

THE STOCKADE SPY



VOLUME VI NUMBER 6 PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK APRIL 1966

IMPORTANT LETTER RECEIVED BY ASSOCIATION

The following letter has just been received by the president of the Stockade Association. All of us share his pleasure in this great honor.

Dear Mr. Navias:

The New York State Council on the Arts acting on behalf of Governor Rockefeller has chosen The Stockade Association as one of the recipients of the New York State Award for 1966. This Award recognizes the outstanding contribution that the Association has made to the physical and architectural enhancement of New York State, and in particular the continuing concern that the Association has had in the conservation of an important aspect of our historical, artistic heritage.

Governor Rockefeller will present the Awards at a ceremony scheduled for May 17, 1966 in Schenectady at Union College. We sincerely hope that you will be able to accept the Award in person for The Stockade Association at that time. A brief reception at the Van Curler Hotel will follow the presentations.

You may also be interested to know that the physical characteristic of the award is to be in the form of a banner. A catalog is also being prepared of the Awards and citations.

If you would care to have anyone accompany you to the ceremony, let me know and if any questions arise, I will be glad to answer them.

Best regards,

John B. Hightower
Executive Director



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::

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PARALLEL DRAWN BETWEEN ALTAMONT AND THE STOCKADE

An intelligent and sympathetic analysis of Altamont Village was presented by Mr. Edward Cowley, vice-president of its planning association, at the March meeting of the Stockade Association. Using slides, Mr. Cowley shared his criterion for change: (1) do not write on buildings, (2) remember buildings have sides, (3) do not brick in windows--it gives a paranoid or schizoid effect, (4) do not put cows on buildings, (5) do not use glass brick nor aluminum, (6) remember to landscape schools, (7) beware of using "modernistic" shapes with no function. As one might have guessed, these rules arose out of existing "errors." The slides in the second portion of the presentation did indeed illustrate the "haunting, magical quality (of Altamont) which should be kept and valued and appreciated." Shown were the town's well-spaced, well-built frame homes, most painted white, of individual styles of the turn of the century. Altamont's problem is how to change for the benefit of the majority while keeping for its residents a certain human warmth and oneness.



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circa 1900
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community
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Russell Field

DORIS
1966

BINGO SIGNS REMOVED

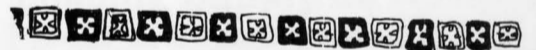
Two signs advertising Bingo games recently appeared on the walls of a prominent Stockade building. Following a number of protests from Stockade residents they were removed, thanks to the kind cooperation of the Knights of Columbus and the city's Building Inspector.

WEINHEIMER EXHIBITS FRENCH PAINTINGS

Recently returned from a year in France, Front Street's George Weinheimer exhibited a collection of fifty of his paintings and drawings at the gallery of the Hotel van Curler during the month of March. The subjects ranged from fishermen and nets, flowers and sea-walls, to strongly-executed children and animals.

A feature of the reception held before the opening of Mr. Weinheimer's show was a tea-table decor executed by Mary-Jo Suksdorf, an original member of the Oakroom Artists' group that sponsored the show. Handwoven linen, fragments of ancient pottery and such appropriate flowers as anemones and chrysanthemums were arranged to augment as well as echo the exhibit.

"Colors that are bright and penetrating," "exciting and stimulating views" -- these are only two of the many favorable comments the show received. And the attendance matched this enthusiasm, according to a spokesman from the hotel.



ARTS CALENDAR:

Drama

Union College Mountebanks: Pirandello's *The Emperor*. Nott Memorial Theatre, April 13-17.

Civic Players: *A Thurber Carnival*. May 2-9, 12 S. Church St.

Art:

YWCA - Works by Hermines Herodes (April) and Shirlee Levine (May)

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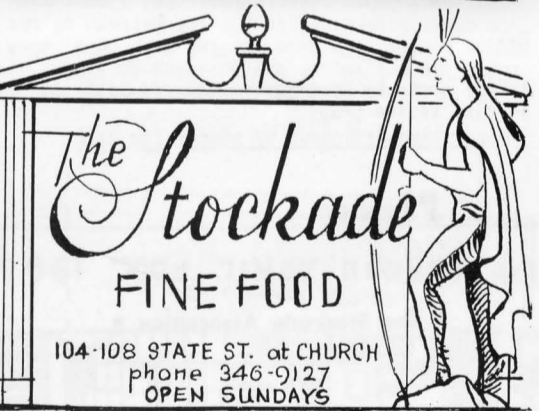


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REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT - II

The following are the general recommendations made by Governor Rockefeller's Conference on Natural Beauty, which I attended as President of the Stockade Association and discussed in last month's Spy:

1. The Hudson Valley. Senator Pomeroy recommended the establishment of a permanent New York State Commission with an outlay of \$200 million, to be matched by Federal funds; that another permanent Commission be set up to include interstate and federal agencies for balanced planning on a State and Federal level.

