



HISTORIC PITTSFORD

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NEWSLETTER

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*Historic Pittsford
newsletter is edited by
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AN AWARD WINNING GROUP

by Audrey Johnson

The year was 1930 when 35 women of Pittsford were organized into a group of people who were interested in flowers: learning about them, arranging them, and planting them. Mrs. Franc Fassett Pubsley, president of the Tuesday Club, a civic organization, proposed that the membership change direction to concentrate on plants. The suggestion was met with resounding enthusiasm and it was almost immediately that the Pittsford Garden Club was formed.

Mrs. Pugsley inspired the members to follow her lead and avail themselves of classes in horticulture. For the next 35 years the club held an annual Flower Show, often at the Town Hall and open to the public who were amazed at the beautiful arrangements and the information made available to them regarding all kinds of plants including trees.

The club had been established only a month when it met with the Village Board to discuss planting and preserving trees in the Village with the express purpose of beautification of the streets. The entire length of Main Street had, at one time, been covered with a canopy of leaves formed by stately elm trees and some of those were nearing the end of their lives. The beautification committee was worried that if that lovely canopy was diminished that the community would look barren and that should be avoided.

When the Club reached one year old, a tradition was established: presenting a book on horticulture or gardening to the Pittsford

Library. That tradition has continued to this day and also includes a weekly flower arrangement for the library.

The Garden Club has worked quietly behind the scenes for 78 years. During the "War Years", members grew and supported Victory Gardens. Some of these gardens were planned and displayed as "front gardens". In 1948-49 seed packets were donated to Europe and were



the forerunner of the World Care Day. In the 1950s Christmas Show and Sales were established as a way to raise funds to support their work. These sales became very popular among the citizens of the community and customers were lined up early, waiting for the sale to begin. In 1958 a major change occurred when it was decided that the Club should undertake a Community Project.

In 1963 four large rectangular brick planters were placed at intervals along Pittsford's Main Street as the first such project. In 1966, the club landscaped the Post Office that was located in the village. The project in the 1970s involved planning, funding and executing a landscape design for the Pittsford Community Library. The Garden Club received an important Environmental Improvement Award for this project.

Many other beautification projects have been conceived and accomplished over the years and they include: Copper Beech Park Renovation, benches placed throughout the village and daylilies planted along the canal, Arbor Day trees in Thornell Park, school courtyards, Daffodil Meadow, and a nature center at Mendon Center Elementary School.

Our town and village has been blessed with the work and the contributions from the members of this respected group and Historic Pittsford recognized them at their

annual meeting in July 2007 with an award for outstanding service. A great many people need to give thanks and recognition to a dedicated club for a labor of love. So much has been done for so many by so few!

Notes from Maryanne Haywood's booklet (1999)



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It was a cold Saturday morning several weeks ago. Dorothy Meusberger, Historic Pittsford's staff member, and I were going over the weekly mail when we were visited by Paul Spiegel. He elbowed his way through the front door because he was carrying a large plastic box filled with books. Paul was cheerful as usual as he plunked the box on the desk. He announced with some sense of achievement that the books within the box were his latest volume of the Echoes of Old Pittsford, 1901-1902. These were hot off the press and he was delivering them to the Little House to be sold to the interested public. He also let it be known that he had already begun work on the next issue.

Most of you readers know Paul Spiegel in one capacity or another. I'm not sure that all are aware that he has been collecting pictures, memorabilia and articles regarding Pittsford for many years. Unlike most of us, Paul has put his files to a good and informative use. He has published 11 volumes of "Echoes" beginning with the year 1879-1880. He has turned these works and profits over to Historic Pittsford. If you haven't had a chance to leaf through one of these volumes, you have missed an opportunity to have a glimpse of Pittsford in years past. Each volume is reasonably priced at \$7.00.

To identify Paul as a supporter of Historic Pittsford would be a gross understatement. He is a champion of Historic Pittsford and a noteworthy historian of the place we call "home".

Thank you Paul.

Joe Maxey, **President**
Historic Pittsford

PROGRAM REVIEW: "ROCHESTER CELEBRITIES OF YESTERDAY"

by *Karen Hultz*

On Valentine's Day, members and friends of Historic Pittsford gathered for a special treat: the chance to hear Donovan Shilling's stories of Rochester celebrities of the past.

Although their notoriety may not have carried into the present day, many Rochesterians deserved their time in the spotlight. The following are just a few of the famous Rochesterians highlighted in Mr. Shilling's talk:

Maude Humphrey grew up in the Third Ward and loved to draw birds and children. She studied in Paris, settled in New York City and became famous for her drawings. She eventually married Dr. Bogart and had a son named Humphrey who became a well known actor.

Martha Matilda Harper started out as a maid in a home on Main St. in Rochester. She created a hair tonic which was purported to make hair grow. Sales of the hair tonic grew into a beauty shop which eventually became the first franchise in America.

