



# GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 63  
Spring 2025

NEWSLETTER

## GHS Calendar Summer 2025

### Exhibits

*Rails to Trails  
and  
The Hill Family Legacy*

### Museum Hours

#### July and August

Wed. and Thurs.  
10 –2  
Sat. 10 –2

#### Sunday, June 29, 3-5

Exhibit Opening Reception  
GHS Museum

#### Saturday, July 26

GHS Annual Book Sale

10-4

Janet Long's Garage  
&

*Ice Cream Social*

2-4

GHS lawn

#### Monday, August 4, 7 PM

GHS Annual Meeting &  
Program

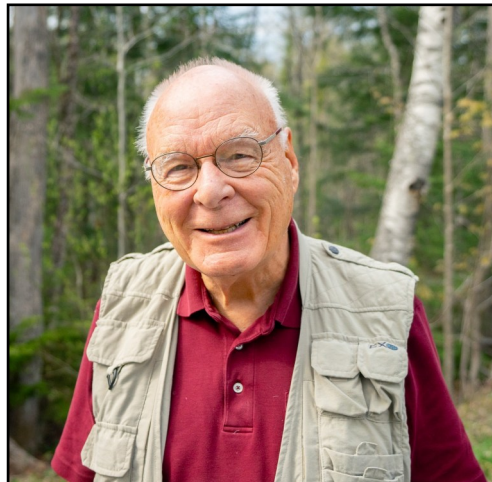
**The Great Maple Syrup  
Bubble**

:  
**Tim Breen**  
Fellowship Hall

## GHS Annual Meeting August 4, 7 PM

### The Great Maple Syrup Bubble

GHS is fortunate to feature, at our annual meeting on **August 4 at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**, our own Greensboro resident and well-known historian Timothy Breen. Hard to believe, but he has discovered that Vermont maple syrup might have ended slavery!



His topic, "The Great Maple Syrup Bubble" reconstructs a lost eighteenth-century world of social reformers and ambitious entrepreneurs. At the time of the ratification of the United States Constitution, many American openly began criticizing the enslavement of Africans. They read widely-circulated books containing graphic images of the horrors of human bondage in the Caribbean Islands, where the majority of household sugar was manufactured. As a way to undermine this cruel trade, people in north-

ern cities argued that large-scale production of maple syrup might liberate guilty consumers from cane sugar.

For a brief period, the possibility that maple syrup might end slavery energized curious plans. The dreams soon faced everyday reality. Even the most fervent reformers encountered huge production problems. A best-selling pamphlet advised potential citizens about the cost of implements. Newspapers advertised special sugar kettles. Land speculators announced acres of promising maple trees. The most ambitious effort came from the Holland Land Company, the largest foreign investor in the new nation. It sent secret agents to Vermont with the goal of cornering the entire maple syrup market. How do you think they fared? Come to learn this sobering story of good intentions, erroneous agricultural advice, and unfavorable geography.

### Opening Reception June 29, 3-5 PM

You are invited to the opening reception for this summer's exhibit on Sunday, June 29. Come for tasty refreshments, conversation and for first view of the exhibit.

## President's Corner Hidden Treasure

The Town of Greensboro has hidden treasures.



BJ Gray

One of which is the gently used book store or Janet Long's Book Emporium sponsored by The Greensboro Historical Society.

Tucked away in what was the Everett and Helen Lyles Gulf Station are hundreds of books culled to perfection by GHS volunteers. The books are donated by folks from all walks of life which makes the collection a rarity

for all.

It's great fun to see people's faces when told to pay by donation which usually results in big smiles and generosity. Culling the donations from before 2000 is fascinating. You never know what you will find tucked away in a book. Place markers left placed after 20 pages can tip you off as to how readable a book might be.

The categorization can be tricky so we have a special undetermined category box. Sometimes there are first editions. Large print - no problem. One preface read - Cary Grant is at the door - unusual.

