



Phelps Community Historical Society

August 2023 Volume 31 Issue 276



Howe House Museum

66 Main Street
Phelps, NY 14532
(315) 548-4940

E-mail:

histsoc2@gmail.com

Website:

phelpsnhistory.com

Museum Hours:

Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
10 AM-4 PM

President

Mart VanKirk

Vice President

Sarah Landschoot

Treasurer

Tom Cheney

Trustees

Billee Altman

Ron Grube

Gary Jones

Len Kataskas

Dennis King

Barry Lee

Jane Pedersen

Cathy Scott

Director

Diane Goodman

Administrative

Assistant

Heather Olander

Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts

7 Church Street
Phelps, NY 14532

Director

Michael Nash
(585)-789-0017

Gallery Hours:

Thursday 5-7pm
Friday 3-7pm
Saturday noon-7pm
or by appointment

Looking back on the past few weeks the word that comes to mind is “busy”. The month began with the activity that comes with the Annual Sauerkraut Weekend—decorating a float for the parade, opening the museum on Saturday afternoon and watching the parade from the front porch. Visitors that week included PCS alumni in town for the reunion and Phelps residents with family visiting.

The Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts continues a rotation of exhibits—the most current are “Garden - artistic interpretations of summer” and “Polarity - discover yourself in the push/pull of art”. The Village of Phelps is alive and well with several places to find food and beverage. The latest additions to Main Street are two pizzerias, with an ice cream parlor to open soon. The increased “foot traffic” has benefited the gallery as well as the museum.

Thanks to the Ontario County Workforce Program, a crew of six worked at the Howe House on a Wednesday morning doing general housekeeping top to bottom, even the basement got a good sweep!

The young ladies in the photo below are two of the several young people we were pleased to have take a tour of the museum. Other visitors included a brother and sister who visited with their summer caregiver and then came back the following week with their grandma; two fathers with their young sons from Canada on their way to the NASCAR races in Watkins Glen; people who were just passing by and saw our sign; and Marty and Maggie Weigel, PCHS members. Maggie is a long time volunteer with the historical society in Pulaski and wanted to chat about collection procedures.

It seems like we just watching fireworks and now the air is cooler at night and kids are making the most of the last days before school starts. Hope you had a good summer and are looking forward to autumn, my favorite season of the year!

Diane Goodman

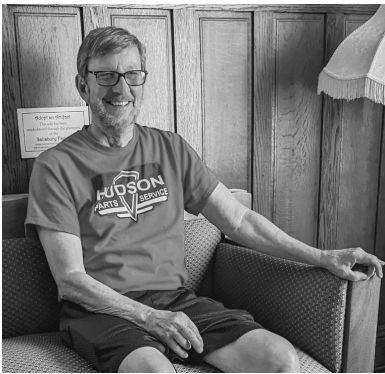
PCHS Director



Telling the Stories of Phelps

A Series of Interviews by Wendy Gaylord

Rick Darrow grew up on West Main Street in Phelps. Edited excerpts from his stories follow:



Rick: Much of what I remember about living in our house involved sauerkraut. Phelps was the sauerkraut capital of the world, of course. Across our backyard, which was about half an acre, there was an old farmer's field that had been bought up by the sauerkraut factory and

still had alfalfa in it, but the farmer was long since gone. The Silver Floss sauerkraut factory, which was busy year-round, had the enormous water tank. The water tower was huge and originally it was painted black. It said Silver Floss on it, but later they put this garish orange on it and whatnot. It's been torn down since. But just the location of that water tower for a kid. You stood under it and you looked up and it was just unimaginably tall and had a stairway that we could have easily climbed if we wanted - if we had the courage to do so. But at night, when we were in our beds sleeping, we, all three of us (*Stephen, Rick and Randy*), had this recurrent dream that we would share later, of gaining the courage to climb that thing, and several of us would get up to the catwalk that went around it. It was sort of bullet-shaped, a large cylinder with a cone on the top. But then there was another ladder that went up the side of the face of the tower, and then another one that went all the way up to the ball at the top, and all of us shared the same dream of climbing, not only just the water tower, but all the way up to the ball. It would be very windy and very chilly, and we'd always slide off and fall and wake up before we hit the ground! And of course, as Steve would always say, "Hey, if you wake up, you know it's just a dream. If you don't wake up it wasn't a dream!"

