

Historical Society Newsletter

Ron Feulner, Editor
P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

OFFICERS: Coral Crosman, President; Tom Siragusa, Vice President; Patty Schwartzbeck, Secretary; Alice Feulner, Treasurer; Robert Roeckle, Trustee; Ron Feulner, Trustee; JoAnn Rowland, Trustee.

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Calendar

We will begin our year by changing the date of our first meeting. As you are probably aware, we usually meet the third Tuesday of the month, however, due to our speaker's schedule, we have had to change the meeting date to **Wednesday, September 20. We will also have a pot-luck dinner (bring a dish to pass and your own table setting) before the meeting. The dinner will be at 6 p.m. The meeting will begin at 7.** Our speaker will be Jack Freeman talking about Fire Towers.

In October, we will return to our regular schedule of meeting on the third Tuesday.

Reminder that our year of meetings begins in September so everyone's membership renewal is due (unless you have recently paid). We have made it easy to renew your membership (or become a new member) by filling out our membership application contained in this newsletter and mailing it with your dues (if you prefer to keep your newsletter intact, you may copy the necessary information on another sheet and send it). We will also accept memberships at our meetings. The only requirement to become a member is an interest in local history (residency in the town is not required). We hope to have another good year, and we need you as a member to help it happen.

Coral's Calls

By general consensus, *summer* went by far faster than usual and much too busily and now, days swiftly shortening, September upon us – with our first meeting of the year on **WEDNESDAY (September 20)** this time and to at long last get to the subject of “fire towers,” projected since I first came on board in the spring of 2001. **Jack Freeman**, Adirondack Mountain Club spokesperson, hiker and author, will address, among other items, his involvement with establishing access to the Spruce Mountain fire tower so that it too can be rehabbed and made a goal of fitness/out-of-doors enthusiasts once again. It is my understanding that while the peak itself lies in the Town of Corinth, the trail starts right here in Greenfield. Freeman, who is the author of *Views from On High: Fire Tower Trails in the Adirondacks and Catskills*, and a popular speaker throughout the region, will have his books as well as a couple titles by other fire tower aficionados and advocates available at our meeting. Spruce Mtn. was among hikes proposed by our group in the spring.

While with perhaps not enough bodies willing and able to match all our intended spirits, the Historical Society has not exactly been idle. Member and town historian Mary DeMarco was pleased to lead a group that included Violet Dake Fallone, former Montgomery County historian, and members of her party to several Greenfield sites including the railroad station and Daketown School where, our historian reported, visitors were much

impressed by renovations that had taken place since their last tour perhaps a decade ago. They also enjoyed a fine luncheon at Greenfield's height overlooking Lake Desolation from its nearby restaurant, which is under new management.

Tom Siragusa, newly-elected vice president, met with Greenfield Elementary School's 4th grade social studies point person, David Shippee, to plan early fall activities that would include a tour of the one-room schoolhouse and the nearby IOOF Hall and park as a community-oriented 'field trip.'

During my on-foot tours about Middle Grove, I happened to be much impressed by some artwork gracing the 'facilities' of our town park, created with the oversight of the Odyssey School of Fine Arts in this hamlet (www.odysseyartschool.org). The mosaic depiction, which is even better in color, is the sort of art an organization such as ours should be ready to commend for enlivening our perspective on that which is about us.

At our May meeting (last of the year), officers elected included yours truly as president; Tom Siragusa vice president; Patty Schwartzbeck, secretary, and Alice Feulner, treasurer. JoAnn Rowland, Rob Roeckle and Ron Feulner will continue as trustees. Many thanks to Joyce Woodard who chaired the nominations committee – and has agreed to fulfill the role of archives and collections person for the coming year. Serving with Joyce on nominations were Margie Jones and Mary Max. Our featured speaker was Field Horne, area historian, who has produced a beautiful compilation of letters written by visitors to the Saratoga area from the 18th Century onward. He entertained the audience by sharing some of these epistles as one of our members affirmed later that she was also enjoying them as her husband read from the handsome volume aloud each evening. Refreshments were provided by Vince Walsh and Joyce Woodard.

One of the summer treats we have here in the "Adirondack foothills" (as Dick Roeckle assured me once at the old General Store that this was indeed where we lived) is the transient visits of once year-round residents who have become like our flying passerines, gracing us with their summer voices. I was able to enjoy Florence Breitbeck's company – she now winters in Tennessee but has long been a member of our organization. Also, Enid

Older was her smiling self, up from Florida with members of her family... At our May meeting, year-round resident Gertrude Jones presented a family portrait in a beautiful frame to the Historical Society. We are always grateful for such generosity – as one genealogical tale "a-borning" is of a W. Palm Beach denizen who has been tracking down one of her ancestors, a famed Mason of the Greenfield Center Lodge which recently shared photos and other memorabilia with our society...more details to follow! *Stay tuned...*

In other business from May, the proposed name change (that did cause a little stir, at least among some members) has been tabled since the charter was about to be approved, or so we were informed, and it was not considered appropriate to drop "Town of" from the name at this particular point, on the advisement of the State Education Department spokesperson. Thanks also to Karl Zeh and Earl Jones who provided the internal audit of our finances at the meeting. As for September's *Wednesday* gathering, don't forget we start with a **6 p.m. potluck** at the Greenfield Community Center, followed by our business meeting and guest speaker at 7... *See you then!*

Lady Slipper Lane

By Florence Breitbeck

(Florence's address) Mrs. Carl Breitbeck (Florence), 5701 King Lane, Lafayette, TN 37083

In 1934, Carl and I bought a camp on Ballston Lake. It had once been an icehouse. When we finished remodeling it, friends said, "You made a nice house from an ice house."

