



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 46, Number 1

Our 46th Year

Summer 2019

From our new president

I'm excited to become president of SLHS, and I'm hoping to bring some interesting speakers to our 2019-2020 meetings. We are very excited to have our Methodist Farm marker in place commemorating their 100th Anniversary (*more about that elsewhere in this issue – Ed.*).



I was born in Averill Park and currently live in the house that my parents moved into in 1946. My dad worked for Boyce Lumber in Averill Park and later for Pollock Lumber (Troy, Eagle Mills, Wynantskill). He went on to open his own business, Tremont Lumber, “down behind the Round Church” on Orient Avenue in the former Troy & New England Railroad terminal building.

He and my mother ran that until his death in 1980, then my mom continued to run it for a bit before selling it to my nephew Dennis, who moved the business to its current location on Route 43.

My brother Kenny and nephew Kenny Jr. run Brookside Garage. They field a race car that my nephew

Kenny drives; they go to Malta on Friday nights, Lebanon Valley on Saturday nights, and Devil's Bowl in Vermont on Sundays. My late brother Dennis Sr. owned the old lumberyard and ran a general contracting business. Unfortunately, the old “depot” roof was lost to a snowstorm, and the building had to be demolished.

I was a school nurse in Lansingburgh for 22 years and also worked at Samaritan periodically and at various nursing homes in the area. I continue to do school nursing or camp nursing at Hudson Valley Community College during the summer part-time. My husband Brian Bradley and I moved in with my mother when she was 87, and we put a new roof and siding on house and shored up the barn. I'm hoping to have a program on my barn and on barns in general this coming spring.

We hope you've enjoyed your summer, and we'll keep you up-to-date on our activities via our website and Facebook! — *Jackie Tremont, President*

In this issue:

Best laid plans...and all that! Our Summer issue has fallen victim to computer, printer and Internet access problems as well as the usual activities of a typical summer. Nonetheless, here it is at last! Inside, we welcome new officers and trustees and look back at two very successful recent events: May's Annual Meeting and June's Lobster Bake and Dance. We also look a bit further back...to 1969 and thereabouts! Also, coverage of the dedication of the historical marker at Methodist Farm, information on upcoming programs (now starting earlier!), and more – all inside!

Upcoming programs

- 1 **Tuesday, September 10, 7:00 p.m. (note new, earlier start time):** Join Town Historian Bob Moore for his annual presentation to the Sand Lake Historical Society. There will be an update on the Hazel Drew murder investigation, including news on the completion of John Holser's film and a new upcoming WMHT podcast coming soon. The highlight of the evening will be the presentation of three oral history interviews, including Bill Middleton and Frank Mantha. These interviews were produced by Jim Powers, SLHS Trustee and professional film-maker. The stories speak to the importance of our shared past and history that unites us all. Refreshments will be served.
- 1 **Tuesday, October 8, 7:00 p.m.:** Michael Barrett, Executive Director of the Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway and the Burden Iron Works Museum in Troy, will present *Bells, Bells, Bells: An Enduring Legacy from the Greater Troy Area, 1808-1952*. Four of the largest bell manufacturing concerns in the US were clustered in Troy and West Troy (now Watervliet.) Between them they created an estimated 100,000 bells, including several of our nation's most famous. (A number of those bells can be found in town; see *Historical Highlights*, Volume 28, No. 2, Winter 2003 or <https://sandlakehistory.org/bells.htm>)
- 1 **Tuesday, November 12, 7:00 p.m.:** Eric Durr will present a program on *D-Day / Normandy*. Durr has served as Director of Public Affairs for the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs since 2007. He served 28 years in the Active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard as an armor officer, division plans officer, operations officer, public affairs officer and civil affairs officer. He commanded a tank company, a headquarters company and a tank battalion in the National Guard and also worked as a Department of the Army civilian, a newspaper reporter.
NOTE: The September, October and November program will be held in the Court Room at Sand Lake Town Hall, 8428 NY Route 66, Averill Park NY 12018.
- 1 **December and Beyond:** Holiday party. 2020 programs tentatively include: history of Burden Lakes; Abolitionists in pre-Civil War Troy; a closer look at Tremont Calendars; saving, stabilizing and restoring barns; a new look at *Architecture Worth Saving in Rensselaer County*; and Methodist Farm history.
- 1 **Elsewhere:** *From Country Drives to The Grand Tour* continues at the Rensselaer County Historical Society, 57 Second Street, Troy, through December 21, 2019. A companion exhibit, *Bringing Vacation Home: Our Community On Vacation*, opens September 9, focusing on the impact of travel in and out of Rensselaer County. Suffice it to say that Sand Lake will be nicely represented in the exhibit (hint: think Carousel)!

