



Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President: Louise Okoniewski; Vice President: Robert Roeckle;
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The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

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www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

YOU CAN NOW PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE!

CALENDAR

Dec. 14 – SUNDAY, Christmas Party, 1 - 4 p.m.
at the IOOF Hall in Middle Grove.

The theme this year is “Sharing Christmas Memories and Where did you get your Christmas Tree?” Please bring cookies/snacks to share and exchange (donation to benefit the Historical Society).

Jan. 20, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: Joe Zarzynski will speak on a Fort William Henry archaeological study of cannons and other artillery pieces done in the spring/summer of 2014.

Feb. 17, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: Show and Tell Program, members bring an item they can briefly talk about – anything that has a story.

March 17, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to be announced.

April 21, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to be announced.

May 19, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: Marty Podskoch will discuss his book, “Adirondack 102 Club: Your Passport and Guide to the North Country.”

WEEZIE’S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

Another year has almost come to an end. We had snow for Thanksgiving, and despite the warmer temperatures, Lake Desolation has a coating of ice. If you weren't ready for winter, the scramble is on to tighten things up, get the wood in ... all that fun stuff we do for the winter season. In between, we have shopping for the holiday dinner and gifts for family and friends. Could be enough stress to make you want to get away for a while. That was the topic of our November meeting as Mary Sanders Shartle read from her new novel “The Truth and Legend of Lily Martindale.”

Mary read from her book which begins with Lily Martindale firing shots on a military flyover. Lily returned to her birthplace after a successful life to escape tragedy. She is hired as a caretaker of an Adirondack Great Camp, and becomes a hermit. The firing of the shots has Lily upset as now she is once again a person of interest in the press and to the FBI. Mary describes the hamlet of Winslow Station, the people who live there and look out for Lily. What is the secret that she is running from? Why have they found her? She has lived an isolated life for ten years, and now they are here. The book takes place in the 1990s with flashbacks to the 1950s. Mary's novel has received excellent reviews for the way she has created a character that most of us can relate to. She describes the Adirondack Mountains in a way that the reader can visualize. Her characters as well as Lily's struggles keep the book interesting.

Mary asked the question of what would drive a woman to live by herself? To become a hermit? Mary researched hermits of the Adirondacks and that led to a light hearted discussion of well know hermits of the area. Some in attendance remembered a hermit that lived at the top of Ormsbee Road, and told how they or someone they knew, brought him food or other items. Other hermits

of the Adirondacks such as French Louie and Bill Smith were mentioned.

Mary has lived in Greenfield for 30 years and loves to hike. She is a writer and poet and has writing workshops in the Albany, Saratoga and Adirondack areas. "The Truth and Legend of Lily Martindale" would make a great Christmas gift and can be found at Northshire Book Store in Saratoga and on Amazon.

A Christmas Tree

by Alice Feulner

Last year during Christmas Season, I was in a mood. I had suffered several falls and illnesses during the summer and was feeling sorry for myself. We were at the annual Christmas Party at the IOOF hall in Middle Grove. The room was all decorated and the tables filled with homemade cookies, so many people were there.

Our friends Ron and Mellissa Deutsch came and sat with me. They wanted to know about our Christmas plans. I said I wasn't going to have a Christmas Tree this year. They wanted to know why, and I probably went into all the reasons.

The next day our doorbell rang and the whole Deutsch family was standing outside. They had a Christmas Tree all decorated and they began singing Christmas Carols. They have three thoughtful children being brought up in such a giving family. I am thankful for wonderful friends.

The Galway Preservation Society is celebrating!

Our book, *Galway 1900 - 1949, A Photographic History of Life in the Town of Galway, Saratoga County, New York* has arrived! The book, which has over 300 photos and narratives capturing the ways our area has changed since the beginning of the 20th century, is now for sale for \$40.

You can purchase your copy during open hours at the Galway branch of the Ballston Spa National Bank and at Galway Town Hall. The Galway Public Library will host a Book Signing and Sales Events on Dec. 6 at 1 p.m. and Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. They also will be available from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the library on Dec. 13 and Dec. 20.

A form for ordering by mail is available on our website: www.GalwayPreservationSociety.org.

