

BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Summer Issue

June 2026

Dear Members:

The Bridgewater Historical Society Walking Tour is only a few weeks away. Save the date, Sunday July 5th! Two homes will be open in addition to other historic sites.



Open on Sunday July 5th.

215 S. Main St. - The Dinkel Tavern.

The house was built by Jacob Dinkel, circa 1815. Jacob Dinkel and his brother John came to the Bridgewater area in the early 1800s and are credited with starting what we now call the Town of Bridgewater. This house originally had five windows across the front on the second floor with four windows and a door on the first floor. Due to extensive flood damage, most likely in the late 19th century, the façade was rebuilt as you see it today. The interior retains much of its 1800s detail. Judy Galang is the current owner. Her parents George and Evelyn Row bought the house on September 24, 1946.

George and Evelyn understood the significance of the house and were great caretakers. Evelyn had the house open for the 125th Anniversary of the Town of Bridgewater in 1960 and for several occasions after that. Judy and her husband Mike bought the house from Evelyn in 1981 and raised their family there. Judy continues her mother's tradition of letting the community enjoy Jacob Dinkel's house with interior tours on July 5th.



Judy's mother Evelyn, loved being outdoors and enjoyed being surrounded by flowers and plants at her Main St. home.

You may tour the gardens around the house and explore the historical information Judy will have on placards located about the property.

We are very pleased to welcome the **Bridgewater Rotary Club**, who will be serving refreshments in the serene and landscaped back yard on the day of the tour.



Open on Sunday July 5th – 111 S. Main St. Rachel Hayes is the granddaughter of Ike and Ruby Riddleberger, who owned the house at 111 S. Main St. from 1945 until Ruby's death in 1987. Rachel, along with her cousin Rebecca Dupuis, will be conducting tours of the house on July 5th. Nicole and Mark Flanders are the current owners. It is a wedding and special occasion venue.



Some things change a lot and some change just a little. This B&W picture is from 1958 and shows Rachel's mother getting married at the house. Check the current day picture above. Notice that the house column detail, the iron fence and the cast iron planters are still there, exactly as they were in 1958! Unfortunately, what appears to be a new 1959 Desoto parked on Main St. in front of the house is nowhere to be found now!



During a recent walk through of 111 Rachel explained how she would sometimes color in her coloring books with her legs in the front living room of her grandmother's house with her arms and hands in the hall. This was because the front living room was the "good" room and she was not allowed to color in there. Children are good at finding ways to stretch the rules! Rachel and her cousin have stories of the ghost of the house, what Louie the dog did to the steps and more!

Join the BHS on Sunday July 5th and hear more stories from Judy Galang and Rachel and Becky about the houses on tour.

In order for you to plan your Independence Day Weekend in Bridgewater, here is the BHS Fact Sheet for Sunday July 5th:

**Celebrate Independence Day
Weekend in Historic
Bridgewater!
Sunday July 5, 2026
The Bridgewater Historical
Society Presents:**

A self-guided Walking tour, with two significant houses open to the public.

**Tour Headquarters and Starting Point
BHS Museum
109 S. Main St.
Bridgewater, Virginia**

The Walking Tour will feature the story of the Dinkel Brothers, Jacob & John, the founders of Bridgewater.
Significant Houses Open to the Public:

111 S. Main St. (circa 1849) – the J.G. Brown and Riddleberger house.

215 S. Main St. (circa 1815) – The Former Dinkel Tavern and Jacob Dinkel's house.

Refreshments at 215 S. Main St. by the **Bridgewater Rotary Club**

Also included in this Walking Tour are:

The site of **John Dinkel's 1800's era mill building** on Riverside Drive.

John Dinkel's House – 1 Wynant Pl.

NOTE: John Dinkel's former circa 1820 home still stands in

Bridgewater. However, John's house, gardens and yard **WILL NOT** be open for this event. Artifacts and history of **John Dinkel's house will be located in a meadow adjacent to the property under a canopy.**

Nathan and Kim Miller currently own the John Dinkel house.

