

The Rensselaerville Press

📖 A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE RENSSELAERVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 📖

"Today is Tomorrow's History"

Summer 2023

Eighth Annual Art Show

About two hundred people wandered through the grist mill on the opening night of the art show 2023. Stringplicity, a trio, played welcoming music during the three-hour artist reception Friday evening, August 21. Artists and friends enjoyed the appetizers and beverages donated by trustees and community members. A thanks to all who donated items or volunteered to welcome guests at the sign in table. Through the generosity of the artists and visitors RHS raised more than \$1,300 in donations that night, which will be used to finish painting the back of the mill. It was a relief to all when the predicted severe rain never materialized. This was one of only a few dry days in July.

Doug Riter, curator of the show, and Geoffrey Hall, his assistant, did magic Thursday, the day before the opening by visualizing and hanging the works of 46 artists. This was the largest number of artists to participate, and it ranged from a large, embroidered quilt of the flowers of the United States made by the late Anna Kuhar to the collection of small hand painted rocks by Dorothea Cotter that many guests purchased. By Friday morning all 144 pieces of art were hung with artist bios, pictures, name cards and description cards for each piece. Doug Riter, Nancy Rypkema and Rose Kuhar worked hours to create these. As in the past, a portion of the artwork was for sale and is now displayed in many local homes while other pieces were only on display.



All photos in this article by Victor Schrage

This year showcased a wonderful display of Charlie Van Horne's work. Sadly, Charlie passed away unexpectedly this spring and through the generosity of his wife Alexandria, Ella Prince was able to hang a wonderful tribute to Charlie. This year's show was in memory of Charlie and several residents shared their private pieces of Charlie's work which were included in the tribute.

The show has several unique features; one of them is the Emerging Artists room. There were ten emerging artists this year: Eliza Caprio, Ethan Caprio, Jared Caprio, Nuala Mernin, Emmelia Mormile, Maddie Fauvell, Eddie Ventura, Lilly Ventura, Caris Warburton and Rose Warburton. One new entry this year was Nuala. She is a talented young teen artist and the community looks forward to seeing her entries in the upcoming years.

Another special feature of the show is the scope of media that is included each year. This year there was: pottery by Tony Guadagno, quilling by Christine Gifford, pastels by Susan Story, painting and a monoprint by Bente Hirsh, photographs of space by Paul Ventura, creative wood pieces by Brad Chase, a



Continued on Page 2

Eighth Annual Art Show... *Continued from Page 1*



throughout the mill by Ella Prince, Elisabeth Vines, Karen Langley, Geoffrey Hall, Caleb Elsbree, Mame Kennedy, Ann Wolf, Peter McCaffrey, Kate Fauvell, Patricia Byrnes, Cynthia Willis, Josh Carlsen, Justine Criswell and Karen Haseley.



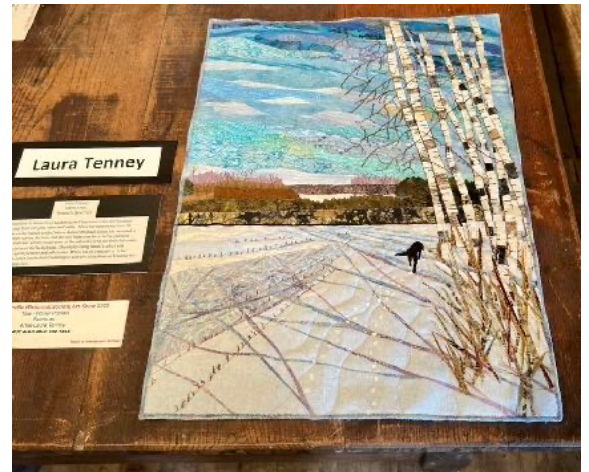
submitted items must be created by the entering artist.

The Art Show is a team endeavor.

- Cleaning mill and clearing space: RHS Trustees, Jim & Doug Riter
- Creating labels – Doug Riter, Nancy Rypkema, Rose Kuhar
- Poster and advertising – Ella Prince
- Organizing artists- Rose Kuhar
- Web site & online registration – Karen Haseley
- Curating show and open hours - Doug Riter
- Hanging show – Doug Riter & Geoffrey Hall
- Memorial dedication – Ella Prince
- Reception & open hours - RHS Board of Trustees & community volunteers

A special thanks to all the artists; you made this so successful!

quilted wall hanging by Laura Tenney which she created from a photograph, stained glass by Adam Lang, portraits by Bruce Barker, unique mixed media by Pat Frik, large works by Patricia Elsbree and William Ouelette, small watercolors and oils by Deborah Hallenbeck. David Suter's work always draws a crowd. His creative frames that showcase his pieces are masterpieces in themselves. Hope Konecny, Clay Sorrough, Thomas Corrado, Jimmy Walker all filled the gallery with five pieces each. Original work in a variety of media were found



A flying eagle sculpture was on display by John Earle.

