

CALENDAR

Tuesday, September 17, 2002

7:30 PM

Board of Trustees

Saturday, September 28, 2002

Stockade Walkabout

Sunday, September 29, 2002

Mabee Farm Fall Festival

Saturday, October 12, 2002

Refreshments, 1:30 PM

Program: Antional Archive Week

Presenter: Elsie Maddaus

Tuesday, October 15, 2002

7:30 PM

Board of Trustees

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Tired of the long, hot summer? Relax with Bill's reflections on the alternative.

I'd seen a lot of snow before coming to Schenectady. After all, my home was in the snow belt, south of the Great Lakes. I was used to walking in deep snow and on ice. My problem was I had little experience driving on the stuff. Neither of my parents drove a car, and I didn't get one until after graduation from college. A cousin commented, "You drive like an old lady." (I now drive like an old man.)

Several of my co-workers in the lab decided to go to a hockey game at RPI, and somehow I was elected to drive. While we were watching the game, the area got 4" of a damp, clinging snow. Needless to say, nothing had been plowed by the time we headed home. We had to weave out way down Troy's Congress Street hill, past abandoned cars. And ahead was the dreaded hill up and out of Watervliet. It must have been all the weight in the car, helped by my non-aggressive, old-lady driving, but we made it up the hill without incident. We celebrated by stopping at a bar near the Albany airport. I still smile when I pass that bar (and I grit my teeth when I go down the Troy and Watervliet hills).

* * * * *

A General Engineering Laboratory Pastime: During coffee breaks, the permanent employees in the section of the lab where I worked, including the managers, played a game with 5 dice. The game was to see who could guess the rule that was being used to come up with a number each time the dice were thrown. There were dozens of variations. An example of one variation is: on the first throw, the dice displayed 1,2,3,4,5 and the answer is 6. On the next throw 1,2,2,4,4 and the answer is 0. On the third throw 3,3,3,5,5. and the answer is 14. A clue: this game was called "How many petals on the Rose?"

Now for the answer: Dice faces which displayed a center dot were "roses", and the corner dots were then the

petals on the rose. therefore faces with 1,3, and 5 dots were roses, but only 3 and 5 had petals. The 3 had 2 petals and the 5 had 4. So a display of "3,3,3,5 and 5" would add up to 3x2 plus 2x4 or 14.

(Bill adds:"Re last newsletter: Elliess Riemer says she also stayed with Mrs. Bigelow, but didn't know her first name was Sadie.")

- **Bill Dimpelfeld**

AROUND THE COUNTY

Bellevue -Bob Sager

Following Mrs. Westinghouse's rejection of the "days pay" mansion, the house was occupied by the family of H. R. Hegeman, who was also an officer in the Westinghouse Agricultural Company. They were listed as attending family functions where only family members were present, so it is likely they were related to the Westinghouses. Around 1902 the Hegemans moved to 826 Union Street at the corner of Jackson Place, and the #7 Guilderland Ave residence was taken over by George Westinghouse More, son of Spencer More and Catherine Westinghouse. He was of an inventive nature like his uncle George, Jr. and his grandfather George, Sr., and ran a machine shop in the barn of his father's property at 33 Guilderland Ave. My maternal grandfather, Arthur Cullings, worked for him as an assistant at one time. The Moores had two children: Spencer More II and Kate, named after their Moore grandparents. (To be continued)

Scotia-Glenville -Elsie Maddaus

On a grassy, triangular island bounded by South Ballston Street, Sanders and Riverside Avenues stands a blue and gold marker erected by the State Education Department in 1932. It reads: "The Camp 1755-1812. American Armies Camping Grounds on Mohawk River Flats west of Glen Sanders house."

The camp extended along the river between the Sanders place and the Toll farm and was used as a mustering ground for 150 years. It was used variously by Indian war parties, by colonial forces during the French and Indian wars, by the Continental Army during the Revolution and the War of 1812.

Today the area is a quiet residential area with homes of a variety of sizes and architectural styles. There is little through traffic on its streets. But you will see joggers, individuals or families on bicycles, people walking their dogs or pushing baby strollers or couples out for a walk.

