

March 2000

Published by The Stockade Association

Vol. 41 No. 7

### Stockade Calendar

#### Stockade Association General Meeting

Thurs., Mar. 9, see page 7  
7 PM Social 7:30 Meeting  
Historical Society  
32 Washington Ave.

**The Northwestern College  
Choir**, Thurs., March 9  
7:30 PM, free, open to public,  
First Reformed Church

**Joanne Shenandoah**,  
Native American  
singer/songwriter shares  
Compositions on  
Indigenous Culture  
Thurs., March 9, 7:30 PM  
SCCC Auditorium  
Free & open to public

#### “Architectural Gems of the Mohawk Valley: A Roving Eye”

Speaker: Howard Bliss  
Sat., March 11  
1:30 PM Refreshments  
2:00 PM Program  
Historical Society

#### “How the Other Half Loves”

by Alan Ayckbourn,  
March 17 - 19 and 22 - 26  
8:00 PM, Sun., 2:30 PM  
Sch'dy Civic Players  
12 South Church St.  
Tickets \$12, 382-2081

**April Spy Deadline**  
March 15

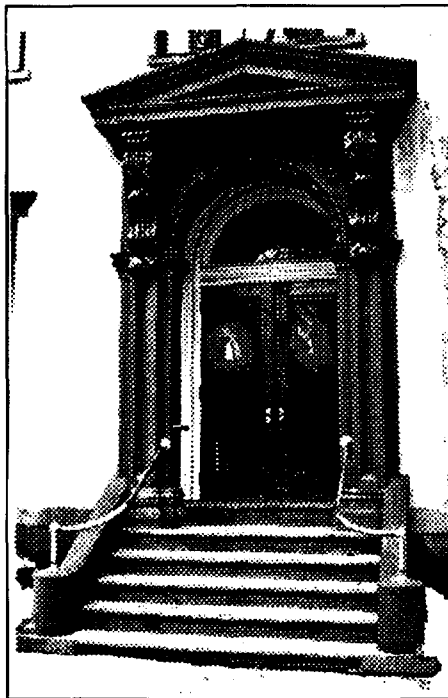
## Mohawk Club Open to Stockade Assoc. Members

Looking for a new place to have a quiet conversation and a well served dinner? Within walking distance? The quest just got easier.

Betty Lou Scanlon, 2nd term president of The Mohawk Club at 1 North Church Street warmly welcomes and encourages Stockade residents to enjoy the lovely dining rooms now open to them.

The private club should be considered a “quietly elegant extension of your own home,” said manager Richard Jones, “especially if you are considering a large party or social event: Think about it.

The Mohawk Club is now open to all paid up members of The Stockade



Association. (see page 4)

The following club facilities are available:  
**The Club Dining Room** is open for dinner only, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. Reservations must be made no later than noon of that day. Food and beverages must be paid for by cash or check (no credit cards)

**Guest Rooms**  
Singles \$50 per night  
Doubles \$55 per night  
**Meeting Rooms**  
\$25 room rental

+\$25 for coffee & cookies

Stockade Association members will have no voting rights or privileges at any other clubs. Please keep in mind the **dress code** when utilizing the Club for your dining and busi-

(continued on page 2)

## Mohawk Club Rich In History

The new brass plaque by the front door of 1 North Church Street (southwest corner of Union) reads “The Mohawk Club - Est. 1885.” The private club has an air of mature elegance - perhaps because there has probably been a house on the land since 1662 - a year after Schenectady was founded.

The Club really began 123 years ago when a group of rabbit hunters casually formed a shooting club. They

incorporated seven years later under NYS law for “social purposes and lawful sporting” as the Mohawk Club.

Land that the present building sits on was deeded to Arendt Van Curler and became the center of the first four blocks of Schenectady as laid out in 1664. For security, the area was surrounded by a gated sharp pointed pine post stockade. Van Curler drowned in Lake Champlain a

(continued on page 3)

**Third Saturday Poetry at Arthur's**

Featured Poet: John Weiler - musician/artist/poet  
Sat., March 18, 7:30 PM Sign up, 8:00 PM Readings

**Jazz Night at Arthur's**

Fri., March 10 - Accoustic Jazz  
Fri., March 17, St. Patrick's Day - "Hot House"  
Fri., March 31 - "Hot House"

**Ash Wednesday Service**

March 8, 7:00 PM, First Reformed Church,  
8 North Church Street

**Ash Wednesday Liturgy & Distribution of Ashes**

March 8, 9:00 AM, Holy Cross Church  
18 North College Street

**Stations of the Cross & Benediction**

Friday, March 17, 7:00 PM  
Holy Cross Church

**Lenten Luncheon, March 14, noon**

First Presbyterian Church, 115 Union Street  
Call 374-4546 for reservations

**Future Dates**

**Secret Gardens of the Stockade**

sponsored by the Friends of the Stockade Garden Group,  
June 23-24. Fri. 3 - 8 PM, Sat. 10AM - 4 PM.

