



THE BULLETIN

Cortland County Historical Society



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Dates to Remember:

- *December 23–26, we will be closed for Christmas*
- *December 31, last day to make a tax deductible donation to CCHS for 2011*
- *December 31–January 2, we will be closed for New Years*

Mindy's Musings

Since I was a young girl the importance of service was impressed upon me. To give unselfishly to another without thought of reward for ones self was a lesson I heard numerous times growing up. From a youth group that extolled the virtues of service, to National Honor Society that had service as one of its purposes, and membership criterion, the importance of service to others was continually reinforced. This lesson stayed with me as I grew up, and has continued to form a basis for behaviors into my adult life.

As the director of Cortland County Historical Society the importance of service is something I am reminded of daily. This fall I have taken on the challenge of a six week online collections management class. This class is intended to help refresh the knowledge that I gained in college, as well as update myself in best practices and changes in New York State Law. I also attended a seminar on connecting with your fans: online and in person. While both of these classes are wonderful opportunities for professional development, they brought me into contact with a fact I do not often think about: how many museums in New York State are ran by all volunteers.

Originally Cortland County Historical Society was like these organizations, volunteer ran, over time we evolved to having a paid professional staff. At many historical societies like our own, having two paid staff members is a luxury. However, despite having two staff members, Cortland County Historical Society could not operate without our volunteers.

At the seminar on connecting with your fans, the volunteers (and even those paid staff members in attendance) all had one thing in common, passion about their organization. This passion serves as their driving force to volunteer. One woman commented that she had been goaded into volunteering, but her passion for the cause has spurred her continued involvement. The volunteers in the collections management class are much the same. Some of these volunteers are so dedicated they are opening new historical societies and museums. Others are tackling important parts of running a museum like collections and public relations.

Volunteers at Cortland County Historical Society are the same they have a passion for our mission. They see the importance of the work we do and give of their time and talents to make our programs successful. Without these volunteers the various programs Cortland County Historical Society offers would not be the success that they are now. During 2010 Cortland County Historical Society volunteers gave over 2,900 hours of their time. As the holidays descend upon us, it is time to remember that which we are thankful for, and I am grateful to the volunteers that make my job easier and much more pleasant by their enriching influence on my life.



Board Retirement Dinner
Left to Right: Honoree Jaffrey Harris, Kathy Beardsley, Mindy Leisenring, Nadyne Harris

Why I Volunteer at CCHS

This reminiscence from Elsie Gutchess sheds light on how she became such a staunch supporter of the Cortland County Historical Society.

“ Many years ago, in the middle 1930’s, my just retired (from being a Michigan school principal) great aunt, Elnora Blanchard took a taxi five days each week, the mile to and from the Cortland County Historical Society, to keep the Historical Society going in its little cramped and cold space in the Court House. She kept all the records and files, answered the mail, tended the collection, led their meetings and offered programs. The budget was zero. She and her retired (Cortland High School English teacher) maiden sister resided across Tompkins Street from us in the old family farmhouse and lived on nearly nothing. As we did, and all of our neighbors.

She lectured me (as only a school principal could!), I think I was in second grade, that when I grew up, I must support the Cortland County Historical Society, belong to the DAR, and take care of the family genealogy. I do, or have done, my best to meet her edicts.”

As the Historical Society honors our faithful and staunch volunteers, Elsie Gutchess’ name is one that comes to the top of the list! Elsie, we are indeed grateful for the many ways you support our Society!

Submitted by Diane Ames

In 1997 I was recruited by Charles Jones for membership on the Board of Trustees. I asked him what I might be able to do for the Society and he said, "Oh, maybe you could write an article or something." Well, I'm no writer but the "something" was my doing what he had done. Mary Ann Kane described it as "light bulb changer".

I was pleased to be asked since I had retired and had some time available for this sort of thing. People have asked me about volunteering at the Society but they don't have "experience". I tell them there are any number of niche jobs that don't require any more time than they can give and they will be shown what has to be done. Anything that helps the organization on any level to improve its services is welcome. To me what is most important is giving back to the community some of what one unconsciously benefited from during their lifetime. Also, there is a certain satisfaction knowing that your volunteering is useful.

