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May 1995

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Vol. 36 No. 5

The Stockade Association
General Membership Meeting

"Open to All Stockade Residents"

Thursday, May 18, 1995
Schenectady County Historical Society
7:00 pm Social
7:30 pm Program/Business
Agenda

Committee Reports

Proposed Officers and Board members for
1995-1996

ELECTION

**PLANS FOR ROTUNDO, LITTLE PARK
CLEAN UP**



STOCKADE SPY

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Letter from the editor

As we prepare for our last issue until September, it is time for me to wish you all a good summer. There have been many noteworthy events this year, and will be again I am sure. We have several new members to elect for the Association Board, so I hope you will all be attending the meeting on May 18, at the Historical Society. Plans are underway for making the Stockade an even better place to live. However, it behooves us all to be aware that that may mean one thing to those who live outside the area and quite another to those of us who reside here. It is always easier to leave it to someone else to attend meetings, write letters, and voice opinions, but one can get caught in a situation that is irreversible if too little attention is paid to plans and proposals. A case in point is the Park. What is to be done with it? What is being done with it? Even if you seldom use the Park, its ultimate purpose can affect you. No, I am not saying that the enemy is out to get us, because I don't know who is the enemy, or what might be the end result. I am saying, pay attention.

Enough of that. Others will keep you posted I am sure. For now I would like to mention something that has made life for the Spy staff much easier: the increased use of it by Stockaders. I am delighted to find an envelope in my mail or in the basket at the main entrance to Riverside Condominiums, contributions from you that you would like to share with others. We have sometimes been accused of not reaching the community, but that is more a result of not having anything to reach with. When we hear from you, as we have been doing recently, we are happy to make this a real neighborhood paper. When one of us is involved in a special event we can report on progress, but often we hear about it in the daily papers first. Of course it does take a bit of advance notice, because we have to have time to get the paper into shape before sending to the printers, but you have been very good lately about heeding the deadline we publish each month. A big thank you from all of us to all of you who have sent in notices, articles, letters, and poems. We look forward to hearing from you in August, for the September issue (especially about Fall events that are unique to the Stockade).

One other note of thanks is due, this time to my friends and colleagues who work so well, so cheerfully, and so creatively to get each issue out. I am more than fortunate to have the opportunity to work with them, and they are very patient with me. I value them.

Now is time to say a brief farewell. I hope I will see some of you during the summer as we enjoy our Stockade sights.

The editor

Letter To The Editor

To the Editor:

I am writing to share some concerns that I have regarding the Stockade neighborhood in which I live. First, I chose to live in this area because I have always admired and respected the great care homeowners and landlords have given to the many historical properties. I am currently renting an apartment that I truly love and I feel fortunate that I am able to live in this neighborhood.

It saddens me to see some homeowners or landlords that let their properties decay. I have also seen people disregarding parking regulations and speeding through the streets. I am concerned because there are children who are out playing along the sidewalks and in the Front Street swimming pool lot. I feel that a child could easily be injured due to a speeding driver or a driver that fails to stop at a stop sign. I have also noticed that the lot has turned into a dumping ground and an area for people to abandon their cars. I feel the city could do more to prevent this.

There has also been a rash of vehicle vandalism, the most recent occurring on April 19th. A vehicle, possibly with Vermont plates and of a rust color, was seen leaving the most recent scene of a break-in. I would hope that my neighbors could keep an eye out and report any suspicious activities to the police. I would also like to see the police patrol the Stockade more frequently. It seems the safest place to live in Schenectady is becoming the Hamilton Hill area. I think police patrols on bicycles is great, but will we see them here?

Finally, despite all I have said, I truly love this neighborhood. I love to walk along the river and gaze at the great old homes and dream that someday I may be fortunate to own one. I hope that the people of this neighborhood can all pitch in and help keep it a wonderful place to live.