Janet Long's family garage decor remains for atmosphere. There was a pit to change oil, now filled, located under the book tables. During the '70s gas restrictions caused the end of the gas station when a conversion occurred to real estate and insurance. Pinball machines attracted folks like Louis Kesselman, our local tailor, who was a regular.

On summer Sundays when Willey's was closed, 300 papers were sold - NY Times, Boston Globe and Herald Tribune all labelled with purchaser's names. Bait and ice cream were sold and rowboats rented. Noted author John Gunther enjoyed the ice cream.

Interested? Janet Long's Book Emporium, just across from Willey's, is always open with staff ready to help during the Book Sale on Saturday, July 26. Investigate and find reading treasure.

## GHS Exhibit 2026

### World War II: The Greensboro Home Front

Two generations later, World War II continues to fascinate us. The scale of the sacrifice is scarcely understandable with today's stark separation of military and civilian life. What was life like in Greensboro during WWII?

What did we do to support (or perhaps thwart) the war effort? Who did we send off to war, and who did not come home? We plan to explore these topics and more in our summer 2026 exhibit.



Craig Smith who later owned Smith's Store

Please contact us at [secretary@greensborohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:secretary@greensborohistoricalsociety.org) if you have ideas or resources to share, such as memorabilia, letters, or period items that would help demonstrate what life was like on the home front in Greensboro. We would also welcome any veterans of the war to share their stories.

### . Upgrade to GHS Museum

New light-protecting window shades can be seen in the Hill Exhibit space as part of the historical society's ongoing work to promote the long-term preservation of its collections. These window film treatments will mitigate the effects of ultraviolet (UV) light on collection materials while



Lighting differential seen during shade installation

also enhancing exhibit viewing. This project was funded, in part, by the Vermont Arts Council and the Cultural Facilities Coalition. The historical society appreciates this support the Vermont Arts council and National Endowment for the Arts.

## Winter Meeting Greensboro High School Alumni Storytelling

At Fellowship Hall on March 2, 2025, 15 panelists gathered to share their stories about Greensboro High School. Guests and panelists were also invited to explore Greensboro High School artifacts and ephemera from our archives. Former students enjoyed searching for friends and teachers in the yearbooks or reminiscing about the dances and sport games from their high school years.

Erika Karp presented a brief history of Greensboro High School, which operated from 1917 through 1968, then soon turned the floor over to the panelists. Here are just a few highlights of their personal stories:

- \* Jacqui Molleur ('61) fondly recalled her teacher playing "The Happy Farmer" on the piano--if the students behaved well.
- \* Janet Long ('53) admitted that a misunderstanding about the nature of graduation speeches resulted in her delivering a speech about Zurich when she was valedictorian.
- \* George Young ('58) swore he did not miss a single day of school.
- \* O'Neal "Sonny" Demars ('50), reminisced about the "hog box" van his uncle drove as the school bus.
- \* George Hussey ('66) recalled basketball triumphs and the excitement of getting team jackets.
- \* Phillip Rochette started "going steady" with Bette Toussant during their junior year. He proposed on their graduation day ('66), and they've been happily married for 57 years.
- \* Patsy Mercier ('64) looked back on the torture of geometry class her sophomore year.
- \* Ernie LaPierre ('67) described his short-lived attempt at being one of the school's "bad boys" when he snuck off during his free period to buy a bottle of beer and some cigarettes.



We closed off the discussion with everyone joining in singing the school song, "Tell Me Why," before enjoying some refreshments.

## GHS Bookstore

Remember to visit the museum bookstore, where you can find a variety of local history titles including *Fetches Up Yankee* by Lewis Hill, *An Architectural Walking Tour of Greensboro* by Rolf Muentner and Jenny Stoner, and *George Washington's Journey* by Timothy Breen. We also have the most recent edition of the *Hazen Road Dispatch* plus a wide selection of earlier issues at \$3.

