



# Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 40, Number 3

Our 40th Year: 1974-2014

Spring 2014

## From the president

Thank you for your support of our programs during the past few months. We enjoy fulfilling our purpose of bringing alive the history of our local community and surrounding area, including its people, places and events. Recent programs included:

- † December 10, 2013 — Holiday Pot Luck Dinner at the home of Barbara Neu and Ron Berti. Jackie Tremont read "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" and Bob Shuey presented information about an historical grave marker from the Civil War.
- † January 14, 2014 — Kenneth James of Stephentown spoke about American Chestnut Trees and his project to preserve and revive this species in the northeast.
- † February 11 — Show and Tell about local area quilts, presented by six local women.
- † March 11 — Historical Berkshire Glass Works in Lanesboro, Massachusetts, by Julie Sloan and William Patriguin.

Thanks to the Nominating Committee of Mac McEvelly, Katie Komdat and Joan Fuess who will present the nominees at the May 13 Annual Meeting for your vote. Trustees who will be continuing are: *Joe Ferrannini*, *Woodie Hacker*, *Katie Komdat* (second term ends May 2015); and *Anna Church*, *Dee Erickson*, *Bonnie Hellum* (second term ends May 2016). The new officers for 2014-15 will be elected by the Trustees immediately following the Annual Meeting.

We will be presenting \$500. scholarships to two graduating seniors from Averill Park High School. The scholarships are given in memory of past members of the Sand Lake Historical Society. The awards will announced at the Awards program for seniors and their parents on June 12.

For more information about the Sand Lake Historical Society, how to become a member and past and upcoming programs, please visit the website: <http://sandlakehistory.org>. All programs are free and open to the public. — *Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch*

## Upcoming programs, May – June 2014

We invite you to mark your calendar with the dates of our upcoming programs and join us as you are able. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month. All of our meetings (except December and May) are held at the Sand Lake Town Hall at 7:30 p.m. We meet in the Court Room/Town Meeting Room, accessible at the ground level entrance on Route 66. The December and May meetings are held at two other locations and begin with dinner at 6:00 p.m.

- † **Tuesday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m.: Phyllis Chapman will portray the first person story of Lucy Larcom, a nineteenth century New England textile mill worker.** Lucy Larcom, later to become a noted poet and educator, began her working life in a New England textile factory in the 1830s. As a young mill worker, Lucy tells about the working and living conditions which many young farm girls experienced in the early days of America's Industrial Revolution, going into the mills hoping to make a better life for themselves. The program will begin at 7:30 pm at the Sand Lake Town Hall, corner of Route 66 and 43 in Sand Lake. Enter by Sand Lake town courtroom lower entrance, handicapped accessible.

*continued →*

† **Tuesday, May 13: Annual Dinner Meeting and program, 6:00 p.m., at the Burden Lake Country Club.** Advance reservations will be necessary for the sit-down, full-course dinner. The dinner reservation form is at the back of this issue of *Historical Highlights*. Annual reports, the budget and nominations for trustees will be presented for approval. The program will be the history of the Burden Lake Country Club by Tom Choquette. We will recognize the Sand Lake Ambulance Company for the exceptional work done to beautify and preserve their historical building.

† **Tuesday, June 10,** program will be "Searching the History of your House," with David Ernst, FramePro Construction and another local speaker. 7:30 p.m. at the Sand Lake Town Hall.

We do not meet during July and August. Our future programs in the fall and winter will be on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Sand Lake Town Hall. Please save these dates on your calendar: September 9, October 14, November 11 and December 9 (6:00 p.m. dinner at the Knowlson House, home of Ron and Barbara Berti). — *Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch*

### **Nominating Committee report**

These are the nominees for trustees for the upcoming new term of June 1, 2014-May 31, 2017. Nominated for their first three-year term: *Joan Fuess, Mary June Roy, Mary Weber, Bob Moore*. Nominated for their second three-year term: *John "Mac" McEvilly* and *Barbara Neu*. Further nominations can be made by the members present at the Annual Meeting in addition to these five nominees. Our bylaws allow us to have between 15-25 trustees.

