



# THE SENTINEL

Vol. 21, No. 4

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Summer 2013



## NSHA Presents a Dutch Treat on June 11

The New Scotland Historical Association (NSHA) normally ends its program season in May. However, this year NSHA has partnered with Old Songs Inc. to host a special program on June 11 featuring the Dutch/Frisian band Kapriol'!. Kapriol'! plays lively music from the Dutch and Frisian tradition as well as tunes composed by group members. The musicians are all multi-instrumentalists. The band members are:

Ad Bos - cajon and other percussion instruments, keyboard, vocals

Rutger Dijkstra - bass guitar, mandolin, vocals

Marita Kruijwijk - flute, shawm, vocals

Marian Nesse - accordian, vocals

Two members of the band presented a very well received program for NSHA in the late 1990s under the name Kat' yen t'Seil.

Although most of the group's repertoire are free interpretations of traditional Dutch and Frisian songs and dance tunes, their music is also influenced by Renaissance, Scandinavian and Celtic music.

The band members are also strong a capella singers.

Kapriol'! is internationally known. Old Songs Inc. has brought Kapriol'! to the Capital District to perform at its annual festival, which will be held at the Altamont Fairgrounds from June 28-30. However, you can preview the band on June 11 at 7:30 pm at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center. As with all NSHA programs, this program is free of charge to the general public.

### Fun and Games on Sunday Afternoons!

#### June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 BOARD GAME CHALLENGE

Chess, Checkers, Backgammon, Chinese Checkers, Parcheesi, Dominoes, Muggins (another form of Dominoes), Candy Land, Monopoly, Chutes and Ladders, Pay Day, and Pokeno.

Awards will be given to the youngest and the oldest winner of each board game and a winning prize to the person winning the most different board games. Better start practicing!

#### July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 OLD MOVIE DAY

Movie "Shorts" from the silent and not so silent days will be shown at this time. They include Buster Keaton starring in "Sherlock Jr.," Charlie Chaplin in "Modern Times" and the all time favorite "All-Barkie" Dogville Comedies. These are very talented, costumed tail-waggers, including a variety of breeds of talking dogs with numerous tales to tell!

#### September 22, 2013 ANTIQUE ROAD SHOW

Details to follow in the next issue.

Questions? Please contact Sandy Slingerland at 768-2462

### Museum Hours

Sundays

2:00—4:00 P.M.

Closed

Father's Day and Labor Day

# NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 541  
Voorheesville, NY 12186

## OFFICERS 2013-2014

### President

Alan Kowlowitz 765-4212

### Vice President

Don Meacham 765-2981

### Corresponding Secretary

Marion Parmenter 765-4652

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Peg Dorgan 768-2852

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#### Historic Sites

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#### Town Historian

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#### Sentinel Committee

Robert and Marion Parmenter,  
Editors

Marie Hornick

Willard Osterhout

#### Web Page

[www.newscotlandhistoricalassociation.org](http://www.newscotlandhistoricalassociation.org)  
Email: [newscotlandhistoricalassoc@gmail.com](mailto:newscotlandhistoricalassoc@gmail.com)

## President's Letter

NSHA has had another very successful year. We had around 400 people visit our museum since last May and over 400 attendees at our programs between October 2012 and May 2013. I am particularly pleased with the number of folks who came out to hear our own Tim Albright's program on John Boyd Thacher Park. We also launched a new exhibit on "**Entertainment Before the Age of TV**" that included a community dance for the exhibit's opening on April 14. A card party is also planned as part of the activities surrounding the Exhibit. NSHA published 4 issues of the *Sentinel* that served to educate, inform and entertain our membership. With the kind permission of Dennis Sullivan, we republished his **Voorheesville, New York: A Sketch of the Beginnings of a Nineteenth Century Railroad Town**, which has been out of print for quite some time. We have sold around 150 copies of Dennis's book.

Using funds generated from our 2010—2011 membership appeal, we purchased a new projector and refreshed its computer equipment.

Last year at this time I reported the challenges we faced recruiting members willing and able to serve as officers and work on committees as long-term active Association members scale back their activities. This year I am happy to report that we have two new Board members in Art Thorman and Sherry Burgoon and a new Membership Chair in Sarita Winchell. Don Meacham has also stepped up to assume the position of Vice President. I am sure our new Board members and committee chair will add new ideas and energy to what I think is an exceptional Board.

