

Historically speaking



Quarterly Newsletter

july
august
september

Fulfilling our wonderful mission - with YOU! Congratulate our 2024 Volunteer Award Winners!

The strength of any non-profit comes from the time and commitment of its volunteers. This year we hosted our Annual Awards Dinner & Membership Meeting at The Maola at Riverside, where we honored your volunteer colleagues for their generous contributions. Congratulations to these incredible volunteers - the heartbeat of our great Historical Society family!



(left, top row):

Karen Whitmore received the **Director's Award** for her many years of support with the Ghostwalk Veri-Good Bakery, coordination of countless social events, and detailed organization of our often chaotic attic!

Lynne Harakal received the **Lifetime of Service Award** in recognition of her 8 years serving as Executive Director followed by another 8 years as loyal and trusted Board Member - her impacts are immeasurable!

Jim Morrison received the **President's Award** for his unparalleled leadership and service. Jim was recognized for his 8 years serving as Society Treasurer as well as his tireless "rolling up the sleeves" to assist with every event - from logistics to ticket sales and everything in between!

(above, bottom row):

Claudia Houston received the **Edwin C. Bearss Champion of History Award** for her decade+ of service to the Society. Claudia has made significant impacts as our Historian through her research, countless articles published, coordination of education programming, and leadership of the Annual History Quest event.

Elisabeth Luther received the **Education Award** for her exceptional volunteer work assisting our Curator with the organization, conservation, and detailed accountability of the 7000+ pieces in the Historical Society Collection.

Linda Grzeika received the **Newcomer's Award**. Linda has taken on a lead role as an office volunteer, assisting during a critical period of staff changes, always supporting day-to-day activities and major events. She does it all!

Sue Dunn received the **Extended Service Award** for her 14 years of faithful support to the organization, providing administrative support in every aspect, contributing significantly to the overall benefit and growth of the Historical Society. Thank you and we wish you a Happy Retirement!



Chris & Suzanne Richey received the **Battlefield Award** in recognition and appreciation of their generous donation which funded the purchase of a fully functioning reproduction 1841 cannon. This incredible addition to our Battlefield made its debut during the Harry Goodman Battlefield Adventure Day - where over 100 children enjoyed witnessing it in action!

Jay DeLoach received the **Ambassadorship Award** in recognition and appreciation of his 4 years serving as Editor for our Annual Journal. Jay oversaw the organization and publication of over 30 professional articles - most notably the publication of our recent 100th Anniversary Edition - a beautiful 60-page journal that we will proudly display for years to come!





Update from Anthony Giardino, Executive Director

A Night for the Ages - and Introducing Our New Team!

We're still raving about the wonderful awards dinner hosted at **The Maola at Riverside** back in May. It was the perfect historic venue coupled with incredible food from **The Flame** and music from **Doctor Paul**. We were thrilled to host our largest annual meeting in years - celebrating alongside 165 of our volunteers, members, directors, and staff! What a great evening!

The highlight of the night was recognizing the selfless volunteers who keep this great organization running (featured on cover). We were also delighted with the election of a new Treasurer, **Bob Penvose**, and three strong new board members, **Rob Overman**, **Laura Miller-McLemore** and **Dr. Graham Barden**. Bob steps into the very important role as Treasurer, bringing strong financial acumen and proven service in our community. Rob has been a loyal Society member and supporter for 14 years. Laura is no stranger to the Society, as she delivers her awe-inspiring acting skills to various roles in our Ghostwalk and Lantern Tour events. Graham, a retired pediatrician, is a proven leader in the community and shows true passion for our mission and New Bern's history.

These new appointments - as well as outgoing leaders **Jim Morrison**, **Karen Whitmore** and **Lynne Harakal** - all truly exemplify the dedication that has served the Historical Society so well over the years. We are very grateful for you all!



Thank you to our talented photographer **Rick Meyer** with Coastal Photo Club for these exceptional images!

Our Team is now COMPLETE!

With Mickey Miller and Sue Dunn retiring in May and June, there's been a couple months of musical chairs around here! I proudly report that after 60 days, the review of 160 resumes, and conducting several interviews with a great hiring committee, I am thrilled to announce our new staff members - *all chairs are filled!*

Please meet our new Operations Assistant, **Michel Epps**, and Operations Manager, **Dr. Dwight Carlblom**! Michel comes to us with a strong background in administration, education, and various programs and nonprofit experience. Dwight formerly served as Head of Epiphany School for 9 years and as a history teacher for many of his 46 years in education.