Jaff Harris

I volunteer joyfully because I have been blessed in my life journey with so many kind souls that have encouraged and supported me. I have much to be grateful for. I believe volunteering is one way of my paying tribute to all those kind people.

Kathleen Beardsley



This year we had the chance to honor four recent board of trustee retirees. Thank you to Byron Horak, Leonard Ralston, Mary Bickford, and Jaffrey Harris for their many years of service.

Despite retirement these individuals still continue to serve in various capacities and we are grateful for the hard work they perform to make Cortland County Historical Society run smoothly.

Behind the Scenes

CCHS has many people and organizations volunteering their time and talents “behind the scenes”. We thank Time Warner Cable, Jim Forshee, Melanie Arnold & Sharon and Mike Stevans for videotaping interviews and events sponsored by CCHS. Those tapes are then aired on Time Warner’s Channel 2.

In April, Sharon and Mike taped the CCHS “Here Come the Brides” fashion show. Then Melanie made sure that it was aired on Channel 2 making it possible for a large number of people to see and learn about the history and styles of gowns modeled in that show. Sharon and Mike went above and beyond videotaping by producing many DVD copies of the event. The CCHS gift shop has a few copies of those DVDs left for people who want to purchase them.

Another project that Mrs. Stevans and Jim Forshee have done is videotaping peoples memories of our agricultural community. They have taped interview of 18 different people recording their memories of the Cortland County Fair. Recently, Sharon taped a 40 minute interview of Buddy Fleming and Chuck McEvoy with their memories of working on the big farms owned by J.M. MacDonald and Glydon Crocker. With Tom Dumas doing the interviewing and Sharon doing the taping, some fun yet important memories have been saved digitally, preserving important background of Cortland County’s agricultural history.

Submitted by: Marti Dumas

From the Mail Bag

Dear Person-in-charge,

In the late Spring–early Summer I realized I could visit Cortland, where I was born but never visited in non-fading living memory. As I have been trying to trace my ancestors, this was my chance to check up on them. So I called the Cortland County Historical Society and chatted with Mrs. Anita Wright. She took notes on what I knew about my Cortland ancestors and said she would research it and have it ready when I would be in Cortland on July 7, 2011.

The day came and Mindy had the info and as I asked some questions, she found some more info. This turned into a breakthrough day! Many missing pieces came falling into place. I was able to visit my Great grandfather, Dr. Philip Micheal Neary’s burial site at St. Marys, took photos of some of the houses he lived in and the neighborhood, and visited the hospital he was involved with in the 1890s. Mindy gave me a brochure which has his photo and a photo of Dr. Kelly who my mother worked for as a surgery nurse. Wow! I could not sleep that night—I was too overcome and excited.

A fantastic job by all. I’ll be back to look for more leads and info. Thank you for having such a great historical society in Cortland—keep up the great work.

Cheers,

Phil Underwood (my Mom is the Neary)

Café Press Shop

Visit our new online store at: <http://www.cafepress.com/cortlandcountyhistoricalsociety>. Purchase specially designed items that show your support of Cortland County Historical Society. Designs are available on many types of items. Shop now for Christmas. <http://www.cafepress.com/cortlandcountyhistoricalsociety>



All purchases benefit Cortland County Historical Society!

Membership Renewal July–September 2011

Thank you to our new and renewing members!

Ted and Helen Ackroyd

Donald and Diane Ames

Claude M. Arnold

Harry and Mary Alice Bellardini

Mary P. Bickford

Karl Blixt

Rosemary Bracciale

Van Burd

Joanne B. Canale

Anne Caratelli

James and Patricia Clark

Mary Louise Congdon

Mary Jane Corey

Carol A. Deloff

C. Ashley and Beverly Ellefson

Joan K. Fenner

Linda Frank

Barbara Gebhardt

Stephen and Deborah Geibel

Elsie Gutchess

Kathleen Howe-Handiboe

Nancy M. Hansen

Patricia A. Harrison

Gladys G. Jacobs

Richard and Nancy Kroot

Beatrice Lammers

Diana B. Leisenring

Paul Lorenzo

Joan M. Mack

Erling Maine

Gwendolyn McCabe

Judith Niederhofer

Lawrence H. Paser

Patricia Perkins

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Volunteer!



