

Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)

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FCAHS RECEIVES \$20,000 GRANT FROM STATE SENATE BUILDING DEEMED 'HISTORIC PLACE'

We are pleased to announce that the New York State Senate has awarded the Fly Creek Area Historical Society a \$20,000 grant, earmarked for the continued renovation of our building. Trustee Jim Wolff and Treasurer Cynthia Ekland, along with fellow Grant Committee members Jim Atwell, Dora Cooke, and Richie Carr, were instrumental in applying to State Senator Jim Seward for this grant. It will be vitally helpful to our continued efforts in upgrading our century-old building. Said Seward's spokesman Duncan Davie, "The Senator has been able to secure budget funding for this need because he supports the work of the Fly Creek (Area Historical Society)."

According to Jim Wolff, the items for which the Board specifically sought funding, and which the State approved (with some modifications), were installing the septic system and handicap-accessible bathrooms, updating the kitchen equipment, and restoring the stoop and steps in front of the main entrance. "At this point in time we are awaiting a signed contract from the State of New York. before we can go ahead and purchase the items needed for completion of the bathrooms," Jim wrote. "On April 6, we prepared and submitted our grant application, which was reviewed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP), after which a contract was prepared and sent to us on June 14. We signed and returned the contract on June 17 for further processing by the various State Agencies involved (Dept. of Law, Office of the State Controller, and OPRHP). The fully-executed agreement will then returned to us and we can proceed with the project.

"During the process of reviewing our grant application, the OPRHP determined that our building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Kathleen LaFrank at OPRHP deemed that the building is eligible for listing on the National Registry because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the local patterns of our history. Ms. LaFrank, in her 'Statement of Significance' wrote as follows:

"The Fly Creek Grange is a significant intact example of Grange, an important building type in the agricultural regions of rural New York. The design of the building is based on its function as a meeting and social hall and is characterized by a large meeting/performance hall on the upper story and a kitchen and smaller meeting spaces below. Like others of its type, the modest wood-frame building is two stories tall, rectangular in shape and similar in form and materials to the agricultural buildings that characterize the rural landscape. The Fly Creek Grange retains a high degree of integrity to the historic period.'

"The unfortunate upshot of this 'designation' is that our handicap bathroom ramp will have to be slightly redesigned and modified so it appears more in character with the main historic structure. This will, unfortunately, delay completion of our project, but hopefully, not too long. The 'designation' is more than fitting for our 'historical' society's headquarters and may prove financially beneficial to us in the future, as we go about our work of preserving our local history and providing a central location for our community functions."

