

The historic Livery in Sunapee Harbor building stands proudly above the Sugar River.



GOOD NEIGHBORS

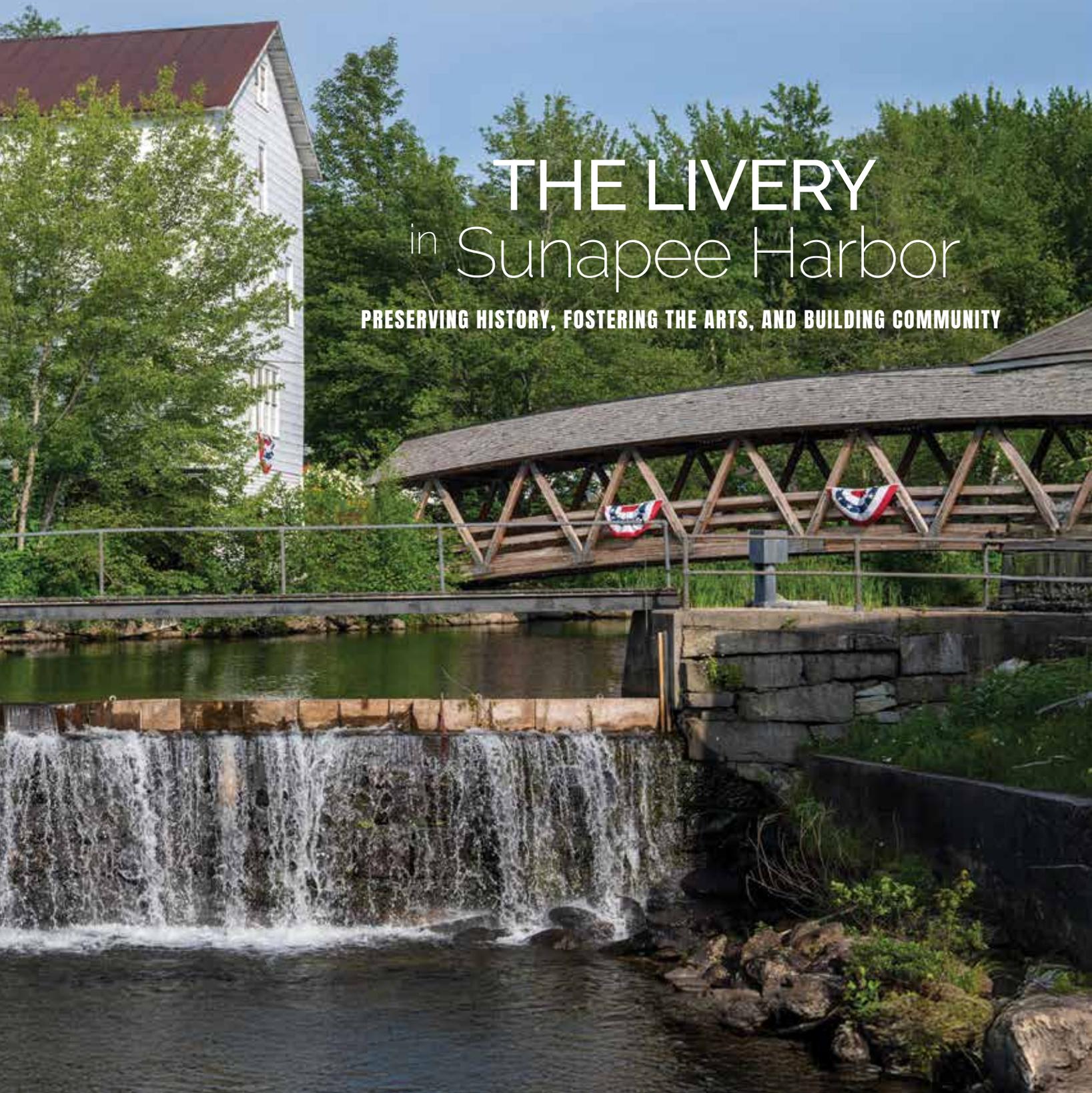
BY SUSAN NYE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN RAYMOND

THE LIVERY

in Sunapee Harbor

PRESERVING HISTORY, FOSTERING THE ARTS, AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

