



The Half Moon

The Newsletter of the Newtown Historic Association



IN THIS VOLUME:

- Crafting a New Sign for the Half-Moon Inn
- Highlights From Recent Events and Information on Upcoming Events
- Holiday e-Auction Winners
- Docent Training

Welcome

The Newtown Historic Association presents this newsletter to the Newtown community with the goal of providing news and information on related historic and preservation events and activities in our area. We welcome any suggestions for future articles.

Officers

Dan Griffin, President
Brian Rounsavill, First Vice President
Richard Speranza, Second Vice President
Mary Jo Garner, Recording Secretary
Caroline Bennett, Corresponding Secretary
Lori Michelin, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Keyna Crawford
Paul Gouza
Betsey King
Jeff Marshall
Geno Peruzzi
Amy Smith
Susan Thompson
Gina Tognini
David Walton
Honorary Life Director – David Callahan
Parliamentarian – Tim Potero

Callahan Research Center

100 Mercer Street
Newtown, PA 18940 USA
Research Center Hours:
Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
And also, by appointment

New Members

Bill & Amy Avayou, Velos & Angela Christou, Sherry & Randy Flager, Carter & Casey Franz, Andrew, Maureen, & Anna Hersh, Ian Kelly, Sherri Marino, John B. Monaghan...



Upcoming Calendar

February:

- 2/1: **Annual Appreciation Dinner** at 6:00 p.m., Temperance House
- 2/4: **NHA Happy Hour** at 6:00 p.m. (Court Inn) and **“Frederick Douglass Returns to the Newtown Theatre”** at 8:00 p.m. (Newtown Theatre)

March:

- 12/6: **“Titanic Around the World”** at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn

April:

- 4/11: **Tavern Night** at 5:00 p.m., Court Inn
- 4/18: **Annual Spring Clean Up** at 8:30 a.m., Court Inn
- 4/20: **Annual Business Meeting followed by “Show and Tell”** at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn

For the latest information and further details, visit www.newtownhistoric.org.

New Members (cont'd)

Kathryn Puzycki, Judith Ritter, Kevin & Jane Rumbelow, Craig & Patti Slavtcheff, Frank & Francine Verwiel

NHA and Social Media

The Newtown Historic Association is active on social media. Be sure to follow us on Facebook (#newtownhistoricassociation) and Instagram (@newtownhistoric). We have a separate presence for Market Day (#newtownmarketday, @newtownmarketday).

Crafting a New Sign for the Half-Moon Inn Historic Inspiration and Modern Craft Unite in Newtown

By Paul Gouza

The design for the new Half-Moon Inn signboard draws upon local historical influences, traditional artistic elements, and period craftsmanship. Undertaking this project was a distinct privilege, as it involved upholding a legacy shaped by esteemed artists in the community.

During the design process, I found significant influence in a 1936 paper by Dr. B.F. Fackenthal, Jr., a noted metallurgist and iron industry executive from Riegelsville, PA. The paper, submitted to the Bucks County Historical Society and titled, “General LaFayette’s Journey from Brandywine to Bethlehem with Special Reference to Inscriptions in Taverns and Tavern Signboards,” highlights the tradition of naming taverns after the pictorial illustrations depicted on their signboards, a practice dating to an era when widespread illiteracy made imagery essential for identification.

According to Dr. Fackenthal’s research, celebrated artists have a storied history of painting tavern signboards. These include Hans Holbein, William Hogarth, Sir John Everett Millais, and notably Newtown’s own Edward Hicks. Hicks himself contributed to this

visual legacy with his sign for Bogart’s Inn (later General Greene Inn) in Buckingham Township, as well as his renowned 1844 work, “Penn’s Treaty with the Indians,” now displayed in the Hicks Room at the Half-Moon Inn. Bogart’s Inn hosted meetings of the Bucks County Committee of Safety, beginning on July 21, 1775, after the group was first organized in Newtown on July 9, 1774. Other Newtown signboards painted by Hicks include those for the Bird-in-Hand, Brick Hotel, Temperance House, White Hall, and the Newtown Library Company.

In keeping with this artistic and historical tradition, the new signboard was crafted from medium density overlay plywood, a material specially designed for outdoor signage. Its hand-painted surface features colonial white and matte black lettering, utilizing Laney’s Old Village acrylic latex and Rust-oleum latex, respectively. A border of British red (Laney’s Old Village/Acrylic latex) frames the artwork. Durability was prioritized, with the signboard receiving one coat of primer, two coats of paint, and a protective finish of three varnish coats.