Recap of past programs and events

Annual Meeting

Our 2019 Annual Meeting was held Tuesday, May 14, at the future home of *TBA – Tighe's Bistro Américain*. Owner Kevin Tighe graciously entertained us despite being deep in the midst of the nearly two-centuries-old building's ongoing renovation. SLHS Trustee Dawn Vink picks up the story:

"An incredible amount of work went into making this event happen. An industrious group of trustees worked tirelessly at cleaning and assembling tables. The 'Clean Team' of Rosemarie Sniezyk, Michelle Mosher Schultz, Barbara Mosher Matrese, Joan Fuess and Holli Boyd-White helped ensure everything was ready for the fete.

"The bar area was cleared off to make way for our creatively decorated birdhouses. Thank you to Barbara Neu-Berti, Sue Powers, Sharon Dawes and Jim Powers for



making certain they were delivered and festively displayed. The avian abodes feathered their nests with bids, flying their way one stop closer to another successful fundraiser.

*"The historic building on Glass Lake has had many incarnations over the years, such as housing the Glass Lake Inn (see *Historical Highlights*, Vol. 45, No.4, Spring 2019). Most recently it has sat vacant for some time, creating great anticipation for the [capacity crowd of] nearly 80 attendees. The large group was very eager to get a sneak peek of the storied site.*

"The heartier-than-expected spread was prepared by Paula's Kitchen and Lakeview. A tasty variety of desserts was provided by Café Deli-Icious; Janice Hofaker Tighe provided many of the necessities, including coffee, tea and a posse of



willing and helpful friends (including Lois Rybka Dysard who photographed the event). The Sand Lake Historic Neighborhoods Project provided the wine assortment, flatware and dishes.

“As the repast was enjoyed, Kevin Tighe entertained the crowd with his stories of renovation adventures and subsequent archaeological finds. Pete Finn gave us an update on the progress being made by the Sand Lake Historic Neighborhoods Project. Many folks shared their personal memories of the building from when it hosted travelers and entertained locals. Town Historian Bob Moore provided a slide show of historic images as a visual background to the many tales being told.

“It was an evening steeped in memories of the past, along with heightened anticipation of a wonderful future for this historic building.”

Outgoing SLHS president Joan Fuess spoke briefly on the past year’s events, and elections were held for trustees. Those elected were *Sharon Dawes* and *Jackie Tremont*, each to a second three-year term to end May 31, 2022; *Peter Finn*, *Michael Perry*, *Ann Winnicki*, each to an initial three-year term to end May 31, 2022; and *Dawn Vink*, to complete a term to end May 31, 2020.



Lobster Bake and Dance

“Well, I went to a dance just the other night. Everybody there was there....” – *Over and Over*, by Bobby Day (later covered by Dave Clark Five)

Our 5th Annual Fundraiser -- was held June 7 at the “Dance Hall” at historic Crystal Cove. The building, almost as old as the park itself, has wonderful views over Crystal Lake in Averill Park, enjoyed by nearly 100 people over dinner, music, and dancing!

In addition to all the SLHS members who worked so hard to make this event happen, there are many, many others to thank as well, beginning with the **Honorary Committee**: EVENT SPONSORS -- *Bonded Concrete / Troy Sand and Gravel; Crystal Cove*. LEGACY LEVEL -- *Susan, Steven, Jim & Karli Powers; Chet & Karen Opalka*.

