The Great Give 2016 will take place on Tuesday, May 3, 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 4. It is an online giving event that enables donors to give to their favorite organizations quickly and conveniently. You may go to our website: www.sheltonhistoricalsociety.org and navigate to the form, fill in the blanks using your credit card, and presto! Maybe your gift will be matched, multiplying your donation. More than ever, your support is appreciated BECAUSE….

As you may know, a devastating blow was dealt to Shelton Historical Society in late October 2015. The roof of the Brownson House on the grounds of Shelton History Center was under repair when a wind-driven storm forced rain through the protective tarp, soaking the ceilings of four rooms and flooding each floor from the attic to the basement artifact storeroom. Immediate help from responding fire departments, volunteers, staff, and community members hustled damp boxes of documents and artifacts to safety in dry areas of the historic 1822 house. A disaster recovery service responded immediately, setting up equipment that dried floors and walls overnight. The plaster ceilings, however, took weeks to thoroughly dry and required constant monitoring. As insurance investigators refused coverage for this disaster, citing several factors.

Remarkable responses from the community counteracted the discouraging news from the insurance company. Curators and archivists from as far away as Lebanon, Essex, Simsbury, Groton, and Waterbury arrived the next day to help assess the collection of documents with Shelton Historical Society curator Deborah Rossi and librarian Ellen Kolesk. Fortunately, the mild day helped papers dry quickly as they were spread on tables in the Wilson Barn of the History Center complex. Considering that thousands of papers were affected, very few were found to need advanced conservation care.

Regina Misercola, a member of the Society’s youth group, Teen Time Travelers, entered an essay contest sponsored by VolunteerSquare.com that invited students in area high schools to explain what community volunteering meant to them. Entries were due just days after the incident so Regina thought the timing was significant. A student who loves language, Regina was a contest winner and generously turned over the $450 prize to the Shelton Historical Society. While she kept her idea a secret from the staff, she shared her plan with other members of the teen group, then surprised executive director Tracey Tate with her gift. To Regina, community service is “about making a difference in the lives of others and being a part of something that really matters.” To read her essay, connect to http://blog.ctnews.com/volunteersquare/2015/11/23/and-the-winners-are/#photo-713094

So impressed with the work that the museum professionals from around Connecticut did in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, the Teen Time Travelers spent a few of their Friday evening meetings making gifts for the volunteers. Many regular Historical Society volunteers arrived to help, too, some still coming weekly to rehouse all of the artifacts and documents that were removed from the store-room.
A Good Reason (continued)

Second graders in Mrs. Peruzzi’s class at Mohegan School decided to accomplish chores at home in exchange for earning money to donate. Their class had been scheduled to attend an educational program called “Children’s Chores and More” at the Society just days after the disaster. Their donation of over $300, earned by raking leaves and washing dishes, will be used toward repairing an 1887 map of the Borough of Shelton that sustained water damage. Upon initial investigation, the map seems to be the only original one in existence, so it will be important to restore it.

Shelton Intermediate School teachers, administrators, and staff paid to “dress down” and gave those funds to the Historical Society, while staff from the Jones Family Farms Winery also made a contribution from a holiday collection. Other historical societies around Connecticut sent their spare archival boxes to replace many that were ruined. Shelton Historical Society members and others from the community contributed monetarily to the effort.

The Valley Community Foundation and the Bassett Foundation granted emergency funding to pay for the initial stabilization of the building. Mr. Bernard Brownson, the grandson of the last owners of the house, the Jones family, and the Derby-Shelton Rotary also made contributions.

As of this writing, progress has been made: roof repairs and related projects are complete, ceilings and walls have been patched and painted, and molding will be replaced where it’s needed. A committee is trying to locate appropriate carpets for the various rooms.

The more time consuming work for the staff is handling the collection items. This work is ongoing. Furniture is being cleaned by curator Debbie and volunteers. Fortunately, while water ruined dozens of archival boxes, most documents that were housed inside weren’t damaged. Ellen and weekly volunteers are busy sorting and filing those documents, placing them carefully into new boxes and making sure they are catalogued at the same time.

