

Historical Society Newsletter

Janet Jones, Editor

P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

OFFICERS: Ron Feulner, President; Tom Siragusa, Vice President; Patty Schwartzbeck, Secretary; Robert Roeckle, Treasurer; Coral Crossman, Trustee; Vince Walsh, Trustee; JoAnn Rowland, Trustee

Volume 8, Issue 3

Calendar

November 20: Tuesday, meeting held at Greenfield Community Center at 7 p.m. and program to follow – *Marilyn Rothstein – Naughty Puritans and Sainly Sinners*

December 15: Saturday, **Holiday Open House** (in place of December meeting) will be held at the IOOF Hall in Middle Grove, 2 to 4 p.m.

We still need articles for the 2007-08 year. If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, send it to: Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 or if you type it using Microsoft Word, e-mail it to: aliron@localnet.com. Please type in upper and lower case, NOT ALL CAPS. Thank you.

Ron's Ramblings

No end of things to talk about this month. First, our Tuesday meeting (October 16) went smoothly. We didn't get into much new business because many of our regulars were on a senior trip. We still had 29 present including many new members. So many, in fact, that I decided to open the meeting by having them stand and introduce themselves. What a nice feeling it is for us old timers to see new faces.

As I said, I was able to move quickly through our business meeting and on to the evening's program. When Lynn Wochinger (our program person) first told me about her idea to have someone talk about entrepreneurs of the past and present, I'm afraid I didn't show much enthusiasm. Lynn went ahead with her plans, and the program turned out to be one of our best. I have lost track of how many people came up to me and said how much they enjoyed it. Patty Schwartzbeck spoke about her Mom and Pop's Store in Porters, the last independent left in the Town of Greenfield. Patty summarized the history of the store (also see our article in April 07 newsletter). Next, I spoke briefly about the history of the Glass Factory, which was a booming business during the mid-1800s.

Then Lynn switched the program to today's entrepreneurs. Andrea (L'Hommedieu) Mann talked about her engineering business (they outfit businesses with wireless communication systems). She and her husband run the business out of Glenn Baugh's old house, which is situated diagonally across the road from our IOOF hall. I didn't realize that the house was no longer a personal residence because you can see no signs of the business from the street. Our second speaker was John Zenetti who runs a high-end woodworking shop doing architectural millwork in what was the Middle Grove School behind the

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. **If you have already paid, and included a donation with your membership, we would like to Thank You!**

old firehouse. John confessed that he was not a public speaker and was nervous about the evening but then went on to give an excellent presentation. John employs eight men building a wide range of custom furniture and cabinets that range from conference tables that have to be placed with the use of a crane to four-poster beds – all built by hand in his shop. Our third speaker was a young woman, Katie Camarro, who took her mother-in-law's favorite recipe for fudge sauce and turned it into a thriving business, "Sundae's Best," supplying several hundred stores. She brought samples as well as a lot of enthusiasm. Our last speaker, Lorna Dupouy, told how she had followed her Air Force officer husband around the world only to return and purchase the old Dake (or Peacock) mansion on top of the hill in Greenfield. She reviewed her own interests and talents looking for a business that she could run out of the mansion and decided on the "N.Y. School of Etiquette." She has classes for both children and adults. When she finished her presentation, she invited our entire group for tea at the mansion.

The building and grounds committee remains active, and at our last meeting, they decided to go ahead with plans to convert the old kitchen area in the IOOF hall into a small heated office space so Joyce Woodard and Ann Michel (our Archive people) will have a workspace in cooler weather. We have separated the project into several stages and members of the Building and Grounds Committee are going to volunteer their expertise in doing the renovation.



Earl Jones and Bud McKnight tearing down the old outhouse.

The really big news, however, was our workday on Saturday, October 20. It was successful beyond my wildest dreams. Twenty-five people showed up; some brought food and others tools and trucks. We hauled away seven truckloads and one large trailer load of debris. Most of the work was completed by lunchtime, and that's when JoAnn Rowland and her helpers kicked in to feed us a worker's style meal. Robert Roeckle looked around the room and said, "We've never had so many people show up on a work day; it must be the food!"

The forecast was iffy, and I kept my fingers crossed all day Friday as it poured rain, but they were saying it would clear by Saturday morning with a chance of showers in the afternoon. They were right, Saturday morning when I arrived about 8:30 to meet Louise who was dropping off her gas grill, the ground was wet, but the rain had stopped. Soon afterward, Robert Roeckle came and then Stan Zeh. Stan and I loaded our pick-up trucks with the first loads of the day and headed out with them. When I returned to the IOOF hall, there were workers everywhere.