HERITAGE LEVEL -- *Scott & Claudia Bendett; Debbie Bucher Wager; Bob & Sharon Dawes; Alice & Hal Howard; Will & Tara Lindheimer; John T. McCarthy, M.D. & Jane L. Falkenstein, M.D.; Bob Moore & Tina Malone; Cathy O'Neill & Chuck Boisseau; Michelle Schultz & John Conway; Mike & Christine Sheehan; Judi & Doug Stone; Dawn Vink & Bruce Mereness*. CAROUSEL LEVEL -- *Fred Erickson; Joan Fuess; Andrew Mace*.

Raffle Prize Donors included: *Rob Bucher / Destination Kia; Melissa Dawes; Bob Deeb; Doby's Submarines; Brandon Ford / 1st Priority Mortgage; Joseph Johnson; Kay's Burden Lake Restaurant, Inc.; Keneston Landscaping; Lakeview on Crystal Lake; Bob Moore; Heather Naventi / Masterpiece Jewelry Studio; Ed Patanian / Westfall Station Café; The Sheehan Family; Towne Tavern; Gene Urgento; Layne Volkmann / Tocara Jewelry; Debbie Bucher Wager / Howard Hanna Real Estate Services; Worthington Flowers*.

All this, plus a 50-50 drawing, the end of the silent auction of birdhouses, historical exhibits on display, and a video oral history with Frank Mantha (*pictured here welcoming everyone*), current generation of the family that has owned Crystal Lake Park / Crystal Cove since 1896!

Last but certainly not least, thanks to the T.L. Holloway quartet for providing wonderful music throughout the evening!



Sand Lake Historical Society Annual Report 2018-2019

Board members: Joan Fuess (President, Programs), Rosemarie Sniezyk (V-P), Sharon Dawes (Recording Secretary, Records Management), Jackie Tremont (Corresponding Secretary, Markers), Michelle Mosher Schultz (Treasurer, Archivist/Curator). Jane Minotti (Librarian), Sue Powers (Ways and Means), Dawn Vink (Historic Neighborhoods), Jim Powers (Oral History), Dee Erickson, Holli Boyd-White, Drew White. Board members for partial terms: Bonnie Hellum, Tedi Toca. Off Board - Andy Mace (Editor, Webmaster and Membership)

Preserving the Past

Acquisitions: Wooden plaque depicting our logo given by Mike St. Germain; branding iron with the initials JK Averill; a book titled *Antique Glass and Glass Collecting*; *Images of America* titles, including *Nassau*, *Railroads of Rensselaer*, and *Trolleys of the Capital District*; a spike from the Troy-New England Railroad.

Merchandise: Magnets, *Images of America*; *Sand Lake*, *Images of America*; *Sand Lake Revisited*, DVD -- Evening with Teddy Roosevelt, Book -- *Who Killed Hazel Drew?*, Hannaford *Fresh Cookbook*.

Displays: There are five major display cabinets at the Sand Lake Town Hall. Two permanent displays include items from Faith Mills and the Glass Factory. Rotating displays in Town Hall this year included Civil War Weapons, Blum family information and auction notice from 1919, and Calendars and memorabilia from Tremont Lumber Company.

Markers: a historical marker has been designed for Methodist Farm and will be dedicated there this summer.

Records Management Committee: the committee was established to select and implement policies and practices. Introduction of Google's G-Suite to store, manage and facilitate access to Society records; also digitize our archives and communication with the board members.

Community Collaborations

Oral History Project: Our Stories Matter: Bob Moore, Town Historian, is interviewing citizens. Jim Powers is the videographer.

Historic Neighborhoods: This group meets monthly; its initial task is to research historic homes on Schumann Road, Glass House hamlet area, and by the Fox Mansion. The design is to serve as a model for other neighborhoods. Data collected will be kept in the Town Historian's office. A block party was held for Schumann Road residents. There was direct input into the Town's Comprehensive Plan "to enhance and preserve the character of the town's hamlets, neighborhoods and building stock."