“There has been a whirlwind of activity as we recover from this event, even while we remain closed to the public,” says Tracey Tate. “It’s been heartwarming to get such positive and surprising responses from all kinds of people. We hope to come back stronger than ever. All this help is inspiring us to work hard to do so.”

From the Director

— Tracey Tate

Greetings—Happy Spring!

While not quite business as usual at Shelton History Center, the staff is available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays—as usual. Someone is in the office, barring illness, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.—but usually longer!

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel the normal spring activities of welcoming school groups to our premises because all the buildings are currently being used to store and/or process the collection items that had to be removed from the storeroom. We miss the students and hope to see them next year at this time.

In the meantime, while the house is being repaired and restored, the office in the basement looks like an episode of Hoarders as we examine, file, box, clean, and catalog—methodically and carefully—all the things that were removed from the storeroom and dried. Thanks to Karel, Nancy, Andy, and Steph, volunteers who arrive weekly without fail to assist Debbie and Ellen, we are actually benefitting from the normal disruption in our schedules to improve our procedures and the management of the organization. The Collection Management Committee have been helpful in assisting with decisions and policies. And the Teen Time Travelers aren’t afraid of getting their hands dirty!

Planning for the usual annual events is ongoing behind the scenes: see elsewhere for details about Connecticut Open House Day, the Vintage Vehicles Antique and Classic Car Show (Father’s Day), and our monthly book discussion (Shelton Reading Circle). If you are social media savvy, please “like us on Facebook” for more time sensitive information than can be entered onto our website: www.sheltonhistoricalsociety.org. A good old-fashioned phone call works, too (leave a message due to our part-time hours: 203-925-1803).

Lastly, we are grateful to the Connecticut League of History Organizations, the professional organization to which we belong, and Co-Steps, the statewide effort between cultural organizations and emergency responders, for their advice and assistance during this time. Best of all, the outpouring of support and understanding from our community, our members, and our donors while we pick up the pieces, means the most—we can’t thank you enough!
**BULLETIN**  
**A Page to Save**

**Teen Time Travelers**

History-loving teens, ages 13-18, learn, teach, and promote awareness of the Shelton Historical Society. They meet every other Friday after school at Shelton History Center, learn behind-the-scenes museum operations and local history, complete volunteer tasks, and take trips to various places of interest.

**Now Recruiting!**

**JOIN US!**

(That’s not really us on the left.)

- Knock off community service requirements!
- Meet new friends!
- Learn about local history and museum secrets!
- Visit cool places!
- Have FUN!

Find out more by calling 203-925-1803, emailing shcdirector@gmail.com or just coming to a meeting:
May 13, 27, June 10, 24, July 8: 4:30-6:00 p.m.

**From the Archives: BEARD’S LAW**

Take a moment to read this list by David Beard from Louisville, Kentucky. It was sent to us in a collection of papers from Phil Jones and while he didn’t write the words, he most likely lived by the sentiments. I’m sure he would be happy if we passed them on to you. It’s what we do!!

- If you open it, **close it**.
- If you turn it on, **turn it off**.
- If you unlock it, **lock it**.
- If you break it, **repair it**.
- If you can’t fix it, **call in someone who can**.
- If you borrow it, return it.
- If you use it, **take care of it**.
- If you make a mess, clean it up.
- If you move it, **put it back**.
- If it belongs to somebody else and you want to use it, **get permission**.
- If you don’t know how to operate it, **leave it alone**.
- If it doesn’t concern you, don’t mess with it.

During our yearly inventory of the general library collection of books, we have noted a gap in the collection of Shelton High School Argus yearbooks. These favorite sources are invaluable for identifying residents, observing culture, and following the historical development of the educational system.

We are not sure if they were printed during the Depression years. Looking to the future, we would like to obtain a current yearbook every year for archival purposes. Would you be able to donate any of the missing volumes?

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**Wish List**

These donations always help!
Drop them off in the office any Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, 10-3.

- Paper towels
- Cleaning supplies
- Tall trash can liners
- Tissues
- Reams of copy paper
- Snack packages or baked goods for teens who meet on Fridays (no nuts)
A Message from Membership:

Hello!