We thank the following trustees going off who cannot be renominated (having completed two three-year terms): *Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch, Christine Kronau, Patricia Robelotto* and *Jackie Tremont*. We also thank the following trustees who completed one three-year term but chose not be renominated: *Joyce Baum, Robert Baum* and *Gloria Waldron Hukle*. — *Nominating Committee: Mac McEvilly, Katie Komdat, Joan Fuess*

### **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. Both together may be had for only \$20.00! 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*

### **From your editor**

As the Sand Lake Historical Society wraps up its 40<sup>th</sup> year, this issue of *Historical Highlights* takes a look at itself: if you will, a history of the newsletter!

We'll view selected issues in roughly five-year increments, along with a brief description of some of the contents of each...and some notes from in between!

The images here won't, unfortunately, be particularly readable (although those of you who receive this newsletter electronically will be able to enlarge the pages somewhat), but better versions will be on our web site shortly. In the coming months, your editor/webmaster hopes to devote a new section of the web site to complete back issues, starting "at the beginning" and working forward as time permits! Join us as we go...

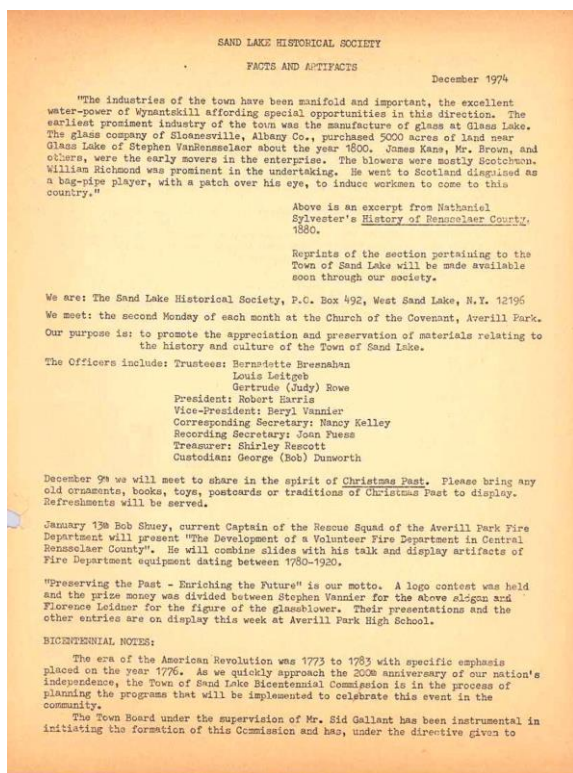
### **Looking back...**

#### ***Facts and Artifacts and Historical Highlights***

***Facts and Artifacts, December 1974.*** This is one of the earliest newsletters for the newly formed Sand Lake Historical Society. At this point, the major focus was on the upcoming Bicentennial of the US, and a Town of Sand Lake

Bicentennial Commission had been formed to celebrate in the community.

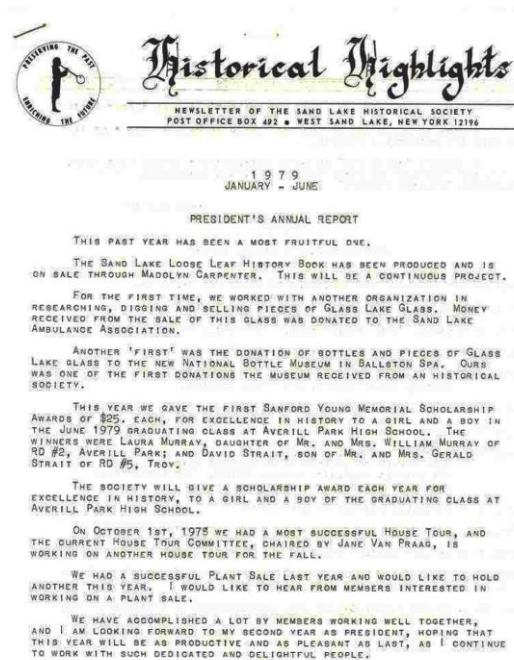
Elsewhere in this two-page issue, it was noted that "CHARTER MEMBERSHIPS are still available through May, 1975. 89 persons have joined in the seven months of our existence."



*Facts and Artifacts* continued as the newsletter name for several more issues. But the September/ October 1975 issue bore the name *Sand Lake Historical Society News (Facts and Artifacts)*. Notable in that issue was the fact that a dinner was to be held to celebrate the granting of the Society's Provisional Charter on June 27, 1975!

