

# Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the  
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 40 No. 4 April 2015

www.InterlakenHistory.org

**BOSTA**  
Hosta,  
Plantain lily,  
Funkia *Liliaceae*  
See page 4 for  
more on the *Hosia*  
*sieboldiana* and  
*H. fortunei*



## **The Community is Invited!** **Monday April 27, 2015 7p.m.** ***Early Memories of Interlaken***

From the point of view of a farm girl

The Interlaken Historical Society invites you to spend an evening looking back at the 1930s and some of the people and places within the community. Ruth Myer will discuss memories of those days as they related to her youth and people she knew. Due to the poor weather in January we have invited Mrs. Myer to be the speaker in April.

Mrs. Myer will be talking about early memories of places and businesses in Interlaken which played a large part in her youth. The canning factory was an important part of our lives. As farmers we needed the income from our peas and beans to pay for at least the interest on the mortgage. It was my first job, and not always fun.

Copies of Ruth's two books *A Farm Girl in the Great Depression* and *Behind the Organ Pipes* will be available for purchase. The meeting will be held in the dining room of the Masonic Hall, 8396 Main Street, second floor at 7:00 pm. The meeting room is handicapped accessible. Refreshments will be served. For information 607-280-2099.

## **Last Call**

### **Articles for the 65th Anniversary needed**

We are still needing articles for the 65th Anniversary volume. We would love to have items from Town and Village officials of all eras since 1950; from organizations that met or were in our area between 1950 and the present.

Agriculture played a large part in the lives of families, and the stories about family farms will be a part of this volume as well. Whether the farm was or is a few acres to a large dairy, crop farm with a small roadside stand or the organic and CSA farms of today. The editors are wanting to show the full spectrum of ag life in our community.

There have been a number of businesses that have served our area, we need your stories as well. Please send in items by June 20. To stir your minds, please see pages 6-8 for several articles. And thank you all who have submitted items to date. If you need assistance, please call 607-280-2099

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### President's Message

End of February 2015, what a winter we are having, everyone is looking forward to spring. The whole month has been breaking records with wind chills well below zero. More snow falling and blowing than in recent years. Reminds me of the 60s and 70s, snow banks getting to be 10 to 12 feet high with blowing snow coming over the top and creating whiteouts.

The Society's January meeting had to be cancelled due to cold and slippery roads. We have rescheduled Ruth Meyer to be our April 27<sup>th</sup> speaker. She is eager to share her memories of childhood.

We continue to make plans for 2015. We need docents for Saturday open hours at the museums. Call 607-592-3224 to volunteer. Our outreach this year includes Olde Home Day, T-burg Fair Parade and exhibit.

Our major program this year will be at the firemen's field featuring the Lehigh Valley Railroad with focus on the Black Diamond passenger train. Elsewhere in this issue read about the other two railroads in the Town of Covert.

In closing, we are all saddened by the sudden death of Don Betzler. Don, a local businessman doing sales, service and parts for local farmers, will be missed for solving problems with equipment that wasn't working right. Please keep Kathy, Matt, Bob and Phyllis in your thoughts and prayers.

See you in, around, and involved in the Interlaken Historical Society this summer.

John Hunt President

### Gifts In Memory of Doug VanBenschoten

Robert and Therese, Richard and Christine Elliott

Frank Dana

### Gifts in Memory of Don Betzler

Ruth and Debra Wagner

### Recent Donations

Rachel Gates Johnson, Odessa, NY

Child's toys, Interlaken High School Diploma, IHS porcelain dish, and photographs. See page 9 for more on these gifts.

Tammy Reynolds, Interlaken, NY

With the closing of the Tri-Village Penny-saver Tammy donated a preserved copy of the first issue of the paper, several other issues over the years, and two photographs. One photograph shows the second Pennysaver office, on Railroad Street, now the home of Ginny and Chris Kempf, and the second photo a

July 1957 picture of the building that housed the paper for over 56 years.