What can one get out of volunteering? Whatever you are looking for!

Do you have special skills that you would like to share? We can use everything from office help to keeping our sidewalks clean this winter. Do you have experience as an educator? We'll find a fun spot for you. If you have 2 hours once a year, once a month or once a week to give to us, we'd like to talk to you to determine the best fit such as working with children at one of our educator sessions, filing, answering the phone, greeting visitors, setting up displays, PR, etc.

If you have not volunteered here or are interested in coming back to help, please contact Mindy at 607-756-6071.



Gerald Young and family with the giant pumpkins he grew as a volunteer for Cortland County Historical Society Pumpkinfest booth.

2011 Volunteers and Business Supporters

A giant thank you to our 2011 volunteers, and the businesses that have supported us.

Carol Alexander, Diane Ames, Melanie Arnold, Michelle Ball, Diane Batzing, Ina Bean, Betsy Beardsley, Kathy Beardsley, Connor Beattie, Mary Alice Bellardine, Charlie Bernheim, Mary Bickford, Betty Bonawitz, Isabell Christine Brown, Valerie Brown, Christine Buck, James Cady, James Clark, Joseph Compagni, Elaine Contento, Charles Cooper, Sue Covington, Sierra Darling, Sandra Decker, Jamie Lyn DeLine, Jenna DeLine, Jessica DeLine, Kyle DelMuro, Mike Dexter, Ryan Dona, Martha Dumas, Thomas Dumas, Mike Durfee, Bill Eligh, Susan Eligh, Margaret Fiske, Madeleine Fortin, Antoinette Gallagher, Danielle Gallagher, Thomas Gallagher, Sean Griffin, Jaffrey Harris, Nadyne Harris, Amanda Harrison, Edmund Hart, Lou Heath, Johanne Holcomb, Emily Horak, Roger Horak, Sally Horak, Betty Hudson, Mary Ann Kane, Carl Kimberly, Mary Kimberly, Lynne Lash, Louis Lauria, Diana Leisenring, Paul Lorenzo, Jenny Manning, Berniece Potter-Masler, Gwendolyn McCabe, Therese McDonald, Karen McEvoy, Betsy Meldrim, Jim Miller, Patty Patriarco, Chopper Payne, Jennifer Petrucco, Kaaren Pierce, Pamela Poulina, Maria Purcell, Leonard Ralston, Kathryn Ramirez, Ed Rause, Kira Read, Carol Reed, William Rueda, Bev Ryan, Nicole Schroder, Jake Schuhle, Tammy Demeree Sciera, Catherine Seager, Alison Emily Sears, Kevin Sheets, Charlie Sheridan, Lorraine Sherry, Shannon Spencer, F. Michael Stapleton, Mike Stevans, Sharon Stevans, Katie Thomas, Ronald Van Dee, Larry Wales, Kim Walker, Jennifer White, Jaclyn Yong, Gerald Young, Haleigh Zeches, Nikki Zeches, and Sharon Zeches.

Ames Linen, Bernard's Custom Logo, Builder's Do It Best Center, Byrne Dairy, Cable Channel 2, Carbon Copies, Cortland Downtown Business Partnership, Cortland Fitness Center, Cortland Repertory Theatre, Cortland Standard, Economy Paving, Good News Computing, Greek Peak Mountain Resort, Hart-Stone Securities, Heath Electric, Key Bank Cortland Branch, Lily Lanetree, Price Chopper, Reeds Seeds, Shaw and Boehler, Sheridan's Jewelers, Shipwreck Mini Golf, The Bling Store, Tops Market, Van Dee Plumbing, Wal-Mart, Wright-Beard Funeral Home, and WXHC. Please patronize these businesses that give to the Cortland community!

If I have missed a name, please accept my thanks for your hard work, and apologies for the mistake. We appreciate all of our volunteers and supporters at Cortland County Historical Society!



Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love...
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Cutters and Pasters diligently working in the Research Center

**CORTLAND COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Society**