We are not completely out of the woods and still need Chairs for our Historic Sites and Collections Committees. We can always use more committee members and museum volunteers. We can particularly use help in better utilizing technology to promote NSHA's activities and communicate with our members and general public.

I wish everyone a great summer and please remember to come to come to our special June 11 program that will feature the Dutch folk music group Kapriol'!

Alan Kowlowitz

## Exhibit Report

The new exhibit entitled "Entertainment before 1950 and TV" was opened Sunday, April 14, 2013 by a group called the Fireflies. The tunes were from days gone by using fiddles, guitars, penny whistle, flute, banjo, mandolin and recorder. Dances were taught and called by Paul Rosenberg. The dancing was fun and the music was delightful with a lot of toe tapping.

The exhibit itself features a "must see" 1917 stage curtain that is 17 feet long and 9 feet tall on loan from the Unionville Reformed Church Fellowship Hall.

Sandy Slingerland, Exhibit Chair



**New Board Members**, left to right: Sherry Burgoon and Art Thorman, Trustees; and Sarita Winchill, Membership Chairperson.

NSHA welcomes 3 new Board Members. Art and Sherry, both retired teachers, were involved with the Exhibit Committee on the Civil War Exhibit and Art also participated in the creation of the current exhibit. Some may remember the program Art presented to NSHA on “**Tinsmithing in Colonial Days**,” in February of 2003. Sherry was an immense help to our book committee when she agreed to proofread and edit the *New Scotland Township* book, which we wrote in 2000, for Arcadia to publish. Sarita is retired from the position of Assistant Superintendant for Business at the Voorheesville School. An article by Sarita appeared in the Sept. 2004 *Sentinel*—about the **Crouse Farm** and family history. Her grandparents descend from the LaGranges, Crouses, Wynkoops, and Albrights. Sarita brings much New Scotland history with her!

We are delighted these talented folks have joined us on the board.

### Scholarship Awarded!

The New Scotland Historical Association Junior Award was presented for the first time on May 7; it was the result of a group of volunteers who wouldn't give up trying to get high school students to enter a competition for a cash prize to help with their soon-to-be college expenses. Jerri Osterhout suggested if high school seniors weren't interested in entering the competition, perhaps high school juniors would be. With that as a beginning, committee members Herb Reilly, Peg Dorgan, Bill Hornick, Alan Kowlowitz,

and Marie Hornick joined Jerri in suggesting how the scholarship might be designed.

Since the winner of the scholarship would still have a year of high school left, might the scholarship money be used for preparation? For example, one member suggested using the money to visit several colleges to learn about courses and possible majors. Another person suggested that the money could be used to purchase needed things like blankets and towels for living in a dorm. With committee members who had had college students in their homes at one time, the words “textbooks” and “transportation” were frequent uses for a scholarship.

It was agreed to give the scholarship in the spring of the junior year so the person receiving the Junior Award could, with the advice of family, decide what to do with it.

To begin the events of the May 7 meeting, NSHA proudly presented the first Junior Scholarship to Miss Margaret Burrill of Voorheesville, with her proud parents Mary and William standing with her before the audience. Margaret is home-schooled.

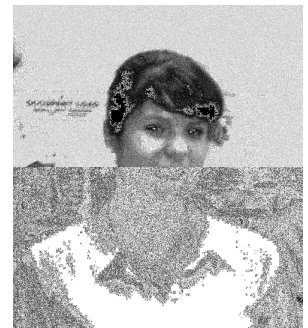
She is considering a career as a nurse or a dance instructor. When given a chance to tell something about herself, she chose to say that she has a very positive outlook and always tries to do her best, two strengths which are useful all through life. In addition, Margaret does a number of volunteer turns, such as playing the harp for a fund raiser and for a Senior Center Christmas Show, participating in a walk for “Making Strides Against Cancer,” participating in Show Choir and Signing Choir, and Youth Group Hostess for Christ's Church in Guilderland.