Duanesburgh

(Richard W. Lewis, Jr. has been studying inscriptions on family gravestones in the Duanesburgh area. It is "relatively rare today in this country to lose a child to illness or at childbirth. . . ." but one or two hundred years ago "children right in this area regularly succumbed to a number of illnesses such as diphtheria, scarlet fever, and influenza. . . ." He has collected verses from some of the gravestones.)

Of course, many . . . settlers were farmers . . . Some verses have the plant torn from this earth to re-grow in Heaven. . . This verse is inscribed on the grave of Catherine McCoy, who died in 1848 at age 9 weeks:

Sweet Catharine dear how soon her breath

In death to God is given:

A plant too tender for this earth

Is blossoming fair in heaven.

Princetown Tidbits -Irma Mastrean, Town Historian

INDIANS IN PRINCETOWN?

As the white man took over more and more of their old lands, the Indians moved upstream and took over less desirable lands along the smaller streams. Near the border of the two townships . . . Rotterdam and Princetown . . . were two mill sites, and near there a few Indians had chosen to eke out a precarious existence. A sketch passed down from the Rynex family ancestors shows an early Rynex home next to an Indian settlement, near Plotterkill Falls. A pine forest now covers this site.

MUSEUM NEWS -Jo Mordecai, Coordinator of Exhibits

Hail Britannia!

Our Jubilee display proved successful. Thanks to Channel 13 and Steve Scoville, we appeared on TV which added to our attendance. Then on June 13th, the Gazette gave us a generous feature story on the front page of the "Lifestyles" section which gave us even wider coverage. We're leaving the display up for the rest of the summer to enable those who may have been out of town to enjoy it.

Famous Schenectadians

During September, in keeping with the Walkabout's theme, "Famous Schenectadians," the Vrooman room will feature pictures and artifacts relating to some of the many famous people of our community.

Restoration Program moves Along

The Society's campaign to provide funds for the restoration and rehabilitation of portraits and other oil paintings in our collection has received significant support. Through July 30, 2002 we have received just over \$19,000 for our "Adopt a Portrait" project. 13 portraits and other oil paintings have been restored and two are in the process of restoration. We have restored six frames and purchased five more. This is an ongoing project. Several portraits of Schenectadians who contributed to 19th century history of the area that are waiting for restoration are e. g. James Rosa, an early railroad magnate; Dr. Thomas Dunlop, a physician born in 1804 and graduate of Union College; Nicholas Marselis, a boat builder and his wife Machtelt, all by Samuel Sexton, a 19th century Schenectady artist. Another major portrait in the collection awaiting restoration is that of Jonathan Walton, a merchant who was wealthy enough to have a ballroom in his home on Union Street. His portrait was painted by Ezra Ames, an artist who worked out of Albany.

The Society is fortunate that our Trustee, Ona Curran, has been in charge of the implementation of this project. She is an expert in the fine arts. She has evaluated the paintings and is working in conjunction with Caroline K. Keck, a well-known conservator. About a fifth of the Society's extensive collection has been restored. In several cases, frames, which are essential to proper care and preservation of a painting, have either been restored or a new frame purchased if the original was not available or was not appropriate for the period being depicted.

This project would not have worked without her extensive skills and enthusiasm -- and the contributions of those that follow:

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LIBRARY DOINGS

The Library Committee announces the new 2003 calendar will be ready in September. The calendar this year features prominent Schenectadians and their homes. Twelve families and their houses are features from the Duanes to Jessie Zoller. The calendar will sell for \$10.00, and will be a delightful Christmas gift for people who live in Schenectady and those who have moved away.. The Library committee is pleased to announce the republication of the Mortality Census of Duanesburg. We have added the cemeteries of Princetown, a new index, and new maps. The book will be available in September for \$15.00--a real bargain!

MABEE FARM PROJECT by Stanley Lee

Coming up:

Fall Festival: Date is September 22. This year we are allowing more craft sales. We will still have all the demonstrators and animals as in the past. Cost: \$5 adults, \$2 kids.

This is a wonderful family event, a way of celebrating the change of the seasons in a beautiful setting. !0:00-4:00. Come and explore, play, eat: watch John Anker in his new blacksmith shop and Charlie Long making brooms.

Special Note: Archaeologists Louise Basa and Dr. Ronald Kingsley, Mabee Farm Committee Members and participants in SCCC Community Archaeology will be available for questions about the current excavations.

