



WANAKENA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 1
Summer 2016

RECONSTRUCTION HAS BEGUN

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On June 21, 2016 at 9:30am a ground breaking ceremony signaled the start to rebuild the Wanakena footbridge.



From left to right: Sue Westbrook, Marsha Smith, Polly Hamele, Lucille Adams, & Shirley Northrup.

After 2 1/2 years of holding events & raffles, soliciting donations, receiving generous memorials, family lemonade stands, summer bottle drives and applying for grants, the stars have aligned and in approximately 90 days a swinging bridge will once again span the Oswegatchie River at Wanakena.

Marsha Smith began the emotional event with a heartfelt thanks to all of the dedicated volunteers and many donors who made this day possible. A teary-eyed Sue Westbrook, Town of Fine Supervisor, praised Wanakena and the surrounding Clifton-Fine community for their heart, perseverance and collaboration in raising the money needed to replace the landmark swinging bridge and declared that "Wanakena is one of the last bastions of what is meant by the statement, it takes a village". *Continued on page 3*

Where the Dollars Came From:

There are many different ways that the more than \$128,000 was raised to rebuild our footbridge, the majority came from: Memorials \$15,416, Raffles \$12,749; Grants (to WHA) \$13,985; Bossie Bingo \$6,000+; Donation jars \$5,278; PayPal \$3,343; Bottle Drive \$2,704; Bridge part souvenirs \$2,155; Cat's Meow keepsakes \$1,749; Cash box @ bridge \$629; Lemonade & cupcakes \$498; and Donations \$63,400+. Thank-You, Thank-You!

Special points of interest:

- August 13 will be Wanakena Day!
- Ways to support the bridge: project: see pg 10

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

MARSHA SMITH



Thank you members and friends for another amazing year of support in 2015! The Wanakena Historical Association continues to thrive with your generous support of gifts, time and talents. Many creative ideas and hard work have helped our association stay active and we have raised over \$130,000 in two years to match the grant for rebuilding our footbridge. Awesome!

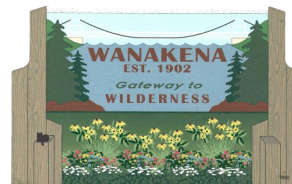
We are very pleased to announce that we celebrated our bridge ground breaking ceremony on Tuesday, June 21st by the north entrance to the bridge! NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, who has awarded the project a \$125,000 grant, approved the bridge design and contract submitted by Northeast Concrete Coring and Cutting, Inc from Potsdam. They have 90 days to substantially complete all work items. We are in the process of raising the remaining \$25,000 of matching funds needed to complete the bridge. In addition, we will need to raise money for the walkways that will be done separately, which will be around \$36,000.

Susan and Chris Westbrook have started a campaign to help raise \$25,000. They have donated \$250 in the hopes that 99 more people will each donate \$250 which would make up the \$25,000. Anyone wishing to join this campaign may send a check to WHA Bridge Fund at PO Box 73 Wanakena, NY 13695.

We are planning to have Wanakena Day in the village on August 13. We will have Bossie Bingo, a pie contest, 2 beautiful hand-quilted quilts for raffle, and keepsakes for sale from pieces of the old bridge. Other things are still being planned. As always, we are happy to receive memories and/or pictures of past times in Wanakena, as well as historical materials.

2016 Keepsake ~ The Wanakena Welcome Sign

Carol Cassidy and Ginny (Lea) Peters worked through the winter to design and order a very familiar Wanakena landmark. This year's keepsake is the Wanakena welcome sign. The big welcome sign was donated by the Cranberry Lake Boat Club and installed in 2002 for the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Wanakena in 2002. Even if you have not been collecting the WHA Cat's Meow Keepsakes, this is one visitors & residents alike will recognize as the peaceful reminder that they have returned to one of



the most special places in the Adirondack Park. The colorful wooden keepsake measures 5.5" x 3.5". And will be sold during WHA events for \$20 and are available by mail order for an additional \$2.50 to cover shipping costs..

See Page 11 to order .

Continued from page 1

and should be model for the state and the country". Dirt was ceremoniously turned using gold shovels by : WHA President, Marsha Smith; Fine Town Supervisor, Sue Westbrook; and long-time Wanakena residents Polly Hamele, Shirley Northrup & Lucille Adams. There were many current and former residents and friends of Wanakena present with long-time ties to Wanakena. Everyone seemed to have a story about the bridge, and many shared some moving childhood memories. Marsha also said that, "the bridge really is the heart of our village. And as one of our friends says, Wanakena without the footbridge is like Paris without the Eiffel Tower. And it really is like that,"

The work to be performed, per the contract with Northeast Concrete Coring & Cutting Inc. - Canton NY are to (a) Perform pull test on tie downs or 'dead men' (Atlantic Testing Laboratories); (b) Remove remaining walkway on South Shore side (c) Commence North & South Abutment concrete work; (d) Build footbridge & towers; (e) Install staging in the river to work off of to install bridge; (f) Install bridge; (g) Install cables & rods.



