

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

April 2009, Issue 190

Share Session

Happy Spring, to all,

I'm not sure if there is enough poetry about spring, and there's some good stuff, that would rise above our relief that spring is here. Meeting night capped a 50 degree day, with a crisp blue sky. Attending were Harriett Rasmussen, Larry & Dot Hesel, Phyllis Beechert, Christine Mickelsen, Jeannette Rose, Ron Golden, Bob & Marie Shaw, Stephanie Ingalls, Walter Ingalls, Donna Winans, David and Harriet Gumpert, Orin & Shirley Stevens, and Don Teator. For a first meeting of a year, with its attendant risk of forgetfulness that the meeting is on, we had an excellent turnout.

Jeannette innocently brought up the cemeteries section of Sylvia Hasenkopf's work on rootsweb and ancestry (www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nygreene2 – copy and paste into your browser to look at all the info that's online). Thirty minutes later, we were still talking cemeteries – Greenville's cemeteries and the condition they are in, how many there are, what their names are, care for cemeteries, the deterioration of stones, the theft of stones, the value to genealogy, and the ambiguity of some of the wording on the stones.

Don noted two recent art exhibits – Tom Teich at the Acra Agroforestry Center and James Cramer at Ruby's (unfortunately, both will be past by the time you get this; I hope you enjoyed them while they were available).

Don also drew attention to the Robert Titus' articles on geology that the Daily Mail is printing on Thursdays.

We mentioned that June Clark paid a recent visit to the area for a few days, and she sends her best to all those who remember her (and even those who don't).

We talked about the Stevens' diary that Cris Ketcham had used for a topic or two in the past. This topic led from Harriett's transcribing of a diary in the historian's files, author unknown, year is 1895. Harriett is trying to figure out who wrote the diary, using the names mentioned. So far, we know the surname is Hallock, with a brother Lester and a sister Rose, wife Sadie, neighbors are Eldridge, Hempstead, Finch, Youmans Haight, and Abner Alden. Everything points to eastern Freehold, somewhere in the general area of the current Thunderhart golf course area. Harriett is on the hunt. And, thank you, Orin, for the reminder of the family diary.

Other topics were a Greene County meeting about our lever voting machines (a possible relic), the 2010 calendar, and a couple more that have evaded my trap-like mind). Another request was Don's plea for ideas for programs; if you can think of any, or arrange for any, please contact Don.

Our next meeting will again be a share session. Bring an idea or two, a story, some research you might be looking for, etc.

Included in this newsletter are copies of Jeanne Bear's obituary, a winter article about the Old Timers' Party, a winter article about the 2009 calendar, and one of the articles from Titus' geology series.

Finances for the 2010 calendar are in good shape. The money from sales of the current calendar, along with the sponsorship of the 2009 calendar, along with the accumu-

lation of gifts from Carol Bryant, Bob and Emma Spees, and Zan Bryant, along with the anticipated sales of the 2010 calendar should just about cover costs. We will need a sponsor for the 2011 calendar; there won't be any cushion left after this year. However, I had an email from a member who may have a contact for that calendar. We will keep our fingers (and toes) crossed. (Where did that saying ever come from?)

This month has been a heavy-heart month. Jeanne passed away in early April,

had been in poor health, so we were sad but not shocked of the news of the passing of one of our town's pillars. Shocked was our reaction to the passing of Larry Hesel and, even as I type this, I can only shake my head at the twists of life. Our thoughts and sympathies go with Dot and Aileen and families. Maybe, I will have more coherent words by meeting time.

Take care,

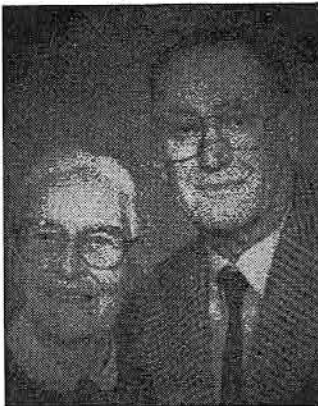


Saturday-Sunday, April 4-April 5, 2009

Obituaries

Jeanne Yates Bear

*Devoted to working
with youth*



Jeanne and Orloff Bear

GREENVILLE — Jeanne Yates Bear, 86, passed away on April 3, 2009 at her home in Greenville. She was born in Hartford, Conn., on July 21, 1922, daughter of Claude and Minnie (Gibbs) Yates.

