



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

Spring 2019
Vol. 126, No. 1

avis update

The Bonier Reservation is Dynamic By Alix Driscoll

“The Bonier Reservation is dynamic.”

That’s how Dick Bonier speaks of the land he cherishes and has given to AVIS in June 2018 after planning this gift for many decades. “I had a dialogue with everything outside on the property, the snapping turtles, Northern Lights; I drank water from 300 feet down.

It is always changing with new growth as nature creates anew,” he affirms juxtaposing knowledge that his gift is permanent for all to enjoy now and for generations to come.

Bonier’s adult children, Catherine, Fran, and Tom, supported this gift; it was a family decision to create The Richard J. Bonier Reservation, 20.21 acres for AVIS to protect.

Treasures of the land

Located to the southeast of the reservation, is Dick’s Pond, a treasure. When there was a massive drought in the 60’s he rented a bulldozer to deepen a small pond with water lilies springs in the middle; he scooped out the wonderful white clay bottom to create a place that was more inviting for swimming and skating. He shared with much pride that he “saved it” from the designs of local developers who tried to fill it in. Swimming, skating, catching frogs, and playing hockey there added to the “fantasy of living in the woods,” agreed Katie. She’s Dr. Catherine Bonier, Dick’s daughter, an architecture professor and Co-Director of the Urban Research Lab at Carlton University in Ottawa.

In 1963 Bonier came to Andover from Watertown to work in a clinic on Tower Hill and purchased 25 acres in what was then a very rural area, which was said to be part of the old Bailey Farm. Upon the land was a small cape built in 1832, held together by flat



Top: These words on the metal engraving on Dick’s Bench express the gratitude of AVIS to him and to his family for the gift of the Bonier Reservation. Photo by Alix Driscoll

nails, for the original owner was a blacksmith. Bonier was a city kid who always dreamed of living in the country. Around his more that two acres he planted copper beech, dogwood and hickory. In 1996, when the house burned down due to a chimney fire, Bonier rebuilt nearer the long driveway guarded by white pines he had planted in two sentinel rows. He walked in the woods almost every day, clearing dead wood, noticing new growth, and caring for the forest through the seasons. He would often bring his children along to learn about wildlife and forest circles. He and his then wife, Carolyn Malone Bonier, kept a meticulous journal of all the signs of spring, from the first snowdrop flower to the first bluebird sighting each year.

Family lore

As a family, the Boniers would gather each year at Picnic Rock along the stream on an auspicious spring day to celebrate with white wine, crispy chicken and brownies.

Early on Bonier created the sledding hill for his family. “For us, my dad encouraged curiosity, watching living things, a gentle dialogue with nature.” shared Katie. The children regularly explored and played in the woods, usually not arriving home until dark, always honing their independence. His daughter, Fran, would expand past her father’s amateur naturalist status, becoming professor and research biologist with a focus on field work and ecology. Tom, the youngest, is deeply involved in politics, but moved to his own home near a stream in the woods of Maryland, as soon as he was able to leave Washington D. C. Katie teaches classes in mapping and water-sensitive environmental urban planning, skills she started at age 8, when she first paced out and graphed what she labeled Sweetwater Stream, the skunk-cabbage-edged creek



Left: Hoisting the Richard J. Bonier Reservation sign at the trailhead in December 2018. Davaid Dargie, Katie Bonier (Dick’s daughter), John Hess, AVIS President, and Ranger Dick Dillon. Photo By Alix Driscoll

Right: On a brisk late fall day, David Dargie, AVIS’s Land Manager, Susan Stott, AVIS Trustee, Carolyn Malone Bonier and Katie Bonier met at the historic Picnic Rock to make plans for Dick’s bench on the reservation. There will be an opening in the spring of the Bonier Reservation. Photo by Alix Driscoll

that runs through the Bonier property. The family hopes that by conserving their father's property and making it available to the public, others will also benefit from this magical place.

Bonier's gift to AVIS

It would seem that he had been thinking for a great while about this singular donation. Early on, Harold Rafton had planted the thought for his consideration. "He was a bulldozer," affirmed Bonier. Long discussions followed with Fred Snell, former AVIS trustee and president of AVIS, as the Bonier and Snell offspring grew up together. From time to time Peggy Keck, AVIS vice president for decades, and later Susan Stott, AVIS's land acquisition expert, dropped by to seek his interest in preservation.