**Property Tax Break**

The City Council has approved a five-year freeze on increases in assessment that commonly result after an owner has rehabilitated a property. After five-years, the increased taxes will be phased in over the next five years, resulting in a ten-year delay before the full impact of the new assessment is felt.

Rehabilitation work must be performed on properties designated as local landmarks or located in local historic districts and it must restore important historic features and be approved by the city's Historic District Commission. Under the law, routine maintenance and repairs do not qualify for the tax exemption.

Our Board encouraged the City to adopt this legislation: this tax break will provide an incentive to owners to undertake the costly restoration of properties in the Stockade with the knowledge that at least they will not have to face increased property taxes as soon as the work is completed.

The "Application for Partial Exemption for Alteration or Rehabilitation of Historic Real Property" is available at the City Assessor's Office, Room 8, City Hall. (382-5075)

ness pleasure. Jackets and ties for men and appropriate dress for ladies in the dining room. Casual attire in the bar and grill room. Please no jeans or shirts without collars.

**Stockade Walkabout  
Saturday, September 30**

If you would like your house to be on the tour or would like to take part in this wonderful event, call Anne Bernat at 393-5770 or Sylvia Briber at 377-0469.

**Save and Share Food Buying Co-op**

Save and Share Food Buying Co-op is a program of the Schenectady Inner City Ministry. Its goal is to provide quality groceries at lower than retail costs. Packages of groceries are sold for \$15 each month and may have up to \$30 worth of groceries. We invite anyone interested in trying the co-op to call us. There are no income requirements, registration fees or other obligations. *Everyone* is invited to participate.

In recent months, the program has been expanding, adding distribution sites at the **YWCA** and Steinmetz Homes. The program is in need of volunteer support to help with this expansion, as well as to maintain the existing 4 sites. Some opportunities to help include: prepare mailings, unload and sort food on distribution days, and sign-in participants. Please call Cindy Hofer at 346-5207 if you are interested in receiving our latest menu or volunteering.

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(continued from page 1)

few years later and his enterprising widow turned their house into a tavern since she had exclusive rights to tap beer.

The smart money was on the Dutch traders in the developing wilderness to capitalize on Schenectady's river-friendly location to provide commercial access to the frontier that was "about a day's journey west." They were right. Schenectady prospered and in 1807 with currency coming into general use, its first financial house was created as the Mohawk Bank. It was successful enough within ten years to erect the building now on the original Van Curler land.

In 1819 a devastating fire destroyed the large commercial area around Washington Avenue - nearly 200 buildings. The loss was worsened by the opening of the Erie Canal and commerce was no longer dependent on river front accessibility. Instead of rebuilding, the business sector moved eastward on State Street and in 1853 the bank followed. Sound familiar?

Possession of the former bank building changed many times and fell into such neglect that it was condemned for health reasons. The Mohawk Club had outgrown its rented quarters on Liberty Street and purchased the defunct structure once described as "the most magnificent private residence in this part of the state" when New York Central Railroad's Chauncey Vibbard owned it.

The club's extensive renovation left the exterior much as you see it now but gave members several dining rooms, bar, reading room, billiard room and spacious guest rooms. There was even a barbershop. It was as distinctively elegant as the era.

The interior, even now, is reminiscent of that past glory. The very high ceilings, Ionic columns, gentle cream, rose and pale green colors, Currier and Ives prints of sailing ships, traditional furniture and fireplaces still exude a graceful distinctive warmth, distant from the turn of the century heavy window hangings.

Among the oil paintings in the Reading Room, from the Mohawk Bank, is one of a Mohawk Indian wampum belt. It is used as a logo and appears on much of the Van Curler Dining Room china. The more casual Grill Room has old photos of Schenectady. One is of the magnificent old train station with a horse drawn carriage in front and another, taken in the glory days of 1921, shows parked cars and relaxed shoppers on Jay Street.