Marsha Smith addressing the attendees at the ground-breaking ceremony.

Although the WHA has raised over \$125,000, which was enough money to match the funds required to receive the NYS matching grant from the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites, **the known costs now exceed what has so far been raised.** Additional money needs to be raised for the construction of the bridge as described above (\$25,000) as well as for the walk-ways on both sides of the bridge (estimated cost \$35,000). The WHA and Town of Fine are actively investigating obtaining additional grant money.

Fundraising activities, as well as documentation of progress will be publicized on the Wanakena Historical Association Facebook page.

Wanakena Day August 13, 2016 — Save the Date!

If you will be in the area on August 13, the WHA and planning committee are organizing an event primarily to celebrate and have fun, but will also sponsor events to raise any additional money that may still be needed to complete the bridge project. We definitely know that there will be Bossie Bingo and another pie contest and pie auction. We hope to make this an annual event. Anne Logunbuhl was the 2015 1st prize winner, who plans to enter this year to challenge the judges for a two-year winning streak. Watch the WHA Facebook pages for updates on the plans.



Anne Logunbuhl, 2016 Blue Ribbon pie baker extraordinaire.

WANAKENA GENERAL STORE CLOSES

It was truly a sad day in the annals of Wanakena history, when on Monday October 12, 2015, Wanakena no longer had a convenient friendly General Store to shop in. The community also lost a central location to meet and gossip with our neighbors. Rick Kovacs and Angie Oliver worked extremely hard to keep the store open 7 days a week, but after 112 years of having a store in Wanakena, it was unmistakably determined that the hamlet of Wanakena could no longer support a year-round store. With the majority of residents being seasonal, and many of the year-round residents also departing for warmer weather for weeks or months at a time, maintaining a store, with heat, lights and perishable foods was just not practical from a business perspective.

Rick and Angie were important players in planning and participating in events that raised money to rebuild the footbridge. Their generosity in time, dollars and ideas was one reason for the success of some events. Wanakena residents unquestionably miss the convenience of walking to the Little Store in the Big Woods to buy milk, bread, eggs and the morning newspaper and to meet & chat with neighbors. The WHA wishes Angie and Rick the very best as they continue living in Wanakena and running Packbasket Adventures. We very much look forward to the Contra dance events that Rick and Angie plan, which are becoming very popular in Clifton-Fine. If you have never tried contra dancing, give it a try, it's fun and great exercise!



Rick Kovacs on Bridge Day 2014



Goodies in Wanakena's now closed general store.



Angie on the last day of business

PLANS FOR HISTORIC DISPLAY & DONOR RECOGNITION

Once the footbridge is rebuilt and in-place, the WHA plans to erect a 3 sided kiosk near the South Shore entrance to the footbridge. Each panel will depict the 113+ year history of the bridge, including the ice-jam of January 2014 that brought it down, the dismantling, the fund raising events, the rebuilding and the re-dedication.

A flip chart, or panel will list the names of memorial gifts and donors who helped rebuild a swinging bridge in the Adirondack Park.



Last pieces of the footbridge as it was dismantled.

OTTO'S ABODE opens in Wanakena



Nolan Federow & Hannah Ziemba on Bridge Day

The old saying is, "when one door closes, another opens." And so it goes in Wanakena. The space that once was the Wanakena General Store has re-opened as an 'Experimental Art Centric Storefront'. Otto's Abode seeks to encourage, examine, and celebrate collaboration and community exchange with and within a public home for the arts. The aim of the project is to create an environment in Wanakena where the professional & the amateur, the performer and the spectator, can entertain, 'puzzle' and inform. Where one can grab a snack, a cup of

coffee, a map, and a bag of ice and be informed, entertained and puzzled.

Otto's Abode is a volunteer-based general store / exhibition space, which its four creators (Sue & Dave Ziemba, Hannah Ziemba & Nolan Federow) view as a collaborative art project. When you are in Wanakena, stop into Otto's Abode and check out the art on display, attend one of the evenings when Wanakena 'spins vinyl', or sit back and enjoy a coffee with Wanakena friends and local talents.



