

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

September 2024, Issue 328

Pine Lake Manor Centennial

Another pleasant evening in a stretch of pleasant days, unlike July and August, welcomed the evening's attendees:

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Margaret Donohue, Anita Orsino, Joyce Chase, Gayle Schermer, Amy Short, Stephanie Ingalls, Johanne & Robert Titus, Marcella Vineis, Jeff Whittaker, Stewart Wagner, Terry & Garth Bryant, Diana Marshall, Donna Willard, Harriet & Art Marini, Carol Rocca (?), Peter Hahn{?}, Joanne & Tom Baumann, Eileen & Ed Volmar, Rachel Ceasar, Richard

Ceasar, Lian(?) Downes, Barbara & Jack Van Auken, Carolyn Savery, Caroline Pollard, Barbara & Flip Flach, Thomas Sweeny, Carol Schreiber, Joan Smith, Tracy Boomhower, Craig Schwab, Renate LaFleur, Rita & Peter Buttiker, Kevin Lewis, Linda Berger & Frank Potter, Maryanne Morrison, Liam Tiernan, Don Teator, and the usual several who escaped notice. Once again, the continued influx through the doors prompted several appreciated helpers to gather fifteen chairs from the Small Community Room.

## Pine Lake Manor – A Centennial

Pine Lake Manor celebrated a benchmark year this year – 100 years as a resort. It is proper that the GLHG would note and help celebrate with the Schermer and Baumann families. Over the years, articles and press releases have not only noted the progression of growth but has also testified to the impact and importance of this resort. (The same can be reiterated for the other resorts, existing or defunct.)

In 1983, then Town of Greenville Historian Edna Adams had written a two part article for the Daily Mail about the existing resorts. This is what she had to say about Pine Lake Manor:

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This resort has been in the Schermer family since Nicholas and Lydia Schermer came from Germany in 1924. In the earliest days it was on the Cocksackie Turnpike and in 1839

there was a tavern and hotel on the site of the Main house. Nearby there was a toll gate. Nicholas came up to the country to look for land and found this old place east of Greenville on Route 26. There was a lovely lake on the property and they named their



Centennial photo:  
Kevin, Jacquie, Any,  
Joanne, Tom

place Willow Rest Farm. When their son Reinhold started to manage the resort in 1949, they changed the name to Pine Lake Manor. Reinhold and Jo Schermer's daughter, Joanne, married Thomas Baumann, son of Wilbur and Thelma Baumann, and they are the present owners of this resort.

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At the 90 year mark, GLHG held one of its meetings at the resort, a very well attended meeting. More about that later.

For this evening, the 100 year mark, PLM owners Tom and Joanne Baumann persuaded daughter Amy Short to present a centennial program. Amy, thank you not only for covering for your exhausted family nearing the end of their season but also for allowing GLHG to celebrate the centennial with the family.

Amy had prepared almost forty slides for the program, many of them with photos of the various stages of the resort's growth. Amy also had prepared a text sheet to go with each slide and she kindly shared that with this writer, something I have borrowed heavily from.

And the program began:

In the 1700's, the property where Pine Lake Manor currently sits (and eastward for about 1/2 mile or so) was called Brandy Hill. This bustling area was home to a cider mill, Haight's hotel and dance hall, a stage coach stop, Aaron Butler's tin ware shop, an Episcopal Church, a saw mill and farms.

Pine Lake Manor has been a family run business for four (going on five) generations. How did it all begin?

### \*\*\* Nicholas and Lydia Schirmer

At the age of 15, Nicholas Schirmer [note: surname spelling different from today] left Germany to work on a farm in Minnesota. At the time, Canada was giving out land parcels to homesteaders, so Nicholas went to Alberta to claim a parcel and built a "hut" where he could live. Not long after, he went back to Germany to visit relatives. It was there he met his future



wife, Lydia. After corresponding, Lydia came to Alberta, Canada. Nicholas and Lydia married and had the first three of their six children -- Reinhold, Ruth and Harold (Pete) -- in Alberta.

Nicholas and Lydia decided the Canadian winters were too cold and decided to travel to California. They got stuck in a blizzard during their travels, postponing their arrival. During this time, Nicholas Jr. was born in the state of Oregon where the family remained until the spring. In spring, they left Oregon and returned to Canada.