### **Trains in the Village**

On Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, the Interlaken Historical Society will be hosting an event to share information and memories of the three train systems that were either in the Village of Interlaken or associated with the surrounding area. The most well-known is the Lehigh Valley Railroad and its Black Diamond trains. The Lehigh Valley tracks ran through the village and stopped at the Railroad Depot on Geneva Street. It was the efforts of the Lehigh Valley to find a new name for the depot that led to the naming of our community Interlaken in 1904.

Once the new depot was built in 1910 the former building was moved to Bergen Beach by D. Scott Rappleye to be a summer cottage. Thank you Phyllis Betzler for the picture of the cottage.

The second railroad was a model railroad built by Sigmund VanDoren on his family farm southeast of the village on Powell Road. This system had 970 feet of track, an engine, switches, turntables and passenger car which locals had the opportunity to ride. Visitors from around the area would come to see this early 1900s train.

The third train system was laid out and the grading completed, but due to financial problems never completed. The Pennsylvania and Sodus Bay Railroad planned its track through the village crossing West Avenue near Knight Street and angled across what is now the western edge of the firemen's field as it continued north.

The **Trains in the Village** event will be held on the firemen's field, at the corner of Knight and Mechanic Streets. This location provides plenty of space for displays, vendors, spectators and parking for all.

We are currently looking for groups and organizations interested in setting up displays about the Railroads in our area, how the train systems supported the rural communities and other historical topics.

Inside the large pavilion will be a working model train from the Upstate Model Railroad club.

A special feature of the day will be a train for the kids and other young at heart event attendees to walk and climb around in. Thank you to several members of the board and other volunteers in building this special train.

If you are interested in being a part of this event please contact call 607-280-2099, or [museum@interlakenhistory.org](mailto:museum@interlakenhistory.org),

*The original train depot was moved to Bergen Beach and became a cottage after 1910.*



## Those Olde Time Hostas

Barbara B. Stewart

As you enjoy reading the latest Interlaken Historical Society Newsletter, there is probably snow still on the ground. After this “olde time” type winter, we are all ready for spring to come.

Once the early flowering bulbs are done, Hosta's are quick to follow, poking their heads through the now warmed soil. Hosta's have been with us, around our homes, for a long time. This is especially true if your home is 100 plus years old. The plant comes in many shades of green, some are variegated, have rounded, pointed and oval leaves. Some flower in the spring, summer or fall. The blossoms range from white, light pink, cream and lavender. They can handle full sun, partial shade and deep shade. Little moisture is required, but moist areas are okay too. As a perennial, they come back each year. Most are easy to divide, in spring and early fall, to be shared with friends and neighbors. That's a lot of “bang for your buck”.

In the garden area in front of the Interlaken Historical Society building, there are at least eight different species. When we started to plan the garden, donations of plants came from home divisions and local garden stores. All plants have settled in and are thriving. Although we did improve the soil by adding compost, fertilizer and mulch, the plants would have been happy in little prepared soil. These plants survive in

soil around foundations and even rock piles. They don't need much fertilizer, but some compost and mulch are welcome.

Not many perennials are as easy and versatile as the Hosta or “Plantain Lily” as they are sometimes called. Even with severe and prolonged low temperatures, your Hostas should be just fine. The growing points are well below soil level and the snow pack is a great insulator.

There is a Hosta on the Cornell campus that is at least 3 feet tall and 4 or more feet wide. A small child could hide underneath the foliage, it's a beauty!!! On the other hand, I have one that is only 3-4 inches tall and about that wide, with delicate, fragrant purple flowers blooming in August. Another larger species, also flowers in August each year about a week before our wedding anniversary, what a treat!!

The plants that came with our home are found around the neighborhood. I am sure plants were divided and shared through the years. They have made great foundations plantings and around our deck, other shady spots.

With the various shades of green, cream, variegations, leaf size and leaf shape, some flowering and fragrant, there is a place for them somewhere in your garden. Take some time this spring to visit a garden center or nursery. You will find an interesting selection to enhance your garden or walkway. Spring will come!!!

### Interlaken Library News

The Interlaken Public Library welcomes Sandy VanEtten as our new Library Manager. Sandy grew up in Newfield, NY and graduated from Newfield Central School. Shortly after graduation she moved to Ovid.

