

# *Fly Creeker*

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)  
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VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1 \* WINTER, 1997

## NEWS BRIEFS

- **Renewed interest...** Since the last newsletter, we have received membership renewals from Irving & Joan Lyons, Carolyn McLean, Rolan Mumford, Janice Pope, Phyllis Todd, Jim & Margaret Wolff, and charter members Irwin & Virginia Curlis (see below), John & Jean Finch, and George & June Wyckoff. This brings our 1996-97 membership total to 113.
- **Due-ly noted...** Final reminder: membership dues were payable August 1, 1996. If your name was not listed on the roster in the last issue, or in the news item above, please use the application on page three of this newsletter to renew. Membership is good through December 31, 1997. We appreciate your continued support.
- **Still going...** Elaine Harvey's streak of FCAHS meetings is still alive. Elaine has now attended 54 straight meetings since last missing one in November, 1991.
- **Slowly but brochure-ly...** Following a discouraging start, the Brochure Committee -- consisting of Peter Martin, Florence Michaels, and Elaine Harvey -- reports progress on the proposed area brochure. They plan to meet early this year, and hope to begin production of the brochure this spring.
- **You, too can be a journalist...** The Publications Committee plans to hold its annual gathering at the Fly Creek Church on March 26, just prior to the FCAHS meeting. All interested people are invited.

The FCAHS regrets to report the recent deaths of two long-time members. We extend our sincere condolences to their families and friends.

**Garfield P. Burnham**, a FCAHS member since 1990, died November 24, 1996 at Cooperstown.

Mr. Burnham was born at Seneca Falls, NY on March 8, 1912, and married Katherine Miller on July 26, 1942. He served in the U.S. Army from 1942-45, and taught Industrial Arts in Liberty, NY for nearly three decades. He and his wife had lived in Fly Creek for the past 14 years.

Mr. Burnham's survivors include his wife, a sister, two children, and five grandchildren.

**Virginia W. Curlis**, a charter member of the FCAHS, died November 30, 1996 at her Fly Creek home, following a long illness.

The former Virginia Westhead was born in Brooklyn on May 31, 1920, and married Irwin W. Curlis on April 19, 1941. The two of them had lived in the Fly Creek area for the past two decades. Virginia served as an interpreter for the Farmers' Museum and Fenimore House, and was a member of several organizations, including the Fly Creek Volunteer Fire Department Women's Auxiliary.

Virginia is survived by her husband, two sisters, three children, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren, among others.

## 1997 MEETINGS SLATED



Mark your 1997 calendars with this year's FCAHS meeting dates: January 22, February 26, March 26, April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, August 27, September 24, October 22, and November 19. Meetings are held in the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church beginning at 7 P.M., and are open to the public.

The January meeting will feature FCAHS President Jim Atwell, speaking on "The Meneely Bell Works and the Fly Creek Methodist Church Bell." In February, attendees will provide their own program with the annual "Remembrances of Times Past." And, in March, John Phillips will demonstrate and describe "Old Swords and Guns."

The final two 1996 meetings of the FCAHS were held on October 23 and November 20. At the October meeting, attendees pooled car rides to Jim & Shirley Parmentier's Fly Creek home/studio, where they had been invited to observe the making of clay products. Procedures were demonstrated and/or explained, from the processing of the raw clay to the firing of finished items. Those who attended agreed it was an interesting and educational experience, and appreciated the Parmentiers' willingness to share their expertise.

The November meeting featured Jim Habener, President of the Greater Milford Historical Association. He spoke about activities planned and carried out for Milford's 200th anniversary, and also shared historical news items culled from *The Milford Methodist*. These both informed and reminded members of times gone by. It was especially pleasing that Mr. Habener spoke with such clarity and projection that all could hear -- an added bonus for those with failing ears! As usual, the program was followed by the business meeting and the serving of refreshments. (Submitted by George Badgley)

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

By Elaine Harvey

(Editor's note: this wintertime assortment is the fourth and final installment of tidbits collected during Elaine's research of area history. The items are from the book, *History of Cooperstown*.)

A Linn tractor equipped with a snow plow was purchased by the Town of Otsego, and used to good advantage in winter in keeping the highways open for traffic. (January 1, 1925.)

The Cooperstown Fish & Game Club, now with membership of more than 400, voted to lease from Stephen Clark the old club house on the former golf links just west of the village on the Fly Creek road. (March 13, 1940.)

Lt. Harry W. Gay was reported missing in action while on an aerial mission over Italy on February 19. He was later reported killed in action. He was the son of Mr. & Mrs. Fred A. Gay of Fly Creek. (March 12, 1944.)