We started out our membership drive in late January with a great, quick response. Thank you to many of you for bringing your renewal memberships to our annual meeting. As always, it’s great to see members at our events. Thank you to those who promptly mailed in their renewals. The membership drive continues, and we still need the support of our members who haven’t mailed in their renewals. We certainly hope you just need a little reminder from us; we hope you continue your membership, be part of our growing non-profit organization, and we need your ongoing financial support through your membership. It’s one way to help us with our mission of education, historic preservation, and to continue to provide programs for our members and the public.

Join Our Gang!

Membership in the Shelton Historical Society
Your financial support through membership in our organization is greatly appreciated.
If you are interested in becoming a member to support our missions and programs, please send completed form with a check payable to:

Shelton Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 2155
Shelton CT 06484

Name:_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
Address:___________________________________________________________________________________________________
Phone #:_____________________________________________   Email:_______________________________________________
New Membership:________    Renewal Membership:__________
Business Membership: $100.00_____   Family Membership:$30.00_____ (Number in family_____)    Individual:$20.00________
Would you like to know about our Volunteer opportunities?_________

In thanks and friendship,
Cheryl

We are pleased to recognize that so many of our members have been with us since the Shelton Historical Society’s founding. We also want to note that many of our families are not only first generation, but second, and in some cases, third generation family members. We are happy to see the growth of our organization through its members; both new and those who continue to join us year after year.

To those who need a reminder to join us OR if your membership renewal is still on the “to do list” please help us save postage and mail it right away with the form below.

Shelton Historical Society is a 501© 3 Non-profit organization
School’s Out!

Once again, Shelton Historical Society will be participating in Connecticut Open House Day on Saturday, June 11, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

The Connecticut Office of Tourism is sponsoring the 12th annual one-day statewide event designed to showcase Connecticut’s diverse world of history, art, and tourism. It’s a great way for residents to discover or rediscover all that is happening in our state. It is hoped that once Connecticut residents learn about the wealth of treasures in our own backyard, they will share their newly gained appreciation and enthusiasm with visiting family and friends and become Connecticut ambassadors.

While the Brownson House will remain closed due to ongoing repairs, we will celebrate the end of the school year by throwing open the doors of the Trap Fall School and hosting activities meant for the entire family. Can you imagine spending your school day, possibly in fact, your entire school career, in a one-room school? How did you learn with all the different ages attending? What games occupied your recess time? What did you do if the weather was bad?

So while the academic year will be almost over by Saturday, June 11, you’re invited to attend our “School’s Out!” program on Connecticut Open House Day. Refreshments will be offered and the Teen Time Travelers will plan surprises for one and all! Plan on coming between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. when you’re planning your excursions to visit other Connecticut Open House Day venues.

May
3 8 am The Great Give
4 The Great Give ends 8 pm
10 Shelton Reading Circle at Huntington Branch Library, 6:30-8:00 pm
13 Teen Time Travelers, 4:30
17 Board meeting
23 Collection Management meeting, 4 pm
27 Teen Time Travelers, 4:30
30 Memorial Day

June
10 Teen Time Travelers
11 Connecticut Open House Day 11 am-3 pm
14 Shelton Reading Circle at Huntington Branch Library, 6:30-8:00 pm
18 Volunteers needed to set up for Car Show!
19 Vintage Vehicles Antique & Classic Car Show
21 Board meeting
24 Teen Time Travelers, 4:30

July
8 Teen Time Travelers
9 Olde Ripton Garden Club garden tours around town (5 members’ gardens) 10 am-3 pm Tickets $25
12 Shelton Reading Circle At Huntington Branch Library 6:30-8:00 pm
22 Teen Time Travelers, 4:30

August
8-12 Adventures in History, 9 am-12 For children 7-12. Registration is necessary. See website.
5, 19 Teen Time Travelers, 4:30
SHELTON READING CIRCLE

Meets the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:00 pm at the Huntington Branch Library, 41 Church St., Shelton CT 06484

It’s free and open to the public. In general, books tend to have an historical theme. Consider joining us!

May 10: A Star for Mrs. Blake by April Smith

June 14: In the Garden of Beasts by Erik Larson

Copies of the books can be obtained at the Huntington Branch Library by calling 203-926-0111 and placing a reserve. Call Ellen Kolesk at Shelton History Center for more Information: 203-925-1803.