



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 39, Number 3

Spring 2013

From the president

Your Sand Lake Historical Society has had a meaningful and varied set of programs this winter and early spring. I invite you to join us at the upcoming programs this spring. Your attendance and support are important as together we keep alive the history of the people, places and events of our local community and the surrounding region. I am especially grateful to all of our trustees and officers for their creative ideas, active leadership, time and energy for each of our activities.

At our May 14 Annual Meeting the Trustees will nominate Ross and Mary French for a vote by the members to become Honorary Lifetime Members of the Sand Lake Historical Society.

Here are the programs that have informed and entertained us during the past few months:

Holiday Pot Luck Dinner at Knowlson House, the home of Ron Berti and Barbara Neu-Berti, on December 11. Peg Harbour-Holland spoke on the topic "Introduction to Genealogy and Resources of the Capital District Genealogical Society." She is an active volunteer member of CDGS.

The program on January 8 was Jim Bonesteel, president of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance. He spoke about the "History of the Rensselaer Plateau."

Michael A. Esposito spoke about "Troy's Little Italy," on February 12. Mr. Esposito, a life-long resident of Troy, is the author of *Images of America: Troy's Little Italy*. (Arcadia Publishing, 2009)

John "Mac" McEvelly, on March 12, presented "The Irish in the Civil War: North and South", told from the perspective of an Irish Civil War veteran soldier. Mac is the Captain of the re-enactment unit Morgan's Artillery, a staff officer in the Army of Northern Virginia and a safety official with the National American Artillery Association. — *Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch*

Upcoming programs, April-June 2013

We invite you to mark your calendar with the dates of our upcoming programs and join us as you are able.

† **Tuesday, April 9, 7:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church:** Kathy Arbogast will speak about "Buttons." She is active with The Mohawk Valley Button Club and the Half Moon Button Club. (You may bring your buttons to be identified, but not to be appraised).

† **Tuesday, May 14, 6:00 p.m.: Our Annual Dinner Meeting and Program.** Dinner will be served at Uncle Marty's Adirondack Grill. Hot and cold buffet dinner will be served at Uncle Marty's Adirondack Grill, Route 43 Averill Park, opposite the Averill Park Post Office. The speakers will be Marty and Val Balga, owners of "Uncle Marty's Adirondack Grill." The site was earlier known as Al's Place. Reservations due by May 6. Reservation form is in this issue. Annual Reports and Budget will be presented. Trustees will be nominated and elected. Trustees nominated are: *Bonnie Hellum* (second term, ends spring 2016); *Anna Church* (first term, ends spring 2016); *Dee Erickson* (first term, ends spring 2016). Additional nominations can be made by members at the annual meeting.

Tuesday, June 11, 7:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church*: "Three Centuries on the Hudson River" program by William L. Staats. Staats Island (or the Hooberge; the "high hill"), near Castleton-on-Hudson, has been in the Staats family since the mid-17th century. The Joachim Staats homestead, dating from 1696, remains a family residence where 11 generations of the Staats family have lived.

Please save these fall 2013 meeting dates: September 10, October 8, November 12 and December 10. We do not have meetings or programs in July and August. Enjoy your summer exploring the area around us and all its resources. — *Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch*

Gifts of history

Have you found someone to give a copy of *Sand Lake Revisited*? The Society realizes a 50% profit from their sales and receives a 10% royalty for sales in other venues. The cost of *Sand Lake Revisited* is **now only \$12.00** (including tax). *Sand Lake*, our first book, is also available for **only \$12.00** (including tax); add \$3.00 shipping, for each copy. Copies of both books are for sale at the Town Clerk's Office for the Society. Robert J. Lilly's book *The Wynants Kill: a small stream, but mighty* is available for \$16.20 (including tax), and Marvin Bubie's book *On the Trail of Henry Hudson and Our Dutch Heritage Through the Municipal Seals of New York State* is available for \$27.00 (including tax)

A set of 6 note cards for \$7.00 (tax included) is available, including: Carousel at Crystal Lake Park; Parade at Younghan's Race Track and Fairgrounds; Summer campers "roughing it" c. 1915 at Methodist Farm at Crooked Lake; Hikers dressed 1928 style at Camp VanSchoonhoven; Victorian lady rowing her dog on area lake; and Family relaxing on their porch at lakeside cottage. The note cards are available from Town Clerk's office.