Who Killed Hazel Drew?: promoted and attended the November 18th Film Preview of John Holser's Documentary at Sand Lake Center for the Arts - SLHS provided refreshments and designed and sold t-shirts. Supported the restoration of Hazel Drew's headstone and family plot in Brookside Cemetery, Poestenkill, by Joseph Ferrannini.

Sand Lake Association for the Mutual Protection Against Horse Thieves held their 170th annual meeting and have asked for our support.

Publications

Historical Highlights, our newsletter, is now published four times per year, with a Summer issue added in 2018.

Facts and Artifacts, a series of reprints on popular and relevant topics such as *Memories of Faith Mills*; *Hamlets of the Town of Sand Lake*; *Sand Lake - Mill Town?*; *Centennial of Methodist Farm*; *Historical Markers*; *Sand Lake schools prior to 1929*.

Along with having a booth at the Kiwanis Summerfest, we produced a self-guided **Driving Tour Through Sand Lake History** of 14 historic sites beginning at Young's Pharmacy and General Store (1870s) and finishing at the Sand Lake Center for the Arts (1835). The Town Historian's office was open.

Experiencing the Present

Sand Lake Historical Society Membership: 138, including a variety of membership categories: Individual, Family, Lifetime, Sustaining, Complimentary, Courtesy.

Attendance at monthly meetings continues to grow. A total of 348 has been recorded for this period.

Communication: our key media source has been *The Advertiser*. Meetings and events are listed on our website and Facebook page, the library's community calendar and via a members-only email list. Cards are sent to families of deceased members and alumni as well as thank-you and congratulation notes.

Programs:

- 1 June 2018 - Jim Greenfield, North Greenbush Town Historian on "Defreestville and Wynantskill: Two North Greenbush Hamlets"
- 1 September 2018 - Heidi Hill from Schuyler Mansion on "How Hamilton Became a Schuyler"
- 1 October 2018 - Bob Moore, Town Historian, with a PowerPoint presentation of old photos of Sand Lake and Introduction of the Oral History Project
- 1 November 2018 - Eric Washburn on "Birds in your backyard and far away" (100th year anniversary of Migratory Bird Treaty Act)
- 1 December 2018 - Holiday party festivities at Berti's - sharing family traditions

- 1 January 2019 - Bob Shuey on "The New Age of Weaponry in the Civil War"
- 1 February 2019 - cancelled due to weather
- 1 March 2019 – Rensselaer County and Troy City Historian Kathy Sheehan on "Traveling Through Rensselaer County in the 19th Century"
- 1 April 2019 - Tom Carroll, Senior Scholar at the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway, on "The Mother Lode of Tiffany Windows in Troy"
- 1 May 2019 - Annual Meeting at Tighe's Bistro Américain, with TBA owner Kevin Tighe and others on "Renovations & Memories of Historic Glass Lake Inn"

SLHS Memberships: Rensselaer County Historical Society, Museum Association of New York (MANY), DHPSNY Online Directory, Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway

Memorial Awards were given to two Averill Park High School graduates for Excellence in History. This year, 2019, the awards went to Kelsey Granger and Kristen Schaefer

Fundraisers: 24 Birdhouses were purchased and given to local artists to design and paint for a silent auction to be held at our annual fund-raising event in June. A *Lobster Bake and Dance* is planned at the historic Crystal Cove in Averill Park. An honorary committee has been established. The history of the carousel, weekend dances, and entertainment at the site will be featured.

Enriching the Future

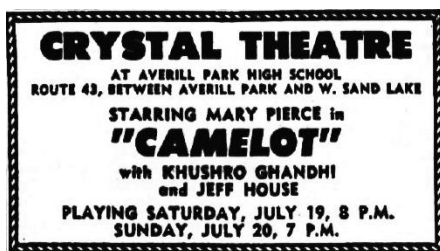
- 1 Participation in the Community Organizations meetings with Sand Lake Town Supervisor
- 1 Input into the Town of Sand Lake Comprehensive Plan
- 1 Continuing to set goals for 2019-2020 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted, Joan Fuess, President

50 years ago, give or take a few years...