NEWS BRIEFS

- **Try to Re-Member ...** Welcome to our newest members, Doris M. Larsen and Jim Van Horn. Also, renewals were received from Michael Ainslie and Henry & Toni Ludlam, bringing our 2002 membership total to 166. And, apologies to Jean Neff, whose name was misspelled in the last issue.
- **Fourth on the Fourth ...** Thanks to Elaine Harvey and the Jim Fish family, we were well represented at Springfield's Fourth of July parade. Elaine helped lead patriotic songs while visitors waited for the parade to begin. The famous Fish family float, depicting an old-time blacksmith's shop, won fourth prize out of 18 floats. Its next scheduled appearances were in Hartwick and Fly Creek, where it should appear between 9:30 and 10 AM on July 20.
- **Community Service ...** Fly Creek will host its annual Community Day on August 24 this year. This event is co-sponsored by the FCAHS and the Fly Creek Methodist Church. It includes house-to-house yard sales and good food. For more details watch the *Pennysaver* and area newspapers.
- **Open-Door Policy ...** MerriLynn Fish, Pete Martin, and Marion Brophy have arranged for the FCAHS building and archives to be open to visitors and researchers every Saturday morning through the rest of the summer.
- **Become Immortal ...** The suggestion has come up that members record some of their biographical information and area memories on paper, for the FCAHS archives. Future Fly Creekers will be interested to know about their predecessors, and this will serve as an invaluable research tool for them. So, take pen, pencil, typewriter, or word processor in hand, write down a brief biography of yourself, and include whatever else you think is relevant or interesting – information about your house, your family, etc. Papers may be submitted to the editor at the above address. Note: these are intended for our private archives, and will not be published in the newsletter without permission.
- **Quaking in Our Boots ...** An earthquake was felt in the Fly Creek area at 6:50 AM on April 20. The quake, with a magnitude of 5.1, was centered near Plattsburgh, less than 150 miles north of us, and was felt from Maine to Maryland. It was the biggest quake in this area in more than 50 years. Can anyone remember anything similar?
- **50 & 75 Years Ago ...** Elaine Harvey passes on these nostalgic items reprinted in recent *Freeman's Journals*. April 27, 1927: "Filling a want that has been in the town of Otsego for the past fifty years, there has been completed a half mile south of Fly Creek on the county highway from Grasslands to that village, a new town house for storing and properly caring for town machinery. The new building is 150 by 40 feet in dimensions and contains a well equipped shop in one end which is 40 by 50 feet in size. This will afford not only the means of repairing the machinery but will give warm storage for the town tractor in winter." March 26, 1952: "The way has been cleared for the erection of a new Fire House at Fly Creek following acquisition this week by the Fire Department in that community of two lots at the corner of Route 28 and the Toddsville Road. The work of the Fly Creek Fire Department, and purchase of its equipment, has been accomplished almost entirely through voluntary contributions of residents of the community and many outsiders." April 23, 1952: "A preliminary survey for establishment of Fly Creek as a standard fire district is being conducted by a committee headed by Assistant Chief Adolph Bider, it was announced last week by Fly Creek Fire Chief John Trinkaus. Other members are Stanley Jensen, D. Weir, Maurice Gardner, Sr., and Claude Jacobs."
- **Be Square ...** The FCAHS has resumed its monthly schedule of square and round dances. They are held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road on the first Saturday of each month, May through November, from 7-10 PM. Admission is free, and refreshments are available for purchase. This year's remaining dances are scheduled for August 3, September 7, October 5, and November 2.
- **Im-press-ive Donation ...** Our thanks to Ellen Hahn, who donated a tailor's iron made in Fly Creek.

NEWS BRIEFS. Continued

- **Ease Our Paint ...** The Society will soon be undertaking the job of painting its building. It is estimated that this will cost us about \$1,000 for materials and \$2,700 for labor; this is *not* covered in the grant reported on page one. We had originally sought volunteers to help with the labor, but the Board decided that would be unsafe, and that we should hire professionals. We are asking members to support this project by donating toward the materials cost, and we'll seek matching donations from other sources. See the coupon on page 5 for further details.
- **Refreshing News ...** reminder: those in charge of refreshments for the next three meetings are Freida Snyder & Elaine Harvey (July 24), and Dorothy Martin & Leila Martin (September 25). Since the August meeting is preceded by a covered-dish dinner, no extra refreshments will be necessary.
- **Taxing our Patience ...** Sally Rezen shares with us copies of interesting old Otsego County tax abstracts in her possession. For example, the 1840 abstract shows the Town of Otsego (Supervisor, Elihu Phinney; Collector, John Hurd) with 32,124 acres, at an average value of \$16.97 per acre, and a grand total – for the whole Town, mind you – of \$3,379.01 in collectible property taxes. In comparison, according to Town Clerk Pam Deane, the Town's land taxes in 2002 totaled \$2,625,841.88 – an increase of 77,610%!
- **Fourscore and five years ago ...** Elaine Harvey passes on information from a 1917 publication, *Farm Directory & Reference Book, Otsego & Herkimer Counties*. Town of Otsego officers listed included J. Dana Whipple (Supervisor), Henry Thayer (Superintendent of Highways), Joseph Wicks (Town Clerk), Walter Wilson (Collector), and Harvey Russell, George Hecox, and Henry Randall (Assessors).
- **Things We Were Dying to Know ...** Among Marion Brophy's many interesting handouts, during her June 26 program, was a list of Town of Otsego deaths between July 1849 and June 1850. Thirty-three decedents were listed, with causes of death such as scarlet fever, inflammation of bowels, dysentery, and kick of a horse. The mean average age at death was just 34 years old, and the median was 24. Another list showed people buried in the Fly Creek Valley Cemetery in 1892-94, by which time the average age at death was 48.

The FCAHS mourns the recent deaths of three long-time members. Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of these people.

Mary Pernat died on May 21, 2002. Mary was born December 7, 1914 in West Virginia, and married Felix Pernat on August 27, 1938; he died on May 1, 1995. She was actively occupied with her husband on the family farm in Fly Creek Valley. Mary is survived by one son, two daughters, and seven grandchildren.

