

The Historical Herald

The Quarterly Newsletter of



The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

PO Box 514
Bartlett, NH 03812

www.BartlettHistory.org

Winter 2020 Edition (2020:1)

The Bartlett

Historical Society

The Campaign Continues...Thank you for your Continued Support

We start each newsletter with our expression of thanks to all of those who have contributed to our campaign to raise the funds to open our Bartlett history museum.

This newsletter is no exception – Thank You – for all of your support for this project. As you will see when you read this newsletter, your donations have finally allowed us to start the renovation work on *our* museum. *OUR* museum? Yes, we purchased the building from the Bartlett School District on November 5, 2019!

There's a few progress highlights below but the complete story is in a [Bartlett History Museum — Progress Report](#) supplement with this newsletter.



BHS Owns the Our Future Museum Building: The Bartlett School Board has, all along, supported the idea of selling the St. Joseph Church building to BHS. We just needed to work through the legal details with them. With that legal process completed, we invested our \$1.00 to purchase the building and call it ours.

Renovation has Started: We hired Acadia Contractors to gut the building and give us an environmentally safe building. Opening the building's frame revealed some surprises. We'll tell you about them in the Progress Report. Your support allowed us to start this renovation.



Preparing the Building for Winter: With Acadia Contractors completing their work in late October, we decided we were too close to winter to replace the entire roof structure. We will tackle that project in spring 2020. As a temporary measure, our General Contractor, Bill Duggan, with the assistance of Sean Lorway, owner of Emerald Tree Experts, volunteered their time and equipment to install tarps covering the entire roof. Their generosity saved us hundreds of dollars in the process. We sincerely thank both of them for their generosity. Bill also installed steel cables in the building to give the walls some assistance against the expected pressure from the snow on the roof.

Campaign Fund Raising Status: We continue to search for funding for the remainder of the renovation effort. In November, the Robert & Dorothy Goldberg Foundation awarded us a grant of \$5,000 for the renovation project. We greatly appreciate their generosity. To date, we have raised \$220,000 (gross) with roughly \$16,000 in expenses leaving us \$204,000 cash in hand. About \$160,000 of this money will be spent on Phase 1. We are reenergizing our fund raising efforts by exploring grant opportunities as well as asking individuals and businesses to donate to our project. If you would like to talk more about our museum project or know of someone who is interested in supporting historic preservation projects, please have them contact Phil Franklin (Phil@BartlettHistory.org) We always enjoy talking about this important BHS and community project.

Donors from 10/01/2019—12/20/2019

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President's Message:

Happy New Year to all! As I wrote this letter in December 2019, I started thinking about all of the things that we, as a historical society, have done in 2019. We focused on our museum project, fund raising, broadening the community's awareness of BHS and educational offerings. I came up with an extensive list that I'd like to share with you. As members and donors you helped make all of this happen. For your continued support, I offer our most sincere thanks on behalf of the historical society Board of Directors. I look forward to another great year in 2020.

Educational & Informational Activities

- ◆ January, April, June, October: BHS sponsored quarterly presentations on railroad history in the valley, New England stone walls, broadcasting from atop Mount Washington and the CCC Camps
- ◆ January, April, July, October: BHS newsletter is published to all members and non-member donors.
- ◆ March – June: 8th Grade History Project topic research, student presentations and the presentation of the Bartlett History Award to Kat Lawson for her work on the topic of Maple Sugaring in Bartlett

Promotional Events

- ◆ March: BHS participated in the Great Glen Charity Day at Great Glen Trails in Gorham
- ◆ July: Norm Head and Sue Franklin were guests on WMWV's Drive Time program promoting the upcoming Giant Yard Sale
- ◆ August: Phil Franklin was the guest on a WMWV Drive Time radio program promoting the museum project and upcoming Flatbread Restaurant Benefit Night
- ◆ Over the Year: BHS was featured in different Conway Daily Sun articles

Fund Raising Events

- ◆ April, June: Red Parka Pub and Terri O'Brien hosted BHS at their Bingo Night for non-profit support
- ◆ June: BHS held our first annual BHS Golf Tournament at the Linderhof Country Club.
- ◆ August: We held our third Giant Yard Sale to raise funds for the BHS Museum Fund
- ◆ September: BHS was hosted by Flatbread Company Restaurant in a Benefit Night
- ◆ November: Joseph's Spaghetti Shed again hosted BHS in a Dine-to-Donate evening