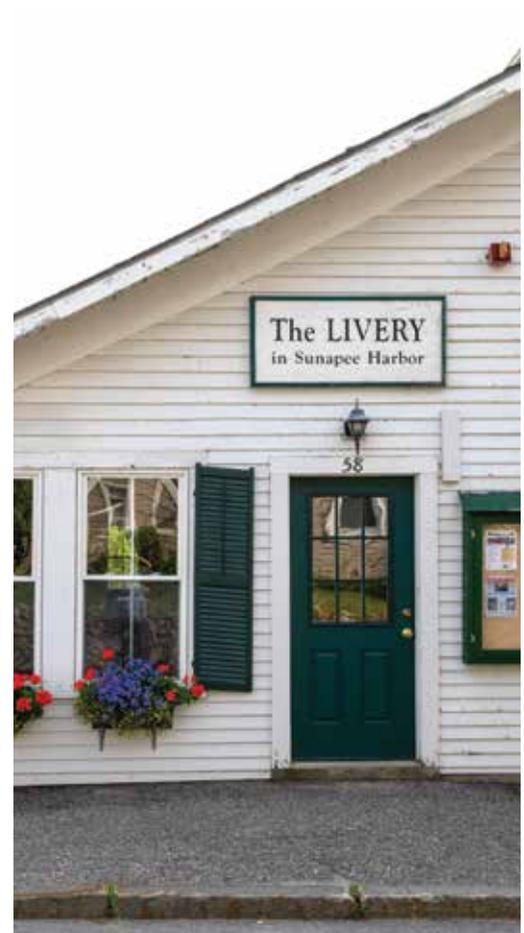




Built more than 100 years ago, The Livery is a link to the days of grand lakeside hotels with croquet on the lawn, tea dances on the terrace, and genteel boating in the harbor. Before interstate highways connected urban centers to Sunapee, vacationers traveled north by train. The last leg of the journey was usually completed by steamboat. For vacationers looking to explore the area, The Livery offered horses and carriages for hire. While a few historic homes and cottages remain, the grand hotels are gone and The Livery is Sunapee's last large commercial structure from the steamboat era. It stands as both a reminder of a bygone era and a testament to the future.

A BUILDING WORTH SAVING

Throughout its long life, versatility has been the key operating word for The Livery. The massive four-story structure began its ever-changing life as the stable for the long since gone Harbor House Hotel. After the automobile changed the way people traveled and vacationed, the town of Sunapee purchased and renovated the building. Over the years, it has housed the fire and police departments and town hall. At one point, it was on the list of possible sites for the new library.





Top from left: A tour on Sunapee Cruises' MV Mt. Sunapee is a wonderful way to see Lake Sunapee. The Sugar River Heritage Trail wends its way past The Livery along the historic Sugar River. The barn quilts on the retaining wall to the right were made by community members and are just one example of the community programs hosted by Sunapee Heritage Alliance (SHA) at The Livery.

Bottom from left: The Carriage Shed is used for community programs and is perfect for a wedding or baby shower. Flowers adorn the Harborside Trading building where Sunapee clothing abounds. The Blue Canoe restaurant is a wonderful addition to the harbor.



Project Sunapee

The nonprofit organization works throughout the year to strengthen the community, encourage economic vitality, support education, and preserve the town's cultural, historic, and scenic assets. Find more information at projectsunapee.org.

New Hampshire Preservation Alliance

Since 2006, more than 100 historic landmarks have joined the annual Seven to Save lists and more than half have been saved. Learn more at nhpreservation.org.

Plan New Hampshire

The nonprofit works with communities to foster excellence in planning, design, and development. Learn more at plannh.org.

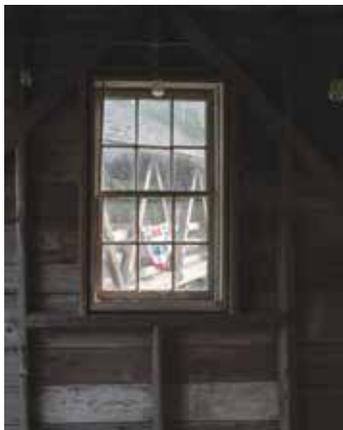
Northern Border Regional Commission

This federal-state partnership supports economic and community development with grants in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Find more information at nbrc.gov.



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Clockwise from below: A view of the covered walking bridge from The Riverside Room in The Livery. The covered bridge brings visitors across the Sugar River to The Livery and toward all the activity in the harbor. The Ben Mere bandstand marks the site of the old Ben Mere hotel and now hosts music during the weekly Farmers' Market in the summer. The Sugar River has supported industry in the past and now serves as a place for recreation and reflection.