Things change. Menus, by-laws, fashion. But one thing is certain. Even as the Club evokes the past and untold stories, Manager Richard Jones is there to maintain the high quality and dignity of the Club.

- Diane Buckley

## Courtney Anker

### Running for Leukemia Society of America

Courtney Anker of Washington Ave. is part of



a 13 member team from the upstate chapter of the Leukemia Society in training for the San Diego Rock N' Roll 26.2 mile Marathon on June 4th. She is hoping to raise \$3500, and will be representing a local leukemia patient, Greg. Courtney will be proudly wearing a hospital bracelet with his name. If you would like to contribute to her effort, please call Courtney at 347-2742,

or send your contribution to the following in her name along with your name, address, and phone number so she can thank you: Leukemia Society of America, Upstate NY/Vermont Chapter, 85 Watervliet Ave., Albany, New York 12206-2023.

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 Theone Bob  
 John Bradshaw  
 Sylvia & Bob Briber  
 Liane & Allan Brown  
 Jeannette Bruschi  
 Dr. & Mrs. Colin Burris  
 John Chequer & Bess Taft  
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 Dorothy & Neff Dietrich  
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 Ciny & Phil DiSorbo  
 Alyson Doherty  
 Anne Donnelly  
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 Karen Engelke  
 Marie & John Eoff  
 Shirley Fahey  
 Peggy & Earl Farry  
 Joe Fava  
 Werner Feibes  
 Michaela French  
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 David Gonsalves  
 Lyn & Richard Gordon  
 Kathuryn Green  
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 Gregory Harper & Josephine  
 Sorensen

Ruth Harvey  
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 Janie & Robert Hayner  
 Dr. & Mrs. James Holmblad  
 Peter Hornby  
 Donna Hunt  
 Blaine Johnston  
 Nancy & Manfred Jonas  
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 Mary Kuykendall  
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 Dennis Meyer  
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 Kipling Papa Silveria  
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 Jennifer & Larry Schmidt  
 James Schmitt  
 Van Shanklin  
 Paul Shave

Susanna & Jim Sherwood  
 Anne Siddall  
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 Letha Stewart  
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 Gertrude Sullivan  
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 Raymond Tibbitts  
 Joan Vlaun  
 Rev. D. Wampler  
 Clare Weiner &  
 George Wheeler  
 Jennifer Wells  
 Helen, William & Christine Witts  
 Robert Woods  
 Jean Zegger  
 Gretchen Zick

Become a  
 "member in good standing"  
 and add your name to this list.  
 Send your membership dues  
 today! (See page 5)



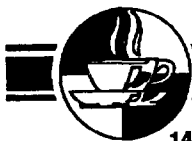
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374-6216  
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David Marhafer 5/00  
377-0331  
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**Treasurer**

Meredith Anker 5/01  
347-2742  
4 Washington Ave.

**Recording Sec.**

Emily Curtis 5/00  
381-1818  
215 Green Street

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Lidia Pasamanick  
377-0802 5/00  
12 N. Ferry Street

**Directors**

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374-7355 5/01  
111 North Ferry St.

Bill Gocha 5/01  
347-1720  
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Paul Mlodzianowski  
382-7654 5/00  
109 Union Street

Jennifer Wells 5/00  
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17 Washington Ave.

Gerald Plante 5/00  
240 Green St.  
377-3176

Frank Marro 5/00  
250 Green St.  
381-9764

**STOCKADE ASSOCIATION** *Emily Curtis, Board Secretary*

Stockade website:

[www.historicstockade.com](http://www.historicstockade.com).

**Board Meeting Highlights  
February 1, 2000**

There was a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Stockade Association on Tuesday, February 1, 2000.

The board reviewed its activities in 1999, and was pleased with many of the Stockade Association's successful activities. These included: community activities (Sidewalk Sale, Walkabout, Park Cleanup, Tree Lighting); renaming the park to Riverside Park; installing the "brick" stamped asphalt crosswalks; completion of our web site ([www.historicstockade.com](http://www.historicstockade.com)); and initiating several city plans for improvements to the park, including refurbishing the pump house.

The board then discussed the recent trip by several city officials and private-sector leaders to Woonsocket, Rhode Island. A *Gazette* article reported that Woonsocket ceased providing welfare agencies in their cities with Community Development Block Grant funds, and instead began funding more economic development projects. The board felt that this provided a fine example for Schenectady, and made a motion to write a letter to the city council encour-

aging similar behavior. The board is also considering submitting its own proposal for CDBG money in the future.