She has worked in libraries her whole life. First working in her school library, she then got a job at the Tompkins County Public Library working as a page after school. She has held various positions at the Tompkins County Public Library including Computer Technician and Head of Technical Services, and is currently working as Cataloging Manager at the Finger Lakes Library System.

Sandy is excited to start this new opportunity. Please stop in and welcome her!



*Captain Jack entertains children at a special story-time March 7th at the Interlaken Public Library*

Did you know that the Interlaken Public Library is a municipal library – the only municipal library in Seneca County. As a municipal library, we do not have association members that pay annual dues. Our funding comes from town, county, and village appropriations and school district voter levies. At this time that funding totals **less than \$39,000 per year**. Funding for programs and classes comes primarily from grants that we must apply for and receive.

All expenses for the Interlaken Public Library are paid by the above funds. These expenses include the Polaris computer system that connects us to Finger Lakes Library system for all of our and your everyday library needs. In addition to this, it must also cover salaries, insurances, utilities, building maintenance, public computers and technology, library supplies, collection development and other operating expenses

We rely heavily on individual and business donations. These donations are used for further collection development, to sponsor magazines and keep our technology updated. At this time we are also raising funds to make our second story handicap accessible which will expand our area for programs, as well as being available for use by community organizations. Donations are welcome year round and can be mailed to Interlaken Public Library, PO Box 317, Interlaken, NY 14847.

### **Pell Farms**

In 1957 Donald and Mary Pell purchased what is now Pell Farms from Dana Hayward who previously purchased it from Emery Holton, located on Route 89, Interlaken, NY.

For a short time we had a dairy herd and milked cows. We also had chickens and sold eggs.

The farm was put in soil bank for a number of years. Don went to work at Cornell University and Mary, a registered nurse worked at Willard Psychiatric Center.

After the farm was taken out of soil bank, Donald's sons Carl and Richard started crop farming, growing corn, soybeans, wheat, oat and hay. They also raised beef cows for a number of years.

To this day Carl and Richard continue crop farming. Presently, Carl's son Colter is helping on the farm.

*Mary Pell February 2015\*

### **Wickes Pharmacy**

In the early 1960s Wickes Pharmacy, which had been in existence since 1908, changed its appearance from an "old fashion" drug store to modern pharmacy. Charles J. Wickes decided that since his daughter, Phyllis had just graduated from U.B.'s (University of Buffalo??) Pharmacy School and received her license she might stay in Interlaken awhile and help him if she didn't have to work behind the soda fountain in a drug store of the past.

Charles hired a company to draw the plans and to work with the carpenters from Ithaca to transform the store without having

to close. So within two to three weeks it was accomplished.

Phyllis was the fourth generation of pharmacist (or druggist as they were called earlier in time) as her great-grandfather, Silas R. Wickes was a druggist in Trumansburg, NY, and his son, George V. Wickes had a drug store in Mecklenburg, NY. George trained to be a druggist in Canandaigua, NY. In those earlier days one did not go to druggist school but trained under someone else. In 1908 George and his wife Mary Irma Slaght Wickes and two-year old Charles moved by horse and wagon to Interlaken and opened Wickes Pharmacy. They rented a house on Cayuga Street as they would not be able to live over the drug store as the telephone company had their office there. Charles' sister Christine was born a couple of years after they moved to Interlaken.

Charles went to Pharmacy School at the University of Michigan for two years, then transferred to the University of Buffalo for his last year. While there his father passed away. He hired Bert Howell, a retired druggist from Eli Lilly Drug Company who lived on West Main Street to run the store until Charles got his license.

Wickes' Pharmacy became the Interlaken Apothecary Shoppe in 1976 when Charles sold it to John Kavis due to illness. John also owned John's Pharmacy in Ovid. Both Charles and Phyllis worked part-time for John Kavis who closed the store in the early 1980s leaving Interlaken without a pharmacy.