These two professionals bring exceptional talent, experience, creativity, and true passion for New Bern's history to the Historical Society mission. Together, we're driven to provide our members and visitors the continued level of enthusiasm and quality associated with our notable programs and events. Be sure to show them a warm welcome when you see them!



Dwight Carlblom, Marissa Moore, Michel Epps, Anthony Giardino

2024 Events Calendar

*Watch our website (www.NewBernHistorical.org)
for further details on upcoming programs!*

Saturday, August 3: Ghostwalk Auditions / 11am / Attmore-Oliver House

Thursday, August 22: New Bern in the American Revolution presented by Tryon Palace Curator, Lindy Cummings / 7pm / Cullman Hall NC History Center ***No Cost, Reservations highly encouraged - open July 18***

Saturday, September 7: Living History Day / 10am-4pm / New Bern Battlefield Park

Saturday, September 21: 4th Annual History Quest Scavenger Hunt / 10am-4pm / begins & ends at New Bern Battlefield Park

Wednesday, October 16: Lunch & Learn – The Forgotten Mutineers by author Glen Swain / 11:30am / Carolina Colours

Thursday-Saturday, October 24-26: Ghostwalk! / 6-9pm at Cedar Grove Cemetery & various downtown locations



Ghostwalk Auditions

Saturday, August 3 • 11 am
Attmore-Oliver House

It's that time of year again! We are gearing up for another exciting fall full of spirits, creepers, and ghostly guides - oh my! If you are interested in participating in one of New Bern's premier events as a ghostly specter from the past, a guide, or a cemetery creeper, be sure to be at the Attmore-Oliver House at 511 Broad Street at 11am on Saturday, August 3 for Ghostwalk Auditions. First-come, first-served; no preparation needed.



SAVE THE DATE for Ghostwalk 2024!

October 24-26th from 6-9 pm

History Quest

Saturday, September 21 • 10 am
New Bern Battlefield Park



Put your Sherlock Holmes hat on and join this family friendly, outdoor scavenger hunt! Get your family, friends, or colleagues together to follow the clues to a series of quests. You'll discover historical places in and around New Bern that are hidden in plain sight. You might even learn a thing or two about this town that we live in! **Registration opens Aug 7** and watch our website (www.newbernhistorical.org) for more details.

We had a fabulous spring - we couldn't have done it without YOU!

A Weekend of Beauty & Charm

We had another marvelous Homes Tour this year, thanks to our stellar Homes Tour committee, led by **Cathy O' Brien** and **Sharon Nelson**. Everything was wonderfully orchestrated by the team, from the beautiful floral arrangements and live music, to the carefully coordinated docents and relaxing sit 'n' sip. And, of course, the stars of the show...the Historic Homes in both downtown New Bern and the Ghent Historic District! Thank you to everyone who made this year's tour truly a feast for the senses!



Heritage Homes Tour Committee

Jeanne Garner - Flower Chair ♦ **Lisa Setliff** - Volunteer Chair
Joanne Friedman - Music Chair ♦ **Annette Hunt** - A-O House Garden Chair
Susan Broderick & Cheryl Wyatt - Garden Co-Chairs
Kathy Morrison - Publicity/Marketing Chair ♦ **Sue Wyatt** - "Church Lady"
Cheryl Jukich - Graphics ♦ **George Evans** - Logistics Chair

You Tee'd It Up Fore History



The New Bern Historical Society's **5th Annual Golf Tournament** was a tremendous success! Huge thanks to our amazing committee, generous sponsors, and dedicated volunteers. The **Carolina Colours** staff helped bring this event to a new level of professionalism (and fun!). Thank you to our membership for coming out to support as volunteers, sponsors, golfers, and raffle ticket buyers. Masterfully led by **Walt Teasdale**, the hard-working committee included **Cindy Teasdale, Gary & Marilyn Staley, Norman Black, Lisa Setliff, and Bob Dofner**. They brought in a record number of sponsors to make it our most profitable Golf Tournament yet.



