



# THE BULLETIN

*Cortland County Historical Society*



*Volume 5, Issue 1*

*February 2012*

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## **Dates To Remember:**

February 1—SUNY Cortland Memorial Library, Second Floor. Exhibit opening: "Abolishing the Chains of Slavery: Central New Yorkers to the Rescue"

February 8—Lecture by Dr. Milton Sernett "We Must Abolish Slavery! - North Star Shining: The Abolition Crusade in Upstate New York" 4 pm, Corey Union Exhibition Lounge

February 14—initial deposit for the Ottawa Bus Trip due to CCHS

February 16—Performance Robert Djed Snead - "Escaped Slave (and now Reverend) Jermain W. Loguen Visits Cortland" 7 p.m., Sperry Center, Room 205

## **Mindy's Musings**

It is hard to believe it is 2012 already. 2011 flew by us, and now we find ourselves in a New Year. Each New Year according to [www.statisticbrain.com](http://www.statisticbrain.com), at least 45 percent of Americans always make a New Year's resolution. According to the same site, in 2009 the United States population was 307,006,550, meaning at least 138,151,598 Americans are making a resolution this year. I am included in that number personally and professionally.

In August we begin in earnest to plan for the upcoming year. We make a budget, create advertising goals, and defend our worth to the Cortland County Legislature.

This year, in creating advertising goals, I set specific, measurable goals defining success for Cortland County Historical Society in 2012 in advertising. With the New Year, I have added other important factors of our work to that list. As members and supporters of Cortland County I feel it is important for you to know what our goals are, why we strive for these things, when we meet these objectives (or if we fail to meet them what caused our failure), as well as to know HOW you can help.



**CCHS Director Mindy Leisenring prepares students from Parker elementary for a tour of the Suggett House Museum**

## **Cortland County Historical Society 2012 New Year's Resolutions**

- 1. Increase membership by at least 50%.** Currently we have a membership/supporter base of 445 individuals or households. This would make our goal membership 668. Members provide not only financial support, but serve as volunteers, and help to prove the value of our programs. You can help by renewing your membership or reaching out to your friends to become members. Use the forms enclosed with your Holiday Fund Drive request to encourage a friend to join. Plus, memberships can be given as a gift, so the next time you are shopping for a friend, consider the gift of membership to Cortland County Historical Society.
- 2. Increase researchers and visitors by 25 percent of our 2010 numbers.** In 2010 we served 510 researchers and 63 visitors for house tours (not including school tours). This would equal 638 researchers in 2012, and 78 visitors to the museum. When was the last time you visited the museum? A friend in from out of town? Cortland County Historical Society makes the perfect spot to stop and learn more about this great community! Visiting from out of town, stop in. We always have something great to share with you.

## Membership Oct–Dec 2011

Thank you to our new and renewing members.

Ted and Helen Ackroyd, Harley and Teresa Albro, Bill and Katrina Allen, Paul and Betsy Allen, Donald and Diane Ames, Leonard and Linda Cohen, Patricia Arnold, Marsha Ashbarry, Edward John Barry, Sr, Ina Bean, Betsy Beardsley, Ed and Kathy Beardsley, Ruth Bennett, Grace Bentley, Doris Blackstock, Susan Bleistein, Karl Blixt, Betty Bonawitz, Rosemary Bracciale, Anna Brookes, Muriel Brooks, Joseph Brownell, Van Burd, William and Jean Cadwallader, Chris Calabro, Ward and Louise Calaway, Joanne Canale, Joan Cannella, Anne Caratelli, John Churchill, James and Patricia Clark, Sue A. Clark, Philip and Mary Coffey, Joseph and Katherine Compagni, Mary Louise Congdon, Suzanne Conley, Elaine M. Contento, Isabel L. Coon, Mary Jane Corey, Dick Crozier, Gary and Sandra Decker, Michael Dexter, Ward and JoAnne Dukelow, Thomas and Martha Dumas, Linda Eberly, Warren S. Eddy, C. Ashley and Beverly Ellefson, Bella Fabrizio, Robert and Patricia Ferris, Harley Finkelstein, Louis Fiorentini, Roger Frain, Mary Ann Gambitta, Nancy Garvey, Barbara Gebhardt, Jeff and Gonda Gebhardt, Stephen and Deborah Geibel, Gayle Gleason, Dann S. Grant and Family, Sue Guido, Robert Hall, Kathleen Howe Handiboe, John and Lorraine Hannon, Nancy Hansen, Edmund and Maryanne Wilbur Hart, Cathy Hash, Barbara Haskell, Lewis and Judy Heath, Elima Higgins, Gerald A. Hines, Patti Hobbs, John and Lisa Hoeschele and Family, Johanne Holcomb, Sally J. Holcombe, Maureen Isaf, Gladys Jacobs, Jan Jeffers, Ruth Jordan, Mary Ann Kane, Robert D'Addario

