

Franklin Historical Society, January 2025—Happy New Year!

From a white Christmas to a greenish—brown New Year's (of which no one was dreaming...), is confusing the heck out of indigenous plant life. If you are a snow enthusiast, this warming trend has done you no favors, but those who hate shoveling the white stuff, especially when wet and heavy, are smiling in relief. Winter marks a hiatus for the Society, but does not mean the Society is inactive. Labor Day was the last time for the season that the museum was open to the public, except by special arrangement, of course. November was the month in which the last official meeting took place, and December tied up the year in a neat holiday bow with the traditional pot-luck dinner.

So what does go on when cold weather sets in as a matter of course?

In years past, a "building check" was carried out on a regular basis, especially when the mercury was in the single digits, to check for warm pipes in the basement delivering hot water from the buildings across the driveway. That ended when the heating plant was shut down and the Society installed its own boiler. Now the protocol is to regularly monitor the level of propane in the outside tanks to insure an uninterrupted flow to heat the lower two floors of both the Webster/Tay. Even though the thermostats are set at 45 degrees (to keep pipes from freezing), consumption is still considerable. The first fill of the two tanks this season resulted in a bill on excess of \$500. This is why the Society is fortunate to have a loyal membership, and invested savings, should the need arise to augment the checking balance. A routine walk-through checks for leaks, cold spots, working thermostats, a secure cellar with warmed crawl space, and any problems with the alarm system. Donations to the Society continue, albeit at a more leisurely pace, continue, as does the responsibility to properly credit and catalog them. In that regard, the Society gratefully acknowledges the following:

From **Chris Lewis**, a Trachy Agency envelope and business card, and key chains from Grevior Furniture and Franklin Auto and Cycle;

From **Annette Cain**, a newspaper article on Daniel Webster;

From **Zeb Fontaine**, Arthur Fontaine's army cap, shoes, photo, certificates of completion of training, and a mannequin on which to display his father's uniform (previously donated);

And from **Kathy Fuller**, hand bells for Marjorie Briggs and Edward B. Briggs, for their excellence in teaching, a 1976 Winter Carnival booklet, various vintage Life, Look, and Woman's Day magazines, a 1903 Farmer's Almanac, and a 1900 book by Elizabeth Barrett Browning for our school room display.

News updates: Although the renovation of Soldiers Memorial/City Hall/Opera House is moving to the next planning phase, there is a sad reminder that bringing the building "up to code" comes at a price, and not just the cost of the necessary bond. So much of the original interior elements will be lost forever. In 2016, the one remaining corner staircase to the balcony was uncovered intact when the space across from the City Clerk's office was being expanded. Its twin, on the other side, had been demolished to accommodate storage in the Clerk's office. Now, both will be gone.



The good news is that promises have been secured to protect the G.A.R. Hall from losing any of its original character, displays, and artifacts, while the surrounding area will be completely altered, including the original doors to the Hall and to the balcony, as being non-compliant to code. Perhaps the trim can be saved....

The iconic 1891 Franklin and Tilton RR trestle is also threatened with demolition by action of the city council. If the council votes to appropriate the one million dollar match to the state's four million dollar grant, the last hope for the span's salvation will be lost, and the trestle will be razed, and a modern walkway will replace it. In its heyday, the trestle delivered people and goods between Tilton and Franklin and was a testament to the city's industrial prowess. Its presence speaks volumes about the history it embodies, as its absence will speak only to another loss of visual vestiges of a storied past.



The winner of the Society's Festival of Trees Christmas wreath has yet to come forward to claim their free membership and books, but time remains for them to contact the president for their gifts and tour. Leigh Webb can be contacted via the Society's website "contact" button. By filling out the form and submitting it, the information goes directly to Leigh.

To all, may 2025 be the best year for everyone, including good health, friendship, and and most of all, caring for one another every day, week, and month throughout. There is no time limit on kindness.

Happy New Year!