Order information is also available on our web site. You may send an order to Sand Lake Historical Society, Box 492, West Sand Lake, NY 12196 for any of the above items. --
Gloria Waldron Hukle, Ways and Means chairperson

Dues are due!

Membership Dues for the coming year are due, effective from June 1, 2013- May 31, 2014: Student (13-22) \$3; Individual \$10; Family \$15; Individual Life Member \$100; Family Life Member \$150. A membership form (and annual meeting reservation) may be found elsewhere in this *Historical Highlights*.

Silent auction to benefit scholarships

Two works of art will be auctioned off from now until the May 14 annual meeting and dinner of the Sand Lake Historical Society. Last bids will be received during the 6:00 p.m. dinner and the auction closed at start of the meeting following.

Silent auction bids for each work of art can also be telephoned to Jackie Tremont at 527-9926 or emailed to JTremont1@nycap.rr.com. Opening bid for each work of art is \$75.00.

The proceeds from this silent auction will go towards the annual scholarship given to two Averill Park High School graduating seniors. Each year we award two \$500.00 scholarships for students selected by the high school faculty.

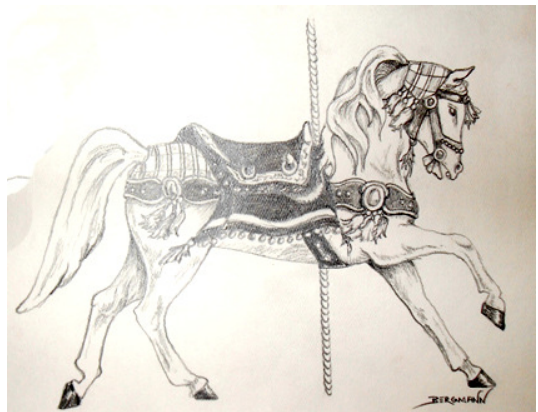
Jeness Cortez has donated a print entitled "Kindred Spirits." Ms. Cortez studied at Herron School of Art and the Art Students League. She is proficient in a variety of subject matter — sporting, wildlife, landscape, and of course, horses. She can be reached 674-8711 or www.perlmuttergallery.com.

Ms Cortez has been exhibiting her work since 1975 and has had more than 40 solo shows throughout the United States. Her work is in



numerous public and private collections, including those of the New York State Museum, Skidmore College, SUNY Empire State College, Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, and HRH Queen Elizabeth II.

A pencil sketch of a carousel horse from local AP artist John "Matt" Bergman. A pencil sketch of a carousel horse from local AP artist **John "Matt" Bergman**. The painting and the sketch celebrate the carousel which was located for many years at Crystal Lake. Many of us remember it fondly.



Matthew Bergmann is a lifetime resident of Averill Park. After serving in the United States Army he attended Westfield State to study Art and Education and later went on to receive a Masters of Science and a Masters of Art from SUNY Albany. For the last 16 years he has been Teaching Art at Lansingburgh High School and also doing freelance and commissioned work for the Community. Doing everything from drawing portraits or historical buildings to personalized Name art for gifts, Matthew enjoys customizing his art for customers needs. Watercolor being a favorite, he also works with a wide variety of other media.

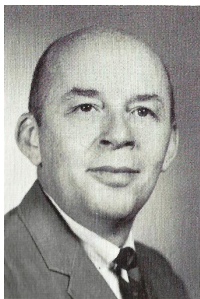
Special thanks to both artists for donating their works to the SLHS! [NOTE: Larger versions of both prints may be seen on our web site.]