## Mindy's Musings Continued

3. **Increase school involvement.** In 2011 three of the twelve elementary schools in Cortland County visited Cortland County Historical Society. We have been working with local teachers and the teachers' center, to increase awareness of our programs, as well as opportunities we offer. All school children receive free tours and research whether as part of a school group or through their own visitation. Are you local? Encourage your school to visit for a tour or to use our off site educational kits. If you aren't local, we may still be able to find a way to work with your school, through online programming and document based research.

4. **Creation of a new brochure.** Trustee Kaaren Pierce consistently refers to "Cortland County Historical Society as the best kept secret in Cortland County". This year we aim to get the word out. A new brochure will allow us to advertise more locally and at other regional attractions. Maybe you are a great photographer or a wordsmith who could come up with clever text to drive people in. Ideas are always welcome.

5. **Increased web presence.** Working with local business Good News Computing, as well as through Facebook, we seek to increase the ability for people to learn about our products and services through our website and other online outlets. The simplest way is to follow us on Facebook. I follow several museums, which have creative contests and information on their Facebook site and I hope to increase our presence and usage of the site. Visit us online at: [www.cortlandhistory.com](http://www.cortlandhistory.com) or [facebook.com/CortlandCountyHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/CortlandCountyHistoricalSociety).

These may seem like lofty goals, but I have always been a bit of a dreamer. However, I believe that they are 100 percent achievable. In the almost four years I have been at Cortland County Historical Society, we have reached many new heights, and I know that with hard work and perseverance 2012 will bring us to new levels of success. In each issue of the newsletter, I will devote a small block to how we are doing on reaching our goals, a check for you that we are working towards our goals, and a reminder that each of you plays an important part in moving us forward.

## Attic Treasures Sale

Our fundraising committee is busy preparing for the annual Attic Treasures Sale (formerly known as the Pale Pachyderm Sale). While we have collected items over the year, we are always looking for more items.

So when the spring cleaning bug hits you, feel free to drop by Cortland County Historical Society with items that you wish to donate to our sale. All we ask is that you do not bring in textbooks, clothing, or cookbooks! Donations are accepted year round, and are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Stay tuned to find out the exact date of the sale.



Items on sale at a previous Attic Treasures Sale.

## Crown City Distributors by Tom and Mickey Gallagher

In 1969, Ben J. Ardito, a prominent local beer distributor, and two of his employees, Tom Berardi and Mickey Gallagher, purchased the beverage distributorship of Ben J. Robbins and incorporated under the name Crown City Distributors. They expanded the product line to include all Pepsi products; Hires Root Beer, Orange Crush, Cherry Crush, Mountain Dew, Schwepps Tonic, and Soda, and the Clicquot Club line.

The partners established their distribution center at 116 Port Watson Street, a very primitive building with no heat, no running water or toilets and a 12 ft by 8 ft office with a portable electric heater. The building was just wide enough to park the three trucks of the business. All loading and unloading was done out of doors, which turned out to be very labor intensive, especially during the winter.