A view of Otto's Abode in Wanakena

Donated Quilts to be Raffled for Footbridge Reconstruction



Double Size

Two beautiful handmade quilts were donated to raise money to rebuild the footbridge. **Leann Otta-way** made & donated a Double-Size (90x90) entitled 'Lady of the Lake' in honor of her dad, uncle and grandpa who were all graduates of the Ranger School. **Wayne & Karen Allen** donated a handmade King Size quilt made by a PA Mennonite family. Chances for the double-size quilt are \$1 each, or 6 for \$5; Chances for the King size quilt are \$5 each, or 3 for \$10. The drawing will be held on Wanakena Day August 13th.



King Size

See Page 15 to obtain chances on winning one of the quilts.

Wanakena's Bridge Day — 2015

Our second bridge day was held August 15, 2015 with many individuals dressed in period costumes from the early 1900s. What a fun and profitable day we had with more than \$22,000 raised for the bridge. It was very well attended with activities for people of all ages. Children's activities included: making books, hula hooping, corn bag tossing, croquet and a memory game with rubber ducks in a kiddie pool. Adults enjoyed the corn bag toss and a 50/50 challenge tossing horseshoes, pie contest, crafters exhibits, raffles, silent auction, and blue grass music. The Western Adirondack Model Railroaders used the Wanakena church to set up their working display of the railroad lines around the mills. Crafters included: knitting, crochet, rug hooking, appliqué quilting, carving and woodworking. Keepsakes made from the original bridge were available for purchase. The weather held, except for a brief rain squall that stormed through. The day ended with live music for the Contra Dance in the street.



Bernie Siskavich & Kim Schneider at the pie auction.



Allen Ditch with Linda & Bob Jones of St. Lawrence River Decoys, with the merganser decoy.

Raffle and silent auction with about 160 items, was set up under a large rented tent beside the river that included: crafts, furniture, decoys and artworks. Food was available all day, with The Pine Cone Grill offering hotdogs, brats, ribs and drinks under the big tent. Ice cream sodas were offered by the Wanakena General Store. An afternoon tea with homemade scones was held after lunch. The homemade pie contest was held at the gazebo with awards for the top

three bakers. Slices were sold to individuals and whole pies were auctioned, and made for lively entertainment. One of the highlights of the day was when the live auction of a merganser duck decoy, carved by Bob Jones of St. Lawrence River Decoys from wood salvaged from the North Shore trestle of the old footbridge brought in \$6,210! Two lovely handmade quilts and a handsome canoe highlighted in a previous newsletter, were our large year-long raffle items and together brought in almost \$12,000! Thanks again to Primrose McVay and Vicki Feldman for donating the quilts and to Ernie & Penny Giraud for donating the canoe.



Kristin Rehder won the bid to put a pie in the face of APA Director, Sherman Craig

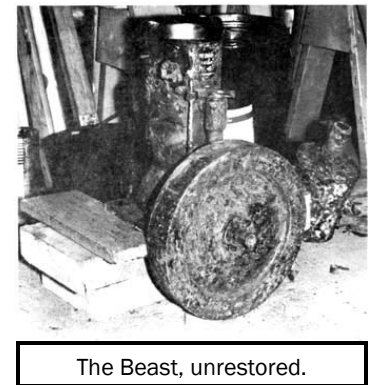
Thank you to all who worked so hard to make our day so special. Thank you to all that donated items or bought items. Thank you to all who have worked so hard and continue to work behind the scenes to make our bridge rebuild a reality!

THE WANAKENA & THE BEAST

PART 2: THE BEAST

BY: SUE SMEBY

The Truscott Boat Mfg. Co. was established in Chicago in 1871, by Cornish Immigrant Thomas Truscott. It was moved to St. Joseph's Michigan in 1892. The company initially built small rowing craft, sailboats and steam launches, employing hundreds of craftsmen. By 1905, gasoline had emerged as the power of choice for small boats, and Truscott quickly became a leading manufacturer. Truscott had a reputation for fine workmanship extending far beyond the Great Lakes, shipping boats as far away as China and Australia. The company continued to build runabouts and other small pleasure craft until shortly after WWII, closing in 1948. In addition to building complete boats - such as *The Wanakena* - Truscott also sold their marine engines for use in home-built boats. Truscott #2065, a one-cylinder, 2 cycle engine, was sold to Rich Lumber Co. in 1908.



The Beast, unrestored.