Date to be announced: A Drive into Mohawk Valley History is a historic site driving tour, starting 9:30 at the Mabee Farm, then proceeding to Schoharie Crossing and Queen Anne's Parsonage, and ending 4:30 at Fort Johnson. Cost is \$15, lunch included.

Forefathers Day: It was well attended. Anneke, Kim and the crew served up great Dutch food to about 70 guests. Everyone toured the buildings, renewed old friendships and enjoyed the demonstrations such as Walter Fleming demonstrating tinsmithing.

Rotterdam Open House: We sent out 1200 invitations to the area people -- 300 came! Interest was high with everyone inspected everything All comments were positive. The purpose was to reach out to the neighborhood and have them feel the farm is part of their community and get them to feel involved. It was a good start.

Niskayuna Acting Troupe's play : "It Spoiled My Constitution". This is the first time we have rented to an outside group for their event. They filled the barn on Thursday and added more seating and filled the barn again on Friday. The performance by these talented young people was great and very well received. We are hoping they will be back again soon.

Construction: The carriage shed is finished for now. The framing, roof and siding are done. Decision on the open side will wait to see what it's like with the winter snows. The black smith shop is progressing on schedule. Foundation, framing, roof rafters and sub roof are finished. The siding is started, leaving roof shingling and doors, windows and trim still to be done.

The docent group had been a life saver, not only helping with tours, but with reunions and special events. This allows us to have two and three activities at once.

Charlie Long has established his broom factory in the English barn. The herb garden is started, and Bill's vegetable garden looks great, although some of the pumpkins look a little strange. And of course we're all waiting for the sweet corn.

Education

Our first education class (the timber framing class) ran for four days and had at least ten people each day, about the limit for a hands-on class like this. One person came from Saranac Lake. Ev Rau did an excellent job teaching with lectures, demonstrations and supervising the actual work. Hopefully this can be repeated again next year and expanded to other skills.

The Children's Education Program by Ned Pratt is finished. We have formed a small committee to develop a marketing plan and cell it to the schools. On site programs will be developed for the different grades. We are working on a two day pilot program with Mohonasen schools for their 7th grade class (250 students) in October. There is a lot of work and details still to be done. The goal is to have a fully developed program in place and use for the spring semester.

We are now halfway through the second year of being open to the public, and the Farm is in almost constant use. There are always activities going on: visitors, tours, weddings, classes, reunions, gardening, or artistic painting - - sometimes two or three things at once. This mixed use will enable the farm to survive in the future. Only if we offer a real service to the community can we expect it to support us.

[THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE . . .](#) How did the street you live on get its name?

The Yet-to-be-Named Committee of the Historical Society has embarked on an effort to compile a history of street names for our City and our Towns. Often these names are given to streets by the individuals who

developed them. Frequently the developer names the streets after members of his or her family. Wright Avenue and Morris Avenue are examples of this practice. these streets were named by Schenectady's foremost real estate developer, Henry Schermerhorn De Forest. Both were named after his daughters, Beulah De Forest Wright and Pearl De Forest Morris.

Do you know how your street or other streets in the city or town where you live got its name? Please include yourself in this project. Share your knowledge with us -- you'll be given credit for your contribution, and all of us will be richer for what you have told us.

Contact Virginia Bolen at the Historical Society, 374-0263 or Frank Taormina at 374-9655.

AMONG OURSELVES

Our Stasia Berdy is ill and we miss her bright smile and her fabulous sense of humor. Stasia -- we're thinking of you and we send our love.

WE GET LETTERS -- AND CHECKS, TOO! or Thank you, G E.!!

Dear Mr. Dimpelfeld:

I am pleased to enclose a GE Fund check in the amount of \$12,320.63. This gift from the GE Fund's 'More Gifts...More Givers' program matches contributions made during 2001 by GE employees and retirees. Eligible gifts made in 2002 will be matched by the GE Fund in May 2003. We encourage you to announce this support within your community, and we hope to see copies of any press coverage.

Congratulations on your efforts that made this support possible.

Sincerely,
(Signed) Joyce Hergenhan

AND MORE LETTERS . .

We can't publish details of this letter, but we're delighted to report that it contained a check from one of our favorite donors -- Anonymous! We honor the request for anonymity and we are extremely grateful for the gift of \$10,000.

GREEN'S CORNERS SCHOOL . . .