The building's future became uncertain when the last Town of Sunapee tenant, the police department, moved out in 2005. There was talk of tearing it down. Recognizing The Livery's historical significance, a small group of concerned citizens stepped forward and formed The Harbor House Livery Committee.

To help protect the building's future, the committee secured a place for it on the State Historical Register and won a spot on the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance's Seven to Save list. In 2007, the nonprofit Plan New Hampshire agreed to facilitate a charette to study the future of Sunapee Harbor with significant focus on The Livery. The charette concluded that the building could and should be saved through a combination of nonprofit and commercial goals and use.

Sharon Parsons and Barbara Sullivan were on the original Harbor House Livery Committee. Sharon says, "I love the history of it, we all do. The Livery has a wonderful story, one that needs to be shared and continued. We wanted to save it—and we did!" Barbara adds, "As soon as I saw it, I knew I had to be involved. It's a fabulous piece of history." Both Sharon and Barbara urge visitors to check out the steep circular ramp that was built to move horses up and down the four-storied building. In its heyday, 30 horses were kept at The Livery. "We've made inquiries throughout New England and, so far, the ramp appears to be one of a kind," Barbara says.

TAKING IT A STEP FURTHER

With Sunapee's 250th birthday looming in 2018, The Harbor House Livery Committee took the next step and created Sunapee Heritage Alliance. A nonprofit 501(c)3 charitable organization, SHA took over The Livery in 2015. Their mission focuses on preserving and revitalizing Sunapee's cultural and architectural heritage and building community. Thanks to SHA and their generous supporters and volunteers, The Livery has new life and purpose.

A grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission in 2020 was a major turning point for the organization. The \$350,000 grant allowed the SHA to rebuild The Livery's foundation and underpinnings. Completed in late 2021, the massive building was secure and

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spaces on all four floors could be used for a wide variety of events.

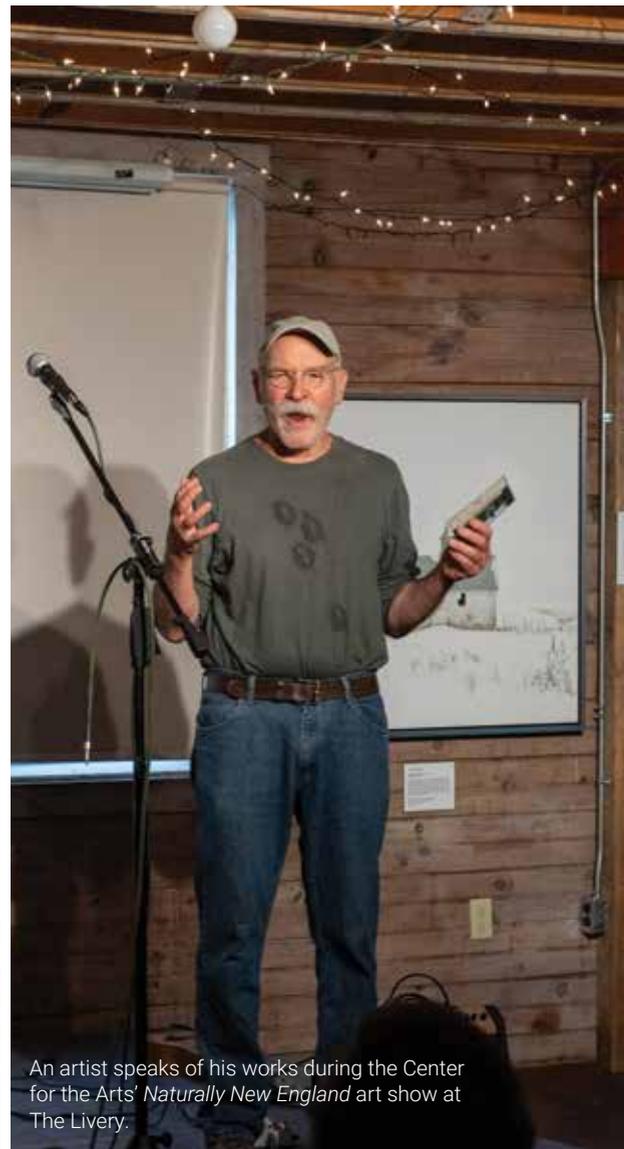
The organization's board of directors' passion for the project is infectious. From day one, they have worked tirelessly at repairing and maintaining the building and filling it with interesting programs. They are driven by their love of history and their community. "From the start we have been careful and considerate in our approach," says Barbara. "We want to be respectful of the building's history and the needs and wants of the community."

