

THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004
aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Alden Historical Society, founded in 1965, is a volunteer-supported organization whose mission is to preserve, promote and present the history of the Town of Alden and its people.

Baptist Church, Liberal Hall, Movie Theater, Village Hall, Legion Hall

At a recent Historical Society program, Alden Town Historian Len Weisbeck, told of when his father, Joseph Weisbeck, ran a silent movie theater in the building at 13143 Broadway. That building, now known as the Legion Hall, has had a rich and varied history, like many buildings in Alden.

It began its long life as a Baptist Church and was dedicated on December 22, 1852. In March 1833, thirteen people met at the home of Dexter Ewell in West Alden to form a Baptist Church. Articles of faith and a covenant were adopted in April, and the church was organized in September. They met in homes and at the school until the building in the Village was built. There is no record of the date when the congregation ceased to meet.

On May 10, 1902, at the home of Mrs. C.A. Tyler, the Alden Liberal Club was organized by a group of women. The club's purpose was "to promote literary and social culture, to advance the interest of the library and to aid in the extension of village improvements." Regular meetings were held on alternate Wednesday afternoons, except in July, August, and September, where two current books were carefully reviewed and discussed and one purchased to be given to the Alden Library. About twenty books a year were given to the Library, and as other libraries were formed in surrounding towns, the Club donated books to those libraries.

The Club decided the first great need in the village was a Town Hall and so sponsored many activities to raise funds—New Year's Ball, Fourth of July celebration in the Grove, public suppers, card parties, box socials, raffles, an Autumn Festival, and teas. In 1908 the Club was able to purchase the old Baptist Church and immediately made plans to repair, and then later remodel, the building.

Liberal Hall, as it was thus renamed, soon became the social and cultural center of the community. There were dinner dances, masquerade parties, dancing school, illustrated stereopticon lectures, vaudeville acts, and home talent

plays, many directed by artist George Roberts. High School commencement exercises were held at the Hall, as were school plays, dances, and even basketball games. In 1910 a club room, kitchen, dressing rooms and a larger stage were added.

In the 1920s, Paul Spring used the Hall as a movie theater. He sold out to Joseph Weisbeck, who ran silent movies on Saturday nights. A piano player provided the music, and later a Victrola with records was used. Leonard Weisbeck can remember having to set up the rows of wooden chairs and the fire hose and buckets of sand needed for fire suppression in the projection booth. Later Eugene Pfeil and Nelson Fisher tried showing talking pictures, but this venture did not last long.

In 1924 it was decided that Liberal Hall had served a useful purpose in the community and it was sold to the Village of Alden. It continued to be used for high school graduations and school plays until the new school building (1936) was built with an auditorium. The Village Board held its meetings here. In the late 1940s the "Swing In" a spot for teenagers was located in the building.

The Village sold the hall to Alden Post No. 1377 of the American Legion in 1947 for \$1. The Legion continues to meet here and carries on the tradition of the Liberal Club by opening its doors during various community events such as the September Art Show and Winterfest.

Karen Muchow

Alden Book Project

Early last year Andrea Kersten, Alden Middle School art teacher, was awarded an E&WG Foundation grant to produce a book about Alden. The book, modeled after one done on Lancaster, is scheduled for publication in November 2011. Proceeds from the sale of the book are to go to the Alden Historical Society for funding educational programs and to other local charities.

Mrs. Kersten gathered a group to plan the book; a group consisting of Middle School faculty, representatives from the Alden Art Club and from the Alden Historical Society. Conrad Borucki, President of the Alden Art Club and Alden Historical Society member, demonstrated his painting techniques to some middle school art classes and helped the students with their paintings. He and other members of the Art Club are submitting paintings for the book, ones they have previously done or new ones. Karen Muchow, curator of the Alden Historical Society, led tours of the Society building and gathered materials for the middle school researchers and writers.

Over forty buildings and places have been selected for inclusion in the book. More writers are needed to write the accompanying articles for the paintings. Also needed are personal stories or anecdotes about the places pictured. If you have information about the history of a building, or a story about it, please submit

it in writing to Karen Muchow, Alden Historical Society, 13213 Broadway, Alden.
Your contributions may be used in the book.

