

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

Tuesday, November, 21, 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield. Our program will be *Shared Recollections of Thanksgivings Past*. Members attending will have an opportunity to share stories about their unique Thanksgiving gatherings and family customs or rituals.

Saturday, December 16, 2 - 4 p.m., our annual holiday open house and celebration at the IOOF Hall in Middle Grove.

A Reminder that our year began in September. 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.

I just wish to say thank you to the members who have so promptly paid their dues and a special thank you to those who have chosen to add a little extra as a donation. Every little bit helps us accomplish our goals. Alice Feulner (Treas.)

Coral's Calls

We've had some busy times, of late, and a sense of bringing a few long-dreamed projects to fruition – special plaudits to Tom Siragusa, our new vice president, for agreeing to honcho the Greenfield Elementary School field trip in conjunction with Dave Shippee, 4th grade teacher there who was pivotal in orchestrating the three classes at that level, their teachers and chaperones in a 3-site tour of the old Daketown School and Odd Fellows Hall with an adjunct activity at the Middle Grove park pavilion on what proved to be a sparkling, sunny day in late September. I'll try not to omit appropriate thanks to any one volunteer but am especially grateful to Kurt Kilmer, graduate of our one-room schoolhouse, who shared with youngsters what it was like “in the good old days” and responded to their questions; to Joe Peck, well-know area farmer and raconteur who brought with him samples of grain, crops and farm tools to illustrate what 19th century agriculture was like and in what ways Greenfield and other areas have changed. Meanwhile, at the pavilion, Lisa Kosek had nimble fingers fascinated with the construction of cat's cradles and other string novelties while Jim Smith found songbirds among the school children as he accompanied on guitar in the sharing of their music over refreshments.

More than 90 individuals visited if one was to include the teachers and a few parent volunteers.

Tom made wonderful molasses cookies for the snack portion, accompanied by fresh cider and apples he supplied. While it had been a bit daunting to consider how a one-room-school constructed with fewer numbers in mind could accommodate this expansive grade level, thanks to the brainstorming and input of those organizing the event, it was deemed successful as this observer became caught up in the spontaneous response of our young visitors – so we are in hopes of reproducing this event another year for the next fourth graders whose social studies curriculum intertwines with our local history. Thanks again to all who assisted in any way!

It was, on the other hand, a “dark and stormy night” that brought consummate artist-storyteller (and longtime resident) Bruce Hiscock down from the more northerly reaches of Greenfield to share with us in what ways a background as a chemist that originally brought him to a region more known for racehorses also enabled him to develop his major career, that of children’s picture book author and illustrator. The careful and sensitive detail he brings to his art, his subjects and his narrative is also reflected in the evolution of his dwelling and studio which draws upon that natural environment and, as he pointed out, that rainy day had seen young visitors from the same elementary school to his abode to inspect how an artist lives and works – at close hand. While some of his work draws from further afield, including Alaska and other parts of the continent, environments contrasting with our wooded, swampy and perhaps too-rapidly developing township, our audience appeared to be especially responsive to those elements of his own back yard that fostered *The Big Rock* and other children’s classics beloved by more than one generation of fans. Plaudits to Bruce for ‘bringing us into’ his unusual home and landscape via his slides and tales and for giving us all a sense of the dedication and acceptance of pacing required to bring such observations to books that others can linger over appreciatively.

Also, as a side note on our September speaker, Jack Freeman, author and Adirondack Mountain Club advocate for fire towers, including access to our own ‘backyard’ Spruce Mountain: his talk spurred a

prominent account on the status of that particular project deriving from an interview with our speaker by Lee Coleman which appeared in *The Daily Gazette* on September 25th.

I am gratified to have Lynn Wochinger working on programs. This historical society member has brainstormed with Secretary Patty Schwartzbeck to create ideas for future meetings. Incidentally, *any* member who has program suggestions or possible speakers in mind should not be shy about approaching Lynn or any of our board; we’re always looking and who better to come up with features than faithful attendees, as witnessed our rainy night you all turned out! But weren’t the refreshments *wonderful*? Again, thanks to Alice Feulner, Janet Jones, Audrey Crandall and Patty, who also brought goodies. The Jones family seems, as a whole, to simply ‘spirit’ on the coffee, soda, etc. – as well as similarly dispatching the ‘clean-up,’ no mean feat!

