

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



# NEWSLETTER

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

2005

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Our Museum's 40th Anniversary Year is rapidly coming to a conclusion. The highlight of our 40th year celebration was our Anniversary Dinner held on June 25th at The Cedar Hill Mansion (former Elks Club). It was our honor to be the first group to use the facility which has been completely redecorated by Daniel and Brian Kelly. A large group of Museum members and their guests attended the dinner and Gala. Town Supervisor Theresa Eagan, NYS Senator Neil Breslin and County Executive Michael Breslin were our keynote speakers. A special thanks goes to Peter McGinty and Wendy Brandow for handling the arrangements.

Town officials, staff, committee chairmen, and volunteers have been busy during the summer on many Museum projects. Greg Sagendorph and his staff did a beautiful job maintaining the Museum grounds and building. New roof gutters were installed, our large wall screen was replaced with a new one, and the outside bench relocated to a new foundation.

The Delmar Progress Club donated new shrubs and ornamental grasses which Marian Davis and myself planted at the front and street side of the Museum building. With the help of Peter McGinty and Parker Mathusa the Tollhouse was cleaned and arranged for the summer's opening.

This year Marion Zrelak and Kate Zupan will Co-Chair the Annual Card Party. It will be held at the Bethlehem Town Hall on October 27 from 7 to 9:30 PM. They will need volunteers.

A special thanks to Susan Leath who filled in for Barbara Mulfelder, Membership Chairman, while she was busy moving to Altamont.

Our Program Committee Co-Chairs Howard Gmelch and Bob Mulligan, with assistance of Art Young and Joan Stahlman have arranged a number of great programs that I think you will enjoy for the coming year.

Our Christmas tea will be held on December 4, 2005 from 1 to 4 PM.

I would like to also mention our summer exhibit

*(Continued on back page)*

## A NEW HISTORIC HOUSE FOR THE RECORDS



*Hamagrael House*

Most people know the name Hamagrael because of the Hamagrael School. That is how I knew it, until one day I learned more about the name and discovered one of our historic houses that I was not aware of until I drove further down Roweland Ave. in Delmar and saw a lovely old white house setting back on a very big lawn. I then inquired about it and received some interesting information from a friend.

After the Revolutionary War a man by the name of Peter Patterson came down from Canada. He acquired a two hundred tract of land and built a log cabin on it. After two years he returned to Canada and returned to the area with his family. The Family occupied the house from 1838 to 1902. The property was then disposed of and a truck gardener rented the house. He lived in only a couple of rooms and the rest of the house was shut off.

*(Continued on inside rt.)*

## MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Committee reports that we have:

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 64 regular members | 60 family members |
| 5 business members | 36 Life members   |

*and we can use more - do you know anyone?*

### **John Schraff**

We mourn the loss of our long and faithful member John W. Scharff. John gave many hours of service to The Bethlehem Historical Association in repairs and supervision at the School House near his home. Several times a Trustee of The Association, we will miss his presence among us.

### **Margaret Thayer**

We also mourn the passing of Margaret Heath Thayer, a charter member of our Association. We will always be indebted to Margaret, because she early recognized that many of Bethlehem's small private cemeteries in the Town were disappearing, with their gravestone records of early families. She undertook to hunt down and record this information, which was a basis for our publication, "The Records of the People of the Town of Bethlehem - 1698 to 1880".

### **Historic Tapes**

Ruth Minor - her home and times.  
Edward Kleinke - Dairy Farming, etc.  
Mathew Halsdorf - memories at age 101  
Florence Onderdonk Hansen - Normansville  
William Tinney - Historic Steamboats  
Members of the BHA about  
"The Big 1918 Flu Epidemic"

### **And Others**

Peter Christoph - The Nicolls Family in America  
Jean Balint - The Wynkoop House  
Delmar Memories given by Evelyn Bennett Drake, her sister Florence Bennett Jackson, and Mildred Winegard at a Delmar Progress Club meeting

These Tapes were made several years ago. If you are interested in listening to one of them you may contact Lois Dillon 439-3302.

## **A TRIBUTE TO MARIE WEIDEMAN**

On the afternoon of August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005, some 50 members of the classes of 1934 through 1944 of the little Red School House in Cedar Hill, New York met to say thank you to Marie Weideman on the year of her 95th birthday.

The gathering was led by Howard Miller of Cedar Hill who had Marie as a teacher for four years. The gathering brought together many people whose families were the backbone of the Cedar Hill community for the last 200 hundred years. The joy of being able to visit again with individuals whose life paths took them to other areas of the country was most memorable; especially, with Marie being a link to a tapestry of intertwined family histories.

