



Allegany Area Historical Association

March 2018

www.allegany.org

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Once again, we had a good Christmas Cookie Sale, netting over \$1,100 in sales and donations. Thanks to Diane Boser and her elves for their hard work in organizing it, Linda Kruppner and her staff at Nature's Remedy for hosting us and our great bakers. We boxed 121 dozen cookies and had many delicious Christmas specials. We had cookies left this year, which we donated to the Olean Food Pantry and Genesis House. At our Community Christmas Service the next day, we collected \$72 for Genesis House and many paper products for them. Thanks to Rev. Dan Buringrud for conducting the service and Kim Voegelin for the musical accompaniment.

We had our annual meeting in November instead of October. We had to elect three Trustees to a 2 year term. Mel Duggan retired as a Trustee after being on the board for many, many years. He is a Florida resident now, but does spend some time in Allegany. Re-elected were Tom Stetz and Jim Hitchcock, and Alice Altenburg was elected to take Mel's seat. THANK YOU, Mel, for everything you've done for us over the years. He did say, though, that he is still going to help us as we need it.

I hope you follow our Facebook page, which Sue Schreiber Kalman does for us. It has information about our meetings, and lots of pictures of bygone Allegany. Check it out.

The Allegany Public Library has a new nighttime look. Thanks to the efforts of Bob Parker from the library, a \$1,000 grant from the Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation, a \$500 donation from the Enchanted Mountain Garden Club, an anonymous donor, and electrician Todd Depuy, the building is now lit up on the outside at night. Check it out. Perhaps more buildings in Allegany could be done like this.

Pete Forness, the unofficial "mayor" of Allegany shovels our walk for us. I did it for years but one day a few years ago I went down to shovel and found it already done. I couldn't find out who was doing this until I happened to get there when Pete was hard at work. He says it's good exercise for him and he's glad to do it. I am too because if he didn't I would have to! If you see Pete, thank him.

Our Trustee, Tom Stetz, takes care of our grounds and building for us. This winter I asked him to check the building as we had a big thaw and there was lots of water around. He did and found everything was fine, except for a small amount of water outside of the women's bathroom that had been there for a while. He mopped it up and checked the building for the next several days. Each time he found the same amount of water in the same spot. But then he happened to be there and heard dripping. What had been happening was there is a water discharge from the furnace into the sink and the drain trap under the sink was leaking. He replaced it, along with the pipe going into the floor as that was corroded. Problem fixed – thanks, Tom. I know that when you own a building, it's patch, patch patch, whether the building is new or old like ours.

Tom Stetz pointed out two things Allegany is missing – a full service grocery store (meat and fresh produce), and a laundromat now that our existing one is to be torn down. Up until January 9th there wasn't a place in Allegany to get breakfast, except on the weekends, but now the Brickhouse is open for breakfast except for Mondays. Hopefully that will last.

We had an inquiry about Puggity Chute, as North Second Street used to be called in the early and mid 1900's. Our history book just has a bit of information about this but doesn't say why it was called that or where the name came from. Anyone out there who can help?????

Francie Potter, President

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH JIM AND DIANE BOSER,

done by Wes and Judy Martin on July 20, 2017

Jim's ancestors came to Allegany in the mid-1800's on the Birch Run Road. His grandfather, John, started as a farmer then went to work for the railroad in the shop repairing cars and locomotives. His father was born in 1913 on the family farm near where the American Legion is today. Shortly after that, the family moved into the village. In the 1930's his dad started a restaurant business where the Village Inn was, but decided that wasn't for him, so he built a service station next door at 119 West Main. The family lived in an apartment upstairs. Jim had 5 sisters and things got a bit crowded in the apartment so in 1944, his dad bought what was called the Harms mansion at the corner of Fourth and Main.

He had a cousin who was a pilot during WW II, and who once flew his plane over Allegany and Jim still remembers his cousin's mother waving a towel at him as he flew over. The cousin was killed during the war. Jim, being born in 1936, remembers a lot about the war. His mother was an air raid warden who had to go around to make sure lights weren't showing at night. Since Olean had a refinery, the area was considered a target. Across from the gas station was an empty lot where scrap metal and tires were collected for the war effort. Of course, at the gas station ration stamps were required to make a purchase. Everything was rationed then, meat, clothing, anything that could be used in the war effort.

Diane was born in Columbus, Ohio and had a sister and 4 brothers. She entered nurses training in Columbus after high school. Her mother told her not to go to the USO dances because they were nothing but trouble. Being 18, she went anyway, met Jim there, and the rest is history. They have been married 60 years in 2017. She has a brother married 61 years, and a sister married 58 years. One of Jim's sisters has been married 58 years, so "until death does us part" means something in their families.