Part I – Camelot! At 10:56 p.m. on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong descended from Apollo 11's lunar excursion module, carefully stepped down a ladder, and became the first man to set foot on the moon.

Earlier that evening, Crystal Theatre in Averill Park staged its second night of the musical *Camelot*. If you know your musicals, you know that *Camelot* is



a fairly long show. As much as all of us involved loved doing the show, there was an underlying fear that it would not

end in time and that they would miss the landing! Thankfully, the show *did* end in time, and cast, crew and others rushed to crowd around a small black-and-white television set someone brought that night...and we all got to see and hear that momentous occasion!



"Camelot," of course, was also how Jacqueline Kennedy had described her husband's Presidency shortly after his assassination in November 1963. And it was JFK's dream to put a man on the moon. Did Crystal Theatre director Jack Smead deliberately choose that show to run that weekend? We'll never know for sure; in retrospect, though, it certainly seemed appropriate! — AM

Part IIa – 1969: When Woodstock Changed the World. I was able to attend the Conference by the same name back in June sponsored by Marist College, Hudson River Valley Institute, New York State Museum and the Office of State History. The topics were varied and covered subjects like Civil Rights and Black Power, Viet Nam, Challenges of Second Wave Feminism and CNN Historian Douglas Brinkley's *Woodstock Revelations: 50 Years Later*. Brinkley covered a lot of ground, dedicating his talk to Richie Havens who opened the festival with a rousing version of *Freedom*. "You got Woodstock or you didn't," he said. Like Dylan's *Ballad of the Thin Man*, "Something is happening and you don't know what it is, do you Mr. Jones." This was not just a music festival, but a gathering that made people feel connected and part of a greater organism. I remember Professor Rajkowski at Siena College calling Woodstock a "faith experience." Some have described it as a moment of "naïve faith" where "all was possible"!

On a personal level, I was affected by the idea that a new community was forming to create positive change in the world. I believed that I could make a difference by becoming a teacher. There were some that rejected mainstream American values and decided to start over by going "back to the land" to establish communes. Drop City, in Colorado was one of the first, but I discovered there was a commune right here in West Sand Lake on Barnes Road in the early 1970s.

Part IIb – The Hippie Farm. The neighbors Gotsamer built a new home and rented their old 1850 farmhouse to about 8 couples. Rodger Sutton, who lives in the house today, told me there were 13 beds in the house, a woodstove for heat, and a hand pump for water in the kitchen. The group grew their own crops, including corn, pumpkins and squash. Evidently, some of the tending of the crops was done in a free, naked fashion. He also said that the leader was a

woman called "Hot Mama" who held court in a house made of straw bales with a tin roof.

I also talked to June Groat and Laura Schreiner from the Broken-New Farm and riding stables who lived across the street from the hippies. Their farm is the original Barnes family homestead built in 1825. They agreed that the commune did not really have a name but there was a yellow sign out front. June did become concerned one day when she walked down by the creek and found a number of naked hippies sunning on the roof of a shack!

This is about all the information I could find on the commune; please contact me if you have any stories about this "far out" community. 518 674-2026 – *Bob Moore, Sand Lake Town Historian*



Part III – Estate Sale Finds. Your editor, like so many of us, occasionally gives in to the temptations of garage sales, yard sales, estate sales and the like. A recent Saturday was no exception. One always approaches such sales with the hope of finding a particular treasure, but what I ended up finding at this one was far more than I'd bargained for – in a good way!

Amongst the tools, I found a nice, small carpenter's level in good condition and very inexpensive. Great! Now I realize that's not all that exciting, even if you're "into" tools as I am, but it was a nice find.

I continued around the yard and in the garage, scanning housewares, toys...and found a Flutophone! If that name doesn't ring a bell, it's a small plastic recorder-type instrument once popular in elementary schools. My class happened to be the last one that used that particular instrument, and this one belonged to a close friend of mine that we lost much too soon, making this a rather poignant find.

