



Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President, Mary Vetter; Vice President, Joan Rowland;

Secretary, Patty Schwartzbeck; Treasurer, JoAnn Rowland;

TRUSTEES: Dan Chertok, Ron Deutsch, Ron Feulner, Katie Finnegan,
Aida Gordon, Louise Okoniewski and Robert Roeckle

The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

Volume 17, Issue 6



501(c)(3)

www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

In Memory of Donnie Young

Sponsored by Frank Goyette

CALENDAR

Feb. 21 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.

Program: Ben Kemp will do a presentation on Ulysses Grant and the Irish, with an emphasis on the Irish Brigade in the Civil War.

March 21, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.

Program: *Lauren Roberts*, our county historian, will do a presentation on **The Homestead – Saratoga County's Tuberculosis Sanitarium.**

April 18, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.

Program: *Dave Fiske* will talk about a new book he has written, **Solomon Northup's Kindred: The Kidnapping of Free Citizens Before the Civil War.**

May 16, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.

Program: *Marty Podskoch* will speak about a book he wrote on **Fire Towers.**

Everyone is welcome, admission is free, you don't have to be a member to attend and refreshments are served after all programs.

January's meeting was cancelled due to bad weather.

February refreshments volunteers are Patty Schwartzbeck and JoAnn Rowland.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

February Notes

by Mary Vetter

Our North Country winters have a habit of putting the kibosh on plans and that is what happened to our January meeting. The early weather reports that day were scary and I decided that safe was better than sorry. I am sure that you, like me, were sorry to miss out on Andrea Mann's presentation about her book, *A Letter from Ginger Boy*. I was looking forward to a talk full of local flavor. Hopefully, Katie Finnegan will be able to reschedule this event.

On a somber note, January witnessed the passing of Don Young. I am glad that I had a few opportunities to meet Don. I found him to be a remarkable man. Despite his struggles with his health, Don was always friendly and always ready with a story. His demeanor was a reminder that no matter what life throws your way, you can still enjoy yourself and those around you. We offer our condolences to his family and hope that the memories they have of Don will provide solace over the coming months and years.

In February, we will hold a board meeting to draft plans for the work we have ahead of us over the coming year. We will be finishing up some old projects and making plans for the various events we will hold in the

Meetings Cancellations

If schools are closed due to weather, our meeting will be canceled.

A message also will be posted on our website and on our Facebook page.

www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

[www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=town of greenfield historical society](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=town%20of%20greenfield%20historical%20society)

coming months. We are always looking for people who are willing to work with board members on projects. It could be anything from spring cleaning to helping with plans for events such as the Gala. Opportunities to help will be posted in our monthly newsletter. Everyone has some expertise that will help make our projects successful.

On Feb. 21, Ben Kemp will provide a presentation on Ulysses Grant, with an emphasis on the Irish Brigade in the Civil War. Ben is an engaging speaker and well worth the trip. His presentation will be a good tonic for any cabin fever you may be experiencing.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

We were all saddened by the passing on January 6, 2017, of our fellow Greenfielder, Don Young. Don was a unique personality and was a big part of our local history. Just as a tree's roots are inseparable from the soil it grows in, Don's roots were inseparable from the Porter Corners area of Greenfield. He was born here, a direct descendant of one of our early settlers, and he lived his life on part of the same farm as all those generations before him.

If you knew Don, and who locally did not, you can't help but remember him as a part and parcel of Greenfield. He never lacked a story to tell whether it was over coffee at our local Stewart's Shop or while delivering a load of firewood or stone in his dump truck. He always acted as if you had made his day just by saying hello to him.

Don was somewhat of a phenomenon in the medical field as the longest survivor with his particular treatment for Crohn's disease. The artificial nutrient system, TPN (Total Parenteral Nutrition), that sustained him for 42 years was only supposed to keep him alive for 20. I remember him describing it to me as giving him the advantage of being able to eat anything and everything he desired (cake three times per day if he wanted), while he and his nutritionist decided on an ideal weight for him and designed a nutrient concoction that went directly into his blood stream that would maintain that weight. As serious as his condition was, he made light of it and acted as if it was something most people would envy.

He was also instrumental in starting the Oley Foundation and becoming a national resource for others suffering from the same disease. He was honored for his participation by being named as co-chair for the Howard-Young Chair which is a position usually reserved for someone offering financial backing for the research.

