Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)
Editor: Bill Deane, 607-547-4426; billdeane14@gmail.com
VOLUME 36, ISSUE 1 * WINTER, 2024

NEWS BRIEFS

- **Dues and Don'ts…** Final reminder: FCAHS dues were payable by the first of the year. If your name is not on the list of paid-up members on page 4, please use the application on page 5 to renew your membership and continue receiving the newsletter. The dues may soon be raised for the first time since 1996 (see page 3), so get in at the retro price while you can!

- **Making a List…** The roll of membership on page 4 reflects those who have paid their 2024 dues as of January 10, according to our Treasurer. Please let the editor know if there are any corrections or omissions. Welcome to our new members, and thanks to all for your continued support of our Society!

- **A Question of Timing…** For our first 33 years, our monthly meetings started at 7 PM. In 2022, the start time was changed to 6 PM. Some people prefer the new time, some the old, while a compromise time of 6:30 has been suggested. There also has been talk about moving the programs back to the end of the meeting, one hour after the scheduled start time. The Trustees agreed to solicit member input, and make a decision early in 2024. Please e-mail or phone the editor (contact information on masthead) with your vote. Thanks.

- **Wide Area…** Reminder: we are the Fly Creek *Area* Historical Society. When the Society was formed in 1989, we explained that the area includes "Fly Creek, as well as the neighboring hamlets of Oaksville, Pierstown, Fly Creek Valley, Forkshop, Toddsville, Index, Christian Hill, Phoenix Mills, and rural Otsego." Which was a long way of saying "The Town of Otsego other than Cooperstown." So, it's more than just Fly Creek, but it doesn't include such places as Hartwick, Schenevus, or Morris. Henceforth, the *Fly Creeker* will concentrate on our area.

- **Treasured Members…** After serving as our Treasurer since 2019, Deecy Haviland has decided to step down for various reasons, including to focus on our Archives Committee. We thank Deecy for her four years of service in one important role, and future service in another one. We also thank Bev Hargrove for her many years as chairperson of the Archives Committee. The Board of Trustees appointed Sharon Kroker to complete the remainder of Deecy's term as Treasurer, through August, 2025.

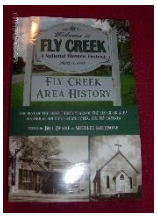
- **Electronic…** Distributing the *Fly Creeker* electronically would save us paper and postage. If you would like to get future issues that way, please e-mail the editor at billdeane14@gmail.com. Thanks.

- **Going Like Hotcakes…** The spring pancake breakfast, our first fund/fun-raiser of 2024, has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday, May 5, 8 AM until noon. Mark your calendars and bring your appetites!

- **Two Shipmans Passing in the Night…** The December 24, 2023 issue of the Albany *Times Union* had an article of local interest by Kenneth C. Crowe II. It quotes yours truly and is about our own David Shipman, the inspiration for James Fenimore Cooper's most famous literary characters. While we "know" that Shipman is buried in Fly Creek's Adams Cemetery on County Highway 26, Hoosick Falls also claims to be Shipman's final resting place, and each has a historic marker to that effect.

- **Trustworthy…** The current FCAHS Board of Trustees consists of President Greg Crowell, Vice-President Bill Deane, Secretary Dora Cooke, Treasurer Sharon Kroker, and Trustees John Phillips (chairman), Liz Susman, and Tony Kroker. The Board next plans to meet on April 9, 2024 at 3:00 at the Town building.

FLY CREEK AREA YESTERYEAR



Each issue, we will include an article from our 2022 book, *Fly Creek Area Yesteryear*. Copies of the book are still available at the FCAHS/Grange building ($20 for members), and at the Fly Creek General Store and Fly Creek Cider Mill ($25 plus tax for the general public). Copies can also be mailed in the continental US (library rate) for an additional $7 per book.

BLIZZARDS OF THE CENTURIES

By Bill Deane, Spring 1993

At the FCAHS meeting of February 24 [1993], the Society was treated to an unexpected and interesting presentation. George Badgley – in a late substitution for the scheduled program – spoke about "The Blizzard of 1888," the legendary storm that pummeled New York State in March of that year. George read from the diary of his mother's first husband, George Henry Deuell, who was 14 and living in Dutchess County at the time.