The project required a significant investment of time, over 100 hours spent on design, layout, and painting, all accomplished within a six-week period.

(continued on the next page)



Crafting a New Sign for the Half-Moon Inn

Historic Inspiration and Modern Craft Unite in Newtown (cont'd)

By Paul Gouza

The completion of the signboard was made possible with the support of community members, including Dave Callahan, Jim Garner, Brian Rounsavill, and the staff at Newtown Hardware House, whose assistance proved invaluable throughout the process.

The New Sign



Paul Gouza, Jim Garner, and Brian Rounsavill



Do You Have Historic Items to Donate?

Photo: Neale Messina

If you have historic items to donate to the NHA (pictures, letters, research on a property or family, furniture, etc.), please contact us at (215) 968-4004.



Interested in renewing your membership or becoming a member? If so, please visit <https://www.newtownhistoric.org/renewal>



November General Meeting

It was an informative and lively presentation at the November general meeting, "Spotlight on the Golden Rod House."

First, NHA Board member, Jeff Marshall, led the room through the history of the Golden Rod House, interwoven with stories about its first owner, Annie Skeer.

Next up was Newtown Borough resident, Rebecca Rescate. Fueled by her passion for historic preservation and drive to restore the home to its former glory, Rebecca shared numerous photos and stories about both the highs and the lows she and her husband, Chris, have experienced since moving into the Golden Rod House about five years ago.

Jeff Marshall and Rebecca Rescate



Jeff and Rebecca were the dynamic duo of Newtown that evening and they kept the audience wanting to learn more.

It was a full room. Approximately 50 people were in attendance.

November General Meeting



Winner from the NHA House Tour Ticket to the NLC's Book Lovers Party

Photo: Nancy Webster

Jim Murray from Yardley, PA, is the lucky winner for two tickets to the annual Newtown Library Company's Book Lovers Party.

The party is being held on **Saturday, February 28th, 2026, starting at 6:00 p.m.** This year, the event will take place at the Morell Smith's American Legion Hall, 41 Linden Avenue, Newtown, and there will be a live band for everyone to enjoy. During the event, the Newtown Library Company (NLC) will also be honoring 250 years of service and sacrifice by Newtown's military members.

With live music, delicious food, drinks, and dancing—it will be a night to honor both our history and our vibrant community.

Tickets for the event are available for purchase on the Newtown Library Company's website:

<https://www.newtownlibrarycompany.org/events>

Layla Leuthy-Peck (NLC member) and Tara Grunde-McLaughlin (Newtown Borough Mayor)



NHA Logo Store

The NHA logo store is open for business!

Give the gift of Newtown pride. Shop local throughout the year with NHA-branded mugs, totes, and cozy gear.

From vintage-inspired caps to classic tees, NHA logo gear lets you represent Newtown in style. Perfect for history lovers, hometown heroes, and all local yocals—near or far!

Grab a hoodie, sip from a historic mug, and support the mission.

Every purchase benefits the NHA. Shop anytime at:

<https://newtownhistoric.printful.me/>



Annual Holiday Open House Tour

Photos: Neale Messina

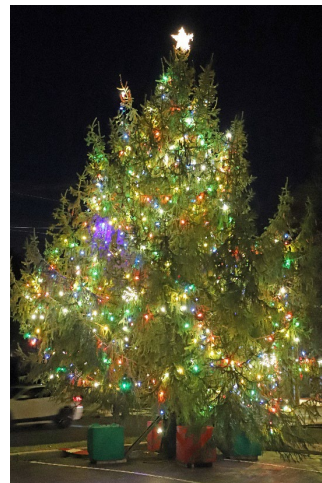
The Newtown Historic Association held its 62nd Annual Holiday Open House Tour on Saturday, December 6, 2025. Visitors enjoyed glimpses into some of Newtown's unique private residences, all dressed up for the holidays. This year, five private homes and seven public buildings were open for the day, including the Half-Moon Inn and the Callahan Research Center.

Over 900 tickets were sold to benefit the NHA. It was another amazing turnout! The NHA extends our sincerest appreciation to all who attended, volunteered, sponsored, and/or opened their home or building. It was a great day and a huge success.



Annual Holiday Open House Tour

Photos: Neale Messina



2025 Historic Open House Tour Sponsors and Advertising Partners

The Annual Historic Open House Tour was funded by generous sponsors and advertising partners from local businesses and supporters. The NHA greatly appreciates their generosity.

