

News&Views

from the

Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum

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Bob Cameron to Depart as Museum Director

After seven very full and successful years as Director of the Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum, Dr. Robert D. Cameron will retire April 1. We will sorely miss his amazing energy, brilliant ideas, and tireless efforts to regenerate and promote the Museum!

On January 23, 2022, Bob received the Centre County Historical Society's 2021 John H. Zeigler Historic Preservation Award in Education and Advocacy, an award for which everyone associated with the Museum believes he is supremely suited. He has given so much time and effort (well beyond his formal responsibilities) to educate the public about our Museum, to rediscover, preserve, and display the artifacts of the Boal and Columbus families, and to promote the values in which we—as a community—so deeply believe. Endless thanks, Bob!

FROM OUR DIRECTOR:

One of the greatest pleasures of my life has been the privilege to serve as Museum Director for these past seven years! I began at a time of great turbulence and challenge for the Museum. But, with the efforts of so many fantastic volunteers, we were able to right the ship and set a course forward that enabled much to be accomplished. My deepest appreciation to all of you who contributed your time, energies, and treasure to achieve these goals.

Undoubtedly my greatest reward has been the opportunity to meet so many incredible people who I now call my friends. I remain convinced that the Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum and its extensive collections rank among the most important of museums in the US. It is imperative that this national treasure be preserved for future generations to study and enjoy. I must now return to my career, which I put on hold to assist the museum. But I won't be completely absent: You will find me on weekends at the Estate, constructing gardens and restoring the greenhouse. Stop by and say hello. I'll be the one with his knees in the soil! - Bob

Autumn Events and Accomplishments

Trails: Visitors to our 3 miles of trails took in the fall colors as they enjoyed the rustle of leaves underfoot. During the **United Way Day of Caring** in early October, 250-plus volunteers added fresh mulch to the Outer Loop Trail, painted the Bird Observation Deck and the bridge linking the trails with Blue Spring Park (photo below), and straightened the Old Ticket Booth behind the Chapel.



Photo by Bob Cameron

Gardens: September rain produced a myriad of mushrooms, including giant puffballs, some measuring over two feet in diameter! Our formal gardens also benefited from the ample rain as volunteers continued to develop and maintain them. And with the Victorian Greenhouse sections from Rockview State Prison now relocated to the Boal Estate, building plans and fundraising are underway to enable construction of the **Tropical Garden/Butterfly Vivarium** to begin this spring. (See “Corporate Sponsorship Program,” page 3.)

During the United Way Day of Caring, the Marine, NROTC, and other volunteers also:

- » Uncovered the four corners of the old swimming pool (photo above right)
- » Made headway on the Reflection Garden behind the Chapel
- » Worked on the Rose Garden
- » Raked leaves and mulched beds
- » Weeded the Amphitheater terraces and borders and the nearby Spanish Cross Garden

Ghost Tours: To help our friends and neighbors celebrate Halloween, this October we held the first **Ghost Tours of Olde Boalsburg** over four nights. The event sold out rapidly, was a huge success, and helped raise much-needed funds for the Museum. Tours included details of Boalsburg history along with many local stories of the macabre. “Past residents”



Photo by Paul Weener

appeared at their grave sites in the Boalsburg Cemetery to entertain tour guests with tales of their lives. Later, “Colonel Terry Boal” met guests near the Columbus Chapel crypt (photo right).

Each tour concluded in the Great Room of the Boal Barn with hot chocolate and a presentation by Springhill Paranormal Investigators revealing their findings of the paranormal at the Boal Mansion.



Photo by Mary Szmolko

Home for the Holidays: Festivities over the weekend of December 3–5 included **Candlelight Tours** on Friday evening, the **Kristkindl Market** in the Boal Barn on Saturday, and the popular **Christmas High Tea and Candlelight Tour** in the Boal Mansion ballroom on Sunday afternoon. The Friday tours accommodated almost 40 guests and the Ballroom was filled on Sunday.

Corporate Sponsorship Program

The Museum has developed a new Corporate Sponsorship Program. Many organizations already make periodic donations. For those ready to formalize their giving, this annual donation program focuses on an appropriate exhibit or area of interest, such as the Art Collections, the Butterfly Vivarium, or the Columbus Chapel and Exhibit. A description of this program, with suggested giving amounts, is on our website, www.boalmuseum.com. A brochure will be printed in the future and distributed to current donors and to local corporations. Please contact Cindy Shaler, cshaler@comcast.net, if you'd like a copy.

