

SMITHVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

October 17, 2012

Our next business meeting will be at the Community Center on Saturday, October 27, 2012 at 9:30 am. All members are invited to attend. We will be making final plans for our annual meeting.

Annual Dinner Meeting: Rick Marsi, nature writer for the *Binghamton Press*, will present the program at our annual dinner meeting on Friday, November 9, 2012, 6:30 pm, at the Community Center. Bring a dish to pass and your table service. Following the dinner and a brief business meeting, Rick will present his newest slide program, *Day in the Life of a Wetland*. As Rick says, “Few ecosystems can match a Southern Tier wetland for diversity of flora and fauna. Herons, turtles, frogs, wood ducks—the list of species dependent on local wetlands seems endless.” Get to know how local wetlands work and what creatures inhabit them. Rick’s magazine-quality photos will illustrate the program.

Rick spoke at our annual meeting several years ago. Anyone who attended won’t have forgotten his stunning photographs and fabulous program.

Also at the annual meeting, we will select the winner of our beautiful fundraising quilt pieced by Joan Barker and Christine Richter. Perhaps you saw it in the window of Thomas Real Estate; it’s made with authentic reproduction Civil War-era prints in soft tones. If you haven’t purchased raffle tickets and would like to, packets are enclosed. You don’t need to be present to win. The cost is \$1 each, or six for \$5. The completed tickets may be returned with your check to SHS at PO Box 176, Smithville Flats 13841—or bring them to the meeting.

OTHER NEWS:

* Welcome to new members Byron and Marcia Harrington from Norwich. Byron grew up on Echo Lake Road. Among his Smithville ancestors are the Edgertons and Knickerbockers.

* SHS members, church members, and friends filled the Smithville Center United Methodist Church for our July program. The summer’s evening was made pleasant with music and the story of the church’s history. Edele Thompson told about the church, the people, and the early years. A surprise visitor was Edele’s grandmother Jennie Hayes, portrayed by Nina Kinney. Nina wore an outfit that had belonged to Jennie, born in 1873 and once a church member.

SHS member Bernie Kneller, ill and unable to attend the program, wrote to me about her connection to the church. Her ancestor, Miles Hubbard, was one of the founding members.

* I interviewed Gary Huttleston about his memories of Smithville’s gas stations, garages, and repair shops. The list numbers twelve—can you believe it?—and we’re seeking more information. If you remember anything about Smithville’s garages, especially the unnamed one north of the Sportsman’s Inn, please drop me a note or give me a call at 656-4781.

* Ruby Eggleston White lived with her family in Smithville Flats from 1924 until after the 1935 flood. I visited Ruby in Cincinnati and took along some of our unidentified photographs.

She was pleased to put names to some of those unknown faces from the distant past—one of whom was her great aunt. She couldn't have been more pleased than I was.

* Thanks to Mindy Eldred's help, we have a list of Smithville's Citizens of the Year from 1977 to 2011. The Smithville Valley Grange began the awards in 1977 by recognizing Gary Huttleston. Now our goal is to create a brief biography of each recipient. Gary Huttleston made my day when he handed me his autobiography. The following year, 1978, the award was given to Louise Smith. Can anyone share information about her?

* We continue to solicit stories for a publication about the working experiences of Smithville, Greene, and other area people. As well as permanently capturing history, this project will benefit the Smithville and Greene Historical Societies. With a goal of ninety stories, we have thirty-nine completed, all with charming photos. Please consider giving us your story or helping someone else to write theirs.

* September 29 found us in Whitney Point for another Doug's Fish Fry fundraising event. Thank you to Alison Owens for managing the event and to those who worked and/or made baked goods for our sale: Joan Barker, Barb Bush, Bev Eaton, Jeanette Lamb, Heather McCloud-Huff, Diane Merrill, Alison Owens, Jacob Owens, Matthew Owens, Edele Thompson, and Christine Buck. Also, thanks to those who purchased Doug's dinners and our desserts.

NEWS NOTES FROM THE PAST: From the *Chenango American* 10/13/1921. Byline Greene. Headline: Fire at Tarbell Farms.

Between 3 and 4 Friday morning, a telephone message was received here, stating that the buildings on the Tarbell Farms above Smithville Flats were burning and asking assistance. The firemen responded with the chemical, and 35 or 40 autos hurried to the scene. The fire, however, was under such headway that nothing could be done. All of the buildings on the west side of the road, consisting of a large horse barn, cow barn, large farm machinery barn, tool house, hospital for sick cows and two long sheds were destroyed.

There were 15 horses in the horse barn. These were released, but three of them rushed back and were burned to death. In some of the buildings a large quantity of valuable cherry and chestnut lumber was stored, which was also destroyed, not a thing except the horses which remained out being saved.

The origin of the fire is unknown. There was a fair amount of insurance on the property.

Twenty-six years ago, October 28, all of the buildings on the opposite side of the road were destroyed, the fire in that case originating from sparks from the chimney falling on the roof of the dwelling.

Please mark your calendar and join us for the Annual Meeting on November 9—an evening of good food, friendship, and an exceptional program.

Christine Buck, President