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Briarcliff Manor-Scarborough
Historical Society

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Dear Members, Friends and Supporters –

I've been mulling over just what to say about the tragedy that has befallen us with Hurricane Ida. But as I began to write, all I could think was "how do you describe the indescribable"? Another phrase from the political world was noted: "Let's not let this crisis go to waste!"

An insurance adjustor came on Friday, October 8th. He was terribly overworked, as you can imagine. He could only view the tables, chairs, desks, cabinets, lamps, and computers piled together in the middle of the room. The REAL BMSHS is more valuable and ephemeral. Documents in every bottom file drawer and/or on a bookshelf that was 16" above the floor was unsalvageable and had to be thrown away, even before we were able to dry and save some material and photographs. These drawers were ID'd with "Briarcliff Manor Organizations (Scouts, etc.), "Private Schools (Mrs. Dow's School, Edgewood Park etc.); "Pictures & Histories of Homes on Roads: Scarborough Station Road to Zuydhoek Road." I have a tall vertical file that starts from A and goes to Z with pictures and histories of almost all the BCM roads, houses and businesses. The lowest shelves held binders with inventories and pictures of special collections and our contributors. From the time the library opened, library ladies clipped important news from the papers and pasted them in a book-a-year. We lost 10-12 volumes out of 45, but I went through each before it was tossed and took out and saved the most significant articles and any obits. Numerous archival file folders and boxes were lost.

I'm numb just enumerating these things. And I was just beginning to feel that we had finally organized all our material and research and believed that digitizing material was in the near future. So many steps will have to be retraced before that will be possible.

What was virtually untouched were objects and pictures in two breakfronts and display cases. All the archival boxes in the two sections of our locked "vault" in the hall containing 100+ year-old scrapbooks and flags and a couple of W. W. Law's ledgers re: early property sales in BCM were safe. All our maps; most books; binders with various studies on people/houses/periods; and our 10 volumes of village People (obits and special newspaper mentions); books by authors who have given us programs; binders with reports pertaining to New York State Department of Education, with which we are affiliated – all survived, so far as we know, virtually unscathed.

The material to be saved was removed to the Youth Center in big plastic bags and crates where we dried the contents with industrial fans, as much as possible, and good, old sunshine. Virtually nothing that was "together" remained in that condition, however. The objective was simply to dry as many things as we could hoping we'd beat the start of mold. We had some wonderful volunteers helping and hurrying. The task was accomplished. And now we need to think about getting things back in order.

I asked Mayor Steve Vescio for a statement about the situation. "For as long as I am Mayor, the BMSHS will always have a home – you won't be homeless." But it's so hard for me to believe – even if the floor were cleaned, the furniture put back in place and the drywall were replaced, how can we go back to this space

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<https://www.briarcliffhistory.org/giving-and-membership/briarcliff-historical-society-membership>

which has had SIX FLOODS? Steve and Dave Turiano, the Village Engineer, will be assessing what will have to be done to prevent this from happening again, and it will have to be MAJOR, but....

Meanwhile, I have tentative permission to have a desk, table, lamp, copier, internet and phone on the "Lounge Level" of the Youth Center. It will be from that base that we gain a new footing. I'm heart-sick and deeply dismayed, but want to be undaunted as we plan for the future. With your strong support, I am hopeful that BMSHS will once again be worthy of our motto "Caretakers of Our Heritage." That is our goal but clearly, we are in a hole right now and must pull together to get out and move on to better times. As a final addition, I am deeply gratified and appreciative of the numerous friends who have already sent donations as well as kind wishes and encouragement!

And now for some pictures....

Karen K. Smith

Karen K. Smith, Executive Director

George J. Behling Jr.

George J. Behling, President

But enough! A positive attitude is a force multiplier. Lets press on with this attitude!





