

# *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*

*Volume 7, Issue 8*

## **Calendar**

*Tuesday, April 17, 7 p.m.* at the Community Center in Greenfield. Our speaker will be Claire Olds, retired Dean at Skidmore College. She will talk about writing our memoirs.

*Tuesday, May 15, 7 p.m.* at the Community Center in Greenfield. An *Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social*.

## ***Coral's Calls***

Where to start – on an evening that *packed* the Community Center if it didn't help I started the rows around the middle instead of further forward ... not sure whether to attribute the energized gathering to the well-publicized Caboose issue and a promised visit from Supervisor Al Janik, a goodly number of Jud Kilmer the raconteur's avid fans, or daylight gently playing over our snowbanks at 7 p.m. to remind us it was *nearly* spring in what remains of our wilderness ... well-traveled. But it was surely not too dull an evening, by anyone's account. Our town supervisor had volunteered to answer questions about the disposition of the faded red caboose that sits on the west side of 9N just south of the old railway station, testify to its structural needs and attempt (at my request) to create better communication between our volunteer organization given the charge of protecting and preserving antiquities and the elected town leaders who must deal with the realities of governance, taxes, insurance, liability, competing interests and all that other good stuff that can make community relations a prickly prospect.

Several recorders graced our session, including our own Bob Roeckle, longtime member and current trustee who made use of our veteran video camera, for which we owe him thanks. Town resident Tony Bucca came to cover the event for the D&H Historical Society newsletter he edits. The caboose in question suffered in a fatal car fire earlier this year and there are few others, if any available, like it. While the effects of the calamity were less than totally destructive to its existence, it certainly put the billboard-like fixture under a good deal of scrutiny in terms of its purpose, presence and potential rehab which – as one might have foreseen, looking down the throat of the patient revealed far more problems than a scorched wall and battered bumper. Historical Society member and past supervisor Ralph Stacey spoke about the acquisition of the caboose and its relocation to the present site in its less than pristine condition at the time (between 1988 and 1990, I gathered.) A number of our neighbors in Corinth attended the meeting which I thought a good sign for mutual concern in the unending campaign to assure the balance between historical representation, jobs that do not eradicate the environment, and reminding folk that while railroads have been around for some time, there are those unprepared to eliminate every last trace of them. It is perhaps no small coincidence that with the high price of road fuel these days, rail freight has increased.

The town had placed ads seeking volunteers to work on the caboose dilemma with Mary Ann Johnson, town clerk, as the contact. Janik indicated that while there was "some time" before a decision might be reached about the future of the eye-catching roadside item, certain maintenance requirements

would ultimately force those among the tax-paying community to reach a “solution” other than allowing it to just sit where it is, continuing to degrade as it apparently had been doing for some time. The canvass for volunteers was to have concluded by the April 12 board meeting so the caboose may have made more “news” by the time this column reaches you.

Jud Kilmer had prepared a text of his recollections of the old graphite mine and in what ways his father’s lumber business was involved in supplying it. Part of this was technical information about belts and electricity, the site itself and what ran the operation; there was also discussion of how graphite was used (as a lubricant, I gathered – this writer just thought it kept my pencil going). The mythic hidden seams of “lead” in the region also surfaced in the Q&A section. Jud is ever a fascinating “original source” in keeping alive the once-prominent tradition of our oral culture which I sometimes fear might be jeopardized by some citizens’ latent fear of speaking up in a group. He has a folksy touch and I could sense his commitment to sharing information and lore that he doubted was “recorded” anywhere. Well, now it is and historian Mary DeMarco made a copy for her files that evening. Thanks again, Jud, for your illumination of our oft-referenced former mine. Maybe some of us will even get to visit its vicinity at a future date.

The dues structure change again passed (its required second vote for constitution and by-laws), a streamlined accounting with one membership fits all for \$10, no more “Family” vs. \$6 “Individual” category: I was thus prompted to suggest that people “hook up” as they do on Wednesdays at Gore Mountain when a certain soda brand prompts “two-for” specials. But I’m not about to define logistics for GHS membership savings. Also, from last meeting, I did not include February’s vote to provide a guest speaker an “honorarium,” probably \$25, for non-members. Lynn Wochinger, our program chair, was good enough to point out that April’s speaker, Claire Olds, a retired Skidmore College dean, will discuss “Writing Our Memoirs” at 7 p.m., as cited in our March newsletter. Lynn also gently reminded me to alert folk departing our March meeting to stay for refreshments ... which a good many were able to do. With more than 50 chairs set up, I was the killjoy who started re-stacking them but others readily joined that effort and I was gifted by some scrumptious brownies (being too busy then running my mouth to

much partake). All sorts of healthy and not-so refreshments were provided by Jud’s wife, Sandy, Erica Burkowski, Jane Potter and Vince Walsh. (Anyone else?) We missed both Alice and Ron Feulner owing to a contagion from which they suffered but Alice hopes to bring refreshments in April, along with Joyce Woodard and Louise McCormick. So, barring unexpected blizzards, we’ll hope to see you all real soon ... and by then we may know more “about the caboose” than at this writing ... Hopefully, the *resolution* that the Town of Greenfield Historical Society got to the town board right after our February meeting did sow a few seeds. Even if I called it a petition in my column ...

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*At our March meeting one of the desserts left many people asking, “Who made that cake?” Well, I’m here to report that it was Ann Michel, and she has been gracious enough to share her recipe with us. Thanks Ann.*

*The Editor*

### ***Ann Michel’s Recipe for Oatmeal Cake***

#### Cake Ingredients:

|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 1/3 cups boiling water | 2 well beaten eggs |
| 1 cup quick oats         | 1 1/3 cups flour   |
| 1/2 cup oil              | 1 tsp. salt        |
| 1 cup brown sugar        | 1/2 tsp. cinnamon  |
| 1 cup white sugar        | 1 tsp. soda        |

Pour boiling water over oats and let stand (cool). Then mix dry ingredients in a large bowl. Mix beaten eggs, sugar, oil, and add oats to bowl. Place in 9 inch by 13 inch pan and bake 30 to 45 minutes (for bar cookies use a 13x9 and a 9x9 pan).