The Stockade Association's suit against the Board of Zoning Appeals was filed in January and assigned to Judge Caruso, who is not allowing oral arguments.

The Finance Committee has been investigating new ways to invest the Stockade Association's money. Possibilities include Treasury Bills earning 6% or other Certificate of Deposit accounts. The Association currently has \$5,943.01 in checking and \$11,782.72 in its CD.

Corporate membership in the Mohawk Club for the Stockade Association is now official. The Mohawk Club has a complete list of all Association members in good standing.

The garden club is making preparations for a "Secret Gardens of the Stockade" tour. The tour is scheduled for June 23 and 24.

Candidates for the second annual John Zegger Preservation Award will be sought by an award committee. The award will be given this May during Preservation Week ceremonies.

**Stockade Association  
Membership**

If you would like to become a member of The Stockade Association, please make your check out to **The Stockade Association** and send it to the treasurer, Meredith Anker, 4 Washington Avenue, Schenectady, 12305, along with your name, address, and phone number.

Tax deductible membership is \$10 per person, \$15 per household.

**Dates for next General Meetings:**

**Thurs., March 9 & Thurs., May 11**

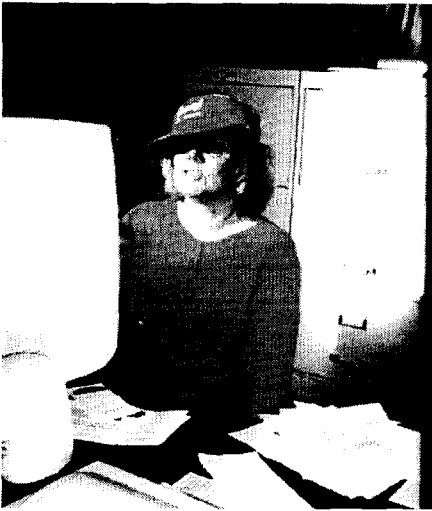


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# Schenectady County Historical Society -

## New Librarian & New Weekend Hours



"This job is fun every day!" says Ginny LaGoy, new Librarian at the Schenectady County Historical Society. Ginny, who has been with the Society since July 1999, presides over one of the most

unusual local collections in the state, namely, the vast collection of family files that form the backbone of the Society's archives. These files offer a rich and very personal history of local families. They may contain news clippings, legal papers, pictures, or family trees. In addition to the complete files, there are abstracts of each family file in the card catalog. People call from all over the country and from overseas with questions about their Schenectady connections. Ginny is happy to oblige, and loves the odd facts, the missing links, and curious stories that she unearths for callers.

Visitors to the library are primarily interested in genealogy, and the new Saturday hours (9 AM to 1 PM every Saturday) at the Historical Society have also opened up research to the many working individuals who were unable to get to the archives during the week. Other patrons include students and professors researching local history, and architects who need information about building sites in the county. Holdings also include microfilmed census records from 1800-1925, as well as local newspapers and other publications.

Ginny would like to see the family files grow - the library's collection is not static. She plans to acquire naturalization records as a way to record Schenectadians who have come here more recently from other countries. Other documents to be acquired include wills, always a rich source of local information and history. As part of her work to extend the library's collection, Ginny hopes to work with ethnic societies and groups in the area.

Given that the Historical Society is located in the oldest part of Schenectady, Ginny would love to see more information about the Stockade in the library. She offers some challenges to Stockade residents: "Who are you?" "Do you have a family connection to your house?" "Do you have any historic artifacts or documents to deposit at the library?" So, if there are attics and cellars that need cleaning out, remember the Historical Society library! You'll be enhancing the rich array of information about the county, and maybe have your name immortalized in one of the Society's famous family files.

NB. In addition to the new Saturday hours, the SCHS has a wonderful web site at: [www.schist.org](http://www.schist.org). A tour of the Society is only \$2.00, a bargain by any standard. Please note that the librarian undertakes private research by request at a fee of \$15.00 per hour. You may call Ginny LaGoy at 374-9541 for more information.