Jack Smead and musicals @ AP

NOTE: This is just the beginning of what we hope soon will be an expanded feature on the Historical Society's web site, documenting a wonderful time in the 1960s in Averill Park: musicals at the high school during the school year and also, for a number of years in the latter part of the 1960s, during the summer. The man who made it all possible then: John C. "Jack" Smead!



Dee Erickson, Marietta Mitchell and Andrew Mace share memories of that time here. Ask the usher to show you to your seats, 'cause the show is about to start!



I can't remember exactly the year when Mr. Smead cast a spell over me and many in our community. My parents took me to see the APHS vocal music dept.'s production of "The King and I." I think it starred Mike Stahlman and Joyce Schmidt. "Anna" was dressed in beautiful gowns crafted by local women

who used yards of beautiful fabrics to make authentic gowns. There were dozens of girls and children costumed as the wives and children of the King. Mr. Smead with Miss (Brenda) French from the art dept. and her students created beautiful scenery and backdrops. Linda Pawlson became a permanent set designer. I was completely stage struck. It was MAGIC!

When I was in 7th grade, my friend and classmate, Connie Cooke, was cast as a young Amahl in the Menotti opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors." The cast included a gifted senior Helen Thayer and some of the Plante boys from Poestenkill. To this day it remains one of my favorite holiday pieces.



MY FAIR LADY

When I was in 8th grade, I had my big break. I was cast as one of many young slave dancers in "Showboat," starring siblings Helen and Bill Thayer. (FYI, dancing was not my forte.) That same year, my sister Mary Pierce (LaFleur) landed the role of Eliza Doolittle in "My Fair Lady." Audrey Hepburn was named the star of the movie version and her costumes and incredible hats were featured in LOOK magazine. Again, the local women under Jack's direction, created the same costumes and hats - an incredible feat. Some of these talented women were Mim Debus, Kitty Reid, Peg Sweger, Bea Danks, Kitty Mace, and my mother, Edna Pierce. Dick Fredericks and Mike Davis and the late Jimmy McGuire also starred.

At some point, Mr. Smead was putting on three major musicals a year! They included "Oklahoma" with Bob Campano and Elaine Malloy, "Carousel" with Bob Stackrow, Janice Stevens, Mike Bocketti and Joyce Craver, and "Finian's Rainbow." "South Pacific" and "Camelot" followed as did "Brigadoon."



THE LYRIC THEATRE @ CRYSTAL LAKE, 1967

At some point (around 1965? —Ed.), Jack was paid a small salary to stage a summer theatre, originally called Lyric Theatre. Over a six-week period, SIX shows were staged, an amazing feat for any group, especially a bunch of high school students who all had summer daytime jobs.

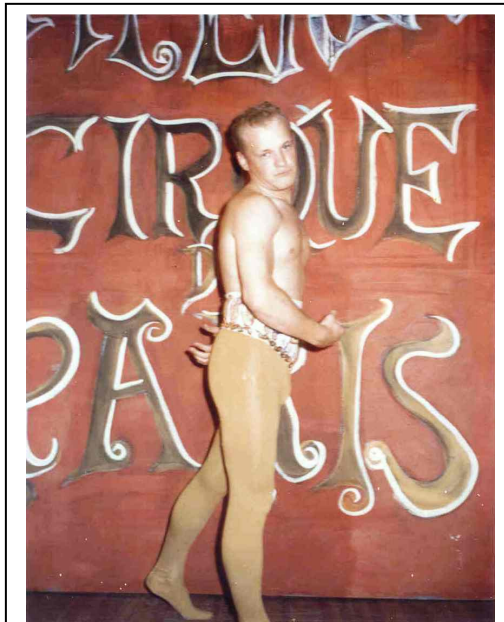
The first season had several minor shows, the melodrama "Love Rides the Rails — or, Will the Mail Train Run Tonight" and "Dinny and the Witches." Other shows over the first and second seasons included "The Telephone" and "The Medium" — both Gian Carlo Menotti operas — and "Trouble in Tahiti," a one-act opera by Leonard

Bernstein. All three starred Mary Pierce; the third also starred the late Jeff House.

