

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



# NEWSLETTER

*Old Cedar Hill School House, Selkirk, New York 12158*

Winter 2007

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to 2007. Our formal programs each year conclude with our annual Silver Tea. This year the Tea was both successful and spectacular. The weather was beautiful, attendance exceeded our expectations, the decorations, thanks to our talented volunteers were both imaginative and beautiful, and the refreshments were abundant and elegant.

Now that 2007 is here, we have been busy changing many of the temporary displays in preparation for Spring meetings and other activities scheduled for the Museum. New displays include a wonderful selection of early American made baskets (some native American), archaeology discoveries from the early Winnie House on Creble Road, early 19th century woven coverlets in vivid colors (red, white & blue) showing eagles, stars, and other motifs, plus several additional early items given to the Museum by a Member of the Town's Haswell Family, and a display of some of our Town's Historic Houses.

Work will begin to develop plans for the Associations participation in the State Quadricentennial celebration to be held in 2009. The BHA will also be on the Aquaduck Tour beginning on February 20th which will tour historic sites within the Town.

Please check your book for the Spring meetings to be held on the third Thursday of the month.

*Ann Van Derwort*

## SCHOOLHOUSE AT CEDAR HILL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AT THE MUSEUM

Under the leadership of Peter McGinty and members of the Town Highway Department, the Museum and its associated facilities have been improved and upgraded to ensure that the membership and our guests can fully appreciate the beauty of "the old red school house".

I would like to enumerate a number of capital improvements that have occurred over the last few years as a way to thank Peter, Ann and the Town for all the efforts that have been expended to keep our Museum in top running order. As a place to start, one quickly notices how comfortable the interior of the Museum is during our cold winter days and that is based on the installation of a new furnace and thermostat system designed to meet the needs of our membership. Other improvements include a new front door; a completely repainted interior of the entire facility, and the painting of the exteriors of the cellar doors, Toll Gate House and Carriage House and handicap ramp; a new sewer system for the facility; the installation of a speaker system for better communications within the Museum, a new dehumidifier in the basement to help protect our materials; a new gutter system to protect the handicap ramp; new shrubs at the left side of the Museum to balance the older shrubs on the right side; the siting of a park bench on the west side of the Museum; and the restringing of the rope to ring the old school bell.

While other improvements will be addressed in the future, we will always remember all the work that Jim Wiedemann, Henry Meyer, John Scharff and others performed in the past to convert the old school into the wonderful facility we enjoy today. I offer that Peter and his staff are committed to ensure that this treasure will continue to be carefully managed and will be preserved for history.

*Parker Mathusa*, Treasurer



Chairman of our Trustees, Lois Dillon & President Ann VanDerVort  
with members and friends at our Christmas Silver Tea.

### *PROGRAM NOTES*

The 2007 Program Year will continue with speakers on February 15th, March 15, April 19th and May 17th. As a customary, the February program will be held at 2 pm so that members do not have to drive on dark, wintry night roads.

The rest of the programs will be held at 7:30 pm as usual, except for May, which is our Barbeque/Annual Meeting. This begins at 5:30 pm and Dr. Houghton, Town Historian, will have a special short program. Of course, all programs will be held at the Cedar Hill School House, and on a Thursday.

The February program features Jack Keenan: "Mr. Old Time Radio", who will discuss the programs some of us older members remember from the past. He will have sound clips to stir our memories.

In March, Charles Flanagan will sing and play for us "Some Songs of the 18th Century." Retired from a career with the State, Charley has served as a guide

at Fort Ticonderoga, where he expanded the usual military tour of the fort with an introduction to another of his interest: music. Specifically, the music which would have been heard at the Fort, and in Bethlehem, two centuries ago.

April will see us smack in the middle of the 19th century. David Gould will speak on "The Birth of Modern Railroading: 1850-1870". Not only was this his graduate thesis topic, but Dave has recently retired after a career as a railroader. His is certainly an informed viewpoint.

Plans for the 2007-2008 Program Year are in train and most of the speakers are lined up. However, we are always looking for suggestions from the membership and have gotten several good ones. Please think of other good speakers we might add to our list of candidates.

Call the chairman, Bob Mulligan, at 439-3807.

## GENEAOLOGY CORNER

By Art Young, Committee Chairman

Last Fall, President Ann appointed me as your Genealogy Chairman. We agreed that I would present a short report at each of our regular membership meetings. At our meeting last September, I presented my first report, "G-1" and provided copies to the membership. This report was followed up by "G-2" in October and G-3 at our November meeting also with copies for our members attending the meetings. These reports provided some suggested methods of tracking your ancestors and also included some forms, websites information, and computer software programs that could be of aid in your research.

Whereas, I am not a certified genealogist, I have had some success in tracing ancestors back to the 1620 Mayflower and beyond. This has been accomplished by establishing direct bloodline connections using vital records such as: birth, death, marriage, church, cemetery, military, naturalization and census records. Also, information was obtained from, published family histories, wills, guardianship and probate court and land records.

It is my intention to continue the "G" series reports that we started last September, in which I hope to guide you through at least part of the methods used to locate ancestor information in some, if not all, of the record resources listed above. "G-4" is being prepared for our January meeting and will cover or start to cover the use of census records. Because census records are such a large and important resource, this subject may continue into my February report.

However, this type of, "do it yourself", research can take up a great deal of time, even though it does create a great deal of

self-satisfaction when you find that next grandparent or great grandparent in your line of descent. Always keep in mind however, that if you do not have the time or do not wish to take the time to do the genealogist's who will do the work for you, even though that does take some of the fun out of your project. Marie Hoffman, President of the Capital District Genealogy Society would, I am sure, be happy to provide such information, (283-4793), and our New York State Library right here in downtown Albany, on Madison Av e., also maintain a list of such professionals.

A few copies of my first three reports, "G-1 to G-3, are made available at our regular membership meeting, if you have such interest or copies may be obtained from our Secretary Wendy Brandow, as they have been made a part of the meeting minutes. Good luck with your research and hope to see you all at our next meeting.

### IN MEMORIAM

We were very sad to hear of the death of our good friend, Charles Crangle. He died in October after a long illness. Charles was a long time member of our Association. He was past President and several times Chairman of our Board of Trustees. He was very much a Trustee in every sense of the word. He was also our Program Chairman for many years giving us both interesting and delightful programs, such as when he and his wife Marjorie went on their many travels in the World. He would always make a program of his slides of a trip to show at one of our meetings. Charles Crangle's name will always be an important one in the History of The Town of Bethlehem Historical Association. The Association thanks the people who have sent in contributions in Charles's memory.

*Lois Dillon,  
Chairman of the Trustees*

# AS OF JANUARY 24, 2007 MEMBERS

5 BUSINESS  
64 FAMILY  
34 LIFE  
75 REGULAR  
178 MEMBERS

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## NEW MEMBERS SINCE YEARBOOK (06-07)

RON AND MARY WILLMOTT  
REUBEN GOLDWASER  
GALEN R. RITCHIE  
JOHN GIORDANO

## Officers

President- Ann VanDervort  
Vice President - Susan Haswell  
Recording Secretary - Wendy Brandow  
Corresponding Secretary - Susan Leath  
Treasurer - Parker Mathusa

## Trustees

Lois Dillon, Chair  
Ralph VanWoert    Marian Davis  
Kathleen Newkirk    Allison Bennett  
Sheila Giordano    Peter McGinty

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## DONATIONS THANK YOU

- Thank you to Peter Vanderzee for his donation in memory of his parents who were active with our Association.



Town of Bethlehem Historical Association  
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