



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Marie Adams
Linda Cohen
Michael Cunningham
Mary Farmer
Harry Kellogg
June Kiefer
Lee Minnie
Richard Olson
Reed Proper
Diane Ritz
James L. Ulrich
Margaret Vandelinder

OFFICERS

President
Christine Cardner
Vice President
Roland Christy Jr.
Secretary
Lynda Kellogg
Treasurer
Christine Cardner

DIRECTOR
Gail Murray

STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

Stakeholder Roundtable II is planned for Saturday, June 12th, 10 am at the Big Moose Firehall. Historical Association members and the public are welcome to attend. Please register at the Historical Association, call 369-3838 or email director@webbhistory.org.

The first Stakeholder Roundtable took place on Wednesday, February 4, 2004 at the Old Forge Library with 20 people in attendance. That group broke up into individual small groups for brainstorming, reflection, recording and prioritizing led by trustee Michael Cunningham.

Results of both sessions will be discussed at future planning sessions of the Board of Trustees.

Benefit Auction June 19, 2004

Our second BENEFIT AUCTION will be held on June 19, 2004 on the grounds of the Goodsell Memorial Museum, 2993 State Route 28 in Old Forge.

Donations of antiques, new, nearly new and Adirondack style items are being collected. Preview of items starts at 9 AM. Bidding starts promptly at 11 AM. Items will be randomly selected.

Some of the items already collected are: Grumman Canoe, Chairs, End Tables, Lamps, Cross-Country Skis, 1986 Chris Craft 16'11" Boat, Wooden Trunk, Glassware, Fishing Lures, Barrels, Clocks and other antiques, vintage items and collectibles.

We hope you can attend and help make this event a successful fundraiser.

Make your reservations now for the Victorian Party on the Porch

The Ways and Means Committee announces what we hope to become an annual fundraiser-social event, a Victorian Party on the Porch. This year's event will take place on Wednesday, July 14, 2004. Please come and enjoy appetizers, a light dinner, beverage and desert.

Our get together starts at 4 PM with appetizers and background music. Our guests will enjoy the exhibits in the six rooms of the museum and conversations with friends and neighbors. Victorian theme decorations will adorn the tables placed on the porches and throughout the first floor and buffet area. It is suggested that our guests wear a vintage piece of clothing, jewelry or hat to add a note of interest to our gathering. Dinner will start at approximately 5 PM. The Farm, Restaurant, Trails End Restaurant, Subway and Holland Farms will be donating some of the food items for our enjoyment.

Tickets may be purchased for \$15 by contacting the Historical Association at 315-369-3838. Seating is limited, please make your reservations soon.

Visit our Website www.webbhistory.org
Email director@webbhistory.org

From the Director's Desk
TOWN OF WEBB HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 513, OLD FORGE, NY 13420
PHONE: 315 369-3838

Coming Events

June 19, 2004—*Benefit Auction* Preview 9-11 AM Bidding starts promptly at 11 AM. Antiques, vintage, Adirondack, new and nearly new items—something for everyone. Donation items accepted year-round.

July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31—One-Hour walking tour of the Old Forge Waterfront led by Town Historian Peg Masters. Tour begins at 9:30 AM at the Hemmer Cottage, Park Avenue. Free.

July 14, 2004—*Victorian Party on the Porch* - appetizers 4PM, light buffet dinner 5PM, dessert Fundraiser-social event, Reservations required, limited seating, \$15 per person

July 27—*Slideshow of the Eagle Bay Area* held at the Hard Times Café, refreshments, followed by a walking tour of Eagle Bay. \$10 pre-registration fee required. Call for reservations. Limited seating.

August 7, 14, 21—*One-Hour Walking Tour* of the Eagle Bay area led by Town Historian, Peg Masters and co-host Stuart Nelson. Tour begins at 9:30 am from the porch of the Hard Times Café. Free

August 7, 2004—*Postcard, Paper and Bottle Show and Sale*—183 Park Avenue, Municipal Building, Old Forge.