Name Withheld By Request

1995 Heritage Awards

Five historic home restorations will be honored Wednesday, May 17 for their outstanding contribution to revitalizing Schenectady's historic neighborhoods.

The Schenectady Heritage Foundation and the city's Urban Cultural Park program will conduct a joint awards ceremony at twelve noon in City Hall Rotunda. The public is warmly invited to attend.

This will mark the Fifth Annual Presentation of the Heritage Awards, which are given to individuals that foster public awareness of Schenectady's historical and cultural resources. The award theme focuses on the importance of preserving the rich heritage that exists in our city's neighborhoods. In announcing the awards, James Schmitt, Chair of the Schenectady Heritage Foundation stated: "History has demonstrated to us that cities cannot exist without their neighborhoods and neighborhoods cannot exist without their buildings -- intact. Our concern for decaying neighborhoods in our city has translated into an effort to demonstrate the effectiveness of preservation as a tool for revitalization."

This year's finalists include two Stockade restorations: the General Jacob Swits House, ca 1790, at 19 Front Street, restored by owners Elizabeth and Gerald Gemmette after a destructive blaze, and the home at 216 1/2 Union Street restored by owners Ann and Joe Bernat. Other awards are to Barbara Bishop and Tony Ward for their restoration of 1022 Union in the Union Corridor Historic District, and Jessica and Michael Emery, owner restorationists of 1035 Park Avenue in the Union Triangle Historic District.

A special event of this year's awards will be the recognition of Special Projects, paying tribute to those homeowners who repaved their walks in slate or brick, or restored roofs to their original slate shingles.

"By citing these projects for excellence, the Schenectady Heritage Foundation hopes to encourage further revitalization of our buildings, our neighborhoods and our city." Schmitt concluded.

From the VP

With this issue of the Spy the Stockade Association marks the end of another year of neighborhood activities. Is the neighborhood improving? There are signs of it, but there are also some negative indications in the unresolved spill site, empty buildings, lower participation in meetings, and a harder struggle to continue some of our longstanding special events. In view of this, a very important moment is coming up - electing new board members to help take on these challenges. We need representation from the entire neighborhood to improve our chances of success.

In these times there is no way we can expect an inspiring resolution of all ills. However, we can focus on incremental change. How about:

1. Improved safety - We already have a foot patrol policeman during one shift a day. There are also some simple improvements that might be pursued. Police frequently recommend "shining a light" on crime to retard it. What would it take to have the entire neighborhood leave a light on at night (at the standard rate of 10 cents per kilowatt hour it cost 6 cents to run a 60 watt bulb for 10 hours - that's \$1.80 month)? For those without one, there has to be a simple way to get a blanket approval from the Historic Commission along with negotiating a group rate for installation from a contractor. The same could be done for flood lights in back yards, or even for home security systems. What it takes is citizen interest and a little initiative.

2. Constructive Involvement - Some buildings are in need of more active intervention. Some sort of friend of the court brief to push settlement of the Ladd spill site would do wonders. A committee of legal and hazardous material expertise is needed to advise the board. Also, there are some long empty buildings in need of help. It's time to propose some very different alternatives.

3. Preservation Stagnation - There are some very noticeable improvements including restored fire damage, new sidewalks, and exterior painting. Is it time to provide further inducements to preservation? We have a sidewalk reimbursement program, but should this sort of thing be extended to cover painting, masonry, millwork, etc.? Are we just too strict in our standards? If so, we should quickly move to seriously evaluate relaxations.

4. Cleanup - It's time for a quick outside cleanup for springtime. If everybody picks up around their street and sidewalk, the area could look a lot nicer.

We have a great and respected neighborhood derived by setting high standards. From building maintenance to social involvement in our various events, our neighborhood gets better through commitment of personal time. First and foremost, we need more involvement to change for the better.