Mrs. Bernice Jones of Oaksville became the first woman in history to occupy an elective Otsego County office when she was sworn in as County Treasurer, succeeding L. Dean Beach of Hartwick. She was elected in November over Herbert Escher of Oneonta, a Democrat, by a margin of 6,508 votes. (January 1, 1951.)

## MEMOIRS OF A FORMER FLY CREEKER

Fred Weigel, a former area resident now living in Florida, has done something more of us should do: record facts of and memories about his life for posterity. Following are some of these:

Fred Weigel moved to Fly Creek from Ilion, NY (where he had been employed by Remington Arms) in August 1943. He was inducted into the U.S. Navy in March 1944, serving with the Fleet Air Wing Four in the Aleutian Islands of the North Pacific. He was honorably discharged in November, 1945. During his time in the service, Fred's wife Wilma prepared hot lunches for the children (including the Weigels' three sons, Robert, Fred, Jr., and Richard) attending Fly Creek School.

In December 1945, Fred began working at Western Auto in Cooperstown. He remained there until September 1947, when he started his own business in Fly Creek, selling and servicing oil-burning space heaters and furnaces. In May 1948, he expanded to selling and servicing gas and electric household appliances, water softeners, washers and dryers, and doing limited electrical contracting. In addition to running the business, Fred also drove a bus for the Cooperstown school district for a few years.

Fred was active in the formation of the Fly Creek Fire Department, serving as Fire Chief during the time the Fire Hall was built. He also served on the Otsego County Fire Advisory Board during this time. He helped to procure and renovate the tanker truck and the Jeep fire truck.

Fred had earned his pilot's license in 1938. He was a member of the Civil Air Patrol and Cooperstown Flying Club, Inc., and gave rides in his aircraft to many local people. He voluntarily did aerial searches for Otsego County Sheriff Mills Miller.

Fred is also a member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and the Masonic Lodge. Wilma was a member of the Rebeccas, American Legion Auxiliary, and Fly Creek Fire Department Auxiliary. Their family all attended the Fly Creek United Methodist Church (where Wilma sang in the choir) and Sunday School.

Fred sold his business and moved to Florida in 1959. In 1979, he retired as Terminal Superintendent of the Palm Beach International Airport, and Wilma retired from the Business Affairs Department of Palm Beach Junior College. They both still live in Florida. (Submitted by Florence Michaels)

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### 1996-97 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY P.O. Box 87, Fly Creek, NY 13337

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_ New Membership \_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Check applicable box(es):

- Please register me as a member of the FCAHS. Enclosed is a check for \$10.
- Please register us to a family FCAHS membership. Enclosed is a check for \$15.
- Please accept the enclosed donation, in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum \$20), and enroll me/us as a contributing/sustaining member(s).

## A FLY CREEK POET

Phyllis L. Talbot, a long-time Fly Creek resident who died in 1987, not only wrote the weekly "Fly Creek" column for the Cooperstown *Freeman's Journal*, but also was a published poet. Following are two of her efforts. "T'aint Funny" appeared in the Summer 1974 issue of *Green's Magazine*, while "Thought for Today" was printed in the Spring 1975 edition of *Poetry Today*. (Submitted by Elaine Harvey)

### Thought for Today

Bright sun on the pond, cool shade beneath the pines,  
Spring's weather gets me, I'm lazy all the time  
No ambition stirs me, I'm satisfied to rest  
I've spent my life a-working, given all my best.

Now in my retirement I have time to write  
All ideas have left me, I think with all my might,  
The time to do is when you're young, inspiration fresh,  
When ideas come tumbling when you lie down to rest.

So burn the midnight oil, find your chosen niche,  
Set back and see the beauty when you're old and rich.  
Maybe not in money, but in glorious memories  
Of days among the flowers, watching birds and bees

Seeing the glory of the autumn, colors gay and wild,  
Gathering the chestnuts when you were a child.  
The whiteness of winter with its snow and blow  
Remembering the blizzard that stranded you and Joe.

If the present and the future is governed by the past  
We will find the ending, peace in our hearts at last.

### T'aint Funny

Words that sparkle come slowly  
Hesitating on my lips  
My husband reads the paper  
"Ed Marshall broke both hips"

More words come through to me  
Flowing clear as wine  
My husband reading ads  
"Sausage a dollar forty nine"

Once more I start to write  
And comes my husband's voice  
"Steak, one ninety eight a pound  
Very best USDA choice"

Quiet once more reigns  
And a story I would tell  
In the paper my husband finds  
"For sale: a small hotel!"

By now I've really had it  
With coffee I fill a cup  
"Nixon didn't pay his taxes"  
Ye Gods! I give up

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