



January 2022

Dear Friend of Heublein Tower,

Happy New Year! The Friends of Heublein Tower have continued our work to restore and enhance the cherished Heublein Tower despite the ongoing challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic. While the park remained open for those who like to hike along the trails, the Tower building was closed to the public for the 2020 season. Due to the efforts of the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the building was re-opened to the public for the 2021 season. However, with the Gift Shop closed for the 2020 and 2021 seasons and the limited accessibility of the donation box in the lobby, we have experienced a profound reduction in donations. While Covid protocols reduced our ability to work inside the building, to get volunteers to help us, or to have contractors perform work off or on site, we were still busy. Let's hope 2022 is smoother sailing! Below are some of our recent highlights:

Light the Beacon Capital Campaign: Many of you know there was a blinking red beacon in the cupola atop the Tower for over 50 years. While not officially required by the FAA, travelers by car and plane knew they were almost home when the beacon came into view. The Board had anticipated launching our first ever Capital Campaign with the goal of raising funds to modernize and re-light the beacon that burned out 5 years ago and to pursue additional capital funds for further restoration and enhancement of the Tower. This campaign was ready to go when we realized that we would have to shelve it for the time being due to the Covid pandemic. That campaign will soon commence with the goal of raising \$150,000 in funds, attracting sponsors to help us continue with various projects both large and small, including re-lighting the beacon. Let's bring it back! If you are interested in being a part of this opportunity to help us Light the Beacon and continue the work on the enhancement and restoration of the Tower, please contact me or any Board member to discuss and get involved. You can go to our website to make a tax-deductible donation or send a check to our post office box to support this important goal.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOWER:

South Servants' Entry Door: We have finished the south servants' door recreation. For as long as I've been on the Board (19 years) all that was there was a sheet of brown painted plywood. We documented the original door, door frame, and roundtop transom lite. We looked at the original drawings and used those documents to fabricate a recreation. Since we always do things as authentically as possible, we also used original locks and original style weatherstripping. When you visit, please take a look at the reconstructed door and know that your donations are at work restoring the Tower to its original splendor. Thank you to everyone who helped make this project a reality.

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Boiler Room Door: With the completion of the south servants' door, we are now looking to recreate the exterior boiler room door on the east side of the building. We don't have any clear photographs, but we do have the drawings of the 1921 addition to use as a guideline. Your donations will help to make this project happen and are appreciated.

Flag Pole Restoration: We have received permission from DEEP to restore the original 75-foot tall flagpole to its original location. It had fallen down years ago and some of the pole sections were bent. We will have those replaced and inserted into the rest of the original sections. It will then be galvanized and painted using the latest long-lasting coatings. It should be able to fly a 12-foot by 18-foot flag. It will be quite a sight to see! Keep checking our social media for updates as we proceed with this exciting restoration project.

Observation Room Windows: With the constant New England weather at the Tower, the windows in the Observation Room have taken a beating over the years. These are not the original windows but ones that were installed in the 1960s after the State turned the Tower and surrounding property into a State Park. We are working with DEEP to help specify replacement windows that are most appropriate for the Tower in design, historic appearance, glass type, and wind resistance. It is our hope that the replacement windows will be in place before the Tower opens on Memorial Day weekend 2022.

Outdoor Porch Furniture: The wooden Adirondack chairs and table on the porch outside the Gift Shop had been donated some time ago by the Talcott family in memory of former Board member Wallace Talcott. Unfortunately, it had suffered under exposure to the elements, so the Friends recently purchased two new chairs and a table of a weather resistant material. It will remain dedicated to Wallace's memory.

We're sure there are other projects that will come up to need our attention, but this is what we have planned for now.

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

Park Supervisor: The Friends of Heublein Tower received word that a new Park Supervisor was selected for Talcott Mountain State Park. Her name is Stephany Dumond and we're excited to have her managing the park and look forward to many successful projects in the years to come. Stephany comes from Burr Pond State Park and was our temporary Park Supervisor after the previous supervisor left for another park assignment. She has already been a joy to work with. She is forward-thinking and has a wonderful attitude. She has already put new guidelines in place to open communication channels between her office and the Board. Welcome Stephany!

Board Members: We have had several Board members step down. A heartfelt thanks to Frank Burnham, Janet Carville, Jessica Hinman, Jeanine Longfritz, Rich Pelzar, and Barbara and Otto Ruppert for the huge amount of time, energy, and growth you brought to this organization. We are most appreciative.

EVENTS:

Hike to the Mic: Our two fundraising events were reduced to only one this year. Board member Bill Case orchestrated another great August event. After a last-minute postponement due to the weather, it was rescheduled then postponed and rescheduled again for September. The weather finally cooperated for two full days of great music, food, and family fun. As always, we are extremely grateful for our sponsors and the volunteers who make this event happen. Please reach out if you would like to be a sponsor of the 2022 Hike to the Mic, which is already in its planning phase.

Tower Toot: Our second event, the long-running Tower Toot, did not happen in 2021. We all missed not putting on this event and seeing so many people at the Tower. We're committed to having it in 2022 and have already started the planning process.

A host of other activities are being pursued by the all-volunteer Board. We're organizing volunteers, making website improvements, fundraising, and searching for missing artifacts to name a few. All while enjoying great food, live music, and the "Royal View" from atop Talcott Mountain.

PLEASE DONATE:

We know this is a difficult time for many, but if you are able, your donation of \$25, \$50, \$75, or more will help us toward our 2022 goal of continued restoration and re-creation. To make a tax-deductible donation online, please visit our website at www.friendsofheubleintower.org or mail a check to FOHT, P. O. Box 991, Avon, CT 06001.

We hope the year ahead brings everyone good health and prosperity.

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "Jay T. Willerup". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jay T. Willerup, A.I.A.

President, Board of Directors

Friends of Heublein Tower