Museum Activities

- ◆ March: At the Annual Meeting of the Bartlett School District, voters gave their approval for the Bartlett School Board to sell the St. Joseph Church building and property to the Bartlett Historical Society
- ◆ July: Bartlett Planning Board approved a 15' perimeter of property boundary around the St. Joseph Church building for what would be our museum grounds
- ◆ August: Bartlett Zoning Board of Adjustments approved our use of the former church as a *museum*
- ◆ October: Acadia Contractors completed removal of all hazardous materials giving us a "safe" building
- ◆ October, November: Our General Contractor, Bill Duggan, and his crew with the assistance of Sean Lorway from Emerald Tree Experts (volunteering their time and equipment) cover the museum roof with tarps to protect it from water infiltration over the winter; Also, Bill and crew install temporary interior cabling to help the building withstand pressure from the anticipated winter snow
- ◆ November: BHS purchased the St. Joseph Church building and property for \$1.00

Quite a year of accomplishments! As we look forward to 2020, our main goal continues to be the opening of our museum in the former S. Joseph Church building. With your help and that of others as we look for additional support for this project, we will accomplish this goal. I thank you again for your continued support of our growing historical society. When we say this is YOUR historical society, we mean it. Whether you live in town or out of town, your support helps us keep driving forward and your input is welcome. Thank You.

Sincerely,

Phil Franklin

President, Bartlett Historical Society

A Couple of Additional Notes from Phil Franklin

Resignation of a Valued BHS Board Member

Norman Head, a founding member of the Bartlett Historical Society and good friend, informed the Board that he is resigning effective in January 2020. Norm told us “the primary reason I have decided to do this is that I have been donating my time, efforts and many evenings to various non-profit or local organizations or town boards for the better part of 45 years and have reached a point where I want/need to cut back, have more free time and not be out as much.” Norm is currently the Town Moderator as well as a member of the Bartlett Zoning Board of Adjustments. Professionally, he is a very active realtor with Badger Realty. In the past few years, Norm, as president of BHS, has been at the forefront of the project to transform the St. Joseph Church building into our Bartlett history museum. Personally, he has been one of my advisors and has been a big help to me as I learned the ropes of the historical society. Norm has agreed to stay active as an Advisor to the BHS Board but, he added he “won’t be attending regular board meetings.” While we will miss having him as a member of the BHS Board, we know that he’s just a phone call away. We extend our sincere thanks to Norm for his service to BHS.

Belated Yard Sale Thanks

After we published the fall 2019 newsletter with its article on the results of the 2019 yard sale, I realized that I made a significant error of omission in that article. I correctly thanked some of our volunteers but I neglected to express our thanks to several other volunteers for their support in the sale. So, I sincerely apologize to those who I missed, it was certainly not intentional. Volunteers are very important to our organization and we need to recognize their service. In addition to the people we recognized in the fall newsletter, I extend a sincere note of thanks to the following people for their support in the 2019 yard sale:

- Ernie and Sharlene Barbeau for their help in the setup process and during the sale
- Greta George, Ellen Hayes and Evelyn Bailey and Linda Bernard (owner of Bart’s Deli) for the wonderful baked goods that they made for us to sell
- Michele and Kevin Pratt, owners of Flossie’s General Store in Jackson, for the use of their popup tent
- Finally, Diane Swansburg for her donation of a great gift basket that we raffled off.

An event as large as the yard sale requires a great deal of help from our members. Donations of your personal time, whether large or small, are incredibly valuable and appreciated. Thank you!



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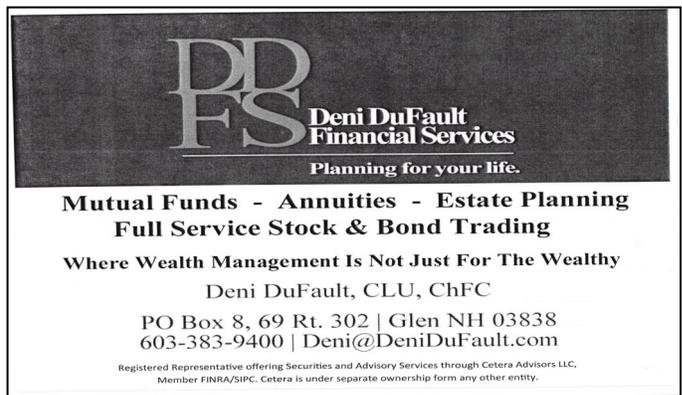
We thank our many sponsors who cover the cost of this newsletter. Your support for this quarterly publication is greatly appreciated.