New Tour of Boal Mansion Expanded Exhibits

The unveiling of the Boal Mansion's expanded second floor exhibits reveals a wealth of early 20th-century fashions and displays of antiques, paintings, and memorabilia in three bedrooms, Colonel Boal's office, and two bathrooms, as well

as the Armory. (See separate article, below.) A tour of the second floor is combined with a tour of the recently refurbished **Transportation and Early American Life Exhibit**. There you will find artifacts of early farming life on the Boal Estate, plus restored antique vehicles (carriages, coaches, buggies, and a surrey—with its “fringe on top”), saddles used by the Boal family, and more.

Major Extension to the Boal Armory

The original Armory on the second floor of the Boal Mansion wasn't large enough to hold all the World War I items that Colonel Terry Boal and his son Pierre brought home with them. Director Bob Cameron and the Armory Committee therefore expanded into an adjoining room. That second room contains, among other items:

- » A huge collection of French and American WWI posters and maps, covering all the walls, with some displayed on stands
- » Gas masks and other civilian and military equipment
- » Numerous medals awarded to both Terry and Pierre Boal
- » Terry Boal's desk from France, with his photos and writing materials
- » Pierre Boal's uniforms from the French cavalry and the American Air Corps

Membership Drive for 2022

It's time to become a member of the Museum for 2022, to purchase gift memberships for friends and family members, and to make donations to continue the Museum's goals of education, entertainment, and community involvement.

Your membership card provides free entry to Basic and Extended tours for you and your immediate family members during the calendar year. Also, you will receive 10 percent off in the Museum Gift Shop, discounts on special events, and more.

If you spend \$250 or more, you will receive a complimentary Museum tote bag. (See membership benefits and membership levels below.)

The impact of the pandemic on the Museum has been dramatic and your membership and/or donations will help to keep us operating successfully.

Even if you don't plan to visit this year, you can still become a member or make a donation. Any way you do it, we're grateful for your help in maintaining this wonderful historic site for future generations to enjoy!

How to Become a Museum Member

Fill out the Membership form directly on our website, www.boalmuseum.com, or print and mail it with your check to:

2022 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.

Additional Benefits of Membership

- » Newsletters and updates about the Museum, activities, and coming events
- » Reduced fees at selected special events
- » Opportunities for training, service, and organizational involvement
- » Opportunities to assist in planning special programs and events
- » Chances to take part in the preservation and interpretation of our historic past for future generations to learn and enjoy

Membership Levels

_____ Individual \$30.00

_____ Sponsor \$250.00*

_____ Student \$15.00

_____ Benefactor \$500 or more*

_____ Family \$50.00

_____ Explorer's Circle \$1,000+*

_____ Patron \$100.00

* These levels receive Museum tote bags

Please make your check or money order payable to Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your donation or membership fee is tax deductible.

Museum Tours and Special Events

Basic Tours include the ground floor of the Boal Mansion, the Columbus Chapel, and the Columbus Exhibit building. These are offered 7 days a week by reservation at 10 am and 2 pm, cost only \$10 for adults and \$6 for students under 17, and are free for Museum members, children 6 and under, and those on active duty in the military. A Basic Tour takes 1-1/2 to 2 hours.

Extended Tours cover the second floor of the Mansion (bedrooms, fashions, artifacts, paintings, the Armory) and the Transportation and Early American Life

exhibit. An Extended Tour takes about 2 hours and costs \$20 for adults, \$10 for students under 17, and are free as above.

To make your reservation for any tour in advance, call Museum Director Bob Cameron at 814-876-0129. Group tours are always available. (Status of the pandemic may further impact Museum operations.)

Special Events for 2022: We are currently planning spring, summer, and autumn events. What we do know in advance:

Home for the Holidays at the Museum

Fri, Dec 2, 5–8 pm Candlelight Tours

Sat, Dec 3, 10 am–5 pm Kristkindl Market

Sun, Dec 4, 4 pm* Christmas Tea and Candlelight Tour

* Starred events require reservations. To reserve or for more information, go to www.boalmuseum.com, where you can reserve and pay.

Return of the Boal Barn Theater!

With the assistance of Jon Vickers-Jones and other volunteers, revitalization of the Boal Barn is nearing completion. We are busily scheduling special events for the 2022 season at the Boal Barn Theater. We are so excited to welcome the return of laughter and applause to this historic venue. Stay tuned for details of upcoming theatrical, musical, and other events.

Needed, in Good Working Order

The Boal Museum thrives on volunteerism, memberships, and donations. Currently we're in need of some larger-than-usual items to help our volunteers work. If you can donate any of these items, please call Museum Director Bob Cameron at (814-876-0129) to arrange drop-off or pick-up.

