

PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS

A NEWSLETTER OF THE
PUBLIC HEALTH MUSEUM



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2017 in Review PHM Annual Meeting

On Saturday, November 4th, the Public Health Museum hosted its Annual Meeting for members and guests interested in hearing more about the Museum activities over the last year. Secretary Dr. Al DeMaria presided over the meeting, which included an overview of museum events, announcement of new partnerships created in 2017, and plans for the New Year.

We also welcomed several guests to our Annual Meeting – the Lowell Community Health Center, the Lawrence History Center and the Tewksbury Hospital Pines Cemetery group were represented at display tables – and we had two of our Outbreak! 2017 alumni in attendance to present about their summer experience.

Prior to the official start of the Annual Meeting we welcomed the family of Chester “Chet” Kennedy, Museum co-founder and former Board member, and hosted a memorial celebration in his honor. Our July edition this newsletter announced his passing on May 24th, 2017 along with a long list of his accomplishments in the field of public health.

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The Public Health Museum web page has a new look!
Click [here](#) to check it out.

2017 in Review continued

After the business meeting was adjourned Dr. DeMaria introduced our guest speaker for the evening, Dr. Barbara Poremba, a Professor Emeritus of Nursing at Salem State University. Dr. Poremba gave a fascinating account of what took place during and after the Coconut Grove Fire, honoring the 75th anniversary honoring the 75th anniversary of this tragedy which occurred on November 28th, 1942. A brief overview of the lecture can be found below.

Remembering the Coconut Grove Fire on the 75th Anniversary

Public Health and Safety Lessons Learned

Seventy five years ago, on November 28, 1942, Boston experienced its deadliest man-made disaster and our nation's deadliest nightclub fire. It was Boston's Titanic.

In a building that had an occupancy of 600, 492 lives were lost and another 166 persons were injured. Over the years, much attention has been devoted to the causes and legal actions taken. This tragedy brought about many reforms and advances:

The presentation focused on those lessons learned:

- Reforms in public health codes and safety standards mandated across the US
- Major changes in the treatment, rehabilitation and nursing care of burn victims
- Advances in psychiatric care for acute grief and crisis intervention
- Planning and management for disasters

The importance of the entire health care team was emphasized. Many of the fire's victims survived because of the skilled nursing care initially administered and the ensuing care provided over the next few weeks and several months. These nurses were recognized as true "unsung heroines" since they were also victims who suffered unthinkable emotional trauma by caring for the disaster victims.

Presentation by Dr. Barbara Poremba, Professor Emeritus of Nursing, Salem State University.



PHM Hosts Summer Intern and Volunteers

The Public Health Museum welcomed six volunteers and one intern to work with us this summer! Our volunteers helped with a number of tasks and projects around the Museum including assisting with tours, administrative work for Outbreak, and researching items within our collections. Volunteers Jamie and Miranda were able to identify information about medical equipment we knew little about, while volunteer Aanchal spent the summer learning more about public health and writing newsletter articles. Below are some statements from our volunteers about their summer experience:

“Volunteering at the Public Health Museum over the summer was a pleasure. Personally, I worked on doing research in the basement with another volunteer. We found everything from photographs dated back to the 1800s to vintage instruments that haven’t been used in years. It’s an experience unlike any other because you not only get to meet others interested in Public Health, but you get to learn about the history of the Tewksbury Hospital and surrounding hospitals as well.”

Jamie Saxonis, Salem State University

“As a volunteer at the museum I did research to enhance an existing exhibit, and attempted to discover the names and purposes of medical instruments in museum storage. Through my research, I learned more about many of the food and water safety procedures that I had come to take for granted - the pasteurization of milk, for example. I also was able to take a look back in time in medical history by researching instruments from a different era. Finally, the historic campus of the Tewksbury Hospital, particularly the Old Administration Building, provided a unique and interesting space to work.”

Miranda Skurla, Lafayette College



Summer volunteers and intern from left to right: Jahnvi, Aanchal, Jamie, Miranda, and Heather.

“Volunteering at the Public Health Museum was an enriching experience. Personally, I got to view and study several medical instruments located within the museum and write articles about them. In addition, I got to research information about syphilis and help the museum put together an article. Everyone was very supportive and the environment was great!”

Jahnvi Patel, Lowell High School

The Museum also benefited from having a Social Media Intern this summer working to expand upon our social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Heather Martenson is a recent graduate of the Art History program at UMass Amherst. She spent the summer as the Public Health Museum’s social media intern, running the museum’s social media sites to promote events and exhibits via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as collaborating with other volunteers and conducting research on objects in the museum’s collection. In addition, Heather worked to integrate social media into the museum’s exhibits to create a more interactive and engaging experience for visitors. Coming from an art historical background, the Public Health Museum encouraged Heather to step out of her comfort zone and broaden her horizons by giving her the opportunity to learn more about the world of public health.

The Public Health Museum was grateful for all the work our summer volunteers and intern provided! We wish them future success in their educational and professional endeavors!

A Day at the Public Health Museum

Getting to Know the Volunteers - Linda Perry

This article is the first in a series of interviews with Museum volunteers. Volunteers provide invaluable support for the Museum and their energy, talent, perseverance and sense of humor keep the Museum moving forward. In this interview, Linda Perry, a Museum volunteer since 2013 provides an overview of her role at the Museum.

Interview with Linda Perry by Margaret Ferguson

Describe what you do at the Museum:

It is hard to describe, officially I am the Volunteer Coordinator and a board member (now Treasurer). On a daily basis I lead tours and I assist other volunteers with their projects. I also help the Administrative Assistant and coordinate outreach events.