The afternoon included a wonderful lunch wrapped with many stories of pleasant times including looking at old photographs; and recalling school plays, community club picnics on the Hudson River and Christmas Carols for the community of Cedar Hill. Marie was always at the center of our lives as she taught us the skills to face the world as we were growing to become adults.

The highlight of the afternoon came when Marie gave us her version of how we performed during her tenure with us. Needless to say all our grades have not been turned in to the superintendent for final analysis and we will always have to continually improve, as a person, in Marie's eyes to our last day. Our community gathering was unique whereby the classes of 1934 to 1944 could meet collectively to say thank you to a most special person and one who in many ways constructed the foundation of our lives.

Respectfully submitted,

Parker D. Mathusa, Class of 1944

*(Hamagrael House, cont. from P1)*

In 1932 the Edwin Heinsohns modernized and renovated the house. In 1937 he sold all but 8 acres that the house stood on for a development of home sites. Sixteen acres was the proposed site for the Hamagrael School. that the voters were asked to authorize the purchase of the land at a public hearing on November 13,1942. In the early 1940's the Heinsohns wished to name their home at 187 Roweland Ave. "Hamagrael". They received permission to use the name by Mrs. Heinsohn's relative who used the name for his former property in Massachusetts. "Hamagrael" (as the story has been passed down) is Danish for "home in the country" In the 1960's the name was no longer used for the house because the school was built and it was named "Hamagrael". The purchase price for the land the school was built on was \$3,000.

Other owners of the house through the years improved the landscaping, added to the house, put in a swimming pool, and enjoyed the house. Dr. and Mrs. David Q'Keeffe purchased the house in 1971 and lived there until 2000. Mrs. Q'Keeffe (Diane) has given wonderful information and news articles about the development of the land around the house, which with land they sold allowed for the extension of Jordan Blvd. and Wisconsin Blvd. She also told of the 29 wonderful years there when their children grew up using the lovely grounds.

In the winter months Dr. Q'Keeffe flooded the front yard for a hockey rink and figure skating rink for their children and friends. During the Fall they erected Football goal posts. The Q'Keeffes have given us pages of this information for our collection. How wonderful it would be if more of our houses had this information, and it all happened because after playing bridge at Helen Smith's one day, I didn't turn left to Jordan Blvd. I went straight down Roweland!

Lois Dillon, *Historic Resources Chairman*

## *Memories from the House Tour*

LYNNE CLARKE & ALICE MURPHY



CHARLES CRANGLE, MR. & MRS. ROBERT  
O'NEILL AND LOIS DILLON

OTTO & URSULA MERTY

## Heard and Seen Around Column

Many people had a good time in the Museum talking with others after taking the Drive-it- Yourself House Tour. Our new Town Historian Raymond Houghton came in and introduced himself. We had not known that Joe Allgaier resigned as Historian.

A man came in to see if we had an old map of the Town because he goes around with a metal detector searching for treasure - Betty VanOostenbrugge said that we did, and sold it to him.

Another man came in to see if we knew anything about a local man back in the late 1800's who had written a book about Howe Caverns? No, we didn't, but he told us a lot about our local caves.

One woman came in to check the Tour to make sure that her house was not on the Tour!

Dorothy B. Brown gave the Museum a beautiful black wool Victorian cape. Marian Davis said we did not have a cape like it.

Joe Lamprecht presented the Museum with his late wife Judy's collection of 1920 - 1940's dresses. The Museum Committee plans to display them in the near future.

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*Lois Dillon and Kathleen Newkirk, Editors*

Childhood Treasures; Toys from the Past." This fascinating exhibit was largely put together with the vintage toys loaned by many of our members, along with items from our permanent collection. Marian Davis and myself spent many hours arranging and setting up the displays. It was fun to work with so many great toys. Each Sunday Betty Van Oostenbrugge arranged for Museum hostesses to watch over the exhibit and greet guests, and answer questions.

On two Sundays in July and August, Lois Dillon, Historic Resources Chairman organized and promoted the "Drive it Yourself Tour of Selected Historic Houses and Sites in the Town of Bethlehem". There were many people who enjoyed the Tour.

Through the efforts of Howard Gmelch and Connie Mulligan we have a new updated Year Book.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that it is the volunteers that make our Museum work. I would like to thank

all of you who have helped, and will look forward to others assisting us in the coming year.

Sincerely,  
Ann VanDervort  
President, BHA



Peter Mc Carty turning over the gavel to new President, Ann VanDervort  
*May Annual Mtg., 2005*

Town of Bethlehem Historical Association  
Cedar Hill Schoolhouse  
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Selkirk, New York 12158

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