

THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXXXIV

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

April 2026



Next Meeting & Program: April 24, 2026 How Isaiah Thomas Brought the Revolution to Worcester. Ashley Cataldo will tell us how Isaiah Thomas, revolutionary printer and founder of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, traveled with his printing press from Boston to Worcester in April 1775. Hear how Thomas made the journey and what he did to promote the Revolution in Worcester.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Society building, 52 Main St., Northborough, MA. The event is free and open to the public. Masks will be optional.



History Corner

by Norm Corbin, Historian

Town Meeting Historic Preservation Articles

On April 27th, Northborough will start its Annual Town meeting. In this Hourglass I want to highlight several articles that relate to the preservation of historic Northborough properties.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY WINDOWS FUNDING

ARTICLE 38 is for requesting \$212,760 of Historic Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for a window restoration and preservation project on the Historical Society building.

Historic Community Preservation Act funds can be used for preservation and restoration projects. All work must conform to the requirements of "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings (2017)". With this building being listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*, projects for long term preservation are appropriate.

This project involves the preservation and restoration of the windows at the Northborough Historical Society Building. A total of 21 double-hung windows will be removed to an off-site workshop, preserved, painted and reinstalled. The restored windows will be weather-tight thereby appreciably prolonging the life of the building. Without this effort, the window surface will be subject to dry-rot, eventually requiring removal and replacement.

Additional details on this project can be found in the CPA application, see link:

https://www.northboroughma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf12221/f/uploads/comm_pres_window_restoration_nhs_10-11-25.pdf

Please vote for this important restoration project for our very historic building

WHITE CLIFFS REQUESTS

There are four articles at the Town Meeting for White Cliffs. Three articles are to enable the firm Elegant Banquets to reopen the property as a wedding reception facility. This would be Elegant Banquets sixth such facility. Their "Le Chateau" facility has many similarities to White Cliffs in that it involved the restoration and conversion of a historic mansion into a wedding venue. They anticipate investing \$10 to \$12 million dollars in the restoration of

White Cliffs and constructing a new function room and gardens. The plan is for the facility to be leased for about 8 years before the sale occurs. If all goes to plan, they expect the business to be operational in the Fall of 2027. Additional information regarding the agreement between the Town of Northborough and Elegant Banquets can be found on the links below:

<https://www.northboroughma.gov/home/news/white-cliffs-update> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8YuIhcJ3dw&list=PLk479TOxptkUMmJhpNBbHG9PmchRBUmIb&index=1>



Photo: White Cliffs Mansion as built

ARTICLE 4 To authorize the lease of White Cliffs to Elegant Banquets with the option to sell the property at a later date. In addition, the property will have a Historic Preservation Restriction to retain the historic architecture from improper modifications in perpetuity. The Northborough Historical Society is considering to be the monitor of the Historic Preservation Restriction.

From the Town website, "The lease term is up to 45 years to support eligibility for historic tax credits, which are not available while the property remains Town-owned without a long-term lease. Lease payments will begin upon issuance of a certificate of occupancy and will increase over time, including a 3% annual escalator after 8.5 years if the purchase option is not exercised. The tenant may exercise an option to purchase the property at any time during the lease term. The purchase price will be \$2.5 million if exercised within the first 8.5 years and will increase by 2% annually, compounded, thereafter."

ARTICLE 5 To approve a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreement between the Town and Elegant Banquets LLC. From Town website, "Upon execution of the lease, the Town will begin receiving property tax revenue based on the current assessed value. A Tax Increment Financing

(continued on page 2)

History Corner, continued

(TIF) schedule is proposed that phases in full taxation on improvements and personal property by year seven. The Town would also receive local meals tax revenue once the facility is operational”

ARTICLE 6 To propose a Hospitality Overlay District. This is necessary because the mansion is located in a residential zone. This overlay district will allow the property to be used for hospitality events. From the town website, *“The purpose of the Hospitality Overlay District (HOD) is to allow options for hospitality uses in select locations within Northborough based on proximity to infrastructure*

and appropriateness of the site. The Hospitality Overlay District is intended to ensure that these uses serve the community’s cultural, economic, and social needs while minimizing adverse impacts to abutting uses.”