We hope this is the first of many years of presenting a student from the Town of New Scotland with a check toward college expenses. This money was a donation from the Eberle Fund given to NSHA in honor of all the assistance and leadership of Ann and Donald Eberle in their years with NSHA.

Marie Hornick

### Scholarship Winner!

**Margaret Burrill  
of Voorheesville**



## A DAY IN THE OLD SCHOOL

School buses were not invented. We walked to school or had rides with neighbors who worked in Town. The local tax needed to be kept down or the local Trustee who hired the teacher by the year might lose his non-paying job. I remember our farm taxes (School) as being \$15-\$18 a year.

The school day extended from 9 to 4 in the little school house next to our Church. While it was in effect a one room school, there was quite a large library room in the front corner facing the road. On the opposite side were the Rest Rooms (chemical tanks downstairs), with a cloak area preceding the one class room in the rear.

There was a large stove in the center with the teacher's desk in front, preceded by a recitation bench in front of same. All eight grades were in the same room. Classes numbered not more than 5 or 6, as I remember.

Subjects were scheduled by grade at various times of the day. When called students hurried as the end seats of the recitation bench were favored because they had end rests to lean on.

The early bell rang at 8:45. School started at 9. Recesses were scheduled at 10:15-10:30 and again at 2:15 to 2:30 with a full noon hour from 12:00 to 1:00.

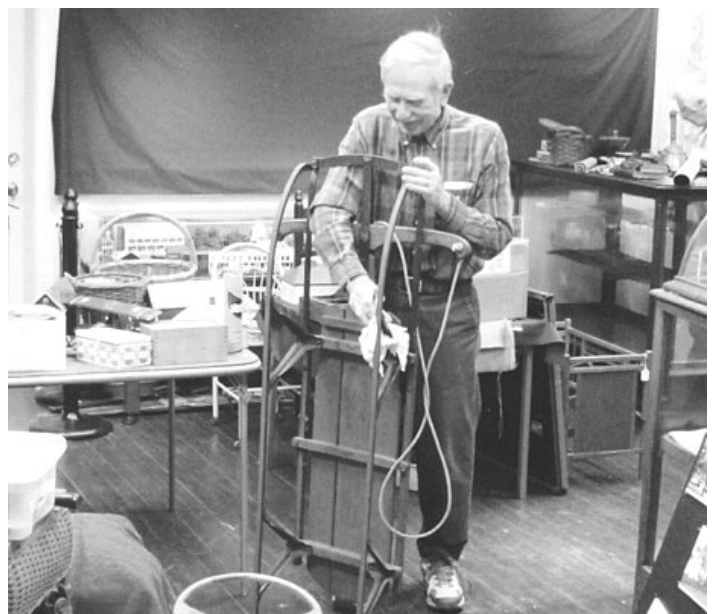
Each student was assigned a desk which had a place to keep books underneath and an ink well on top of the desk. Students received front seats if necessary for discipline. If the front desk did not help, you had the honor of sitting on a chair and working by the teacher with your back to the students.



The interior of the Unionville School built in 1907 which Walt Miller wrote about. He would have attended here in the 1920's

All subjects in those days were completed with a Regents Exam at the end of eighth grade. These were given in Delmar in what is now the new Town Hall. I remember the teacher letting Ruth Hopkins (Mudge) and myself take the Regents Exam for each subject in January of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She felt we were ready for some and the rest would be good experience. I will never forget walking in a large room in Delmar school (50-60 kids) and all taking the same exam. We were equipped with pen, pencil, eraser, and ruler. I'm sure we were scared. Imagine our surprise when we were notified that we had passed every subject. This is not mentioned in a bragging sense, but rather as a tribute to the one room school and teachers such as Mrs. Merrit, Mrs. Attwood, Mrs. Lewis, and our own Miss Gallup (Avis Morehouse). I'm sure that Ruth will agree that both of us were well equipped to cope with High School life.

*[This article was written by Walter Miller (1915-1999) for the April, 1981 Unionville Church Newsletter]*



Museum committee member, Irving Mosher polishes a sled for the current exhibit at the museum. He attended this Unionville School from 1934-1942!