August 15—*Taste of the Fulton Chain Benefit Cruise*—Cruise the Fulton Chain of Lakes, enjoy signature dishes from the area's fine restaurants aboard the Clearwater II, and support local architectural preservation efforts. Proceeds to benefit the Hemmer Cottage. Reservations required \$25.

Memorials and Honor 2004

Memorials—Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Vekasy for Albert J. Dorris; Mr. & Mrs. Richard Williams for Bette W. Palmer, Ms. Jane Eyre, Mr. & Mrs. John Hopsicker, Mr. & Mrs. Omer Hudon for Robert Gaudin; Mrs. Ida Winter, Mr. & Mrs. Brian Kerrigan for 'Bunny' Bischoff; Ms. Marion Spain Hannan for Charles Ward Russell; Mrs. Adela Seymour for Chris Seymour; Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Russell for Donald and Janice Russell, Mr. & Mrs. Donald Lawson for Doris Sauer; Mrs. Virginia Gross for Dot & Ken Rivette; Mrs. Pauline Glisson for Edward Boudreau; Mrs. Marilyn Hafner for Evert Hafner; Mr. & Mrs. Rick Anderson for Helen Kuzio; Mrs. Mary Evans for James Evans; Mrs. Cecelia Buckley, Mr. & Mrs. Allen Stripp for Jane Ritz; Mrs. Jeanne Osepchook for Jean Liddle; Ms. Christine Cardner for Jean Titus Cardner and Tina Titus; Mrs. Joyce P. Hall for Joel and Estelle Potter; Mr. & Mrs. Fred Ehrensbeck for 'Kit' Ehrensbeck; Ms. Mary Ellen La Fleche for the La Fleche Family; Ms. Susanne Barrett, Mrs. Muriel Marvin, Mr. & Mrs. Howard Slater for Laurel Marvin; Mrs. Dorothea Una Deis, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lehnen for Leroy W. Deis; Mrs. Eunice Whittlesey for Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Baird, Mrs. Robert Searing, Jr. for Robert T. Searing Jr; Mr. Mark Kavouksorian for Walter Coogan, Mrs. & Mrs. Omer Hudon for Wilfred Hall, Peter Little, Donald Bird; Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Kiefer for Dorothy Blue Ackerman and Mrs. Eleanor Scheidelman for Warren Scheidelman.

Honor—Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Eyre in honor of Thomas and Barbara Keating on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Ms. Gertrude Freedgood, Ms. Karen Hoffman, Mr. & Mrs. John Keith, Ms. Leslie Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Strube, Mr. & Mrs. John Jupin, Mrs. & Mrs. Edward Vanderwall, Mrs. Richard V. D'Alessandro, Ms. Katherine Pfiel in honor of Jack and Barbara DeBevoise on their 50th Wedding Anniversary designated to the Hemmer Cottage Edie Morcy Adirondack Guide Fund.

Letter from the Director

It is impossible to ignore the events taking place in the world and on our shores that are affecting our daily lives nor should we. Reductions in Federal and State support and changes in the amount of extra money earmarked for flexible spending from our loyal donors is the result of these events. But we must strive to keep the business going. Looking back, this organization has made big changes in spite of cuts. We are moving in a direction of seeking support from many sources.

We are grateful for our recent award of a \$20,000 Legislative Initiative Grant, which will help partially fund our Woodshed Research Center Project made possible as a result of State Senator James Seward and many other people. Several of our Trustees have brought new ideas, sources of funding, and maybe most importantly, time and willingness to work on funding projects. We must continue to keep our doors open to the public, offer increased opportunities to educate and inform, and continue to collect and document past history as well as changes being made in the Town of Webb on an ongoing basis.