2. Townscape. Mr. Philip C. Johnson, architect, recommended that more attention be given to the visual landscape by encouraging tree banks, tree schools; tax incentives for participation; putting under ground parking lots and cables and wires; maintaining a variety of architecture ("multiformity not uniformity"); use of water in fountains, etc. for dynamic beauty; the establishment of governmental Commissions in cities with power to create urban

design; urge Federal Buildings in the USA be as creative in design and as beautiful as US buildings in foreign lands; stress special studies in schools and colleges on Aesthetics in Architecture.

3. Clean Waters. Dr. Hollis Ingraham, Health Commissioner, recommended immediate action in cleansing water sources; raising standards of water treatment; greater co-ordination in pollution abatement action by Federal, State and Local agencies; making the Mohawk-Hudson Basin a center for demonstration and investigation; more research on pesticides and on industrial waste; finding means of lowering the cost of purification and disposal borne by local communities; more stress on educational efforts.

4. The View From The Highway. Mr. Bernard A. Lefevre, chief engineer of Public Works, recommended that legislative Bills on Beautification be passed this year; militant action be taken against littering; make an inventory of areas worth protecting; designate scenic facilities; make state laws even more strictive than federal laws; be concerned with care of "remnants" of lands.

5. Historic Preservation. Mr. Geoffrey Platt of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, said that preservation was an essential element of our present society, and recommended that co-ordination of all state agencies take place for more effective preservation, not only of buildings but also of objects and structures; tax laws be modified so that owners who keep up their buildings are not penalized; a New York State Historic Preservation entity be set up to match State money, to act as a holding company for acquiring historic sites.

6. City Parks. Mrs. Elinor Guggenheimer, member of the New York City Planning Commission, recommended that the State set up demonstration parks to show what can be done in small parks as well as in large parks; Federal and State parks should be located in towns of the state with adequate funds for maintenance; additional funds be available for use of park space in towns; private parks be encouraged; more courses of study in landscaping be given in schools and colleges; youth be more involved in these enterprises.

7. Air Pollution. Mr. Robert A. Low, Councilman of New York City, recommended that new studies be made to determine the relationship of air pollution to the health of all citizens; Dr. Teller's suggestion of using nuclear fission power rather than coal or oil be followed; Federal Funds be obtained to foster a Clear Air Act; the State regulate the content of deleterious substances like sulfur and lead issuing from new and old automobiles; tax incentives for air pollution control be made effective; the State enforcement be strengthened; more qualified personnel in this field be obtained thru better courses of study, and recognition.

8. Suburban Development. Mr. S. J. Schulman, Commissioner of Planning of Westchester County, stated that to maintain suburban areas, certain tools in the form of municipal laws need to be implemented - as Municipal Commissions on Natural Beauty to be set up by the State; State grants be made to aid suburbs; residential utility lines be buried; several Zoning Laws and #701 Planning Law be made more flexible.

9. State and County Parks. Mr. Joseph Prendergast of the National Recreation and Parks Association, recommended that the "green belt" idea be expanded; walkways have trees; Public rights be applied to all shore lines; State parks be considered as protective preserves; there be established protected "transition" areas; children in schools have courses in the promotion of Conservation; the State promote a 10 year plan with a covering Bond Issue; we should not forget Inner Beauty and Indoor Recreation while stressing the out-of-doors.

10. Waterfronts. Mr. Stanley B. Tankel, Planning Director, recommended that all waterfronts be made accessible to the public; highways be kept out of view of waterfronts; there be established large single pooled sources of information on waterfronts; the State interest itself in developing more waterfronts; clean-up action be taken on the lower Hudson below Washington Bridge; clean-up on the New York Central Railway right of way; water pollution control be better established; willing partnership for the Hudson River project be established with the aid of New York, New Jersey and the Federal Government.

11. Landscape Action. Mr. Bradford Greene, Landscape architect, recommended that more attention be paid to existing laws, such as the 1959 State Open Spaces Law; State litter laws be implemented with sufficient men to enforce the laws; granting of gifts of private land be encouraged; maintenance money be made available for continuous clean-up of areas so acquired; young people should be subjected to more education on Conservation in schools; PTA's be alerted to the same cause; more colleges give courses in Landscape Architecture.