To our BHS newsletter readers —

When making a choice of where to make a purchase, please look to make your first stop at one of our newsletter patrons. Please let them know you chose their business because they support BHS.



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8th Grade Bartlett History Project—How Can You Participate?

Here's a BHS Volunteer Opportunity!! We are reengaged with the 8th graders at the Josiah Bartlett Elementary School on the Bartlett History Project. The 21 students will each select a topic about Bartlett history from a long list of possible topics. Students will be digging out historical facts on the Internet, in books, magazines and newspapers as well as visiting historic sites. Another important research "tool" is conducting interviews with local historians on their Bartlett history topics. *This is where you can help.* When a student selects a topic, we'll look to our list of local historians to see if we can match them with someone who knows about this topic. This is a great way for students to learn as they hear the history first hand and a great way to be a BHS volunteer. Please contact Phil Franklin at Phil@BartlettHistory.org or Hadley Champlin at champlinj7@gmail.com if you would like to participate in this learning program. It should be an easy and fun way for you to help.



What was Happening in Bartlett Around 100 Years Ago?

1919—1920

- ◆ \$8.11 was spent to purchase a new record book for the town clerk
- ◆ EF Eastman was paid a bounty of \$5.00 for 1 wildcat

1920—1921

- ◆ A total \$18.40 was received in dog tax
- ◆ \$9.00 was spent to maintain watering troughs

1921—1922

- ◆ A total of \$785.82 was received by the town in auto taxes
- ◆ From the school board report "some provision should be made for water at the Glen school, as the neighbors have objected to the children obtaining water on their premises"



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St. Joseph Church—Our Future Bartlett Historical Society Museum

If you know of anyone interested in helping support the restoration of an historic building, please have them contact us.



We'd enjoy talking with them.

Norm Head Phil Franklin
603-986-6278 603-374-5023
Normiejoe@gmail.com Phil@BartlettHistory.org

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Announcing our 2020 Quarterly Presentation Lineup!

Wednesday, January 15: "A History of the NH Presidential Primary" by John Gfoerer

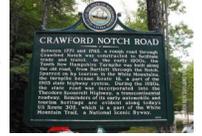


This program presents a brief history of the New Hampshire Presidential Primary, from its origins during the Progressive era of the early twentieth century, through its evolution to the most important step toward being elected President of the United States. Just in time for our primary!

Bartlett Elementary School, Cafeteria, Route 302, Bartlett, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 15: "The Story of NH's Road Markers" with Michael Bruno

Throughout our state, including right here in Bartlett, there are green markers with white lettering noting historic sites along our roadsides. Michael will give us the background on these markers and enlighten us with some of the more unusual ones.



Bartlett Elementary School, Cafeteria, Route 302, Bartlett, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 17: "The Role of the US Forest Service in the White Mountains" with Clare Long



We are surrounded by national forest land and we see the US Forest Service vehicles and staff throughout the area. Clare will talk about the role of the Forest Service in our community and national forest.

Bartlett Elementary School, Cafeteria, Route 302, Bartlett, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 21: "A Century of Railroading in Crawford Notch" with Ben English

From the 1860's to the late 1950's, the railroads played a major role in the growth and vitality of the area. Ben, a railroad historian and BHS member, will tell us about the rise and fall of the railroads in our area.



Bartlett Elementary School, Cafeteria, Route 302, Bartlett, Time: 7:00 p.m.

All of our programs are open to the public. Donations are gratefully accepted at the door to help cover the costs of each presentation.

Final 2019 Presentation Wrap-up

On Thursday, October 10, 2019, Dave Govatski provided an audience of about 50 people an updated look at the history of the Civilian Conservation Corp in the White Mountains. Dave walked us through the background of the CCC, the requirements for the men and work done by them. He also enlightened us to the fact there was a women's CCC as well. All-in-all a very interesting presentation. We thank Dave for his time spent with us.

What are your ideas for presentations?



In response to our request for presentation ideas two of our members suggested a presentation by the NH Fish and Game. We're looking into options with Fish and Game for 2021 presentations.