We will continue to solicit new members and ask our current members and supporters to spread our message. If you like what we are doing, tell others, bring friends to see our exhibits, take one of our walking tours, support our fundraising efforts by attending our Benefit Auction, Victorian Party on the Porch and our 5th Annual Postcard, Paper and Bottle Show and Sale. We believe that the Town of Webb Historical Association at Goodsell Memorial Museum helps to make this community a good place to live and work, and a tourist destination or stopping place along the corridor.



Traces of the Past – “Paging Mr. Pitt Smith”

By Peg Masters, Town of Webb Historian

Fifty years ago, J. Perry “Pitt” Smith accepted the dual position as the Publicity Director for the Town of Webb and Secretary for the Central Adirondack Association (CAA). Tales of his remarkable talent for the promotion of the Old Forge region nationwide during his nearly 20-year tenure are legendary.

A native son, Pitt was the only surviving child of Edward S. and Gertrude Peebles Smith. He was born May 2, 1914 in his parent’s home at the edge of Old Forge on the Eagle Bay Rd. Edward and Gertrude, like many of our pioneer families, hailed from Lewis County. In his prime, he worked along the Moose River at a pulp mill in Lyonsdale, then at a mill in Fulton Chain. At the time of his marriage to Gertrude in 1909, he was employed as a manager of John Robert’s boat works in Old Forge – later working as a guide and caretaker at the League Club.



Photo Courtesy of Fred Smith

Gertrude’s sister Luella, married to Samuel Van Atta, lived nearby on Park Ave. The first vintage photograph of baby Pitt shows him obediently posed in a hand-embroidered dress and high topped button shoes – establishing a tradition he known for into his adult life of always dressing impeccable in a business suit and tie for public appearances.

Friends say Pitt was a daring, fun-loving youth and a person who was a genius at telling a good story. Clayton Villiere recalls how difficult it was to find work after high school in the 1930s and the winter the two of them spent earning \$2 a day cutting and storing ice at the League Club when temperatures hovered daily at 30-40 below zero. Pitt later obtained a guide’s license and often worked along side his buddies Clayton & Leo Villiere, Bob Goodsell, and Red Perkins as “hounds” driving deer for sportsmen at the League Club. In 1939, Pitt married his high school sweetheart Elizabeth “Nibs” Williams. Elizabeth’s roots lay deep in Adirondack soil. Her grandfather Charles bought land from Dr. Webb on Big Moose Lake to build Lake View Lodge. Her father Fred Williams took over the hotel after Charles’ death and also owned the Seventh Lake House Hotel. Following a brief stint working at a defense plant in Syracuse during the war, Pitt and Nibs bought the Seventh Lake House and operated it from 1945-1953. His charming manner and entertaining tales kept guests coming back during a period of time when vacationers began to prefer shorter motorized trips to the Adirondacks. Pitt always seemed to see life through rose-colored glasses and once

chastised his daughter never to mention black flies in front of their guests. The old hotel needed constant maintenance. Undaunted, Pitt secured a sizable loan for repairs from a League Club banker friend. For collateral he stated he had at least eight valuable boats at the hotel. Only later did the bank exec discover that at least three of them were leaky row boats and two banged up canoes. Pitt was a dye in the wool Democrat, tried his hand at local politics, and for a time served as a Justice of the Peace in Inlet. One of his life’s delightful moments was shaking the hand of Lynden Johnson on a campaign swing through Syracuse.

Pitt approached his new job in 1954 as a publicist with gusto - sending out thousands of press releases to newspapers; giving glorious weather reports to radio stations; attending tourism conferences, and organizing special events such as country-western shows at McCauley Mountain. Among the top talents he recruited were Loretta Lynn, a wing-walker for air shows at the new Old Forge airport and many sports legends. Scrapbooks of clippings at the Historical from this time period are filled with photos of nationally known celebrities that Pitt magically booked for winter carnivals and golf matches – names that included Sam Snead, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Miss America Lee Merriweather, Paul Horning, Jack Lescoulie, and Frank Blair. Pitt also solicited hundreds of prizes from the owners of sporting goods stores for popular fishing contests, and nearly every child in town went home with a new fish pole. He always had extra tickets printed for special events to hand out to locals who could not afford the price of admission. In the mid-1960s, Pitt helped organized local snowmobile races and should be credited as the “Father of Snowmobilmism” according to one friend.