Jeanne spent a majority of her free time over the years working with the local youths of the community. In 1945 she organized the Greenville Gremlins 4-H club. She spent 63 years since then committed to organizing club events and projects. Her love for 4-H led her to spend countless hours with many young girls around the community teaching them

to sew, bake, work with crafts and present public presentations. She also spent many hours each year volunteering at the Old Timers Party, Summer Recreation Program and the March of Dimes. She participated and volunteered at the Greene County Youth Fair, the Altamont Fair, Greene County Clothing Revue, Memorial Day parades, Christmas caroling at the nursing homes and other community events.

Jeanne served on the Greenville Town Board as a town councilwoman and was town clerk for 28 years. She was an active member of the United Methodist Church of Greenville and Norton Hill, the Greenville Republican Club, the Greenville Historical Society and a member of the Maranatha Valley Chapter #38 O.E.S.

Jeanne was a true believer in education and as such she graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in Art Education. She was a substitute school teacher in the Greenville Central School District for many years.

She was very passionate about her family and devoted herself to bringing happiness to all. One of her favorite

expressions was "Your kindness is only exceeded by your good looks."

She was predeceased by her husband of 62 years, Orloff Bear Sr., as well as her only sister, Loraine Davis.

She is survived by her two sons, Orloff Bear Jr. (Terry) and Richard Bear (Gloria); one daughter, Katherine Schlenker (Michael); her grandchildren, Mary and Michael Skehan, Christine and Craig Zito, Katie and Kevin Sill, Jeremy and Nicholas Bear, Eric Bear, Lauren, Lea, Elizabeth and Jenna Schlenker, Antoinette, Nicholas, Kristine and David Bader; great-grandsons Devin and Garret Skehan and Collin Zito; great-granddaughter, Mackenzi Zito; and many nieces and nephews in the area.

Funeral services will be Tuesday, 11 a.m. at the Cunningham Funeral Home, 4898 Route 81, Greenville. Friends may call at the funeral home on Monday, 3 to 5 and 7 to 9 p.m.

Interment will be in the Greenville Cemetery. Those who desire may contribute in her memory to the Greene County Agricultural Society, the Greenville-Norton Hill U.M. Church or to the Maranatha Valley Chapter #38 O.E.S.

GREENVILLE

Celebrating those who give back to the community

By H. Hawke
For Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Yesterday's volunteers are today's old-timers in this most poignant of celebrations, the annual Greenville Old-Timers Christmas Party. A proud

town tradition now in its 58th year, it showcases the best of the holiday season: sharing, caring, community, joy, good food, good neighbors and gratitude.

While many holiday celebrations

center on children, the Old-Timers Party is unique in recognizing and honoring those who have lived in Greenville most of their lives. Pillars of the community, the honorees are doctors, lawyers, school teachers,

farmers, parents, grandparents and good citizens. They worked in and built the town and on the first Sunday of every December the givers become the receivers as Greenville recognizes their priceless service.