If you have a presentation topic that you'd like to see us sponsor, please let us know and we'll see what we can arrange. Drop a note to BartlettHistoryNH.org or Phil Franklin at Phil@BartlettHistory.org.

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David Eliason

Longtime Bartlett Innkeeper with Family Ties to Chestertown, MD

By Phil Franklin

On a rather damp White Mountain afternoon, Norm Head and I sat with our friend Dave Eliason for a couple of very quick hours. We listened as Dave told the story of his family, their move to Bartlett, their life here and his life as a local innkeeper. As we set up time for this interview, Dave commented that there wasn't much to say about his life in Bartlett except that his family had longevity in town. As we concluded our conversation, we mused over the fact that there was a very rich and interesting story around Dave's life.



Dave Eliason
2001

David Eliason is a long time Bartlett resident who first came to town at the age of four with parents, Alan and Elizabeth "Libby" Eliason. They moved from the family homestead of Chestertown, MD. Dave is most well known as the owner and innkeeper of the former Sky Valley Motel and Cottages on Route 302 in town. Now, retired from his role as an innkeeper, he divides his time between the home he still maintains on the former Sky Valley property and a piece of property in Chestertown.

The Eliason's in Chestertown, MD

Before we venture into Dave's story in Bartlett, let's stop for a minute in Chestertown, MD, a small town in Kent County on the Chesapeake Bay. The Eliason family played a role in the building of that town. In the early 1800's, Dave's great grandfather came from England and landed in Delaware and shortly thereafter relocated to Chestertown. Dave described his grandfather as a "business mogul" (although very humble, he would never refer to himself that way). He owned 10 farms of various sizes, was instrumental in the formation of the local bank, was on the committee to build a local church; he also owned a hardware store and a Ford dealership. He also served on the Board of Directors of a local insurance company, a man of limitless ambition. He was a strict believer in the sabbath, a day for reflection only. Another relative owned a cardboard box company. His great uncle, "Captain Eliason," owned a steam ship company. The roots of the Eliason family run deep in Chestertown as there are still a few relatives living there today. Dave commented, however, that the town has changed dramatically and the story of the Eliason family involvement in the early history of the town is little known among the current residents.

Most of the Eliason family land holdings were sold off by his father and father's siblings. Dave said that many of the farms that were sold have become housing developments. The family did retain an 800 acre piece of the land known as Fairlee Farm along with the original family homestead of his grandfather. That house is currently owned by one of Dave's cousins. His father had previously owned the homestead. He died in the same bedroom where he was born. The Eliason's now lease a good portion of the property to a local farmer who raises corn and soybeans on it. They are moving the land into a conservation easement. Dave said that they will be permitted to build a barn on that property and continue to farm it but it will be protected from major housing development. Dave, himself, has a trailer situated on the property where he has a beautiful view of the Upper Chesapeake Bay.



Alan Eliason
1949

After the death of Alan Eliason in 2013, Dave returned to Chestertown and the family homestead after a 30 year absence. His mission was to clean out the house as his family had been great accumulators of many things over the years. He commented that as he poured through the things in the house, he found many interesting items and old magazines from 100 years ago. He ended up keeping more than he anticipated.

Sky Valley

Dave's parents met at Washington College in Chestertown where Libby was a student. His father was a professional photographer, specializing in portrait photography. He had a studio in Chestertown. In summer of 1945, Alan and Libby came to Bartlett to get into the hospitality business. Alan was looking to

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David Eliason interview continued ...

escape from the pollen that caused his “hay fever” allergy to bother him in MD. In 1946, they purchased the property that became the Sky Valley Motor Court, and eventually, Sky Valley Motel and Cottages but, locally, simply known as “Sky Valley.” The plan was to live in Bartlett and run the motel in the summer and live in Chestertown and run the photography business in the winter.



Sky Valley Road Sign on Route 302

The property on which Sky Valley was situated has a long history in Bartlett. Located between Route 302 and the Saco River, just east of the center of Bartlett Village, the parcel dates back to 1793 when it was a part of the Obed Hall farm (an original settler in Bartlett) and the Timothy George farm. In 1898, the property was then in the hands of

Ida Hall who sold a portion of the property to Edgar Stevens who was the proprietor of the Cave Mountain House (which would later become the Howard Hotel and then the Bartlett Hotel when it finally burned in March 1989; the land of the hotel is now a town park on the corner of Route 302 and River Street). In 1921, Stevens’ heirs sold the property to Orin Cook who, in turn, in 1946, sold 35 acres of his farm land to the Eliason’s. Originally, the Eliason’s were looking at the property that is now the Storybook Inn, Stilphens Farm at the time, on the corner of Route 16 and 302 in the Glen section of town. Alan Eliason was swayed by the better mountain views offered from the Cook property, despite the fact that the Storybook site was better from a business vantage. Dave told us his father often said he made many of his wrong decisions for the right reason ... and vice versa ... depending on the story.

