

# News&Views

from the

**Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum**

Vol. 5, No. 3

## Review of a Year Like No Other

Charles Dickens was born over 200 years ago, yet the opening words of his *A Tale of Two Cities* aptly describe 2020: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” We sincerely hope that all of you, our Museum family, are safe and well as we wrap up this most challenging of years.

Here at the Museum it has been a year of many accomplishments despite the severe impact of the pandemic. First a brief overview of the bad: Yes, every festival, concert, tea, wedding, play, and special event was canceled, resulting in the loss of 98% of our seasonal income.

But let’s focus on the “best of times” and what we—our donors and especially our volunteers—accomplished despite the pandemic:

- » We constructed a 40-foot-long footbridge linking the Boal Estate with Boalsburg’s Blue Spring Park. The bridge was the final link in a four-year project to construct nearly 3 miles of hiking trails throughout the Estate. During the pandemic, the trails became very popular; during a recent afternoon, we counted more than 130 walkers and joggers.
- » We planted more than 500 native trees and shrubs this year.
- » On the Columbus Vault building, we constructed a living roof, planted and nurtured it, and completed a handsome stone façade as well (photo at right).
- » In our various formal gardens, we planted over 350 perennials and ornamental shrubs.
- » Using wood harvested from the Estate, we sided the exterior of the Transportation Exhibit.

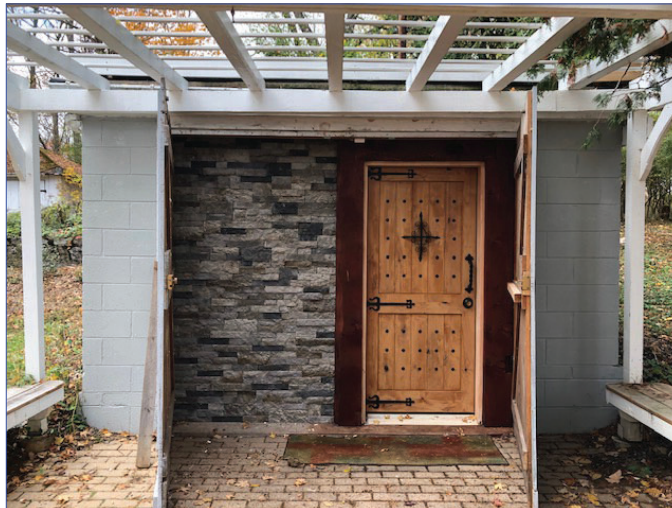


Photo by Bob Cameron

- » Local film producers used our site to create several video productions, including “The Nutcracker” by Centre Dance (see article and photos on page 5) and an episode of the PBS television show “Beyond Your Backyard.”
- » We initiated renovation of the Boal Barn Theatre to make it a year-round venue, insulated many of the walls, painted, cleaned, and obtained quotes to add air conditioning and heating.
- » We digitized over three dozen WWI posters and maps for exhibit.
- » We designed and constructed the Armory Annex to showcase the many WWI artifacts and the Boals’ role in that war.
- » As part of the Sensory Garden in front of the Chapel, we incorporated a wrought iron fence into the restored Boal fountain.
- » One Eagle Scout project consisted of constructing wood-duck nesting boxes along the trails with a detailed educational board about the birds, seen at right.
- » A second Eagle Scout project resulted in a bird observation deck with educational board, seen at lower right.
- » And a third Eagle Scout project is constructing a trail of bluebird houses along the Outer Loop trail.
- » We restored the gates at the main entrance and all the lamppost lights on the grounds.
- » We continued dismantling the Rockview Historic Greenhouse, in preparation for moving it to the Boal Estate in 2021 as part of a future butterfly vivarium.



- » We continued necessary maintenance of the buildings, grounds, trails, and roads throughout the year.
- » Ours was the only museum open in Centre County through the summer. Despite more than doubling the number of hours we were open each week (seven days a week, both mornings and afternoons), we were not able to welcome the usual number of visitors due to self-imposed safeguards. Tours were by reservation only and were limited to a family or friend group of no more than 10 people; consequently, a two-hour guided tour could be filled by a single couple, while in other years we would accommodate up to 15 people per tour. So we did many more tours, but for far fewer people. However, the hundreds of guests who visited from throughout the United States and abroad appreciated our efforts to be open. Unfortunately, we had to discontinue tours in early October when the local positivity rate increased.

A heartfelt “thank you” to all our incredible volunteers and donors who, in spite of a pandemic, produced major accomplishments at the museum this year, making it the “best of times.”

