

THE STOCKADE SPY



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Photo by Mike Powell



STOCKADE SPY
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Letter from the editor

Perhaps communication has become a word that has a rather formal, or technical meaning these days. Yet when one thinks of it, isn't communication the most important part in our lives? Whether it is a phone call from family or friends, a letter (rather a rarity these days), or meeting someone unexpectedly and talking for half an hour, there is a lifting of spirit when we have communicated in this way that has nothing to do with the "communication networks" we are told looms so large in our futures. It is the human relationship between two different people, the dynamic exchange that can result in pleasure, frustration, laughter, or anger; it is still a part of our lives that most of us would sorely miss. There are those who say they prefer to be alone, but what does that mean? Sometimes, usually, or always? Without our hermits we would lose a part of most cultures, yet the recluse is most often thought of as away from society, as certain orders of monks or nuns in all faiths, so while acknowledging their contributions, they are not the people I am speaking of in discussing communication. It's us, and the people we come in contact with in our everyday lives; the servicepeople who fix our cars, TVs, roofs, and so on, who can make us say "what a pleasant person that was." We hope they say the same of us. I have seen unbelievable rudeness exhibited towards the repairman, store person, garage mechanic, and so on, and wonder if the person who behaves this way is really so unsure of him/herself that they can't be courteous. Shades of Miss Manners. I think we could call it consideration. Whatever it is was probably instilled into us as children (at least for those of my generation!), and then it becomes second nature.

Where on earth was I when I got into all this? Oh yes, communication. Well, to me it means all those little things I mentioned, far more than having Internet or e-mail, yet we seem to have given the word a heavily technical bias these days. Need I add that I loathe those telephone voices instructing me to push, push, push (sounds like my memories of childbirth!), and today they even ignore the idea that anyone may still have a rotary phone (a what?).

Lest I have to delete this third attempt to communicate with you, I will just say -- enjoy the spring that April must herald, and enjoy the opportunity to get out more and talk with your neighbors. I appreciate living in a neighborhood where this can happen.

Do read the letter about Front Street -- may be other streets in our Stockade could benefit from similar treatment. How about letting your Association President, Paul Cardamone, know if you would like this pursued further. As you must know by now, Paul is anxious to hear what direction you believe the Association should follow. He is acting on your concerns about the Park, distributing a survey to find out what your priorities are. Did you fill it in? Drop it off at his house? Together we can be a heard voice, not a vague murmuring.

April is, "the cruelest month . . ." or "Oh to be in England now that April's there . . ." Take your pick, that's the joy of diversity.

The editor

To the editor

Most of us in the Stockade are very aware of the traffic problems in our neighborhood. Certainly those of us who live on Front Street are concerned about the level of speeding [by] through traffic. The condition of Front Street right now attests to the fact that the street bears far more than local traffic. This traffic tears up our streets, the constant vibration is harmful to our fragile buildings, not to mention the safety issues. The Stockade is a residential enclave and there is no reason for other drivers to come through. Except of course they use it as a short cut.

This winter I have had occasion to go on a regular basis to areas of Albany that have brick streets. I was happily surprised to find no difficulty with the bricks and winter driving. But what impressed me the most is that presently there are no potholes!

I suggest that if the surface of Front Street from College Street to Washington Avenue was removed to expose the bricks, the benefits would be threefold. A brick street would add to the charm of the Stockade. The bricks would slow traffic down, and I certainly think it would reduce the level of through traffic.

Instead of resurfacing Front Street (the bricks are exposed in some places), let us ask the city government to remove the macadam and support the Stockade in its efforts to preserve and there a viable historic area.

Susanna K. Sherwood

[I too have noticed the bricks and think this is an idea the Association might wish to pursue further. Please, if anyone has an opinion about this, let us know. Editor]

Fourth Annual Preservation Awards

The Schenectady Heritage Foundation is seeking nominations for awards for outstanding historic building restorations in Schenectady county. There are three categories: Current Restorations, completed during the last three years; Early Restoration, completed within the last three decades; and Adaptive-use Renovations of any date.

Nominations should be submitted to Jim Schmitt, Chairman, Schenectady Heritage Foundation, 217 Union Street, Schenectady, New York 12305. State the building name, address, dates of construction and restoration, present owner and telephone number.

Awards will be presented at the 1994 Heritage Awards Ceremony at City Hall Rotunda during National Historic Preservation Week on May 18.

The First Annual Awards, 1991, went to -- Johannes Teller House ca. 1740, 121 Front Street, Axel Frieberg owner, Feibes & Schmitt restoration architects. -- Adrian Van Slyck House ca. 1750, 114 Front Street, Deborah Lambeth, owner.

The Second Annual Awards, 1992, went to: -- John Horman House ca. 1909, 1173 Wendell Avenue, William J.B. Mynderse design architect, Union College, owner.