### Antiques Road Show Returns!

#### Save the Date!

**Sunday, September 22, 2013** starting at 1:00 pm NSHA will host another Road Show. Caroline French from New Hampshire, will return to do the appraisals for us. It will be held at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center 1:00—4:00 pm. More information will be in the Fall Issue of the Sentinel.





## LOCAL HISTORY ALIVE AND WELL

Recently the Albany Hilltowns web site was in danger of being removed from the Internet. The server was going to delete all the files in 30 days and years of work and hundreds of hours of volunteer efforts would be lost! Fortunately John Elberfeld, a resident of Knox, was able to download all the files and save all the information on a new disk.

Over the last several months, through the combined efforts of John Elberfeld, Betty Fink and myself, 100% of the site has been reconstructed with more new items being added on a daily basis. I encourage each and everyone of you to visit this website to view the history of your neighbors who lived up on the hill. Browse each town and the many categories they contain from Businesses, Organizations, Churches and Photo Galleries to Biographies and Stories plus much much more. If you do visit the site be sure to sign the guest book and let us know what you think. Just Google Albany Hilltowns to get started.

On a more personal basis, if you had family that came from one of the Hilltowns and would like to see their biography added to the site or perhaps you have some old family photos that pertain to one or more of the 4 towns that you would like to see on the site or any other information you think is relevant please contact me by email [wosterhout9@hotmail.com](mailto:wosterhout9@hotmail.com) or call 872-1606 I would love to hear from you.

Enjoy the history,  
Will

### DO YOU HAVE ROOTS IN ITALY?

Our organization has recently received a letter from “Centro Meridionale Ricerche Genealogiche” (Southern Italy Genealogical Center) based in Palermo, Italy. The center specializes in genealogical searches for families that have their origins in Sicily and other parts of southern Italy. They claim long experience and utmost reliability and competence in “finding your remotest ancestor”. Their web site address is

[www.sicilygenealogy.com](http://www.sicilygenealogy.com).

Their mailing address is Via Aragona, 7 90011 Bagheria (Palermo)

If you would like to see their letter let Martha Slingerland know. (768-2184)

### Good Reads for Summer!

**Times of Our Lives—New Scotland Memories**

**Voorheesville, New York: a Sketch of the Beginnings of a Nineteenth Century Railroad Town**, by Dennis Sullivan

**New Scotland Township—NSHA**

All are available at the NSHA Museum, New Scotland Town Hall and Voorheesville Village Hall, also. Can't find the books? Call Peg Dorgan at 768-2852.

## The Highwayman The Electrocution

After I had worked for the Town for a few months, I became the main backhoe operator. We were working on Lower Flat Rock Road where the bridge crosses the creek, cleaning out some ditches. The Groesbeck farm was located on the opposite side, with the house on one side of the road and the barns on the other. There was a horse stable with a small corral located close to the creek. Ira Groesbeck's granddaughter kept a horse there. The area inside the corral was very wet and muddy due to a lot of recent rain.

We had just returned from lunch and I went to get the backhoe by the telephone pole where I had parked it during lunchtime. I started the machine and raised the boom and swung it around without realizing just how close I was to the pole. Well, I gave that pole a shot that made it shiver all the way to the ground and made every wire dance around like the end of a whip. I sat there aghast as those wires did their dance until everything settled down and I realized I hadn't broken anything, or so I thought. The rest of the story was related to me by the laborers that were standing on the bridge.

It seems this old horse was just hanging there by the corral fence with his head hung down, probably contemplating his younger days. He was completely oblivious to the nightmare that he was about to experience. This horse was the pet of Ira's granddaughter. What I hadn't seen was the effect of my blunder on the pole that was located across the creek by the barn. It seems I shook the tar out of that one too, which caused an electrical line which was hooked to the barn to break. Now that line could have fallen anywhere, but no, it had fallen inside the corral in the wet mud. Now here was old Dobber just standing there minding his own business, wearing four iron shoes: he jumped in the air to get his feet out of the mud but because horses can't fly, he had to come back down. Each time he returned to Earth, he would bounce up again like "Tigger" in Winnie the Pooh. Eventually he bounced his way to his stall which had a wooden floor and he was able to get away from that shocking experience. That is how the story was told to me, as I did not see it myself.