At home, he lived local history, not only because he loved it, but also because he was part of it. I remember discussing the Kayaderosseras Creek with him (realizing that a tributary ran through their original farm and may have been one of the reasons his ancestors chose the site after walking here from the Atlantic coast where they had been whalers). In the mid-1800s, one of his ancestors, Russell Ormsby, built a saw mill on the farm and used water power from the creek to saw lumber to help build Plank Road which ran from the Glass Factory to Route 9N in Greenfield.

When I mentioned the importance of the Kayaderosseras, Don laughed and told me, "It's one of the biggest damned creeks in Saratoga County," meaning, of course, that the creek and every tributary had several dams where mill ponds were used to run the early mills of Greenfield.

Yes, Don loved local history, but I think he loved sports more, especially baseball and softball. Don as a relatively young man was disabled with Crohn's disease and could have retreated in self-pity, but, instead, he threw himself into public service. He served on the Town Board for a while, but most Greenfielders will remember him for the many sports teams he coached.

I think that he would agree that the highlight of his coaching career was his area girls' softball teams. My brother, Gene, who knew Don well (because his daughter, Amelia, played on one of Don's teams) told me that Don had spent a lot of time watching girls softball at Skidmore College and talking to their coaching staff. "That's how he learned coaching," Gene said.

However, Don learned coaching, several generations of girls have fond memories of their days on the softball diamond with him. Gene also told me that Amelia would always come home from practice with a "Don story" to share with her parents.

Anita Martin, another parent, told me that once they drove to a field where a game was to be played only to find the opposing team waiting for Don and his girls to show up. Suddenly a dump truck with a bunch of yelling girls drove on to the field with Don behind the wheel. His old car had broken down and rather than miss a game, he picked his girls up in his dump truck. That was Don: always turning a negative into a positive.

When I asked Anita if she would like to write something for our newsletter, she offered the following:

Over 20 years ago, my family and I discussed one of Greenfield's treasures, Don Young. Our younger daughter, a softball enthusiast who was always searching for more play time, joined the Greenfield softball team, which Don coached. Being part of the team was a joyous, enriching experience.

Softball was a vehicle Don used to teach both athletics and important life skills. On the field, he developed rapport with each girl and created a unified team of girls of diverse skill levels and backgrounds, molding the team into a softball family supportive of each other at all times. Don's joy while coaching set the tone. The girls played to win, but they did so without the stresses often seen and felt on athletic fields. They improved, and they enjoyed the game and the camaraderie they shared. Don simply had the ability to foster pleasure in what was special about the game and to recognize what was special about each player. They were more than players to him. I can only imagine how many young lives he influenced in positive ways.

Clearly, Don was a man who loved life and people. Smiling, wearing his Red Sox cap, standing on the field on a sunny day, he radiated joy. Coach, mentor, jokester, intellectual, humanitarian, a man always kind and compassionate, Don will be sorely missed by those whose

lives he touched through coaching and through other activities and relationships. I know I will remember him with appreciation and love when I return in my memories to those sunny, wonderful days when bats were swinging and voices were cheering to support the team. Those days were peaceful treasures shared by the softball family.

Thank you, Don, for sharing yourself with all of us. Parents could not have asked for a better role model.

Don's brother, Clifford, told me that he had gone down to the hospital to visit Don while he was in hospice care. Upon arrival, he found Don unable to carry on a conversation. That is until Clifford mentioned the softball girls. Don perked up and began talking about each of the girls. He had kept track of them and their careers. A number of them have gone on to achieve great things in life, becoming leaders in their respective fields, and I can't help but think that Don played some small role in that.

I contacted some of the girls and asked them if they would like to share their memories of Don with us and here are their responses.

Don's niece, Tracy Young Pearse, wrote:

My Uncle Don truly got great satisfaction from coaching softball, and bringing laughter and mentorship to the girls he coached. He was well loved by many, and brought happiness to the teams he coached.

Amelia Feulner Baur wrote:

I was an "outsider" to Don's softball team because I did not attend the same school or regularly play on the same teams as the other girls. But Don (and the other girls) immediately made me feel at home. I had never had so much fun playing before. Don approached every inning with a laughter – telling jokes, or advising of strategy with. We learned a lot and had a blast doing it. His love of baseball and teaching was shown at every practice and game.

Regan Martin wrote:

Don was a wonderfully kind and humble man who had an indisputably deep, positive impact on so many softball girls and their families. His leadership on the field helped to shape a love for the game of softball and to build positive overall character of all the girls of the team. He helped so many to not only grow as ball players, but also to develop strong morals and character to become successful contributors of society.