The trucks that came with the business were old and in need of constant repair and did not meet the needs of the operation. The truck bodies were open with a canvas curtain to "protect" the contents. Many days during the winter proved to be interesting. If the temperatures dropped below freezing, the contents of the bottles and cans would freeze, causing the tops to blow off or raise a few inches above the top of the container. Since there was nothing solid on the sides of the trucks, occasionally full cases of empties would end up on the road when rounding a corner. Reflecting on these changes, one may wonder why they did not move to a different location sooner.

In 1970, after nearly ten years at SCM in Syracuse and Cortland,

Mickey's brother Tom became a partner. After about 4 years, Mickey and Tom bought out the other 2 partners and became sole owners. By now the business had expanded to the point that the old warehouse was no longer big enough to hold the inventory and the trucks were not large enough to hold the amount of product needed for daily deliveries.

In 1976, Crown City Distributors purchased about three and one half acres of land on Luker Road from the Stiles-Potter family and built a new 7,200 square foot warehouse. That was large enough to hold the needed inventory, plus the space to hold new, larger trucks. It was now a distinct pleasure to load and unload the trucks inside the building.

The move to the new warehouse did not happen without challenges. We had only one fork lift and it could only be used in one location. This meant hand loading and unloading many pallets at one or the other location. We had two young men working for us during the summer. Chet and Jeff Siebert. Their father, Chet Sr. (Chairman of the Board at PTM) had stopped by to see how we were progressing. He saw the dilemma and soon disappeared. Within a half hour, we looked down Luker Road and there came Chet Sr., driving a second fork lift. Needless to say, we were duly impressed and thankful. That made the job of moving much easier.

The business continued to expand. We had gone from refillable bottles to almost 90 percent cans and plastic bottles. This made daily deliveries much easier and more efficient, for we didn't have to send trucks out

with room for empties. In 1969, the total number of cases delivered was approximately 80,000. In 1977, that had increased to 200,000 cases, plus over 1500 pre-mix and post-mix tanks for fountain systems.

Although we were enjoying the success that came with many years of hard work and dedication sometimes things don't remain the same. Little did we know that Pepsi National and Pepsi bottling Co. were in talks to reorganize. Part of that reorganization was the elimination of all warehousing distributors.

We were very fortunate to have had a dedicated staff. Throughout the years, they were the backbone of our success. It is important to recognize some of those people: Leo Riley, Dennis Gallagher, Doug Bartholomew, Carl Van Etten, Chet Siebert, Jeff Siebert, Brian Pendell, Tom "Glider" Gallagher Sr., and Toni Gallagher; bookkeeper for the first few years, and Office Manager Sharon Zeches for ten years.

Crown City Distributors closed its doors in 1987.

For more stories like this: stop in at Cortland County Historical Society, Sheridan's Jewelers, or Olde Homer House today to pick up your copy.

We will be glad to mail your copy. Priority mail goes for \$5.00, media mail, much less.

Have a story to contribute to our next book? Call (607)756-6071, e-mail: [cortlandhistory@centralny.twcbc.com](mailto:cortlandhistory@centralny.twcbc.com) or mail to 25 Homer Avenue, Cortland NY 13045.