12. Federal-State-Local Relations. Mr. Edwin G. Michaelian, Westchester County Executive, stated that the present relationships were better represented by a marble-ized cake than by the simple three layer cake of Federal, State and Local governments; he recommended that despite this intergrouping, the local governments should maintain their local independent functions; greater effort should be made to help local governments maintain communication among themselves and with all other groups; private industry should work together with schools and other agencies to keep channels of communication open; there should be better and easier consultation among the different levels of government.

-Louis Navias

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AT THE INDIAN



Letters to the editor:

Editor, The Spy:

The article signed by John D. Adams in the March issue of the Stockade Spy seems to me in bad taste for publication in a neighborhood news-sheet which aims to be identified with the best in historic Schenectady, as well as its hopes for the future.

I appreciate that it is an attempt at absurdity and extremism in far-out humor, but to attribute industrial unrest to "Late Lynn" or "Turbine Renaissance" in architecture; to use the name-calling device by labels such as "phoney masquerade" and "bland incandescent master" does not serve the public good. To make Schenectady a tourist mecca by eliminating the General Electric Company is to make it a ghost town.

Our schools, our parks, our streets, even the Stockade area itself depend upon the tax support which GE prosperity in Schenectady provides. Less than two years ago, the entire community joined forces and mobilized every effort to keep GE in Schenectady and to make its productivity competitive in the world markets.

It is regrettable that the Stockade Spy is not aware of its responsibility to the greater public interest of Schenectady.

Sincerely,

Helen Garey

as others see us

"Did George Washington really sleep in that house on Washington Avenue?" asks the young mind, full of direct impressions, uncomplicated thoughts and fantasies. The adult responds it is of no importance in a factual world. But in the world of fantasy, the young world, the layers of modern traffic, lighting, congestion easily peel away leaving only a small, aristocratic area in the late Eighteenth Century.

Indeed, the dwellers of the Stockade were not a rustic breed as attested by the richness of architecture, furnishings, and other trappings. These outer garments reflected an inner quality of the citizens, an interest in culture.

One cannot today walk through the Stockade without feeling some of this past glory. There is more than fantasy here. There is a spirit of Eighteenth Century renaissance....a new age of enlightenment, reason.

In no stronger manner does this rebirth manifest itself than in the physical restoration. The deterioration caused by neglect and time has been arrested; the slums, which had all but destroyed the original beauty of the Stockade, are disappearing. This feat has been accomplished only through extraordinary efforts by Stockaders to preserve past glory.

Today's Stockade visitors, the child with his sense of fantasy and the adult, practicality, walk through your lovely streets, marvelling at the architectural achievements, reliving the past through the historical markers, and -- most of all -- joining Stockade friends at warm firesides in intellectual and light-hearted conversations.

The Stockade offers a rich heritage. It is a pleasure to share, as a visitor, your glorious past, stimulating present and challenging future.

- Fulvia Hickman

[A Schenectady native, Mrs. Hickman presently lives in Niskayuna.]



RESTORATIONS
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the jaundiced eye

THE COLONELS' LADIES

The Women, by Clare Boothe Luce, has those qualities of movement, color, vulgarity, and outdated bawdry that induce in some a nostalgia for burlesque and vaudeville. The hearty applause that greeted the play's production by the Civic Players was clear evidence that they had found both their metier and the measure of their audience.

Helen Hughes was top banana, the rest of the cast was adequate or spastic. The directors and stage managers deserve great credit for keeping thirty actresses and ten sets moving smoothly across the narrow stage which the smart money had been sure would look like a scene from Rosa Bonheur. It is difficult to find much else to approve of. The costumes were presumably the ladies' fancies, and if they clashed with each other, or with the liver-paté pink set, who would have the courage to tell them so?

Productions of this sort are like models of Brooklyn Bridge constructed from toothpicks. They show some technical skill and working at them is better than loitering on street corners. But are they really an occupation for adults?

-Arthur Covert

LENTEN CONCERT AT ST. GEORGE'S - A Review

At ten of five p.m. on a cold Lenten Sunday, your reviewer picked his way through a full parking lot, past a Mercedes and Jaguar, to reach the door of St. George's church. Once inside, a pleasant ocean of sound and rhythm engulfed him. The prelude was Debussy's "Sacred Dances" played by harpist Corkey Christman and organist Samuel Roberts jr. The church, like the lot, was full; and the distinguished audience included at least one G.E. V.P. (retired).