The buildings and places to be featured are:

Alden Methodist Church	Neeland's Dairy
Alden Presbyterian Church	Pfeil's Beanery
St. John's RC Church	Platt's Mill—Alden Center
St. Patrick's RC Church-Crittenden	Young's Mill
St. Paul's Church	Alden Park Inn & Blackwater Baths
Town Line Lutheran Church	Empire Hotel
ACS 1914 Building	Original Baths (St. Aidan's Episcopal Church)
Alden Seminary—Dr. Panek's office	Alger/Rodgers House—Broadway
Henskee Road School	Cobblestone Farm House—Four Rod Road
Millgrove School #13	Creighton's—13295 Broadway
Union Grade School—Church St.	Dr. Tyler's/Alden Grange—13140 Main St.
Darrow's	Milliman/Langdon House—Exchange St.
Wende Hotel in Millgrove	Wende/Genco House—Genesee St.,
South side of Broadway in village	Willis/Webster House—Broadway, Town Line
Alden Advertiser	Bandstand in Fireman's Park
Alden Historical Society	Erie County Home & Infirmary
Alden Pharmacy	Erie Railroad Station—Exchange St.
Alden State Bank	Evergreen Cemetery—Broadway
Bennett Manufacturing	Legion Hall
Ewell Free Library	Town Park
McGavin's—West Alden	Broadway Viaduct
Henry's Candy	Joe Panza Trail
Moffat's Tannery	
Meyer Funeral Home	

Karen Muchow

New Officers Elected

At the January 2011 meeting, the Historical Society selected its slate of officers, trustees, and committees for the coming year. Some positions have remained the same, while others have changed. The Society extends its gratitude to all outgoing volunteers, whatever the capacity they filled. Check out the committee volunteers for 2011 below.

Officers: *Curator/Archivist* – Karen Muchow; *President* – Gil Dussault; *Vice President* – Roberta Vincent; *Secretary* – Kris Rogers; *Treasurer* – Elli DeFilippo.

Trustees: Fred Blowers, Conrad Borucki, Bill Dabb, Elli DeFilippo, Gil Dussault, Judy Hotchkin, Kris Rogers, Sal Sardella, Keith Stone, Roberta Vincent, and Paul Werner.

Committees:

Bldgs & Grounds- Fred Blowers (C), Paul Werner (C), Kris Rogers, Doris Brade, Kelly Cavanaugh, Dan Kubiak

Collections- Keith Stone (C), Karen Muchow, Sandy Dussault

Membership- Judy Hotchkin (C), Laura Loehr

Program- Roberta Vincent (C), Conrad Borucki (C), Carol Borucki, Sal Sardella

Publicity- Judy Hotchkin (C), Laura Loehr

Newsletter- Elli DeFilippo (C), Carl Matthies

Fund Raising- Gil Dussault (C)

Audit- Laura Loehr

Erie County Fair - Elli DeFilippo, Sandy Dussault

Message to Our Members

I am honored to be your Society President this year. I assure you that I do not take this responsibility lightly. I am committed to do my best on your behalf and I expect that level of commitment from all who conduct society business.

This past year a few of our trustees decided to take a much deserved rest and not run for re-election. They are Laura Loehr, Carl Matthies and Dr. Ralph Davis. We are grateful that we were able to retain Roberta Vincent for another term. She is our Vice President this year. I wish to publicly commend and thank those individuals for their tireless service through the years. Many of them are continuing to volunteer their time to the society in various facets.

Your Board of Trustees and Curator follow the footsteps of many dedicated predecessors who freely gave their time and efforts to further the cause of preserving, protecting and presenting the shared heritage of this great community of Alden. We owe them a sincere debt of gratitude for continuing the good work.

This year, we are a diverse group of men and women who are no less committed to that great purpose. Among our peers I believe our society performs well. However, we do not have superpowers. Not only do we need your input---we need your help financially----we need your attendance at programs and we need you to volunteer to assist on the various committees we have. As you might expect sometimes there is much to do and unfortunately, few with which to do it. Be assured---everyone counts.

We appreciate your membership and interest ---but as you know--membership also has its own responsibilities. If you believe as we do that the mission is right... then I would encourage you to step up. You are important...you have much to offer... and you are needed. I hope you will seek out ways to help your Historical Society in some way.

Call us--write us---email us---visit us---we want to hear from you. I believe this Historical Society can do great things with your help. There is a place for you in the big picture. We all know the cause is worthy ---it has been---- is now-- -and will be for many years to come.