*Submitted by Phyllis Wickes Betzler*

## Frontenac Point Vineyard Estate Winery

After working for New York State government, and living in Albany, for 11 years and assisting the passage of the farm-winery bill in 1976, Jim (Cornell University-CALS '67) and Carol Doolittle (Good Counsel College/Pace University '68) decided they wanted to have their own winery – “it sounded like fun” – so they embarked upon an adventure. They purchased a promising site with a panoramic view of Cayuga Lake, and planted their first 3 acres of vines in 1978. Frontenac Point Vineyard became NY farm-winery #47 in 1982 producing only 400 cases of wine.

We purchased this property specifically because peach, plum, pear, sweet cherry and apple trees were successfully grown here by earlier generations of the King family. The land is part of the King Military Tract on Route 89 near Kingtown Road, Town of Covert.

From this historical agricultural data we knew cold-tender grape varieties could also be successfully grown on this site.

In fact, in recent years this site is described by viticulturists as being in a “Banana Belt.” When vineyards on the south and north ends of both Cayuga and Seneca Lakes have reduced or no crop the following fall due to an extremely cold winter we have never experienced any damage to our fruiting buds or vines.

They have maintained a diminutive status, currently making only 2000-3000 cases a year. Their son, Lawrence, now

carries this tradition into the next generation.

All of the grapes used to make Frontenac Point wines are grown in their 18-acre vineyard here on slopes of low elevation, protected by a microclimate influenced by Ontario and Cayuga Lakes. The combination of estate-grown grapes, Cazenovia and Aurora silt loam soils, climate, and Frontenac Point’s winemaking techniques produces wines that are truly appellation Cayuga Lake.

Jim is the winemaker and he focuses primarily on dry wines using barrel fermentation and other modern processes to permit the wines to express their complexity. Committed to the notion that change is good and that just because there is a traditional way of making wine doesn’t make it the only way. Frontenac Point challenges the status quo with vinifera and old-world hybrid blends in addition to varietal vintages including Pinot Noir and Chambourcin. More than half of their production is red wine. Their white wines include Riesling, Chardonnay, and Brut Méthode Champenoise.



## A Stone's Throw Bed and Breakfast

We arrived in Interlaken on a blustery winter day in December of 2008. We had purchased the Peabody House on West Avenue, also referred to as the “snow house” by folks at Jay's Diner, then owned by Blanche Belliveau - who had welcomed us with gluten free pancakes and breads. Being gluten intolerant, what a wonderful surprise.

Our first day at our home found us knee deep in snow. Our driveway, adjacent to open farmlands, was covered in snow drifts - one chilly welcome!

We came to Interlaken after falling in love with our Greek Revival home. We were in awe of the ten column porch. We appreciated the quaintness of Interlaken, the open fields and great proximity to both Seneca and Cayuga lakes, as well as the amazing number of vineyards nearby. A perfect location for our home and business.

We spent almost three years renovating our 1850 home. We opened our business, A Stone's Throw Bed and Breakfast, in the spring of 2012. We have had three great years of guests at our door, arriving from, as close as Ithaca to as far as California, Germany and India. The majority of our guests visit us from Pennsylvania, New York and Canada. We are seasonally open

from late April to early December. Many guests enjoy the good old fashioned art of “porch sitting.” Our guests are greeted with a smile, comfy accommodations to refresh from their travels and a hearty farm to table breakfast each morning.

We are so fortunate to have two great neighbors - the Rappleye sisters, Norma Stuck and Doris Coon. They have welcomed us to Interlaken. When Norma was first married, she lived on the top floor of our home, while watching her home being built across the road. The house at that time had an outside stairway leading to their apartment. Both Doris and Norma have shared many great stories of Interlaken. We call

Norma the unofficial mayor of Interlaken, who on warm days sits on her porch and greets folks as the walk and drive by. It's great to hear about a thriving Interlaken in their early days and how they both played around the mulberry tree in our yard.

Your Innkeepers,  
Tony Del Plato & Gina Nigro





### **Dues Reminder No More Red Dots**

Yearly dues are due beginning in July of each year. We thank all those who regularly send in their dues. This year we have added a field to the mailing labels which lists when your dues are paid through, i.e. 6/30/2015 means you owe dues this summer. Others may see 6/30/2016 or later, your dues are paid through June 2016 or as noted. This field will be on the mailing labels for each issue, and replaces the red dots.