Harold Jones called me aside and pointed to his father, Earl, and Earl "Bud" McKnight who were busy with crowbars tearing down the old outhouse. Harold said, "You know, those two worked together for several decades at the International Paper mill in Corinth. They were millwrights, and that's what they did; they tore things down and built new structures. In fact, toward the end of their careers, I somehow ended up being their boss, which was a little embarrassing for me, but today, when they showed up, they both came over to me and wanted to know what they should do first. I told them they could tear down the outhouse, and the two of them went right at it just like in the old days."

We basically split up into five groups. JoAnn supervised one group preparing the food. Harold's group went to work cleaning the debris out of the carriage house. Earl and Bud tore down the outhouse. Paul Rickett worked on the lawn area between the buildings that had an accumulation of junk and brush that needed attention, and the last group worked at cleaning out the kitchen area of the IOOF hall under the supervision of Joyce Woodard and Ann Michel.

We started a small fire to burn the clean wood debris (which reduced the number of trips to the landfill), and since it had been raining recently there was no danger of the fire spreading. By early afternoon many tired and dirty workers were saying good-bye to each other and leaving to go home and nurse their aching muscles. A few of us die-hards stayed on. Janet Jones, Margie Jones, Alice Feulner and Earl Jones became engrossed with the artificial



Some workers at the IOOF Hall enjoying their lunch.

Photos supplied by the Feulner's

It Was Probably A Dumb Idea!

By Al Horning

As I look back, it was probably a really dumb idea, but my brother and his friends thought it would be a great adventure if I would take them deer hunting in a truly wild and remote area. After thinking about it for some time, they finally decided on the Lake Desolation area. They poured nightly over topographical maps and concluded that “Thousand Acre Swamp” off Lake Desolation Road was no doubt an ideal hunting ground for deer and asked if I’d take them one cold November in 1979. I looked at the maps they had and saw that the roadless wilderness seemed to stretch for miles above the road. No doubt it would provide the perfect environment for an elusive trophy buck.

Unfortunately, I didn’t know a lot about the area. I lived in Galway at the time, and had wandered the back roads from my house to the Sacandaga on occasion. I’d been to Lake Desolation a number of times, and traveled the road to Bachelorville, so I knew it was a pretty remote and unpopulated area. In those days, it was a rare occasion to spot a deer in the wilds so it made sense to me that there ought to be deer in the middle of nowhere, especially in an area named “Thousand Acre Swamp.”

Our plan was to drive north out of Desolation about two miles and stop on the right side of the road and walk in about half a mile. I would stop first and sit, my brother next, and his friends after. In this way we’d form sort of a string of four people in a line strung out through the woods. When it got dark around 5:30, we agreed to all turn around and walk the trail back to the car. I’d be waiting out on the road at the car.

The plan was simple, and was apparently too simple for our group. As events unfolded, the whole evening soon turned into a nightmare.

My part went fine, I took the three 16-year-olds with me up the trail. I stopped at my appointed location, and they went on ahead of me. It was a beautiful cold fall/winter day, and brown oak leaves were everywhere on the ground. It hadn’t snowed yet, which was amazing for the North country. I quickly found a semi-comfortable place where I leaned next to a tree and waited for the deer to arrive. Throughout the afternoon, I watched the sun

Christmas tree, which had come apart when we moved it. They ended up on the floor trying to fit all the pieces together again while I tended the fire outside. It had burned itself down to a large pile of red-hot embers, and I was wondering how I was going to find enough water to put it out. I knew that without water, it would probably stay hot all night, and I didn’t want to stay with it. That’s when it started to pour rain (just like the forecast had said). I just raked the coals out in a thin layer and listened to them fizzle as the rain came down. Within a half-hour, they were cool enough to leave, and by that time the Christmas tree was together again, so we all said our tired good-byes, and with a real sense of satisfaction for a job well done, we left too.

The following people attended the workday:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Ron Feulner</i> | <i>Alice Feulner</i> |
| <i>Paul Rickett</i> | <i>Stan Zeh</i> |
| <i>Robert Roeckle</i> | <i>JoAnn Rowland</i> |
| <i>Harold Jones</i> | <i>Joyce Woodard</i> |
| <i>Earl Jones</i> | <i>Edward Woodard</i> |
| <i>Bud McKnight</i> | <i>Ann Michel</i> |
| <i>Kurt Kilmer</i> | <i>Louise Okoniewski</i> |
| <i>Audrey Crandall</i> | <i>Lynn Wochinger</i> |
| <i>Mary Carlson</i> | <i>Margie Jones</i> |
| <i>Winnie O’Connell</i> | <i>Joan Rowland</i> |
| <i>Nancy Homiak</i> | <i>Janet Jones</i> |
| <i>Vince Walsh</i> | <i>Erika Burkowski</i> |
| <i>Chad Jorgensen</i> | |

The following people supplied trucks and a trailer:

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|----------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Harold Jones</i> | <i>Kurt Kilmer</i> |
| <i>Earl McKnight</i> | <i>Kelly Woods</i> |
| <i>Stan Zeh</i> | |

eventually set and the shadows of darkness begin to grow. About 5:30, with no deer, I began the cold walk back to Lake Desolation Road. I expected the three boys to be along shortly, and arrived at the car and started the engine. I waited about 15 minutes before I began to feel a bit concerned as to why the boys hadn't arrived yet.

