



# *The Gazette*



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Sponsoring Historic Bristol Day—Third Saturday of Each October

BCHF is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit, all volunteer Organization.

JANUARY 2026

## President's Corner

### A New Year

Happy New Year from BCHF. In November, the general membership meeting was held at our building on Cedar Street and new board members were elected. Highlights from 2025 were summarized at the meeting. The current board members are Susie Antonelli, Donna Albright, Michael Crossan, Larry Daniel, Diane Davidson, Joe Dugan, Ceil Graff, Alison McHugh, Paul Moore, Deborah Pinney, Nick Rizzo, Jeanette Ruano, Jesse Walker, and Susan Watkins. After the board election, we had an engaging presentation about the history of the Puerto Rican community in Bristol and the surrounding area.

Later in the month of November, David Kaplan talked about the captain of Titanic Ship at BCHF's building. Additional events and trips are being planned in 2026 by the Ways and Means Committee. The first Historic Bristol Day planning meeting will be on January 20th at 7pm at the BCHF building. If interested in volunteering for Historic Bristol Day please contact Michael Crossan [mcrossan@bbsd.org](mailto:mcrossan@bbsd.org).

Looking ahead, we cannot wait to see everyone at events throughout the New Year as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States in the borough and surrounding area.

*Jesse Walker*

## Member Renewal

Dear Member,

January is the time your annual renewal membership dues for BCHF are due. We appreciate your past support and trust that you will continue to do so. Dues are the same as last year, \$15 for individuals, \$25 for families and \$60 for businesses.

This year I have sent a reminder email to all those who have shared their email with us. Letters have been sent to those who do not have or have not shared their email. Due to the increasing price of stamps, I am

hoping to use email as a more cost effective communication method.

If you use email, I would appreciate your sharing it with us. You can email me directly at [jaruano@comcast.net](mailto:jaruano@comcast.net) to do so.

You can pay your dues directly on line by going to our website at [www.bristolhistory.org](http://www.bristolhistory.org) or by sending a check to BCHF, P.O. Box 215, Bristol, PA 19007

Thank you

Jan Ruano

Membership Chairperson

# Honoring Anna Bono Larrisey: A Steady Hand on BCHF's Finances

By Michael Crossan

When the Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation talks about “keeping the lights on” for our building, programs, events, and preservation work, there’s one name that quietly appears behind the scenes again and again:

**Anna Bono Larrisey.**

For many years, Anna has served as Treasurer of the Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation, carefully stewarding the organization’s finances so that our mission—to preserve and celebrate the rich history of Bristol Borough—could thrive. In this role, she has done far more than balance a checkbook. She has helped ensure that every house tour, exhibit, talk, scholarship, and community program had the financial foundation it needed to succeed.

As Treasurer, Anna oversaw budgets, maintained meticulous records, prepared financial reports, and worked closely with the Board to make responsible decisions about how BCHF’s resources were used. She dedicated countless hours to this work—quietly, reliably, and without fanfare—because she believed deeply in the importance of preserving Bristol’s history.

Her service with BCHF reflects a broader story of dedication to the town. Anna also serves as Bristol Borough’s elected Tax Collector, a position that demands accuracy, accountability, and trust from the community. It is no coincidence that someone entrusted with that responsibility was also entrusted with the finances of BCHF. In both roles, Anna has demonstrated

the same steady reliability, attention to detail, and deep commitment to her neighbors.

Behind every successful Historic Bristol Day, every newsletter, every program that requires insurance, permits, contracts, or payments, there are quiet tasks that most people never see: tracking deposits, paying bills on time, answering questions, and planning ahead for the next

project. Anna has been the person we counted on to make sure all of those details were handled with care.

As she retires from the BCHF Board and from her role as Treasurer, we recognize that we are saying thank you not just for “years served,” but for the peace of mind she brought to everyone around the table. Because of Anna’s work, Board members and volunteers were able to dream a little bigger—knowing that someone dependable was watching the

numbers and safeguarding the Foundation’s future.

On behalf of the Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Anna Bono Larrisey for her many years of faithful service, her professionalism, and her unwavering dedication to Bristol Borough. Her legacy will live on in every program, publication, and preservation effort that she helped make possible.

Thank you, Anna, for giving so generously of your time and talents to BCHF and to the town we all love.



## Looking Ahead to Upcoming Programs



**February 15, 2026 @ 2PM.** Michael Harris presents “An Overview of the Fighting Along the Delaware River in 1777. Michael C. Harris is a historian who wrote *Fighting for Philadelphia*, a book

about the battles along the Delaware River in 1777, including the fights at Fort Mercer and Fort Mifflin.

Michael C. Harris is an award-winning historian and author who has worked for the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. He has written extensively on the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777. Light refreshments will be served. Donation of \$5 per adult is suggested, students are free.

**March 22, 2026 @ 2PM.** Carol Simon Levin will bring to life, Abigail Adams: Remembering the Ladies. Carol Simon Levin is a professional storyteller, historical impersonator and NJ Council for the Humanities Scholar specializing in “Fascinating Women History Forgot.” Light refreshments will be served. Donation of \$5 per adult is suggested, students are free.