The Oswegatchie River was narrow, rocky and shallow, but in 1908 it was jumping with trout, a fisherman's paradise. Paddling upstream from Inlet to High Falls was slow work, so officials of Rich Lumber asked a mechanic from their machine shop to build a suitable boat, powered by the Truscott engine. The mechanic's novel concept was a flat-bottomed boat, with a flush propeller; he accomplished this by building a tunnel for the propeller to turn, covered with iron straps to protect it. A rudder was added at the stern. While this shallow-draft boat worked in theory,

navigating the actual Oswegatchie proved to be a challenge. The rudder was unable to steer the boat around sharp bends of the river, and was often torn off by rocks and logs in the river bed. Rich Lumber decided it would be more effective to steer with logging pike poles, and assigned men to stand in the bow and pry the boat around bends. The boat was heavy, the river very winding; steering was hard work, and it soon earned a nickname, painted on the bow - The Beast.

Local woodsmen and guides like Wilfred Morrison had other reasons to dislike The Beast. Herb Keith summarized their objections in *Man of the Woods*, Chapter 10: "Two Shames: Timber Thieves and a Motorboat at High Falls". The Beast, according to Herb, "was the forerunner of the most destructive device ever invented by man to ruin fishing on the upper Oswegatchie and other rivers". Herb did not resent the use of marine engines on Cranberry or other large lakes. But, he felt they had no place in a wilderness river setting. They only helped to bring more people into

the woods, the kind who did not appreciate the value of wilderness, but only wanted to get to their destination, as quickly and easily as possible. The Beast helped impatient "city people" and "sports", as Herb called them, to bring the rush of modern life into the woods, to "battle the life out of old Mother Nature".

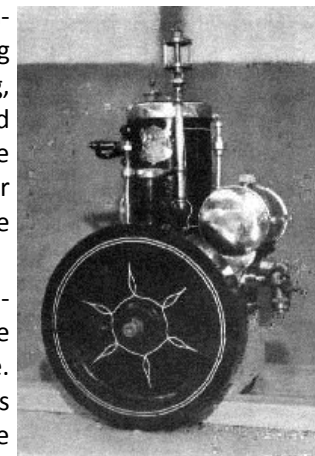


The Beast, on the Oswegatchie at Camp Royal.

The Beast was moored in a cove below the landing at Inlet, near Inlet House. After a few years it was little used, and slowly sank into the sand of the river bottom. There the boat remained buried, missed by no one, except tourists (who thought it picturesque). But the Truscott engine was not forgotten. In 1964 Herb Keith told a shortwave radio friend about the engine, someone he knew restored them as a hobby: Wesley Hammond, a teacher from Leicester NY. Later Herb and several neighbors

used chain falls to pull the Truscott out of the Oswegatchie; Herb gave it to Mr. Hammond in 1965. He succeeded in rebuilding it, after much difficulty; this story is told in detail in two articles Mr. Hammond wrote for *Gas Engine Magazine*. "A Sad Case" appeared in the Sept/Oct 1966 issue, describing the history of the engine and how Wes had acquired it, and admitting it seemed a lost cause. "Aftermath of a Sad Case" appeared in July/August 1967, thanking the many readers of the first article who answered Mr. Hammond's technical questions, allowing him to completely restore the Truscott. This was a labor of love for Mr. Hammond, who felt that because of the engine's interesting past, it deserved his best effort. After finally succeeding, he exhibited the Truscott at small engine shows, and used it to impress his Industrial Arts students with its precise engineering. He found that "it helps show them their heritage, and seems to give them more respect for those who lived before them".

Locating the current home of The Beast's Truscott engine is ongoing. An inquiry on the "Smokstak" Antique Marine Engine Forum has so far received one response. Wesley Hammond had sold all his engines before his death in 1987, but the writer was sure he had seen the Truscott sold at auction in recent years, to a collector in the Endicott area. So it seems likely that #2065 is still in central NY, perhaps with an owner who would be interested in its history as the engine of The Beast, first motorboat to navigate the upper Oswegatchie.



Beast— Restored by Hammond 1967

HAVE YOU BEEN (WORKING) DRIVING ON THE RAILROAD?

BY: BOB MERIDETH



One of the questions often ask is “where did the railroad go—I don't see anything that looks like it might have been a railroad”? When the Cranberry Lake Railroad was built in 1902 & 03 there were no roads between the Star Lake/Benson Mines area and Wanakena/Cranberry Lake. Later, there was a wagon road that ran past Sunny Pond and over to Inlet. It is mentioned as a hay ride route from the Star Lake hotels. A branch that had been the French Camp spur went to Wanakena roughly along the route of the current snowmobile trail. The only 'fast', reliable way for passengers and freight to get to and from the Wanakena hotels, lodges and factories was by rail. From Benson Mines to Wanakena the railroad was a common carrier, chartered and regulated by the state. From Wanakena the Rich Lumber Co. rails branched out into the woods, going to the Plains and to Dead Creek Flow with a number of small branches, totaling about 22 miles of track. These lines provide some of the truck roads and trails we use today. Occasionally one can find the imprint of the ties along the route of some of the small branches.