ARTICLE 42 This article requests \$132,980 from the Historic Community Preservation Act funds to pay for the White Cliffs Debt Service. In 2016, Town Meeting appropriated \$2.4 million for the purchase and expenses associated with the property. The majority of this funding uses a 10 year bond. This payment will be the ninth of ten payments.

Proposed by-law changes to be voted on at the Historical Society Annual Meeting on May 15, 2026

By law regarding welcoming new members

This change is to bring the by-law into compliance with current procedures

Current

ARTICLE IV - ELECTED OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, TRUSTEES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, OTHER PERSONNEL, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1

A. President

4. *Shall send a letter welcoming a new member to the activities of the Society, and enclosing a copy of the Bylaws and any other orientation material.*

Proposed

D. Membership Secretary

7. Shall welcome new members and guide them to resources for more Society information.

By law regarding approval of expenditures

This change is to increase the amount of an expenditure that can be made without the approval of the full membership, and give the Board the authority to approve expenditures up to that amount

Current under Finance Committee

ARTICLE IV - ELECTED OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, TRUSTEES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, OTHER PERSONNEL, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 6. Standing Committees

H. Finance

The Finance Committee shall:

- d. *Review any requests for expenditure of funds in excess of \$500, and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors on the worthiness of the expenditure.*
- e. *Ensure that any request for large expenditure of funds, approved by the Board under 2.d. above, is presented to the membership for their approval/disapproval.*

Current Under Treasurer

ARTICLE IV - ELECTED OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, TRUSTEES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, OTHER PERSONNEL, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1

E. Treasurer

1. Shall receive, hold and pay out all the Society monies subject to the order of the Society Board of Directors.

Proposed

1. Shall receive, hold and pay out all the Society monies subject to the order of the Society Board of Directors. Expenditures over \$1000 must be referred to the Board for approval. Expenditures over \$2000 must be presented to the membership for approval. Budgeted expenditures and emergency expenditures are excluded from this provision.
2. Shall ensure that any request for expenditure of more than \$2000, approved by the Board under E. 1 above, is presented to the membership for their approval/disapproval.

Text in italics to be deleted.

Nominating Committee Report

Underlined names are submitted to be voted on at the May 15, 2026 Annual Meeting

Position	Person	Term Expires
President	<u>Ken Bennett</u>	2027
Vice President	<u>Rob Van Buren</u>	2027
Directors	Janice Ferenchick	2027
	Mike Duchesneau	2027
	Chuck Liljestrand	2028
	Mark Bashour	2028
	<u>Rick Ferenchick</u>	2029
	<u>Jack Bakstran</u>	2029
Treasurer	Nadine Proctor	2027
Membership Secretary	Jean Langley	2027
Recording Secretary	Hilary Wilson	2027
Museum Trustees	Jane Fletcher	2027
	Kathy Pierce	2027
	Lynne Derosier	2028
	Allyn Phelps Jr	2028
	<u>Linda Corbin</u>	2029
	<u>Rhonda VanBuren</u>	2029
Publicity	Zenya Molnar	2027
	Alex Molnar	2027
	Laura Ziton	2028
Hospitality	Marcia Parsneau	2027
	Carolyn Squillante	2028
	<u>Ingrid Molnar</u>	2029
Program	Suzanne Williams	2027
	Arlene Marshall	2028
	<u>Marcia Mills</u>	2029
Property	Rob Van Buren	2027
	Peter Stone	2027
	<u>Open</u>	2029
Kitchen	Marcia Mills	2027
	Debra Bennett	2028
	<u>Rebecca Shaw</u>	2029
Legislative	Hilary Wilson	2027
	Michael Mills	2028
	<u>Carol Bostock</u>	2029
Nominating	Mike Duchesneau	2027
	<u>Ellen Racine</u>	2027
	<u>Lois Smith</u>	2027
Ways and Means	Marie Spence	2027
	John Northgraves	2027
	Mark Bashour	2028

Submitted by the Nominating Committee
Mike Duchesneau ▪ Ernie Racine ▪ Rhonda Van Buren

The Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, May 15, 2026.