Dave told us that the Sky Valley property was a hay lot with a large Elm tree when it was purchased by the Eliason’s. The tree blew down in the Hurricane Helene in 1958. Sky Valley was originally just nine cabins. In 1952, ten modern, AAA approved, motel units were added. The Eliason’s also installed the first large swimming pool in the area. In 1956, the building containing the motel office, restaurant and gift shop was added. The restaurant was added because there were very few restaurants outside of North Conway and people didn’t want to travel that far for a meal. In response, the Eliason’s opened “The Poolside Restaurant” also later added a gift shop in 1958. His mother ran the gift shop. Dave’s father also had a dark room on the property so he could continue his photographic work here in the White Mountains. This is where Dave learned to develop black and white pictures, a talent soon forgotten. During the 1960’s Dave’s dad became a Realtor and worked with Wimpy Thurston at first, later joining Country Squire Realty in North Conway. He developed the Cathedral Ledge Village in North Conway, Saco Ridge Village on West Side Road and worked with LeLand Realty in the development of housing at Tyrol Ski Area in Jackson. He was a man of many talents who seemed to know how to do everything from re-wiring an electric panel to building a brick fireplace. He always attributed that to the fact that in Bartlett in 1940’s and 1950’s a good tradesman was difficult to find and if it had to be done, you better know how to do it yourself.



1949 Sky Valley with few cabins & Elm Tree

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Drawings By:
Greta George
Bartlett, NH
comfibrook@gmail.com

Greta’s phone # 603 738 4958

Growing Up in Bartlett

Dave came to Bartlett permanently about 1952 at the age of four (born in 1948). We talked about his schooling. Dave told us that he liked school in Bartlett as his class was about 12 – 13 kids, everyone knew each other and got along well. In 1955, he started first grade at the Bartlett elementary school. His teacher was Mrs. Lucille Garland. In third grade, his teacher was Mrs. Flora Jones (Gene Chandler's mother who by that time had remarried, the post master, David Jones; Gene is one of Bartlett's current selectmen). Dave recalled that in grades 4 and 5, classes were held a part of the time in the basement of the Union Congregational Church, just up the road from the school and part of the time in the gymnasium on the third floor of the school building. He remembered a teacher named Mr. Walker who was known for being a strict disciplinarian but was a "nice guy" if you followed his rules. Mr. Walker was the coach of the baseball team and would drive the team to away games in his own car.

In junior high school, classes were held on the upper floors in the old Bartlett High School. Dave commented that seventh and eighth grades were the best years of his school career. He liked the smaller class size and he added that there were no cliques as all of the students held similar interests and "we were all in the same clique." Junior high was his first opportunity to change classrooms for different subjects so this was another new experience for him.



Former Bartlett High School

After junior high in Bartlett, came the move to Kennett High School in Conway. Kennett was and is a regional school. This environment was a "shock" for Dave. Coming from a school with a small number of kids from your hometown to being thrust into a very large environment where there were students from several towns, large classes and social groups or cliques was a big adjustment for Dave. He said that all of his Bartlett friends scattered into different groups. He ended up in a group of kids who perhaps wished they were doing something else. Admitting that he did what he needed to do to get through high school, he said he didn't excel in his studies and ended up with discipline issues, detentions and suspensions. Dave had a short-lived career as the junior varsity football team manager, a job he did with his friend Ralph Clemons. This job came to an end after an away game at Laconia High School. Apparently, at that game, Dave and Ralph were more interested in flirting with the cheerleaders than doing their manager duties. He said it "was a long ride home" after that game. Academically, Dave struggled with his studies. He didn't really find school all that interesting. For example, during his freshman year, he spent about three weeks in French class before his teacher, Mrs. Pinette, told him that he wasn't getting it and he should find another class to attend. He was happy to move on from that class.