At the last trustees' meeting it was decided to make a few changes next year to better organize the art show. Artists **MUST** sign up by the deadline. Any art works that are sold the payment will be made to RHS and the treasurer will take the commission out of payment and pay the artist. Finally, all



Rose Kuhar, Chair of the art show
Continued on Page 3

Eighth Annual Art Show... *Continued from Page 2*



Stringplicity Concerts 2023



Two performances by the Rochester based string trio, Stringplicity, to benefit the Historical Society were given as part of the annual art show. The first performance during the art show opening was a collection of “classic melodies” blending into well known popular songs (ex. Beethoven’s *Fur Elise* into George Harrison’s *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*). Due to the threat of inclement weather, the trio performed in the Mill’s research room which added a nice ambiance as viewers transitioned from this year’s art show in the mill to the opening night reception.



Continued on Page 4

Stringplicity Concert 2023... *Continued from Page 3**All photos in this article by Karen Haseley*

The second performance was given at the Haseley family's outdoor performance stage on Methodist Hill Road. Titled "Beatles Music Plus", it was a performance that included not only over 20 Beatles classics, but pieces by Simon & Garfunkle, Bob Marley, Carole King and original pieces by Stringplicity's guitarist Doug Riter.

This concert, entitled "Stringstock 2" was given in memory of longtime RHS member and supporter Janet Haseley with donations benefitting the Historical Society.

Besides Doug Riter on guitar, vocals and violin, Stringplicity includes Peggy Bellenger on violin and Heather Hutton on cello and vocals. Their music can be heard on their website at Stringplicity.net or on Doug Riter's BandCamp page (BandCamp.com). They performed five songs from their new recording "In The Magic of Music" available on the Bandcamp site.

The RHS appreciates the musical support and generosity of time and talent given to support both the art show and the Historical Society.

Doug Riter

Notes From the Editor

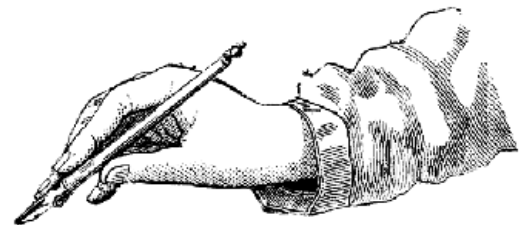
What a busy summer. Some of it was planned and some of it just happened. After a month of draught in June, July and August saw constant rain, clouds and wind but it didn't stop the Hilltowns from enjoying the summer of 2023.

RHS focused on fund raisers with its goal of painting the south side of the four-story grist mill in the fall. The proceeds from all the fundraisers will help with the more than \$16,000 expenses needed for this project.

The focus of fund raising and keeping our membership vibrant was on all trustees' minds. After each newsletter we have several newsletters returned. Some of it is contributed to deaths from members who do not live in the area. **If you have a new mailing address or email please let us know.** Our membership secretary is working hard to update member information. She has had to eliminate members who have not renewed their membership this year.

The membership year runs from January to December, same as the calendar year. The price of printing and postage is making it harder to keep expenses down. If you are having trouble receiving the digital copy it might be going to your junk, spam or promotional inboxes. That is where I found mine.

Enjoy Fall!

*Rose Kuhar*



Hilltown Hoedown

The Hilltown Hoedown community contra dance held on August 18 in Janet Haseley's memory was a huge success. Close to 200 people came to the event and had a great time dancing to the music of Tamarack and following Paul Rosenberg as he taught and called the dances. Individuals of all ages attended and even though the dance floor was packed, everyone danced and sang

along. Participants were also able to enjoy a meal offered by Kuhar Family Farm prior to and during the event.

Many of the participants expressed how much fun they had and they encouraged RHS to host another one.

Janet Haseley, who passed in 2020, was the RHS research chairwoman for many years. She loved everything about Rensselaerville, particularly its people and history. When she got involved with the Albany contra



Photo by Karen Haseley

community at the age of 71, she wanted to bring the joy of community dancing back to the village. She organized these dances, with RHS until a few years before her death.

Many of those who attended the Hoedown, recalled the annual clam steams and square dances that used to take place at the hall. This event helped to bring the memories and joy of those times back and introduced many of the newer residents to this tradition. It was noted by more than one person that Janet was

grinning from ear to ear and dancing along with everyone. To see Conkling Hall filled with all the laughing faces, dancing feet and good food was indeed a trip down memory lane.

Thanks goes to Cynthia Nicholson, Nicole LaGrone, Karen Haseley and all the RHS trustees and volunteers who made this event so successful.