Wendy: Did you also make sauerkraut at home?

Rick: No, but as a kid, sauerkraut was ever-present in the various seasons when there was canning. You could hear the tin cans (*makes a clanging noise*) in the beginning and then aluminum, by the canning era. And of course, the big vats they filled year-round. And the women; in the summer, I remember, we were on vacation always, but for some reason the sauerkraut was ready to can in the summer and our summers are very hot. I don't know why, but apparently because of the vats that it aged in, it was ready to can. And so these women came in and they had the hairnet things on. It was *brutally* hot because this stuff has to be cooked and steamed to a certain temperature - and then the cans have to be steamed and so on. They would open these huge

garage doors, just to get some air in there, and we always felt so sorry for them. But when they opened the garage door, we'd run home and get a glass, clean out a can, get any kind of container, and run over there. We would put the container up on the landing for that door, the ladies would see it, and put some fresh sauerkraut in it and give it to us. And we would run off like, now we're Indians in the forest and we have our food and we're going to eat it, or whatever game we were playing, and we would consume the entire thing and then... For some strange reason, we'd get these *horrible* feelings later in the day. It's like we could never figure it out. You know, why do I have this awful stomachache? And nowadays, of course it's funny, but back then we had no clue as to what was going on.

Wendy: And your mother had no idea?

Rick: No. Or if she did there was little that she could do to stop us. I mean, we would do it anyway, right? She probably didn't know because I don't remember. She would have told us, "For heaven's sakes you can't eat an entire can of sauerkraut and not get an upset stomach!"

But I can remember in the fall when the harvest of cabbage came in. There were huge mountains of cabbage. And for a kid our age, you know, counting our years in double digits, at least at that point, any kind of a mound of something called for King of the Hill, cabbage or snow or sand or whatever it was. So that's what we did. We played King of the Hill on top of those things.

And of course, one story: My mom sent us over, like we were going to the grocery store, "Get one of those cabbages. We're going to make some slaw." And so I got to take my bicycle and go get a cabbage and make sure it was a good one. And off we would go. It was never considered stealing, you know? It's just like, hey, it's there. They've got plenty of them. Once I was driving back with one hand on my bicycle, and I went around Eagle Street and onto Main Street. There was a driveway shared by two homes there, and it was quite narrow, and this '57 Buick convertible, powder blue, beautiful, beautiful car backed out of there - for the last time, actually, as I found out later. She never backed out after that. She made all of the 103 moves it took to get going straight. But she backed out of there right in front of me. I had time to just try to brake. But I hit the car and flew over the handlebars and the cabbage and myself ended up sort of in the back seat, sort of hanging out. She was wearing one of those scarves that was very '50s - folded in half and tied under her chin, and she was *gorgeous*. She was this blonde, young woman. And I was, what, 9 or 10? I just thought, oh, my God, she's so beautiful. Anyway, I'm apologizing like crazy, and she's apologizing like crazy. And the two of us, finally, we had apologized enough and I grabbed my cabbage and she took her car and we went off. I was fine, not a scratch.

Continued on following page

In the fall when the cabbages are being processed and they're - I don't know the whole process to tell you the truth - but the cabbages go in. They get all chopped up, get the salt and what not put on them and put in the big vats and they age. And the vinegar and then all the rest starts. You have these huge piles of leaves, the outside, the green ones, the ones they don't want. I guess the machine just takes them off automatically, takes the solid ones in to make sauerkraut and the rest of them were put in a huge hopper and then dumped in this enormous field. Apparently, they ran out of room and they dumped it in the field behind our house. It was not there for long, but it was there long enough to make a King of the Hill!