Deuell left a remarkably detailed account of the blizzard, which began in his area on Sunday, March 11, 1888. The storm raged for three days, burying the region with drifts up to 14 feet deep. One of the area's oldest inhabitants called it "the worst snowstorm he ever saw or ever expected to see" (although other old-timers maintained that, compared to the one of April 14-17, 1857, the 1888 storm was "a mere squall"). The diarist continued the story with accounts of family hardships, snow removal, and flooding that followed the blizzard.

In an eerie coincidence, this meeting was followed just 17 days later by a blizzard of comparable proportions. The Blizzard of 1993 hit Otsego 105 years – almost to the day – after the 1888 version, and broke the local records for one-day and one-storm snowfalls. Admittedly, blizzards nowadays do not have the impact of those of yesteryear, simply because we have more sophisticated weather-tracking and snow removal systems. Nevertheless, it was an epic storm that paralyzed the eastern United States last month.

The Blizzard of '93 hit the U.S. at the Gulf of Mexico and continued a rapid and destructive path northeast through New England. The first flakes touched down on Otsego County early in the morning of Saturday, March 13, and were joined at midday by 40 to 55 mile per hour winds. Temperatures hovered around 10° F., with wind-chill factors of -40° F. The snow and wind continued all afternoon, evening, and night. By Sunday morning, the snowfall had tapered off, but the wind was still whipping it around wildly. Because of this, snow removal efforts before Monday were rather futile. By then, many of us required bucket-loaders, rather than conventional plows or snow blowers, to clear our driveways and end 48 hours of imprisonment within our homes.

Between 7 a.m. March 13 and the same time the next day, 27.3 inches of snow fell on Cooperstown, according to the National Weather Service observer Harold Hollis. This broke the one-day record of 23" set on – you guessed it – March 13, 1888. All told, the 1993 storm dumped 28.3 inches of snow here, breaking the one-storm mark of 27.4" set December 25-28, 1969.

As members of a Historical Society, we strive to learn about and preserve history, but it is not often that we experience it first-hand. Humbling, isn't it?

SNOW BUSINESS

Cooperstown's Harold Hollis is one of American's more than 10,000 National Weather Service observers, a position he has held for more than 40 years. He maintains local weather records dating back to 1854, including snowfall documentation from October, 1869 to the present. Mr. Hollis notes that the 1992-93 snowfall total (through April 15) ranks fifth on the all-time list and that another five inches' worth will vault us all the way to second place. Below is a list of the five snowiest area winters on record [note: the book lists the top ten as of 1993].

Some other winter records: the earliest measurable (at least one-tenth of an inch) snowfall was on October 4, in both 1974 and 1987 (although we had flurries last September 30). The latest was on May 20, 1976. And the coldest recorded temperature was -34° F. on February 9, 1934.

Winter	Inches
1970-71	179.5
1955-56	129.0
1977-78	128.7
1886-87	126.0
1992-93*	124.0

* Through 4/15.

PROPOSED BY-LAWS AMENDMENTS

The FCAHS Board of Trustees met on January 9, and is proposing raising its dues for the first time in 28 years. We are sorry this may cause hardship for some, but we think these changes are necessary and overdue. Obviously, the Society's expenses have increased significantly since 1996; we didn't even have our own building back then, but now are facing tens of thousands of dollars in repairs and maintenance.

Raising dues entails making changes to Article One of the FCAHS By-Laws, which requires a two-thirds vote of members present at a general meeting held at least 30 days after due notice. These proposed changes will be voted on during the February 28 FCAHS meeting (or, if cancelled, the next monthly meeting held following that date). Please plan to attend and make your vote count. These changes, if made, will not affect those who have already paid their 2024 (or future years') dues.

