



## 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 8



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[www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com)

### CALENDAR

**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.**

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Daketown School Cleanup** – Saturday, April 29,  
9 a.m. to noon

**Chatfield Museum Cleanup** – Saturday, May 20,  
9 a.m. to noon

**Farmers Market** – Fridays, June-September 2017  
4 to 7 p.m.

**Saratoga County Fair** – July 18-23, 2017

**Caboose Days** – Saturday, August 12, 2017

**Fall Gala** – Saturday, October 2017

*March refreshments volunteers, Katie Finnegan and  
Mary Vetter, served Brownies, Ginger Snaps and Coffee Cake.  
April refreshments volunteers are Joan Rowland and  
Louise Okoniewski.*

*Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson*

### APRIL NOTES

**by Mary Vetter**

Well what a nice turn out we had for our  
March meeting. Lauren Roberts, the Saratoga  
County Historian, gave a great presentation on  
The Homestead which was the TB sanitarium  
located in the hamlet of Barkersville.

While the stories I had heard about this place  
were the kind of scare stories that send chills up  
your spine, the truth is, this sanitarium provided  
much needed medical care for TB patients in the  
county who could not afford private care. TB was  
a deadly disease around the turn of the century and  
up through the '40s. The medical community did  
not fully understand this illness but believed that  
plenty of fresh air and sunshine was the best therapy  
for those suffering from this disease, and Barkersville  
fit the bill. Later, better disease prevention strategies  
and new drugs conquered TB. A copy of this  
presentation will be available on disc at the Town  
Historian's Office.

This month, we have included an appeal for  
help. We are blessed with very dedicated board and  
committee members, and they work hard to carry out  
the Society's mission. This work is fun, interesting,  
sometimes surprising and creates a legacy we can be  
proud of. With our larger projects, we can use more  
help, so take a moment to look at the appeal attached  
to this newsletter and decide on what skills and ideas  
you can bring to the table. Feel free to share it with  
anyone you think might be interested.

Happy Spring everyone! See you on April 18th  
for another enlightening meeting.

## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

During the last several issues, I have written about Sky Ranch with much of the material coming from you, the readers.

Your help was much appreciated on that topic, and now, I am wondering if you can help with another. I was recently looking through our files at the historian's office and found one labeled Spar Drive-in, also known as the Spa Drive-in and the Greenfield Drive-in.

The file tickled my fancy, because, I remember as a child in the '40s and '50s, the outdoor theater was just about our only form of entertainment. Almost every weekend, our parents packed us in the family auto, and we headed for a drive-in theater. Sometimes, it was the Aust's Drive-in near South Glens Falls or the Malta Theater on Route 9. For some reason, I don't remember going to the Spar Drive-in, even though it would have been the closest to us (as we lived in Middle Grove). The movies and a walk to the concession stand during intermission was a big treat for us.

There was very little information about the Spar Drive-in on Route 9N in my file, so I went to my favorite online research site, Fulton History, and found the drive-in mentioned many times in local newspapers, but when I searched them individually, most of the mentions were advertisements for the movies that played at the theater.

The earliest actual article was March 3, 1949, when a Saratogian article mentioned that a filing had been made in the County Clerk's Office by Edward Levine, Irving Levine, and Jack Levine to conduct a business under the assumed name of Spa Drive-in Theater.

Later, in 1953, the theater was called "Spar Drive-in.

On April 1, 1955, the Albany Knickerbocker News had an article stating that Julius Perimutter Theaters had bought the Saratoga Drive-in.

On May 3, 1956, an advertisement for the theater in the Saratogian mentioned a "Gala Reopening under new management."

Also in May 1956, the Saratogian ran an ad for a "woman 35-50 wanted to manage the concession stand." Applicants were to apply in person between 1 and 3 on May 8 at the concession stand where they would find a Mr. Schenek (print blurred, so not sure of spelling).

May 4, the Saratogian ran an ad stating "Painters carpenters and sound men are still working. Opening postponed."

June 26, 1956, the Saratogian advertised double green stamps for all adults attending.

August 17, 1956, the Saratogian advertised a movie, "Desperate Women." Along with the following: "Now it can be shown! Before your very eyes! The actual birth of a baby! So frank and revealing showing limited to adults only. Come early. Avoid the crowd. Admission 75 cents." The quality of movies being shown at the theater had clearly declined from the earlier years.

