

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

~~August~~ 2004, Issue 154
Winter

Annual

Greetings to all,

Late winter is evolving (not fast enough for some of us) into early spring, a reminder that our year is about to begin on April 11, at the usual place at the usual time. I trust this newsletter finds you in good health and looking forward to our warmer weather.

In years past, we might be talking about the potluck dinner. To be honest, I had not inquired if anyone was going to organize this get-together. Perhaps, if someone wants to plan for something in the near future, give me a call. Otherwise, potluck will fall by the wayside again.

A look back at last year showed an aberration of our usual alternating of program and share session. Instead, 2004 seemed to be a string of share sessions, with a good showing at most meetings with lots of topics to talk about and share. We'll try to get back to the program routine. If you have ideas for programs, let me know.

On a sad note, I draw your attention to the passing of Len Gardiner, Ossie Gunderson, and Leona Rundell. All had added to the contributions of the GLHG, and they will be remembered and missed.

On the local front, the revision of our zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan awaits the community. If you who have the energy and concern, I would urge you to be aware of developments and be ready to lend your input. For now, it appears that the plan that developed a year ago is suspended, and a new one will be drafted with help from Greene County Planning and other agencies.

Secondly, we are watching a town that is growing, with a plan for 125 more homes to be built next to Country Estates. Greenville has changed gradually over the years, with a long view showing big changes that are barely discernable from year to year. However, the pace over the last few years seems to have increased.

Back to more historical thoughts. One hope is that the winter furlough has allowed some work on local history projects to be shared during the coming year. People contribute in many different ways. One of the most useful is to preserve some piece of Greenville's history. This may happen by the saving of an artifact or knick-knack; however, the part that is tougher to save is the collection of memories and stories. And thus, I urge you to audiotape or write your

memories of Greenville people (including you!), events, and places. Daunting at first, this recording becomes more and more useful with the continual adding of sources.

Our membership numbers about 70, with about 40 receiving the newsletter, and the average attendance at meetings often numbers about fifteen. Our schedule will continue to be the second Monday, from April through November.

A note about subscriptions. Your address label has your subscription expiration date. Anyone wanting to receive the newsletter can subscribe for \$5 for a year (usually April – November issues, plus the annual) and mailed to Don Teator, 3979 Rt 67, Freehold NY 12431. Checks should be made out to: Don Teator. (I don't mind

multi-year subscriptions but that's a real test of your faith!)

Also, if your address has changed, let me know. And, if you'd rather I address your mailing label differently, let me know. In addition to my address, I can be reached at 518-634-2397, and, for the computer literate, I can be emailed at teator@surferz.net or don@dteator.com.

I've included an article from the Times Union recently, about Freehold, of all places. If you see other articles from other than local papers, clip them in case I don't see them.

I hope to see you at the April 8th share session (2nd Monday of April, 7:30 pm).

Until then, take care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "D" and a cursive "on" following it.

Cash flows at auctions in Freehold

2.27.05 ATU B-1

Freehold is not a town brimming with excitement. Its village core is a small collection of stores and houses, not unlike many other upstate towns.



**JON
FACKLER**

But out in the country, there is some exciting stuff going on. There is the Freehold Airport, a little hub of general aviation in Greene County. There is Story's Nursery, with its inspired group of

nursery-keepers, greenhouse-tenders and landscapers.

And there is the Freehold auction. Russ and Abby Carlsen, who own Carlsen Gallery, conduct six auctions a year just north of Freehold village. They are assisted by a solid draft of holders-up and lifters-up and clerks who keep tabs on bids, sales receipts and payments. Sales are usually on Sundays, starting late morning and continuing through most of the afternoon.

The Carlsons sell art and antiques. Explaining the importance of such things to an earlier generation of Americans, the financier Bernard Baruch stated that there are only three enduring forms of wealth. One is precious metals. Another is land. The third is fine art.

Dirt-kickers will say that the interest in art and antiques is simply a case of too much money chasing too few items. If it is a chase, however, it is a demanding chase. Whether you go to Freehold or to Boston or to New York City, it's not just a matter of spending cash. It involves getting there, taking a hard, critical look at an item of interest and taking your chances when the thing is put up for bid.

Some people don't go at all, but they'll look at an item on an auctioneer's Web site and send in a bid, or they'll bid by

phone. Sometimes phone lines are already committed to other bidders, so a person must decide whether to sit out a particular sale — or figure out some way to get to a distant (or remote) place like Freehold.

For Carlsen's sale this past January, a woman from Southern California called about a particular painting and asked to bid by phone. By the time she called, no phone lines were available, so she flew to Albany, hired a car and had a driver bring her to Freehold. She was the high bidder on this picture. Her final bid of \$205,000 was twice the highest price realized to date for the artist. Remarkably, nobody on the phones got to offer a single bid. From start to finish, all the bidders were live bidders in the auction hall.

Big ticket items like this one make the newspapers, or at the very least they generate a lot of talk, both in Freehold and beyond. But there is something about auctions that transcends the individual items offered for sale, or the techniques of bidding.

In bedrock economic terms, auctions provide a vehicle for the redistribution of wealth. Whether the item sold is a shiny thoroughbred yearling at Fasig-Tipton in Saratoga Springs or a John Goddard tea table at Sotheby's in New York City, the game — in economic terms — is the same: Wealth, in whatever form, passes from one pair of hands to another.

Sometimes, there is even a primitive economic multiplier effect at work here. A special item might be auctioned off at an attractive price, then resold (and maybe resold yet again), producing even more movement of cash.

But forget about higher economics. At their roots, auctions are simply a conduit — a way for people to sell things for cash. On any given day of the week, a Duncan Phyfe table or a Chippendale tall case clock are not liquid assets, and yet at an auction they are.

There are four facts of the human condition that underlie much of the selling activity at an auction: death, divorce, debt and desperation. At such times, the question involving one's worldly goods is always liquidity. And because auctions provide this liquidity, many people who need to sell things find their way there.

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