

From the Director – Malcolm Mills

It was a year ago that I wrote my last introduction to a newsletter and here I am back again as your director. Ellen Healey, who had replaced me, submitted her notice of resignation at the time of the Strawberry Festival and the trustees invited me to return, at least on a temporary basis. Well we all know what that means, and I have indicated that I will be delighted to continue for the time being. There are several items to report on since the last newsletter. Hopefully some of you saw the society's float in the Community Day parade in September. As we have not entered a float in recent years, we decided to take this opportunity to promote the society, and support the community. The judges considered that we made a good effort and awarded our antique farm carriage display the third prize, behind the Senior Citizens float and the Community Sponsored Agriculture's colorful display.

Repairs to Buildings

As any house owner knows, repairs to buildings are a never ending task. We recently discovered some rot in the wainscoting beneath a window in the schoolhouse. Rain water had found its way through a crack in the window sill and caused the damage. The trustees accepted the bid from Rich Taylor to undertake the work and this has been satisfactorily repaired. All that remains is for the replaced wood to be painted. If we have a few warm dry days before winter the trustees hope to caulk and paint the exterior window frames and shutters.

The paint on the Brinckerhoff house is in good condition, however the gutters along the rear of the house are deteriorating and must be replaced. Also a rain water leak along the top seam of the front covered porch is believed to be due to lack of a gutter, which would carry the rain away from the area. The trustees are obtaining bids for the gutters.

During hurricane Irene, one of the large locust trees behind the Brinckerhoff house split at its base and fell towards the building. The top just struck the handicap ramp, but fortunately did no damage. This was a wake-up call that we regrettably needed to have some of the very old locust trees cut down, particularly those that could fall onto the house. We contacted, Patrick Cronin of Treeman Services Inc., Rte. 52 for an evaluation. He recommended taking down five of the oldest trees and gave us a very reasonable price to do the work and grind down the stumps. The trustees accepted his bid and the trees were felled yesterday, the wood removed and the grounds were left neat and tidy. If you drive past the house now the rear of the house is more visible, but we can always replace the trees.

On a brighter note, consideration is being given to redecorating the Palen bedroom. The plaster needs some attention, nothing major, and the paint is beginning to peel. Being on the North side of the house the room tends to be dark, so we may have a change of colors to brighten the room and blend better with the bedroom furniture.

Several visitors to the schoolhouse have commented that they remembered as children seeing the State flag as well as the American flag displayed in their school room. Trustee Mike Elkin, noting these comments, contacted Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro's office to request a State flag. A few days later a parcel containing the flag arrived in his mail box. So we now have a New York State flag hanging in the schoolhouse.

Searching the Records –by Michael Elkin, EFHS Trustee

“Hello, this is Carol-from-Canada. When I was a child I lived in Hopewell Junction and I was wondering if you could help me find my old address. My sister and I will be travelling to the Hudson Valley on our vacation.”

I received the telephone message at the Brinckerhoff house in mid-June. Carol didn't leave me much to go on, but she did leave a phone number. I called back to see what other information I could get. Carol and her sister Diane, had lived somewhere in Hopewell Junction in 1969-70. She told me she remembered St. Columba School: and that her last name at that time was Clouthier. Not much to go on, but a thread to follow.

I called St. Columba School and spoke to the secretary, Mrs. Jacqueline Angioletti. She said she needed some time and wasn't sure the school records go back over 40 years. She would call if she came up with some information. I thanked her but figured it was a long shot. A week went by and I had forgotten. Golf, garden chores, meeting friends for dinner, society business, the Yankee's weak hitting, the rest of a retiree's life blurred my memory. Then she called.

“Hello, Mrs. wh- oh yes, yes do you have any information? That's wonderful.” Diane, Carol's sister had attended St. Columba in 1970. “Is there an address?” I asked. “Spring Hill Trailer Park” she have some good news for you.” “Oh, wonderful” she said. “Thanks so very much.” I told her St. Columba had a record of Diane's attendance and that they had lived at the Spring Hill Trailer Park. I gave her the

answered. “That's great. Thanks very much” I replied with glee in my voice. “Carol- from-Canada will be so happy”. I thanked Mrs. Angioletti again. I was delighted to be able to provide an answer to Carol's very improbable query.

One last question remained. Was Spring Hill Trailer Park still in existence? I asked Malcolm Mills, our director, whose knowledge of local history is nothing less than encyclopedic. Malcolm reported that there were five trailer camps in East Fishkill: and only the one on All Angels Road is gone. “Spring Hill Trailer Park is over on Beekman, on the other side of the Taconic”, he said. It's been there for a very long time.”

Before I called Carol-from-Canada with the good news, I had to see for myself. So I drove over to Beekman Road and there it was. The sign read, “Spring Hill is a Private Residential Community”. I turned in and spotted a man feeding the swans in the pond. I asked him where the office was. He said there was no office, but that the manager was just down the road. He kept feeding the swans. The manager said the place had been in existence for over 50 years. He gave me the office number. I thanked him and returned home eager to call Carol-from-Canada.

