

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
1003 RIVER ROAD, SELKIRK, NEW YORK 12158

## BETHLEHEM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER  
JANUARY, 2001

### Dear Members of the Bethlehem Historical Association and Friends

In keeping with tradition, I am submitting the attached newsletter to you to keep you advised on the status of the activities and programs that the Association has underway or is considering for the future.

### Next Century

The Bethlehem Historical Association ended the twentieth century and thirty-five years of public service with its most commemorative Holiday Tea. The museum was decorated with a special Christmas tree, spectacular wreaths and displays and in combination with the high energy of the people who attended the events we have created an outstanding foundation on which to build our future.

As many of the members are aware, the museum was featured by the press in numerous articles over the year 2000 and this recognition in turn encouraged more people to attend our membership meetings and open houses, and to request many private tours of the facilities. One unique request was by the Van Wie family who had a major family reunion centered at the Museum.

The Officers of the Association are pleased by the growing support of the Museum and are evaluating options to accommodate future physical requirements within the context of expanding our facilities. We will begin the next century with a new sanitary drainage system, which is the first step in addressing the future infrastructure requirements in support of the four purposes of our Organization. We are most appreciative to the Bethlehem Town Board, the Town Historian and the Town's Engineering Department in planning and implementing this critical sanitary drainage program.

In fulfilling the primary mission of the organization, the Association continues to support a growing interest by the public to learn more about their roots and the history of the communities in which they reside. We continue to advise people on how they can begin to have a building registered by the State's Historic Preservation Office; learn more about their family's genealogy; the location and restoration programs for cemeteries in the Town of Bethlehem; and hosting numerous tours of visitors interested in learning more about such entities as ice-houses along the Hudson River. The interest appears to be growing and we must be ready to address these changing needs.

#### Recent Events

The Annual Card Party was held in October at Normanside Country Club for the second time and was well attended by the members and guests. We featured a country store, background piano music and superb singing for the pleasure of the attendees, hot apple pie and a raffle of many donated items. The raffle for the three major gifts highlighted as grand prizes at the Card Party was deferred until the Holiday Party so additional raffle tickets could be sold when the Museum was open on election day and at the Holiday Party in December as a means to increase the fiscal support to the Museum.

The card party was co-chaired by Marion Zrelak and Catherine Zupan and they were ably assisted by a dozen of members to ensure a most successful event. In addition, we are most appreciative to those twenty-five companies who provided gifts for the raffle. Thank you all.

The first membership meeting of the 2000/2001 season was held in September and featured Mr. Roger Mabie from the Hudson River Maritime Museum in Kingston. Mr. Mabie spoke on "Hudson River Dayliners." The meeting was very well attended by members and non-members of the Association. Many people in the Albany area have traveled on those beautiful ships and were interested in seeing history retold. It was a great program.

The November program featured Allison Bennett of the Bethlehem Historical Association who spoke of "The Dutch Saint Nicholas" and the growth of the Santa Claus tradition in the United States. A most wonderful evening.

The Annual Holiday Silver Tea held in December was a unique experience for our members and guests who attended the event as well as by the members of the Tawasentha and Hannakrois Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the DANA Society who held special meetings at the Museum.

A special thanks goes to Ann VanDervort and Marion Davis who designed and chaired the Holiday event. The chairs were assisted by William Acquario, Evie Drake, Faith Fuller, Dorothy Geyer, Rita Hoffman, Ted Howell, Jim VanDervort and Ralph Vanwoert. The Christmas Tree decorations were provided by Peter Bishop; the food and punch were provided by Barbara Mulfelder and Wendy Brandow; publicity was designed by Susan Leath; artifacts were provided by Ann VanDervort and Bill LaMed; Betty VanOostenbrugge was the grand hostess; and Marie Wiedeman was responsible for the raffle drawings.

We are also indebted to the business leaders who helped in supporting the Silver Tea. We note that over three hundred people attended the event.

### Bethlehem Library

The Bethlehem Historical Association responded to requests from the Bethlehem Library to provide materials for two special events. The first event consisted of staffing a display table on September 10th for the annual Library Day information program. The Association provided a number of displays and literature for the session and Barbara Muhlfelder, Marty Teumin and Polly Mathusa served as hosts. For the second event, the Library requested a large display of various artifacts that would be exhibited during the month of October. Under the direction of Ann VanDervort and Marion Davis a display of artifacts was created including items related to cooking utensils of the early 1800's.

### Calendar of Meetings

January 18, 2001—2:00 p.m. "State of the Town of Bethlehem" by the Honorable Sheila Fuller, Supervisor, Town of Bethlehem

February 15, 2001---2:00 p.m. "Souvenir Spoon Collecting" by Jean Tomlison.

March 15, 2001—2:00 p.m. "American Furniture" by Dr. Charles Semowich

April 19, 2001—7:30 p.m. "Remembering the China Traders" by Lois Dillion -A  
Member of the Bethlehem Historical Association

May 17, 2001---7:30 p.m. Annual Meeting- A Bar-b-que is planned to be held before  
the Annual meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Note: Executive Committee Meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. on February 22 and June 28, 2001 at the Museum.

### In Memorial

Mr. Charles Crangle, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, offered a prayer at the November meeting for our friends and colleagues who past over the last year: Mrs. Aleta Kullman; Mr. Warren Kullman; Mrs. Marion Merrick; Mr. Karl Schrade; Ms. Marion Anders; Mr. Norman Wiltsie; and Ms. Eleanor L. Kircher. Each will be missed.

### Special Thanks

The Bethlehem Historical Association enjoyed great support from the Town of Bethlehem during 2000 by the careful maintenance of the grounds and building. The lawns were always cut, trees trimmed, leaves raked, lights replaced as required and the heating system properly maintained. Thank you Supervisor Sheila Fuller, Superintendent Gregg Sagendorph and Commissioner Bruce Secor.


Also, we owe special thanks to Betty Wan Oostenbrugge for her contributions in managing the summer programs and leading the presentations to the various school groups and visiting organizations.

In addition, we are indebted to Howard Gmelch for his leadership in creating the highly informative programs that we have for the membership season.

### Season Greetings

On behalf of the Officers and Committee Chairs, I wish the membership and the residents of the Town of Bethlehem a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Parker D. Mathusa  
President