-- Sanders-Ellice House ca. 1775, 205 Union Street, Howard and Mimi Bliss, owners. -- J.A. Lyon House ca. 1904, 1186 Stratford Road, Frank Thomas and Nancy O'Keefe, owners.

The Third Annual Award, 1993 went to: -- John Allen House ca. 1830, 219 Liberty Street, Ron Chard, restorationist.

Lets Go To The Movies

The Stockade has its own movie theatre: Proctor's. It features movies all year, when there are no live performances. Director of Operations, Bob Warlock, considers Proctor's the neighborhood theatre for the capital district. Let's not tell him we think it's ours. For less than ten dollars two adults (\$2 each), and two children (\$1 each) can buy tickets, have a dollar each for candy and popcorn and watch their entertainment in a theatre that not only has a superb sound system and the largest screen in New York state outside Radio City Music Hall, but is comfortable and beautiful.

The genial man you see collecting tickets at the main entrance - chatting with everyone and sometimes helping behind the candy counter is Bob. He's so busy he frequently doesn't get to see the movie. "Old" movies he defines as anything not current. Old "old" is perchance a classic. Days are sometimes spent tracking movie distributors while juggling a schedule that must fit between live shows. Box Office, a magazine for professionals is a big help - listing movies before official release. Amazingly, films are not saved after release for video; there is no historic trust, no organization or studio to preserve current movies, foreign or domestic, that might become classics.

After three or four years popular films are difficult to find. Nobody seems to take care of films like they used to. Bob remembers when there were two film "depots" in Albany where he could pick up and return films and be assured that the distributors would check reel sequence and labels. Now films must be screened before showing - at regular speed - no fast forward here! The usual five or six reels last about twenty minutes each. The projectionist splices the small reels together onto a large "platter" for one continuous picture. Just recently this procedure for The Wedding Banquet revealed reversed labels so that the scenes were out of sequence.

First run houses are usually fully automated - just press a button - that's why screening times are staggered. So if it's fully automated, how does management know when something is wrong? They don't. The next time there's a glitch on the screen, don't just sit there and be

polite - stamp your feet and whistle. Have some fun while you're trying to get their attention!

The theatre is considered a sub-run house and film cost is based on percentage of gross. With newer films, there is a contractual guaranteed dollar amount. Main stream/action movies are best attended but the large cross section of ticket buyers in this area is catered to. The best way to see and hear a movie at Proctor's is in the balcony. Seating there is one dollar more than general admission and viewing is more on eye level. The theatre itself is very handicapped accessible and the hearing impaired may request a receiver to enhance sound. For hygienic reasons, there is a one-time \$2.00 charge for your own reusable ear piece.

Scheduled for the coming season, including summer, is Farewell My Concubine, Schindler's List, Mrs. Doubtfire, the acclaimed Australian film Strictly Ballroom (see it), Orlando, What's Eating Gilbert Grape? and maybe Casablanca, for the generation that has never seen it on a large screen, and an opera film. Bob would like to hear from Stockade residents with ideas for bringing in film favorites or even if you just want to comment. Call 382-3884 and if he's not available, leave a message with the receptionist and he'll get back to you.

Dial 382-1083 for information about movies, times and schedules. Printed monthly is an extremely well done flyer that is available at the library or in the arcade. It lists dates, screening times and dates, length of movie, date made, cast, plot description and rating.

Yes, audience reaction varies greatly from one showing time to another.

Yes, Bob's dream is to have a little film theatre to present esoteric, off beat and foreign films.

Yes, movies are a visual medium - sound came late - but in the 90's, audio is critical.

Yes, with 2700 available seats it will be easy to find a seat suitable for your viewing preferences.

Try movies at Proctor's. They have the best popcorn.

Diane Buckley

Tidings

Just when you thought that one more snowflake would put you over the edge - it's spring...But the Winter of '94 truly "crystallized" for many of us the reason we live in the Stockade...our neighbors.

How many times this winter did I see Al Strack (of Front St.) clean off his sidewalk...then cross the street and continue on down the sidewalks of his neighbors.

One Stockadian tells of a much appreciated kindness while shoveling a long driveway. A just moved-in neighbor was dealing with snowfall with the best tool he had on hand...a pooper scooper! Offered a shovel, the grateful neighbor later helped clear the long driveway. Another neighbor, until then unspoken to but recognized, came by and said, "Let me help you - I need the exercise." And then extended his thanks for being allowed to help! For all its inconveniences, Stockadians find all this snow not so much a bother as an opportunity to help out and be good neighbors..