Holiday House Tour Sponsors



Bob Weller
Founder and Chief Executive Officer



Holiday House Tour Advertising Partners

Peruzzi



peruzzi.com

LAW OFFICES

STUCKERT AND YATES



Mary Dinneen
Katie Dinneen



Countryside Gardeners Club

CLARK'S FLOWER SHOP



FLECK FAMILY HOLDINGS

The Cosack Team



Annual Appreciation Dinner

The NHA Annual Appreciation Dinner to honor those homeowners and public building stewards who participated in the 2025 Holiday Open House Tour will be held on **Sunday, February 1st, 2026, at the Temperance House**, 5 S. State Street, in Newtown. Come help us celebrate our volunteers!

NOTE: WE WILL NOT BE SENDING INVITATIONS VIA THE POST OFFICE THIS YEAR.

Cash bar begins at 6:00 p.m. and the dinner begins at 7:00 p.m. The fee is \$60 per person and is payable online (link below) or by check (include your entrée choice) payable to Newtown Historic Association and mailed to Keyna Crawford, 116 N. Congress St, Newtown, PA 18940. Entrée options are:

Filet of beef (8 oz)
Chicken Marsala
Broiled salmon with bruschetta

For additional information and to purchase tickets online, visit: <https://newtownhistoric.org/.../annual-appreciation.../>

Space is limited. The reservation deadline is Saturday, January 24th, 2026.

If you have any questions, please call Keyna at (267) 679-9287. We hope to see you there!

NHA Happy Hour and Frederick Douglass Returns to the Newtown Theatre

On February 4, 1864, Frederick Douglass visited Newtown, PA, and spoke at Newtown Hall, now known as the Newtown Theatre. **On Wednesday, February 4th, 2026** – 162 years later to the day – the theatre will welcome back nationally acclaimed Frederick Douglass impersonator Darius Wallace to the theatre to deliver “Frederick Douglass: The Self-Made Man & The Work of Rebuilding a Nation.” This is a completely different show than in 2025.

Darius Wallace (“Frederick Douglass”)



In this one-man theatrical event, Wallace steps into the voice, passion and moral authority of Frederick Douglass to deliver his power Self-Made Man speech – an enduring message about resilience, education and self-determination. But this is more than a recitation. The evening expands to include what Douglass spoke about in Newtown in 1864, which was his urgent advocacy for the Freedmen’s Bureau – an institution that provided education, housing,

and legal aid to millions of newly freed men and women – and his vision for a nation united by justice and equality.

This performance speaks powerfully to today’s conversations about equity, citizenship, and the responsibility we share in shaping a more just society. It is a stirring reminder that the work of freedom is never finished and that we all have a role in building the future.

General admission tickets for this special event are available for \$32 per person or \$27 for Newtown Theatre members. **Prior to the 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. theatre event, a limited number of tickets are available for a 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. cocktail hour at the historic Half-Moon Inn (Court Inn), 105 Court Street.** Wallace will attend the cocktail party as Frederick Douglass. Tickets for the cocktail hour/lecture combo are \$60 and include VIP seating at the theatre. All proceeds from the cocktail hour benefit the Newtown Historic Association.

A percentage of the ticket sales from the Frederick Douglass presentation will support the [African American Museum of Bucks County](#).

For additional details and to purchase tickets, visit: <https://www.thenewtowntheatre.com/.../frederick-douglass...>



March General Meeting

Our March general meeting will be held at the Court Inn on **Monday, March 16th, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.** The presenter is Thomas Lynskey and the presentation title is "Titanic Around the World."

The RMS Titanic sank on April 15, 1912, in the North Atlantic Ocean. The largest ocean liner in service at the time, Titanic was four days into her maiden voyage from Southampton, England, to New York City, United States, with an estimated 2,224 people on board when she struck an iceberg at 23:40 on April 14.



Mr. Lynskey, a part-time explorer and the speaker for the meeting, has travelled extensively to different sites around the world relating to the Titanic - where it was built, the docks it visited, and the graves where victims were buried. This presentation will essentially be a world tour of significant locations and key artifacts on display from the ship's story.

This event is free for members. Non-members are also welcome to attend, and donations are always appreciated.

NHA Newsletters

If you would like to revisit previous newsletters, you can find them on the Newsletters page of our website:

<https://www.newtownhistoric.org/about-us/newsletters/>.