### In Remembrance

Carol Vaughan Landon	Stephen Henry Lotspeich
Ethne Gray	George Charles Hemmens
Philip Hayward Gray Jr.	Thomas Matthew Hurst
Paul John Pitt	Rachel Ann Lapierre Fletcher
Helen M. Dimick	Elizabeth "Betty" Mae Dickson
Janet Fietsam Hale	Jeannette Ann Brochu
James "Jim" L. Silver	Langley "Lanny" C. Keyes Jr.

### Come enjoy the annual Ice Cream Social on July 26 2-4 PM

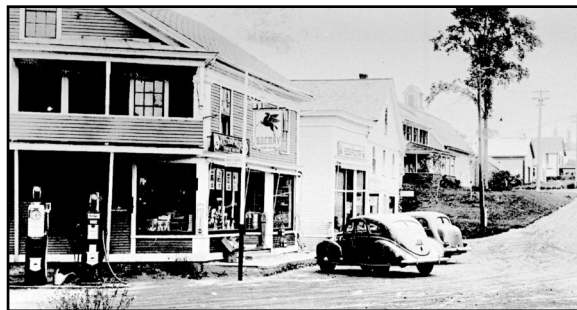




## The Hazen Road Dispatch 2025

The forthcoming issue of *The Hazen Road Dispatch* will celebrate milestones for two beloved local community institutions. Kyle Gray's "The Willey's Store at 125" will focus on the last 25 years of the store's long history. In "Fifty Years of the Buffalo Mountain Market," Annie Gaillard will tell about how a "hippie" grocery-buying club grew into today's successful co-op.

Two more articles will focus on social and economic infrastructure. Paul Wood's "The One-Room Schoolhouse--Part One" will present a history of these fabled institutions with examples from Walden and elsewhere in Vermont. In "Canal Fever' and Its Legacy in the NEK," Robert K. Merrill and H. Clay Simpson will trace the continuity from various failed 19<sup>th</sup>-century canal-building plans to today's transportation and recreational biking networks.



Willey's and adjoining stores in 1940

Another pair of articles will revisit the Hollywood connections of Greensboro and Craftsbury. Charles T. Morrissey will update readers on the old, vexed question of whether the legendary screen actress Greta Garbo swam and sunbathed in the nude on Caspian Lake in the 1950s. Don Houghton will describe last September's Trouble With Harry Festival in Craftsbury, with an overview of the materials documenting the filming of the Hitchcock comedy there in 1954. Finally, the Summer 2025 issue of the journal will include reviews—by T.H. Breen and Charles T. Morrissey—of two recent books on Vermont history by historian J. Kevin Graffagnino. Volume 49 of *HRD* will be available in mid-June in neighborhood stores and at the Greensboro Historical Society Museum bookstore. All previous issues are available there, and the index for the past issues is on the society website: [www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org).

## Our New *Hazen Road Dispatch* Editor

Last fall our *Hazen Road Dispatch* was a publication in limbo. We lacked an editor for the 2025 edition. (Gail Sangree, our amazing long-time editor, had retired after the 1923 edition and Stefanie Cravedi and Nancy Hill filled in as editors for Volume 48 in 1924.)



Deb Favreau & Dan Penrice

A miracle happened for GHS last winter when Dan Penrice (accent on "rice") appeared and was willing to tackle the job. Dan, a freelance writer and editor, was born in the Midwest but came east to college, ultimately getting his Ph.D. in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard in 1984. He has worked since 1994 for many clients in all phases of the editing process. He has also written bylined articles in publications such as *Harvard Business Review* and *Boston University Magazine*.

Dan and his wife, Deborah Favreau, currently live in Cambridge, MA and are new part-time residents of Greensboro. After an extended search for a house in the NEK where Deb's family had long-time connections, they purchased the 'yellow house' on Baker Hill from Tim and Bobbie Nisbet. They are both eager to join the Greensboro community and look forward to spending increasing amounts of time here in the coming years.