- » Large riding mower
- » Room dehumidifier
- » Rainbow small vacuum cleaner
- » Large vacuum cleaner with attachments for upholstery
- » Sharp Mop & Vac with refills

If you would like a receipt for tax purposes, just let us know the value of your donation.

Museum Master Plan

This past summer, Bob Cameron created a preliminary Master Plan of the Boal Estate, with the able assistance of summer intern Grayce Thi-Marie Amspacher, Landscape Architect at PSU. The plan (shown below) shows all existing buildings and gardens along with some that are in the works.



Volunteer Opportunity: Website Manager

We need someone to take over as manager of the Museum's website (www.boalmuseum.com). You would be responsible for updating and maintaining the site, with input from the Museum Director, the Communications Committee, and several others. Minimal time is needed, perhaps 1–2 hours a week, but experience *is* required. You would also attend once-a-month (or so) Communications Committee meetings. If this volunteer opportunity appeals to you, please contact Communications Manager Cindy Shaler at cshaler@comcast.net or current Website Manager JT Thompson at office@boalmuseum.com.

Farewell to Art Pentz, Jim Finley, and Pete Ferretti

Pete Ferretti, 79, of Boalsburg, died at home on December 24, 2021. For well over a decade, Pete volunteered at the Boal Museum, offering his knowledge of plant behavior, growth, and harvesting. His keen insight was primarily focused on the reestablishment and maintenance of the Museum's various gardens.

He received his BS in Plant Breeding/Horticulture at Penn State University in 1962, his MS in Cytology Cytogenetics/Botany at University of Connecticut in 1966, and his PhD in Plant Nutrition/Plant Pathology in Horticulture at Penn State in 1969. He was professor of Cooperative Extension for Penn State for 37 years, until he retired in 2006.

Pete also volunteered for many years with the Harris Township Lions Club, Our Lady of Victory, and the Boalsburg Village Conservancy.

Memorial donations can be made in Pete's memory to the Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum, P.O. Box 116, Boalsburg, PA 16827.

Jim Finley of Port Matilda died on October 2, 2021, aged 72. Jim was responsible for creating the extremely beautiful (and very popular) "Boal Bowls," made from trees that fell or were culled on the Boal Estate. His fellow woodturners continue making the bowls and other wooden items to sell at the Museum's Gift Shop.

Jim completed his BS in Forest Science at Penn State University in 1970, an MS in Forest Resources at PSU in 1975. He joined the School of Forest Resources faculty at University Park in 1981, where he developed research and extension-education programs on sustainable forest management. In 1991, he completed his PhD in Extension Education at PSU.

Jim dedicated his life to promoting the protection, health, and vitality of forests. In 1991, he founded the PA Forest Stewardship education and outreach program, in partnership with the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry, and coordinated the volunteer program that now includes more than 750 PA Forest Stewards.

Jim served on the boards of numerous foundations and conservancies, and established PSU's Center for Private Forests.

Art Pentz was a frequent visitor to the Boal Museum, most often as a fine photographer. Art died this September, aged 75; we will miss his wry sense of humor as well as his handsome photos, some of which are shown on the next page.

Art graduated from Bloomsburg University with a BA and MS in Speech Language Pathology. He received his PhD in Special Education from Penn State University.

He was an associate professor and head of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Oklahoma State University, where he taught and conducted research for 32 years. Art was a life member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

After his retirement in 2014, Art moved back to State College, where he volunteered for Meals on Wheels as well as the historic Boal Museum.

Memorial donations can be made in Art's memory to the Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum, P.O. Box 116, Boalsburg, PA 16827.



Photos by Art Pentz:

Above: The Boal Amphitheater during a festival

Above right: Mathilde de Lagarde Boal's aunt Victoria Montalvo, lady-in-waiting to Queen Isabelle II of Spain and wife of Diego Colón ("Columbus" in English)

Right: Part of the World War I collection in the Armory

Far right: Mathilde Boal's bedroom display



You Are Very Welcome to Visit!

We encourage you to visit the Museum for a tour or special event. We are open every day for tours at 10 am and 2 pm. Reservations are still necessary for your friend- or family-group until all COVID restrictions are lifted. Just call Museum Director Dr. Bob Cameron at 814-876-0129; he will arrange for a tour guide to meet you at the Visitor Center.

Meanwhile, you can walk, run, or jog on the ever-expanding Museum trails during daylight hours, schedule a wedding, reunion, or other function on the grounds or in the Boal Barn's Great Room, or just admire all the beautiful gardens.

Please keep in touch: Leave a message on the Visitor Center phone, 814-466-6210.

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P.O. Box 116, Boalsburg, PA 16827

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