

Squire's Tavern Quarterly

Barkhamsted Historical Society Newsletter

web site - barkhamstedhistory.us

September 2021

Squire's Tavern Celebrates a 20 Year Milestone

by Paul Hart

Twenty years ago on July 15, 2001, we got the lease on Squire's Tavern. The lease was signed that day at a big open house celebration with many people in attendance. A symbolic oversized gold key was handed over to Barkhamsted first selectman Mike Fox by State Department of Environmental Protection official Mark Rickert.

The building is leased to the town and operated by the Barkhamsted Historical Society as our museum and headquarters. The lease ceremony was the culmination of several years of negotiations between the town, State and Historical Society. Walt Landgraf and Leslie Cosgrove

worked hard to iron out the details with the State and fortunately we had the backing of then DEP deputy commissioner Dave Leff. Without Dave's support the lease probably would not have been approved by the State.

The lease was a formal step that put control of Squire's Tavern in the hands of the Historical Society. At that point, the restoration effort at Squire's was started in earnest. After years of work by friends, volunteers and paid contractors we have preserved and restored a building that is a big part of the history of Barkhamsted.

Continued on page 4...



Photos above: at left, State DEP official Mark Rickert (in blue shirt) hands over the Squire's Tavern "key" to Barkhamsted First Selectman Mike Fox as BHS president Sharon Lynes looks on. At right, a large group of visitors observe the lease signing at Squire's Tavern, July 15, 2001.

The 2020 COVID Pandemic: Personal Reflections



Starting with the March 2021 issue of our Quarterly newsletter we began a series of articles describing personal experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic. Probably that is the last thing you want to be reading about now... we are all tired of this thing, but we want to take this opportunity to preserve these experiences for future readers

50 or 100 years from now. How COVID impacted our lives may not be news to us but later generations may find these experiences informative and interesting.

We want to share with them the stories of what we went through over the last year or so. We have two articles in this issue: the first starts on page 2 and the second on page 5. Thanks to all who contributed. ☹

A Barkhamsted COVID Story

by Paul Hart

My most vivid memory of COVID was driving home from Dempsey Hospital the night of April 14, 2020 and wondering if I would ever see my wife again. We had set out that evening to have Kathy's blood oxygen level tested. She had tested positive for COVID almost a week earlier, and was not feeling well. She knew that it was important to monitor blood oxygen levels but one clinic we tried was not open, so we decided to go to Dempsey. They found that her blood oxygen was way too low and admitted her immediately. Once she was admitted, I was not allowed to see her. On the ride back home I was confronted with the despair and frightening possibilities of this bleak period at the start of the COVID pandemic.

Next morning I called Kathy's cell phone and felt relieved to hear her voice. She calmed me down and assured me that she was okay. Weeks later I found out that no, she had NOT been okay. She was just trying to make me feel better at the time. Kathy spent 13 days at Dempsey, on oxygen the whole time, and came close to being put on a ventilator. The whole nightmare pretty much ended when she was discharged and was able to come back home.

It is so nice to have the COVID experiences of 2020 in our rearview mirror now. What a year. In January there were news accounts of a distant problem in China. In February there was speculation that there might be some impact in the US. In March we realized that life was going to be different as the virus marched across the country. Barkhamsted Historical Society had about 50 people attend a program in mid-March, and right after that everything shut down in Connecticut and the nation. I mean SHUT DOWN. Restaurants and other businesses closed. Bank lobbies closed (drive-in only). Churches closed. Even popular spots in town like the Saville Dam and Beach Rock overlook were closed to visitors. Only essential stores like groceries and package stores remained open. Most people stopped going to work and many worked from home. The daily routines of life were at an end and no one was sure how this was going to pan out. Face masks were required. Before things got bad I remember seeing someone wearing a face mask in the grocery store and thinking how weird that was. A few weeks later we all had them on.

Kathy got COVID in early April although at first she did not suspect it because her symptoms were not the common COVID symptoms. But she wanted to get tested anyway. She was able to be tested because she is a health care worker. The test came back positive. She had (and still has) no clue as to how she got COVID. A few days later I was feeling less than 100%. In these early days, it was not easy to get a COVID test because the test supplies were limited and the demand great. To be tested you had to have an exposure to someone with COVID and you had to have

symptoms. I was approved to be tested and drove into Hartford, got in a long line of cars and after an hour and a half was tested in a temporary drive through facility in a parking lot off Farmington Avenue. Several days later the test result came back positive. My case was mild and I quarantined at home for two weeks. Friends and relatives dropped off food. Friends and relatives called daily, concerned because I was 68 years old and it was becoming apparent that older people were more at risk of death from COVID. My doctor talked to me via a "tele-visit". After about a week with mild symptoms I felt fine.



Photo above: a drive through COVID testing site.

But life was different now. Panic buying at the grocery stores cleaned out all paper goods- paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, napkins. I mean that aisle in the store was just 90% empty. Some things like frozen pizzas, eggs and baking supplies were hard to get. Checkout lines were spread out as "social distancing" rules were invoked: people had to remain six feet apart. Grocery aisles were made one way to help keep people apart. (...continued on page 3)



Photo above: paper items pretty much gone at the store.