Some of us did get our fill, however, and headed South...way South, making sure they were nowhere near any potential snowfall. Our own Paul Spencer headed to Miami Beach, Florida with former Stockadian Jim Zayicek. Paul and Jim basked in the warm weather, the cool art deco architecture and the great shopping - and are now happily home enjoying the dirty snow...

Shirley and Cullen Burris of Church St. headed waaaaay down south to St. Croix -- no chance of snow down there -- and though happy to be back home, look forward to our own warm weather.

For those of us who couldn't escape that far -- a great escape from all the white stuff is just around the corner -- literally. I heard rave reviews about Stockadians Rocky Bonsal and Jeffrey Knight, who recently completed a run at the Schenectady Civic Playhouse production of "Look Homeward, Angel." I've attended several plays there, and the productions have always been excellent. How often do we overlook something so neat right in our own backyard...so...I urge all of you to head over there to the next performance.

Congratulations are due to new grandparents Mimi and Howard Bliss of Union St. The Blissess welcomed their first granddaughter, Nina, recently, and the best news of all is that she and her family will be moving from the west coast to the east coast, making you know who very happy.

Finally...one Stockadian who truly exemplified all that is so good about the Stockade was Bill O'Hare. Bill died last year, however, he was recently honored for his endless contributions of time and wisdom. On Sunday, March 20th, 1994, the conductor's music stand of the Schenectady Symphony was dedicated in memory of Bill. Bill always gave generously and tirelessly of his time; as a member of the Stockade Association Board, he gave freely of his professional advice and wisdom. More than that, he was a good friend, always ready with his dry humor to turn crisis into normality. We still miss you, Bill.

I have seen Joan O'Hare, Bill's wife, while out and about. Joan also share's Bills generosity of spirit, and we all hope that she continues to find the Stockade a place for friendship and support.

In closing, just a reminder to give me your good news to share with your friends and neighbor...I remind you once again that without you, I am nothing. So...let us rejoice once again in the newness of spring as we welcome April with all its...SHOWERS!!!! AAAAHHHHH!!!! See you next month.

General Association Meeting

Excerpted from minutes of meeting held at the Mohawk Club, March 16, 1994.

Paul Cardamone, President, distributed a status report of historic district code violations currently referred to the City corporation counsel's office, as requested; he also provided certificates of membership to all dues-paying members. Sidewalk improvement grants of up to \$150 are available if they meet Historic District guidelines.

Joe Bernat, Walkabout Committee chair, is looking for 6 or 7 residents to open their historic homes this year. For information, send a note to Joe at the Association P.O. Box 1661, 12301.

The nominating committee will present a slate of candidates for board vacancies for vote at the May General membership meeting. Interested residents are invited to contact Joe Bernat, Marie Eoff, or Kathy Johnson, committee members.

Jack Zegger announced the YWCA will hold a "Take Back the Night" march on April 29, 1994, beginning at the YWCA at 7p.m. Participation is invited.

Guest speaker, Bill Seber, City Parks and Recreation Director, spoke about ways to improve Rotundo Park (Riverside). An active dialogue ensued -- the Parks Department could work with Stockade residents by organizing a Park cleanup, with Parks Department coordinating a pick of debris and pruning the trees. Increasing wattage on existing poles would improve lighting at least cost (NiMo maintains poles and lights. To report a light out, include pole number). There is a little money through the Adopt-a-Park program to pay recreation leaders if summer programs for children are desired. Volleyball apparatus was purchased and will be installed. Parks has no money to widen the path, but police will initiate a bike patrol of the park. Discussion followed over the question of the Association committing labor and money to one or two projects that would be significant over several years.

There is no money in the budget for resurfacing the tennis courts. Jim Crick, Union College crew coach, observed that the planned boathouse is seen as a "need of the Park," and perhaps the tennis courts would be too, giving hope for paving of courts. A task force meeting at 5:15 in Union's College Center, room 204, March 29, is open to those who wish to join

Mike Bartlett will chair a Park committee and present plans at the May meeting. Residents interested, should contact Mike.

Finally, brochures for the "Retree Schenectady" program will be available soon at the Parks office. This program was initiated by Pat Berkey, whose singlehanded enthusiasm has enabled the program to grow to an annual project. Trees are provided at cost, about \$16-\$26 each, and buyers plant trees; this year emphasis will be on limited height trees to eliminate problems with overhead power lines. The Parks Department is holding educational seminars and resource people are available.

Jim Schmidt noted certain problems that GE Realty Plot, another Historic District, is having with houses on Lenox Road, owned by Union College. In the past the Historic Districts have supported each other when needed, and Jim asked the Association to do so in this instance.

Special Events

Benefit Concert for Indian Relief
Saturday, April 16, 1994 Begley Hall Auditorium, SCCC Campus, from 2:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Featuring:

Begona, Blues Alley. Joc-a-Mo, Petroglyph, Sweet Cider, Beth Jochum & Brenda Fischer, an Indian Style Flute Trio, and speakers.

