



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

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Spring 2002

Annual Meeting

On Saturday, May 4, the Sand Lake Historical Society Annual Meeting will be held at Salem United Methodist Church (on Shaver Road off route 150 south) in West Sand Lake. The church's "sell-out" dinner of Swiss steak will be served at 7:00 p.m. along with potatoes, vegetables, cole slaw, rolls, beverage and dessert for the bargain price of \$10.00. Prior to the dinner, at 6:00 p.m., a cocktail party will be held at the home of Marion & Woody Hacker on the corner of Orchard Lane and Cobb Hill Road in West Sand Lake. (At the corners of Routes 43 & 150, take 43 west towards Defreestville. Turn left on Old Best Road, then right on Orchard Lane to Cobb Hill Road.) The cost of dinner and cocktail party is \$15.00. April 25 is the deadline for reservations, *which are a must*.

The program speaker will be Kathleen M. Jimino, our County Executive. She will speak on "the Progress Rensselaer County has made over the years." Public servant Jimino has worked as Troy's City Manager and Budget Director and in 1996 was a Principal Analyst for the New York Senate's Finance Committee. As County Legislator from 1997 until May 2001 she spearheaded legislative review, which reduced property taxes during each of those years. While on the Committee on Aging, she sponsored "Kathy's Law" mandating background checks of any person seeking employment at the county nursing home, day care center or as a home care provider. As County Executive she is becoming known as an aggressive advocate for new businesses in the County. We welcome Ms. Jimino, who has been called by State Comptroller H. Carl McCall "one of the finest public officials with whom I have worked."

A reservation form appears elsewhere in this issue of *Historical Highlights*.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee of Marion Hacker, Lena Barnum and Karen Wood are submitting the following names for Trustees to be elected at the Annual Meeting. This would bring the total number on the Board of Trustees to 14.

- ✓ *Marion Hacker* (2003; to fill the unexpired term of Barbara Mohan)
- ✓ *Iona Mosher* (2005; second term)
- ✓ *Nancy Davis* (2005; second term)
- ✓ *Linda Ormsby* (2005)
- ✓ *Grace Briscoe* (2005)
- ✓ *Karen Wood* (2005)
- ✓ *Ginny McGreevy* (2005)

Methodist Farm

By Mary French

A dream of Mr. J. Wesley Wood was the vision of acquiring property to further religious, educational and recreational purposes among the Methodists in the area. In 1917, the Methodist Sunday School Association of Troy and Vicinity was formed by 13 Methodist Sunday Schools in Troy, Watervliet, Green Island, Cohoes and Waterford. The property acquired was the apple orchard and sheep farm with Crooked Lake frontage from Stiles Hardware of Cohoes. Mr. Wood was manager of the farm for 30 years and, at the time of his death in 1952, was a trustee.

The older summer residents at the Farm, who often refer to themselves as “Farmers,” recall that camping was begun in tents. Then there were camps with erected sides and canvas tops. Gradually more sturdy camps were built, small trailers were introduced, and there were no more tents. Currently there is a central pole with electricity, which each camp can tap into. Water is brought to each lot, and drinking water is available from the faucets that come from *one well*. Additional water is pumped from the lake for utility purposes. Outhouses have now been replaced by Port-a-johns near the camps and at the beach.

The sandy beach has a beach house, a raft in the deeper water and a toddler area close to shore. No dogs are allowed. In 2001, trees were cut to give more sunshine to the beach, and replacement trees will be planted. Over the years, the climb up the hill from the beach has remained a challenge. There are also baseball, basketball and playground areas.

Persons using the campsites renew their “license to occupy” annually. The board of Directors has a representative of each member church Sunday School: Broadway United Methodist Church (UMC), Rensselaer; Calvary UMC, Latham; Christ Church, UM, Troy; Church of the Covenant UM, Averill Park; Church of the Good Shepherd UM, Green Island; First UMC, Rensselaer; Hope UMC, Troy; Lansingburgh UMC, Troy; North Chatham UMC, North Chatham; Pawling Avenue UMC, Troy; Salem UMC, West Sand Lake; Waterford UMC, Waterford; Watervliet UMC, Watervliet. The annual meeting, held the third Tuesday of April, is rotated among the member churches.

