From: **Townsend Historical Society** info@townsendhistoricalsociety.org
Subject: Townsend Historical Society President's Letter - Oct 2026
Date: October 26, 2026 at 4:59 PM
To: rideout01469@gmail.com

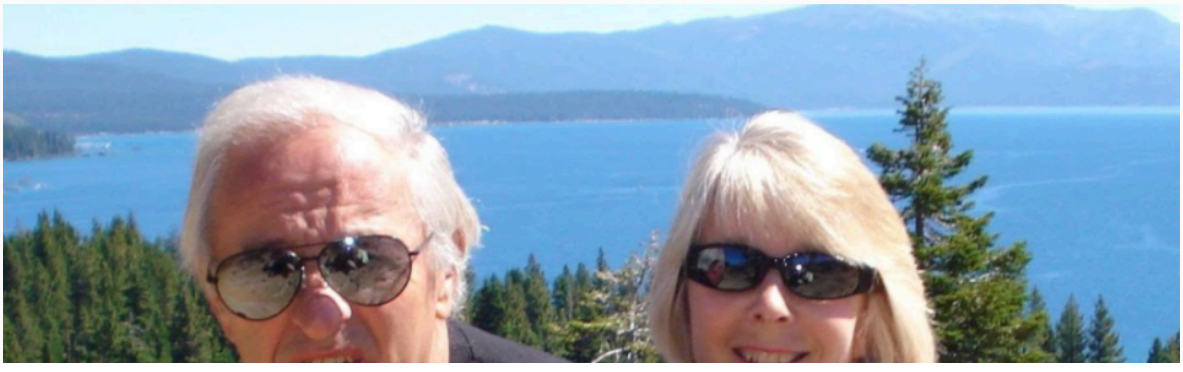
Townsend Historical Society President Chris Barnacoat's Letter:

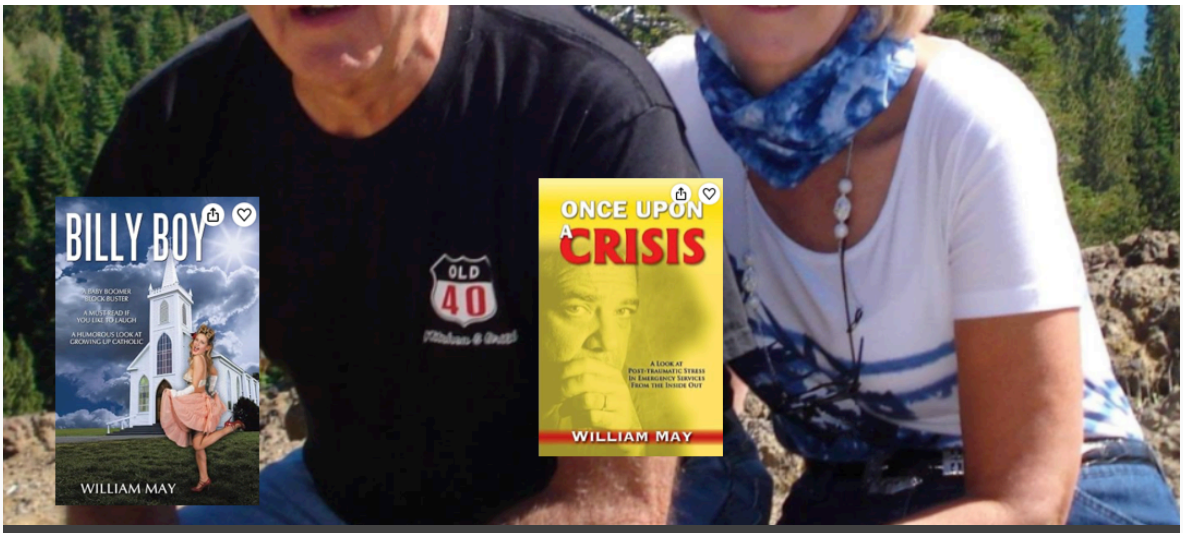
October 2026

It's been a couple of months since the Presidential quill has been dipped in the ink well. The seasons have changed from Summer to Fall and the leaves will soon be cascading down to carpet the earth below. It will soon be time for the gardening group to ready their rakes and tarps and prepare the Reed House grounds for winter.