With Special Appearances by:

Voices of Creation, traditional Indian drum and dance, & *Clan D.O.U. Rhythms*, traditional African drum and dance.

The Benefit is sponsored by One Nation/Wanji Oyate, SCCC Student Government Association/Human Services Club/Drama Department and Radio Station XL 104.5, WXLE-FM.

Poetry Reading

The 1994 Readings Against the End of the World, a 24 hour marathon poetry reading and vigil -- Earth Day, Friday, April 22 at 12:00 midnight through Saturday April 23, at Caffe Dolce, 142 Jay Street. For information call 785-252 or 382-8212.

Spring Cleaning

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Overture to <i>The Bartered Bride</i>	Smetana
Symphony No. 8, G major, Op. 88	Dvorak
Sinfonietta	Janacek



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Who's in charge here?

If Will Rogers were alive today his sides would be aching after a look at democracy in Schenectady. For the individual out there who might not know about him, Rogers made a career out of poking fun at the antics of the nation's elected officials; the "hired help" as he used to call them. Among his favorite practices was addressing and posting notes to "Cal-Cool; care of the White House." One of my favorite quote of his goes, "How anyone can read the paper about what goes on in Washington and not bust out laughin' is beyond me." Well, that certainly holds true in our town, now don't it folks.

If you want to see what I'm talking about, just turn to cable channel 11 the next time there's Schenectady's equivalent to a town meeting on. I did, last Monday, and as usual there was plenty of humor if you looked for it. It begins right off the top with the title of the meeting called "The Privilege of the Floor." Now that right there is funny. I guess it's an attempt to make the halls we bought, paid for and sustain seem imposing and intimidating to us. At most town meetings speaking is an expected "right," not a privilege, but what do I know.

The next good laugh came when the foreman of the hired hands, Mr. Isabella, went about welcoming four county councilmen who were repaying the courtesy of Joe Notar's visit to their publicly funded get together. It was like they were out of towners, here for the rites of Spring soiree or maybe getting ready to hunker down to some grits and Courvoisier. It also struck me that, if both sides started sending four times the people back and forth, by May fourth or so the entire city's population would be involved.

During this little social, Mr. Isabella (and presumably the rest of the hired hands) took real pride in showing off their little red light; their "new procedure" I believe it was called. Now I laugh at this, for one because it's funny, and for two, to keep from getting angry. What happens is, when someone from the floor wants to have their say, as soon as they start talking a three minute egg timer is kicked in, like the whole council was made up of inept short-order cooks. When the time's up, the light flashes, the foreman whacks away with his gavel and the speaker, who can't be heard over the banging anyway, is required to sit down. Now the first laugh here is that the light only points to the floor and not where it's often more desperately needed. The real joke though is that the hired help took some of the boss's money to pay for a contraption that will restrict how long the boss can speak to the hired help!

Dear city council, it's time for a reality check here. One: speaking to you is not a privilege but a right, so rename the meeting to reflect that. Two: if you don't want to listen to us, don't hold your hands up come November. There are times when I can't articulate how I feel about dust mites in three minutes let alone propose any issue more complex. You're paid to represent us all and therefore you even have to listen to idiots like me. More important, no one should ever hang an egg timer up and call it democratic procedure. Democracy takes longer. If you're unaware of that or don't feel it's required of you to hear us out, perhaps you should find a different line of work.

M. Powell

April Waste Collection Dates

April 7	Thursday
April 14	Thursday
April 21	Thursday
April 28	Thursday
May 5	Thursday

Remember to recycle:

Separate green, clear and brown bottles and jars; plastic bottles with necks and metal cans, and place into a recycling container marked "Container Product."


Separate magazines, newspaper, brown paper (grocery bags), and corrugated cardboard and place into a recycling container marked "Paper Product."

For answers to recycling questions call the Recycling Hotline 382-5060.

Call for Submissions


As always we are happy to receive your comments, news, literary works, etc. Without them the *Spy* is dead!. Just a few reminders, along with my thanks.

All contributions must be received by **Friday, April 15** for publication in the **May 1994** issue (the last issue until September). Please be sure they are typed, double spaced, signed with the **writer's name, address, and phone included**. You may mail materials to Riverside Condos, **137 Front Street, #105**, clearly marked for the *Spy* editor, or leave them in the *SPY* basket in the open foyer in back of the building. Thank you for your cooperation. In case of undue hardship in getting information typed, we will consider clearly written letters (not articles). If you've entered the computer age, we would love you to include your submission on an MS-DOS disk in WordPerfect or ASCII format. Disks and any original material will be returned **upon request**; otherwise no responsibility for them is taken by the *Spy* staff.



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