A Barkhamsted COVID Story... continued from page 2.

A big part of my previous routine before COVID including going to meetings and activities of several non-profit organizations with which I am involved. No longer. All these organizations were shut down. The library closed. The historical society closed. The church closed. The state forest friends group shut down. My weekly "to-do" list shriveled up to nothing. Then we all learned about "Zoom" meetings on the computer via the Internet. These replaced in person meetings, and we saw faces on the screen, but something was missing.

Personal contact in your general life just disappeared almost completely. Even a simple pleasure like catching a movie at the theater was gone. Our two-week house reservation at the Outer Banks in North Carolina was kaput... interstate travel was greatly restricted. We lost half of the

rental fee. The annual Barkhamsted July 4th parade was held, but not on the usual Pleasant Valley route. Instead of a traditional parade with throngs of spectators, it was a small convoy of vehicles driving a route throughout the town. Not the same enthusiasm but still greatly appreciated by townspeople... at least we had a bit of a celebration. For Thanksgiving we always have 20 some people packed in at one table at our house. For the first time in 30 years the 2020 Thanksgiving at our house was just Kathy and me.

It was some year. I guess it could have been worse. So glad that vaccines started to roll out in December 2020 and that we are starting to get past the COVID pandemic and back to some semblance of a normal routine. But I think it is fair to say that no one will miss what we went through in 2020. ☿



Photo above: a portion of the July 4, 2020 Barkhamsted town parade on Day Road in Barkhamsted.

A blast from the past...

This photo is the Civilian Conservation Corp workshop and garage at Camp White in 1947. The Depression is over, the CCC camps are all closed and even World War 2 has come to an end. This forlorn building is just one reminder of what had been a very active spot just 10 years earlier when CCC boys would have been climbing into trucks here and heading out for a day's work. At present, there is little left here except for some concrete footings in the woods.



20 Years Ago... continued from page 1

To this day working relations between the State DEEP, the town of Barkhamsted and the Historical Society have been excellent. This partnership has done much to develop Squire's Tavern into a great asset serving both the town and State in many ways.

The Historical Society truly appreciates the hard work and support by so many people over the last 20 years. We should all be proud that we have preserved this building and utilized it for the benefit of many, something we hope to continue for another 20 years and beyond. ☞



Photos above: 20 years... at left, Squire's Tavern in 2001 and at right Squire's Tavern in 2021



Photos above: at left... State, town and BHS officials arrive by ox cart for the lease signing ceremony, July 15, 2001. At right... work starts in earnest on the restoration of Squire's Tavern 20 years ago. This photo is in the front kitchen.

Squire's Tavern Gets a New Coat of Paint

See the recent photo of Squire's Tavern above (upper right)? This bright and shiny look is due to a new coat of paint, actually a couple of new coats.

Barkhamsted Historical Society contracted with Paul Sandy, owner of Production Painting, last year and we are very happy with the final result. Paul took down the shut-

ters and began painting those last winter, then finished doing the building this summer. Weather issues, including all the rain we got this spring slowed things up a bit but the job got done and the Tavern looks great. Bela Squire would be proud and so are we! ☞

Students' Perspective On COVID

The following are experiences of students from the fifth grade of Barkhamsted Elementary students written in late 2020:

Covid has made a lot of things different for me. I have to wear a mask everywhere that I can't breathe in and I really hate it. I can't go to the movies anymore because they are closed. Last year we went remote and I couldn't be with my friends and I was sad because I couldn't see them. I have to do almost all my work on the computer now and me and my friends have to stay six feet apart in school.

Bella, grade 5.

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COVID 19 has been a very stressful year for me. Last year (2019) I skipped a grade and that was stressful enough, but then like no time later my class and I were told that we would go home with everything that was at school that was ours. The teachers told us nothing; they said they didn't know why we were leaving the school. They gave us a two-week break and somewhere in the 1st week I was told about something called the "coronavirus" and that we would be learning on computers (Chromebooks) and I was thrilled that I didn't have to go to school until it started... When it started it was bad because we had to do a Google Meet or Zoom reallllllly early in the morning, so now everything was super-duper weird.

After that stressful year it was of course 2020. In early 2020 we were out of quarantine and we could go out, and go to school, everything was good right? No, we had to wear masks... See, this was horrible because the mask gave me back my old bad, goldfish breath and spat it into my nose, my first mask put the air from my mouth up, which made it feel like my eyeballs were burning; also, I literally felt like I was suffocating every time I put on my mask. I have an okay mask now in 2021 and I'm so used to it. When I go to my friend's house, I touch my chin to adjust my mask but it's not there. I do this a lot. It's just I'm so used to it. Also, we have a thing that we do in our family. We go out to Vermont from Connecticut, where my mom's side is and I love doing it but now we can't because of COVID.



Photo above: Barkhamsted Elementary School in Pleasant Valley.

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All in all, this was an experience. I'll say I did not enjoy COVID, but I learned a lot of things, and at least I can say when I'm older I suffered through it.

Luke B., grade 5.