## Yard and Crafts Sale Wrap-up

The Museum’s Barn, Yard, and Crafts Sale on Saturday and Sunday, October 10 and 11, was a great success for us! Proceeds will benefit all aspects of the Museum, exhibits and buildings as well as landscaping and collections.

We are very grateful to our vendors of crafts and food for participating in this difficult time. We are also grateful to those of you who visited, bought yard-sale items, antiques, collectibles, and books, as well as food, drink, and crafts. Everyone was respectful of each other’s space and kept their masks on.





A clear sky and colorful autumn foliage helped draw patrons ready to buy—or just ready to get out of the house for an afternoon. Either way, the sale ended as a great success for the Museum.

All Barn sale photos by Mary Szmolko



## Filming the Nutcracker

During November, the Boal Mansion and our outdoor stage were two sites chosen by the Centre Dance Company to film this year's production of "The Nutcracker." Most years, the company presents the ballet at one of the theatrical venues in Centre County, but with theaters closed due to the coronavirus, they chose to film it. Below are images from the rehearsals and filming.



From left: "Mice" meet with Centre Dance Director Nicole Swope; a young ballerina puts on her slippers; members of the company pose on the Mansion staircase. Photos by Cindy Shaler



Centre Dance ballerinas gather for filming on the outdoor stage at the Museum.

Photo by Bob Cameron

## Museum Membership Drive

Through our ongoing Membership Drive this winter, we hope to involve more regional visitors and encourage more distant friends to plan trips to Boalsburg and Centre County in the coming year.

What does a membership mean for you? It means free tours for you and immediate family members all year long. Also, a 10% discount in the gift shop, discounts on special events, and more. We are also developing special programs that will be available only to members.

For the Museum, your membership and additional donation mean we can continue to maintain and improve all the facilities and exhibits here.

As a special incentive this year, members who give \$250 or more will receive an **elegant Museum tote bag** (burgundy logo and type printed on a cream tote) along with their membership card. So sign up to be a Sponsor, or purchase five Family **memberships for friends as holiday gifts**. (Be sure to include their names, emails, and addresses.) Or, if you're feeling really generous this year, go for the big one: the \$1,000 Explorer's Circle!

**If you don't live within travel distance and don't plan to travel**, you can still participate by becoming a member or simply making a donation. Any way you do it, we're grateful for your help in maintaining this wonderful historic site for future generations to enjoy!

### To Become a Museum Member

Print and fill out the Membership form on the following page and mail with your check to the address below. Or use the Membership form on our website, [www.boalmuseum.com](http://www.boalmuseum.com).

2021 Membership  
Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum  
P.O. Box 116  
Boalsburg, PA 16827

**Note:** If you live locally, we will hold your membership card at the Visitor Center until your first visit. Otherwise, we will mail it to you.

## Membership (January through December)

Annual benefits include:

- » FREE admission to the Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum for you and your immediate family: all regular tours and exhibits
- » Newsletters about the Museum, activities, history, and coming events
- » A 10% discount on purchases from the Museum store
- » Reduced fees at selected special events
- » Opportunities for training, service, and organizational involvement
- » The opportunity to assist in planning new special programs and events
- » The chance to take part in the preservation and interpretation of our historic past for future generations to learn and enjoy

Membership levels (insert quantity\*):

___ Individual \$30.00	___ Sponsor \$250.00
___ Student \$15.00	___ Benefactor \$500 or more
___ Family \$50.00	___ Explorer's Circle \$1,000 or more
___ Patron \$100.00	

Additional tax-deductible contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ At \$250 total or above, receive a free Museum tote bag. (Value of tote bag, \$20, is not tax-deductible.)

Please make your check payable to: Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum, which is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*\* For multiple memberships, add extra names, addresses, phone numbers, and emails on the back, so we can send the membership cards if they are not local.*

\_\_\_ I'm interested in volunteering; please contact me!

Opportunities include, among others, communications, membership, special events, public relations, guiding tours, managing the bookstore, housekeeping, hospitality, photography, gardening, and research.

## Join us!

We encourage you to visit the Museum for a tour (likely still masked and distanced) when we open in the spring. Meanwhile, you can participate in the growth and development of the Museum as a member, a volunteer, or a donor. Walk, run, or jog the Museum trails during daylight hours, schedule a wedding or reunion on the grounds or in the Boal Barn, or just admire all the lush gardens. Please keep in touch: call Museum Director Bob Cameron at 814-876-0129 or leave a message on the Visitor Center phone, 814-466-6210.

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Photo by Mary Szmolko