I have so many fond memories of Don. They range from attending tractor pulls at the county fair with Don, to eating ice cream after a tough fight and big win at a game, to softball parties on his family property, to hours of pitching, batting and grounding practice, to attending events of the Oley Foundation, to his attendance at gatherings of friends and family at my house, just to name a few. I also looked forward to receiving his Christmas card because every year, without fail, Don's card was the first card to arrive at my house!

Finding an individual with such deep passion for positivity in life, teaching and supporting others, and softball is rare. Don was way more than a coach to me, he was a great friend. His impact on me was very profound,

and I know I'm just one of many, many people who would say the same thing. He always knew how to put a smile on my face, and I will never stop smiling when I think of Don.

P.S.: As a die-hard Yankees fan, there was only one person who could ever make me root for the Boston Red Sox. And that person was Don. With that, in honor of my dear friend and beloved coach, I say, "Go Sox!"

When presidents and kings die, we see extravagant memorials on T.V. in their memory, but when our real national treasures, the many common folk like Don Young, who quietly devote their time and talents to the well-being of the rest of us die, they seldom get the appreciation they deserve. I hope that in some small way this article will help give Don the recognition he deserves.



Don's girl's softball team in 1992.



Don about to throw out the first ball of the season on opening day, May 1, 1993.



Don's sandlot team in 1985, (left to right) back row: Don (Coach); Leigh O'Connor; Mark Young; Earl Jones (representing Methodist Church sponsor); middle row: Keith McCormick; Mike Murascus; Billy Friskie; Eddie Turney; front row: Keith Homiak; Jay Salmon; Pat Subcliff and Casey Kruger.

Photos supplied by
Clifford and Louise Young

In Memory of Don Young

May 2, 1940 - January 6, 2017



Donald A. Young – GREENFIELD – Donald A. Young passed away with family by his side on Friday, January 6, 2017, at Hospice Inn at St. Peter's Hospital in Albany, N.Y. Don was a life long resident of the Town of Greenfield, the sixth generation to reside and farm land on Ormsbee Road in the hamlet of Porter Corners.

In his youth, he played baseball and basketball. A graduate of Saratoga Springs High School, Don tried his hand at many occupations, working for the Greenfield Highway Department, Saratoga Flour, and an owner operator, hauling goods for Stewart's, before purchasing the country store his grandfather had previously owned in Porter Corners, renaming it "Mom & Pop's." However, he never enjoyed anything quite so much as farming.

Don was diagnosed with Cronh's disease in his early 20s. Several surgeries left him with very little intestinal track and limited ability to absorb nutrients, he began a therapy called Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) in 1975, as a means of providing nourishment. With his health compromised, only able to work part time on the farm, he dedicated himself to community service. He served two terms as a Councilman on the Greenfield Town Board. He was the president of the Greenfield Sandlot League, coaching both softball and baseball. He chartered buses to visit local minor league games and to his beloved Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park. He was a charter member and past president of the Oley Foundation acting as a patient advocate for people on TPN. He travelled all over the U.S. to speak to medical professionals on behalf of patient rights and improvement of therapy. He was one of the longest surviving users of TPN, with 41 years. Don was known for his encouraging demeanor, storytelling and unwavering support of the Boston Red Sox.

Don is survived by his wife, Bonnie (Humiston) Young; daughter, Janet L. Young of Pleasant Valley, N.Y.; sons, Paul O. (Rita) Young of Saratoga Springs; and Mark H. Young of Porter Corners; grandchildren, Britany, Alyssa and Zack Young; brother, Clifford C. (Louise) Young; niece, Tracy (Richard) Young Pearce; great nephew and nieces, Alex, Kiran and Juliet of Boston, Mass.

Don has donated his body to the Albany Medical Center so that they can study the long term affects of TPN on the human body. His ashes will be scattered on his return to the family farm.

Any gift of memory can be donated to either the Oley Foundation, 43 New Scotland Ave., MC28 Albany Medical Center, Albany, NY 12208 or the Hospice Inn at St. Peter's Hospital, 315 S. Manning Blvd., Albany, NY 12208.



Don entertaining the group at the First Porter Corners School Reunion on Aug. 13, 2011



Don's sandlot baseball team in 1977.



Don's sandlot baseball team in 1982.



Donnie and me, 1959

Shop at Amazon Smile

Help support our historical society when you shop at Amazon. Amazon Smile, the charitable arm of Amazon, will make a donation to us on qualifying purchases when you sign into your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com. The first time you do this, tap Accounts & Lists then tap Your Amazon Smile. On the right-hand side of the screen tap the change charity button and type in: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society.