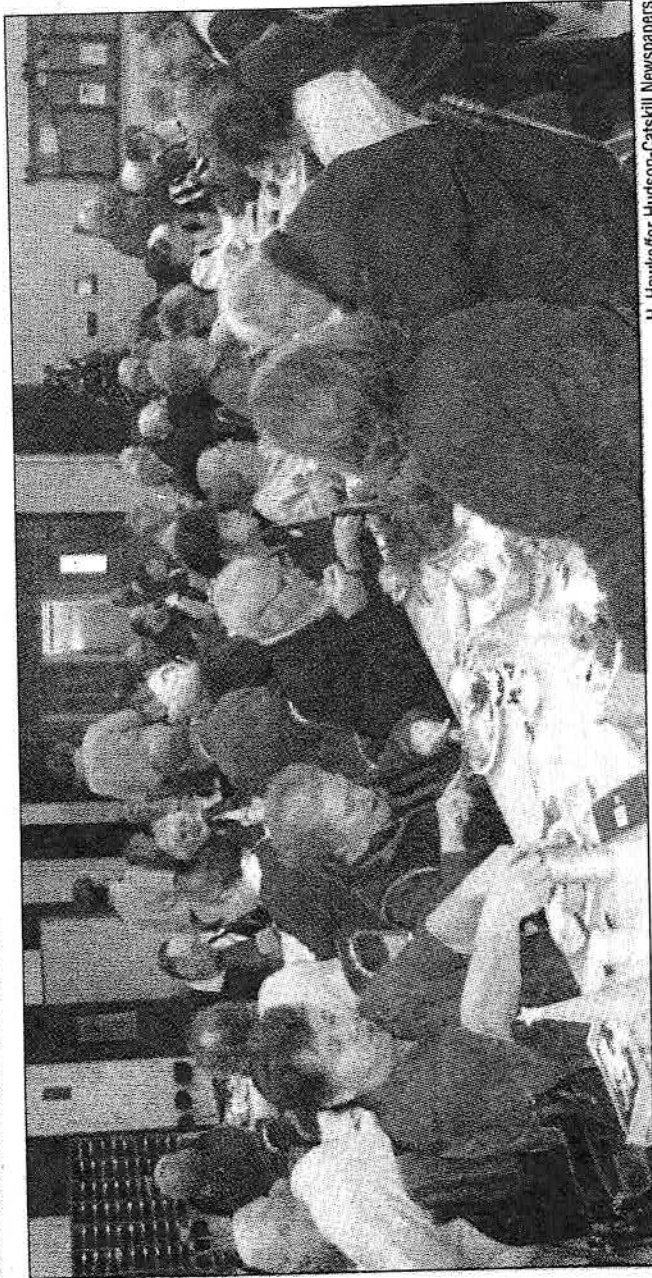
The tradition started in 1950 when former Greenville Supervisor Arnold Nicholson wanted to show his appreciation for the town's support. Open to any resident 65 or older, the annual Old-Timers Party has continued through several generations of Greenvillians and shows no signs of ending.

At first it was held at the Legion Hall, but for the past several decades the Greenville School District has volunteered the use of its facilities and Greenville High School hosts both the show and the dinner.

Deb Tompkins, an accomplished equestrian and crafter, was this year's chief cook and bottle washer. She inherited the position from her mother, Hilda, who supervised the entertainment portion of the event for 19 years.

Deb remembers a time when summer resorts would open their kitchens and cook turkeys for the party, while

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H. Hawke/for Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Seniors dig in at the annual Greenville Old-Timers Christmas Party Sunday.

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local women baked thousands of cookies and dozens of pies.

A whirlwind of activity, Deb coordinated volunteers, directed cafeteria decorations, organized the program, scheduled performers and arranged for a clean-up crew. She also made the 13 centerpieces on each table and those lucky enough to have a sticker on the bottom of their beverage cup got to take them home.

This year's turnout included 72 diners. Volunteers from the Greenville Rotary Club provided transportation for residents who couldn't drive themselves and hand-delivered meals to more than a dozen seniors.

The highlight of the event is honoring the oldest men and women in Greenville. This year's "Golden Oldies" winners included 95-year-old Walt McClure, 91-year-old Dorothy Blenis, 90-year-old Ruth Wiltsie and two youngsters tying for 4th place, George Story and Fran Winnie, both 88.

Each received gift certificates from local restaurants, including Vince Anna's,

Mountain View Brasserie, Sophia's and the Green Hill Café.

Before the Old-Timer awards, a show emceed by local musician Jayme Albin and featuring town residents was presented. Marta and Anna Kelly sang "Sisters." John Meredith and members of the Greenville High School music program performed a variety of traditional Carols. Fran Bouillion sang "O Holy Night." Greenville student Bethany Mitchell sang "The Sun Will Come out Tomorrow," and Girl Scout Troop 208 performed "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus."

After the show, the seniors were escorted into the cafeteria for a traditional holiday dinner prepared by cafeteria worker Dorothy Bishop and her staff. The seniors were served a meal fit for an Old-Timer, including turkey and all the fixings. While they dined to the soothing sounds of local harpist Jim Davis, Boy Scout Troop 42, led by Dave Battini and Colin Tumey, freshened beverage

cups, passed gravy boats and cleared away plates. Girl Scouts from Troop 208 and local residents helped with the serving. Cafeteria Supervisor Paul Ventura personally baked 16 pies.

