



Kirk Shoen used a long selfie stick to photograph his family's masked faces on son Brandon's 10th birthday



Mary Lyall and Mark Blech meeting inside of The Center for HOPE on Prospect Street



Izzy Audette captured Michael DeFilippo and Emily Kane with a masked cow at JJ's Snack Bar



Teen vocalist Aiden Irish and seasoned-pianist Cole Broderick at the surprise 80th birthday celebration for Josie Uhlinger

It Will Take A Whole Village To Finish Building The Ballston Spa Living 2020 Community Yearbook

HERITAGE-PRESERVATION PROJECT COMBINES LITERARY TIME CAPSULE WITH COMPANION WEBSITE

story by Ann Hauprich

Can it really be that as autumn leaves were tumbling last September the average villager's vocabulary included neither the acronym PPE nor the phrase social distancing?

Or that smiles could be seen on faces as residents blissfully interacted at close range with friends, neighbors and tourists who had flocked to Ballston Spa's downtown to savor the excitement of The Way We Were Car Show in October?

Is it possible the youngest among us this fall might not be aware that the wearing of face masks in public places was once reserved for Halloween?

Although I had huddled with others on the steps of the Post Office to witness the filming of some Depression-era scenes for The Way We Were in 1973, nothing could have prepared me for Front Street's transformation into a sci-fi movie set after a State of Emergency was declared in March 2020.

The few faces that were spotted along eerily empty sidewalks after measures were taken to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 were all but hidden behind often improvised protective respiratory coverings and, in some instances, plexi-glass shields. Invaders from another galaxy could easily have blended in with the scenery.

It was around this time that the quest began in earnest to capture the indomitable Spirit of Ballston against the unprecedented backdrop of a coronavirus pandemic for a literary Time Capsule and its companion web site BallstonSpaLiving.com.

The Table of Contents that Webmaster-Publisher Mary Hauprich Reilly (BSHS Class of 1981) and I (BSHS Class of 1971) originally drafted for the Ballston Spa Living 2020 Community Yearbook has had to be "re-imagined" multiple times since the first rainbows of hope, birdhouses and Ballston BLOOMS banners appeared.

Although the website contains foundational blocks for the heritage preservation project, it will take a whole village to ensure the community yearbook succeeds in mirroring life as it has been unfolding here since the dawn of the new decade

As part of our mission to preserve the past and present for future generations, we are seeking family-friendly contributions based upon such themes as inspiring acts of kindness, stories behind masked faces, remote learning and WFH experiences -- to name but a few. Did the pandemic change the way you celebrated St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and/or Labor Day? How about personal or professional SMILE-stones? A picture is worth a thousand words.

A glance at the labor of love's ever-evolving Table of Contents and bonus web features <https://ballstonspaliving.com/toc-2020/> provides added insight into the scope of possibilities. As an example, sections devoted to pre-COVID grand openings and post-State of Emergency re-openings, first responders, front line workers, houses of worship, patriotic organizations, service clubs and human interest stories are still being developed. An example of the latter includes a tribute to some health care professionals at LaMarco Physical Therapy who responded to early PPE supply shortages (<https://ballstonspaliving.com/stories-behind-the->

facemasks/) by donating their time and treasure to craft face masks on their home sewing machines to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Other recent offerings include a multi-tiered feature about The NEW Old Chocolate Factory <https://ballstonspaliving.com/new-old-chocolate-factory/> and a salute to Village Police Officer John Cioecke who went above and beyond the call of duty to rescue a wedding in 2019 and then brightened the couple's first anniversary in 2020: <https://ballstonspaliving.com/couple-grateful-to-law-enforcement-official-who-said-i-do-when-they-sought-wedding-day-help/>

A cornerstone of the website is a series of Q & As with "Pillars, Posts & Supporting Beams" of the community. The first to be featured were Mayor Larry Woolbright <https://ballstonspaliving.com/mayor-larry-woolbright-interview/>, Village Clerk Teri O'Connor <https://ballstonspaliving.com/village-clerk-teri-oconnor-q-and-a/>, Ballston Spa Chief



Dentist Thomas Pray and his team of caring professionals: Front L-R Joy Soriano, Thomas Pray and Kellie Bean; Back: Gabby Lewis, Alyssa McDowell, Asma Karimah, Taylor Joyce and Susie Joyce

Librarian Andrea Simmons <https://ballstonspaliving.com/librarian-andrea-simmons/> and Ballston Spa Business & Professional Association (BSBPA) Executive Administrator Ellen Mottola <https://ballstonspaliving.com/bsbpa-ellen-mottola-interview/>. 2020 Postmaster Joseph Amash is among the next on our list of distinguished personalities to be honored.

Other works-in-progress include a tribute to Mark Blech's newest community art exhibit honoring First Responders that also shines the spotlight on Cold Cases involving missing persons, including a BSHS Class of 1996 graduate who vanished without a trace from her SUNY/Albany campus in 1998. The abduction of Suzanne Lyall inspired her mother Mary and now late father Doug to co-found The Center for HOPE which has since earned national acclaim for its humanitarian and social justice initiatives.

Another forthcoming story celebrates the birth of a weekly village newspaper called The Ballston Spa Express whose print editions hold the promise of being warmly welcomed by readers for generations to come. (I cannot help but already be a fan because my very first published piece appeared in the old Ballston Journal while I was a teen representing the Rotary Club of Ballston Spa as an international exchange student in Denmark half a century ago.)

Many visitors to the Ballston Spa Living web site have expressed delight in following a series titled Village Vignettes by Paul Monaco <https://ballstonspaliving.com/meet-paul-monaco>. While all of the BSHS Class of 1981 alum's contributions are exquisite, Paul's most recent offering about how front porches soothe stress and foster community spirit is especially eloquent <https://ballstonspaliving.com/porches/>. We are looking forward to showcasing samples from the 2020 photography portfolio of Antonio Bucca, who graduated with the BSHS Class of 1971 <https://ballstonspaliving.com/tony-bucca/> as well as images captured by Junior Photographer Aiden Irish <https://ballstonspaliving.com/junior-photographer-aiden-irish/>. The multi-talented 16-year-old also recently serenaded a village woman on the occasion of her 80th birthday, but that's quite literally another story https://ballstonspaliving.com/josie-uhlingers_80th-birthday/.

All that's still missing are contributions from Y-O-U!

As a holiday gift to the community, a digital copy of the title will be available free of charge by December 24 via BallstonSpaLiving.com and www.LegaciesUnlimited.com. Professionally printed and bound copies of the full-color 8.5" x 11" volume that will include special sections honoring Spirit of Ballston Spa contributors and sponsors will be donated to multiple libraries, resource centers and historical societies. (Those wishing to purchase copies for private collections will also be able to do so.)

The deadline for submitting images with detailed captions is September 30. To learn more please email: AnnHauptich4@gmail.com or visit www.BallstonSpaLiving.com.



Digital artistic rendering of Ballston Spa Mayor Larry Woolbright by Mary Hauptich Reilly



Digital artistic rendering of Webmaster Mary Hauptich Reilly and Editor Ann Hauptich



Sophia Horn and Amalia Hostetter



Aiden Irish snapped this picture of Mary Alice Hallett at the Ballston Spa Community Garden gate



Ballston Spa Living "Village Vignettes" contributor Paul Monaco outside of The Iron Roost



Digital artistic rendering of Librarian Andrea Simmons



Stephanie Rizzi and Angie Irwin from FACT (Felice Advocacy Coming Together)



Shopping at Hannaford with COVID protections



Digital artistic rendering of Village Clerk Teri O'Connor

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