Volunteers are called to active duty on “Farm Day” to do the work of clearing the roadways,

beach and grounds, cleaning the two pavilions, repairing the picnic tables and other general maintenance. All will be in readiness for the season, which extends from the last week in June to Labor Day. Member Sunday Schools can use the facilities free of charge. There is a group rate for use of the pavilion(s) and the bargain of \$5.00 per carload for others. Since its inception, Methodist Farm has maintained its policy of no alcoholic beverages on the premises.



Each Sunday evening the bell rings at 6:45 p.m., summoning persons to the 7:00 p.m. Vesper Service conducted by area clergy. The picture of Lois Bishop seated at the piano shows her at the post she served for many years. She and her late husband, Paul, called Methodist Farm home during the summers since the mid 1940s.

Our other picture is of C. Malden Wells, who greeted customers and passers-by at the “Barn Sale” from its inception until 2000. A July 1996 *Advertiser* article gives the hours as 9-5 seven days a week. And youth who worked at the Farm as gate tenders, lifeguards and grounds crew have decorated the barn walls with “good graffiti” — their names and dates of service. The *Advertiser* article also mentioned a junked trolley car (circa 1936), which Clyde Poole drove to the Farm to use as a camp. Although additions have been built on either side, the front of the car can still be identified.

Mr. Wells shared a favorite Farm story in his August 24, 2001, article in the *Advertiser*. The dog that belonged to the Mosher family on Trail’s End

Road chose Methodist Farm as his summer home. Mr. Wells states, “The Moshers would stop by to take ‘Pup’ home. In no time at all it was back at its adopted home. The dog was more religious than some campers. Pup just had to be in center aisle in the chapel. To heck with ushers going up with the offering.”



In 1990, a tragedy occurred at Methodist Farm when the body of Mrs. Ruth MacNary, who was murdered by the foster daughter of another camper, was found. There is now a memorial garden by the chapel in her memory.

Methodist Farm has been summer home to persons from as far away as Florida and Pennsylvania and as close as Averill Park. The *Times Union* called it the “best kept secret in Rensselaer County.” Let’s change that. ☺

President’s report

This year has been an active one for the Society. We ordered 1200 copies of *Images of America: SAND LAKE*. They have been sold, and we ordered 200 more. Chris Kronau, our Town Clerk, has been very gracious in being a convenient outlet for persons to purchase copies. Thank you, Chris. ☺

Programs for the year have been varied and well received.

☞ June was a picnic at Crystal Cove and brainstorming on projects for the society.

☞ September’s meeting was preempted by the World Trade Center disaster, but we rescheduled it in November when the youth presented *A Walk in Their Shoes*, an original play on the Underground Railroad under the auspices of the Circle Theater Players summer drama camp students.

☞ October was a presentation by three Girl Scouts on fabrics, fashion, pottery, dolls and doll making in the 1800’s.

☞ November’s program was presented by Walter Fleming as “The 19th Century Tinsmith.

☞ The December covered dish dinner was a sumptuous success, and a visit from Sinter Klaas enlarged our knowledge of the Dutch Christmas celebration. A visit to Cherry Hill’s holiday open house was enjoyed by those who attended.

☞ In January, we were treated to lively Irish guitar music and an overview of *The Trial of Bat Shea* by the author of the book, Jack Casey.

☞ In February we went Native American with Ken Kullman who presented the bead and fur trade in period costume.

☞ March’s program was a presentation of the postcard collection and accompanying script of Harold Tift, the Town’s first historian, by his wife, Alice Tift.

☞ In April we were hosted by Trinity Lutheran Church, which celebrated its 225th anniversary in 2001. Donna Kreiger presented a slide program on Palatine Wilderness at Hoosick Path – Gilead, Mother Church.

☞ See May’s annual meeting publicity elsewhere in this issue.

- Karen Wood has agreed to be Archivist for the Society. She and her committee are getting our acquisitions in order. How we can expand our space is the big question!!
- Robert Lilly and Edna Pierce have been faithful in managing our book collection housed in the Town Library. A guide has been prepared regarding our holdings and their location.
- We received a gift of a Karaoke sound system from John Kacharian.
- A gift of a Glass Lake glass cane was received from Lillian Nash.
- *Historical Highlights*, our newsletter, continues to have a feature article on an

historical topic and Bob Lilly and Andy Mace keep us up-to-date.

