



Wanakena Historical Association
 PO Box 73
 Wanakena, NY 13695

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Next Meeting
 Sept 6—9:30 am



WANAKENA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 1

Summer/Fall 2014

Update on the Wanakena Footbridge

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Thank You, thank you, thank-you to the many people who have contributed to rebuild our swinging footbridge. Although the response has been phenomenal, we need to diligently continue fundraising efforts to ensure we will have the necessary funds to rebuild our bridge. Susan Westbrook and her grant committee have applied for several large grants, all of which require matching funds prior to grant money being awarded. Current estimates used in the grant applications for rebuilding the bridge are \$250,000, which does not include \$33,000 to remove the bridge from the river. We will not know the matching funds that will be required until the grant amounts have been awarded and contractor proposals have been received.

Unsolicited donations started arriving in the mail only days after the ice jam took the bridge out. At this time, the WHA has collected over \$38,000, which includes a generous donation of \$10,000 from the Northern New York Community Foundation. The rest of the fund has grown through: individual donations of \$5 to \$1,000; sales of donated candy bars; lemonade stands; Bossie Bingo; baked beans contest; donation jars at local businesses; and portions of sales from Star Lake SOS 5K Run, Wanakena General Store & the Pinecone Grill; Glazier hot dogs & Bimbo bakery. *continued on pg 3*

Special points of interest:

- Next Meeting
Sept 6 at 9:30 am
 Wanakena Church
- Ways to support the bridge: see pg 11

TREASURER'S REPORT: 2014

WHA FUNDS; as reported by the treasurer:

Balance Sept 15, 2012	\$ 9,568.06
Balance June 1, 2013	\$ 8,923.58
Balance June 7, 2014	\$ 11,082.

BRIDGE FUND

Balance as of July 16, 2014	\$ 37,314.
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:
MARSHA SMITH



It was a long and cold winter for most of us in the northeast. It became a sad winter with the news that an ice jam badly damaged the Wanakena footbridge on January 13, 2014. The town of Fine owns the bridge and is responsible for it. However, the town does not have money for rebuilding. So, the Wanakena Historical Association has been asked to help raise the money for rebuilding. The footbridge was dismantled and removed from the water in late June. Engineers and architects will be working on a design and estimates of cost.

WHA almost immediately started receiving donations to rebuild the footbridge and quickly set up a PayPal account on our website (wanakena.webs.com) to make it as easy as possible for the general public to make donations. We placed donation jars in local businesses and have seen continuous donations from the Clifton-Fine community and friends of the WHA. Another group of volunteers has been hard at work applying for grants. Grants will eventually be the main source of funding but everything each of us can do as individuals is also very important as matching funds/donated time will be required by the grants. We are also accepting checks to **WHA Bridge Fund at PO Box 73, Wanakena, NY 13695.**

Several individuals have stepped forward with ideas for raising money and those ideas are being pursued. Please visit our Facebook page often to see the latest news. As the raising of money and the rebuilding will take more than a year, we welcome any ideas and offers of help in any form.

All donations for rebuilding the bridge will go directly into the rebuilding fund. Annual dues and undesignated donations to WHA will go to the association. Please keep your dues up to date so we can continue to preserve the history of our little town.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and I hope to see to see you in Wanakena.

Like hundreds of other students, I was first introduced to the Wanakena footbridge upon my arrival at the NYS Ranger School fifty years ago. I can not recall any visit since that time, whether with family, friends, or especially with grandchildren, that I did not stop to walk across the footbridge and share this unique experience with those along with me.
L.A.L., Chambersburg PA

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SUPPORT
REBUILDING OUR FOOTBRIDGE

THANK YOU AGAIN TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SENT A DONATION OR LETTER OF SUPPORT: There are many different ways that WHA members and friends can help to ensure that our 'swinging' footbridge will be rebuilt.

- Encourage friends and family, who have walked the bridge to donate
- Send us a story about the bridge or a picture of family /friends on footbridge
- Purchase raffle tickets for the three items listed on pg xx
- Attend the 2014 Wanakena Bridge Day on August 16
- Consider donating a raffle item for Bridge Day 2015
- "Like" us on Facebook so your own friends know about the efforts
- Donate by sending a check, or using Paypal on the website
 - Paypal at wanakena.webs.com/donate
 - WHA - Bridge fund, PO Box 73, Wanakena NY 13695
 - ANCA Crowd Sourcing (to be announced on Bridge Day)

WHA MEMBERSHIP:

JOIN OR RENEW TODAY

Your current membership status should be indicated on the mailing label. If your membership is expired or you have never formally joined, please complete the form below and send form and payment to: **Wanakena Historical Association, PO Box 73, Wanakena, NY 13695.** All gifts, above membership are tax deductible.