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COVID affected me a lot. It was the day before my birthday and my mom was crying. I don't know why. My mom comes upstairs and tells me Uncle Robby died. I know this just sounds normal and not because of Covid but on a funeral day we had to do a remote funeral. But I wanted to be there.

Another way COVID affected me was when my brother got COVID because he was working at Home Depot. Since my mom was there, she got COVID. When we went back to the house, we didn't have masks on. Before we went back to my mom's house we got tested so we didn't know if

it was positive or negative. When we got the test, it was negative but we don't know because after we took the test we went back to my mom's house and she had COVID. Then I had to go remote. I missed out on being with my friends and I didn't get to see my family, only my aunt.

Sara grade 5

I think that COVID has affected me because my holidays were horrible. My holidays were horrible because my uncle was exposed to COVID so he had to do a Zoom call instead of being with us. This affected me because I have not seen him in a while so it was sad.

Secondly, when I go to school it is scary because if somebody tests positive you are putting people that you have been in contact with at risk. This also affects me because when you have to wear a mask for 8 hours straight, it gives you a headache and then you feel like you are sick. Sometimes you flip because you think you might have COVID.

Lastly COVID affects me because if you go to see your grandparents you don't want to give them anything that you do not know you might have. Also it affects me because they are at high risk to get it so you worry when you see them and if they get it they might not make it through having COVID.

Alexandra grade 5 ❧

Historical Society News

Summer Campers Visit Squire's Tavern

The Barkhamsted Recreation department runs an annual summer camp in July and this year the campers again visited Squire's Tavern. With a theme of "Barkhamsted Olympics" the campers were treated to a series of old time games including egg racing (see photo below) and ring toss.

After the games the kids were given a short tour of Squire's Tavern. It was a fun day and gave the campers a taste of life long ago.



Help For the Tavern Garden

BHS keeps a small flower and vegetable garden out in back of our barn and each year we are challenged to plant and maintain it. This year we got some help. Volunteers from Baroco Corporation planted seeds, weeded and did other garden work (see photo below).

Baroco provides opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and contribute to their community. Their work in our garden is a win-win situation and we are most appreciative for their help and dedication.



Exhibit Work Continues

Volunteers continue to work on upgrading the exhibits at Squire's Tavern. Just recently the update of the Barkhamsted Lighthouse exhibit was finished. Highlights include three Lighthouse baskets and an original drawing of the stage coach passing the Barkhamsted Lighthouse (below, right) by artist and BHS volunteer Bonnie Boyle. Come on down and see it!



Historical Society Calendar



Squire's Tavern is open for our regular hours:

Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 pm and
Wednesdays from 9:00 am to noon.

① **Saturday, September 11, 2021** - BHS members and friends: this is your official notification of our annual meeting (a very short business meeting) and a slide show program on a "Tour of Old Riverton". 1:00 pm at the Riverton Inn. The program is free and light refreshments will be served. Seating is limited. To be assured of a seat we ask that you please sign up in advance by leaving us a message at (860) 738-2456 or sending an email to:

paulhart411@charter.net

② **Saturday, November 6, 2021** - Tavern Night starting at 7:00 pm at Squire's Tavern. Music, old time tavern food and dancing. Tickets are \$20 per person, children under 12 are free.

③ **Sunday, December 12, 2021 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm** - Christmas Open house at Squire's Tavern with a special music program: The very popular Greenwoods Consort will perform from 2:00 to 3:00. Hear these wonderful voices and see the Tavern decked out with old fashioned decorations. Light refreshments provided. Free and open to the public.



Membership Renewal Time

Our membership year starts September 1, so we are enclosing a handy membership envelope. We do hope you will send it in. Your support is the engine that keeps this organization going. We so appreciate our members!

Barkhamsted Historical Society

President - Noreen Watson
Vice President - Paul Hart
Secretary - Kristina Napolitano
Treasurer - Ted Bachman
Town Historian - Doug Roberts

Committee Chairs

Building & Grounds - Charles Watson
Grounds Planning - Georgia Nash
Collections - Jim Lussier
Publicity - Ginny Apple
Education & Research - Mike Day
Finance - Ted Bachman
Membership - Sharon Lynes
Exhibits - Bonnie Boyle
Docents - Cathy Connole
Newsletter - Paul Hart

Trustees

Bill Day (3 yrs)
Cathy Connole (3 yrs)
Harriet Winchenbaugh (2 yrs)

Telephone- (860) 738-2456

Mail- P. O. Box 94
Pleasant Valley, CT 06063

E-mail- bhs@barkhamstedhistory.us

Web site- barkhamstedhistory.us

Squire's Tavern is located at 100 East River Road in Barkhamsted, one mile north of the Pleasant Valley bridge.

Squire's Tavern is open to the public on
Wednesdays 9:00 am to noon and
Sundays 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Barkhamsted Historical Society Membership:
Seniors \$12, Individuals \$15, Family \$25

Mail to Sharon Lynes, BHS Membership,
P.O. Box 94, Pleasant Valley, CT 06063
or sign up and pay through our web site.

The Barkhamsted Historical Society is dedicated to preserving Barkhamsted history, helping people connect with past traditions and inspiring appreciation for our heritage to enrich lives and strengthen community.

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