Jim has seen many changes to Allegany over the years, particularly in the business district. There used to be many restaurants, a bowling alley, a pool hall, clothing stores, and movies in a theater over the town Hall. Jimmy Cornelius of Olean was the owner and Doc Kinney of Allegany ran the projector, and it cost 25 cents to get in. Of course, Olean had three theaters so if you wanted more, you rode the bus to Olean.

Jim started school at Little Bona's, the parochial school on Main Street, until 3rd grade when he transferred to Allegany Central, and graduated in 1955. He now serves as President of the Allegany Alumni Association, and in doing his Meals on Wheels rounds, sees a lot of his old classmates.



Jayne Mansfield on movie set in Spain



Jim Boser and friend exploring Spain

At the end of the Korean War, the draft was still in effect. Jim and some of his friends didn't want to get drafted so they signed up for the U.S. Air Force. He went through basic training at Samson Air Base on Seneca Lake. His group was the last to go through basic at Samson as it was closed then, and is now a NY State Park. Basic training was an introduction to "real life" for someone from a small town. There was only one black person in Allegany and about half of Jim's basic training were black.

After Samson, Jim flew to Columbus from Bradford Airport on a C47 – his first flight ever. He was a Specialist in finance and accounting. Jim and Diane married in April of 1957. Jim was then sent to Spain and Diane joined him in October of that year. They were there until Jim left service. Their two older children – Tim and Cindy – were born in the base hospital in Madrid, at a cost of \$5 per child.

When Jim got to Spain, his friend from Allegany, Duane Carlson, was already there in the service and helped Jim and Diane get settled in. They were the only non-Spanish speaking people in their apartment complex. The language barrier was something to get over, but there were enough Spanish people who had a bit of English so they managed.

They toured a bit while there, as much as a limited budget would allow. A Spanish colleague of Jim's took them to the bull fights, and to Real Madrid soccer matches. One time, on a picnic in the country, they saw Jayne Mansfield riding a donkey during the making of a movie. The customs were different – dinner was at 11 p.m., and everyone, except the Air Force personnel, took a siesta during the day. Spain was a Catholic country so there were lots of Catholic holidays to be observed.

When his tour was up, Jim bought a new Volkswagen and had it shipped back. He was discharged at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey and then picked up the car in Brooklyn. They came to Allegany and Jim went back to the gas station with his father from 1959 to 1968. The station was also a tire distributor and did a good business. They lived with Jim's parents for about 2 months and then moved to the apartment over the old fire hall on the corner of Fifth and Main, now Catalano Plumbing & Heating. Jim's dad owned the building then and the fire department had what few pieces of equipment they owned on the first floor. It was always a tight squeeze to get the equipment in, and that caused the department to build a new fire hall on First Street.

Jim has been a member of the fire department since 1954, and is now a Life Active Member. Jim vividly remembers one call. He and Pete Fortuna took the department's Cadillac ambulance to a call on Seventh Street for a car into a house. When they arrived, no one was in the car, and all the lights were on in the house. They knocked on the door and when they did, the house exploded! They had been on the front porch but wound up 60 to 70 feet away on the lawn, nearly in the road. Pete was more seriously injured than Jim, who called back to the department and told them to bring everything they had. One of the neighbors took them to St. Francis Hospital, with Pete staying there for about 2 weeks and Jim only a couple of days. Jim said they were both very lucky to survive! The car had severed the gas meter off the house. The homeowners never said anything about gas in the house when they called for help, before they left the house. Had the firemen known about gas in the house, they would have responded differently. The driver, who was drunk, was a neighbor of Pete Fortuna's.

Diane said the explosion shook the whole village. When she heard the news over the scanner, she called Jim's parents. Jim's mother stayed with their four children and Jim's dad took Diane to the hospital. On their way home they stopped on Seventh Street to see the house. Diane said there wasn't any house left to see, just a foundation. She said it was a miracle they both weren't killed.

TO BE CONTINUED

THIS AND THAT-----

97 (!) year old George Schreiber has made a big move – to The Pines Nursing Home in Olean. George always says that he's going to live to be 100, and who can doubt him at the rate he's going. The family reports the move went better than they anticipated. George settled in nicely. It's taking the staff a few days to get to know him and his needs, but that's normal. It's a bright and cheerful facility, and everyone is very friendly. We featured George's oral history in our May 2013 issue. If you want to send George a card welcoming him to his new digs, his address is: George Schreiber, The Pines #B-19C, 2245 West State Street, Olean, New York 14760.