Blanche Stuart Scott, born on Mt. Read Blvd. in Rochester had a long list of firsts: the first woman in America to drive a race car, the first woman to fly an airplane and the only person born in Rochester to appear on a U.S. postage stamp.

Mr. Frank Hawley of Pittsford developed the first "electric trolley boat" - a canal boat that moved along the canal by electric current.

Rochester has always been a source for innovative, entrepreneurial people. Some were famous for a short time, others became household words. Thanks to Mr. Shilling, we now know a little more about some of the less famous. ■

WEBBER MEMORIAL

by Joe Maxey

Not many years ago, the Pittsford community lost the presence of an important volunteer: Jackie Webber, a resident of a historic home on Monroe Avenue. She was one who added to any event or gathering. Hers was a dedication to enhancing the lives of those around her. She did this through wonderful flower arrangements and decorating for celebrations and happy events. Most of all, she accomplished her task with her delightful personality and her infectious laughter.

When Jackie died, her friends contributed funds to Historic Pittsford to be used to “beautify the community”. Over the past several years, many ideas have been discussed, but none of them seemed to satisfy the memory of our friend. Then, this past year, the thought of a fountain or water element in the Village was suggested as the type of addition that would be fitting.

Jean France chaired the memorial committee for Historic Pittsford. The process was lengthy and input was sought from Bill Carpenter, Bob Corby, Bill Webber, Marjorie Shelley and many others, especially the Historic Pittsford Board. It was finally decided that a pre-cast fountain would not work. It somehow seemed too sterile and unimaginative. Jean's committee invited a landscape architect and sculptor to create an installation which he called a Natural Stone Water Sculpture. His name is David Spencer and his office is in Victor, NY.

Thanks to the patience and help of Marjorie Shelley, Director of the Pittsford Library, a site was decided on that was acceptable to all: the outdoor garden at the new library. It is a beautiful setting just waiting for the soothing sound of a sculpted stone waterfall set amidst the plantings and flowers. This is what we look forward to this spring, a place that would make Jackie smile. ■

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE

Upcoming Program on April 10th

Can a strip mall, a diner, or a ranch house be a landmark? To many people, buildings constructed after World War II are just not old enough or “pretty” enough to merit the same treatment as our pre-1930 gems. Disdain for the recent past is nothing new: in the early to mid 20th century, Victorian era architecture was seen as unfashionable or worse, and was dismissed and destroyed just as mid 20th century buildings and landscapes are today.

Boston, Washington D.C. and other cities are grappling with these issues as a new wave of preservationists have launched controversial efforts to protect notable, but unpopular buildings of the 1950s and 1960s. Katie Eggers Comeau, the advocacy coordinator for the Landmark Society, will explain why the recent past is the new frontier for preservationist and how we can learn to love - or at least live - with the idea of a post World War II landmark. ■

FREE ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTATION SERVICE

As the snow melts, thoughts often turn to home repair and maintenance. If you are experiencing basic structural problems or contemplating exterior architectural changes to your home, consider asking for the services of Historic Pittsford's Architectural Consultation program.

This program offers on-site consultation and a follow up report by preservation architect John Bero. To qualify for this consultation service, your property must be located in Pittsford village, regardless of year built. Town

properties must have been built prior to 1902 or listed on the Town's list of buildings worthy of historic designation. To request this service, please contact Mary Menzie at 381-3779. ■

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Historic Pittsford is a not-for-profit organization chartered and incorporated under the New York State Department of Education. Committed to the preservation of Pittsford's rich heritage of nineteenth and twentieth century architecture and the special character and sense of place it has provided, Historic Pittsford also faces the complexities of Pittsford today.



Little House Office and Museum

18 Monroe Ave., Pittsford, NY 14534 / 381-2941

Open: Wednesday and Saturday 9am-12noon

Dorothy Meusburger, Secretary

www.historicpittsford.com



ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE (in the village)

Once again, Historic Pittsford Board members and their volunteers will take to the village streets to update the survey that was done in the 1970s. The current project will update the existing information on each village structure. It will then be edited and put into a digital format. Putting the data online will make the information more accessible to residents, village staff, the Architectural Preservation Review Board and building owners.

So, if you see our Board members walking through your neighborhood carrying folders and a clipboard, give them a wave and a “job well done”.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 10, 2008

HP Program: “*Landmarks of the Future:
Preserving the Architecture of the Recent Past*”

Presented by Katie Eggers Comeau

Details to follow.

April 26, 2008

Landmark Society's Annual Regional Preservation Conference:

“*Maintaining Hometown Character in the 21st Century*”

For more information, go to:

www.landmarksociety.org

July 13, 2008

Historic Pittsford's Annual meeting
at the historic home of John Fadden on East St.
Details to follow.



**THE BARNS
ARE COMING!**