Thomas Edward Reilly died on June 18. He was born April 1, 1934 in Port Chester, and moved to this area in 1953 to assist on his relatives' enterprise, Fairview Farm in Pierstown. Ed was Master of the Pierstown Grange #793 for six years, and became a Seventh Degree Member of the National Grange. He and his aunt Katherine Hanor joined the FCAHS a few months after it was formed in 1989. On January 24, 2001, he and Sue Drake presented Katherine's slide program on "Pierstown in Years Past." Besides his aunt and several cousins, Ed is survived by two sisters.

Elizabeth June Wyckoff died on June 25. She born in Syracuse June 22, 1918, and married George Wyckoff on April 29, 1939. She and her husband were founding Members of the FCAHS. June was an accomplished composer, pianist, and vocalist. She sang in churches, concert halls, and many events. June is survived by her husband, four children, and several grandchildren.

IN MARINE CORPS



MISS SALLY ANNE VAN HORNE

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dorr VanHorne, Fly Creek Valley, who was recently inducted into Marine Corps Woman's Reserve.

Miss Van Horne Joins Marine Corps Reserve

Miss Sally Ann VanHorne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dorr VanHorne of Fly Creek Valley was inducted into the Marine corps, Woman's Reserve, at Buffalo on February 12th and is awaiting call for active service. Miss VanHorne is a graduate of Coopers-town High school, class of '41 and has been employed at the Scintilla Magneto company's plant at Sidney and more recently at the Remington Rand plant at Ilion. Upon receiving call she will be sent immediately to the Marine Training base at Camp LeJeune, N. C.—Our Fly Creek Valley Reporter.

GRADUATED



PVT. SALLY VAN HORNE, U. S. M. C.

Pvt. Van Horne Leaves For Cherry Point, N. C.

Pvt. Sally VanHorne, USMC, left on Saturday for Cherry Point, N. C., after having spent a fifteen-day furlough at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dorr VanHorne. Pvt. VanHorne was transferred to Cherry Point from Norman, Okla., where she recently graduated from the Aviation Machinists school. She enlisted in the Marines in February and received her basic training at Camp LeJeune, N. C.—Our Fly Creek Valley Reporter.

SCRAPBOOK CLIPPINGS

Recognize the gal on the left? It's our own Sally Rezen! These are from a World War II-era scrapbook owned by Carolyn McLean. Unfortunately, sources and dates for most clippings were not recorded. Following are other news items related to the Fly Creek area:

* During a state-wide milk strike in August, 1939, three Fly Creek Valley men were arrested. Ezra Bolton, Charles Goodspeed and Tony Yakos were "charged with stopping a milk tank truck on the main highway between Fly Creek and Coopers-town, breaking the seal and then letting the milk run out on the ground." They reportedly threatened the truck driver with an iron pipe and a stone. The same night, there was a meeting at the Court House between representatives of the Dairymen's League, the Cooperstown Sheffield plant, the East Products company, and the Dairy Farmers' Union, with some 200 in attendance. The meeting's chairman was Dan Wickham of Fly Creek Valley.

* A dog belonging to Mr. & Mrs. Mathias Muller of Wileytown received the Dog World's international diploma of honor. Bobby, a 12-year-old collie, awakened the four members of the Muller family at 3:15 AM on February 12 (year uncertain), enabling them to escape their burning house safely. Unfortunately, the dog perished in the fire.

* Mr. & Mrs. David Goodspeed of Fly Creek had two sons who served with distinction in World War II. Corp. Charles Goodspeed (he of the milk strike incident), who entered the armed forces July 28, 1942, was awarded the Good Conduct medal, and his bombing unit later earned the Distinguished Unit Badge. His older brother, PFC Norman L. Goodspeed, was not as fortunate. Norman, who had entered military service on April 28, 1942, was reported missing in action in France on August 2, year uncertain.

* PFC Chester J. Caulkins, Jr. Of Fly Creek Valley died from wounds sustained on Saipan in the Pacific in July, year uncertain.

FLY CREEK 25 YEARS AGO

[Editor's note: following are some excerpts from Phyllis Talbot's "Fly Creek" column in the July 6, 1977 *Freeman's Journal*. This was submitted by Elaine Harvey.]