and Kate O'Connell, Patrick Kiernan, Tony Kissel, Richard and Nancy Kroot, Beatrice Lammers, Lynne Lash, Diana Leisenring, Paul Lorenzo, Joan Mack, Erling Maine, Jim Masterson, Gwendolyn McCabe, Joan McEvoy, Lois Meyer, Mary Michener, Mike and Barb Milligan, James Monteverde, Mason and Jane Morenus, Sherry Morgan, Susan Morgan, Rick Morse, John Morton, Jim and Barb Nichols, Judith Niederhofer, Tamie J. Olmsted, Judd Olshan and Family, Jo Carol Parkin, Stella Partis, June B. Paser, Stephanie Passeri-Densmore, Pat Patriarco, Carol Foster and Paulette Fry, M.K. Peace, Patricia Perkins, Roger Phillips, Lila Pierce, Pamela Poulin, Marsha Powell, Judith Pribula, Robert Price, Edmund Raus Jr., Don and Carol Reed, Gregory Reed, Robert and Norma Rhodes, Hugh and Judy Riehlman, Robert and Patricia Riehlman, Robert Rightmire, Norma Riley, David Ritchie, Joan Robinson, Margaret Robinson, Randy Rogers, Chris and Michelle Ryan, Maria O. San Jule, Richard Schieffelin, Jacob and Margaret Schuhle, Alan Scouten, Frances Shearer, George and Elaine Smith, Robert E. Smith, Robert Spitzer, F. Michael and Kathy Stapleton, Jim Stevens, Judy Swartwout, Philip and Diane Tennant, Angela Thurlow, Karen C. Tice, Philip Underwood, Ronald and Wilma Van Dee, Louis Vanaria, Deborah Vibbard, Harold and Helen Walker, Michael Wallace, Doug and Lois Walsh, George and Patrica Walter, Russell Wanish, Janice Warner, Dale E. Watrous, Malcolm and Margaret Watrous, Benjamin Wells, Harry J. Weston, Jeff Wheatley and Family, Kenneth and Janice Wheeler, Jennifer White, Ruth Whiting, Kenneth and JoAnn Wickman, Newell and Ardis Willcox, Kenneth Wooster, Muriel Wrobel, Paul and Elizabeth Yesawich, Kay Zaharis

## Thank You—Diane Ames

### CCHS Trustees

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Joseph Compagni—Secretary

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Toni Gallagher, Mary Kimberly,  
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Kaaren Pierce, Dr. Kevin Sheets,  
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#### Staff:

Mindy Leisenring—Director

Anita Wright - Research Associate



Ed Hart (Board President) presents Diane Ames with a plaque in recognition of her service as CCHS Board President

Just about this time, four years ago, I was contacted by F. Michael Stapleton, about the possibility of applying for the director's position at Cortland County Historical Society. I won't bore you with the details about my decision to apply, but we all know how the story ends. My application was to be e-mailed to the board president: Diane Ames. Diane was out of town when I sent in the application, but immediately upon return contacted me and apologized for the delay (those of you who have applying for jobs, know that two weeks is very little delay in the waiting game), but hoped I was still interested and would like to set up an interview. Over the next two months I would visit the museum, have my initial interview, and then come down for a meet the staff interview, dinner and board meeting.

After meeting the staff, Diane took me around Cortland and into Homer showing me

where this and that was. This is a good place for getting this done, this is a nice store to shop in, and other helpful information for a newcomer. That evening my first trip down Cortland's one way Main Street, and dinner at the Community, was capped off by a call before I even made it home, asking for me to call when I made it home. I had the job; I would start Tuesday, April 8, 2008. Diane was here when I arrived to help get me settled in.

Fast forward four years. There have been many great moments shared with Diane. Moments including:

- \* The first day at Cortland County Historical Society, with the stamp cancellation event, as well as attending the County's Bicentennial celebration at the High School.

- \* The publication of the first newsletter in May 2008, and her excitement to establish regular communication with

the members.

- \* The Ames-Dibble House tour, fundraiser; when she and her husband graciously opened up the home of his mother to the public to raise money for CCHS.

- \* Playing piano for our Bridal Show Fundraiser, which obstructed her view of the show.

- \* Her Board President's history question at our monthly board meetings.

I could continue writing this list for days and fill pages of the newsletter with the special things that Diane has done for both Cortland County Historical Society and my self. While she will no longer be serving as our board of trustees' president, she will remain a presence on the board of trustees and a force for positive growth and success at Cortland County Historical Society.

## Thank You—Christine Buck

Flipping through the minute books of the Cortland County Historical Society board of trustees you see that in January of 1987, Christine (Chris) Buck is introduced as a new trustee for the first time. Fast forward 25 years and with the exception of 5 years of that time, Chris has served on the board of trustees, even while not serving on the board, she continued to be involved. During her first tenure on the board Chris served as Vice-President and was an extremely active member of the board. In 2004 she stepped down after 17 years of service. In January 2008, after the retirement of Director Mary Ann Kane, Chris came in, and took over as the Interim Director of the society through April of 2008, when the new director began. Chris continued on for a few months helping to make the transition of leadership as smooth as possible. When vacancies on the board came up, hers was one of the first names brought up to fill one of the positions. In January of 2009 Chris returned to service on the board of trustees. With the retirement of long-term trustee Leonard Ralston at the end of 2010, Chris took up the head of the publications committee, and was part of the success of our most recent publication: Working in Cortland County.

