

Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)
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NEWS BRIEFS

- **Putting a Lid on It ...** Jim Wolff reports that our building's lavatory roof was completed on May 31, thanks to the donation of time by Steve Smith and Tom Smullens. Jim Yourho did the electrical wiring, and Richie Carr, Ed Thorne, and Sean Hurn have donated many hours framing the inside of the building and putting on the new siding. Two people doing court-ordered community service also have contributed their time and labor to our building. The FCAHS has paid only for the materials required.
- **Shall We Dance? ...** Square and round dances resumed in May. Dances are held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road on the first Saturday of each month through November, from 7-10 PM. Admission is free, and refreshments are available for purchase, with proceeds going to the FCAHS. The next three dances are slated for August 2, September 6, and October 4.
- **All the World's a Stage ...** As they did last year, the Leatherstocking Theatre Company is renting our building to rehearse their plays, and offering free tickets to FCAHS members. Remaining scheduled performances are at the Cooperstown Theatre Festival at 8 PM (* indicates an additional performance at 2 PM) on the following dates: July 22, 23*, 24, 25 & 26, "Master Harold and the Boys"; and August 12, 13*, 14, 15, & 16, "Proof." Call 547-1363 to reserve your seats, and tell Amy that you are a member of FCAHS to receive free admission.
- **It's a Jungle Out There ...** In recent weeks there have been several reports of unusual animals seen in broad daylight in the Town of Otsego. A porcupine was seen on Jones Road, a coyote was spied near Christian Hill Road, a bear was spotted near Beech Street in the outskirts of Cooperstown, and a mountain lion was seen near Rezen Road, all by reliable witnesses. Has anyone else seen any strange critters in the Fly Creek area, recently or in the past?
- **Stretching it Out ...** The matter of whether the Society should take an official position on the Town of Otsego's proposed new building has been tabled three times, and is now slated for the July meeting.
- **Go Fish ...** The Oneonta *Daily Star* recently printed the following in their "Step Back in Time" column, originally from June 5, 1978 (with corrections by the editor): "Merrie Sue Fish, 16-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ward "Jim" Fish, was judged best among seven contestants for the honor of representing Fly Creek volunteer firemen at various functions in 1978-79. Kathy Aufmuth, 15, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Aufmuth, was chosen first runner-up, while Barbara Smith, 15, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Smith was selected as second runner-up to the queen."
- **Jonesie's Lives On ...** The Society will be receiving a valuable donation from FCAHS member Bob Jones of Austin, Texas. Bob is the son of the late Leonard Jones, better known as "Jonesie," long-time proprietor of H. E. Jones' Sons Hardware Store, which served Fly Creek from 1882-1996. Bob has offered to donate various tools and artifacts from the store, and we eagerly await these.
- **Snow Time Like the Present ...** Though we didn't get much after January 3, the winter of 2002-03 produced a total of 103.7" of snow, according to Cooperstown's National Weather Service observer.

NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

- **Family History** ... Anyone with questions or information (e.g., from family Bibles) about their family history should contact the FCAHS Genealogy Committee in care of the *Fly Creeker*. Among the committee's extensive or partial histories are ones on families named Barber, Beadle, Bliss, Bowmaker, Cheney, Colman/Fake, Daniels, Day, Gillett, Hinds, McRorie, Pickers, Putnam, VanHorne, Wikoff/Hoke, and Williams.
- **New & Renew** ... Welcome to our newest member, Claire Kepner. We also received renewals from Grant Campbell, Dorothy LaGasse, Henry & Antoinette Ludlam, Beth Okerson, and Carl & Inga Roemer, bringing our 2003 membership total to an even 150.
- **Leaving No Stone Unturned** ... One of the last research efforts of Marion Brophy (see obituary, back page, and the article in the previous issue) was trying to find out when our FCAHS building was erected. Homing in on it, Marion found the following article in the June 16, 1899 edition of the *Otsego Farmer*: "The foundation for the Grange hall has been laid and Charles Allen of Pierstown is now engaged in framing the building in which everyone appears interested and anxious to see completed."
- **Historian Wanted** ... Marion Brophy's death leaves vacant the position of Town Historian. This is an important volunteer position, with expense funds available through the Town of Otsego. Anyone interested in the position should contact Town Supervisor Bill Gates or Town Clerk Pam Deane.
- **Setting Sale** ... The annual Fly Creek Community Yard Sale will be held on August 23. Contact Fund-Raising Committee chairpersons Elaine Harvey or Freida Snyder for more information, or check local newspapers and posters in the days prior to August 23.
- **Building for Rent** ... The FCAHS has set a fee schedule for rental of its building. For full-day use, the rate is \$200 for profit-making organizations, \$100 for 501 C (3) non-profit organizations, and \$50 for FCAHS members; the respective rates for half-day use are \$100, \$50, and \$25. There is no fee for FCAHS-sponsored events. A security deposit equal to the user fee, and proof of \$250,000 liability insurance, are required. There are also fees for a custodian (\$10/hour, minimum \$40), and for heat, if required (\$50). Contact the FCAHS President for further information.

MEETINGS

The next three meetings of the FCAHS are slated for July 23, August 27, and September 24, 2003. In July, Don Drake will present "Let's Meet at the Grange." He'll give a history of the Grange movement and dilate on its importance as a social hub in farm communities. August will see the annual meeting, preceded by a covered-dish dinner at 6:00, and featuring annual elections and committee reports. The September program will be "Meet the Candidates," with contestants for Town Supervisor and two Town Board positions expected to be on hand for questions & answers. Society gatherings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road beginning at 7 PM.

The three most recent meetings were held on April 23, May 28, and June 25. In April, Dr. Gilbert Vincent, President of the New York State Historical Association, presented "Stewards of a Building's History." Dr. Vincent gave observations about and recommendations for our building, and also spoke about the past, present, and future of the Farmers' Museum. The May program was "Catskills Rising, a Poetry Play" by the Catskill Poetry Theatre, directed and scripted by Susan Melchior. Seven members of the troupe wove 44 poems by local and internationally-known poets into an excellent presentation. And the June program was "Where'd Baseball Come From?" by Tim Wiles, Director of Research at the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Tim probed back in history, years and even centuries before the mythical 1839 invention of the game, to reveal references to the term "baseball," and examples of similar games.

FCAHS COMMITTEES

[Editor's Note: the following was submitted by Jim Wolff on behalf of the FCAHS Board of Trustees]

The Board of Trustees adopted the following committee structure, organization and responsibility statement at their January 15, 2003 meeting and instructed the Secretary to file a copy of this document in the Society's Policy and Procedures book:

Reporting: Each committee Chairperson is responsible to and shall report to, and coordinate their committee's activities through the Board of Trustees. Periodically, each committee shall prepare a plan, submit it to the trustees for approval, then go about executing their plan.

STANDING COMMITTEES

1. LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Mission: The Committee is "responsible for collecting, cataloging, caring for, arranging, and repairing books, manuscripts, newspapers, artifacts, relics, and other historical material." (*Bylaws*)

Duties: This committee oversees the Society's primary function: collecting and preserving objects and materials related to the history of the Fly Creek area and making them available to researchers and other interested parties. The committee is in charge of both the archives and the museum function of the Society. It will receive any requests for use of the archives, assure that a Society member is present when the archives are in use, duplicate materials when requested, and assure the safety of all materials. It will arrange rotating displays of archive materials for the Society's regular meetings. It will see that museum objects are displayed with accurate written explanations and with proper precautions for their security.

Members: Chair and at least two other Society members.

2. PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mission: The Committee is "responsible for finding ways and means for establishing joint or individual research studies, for providing newsletters to members, and for publicity." (*Bylaws*)

Duties: The committee's most regular responsibilities are (a) assuring the publication of *The Fly Creeker*, the Society's newsletter, and (b) assuring public notice, through posters and press releases, of the Society's regular meetings and its special events. The committee will also encourage, in every way it can, continued research into local history by Society members and other interested parties.

Members: Chair and at least four other Society members.

3. PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Mission: The Committee is "responsible for arranging suitable programs." (*Bylaws*)

Duties: The committee will arrange programs for all monthly meetings except for the Annual Meeting. The programs may be speakers or other sorts of presentations, but all should reflect the Society's purposes as outlined in its Constitution, or, more broadly, the role of the Society as a promoter of the area's well-being. The committee should arrange at least two programs each year that have special appeal to children, and two that are directed toward the elderly in the community. The committee will see that individuals who present programs are thanked in writing.

Members: Chair and at least two other Society members.

4. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Mission: This committee shall be "responsible for membership drives." (*Bylaws*)

Duties: The committee will concern itself with growth of the Society through (a) recruiting new members, (b) through retention of new members by introducing them to the membership and by educating them to the Society's history and purposes. The committee will see that a member greets all newcomers and visitors to each meeting, and that these newcomers are introduced to the body and publicly welcomed by the President. When a member does not renew membership, the Committee will contact the individual to find the reason and to encourage continuing in the Society.

Members: Chair and at least three other Society members.

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FCAHS COMMITTEES, Cont.

OTHER COMMITTEES

5. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mission: This committee shall oversee all fund-raising activities of the Society, whether by sponsored events or by solicitation. It shall review potential outside funding sources of gifts or grants. It shall assist the Treasurer in preparing the Annual Operating Budget.

Duties: The committee will assure that all funds collected from any sources are duly given to the Treasurer and entered into the General Funds. The committee will plan and execute any fund-raising campaigns. In cooperation with the Activities Committee, the Finance Committee will propose activities that have a fund-raising as well as a social goal. It shall assure that no individuals or companies are solicited repeatedly or in any other way to cause annoyance. In the case of grants, it shall oversee the writing of applications and the gathering of necessary support material. The committee will offer the Treasurer any requested assistance in preparing the Annual Operating Budget.

Members: Chair, plus the Treasurer (ex officio), and at least two other Society members.

6. ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Mission: This committee will plan, prepare, and conduct events whose basic purpose is to provide entertainment and cultural enrichment for the Society and the community.

Duties: The committee will oversee any meals offered by the Society, whether for its own members or for the public. It will oversee any social (e.g., dances) sponsored by the Society. The committee will seek to broaden the pattern of events to include musical performances, lectures, films, etc. When moneys are collected at Activities Committee events, the Committee will assure that the funds are duly forwarded to the Treasurer for inclusion in the General Funds. The Treasurer will then see to paying any associated expenses from the General Funds. The committee will adhere to the Board's Policy Guidelines for the use of the Headquarters Building and property.

Members: Chair and at least two other Society members.

7. BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Mission: This committee will oversee the general maintenance and any improvements of the Headquarters Building and its grounds.

Duties: The committee will develop and maintain an inventory of all furniture and equipment belonging to the Society. In cooperation with the appointed Property Supervisor, it will assure the regular cleaning of the building, disposal of trash, and grounds keeping. The committee will oversee any routine repairs and the continuing restoration projects.

Members: Chair, plus Property Supervisor (ex officio) and at least two other Society members.

8. GENEALOGY COMMITTEE

Mission: This committee will encourage Society members to research information on their families and will provide them with instruction and materials to aid them.