Only members who have paid dues for the 2025 - 2026 Society year may vote at this Annual Meeting. If you are not sure if your dues are current, please email Membership Secretary Jean Langley.

MembershipSecretary@NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

In recent years, the Society has held 2 events at White Cliffs; in our 100th Anniversary year in 2006, and just before White Cliffs closed in 2014. To the right are some photos taken at those events - hopefully White Cliffs will be restored to its former glory in the next few years.



PRESENTS



with guest soprano, Emily Siar
PERFORMING

“Ben Franklin’s Musical Curiosity”



Friday, May 1st at 7:00pm
Trinity Church, 23 Main Street, Northborough

Under 18 – FREE
Northborough Residents 18+ – Donation appreciated.
Non-residents 18+: \$50.00
(proceeds will support Friends of the Northborough Library and the Northborough REV250 Committee)

Get tickets at:
bit.ly/nboro250concert

Tickets are required for all attendees.



“Scintillating performances of sentiment and sparkle.”
—THE BRC MUSIC MAGAZINE

For more photos of White Cliffs, visit our website at:
www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org





Northborough Historical Society Pizza Party



When: 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, 2026
Where: Northborough Historical Society, 52 Main Street, Northborough, MA 01532
Tickets: \$15. Ticket price includes 2 slices of pizza, drinks and salad



Pizza Party tickets are now available. Cash or checks will be accepted. They can be purchased at the Senior Center on Wednesdays, between 11am and 1pm, from Ken Bennett or Bob Van Buren or at the Friday night Society meeting on April 24. If you can't make those times to buy your tickets, call Hilary Wilson. 508-963-3529.

Tickets are limited - once they're gone, they're gone - get them soon!

The Pizza Party is a fundraiser for the Society

Raffles at The Pizza Party

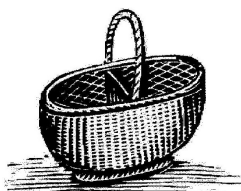
There will be 2 raffles at the Pizza party - a basket raffle and a red cup raffle. If you want to join in the fun, remember to bring some cash!



Information about future programs and more is available on our website.

www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

If there is a red dot in the address panel below, it is time to renew your membership.



Curator's News by Ellen Racine

The Museum will open for the season on May 1.

Isaiah Thomas was a remarkable man - and we will learn more about him in our April 24th program. In our archive we have seven books printed by him, some in Boston and later in Worcester after he fled from

Boston with his printing press. His customers from Northborough included Abraham Wood, an early Colonial composer, and Rev. Peter Whitney with his book, published by Isaiah Thomas in 1793 – The History of the County of Worcester, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, ...” Additional works published were the Massachusetts Magazine, An Anthem for Thanksgiving Day, and others. These vintage printings will be on display at the Friday meeting. Please stop by.



► It is now easier than ever to make a donation to Northborough Historical Society ◀

Donations can be made online at our website. www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/donate.html

Membership

Annual Dues:

Single — \$30
 Student/Senior — \$25
 Family — \$55
 Lifetime — \$500

Mail dues to:

Northborough Historical Society
 Membership Secretary
 P.O. Box 661
 Northborough, MA 01532

*Please make checks payable to
 Northborough Historical Society*
 Dues are due in September each year

Scan QR code
 to donate via
 PayPal



**Next
 Board of Directors
 Meeting
 Tuesday, May 12**