

January GPS Update By Bonnie Donnan

Happy New Year! It is a good thing we have the celebratory mood of the holidays to provide a positive note amid the snow and the cold.

Our December meeting, held at the High School, gave us the opportunity to preview part of the concert presented to the public the following night. We were able to enjoy a dress rehearsal performance of two talented groups. The Galway Community Band, a collection of area musicians directed by music teacher Mr. Gary Barrow, ranged from a fifth grader to retirees. The Jazz Band was a small group of talented students plus Mr. Barrow. It is a pleasure to listen to people who get together and perform for the joy of it.

Thanks to the providers of our delicious refreshments, Geralyn De La Fleur, Mary Lynn Kopper, and Virginia Sawicki. Also thanks to all who brought contributions for the Community Christmas Basket project.

Remember to check out the display cases at Town Hall. The beautiful bird carvings by Jim Reedy and his son Chris are truly striking works of art. The collection has been generously shared by Florence Reedy.

Our next meeting is back at home base, Town Hall, on January 4th. Our speaker is Tricia Shaw of Schoharie Crossing on "How the Erie Canal Impacted the Civil War". The next quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is January 13th at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall; snow date is January 20th. As always, all are welcome to attend.

If you haven't yet visited our new web site, you are missing the results of the labor of our secretary Evelyn Hanna. Our organization's calendar of events, as well as links to many interesting and useful sites can be found.

Looking Back With a Smile

By Elsa Jeffers

Reprinted from the Glowegee Scroll (December/January #2 No date)

I was one of four Van Buren sisters who all attended one room schools and who all had the pleasure of teaching in them.

The schoolhouse was the social and cultural center of the District, was often used for parties and was also a religious gathering place. But the buildings are on the endangered species list, replaced by the enriched central systems; gone is the teacher's large hand bell and the ping-pong paddle discipline. As the best means of controlling the older boys, the rod was often used. Gone is the door with the crescent cut, the ink well and the black cardboard lunch box. They are as obsolete as the tin water pail and the common dipper.

The year's main expenses were the teacher's salary and a few cord of wood. When the teacher needed small supplies she bought them herself. Children bought their own books and paper. When the teacher boarded in the District, she usually boarded with the trustee and he supplied the wood. We often had to wait from December to April for our pay until the public money came from Albany. Just imagine a teacher doing that today. School meetings were held once a year. The trustee and a combined clerk, collector and treasurer constituted the Board of Education. One trustee said, "Before I sign your contract, I want to emphasize the importance of discipline."

I remember that one of my teachers, after much persuasion, convinced the trustee of the need of toilet tissue to replace the Sears Roebuck catalogs in the toilets. Then she showed the students exactly how much to use and not more.

On the way home from school we would stop at the saw mill and the grist mill to watch the men at work and also at the blacksmith's shop to watch Mr. Smith work with the anvils and bellows – an inexpensive "field trip". My older sister related that the most exciting day of her teaching career was the day when a pupil set the woods and fields on fire by using a magnifying glass in the sun. She turned in the fire alarm by driving up and down the roads in her Model T and alerting the farmers from their work.

Perhaps my fondest memory of the little red school was at Woods Hollow which I attended my first four years with my brothers and sisters. It is now under the waters of the Great Sacandaga Lake.