Joe Bernat, Vice President
Stockade Association

Warning To Stockade Residents:

There is a citywide parking crackdown. Previous ticketing near us has been limited basically to downtown or Union St. meters near stores. Councilman Al Jurczynski is quoted in the April 10th Gazette as suggesting this stronger enforcement is a result of a budget of \$695,000 in fine receipts for '95 - up \$170,000 over last year...but there is also more manpower in the police department and parking division.

Warning - don't park in the wrong direction. It is a violation previously little seen in Schenectady but seems to be a new fad. You will be ticketed!

DB

Best Wishes To All
Our Neighbors In
The Stockade



44 Washington Avenue
374-3394

Tidings

It's so pleasing to walk around the Stockade and see the flowers poking their heads up after the long winter. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), an Irish playwright, was very fond of flowers. One occasion Arnold Bennett visited Shaw in his apartment and was surprised that there was not a single vase of flowers to be seen. He commented on their absence to Shaw: "But I thought you were so fond of flowers." "I am," said Shaw, "and I'm very fond of children too, but I don't chop their heads off and stand them in pots about the house."

Congratulations and a big wish of good luck goes to Anne Bernat of Union Street. Anne recently applied for a seat on the City Council and is awaiting nomination.

A warm welcome to Paul and Heather Boyne and their son, Patrick of South Church Street. Formerly of Niskayuna and Saratoga Springs, the Boynes make their way back to this area from the state of Washington. Paul is a project manager at General Electric. The Boynes are awaiting another arrival at the end of May. They are looking forward to meeting their neighbors and say, "It's nice to know the neighborhood is really a community." Welcome, welcome!

Speaking of arrivals, Terry and Karen Mlodzienowski, lifelong Stockadians of Ingersoll Avenue, proudly announce the arrival of their daughter, Kaylee Marie, who was born on February 27th at Bellevue Hospital. Congratulations to the proud parents!

Jim and Betty Lane have returned to Front Street after spending a month in Florida. While there they spent a week with Jim's father in Largo, a week with June and Doug Grisot (former Stockadians) on Captiva Island, a week traveling down and a week traveling back, with stops in Key West, a butterfly farm, and, the highlight of their trip - spending a night in the lighthouse on Amelia Island. Welcome back travellers!

And speaking of travellers, welcome back to snowbird Barbara Edwards of Front Street. Barbara and her dog, Snuffy, return to our neighborhood after a winter respite at their St. Croix home.

Finally, one last wish for the summer and that's a get well one to Hosmer Norris of Front Street. Hosmer is recently on the mend after falling ill last month. Here's to a speedy recovery!

If you would like to contribute any news or event to this column, we would be more than glad to hear from you. Please remember that we are taking our summer hiatus and the next publication of the Spy will be out in the first week of September. So tell all your summer comings or goings. You may drop off any items at the following locations: 137 Front Street or 124 N. College Street. Please make sure all submissions are clearly marked for The Stockade Spy. Thanks to all who contributed this month and have a fabulous summer. See you in September!

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, August 18**, for publication in the **September 1995** issue. 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 appreciate finding your submission on an MS-DOS disk in WordPerfect or ASCII format, so we don't have to typeset. Disks and any original material will be returned **upon request**; otherwise no responsibility for them is taken by the **Spy** staff.

General Meeting Notes, 3/30/95

Joe Bernat, Vice President of the Stockade Association, opened the meeting. Minutes were available for review, but not read. Joe introduced the guest speakers, Assistant Police Chief, Louis Pardi, and Community Police Officer, Mike White.

Chief Pardi noted that community policing in Schenectady began in 1991 and, with the assistance of a three year grant in 1994, now has 13 foot and bike patrol officers assigned to the neighborhoods, including Riverside Park, as well as patrol cars.

Responding to questions from the floor about reporting of minor violations, Chief Pardi encouraged residents to report any suspicious activity, noting that such calls are recorded and kept indefinitely, allowing possible patterns to be recognized and attention given to a problem area. Calls for rowdiness or other violations in Riverside Park should be made to 374-7744 -- the main police number. Less urgent matters, such as cars parked on the sidewalk should be reported to Officer White (370-2022 office, 341-1185, voice mail). An article on Officer White's responsibilities was published in the February Spy.