In September 1957, two men were arrested for stealing speakers from the drive-in.

In 1958 and 1959, advertising was listing the theater as the Greenfield Drive-in.

A February 15, 1966 article stated that a local developer, Bob Macier (spelling blurred so not sure if correct) said, "Here's something for the man who has everything and for the guy that's the 'show-em-the-home-movie type.'" The developer was planning a two-million-dollar development of the site and had no use for the large white screen other than to burn it. "Cart it away and it's yours," the article read. I wondered if anyone took him up on the offer or did he burn it?

I did find one reference in the file in my office that said that Jerome Fuller built the original theater in 1953, but I was unable to verify this. I did find a 1949 article that mentioned that a man named Jerome Fuller owned Fuller's Truck Stop on the Glens Falls to Saratoga Road. I also found where a young (2 ½ year old) daughter was killed by her dad backing his car up in his driveway in Gansevoort, N.Y. This occurred in 1956 and both the dad and the grandfather's names were Jerome Fuller.

After this article, I found no more references to the drive-in or its owners.

Drive-ins today are scarce but a few still exist. They reached their peak in the late '50s and early '60s when there were about 4,000 listed in the United States. Now, the number is down to a few hundred. During their peak, leading movies were being shown to the outdoor audiences. As decline set in, owners sometimes turned to pornographic movies to try to attract customers. The decline was probably due to competition from the home entertainment industry. As color televisions, VCRs, and video rental appeared, fewer people wanted to leave their homes for entertainment.

The first verified outdoor movie was shown in New Mexico in 1915. It was probably a silent film. In 1933, a man in New Jersey experimented in his back yard by suspending a screen from a tree and mounting a projector on the hood of his car. He also researched the spacing of car ramps for best viewing. A speaker was placed behind the screen. He received a patent the same year for what he called a "drive-in theater."

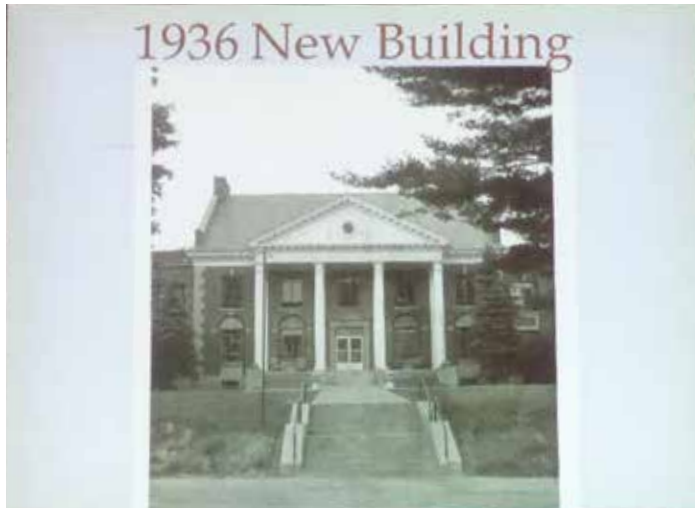
By 1935, speakers were being placed in front of the cars, and by 1941, RCA introduced the in-car-speaker with variable volume, and the rest is history as the saying goes.

If any of you have more information about the Spar Drive-in, I would welcome your input. You can contact me on Wednesdays at the historian's office at town hall (telephone 518-893-7432, ext. 315) or send an email to RFeulner@greenfieldny.org.

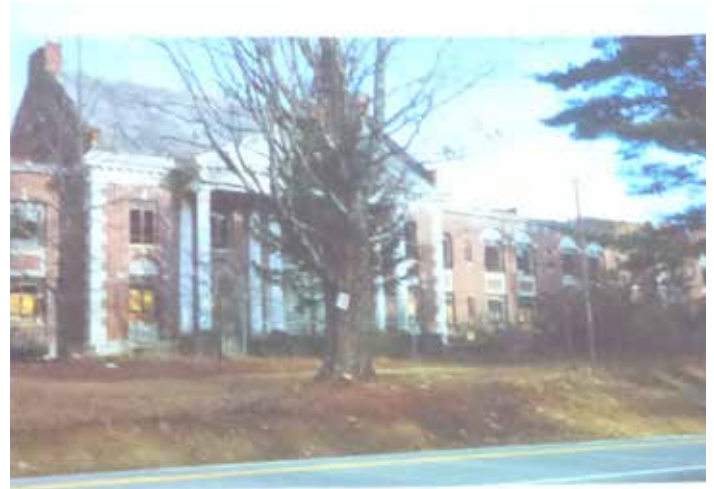
If you prefer to write something longhand, you can send it to me at: Town Historian, P.O. Box 10, Greenfield Center, NY 12833.

