



NEWSLETTER

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Patricia Flint 733-5871

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Sandy Hamer 733-0196

Judith Pierson 733-0196

Dale Riggs 733-6772

Committee Chairpersons

Cemeteries

Patricia Flint 733-5871

Collections & Heritage Center

Bev McClave 733-5170

Fundraising

Bill Zimmerman 794-8430

Membership

Claudette LeFebvre 733-0491

Nominating

David Flint 733-5871

Newsletter

Sandy Hamer 733-0196

Program

Pat Bowman 413-738-5420

Refreshments

Alice Mather 733-5668

Road Challenge a Big Success

Participants enjoyed prizes, good food, autumn views and lots of fun.



Historic Road Challenge participants (l. to r.) Ann Bears, Karl Roenick, Ted Bears and Joan Roenick peer closely at old gravestones as they seek the names of a deacon and his wives buried in the Stephentown Cemetery on Cemetery Hill Road.

by David Flint

The weather and splendid fall foliage provided the perfect setting in September for the Stephentown Historical Society's first Historic Road Challenge. Ten teams of two to five members each participated, driving a 40-mile scenic loop. The directions provided a wealth of historical information of things to be seen along the route, such as several still-standing one room schoolhouses, churches, and the oldest house in Stephentown.

Teams were required to answer a set of 39 questions about places and things they saw along the way. Some were easy, some required historical knowledge and some were whimsical. All teams returned to the Heritage Center at 5 pm for hors d'oeuvres, a delicious turkey dinner prepared by Pat and David Flint, Marilyn Osgood and many helpers.

Every team won at least one prize, too, all donated by local businesses. The Society extends special thanks to the generous sponsors: Avon - Carly

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Winners of the first Historic Road Challenge pose for a celebratory photo before heading home. (l. to r.) First place winner Ann Bears (husband Ted is missing from the photo) and Second place winners Linda Sullivan and Pat Mobos.

It's Time to Renew Your Annual SHS Membership for 2008

The Historical Society inaugurated its new fiscal year on January 1, which means that it is time to renew your annual membership for 2008. The SHS budget is always tight, so early renewals are greatly appreciated. Membership categories and annual fees are:

Individual	\$ 10
Family	\$ 25
Supporting	\$ 50
Life	\$ 200

Please make your check payable to the Stephentown Historical Society and mail it to the SHS at PO Box 11, Stephentown, NY 12168.

In Memoriam

SHS Life Members

Virginia Atwater 1926 - 2007
Dorothy Haley 1928 - 2007

Road Challenge - Continued from Page 1

Drake, Berkshire Mountain House, attorney Brian Baker, Classic Frame & Art, Dave's Market, Eastwick Press, Gardner's Ice Cream & Coffee Shop, Kinderhook Creek Farm, Madden's Service Center, New Scrub Board Laundromat & Car Wash, Pease Farm, Pizza Plus, Snow's Farm, Split Ends Salon, Stephentown Democratic Committee, Stephentown Hotel, Stephentown Republican Committee, Sykes' Store, The Berry Patch, Valerie Sutton Real Estate, Zema's Nursery and Zwack, Inc. Also contributing were Cumberland Farms, Dunkin' Donuts, Hall & Higgins Funeral Home and Koepf's.

Bev McClave and Ellen Jennings organized the Road Challenge with the assistance of Sandy Hamer, Judith Pierson and Tammy Madden.

TOWN GRANTS HELP WITH STEEPLE REPAIR, HEAT LOSS AND OPERATIONS

At its December budget meeting, the Stephentown Town Board awarded a one-time grant of \$14,500 to the Historical Society to help offset the sizeable cost of repairing the leaking steeple and creating insulating panels for the windows at the Heritage Center. The grant was in response to a plea for assistance made to the members of the Town Board at its November meeting by Historical Society President Patricia A. Flint. The grant is in addition to a \$6,500 in funds that the Town Board awarded to assist with operating funds in 2008.

When she announced the grant and operating fund support at the Society's January meeting, Flint said, "We are most grateful for the town's support in this time of very tight budgets and for our town selectmen's acknowledgement of the importance of the Heritage Center to the citizens of Stephentown."

The insulating panels were scheduled to be installed on the large windows in the Heritage Center in January and the steeple repairs will begin as soon as the weather breaks in the spring.

STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Officers

Patricia Flint, President
Dale Riggs, Vice-President
Isabel Krebs, Recording
Secretary
Caroline White, Treasurer
Beverly McClave,
Corresponding Secretary

Trustees

Robert Gorman
Sandy Hamer
William Jennings
Fred Haley
Judith Pierson
Patricia Coon
Claudette Lefebvre

Constitution & Bylaws: In January, the Trustees discussed updating the Constitution & By-Laws and appointed a committee comprised of Judith Pierson, Bev McClave and Bill Zimmerman to consider the issue more fully. Some of the changes considered were retention on the Board of the Past President, no term limits for the office of Treasurer and limiting the amount that the President can spend without Board approval.