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## Sailing Away

Consider sailing on Celebrity Cruise Line's "Best of Greece" cruise, August 29 to September 7.



The itinerary includes a pre-night stay in Athens and ports-of-call including Athens, Greece; Ephesus, Turkey; Santorini, Rhodes, Mykonos and Thessaloniki, Greece. Rates, which include round-trip airfare from Philadelphia, range from \$5,007 to \$5,821 pp double. A Passport is required.

For a detailed flyer, call Janice Rhodes at 215-781-0483 or print it from

<http://www.bristolhistory.org>.

For reservations, contact Grand American Tours at 800-423-0247.

Watch future issues of The Gazette for information on BCHF's plans for 2026's day trips.

## A Community Hospital

Anyone new to Bristol within the last thirty years might be surprised to learn that it once had its own fully operational, modern, inpatient hospital. It was a community hospital in all senses: conceived of and championed by one of Bristol's long-serving physicians, reliant on volunteer help from members of the community, and offering full patient and laboratory services for the care of people in Bristol.

Apart from newbies like me, many of our members will remember the Delaware Valley Hospital on Wilson Avenue that operated from 1960 to 1993. It was a community-focused, accredited hospital with eighty beds and twelve bassinets. There were over three thousand admissions yearly. The hospital had an auxiliary and three guilds with over eighty volunteers. The feeling was that it was truly part of the community due to its structure as a 'non-profit' entity and its location in the heart of Bristol. In time, the hospital expanded to include interns and residents for training... even a cardiology fellowship in conjunction with Deborah Heart and Lung Center.

Dr. Julius Sobel was the president of the hospital's board of directors and the key motivator in the hospital's origin as he gathered like-minded physicians to join. The Delaware Valley Hospital occupied a building that had served as a hospital in the community of Harriman. In May of 1960, a groundbreaking ceremony (picture, Dr. Sobel on the extreme right) marked the start of construction of an addition to the newly reformed and renamed hospital. In the late 1960s, an additional four-

story addition was made to the structure as well as internal renovations. These changes ensured that the hospital was at the forefront of medical technology and equipped to manage all aspects of modern medical care.

Dr. Sobel, who had graduated from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathy in 1934, opened his medical office at 413 Mill Street two years later in 1936. Dr. Sobel served the growing Bristol community in general practice and obstetrics for many years before his involvement in the establishment of the Delaware Valley Hospital. In addition to his efforts toward the growth of the hospital, Dr. Sobel was the founder and chief of the division of Proctology all

while maintaining his private practice. In an aside, Dr. Sobel's wife, Anna Sobel, was the president of the auxiliary and deeply involved with fund-raising including the very popular Fall Carnival held on the hospital grounds.

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end. Dr. Sobel died in November of 1978. He was honored by his many patients, the community he served, and his colleagues. Despite the best efforts of the doctors and the involvement of the community, times changed and Delaware Valley Hospital closed its operation in Bristol in 1993. It was a hardship for the community in terms of the loss of jobs and of the personal care that the community hospital provided.

*References: Grundy Archive,  
<https://archive.grundylibrary.org/items/show/1274>:  
Bristol Courier 8/15/1961: Bristol Courier  
9/10/1936. Deborah Pinney and Dr. Bernard Sobel*





## Bristol Puerto Rican History and Archive Initiative Presentation



Joel Berrocal and Abigail Duffany discussing the Bristol Puerto Rican History and Archive Initiative at the BCHF general membership meeting on November 19, 2025.

This fall Joel Berrocal, a resident of the borough, and Abigail Duffany, the archivist at the Grundy Foundation, presented highlights of the Bristol Puerto Rican History and Archive Initiative. Since the 1950s, Puerto Rican families have made significant contributions to shaping the culture and community of Bristol, Pennsylvania. Today, more than 1,100 Puerto Rican residents call Bristol home, but very little of their history is represented in the town's archival collections.

Mr. Berrocal and Ms. Duffany invite residents to share photographs, documents, keepsakes, and personal stories to help preserve Puerto Rican history in Bristol for future generations.

Your contributions will become part of a new public digital collection in the Grundy Archive. You keep your original materials and receive free digital copies of everything we scan or record. With your permission, materials may also be used in exhibits, publications, or community programs. All materials will be handled with care, and all descriptions will be developed in collaboration with contributors to ensure cultural respect and accuracy.

Spanish-language appointments and interviews are available. Please contact Ms. Duffany via email [duffanya@grundylibrary.com](mailto:duffanya@grundylibrary.com) or call 215-788-7891.





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Athens, Greece; Ephesus, Turkey; Santorini, Rhodes, Mykonos and Thessaloniki, Greece. Rates, which include round-trip airfare from Philadelphia, range from \$5,007 to \$5,821 pp double. A Passport is required.

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BCHF Headquarters are at 321 Cedar Street, Bristol.

For current information about activities and events, check our website at [www.bristolhistory.org](http://www.bristolhistory.org)  
Email us at [bchf2157819895@gmail.com](mailto:bchf2157819895@gmail.com) Follow us on Instagram - [IG@bristol\\_historic\\_foundation](https://www.instagram.com/IG@bristol_historic_foundation)

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