Dave credits Kennett teacher John Tunney for helping him get through high school. Mr. Tunney exposed Dave to literature – reading the classics. He said that at first, he didn't understand the meaning of the stories in the books but Mr. Tunney took the time to explain what the authors were saying versus what they actually meant – the meaning behind the story. With that piece of knowledge and skill for understanding the stories, he developed a lifelong love of reading.

During high school, Dave had a part-time job at the local movie theater in North Conway. He was a projectionist running the projectors that showed the films. In those days, movies were actually on multiple reels and as one reel ended, the projectionist needed to time the start of the next reel so the movie would continue seamlessly. He said that you'd see the same movies over and over again, so much so that the job became boring but he stuck with it until ... Dave said, that after working every day over one summer, he wanted a day off so he could go off with his friends before the restart of school. His boss, Mr. Cassenelli, who was also the Bartlett postmaster at the time, refused to allow him the time off and said that if he didn't come to work, he shouldn't bother coming back again. Dave took the day off and ended his movie projectionist career. This would also end up making things a bit uncomfortable for Dave when he needed to go to the Bartlett Village post office and see his old movie theater boss. Dave also worked for George Flynn at his Gulf Service Station in Bartlett Village (now the site of the Rogerson Excavation building) while

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David Eliason Interview continued ...

in high school, learning how to change oil, pump gas, wash windshields and other such tasks. In the summer of 1966, Dave worked at another gas station in Crawford Notch/Hart's Location, NH, owned by Herb and Helen Brooks (the station was located at the current site of the Crawford Notch General Store and Campground). There, he was mostly pumping gas and kept the generator running. This was the only means of electricity for the station. As a side note, According to Marion Varney in her book, *Hart's Location in Crawford Notch*, Hart's Location was the last town in NH to be electrified. The big day occurred on July 15, 1970 after 15 residents petitioned to have power provided by the NH Electric Cooperative. Prior to that, everyone generated their own power via generators, waterwheels or steam engines. The event was announced on the state and national news! Back to Dave - In his spare time he helped his dad at the motel cutting and trimming grass.

While in high school, Dave said that he and his friends would hang out in the Bartlett Village Water Precinct Park on the corner of Route 302 and Albany Avenue (a.k.a. Bear Notch Road). A favorite pastime was the identification of cars as they passed the park. Dave said that the boys would call out the year, make model and even engine size of each vehicle as it passed. There was a restaurant of questionable repute for teenagers called the Main Street Restaurant in the Village which his Mom forbade him to visit but he and friends went there often after school anyway. He said that his mom probably knew but never mentioned it.

Military Service

After high school, Dave was drafted into the U.S. Army. He said it was at Fort Dix in New Jersey that "he grew up." He was in the Army for three years, two years as a draftee and one in voluntary service. He took on the extra year because it gave him the opportunity to select what he wanted to do in the Army. He selected a job as a supply clerk knowing that he was headed for Viet Nam and thinking it would keep him out of combat. He would later learn that supply clerks were assigned to combat units, but in his case, he landed in Cam Ranh Bay, Viet Nam with a stroke of luck. This base was a large supply depot for all branches of the military fighting in Viet Nam. Dave said that as they deplaned on the base, the troops were divided into groups. Instead of heading into the jungle, he was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay for his tour of duty from 1968 - 1969. He was a Specialist 4th Class, "along with everyone else" he added. While there, he was assigned to assist a Major Beebe who was also from NH. He said that his tour was a good one, no combat and he didn't even carry a rifle. He reentered the United States in Seattle, WA and, while in uniform, was unceremoniously greeted by people calling him and his comrades "baby killers." He said he couldn't get out of his uniform fast enough. It was a very unwelcoming experience.

After leaving Viet Nam, he was assigned to a supply unit at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This was a Special Forces, Green Beret base. Here, Dave said that he gained a new appreciation for those who wanted to be "real soldiers", they were, and still are, a tough breed. While there, he encountered the wrath of a Sergeant Major drill instructor who forcefully brought him before his superior officer for a minor infringement of the rules in the wearing of a hat. This officer was known for his extremely strict enforcement of the rules. Dave said that that incident caused him to rethink his future in the military. He was discharged at the end of his time at Fort Bragg with an entirely new appreciation of personal freedom.

College and the Return to Bartlett

After the military, Dave returned to Bartlett and enrolled in the University of NH (UNH). In 1971 and 1972, he studied to receive an associate degree in business administration graduating with a 3.8 GPA. He then enrolled in Lowell Technical Institute to complete his bachelor degree in business and finance with a minor in accounting. He went to Lowell because that is where his girlfriend, later to be his wife, lived.