HERITAGE HUNTERS MEETINGS

Regular program meetings are on Saturdays at 1 p.m. at the Town of Saratoga Town Hall, 12 Spring St. [corner of Rt. 29] in Schuylerville.

For more information, email melfrejo@aol.com or call 518-587-2978. Public is welcome.

November refreshment volunteers, Aida Gordon and Louise Okoniewski, served Spanish bread pudding and coffee cake.

Please remember to bring cookies or snacks to the Christmas Party to share. JoAnn will make mulled cider.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

This last storm in November let us know winter is here even if it hasn't begun yet on the calendar.

With Thanksgiving behind us and Christmas coming fast, I began thinking about the old-fashioned winters that we once had. Months of deep snow that would crunch underfoot. Even on blue sky days, the air would sparkle with ice crystals that reflected the sun's rays.

What I remember most was the shoveling. We didn't have snow blowers and four wheel drive vehicles were limited to war surplus trucks and jeeps that didn't come equipped with plows. Some enterprising individuals welded contraptions to the front of these vehicles that would allow the attachment of plows, but they were primitive and didn't work very well.

I am sometimes amazed at the number of small slightly built people who now drive big four-wheel drive vehicles. Back then, four-wheel drive vehicles were heavy and cumbersome. They didn't have any power steering or automatic transmissions and took a lot of strength to steer and shift, and the only people who could wrestle the oversized steering wheels were lumberjack types.

No, what I remember is shoveling – sometimes for days after a big storm. What you didn't see back then were people building houses a quarter-mile back off the road like you see today, if they did, they would spend the better part of the winter shoveling. Young people who had a little ambition could do quite well shoveling out town's people, especially the elderly.

Every time I get the snow blower out and experience how quickly it clears my driveway, I am thankful for the intelligent engineers who perfected such machines. I remember some of the first snow blowers that appeared in town didn't work that well. They had a tendency to clog up quickly and those who tried to use them spent more time cleaning the machines out when they got plugged than their neighbors did with their faithful shovels. In fact, those with their trusted shovels often made fun of those individuals wasting their money on the new-fangled folly of a machine that claimed to throw snow.

The other big improvement that I remember was in the shovel itself. The first shovels that I remember were heavy steel shovels. As a youngster, I could hardly lift the shovel without any snow on it. Then came the aluminum shovel – a really big improvement. For a while, it almost made shoveling fun.

What really scares me is that I am getting old enough to remember things like this.

Well, enough reminiscing (I guess that's what historians tend to do). I do hope that all of you have a pleasant holiday and new year.

Free Haircuts

by John R. Greenwood



Ralph Greenwood

Here I share a story about my adventures in barbering at Dad's expense. I stumbled upon this piece I started a couple of years ago and never finished. I felt it was time to trim it up and send it out for others to enjoy. I only hope any family members understand my Pipe Cutter reference was made in the most endearing light. Jack was also my very first bus driver when I started the first grade in the brand spanking new Greenfield Center Elementary School.

As my father's health declined in the last years of his life, it became more and more difficult for him to get around. He always took great pride in keeping up his appearance. He shaved every morning regardless of how poorly he felt. Even during his many stays in the hospital his toiletry kit was his first request. He hated to go more than a couple weeks without a haircut. One day he suggested I purchase a pair of electric hair trimmers so I could trim his hair at home. His long time barber had also found himself with failing health and finally retired his scissors for good. I found my father's request to be a vote of confidence on my ability in helping him through that difficult period of his life. Of course he would rather get out of the apartment, go to a real barber, and get a professional haircut, but he was realistic about the situation. He knew how difficult it was for me to juggle my work schedule, our biweekly visits to see Mom in the respiratory hospital, shopping, cleaning, and all the other necessary responsibilities associated with his care. If he was brave enough, I was game. Besides, Dad was a generous tipper. If I didn't draw blood or take off any body parts I might just earn a five spot.

I have to admit our bimonthly hair appointments did cause me a little stress. I wasn't the most coordinated amateur barber. It looks easy, but when it's a sometimes judgmental father in his 80s, the task takes on a elevated feeling of fear. He pretended to be brave and unconcerned about the outcome. I knew better. I knew him too well. I wanted him to be pleased with the result more than I let on. I knew even in his 80s he wanted to look good.

