

# NEWSLETTER

## Historical Society of Shawangunk and Gardiner

Volume 2 Number 3 Summer 2003



### The Johannes Jansen House

Traveling the back roads of the Town of Shawangunk often leads to many unique and breathtaking discoveries. While best known for dramatic scenic vistas and an abundance of wildlife, Shawangunk also offers a wealth of history to explore. One historic treasure is the Johannes Jansen house on Decker Road in the Rutsonville area. Recently, this property was recognized with a special plaque provided by the town of Shawangunk Historic Preservation Committee. It also is listed on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Properties for its architectural and historic significance.

The Johannes Jansen House is a distinctive example of the early stone architecture of the region. The older one-story

west wing is believed to have been built around 1750 by Johannes Jansen. The two-story main building is of the Federal style of architecture and dates to circa 1800-1820. It was built by John Jansen, nephew of Johannes, who inherited the property from his uncle in 1803. The house was part of a farmstead, and two surviving outbuildings provide added charm to this historic property. The Dutch barn is significant in itself as a rare surviving example of late eighteenth-century agricultural wood frame buildings. Between the barn and the house is a substantial corn crib, equally as rare and dating to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The buildings are surrounded by open fields and forested lands with the Shawangunk Mountains as a dramatic backdrop.

The history of the Johannes Jansen House also is steeped

in drama. It is the reputed scene of one of the most exciting events of local historic tradition. Born in 1725, Johannes Jansen served as a Colonel in charge of the Ulster County Militia, 4th Regiment, during the Revolutionary war. He also was a prominent Whig (and, as such, specifically identified with the rebel cause by the British and their supporters, the Loyalists or "Tories"). In 1780, he and his brother Thomas were attacked by a small party of Native Americans and Loyalists, who had joined forces in a series of raids throughout the Minisink and Warwarsing areas. Tradition records that some of Colonel Jansen's slaves and neighbors were killed or captured, but Johannes and Thomas Jansen and their families escaped unharmed.

Johannes Jansen is buried in the Bruynswick Rural Cemetery near the Reformed Church of Shawangunk. His house and farmstead, though privately owned and not open to the public, continue to be preserved and honored as part of Shawangunk's rich architectural history.

*(Editor's Note: Both the Thomas Jansen House and the Reformed Church of Shawangunk will be featured in future issues of this newsletter.)*

# Letter from the President

## OFFICERS

Suzanne Isaksen  
*President*

Al Smiley-*Vice President*

Doris Callan-*Secretary*

Marjorie Hileman  
*Treasurer*

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Freda Fenn

Shirley K. Orndorff

Joseph P. Trapani

Anita Vandermark

Mary Wright

The vision of thirteen history buffs who met at the Church Hall of the Shawangunk Reformed Church of Shawangunk on February 22, 1977 was to "form an Historical Society of the Towns of Shawangunk and Gardiner" The function was to be the preservation of town documents, artifacts, genealogies of local residents, restoration of historical buildings, and a general interest in the historical facts of the area.

By December 29, 1981 the IRS had granted the Society an exemption number. On June 14, 1996 the State of New York Department of Education granted us an absolute Charter.

## NEWSLETTER

Joseph P. Trapani

Kasey Antonelli

Doris Callan

Freda Fenn

Suzanne Isaksen

Shirley K. Orndorff

Al Smiley

Dear Members & Friends,

At our Annual Meeting in June, we welcomed a new member to the Board, **Estelle Caswell**, an organizer of our Christmas Shop at the DuBois House and coordinator of the *Tribute to Shawangunk Women* book series project. **Freda Fenn** will now serve as a trustee. We also re-elected all the officers and trustees whose terms had expired this year.

I am honored to serve as President of the Historical Society. At our first Board meeting in late June, we identified many programs and projects for the coming year. It is clear that the Society will be busier than ever! Committee chairmanships were expanded for Programs & Education and Fund-Raising to support our goals. One of these goals is to renew and strengthen our associations throughout the Town of Shawangunk and with the Town of Gardiner through educational programs and activities.

Our primary focus will continue to be the development of the Andries DuBois/House into our center for local history. The house is ours, and we have begun its stabilization through volunteer efforts and with assistance and guidance from the State of New York and many consultants and contractors. There is a lot of work to be done but *a lot* of satisfaction in being a part of this project.

It will indeed be an exciting year, with projects at the DuBois House and programs reflecting the diverse history and people of Shawangunk, Gardiner, and our surrounding area. As you read through this issue, think about how your ideas and enthusiasm can add to our success. Our committees are always looking for new members, and we welcome you at our meetings and programs. Join us!