Just a Buck provided many of the goodies filling individually wrapped gift bags in front of each setting. GNH Lumber, Bryant's GU Market, Baumann's Brookside, Greenville Central Schools and the town of Greenville provided everything else from materials to donations, volunteers to facilities.

Preparations for the 59th Annual Old-Timer's Party will no doubt begin in January. That's how long it takes to organize, plan, delegate, coordinate schedules and collect funds and materials. Those who so generously donated their time, their services and their money this year hope the 59th Annual Old-Timers Christmas Party will include even more Greenvillians joining in either as honorees or volunteers.

Windows Through Time

APR 2, 2009 ATV

View from the Mountain House ledge

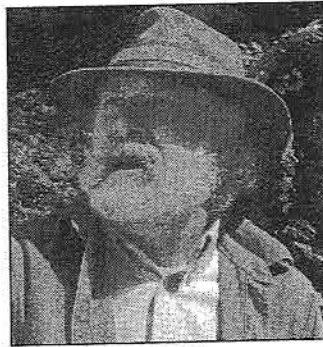
By Robert Titus

North-South Lake State Park is one of the most scenic landscapes in all of the eastern United States. It is located on the Wall of Manitou, the Catskill Front. The "wall" overlooks a 70-mile stretch of the Hudson Valley — that makes for a lot of very nice views. The absolute best part of it is the famed Mountain House ledge. That was the location of the Catskill Mountain House Hotel which stood there from the 1820s to the 1960s. The hotel was located there because the view. All sorts of people came to visit this very fashionable hotel, but mostly it was a Who's Who of the American 19th Century: industrialists, businessmen, politicians and so on. Among them were some of the most talented of the country's writers and artists. The Hudson River school of art was founded here. Its artists prowled the mountains roundabouts, searching for and finding wonderful views to paint.

The hotel is gone but the view remains. Artists still come here and they still paint.

Geologists come here too, many of them and often. We prowl the mountains searching for and finding wonderful geological histories. We look at the landscape and we can read its history. The signs are there. Epic stories of advancing glaciers compete with tales of ancient fossil forests. Petrified rivers flow across fossilized floodplains; it's all there, if you know what to look for.

Then there is the view from the Mountain House Ledge itself. We stand or sit and we gaze into the east. The Hudson River, below, has been there for possibly hundreds of millions of years. But that's not enough time; we gaze beyond the river. There, all along the horizon, south to north, are the Taconic Mountains. Today they are a series of not terribly elevated mountains, hills really. They are pretty, not lofty, and scenic more than majestic. They are green all summer and, in that



Robert Titus

season, never white with Alpine snow. There are few superlatives to use when describing them, but they are nice.

These "mountains" do not conjure up the same emotions as do their neighboring Berkshires, but ... they are nice.

To the mind's eye of the patient geologist there is much to see from the Mountain House ledge. I planted myself there one summer twilight and slipped into the darkening eastern horizon. As the sun, behind me, retreated and the modern Taconics faded into darkness, I could see into the past.

Out there it was a little more than 450 million years ago. I was startled to see a vast expanse of ocean before me. This is called the Iapetus Sea, sometimes also named the Proto-Atlantic. Its waters stretched all the way to the horizon. I watched as time flew by, millions of years of it. From time to time great eruptions were occurring just over that horizon. Something was happening out there.

That something was a volcanic landmass and it was moving. It was drifting towards a collision with North America. I couldn't see that far, but something much the same shape, size and form as today's Japan was crashing into North America. From time to time I could feel the rippling of the earthquakes that accompanied that collision. Then I could see great plumes of soot rising above distant erupting volcanoes.

There was a day when the peak of a rising volcano poked above the oceanic horizon and now there was visible

land out there for the first time. I watched as more millions of years passed by. That small peak was joined by more and then many more. They coalesced into a single rising landmass. Something we call the Appalachian realm was in the process of being born — these were the infant Taconic Mountains.

They rose and they rose. They erupted and they shook. Time, millions and millions of years of it, was compressed and speeded up for me as I watched a great mountain range rise to 10,000 feet in elevation and then quite a bit more. But then there was a new motion. The collision was far more advanced and now great thrusting motions shoved masses of rock westward and toward me. The earth shook violently with each of these shoves.

I involuntarily took a few steps backwards whenever the motions were too strong for me to bear. I am a geologist and I knew what was going

on, but it was frightening to watch.

