

The

# Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

SPRING 2012

## Orangetown has a museum.

For those reading this newsletter, that's no surprise but it seems that for many people, residents of the community, it's a true find. Imagine its 20 years old.

Finding – that term seems to be the key to the secret of the museum's success because there are enough exhibits, items found in basements, attics, garages, barns and just on the road, as well as donated and loaned to the museum to completely fill two separate and distinct buildings to bursting, the Salyer House (on the National Register) and the DePew House on Chief Bill Harris Way.

Mary Cardenas, Museum Director and Town Historian, spoke about the birth of the museum in 1992 when Roger Pellegrini was Orangetown Town Supervisor.

The property upon which stands the Salyer House by the shore of Lake Tappan was owned, and is still owned by United Water. The company maintained the structure usually by allowing an employee to stay there. However, for reasons lost to even United Water, the house was due to be demolished.

Enter Marie Mackay, who was Town Historian at the time and asked United Water to donate the house to the Town, which they did, but the land upon which it sits, was leased to the Town for 99 years beginning in September of 1992.

Mackay formed a Museum Committee comprised of several subcommittees, (House, Publicity, Acquisition & Exhibits, School/Education, Garden, Reference, Genealogy and Finance).

A resident of Pearl River and already a member of a number of organizations, MacKay pulled from them more than 43 volunteers from Pearl River, Piermont Tappan, Blauvelt, Orangeburg, Palisades, Nyack and Nanuet (part of which is in Orangetown).

With a budget of no more than \$8,000, the ten member core committee often sat in the Salyer House in the dark, sans heat, because the electricity had not been turned on.

However lack of funds had its pros and cons. On the one hand, it did not stop creativity as demonstrated by one of the most active committees. Headed by Paul Melone and Bernard Albin a design for a colonial garden was conceived based on what was seen during visits to Philipsburg Manor in Westchester.

Yet the garden was not to be and still isn't. Cardenas said that what was planned would have absorbed half of the entire budget because of the types of plants proposed, (Angelica, Chamomile, Clary Sage, Feverfew, Lady's Bedstraw, Lamb's Ear, Basil and Sage, all either used for seasoning food or curing ailments.)

"Unfortunately, when we did put plantings in there, most of them were eaten by deer. The only thing that they didn't eat was basil." However plans are going forward to give it another try this coming summer.

It took until 1996 for the Museum to open with its first exhibit, "In The Beginning..." about the patents and the development of the area to the Civil War era, said Cardenas. "The reason it took that long is because of the work that went into upgrading the house, including the electricity."

This would not have been accomplished in that amount of time without the help of 18 volunteers from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Jerry Conques worked on painting and restoring some of the plaster and Joseph Ohlinger, a retired member of the engineering staff of the New York Metropolitan Museum, led restorations. He also obtained exhibit cases that were being retired from the Met. "It took Jim Wilson and five other employees from Orangetown Parks and Recreation to move them because they were so heavy." Other cases were donated by the Tappan Reform Church and restored by Barry Osher.





1992 Marie Mackay sitting on the stoop of the Salyer House after it became the first building of the Orangetown Museum



2012 South Orangetown Middle School 7th graders with teachers and museum staff enjoying their annual visit to the Salyer House

## The Celebration Continues!

This year, a very special annual dinner will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives. Perhaps the Beatles had it right when they coined the phrase, 'I get by with a little help from my friends' – certainly the museum would not have been able to thrive and expand without the generous assistance of the *Friends of the Orangetown Museum*. Our *Friends* board has helped us to enhance our collection and exhibits, publish the *Crier* and support our educational and outreach activities. Chaired by Catherine Dodge, with Luise Weischowsky, Assistant Chair, the Board further consists of: Joseph Barbieri, Laura Davie, Rosemarie Fornario, Jeffrey Keahon, Robert Knight, Marie Manning, Ellen McCarty, Kimball Parker, Anne Pinzow and Robert Simon. If you love history as we do, please join us for this communal back-patting session, where we will celebrate the museum's extraordinary achievements and the advancements made in preserving and protecting the unique legacy of Orangetown. We have

expanded to a second museum building at the DePew House, transferred our data collections to a professional museum software program and established an education program with the South Orangetown Middle School. We have presented the public with engaging exhibitions and antique sales, and published *Orangetown*, the book that brings it all together. The museum certainly has something to be proud of. Fittingly slated for the '76 House, this year's dinner will honor Craig Long, Rockland County Historian. We hope to see you as we cut our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cake; absolutely *Rich in History!* —EKS

*continued from page 1*

Julie Trumpler, former museum curator had been chairperson of the exhibition committee, said Cardenas, and laid the groundwork for what is stored and shown at the museum to this day.

A lot of that collection came from Edwin "Blackie" Langer, a former telephone company employee who collected odds and ends left out on the street by residents moving out of older homes.

Collections of bottles came from other residents and a period mantel was found by Clare Tholl, an architectural historian.

That's what it's been like at the museum, people donating and lending items long held, others finding things in attics, barns, basements and even in the ground, and donating these finds.

It still continues, telling the story of the people of Orangetown with its latest exhibit, "We Are Orangetown," the people who founded it, the people who built it and who live here."

The story is not over because recently found and generously donated is a 19th century buggy, which, according to plans, will be displayed on the DePew House lawn.

That's right; it will lead visitors on the way into Orangetown's past, present and the future.