Bonier spent the majority of his career working as clinical psychologist at McLean Hospital in Belmont, where he directed a unit for adolescent outpatients. He is a free spirit given to thoughtful observation and dry humor; his own rebellious nature helped him to relate easily to his troubled young patients. Coming back to Andover each evening, he would change into jeans and head outside to tend his vegetable garden, mow the field, or do other work around the property he loved and cared for. The forested land given to AVIS was, and remains very special to him and to his family.

In its 125th year AVIS is celebrating the opening of the Richard J. Bonier Reservation and the joining of the "rocks and rills" of the historical Bailey farmland to AVIS holdings now protected forever, a gift from Dick Bonier with the affirmation of his family.



Dick Bonier swimming in his pond lush with water lilies. Photo by Katie Bonier

Reflections of Fran Bonier, Dick's Daughter

By Frances Bonier

As children, my brother, sister and I spent hours exploring these woods. My father described the forest as his church – he encouraged us to walk through it respectfully and observantly, and to notice what was going on around us: seasonal events like blooming lady slippers, exciting and rare finds like a beaver visiting the pond, and traces of the land like ruined foundations of old farm buildings. For my siblings and me, our earliest experiences with nature in the forest nurtured our love of wildlife and wilderness, (To a six-year-old, 20 acres can be a vast wilderness), and, undoubtedly shaped who we are now. We are so happy that AVIS will protect this forest for future generations, and we hope others will find as much inspiration and wonder in it as we did.

My father described the forest as his church – he encouraged us to walk through it respectfully and observantly, and to notice what was going on around us.



A tired but enthusiastic group of baseball players from Merrimack College pose after completing nearly three hours of work on November 10, 2018 to clear the new trail at the Richard J. Bonier Reservation on Monahan Lane in West Andover. Due to their work, this newest AVIS reservation will be open to the public in the spring of 2019. Led by David Dargie, top left, and Mark Kalusny, orange jacket, they cleared almost one mile of forest to create Dick's Trail. Photo by John Hess

AVIS 125 Challenge:

Hike 25 AVIS Reservations to Complete the Challenge
And Win an Official AVIS Challenge T-shirt

Help celebrate AVIS's 125th Anniversary by hiking 25 AVIS reservations in 2019.

Get outside and see parts of Andover you never knew existed.

The challenge runs January 1 to December 31, 2019. Hike the main loop of each reservation. Track your progress on a downloadable form at the AVIS website: www.avisandover.org, look for AVIS 125. Reservation maps and parking information can be found there too. When you are finished the hikes, mail the completed form to AVIS, P. O. Box 5097, Andover, MA 01810 or bring to an AVIS event. You will receive an official AVIS Challenge T-shirt!

Questions: members@avisandover.org

Call for Memorabilia for AVIS's 125 Anniversary

AVIS is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. If you would like to help or if you have any historical memorabilia (T-shirts, literature, photos, stories, memories, etc.) please contact John Hess at (978) 470-0806 or hess.john@att.net. We would love to hear from you.

President's Letter By John Hess

We owe a great deal of gratitude to those who came before us: those who founded The Andover Village Improvement Society in 1894 to “beautify” and improve our Town; those who converted this nascent organization into a modern land trust; those who encouraged and assisted the Town to create an effective Conservation Commission; and those who continued to acquire land and protect it for future generations. I encourage all our readers to visit the Andover Center for History and Culture to view the excellent history exhibit that has been installed there. That exhibit pays homage to our predecessors and their many deeds to protect land in Andover.

I also encourage you to participate in as many of the AVIS 125 activities as you can during this, our 125th year. Please see the calendar on our website. There are many wonderful reasons to get outside and explore whether as a lone walker, on a family outing, or trying to complete the AVIS 125 Challenge to hike 25 reservations during the year. The reservations that are required for the 125 Challenge are on a check list that you can get from our website. Just write in the date you do each reservation and send the form to us when you are finished. All who do the 25 hikes will get a T-shirt; and the Challenge T-shirts are not available to the general public.