I remember it had snowed lightly--it must have been November. It was very early, but enough of these leaves had moved on, you know, to make this thing just an awful, smelly pile that no one would touch unless you were a kid. And it made it even better because it was slippery and we were sliding. But the thing I do remember is that when Steve and Randy and I got back to our back porch, we took our shoes off outside. We had the common sense to do that, but as we started in, Mom was washing dishes. She goes, "Wait a minute. What's that SMELL?" She comes around the table and looks at us and we're all going, "Smell?". And we're looking at each other, like "What? What is she talking about?" She goes, "Oh my God. Get out of here. Take everything off except your shorts!" Which we did. And she

marched us into the bathroom to scrub down. I don't know what she did with the clothes, whether she washed them in a bucket; probably, because she had gone through the Depression. So I mean, nothing was ever thrown away. Things had a thousand other uses.

The final story about sauerkraut that I recall was when the Sauerkraut Festival was started. And the first year they started the Sauerkraut Festival (1967) I was either a junior or a senior in high school. And as part of the festivities, they decided to have a Sauerkraut Queen. Newark had a queen and there were Grape Queens and Apple Queens and all the rest. So we had to have a Sauerkraut Queen. And my girlfriend and Charlie Dahle's; our girlfriends ended up being finalists in this whole thing, and I remember they had this celebrity from Channel 13 come down. He was the weatherman, but I cannot recall his name. But he was a local celebrity, and they had the big decision. Which one of these two, either Deb, or Jackie? One of them is going to become the next queen of the Sauerkraut Festival, and Charlie and I are out in the hall, and we're each just hoping and praying it's not our girlfriend. Because the long list of parades and festivities that they had to attend would have ruined our entire social life.

And of course Charlie won that lottery. Deb won the title of queen. And I'm going, yes! And he had to attend all those things. But it was funny.

THE PHELPS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

“A CONVERSATION WITH ELIZABETH CADY STANTON”

PLAYED BY

MELINDA GRUBE



Join us as she reminisces about life as a rebellious daughter, an imaginative and loving mother, a brilliant suffragist leader, and a radical public intellectual.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17 3:00PM

UNITED CHURCH OF PHELPS

66 MAIN STREET

Program is free to the community Refreshments will be provided

2023 Sauerkraut Weekend Parade!

Thank you to the float decorators:

Jane Pedersen

Heather Olander

Gary and Karen Jones

Ron, Rosa & Robin Grube

Diane Goodman

A very special thank you to Pete Empson for pulling the 1924 Essex with his truck and trailer with his truck and trailer

Our rendition of this year's festival theme "Peace, Love, Kraut" won 2nd Place for "Best Appearing Community Organization!"

Thank you to the BDTC, Chris Tiffany, Parade Chair and the Sauerkraut Weekend Committee for making another great parade possible!



Phelps Sauerkraut Weekend Limited Edition Poster

Available at the Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts and the Howe House Museum Gift Shoppe

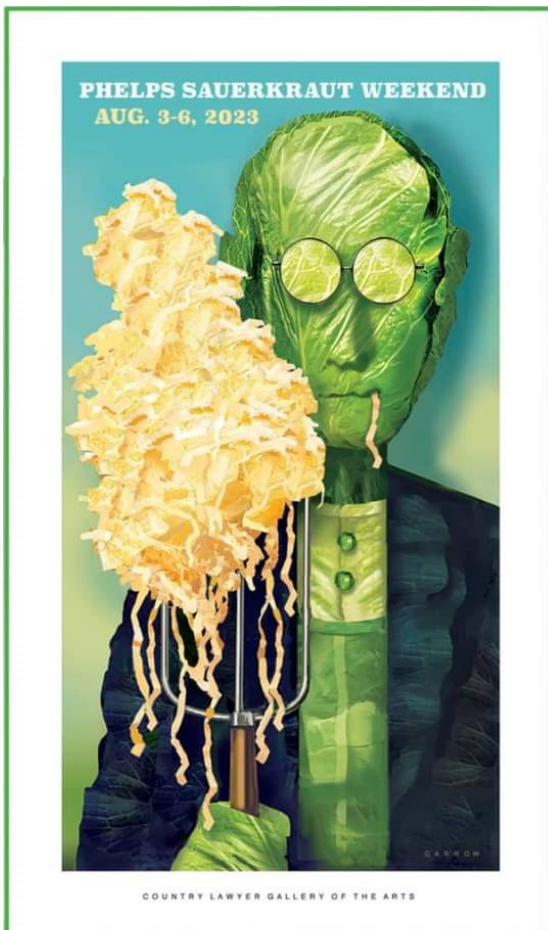
50 limited prints of this poster were generously donated by the artist *Daniel Garrow*