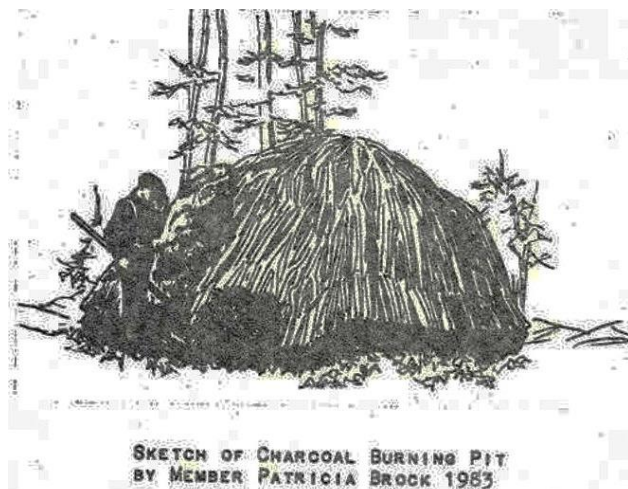
Things continued either as *...News* or *...Newsletter* until July 1977, when *Facts and Artifacts* returned! The April 1978 issue hinted at more change: "We have decided to give the newsletter a new name. Details of the selection of a name will be published shortly. It's time to put your 'thinking caps' on!"

Indeed, *Historical Highlights* appears to have debuted with the October, November, December 1978 issue. The January-June 1979 issue featured the President's Annual Report. The past 12 months had been busy ones for SLHS! A loose-leaf history book was produced. The Society collaborated in "researching, digging and selling pieces of Sand Lake Glass." Proceeds from the sale were donated to the Sand Lake Ambulance Association. 1979 was also the first year of



memorial scholarships given for excellence in history to a boy and girl graduating from Averill Park High School. Awards were given in memory of Sanford Young. Also that year were a house tour and plant sale! Meetings during the period featured programs on such topics as charcoal burning, advertising tin containers, "The Role of the Town Historian," and a roundtable discussion of "The Way it Was" with Myra Wehnau and Helen Crape Guy.

Later that year (1979), the Sand Lake Historical Society was granted an Absolute Charter by the New York State Board of Regents on November 15!



There wasn't all that much to the April 1984 *Historical Highlights* beyond notice of the 9th Annual Dinner, Annual Meeting and Election of Officers, to be held May 8 at Salem UMC in West

Sand Lake. However, the above sketch of a charcoal burning pit, drawn by Patricia Block, was reproduced in that issue.

I'm not sure what prompted it, but the June 1985 issue of *Historical Highlights* was reproduced in blue ink, a refreshing change from the usual black ink! Announcements in that issue included two Memorial Scholarship awards to high school seniors of \$100 each, well up from the \$25 each given first in 1979.



# Historical Highlights

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
POST OFFICE BOX 492 • WEST SAND LAKE, NEW YORK 12196

MAY 1988 - FEB. 1989

## IDENTIFY YOUR HISTORIC HOME

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS NOW OFFERING BRONZE PLAQUES AND AMERICAN FLAGS TO IDENTIFY HISTORIC HOMES AND BUILDINGS IN THE TOWN OF SAND LAKE.

THE PLAQUE MEASURES APPROXIMATELY 8 X 10 1/2 INCHES. A KIT IS SUPPLIED WITH EACH FLAG FOR ATTACHING TO THE BUILDING.

TO QUALIFY, THE BUILDING MUST BE AT LEAST 50 YEARS OLD, AND BE LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF SAND LAKE. THE OWNER SHALL FURNISH THE APPROXIMATE DATE OF CONSTRUCTION.

### PRICES

PLAQUE AND FLAG KIT . . . \$100. PLAQUE ONLY . . . \$87.  
FLAG KIT ONLY . . . \$20.

50% DEPOSIT IS REQUIRED. PLAQUES ARE MADE TO ORDER. DELIVERY IN 4 TO 6 WEEKS.