BRINGING NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

The results are impressive. Throughout the year, The Livery and its partners are busy with community events, performances, and art shows. With a variety of different spaces,

it is ideal for large and small exhibitions, performances, parties, meetings, and classes. From the Center for the Arts' *Naturally New England* art show in the summer to The Livery's own Dinner and Music Series in winter, the four floors buzz with activity.

Board member Maria Fair shares some highlights: "The Livery holds one fundraiser a year, the Harvest Dinner in late September. Local farmers, butchers, and chefs work together to provide a delicious community meal. Moving on to October—anyone wanting to do some early Christmas shopping will enjoy the Art of Craft Fair over the long holiday weekend." She continues, "We're proud to help the Sunapee Middle and High School Service Club with their Empty Bowls Dinner and Music



An artist speaks of his works during the Center for the Arts' *Naturally New England* art show at The Livery.



Above and below: The Livery's Main Hall decorated for a wedding reception. The Main Hall is the site of Friday Nights at The Livery, which hosts concerts and other entertainment.

in November. This wonderful event brings neighbors together to raise money for the Sunapee Food Pantry.”

While Project Sunapee takes the lead on many harbor activities, “The Livery is always willing to participate,” according to Maria. They host preregistration and bib pickup as well as the PTO Pie Sale at the annual Thanksgiving Turkey Trot. The building opens its doors for visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus as well as cookie decorating for Sunapee Christmas Village in mid-December.

Ever attuned to the needs of the community, the board encourages everyone to share ideas for events or classes. Maria says, “We welcome new ideas for community and group events, large and small. Want to form a knitting circle, organize a writers’ group, or start a monthly line dance? We are here to help you make it happen.” Barbara adds, “But we couldn’t do any of it without our wonderful volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We are so grateful to live in this beautiful place surrounded by generous neighbors.”

A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO GATHER

In addition to activities hosted by The Livery and its partners, the building is available to rent for private events. Renters can choose between individual spaces or rent all four floors. With the ceremony down by the river, dinner in the Main Hall, and dancing in the Stable, a wedding can take over the entire building. Local instructors deliver yoga and crafts classes in the cozy Carriage Shed. For a feeling of the outdoors, the Riverside level is perfect for fall, spring, and summer celebrations and activities. The versatility of this wonderful old building as a gathering place for townspeople and visitors is unmatched.

While The Livery is SHA’s first project, it is not last. They recently purchased the Woodbine Cottage property. While the old restaurant is gone, three smaller buildings remain, and SHA is strategizing their next steps with the property. 🌀

The Livery & Sunapee Heritage Alliance
58 Main Street, Sunapee, NH
thelivery.org, sunapeeheritage.org



Join Now and Enjoy Full Membership Amenities!

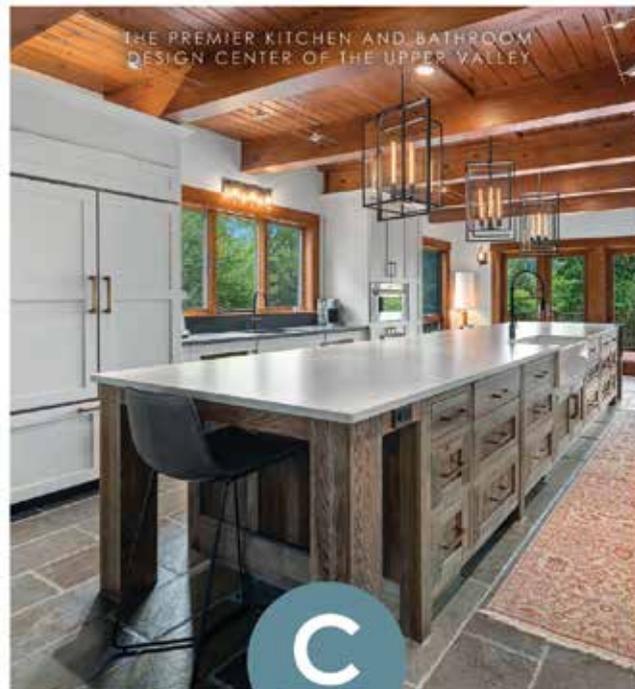
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