Receive a poster with a donation of \$20.00 or more!

Donations support

The Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts

Get yours while supplies last!!





Red Hat Society Visits Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts!

The Red Hat Society is an informal social club formed by women who were inspired by a poem written in 1961 by Jenny Joseph called "Warning." Excerpts from the poem:

"When I am an old woman I shall wear purple/ With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me, /And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves/ And run my stick along the public railings/ And make up for the sobriety of my youth/ I shall go out in my slippers in the rain/And pick flowers in other people's gardens.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?/ So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised/When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple."



The Vienna Violets

(Named because Phelps was originally Vienna)
L to R: Marge Norsen, Mary Ann Gier, Nan Seyfried, Marge Cauwels, Roberta Leu, Marion Donnelly and Bonnie Dixon. Absent: Red Hat Queen Pat Lyon Jones



2023 Croquet Club

Playing field at the American Legion Post #457

Champion

Dora Burns
Pat Hart

President

Billee Altman

Vice President:

Donna Nellis

Secretary/Treasurer:

Pam Whyte

First Row: Billee Altman, Lorraine Cummings, Chris Rizzo, Seated: Betty Lannon, Barb Wilson and Bonnie Dixon

Second Row: Marge Norsen, Terry Allen, Cathy Thomas, Heather Olander, and Amanda Walters.

Third Row: Laura Tierson, Cindy Atkinson, Pat Hart, Audrey Phelps, Lisa Smolinski and Jeannine Dutcher

Fourth Row: Sue Datthyn, Sally Verno, Cathy Mower, Cathy Young, Paula Dean and Nancy Turner

Fifth Row (behind pillars): Carol Conklin, Doreen Hartranft, Pam Everson, Barb Brennessel, Sandy Snyder, Pat Adams, Pat Gordner, Dora Burns, Marlene Treese, Donna Nellis, Nancy Denisi, Pam Whyte and Barb Kesel.

Absent: Erin Altman, Lori Sielawa, Betty Raes, Helen Ceravolo, Nancy Dunning, Megan Ford, Pam Kellogg and Florence White.



Welcome New Members!

Audrey Cornwall - Penn Yan, NY

Membership Renewals

Rebecca Bennett
Janice Blackman
Ann Bohner
Beth Burns
Charles & Nancy Case
Cheryl Chester
Jane Crosby
Clarence & Sharon Curley
Jackie Farrington
Meri Grube
Mary Lewis
Dick & Jean McDonald
Barb Middlebrook
Jane Pedersen
Scott & Margaret Rishel
Kenneth Sontheim
Spencer Westfall
Mark & Sally Zelonis

Monetary Donations

Rebecca Bennett
Cheryl Chester
Michael & Carol Priebe
Mark & Sally Zelonis

Memorial Donations

Dick & Jean McDonald
In memory of
Colonel Jack Lundgard

Ann Bohner
In memory of
Margaret Johnson

Ann Bohner
Al & Marge Cauwels
Bob and Diane Goodman
In memory of
Lt. Colonel Donald Ulmer

In Memoriam

Margaret Hudson Johnson
PCHS Member
June 1937-August 2023

Third Annual Phelps Central School Alumni Reunion

The third annual PCS alumni reunion was held Thursday August 3. The event this year was a luncheon held at Club 86 in Geneva. The alumni gathered from 11am until 4pm, plenty of time for the Phelps Bulldogs to catch up and reminiscence. Over 120 alumni and guests were in attendance and a good time was had by all!