Nathan will be give a talk about their house at the canopy in the meadow at 2:30pm, the day of the tour.

Walking Tour and Houses will be open from 1pm – 4pm.

The 19th century houses on tour are not handicapped accessible.

The BHS would like to invite all Dinkel descendants to attend our celebration and make yourself known!

More Info:

**bwahsm109webmaster@gmail.com
or 540-237-4017**

Bridgewater has several nice restaurants. Come have lunch before the tour starts!

Lastly, the BHS invites all who live on Main St. or anywhere in town to show your red, white and blue during the US' 250th anniversary and the Bridgewater tour.

See you in Bridgewater!

**Celebrate the United States
250 years of Independence over
Three Days in 2026!**

**Additional July Events
in Rockingham County**

Town of Bridgewater

Eve of Independence Celebration

July 3 – 7:30 – 9:30pm

Fireworks will begin at 9:25pm

Celebrate Independence Day with live music from Everyday People and concessions from local food trucks at **Generations Park** on July 3. Fireworks will begin at 9:25 pm from behind Town Hall and are viewable from Generations Park.

**We the People of the
Valley:**

**A Celebration 250 years
in the making! July 4th.**

**Organized by the local Massanutton
Chapter of the Daughters of the
American Revolution, (DAR) and
Rockingham County Public Schools.**

Spotswood High School: Saturday July 4th.

Celebrate Independence Day with a family-friendly event packed with patriotic spirit! There will be Community booths, displays, activities, and birthday party refreshments. **9am:** Opening ceremony kicks off with Thomas Jefferson, General Lafayette and Martha Washington. The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society will perform at 9:30am and 9:55am.

10am or so: Elementary student awards will be announced.

11:15am: Middle/High School student presentation and awards.

**The BHS 2026 Christmas
Ornament**



Designed by Joan Shaver it is currently being produced by Nola Crum, at Crum Custom Designs. It features the John Dinkel House, circa 1820, at 1 Wynant Place in Bridgewater.

Since 2015, the BHS has highlighted a prominent landmark of Bridgewater on our ornaments. The new ornament will be available this summer.

The BHS and Social Media:

Instagram: Find us at: **bridgewatervahistory.**

Facebook: Find us at: **Bridgewater Historical Society.** Our events and news are normally posted at both sites.

Website: Work in Progress!

Historic Walking Tour



Sunday July 5, 2026

Featuring the story of the Dinkel Brothers, founders of Bridgewater
Two Significant Houses Will Be Open for Tours:

111 S. Main St. - the J.G. Brown and Riddleberger house

215 S. Main St. – The Former Dinkel Tavern

Refreshments at 215 S. Main St. by the Bridgewater Rotary Club

Walking tour includes other sites of interest in Bridgewater's history

Tour Headquarters and Starting Point –

BHS Museum, 109 S. Main St.

Bridgewater, Virginia

Walking Tour and Houses open from 1pm – 4pm.

More Info: bwasm109webmaster@gmail.com or 540-237-4017

Sponsored By

**Bridgewater Historical
Society**



Email Addresses:

Help us save on postage! If you are currently receiving your BHS newsletter by mail, but have an email address, would you consider letting us send it to you electronically? Send us your name and email address to bwasm109@gmail.com and we will get you switched.

Museum Scheduled Hours:

Monday – Saturday, 10am -3pm.
There are some times when no docent is available. For info on docents of Monday – Thursday, call the Town at 540-908-4212. For info on docents for Friday and Saturday, call the BHS at 540-237-4017. Thanks!

Bridgewater Historical Society
P.O. Box 102
Bridgewater, VA 22812
Phone: 540-237-4017

Questions:

Call the BHS at 540-237-4017.

Press:

**0 for Sharon Kline,
1 for Larry Elkins or
2 for Greg Riddle.**

Or email:

bwasm109webmaster@gmail.com.

Several of the displays in the Museum are brand new, such as the Bridges of Bridgewater and our historic floods. Stop in and see what Sharon has reimagined!

See you at the BHS!