By six o'clock, darkness had pretty well surrounded me, and the temperature was beginning to drop. I'm not sure what the temperature dropped to that night, but I do remember that it was uncomfortably cold. I decided to make my way in the darkness back up the trail to my original spot in the woods and fire my gun in hopes that the boys would hear it. I walked back up the trail, and found my original hunting spot rather easily. I aimed my shotgun at the sky and fired off a round. I waited in silence. I then shot another round but to no avail. My ears were met with silence in the cold night air. Not knowing what to do, I walked back out to the car.

This wasn't really supposed to happen, and I wasn't certain what steps to take at this point. I knew the boys weren't dressed for the weather with heavy coats and sleeping bags, so I knew I had to get them back out of there. My dilemma involved how to accomplish this. But about 7 p.m., I saw headlights coming up the road from the Bachelorville end of the road. Fortunately, the driver stopped and asked if I needed help. I told him of my situation and gave him the telephone numbers of the other boy's parents and asked if he would call them to alert them to my predicament. He said he was headed to Tinney's Bar, and would gladly call them. Initially, when he opened his car window to speak to me, I was aware of a strong smell of alcohol. When he drove off, I was concerned whether he would follow through on his promise.

Somewhere, about 8:30, a man I believe named Mr. Hayden stopped and asked what I was doing out there in the dark along side of the road. I told him my brother and friends were lost out in the woods, and I couldn't find a way to get them back. He said that he and his brother had lived in the area for years and would be able to go get the boys. He said he'd be back in a little while to see if they came out of the woods. At this point, I didn't put a lot of faith in his promise either.

About 9:30, the State Police showed up with the boys parents. Apparently, the message did get

to Tinney's Bar! I thought this was great because if anyone could get the boys out, the State Police could. To my dismay, I remember following the trooper to the edge of the woods and hearing him say that he wasn't going in those woods. He said if he went in there he would soon be lost just like the boys. Also, he said the best thing would be to wait till morning and send in a search party. I objected because I knew the kids had lightweight coats on, had no matches, and were really unprepared to spend a night in the woods. But the officer was insistent that they weren't going in while it was dark.

So I was pretty discouraged at this point. The boy's parents looked at me, and I at them. What can you do in a situation like this? At this point, we had run out of answers and were thinking of spending the night on the road in hopes that the boys somehow found their way out by themselves.

Somewhere, around 10:30, Mr. Hayden showed up again. This time he had another person with him who I believe was his brother. He asked me where the boys went in the woods and said he would be back with them in a half-an-hour. I had a very hard time believing anyone would go in those woods and ever come back let alone come back in half an hour. But, the two of them disappeared in the woods, and once again the night was quiet. I went back to my car and waited without a lot of hope.

About 20 minutes later, I saw a flashlight out in the woods and heard voices. I thought maybe the Hayden brothers were coming back because they forgot something. To my utter astonishment, I saw three wet, cold, and miserable looking young people in tow behind them. The boys later told me they had lost their compass, dropped their matches, fallen in the water, and somehow got turned around as they tried to cross Thousand Acre Swamp. To this day, I still have no idea how those two men located them, but I was extremely grateful that they had.

They said we made the 11 o'clock news on the Schenectady channel. I didn't hear it, but can imagine what the reporters said: "Local woodsmen locate missing young people."

Sometimes, the everyday knowledge we possess really matters. It may be that we only know little things, like the lay of the land and where the streams and rivers run. But that information may be critical in saving someone's life ... I really feel that on that night, these men saved three lives. And for that, I was thankful.

Membership Application/Renewal

Become a member of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Send \$10 along with your name and address to the address shown below. If you send more it will be considered a donation. Other types of memberships are also available (lifetime, corporate, etc.), just call and ask (518 893-0620). 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.

Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household). _____

Name (please print)_____

Address _____

Areas of interest to you_____

To sponsor a newsletter send \$50 along with your name and address and the wording describing whom you would like the newsletter dedicated to (please print):

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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