Going forward our current generation has the challenge of not only acquiring land as it becomes available but of protecting and preserving the over 1300 acres we already own. Threats of invasive species, herbicides & pesticides, changing river and stream beds which cause erosion, and other challenges mean that we need to invest in more aggressive stewardship. More and more we are going to have to expend resources to protect the land we have saved and that will take money, not to acquire but to remove invasive species. We will need to take other remedial and/or protective actions. We have hired an expert to help identify priority projects and are committed to the stewardship of the lands we manage.

To this end, we have created a campaign to support the AVIS Land Stewardship Fund. Our goal is to raise \$125,000 in this our 125th year. These financial resources will help us to grow the endowment for the protection of AVIS properties. Information about the campaign will be on our website soon.

Thank you for your support of AVIS and we encourage you to get outside and enjoy the wonderful places we have in Town.

AVIS Annual Meeting

We look forward to celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Andover Village Improvement Society at the 2019 Annual Meeting and Dinner. The event will include a cash-bar cocktail hour and buffet dinner. Following the address from the AVIS board of Trustees a talk will be given by Rand Wentworth, the president emeritus of the Land Trust Alliance, a national conservation group that serves as leader for 1100 land trusts. During his 14 years of leadership, he expanded the incentives for donation of conservation easements and doubled the pace of land protection. Land trusts now protect 56 million acres. Currently he is Louis Bacon Senior Fellow in Environmental Leadership, at the Harvard Kennedy School training policy leaders in conservation.

The cost to participate in the dinner portion of the event is \$65 per person, and payment is required to reserve your seat. As always, AVIS members are invited to join us for the speaking portion of the event (beginning at approximately 8:00 p.m.) free of charge.

Date: Wed, April 10, 2019 • **Time:** 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. • **Location:** The Andover Country Club (60 Canterbury Street, Andover, MA 01810)

To purchase tickets on line: Visit us at: <http://avisandover.org/avis125/annual-dinner.html>.

To purchase tickets by mail: Send a check payable to Andover Village Improvement Society to P.O. Box 5097, Andover, MA 01810. Please include the number of tickets you would like to reserve, the names of all planned attendees, and whether a vegetarian meal is preferred. Be sure to include your phone number, email addresses and mailing addresses of all attendees.

Would you like to purchase a ticket for a Warden? If so please include \$65 more. Thank you!

AVIS 125th Anniversary Gear!

In 2019, we'll be offering a variety of AVIS clothing items you can order online and have sent directly to your house. Stay tuned for details! We'll have samples available at our Annual Dinner in April.



On New Year's Day more than 80 hikers led by Jeff LaFountain trekked the Skug River Reservation. This hike kicked off AVIS's 125th celebration year. Photo by Susan Stott.

Time for the Third Annual Shawsheen River Herring Count

By Dr. Jon Honea

It's been a little more than two years since two derelict dams were removed from the Shawsheen River in Andover. One dam was just upstream of the intersection between Main Street and Lowell Street, and the other was near the Stevens Street Post Office. The downstream dam had been there for nearly 100 years and the Stevens Street Dam (AKA Marland Place Dam) had been there in one form or another for more than 200 years—both blocking the historical habitat of important migratory fish populations such as river herring, shad, and American eels. Because, among these fish, river herring have the largest population on the Merrimack River into which the Shawsheen flows, the Shawsheen River Greenway and the Andover Conservation Commission organized the first annual Shawsheen River herring count in the spring of 2017, only a few months after the dams were removed.

We hoped that some Merrimack River river herring would stray into the Shawsheen instead of home in on the area where they hatched as most do. Straying to nearby river systems is an important evolutionary strategy in many species of migratory fish that allows some fraction of a population to survive natural disasters like landslides or human-constructed dams that can block spawning habitat. Straying also facilitated recolonization of rivers as the glaciers retreated at the end of the last glacial period.

Fortunately, the Merrimack River river herring population didn't disappoint and sent, enough strays to start a healthy new run on the Shawsheen when their offspring return to spawn most

likely in 2020 and peaking in 2021 or 2022.