“Hello, is this Carol? This is Mike Elkin from the East Fishkill Historical Society calling. I number and directions to Spring Hill. At this writing, I have not yet called Carol, from you know where, to find out if she visited her childhood home.

Donations from William Happ II

Some of you may remember William Happ, a member of the society, who shared an historic house with the late Dr. Brown, on Schoolhouse Lane, in the hamlet of Arthursburg. Mr. Happ recently moved to an assisted living home in Poughkeepsie and is disposing of the contents of the house, prior to it being sold. Michael Tomkovitch, William's attorney invited the society's director to the house, to see if there were any items the society would like for its farmhouse. A few items, including an oil lamp, a large Dutchess Co. map and a Victorian clock were selected and Mr. Happ agreed to part with them. Our director also asked about having a carpet? He was told if the society wants "a carpet", it has to take "all the carpets", when the furniture has been removed. This seemed a fair deal: so three weeks later Malcolm and Joy Mills spent a morning moving furniture and rolling up about a dozen rugs and carpets and loading them onto a trailer to be

temporarily stored in the schoolhouse. Several are in much better condition than the present floor coverings in the BPP house. They have been unrolled and vacuum cleaned and await selection to be laid in the Hall, Cunningham and Palen rooms. Mr. Happ donated two other items: a set of three candle holders with marble bases, bronze figures supporting the drip shields from which multiple glass prisms are suspended, and also an early percussion cap sporting rifle by Josh Golcher. Art Church, our vice-president, researched the gun maker's name and discovered that Golcher lived in Philadelphia and was a gun locksmith during the mid-19th century. The gun will be displayed on the mantle in the 1750 kitchen. The society is grateful to Mr. Happ for his generosity and to Mr. Tomkovitch for making the arrangements.

Endowment Fund

Reference has been made in previous newsletters to establishing an endowment fund to help secure the financial future of the society. We recently received a greatly appreciated, \$750 donation from The Brinckerhoff Foundation in honor of Todd and Beverley Brinckerhoff and this was added to the endowment. This fund was started about seven years ago and has already grown to just over \$11,000 through the generosity of many of our members.

After a lot of deliberation the society's trustees voted at the October meeting to formally set up the endowment with the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. This organization manages many of the local charitable funds, including Dutchess County Hist. Society's endowment and the Fanny V.W. Boos Trust Fund, which has awarded several grants to our society. The trustees concluded that having this organization administer our endowment

will provide independent stewardship of the funds and provide continuity for the future. Our society will be able to draw the annual interest from the fund and have access to the fund in an emergency, as designated in our bylaws.

We have just learned that the society is named as a beneficiary in the will of Alice Hoecker, who is remembered in this newsletter. The amount will not be known until after probate. However the trustees agreed that these funds will be committed to the endowment fund. Perhaps other members will consider naming the historical society in their wills. They will thereby be ensuring that the Brinckerhoff farmhouse and the schoolhouse will be there for future generations to visit and learn about the early history of the families who created our town.

Sunday November 13th. Speaker Program at the E.F Community Center

“**Saint Nicholas: the Saint who became Santa**” is the title of the illustrated presentation by Ms. Peter Rose on Sunday Nov. 13th. at 3PM at the E.F. Community Center, Rte. 82 (opposite McHoul’s funeral home). Ms. Rose’s lecture delves into the early history of the life of the Saint; explains the various changes in his veneration; relates how he was brought to America by the Dutch in the seventeenth century and, again transformed to Santa in the nineteenth century. The talk encompasses such subjects as literature, religion, the fine arts, and

Dutch food, to describe the extraordinary story of his life that had a lasting impact on us all.

Ms. Rose is a most engaging speaker and you might remember her fascinating talk on Dutch cooking a couple of years ago. This program will be entertaining for all generations so please bring along your children and grandchildren. Refreshments will be served after the talk.

In Memoriam

Alice Hoecker, aged 99 years, passed away on September 16th. at Wingate at Dutchess, Fishkill. Alice and her sister Anita, who predeceased her by a few years, had lived in a house they built in Wiccopee. The sisters had been active members of our society, until several years ago, when they moved to Millbrook. However they remained members and Alice continued her membership through this year. The attorneys, for the executor of Alice’s Will, have

informed the society that it is named as a legatee. We are extremely grateful to Alice for her generosity and, as mentioned previously, the trustees have agreed that the legacy will be placed in the newly established endowment fund. Alice and her sister were loyal members and will be missed, but certainly not forgotten.

WWII Veteran’s Visit to West Point

Due to problems in contacting Col. Sherman Fleck (Rtd.) at West Point and arranging transportation this

visit has been postponed. We hope to arrange the visit next spring.