INCLUDE WITH YOUR ORDER: NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE, YEAR OF THE BUILDING, TOGETHER WITH CHECK PAYABLE TO: SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. MAIL TO: SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P. O. BOX 492, WEST SAND LAKE, NY 12196.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CALL CHET GAVRYOK AT 674-5515, OR ALAN FUERS AT 674-2154. CHET HAS AFFIXED A PLAQUE TO THE FRONT OF HIS RESIDENCE, (THE FORMER SALEM EUB CHURCH IN WEST SAND LAKE). IF YOU WANT TO SEE HOW THE PLAQUE LOOKS ON A BUILDING, STOP AND TAKE A LOOK AT CHET'S!

AN ORDER FORM IS ENCLOSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE.

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THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. THE SOCIETY WAS GRANTED AN ABSOLUTE CHARTER BY THE REGENTS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK ON NOVEMBER 15, 1979.

PRESIDENT: CHESTER D. GAVRYOK EDITOR: ARTHEA B. GIBBS

NEWSLETTER PHONE: 674-3127

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The May 1988-February 1989 issue noted the availability of both bronze house plaques to identify historic structures in the Town and flag kits. Elsewhere it was noted that the Society's own Library had been relocated to the (then still fairly new) Sand Lake Town Library at 43 Mall, a move that allowed much greater access to our collection (rather than having to wait for a monthly meeting)!

By 1994, the Society had moved solidly into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century via a newsletter created entirely on a computer and utilizing word processing software for easier formatting and more of a "typeset" look! By this time as well, *Historical Highlights* regularly had a feature article on some aspect of local history. The Fall 1994 issue feature was "The Wynantskill Hydro-Electric Co. - as I saw it grow" by D. Robert Hastings (originally copied by Stanley Buck on February 29, 1988, from notes by Mr. Hastings).

**Historical Highlights**  
Sand Lake Historical Society  
Volume 21, No. 1 Fall 1994

**The Wynantskill Hydro-Electric Co. — as I saw it grow**  
D. Robert Hastings  
*[Originally copied by Stanley Buck on February 29, 1988, from notes by Mr. Hastings.]*

The first I remember of electric lights was when I was about four years old. We moved from Troy where my father was a steam and electric plant engineer for the United Traction Co. and Troy-New England Railway Companies. He had taken courses in Electrical Engineering from I.C.S. (International Correspondence School?)

He got the idea of electric lights for West Sand Lake and figured out how he could harness his father's grist and cider mill water wheel to drive a generator. The mill had a large vertical Lefel water wheel with a gear-driven horizontal shaft. He purchased a large wooden flywheel and a 50 kw (50,000 watts) and a separate exciter (2,300 volts — 3 phase). He bought a one-panel switch board with ammeters, a voltmeter and an oil switch.

Building a small addition to the grist mill, he put the generator and equipment in the lower floor and a small room on the 2nd floor for an office. This was, I believe, in 1910. This was done during the *daytime* while still working nights at the railway power house.

Once satisfied with the operation of the generator, he had a local farmer cut some *chestnut* poles and, obtaining a franchise to set poles along the highway, he built a line to the four corners of West Sand Lake and hung a small transformer and a street

After a few days, one of the hotels on the corner applied for service. The hotel was wired and connected to the line. Power was available only from dusk until 11:00 p.m., on account of the water supply from the lakes being controlled by the Burden Water Company for the mills along the Wynantskill Creek. The mills did not work nights so the water had to be stored during the day for night operation of the hydro-electric plant.

More and more people made application for lights, so the company was formed and incorporated, I believe, in 1911 and named The Wynantskill Hydro-Electric Co. Inc., with my father Clifford C. Hastings as President, his brother Douglas, who joined him as Secretary-Treasurer, and their mother as officers. My father took care of construction and wiring and my uncle took care of the finances and billing; both held other jobs as well.

To finance construction, the Company would furnish and set the poles, and the customers would furnish the wire. The business picked up quite fast, and both men only worked at other jobs part-time to take care of the new undertaking.

Power was still furnished only from dusk until 11:00 p.m. three weekdays and until midnight on Saturdays. As washing machines and electric irons came on the market, power was turned on Monday morning from 7:00 a.m. until noon for washing and Tuesday from 7:00 a.m. until noon for ironing.

Every night or at any time the power was to be turned off for lack of water or for repairs, the switch was dropped three times at quick intervals — a sign

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The Spring 1999 issue featured an article on the house once owned by Dr. Smith Boughton. The new owners had chosen to name it "Calico House" in honor of Boughton and his "Calico Indians," featuring so prominently in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Anti-Rent Wars in Rensselaer County. Another article went into detail of Boughton's involvement in that movement.