At our December 2011 meeting, we were saddened to accept the resignation of Chris, as she has moved out of the area, and the commute to continue to attend our meetings would be too much to ask of any person. We thank Chris for her continued service to Cortland County Historical Society and know that she will continue to be a strong advocate for the causes of our Society even at a distance. Best wishes to Chris and her family in their new ventures.



## Tulipmania! Visit Ottawa with CCHS May 16–18, 2012

The Dutch gave 100,000 tulip bulbs to Canadians as a token of thanks for sheltering their royal family during the Second World War and the role the soldiers played in the liberation of Holland. The Canadian Tulip Festival maintains the spirit of goodwill by celebrating friendship through flowers. The Canadian Tulip Festival has grown into the largest tulip festival in the world. Get ready for tulips like you've never seen them before. Celebrate Tulipmania over half a century old, as Ottawa celebrates international friendship and the return of spring as millions of colorful flowers bloom in parks and gardens across the capital.

May 16:

Depart Cortland at 7 am.

Arrive in Ottawa in time for lunch amidst the tulips. A tour will guide you through the Tulipmania. (Lunch at your own expense) (visit: <http://www.tulipfestival.ca/>)

Next visit the National Gallery of Canada (visit: <http://www.gallery.ca/en/>)

Dinner at the Byward Market (at your own expense) (visit: <http://www.byward-market.com/>)

The evening concludes with a cruise on the Rideau Canal.

May 17:

Deluxe Continental breakfast at the hotel

Tour of Ottawa. Visit the Parliament Hill, the Supreme Court of Canada, Sussex Drive, including the US embassy, the Official residences of the Prime Minister and Governor General, the Byward market, the Rideau Canal, the Canadian War museum, the Royal Canadian Mint and more.

Lunch and free time at the Byward Market.

Visit the Canadian Museum of Civilization, including a show at the IMAX theatre (visit: <http://www.civilization.ca/home>)

Dinner at a local restaurant

Stop at the Manoir Du Casino prior to returning to the hotel

May 18:

Deluxe Continental breakfast at the hotel prior to check-out

Guided tour of Parliament (<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Visitors/index-E.asp>)

Lunch at the Rideau Center (at your own expense) (<http://www.rideaucentre.net/>)

Depart for home at 2 pm, with a dinner stop en route at your own expense.

Arrive in Cortland between 7:00 pm and 7:30 pm.

Trip includes: Round trip motor coach transportation, 2 nights hotel accommodations, 2 breakfasts, 1 dinner, all admissions and driver gratuity.

Cost: \$375 per person for 4 to a room, \$405 per person for 3 to a room, \$465 per person for 2 to a room, based on 40+ people. If we have less than 40 participants the cost would increase by \$25 per person.

Reservations are first come first served to a maximum of 48 people



**A Passport or NY State enhanced drivers license is necessary for this trip!**



Initial Deposit due:  
2/17/2012—\$100  
each

Final payment due  
4/6/2012

Contact: Mindy at  
CCHS (607)756-6071  
to hold your reservation



CORTLAND COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

25 Homer Avenue  
Cortland, NY 13045



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Permit No. 50

Return Service Requested

Membership Form for New Members

Senior (optional 65 years & older)	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	For "Family" Category please list
Individual	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	names of family living at this
Family	\$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	address.
Supporting	\$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sustaining (Cody Higgins Club)	\$150.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sponsor (Charles Jones Club)	\$300.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Curator (Mary Ann Kane Club)	\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Benefactor (Joan Siedenburg Club)	\$1,200.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Life Member	\$10,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	



**Suggett House, Home of  
Cortland County Historical  
Society**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Cortland County Historical Society; 25 Homer Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045