Karen Haseley



Photo by Annie Mailloux



Photo by Karen Haseley

Attic Treasures

The Historical Society is again hosting its version of “Antique Road Show” on September 17, 2023 from 10:00 am-3:00 pm. This is your chance to find out if Grandma’s ring is real gold; do you have the first edition of a book; or what is that treasure you found in your attic? The event is at Conkling Hall on Methodist Hill Road in Rensselaerville.



We are fortunate this year to have Russ & Josh Carlsen from Carlsen’s Gallery, and Ray Carucci from Seasons & Ray who are knowledgeable about all forms of antiques. Annie Campo, the Whistling Gypsy, returns to answer your jewelry questions and this year we welcome Eric Pedersen, rare book appraiser, to whom you can bring your book questions.

By preregistering on our website you can pick a time to meet with the experts and prepay. It costs \$10 for entry and one item to be appraised. Each additional item costs five dollars each. To pre-resister go to <https://rensselaervillehistoricalsociety.weebly.com/attic-treasures-form.html>.

Rose Kuhar

Rensselaerville



**Sunday, September 17, 2023;
10 am -to 3 pm
Conkling Hall, 8 Methodist Hill Road,
Rensselaerville**

*This antique and jewelry appraisal event is a fund raiser for
the Rensselaerville Historical Society*

RHS Annual Meeting Followed by Talk on “Haunting of the Capitol”

On Sunday, October 15 the Rensselaerville Historical Society will hold its annual business meeting, followed by a potluck supper and a great presentation. At 5:00 pm the business meeting starts and it is a chance for members and individuals of the community to meet the trustees and learn what has happened



*Vintage postcard of State Capitol
provided by Stuart Lehman*

over the last year and what the future plans are for the Society. The potluck supper starts at 6:00 pm; please bring a dish to share.

Each year the RHS tries to involve the whole town by rotating the site of the annual meeting. Medusa was the host last year and this year Preston Hollow hosts at the Tri-Village Fire Company on State Route 145. Come to some or all of the evening.

RHS is actively looking for new trustees. Trustees meet one evening a month March to November. You can email RHS at rensselaervillehistoricalsoc@gmail.com or talk to Matt Mullholland, Ken Storms or any officer.

The culmination of the evening will be a program by

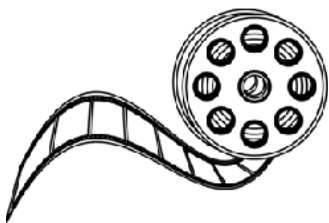
Stuart W. Lehem titled *Capitol Hauntings: A Historical Ghost Tour of the New York State Capitol*.

How lucky we are to have Stuart W. Lehem who works with the Office of General Services as an Assistant Curator for the New York State Capitol as the guest speaker. He is going to take attendees on a tour to explore the haunted history of one of New York State’s architectural treasures — the Capitol building, in Albany. Find out about the night watchman who still makes his rounds, despite his death in the 1911 fire. Search for the missing murals above the Assembly Chamber, and the eccentric artist who painted them. Examine the strange gothic creatures carved in stone on the famous Million Dollar Staircase. These and other “strange incidents” will be the subject of a slide lecture by Mr. Lehem.

Please add Sunday, October 15, 5:00 -8:00 pm to your calendars. See you then!

Rose Kuhar

Film Night With Otto Ohle



Summer in Rensselaerville was kicked off by a film night on July 7. The Rensselaerville Historical Society welcomed film maker Otto Ohle, of Catskill, to Conkling Hall to show several of his documentaries. The audience was fascinated as they watched *Llama Man* and *New York State of Mermaids*. Ohle feels that his videos “aim towards grasping his own real-time curiosity and wonder of the world”. After showing five

films which ran from a couple of minutes to about a half hour, Ohle was gracious enough a have a question-and-answer period.



Rensselaerville Historic District 40th Anniversary

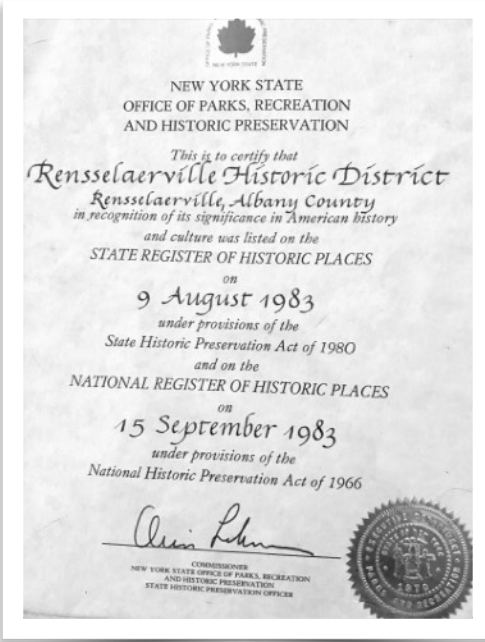
This August marks the 40th anniversary of the nomination of the hamlet of Rensselaerville to the National and New York State Registers of Historic Places. At the time, it was the only community in the State to hold that status, and one of only three in the nation. The nomination declared that "the Rensselaerville Historic District is historically and architecturally important as a rare surviving example of an intact early nineteenth century hamlet in a dramatic natural setting."

