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# ***Allegany Area Historical Association***

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October 2021

[www.allegany.org](http://www.allegany.org)

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

It's October so it is time to pay your yearly dues. I know, we are closed, but the bills still come in. As you know, we don't send reminders in the mail. This will be the **only** notice you will get. The dues are: \$15 – single membership; \$20 – for a family membership; \$25 or more for a patron membership. If you haven't paid after a reasonable time, you will be removed from our mailing list. Pay now while you think about it. Make your check to: Allegany Area Historical Association, and mail it to PO Box 162, Allegany, NY 14706. We are very grateful for your support during this difficult time, and we deeply appreciate it.

We have decided that we will plan to hold regular meetings again, with speakers, in March of 2022. By then we think most people will have been vaccinated and feel comfortable in gathering in groups. Char Sendlakowski even has a speaker lined up already! See you in March!

Recently a bag, with my name on it, was left by the door of the center. Inside was an alumni directory of Allegany School System from 1893 to 1962. Also, a University of Michigan Athletic Review from 1924-25, and a 25 year Michigan football guide, 1977-2002. Best of all was a framed photo of a jam-packed Michigan stadium. This brought back a lot of memories for me. My father worked at the stadium on game days so I went for free from an early age, and saw many great games. My mother went to the very first game on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1927. So going to Michigan games was the norm in our house. The photo now hangs on my wall. There was no note in the bag. Many thanks to the anonymous donor who obviously knew where my loyalties are, and for bringing back so many wonderful memories.

The St. Bonaventure campus is back open to the public, so you can go walking there again. In the October 2020 Newsletter I put in all the information about the plaques on Devereux Hall. They are for Cattaraugus County, Bolivar, Portville, Olean, Allegany, Salamanca, Ellicottville and Bradford. The best time to see them is in the fall since ivy covers them in the summer. Access may be temporarily limited due to construction going on in front of Devereux Hall right now.

Many thanks to Gertrude Schnell for the very interesting history articles she has sent to us. They always show how life was in Allegany "back in the day".

**Francie Potter, President**

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## LETTERS

In 2004 the association published Tales of War and Confinement from World War II. Most of it was the result of an Eagle Scout project by Amit Patel, with letters to the Allegany Citizen from Richard "Richie" Boser and Clem Martiny. Richie was in the service for 5 years and participated in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily and was part of the second wave onto Omaha Beach. After he returned home, he became Allegany's first letter carrier.

He also corresponded with a former teacher, Miss Irene Schnell. Irene wrote to many of her former students and several wrote back to her. We are fortunate to have some of these letters in our files, and thought you would like to read them. Enjoy.

### Post card dated October 7, 1940 –

Dear Miss Schnell: The Army isn't so bad, the fort is on the coast of N.Y. Bay. Having loads of fun riding the subways. Was up on 42<sup>nd</sup> St. and Broadway to see Mickey Rooney in Person. Never seen so many taxis in my life.

Richard Boser



Richard "Richie" Boser  
*photo courtesy of Carol Boser Watson*

### V-Mail dated October 5, 1942 –

"Somewhere in Scotland"

Dear Miss Schnell: Believe it or not, it's me. I've finally found time to write you a few words and to say Hello. I'm on Guard Duty today and on my time off I have had time to catch up on a few of my letters. I have been thinking of you, Miss St. John, Miss --- and Miss Pollina every since Bette wrote me that several of you were leaving the school. Since then I have learned that Miss St. John and Miss Pollina are no longer with you. When you write them, be sure and tell them that I was asking about them and sent my best regards. As soon as Bette sends me their addresses, I intend writing them a few lines. Bette probably told you that Carl Jones and Bob Nolder are over here also and that we were stationed in Southern England. Since then we have moved to Scotland and I believe this country is the most beautiful I have ever seen. The Mts. Reach so high into the sky that they have snow on the tops of them. The homes and the country is a sight I shall never forget. The Scottish people are very nice to us and the Scottish lassies really go for the American soldiers. Their greatest desire is to marry an American and to go to America. The Scotch whiskey is great stuff, one shot of it makes a guy's hair stand straight up. I'm a tea drinker myself, that's about all we get at our meals. We've had several real air raid alerts since we came overseas and at night the usual Black Out. The weather is very changeable, and gum, beer and most sweets are very hard to get. The paper is running out so guess I had better close. Write. Good luck as ever. "Richie".