- Anne Siddall



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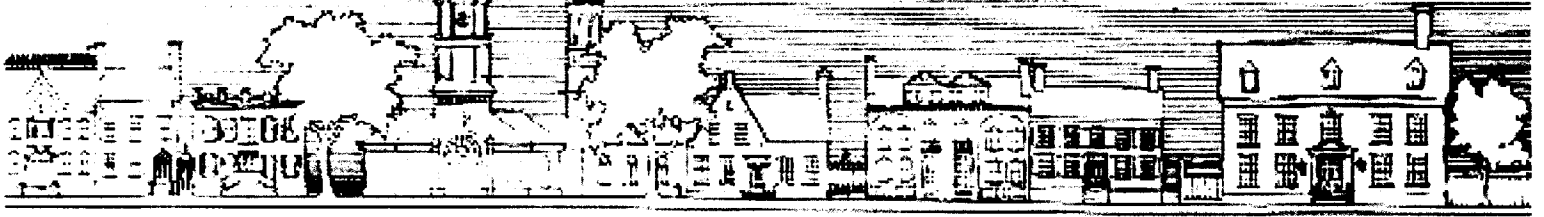
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# THE STOCKADE ASSOCIATION



OF SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK, INC., P. O. BOX 1007, SCHENECTADY, NY 12301

## **GENERAL MEETING**

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2000

32 Washington Ave.

7:00 P.M. SOCIAL

## **7:30 P.M. PROGRAM AGENDA**

- A. Minutes of the January, 2000, General Meeting for approval
- B. Treasurer's Report
- C. **Mayor Albert P. Jurczynski will speak on the following subjects:**
  - The recently issued 'Hunter' master downtown development plan
  - How the plan may involve the Stockade neighborhood
  - The new Downtown Master Plan Advisory Committee recently established to guide the existing web of development agencies on implementing the new plan.
- D. Announcements – Park Committee, Mohawk Club membership, BZA suit and Nomination Committee

*Anyone interested in serving on The Stockade Association board please talk to Connie Colangelo, chair of the nominations committee. Let her know that you are interested prior to the May meeting. Connie's phone number is 374-7355.*

## STOCKADE STOPPER



Can you guess where this is in the Stockade? The answer and an interesting article about it will be in the April *Spy*!

### Historic District Commission

On February 14, the Schenectady Historic Commission considered Michael Casadei's application to make changes to 109 South Ferry St. He wants to replace the front windows with vinyl windows, the front doors and second floor back and side windows. He is also planning to paint the entire building. Because some of the plans did not meet the standards of the Historic District, Mr. Casadei withdrew his application and will submit new plans at the March 20 meeting.

The second Stockade item on the agenda was a discussion of Ray Mahoutchian's proposal to demolish the garage at the rear of 210 Union Street. He will present detailed plans of the site and demolition at the March 20 meeting of the Historic District Commission.

### Schenectady Historic Commission Approval

As you plan improvements to your property, remember that any external work visible from public rights-of-way will need approval from the Schenectady Historic Commission. Please call Anthony Tozzi, the City's Principal Planner, at 382-5054 for more information.

You may also need to speak with Jay Sherman, Zoning Officer, regarding building permits. He can be reached at 382-5049.

- Lidia Pasamanick

### ----- T i d i n g s -----

- Congratulations to Emily Curtis of Green Street, Stockade Association Recording Secretary, who has recently been appointed to the Historic District Commission by the Mayor and will begin to serve in March.
- Congratulations to Bruce Jordan of North Ferry Street for his play, "Sheer Madness" that he has written, co-produced and starred in. On January 31 at the Charles Playhouse in Boston, his show celebrated a run of 20 years - the longest for a play in U.S. history!

A warm welcome to:

- two associate pastors who are now at the First Reformed Church: The Rev. Roger A. Nelson, who came from Chicago, and Dr. Johan G. Bosman, from South Africa.
- Jane Paul, who has worked downtown for many years, now lives in Cucumber Alley.
- June and John Culkin have moved to Front St
- Mary Frances and George Barlow are living on North Ferry St.
- Pamela and John March have moved to North College Street from Ohio.

Neighborhood get-togethers are being planned to welcome new folks to the Stockade. If you are new among us, please call a board member to introduce yourself. (See p. 5)



•Michelle Kelly of Green Street informs us that she is a leap year baby - so she has calculated that she is really 8 years old! She often jokes that when she turns 40 she will be 10 years old. She has indeed found the fountain of youth!

### March Waste Collection Dates

**Monday, Mar. 6**  
**Monday, Mar. 13**  
**Monday, Mar. 20**  
**Monday, Mar. 27**

### The Stockade Spy

#### Editor

Sylvia Briber 377-0469  
23 Washington Avenue

#### Staff

Gerald Plante  
Lidia Pasamanick  
Malcolm Willison

#### Ads

Lisa Perl

#### Finance

Janie Hayner 374-6216  
6 Front Street