## The Bend Revitalization

The Bend Revitalization Initiative (BRI) recently asked residents to respond to a survey about the redevelopment of the old Methodist Church in Greensboro Bend. A much-appreciated large response resulted in the creation of a community center as the most requested reuse of the building.

Survey respondents were entered into a raffle and on March 26<sup>th</sup> BRI presented the prize to Nan Perron at Smith's Grocery. Thank you to the great team at Smith's for assisting with the survey and donating the prize. The results from the surveys and from information collected at our community dinner last Fall will inform the redevelopment of the old Methodist Church in Greensboro Bend.

The five top events people hope to see when the building is reopened are: community meals, educational programming and free classes, live music as well as game, book and craft clubs.

The most requested services were more kids' activities, a community center and more housing, as well as better or free internet.



The Former Methodist Church

BRI thanks everyone for their input and looks forward to getting to work to make this space a reality. Jan Lewandoski has inspected the church from top to bottom-literally – so we know what needs to be fixed and what doesn't. A fundraising campaign is beginning with an event in July to share plans for the building, obtain feedback and celebrate our great community! Stay Tuned.

Jane Johns, Bend Revitalization Initiative, Kaziah Haviland, VT Council on Rural Development

## Remembering Tom Hurst

Friends and family of Tom Hurst (1952-2024) are designing and purchasing a granite bench in his memory. The GHS was pleased to have been asked to provide a site for the bench on the museum grounds, near The Willey's Store and nestled into fresh landscaping that will make the bench an inviting place to watch the goings on in the Village. Tom is remembered by many as a friend, storekeeper, firefighter, historian, UCC minister of faith, and dedicated community steward. Growing up in Greensboro, he worked at The Willey's Store and became a fourth-generation storekeeper. Tom walked around Caspian Lake over 600 times during his journey with Parkinson's disease. He died of pancreatic cancer in November 2024.



The bench, which will cost an estimated \$4,000 to build and install, will read in part "Remembered by friends - 2025." The GHS is assisting with the processing of donations. If you would like to contribute, please make your gift payable to the Greensboro Historical Society but with a separate designation for "Tom's Bench." You can use the GHS website donation link or mail a check to GHS, PO Box 151, Greensboro VT 05841. The friends and family of Tom Hurst thank you!

## Membership Renewal Time

Your dues of \$20 to Greensboro Historical Society and all donations will help preserve Greensboro's unique past and give you a voice in our future.

Greensboro Historical Society  
P. O. Box 151  
Greensboro, VT 05841  
[www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org)



Bend RR Station

Page 6

## Exhibit 2025 Rails to Trail II

The Rails to Trail exhibit, expanded in its second of two years, showcases the beginning, growth and decay of the train line through Greensboro Bend; as well as its transition to a popular recreational rail trail. Did you know that during the heyday of the railroad Greensboro Bend had more businesses than Greensboro village? The exhibit highlights ways the arrival of a train transformed our community for farmers, business people and tourists alike. Train and history enthusiasts of all ages will enjoy the artifacts, maps, timelines, descriptions of the impacts on local industries, stories of industry hardships, train wrecks, and personal remembrances from local folks. Special features of the exhibit include activities for both children and adults. Come visit the museum to learn about this period of Greensboro's history; and share your own memories about the train.



A young child enjoying the model train at the exhibit

### GHS Newsletter

PO Box 151  
Greensboro, VT 05841

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Acquisitions, Wilhelmina Smith  
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Facebook, Kyle Gray &  
Lise Armstrong

*Hazen Road Dispatch* Editor,  
Dan Penrice

#### *Newsletter contributors*

Jenny Stoner, Editor, Becky  
Arnold, T.H. Breen, Renee  
Circosta, BJ Gray, Kyle Gray,  
Nancy Hill, Jane Johns, Dan  
Penrice, Leslie Rowell

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