### **Historical Society Annual Meeting**

The April 27th meeting will include a brief Annual Meeting of the Membership. Included on the agenda are reports on membership, finances and electing new board members. This meeting begins at 7:00 and will be followed by Ruth Myer's talk.

Questions and comments from the floor will be welcome.

*John Hunt and his crew are building a train for the **Trains in the Village** event, and provided two views of the construction. Shown opposite is the tanker and below the caboose. See the completed train at Olde Home Day.*



### **Other Happenings in Interlaken over the Summer Months**

#### **Olde Home Day 2015**

Plan to visit the Museums on Saturday June 13th while enjoying the many activities on Main Street for Olde Home Day.

Music, food, crafts, more food, live bands, the parade and a new twist on the auction. A silent auction will be held beginning at noon and lasting until 4 pm when the winners will be announced. Any items not bid on during the silent auction will be up for bids from the floor at that time. The evening band will begin at 5 pm.

Also on display will be the train being built for the Trains in the Village event.

#### **Lake View Cemetery History Tours**

If you missed the Cemetery History walks last summer make plans to attend this summer. Three guided walks are planned: Sunday May 31 at 4pm, Wednesday July 1 at 7pm and Sunday August 30 at 4pm.

New this year at the Cemetery: *Voices from the Past*. Saturday October 10 the cemetery will come alive with volunteers telling the stories of Mrs. VanArsdale, Mrs. Hause, Pastor Bassler, Captain Quick, George Hunt, Sam Stone and Issac Stout. Watch for more information in the July issue.

**Interlaken Fire Department Car Show** and Flea Market with chicken bar-b-q at noon. Sunday, August 9th at the Firemen's Field. Contact Jim Borden or Matt Barkee for more information. 607-532-4300.

### Gifts to the Museum

Rachel Gates Johnson recently gave the Historical Society a number of artifacts from several generations of the Covert/Greene/Gates families.

Included were a child's carpet sweeper and broom, wooden doll cradle, toy tool chest with woodworking tools, Interlaken High School porcelain dish, and two High School diplomas, for Elizabeth Esther Greene.

Elizabeth E. Greene was Bill Gate's mother, and married Leone Gates in 1937. She graduated from Interlaken High School in 1925.

Elizabeth grew up in Interlaken, her parents were Lela Covert and William John Greene and they moved sometime after 1925 to a farm house just above the Gates Brothers farm on Route 96A near the corner of County Rd 129. Incidentally that house was, for many years "The Darling Rest Home." That was Fred Darling who was the grandfather of Floyd Darling, and great-grandfather of Mary Darling Worrell.

William John worked with and was friends with the Gates brothers, Leone and Jason.

Also included in the donation were several photographs. One is the Kelly Corners' School #9 with the students

lined up in front of the school building. Penciled on the back "Leone Gates," and in her notes Rachel wrote, "Leone, Louva and Jason Gates all would have gone to this school in the late 1890s."

The Historical Society is always looking for new items for our collections. Items that help tell the story of the community and the people that lived here . As we are finding, what was only yesterday, and not yet history, has within a couple of years become the pieces we need to preserve or they will be lost.

**INTERLAKEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
GIFT SHOP ORDER FORM**

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Please Mail Order Form or DUES to: INTERLAKEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PO Box 270, Interlaken NY 14847  
DUES are due beginning July 1, Still only \$10 a year!

**Interlaken Historical Society**  
**PO Box 270**  
**Interlaken, NY 14847-0270**

www.InterlakenHistory.org

**Mark your calendar**

**Monday April 26**, 7p.m. *Early Memories of Interlaken* Masonic Hall Dining Room, 8396 Main St, second floor. Handicapped accessible.

May 10th Articles for the 65th Anniversary book needed.

**Saturday, June 13**, Olde Home Day

**Sunday July 26**, Annual Social on the Library lawn

**Saturday, August 1st** Trains in the Village event,

For more information on these events contact 607-280-2099

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