Above is a photograph of the community celebrating the nomination on the front lawn of the Jenkins Homestead in August, 1983. It is among my favorite Rensselaerville photographs. Taken by Victor Schrager, it not only memorializes the event, it shows the strong community support and participation that the nomination enjoyed.

The nominating document was prepared by Rensselaerville Historical Society volunteers, led by Kate Storms, with the assistance of Judith Botch and Neil Larson from the New York State Office of Historic Preservation. You can find a copy in the Rensselaerville Library as well as on-line at the National Register site. The process took almost two years, and involved working with every property owner in the proposed district in order to complete the nominating forms (about 110 in all) and to secure their written agreement to have their homes and any appurtenant structures included in the nomination. It was a long and daunting process but ultimately, there was 100% participation. That cooperative spirit resulted not only in the successful nomination, but also a sense of community pride and accomplishment that, I think, can be seen in Victor's photograph.

As we celebrate the Historic District's 40th birthday, the Rensselaerville Historic District Association is working to bring the community together again to act in support of this unique place. Please join them. The next membership meeting is at Conkling Hall on Thursday, September 21, 7:00 pm.

Ken Storms



1813

Excerpt from a Gazetter of the New-York

“Rensselaerville, a large Township in the S.W. corner of Albany County, 24 miles S.W. of Albany: bounded N. by Bern, E. by Coeymans and a small corner of Bethlehem, S. by Greene Co. W. by Schoharie County. Its extend And S. about 8 ½ miles. E. and W. 10 giving an area of 85 square miles. Its surface is considerably uneven, and some part broken by rugged hills that belong to the range of the Helderbergs. The valleys, however, are numerous and fertile, and the diversity of surface supplies a due admixture of arable with meadow and pasture lands. The whole population in 1810, was 5928, including 21 slaves, and there



Sampler made by Isabella Conkling in 1824. May be earliest depiction of Rensselaerville RHS has.

were also 515 electors. There are 8 grain-mills, 16 saw-mills, 3 fulling-mills, 3 carding factories employing 9 machines, 2 distilleries, and an air-furnace. There are also 2074 spinning-wheels in families, and 337 looms, which make yearly about 53,000 yards of cloth for clothing. The whole number of families may be 950, and the domestic stock is numerous; the sheep alone amount 10,800. Catskill Creek, which enters the Hudson in Greene. Co. rises in the S.E. corner of

Schoharie County, and runs across the S.W. corner of this town, which is watered by numerous branches of that stream, and which supplies abundance of mill-seats. The turnpike roads are very numerous: The Albany and Delaware turnpike, Athens and Schoharie, and several branches, 5 or 6 in all, that traverse some part of this town. A Correspondent estimates the whole length in miles, at 40, on which are 4 toll-gates that collect annually for toll, 1172 dollars. Lands are principally held by leases from the Proprietor of the Manor of Rensselaer. There is a small village of the name of the town, though frequently called “the Cty,” and there are one or two others also, but very inconsiderable in population. The domestic economy of the inhabitants is rapidly improving, and this is seen in their agriculture, and in the vast increase of household manufactures, which supply the most of common and much of the better clothing.”

Rensselaerville Historical Society Membership Form

Date: _____

New Renewal

Individual Membership \$15

Family Membership \$20

Supporting Membership \$50

Life Membership \$200

Mail to: RHS Membership Sec.

PO Box 8

Rensselaerville, NY 12147

***Make checks payable to:**

Rensselaerville Historical Society

Special Donations:

Paint the Mill Fund \$ _____

Archival Supplies \$ _____

Color Printer \$ _____

Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: Street or POB: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Alternate address for seasonal residents (and dates that apply):

Email: _____ Receive a printed newsletter

Telephone: _____

We are always looking for volunteers. If you are interested, please check the area where you are willing to help and we will contact you:

Bake Sale

Art Show

Antique

Research & Collections

Outdoor Upkeep

Mill Tours/Cleaning

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Vice President Ken Storms
Secretary Joyce Chase
Treasurer Tony Campo
Membership Secretary Laura Ventura

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www.rensseleervillehistoricalsociety.weebly.com

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