Gil Dussault, President

Thank you

The Historical Society extends its gratitude to Sue Muench, Doris Brade, and Gil Dussault for manning the Henskee Road Schoolhouse, located at the Alden Town Park, during the February Alden Winterfest activities. The weather was frigid, but the turnout was good. Doris, Sue, and Gil did a great job of interacting with all who visited the schoolhouse.

Additional thanks go to all of the members who have volunteered to serve as house-sitters at both our new Thursday evening open house and our traditional Saturday open hours during this winter quarter. Volunteers include:

Fred Blowers
Judy Hotchkin
Bill & Therlma Dabb
Karen Muchow

Dan Kubiak
Sal Sardella
Elli DeFilippo
Keith & Mary Stone

Carl & Ann Matthies
Joe Anzalone
Lester & Betty Eastwood
Ruth & Ralph Davis

Margaret Gornewicz

Thanks, also, to our business members, *Alden Advertiser*, *Alden Community Scholarship Foundation*, *Alden State Bank*, *Elwood Jordans Insurance Agency*, and *Neill & Strong, Attorneys, PLLC*, whose ongoing support enables us to pursue our mission.

Student Volunteer



Dan Kubiak at computer work station at Alden Historical Society.

The Historical Society is privileged to have a student volunteer. Dan Kubiak, a junior at Alden High School, is volunteering his time during open hours on Thursdays and alternating Saturdays. Dan has been assisting with inputting collection data in an online Past Perfect museum program, as well as offering assistance to the building and grounds committee.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK:



At the January Historical Society meeting, a cookbook project was discussed. I agreed to chair the project, which will feature local and historical recipes. The project will begin in September, with the collecting of recipes. Recipes may be mailed to the Historical Society Building with attention to Kris Rogers, they may be submitted at a Historical Society meeting, or they may be dropped off to Kris at the Alden Ewell Library.

The Society is always in need of volunteers to assist with Society committees. Please consider volunteering to provide refreshments at a Program meeting.

Kris Rogers, Secretary

From the Collections Committee

The Collections Committee will meet the third Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM at the Historical Society Building.

Recent Acquisitions

We thank the following people for their donations to our collections:

Nick Smith, of the Crittenden Volunteer Fire Dept, for securing a memorial plaque from the Crittenden Post Office commemorating the victims and heroes of September 11, 2001.

ALDEN ULTIMATE TRIVIA GAME

Attention: All armchair game-show participants! Have you ever imagined yourself as a participant on one of TV's popular game-shows? Now is your chance to hone your competitive skills in a contest about local knowledge. Whether you are a native Aldenite or an import, your knowledge of the community may be put to the test at **Alden Trivia Night**, on April 7, at the Community Center.

This will be a night of fun and learning as Conrad Borucki will be our very own Alex Trebek of Jeopardy.

All questions are related to Alden and have been researched by Alden scholars. Points will be awarded for each correct answer, team scores will be kept and some really neat prizes will be awarded.

Teams may be arranged in advance or at show time. If you prefer, you are welcome to sit back, relax and enjoy the show as a spectator. Either way this is sure to be a fun learning experience. Best of all, everyone wins afterwards when refreshments are served. Come one, come all, you won't want to miss this one.

Sample question: The trail behind Alden Town Park is named in honor of ____ .



CLARENCE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Have you ever fancied yourself a pioneer? Join our group on May 12, when we travel to the Clarence Historical Museum, 10465 Main Street, just east of Clarence Town Park. A highlight of the trip will be the opportunity to view the newly refurbished, authentic Conestoga Wagon the Clarence Historical Society has been working to restore.

<http://www.ralphparkerart.wordpress.com/>

Please remember
the Alden Historical Society in your Estate Plans .
A bequest in your memory or in memory of someone you love
can help preserve the heritage of our community

for generations to come.

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

Phone 937 3700

HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING:

The ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S many exhibits are located in the Alden Historical Society Building at 13213 Broadway in the village, across from the bank. The mission of the historical society is to preserve, promote and present the history of Alden and its people.

HOURS:

The Alden Historical Society Building is open to the public every Saturday from 10 to 2 pm and first and third Thursdays from 6 to 8 pm.

Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 937-3700, 937-6400 or email aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

MEETINGS:

Program meetings are generally held at the Alden Community Center on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. Notices will be published in the Alden Advertiser in advance of the program.