—Anne Phyllis Pinzow

### The Friends of the Orangetown Museum Annual Dinner

Celebrating the Museum's  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
*Keeping History Alive*  
Honoring Craig Long,  
*Rockland County Historian*

Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012, 5 pm  
The '76 House  
110 Main Street, Tappan, NY



*We are*  
Orangetown

# E PLURIBUS UNUM Out of Ten Communities ~ One Town

The Museum's latest exhibit at the DePew House, WE ARE ORANGETOWN, opened on April

21<sup>st</sup>. Celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, it is our first true blockbuster – featuring what you need to know about Nyack, Sparkill, Grand View, Pearl River, Palisades, Snedens Landing, Piermont, Orangeburg, Tappan, Blauvelt and South Nyack. A companion

to our recently published book *Orangetown* this exhibit highlights features of our permanent collection as well as the 1704 First Division of the Tappan Patent, 92 Camp Shanks photos, a pair of wooden clogs unearthed from the foundation of the '76 House and even an original entry from the 1964 Pearl River Soap Box Derby.



THE DREAM TEAM: Elizabeth Skrabonja, *Curator*, Joe Barbieri, *Research Assistant*, Mary Cardenas, *Director* and Giuliano Premus, *Buildings Manager*



Orangetown Supervisor Andrew Stewart discussing the exhibit with Ellen Jaffe, *Assemblywoman* and Rose Marie Raccioppi, *Orangetown Poet Laureate*. Ms. Raccioppi wrote a poem for each of the towns of Orangetown.

Poetry and regatta trophies, Lederle Chevron newsletters and a velvet curtained screening room – a small museum delivering a big message. Out of ten communities one town – and we define ourselves within that collective framework. WE ARE ORANGETOWN is open until November 18<sup>th</sup>.



## A Book for Students

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> South Orangetown Middle School students returned to the Salyer House for their annual visit. The buses rolled in, leaving the 21<sup>st</sup> century behind as over 300 seventh graders visited the museum's permanent exhibits; **A Spy in Our Midst – Maj. John Andre**, **At Home in Orangetown** and **Our Dutch Sandstone Houses**. In recognition of the museum's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year as well as SOMS's commitment to encouraging the study of local history, 320 copies of the museum's book, *Orangetown* were purchased for the school by the *Friends of the Orangetown Museum*. In a brief ceremony, Chairwoman Catherine Dodge presented a copy of the book to Superintendent Ken Mitchell before the students poured into the house. An added feature of this year's tour was a riveting presentation by Fred Shofer, Revolutionary War Era interpreter on the beautiful grounds of the Salyer House; a fine time was had by all. —EKS



**During the presentation of *Orangetown*:** from left: Sara Kukla, *teacher*, Karen Tesik, *principal*, Paul Clark, *author*, Luise Weischowsky, *Assistant Chair, Friends Board*, Catherine Dodge, *Chair, Friends Board*, Mary Cardenas, *author and Museum Director*, Ellen McCarty, *Friends Board Member*, Elizabeth Skrabonja, *Museum Curator*, Marie Manning, *Friends Board Member*, Dr. Ken Mitchell, *School Superintendent*, James Amandola, *teacher* and students.

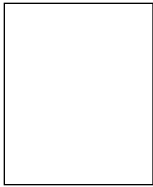
*Photo by Anne Pinzow, courtesy of 'Our Town'*



196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
Orangeburg, New York 10962



Tel. (845) 398-1302  
www.orangetownmuseum.com



☛ at The DePew House  
196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
Orangeburg, New York  
*Office, Archives by Appointment*  
(845) 398-1302

Now Open!  
**WE ARE ORANGETOWN**  
Tuesdays 10 – 2 , Sundays 1 – 4  
Or by appointment  
Admission: your donation

☛ at The Salyer House  
213 Blue Hill Road  
Pearl River, New York  
*A Spy in Our Midst,*  
*Our Dutch Sandstone Houses &*  
*At Home in Orangetown*  
Permanent Exhibit: Hours by appointment  
(845) 398-1302

THIS SPRING AND SUMMER:



**WE ARE ORANGETOWN:** Opened at the DePew House, 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg, NY, April 21<sup>st</sup> 2012. There are six hamlets and four river villages that together, create Orangetown. Independently they speak to our nation's growth and development along "America's river" – the Hudson. Together they verify the claim – ***Rich in History.*** This multimedia exhibit presents a historical snapshot of our town. Open through November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012.



**Antiques & Collectibles Sale:** Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 10 am – 4 pm, Rain Date, Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>. Presented by ***The Friends of the Orangetown Museum,*** A NY Heritage Weekend Event – the Museum will be open free of charge. Antiques • Fine Collectibles • Jewelry • Toys • Decorative Arts • Fine Arts • Furniture. At the **DePew House,** 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg, NY



**Friends of the Orangetown Museum Annual Dinner:** Join us to celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the publication of ***Orangetown*** and honor County Historian, Craig Long. A festive dinner and historical presentation of interest is planned. Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012, 5 pm–hors d'oeuvres, 6 pm–dinner, at the '76 House, 110 Main Street, Tappan, NY. Tickets \$55 per person, \$65 at the door. Contact the museum for information.

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Elizabeth Skrabonja, MUSEUM CURATOR  
The Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives was founded in 1992 to acquire, preserve and exhibit objects which reflect primarily the history of the Town of Orangetown. The Museum's additional, but not lesser mission is to document, research, promote and publicize the town's rich, historical heritage of the town for the people of Orangetown.



Andrew Stewart, SUPERVISOR  
Thomas Diviny, Tom Morr, Dennis Troy and Paul Valentine, COUNCILMEN

FRIENDS OF THE ORANGETOWN MUSEUM  
Your membership in the Friends of the Orangetown Museum helps to collect and preserve the history of Orangetown. Members will receive notices of programs and events as well as free admission to the Museum's special exhibits and events. The Museum is a 501 (C) (3) organization and all donations are tax deductible.

STUDENT/SENIOR \$10 SINGLE \$15 FAMILY \$20  
LIFE MEMBER \$100 CORPORATE \$250