The main line from the junction of Ct. Rt. 60 with St.Rt. 3 generally provides the base for highway 3. At the rock cuts made when Hwy. 3 was rebuilt you can see parts of the railroad bed where it curved around the rock outcrops. Where the highway goes over the hill approaching the Wanakena turn off truck road 5430 on the right goes up into the woods. That is where the railroad turned toward the hamlet. About ¼ mile in you come to the 'big fill', which was originally a 400 ft. trestle that was covered with tailings from the mine to eliminate maintenance and fire danger.



Original 400 ft trestle built for trains to access the Wanakena depot & mills.



The “Big Fill” used for auto access after rails were removed.

The road bed then passes through a cut in the hill and turns toward the current road joining it near gate 70 C.R. 61. So, again driving on the old railroad, you continue past the cemetery and approach the bridge over the Oswegatchie.

The original wooden railroad bridge was converted to a car bridge and later replaced with the current steel bridge. The Cranberry Lake RR turned before crossing to run along River/Front St. to the station and on to the town dock where it was met by the Helen and/or the Wanakena. Hamele St. was a siding that served the Rich & Andrews general store and sometimes held a dignitary's private car. It is rumored that the private car of the president of the NYC RR, was seen there, although one wonders how such a long car as the Idle-hour, could have negotiated the sharp curves leading into Wanakena, perhaps he used an older, smaller one to go fishing.

Across the bridge, trains of lumber and manufactured goods would have been made up to be taken to the junction with the Carthage and Adirondack RR at Benson Mines. The arrangement of the tracks there created a 'Y' that would have allowed for turning engines around. Parts of South Shore Rd and the road along the mill pond are remains of those tracks. Trains loaded with logs from the woods and from lumber camps located between Wanakena and Benson Mines would come in to dump their loads into the mill pond.

When the rails and ties were removed in 1917 the roadbed became a rough gravel road. It is said that children found it rather scary to cross the Big Fill up high in the back of a touring car. Our current roads using the old railroad grade are much more comfortable.

THANK YOU AGAIN TO EVERYONE WHO HAS ALREADY SO GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED THE REBUILDING PROJECT: There are several ways that WHA members and friends can help to raise the money still needed to complete the rebuilding project .

- Encourage friends and family, who have walked the bridge to donate
- Purchase raffle tickets for the two quilts listed on pg 5
- Attend the 2016 Wanakena Bridge Day on August 13
- 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

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**

ORDER KEEPSAKES OR QUILT CHANCES

ORDER FORM

Wanakena Historical Association, PO Box 73, Wanakena NY 13695

QUILT RAFFLE:

King Size 1 chance \$5 3 chances \$10 No. wanted

Double Size 1 chance \$1 6 chances \$5 No. wanted

WANAKENA CAT'S MEOW KEEPSAKES

Wanakena Welcome Sign (2016) \$20 plus \$2.50 shipping No. wanted

'The Helen' Tour Boat (2015) \$20 plus \$2.50 shipping No. wanted

O'Leary Guest House (2014) \$20 plus \$2.50 shipping No. wanted

Wanakena Train Depot (2013) \$20 plus \$2.50 shipping No. wanted

Old General Store (2012) \$20 plus \$2.50 shipping No. wanted

Wanakena Hotel (2011) \$20 plus \$2.50 shipping No. wanted

Footbridge \$20 plus \$2.50 shipping No. wanted

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Keepsakes will be mailed to the following address, unless otherwise indicated with the order

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

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

GIFT MEMBERSHIP for:

NAME:		Date:	
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	E-Mail:		

Gift recipient will be notified by mail

All GIFTS are tax-deductible

Wanakena Historical
Association
PO Box 73
Wanakena, NY 13695



WHA Board of Trustees (2016)	
Marsha Smith (Pres.)	Judy Hastings
Ron Capone (Treas.)	Sandy Conklin
Sue Smeby (Secty)	Piers Bramham
Primrose McVay	Allen Ditch
Sara Cibelli	John Steinburg
Gerry Cibelli	Gail Simmons
Bill Gleason	Paul Flynn

Next Meeting
Sept 17th — 9:30 am