Once you have saved us as your charity, start shopping. When you checkout, Amazon will let you know if any of your purchases qualify for a donation. Amazon then sends the donation to us. You do nothing more. Remember to sign in at smile.amazon.com on all your Amazon shopping trips to support us. Thanks!

Mug Fund Raiser

If you missed purchasing your caboose mug, you have another chance. They are currently being reordered due to popular demand. They are \$10 each. If you need to have them shipped, it is an additional \$8. Please contact Joan Rowland at 518-893-7786 to order your mug.



Payment can be made at the next meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 21, or by mail to: TOGHS, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833.



Letters to the Editor

January 13, 2017

The passing of Donnie came as a shock to me. The last time I saw him was a few years ago at one of the reunions. I don't remember exactly when. He was always in such good spirits and his happiness was contagious.

I obviously did not know him as well as everyone in Porters but I am grateful to have known him for the brief time that I did. The last time I saw him he reminded me of a time we were tossing a ball and he tossed a rotten tomato or apple to me and I caught it with the obvious results of it splattering all over me. I didn't remember the event but we both laughed at the retelling of the story.

A few years ago your sister, Nancy, sent me a photo of me standing on Donnie's shoulders. I use to enjoy 'tumbling' and it may have had something to do with that, or I was going to dive off his shoulders into Weirmans Pond. I really don't remember why I was on his shoulders but there was probably some humor connected to the whole event. A couple of weeks ago I actually showed the photo to my 8 year old grandson when I was trying to explain 'tumbling' as something we use to do in gym. Porter Corners has lost one hell of a guy. My deepest sympathy to his family.

January 14, 2017

As I mentioned in the previous letter, I did not know Donnie that well and that was my loss. The couple of recent times I met with him at reunions provided just a glimpse of Donnie's strong constitution and amicable personality. What I do remember about him from the past when I lived in Porter Corners was that he could be counted on as a friend to everybody. Enclosed is \$50 to sponsor a newsletter to the memory of Donnie Young.

Frankie Goyette

From Greenfield, Porter Corners: RIVER TO LAKE LUZERNE, N.Y.

Today I travelled along the road north to Lake Luzerne, N.Y. I took the county road, as I wanted to see the Hudson River. My destination was to go to Mollies Mason Jar Restaurant for breakfast or brunch. The meal was excellent as usual, and then I decided to take the back way to follow the River along the other side, to go home. It was a brisk 31 degrees, and because of all the cloud cover, the temp stayed there for awhile flirting with a possible 32 degrees. Along the river's edge, I noticed that ice was reaching it's territory outward toward the middle of the river. Couldn't help but notice that there was a ripple in the center of the river, thereby indicating that there was a pretty strong current in the center of the river.

I started to think, "Isn't that just the way life is in nature?" Then I tried thinking about how we as humans live in the flow of life. We all seem to be on the same path from beginning to the physical end of life. Couldn't help but notice that this river just kept flowing and running in the center. I knew it was the current. Applying this thought to myself, I started with, "Well, I don't want

to be standing still in one spot all the time as that is nonproductive, and leads to nowhere."

To have a successful run in life, sometimes we have to get caught along the shoreline, where the debris of leaves and tree branches take hold on our place in life. Then everything slows down and eventually becomes ice. Yet there is movement in the center of the water which beckons new places, new territory, new bends in the geography of the land, and perhaps encounters an unexpected surprise when watching something drift by us at lightning speed.

I assume the moral of this story to be, that even though we face disappointment, pain and staleness in our life, we must mentally and spiritually get "moving," and not remain dormant. Dormancy will turn to no new ideas, experiences, finding new friends and enjoying what we've already been blessed with in life. Life is a journey with hills, valleys, mountain top experiences, learning lessons and these things all shape us as to who we are.

Fran Lambert, Gatekeep On The Mountain

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL 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 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 _____

**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.
Please send articles and/or photos to: JJones18215@roadrunner.com.**

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

We invite our membership and readers of this newsletter to share with Dan any historical information about an interesting person, place, structure or event within our town. Dan reserves the right to proof read and edit submissions, but he will be very happy to add your information to our map. We are always looking for historical information to add to and enhance the map, which we consider to be an ongoing work in progress. Please email Dan Chertok at Chertok@LCYLAW.com or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859



The Town of Greenfield
Historical Society
P.O. Box 502
Greenfield Center, NY 12833