MAY PROGRAM

Last Shot Distillery

Our next program will be on Tuesday, May 23 at 7:30 pm at the Last Shot Distillery, 4022 Mill Road! We’re very excited to be able to hold our program on the site of this new distillery; in the 1800s it also was a distillery. Since then the property has changed hands and served as the location of many different industries, including paper mills and the Skaneateles Boat Co.

John Menapace, a local builder/contractor and a wooden boat restorer among other talents, bought this building a number of years ago. He was approached by Chris Uyehara two years ago about the concept of a distillery. Chris’s background is in culinary arts, beginning in his native Hawaii. His baking was well-known in Skaneateles at the Patisserie and Rosalie’s, among other venues. He began experimenting with making whiskey and taking classes to hone the craft and had a vision to open a distillery as a “retirement project.” Now it is a growing business of small-batch microdistilling.

There is parking at the Mill Road location—as you come down Fennell St from the village, continue onto Mill Rd and the distillery is on the right. There will be a free tasting of three types of whiskey; cocktails will be available for sale. Tours of the downstairs still will also be held.

Please join us at this new location for an insider’s look at our newest distillery.

JOB OPENING

I will be retiring as Museum Director as of September 29, 2017. It’s been an exciting and rewarding 13 years, but it’s time for me to move on.

The director’s job currently is 27 hours per week and is the only paid position funded by the historical society. Someone with good computer skills, organizational skills, the ability to work well with volunteers, and managing a variety of tasks that change daily will be a good candidate.

Please contact David Bates, Board President, at 315-730-6778 or email him at davidbates3@gmail.com if you’d like to learn more about the job.

Laurie Winship

House tour this July to benefit Museum!

Ron Beavers and Karen Lewis bought 50 West Lake St and have made extensive, historically correct renovations. Their presentation at our February program generated a lot of interest, so they have offered to conduct tours of the house, in small groups. See p.5 for details!
Join us on June 27 as Steven Frackenpohl and guests present the story of the formation and growth of the Skaneateles Festival—Chamber Music By the Lake. Through stories, anecdotes and photos, you will be able to trace its growth from its beginning in 1980 to the current day.

At the Sherwood Inn in 1980, a small group of local citizens met to discuss the possibility of promoting the arts in the Skaneateles area in the form of a summer music festival. From that initial meeting grew one of the premier chamber music festivals in the Northeast. You can trace its journey through the various homes it has occupied throughout almost four decades, from various local churches—St. James, St. Mary’s, and First Presbyterian—to the majestic Brook Farm setting, and finally to the beautiful new venue at Angela’s Vineyard.

Please join us on Tuesday, June 27 at 7:30 pm at The Museum at The Creamery for a history of the Skaneateles Festival and a preview of the coming season. There will also be a short business meeting for members to vote on the proposed budget and elect new Board members.
CREAMERY HOURS
Jan-June, Fri-Sat, 1-4 p.m.
July-August, Fri-Sun, 1-4 pm
Or by appointment

Newspaper article from *Skaneateles Democrat*, March 26, 1874
“Messrs. Trustees, are you aware that the corporation does not own a single fire ladder? The new ones, purchased a few years ago, have been lent out until not a vestige of them remains.”
Thanks to Beth Battle for finding this tidbit.

**Special exhibit, special hours**
On Memorial Day, Monday, May 29, we will be open from 11:30 am-2:30 pm. We have a special exhibit to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Bataan Death March and General Wainwright’s role in the war at that time. The exhibit can also be seen during our regular hours.

**Recent Acquisitions**
Sheet music for “Skaneateles Polonaise,” composed for the Skaneateles Yacht Club in 1855 by Gustav Eckardt
Portrait of Fay L. Clark, steamboat Captain on “City of Syracuse” and two of his Captain’s licenses
*History of Agriculture in Onondaga County*, by Robert Bitz
*Skaneateles Boat Company Production Records*, compiled by David Miller

**AMAZON SMILE PROGRAM**
Do you shop at Amazon? If so, they have started a new program that donates a percentage of all eligible sales to a charity of your choice. The Skaneateles Historical Society is now participating, so all you have to do is go to:


and shop as usual. No cost to you, a benefit to us—what a great deal! Give it a try! We have 26 people who regularly shop on Amazon and select us as their donor benefit.