In 1922, Nicholas, Lydia and their family left Canada so Nicholas could work as a tenant farmer in Kinderhook, New York. They continued to own the farm in Canada until it was sold in 1958. Lydia returned to Germany to visit relatives and after a few months, Nicholas joined her. They stayed in Germany until their daughter Lydia was born.

### \*\*\* Willow Rest Farm

In 1924, Nicholas, Lydia and family returned to the states and purchased the farm in Greenville,

## *Willow Rest Farm House*



bungalow sits on the original site of the Episcopal Church.

### **\*\*\* Reinhold and Josephine Schermer**

Reinhold Schermer, eldest son of Nicholas and Lydia, met Josephine Gawel while he was working in New York City. He was running his tool and die business in Manhattan and she was then working as a nursing instructor. Although they were first introduced to each other while both living in Brooklyn, many miles from upstate NY, the resort played a hand in their first introduction. Jo's sister knew Reinhold from a previous visit to Willow Rest Farm, so she introduced Josephine and Reinhold after he moved to Brooklyn.

They married in 1942 and continued to reside in Brooklyn, NY. They had two

NY. At that time, the farm consisted of the main house and two barns. An addition was added to the front barn to create the annex building that, at that point, had rooms upstairs and a small recreation hall downstairs.

Twelve Maples was an established boarding house across the road from the farm that Nicholas and Lydia had purchased. Mrs. Zeh, proprietor of Twelve Maples, asked if they would take the overflow guests, so Nicholas and Lydia started renting out rooms on the farm. Within a short time, they were taking in their own guests and Willow Rest Farm was formed. Nicholas and Lydia's youngest child, John, was born in Greenville in 1926.

In 1931-32, Nicholas planted the forest of pine trees (since removed) next to what was then the primary swimming hole but is now referred to as the "back lake." One can also see a windmill that Nicholas built. We recently found a blade from that windmill when digging near that spot.

During that time, a bowling alley was also constructed and a tennis court was added. The bowling alley was eventually removed in order to make room for the installation of the shuffleboard courts. This was done at the same time the pool was installed prior to the 1961 season.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's a shower house and a two-room bungalow were built next to the annex building. The



Josephine & Reinhold

children while living in Brooklyn - their daughter Joanne in 1943 and their son John in 1945. In 1948, they moved the family to Greenville.

Within a short time, the bungalow by the pool was constructed as a temporary summer residence for Reinhold, Josephine and their two small children. In the fall of 1948, the family moved into the Main House.

### \*\*\* Pine Lake Manor

In 1949, Reinhold and Josephine purchased the property and changed the name to Pine Lake Manor. Also in 1949, a small house was constructed on the property for Nicholas and Lydia.

In 1951, the barn was converted into a recreational hall (the Rec Hall).

In 1952, the downstairs of the annex was converted to additional rooms.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's

early bowling alley—outdoors



Tom, Joanne  
Jo, Reiny



(until 1962), Pine Lake Manor remained open during hunting season.

In 1958, Reinhold and Josephine's youngest child, Gayle, was born.

During 1959-1960, the man-made front lake was constructed and in 1961 the pool was installed.

In 1962, the lake motel with the well recognized Pine Lake Manor lettering was built and was ready to use for the 1963 summer season.

In 1963, Reinhold and Josephine's eldest daughter, Joanne, married Thomas Baumann and they began their resort life together. Their daughter Amelia (Amy) was born in 1964 and their son Kevin was born in 1967.

In 1968 the "back" motel was constructed. It was also during that year that Nicholas Schirmer passed away.

In 1970, Twelve Maples was torn down. Tom and Joanne's youngest child, Jacqueline (Jacquie) was born.

In the early 1970's, the Shear/Heslin house (across the street from the dining room) was purchased and converted to additional motel units.

### \*\*\* Tom and Joanne Baumann

In 1976, Joanne and Tom built a home on the former Twelve Maples site and moved "on-premises". Their home now includes Pine Lake Manor's office.

Reinhold, Josephine and Gayle then moved from the Main House across the lake into Tom and Joanne's previous home.

In 1979, the "30's" motel unit was constructed. That same year, both Reinhold and his mother Lydia passed away.

In 1981, the small house where Nicholas and Lydia had lived was remodeled and additional motel units were created.

In the 1970's, 80's, and 90's many various additions were made to the Rec Hall and Main House. Both bungalows were subsequently torn down and replaced with new, modern buildings.