# Historical Highlights

Sand Lake Historical Society  
Volume 25, No. 3 Spring 1999

## Dr. Smith Boughton and his house

Editor's Note: In Bernd Foerster's *Architecture Worth Saving in Rensselaer County, New York*, there is a picture of Dr. Smith Boughton's House. It is on Route 43 in the Alps, located in the Town of Nassau a short distance from the Sand Lake town line. The house had been in very poor condition and surrounded by trash. When improvements were noticed, it was discovered that the house had new owners. Mark Lewis and his wife, both interested in historic preservation, had purchased the house. Who was this Doctor? We local people should know.

### THE CALICO HOUSE

By Joanna & Mark Lewis

A historical marker in the front yard reads *Home of Big Thunder, Dr. Smith Boughton, leader of the Anti Rent War of 1838-1844*. On page 189 of *Architecture Worth Saving, Rensselaer County, NY*, there appears a picture of the house, located on State Route 43 in Alps, with the following narrative: "Some buildings are worth saving for reasons other than their architectural distinction. This modest house, for example, should be preserved because it was the home of Dr. Smith Boughton, who played an important role in history as leader of the Anti Rent Wars, the rebellion against Feudalism in the United States."

According to Don Carpenter, an expert on historical buildings, the house was probably built between 1799 and 1810. This would have made the house between 29 and 38 years old when Dr. Boughton and his 16-year-old bride Mary Bailey moved in. The house was built on the land of Amasa Bailey, Mary's father, and was probably given to the newlyweds as a wedding gift.

We believe the original house had four rooms downstairs and two rooms and an attic upstairs. An addition in the 1950s added a kitchen and one large dining room. In our renovation process we subdivided the 1950s dining room to add another downstairs bedroom. The "Sitting Room" (our designation) has a wonderful, well-used stone fireplace and semi-cathedral ceiling. Although far from elegant, the house has a charm and beauty all its own. In our renovation, which by the way is far from complete, we have tried to keep to colors and furnishings that would complement the era of the house.

Naturally, we are eager to learn more of the history of the house. We are told it was used as a way station in the "Underground Railroad"; there are many features in the house that would seem to bear this out. If any one having information on the house would please pass it to us, we would be most appreciative.

By the way, in honor of Dr. Boughton and his Calico Indians, we have chosen to name the house "Calico House." Those who have a true interest in this important part of history are welcome to stop, have a cup of coffee and see where Dr. Boughton lived. But please call (674-3995) before you come!



Smith Boughton house as it appeared in the 1930s; from Foerster's *Architecture Worth Saving in Rensselaer County, New York*

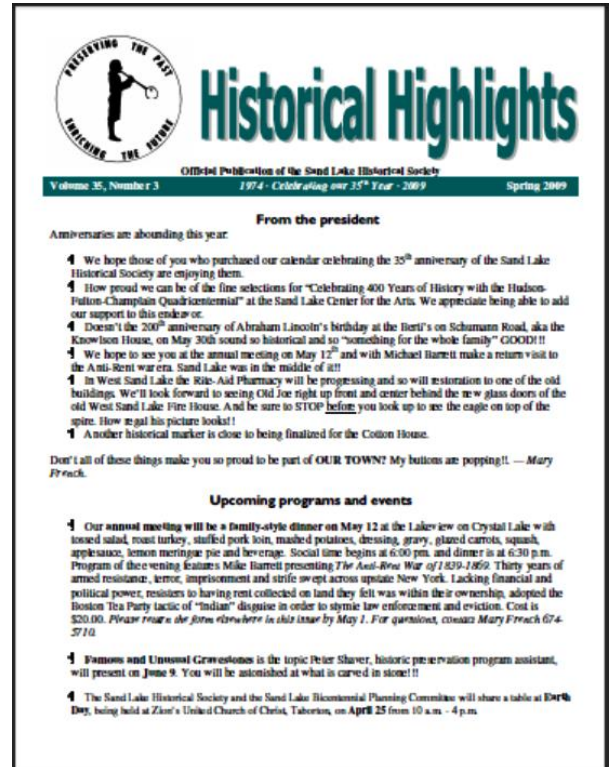


The year 2004 saw two significant anniversaries: it was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sand Lake Historical Society; even more notably, it was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Averill Park Central School District. Most of the Spring 2004 issue of Historical Highlights was devoted to a look back — in both words and pictures — at the schools in the Town prior to 1929. Most of these were one-room schoolhouses, but a few were slightly larger.