**We’re now on Facebook!**
Let us know what you’d like to see on our page! It’s under Skaneateles Historical Society.

BOARD MEMBERS: President, David Bates; V-P, Bill Stinson; Secretary, Mona Smalley; Corresponding Secretary, Karen Lengyel; Treasurer, Tessi Spearing; Town Historian, Beth Battle; Village Historian, Jorge Batlle; Members-at-large, Dan Bangs, Julie DiBagio, Doug Hamlin, David Miller, Karlene Miller, Barbara Patrick, Joseph Spalding, Susan Spalding, Richard Whalen
MUSEUM DIRECTOR: Laurie Winship
Over the years, those in Skaneateles who wish to see into the future have had options. First, there were gypsies. As early as 1860, before the Civil War, gypsies were passing through or close to the village. Florence Hall, who grew up here in the 1870s and ‘80s, recalled a gypsy caravan making camp in Austin’s woods (on the site of the current middle school on State Street), and the gypsy women going door-to-door the next morning on Onondaga Street, offering to tell fortunes.

On October 15, 1874, the *Skaneateles Democrat* reported, “A band of gipsies were encamped near the ‘twenty-eight swamp’ last Sunday, and did a thriving business in fortune telling. They broke up camp on Monday and moved westward.”

To give you an idea of what a “thriving business in fortune telling” might net, the *Buffalo Evening News* (October 24, 1882) reported, “A band of gipsies recently encamped near Brighton scooped in nearly $4,000 from love-sick maidens and credulous swains, each of whose ‘fortune’ was predicted to marry rich.”

This method of looking into the future, however, had an unsavory side. In May of 1913, the *Skaneateles Free Press* reported, “Nine wagon loads of Italian gypsies drove into town yesterday afternoon holding forth for nearly an hour on Jordan Street between the Shear and Eckett blocks. They were an unkempt and dirty lot, every wagon swarming with children, most of whom were slightly clad, and some practically naked. After they had supplied some of their wants, the band moved off, up the west lake road.”

Fortunately for those with delicate sensibilities, villages and cities were also being served by more neatly (fully) dressed palmists and clairvoyants, with names like La Presta, Great Loretta, Professor La Delta, Madame Taprello, the Mysterious Raymond, Zebara and Zuroha. With few exceptions, they sought to arrive as “world famous” but leave town without a trace.

Our visitation came late in the summer of 1917. The Skaneateles and Auburn newspapers carried an advertisement for Professor Alexander, “the world’s renowned, celebrated clairvoyant,” holding forth at a private residence on State Street. The ad noted, “He reads your life like an open book without asking any questions. He gives names, dates, facts and figures of anyone’s life. It is unnecessary to creep in the dark when he is in your midst.”

I cannot find any record of knowledge the Professor revealed, of his patrons, or of their delight or disappointment. His advertisements stopped appearing in mid-September, but the following month “Clairvoyant Reed” appeared in Fulton, N.Y., where, it was said, he “reads your life like an open book without asking any questions. He gives names, dates, facts and figures of anyone’s life. It is unnecessary to creep in the dark when he is in your midst.”

If there were any frauds perpetrated by the Professor, it would appear that Skaneateles got off lightly, or was too embarrassed to complain.

A longer version with many more fortune tellers can be found at Kihm’s blog:

We are excited to announce that Ron Beavers and Karen Lewis, at 50 West Lake Street, will open the doors of their home this summer to host a house tour benefiting the Museum at The Creamery. The Beavers have recently completed a renovation of their pre-1850s home, taking into consideration the original character and history of the space. The tours, limited to six people at a time, will touch upon the details of the restoration as well as the history of past homeowners and Skaneateles in general. Tours are currently scheduled to take place at 1:00, 3:00 and 5:00 P.M. on the following dates:

July 1, 2
July 8, 9
July 22, 23
July 29, 30
August 5, 6

We expect this to be a popular event that will provide an opportunity to check out one of Skaneateles’s most interesting homes and meet some great neighbors, all while benefiting the Creamery. Reservations are strongly suggested for the 1:00 and 3:00 tours and can be made by calling the Creamery at: 315-685-1360. The entrance fee is $15 per person; cash will be accepted at the door at the time of the tour. There are stairs involved; one to get into the house, and 18 to get from the first floor to the second floor.
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It’s our 25th anniversary! This is a photo of our original building on opening day, May 23, 1992. We’ll be planning a special event and exhibits to celebrate, so watch for further information.