Here's how the haircut went. Dad would set up an old metal stool in the miniature bathroom of his apartment hours before I got there. To add interest to the scene visualize a tangle of oxygen hose, a father and son set of two hundred pounders, a floor covered in cheap slippery linoleum, Dad in his boxers with one of Mom's 30 year-old blue faded and frayed Montgomery Ward bath towels draped around his shoulders, and me wishing I was home having dinner with my heaven sent and patient wife. I'd tell you it was hell, but

I'd be lying because I smile every time I think of it. Once we were all set up, I would try to visualize the training video that came with the Wahl Home Hair Trimmer set. It looks so easy when the pros do it!

When I was a kid growing up in the '60s, I would get my haircuts from a bus driver. Let me explain. There was a bus driver/barber who lived a few doors up the road from our house. He had a fully stocked and furnished barber shop set up on the front porch of his house. He delivered kids to school during the day and cut their hair and their father's hair after school, summers and on Saturday's. He was a meticulously groomed and polite man. His name was Jack. My mother would send me up the street after dinner and I would knock on the front door of Jack and Tessie's house. Tessie would come to the door and welcome me in. She would politely explain that Jack was finishing his dinner and that if I wanted to wait in the barber chair he would be in shortly. I would shake my head, "Okay" and wait five or ten minutes for Jack to come in. During that time I always tried to muster the courage to ask if I could buy a 10 cent comb with the change from the dollar Mom gave me for a 90 cent haircut. One day I think I actually did follow through. When I got home I think mom smiled lovingly and said, "That's fine dear."

Jack was a talker and if he got on a roll you never knew how short your hair might end up. The best course of action was to stay quiet, sit statue-still, and not ask any unnecessary questions. I remember coming home a few times with my mother assuring me the bare spots would fill in, in a few days.

That memory kept tapping me on the shoulder as I buzzed up the back of Dad's neck. Every once in a while I would stub my toe on the stool and catch a little clump of hair follicles that I didn't plan on. Dad teased me and labeled me "Jack The Pipe Cutter" the endearing name our old barber earned from his occasional misguided sheers. We would laugh and reminisce, it was a simple Hallmark moment for a tired son and his failing father. It was probably one of the most lovingly memories I have of Dad during that difficult time. Although he sometimes walked away a little lopsided on top, he never once complained about my inadequacies as a wanna-be barber. I miss Dad. I miss our free haircuts. I guess that's not really true, they weren't free, they were priceless.

IMPENDING STORM

Ice is on its' way.

Winter thus far has become nothing more than a very cold, long extended Fall.

Snow will make its' entrance, while humans, and nature prepare for what unknown is yet to come.

The trees and foliage have braced themselves for the coming mystery, their roots are deep for future survival.

Holiday fanfare seems dwarfed by thoughts of traversing through the Winter.

Fran Lambert

Gatekeep On The Mountain

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Become a member of The Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. **Our membership year begins June 1 and ends May 31, dues are paid annually. Send \$10 per household (or \$100 for Lifetime Membership)** along with your name and address to the address shown below. **IF YOU SEND MORE THAN ONE YEARS DUES, THE BALANCE WILL BE CONSIDERED A DONATION.** You also may join at one of our meetings. Send this application form and fee to The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Make checks payable to: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society. **YOU CAN NOW PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE!** www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CLICK ON:



AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS.

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

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone number _____

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 it dedicated to.

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 copy of our newsletter along with information on how they can join.

Name _____

Address _____

PLEASE SEND ARTICLES AND/OR PHOTOS FOR OUR FUTURE NEWSLETTERS.
Mail to: **The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833**
or email to: **JJones18215@roadrunner.com.**

If you'd like to dedicate and/or sponsor a newsletter, send \$50 to *The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833*, include your name, address and the wording describing who you would like it dedicated to and/or sponsored by.

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield
If you have any information, email Dan Chertok at BMMSCHERTOK@gmail.com.
You also may call (518-893-2268) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859



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