Tavern Night

Back by popular demand, the Newtown Historic Association is resurrecting Tavern Night at the Court Inn on **Saturday, April 11th, 2026, beginning at 5:00 p.m.** More details will be forthcoming. Save the date!



Annual Spring Cleanup

Our Annual Spring Cleanup at the Court Inn will be held on **Saturday, April 18th, 2026, beginning at 8:30 a.m.**

We are seeking volunteers to assist with the cleanup. No experience necessary. Please come help us and have some fun making the Court Inn shine again, especially those who are interested in helping with our buildings and grounds. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Gouza at pgouza12@gmail.com.



Annual Business Meeting and April General Meeting

The NHA Annual Business Meeting and April general meeting will be held in the Court Inn on **Monday, April 20th, 2026, starting at 7:30 p.m.**

The Annual Business Meeting will be conducted first. It will include the election of Directors and Officers for a new term. Also, there will be a review of the organization's events over the past year.

Officers & Board of Directors (2026 - 2029)

Officers

Betsey King, President (4/24 – 4/27)
Paul Gouza, First Vice President (4/24 – 4/27)
Rick Speranze, Second Vice President (4/24 – 4/27)
Amy Smith, Recording Secretary (4/24 – 4/27)
Caroline Bennett, Corresponding Secretary (4/25 – 4/28)
Lori Michelin, Treasurer (4/26 – 4/29)

Directors

Keyna Crawford (4/25 – 4/28)
Dan Griffin (4/26 – 4/29)
Jeff Marshall (4/24 - 4/27)
Geno Peruzzi (4/25 – 4/28)
Gary Pickell (4/26 – 4/29)
Brian Rounsavill (4/25 – 4/28)
Susan Thompson (4/26 – 4/29)
Gina Tognini (4/26 – 4/29)
David Walton (4/25 – 4/28)

Timothy Potero, Parliamentarian (4/26 – 4/29)
David Callahan, Honorary Life Director

The Annual Business Meeting will be followed by the general meeting. The presentation topic is "Show and Tell." **Please bring your old/antique item to the meeting to participate!**

Holiday e-Auction Winners

The Newtown Historic Association's Holiday e-Auction was packed with local treasures, handcrafted décor, exclusive experiences, and collectible finds.

Congratulations to all our winning bidders:

- Robert Abrahamson
- Marc Butler
- Mary Jo Garner
- Paul Gouza
- Daniel Griffin
- Tara Grunde-McLaughlin
- Betsey King
- Ron Kumor
- Denise Metz
- Lori Michelin
- Tom Seiple
- Laura Shepherd
- Eileen Steele Slezak
- Gale Wiik
- Rebecca Wright

We appreciate everyone's interest and participation in our auction. Every bid helps fund preservation, education, and community programs that keep Newtown's story alive.



Docent Training

Photo: Neale Messina

The Newtown Historic Association is seeking volunteers to be trained as docents for the Half-Moon Inn during opening hours on Sunday afternoons. Docents play a vital role in welcoming visitors to the Inn and sharing the rich heritage of our Newtown history, including the new History of Newtown Exhibition.

If you enjoy history and engaging with people, this is a wonderful opportunity to make a meaningful contribution. Please contact the NHA via email at info@newtownhistoric.org or by calling (215) 968-4004 if you would like to participate in the docent training.



Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- Deiner Money Management, Inc. **(NEW)**
- Mary Dinneen, Realtor
- Edward Jones (Shikha Prashar)
- First National Bank & Trust Company of Newtown
- Fleck Family Holdings
- Gilded Home Furnishings Consignment
- INTERSTATE Building Maintenance **(NEW)**
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- Leber Insurance Group/Main Street Masterminds **(NEW)**
- Lin Bethman Auto Center, Inc.
- Marcolla Realty
- Marisa Pilla Design
- Dan McCloskey, Re/Max Properties **(NEW)**
- NAC/NAC Have A Heart Foundation **(NEW)**
- Newtown Business Association
- Parry Insurance
- Anthony Petsis & Associates, Inc.
- SDG Holdings I, LLC
- Steele's Gulf Auto Repair, Inc.
- Stuckert and Yates
- T & T Tree Service
- Tomasello Appraisals & Advisory
- Waitkus Design

Interested in renewing your membership or becoming a member? If so, please visit

<https://www.newtownhistoric.org/renewal>