2024 Marks & Taylor Scholarships Winner

The New Bern Historical Society is pleased to announce the Harriett Marks Scholarship and the John R. & Alice Land Taylor Scholarship for 2024 have been awarded to New Bern High School Senior, Abigail Gonzalez Zavala.

Miss Gonzalez Zavala was selected from among a group of talented and deserving applicants. Abigail is the daughter of Hugo Gonzalez and Norma Zavala.

Abigail demonstrates consistent academic excellence, achieving the Honor Roll and Principal's List multiple times. She is an award-winning filmmaker and an internationally recognized writer. Abigail is actively involved in various extracurricular activities, including serving as the Chair of the North Carolina Thespian Society, co-founder of the New Bern High School Blog Club, and writer for Oxford University's Harbingers' Magazine. She has chosen to attend Appalachian State University, where she will begin her undergraduate studies in theatre, economics, and public policy this fall.



Mary Parrish, Scholarship Committee
Member & Abigail Gonzalez Zavala

What a year it's been!





Curator's Corner...by Jim Hodges

Benners-Kellum Photograph Collection

There is no better way to document the present and preserve the past than with the power of photography. Since the emergence of itinerant photographers in the 1840s, New Bern has greatly benefited from a vast parade of photographers that settled here and captured the people, places, and events of daily life. A twentieth century standout was William Lucas Benners, Jr., affably called Billy, who was a New Bern fixture always seeming to be "at the right place at the right time" to capture the moment. Born in 1925, Billy Benners founded the Benners Studio of Photography in 1948 that continued in downtown New Bern until 2003. In addition to his professional career, he was a dedicated family man with five children, active with the New Bern Civic Theatre, the Elks Lodge, and the First Baptist Church.

After his death in 2011, his studio and contents were sold to another photographer; however, its survival was short-lived, and the business closed. It was rumored that Billy Benners' extensive portfolio was to be sold to an out-of-towner. However, before this could be transacted, local attorney Norman Kellum, realizing the historical significance of this collection and recognizing the importance of keeping this collection in New Bern, interceded and purchased the complete collection of photographs and negatives.

In June 2023, Mr. Kellum gifted the collection to the New Bern Historical Society with the express purpose of keeping it complete and sharing with future generations how life was portrayed in New Bern in the second half of the twentieth century.

The bulk of the images totaling 21,843 files in 2363 folders were digitally stored on an external hard drive. Several months have been invested in reviewing and organizing the images into thirty-two categories. The total number

of images has been greatly reduced due to the elimination of duplicates resulting in less required digital storage.

In addition to the hard drive images, there were 2169 raw negatives in a variety of sizes stored in eight cardboard boxes. The services of Wayne Lytton, a forty-year veteran of National Geographic at their laboratory in Washington, DC, was recruited to convert the images from negatives to positives and to utilize Photoshop techniques to make necessary modifications to enhance the images.

The collection included six large black & white prints mounted on foam board and most likely were intended to be framed. Also protected in six binders are a wide assortment of paper copies from the original digital collection. There are approximately five hundred images in the binders.

Lastly, there were thirty-four vintage glass negatives of New Bern scenes and people that Billy Benners had rescued. Possibly these can be attributed to Bayard Wootten or other early twentieth century photographers, but without definitive proof, the creator or creators of these exceptional treasures are unknown.



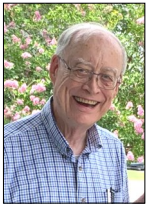
Hundreds of hours have been invested in reviewing, refining, and organizing this impressive collection of 8973 files in 1371 folders. My sincere appreciation to Norman Kellum for his generosity to the New Bern Historical Society and to his community. The Benners-Kellum Photograph Collection is secure and will be shared with future generations.