- Awards to a male and female high school graduate who excelled in history will be given in memory of deceased members Jean Wilkins, Marion Ryan and Dorothy Leitgeb.
- An honorarium of \$25.00 was voted to be given for the membership programs.
- We subscribed to *The Eastfield Record* and contributed to the Eastfield Foundation.
- Two Girl Scouts are working on historical projects at the Sand Lake Center for the Arts for their Gold Awards.
- An ad hoc committee of Mike St Germain, Nancy Davis and Judy Rowe will be working on the wording and placement of an historical marker for the Glass Factory/Glass Lake by the Society.
- We had to say good-bye to Barbara Mohan because of her move from the area. She was a super proofreader for our book and an excellent treasurer. Now we say welcome to Grace Briscoe who already has a firm grasp on the task at hand as treasurer.

There's lots of action! You are welcome to join in and use your gifts to the society's benefit.

I have truly enjoyed the enthusiasm and willingness of the trustees to be involved in this year's initiatives and look forward to next year's challenges. – *Mary French, President*

Sand Lake Center for the Arts

The First Presbyterian Church building, a.k.a. The Old Sand Lake Town Hall, is going through yet another metamorphosis. Its new name and mission is *Sand Lake Center for the Arts* (SLCA).

Circle Theatre Players (CTP), the resident theatre company, leased the building from the Town of Sand Lake and is responsible for all renovation and maintenance for the duration of a 25-year renewable lease. CTP is expanding the facility's usage. Architect's plans for part of the renovation include space for theater performances, historical displays and artisan exhibits. Additional uses for the SLCA facility are under consideration and will be *inclusive*, not *exclusive*. The center is being designed for use by *all* the people of Sand Lake as a

place to showcase the interests and talents of our diverse population.

As custodian of this important piece of Sand Lake history, CTP is asking for input from the community. Anyone having display items, memorabilia and/or old stories relating to the SLCA structure, and family remembrances for oral histories is urged to contact Grace Briscoe at (518) 674-0982.

Fund raising events to support the renovation begin May 3 with a kickoff dance party and buffet at Regan's Restaurant on Route 66. A public informational meeting will be held at the Sand Lake School on Monday, May 6, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. and includes plans for a walk-through at the SLCA building following the meeting.

The *Advertiser* will carry weekly updates on the progress of the project, and scheduled events. Once again, *everyone is invited to become involved in the success of the Sand Lake Center for the Arts* through contributions of time, talents, information, ideas and participation in fundraisers. For additional information and event tickets, please call Lea Schroeder, CTP Administrative Assistant, at (518) 237-2148.

June membership meeting

Last year's June picnic at Crystal Cove was so well received that we will be going back again on Tuesday, June 11. Come at 6:00 p.m. with a covered dish to share. Place settings and beverages will be provided.

Writers wanted!

We are in need of volunteer authors, researchers and oral history editors for *Historical Highlights* and the Society collection. Early schools, early living in the town and farms of Sand Lake, come to mind. There many topics to chose from. This could be an individual or committee endeavor. Are you interested? Let us hear from you.

SLHS web site

If you have a computer, be sure to get online and visit our web site. Andy Mace has done a good job putting this site together with information about the Society and articles from past issues of *Historical Highlights*. Get acquainted with our web site and be informed.

<http://members.aol.com/sandlakehistory/>



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Sand Lake Historical Society Annual Meeting

Reservations needed by April 25!

Name: _____

Dinner only \$10.00 each.....#_____ \$_____

Dinner & cocktail party \$15.00 each.....#_____ \$_____

[For further information please call Marion Hacker, 674-3191]

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It's also time to renew your membership. The date on your *Historical Highlights* address label is your membership date. Dues are for the year June 1 – May 31. **01-02** indicates your membership should be renewed. If it reads **02-03** you are paid up till May 31, 2003.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

\$5 per individual _____ \$8 per family _____

Grand total enclosed:

Make checks payable to *Sand Lake Historical Society*

Mail to:

Sand Lake Historical Society
Post Office Box 492
West Sand Lake, New York 12196

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Historical Highlights

Bob Lilly, Editor
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