Annual Membership: Individual Membership: 1 year \$10 3 years \$25
 Family Membership: 1 year \$25 3 years \$60
 Contributing Member: \$50
 Lifetime Membership: \$100

New or **Renewal**

NAME:		Date:	
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	E-mail:		
Prefer to receive correspondence by:		<input type="checkbox"/> E-Mail	<input type="checkbox"/> US Mail
<input type="checkbox"/> GIFT MEMBERSHIP for:			
NAME:		Date:	
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	E-Mail:		

Gift recipient will be notified by mail *All GIFTS are tax-deductible*

The 2014 PARADE: and funds for the bridge

This year Wanakena had its 11th annual parade to celebrate the birth of our nation. For some it was the first time they were in a Wanakena without the swinging footbridge. What started in 2003 as a simple parade of decorated bicycles, pets and lawn-mowers has evolved into an amazing array of family and community units having a fun day with Bill Gleason (1st president of the WHA) manning the new WHA PA system to announce parade participants, progress of the 2nd annual baked beans contest and the most anticipated event, Bossie Bingo. The (rubber) duck races were cancelled, as there was no 'finish line' to gauge the winner at the footbridge. We hope to have a duck race when our footbridge is re-



Janet Yuckel serves baked beans to the tasters (for a small fee) in the gazebo. \$270 was raised to rebuild the bridge.



Tony Reed walks the grid with the calf getting ready to mark the winning square! The biggest prize was \$500.



Jack & Charlotte Laquay made \$125 selling lemonade.

built.

This year all proceeds went to the fund to rebuild the footbridge. Proceeds for the day included money from: Bossie Bingo, Baked beans contest, Hot Dogs for the bridge, Donation jar and the Laquay kids' (Bernie & Blanche Siskavich's grand-



The Clifton-Fine Scouts march proudly in the 2014 parade.

children) parade stand. a great community we in!!!



Smokey The Bear arrives on the NYS Ranger's truck.

Lem-What live

Together, the community will work to restore their beloved bridge. The path ahead is long and will at times be quite challenging. The love this community bears for the bridge and all it means to the connection of the community to its history and the shared love all members feel for the structure will ensure ultimate success. **S.S.S., Cranberry Lake NY**

Bridge Update, continued from page 1

We planned to list the names of all persons, organizations and businesses that have already donated, but decided to postpone this as it would add about 3 additional pages of this newsletter!

Planned efforts include: BRIDGE DAY (see pg 7) scheduled for August 16 and partnering with ANCA, who plans to kick-off fundraising via 'Crowd Sourcing' in their organization on Bridge Day. In addition, we are planning to schedule a second Bridge Day in 2015; so think about donating raffle items, crafts, or gift certificates to (hopefully) finalize the fundraising efforts. We very much look forward to planning the dedication of the new bridge, which hopefully could occur in 2016?!?

We especially want to thank the small army of people who have given many hours to planning events, volunteering at events, participating in events, maintaining financial records, coordinating donations of services & goods, and sending thank-you notes to donors. **YOU ARE OUR BIGGEST DONORS!!**

If you have any questions, or ideas, please send an email to: wanakenaha@aol.com.

Marsha Smith & Allen Ditch
co-chairs Bridge fundraising committee

Additions to the Walking Tour Are On Hold

In the last newsletter it was announced that the WHA was going to move forward with several projects to improve the J Otto Hamel Historic Walking Tour. We did receive a grant from the Damoth fund to make these upgrades, but both of the projects have been put on hold. The Damoth Fund approved moving the \$2,000 awarded for these projects to the bridge fund. After the footbridge is rebuilt, the WHA will decide the best timing to add a new picture station depicting the footbridge in pictures and story and to move the "Wanakena Library".

I myself have spent long periods just standing in the middle of the bridge gazing at the amazing beauty around me. I know it is just a bridge, but to people who have seen it or used it, its much more than that.

A.M.Y. Philadelphia PA



Some places in life that you run into are unique and special, there is no other like it. This in short, the Wanakena Bridge.