It's not too late to take in the World War I exhibit at the Cattaraugus County Historical Museum in Machias. It will be up through March. We loaned the museum some articles we have that belonged to Clare Welch, a soldier in that war. They included his Army trunk, his uniform, including his puttees and his gas mask. Check it out.

I spoke recently to the Allegany 60 Plus Club about the history of Allegany. I enjoyed it and hope they did too. Several membership applications were handed out, as well as some old newsletters and other materials that I had taken with me. If you know of other groups that would be interested in our history, let me know.

If anyone has an idea for speakers or programs they'd like to hear, please contact us. We're always on the lookout for programs that will appeal to our members. Some of our best programs in the past have come from suggestions from our members.
We aim to please!

Memorials



For: Helen McCully

From: The McCully Family

For: Ellen Peck

From: Helen Larson

John P. Walsh

For: Marion Elling

From: Kathy Premo

For: Doris Kelly

From: Kathy Premo

ITEMS FOR SALE

In addition to our history book, we have many more items for sale. These make good birthday presents, or just anytime presents. Here's what we have:

POST CARDS - 4 different Allegany scenes
- 75 cents each, plus shipping.

ALLEGANY HISTORY VIDEOS - \$10, plus \$5
shipping

ALLEGANY HISTORY DVD'S - \$18, plus
shipping

TALES OF WAR AND CONFINEMENT - \$6,
plus \$3 shipping

WE GET MAIL



We received a note from Tony Rado, who said he loves receiving the newsletter (thanks, Tony). He enclosed an article his mother, Zine Rado, wrote for the Citizen when his dad got home from serving in the Army Amphibious Engineers during WW II. Here it is.

T-3 John A. Rado, aged 38, arrived in town last Thursday, having been honorably discharged at Fort Knox, Ky., Dec. 18 under the over age eligibility.

A former employee with the New York Transit Company in the Four Mile district, Johnny expects to resume his position in the near future. He is residing with his wife, Zine and daughter, Sharon, at 85 1/2 North Fourth Street in this village.

Johnny was called up by the Salamanca draft board November 8, 1943 and a year later shipped overseas, being stationed in England, France and Belgium as chief boiler operator and maintenance man on a floating power unit of the army, thereby being on a ship most of the time.

He left the European theatre of operations last summer and shipped direct to the Pacific, landing in Luzon the first part of August. He arrived back in San Francisco on his birthday, December 8.

For his service, John was awarded the ETO ribbon with one battle star for the Rhineland campaign, and Asiatic-Pacific ribbon, the Good Conduct ribbon, American Theatre ribbon and Victory Medal, and two overseas stripes for his 13 months service in foreign lands.

It is interesting to note that he held an unusual job on his way from California to Kentucky, that of fireman. It seems that at Salt Lake City, Utah, his commanding officer refused to go any further on the train of day coaches which the unit had been forced to use on its way east. So the train was held up while the railroad company made up a Pullman string, and during the seven hour wait Johnny kept the boys warm by tending an improvised wood stove. Eventually the Pullman arrived and the company continued on its way to the separation center at Fort Knox.

MORE MAIL

Pat Dominessy wrote to say how much she enjoyed the article Bob McCoy and the Allegany Hardware. She is the daughter of Larry Dodd who was mentioned in the article as the business partner of Mr. McCoy (Bob's dad). She was in the 8th grade when her family moved back to Allegany in 1948. After living in temporary housing, her family lived upstairs over the hardware for a time, until moving to a house on 4th Street and finally to Union Street in Allegany.

She says, "I can't tell you how many days per year were spent taking inventory in that hardware store. My sister Shirley and I were great friends of Jane, Mary, Bob and Ray McCoy. It was a great pleasure to read of Bob's memories of those days gone by the wayside."

Marlynn Olson-Ray of Randolph also thoroughly enjoyed Bob's article. Reliving old memories is the best.

Allegany Area Historical Association
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INSIDE SPECIAL ISSUE:

Presidents Report

House Explodes

An Unusual Job

NEXT MEETING

We will meet on Sunday, March 11 at 2 p.m. at the Heritage Center, 25 North Second Street. AAHA Trustee Charlene Sendlakowski will talk about the businesses that used to be on Main Street between Second and Third Streets.

She will tell us what businesses used to be where on the street over the years, and who the owners were. She gathered her information from The Allegany Citizen, city directories and other materials. She said it was very easy to get sidetracked in her research, as information about one business would lead her down another avenue, not the business she was looking for.

Please join us as Char fills in the gaps in our local history.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 11 – 2 P.M.
HERITAGE CENTER
25 N. 2ND STREET, ALLEGANY**



Miller Block
circa 1888