## Historical Society's Program on March 21, 2017 The Homestead – Saratoga County's Tuberculosis Sanitarium

*Lauren Roberts, Saratoga County Historian*



*The Homestead – Saratoga County's Tuberculosis Sanitarium in 1936*



*The Homestead – after it closed.*



*Lauren Roberts, Saratoga County historian, left, talking with members of the audience.*



*We had a full house in attendance.*

### CAN'T WAIT

*Jan. 12, 2017*

Can't wait till Spring arrives. I will go outside, and gather up all the twigs and branches that winter's icy fingers have plucked from their parent. After the gathering, these will serve a purpose. A familiar spot where stones have been placed in circular fashion as an open fire pit, these dry fragile ones will rest. There are still areas in the woods where snow refuses to give up its' home, but because of the insistence of Spring rains, they must vacate that spot and become another form and run away as water. The campfire circle has been well placed, not near any trees but in a field where grass will soon poke its' nose head up as it feels the warmth of the sun's rays.

Preparations have been made to enjoy the soon to be feast of hot dogs and burgers, complete with a few foiled steaks to be placed over the flames that will be fed by these branches. The cast iron footed antique grill will be the resting place for these specialties. The fire is lit, and a gentle breeze nudges the flames into a more vigorous action. Now feeling the heat from the burning sticks, a very dry piece of hardwood is gingerly placed over the hottest area of embers. The flames at first dance around the newcomer, and then eventually latch on to the log in concentration.

A short while later the log is also accompanied by another and now this blaze is considered ready for action. The food offerings are placed gingerly onto the cast iron grill, and begin to sizzle. The aroma of the items roasting makes ones' mouth water. Having already sliced an onion and some other herbs to season the meal, the flames mix the delicious scents together in a wonderful array of mouth watering promise. Just can't wait till they're cooked, can't wait till Spring arrives. Hurry up Spring, We Can't Wait!

*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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:Chertok@LCYLAW.com) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859



*Earl Jones celebrated his 95th birthday on Feb. 11. Margie and Earl Jones celebrated their 74th anniversary on March 27, 2017.*



*Alice and Ron Feulner celebrated their 56th anniversary on March 17. Ron will celebrate his birthday on April 19 and Alice will celebrate her birthday on May 12.*



April 2017

Dear Members and Friends:

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

We have a museum in Middle Grove and own the historical Daketown School. To support these sites and continue our mission of preserving the history of the Town of Greenfield, we host and sponsor many community events for the Greenfield area.

We could use your help planning and executing these events. Are you good at planning social events? Do you have carpentry skills? Are you good at organizing collections? Do you have computer skills? Do you like lawn and landscaping work? These are a few of the skills we could use.

We have many committees that work on a variety of things and all of them could use your skills and ideas. Take a look at the following list of events happening in 2017. If you can help us, please call the number associated with that event.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Chatfield Museum	Greeting visitors	Ron Feulner	518-893-0620
Chatfield Museum Cleanup	Scheduled for May 20, 2017 9 a.m. to noon	Mary Vetter	518-322-5675
Daketown School Cleanup	Scheduled for April 29, 2017 9 a.m. to noon	Mary Vetter	518-322-5675
General Meeting Presentations	Help find guest speakers for our general meetings	Katie Finnegan	518-583-6171
Farmers Market	Help organize, promote and staff this event	Ron Deutsch	518-469-6769
Caboose Days	Help organize this event	Louise Okoniewski	518-587-6060
Fall Gala	Help organize this event	Ron Deutsch	518-469-6769

***High School and College Students: We qualify as Community Service for classes!***

***THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT. PLEASE PASS THIS ON.***

Mary Vetter, President and the Board of Trustees

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

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