### Letter dated Sunday, Nov. 29, 1942

Dear Miss Schnell: Your most welcome letter arrived several days ago and I sure was glad to hear from you. By now you probably know that I'm in North Africa and have been in action. Our being so far from England is the reason for your letter taking so long in reaching me. When we were in England the usual time a V letter or air mail letter took in reaching me was seven to ten days. At the present there is no Vmail from the states reaches us all O.K. Today being Sunday, a gang of us fellows made the trip into

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town to attend Mass at a little French church in the center of town. The Mass is said by our Regimental chaplain and is attended by around 75 French people and several hundred Yankees. Due to the war, they were all women and they sang the Mass in French. Of course, it was all Greek to me but we appreciated it very much and there is a Corp. from the Regt. who serves at the Mass and speaks to the people in French. I can't begin to tell you what a beautiful church these French people have. They are fighting with us as you know, and like us Americans very much. They are taking good care of the American soldiers' graves who lost their life in the battle by putting fresh flowers on their graves daily.

I saw Carl Jones on the way back from church today. He sure is getting fat and has taken advantage of this warm climate by getting a good sun tan. He also has grown a mustache which has changed his looks a lot. Bob Nolder is still with him, and my Buddy who was home with me several times is still here with me.

The days here are fairly warm but the nights are cold and just above freezing. Nov., Dec., and January is the rainy season here and four days ago I washed several articles of clothing and they just dried out today after the rain had given them a good rinsing.

Last week our first mail arrived here in Africa and I got 28 V letters so far. I have several packages on the way and some of them are probably at A.P.O. now. I know of 3 of them that is down in Davy Jones locker due to the sinking of a mail boat with all mail dated from Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> to Oct. 3 on it.

Gosh but I'd sure give \$10 to be able to sleep in a bed and between two white sheets again. We are still sleeping in Pup tents and on the ground. But it makes us fellows pretty rugged and some day when the war is over, the truth will come out about our Division and just what part we are playing in this war.

This French money is much easier to catch on to than the English money was. We have been paid in overprinted (Special) U.S. currency. The paper money is the only difference from the money back in the states and it's the seal. In the states it's blue and over here it's gold. The monetary system is based on the "franc" – one franc is equivalent to 100 "Centimes" and in the American dollar there are 75 "franc". I am enclosing a new 20 franc note for you to keep as a souvenir. In our money it is worth 26 2/3 cents.

These Arabs are a bunch of chiselers, when we first arrived here in North Africa eggs were 1½ franc each but they've gotten pretty wise to us Americans, and now they want 6 franc each (or 8 cents in our money). Tangerines are plentiful and I eat on the average of two dozen each day. They charge 1 franc each for them but usually they'll give you a bargain on a bushel of them. I personally don't like them. They never shave, wash nor wear any shoes, and seeing that I can't talk their language, I'm compelled to act crazy because of all the motions that I have to go through in order to buy something from them.

Thanksgiving was just another day for us, we were minus the Turkey, chicken, cigarettes, etc., and it went by almost unnoticed. But the Army will make up for it just as soon as they get their rations in.

It's getting dark fast so guess I had better close. Carl told me to say Hello when I wrote you. Please excuse the writing paper but this is all I could buy over here in Africa. Tell Miss Hardy and any one who asks about me that I said Hello and that I wish them all (especially you) a very merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. It'll probably be a long time before I'll be able to write again but I'll write when I can even though it may only be a card. Thanks again for writing and the Best of luck to you. As ever, "Richie".

### **Letter dated March 15, 1943**

*Dear Miss Schnell: (P.S. my best regards to all the family and your neighbors).*

It sure seems like I owe everybody a letter. I received your V letter that was photographed dated Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, also your V letters not photographed dated Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> and I sure was proud to hear from you so often. Your 3 letters have arrived at different times but it has been impossible to write you

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because of my presence here at the front. It has been two weeks since I have been able to write home but I try my darndest to keep in touch with my sister, Bette, and my gal friend Junie Bockmier. I guess Bette has kept you pretty well informed of my whereabouts here in Africa. We have been up here since before the New Year and have seen plenty of action. By now Bette has probably told you all about the tank battle that us Allegany boys were in so I won't bother to tell you all about it. Carl Jones is here in the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. With m and is now a Staff Sgt., 1<sup>st</sup> Bn Hdq. 18 Inf A.P.O. #1, % Postmaster N.Y.C. He told me that he was expecting a letter from you. He was transferred over to this Bn. Shortly after they were badly beaten on Xmas day. My buddy who was in Allegany with me several times is on the injured list but is coming along O.K. We are at present behind the front lines for a Rest and we got our Replacements in a couple of days ago. Mail hasn't been going out in the past couple of days but this letter will be ready to go as soon as they call for the outgoing mail. We were paid a couple of days ago and I drew \$9 for 2 months. Of course my \$25 allotment, insurance, etc., had been deducted but we were paid under the old value of the franc, 75 franc to the dollar. The value of the French money at the present is 50 franc to the dollar. The 20 franc that I sent you is valued at 40 cents instead of the former 26 2/3 cents. I made a \$60 money order out to Bette. \$30 goes to Ruth towards her graduation and \$10 to Bette, Ruth and Laura as my Xmas present to them. When I get paid for Feb. and March, I intend sending Ruthie \$25 more because I want her to graduate in style the same as the other more fortunate girls in her class. I had intended sending each of my sisters, sisters-in-law and girlfriend, also Ma Doran and my step-mother in Olean each a dz. Roses or a corsage for Easter but I can't get a money order and I can't send francs so I had to call it all off. So I put it for safe keeping in the Quartermasters. Maybe later on I can do something for them to show my appreciation. I hope you understand why I have been unable to write before and more often. Yours for Victory "Richie".