The bungalow located at the original site of the Episcopal Church was rebuilt in 1984 and the one by the pool was rebuilt in 1995.

In 1996, the former Aaron Butler/Haight property was purchased.

Kevin, his wife Julianne and their family (Olivia, Amelia and Thomas) make their home on the former Aaron Butler/Haight property on the south side of Route 26.

Jacquie, her husband Jim Fitzmaurice and their family (Ava, Tess and Bryn) make their home on a portion of the former Aaron Butler/Haight property on the north side of Route 26.

Both Kevin and Jacquie and their families are now involved in the operation of Pine Lake Manor. Amy also contributes to the operation.

Amy noted the arrival of the fifth generation, with photos of them as younger children and a current one.

Joanne & Tom  
From 2018 GLHG Recognition



Three slides noted that PLM has employed many local residents over the years, with a great number of employees from multiple generations of local families. "We could not have been as successful as we have been without our amazing staff and we are incredibly grateful to everyone over the years."

Amy noted, in two more slides, that the only year PLM has not been open in the past 100 years was 2020 - the Covid Year. PLM guests were ecstatic to be back in 2021 and created their own different shirts to celebrate the reopening. PLM reciprocated by providing guests with glasses and had Sunday picnic with a celebratory cake (thank you, Tops bakery).

Many guests also brought their own decorations or presented us with anniversary gifts.

On a sad note, and a memorial one, Amy noted that in May, "just prior to our 100th season, we lost my amazing grandmother, Jo Schermer. My grandmother was loved by family, friends, guests, employees and everyone who had the good fortune of knowing her. PLM's success is, in part, a testament to her hard work and welcoming spirit."

Finishing her part of the program, Amy ended with "Pine Lake Manor now sits on 275 acres with three lakes and continues to thrive

due to much hard work from our family and many loyal and dedicated employees and guests.

“The summer of 2024 marks our 100th year of operation and we are hoping that in another 100 years, Pine Lake Manor will still be going strong with subsequent generations of our family still providing a fun and memorable vacation experience for our guests.”

Finishing the program, a long-time guest, Craig Schwab, who has written a book to commemorate PLM’s 100th anniversary, had recorded a ten minute video set to music to be played. It notes his perspective from the many years he has been a guest at PLM. He pays homage to character, country setting, family connections, home away from home, friendships made at PLM, and the sterling values that is so special, yet so commonplace, at Pine Lake Manor.

The program closed, with light refreshments awaiting.

**Other PLM notes:**

At the 90 year program, Tom gave a ten minute history of the area that stretches from the

intersection of Newry Rd and Cr 26 eastward for a half-mile or so. Locals know it as Brandy Hill, and it was a village into itself. Mention of the Butler-Rundell-Haight family history, the Butler tinware, the Ray Beecher article, the turnpike, the moving of buildings are all ideas for future programs.

At that same meeting, Flip Flach commented about the financial impact the resorts fifty and sixty years ago made—from food and carpentry and plumbing and hiring and more, especially a connection with the Flach Bakery.

And also at that meeting, questions and comments focused on changes in the resort business, cooperation and competition between resorts, the changes in hiring practices, the change of the typical vacation/stay, the use of computers, cultural changes, and so much more. Two-thirds of the audience had worked at an area resort, and thus this meeting, for many of the attendees, was a gathering of nostalgia.

A closing: Congratulations, Pine Lake Manor, and thank you for sharing you lives with the Greenville area. We are richer for it

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**More PLM Notes**

GLHG Newsletter #235 gave an account of the 90 year mark.

<https://www.dteator.com/glhg/glhg%20235pdf.pdf>

GLHG Newsletter #283 gives Sylvia Hasenkopf’s program notes about East Greenville

<https://www.dteator.com/glhg/glhg%20283pdf.pdf>

GLHG Newsletter #320, pg 4, links Craig Schwab’s PLM book and is available for sale.

<https://www.dteator.com/glhg/glhg%20320pdf.pdf>

PLM’s website: <http://www.pinelakemanor.com/> is chocked full of resort info.

**Other Notes:**

The October 14 meeting will feature the 2025 GLHG Calendar. I bet you will like it.

Some of you on Facebook have seen updates on the Observation Tower that Walter Preisner has renovated (or brought back from disappearing!) Part of the November program will share Walter’s work.

A thank you goes to Stephanie and Christine for once again supplying the light refreshments.