Pitt never met a microphone or camera he did not like, another friend told me. He loved to have himself paged in hotels, sometimes as “*Senator Pitt Smith*” – *you are wanted on the phone!*” He’d wink at his companions and stroll across a room, beaming at the attention. And the attention brought him into contact with the movers and shakers of his day – who all soon learned about the beautiful Old Forge Adirondack region Pitt called home. His short life came to an abrupt halt at age 57 in 1972, just after returning home from a sports show in Cleveland. Nibs died of cancer the following February. Every now and then, mail still arrives at the Information Center addressed to the attention of Pitt Smith. Pitt’s love for the region and ultimate tribute, however, endures in the hearts of his four children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren - many who continue to call Webb their hometown today.



Photo Courtesy of Lynda Kellogg

Report from the Architectural Preservation Committee

of the Town of Webb Historical Association

Marie Adams, Committee Chair

Strand Theater Recognized as a Local Landmark

Town of Webb Historical Association has recognized the Strand Theater in Old Forge as a local landmark representing a visible history of the township's development as a recreational and natural attraction. Owners Bob Card and Helen Zyma have preserved the old Thompson Building while developing and expanding its use as a year-round, 'first run' movie theater. Interior renovations remain true to the Art Deco style, while a recent addition features specially dyed bricks to match the original building. A prominent display of the owners' collection of antique movie cameras and projectors adds to the historical ambience of the building's interior.

President Christine Cardner has noted that Bob & Helen's preservation efforts serve to "remind thousands who reside in or visit the area annually that respecting and preserving a community's past not only increases visual appeal and quality of life, but can be good business as well!"

The Strand Theater will be featured as the first of a series of limited edition holiday ornaments offered for sale by the association shortly after July 4. Proceeds will go toward continuation of the organization's historical architecture & education projects.

The Architectural Preservation Committee has been busy! Some highlights of our activities include

- ◇ Prioritizing the recommendations of architect Crawford and Stearns re: The Hemmer Cottage.
- ◇ Completion of flue work to complete heating system.
- ◇ Planning & fundraising to enable the cottage to become self-supporting. Needs include replacement of old electrical system at Hemmer Cottage, updating of plumbing system, installation of security door in basement, & need for a fire alarm system
- ◇ Fundraising to make payments on the outstanding bill from J. Claude LeCours for the removal of the abandoned foundation found unexpectedly from a previous building on the property

We Look Forward to Seeing You On...

June 9 Architectural Preservation Committee meeting - 3:45 PM Hemmer Cottage

June 26 Town of Webb First Annual Canoe Race. 8 AM Registration at the Hemmer Cottage.

Live folk music on the cottage grounds—time to be announced.

July Saturdays Walking Tours - 9:30 AM. Meet Town Historian Peg Masters at Hemmer Cottage for an historic walking tour of Old Forge Lakefront area.

August 15 *Taste of the Fulton Chain* Cruise. 4 PM. Reservations required

Coming Soon! First in a series of annual *Local Landmarks* Holiday Ornaments

\$10.00 + tax

Reserve yours at the Town of Webb
Historical Association, 369-3838

Limited Edition Prints
of Bernard Hemmer's
"Adirondacks Remembered"
are still available
\$100 (limited low numbers) or
\$50 for prints numbered over #11
call 315-369-3838

THANK YOU TO:

Ron DeBree for his help on many projects.

Bob Kennerknecht for his donation of the book "An Adirondack Passage, The Cruise of the Canoe *Sairy Gamp*", by Christine Jerome

Ruth and Elton LeFevre for their donation of the book "Changing Times in the Adirondacks" by Norton Bus Bird and metal shelving units.