Billy Benners taking on four young servicemembers in chess at the local USO in the Edward R. Stanly House on the corner of Pollock and Hancock Streets



Each quarter, the updated newsletter is printed, folded, stuffed, sealed, and delivered to our now 1,450 members of the Historical Society. It is no easy task to ensure that the mailing effort is done thoroughly and accurately. This quarter, we turn the *Volunteer Spotlight* on a dedicated group of people that show up time and again to ensure our bulk mailings remain a smooth success! We are so grateful for our members **Linda Hitchcock, Dianne Brideson, Paula Quinn, Paula Engle, Lucy White, Ann Mooney, Gail Dembickie, Pam Gorman, Steve Dembickie (pictured);** as well as several other loyal helpers including **Cheryl Merriman, Carole Graham, Linda Grzeika, Polly Morton, Anne Porter, Steve White, Terri Hickman, and Laurie Ingram.** These incredible people are responsible for sending off the bulk mail for everything from memberships to Christmas Cards - we very kindly Thank You!





Historical Society President's Message...by Joe Hunt

We need your help in keeping the New Bern Historical Society an exceptional organization and one of the many things that make New Bern a great place to live. The following volunteer opportunities are great options to contribute:

Office Assistance: Help with administrative staff to keep operations smooth.

Event Planning and Setup: Be part of organizing and executing successful events.

Acting: Take on roles in events to engage, entertain and educate visitors.

Docent Work: Guide visitors through home tours, sharing knowledge and stories.

Civil War Battlefield Park: Contribute to preserving and presenting this historic site.

Attmore-Oliver House Campus: Maintain the beauty of the grounds and gardens.

Annual Meeting and Journal Contributions: Support the society's key events and publications.

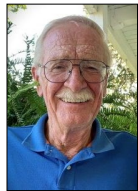
Scriptwriting: Craft narratives for actors to perform at events.

With a need for 400 to 500 volunteers annually, your unique talents will not only enhance the organization, but also allow you to meet new people and have fun as part of a team dedicated to preserving and celebrating the history of New Bern, Craven County, and Eastern NC. If you currently volunteer with us, we are blessed by your efforts!

To express your interest in volunteering or to learn more about how you can support the New Bern Historical Society, please contact our office directly. We welcome your enthusiasm and willingness to contribute to our mission. Thank you for considering to be a part of this great adventure!



Another busy day on campus!



Battlefield Park News...by Gene Lock, Battlefield Adjutant

During the second quarter, our Battlefield volunteers continued their general maintenance of the park. The team trimmed overgrowth along trails and the redans, as well as replaced the ramp where the John Deere Gator is stored.

John Wright, a longtime battlefield guide and volunteer, completed a project that involved untold hours over several months to complete. John, in addition to his work at the battlefield, is also a Master Gardener who currently serves as Vice President of the Craven County Master Gardeners Volunteer Association. Before retiring, John worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers doing many environmental projects.

John's recent project involved the identification of numerous species of plant life at our Battlefield Park. Beginning in 2005, the New Bern Garden Club identified twenty-five species of trees, shrubs, and other understory species. These were previously marked with identifying signage by the Garden Club. During John's project, he was able to locate twenty-three of those plants.

John walked the park trails innumerable times and researched the various trees and other plant life that line our trails. His work involved examining key identifying characteristics of plants such as bark, leaf and twig structure, flowers, and buds. He also compared known species photographs to the plants at the park. John also enlisted Dr. Tom Glasgow, who was the Craven County Extension Director, to assist identifying some of the more difficult plants.

John's efforts resulted in the identification of an additional twenty plant species at the park. Signage has been posted on an example of most species. The signage includes the plant's common name as well as the scientific name. There are now 40 plant species marked with signs at the Battlefield. Furthermore, John routinely monitors the woods for the removal of invasive species which should not be allowed to damage the woodland ecosystem. He has also implemented a primitive trash rack to capture refuse that washes down from Route 70 before it can enter Bullen Branch.

This project makes our park more attractive to amateur or serious botanists as well as for parents who want to instruct their children about forest plant life.



John Wright leading a battlefield tour

We highly commend John for his devotion to the Battlefield Park! His efforts, along with the entire team, directly impact this location remaining a top attraction for the area. In fact, statistics from New Bern Tourism Development Authority show that the Battlefield hosted 3,000 visitors between April - June 2024! Be sure to visit this well-preserved historic site, a designated location on the Civil War Trail right here in Eastern North Carolina!



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Summer Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 10am - 4pm; Friday 10am - 1pm

The Historical Society is proud of the relationships we have developed over the years with the local business community and thank them for their continued sponsorship of our events. Please recognize and support our business partners who generously contribute to the New Bern Historical Society.



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