Following is Article One as it currently reads, with six proposed changes in **bold** print and brackets:

ARTICLE ONE: MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

1. Any person interested in the history of the Fly Creek area and who applies for membership in an appropriate classification of membership and who tenders the necessary dues shall thereby become a member.
2. Annual dues for junior members (individual members 21 years of age or younger) shall be $5.00. [By vote of Society, September 26, 2012.]
3. Annual dues for individual and active members shall be $10.00. [By amending vote of Society, June 26, 1996.] **[Proposed change: raise dues to $15]**
4. Annual dues for a family group living in one domicile shall be $15.00. [By amending vote of Society, June 26, 1996.] **[Proposed change: raise dues to $25]**
5. Annual dues for contributing and sustaining members shall be a minimum of $20.00. [By vote of Society, August 27, 2008 and amending vote of Society, August 26, 2015.] **[Proposed change: raise dues to $30]**
    a. Annual dues for a sustaining family membership (residing in one domicile) shall be a minimum of $25.00. [By vote of Society, August 27, 2008.] **[Proposed change: raise dues to $40]**
6. Annual dues for patrons of history shall be $50. [By vote of Society, August 27, 2008 and amending vote of Society, August 26, 2015.]
7. Annual dues for a sustaining business/professional membership shall be $75, and shall include a business card-sized ad in the *Fly Creeker*. [By vote of Society, August 27, 2008 and amending vote of Society, August 26, 2015.] **[Proposed change: raise dues to $90]**
8. Dues for individual lifetime members shall be $500.00, to be deposited into the Society's Endowment Fund, or into one of the Society's general or special funds, at the discretion of the member. [By vote of Society, August 27, 2008, and amending votes of Society, September 26, 2012 and September 24, 2014.]
9. Annual dues shall be payable in advance and no later than January 1st each year. [By vote of Society, November 28, 2001.] **[Proposed change: change date to January 31]**
10. Members in arrears more than three months after payment is due shall be dropped from the membership. [By amending vote of Society, June 26, 1996.]
11. The membership year shall coincide with the calendar year, January 1 to December 31. [By vote of Society, June 26, 1996.]

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY: 2024 ROLL OF MEMBERSHIP

AINSLIE, James & Catherine
AINSLIE, Michael
ANGERER, Nancy (B)
*BAKER, M. J. “Scottie” (L)
BAKER, Richard & Lynda (C)

BLESSIN, Art & Bev
CIAMPO, Wesley & Evette
CLARK, Jane (L)
COLLINS, Jr., Perry
COOKE, Dora (C)

CRAIG, Peter & Linda
CRIPPEN, Katie (L)
CRIPPEN, Tanner (L)
CROWELL, Greg & Helen (C)
*DEANE, Bill

DUVAL, Bonnie
ELLSWORTH, Catherine L. (C)
*FINCH, John & Jean
FINE, Jeff & Fiona
FLY CREEK CIDER MILL (B)

FLY CREEK GENERAL STORE (B)
HANLON, Carol Goddard
HARGROVE, Beverly A.
HARRINGTON, Angela E.
HARRINGTON, George & Diantha (C)

HARTMANN, MaryAnn
HARVEY, Merritt & *Elaine (C)
HAVILAND, Denise & T. A. BUHL (P)
HAZEN, Al & Darlene
HILLS, Day

JACKSON, David & Judith (C)
KEPNER, Claire (L)
KROKER, Tony & Sharon (C)
MALACK, Chris & Nancy MERRELL (C)
MARCUS, Brad & Shelley

MARIENFELD, Frederick & Mary (C)
McCULLOUGH, John & Susan
McGOEY, Mark, Debra & family (C)
MILLEA, Denis & Janice
MOLLACH, Kathryn (C)

MONTESANO, Dominick & Anna (C)
NEFF, Jean (P)
OKERSON, Elizabeth
OLIN, Gail
PARR, Keith & Amy

PHILLIPS, John & Alison
PIERRO, Robert & Kay (C)
PRIOR, Patrick & Anne
RATHBONE, Sherlee
SHARPE, Stuart & Bonnie

SITTLER, Les & Karen (C)
SMITH, Mr. & Mrs. Steven (L)
*SNYDER, Freida (L)
SNYDER, Katherine
STEPHENSON, Christy

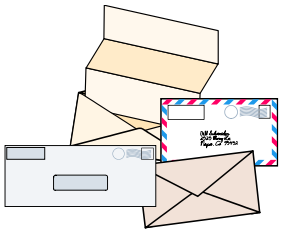
SUMMERS, Suzanne
SUSMAN, Liz
THORNE, Judy (L)
TILLAPAUGH, Ellen & Gary KUCH
TILLAPAUGH, Martin & Meg (C)