Joe thanked the guest speakers and introduced the speaker for the second part of the program: Commissioner Milton Mitchell, Engineering and Public Works, who spoke about plowing during snow emergencies. Little Front Street Park can be cleared to allow cars to park off the streets, especially at night which is preferred plowing time. The general rule after a snow emergency has been announced is: park on even side for the first 24 hours, on the odd side for the next 24 hours, with no parking in the turnaround the first night. If the street is entirely clear of cars, both sides would be plowed at once. A reminder of the rules will be sent out again in October or November.

Commissioner Mitchell then discussed the need to replace water mains on North, Ingersoll, and River Streets this summer. The system is over 100 years old, and the mains are small and constantly spring leaks, resulting in low pressure. Larger mains are needed. Gary Male, and engineer from C.T. Male, explained possible approaches. 1. Replace mains and loop the system through the Park, eliminating dead ends, including North and Ferry Streets and Washington Avenue. 2. Trench each road to replace the pipes. This would be done in the daytime and filled for evening traffic. Work would be completed in approximately one week per street. All work must be cleared through SHIPO inspection. Final paving would need to wait one month to allow for settling. Risks of waiting are continued breakages and fire hazards from low water pressure.

Mr. Male answered questions from the floor: temporary mains would be run to provide service to houses. City replaces connecting line to shutoffs, owner is responsible for line from house to shutoff. Lead lines would have to be replaced. A plumber would be on site.

Other concerns included replacement/repair of sewers, repair of curbs, gasline overlays, vibration generated by heavy equipment. These and other concerns need further researching. A plan to form a committee from the Stockade Association to work with Mr. Mitchell and consultants was proposed. Both Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Male welcomed such a suggestion.

Business meeting: Jack Zegger nominated candidates for the Nominating Committee: Barbara Sauer, Suzanne Sherwood, and Marie Eoff. All were elected unanimously. The Committee will present a slate of candidates for the following positions at the **May 18 General Membership meeting**: President, Treasurer, three board members.

Other suggestions: Park cleanup, neighborhood street cleanup, plans for an informal neighborhood picnic. A sign-up list for volunteers to help was circulated.

The *Stockade Spy* reaches over 1000 Stockade households eight times a year.

Special Events

The Schenectady County Historical Society

SCHS will hold its monthly meeting Saturday May 6, 1995 from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

The Society and the Scotia Glenville Children's Museum will host a round table discussion of Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz. The following people will participate in the discussion:

- * Larry Hart (City and County Historian)
- * Midge Hayden (Steinmetz's grand-daughter)
- * George Wise (GE Historian)
- * Scott Haefner (City Historian)
- * Charles Lemmond (GE Hall of History)
- * Mary Kuykendal (GE Hall of History)

The public is invited to attend.

For information call Rosemary B. Harrigan 479-4083 (work) or 355-5748 (home).

Schenectady Symphony Orchestra will present Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on **Sunday, May 7, 1995 at 3:00 p.m. at Proctor's Theatre**. A joint choir of 200 voices from the University at Albany and the State University College of New York at Oneonta will also be featured. The chorus from SUCO Oneonta will be directed by Dr. Robert Barstow. Eric Strand is the Director of the Chorus at the University at Albany.

Tickets are available through Proctor's Box Office, 346-6204. Tickets for adults are \$15. Student tickets are \$7. Under the SSO's Family Plan, students are FREE when accompanied by an adult.

Schenectady Civic Players

May 5, 6, 7 & 10-14 Alan Ayckbourn's "Bedroom Farce" For info call 382-2081

Hydro Plane Races

May 27, 28 & 29 on the Mohawk River. Static displays, children's activities, boat show, Bud Lite ski team, performances and food. 8am to sunset. Mohawk Valley Marine. For info 399-2719

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370-5511 (Guests receive calls on 370-5972.)

