

THE BALLARDVALE GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALLARDVALE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Vol. 18, No. 2

BallardVale, Massachusetts

Fall/Winter 2021

A Strong Start for Ballardvale Day

A new tradition was inaugurated on October 16 when the first Ballardvale Day put this historic neighborhood in the spotlight. Ballardvale resident and town employee Barbara Burke was the principal organizer, but plenty of volunteers from community organizations stepped up to help make the day a success. Residents and visitors could learn more about the community at multiple tables around the Ballardvale Playground, take a walking tour led by guides from the Andover Center for History and Culture, hike through a village AVIS reservation with a knowledgeable warden, or watch excited kids enjoying a bounce house. Here are some of the participants.



Ann and John Irza, wardens of the AVIS Burns Reservation, led tours.



Mike Murnane, who offered kids (and grownups) an introduction to fishing, gives some pointers to Ella Ngo.



Shawsheen River Watershed Association President Brian Henderson and board member Alice Friedenson described the seasonal tours and activities sponsored by the SRWA.



BallardVale Historic District Commission Vice Chair Diane Derby and her husband, Steve, answered questions about the neighborhood and the BVHDC.



Jennifer Sloan, past president of ANDONA, answered questions about the organization, which benefits children all over town.



Priscilla Loring and Denise Johnson explained the role of the Andover Community Trust in creating permanently affordable housing.



Boy Scout Troop 76 explained the many reasons to get involved in scouting.



Juliette Earl, Fatima Umar, and Melissa Marrama of the Andover Islamic Center organized activities for children.



Martha Tubinis, director of programs for the Andover Center for History and Culture, led walking tours focused on Ballardvale history.



Tony Collins, Ballardvale resident and associate planner for the Town of Andover, solicited opinions on potential neighborhood improvements.

Ballardvale Green Dedication

Longtime Ballardvale resident and community advocate Richard J. Bowen was recognized last August by the dedication of the Ballardvale Green in his honor. A former town manager, Mr. Bowen spent many hours serving Ballardvale over many years, whether it was beautifying the green, emceeding the annual tree lighting, or volunteering his expertise as the first chair of the BallardVale Historic District Commission.



Richard J. Bowen and his wife, Lucy, admire a handsome new bench with a plaque commemorating the "Richard J. Bowen Ballardvale Green."

Vale Goblins Haunt Playground

The longstanding tradition of the Ballardvale Halloween Parade on the Sunday before the holiday continued in 2021, thanks to veteran organizer Jan Holden. Excited children in costumes gathered at the playground before parading up Center Street.



Jan Holden and her "bat dog" Regal.



Mari the Narwhal is Jan Holden's granddaughter.



Ava Birch was the cutest cow on the playground.

Bill and Leslie Ferris Brighten the Vale

Bill Ferris and his wife, Leslie, have fond memories of hanging out in the Ballardvale Green as teenagers. “We used to play football in the field across from the firehouse (now the Ballardvale Playground) and borrow spare hoses from the firehouse so we could connect to hydrants and flood the courts for pickup hockey games,” Bill said. “Leslie worked behind the counter at the store, which is now Spinner’s Pizza but was at that time called the Corner Cupboard.”

Now, decades later, Bill and Leslie are helping brighten the Green. During the pandemic they Illuminated HOPE Trees in red, white, and blue on the Green and at Memorial Hall Library as part of a nationwide initiative to inspire hope and recognize front line workers. As the owners of a Christmas Décor franchise, they donated the lights and created an accompanying GoFundMe site that raised hundreds of dollars to send meals from hard-hit local restaurants to first responders.



Ballardvale Green HOPE Tree.

“It makes us feel good to do something for the community,” said Bill, who was grew up in the

same house at the end of Highvale Lane where he and Leslie raised two children and still call home.

A big part of the magic of the Ballardvale tree is in the technology that Christmas Décor provides. Bill said the RGB lights can be changed to practically any color and theme from the operator’s cell phone. The Vale tree lights have changed to several different themes over the years, from red, white, and blue for July 4 and Veterans Day to traditional warm white holiday finery. Bill said there have even been personal requests from Ballardvale residents for baby blue or pink lights to commemorate a birth in the family.

Sweet News

Talented Ballardvale baker and cake decorator Debra Rodger has opened the new Andover Bakeshop. Pick up your favorite treats at 28 Chestnut Street.



Debra Rodger with some of her creations.

Ask the BVHDC

In this issue, the BallardVale Historic District Commission has questions for readers from the “How Much Do You Know About Ballardvale?” quiz created for Ballardvale Day. Do you know the answers?

1- What is a vale? 2- Was there ever a church on Church Street? 3- Did anyone famous live in Ballardvale?

(Answers: 1- A hollow, valley, or depression. 2- The Union Congregational Church was once on the corner of Church Street and Andover Street. 3- Jay Leno on Clark Road.)

New Tree Lighting Organizer



Meet our new Tree Lighting organizer, Anna Kantzios. She's very enthusiastic and loves the Christmas holidays. She expects some things to remain the same, and also has some new

ideas that you may see in time. Anna moved to Andover in July of this year, and biked to Ballardvale Day, where she discovered we were looking for a new Tree Lighting organizer and the rest is history. She's looking forward to meeting you at the Tree Lighting on Sunday, December 5th at 5:00 on the BallardVale Green, where there will again be holiday singing, hot chocolate, cider, and cookies. If you'd like to volunteer to help Anna, please contact her at 5archerlane@gmail.com. There are any number of ways to help, from setting up on the 5th, to loaning tables, trash cans and liners, providing hot chocolate, cans of whipped cream, mini marshmallows, cider, cookies, serving the drinks, cleaning up and taking down the tables, etc. and checking the green for any stray pieces

of trash. Anna's holiday spirit is evident in the picture of her and her sister below.



The BallardVale Historic District Commission has an opening. To learn more about becoming a member, contact Diane Derby, vice chair: derby01@comcast.net.

Questions? Suggestions? Feedback?

If you have a question for the BallardVale Historic District Commission, a suggestion for a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue, or a story you'd like to contribute, please contact the editors / kfeenglish@gmail.com; Joe Halpern / joehalp@gmail.com.

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BallardVale Historic District Commission

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CALENDAR

December 1 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting

Town offices, second floor conference room — 7:00 p.m.

December 5 Holiday Tree Lighting

BallardVale Green — 5:00 p.m.

January 5 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting

Town offices, second floor conference room — 7:00 p.m.

February 2 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting

Town offices, second floor conference room — 7:00 p.m.

March 2 BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting

Town offices, second floor conference room — 7:00 p.m.