

NEWSLETTER

LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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February 2010

NEWS FROM THE TRUSTEES

- A. Revision of Bylaws – On January 20th your Board of Trustees began working on the first major revision of the LHS Bylaws in several years. The revisions will divide and define function responsibilities of committees more clearly and give more responsibility to committees. For the first time there will be a Nominating Committee to select a slate of Trustees to replace those whose terms expire, to nominate new officers, and to select chairpersons and membership for committees. In addition the regular meeting time for Board of Trustees meetings will set for the third Wednesday of every other month (January, March, May, July September, and November) at 2:00PM. There will be an easier to meet quorum rule for Board of Trustee meetings.
- B. Reemphasis of Committee Structure – In the interest of involving more of the membership and their talent in the affairs of the Society, your Trustees have chosen to reemphasize the Society's committees. Our committees include the following:
- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Events and Programs | Nominating |
| House and Grounds | Website |
| Hospitality | Collections |
| Historic Preservation | Fund Raising and Publicity |
| Membership | |
- In addition there is one *ad hoc* committee at present, the Lansingburgh Cemeteries Committee, chaired by Gordon Brown, which is working with Senator Roy McDonald in planning the rehabilitation of the Lansingburgh Village Burying Ground and the Old Catholic Burying Ground. More on that project follows. Any member is eligible to work with a committee. We invite members who want to participate to either contact the chairman of that committee or email Dave Marsh (use email address on the heading above).
- C. Update of the Collections Management Policy- On January 20th. The Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation of the Collections Committee (Richard Zeller Chairman, Kathleen Tivnan, Dorothy Clayton) to make some revisions of the collections policy. Among the additions was a provision to add a Deed of Gift to the documentation of items received into the collection. The new policy has been filed with the New York State Education Department by our Archivist/Curator, Warren Broderick.

THE LANSINGBURGH CEMETERIES PROJECT

On November 20th NYS Senator Roy McDonald sat down with several Trustees to discuss a Lansingburgh Historical Society project to rehabilitate and preserve the two cemeteries on the east side of Third Avenue and lying on the north and south sides of 107th Street. Sen. McDonald explained that he had some experience in getting a similar project funded in Saratoga County a few years ago and that he knew that the late Nancy McHugh had informally proposed such a project in Lansingburgh.

The meeting at Germania Hall was attended by Gordon Brown, Kathleen Tivnan, John Connors, David Saehrig, Pat Polito (an aide to Sen. McDonald), and Dave Marsh. The group walked across Third Avenue to the cemeteries and listed goals which should be accomplished if a grant could be secured for the Society by Sen. McDonald to rehabilitate the two burying grounds. They need to be cleared of debris and trash which has accumulated over the years. Fences need to be replaced. Signage needs to be made and set in place. Plot maps need to be drawn. Tomb stones need to be cleaned, repaired, and returned upright. Shrubs need to be trimmed and/or removed. Sidewalks need to be installed. Local people need to be discouraged from allowing their dogs to defecate in the cemetery grounds and along sidewalks.

An action plan was drafted and task listed to be accomplished to get the project moving. Letters were written to Mayor Harry Tutunjian (the City of Troy owns the Lansingburgh Village burying ground on the northeast corner of the intersection) and Bishop Howard Hubbard of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany (which owns the Old Catholic Burying Ground). Gordon Brown drafted a \$20000 grant proposal to Sen. McDonald's office. Members of the cemetery committee have been collecting what data they are able to find on the cemeteries and the burials in them. A privately published book by Mrs. Frances Broderick whose preparation was assisted by her son Warren Broderick has been most useful in helping us learn about the burial sites.

A number of soldiers from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War are interred in these grounds along with descendents of many early Lansingburgh families.

If this project is funded there will be need for volunteers to carry out some of the work. We have already begun to create a list a people who want to donate their services. Some of the more technical tasks we hope will interest local college students who may be looking for projects to fulfill study requirements. Some of the tasks of a professional nature will require training by qualified people who may wish to provide guidance and training to volunteers. This promises to be an important community project.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

APRIL 15, Thursday, 7:30PM, Melville House- Paul and Mary Liz Stewart of the Underground Railroad Project of the Capital Region will speak about the Underground railroad in the Troy area, including a well publicized fugitive slave case in 1860. African American church members in Lansingburgh at that time had already

condemned the notorious Fugitive Slave Law. The public is invited to this event and refreshments will be served.

APRIL 24, Saturday, 9:00AM to 2:00PM, Melville House- our annual Book Sale will take place rain or shine (it takes place indoors). Hundreds of quality used books and ephemera priced from 50 cents to \$20. Books on Troy, Rensselaer Co., New York State and local history; Herman Melville, Americana, gardening, natural history, fiction and nonfiction, post cards, Troy trade cards, etc. Proceeds from this sale benefit the restoration of the 1786 Herman Melville House.

May 20, Thursday, 7:30PM, Melville House- Hugh Vaughn Lansingburgh native and dowser will give a talk about invisible energies of Lansingburgh and their connections to Native Americans and sacred sites.. He will explain ley lines and spirals, the art of dowsing and controversial actions of General John Ellis Wool of Troy in 1838. The public is invited to this event and refreshments will be served.

JUNE 12, Saturday, 9:00AM to 2:00PM, Melville House- our annual Porch Sale will take place rain or shine inside and on the porch at Herman Melville House. There will be hundreds of antiques and collectibles, kitchen and household items, local post cards, antique tools, antique and collectible glass, small furniture, a desk; beer, soda and medicine bottles, some perennial plants, etc. No junk! Proceeds benefit the restoration of the 1786 Melville House.

SEPTEMBER 16, Thursday, 7:30PM, Lansingburgh Branch of Troy Public Public Library (NW corner of 114th St and 4th Ave)- Ned Pratt, President of the local chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians will present a program on Troy's endangered churches. Some of these churches may not survive, others may be reused in a way that their architectural features are not respectfully preserved. Stained glass and other elements of these religious edifices will be discussed. This program is open to the public and refreshments will be served. Note that this program will be presented at a different location than Melville House (see underlining above).

NOVEMBER 18, Thursday, 7:30PM, Melville House- our annual Holiday Party will be held including an auction of small antiques, collectibles, Christmas books and holiday ornaments. There will be note paper for sale which shows a winter scene in Lansingburgh in the 1870s. This party is open to the public and refreshments will be served.

A REPORT ON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Gordon Brown, Membership Committee Chairman reports that this year we have had a decrease in Society membership renewal, very likely the result of a poor economy. As of January 20, 2010 we had 248 members (84 life members, 49 sustaining, and 115 regular members). Renewals and new members are always welcome. Consider upgrading your regular membership to a sustaining membership or either of those to a life membership. Encourage your friends to join. Our membership year begins in April. People who join in January, February, or March extend their membership through the next membership year.

Regular Membership is \$5.00/ year
Sustaining Membership is 25.00/year
Life Membership is \$100

**Mail to: Lansingburgh Historical Society
P.O. Box 219
Troy, NY 12180-0219**

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NAME_____

MAILING ADDRESS_____

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EMAIL ADDRESS_____

____ Regular(\$5) ____ Sustaining(\$25) ____ Life (\$100) Donation\$ ____

Donations welcome! You may include it with your membership.