It's time to welcome the next river herring strays from the Merrimack. It's a 10-minute commitment for a counting session. Go to the little bridge by Marland Place; see easy-to-follow instructions. Questions? jon_honea@emerson.edu.

You can find directions to the count location, on the little bridge by Marland Place, and easy-to-follow instructions, and link to sign up for a time here: www.shawsheengreenway.org/herring-count.html.

Please contact me at jon_honea@emerson.edu if you have any questions, comments or stories to share.

Bring your families, children's groups, environmental friends, and all who want to see and count our new neighbors, the river herring.



Here's what a river herring or alewife looks like. Alewives (*Alosa pseudoharengus*). Photo by Jerry Prezioso, NOAA Fisheries.

Stewardship, Thoughtful Management of AVIS Reservations

By Amy Janovsky, Stewardship Chair

Stewardship is a new framework for thoughtful management of AVIS's reservations. As an all-volunteer organization, AVIS's first task is to set priorities, in this case, to determine which reservations are showing healthy, diverse natural vegetation, and which are becoming damaged by invasive plants and other pests. It takes a skilled eye to read a natural landscape, seeing how historic land uses such as farming have altered forest cover and soil conditions; how chestnut blight wiped out mature forest, leaving root sprouts still attempting to thrive; how the demise of mighty ash trees leaves sunny openings in which bittersweet, multiflora rose and barberry thrive—creating impenetrable tangles. AVIS is fortunate that Richard Barry, warden of the Burns Reservation, is adept in such reconnaissance, and is currently



This tree at Baker's Meadow has been strangled and downed by Oriental bittersweet, an invasive plant damaging trees throughout our area. Photo by Richard Barry.

conducting a Reservations Review to assist the Stewardship Committee in setting goals for each reservation, and then prioritizing the work.

For this project, Richard will focus on all trailside areas and assess the degree of infestation by invasive plants, if any. Mainly focusing on all woody invasive species, knotweed, evergreen ground covers, and garlic mustard, he will also take note of other indicators of forest health, and will take representative photographs mapped and linked to GPS coordinates to record his observations. His reports will describe the health of the forest or other habitats that exist throughout each reservation and provide brief recommendations for improvement. This will create an active record that will be updated whenever work projects are completed. Wardens will be invited to participate in Richard's site visits, and to participate in the planning for work at the reservations.

Our overall goal is to better understand the ecological status of our reservations so that we can prioritize seeking professional assistance to assist us in addressing issues of concern.

Phase one, consisting of the Burns, Greene, Purdon and Bakers Meadow reservations, is underway; the results will let us consider and possibly fine-tune our approach before we move on to Phase 2. Already, this project has sparked new ideas for enhancing the visitor experience at the Purdon Reservation, while considering how best to address ecological challenges at the site.

This tree at Baker's Meadow has been strangled and downed by Oriental bittersweet, an invasive plant damaging trees throughout our area.

Thank You

We can never thank our supporters, volunteers and donors enough.

The Boston Foundation Thank you for the annual grants of \$5,000 from the Bessie P. Goldsmith Fund that are used for improvements and maintenance on the Goldsmith Woodlands, as well as necessary tools and equipment.

Annual Appeal Donors: November 30, 2018 - January 14, 2019

Thank you for supporting AVIS with your donations, and for joining us in keeping the land protected and open to the public.

Robert and Susannah Abbott
John J. and Diane Anciello
Linn Anderson
Chris Andrews
Steve Andrews
Ed Anson
Linda and Larry Ardito
Ralph and Cathy Bakkensen
David Barcelo
John and Nuala Boness
William Bourassa
Robert W. Bouzon
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Rob Butler
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Glenn and Jane Cairns
Joan Canterbury
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Gary Clarke
Peggy and Dan Coleman
Nathan Combs
Cynthia Cook
Al Coons
Dennis Crispo
Matt Dallett
Carolyn and Ron Dann

David Dargie
Richard Davis
Susan Feindt and
Michael DeLaus
Andrew Dorsey
Dave and Kate Doub
Jack and Alix Driscoll
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Chris Vieira
Francois Vignon
David and Sue Wahr
Helen and David Waller
George W. Wermers
Marion Wohlhieter
Alan and Jessica Zucchini



AVIS'S 125TH CELEBRATION EVENTS
Please check avisandover.org for specifics, where to meet for each event and for other events that will be added during the year. We want everyone to be aware of AVIS and the importance of land preservation and access for all. Everyone should have the opportunity to become a member.