While at UNH Dave took a real estate course and received his New Hampshire Brokerage License. During his time at Lowell Tech he utilized his license by working in the real estate business as a broker and eventually the office manager with Delmore Real Estate in Chelmsford, MA, a small five-person office with

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David Eliason Interview continued ...

Marty and Connie Delmore. Marty was a well respected and very capable and gently persuasive sales-person and Dave learned many sales skills from him as well as how difficult the business can be at times. When moving to Sky Valley in 1975 Dave kept his N.H. license and took on his father's Trade Name, "Eliason Realty", and joined the local Board of Realtors. This was very much a part-time endeavor and after a number of years Dave remembered Mr. Delmore's advice, "Real Estate is not a part-time business, either you're going to put everything into it or you shouldn't be doing it at all." Advice that turned out to be correct.

Throughout the time that his parents owned Sky Valley, Dave had different jobs at the motel to earn \$1.30 an hour for his effort. Dave was one of about 30 people who were on the Sky Valley payroll. He said that he liked mowing the lawns during the summer. He washed dishes for the restaurant in what today we would see as an unconventional location on the back porch of the office building.

Dave noted that Gene Chandler worked there as did Norm Head from our Bartlett Historical Society. Norm told us that he was a "pool tester" taking care of the swimming pool.

Dave told us that his father allowed people who were not staying at the motel to come to enjoy the pool and grounds for 50 cents a day. He also said that from 1955 – 1980, the Red Cross conducted swimming lessons in the Sky Valley swimming pool. Dave admitted that life was much simpler in those days.



Sky Valley Pool & Cabins 1956

In 1971, Dave got his first taste of management as he took on the responsibility of managing Sky Valley for that summer. By the end of the summer, however, he was convinced that he never wanted to do that job again though, in 1976, things changed. At that time, his parents had divorced and his mother ended up with the property. She was living in Durham, NH and needed someone to manage Sky Valley for that summer. Dave signed a one year contract with his mother to manage the motel. His wife agreed to move from Lowell where they were living. In the end, the one year contract ended up being 43 years of being the innkeeper and manager of Sky Valley. Sky Valley was actually a family owned corporation with Dave and his five siblings making up the board of directors. Contrary to his 1971 conclusion, Dave said that in all of the years he managed Sky Valley, he really enjoyed running the business and never really thought of it as work. He currently holds the prize for being one of the longest lasting innkeepers in the Valley.

While working at Sky Valley and even before that time, Dave also worked for Richard Jones, a Bartlett entrepreneur, at the Attitash Ski Shop. He started working for Mr. Jones in 1972 and stayed with the business for 20 years. Dave said that he learned a lot from Mr. Jones with the most important thing being that the employees are the most important part of the business, even over the customers, since without good help you won't have any customers. Dave said that Mr. Jones paid his employees substantially more than what other shopkeepers paid their staff. As a result, Mr. Jones usually had a waiting list of people interested in working for him and the employees did their best



Sky Valley Playground & Motel

to take care of the customers. Dave said his starting pay was \$50 per day in 1972 when the minimum wage was \$1.60 per hour. He said that when Great American Skiing took over the management of Attitash, the mountain manager tried to get Mr. Jones to pay more "normal" wages but he refused because of his commitment to taking care of his workers. Instead gave up his lease for the Attitash location of the ski shop and moved the shop to Glen, next to Patch's Market, renaming it "Heavens." Mr. Jones was also known for taking his entire staff on world-wide trips at the end of each season. He took his entire crew to places such as Russia, Bermuda, South America or anywhere else they wanted to go. He was truly a Mt. Washington Valley gem. He believed if he did well financially, so would his employees ... share the wealth was his motto. During Dave's last fifteen years at Sky Valley he also had a side business of bookkeeping but limited himself to only three clients since that was about all the "spare-time" Dave could muster.

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David Eliason Interview continued ...

Aside from running the motel, Dave and his former wife raised three children. All grown and on their own now. Dave's oldest daughter, Katherine "Cree," is in CO, single and working for Marriott; his son, Ramsay, with his wife Colleen and daughter Emma live in Campton where Ramsay teaches English Literature in high school; and his youngest daughter, Mary "Tarmey," with her son, Jack and daughter, Mary Elizabeth, lives in Intervale and works with Debony Salon in Jackson. Dave also told us of the loss of his soulmate, Maureen, who died in January 2019 after a short, brutal fight with cancer. They had been together for 20 years before her passing. He deeply misses being with her and wishes they could have carried out their well-plotted retirement plans together.