What was the aftermath of this accident, you might wonder. When I returned to the garage later that day, I gave the boss a full report. I learned later that they had to call a vet and give the horse an IV because he was in shock; I wonder why. The Vet's bill was about \$1400.00, thank goodness it didn't come out of my pay. A few weeks later I saw Ira, who was a friend of mine, and he told me he was very disappointed that the horse lived, it seems he hated the beast!

Until next time  
Will



Exhibit opening was attended by many aspiring dancers. The Fireflies played old fashioned music—enjoyed by all.



Dances were taught and called by Paul Rosenburg.. Can you pick out your favorite dancers?

## Traffic Court!

Clarksville, NY  
April 6, 1959

Clerk of the Traffic Court  
City Hall  
Albany, New York

Dear Sir:

Today, to your city I traveled to shop.  
With only one hour, it would be a short stop.

I maneuvered through traffic at moderate pace,  
And finally found a lone parking space.

To meter Number 1 8 3 0 I then sped,  
Inserted my nickel...the Meter stayed red.  
With time so important, a decision I made:  
There were no other spaces. Besides, I had paid!

I shopped a half hour, and approaching my car,  
The ticket displayed there I saw from afar.

Herewith is my check for one dollar enclosed.  
To paying this fine I am strictly opposed.  
But my husband insists—and he is the boss—  
That because I stayed parked there, it's my fault, my  
loss.

Do, please, repair Meter Number 1 8 3 0.  
It hardly seems "cricket" letting such a thing go.  
And since I, though reluctantly, make recompense,  
Now that I've paid my fine...don't you owe me five  
cents???

Respectfully,  
(signed) Jane Vonk  
Mrs. W. F. Vonk

*Jane Vonk was Sandy Slingerland's aunt. They lived behind Ingrahams' gas station, and she was choir director for the Clarksville Reformed Church for both Junior and Senior choirs. She also wrote a history book about the church.*

**The following letter is another in a series of letters written by John L. Houck to his wife Sofia of Clarksville, NY, during the Civil War.**

*(The entire collection of transcribed letters by Charles Melbert from the original letters at the NYS Library in Albany can be found on the book shelf in the museum if anyone wants to read them.)*

## Civil War Letter #9

April 12<sup>th</sup> 1863  
Camp near Falmouth, VA

Dear Wife,

I now take my pencil in hand to let you know that I am well at heart but I am very lame on account of having cut my foot with the axe John Bradt and me went to the woods to get some wood and I was splitting an old pine stump and the axe glanced and cut the half of my big toe completely off so that it stayed in my boot when I took it off and I had to walk about a mile with it to camp and then the doctor cut another piece of it off when I got there so now I am in the hospital and I have good attendant too they put me under the influence of chloroform which I think is the drollest feeling that a person can ever have I never felt them operate on it and they either cut or sawed the bone off at the first joint my foot is swelled but a very little and I have but little pain in it unless I touch it against something but it will be a long time before I can walk on it perhaps a year or more now you must not feel uneasy about me for I will let you know if it gets worse or not the doctor says that it is a getting along finely it happened the 6<sup>th</sup> that I think was last Monday so now you must write just soon as you get this and let me know how you all are getting along and how the weather is there if the army moves I will be taken to some other hospital perhaps in York State but as to that I cannot tell so you must give my respects to all enquiring friends no more at present

I remain  
Yours  
truly  
forever  
John L. Houck

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**Mission Statement**

The Town of New Scotland Historical Association preserves, protects and promotes history in the Town of New Scotland through the stewardship of material culture directly related to the town. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of local history, heritage and culture through research, publications and educational programs.

If you would like to become a member, please do so!

**NSHA Membership Form**

\_\_\_ \$10 Individual

\_\_\_ \$15 Family

\_\_\_ \$25 Sustaining

\_\_\_ \$100.00 Life (per person)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to NSHA.

Please send dues to: NSHA

Sarita Winchell, Membership Chair

P.O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

**Museum Hours**

**The museum is  
open year-round**

**on Sunday**

**from**

**2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.**

**Handicap Accessible**

**THE SENTINEL**

New Scotland Historical Association

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, New York 12186