ONGOING EVENTS
Breathing Places, an exhibit about AVIS at the Andover Center for History and Culture (ACHC) open until August 29. ACHC is continuing to seek AVIS memorabilia for the exhibit. To send photos to ACHC breathingplaces2019@gmail.com

Men's Hiking Group at The Center at Punchard is offering hikes on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Many are on AVIS Reservations.

G.O.R.P. - The Great Outdoor Reading Program at Memorial Hall Library. Check out favorite reads from the AVIS community and MHL librarians. See the article in the Update and contact saude@mhl.org for more information. See <https://mhl.org/avis-mhl-great-outdoors-reading-program>

SPECIAL EVENTS
March 10 / Hike at Sakowich, Baker's Meadow, Indian Ridge and West Parish Meadow reservations. 1 - 4 p.m., led by Jeff LaFountain. Meet at the Sakowich Reservation, 26 Oriole Dr., Andover.

March 26 / Tuesdays with AVIS, hike, trimming trails, Taft Res., 9:30 a.m.-noon, Park at Sagamore at Wildwood Road, led by David Dargie.

April 2 / Tuesdays with AVIS, hike and trash pickup, Deer Jump Res., 9:30 a.m.-noon, led by David Dargie, meet at end of Ravens Bluff.

April 10 / AVIS Annual Dinner at the Andover Country Club, 6 p.m. social hour; 7 p.m. dinner and 8 p.m. Meeting and speaker Rand Wentworth. For more information, see pg. 2 and avisandover.org.

April 13 / West Parish Meadow Hike for families with young kids, 10:00 - 11:30. Led by teacher/naturalists, fun hike will be a scavenger hunt for nature clues. West Parish parking lot. Kids age 4 - 8, with adults. Led by Cheryl McKeough and Amy Janovsky. Amy 978-475-8655.

April 14 / Hike at Deer Jump Trail, 1 - 4 p.m., led by Jeff

LaFountain. Park at the end of Merrimack Drive in Tewksbury. Registration required.

April 16 / Tuesdays with AVIS, hike and trash pickup, Deer Jump Res., 9:30-noon, led by David Dargie, meet at Launching Rd. on right, past Mercury Circle

May 7 / Tuesdays with AVIS, hike, Goldsmith Woodlands, 9:30 - noon, led by David Dargie, meet at 491 South Main St.

May 10 / Hike at Shawsheen and Vale reservations, 1 - 4 p.m., led by Jeff LaFountain. Park on Abbott Bridge Drive near Central Street.

May 13 / Kids Hike, ages 4-8 with an adult, West Parish Meadow, 10-11:30 a.m., led by teacher/naturalists Cheryl McKeough and Amy Janovsky, fun hike, scavenger hunt with nature clues, meet at West Parish parking lot. Questions Amy 978-475-8655

May 16 / Hike at Sakowich Reservation, 9:30 a.m., led by Essex County Greenbelt Association. Park at 26 Oriole Dr.

May 16 / Mass Audubon bird talk, 7 p.m., Memorial Hall Library.

May 19 / Bird Hike at

Baker's Meadow, 8 a.m., led by Don and Donna Cooper. Register at avisandover.org

May 21 / Tuesdays with AVIS, led by David Dagie. Check at avisandover.org

May 22 / AVIS 125th Anniversary Beer Naming Party, Oak and Iron Brewery, Register at avisandover.org and pay in advance.

June 4 / Tuesdays with AVIS, led by David Dagie. Check at avisandover.org

June 9 / Hike at Hammond and Skug reservations, 1 - 4 p.m., led by Jeff LaFountain. Park at Skug Reservation, 319 Salem St. or at Wagon Wheel Road.

June 13 / Edibles talk by Russ Cohen, at Memorial Hall Library, 7 p.m.

June 18 / Tuesdays with AVIS, led by David Dagie. Check at avisandover.org

June 19 / Edibles Hike, led by Russ Cohen, 6:00 p.m. Please check on website avisandover.org for details.