T.S., Ellicott City, MD

HARRY FRED SMITH, WANAKENA
MINISTER: BY TED & RAE LOUISE TATE



The Rev. Mr. Harry Fred Smith, known as Grandpa to the Tate clan including the Buck, Brown and Wood families of South Shore Road, served as the pastor in Wanakena and Cranberry Lake in the early 1900's. He was born in 1886 in Waterford, New York and lived on the plains in Kansas, South Dakota, Upper Michigan, Johnsonville, NY, and retired from the active ministry to a home in Mineville, New York. He died in 1973 at the age of 87.

As a pastor he had the uncanny ability to show up when anything was needed. On a book of poetry he wrote he is described as "a poet and mystic who for many years has masqueraded as a Presbyterian minister." I know he wrote that himself.

In 1914 Grandpa was fishing up the Oswegatchie with Mr. Rich of the Rich Lumber Company. Mr. Rich told Rev. Smith that the Lumber Company Lands were to be turned over to the State of New York the next day. Grandpa said, "I always had my eye on the point where the railroad docks are." "Come over before ten o'clock tomorrow, and I'll sell it to you."

Grandpa replied "Now, you know that I am just a poor Presbyterian minister and have no money for such a purchase." To which Mr. Rich replied, "Don't worry about the money. Just get to my office before ten o'clock to sign the necessary papers."

Of course that was done and a small amount of money (probably a dollar) changed hands. The point where the railroad docks were (but not the swampy end) became a place of refuge for Grandpa where he had a small building used as a study. There was nothing taller than a berry bush growing there, nothing taller than a four-year-old. I know that because my mother played on that property when she was four.

Grandpa was a fixture on that South Shore property until the summer before his death, telling stories, teaching wood lore, and thrilling his grandchildren with his knowledge and willingness to take them fishing.

Raffle drawing will be held in summer 2015

The Fundraising Events Committee is sponsoring a year-long raffle for three items. All three items are generous donations from WHA members. Raffle tickets can be purchased from any WHA Trustee (see back cover of this newsletter). We plan to have an order form soon on our website (wanakena.webs.com), so that raffle tickets can be purchased via mail. Winners of the raffle will be chosen August 2014. Call Marsha (315-848-2848) or Allen (315-848-2428) if you would like to purchase chances by phone. Buy your tickets for a chance at these fabulous items, while helping to rebuild the footbridge.

The footbridge has become much more than a simple link of one shore to another. It is a link to the history of the human experience in the Adirondacks. It is the invitation to talk about the development and persistence of a community. It is the place to stop on your walk and take in the views of the river, the forest and the night sky. It is so much more than boards and cables.

H.S., Oswego NY



I am embarrassed to say I do not know much about the history of the bridge, who built it or when it was first erected but I will say I cannot imagine Wanakena without it. **M.F., Underhill VT**

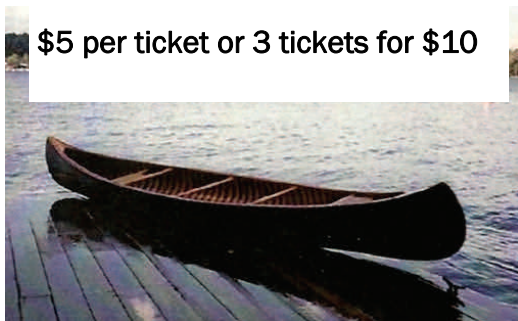
The Wanakena Footbridge is as much a part of its community's history as the Olympic Arena is of Lake Placid's, ... People come from miles away to see it, to walk across it, to linger and enjoy the view of it, and from it ... It is its own mini-museum. **N.B., Canton NY**

THREE GREAT ITEMS DONATED FOR RAFFLE TO HELP REBUILD THE BRIDGE



\$1 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$5

60" X 82" Twin size bed quilt
of the Wanakena footbridge
with Adirondack flora and fauna.
Bridge designed by Carol Cassidy.
Quilt designed, sewn, appliqued
and quilted by Primrose McVay, 2014



\$5 per ticket or 3 tickets for \$10

18 foot green canvas canoe.
In mint condition, purchased in
1990.
Donated by Ernie & Penny Giraud.
Original purchase price \$1,000.



51" X 41" Quilted wallhanging
of the Wanakena footbridge
inspired by a photograph from
Alice Galvin.
Designed, sewn, painted,
appliqued and quilted by
Vicki Feldman

\$5 per ticket or 3 tickets for \$10

The following letter of support was written by the great-great granddaughter of Harry Smith (see pg 4). She is the fifth generation of his family to come to Wanakena.