The school will be open for groups by appointment only, September 2nd through October 15th. It's a great place to take your grandchildren to visit!

The school is located in West Glenville on Potter Road near the intersection with Green's Corners Road. Call Mrs. R. Karis, 24 Windsor Drive, Scotia, for further information or to make appointments - 372 6314.

LOCAL AUTHOR TO SIGN BOOKS

On Saturday, October 12, from one till 2:30 Barnet Schecter will be signing his new book **Battle for New York: The City at the Heart of the American Revolution**. The event will take place at the **Open Door Bookstore** at 128 Jay Street.

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS IS LOOKING FOR YOU. . .Get to know your neighbor!

There are, as you have undoubtedly noticed, many immigrants from other countries living in our community.

Idiomatic expressions can be very confusing. "Give us a ring!" Volunteer to help someone learn to speak and understand English.

Call Literacy Volunteers at 372-9819.

AND NOW FOR THE WALKABOUT . . . SEPTEMBER 28

Famous People of Olde Schenectady

Back by popular demand are carriage rides through the quaint Stockade streets, and an Antique Car Show, recreating the atmosphere of days gone by. "Famous People of Olde Schenectady," such as Arent van Curler, Governor Joseph Yates, and Eliphalet Nott, will come alive and tell their stories. A special note: the home of John Vrooman, author of many books on this region, will be one of the houses on tour. It's located at 3-5 Washington Avenue --down near the river.

Regale your appetite at the on-going Food Fest. Rest your feet with a trolley ride around the Stockade. Bring the kids; there will be old-fashioned children's games, and a petting zoo. Proceeds from the Walkabout will be used for Historical Society painting restoration, Lawrence the Indian restoration, and Downtown Schenectady improvements. Kim Mabee is co-chair of the event, representing the Historical Society this year along with board member and Stockade resident Sylvie Briber and Stockade resident Lyn Gordon, representing the Stockade Association. John Samatulski and Gil Kehn from the Downtown Schenectady improvement Corp. join the Walkabout team.

If you would like to be a docent at the Historical Society, sell tickets, or volunteer in general, please call the office (374 0263). at 346-1711. Tickets are \$15 before the event and \$20 on the 28th.

The Committee is grateful to MVP and to the State of New York for the ample grants which have allowed us to expand our program.

COURSE OFFERINGS IN ARCHAEOLOGY AT SCCC

Courses leading to a Certificate of Proficiency in Community Archaeology.

CFN 212 Historical Archaeology and Field Study.

Designed to introduce participants to historical archaeology. Participants can become members of a task group of volunteers assisting in ongoing site works at the 17th century Dutch Mabee Farm. (2 texts and field kit ca. \$50). Tuesday's September 3 to November 26, 2002, 6-9 PM plus 3 Saturdays in the field. \$150

CFN 217 Recording and Archiving Archaeological Data.

Course is supplemented with visits to archival repositories. Thursdays September 12 to November 14, 2002. Tuition \$150

To register or for further information on the non-credit courses or certificate call: 518-381-1315, Continuing Ed.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT

Wanted!

Someone to do filing in the library. Our librarian can never catch up.

Great opening for volunteer with unsatisfied clerical lust! Call librarian at 374-0263

Wanted!

Someone to do data entry on one of our wonderful computers. You do not have to be a computer geek; you just need enthusiasm for the work of the society plus the ability to follow directions. Call librarian at 374-0263

Wanted!

A real extrovert to organize boat and bus trips. There are wonderful places to go around here, but all the board members are maxed out and we need fresh blood, verve, muscle and know-how to plan trips. Call office at 374-0263

Wanted!

A grant writer. We know the grants are out there; we just need that certain person with the time to ferret out where the grants are hidden so we can continue to enhance the work of the Society. Call President or office manager at 374-0263

Wanted!

Docents. A docent is a tour guide. We're running out of docents and we want fresh troops. Come now: you know that you've always secretly wanted to show people around the Museum. Follow Jo or Sally or Ann a time or two and you'll get the hang of it. Call Jo Mordecai at 374-926 for further information.

POSTCARD OF THE MOMENT

This is the Steinmetz residence which once stood near Groot's Kill on Wendell Avenue, The house was demolished in the 1930s, a victim of nonmaintenance during the depression. There is a small park there and a stone commemorating Charles Proteus Steinmetz.

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