Maintenance & Repairs: The Society continued to make great efforts to take care of the historic building entrusted to us that we know as the Stephentown Heritage Center. A steeple leak was discovered in January that could damage our collection; there is some rot in the outside storm window frames; and rising fuel costs dictate the need to take steps to cut down on heat loss through the high church windows.

The Board retained Ron Babcock to fix the steeple leak and replace the roofing with high quality metal shingles for \$12,500. Work will begin when there is a suitable break in the weather. David Cornell, who originally built the storm windows, will repair them in the spring. The Board has no cost estimate for this project as yet.

The Board also has contracted with Advance Energy Panels of Hoosick Falls to bring the windows up to Energy Star efficiency by constructing and installing advanced technology thermal insulating clear panels to be installed over the inside of the existing windows. That work is expected to be completed in January 2008 at a cost of about \$4,500.

Contributions From The Town Of Stephentown: The Stephentown Town Board was very generous and responded to our need to preserve the Heritage Center with a one-time grant of \$14,500, including \$10,000 for the steeple repair and \$4,500 for the interior energy panels. This is in addition to the regular \$6,500 award to help with operating costs, an amount that matches what they granted us in 2007.

Finances: Contributions from the Town will go far in making up the \$6,000 deficit in our finances at the end of 2007. As of mid December, expenditures were actually under budget by close to \$5,000. The deficit results only from a capital expense of \$11,000 in November related to the steeple repair project. Memorial contributions during the year totaled \$1,757, offsetting the continued decline in our Annual Fund Drive, which netted only \$570 in 2007. Our endowment funds performed well. The Wachovia account shows a gain of 6.5% and Fidelity funds did even better with a gain of 26%.

The Audit Committee met in November and found the financial records of the Society to be accurately recorded and maintained and continued improvement in the financial health of the Society. The Committee recommended that a computer program such as QuickBooks Pro be used to maintain financial records, replacing the current practice of paper records.

New Sign: The Heritage Center has a new double-sided sign out front, created at cost by Kevin Doherty of Montauk Sign Carving Co. of Stephentown and purchased and donated to the Society by Trustee Fred Haley.

Community Service: David Kilventon, a senior at Berlin High School, earned credits in a community and government class by volunteering his time to mow the grass, touch up the Heritage Center landscaping, and paint the back entry way.

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Display Case For The Post Office: After searching in vain for the ideal used display case to place in the Stephentown Post Office to draw attention to what we have to offer, the Board decided to have Rick Gillespie build a 6' case with three shelves for approximately \$600.

Programs: Thanks to the Program Committee, the programs in 2007 were exceptional and well received. In January Berlin Town Historian Sharon Klein discussed Berlin's Arthur Cowee, the "Gladiola King," who experimented with the propagation of different flowers and fruits. In February Kathy Sheehan of the Rensselaer County Historical Society spoke on Mourning Customs and the Cemeteries of Rensselaer County. In March, Lion G. Miles, Berkshire County scholar and historian, talked about the Mohican Indians of this area. In April local historian and author Gary Leveille gave a new perspective on the War of 1812 with his talk on Canadian heroine Laura Ingersoll Secord. The house was packed in May for the showing of the film *Kristie*, a movie made in 1964 for the NBC Children's Theater, much of it filmed in the Berlin and Stephentown area. In June Annmarie Lanese entertained us with stories about Troy's red light district and its legendary Madam, Mame Faye. Archeological historian Walter Wheeler told in August of the Albany silversmiths who crafted silver hollowware and flatware between 1760 and 1920. From Paul Guilbeault we learned about fireworks in September, and in October author and professional storyteller Kathleen Gill presented a program on "Walking the Appalachian Trail". Then a knight in shining armor, Sir Geoffrey FitzGalen, aka Jeff Martin, appeared at our November meeting to tell us all we needed to know about 14th century armor. The year ended with our Annual Potluck Holiday Dinner at which the beer and tales of brewing were provided by Brewmeister Roger Savoy of the Hennessy Homebrew Emporium in Defreestville.

Fund Raisers: Our Strawberry Festival, held June 24, was the most successful to date with a net gain of \$1,757. Special thanks go to Bev McClave, Bill Zimmerman and Dale Riggs. The Tag Sale, held August 11 was another great success, raising \$847, thanks to Bev and her committee.

Field Trip: Pat Bowman led sixteen members on an August field trip in August to two historic Rensselaerwyck residences: the Crailo Historic Site in Rensselaer, for many years the home of the Van Rensselaer Patroons, and the Schuyler Mansion, home of Philip Schuyler, delegate to the Continental Congress, Major General in the Continental Army, New York State Senator and husband of Catherine Van Rensselaer.

Historic Road Challenge: Weather was perfect for the Society's first Historic Road Challenge in October, which replaced the Fall Festival. Nine teams driving a 40-mile route were tasked with answering a list of questions about things they saw along the way. The amazing support provided by many local business sponsors made this a successful fundraiser, with a profit of \$369, as well as a fun event. Prime organizers were Bev McClave, Tammy Madden, Sandy Hamer, Judith Pierson, and Ellen Jennings.