What qualifications do you have for this position:

I worked as a microbiologist in management for more than 40 years. My degree from Northeastern University is in medical technology and biology. Also I have a keen interest in public health and history. A fellow microbiologist recommended the Museum to me as something I might enjoy doing after retirement and she was right.

Describe a typical day at the Museum:

I am often the first one in so I open the Museum, empty the dehumidifiers, check all the exhibits to be sure they are tidy and ready for visitors. Sometimes cleaning is needed such as floors and glass cases. I check my email next and coordinate prearranged tours for schools and other groups. I lead tours, many are drop ins so we may have from one to four or five tours on a typical day. If a large school group is coming I will work with 1 or 2 other volunteers so that the students will have a better experience at the Museum. I really do whatever is needed on that particular day.

What is your favorite thing about working at the Museum:

I love learning more about public health. Some groups that come in may have a special interest such as mental health. This will inspire me to do more research on that subject so I can enhance the experience for those students. I also learn a lot from other volunteers who have their own area of expertise such as nursing, teaching, public health or library science. Duncan Hazel, for example, taught me so much as he had spent most of this life on the campus of Tewksbury Hospital (where the museum is located). Visitors too, who are from many different backgrounds, may have interesting stories to tell.

What do you think the future holds for the Museum:

We need to do long term strategic planning, increase membership and expand our outreach to schools and businesses. We need corporate donors that could stabilize our funding. I have seen continued growth in the four years I've been involved and I think that will continue.

What are you into right now:

I enjoy gardening, reading and traveling, spending time with friends and of course, working at the Museum.

Thanks Linda for all you do for the Museum!

Watch the next issue for an interview with another of the Museum's invaluable volunteers.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer contact the Museum at 978-851-7321 EXT 2606 or complete the [application](#) and mail it to PH Museum, Attn: Volunteer Coordinator, 365 East Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876 or email it to phmuseum@gmail.com.



Linda Perry, Museum volunteer since 2013.

2017-2018 Calendar of Events

December 1, 2017 is World AIDS Day

On December 1, 1988 the first global health awareness day was observed. Almost 30 years later the observance of World AIDS day continues, bringing awareness to the on-going fight against HIV, showing support for those living with HIV and remembering those who have died from AIDS. According to the [WHO](#) during 2016 there were 1.8 million people newly infected with HIV, 1.0 million HIV-related deaths, and at the end of 2016 there were an estimated 36.7 million people living with HIV across the globe. More information on HIV can be found on the [CDC](#) and [WHO](#) web sites.



January 28, 2018 is World Leprosy Day

Did you know that a small island in Buzzards Bay, just 12 miles off Cape Cod, was once home to Massachusetts' only leprosarium or leper colony? From 1905-1921 leprosy patients from Massachusetts were isolated on the small island. Once feared as a highly contagious disease, leprosy is actually not easily spread and can be effectively treated. In 2016 the WHO launched a new [Global Leprosy Strategy 2016-2020: Accelerating towards a leprosy-free world](#) to reinvigorate leprosy control efforts through early case detection, targeted detection in high-risk groups and improved health care access for marginalized populations.

For more information about leprosy, see the [CDC](#) and [WHO](#) web sites. For more information on leprosy in Massachusetts, see the *Mass Moments* article [The First Leprosy Patients Arrive on Penikese Island.](#)

February is American Heart Month

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), including stroke and heart disease, are the leading cause of death globally with a death due to CVD occurring on average every 40 seconds. Risk factors for CVD include:

- high blood pressure
- abnormal cholesterol levels and high triglycerides
- obesity
- lack of physical exercise

Ask your doctor about your risk for CVD and see the [American Heart Association web site](#) for more information on CVD.



Happy
Holidays
from the
Public Health
Museum!



The Public Health Museum is pleased to once again participate in the Tewksbury Public Library 2017 Festival of Trees. The Festival is meant to be “a community celebration of the holidays,” represented by trees from organizations and businesses all across Tewksbury.



The community joined together on December 8th to “enjoy beautiful trees, refreshments, and fun for the whole family” with free concerts being held throughout the evening.

The trees will remain on display throughout the month of December, so we encourage you to stop by the Tewksbury Public Library during Library hours to view the trees!

THE PUBLIC HEALTH MUSEUM IN MASSACHUSETTS

Our Mission

The Public Health Museum is a non-profit educational and cultural museum. The Museum strives to preserve records and artifacts from our nation's public health history; educate the public about the achievements and contributions of public health; and inspire people to build upon the past and continue to advance the future of public health. Our Museum provides a space to explore public health artifacts, inspire future public health professionals, and foster community involvement.

Our History

Incorporated in 1990 and open to the public since 1994, the Museum has the distinction of being the first of its kind in the nation. Massachusetts has a rich history of leadership and notable firsts in the birth of our nation. In the field of public health, Massachusetts was the first to record vital statistics; the first to implement a sustained board of health; and the first to implement a communicable disease surveillance system, among many others.

MUSEUM HOURS

Wednesdays, Thursdays and the first Saturday of each month 10:00am-2:00pm
OR
By Appointment

WALKING TOURS

Seasonal (May through October, weather permitting)
The third Thursday and first Saturday of each month 10:00am-2:00pm
OR
By Appointment

ADMISSION

\$5.00 per person for museum
\$10.00 per person for walking tour

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested in the Public Health Museum.

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