Townsend Historical Society's Annual General Meeting

It is also the time of year to invite our wonderful members to the **Townsend Historical Society's Annual General Meeting**. Please save the date - **Sunday, November 8th from 2-4:00 at the Great Hall in Memorial Hall**. Following the Board Meeting we are very pleased to welcome Bill May, former Townsend Police Chief, who will be our guest speaker. You will surely enjoy a fascinating account of Bill "the Hunk" May's stories of growing up in Townsend. When you arrive, make sure you check in at the membership table so you are all set to vote for the 2027 Slate of Directors and received your copy of the program for the meeting, as well as our list of the year's accomplishments. The program will layout the format for the meeting and I hope you will stay awhile after Bill May's presentation to enjoy refreshments, talk with Bill and talk with board members and friends. Bill will have his books for sale and the 2027 Calendar and the Book 'A Village Hooped in Steel' will also be available. We hope to see you all there.





The annual meeting features Bill May's fascinating stories about growing up and living in Townsend.

Grist Mill

2026 has been a very active year at the Townsend Historical Society and as you will see we have accomplished an enormous amount. I'm sure you will have noticed there has been a great deal of activity at the Grist Mill, Cooperage, and Reed House. Work on the Grist Mill is continuing with exterior repairs and painting still ongoing. Inside, the millwrights from Kentucky have been restoring the structures that support the mill stones, no easy task. In Spring of 2027 the millwrights will be setting and resurfacing the mill stones. Progress toward having a working Grist Mill is slow but it is moving forward.





The Millwrights in action.

Cooperage, Reed Homestead, and Harbor Meeting House

Restoration of the Cooperage is complete thanks to the amazing craftsmanship of Uwe Tobies and his team. This enabled us to have a very successful “soft opening” and we hope you were able to attend. Visitors were excited to finally see the inside of the building, the hearse and the exhibits that had been set up. This was just a glimpse of some of the exhibits that will be featured in the Cooperage when it is set up as an interactive museum. We are very fortunate to have received a grant (written by Ben Jaehne) from the Community Foundation North Central Massachusetts. This will greatly help fund the static, interactive and temporary exhibits that will demonstrate how the building was used over time and how work changed from ‘cottage industries’ to ‘industrialization’.

I’m sure you have noticed that the ‘Gem’ of the THS is now receiving a face lift. Much needed carpentry work is being completed and the many stages involved in painting are underway. The ‘old homestead’ will really sparkle when the work has been completed. To add to this outside work, and to the relief of many, the step at the entrance way at the side of the house has been raised for easier access. Garden beds

have been tended, the Memorial Bench has been cleaned and the area around it attractively landscaped. And to wrap it all up, the picket fence will be installed in Spring.

We cannot forget all the activity inside the house where many updates have taken place. All the main floor rooms have received fresh coats of paint and the Borning room, Dining room and Bathroom have also had new wallpapers installed that reflect some of the different periods in the house. I hope you will be able to come to the **Annual Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 6th from 2-4:00** and experience these updates to the home, see how it is decorated for the holidays and sip on some Wassail and mulled cider and sample some holiday treats.

Last but not least a few words about the beautiful Harbor Meeting House. Hopefully the work on the landscaping, and septic can be completed soon and we can look forward to a Grand Opening in the not-too-distant future.





The year in summary

Looking back over the last few months I'm very pleased to report that despite the rainy Sunday, the Arts & Crafts Fair was a great success and some vendors have already indicated they will be back next year. The Time Capsule has reached its final destination in the Harbor Meetinghouse where it will remain until 2076 when it will be opened – see you there? The Docent Manual is being brought up to date to add even more information to our tours of the Reed House, including new information on each room in the house. We are so appreciative that membership has been increasing. Thank you to Lindsay Morand for all your efforts. The 2027 Calendar has been printed. Special thanks to Jane Jackson who took our ideas, pictures, and texts and turned them into the great calendar available now.

We are so proud of what has been accomplished over this past year and all the work that has gone into the amazing improvements to all our properties. Our great thanks go to all the amazing people, both professional and volunteers who have worked so hard to bring this about. **I want to especially take this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Jock Snaith who has spent decades working to see the vision of Old Harbor Village coming to fruition.** We always have to remember that none of this would have been possible without the very generous gift from our donor.

It has been a busy year, sometimes rather exhausting, but we are all set and ready for another busy and exciting 2027. A main focus of the new year will be acting on our plans for the Toomey House, at 16 South Street. Thanks to the generous donation from Deluxe Corporation the Toomey House will enable us to have much needed space for a new office, a designated research area, a larger gift store, room for the clothes collection and a work space. It will also provide a permanent space for the E.B White Collection, so generously donated

permanent space for the E.B.White Collection, so generously donated by Lindsay Morand. Plans will also include the design and building of an additional vault to provide for our growing archival collections. We are very grateful for the very generous donation from an anonymous donor that will make this possible.

Wishing you all a healthy and happy holiday season and I hope to see you soon.

Chris Barnacoat

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Want to learn more or become a member on-line? Go to our website at:
https://townsendhistoricalsociety.org

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