A graduate of the Phelps Central School class of 1948, Barbara Sabin Gillespie was recognized as the most "senior" alumni at the reunion.

The Phelps High School Alumni Facebook page features more photos from the reunion, and is for anyone who ever attended or worked at the Phelps High School.

The PCS Alumni Committee, listed below, are to be commended for all their time and effort in planning another successful reunion!

Robert Quigley
John Polee
Barry Lee
Billee Altman
Hans Helmer
Lee Edington

Arlene Verdehem Murphy
Paul Salisbury
Sherry Randall Wilkes
Kathy Tandle Phillips
Marlene Jones
Nancy Crouch Edington



Barbara Sabin Gillespie

Correction: Phelps Central School Class of 1953 photo in June newsletter:

Back Row : 6th from the left was James Richard McDonald, Vice President, misidentified as Richard Bement. Missing from the photo: Richard Bement, Kenneth Buck, Richard Jeffrey.

MEMBERSHIP and DONATION FORM

If "Reminder" is highlighted please renew your membership.

If "Final Notice" is highlighted this will be your last newsletter if dues are not paid.

Dues may be paid by: check to PCHS or online at phelpsnyhistory.com

Application: New _____ Renewal _____ Gift _____ Send membership card _____ For Office use:

Individual: \$20.00 _____ Family: \$30.00 _____ Business: \$50.00 _____ Member #: _____

Name: _____ Date Rcvd: _____

Address: _____ Check #: _____

Winter Address: (if different from above): _____ Amt. Rcvd: _____

_____ Exp. Date: _____

Dates Winter Address in effect: _____ Computer: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____ Index Card: _____

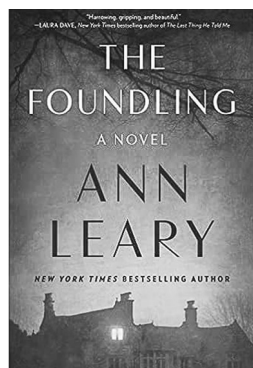
Member Card: _____

DONATION: Amount _____

_____ In memory of (Optional): _____

_____ In honor of (Optional): _____

The Foundling by Ann Leary



Inspired by a true story about the author's grandmother, this book offers a rare look at a shocking chapter of American history, which may leave the reader wondering "did this really happen?"

The Foundling explores the subject of eugenics, how popular it was and how many young women were institutionalized to keep them from having children.

In 1927, Mary Engle is just 18 when she is hired as a secretary for Dr. Agnes Vogel who manages the Nettleton State Village for Feeble Minded Women. Mary had spent her childhood in a Catholic orphanage. At age 12 she went to live with her aunt, so not a lot of experience in life. This job opens a new world to Mary, Dr. Vogel's motherly patronage offers rewards that seduce her compliance. She embarks on a daring friendship with Nettleton's head nurse, "Bertie" that leads to a double date and introduction to "Jake". Mary's future gleams with promise until she glimpses a familiar face among the Nettleton inmates. Lillian grew up in the same orphanage as Mary and now finds herself milking cows on Dr. Vogel's model farm, not because she is feeble-minded - she's the opposite of that - but because she bore a child with a black man.

Mary now realizes there is something mysteriously frightening going on. Young girls imprisoned for incorrect choices they made in their formidable years, now labeled as deviants with low IQs when this in fact isn't the case, and kept there during their childbearing years.

Mary becomes unsettled by a few instances Dr. Vogel covers up. Upon further investigation, she learns of darker stories that are appalling and shocking. Mary digs herself into helping her friend without anyone's knowledge for she is risking her job. Her awakening brought challenges and choices, which could have her end up in jail, or as an inmate herself, if her own secrets would surface. Her decisions didn't always make sense, but in the end she had no other choice as the one she ultimately made.

