

LOOKING BACK

THE HAGUE ARTS FAIR

by Shelly Gautreau and Nancy Young

The first Hague Arts Fair was held August 4, 1973. The following was reported in the September 1973 issue of *The Hague Chronicle*.

The Hague Arts Fair – A Success?

Was the Hague Arts Fair held on August 4 a success? This is a question that a lot of people have asked.

For those who had wares to sell, it was probably not much of a success. There was little evidence that many items were purchased. The hottest item in this category was the Home Bureau Cookbook of which more than 20 were sold.

But for those who exhibited merely for the thrill of showing off their creations to their fellow townspeople, it was a great success. And for those who came to see the mass of talent that Hague was able to assemble on a hot August afternoon, it was likewise a great thrill.

Should the fair be continued next year, and the year after that? By all means! It is the best way yet for Hague to present itself to the summer tourists and to its own townspeople as a talented and cultured community proud of its residents. Also a real opportunity is given to summer and year round residents to spend a day in mutual admiration of each other.

Credit for proposing the fair in the first instance goes to Mr. [RUDY] Meola, [SR.] who assembled a group in his office early in the year to consider the proposal. However, the group of women...Mrs. Meola, Strumm, [Mrs.] Brock, [Mrs.] Crabbs and [Mrs.] Seerup and the high school students, Sally DeLarm and Mary Samascott, who took the ball and carried it, also deserve credit.

If the Hague Arts Fair is to be continued, we think it requires a sponsoring organization and we can think of no more appropriate organization than the Hague Chamber of Commerce. We urge that it does so.

Update:

The Hague Arts Fair, last recorded in *The Hague Chronicle* as being held in the summer of 2015, was the 43rd one and had been sponsored by the Hague Chamber of Commerce since 1974. The write up in *The Hague Chronicle* in 1973 stated, "more than 25 individuals and organizations had signed up." And, in 1974, "a guess in excess of over 500 persons attended the fair."



For the first eight years, there was no charge to be an exhibitor. In 1981, the chamber decided to charge \$5 for a full day per exhibitor. After ten years of hosting a one-day fair, the chamber extended it to a two-day affair. In 1983, the following quote was published (in an article in *The Hague Chronicle*) – "All items should be hand-made or home-baked. This is NOT a flea market." Also, "For exhibitors, there will be a charge of \$10 for either day or \$15 for the two-day show."

In 1988, the charge went up to \$15 for one day and \$25 for two days. In 1991, the charge for exhibitors went up again to \$20 for one day or \$30 for both days.

From 1973 until 1991, the Hague Arts Fair was held in the park at the town beach. In 1991, the location was moved to the new community center and was held there each year thereafter.

In 1996, the fair name was changed to the Hague Arts and Craft fair. A quote at that time in an article in *The Hague*

Chronicle stated there would be "approximately 50 exhibitors from neighboring counties and states" and that "this fair is now a cross-section of local talent and Adirondack art."

In 2005, the fair was back to its original name, the Hague Arts Fair. In 2005, it reverted to the Hague Arts and Craft Fair. In 2009, there was yet another new name, the Hague Arts Fair

and Farmers Market. In 2010, again and finally, the original name was used.

The Hague Chamber of Commerce merged with the Ticonderoga chamber in 2020. The new name was the Ticonderoga Area Chamber of Commerce (TACC).

There were many people who helped organize and promote the fair through the years and they all deserve a hearty thank you for caring about the town and its people. For those who spent time creating and exhibiting, it was likely a fun (though not always fruitful) way to see new faces and talk to friends, neighbors and strangers with stories of their own.

A "fair" to exhibit home-made, home-baked items stood its ground for a long time. It may be that its demise came due to commercialism or a loss of interest. We both attended and/or exhibited items and are happy we were able to experience the "Hague Arts Fair." ■