TREADWAY, Doris I.
VIBBARD, Ronald & Eleanor
WEIR, Layne & Toni GRAY
WINNIE, Margaret (P)
WINNE, Mary (C)

WOLFF, Margaret (L)
WOODLIFF, Dan
WORDEN, Richard & Bea (P)
YOURNO, James

---

* = Charter Member
(B) = Business/Professional Member
(C) = Contributing/Sustaining Member
(L) = Lifetime Member
(P) = Patron of History



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The *Fly Creeker* will print letters of general interest about area history, the Society, or the newsletter itself. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, space, etc. Address correspondence to Bill Deane, at 408 Christian Hill Road, Cooperstown, NY 13326; or e-mail to billdeane14@gmail.com.

FLY CREEK GENERAL STORE
A VINTAGE STORE & CAFE
GROCERIES - FRESH MEATS - PRODUCE & DELI
P.O. BOX 214 FLY CREEK, NY
607-547-7274

Fly Creek CIDER MILL & ORCHARD ®
History, Taste & Tradition
Serving Fly Creek for 160 years!
Events, News & On-Line Shopping at flycreekcidermill.com

2024 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 87, Fly Creek, NY 13337

Name(s): _____ Renewal ___ New ___

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____)_____-_____ e-mail address: _____@_____

- ❑ Please register me as a junior member of the FCAHS (age 21 or under). Enclosed is a check for $5.
- ❑ Please register me as a member of the FCAHS. Enclosed is a check for $10.
- ❑ Please register us to a family membership (note: this extends to all family members living in one domicile). Enclosed is a check for $15.
- ❑ Please accept the enclosed tax-deductible donation, in the amount of $_____ (minimum $20 for individuals or $25 for families), and enroll me/us as a contributing/sustaining member(s).
- ❑ Please register me as a "Patron of History." Enclosed is a check for $50.
- ❑ Please register me for a sustaining business/professional membership (includes a business card-sized ad in the *Fly Creeker*). Enclosed is a check for $75.
- ❑ Please register me as a Lifetime Member (individuals only). Enclosed is a check for $500 (to be deposited into the Society's Endowment Fund, or into one of the Society's general or special funds, at the discretion of the member).

MEETINGS FOR A NEW YEAR

Time to mark your 2024 calendars with the dates of this year's FCAHS meetings! They are scheduled for January 24, February 28, March 27, April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, August 28, September 25, October 23, and November 20. We expect the January, February, March, and November meetings to be held in the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church, and the rest to be held at our FCAHS/Grange building on 210 Cemetery Road. As of now, the start time is 6 PM, but that may be changed following the January meeting (see news brief #3 on page 1).

In January, Gail Lewis, Master of the Pierstown Grange, will present a history of that organization. In February, following a pot-luck dinner, Emily Zaengle will speak about the history of silos. And March will feature our popular annual "show & tell" program; please bring along an item(s) of historical interest.

The final FCAHS meetings of 2023 were held on October 25 and November 15. In October, Jim Loudon gave a fine audio-visual presentation on the train/trolley system which ran through our area in the first half of the 20th century. In November, James Matson spoke on "Barn Quilts of Otsego County," showing examples of this relatively-new and fast-growing phenomena, including barn quilts owned by Fly Creek residents Gordy Robinson, Sam Hoskins, and Freida Snyder. Following is a list of programs presented at FCAHS meetings in 2023 (the January and February meetings were cancelled due to inclement weather; and as usual, there was no program for the August meeting, and no meeting in December):

Date	Speaker/Presenter	Topic
3/23/2023	Sally Zaengle	History of Alfred Corning Clark Gymnasium
4/26/2023	FCAHS members	Show & Tell
5/24/2023	Deborah Miller	Fly Creek Flowers
6/28/2023	Cherise Tolbert	Otsego Land Trust
7/26/2023	Dr. Kiyoko Yokota & Will Kuss	Health of our Lakes and Waters
9/27/2023	Lauren Cady Glynn	"You Be the Judge"
10/25/2023	Jim Loudon	Leatherstocking Rails
11/15/2023	James Matson	Barn Quilts of Otsego County

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 87
Fly Creek, NY 13337