Another week featured "Down in the Valley" by Kurt Weill. I think Martha Whelden and John Miadzielec were two of the stars.

"The Unsinkable Molly Brown," "Once upon a Mattress," "Kiss me Kate" and again, the ever-popular "Carousel," were featured. And who could forget "A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum"?

One summer (1967) the theatre moved to what is now Crystal Cove. That season we did a theatre-in-the-round. I remember that we staged "Oliver," "Bye, Bye Birdie" and "the Boyfriend." In other years, we also did shows such as "Stop the World, I Want to Get Off" (my cousin Thom Fordham and I were in that) and "Music Man" with Sandy Debus as Marion and Mike Boketti as Professor Harold Hill.



**JIM STEVENS IN
"CARNIVAL"**

Some of the actors that appeared in over 11 years of shows included: talented dancer Jimmy Stevens; Jeff House, Martha Whelden, Jimmy McGuire and John Miadzielec, all of whom left us much too soon; Jeff (pretty boy) Bashford; Trina Mace, Andy Mace; Langdon Brown; Kathy Hill; George, Paul and Peter Plante; Mike Davis; Pierce and Mary Eileen O'Donnell; Mary, Dee Dee and Kathryn Pierce; Mike Bocketti; Dick Fredericks; Bob Campano; Candy Benson; twins Carol and Diane Droste...and some I've forgotten to list.

I hope I've been able to give you a small sampling of the gifts of art, music and culture that Jack Smead gave us. He introduced us to a wide range of music and composers. I've never met anyone from any other school who had one tenth of

the opportunity that we, the privileged teens of the Golden Years at APhS and summer theatre, experienced. — *Dee Pierce (Erickson)*

Averill Park was lucky to have such a marvelous music teacher as Jack Smead. When Mr. Knipes, the head of the music department at the time, finished interviewing me for a music position, he sent me to the high school to meet with Jack. In less than ten minutes, we knew that we would get along and work together beautifully.

Although I was teaching 5th and 6th graders, Jack asked if I would play piano for many of his musicals and I was honored. Sometimes we'd do two pianos. Sometimes, his friend from Kingston would come and play the organ along with the piano. That was Howard Hotaling, another great musician. I can remember all of this as if it was yesterday!

Over the years, I have gone to many community theaters, area high schools and to Broadway to see musicals but never was there even one production as good as Jack Smead's. Never! *Showboat, My Fair Lady, Camelot, the Fantasticks* and many, many more were done with perfection. Jack could take a student and mold him/her into the character without a flaw. And singing? Oh, my! Jack would train these high school students so they sounded like professionals! Add with the help of dedicated



COSTUMERS HARD AT WORK!

parents like Kitty Mace, Bea Danks and Ma Pilar Gemeinhardt who sewed costumes that looked so authentic to the period of the show, you have SRO every time.

I was so proud to know and to work with my dear friend, Jack Smead. He will never be replaced.
— *Marietta Mitchell*

So many memories! The first of them dates back to about 1961 or so, when “The King and I” was first staged at Averill Park. My sister Trina played one of the younger children of the King. (When the show was reprised several years later, again with the original leads, Trina got to play an older child!)

For me, it was mostly bit parts, chorus...and a lot of behind-the-scenes work. I remember being a “page” in Camelot, one of many townspeople (and “sword dancers”) in Brigadoon, and one of the many children in River City’s band conducted by Professor Harold Hill in “Music Man”!

I recall 1970, the year I graduated from APHS, being the last year of Lyric/Crystal Theatre. That year, in addition to all those *incredibly important roles* as a member of the chorus, I spent a fair amount of time on the high school stage helping build and paint scenery, along with other behind-the-scenes work — at least until I ended up getting a full-time job (good for the wallet and my upcoming first semester of college, but not nearly as much fun).