Open to the public these programs are both informative and interesting. Many times a guest speaker is present. You are very welcome to come and share your memories and experiences about the evening's program. Afterwards enjoy an informal social complete with homemade refreshments.

Trustee meetings are held at the Alden Historical Building at 8:00 pm. Meetings will be held on the first Thursday of the month in February, April, June, August, October and December (even-numbered months). The trustee meetings are open to the membership.

OFFICERS

President..... Gil Dussault

VicePresident...Roberta Vincent

Secretary.....Kris Rogers

Treasurer.....Elli DeFilippo

Curator.....Karen Muchow

Archivist.....Karen Muchow

Society Historian

Alden Town Historian

Leonard Weisbeck

Alden Town Board Liaison

Arlene Cooke

Editors...Elli DeFilippo/Carl Matthies

Publicity.....Judy Hotchkin

TRUSTEES

Fred Blowers

Kris Rogers

Conrad Borucki

Sal Sardella

Bill Dabb

Keith Stone

Elli DeFilippo

Roberta Vincent

Gil Dussault

Paul Werner

Judy Hotchkin

New & Renewed Members

RENEWED MEMBERS:

Kelly Cavanaugh
Michelle Dussault
Howard Ehrenheim
Helen Giczkowski
Amy Froebel
Sharon Schmitz
Sherry Sojka
Carolyn Burger
Helen Creighton

NEW MEMBERS:

Joyce Arkinson
John Randazzo

BUSINESS MEMBERS:

Alden Advertiser
Alden Community Scholarship
Foundation
Alden State Bank
Neill & Strong, Attorneys LLC
The Elwood-Jordans Agency Inc

RENEWED FAMILY MEMBERS:

Ron & Vi Savage
Raymond & Norine Crist
Kirk & Dawn Merritt
Matthew & Antoinette Shriver
Carl & Ann Matthies
Conrad & Carol Borucki

NEW FAMILY MEMBERS

Dussault family: Brian, June,
Dylan, Anna
Kavanaugh family: Kristen, Ron
Kyle, Jenna

A special thank you to the **ALDEN ADVERTISER** for donating membership cards to the Alden Historical Society.

With Deepest Sympathy

The Alden Historical Society extends heartfelt sympathy to the family, friends and relatives of

Bea Haehl, Alden Historical Society member since 1971 and life member since 1993. *Bea and her husband donated 157 items to the Society.*

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

New members are always welcome. Your support will ensure that the Alden Historical Society will continue to grow and prosper for years to come. Please make check payable as noted below. Thank you for your support.

DUES

Single	\$8.00	Name.....
Family	\$12.00	Address
Lifetime.....	\$75.00

Business....\$45.00 Phone..... Email.....

A check payable to: *ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY* may be mailed to:

Judy Hotchkin, Membership Secretary
Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

APRIL 14, 2011 Alden Trivia Night
7 pm, Community



What do you know about Alden, the place you call home? Can you pit your knowledge of hometown facts against other Aldenites? Then join us for Alden Trivia Night, hosted by our own Conrad Borucki. Enjoy the evening's festivities as a participant or as an observer. It should be a lot of fun! Prizes will be awarded as well!

MAY 10, 2011 Clarence Historical Society Fieldtrip
7 pm, Clarence Historical Society



This field trip promises to be a very rewarding experience even if you have been there before because the displays are changed often. Some folks have signed up at the March meeting but there is room for many more. We will break up into small groups; each group will have a guided tour with plenty of time to do your own viewing. Make arrangements for your own transportation.



JUNE 23, 2011 ACTS and Alden Ev
7 pm, Alden Christian Theatre

Meet at the Alden Christian Theatre (ACTS), 1470 Church St. Then head over to the Alden Evergreen Cemetery where actors from the Theatre will portray the parts of former Aldenites interred at the cemetery. Afterward, return to ACTS for refreshments.

**ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DATES TO REMEMBER
WINTER 2011**

PROGRAM MEETINGS 7 PM	TRUSTEE MEETINGS 8 PM, Historical Society Bldg
April 14 Alden Trivia Night Community Center	April 7 Historical Society Bldg. Members Invited
May 12 Clarence Historical Society Fieldtrip	June 2 Historical Society Bldg. Members Invited
June 23 ACTS and Alden Evergreen Cemetery	

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
13213 BROADWAY
ALDEN, NY 14004

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www.alden.erie.gov



ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Chartered by the Board of Regents
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