The ending was wrapped up nicely, although the journey was hair raising and grim. The fact that from 1913 to the 1990s this process through genetic screenings, segregation and sterilization would rid simple minded people from producing children. Leary's spot-on descriptions of small moments (learning the Charleston, drinking bootleg liquor) bring the Prohibition era to life. The murky politics and ethics of the time, are embodied in Dr. Vogel - a feminist committed to expanding women's right but also an ardent promoter of eugenics and populist fears (of Blacks, Jews and Catholics among others), who cared little about the Nettleton inmates' welfare. Leary's wit complements her serious approach to historical and psychological issues in this satisfying novel.

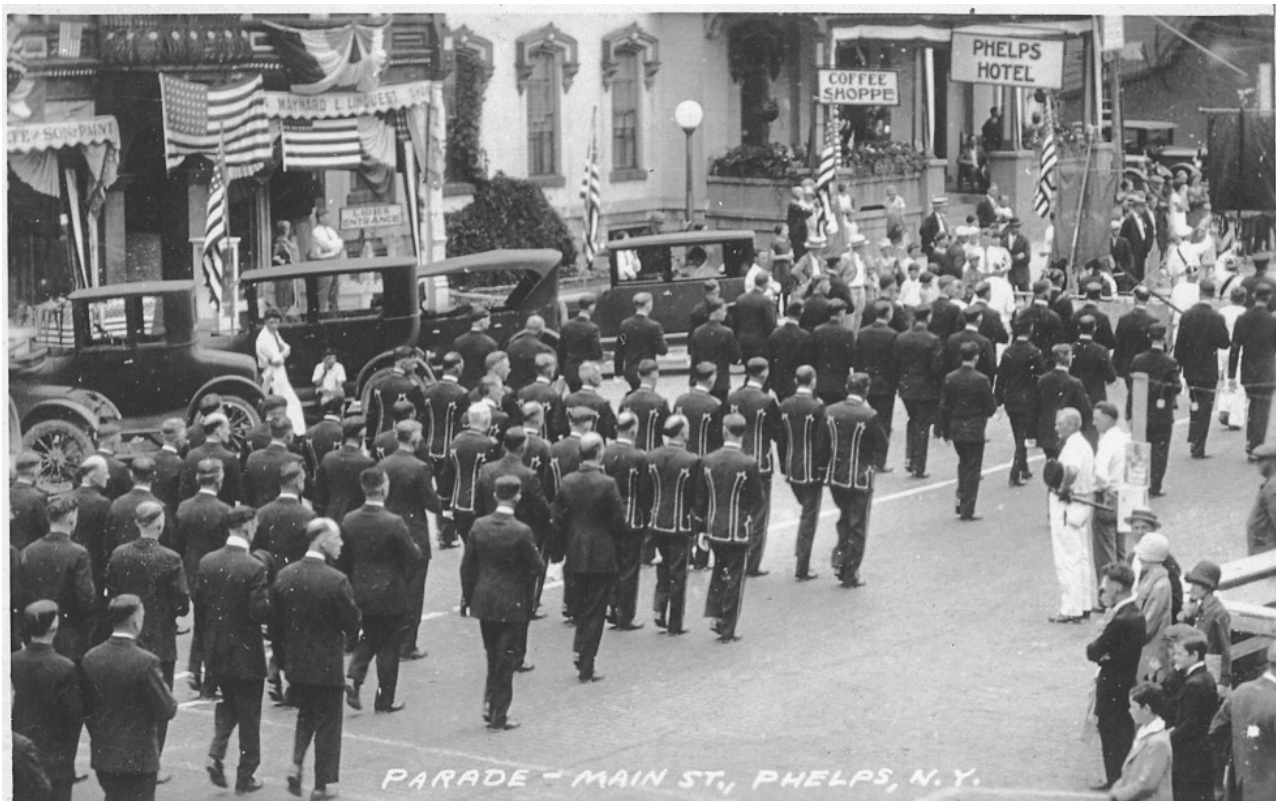
PHELPS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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August 5, 1926

Northern Central New York Volunteer Fireman's Association
31st Annual Convention held in Phelps

Caption on back of postcard: *"Maynard is standing outside door of store."
Hattie Ford Weiss is also there. She clerked for Maynard Linquest.
"Horton Crosby on running board of car." "His father is near him."*