To read all the letters Richie sent home to the Allegany Citizen about his time in service, contact AAHA at [Alleganyheritagecenter@gmail.com](mailto:Alleganyheritagecenter@gmail.com) to obtain a copy of Tales of War and Confinement from World War II.



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Another history article from Gertrude Schnell – enjoy!

### **St. Bonaventure University**

St. Bonaventure College (University) played a big part in my families life as it did in many other families in the Allegany area. When my great-grandfather, Joseph Reihle, came to America from the Alsace-Lorraine region of Germany in the mid-1840's, the only Catholic church in the Allegany area was at the college. The family attended the church when the weather permitted them to travel from the Lower Birch Run Road. In 1894 my grandmother, Delia Rehler and Frederick Schnell were married in the church and their family attended until it burned in 1930. Then in 1931 they attended the new St. Bonaventure Church in Allegany.

In the mid-1920s my aunt Irene Schnell was in some of the first classes at the college that allowed women to attend. The women had to sit in the classrooms behind the men. There were no restrooms on campus for women on campus. One of the women lived nearby so the restrooms were at her house. At graduation the women had to walk behind the men.

In 1955 I started classes at the University. They were held in wooden barracks that had been built for G.I.'s after World War II. Some professors still had women sitting behind the men. Times changed quickly and women were welcomed everywhere on campus and were treated as equals with the men.

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# Memorials



*For: Janet E. Schuman*

*From: Edmund and Theresa Memmott*

*Edwin Hardiman*

*Clair Schuman*

*Gerald Mullerer*

*Mr. and Mrs. Victor Stebbins*

*William and Kathleen Giardini*

*For: Janet Kopec*

*From: Francie Potter*

*For: Pat Premo*

*From: Sue and Bob Kalman*



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## Breakfast With Her Children by Erma Bombeck

There are three things that are overrated in the country: sex, the FBI and mothers who get up to get their children's breakfasts in the morning. I made public the fact that once a year at Christmas, I had breakfast with my children, passed out a few candy canes and told them if they were good, they would see me again next year.

The mail was positively threatening. It seems there is something un-American about sacking in while your children run barefoot through the breakfast cereal and the plastic toys. Pressured by public opinion, I decided this week to get up and have breakfast with my kids. I put on a robe, shuffled out to the kitchen, steadied myself on the door frame and announced, "I am here."

"Who is it?" asked one son. "Snow White lives!" observed another. "Are you all right?" asked my daughter. "or is your mattress on fire?" "What do you want for breakfast?" I asked numbly. "I already got it. Leftover pecan pie and catsup sandwich." I opened a window and breathed deeply.

"Will you get the phone?" shouted my daughter. "It's Gloria," I related, "she wants to know what you're wearing." "Tell her the brown skirt and tangerine sweater set." "She said she's wearing bright green and you'll clash when you walk down the hall." "Then tell her the gray skirt and the yellow sweater set." "She said those are Beaverbrook's colors and there's a game after school." "Then tell her....." "Tell her yourself" I said, slumping in a chair.

"Can you iron this?" asked a son. "It's my gym clothes." The stench made my eyes smart. "Where did you get these?" "In the clothes hamper, but they were on top."

Someone was hammering on the bathroom door. "Will you get out of there so I can get my bike lock out of the pants I wore yesterday?"

"Not until you pay me the 20 cents you borrowed for lunch." "Hey, Mom, we're running late, could you give us a ride?" Numbly I forced a cup of coffee to my lips. My hands shook. "I knew she couldn't hack it" said one. "See you next Christmas," said the other two.

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INSIDE SPECIAL ISSUE:

Presidents Report

Letters from Afar

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