Mrs. Thomas Reilly of Portchester and Miss Margaret Reilly of Bardonia were recent guests at the home of Mrs. Katharine Hanor in Pierstown. Mrs. Hanor and Mrs. Reilly are sisters. They attended a class reunion of CCS and had a fine time.

The Fly Creek Homemakers Club will hold their next meeting July 6. A covered dish luncheon at the home of Mrs. Ronnie Comtess, Fly Creek, at noon.

Dan Susman and his son Billy from California are spending ten days with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Susman.

Celebrating birthdays July 3-9 are: Margaret Tipple, Beatrice Olin, Jim Ainslee, Paul Susman, Henry Zigon, Lois Streett, Polly Selan, Shad Talbot, Jo Ann Schallert. Anniversary congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Zigon, Mr. and Mrs. William Greeley, Mr. and Mrs. William Eldridge.

Billy Michaels, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Michaels, is spending the week at Canada Lake, with his grandmother, Mrs. Dorothy Yuenger.

The Fly Creek Grange No. 844 will sponsor a card party Friday, July 8 at the hall in Fly Creek. Refreshments and prizes. Everybody welcome.

Mrs. Barbara Michaels of Fly Creek has one of her recent paintings in the 7th annual Upper Catskill Community Art Exhibition at the Fine Arts Gallery at State University College in Oneonta.

Kenneth Ainslee (sic), son of Mr. and Mrs. Laverne Ainslee spent the weekend with his parents and attended the graduation ceremonies of his sister, Janet.

The Fly Creek Methodist church has become independent of the Cooperstown church. It is now the Fly Creek Community church under the leadership of Robert Doyle, Minister.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Eldred have established a new coal and-or wood stove and are very happy about it. It is made of cast iron and you can watch the fire burning inside. Herbert Dickson of Fly Creek valley helped to install the brick. Mr. and Mrs. Eldred are so pleased in having such fine, helpful and thoughtful neighbors as Mr. and Mrs. Dickson.

Please clip or photocopy the coupon or just send a check with 'paint campaign' in the memo section to: Treasurer, FCAHS, P.O. Box 183, Fly Creek, NY 13337.

"Buy a Gallon - Spread It Around"

I'll help the Fly Creek Area Historical Society in their efforts to restore, renovate & preserve the Fly Creek Grange Building by buying _____ gallons of paint @ \$25/gallon.

Enclosed is my check to FCAHS in the amount of \$ _____.
Please send an acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

I understand that donations to the FCAHS are tax-deductible.



Thanks!

MEETINGS

As usual, Society meetings are held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road beginning at 7 PM, and everyone is welcome. The next three meetings will be on July 24, August 28, and September 25, 2002.

In July we will tour member Ed Olsen's winery on Hubble Hollow Road, Middlefield, meeting there at 6 PM (for directions or information on car-pooling call MerriLynn Fish, 607-547-9335). After the tour we will return to the FCAHS/Grange Hall for the regular meeting. Our Annual Meeting, with committee reports and election of officers, will be held in August, preceded as usual by a pot-luck meal at 6 PM. And in September we will hear Patrick McGregor, head of the old-time pharmacy at the Farmers' Museum, tell us about medicines and procedures in the mid-1800s.

The three most recent meetings were held on April 24, May 22, and June 26. In April, David Rickard of the Fenimore Art Museum gave a fascinating talk on "Native American Culture" in this area. David, whose father was a full-blooded Tuscarora, noted that the Iroquois were here at least 2,000 years before the first white settlers, and Mohawks and Oneidas also lived here for a time after being pushed out of their upstate living areas. Also during this meeting, Bill Deane was presented a framed "Certificate of Appreciation" for his work as editor for the first 50+ issues of the *Fly Creeker*. In May, Homer Martin (printer for the Farmers' Museum from 1964-92) discussed "Antique Printing Techniques," from cave paintings to the printing press, bringing along various catalogs and equipment to illustrate his talk. And, in June, Marion Brophy, Town Historian, talked about "Researching Local History." Marion (with some assistance from Jim Atwell) shared some of her extensive knowledge much of which she gained working 16 years at the NYSHA library, followed by 12 years in the Record Room at the Otsego County Clerk's office. [Submitted by Carolyn McLean]

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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