On to housewares and books...and records. And there it was! Atop a stack of LPs that included the usual movie soundtrack albums and various "classical" works was "*Jim Borden sings – folk songs – christmas carols*"! Perhaps many of you recognize the name Jim Borden, pastor of then the Averill Park Methodist Church. Borden also happened to be quite the singer and activist... another person taken from us much too soon, and another poignant find! — *AM*



Displays at Sand Lake Town Hall

If you're in the area, be sure to check out the Society's displays outside the Town Clerk's office at Sand Lake Town Hall. The latest display is devoted to Faith Mills.

New historical marker

On July 7, the Sand Lake Historical Society's newest historical marker was unveiled at Methodist Farm on Crooked Lake. The marker commemorates the 1917 purchase of a farm by the "Methodist Sunday School Association of Troy and Vicinity, Inc." for use as a campground. A lovely picnic put on by the "campers" followed the dedication. Representing SLHS were President Jacqueline Tremont and members Andrew Mace, Pete Finn, Ann Winnicki, Jane Minotti and Michelle Mosher Schultz. Rensselaer County and Troy City Historian Kathy Sheehan also attended the ceremony, which was followed by a wonderful picnic!

The Historical Society wishes to thank Charles Walker, "unofficial" historian, and Farm Manager Gary Wieland at Methodist Farm for their assistance.



SLHS member notification list

Those of you who have shared your email address with us should be familiar with our list called "slhs-members@googlegroups.com." This is an announce-only list to quickly get word to members regarding cancellations, postponements and/or program reminders; it is *not* a discussion list. Postings generally run about 1-2 per month, and you will be offered the opportunity to opt out. We're happy to add members whose email address was not on file; just let us know! This will supplement any notifications on the School Closing Network (local TV stations and newspaper websites) or on our Facebook page and web site.

SLHS online

If you haven't already done so, look for us on Facebook! It's a great place to get the most up-to-date news on meetings and events, along with other items of interest from us and from other places and groups in the Capital District. And occasionally, you'll see things you won't see in our newsletter or the web site!

Our page is getting noticed more and more! Last fall, we were at 344 page "likes" and around 370 in early January. In mid-April, we were at **414**; as we go to press, we're at **456** (plus a few other "followers")!

Follow the link on our web site or go to <https://www.facebook.com/SandLakeHistoricalSociety> — "Like" us...and enjoy!

And don't forget our website, <https://sandlakehistory.org/>!

Dues are due!

Please check your mailing label (or the text in the email accompanying this newsletter if you receive it

electronically). If your label says "2019" above your name, your dues are due, and this will be your last issue until you renew! Our "fiscal" and membership year runs from June 1 through May 31.

Officers and Trustees of the Society 2019-2020



Officers: *Jacqueline Tremont (2022)*, President; *Jane Minotti (2021)*, Vice President; *Sharon Dawes (2022)*, Recording Secretary; *Rosemarie Sniezek (2021)*, Corresponding Secretary; *Michelle Mosher Schultz (2020)*, Treasurer.

Trustees: *Holli Boyd-White (2021)*, *Peter Finn (2022)*, *Joan Fuess (2020)*, *Michael Perry (2022)*, *Jim Powers (2020)*, *Sue Powers (2021)*, *Ann Winnicki (2022)*, *Dawn Vink (2020)*.



Sand Lake Historical Society Membership Application/Renewal 2019-2020

(Please print clearly)

New Member Renewal

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) _____

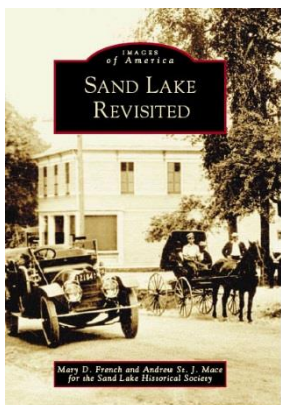
Would you prefer to receive newsletter via: Email or Postal Mail (check only one)

Do you have any particular historical interests or expertise? If so, please let us know:

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

HH 46-1 Summer 2019 NOTE: Memberships run from June 1 through May 31!



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Historical Highlights
Andrew Mace, Editor/Publisher



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