Suzanne Isaksen  
President

## Upcoming Events

### Wed. September 3

#### **Tom Daley**

Old Houses & Places  
Of Interest in Newburgh  
& the Surrounding Area

### Wed. October 1

#### **Carleton Mabee**

History of Gardiner

### Wed. November 5

#### **Capt. John M. Miller**

Worlds Oldest Professional Pilot

### Wed. December 3

Christmas Party, 6:00 PM

*all meetings are held at 7:30 at the  
Walkkil Reformed Church  
Bridge & Church Streets*

## Standing Committees

### Programs & Education

Anita Vandermark, Estelle Caswell

### Fund Raising

Kathy Antonelli, Freda Fenn

### Membership

Joseph P. Trapani

### Publicity

Mary Wright

### Restoration & Bldg Maint.

Suzanne Isaksen

### Publications

Joseph P. Trapani

### Finance

Marjorie Hileman

### Archives & Collections

Karen Dale

### Email

HSSG@Frontiernet.net

## From Freda Fenn, Outgoing President

After eight years of being the President of the Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner, I have stepped down. However, the society is in the very capable hands of **Suzanne Isaksen** whom we welcome as our new President.

There are so many people who make a President's life easier, and I am exceedingly grateful to the board and trustees and their committees, and to the members of the society who gave me their full support along the way. Without their assistance and friendship I could not have

survived.

With the acquisition of the Andries DuBois House we aim at preserving the past for the future. We have made great strides towards this goal, and, although it may seem like a slow process, it will be accomplished. At this time I would also like to thank our local businesses and community who support us whole-heartedly with financial donations. Thank you everyone.

At our June Annual Meeting when our excellent new board and trustees were elected, I was presented with

the most beautiful rose tree. It was perfect, and I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for such a wonderful gift. It means so much to me.

Our board is composed of volunteers who have taken on a task of restoration with professionalism and untiring enthusiasm. With the support and encouragement of an active membership we can work together to ensure that we do preserve the past for the future.

**Freda Fenn**

*Editor's note: Freda has not left the Society. She is still a member of the board and co-chairman of the Fund Raising-Committee.*

### Available From Our "Gift Shop"

(call Freda Fenn 845 895-3986)

- Coverlets depicting historic Shawangunk
  - Navy, Green, or Cranberry ..... \$35.
- Small framed copies of old local postcards ..... \$10.
- Book "Hometown Memories"
  - by Ollie Burgess of Wallkill ..... \$10.
- Boxed Glass Christmas Ornaments
  - depicting the Andries DuBois House..... \$10.
- Wooden Toys
  - made by Bill Michalski of Wallkill .....\$5. and up
- Book series "A Collection of Tidbits & Clippings
  - From the Scrapbooks of Shawangunk Women and Their Favorite Receipts."1845-1922
  - Volumn No. 1 now available..... \$20.

## September Meeting To Highlight Newburgh

Our First membership meeting of the 2003-2004 season will be held on September 3, 2003 at 7:30 PM at the Wallkill Reformed Church. Our featured speaker will be **Tom Daley**.

Mr. Daley is a local

professional photographer who has preserved our area's past in photographs and slides. He is well known throughout the Hudson Valley for his excellent slide programs that cover many topics of local history. His program

for our meeting is entitled "Old Houses and Places of Interest in Newburgh and the surrounding Area".

All Members, Friends, and Guests are welcome to attend this very special presentation.

## Andries DuBois House Update

In May a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Existing Conditions Assessment Report was mailed to fourteen preservation architects in the lower Hudson Valley. The goal of this study is a thorough analysis of the building from foundation to roof, covering interior and exterior. From this report, we hope to determine the following:

- 1) Stabilization priorities
- 2) Projects that can be done by Society volunteers
- 3) Projects that must be bid out to contractors
- 4) Estimated costs for projects.

We received six proposals. After interviews and careful deliberations by the Restoration Committee, our Board of Trustees in July approved the firm to guide our

our next efforts..

The Existing Conditions Report is the first phase of a Historic Structures Report (HSR). Our primary document for short and long range planning, the HSR will guide the restoration and interpretation of the Andries DuBois House and its development into a local history museum and research center.

Between rainstorms this spring, **Paul Dale** installed temporary guttering on the front (east) façade of the house. He will continue this work at the back of the house within the next few weeks. **Joe Trapani** is documenting the existing front porch by means of measured drawings and photographs, in preparation for its careful removal this summer.

The Restoration Committee has been reviewing options for replacing our aging furnace.

Research continues into the occupants of the Andries DuBois House throughout its long history.