The article also mentioned a number of private schools in the Town through the years. That list included: Select School known as Gregory's noted to be "nearly opposite E. Renderts" in 1825; Select School at Sliter's Corners (present hamlet of Sand Lake) noted to be "by Dr. Elmore's" in 1854; Select School in basement of Second Lutheran Church (on Route 43) in 1854; Sand Lake Academy in Gabler Hotel (Lakeview Hotel) in 1843; Brookside Institute in 1860's located next to the Fox Mansion; Sand Lake Female Seminary - a boarding school in 1880's (Lakeview Hotel); Scram's Institute - a boarding school for boys located on site of Church of the Covenant from 1852-75; A private school opened by Miss Nellie Clark noted to be "where Boarer's Hotel is"; and Miss Fannie Howard conducted a private Day School in Averill Park (in a building behind the first house on Johnnycake Lane) in 1889.

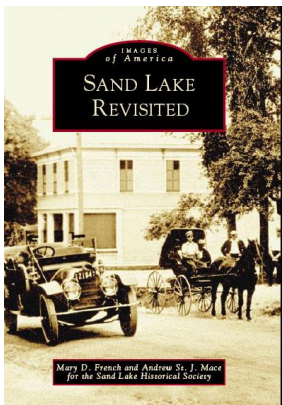
Issues in 2009 — our 35<sup>th</sup> year — continued to feature interesting history-related articles. The Winter issue detailed baseball great and "hometown hero" Elroy Face. The Spring issue

brought a feature on Cemetery Care, as well as articles on continuing restoration of the old West Sand Lake Fire House, note of a new historical marker on the site of the 1776 "log church," and information on the rescue and restoration of the cupola from the old West Sand Lake Post Office, as that building and several others made way for the new Rite Aid store.



Looking back through these issues of our newsletter is a trip through all sorts of history...the history of our town and surrounding areas, and those who inhabited the area. It's also a history of not only those times but the times during which these newsletters were produced. Some may well have been typed on mimeograph stencils and reproduced that way. Fortunately, xerography became not only very popular but quite inexpensive and of increasing reproduction quality starting in the 1970s and 1980s. Later on, computers, word processors, scanners and much better (and cheaper) printers enabled very attractive copy to be produced.

Above all, though, we owe much to the efforts of so many over the years who contributed to these, those who typed and pasted (or ultimately computer-generated) these, and even those who copied, collated, stapled, addressed and mailed them. And now many of you receive this electronically! The evolution of our newsletter is indeed history itself! — AM



<http://sandlakehistory.org>

E-mail: [sandlakehistory@aol.com](mailto:sandlakehistory@aol.com)

Historical Highlights

*Andrew Mace*, Editor/Publisher



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*ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED*

Sand Lake Historical Society

Post Office Box 492

West Sand Lake, New York 12196



## Sand Lake Historical Society

### Membership Application/Renewal

(Please print clearly)

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) \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer to receive newsletter via e-mail \_\_\_ or via Postal Mail \_\_\_ (choose only one)

Total enclosed: ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please 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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## Sand Lake Historical Society

### Dinner and Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 2014, 6:00 p.m., Burden Lake Country Club

(Please print clearly)

The sit down dinner will feature salad, bread, your choice of 4 entrées, dessert and coffee or tea. The cost of the dinner will be \$ 22.00/person.

Please bring a bit of cash with you as there will be a Chinese auction, with 4 great items to take a chance on. Proceeds will help fund the two annual scholarships we give to deserving Averill Park students in memory of past SLHS members.

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May 13th Dinner Reservation Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ number of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate Choice[s] of entrée:

12 oz. Rib eye ( )

Broiled Haddock ( )

Chicken Marsala ( )

Pasta Gardinera ( )

Please mail this form with payment **by May 3, 2014**, to: Sand Lake Historical Society, PO Box 492, West Sand Lake, NY 12196

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**Feel free to write one check for the total amount of membership/renewal AND your dinner reservation(s)!**