Also, while owning and managing the motel, Dave has been a member of the Bartlett Historical Society for a number of years. About ten years ago, he undertook the task of creating the BHS website and has been the website maintainer ever since. He said that he had been collecting information on Bartlett history for years and this provided him a place to store and share the information with others. While not being on the BHS Board of Directors, Dave has also been an advisor to BHS for these years also. His interest in history is not just focused on local topics. He said that he enjoys learning and reading about historic topics from a broad spectrum of sources. In particular, he enjoys reading biographies.

Sky Valley Comes to an End

In 2018 the Eliason family decided to sell Sky Valley. A fire in 2016 at the motel building destroyed six of the ten units. This helped push the decision to sell the family owned property. Dave said that increased competition from the big chain motels and hotels, short term rentals such as Airbnb and second home rentals also drove the final decision to sell. With competition pulling travelers to other places to stay, it became harder and harder for this small operation to be profitable. After being listed for over a year with realtors Norman and Kathleen-Sullivan Head, the property was bought by Kyler and Darlene Drew of the Intervale section of Bartlett. The former Sky Valley Motel on Route 302 is now the East Coast home to the Jamul, CA based Little Angels Service Dogs, a non-profit serving those with medical disabilities. They have renamed it "Sky Valley Ranch." While Sky Valley came to an end as a place for tourists and visitors to the area, it has now found a new life in training service dogs to help people with various disabilities.

Closing Thoughts

One of Dave's final comments was that the hotel business is very confining. After 43 years at the helm of Sky Valley, he is now able to move freely between his Chestertown home and Bartlett home without concern of being needed at the motel. Having a fondness for both places and family in both locations also, Dave can enjoy the mountains as his parents did when they came here and the "Bay" as his parents and grandparents did in their homestead in Chestertown.

We would like to thank Dave for sharing his life story and that of his family with us. He has been a fixture in the Mount Washington Valley and we are very appreciative of his time for this conversation.



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The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

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2020 Bartlett Historical Membership Drive

Welcome to 2020! Our Bartlett Historical Society 2020 Membership Drive is well underway for the year calendar year January 1, 2020—December 31, 2020. Over the past six years, membership in the Bartlett Historical Society has risen steadily with our most recent numbers showing an average 20% increase per year in membership. So far, in the 2020 Membership Drive, 85 people have renewed and 11 people have joined BHS with new memberships. This is a very positive statement that people are making about their concern for and interest in the history of Bartlett. Thank you to all who have taken a membership with us.

If you have not renewed your membership or are considering becoming a BHS member, please take a moment to complete and sent us your membership form and dues. For 2020, we have maintained the same membership dues as we have for the past few years. They are:

- ◇ Individual Members \$20.00
- ◇ Patron Members \$50.00
- ◇ Business Members \$100.00

In 2019, BHS hit a new high with 196 members. We'd like to break the 200 members mark this year. Help us keep growing by renewing your membership or joining as a new member. Membership Matters!

Many people renewing or joining have generously included an extra donation for our St. Joseph Church/museum project or a donation to our general operating fund. This added support is greatly appreciated.

Your membership helps us:

- Demonstrate to foundations and donors that BHS is a viable historical society worthy of their support
- Generate this newsletter four times a year
- Bring in interesting guest speakers for our quarterly presentation on historic topics
- Allows us to obtain “Bartlett artifacts” that appear online bringing them “home”, and
- Helps us cover our society’s operating expenses (e.g. insurance, association fees, office supplies, etc.).

Your membership should also give you the satisfaction of being a part of a non-profit organization that is focused on preserving the history of Bartlett, NH and providing educational opportunities for people to learn more about Bartlett. In our museum, we will display the history for all to enjoy.

To those who are our current members, please consider renewing your membership now for the 2020 calendar year. For those who are receiving this newsletter and are not members, please consider joining and becoming a member of the Bartlett Historical Society. As always, we *Thank You* for your support.

Membership form and information can be found at :<http://bartlethistory.org/bartlethistory/join.html>.

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Ice covers everything at the summit of Mount Washington