On November 21, we hope to have a time of ‘shared recollections’ at the Greenfield Community Center, with the theme of our imminent Thanksgiving but hopefully priming those attending to tell of a few customs and family rituals – or even unplanned incidents – that stand out in their memories of turkey days gone by ...

On Saturday, December 16, 2-4 p.m., we will have our annual holiday open house at the former Odd Fellows Hall, our GHS headquarters on Main Street, Middle Grove. Anyone attending is welcome to bring their favorite treat and Dot Rowland has volunteered to serve her famous, heart-warming mulled cider.

Last but hardly least, Joyce Woodard has agreed to take on the responsibility for working with collections housed at the IOOF Hall and we have been cataloguing those acquisitions (from the former Masonic Temple in Greenfield Center, the post office in Greenfield Center as well as other items that have come our way in the last year or so.) I am grateful to Joyce, who also volunteers in the town historian’s office, for her cheerful capability and willingness to take on this task.

Excerpts from a letter to Helen (Jones) Woods from Andy Kubica

I guess that I'm like a salmon returning to its spawning grounds. What is it about your roots that return to haunt you? When I see the Adirondacks – making a straight line west to east with a notch locating Lake Desolation – it brings a chill up my back. That's my home where I was born. Our farm was just below that notch where all the air in the valley is warmed and comes through the notch as a natural updraft as it flows up 1500 feet and through the pass. I remember, as a tot, watching the hawks circling higher and higher as they rode that air current. The constant breeze from that air flow made it bearable working on the farm. It was a natural air conditioner that increased the growing season spring and fall.

I still love that area, and if it hadn't been for Pearl Harbor, I would probably still be on the farm, and it would have been the biggest and best dairy farm in the North Country. When I left, my thoughts were that I only wanted a wife who could make bread like our neighbor down the road, Mrs. Ord, and a house full of kids. That was my goal in life then, but Pearl Harbor changed a lot of lives.

The [atomic] bomb saved my life because when it was dropped, I was in the Philippines with a Naval Advanced Base Unit that was scheduled to hit the mainland of Japan with the British 8th Army when we got word that the bomb had been dropped and the Pacific War had ended.

After the war, I graduated from Syracuse [University] in 1951, and was drafted by the Air Force to work in Dayton, Ohio on their latest aircraft propulsion systems. My dad's death on Memorial Day of that year brought me back home to Greenfield, and I ended up getting a job with G.E. working at their Malta rocket facility. I continued to work on propulsion systems during the cold war years for both NASA and the Air Force. This work took me and my family to Seattle, Buffalo, Cleveland, and finally to Los Angeles where we've been since 1962.

I remember haying with the Eichorst family on the Englehart farm when I was a boy and looking up at the moon and wondering out loud if we would ever land on it. Bobby Eichorst remembered me

saying that and recently reminded me of the incident. But I never dreamed at the time that we would accomplish it.

I remember that it took 3/4th of an hour for our horse drawn sleigh to take us to the little school at Daketown. Now the shuttle starts its re-entry 18,000 miles away over the Indian Ocean traveling nine times the speed of a 30-06 bullet and lands 3/4th of an hour later at Edward's Air Force Base in California.

I didn't mean to carry on like this, but it still amazes me that the Daketown School with your dad [Arthur Jones] teaching got us off to this flying start. There is a lot to be said for the little one-room schools, but mostly it was the teachers who dedicated their lives to getting us going down the right paths.

Andy Kubica

My Visit to the Old Homestead By Frank Max

It had been more than fifty years since I had been back to the old Peacock farm which was my homestead where I lived alone for two years before my father came from Ohio. When I drove by the old house, I often wondered what changes had been made, and then one day I met the new owner, Mr. Older, and he invited me to have a look inside. The front room was the same with the fireplace and Dutch oven. The pantry which had served as my bedroom was now the bathroom. The master bedroom was the same. The room that was our kitchen is now an empty room. The front porch and the out house are both gone. The area where our garden was and the field where we pastured the cow are both overgrown with trees. Even the path to the spring is overgrown. I remember the spring well as it was the only way we could keep our milk cold. The spring pool was about three feet across and the water came and left in a steady flow. Thinking about that round pool caused me to remember a story about a man who kept trout in a similar pool. He said that the only problem was that when he wanted to cook one for dinner, it had such an arched back that it was hell to fry in a flat pan.

*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 10-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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