The first half of the program was Cantata #106, "God's Time is the Best Time," by J. S. Bach. The Sonata by Orchestra, which opened it, suggested an old wooden needle playing at once in two adjacent grooves of a record; the flute was shadowed by strings playing eighth-interval harmonies and stopped rhythms alien to Baroque music. The chorus then came in, a welcome relief from the instrumentalists. A bass solo on the dark words, "Set Thy House in Order for Thou Shalt Die," went tripping to a dance tune recalling the Virginia Reel. (Or is this Bach's humor?) The upper voices in the choir tended to change timbre and balance with the changes of pitch, but the final chorus was a pleasing and impressive climax to the Cantata.

Father Kirby introduced the offering for the Boys' Choir Fund. While coins were still dropping with a merry clink all around, the second part of the program, "Requiem," by Gabriel Fauré, began in a sombre D minor. This tightly-constructed work, written in 1877, has grown in stature with the years. Your reviewer found the performance well-paced and too moving to invite much detailed comment. Perhaps some mystery evaporated with a rather loud rendering of several pp passages. Perhaps printing the text in the program would heighten our appreciation: "Offertory," for instance, scarcely suggests a prayer for delivery of souls from the torments of Hell.

The audience, he felt, departed deeply grateful to the Men and Boys' Choir of St. George's, to Mr. Frederick Monks, Conductor, to the soloists, and to the orchestra (partly supported by the Music Performers' Trust Fund and Local #85 of the A.F.M.) for preparing and presenting this sacred concert.

-J.A.B.

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THE STOCKADE SPY



VOLUME I NUMBER I PUBLISHED YEARLY IN SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK APRIL FOOL 1966

HISTORIC ZONING DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The United States Supreme Court handed down a decision last week that is considered by many lawyers an historic landmark. By a vote of 6 to 2 (Mr. Justice Black abstained on the grounds that as a historic landmark he was automatically disqualified) the Court held that the ordinance violated the fundamental constitutional right to express one's aesthetic tastes and thereby to develop fully one's whole personality. In his majority opinion Chief Justice Warren observed: "The Founding Fathers meant to preserve individualism. Such devices as the Historic Zoning Ordinance serve only to turn the American people into unthinking conformists forced to worship the old and the trite and forbidden to experiment with the new and the different."

The dissenting justices deplored the Court's blow at Lady Bird Johnson's natural beauty campaign and foresaw an America turned into one gigantic junkyard.

The case in point was of course the famous lawsuit, Kirby vs. Quinn, featured for so long in so many newspapers, which has had as its central issue the proposed installation of a large revolving neon cross on the roof of the Great Hall of St. George's Church, with an electronic carillon playing "The Old Rugged Cross" on the half-hour. Presumably the illuminated cross will soon be under construction thanks to this decision by the Court.

Stockaders who have appeared in one court or another in the course of this long litigation include: For the Reverend Darwin Kirby, Jr.: the architectural firm of Feibes & Schmitt; Paul Schaefer, contractor; the Altar Guild of St. George's; Mrs. Arthur Covert; Arthur's Market; Mrs. Constance Sitz and the Schenectady Board of Education. Appearing for the Honorable William J. Quinn have been: (as a representative of Time Associates, Inc.) Mrs. Quinn; Dr. John Bradshaw; Mrs. George Braden as Editor of the Stockade Spy and the Schenectady Superintendent of Schools.

Amicus Curiae briefs on behalf of Kirby were filed by the Civic Playhouse, the National Council of Churches and Francis, Cardinal Spellman. Opposition briefs were filed by the First Unitarian Society, the Schenectady County Historical Society and Amos G. Whipple.

A spokesman for General Electric declined to comment.

-G.D.B.



SHELTER CLOSES

Ethyl Dowaliby reports that the Children's Shelter will close on April 20 for lack of business. When interviewed, Mrs. D., head of the shelter, said that since the advent of the pill, it has been harder and harder to find uncared for, unloved, or abused and unwanted children. "When we hear of a child we might get for the shelter," she said, "someone else always gets there first. Children are scarce, so everyone loves the ones there are. I and my staff are looking for new positions. I, myself, think I will take a position at F. A. O. Schwartz."