Holcomb Diary: Bill Zimmerman had the entire Holcomb diary digitally scanned so that it can be put onto a CD or DVD and is now in the tedious process of correcting scanning errors.

Acquisitions: Generous friends contributed a Bicentennial costume, a 1787 Indenture, an 1856 Manual for the Use of the Legislature, and a copy of "The Little Leaven that Leaveneth the Whole Lump" donated by the author, Lucille Salitan.

Elections: In December, the following were elected to office for 2008: Claudette LeFebvre elected Vice President, to replace Dale Riggs; Isabel Krebs elected to a first full term as Recording Secretary; Judith Pierson, appointed Trustee in 2006 to replace Neil Krebs, was elected to that position, and Sandy Hamer re-elected as Trustee. Dale Riggs expressed interest in staying on the Board and the Nominating Committee recommended that she be appointed in January to replace Claudette LeFebvre.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the Board Members for their support throughout my first term. My special thanks to Bill Zimmerman for his expertise and guidance.

Respectfully submitted, Patricia A. Flint, President
1/7/2008

2008 PROGRAMS TO SATISFY A RANGE OF INTERESTS

There's something of interest in each of the monthly programs that SHS Program Chair Pat Bowman and her committee (Isabel Krebs, Meredith Rhindress and Lucille Salhaney) have planned for the first half of 2008. The topics range from bread baking to the WPA and include stone wall building and vintage snowmobiles, not to mention the 20th Anniversary Celebration of our own Heritage Center.

The calendar of events is in the box to the right. Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month, are free and begin at 7:30 pm after a brief business meeting (the July potluck supper will begin at 6:30 pm). The public is always welcome at meetings.

2008 Calendar

February 4 - "Stone Walls"
presented by Terry Lamphere

March 3 - "WPA"
presented by David Larkin

April 7 - "Vintage Snowmobiles"
presented by Charles M. Ballard

May 5 "Heritage Center: 20-Year Anniversary"

June 2 - "On this Site Was..."
presented by Kathryn Sheehan

July 7 - Potluck Supper & "Bread through the Ages"
presented by Jennifer Fenander



***Dressed to Tilt:** Wearing sabatons over his feet, grieves to shield his lower legs and brigandine plate riveted to the cloth protecting his torso, speaker Jeff Mann, above, discusses 14th Century Armor, armor-making and warfare at the November 5th meeting of the Stephentown Historical Society.*

**Fort Crailo Trip**

The annual quest to learn more about our past took SHS members on a fall outing to Fort Crailo and the Schulyer Mansion. Lead by SHS Program Chair Pat Bowman, the trip was topped off with the traditional stop for ice cream. David Flint photo.

2008 HERITAGE CENTER HOURS AND DATES OF CLOSURE

The Heritage Center is open from 1 to 4 pm on Fridays and by appointment. It will be *closed* on the following dates in 2008: President's Day February 22, Good Friday March 21, Memorial Day May 30, Independence Day July 4, Labor Day August 29, Thanksgiving November 28, Christmas December 26 and New Year's January 2.



Stephentown's Cemeteries Need Our Help

Stephentown has a rich history that goes back to the Dutch men and women who first settled this region. Some of those settlers moved on to other parts of the country, of course, but many stayed right here in Stephentown to raise their families.

77 Cemeteries in Town

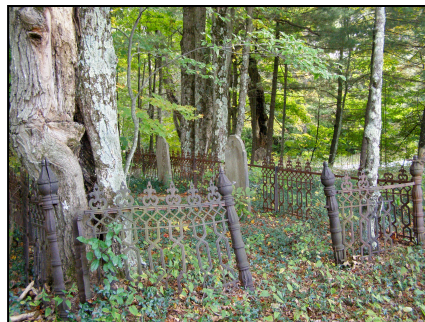
Descendents of some of those early families live and work in Stephentown today - and hundreds of their forefathers and mothers are buried in some of the 77 cemeteries located in our town.

Many of Stephentown's cemeteries are small, family plots. The tradition in early days was to bury family members on a small piece of land right on the family

homestead. Now that families are so widely dispersed, a large number of graveyards have been virtually abandoned.

Spring Survey Planned

In an effort to preserve this important part of our town's history, the Stephentown Historical Society is seeking volunteers to help with a survey of our cemeteries this spring. It won't take much time or effort to visit an assigned cemetery and fill out a form indicating its general conditions and needs. For example, some cemeteries may only need weeding a couple of times a year; others may need more intensive work such as tree removal, fence repair and stone work.



Some cemeteries, such as the Root Cemetery, above, need periodic mowing and other maintenance to keep them in decent shape.

Please Help Us Survey?

Won't you volunteer a bit of your time this spring to help with our cemetery survey? Call Pat Flint, Dale Riggs, Caroline White or Sandy Hamer for more information. Their phone numbers are on the Board list on the front of this newsletter.



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