June 23 / Hike at Rafton Reservation, led by Essex County Greenbelt Association, 1 p.m. Park on High Plain Road or in the Town lot at 283 High Plain Rd.

Summer 2019 / AVIS at the Farmers Market at the Center for History and Culture, many Saturdays.

July 14 / Hike at Purdon, Lupine, Greene, Burns, Wilkinson, and Stanley reservations, (with bus), 1 - 4 p.m., led by Jeff LaFountain.

July 16 / Tuesdays with AVIS, led by David Dagie. Check at avisandover.org

Aug 6 / Tuesdays with AVIS, led by David Dagie. Check at avisandover.org

August 11 / Hike at Bonier, Collins, Lowell and Lawrence Railroad, Smith, and Turtle Mound reservations. (with bus) 1 - 4 p.m., led by Jeff LaFountain. Check on website avisandover.org for meeting place.

September 1 / Art Exhibition in celebration of AVIS's 125th anniversary, Addison Gallery, Phillips Academy, curated by Gordon Wilkins. Check at avisandover.org for more details.

September 3 / Tuesdays with AVIS, led by David Dagie. Check at avisandover.org

Please check the AVIS website: avisandover.org for up-to-date information on these and more events.

AVIS Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Dues: _____ \$30 Individual _____ \$100 Sustaining
 _____ \$50 Family _____ \$15 Student & Senior

You can join or renew online at www.avisandover.org/join.html or make check payable to "AVIS" and mail to :

AVIS
 PO Box 5097
 Andover, MA 01810.

For information about planned giving or stock donations contact info@avisandover.org. Contributions and dues are tax deductible to the extent permitted by federal regulations. Thank you!

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For additional AVIS events see
AVISANDOVER.ORG

To check for other hikes visit
ANDOVERTRAILS.ORG

For AMC walks see
AMCBOSTON.ORG

The AVIS Update is a biannual publication of The Andover Village Improvement Society. The mission of AVIS is to acquire and preserve Andover land in its natural state. More than 1,200 acres of land are managed by AVIS and are open to all for passive recreation.

Please be sure to check our website, avisandover.org, for hikes and other activities during the spring and summer.

CALENDAR

125th Anniversary Annual Meeting

April 10, 2019, Wednesday

6:00 p.m. Reception,
 7:00 dinner,
 8:00 Annual Meeting and
 Speaker

Andover Country Club

Rand Wentworth served as president of the Land Trust Alliance for 14 years expanding the pace and quality of land conservation in America. Under his leadership land trusts now protect 56 million acres. He built bipartisan support for expanding tax credits for donation of conservation easements and TerraFirma, which funds legal costs of defending conserved lands

from legal challenges. Each year he trained 5,000 land conservationists. At Kennedy School, Wentworth is training policy leaders in conservation matters.

He is a graduate of Yale and holds an MBA in finance from Cornell.

AVIS 125 Challenge

until Dec. 31, 2019
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reservation. Track your progress on a downloadable form at the AVIS website: www.avisandover.org, look for AVIS 125.

Reservation maps and parking information can be found there too.

When you are finished the hikes, mail the completed form to AVIS, P. O. Box 5097, Andover, MA 01810 or bring to an AVIS event. You will receive an official AVIS Challenge T-shirt!

Questions: members@avisandover.org

Hikes

There are several hikes each month:

Tuesdays with AVIS led by David Dargie

On the first and third Tuesdays

Monthly hikes with Jeff LaFountain

Men's Hiking Group at Center at Punchard, second and fourth Wednesdays - Some on AVIS reservations

In addition to special topic hikes.

See 125 Events at avisandover.org

Opening of the Bonier Reservation

Spring 2019 TBA

Naming of 125th Anniversary Beer

May 22, Oak and Iron Brewery

Art Exhibition at the Addison Gallery

Opening Sept. 1 to run until mid March

Phillips Academy, 180 Main St.

To celebrate AVIS's 125 Anniversary

With works from the collection.

Curated by Gordon Wilkins September TBA. Please see avisandover.org

JOHN HESS
President

JIM SUTTON
Membership

ALIX DRISCOLL
Editor

LINDSEY CHANDLER
Designer

