second because they're at the two extremes of the town and are crisscrossed by major highways. We knew that, of all the neighborhoods in town, these were the places that were the most vulnerable to development, industry and traffic. We wanted to protect the small community feeling which is what is so special about BallardVale.

BG: How did the study committee and the community get along?

KH: I was amazed at the way everybody worked together, how people talked to each other, how they got out and organized coffees and informal sessions where people could meet and chat and talk about their fears. There was very constructive debate. Some people were skeptical, but in the end, people said maybe this can work. It passed at Town Meeting with a 2/3

You are cordially invited to the 1st annual

***BallardVale Historic District
Spring Social & Awards Program***

*April 1st, 2004
7:00pm*

200 Andover Street, Andover Massachusetts

The BallardVale Historic District Commission is pleased to announce the 1st Annual Spring Social & Awards Program. The establishment of the "*Ruth Davis Sharpe Preservation Award*" is intended to recognize those individuals who have contributed to the preservation and documentation of BallardVale's unique history.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

2004 Ruth Davis Sharpe Preservation Award
Presented by Mr. Richard Bowen

A discussion and display of BallardVale Pottery
Mr. Raymond Gibbons

Charles Sheeler & his work in BallardVale
Mr. James Sheldon

"BallardVale in its heyday"
Video narrated by Ruth Davis Sharpe

Please join us for an evening of History, Education and Hors d'oeuvres.

Questions, or need a ride? Contact Chris Huntress at 978.475.7738

The BallardVale Historic District Commission would like to thank Robert and Stephanie Branca for the use and enjoyment of their building at 200 Andover Street and for providing Hors d'oeuvres.
Thank You!

CALENDAR

- Mar. 3 (Wednesday)** **BallardVale Historic District Commission** monthly meeting
Town Offices – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
- Apr. 1 (Thursday)** **Spring Social and Award Evening**
200 Andover Street – 7:00 pm
- Apr. 7 (Wednesday)** **BallardVale Historic District Commission** monthly meeting
Town Offices – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
- Apr. 26 and 27 (Monday and Tuesday)** **Annual Town Meeting**
Andover High School – 7:00 pm
- May 3 and 4 (Monday and Tuesday)** **Annual Town Meeting, if necessary**
Andover High School – 7:00 pm
- May 5 (Wednesday)** **BallardVale Historic District Commission** monthly meeting
Town Offices – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
- May 15 (Saturday)** **Spring Clean-Up in BallardVale**
Meet at the Green – 8:00am

*Join us for Spring Clean-Up in BallardVale
Saturday, May 15th 8:00am – 1:00pm*



vote, which is hard to get. A bigger number of people believed it could work than didn't. That's special and tells you something important is happening.

BG: The BallardVale Historic District Commission was established to help retain the historic character of BallardVale, architecturally and also in a social way?

KH: It preserves community character, which is much more than just an aesthetic or about retaining charm. Community character is about diversity, it's about age diversity, families, single people... all these different people coming together and living in a reasonably priced, small town-like environment, which is now evaporating across the country.

BG: What advice do you have for the Commission?

KH: Stay flexible and don't be too dogmatic. That can happen in historic districts, like Nantucket, for instance. Keep a flexible approach and be able to grow, change and adapt.

BG: What do you see in BallardVale's future?

KH: Of course, who can really say, but transportation pressures and development along I93 will continue to be issues of concern. I think BallardVale will still have to fight off the intensive development pressures, to be able to maintain a small house with a reasonable-sized yard, and resist the lot line-to-lot line houses that overwhelm the landscape. It will be like a breath of fresh air for people to drive or walk through BallardVale and experience a neighborhood built on such a human scale.

With the Commission, you already have a formed group that can advocate for BallardVale. You don't have to reinvent the wheel or regroup to address every new, whether perceived or real, threat.

BG: You clearly are very committed to preservation.

KH: When I was a little girl, 9 or 10 years old, we lived in Denver, Colorado. One day my dad drove my mother and my brother and me into downtown Denver, and he said, "Take one last look because it's all going away". And they literally bulldozed the whole lower part of downtown Denver. They did not stop until someone said, "Hold the horses here", and managed to save only one block of the oldest section of downtown Denver. I will never forget that as long as I live because I saw it with my own eyes. I've always said if I could do anything to save a historic building, I would do it.

SPRING CLEAN-UP

Join neighbors and friends to celebrate spring (at last!) with "Spring Clean Up" in BallardVale. Bring your own tools (some supplies will be provided by the town) and your energy for a morning of work and fun. Meet at the Green on Saturday, May 15 at 8:00 am for coffee, doughnuts and work assignments.

TAX CREDIT

On November 26, 2003, Governor Romney signed into law (Section 22 MGL Chapter 141) a state historic preservation tax credit as a component of the \$50 million Economic Stimulus package. The 20% tax credit is targeted to income producing property that is at least 50 years old and is certified historic by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. This 5-year program will make \$10 million available on an annual basis. The credit was proposed by the Massachusetts Preservation Coalition. For more information, visit www.preservationmass.org. If you have any questions about the Tax Credit, please call Jim Igoe at 617-723-3383 (Preservation MASS) or Albert Rex at 617-367-2458 (Boston Preservation Alliance).

SPONSOR THE GAZETTE

In an effort to make *The BallardVale Gazette* self-supporting, and to reduce our budgetary needs, we are offering space to BallardVale businesses and individuals who would like to sponsor an issue. *The BallardVale Gazette* is currently published three times a year – March, June and November – and reaches approximately 350 households and businesses in BallardVale and Andover. If you're interested in sponsoring an issue, please contact Mary Bogan at 978-474-1910 or mpbogan@comcast.net.

The current issue of *The BallardVale Gazette* is sponsored by Elm Street Automotive Center. Owner Ron Abraham is a long-time resident of BallardVale and member of the Commission. Thank you to Elm Street Automotive Center.

BallardVale Historic District Commission Members

Chris Huntress, Chairperson 978.475.8882
Diane Derby, V. Chairperson 978.475.0125
Mary Bogan, Gazette Editor 978.474.1910
Bruce Taylor, Secretary
Ron Abraham
Richard Bowen
Perry Raffi
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*Andover Town Offices
36 Bartlet Street
Andover, MA 01810*

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See you at the Spring Social on Thursday, April 1!