Then, at last the Taconics had risen to their maximum. They towered above what would someday be the Hudson Valley. It was an awesome sight to view.

And then it was over. These mountains stopped rising. The great tectonic shoving had run out of steam. Now these mountains began to erode away. First it was slow and later the erosion speeded up. Enormous mountain streams clawed away at the steep mountain slopes and brought them down, foot by foot.

When my vision was over I was gazing again across the Hudson Valley and into the Taconics. There, before me, was the serenity of a summer morn, but I knew now the violent makings of that picturesque scene. I had seen something that those long ago Hudson River artists had missed. Contact the author at titusr@hartwick.edu

History calendar makes a comeback

Miracle Mile sign, Sutton's blacksmith shop and more featured in calendar

By Dave Gordon

For Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

The Greenville history calendar is back.

The Local History Group sponsored the calendars from 1991 to 2005. Town Historian Don Teator said the \$5 price of the calendar doesn't cover the cost of producing it, so this year the cost is being underwritten by Jeannette Rose and Linda Berger in memory of their parents, John and Isabelle Stroell Singer.

Teator has been collecting photographs of Greenville's history since he became town historian in 1989. Shortly after taking office he began looking at collections of postcards held by many individuals in town, he said.

Continued from page A1

been taking pictures of Greenville's communities and building a historical record. So far they have recorded every structure in town, as well as many community events. Debra has also taken aerial photos of the town at regular intervals.

At a recent photo showing, Teator said the couple has begun photographing the town's cemeteries.

This collection contains some 10,000 photographs arranged by road names, Teator said.

The cover of this year's calendar features the covers of all the calendars from 1991 to 1996. The inside cover displays the remaining calendars' covers — 1997 to 2005. The inside back cover tells the story of the Alberta Lodge and its owners, the Singers.

John Singer's experience in the hospitality business included weekend work at Henry's Bay View on Long Island Sound, a popular spot for New York Yankees players. He met such stars as Joe DiMaggio, Phil Rizzuto and Yogi Berra. During the week he worked for Consolidated Edison.

The Singers vacationed in Greene County each summer and in 1949 they decided to buy the Alberta Lodge, which had been closed for 10 years, and make Greenville their permanent home. They restored and expanded the old resort — a family business that included their daughters,

“These collections included pictures of Greenville's communities, some of them now gone or nearly gone,” he said. In addition to the main commercial section — Freehold, Norton Hill and Greenville Center — Teator's collection includes such “bygone or nearly bygone communities” as Surprise, West Greenville, East Greenville, Gayhead, O'Hara's Corners, Place's Corners and Newry.

Teator borrowed Gerald Boomhower's collection and held several community duplication sessions. Since then he has built up a collection of nearly 3,000 historic photos. Since Teator took office, he and his wife, Debra, have

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Contributed photo

The Greenville Free Academy Class of 1929. In the front row are, left to right, Hazel Gardiner, Ruth Gardner, Marie Bullivant, Julia Anderson, Barbara Wickham, Edna Irish and Ida Stone. In the back row are Raymond Story, Gerald Ingalls, Christina Hallett, Edna Heinick, Dorothea Jennings, Charles Stevens and Gordon Abrams.

Jeannette Rose and Linda Berger.

John and Isabelle Singer retired to Florida in 1979.

The February page of the calendar shows a photo of the front of the Alberta Lodge, with an inset of a dining room the Singers added in the 1970s. Other pictures include the Miracle Mile sign in Norton Hill, the former Corner Restaurant, Sutton's blacksmith shop and the Glen Royal Hotel. Inserts on some pages show the sites as they look today.

There are also group shots: the Greenville Free Academy Class of 1929 and a group of Greenville and Norton Hill men out for a day of target shooting. The December page features an aerial shot of central Greenville as it looked in 1960.

There's no special theme to the calendars, Teator explained. “We just choose



Contributed photo

The Corner Restaurant, which once stood on the southeast of Greenville's four corners, was razed in 1960 to make way for the widening of Route 81.

pictures we think will be of interest. Some are historical; some are more recent,” he said.

Teator is looking for a sponsor for the 2010 calendar. The sponsor gets the inside back page for a family history, a business history or an advertisement.

Calendars may be purchased for \$5 at the courtesy desk in Bryant's and at the Greenville Public Library.