A Gardening Subcommittee was developed in early spring, but work plans were "washed away" by our wet spring. Nevertheless, **Paul Dale** has mapped out existing plantings on a survey diagram of the property for eventual landscaping work and further research.

With the exception of the front façade (pending the removal of the porch), the foundation stabilization is complete. Our stone mason, **Robert Jury**, has done an excellent job..

## In Memoriam

**Hazel E. Ronk**, a retired teacher for the Wallkill School District, died on Thursday, June 5, 2003. She was the widow of **J. Addison Ronk**. Hazel became a member of the Historical Society in 1986 and was a Trustee for 2 terms, from 1992 to 1995, and 1995-1998. On March 1, 1989 Hazel prepared and presented

"Reminiscences of Teaching in a One Room Schoolhouse and the Centralization of the Wallkill School District." Her first ten years of teaching were in one-room school houses in Skaneateles and New Hurley. Hazel was an active member of the Wallkill Reformed Church and was named "Women of the year" by the

Wallkill Chamber of Commerce. At the funeral service on June 10th 2003 at the Wallkill Reformed Church, many of her former students and colleagues expressed their remembrances and the influence that she had on their lives. She will be remembered by all of us.

**Edythe U. Crowell**, of Wallkill, president of James B. Crowell and Son Brick Moulds in Wallkill which was established in 1872 and a long time resident of the area, died Monday July 14, 2003 in Poughkeepsie. She was 63. A family statement read: "She lived with grace and loving generosity.

The daughter of the late Asbjorn and Tyra Flack Uleberg, she was born May 22, 1940 in

New York City. She was a graduate of the Julia Richmond School in Manhattan, a member of the Historical Society of Shawangunk and Gardiner, a volunteer at the Wallkill Reformed Church, and a former partner in Scott Realty of Wallkill. "Edie" was also Miss Christmas Seals, 1956.

Survivors include her loving husband, James B. Crowell III at home; daughters, Joan

Schwer and her husband, Greg, of Jersey City, N.J. and Wendy Sutherland and her husband, Peter, of Wallkill; three grandchildren, Sage, Garrison, and William Schwer.

The funeral service was held on Thursday July 17, at her home in Wallkill.

*Editor's note: The Historical Society of Shawangunk and Gardiner is grateful for having been designated recipient of her memorials.*

## Gardiner is Celebrating 150 Years !

The Town of Gardiner is celebrating its 150th anniversary  
With numerous events. For more information you may contact  
the Gardiner Town Office (845 255-9675). Events will  
be posted on the Town website and community board

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- August 2 & 16**      **Hike to the Van Leuven Cabin**  
In the Trapps Mountain Hamlet, 9:00 to 11:00 AM  
Free to Gardiner residents
- September 13**      **150th Anniversary Parade followed by Gardiner Day**  
At George Majestic Park
- September/October**      **Local House Tour followed by Mock Victorian Wedding**  
More information to follow
- October 23**      **West Point Band, "The Jazz Knights"**  
Will be performing at St. Charles Church Hall, 7:00 pm
- November 1**      **Harvest Dance**  
Dinner Dance to be held at Ireland Corners Public House
- December 7**      **Christmas Tree Lighting and Caroling**

### **Old Fashioned Day A Success !**

Old Fashioned Day at Walker Valley on Sunday, June 1st was very successful. Despite the damp wet weather, spirits were high, many hot dogs and cup cakes were consumed, and the events were very entertaining. **Wendy Waterman** won a coverlet as first prize in our raffle and **Joanne Keillor** of Pine Bush won the wooden windmill made by **Bill Michalski**. Many thanks to all who helped that day: **Kathy Antonelli, Kasey Antonelli, Suzanne Isaksen, and Freda Fenn.**

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## **Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner**

*Cordially invites YOU to become a MEMBER*

\_\_\_\$5.00 Student    \_\_\_\$10.00 Individual    \_\_\_\$15.00 Family    \_\_\_\$30.00 Business

\_\_\_\$50.00+ Supporting    \_\_\_\$100.00+ Patron    \_\_\_\$250.00+ Benefactor

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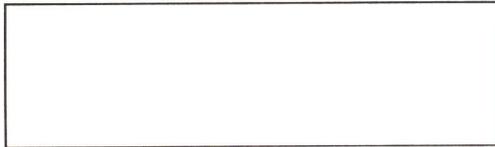
*We want your ideas for programs and events. Please list them here.*

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*Mail check (tax-deductible) payable to*  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SHAWANGUNK & GARDINER**  
*P. O. Box 570 Wallkill, N.Y. 12589 0570*  
**Email HSSG@Frontiernet.net**

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Society's First Guided Tour of Borden Mansion in June