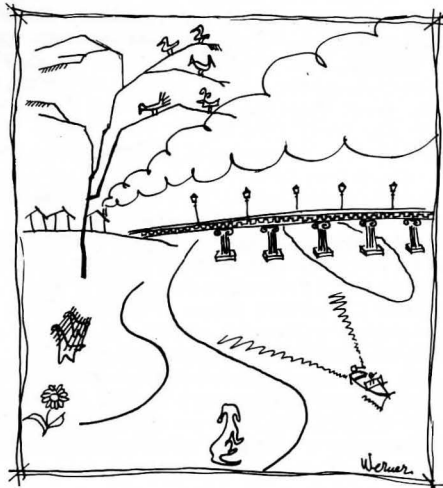
Mrs. Dowaliby also reports that the building on Union St. has been purchased as organization headquarters by a group known as Society for Protection of Persons Planning to Move to the Stockade upon Retirement.

"FRIENDS" TO RAFFLE "LAWRENCE"

Ever since City Engineer John W. Nagle declared the statue of Lawrence the Indian "a hazard to life or property" and gave the Stockade Association 90 days to dispose of him before the city's root-diggers moved in, the best minds in the Stockade have been hard at work.

At their mass meeting last week the Friends of the Stockade finally provided the answer to this vexing problem. By unanimous vote they agreed to kill two birds with one stone, get rid of the Indian and make money at the same time. Their solution: a raffle, to be held on April 31 rain or shine. The lucky winner will receive The Original Lawrence, surely a pretty ornament for any Niskayuna living-room or Glenville garden.

Tickets are \$2 apiece and may be purchased from any Friend.



BROOMCORN INFILTRATING THE STOCKADE

Broom-corn can be found growing on those islands in the Mohawk that can be seen from the Stockade. These presumably have been seeded from the broom industry that formerly existed in the Stockade and in Scotia.

An abandoned broom factory exists on Front Street and can be seen by walking behind 150 Front.

A little known group of charming old houses exists on a cobbled lane, Mill Lane, on State Street across from Church.

MUSEUM

The new head of the Schenectady Museum is yet to be announced, but rumors are that Weinheimer will accept. Rauchenburg, Jasper Johns, and Picasso have accepted positions as curators. Mahoney will be engaged as model for the life drawing sessions to be offered as a museum service to artists who feel a need to renew their proficiency in life drawing.

TREES

The City of Schenectady has donated thirty mature trees plus labor to be planted along Green and Ingersoll. A spokesman for the city said that the city recognizes the stockade as its most precious asset and wishes to encourage the residents to continue their excellent job of free urban renewal.

INTERESTING DISCOVERY AT DEMOLITION SITE

"At first we were puzzled by our inability to trace the origins of the building at 13-15 Union Street to a date earlier than 1865, when its architectural style and the pattern of the brick bonding so clearly indicated a more historic origin. Now we think we have the answer," said Arendt van Curler II, prominent local historian, the other day. Mr. van Curler addressed a packed assembly of interested Stockaders and Friends over the roar and whine of the bulldozers that were tearing down the building.

According to Mr. van Curler, painstaking research has revealed that the building was indeed put up a great deal earlier than 1865, and that for some hundreds of years its occupants were popular as "Purveyors of Swich licour to Lördynges both Eldyng and Yinge" and featured accommodation for several "Menksful maiden of Nyht." All this was illegal at that time, hence the lack of documentary evidence today.

It was the discovery of a large number of empty glass bottles under the rubble of the destroyed building that first alerted the Historical Society and Mr. van Curler to the historic implications inherent in the situation. These containers are all intact and of sufficient antiquity to be of lively interest to the many bottle-collectors in the Stockade. A sale will be held at the Society's headquarters on April 31.

Perhaps the loss of this cherished Stockade landmark will be at least partially offset by enhanced displays of bottles in such historic residences as we still possess.

JUMPING JACKS TO EXPAND TO RIVERSIDE

Upon the announcement that a branch of Jumping Jacks will open on the property of Elizabeth Cooper, Stockade residents, headed by Pam Morrell and Emily Phelps, have formed a committee to purchase a 22-foot loudspeaker amplified by Magnatone to show their enthusiasm and gratitude for the new contribution to the beauty of the river.



DOWNTOWN ARTS CALENDAR

Drama

Civic Players - "The Assassination and Death of Marat As Performed by the Inmates of Charenton Asylum Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade" and Shakespeare's "King Lear." Nightly April 1 - Labor Day, 12 S. Church St.

Galaxy Players - "Aaron Slick of Punkin Creek" Nott Memorial Theatre. April 31-32.

Music

St. George's Men and Boys' Choir - "A Sacred Hootenanny" April 31, 5 p.m.

ART

Oakroom Artists - George Weinheimer: "Portraits of Royalty." Van Curler Hotel.

YWCA - Clarice Norton: "Op and Pop in Collage" April 1-31