Deke and Carol Morrison for the gift of money for the designated purchase of new sturdy metal shelving and a storage cabinet.

Dan and Sheila Rivet for the donation of a Zenith DVD/VCR Combo Player – Recorder that will be used to furnish the new Research Room in the Goodsell Memorial Museum.

Dan Tickner for his many hours helping transfer information between computers.

TOW School Baseball Players — Bob Kratzenberg, Kyle Riedman, Mike Rockhill and Christopher Moran for their help in moving office equipment within the Goodsell Memorial Museum.

EDUCATION

Joan Armstrong, former elementary grade teacher from Mt. Markham Central School in West Winfield, NY and past Assistant to the Director of the Town of Webb Historical Association, has agreed to be our new Education Coordinator. Joan has developed a program designed for the 4th Graders of the Town of Webb School to compliment their studies of local history and worked closely with Webb teachers Diane Gage and Christine Flansburg when the 4th grades visited the Goodsell Memorial Museum in February. Plans are being made to continue to build an educational program for other grade levels as well as worksheets for young visitors to our museum.

Wish List

- Book—*Boats and Boating in the Adirondacks* by Hallie Bond
- A TV/VCR to be used at the Hemmer Cottage
- Shelving Units (see below)

As we continue to develop our storage areas, the Building and Grounds Committee hopes to standardize all shelving by using a particular unit, which can be purchased regionally. Two sizes are available:

small 72" x 36" x 28" - \$58

large 72" 48" x 24" - \$68

Designated monetary donations for shelving will be greatly appreciated. Please contact the director if you can help.

Building and Grounds Update

A grant from the Adirondack North Country Community Enhancement Program (ANCCEP) allowed needed exterior work to be done. The next time you visit the Goodsell Memorial Museum we hope you notice the following:

- Our front and side walks were replaced early in September, 2003 by Putnam Construction of Frankfort, New York. The sidewalks are now level, easy to shovel and look great.
- Three cables were installed in the Oak Trees on the front lawn of the Museum to prevent spreading or splitting of the trunks and deadwood was removed.
- Our cellar exterior door for the entry to the basement was replaced with a high quality metal door that will support the weight of snow from the roof. The door was also sealed to minimize rain water or snow melt seeping into the cellar.

A big THANK YOU to Reed Proper and Rollie Christy of the building and Grounds Committee.

Building Fund Drive

The trustees are announcing the kick-off of a Building Fund Drive to help pay for the Woodshed Research Center project made possible in part as the result of a Legislative Initiative grant from Senator James Seward and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Ciesiewicz and Sons Construction and Contracting of Oriskany was awarded the construction bid. You will see virtually no change to the outside of the building with the exception of a handicap ramp. Inside the current 'woodshed room', the dirt floor will be excavated to make way for a new foundation and floor along with utilities work and interior walls and ceiling work.

The Historical Association is pleased to report receiving a promise of \$2500 from Sarah and Linda Cohen for our Building Fund. They have challenged our organization to match that amount in additional Building Fund donations before the end of summer. When we reach that goal amount, Sarah and Linda will donate an additional \$2500. Our Building Fund Drive Goal is \$21,135. Ground breaking ceremonies will be announced soon with construction to begin after June 20. Construction must be completed by August 31, 2004 according to state requirements.

When complete, this Research Center will provide a much needed workspace, a place for bookshelves and storage for our file cabinets filled with photographs and files on businesses, people, events, camps, and other vital miscellaneous information. If you believe that our role in this community is important, we invite you to made a donation to the Building Fund Drive. Please fill our the form below and mail your donation to Town of Webb Historical Association, PO Box 513, Old Forge, NY 13420.

• ----- CUT HERE -----

BUILDING FUND DRIVE—2004

Yes, I would like to help build the Woodshed Research Center, my donation of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

All contributions are tax deductible

THANK YOU!

Please Mail To: Town of Webb Historical Association
PO Box 513
Old Forge, NY 13420