#### Topping:

1/2 cup of oleo or butter  
 1 cup brown sugar  
 1 tsp. vanilla  
 1/2 cup evaporated milk  
 dash of salt  
 Add walnuts or other nuts and coconut shredded.

Bring to a boil for three minutes, spread over baked cake. Add more coconut on top. Put under broiler until golden brown. (Most of the time I buy ready made chocolate or other icing.)

## Some History of the Porter Corners' Store

by Margie Jones

### Store owners:

Benjamin Clinch opened the first store at Porter Corners in 1787.

Charles Humphrey

Ashael Porter – 1795

William Rowland – also first postmaster  
(Post Office started in store in 1866)

Arthur and Phobe Young

Hillard and Bertha Young

Floyd McKnight, Sr. and Son

(Floyd and Georgianna McKnight)

Joseph and Viola Doherty – 1942 to 1971

Donald and Bonnie Young – 1971 to 1974

Wilbur and Debbie Pixley – 1974

Richard and Patricia Schwartzbeck – 1974 to present

The store, a home in back of the store and a barn below the house are all one property located at the four corners of Porter Road, North Greenfield Road, North Creek Road and Allen Road. This property is now for sale by the present owners.

Arthur and Phobe Young were JoAnn and Joan Rowland's great grandparents, and Hillard and Bertha Young were also their grandparents as well as Donald and Clifford Young's grandparents. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Young and Mr. and Mrs. Hillard Young lived in the large white house next to the store. This house was taken down a few years ago and is now a parking lot. Hillard Young had a traveling market on wheels and sold meat and groceries in some areas. *(This section can probably be continued by our TOGHS members JoAnn and Joan Rowland, or Donald and Clifford Young).*

Joseph and Viola Doherty were the next owners (Earl Jones's and Estelle McLaren's mother and stepfather and the grandparents of Harold, Nancy (Homiak), Phil and Janet Jones). While they owned the store it was called "Doherty's General Store." For the most part Joe ran the store by himself except for occasional help from Viola and other family members. He waited on customers, packed grocery orders, pumped gas and picked up milk from Hall's Dairy in Greenfield almost daily. (This was the first pasteurized milk sold in Porter's.) In between waiting on customers, he was also known to have batted fly balls to the teenagers in town from the store to the community hall. He also allowed those same teenagers to put up a basketball hoop by the side of



Porter's Store taken winter of 2006-2007, courtesy Ron Felner

the store so the neighborhood boys and girls could play. You could very often find Joe and other male adults joining in those games too. He also allowed the 4-H clubs to have dances on the pavement between the store and the house (same location as the basketball court). Joe sometimes joined the other adults on the dance floor, even doing an occasional square dance. The chaperones and the 'older' people in the town joined in the fun by sitting in lawn chairs on the side of the 'dance floor' and 'enjoying' the music (or not?). Joe didn't have the store open on Sunday but you would find him (and Viola) in the same pew in the Porter Corners United Methodist Church where Joe served as usher for many years. In 1971 after 29 years of owning and running the store, Joe and Viola bought a double wide home and moved their residence to North Greenfield Road where they spent the rest of their lives. Viola passed away in 1988 at 87 years of age and Joe passed away in 2001 at the age of 94.

The next owners were Donald and Bonnie Young (grandson of Hillard and Bertha Young). Don and Bonnie ran the store with help of relatives and renamed the store "Mom and Pops," which to the present day has stayed the same. The store was open seven days a week and another first for Porter's was the sale of beer (until that time Porters was a 'dry' town). They also lived in the house behind the store with their three children, Janet, Paul and Mark. *(This section of the story could better be told by our TOGHS Young family members.)*

The next owners were Wilbur and Debbie Pixley who only stayed in business for about one year. Rick and Patty Schwartzbeck, the present owners, bought the store in 1974. On a Sunday in 1995 a helper in the store, Myra Winger, was robbed by a 19 year old man who pointed a hand gun and demanded money

(probably another first for Porter's). The police later found about \$80, the gun and the man was caught at a home a short distance from the store. Ellie Thomas (Rick's mother) primarily ran the store for 30 years with help from her children, including Rick, Patty and their children (Russell, Tricia and Cathy). While the store no longer sold gas, Ellie made sandwiches and subs, and recently a separate section was added to the store which sold soft ice cream. After 30 years of running the store, Ellie retired to Maryland, and has since passed away. Patty, a retired Schuylerville teacher, is running the store at the present time. *(As another TOGHS member Patty can probably also add to this section of the story.)*

The store is presently for sale and it is hoped by many in Porter Corners that it will continue as it has for many more years to come, especially since there are so many Historical Society members connected to the history of the store!

**Editor's Note:** This has been an outstanding year for the newsletter: so many interesting articles, and I did not have to beg for them. I think that our readers are becoming aware of our purpose, which is, and has been, to preserve the "ordinary" history of our town. The stories about the people and events that have made the town what it is.

Now I am running a little low on available articles and would like to restock my supply so if you have an article that you have been thinking about writing, this would be a good time. Thanks.

*Ron Feulner*

**To join the Historical Society send \$10 along with your name and address to the address shown below.**

If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, send it to the address below or if you write it using Microsoft Word, you can e-mail it to me (the editor) at: [aliron@localnet.com](mailto:aliron@localnet.com).

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

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