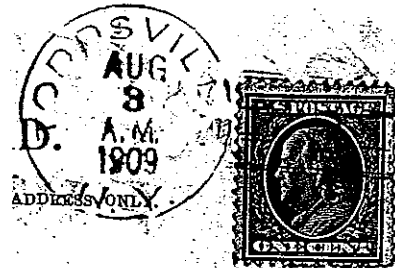
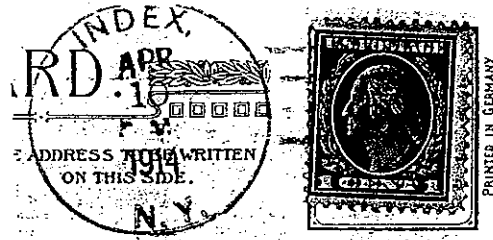
Duties: The committee will hold regular meetings for interested members. It will offer guidance in the best methods of family research. It will invite experienced genealogists to share their techniques.

Members: Chair, plus at least two other Society members.



LOCAL POSTMARKS

Copied below are old postmarks from various Town of Otsego post offices. These are from a collection owned by Elaine Harvey. Included are Flycreek – note the one-word spelling (November 13, 1900), Index (April 10, 1914), Cooperstown (June 17, 1909), Phoenix Mills (November 30, 1905), and Toddsville (August 3, 1909).



CHURCH RENOVATIONS

Previous articles about the history of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church (most recently in the Spring, 1994 edition of the *Fly Creeker*) mentioned unspecified renovations in 1874-75. The following, from the March 11, 1875 *Freeman's Journal* (reprinted in its March 10, 2000 edition, and submitted by Peter Martin), gives some details about these:

“The M. E. Church of Fly Creek, which has been in the process of remodeling since August last, was reopened with appropriate services on Thursday, Feb. 25, 1875. The old church has been built about 40 years, with galleries on three sides and a high pulpit. The society has felt for some time that it should be remodeled and made more convenient for the wants of the society. It has been enlarged, making a very convenient lecture or Sunday school room, a convenient parlor, a large vestibule and an orchestra behind the pulpit. The galleries have been taken out; the body of the audience room remaining the same size as before. It has been beautifully frescoed, painted, carpeted and cushioned, and the whole is heated by a furnace from beneath. A beautiful organ, well suited to the size and style of the audience room, is the generous gift of Mr. John Hooker.”

The *Fly Creeker* regrets to report the deaths of three long-time FCAHS members, with condolences to their family and friends.

Zoe Potts Smith, a Society member since 1989, died suddenly in Rochester on January 6, aged 91. Zoe E. Potts was born July 1, 1912, and grew up in Fly Creek, moving to Rochester after becoming a nurse. She was a Nursing supervisor at Rochester General and Strong Memorial Hospitals, and became a Public Health visiting nurse. In 1941 Zoe married Ken Smith, who predeceased her. She is survived by a sister, Dorothy Potts Laut; two children, Jim Smith and Sue-Ellen Spence; two grandchildren, and two nephews.

Zoe was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, Otsego-Hartwick Chapter, and many Rochester-area service organizations, in addition to the FCAHS. She contributed to the *Fly Creeker* with a letter about baseball in the Fly Creek area (Summer, 1994), and a delightful "ghost story" (Autumn, 1996).

Marjorie H. Tillapaugh, a member from 1990-2002, died suddenly at her Cooperstown home on April 11, aged 80. Marge was the widow of George Tillapaugh, who – along with Florence Michaels – conceived the idea of our Society. Following George's unexpected death in 1988, Florence moved swiftly to make their idea a reality. The first issue of the *Fly Creeker* was dedicated to George's memory.

Marion Brophy, a member since 2000, died in Cooperstown on May 22, aged 77. Marion Hancock was born in Binghamton on February 4, 1926, and married James Brophy in Albany on September 4, 1949. She was employed by the New York State Historical Association for 18 years and by the Otsego County Clerk's Office for 15 years, and also served as Town Historian for the last few years of her life. On June 26, 2002, Marion presented a program on "Researching Local History" to the FCAHS. Her work on solving the riddle of our building's age was featured in the last newsletter, with an update in this one. Marion is survived by her husband, four children, eight grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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