My name is Veronica Stringer. Many people in Wanakena know me as the granddaughter of Connie & Kirk Brown. My family has a camp on a hill from which you can see Town Dock, the general store, and the footbridge. Ever since a grandfather of indeterminable greatness purchased the tiny hunting cabin in the early 1900s, the hemlock-brown waters of the Oswegatchie have flowed thickly through my family's veins, proving that perhaps blood and water run equally thick. I grew up on brown-sand beaches, evergreens, and wild blueberries. I lived for the 4-hour connecting flights that would fly us from Houston to Watertown each year, for although I live in Texas, my soul is firmly embedded in the rocky soil of the Adirondack Mountains. A green canoe, the prick of wild blackberries, the velvety sky at night, the wildflowers -- all are symbols for me of Wanakena, tattooed on my heart, but none quite so permanent nor quite so special as the Wanakena footbridge.



Every child in my family has at least one picture of themselves as a toddler running across the footbridge, a smile plastered across their face. And at least one picture of themselves wobbling unsteadily across the footbridge on a tiny bike, helmeted forehead wrinkled in concentration as they led the daily charge to "the little store in the big woods". And every one of us has countless photos of ourselves since those milestones, swinging from the suspension cables on the "town" side of the bridge, laughing and clinging to the sides as a father or a brother swayed from side to side, an evil grin adorning their faces. And for me, personally, several snapshots of myself silhouetted against the sky as I walked across the top of the edge (much to my mother's dismay).

The Wanakena footbridge no longer exists as I have known it, in its physical form, but the enlightening beauty of loss is the illumination it brings to a shadowy corner. I surprised myself at the deepness of the ache in my chest when I saw the icy splinters protruding from the frozen river. I was surprised until I realized how much more than a footbridge the footbridge is. It is Wanakena, and in every beam of wood, every brushstroke of white paint, is a small piece of everyone who has ever meandered across that beloved behemoth that is our bridge.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The many successes and accomplishments of the WHA are due to the generous contribution of the time, talent and treasures of our members and friends. I hope that we have not left someone off this list. If we have, please let us know and we will recognize your contributions in a future newsletter. Here are some of the people to whom we want to express our heartfelt appreciation.



- Ron Capone for his competent dedication as treasurer of the WHA, and spending many hours on the huge task of recording donations, maintaining our now more complicated financial records, and sending thank-you notes.
- WHA members and friends who wrote letters of support that were needed to endorse community backing in the grant applications.
- Hope Dolan (Town of Fine Clerk) for receiving, copying and distributing the many letters of support needed for the various grant applications, as well as the grant applications themselves.
- The Committee heads, who have put in many hours so that we will reach our final goal to rebuild our bridge: Sue Westbrook (grants); Tom Sauter (salvage & construction); Sherman Craig (regulatory); Marsha Smith & Allen Ditch (fund raising); and Town Supervisor, Mark Hall for forming these committees and overseeing the entire project.
- Bill Gleason for winter storage and Spring installation of the walking tour picture stations every year, as well as overseeing its maintenance and upgrades;
- Allen Ditch and Pam Lea-Maida for developing and managing the Facebook pages and new WHA website;
- Dave and Sue Ziemba for letting us use their property and gazebo on the Wanakena Green (a.k.a. Z-Park) whenever we asked;
- Renee Reed and Brad Love for organizing and conducting the Bossie Bingo event that raised more than \$3,440 for the bridge fund;
- Sandy Conklin & Patti Lincourt for cooking over 100 hot dogs at the July 4th parade fundraisers;
- Joe & Margie Russo for donations from the SOS 5K run and 'Then & Now' book sales;
- Ginny Peters & Carol Cassidy who worked on the design and production of this years Cat's Meow Keepsake (Leary 's Hotel) ; and the many people who sell them;
- Kim Schneider, Tom Bietz, Skye Opel, and Andrew Augustine for coordinating the Baked Beans Challenge at the July 4th parade and donating proceeds this year to the bridge fund.

Come celebrate BRIDGE DAY in Wanakena

August 16, 2014 11 AM—5 PM

Events throughout the day:

- Historical Displays
- Children's Games and Crafts
- Old-fashioned Craft Demonstrations
- Grandma's Recipe Pie Baking Contest
- Raffles & Silent Auction
- Wooden Souvenirs from the Old Footbridge
- Dress in 1910 Era Clothing

At the Pine Cone Grill

BBQ from 5 PM - ?

and

Live Music by Compass Rose

5 PM- 7:30 PM



Sponsored by the Wanakena Historical Association

All proceeds to benefit the Wanakena Historical Association's Bridge Fund

For More Information, call Marsha at 848-2848