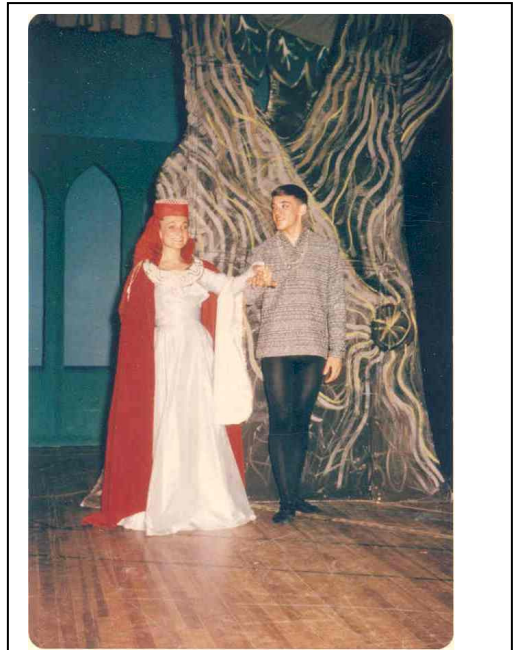
CRYSTAL THEATRE, 1970. L-R: MARY EILEEN O'DONNELL, W.C. DOSCHER, STUART STRONG, ANDREW MACE, CHRISTINE DOBUSH.

Memories! Jack and/or Marietta on piano, often with Dick Knipes (band teacher) on a drum kit or tympani or whatever, and Howard Hotaling absolutely making that Hammond organ sing. They never missed a beat or a cue while they either gently led or brilliantly followed with the accompaniment!

Oddly, one of my most vivid memories was the 1969 production of “Camelot”; closing night was Sunday, July 20. You might recall that date being the date that the Apollo 11 lunar module landed on the moon! My family brought a small black-and-white TV up to the high school. Camelot is a fairly long show and, as much as we all enjoyed performing it, many of us got a bit anxious as the show progressed, fearing we might miss THE EVENT! But the show ended in plenty of time, and I still remember dozens of us crowding around the tiny screen to watch as Neil Armstrong set foot on the Moon! (Only two summers before, the big topic of conversation for many of us was Dr. Richard

Kimble finally catching up with the one-armed man on the dramatic finale of TV’s “The Fugitive”!)

Looking back all these years later, I marvel at what Jack Smead was able to accomplish, especially during those summers of a show a week. Truly a wonderful experience! — *Andrew Mace*



“CAMELOT”



“A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM”

Thanks to Mary Pierce LaFleur and Dee Erickson for the photos you see here. These and more will be on the SLHS web site in the near future.

**Sand Lake Historical Society
Trustees 2012 – 2013**

(term ends)

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Bonnie Hellum, Corresponding Secretary (2013)

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John (Mac) McEvelly (2014)

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Patricia Robelotto (2014)

Judy Rowe (2014)

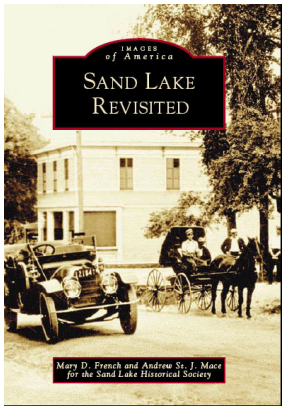
Joe Ferrannini (2015)

Woodie Hacker (2015)

Katie Komdat (2015)



**DEE ERICKSON'S MASK FROM
"THE FANTASTICKS"**



<http://sandlakehistory.org>

E-mail: sandlakehistory@aol.com

Historical Highlights

Andrew Mace, Publisher and Guest Editor



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Sand Lake Historical Society

Membership Application/Renewal | Dinner Reservation

Please mail by May 4, 2013, if you are planning to attend the Annual Dinner/Meeting!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

\$3 per Student (13-22) _____ \$10 per Individual _____ \$15 per Family _____

\$100 per Lifetime (Individual) _____ \$150 per Lifetime (Family – two persons) _____

Number of Dinners (\$20.00 each, incl. gratuity) ____ Dinner Subtotal \$_____

Receive newsletter electronically? Yes ___ No ___ | Total enclosed: \$_____

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Give this slip to someone you know to become a member.



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