In 1967, I was unexpectedly left a widow. We had bought property at 804 Coy Road in the Town of Greenfield as a summer base for the motor home that we planned to go south with in the winter. In 1934 Carl had taken out a \$3,000 life insurance policy to protect me. It seemed like an awful lot of money until I tried to build a space to live in. I could not afford the heat and taxes on the Ballston Lake property. Taxes had gone from \$9.00 per year to several thousand so I decided to rent my home there for several years. The first year that I rented it, I camped out in my motor home in my woods on

Coy Road. I asked my neighbors on Coy Road, the Smeros, how they got electricity as they lived as far back from the road as I would if I built there. I became friends with the Smeros, and I also met Bob and Alice Baker, neighbors on the other side. They were all helpful. Mr. Roeckle, who ran the general store in Middle Grove, dug a well for me. I got power installed back to my building site, and a foundation dug, and concrete blocks laid for a cellar. By then my money was gone. A builder friend suggested that I put trusses over the blocks and a picture window in front and call the cellar my apartment.

Bill Snow had made the beginnings of a driveway, but the soft woods soil soon swallowed up the fill. Each year, I added what dirt I could afford. Jake left his power wagon at the end of my road and Curtis Lumber delivered my needs there. Eve Smero, Jake's Wife, drove it in and unloaded it for me. She was petite but very strong. One day, she asked me if anything happened to her would I take care of Jake. Two weeks later, she died of an aneurysm. I did take care of Jake for many years but as his Parkinson's worsened, I found it too difficult.

I used Carl's ice fishing boat to haul things in and out from the main road to my apartment. My grandson had to hold it back with a rope when I brought my sewing machine, typewriter, and desk so it would not run over me on the downhill sections.

I found I had more things I wanted to save than I had room for so my grandson and I bought a tin storage house "on the hoof." We had to take it apart and reassemble it. We did great until we discovered the two roof pieces did not join. A friend with more know-how told us the foundation had to be level. Mission accomplished!

One cold blustery day, I saw a flock of red polls. I also fed scraps to a red fox and a racoon. They did not share! My biggest thrill was when a black bear visited me. After he had cleaned out the bird feeder and the garbage can, all except the banana skins and coffee grounds, he put his paws on my window and drooled down it. I was not frightened as folks say I should have been since it was early spring, and he was hungry. I just wanted to take a picture of him. To my great disappointment, the flash reflected on the glass, and I did not get one.

I got out of work at 10:00 p.m. and often had to shovel the entrance to my driveway to get my car off the road. A few years into my enjoyable hardships, Jake got Billie Ballou, with his heavy equipment, and with the help of Jake's nephews, they widened my driveway and added more fill. From then on Jake plowed it.

The previous owners were the Snobles. Once, while visiting me, my granddaughters discovered an old trash dump on the property. They excitedly came for shovels and went to work hoping to find some antique china. All they found were widow Snoble's pint wine bottles. They say she used to sit on the road and beg passersby to bring her wine.

I found asparagus, rhubarb and lilacs growing on the property. I always wondered if I had looked long enough if I might have found a barn full of cows, but Mr. Snoble didn't farm with cows, instead he grew wagonloads of potatoes.

I have had 38 good years there and still come back summers. My daughter will not let me drive at age 92, and I cannot live there without wheels so now I live with her in Tennessee.

Request for information:

We received the following request from Sylvia Bockstein dated May 30th, 2006. Perhaps some of our readers can help her. Her address is 172 Jackson Street, Jefferson, MA 01522-1469.

"I am interested in Greenfield because I am the family historian for a Colwell family. One Colwell family lived in Greenfield for a few years during the 1930's, I believe. The head of the family was Ernest Colwell. His wife, Anna (Lantz) Colwell, died sometime during the 1930's, possibly in Greenfield. One of their children, Richard Lantz Colwell, died in Normandy in 1947, buried in an American military cemetery in France, later buried in Greenfield."

"I would like to find out more about the Colwell family when they lived in Greenfield, and also would like to know more about the town of Greenfield during the 1930's as background for the family's history."

*Become a member of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Fill out this form and enclose \$6.00 for individual membership or \$10.00 for household. **If you send more it will be considered a donation.** Other types of memberships are also available (lifetime, corporate, etc.) just call and ask (893-0620). Our membership year begins in September and dues are paid annually. You may also join at one of our meetings.*

Send this application form and fee to Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Make checks payable to: Town of Greenfield Historical Society.

Type of membership: Individual _____ **Household** _____ (please indicate how many persons ten-years-old or older are in the household). _____

Name (please print) _____

Street _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Amount enclosed _____ (**\$6 individual or \$10 household**) **Date** _____

Areas of interest to you _____

Note: If you know someone whom you think might want to become a member, send us their name and address, and we will send them a free copy of our newsletter along with information on how they can join.

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

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