Important Phone Numbers

Police Emergency.....374-7744

Police - Mike White, Community Police Officer
Leave a message, 24 hours341-1185

Fire/Paramedic.....374-3111

City Council Hotline.....382-5089

Street Operations - Paving, leaf pickup, snow
messages.....382-5279

Waste Collection.....382-5144

Drug Tip Hotline.....382-5252

City Clerk.....382-5033

Parking Violations.....382-5242

Environmental notes

Trying to keep up with the multitude of items we hear about that can/may affect our health is a mammoth job. First we must cut out one item, then a year or so later, just as we have adapted to this, we hear it is not harmful as previously suggested. Of course what all this really means is that studies, no matter how carefully done, may hold a particular bias. This can be from the over zealous researcher who believes our habits will lead us to an untimely death and must be protected, to the equally zealous scientist hired by companies who stand to lose if their product is considered harmful. The obvious case in point is the tobacco industry. One such group -- the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) -- certainly has a legitimate sounding title. However far from being a government agency, as one might suppose, it is a private, non-profit group with 40 percent of its funding from private industry. Sound familiar? Companies involved in this include Dow, duPont, Exxon, Union Carbide, American Cyanamid, Chevron, and Coco Cola. Perhaps I am somewhat jaded, but it seems that if one relies on these companies for one's livelihood, one's findings just might favor their products, not in an outright misrepresentation, but in distortion. In an article on April 12, 1995, the Daily Gazette published a letter from a concerned reader who had heard that the ACSH stated "cancer risks from natural foods substantially outweigh those from man-made chemicals." Naturally the reader was confused. A succinct answer was that yes, foods do contain toxic chemicals, but in amounts so minuscule as to make no difference. I make this point because we are inundated with information, and need to realize that some measure of sanity is called for to sort it all out. A good friend of mine said, many years ago when all the furor began, "Use moderation in everything, food, drink, and lifestyle." Sounded sensible then and still does.

RMF

Waste Collection Dates


May 8	Monday
May 15	Monday
May 22	Monday
May 30	Tuesday
Jun 6	Tuesday
Jun 13	Tuesday
Jun 20	Tuesday
Jun 27	Tuesday
Jul 5	Wednesday
Jul 12	Wednesday
Jul 19	Wednesday
Jul 26	Wednesday
Aug 2	Wednesday
Aug 9	Wednesday
Aug 16	Wednesday
Aug 23	Wednesday
Aug 30	Wednesday
Sep 7	Thursday

Toxic Waste Collection Day

On May 13, 1995, county residents will be able to get rid of spray paint cans, pesticides and other toxic materials that have been accumulating in their homes. It will be the first time in four years that a hazardous waste collection day has been held in the county. The last collection day was sponsored by G.E. in 1991 with more than 2,300 county residents participating. County residents will be able to bring their waste to two sites: Building 406 at the Scotia-Glenville Industrial Park on Route 5 and the Rotterdam Industrial Park, North Westcott Road entrance. Both sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Be prepared to have your driver's license or another form of identification to verify that you live in the county. Residents won't have to leave their cars - employees will handle toxic materials. Any toxic material brought to either collection site must be in its original, labeled container. Several items are excluded, including latex or water-based paints, which can be recycled; motor oil, which can be brought to service stations or anywhere motor oil is sold (and disposed of); and batteries, which are not considered hazardous because they no longer contain mercury.

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Sunday, May 7, 1995 • 3 p.m.

The SSO's Season Finale is an all Beethoven Concert opening with the dramatic and lyrical Overture to "Coriolanus", op. 62 and closing with the jubilant Symphony No. 9 featuring Schiller's "Ode to Joy."

FEATURING
SUNY Albany Chorus, Dr. David Janower, Director
SUCO Oneonta Chorus, Dr. Robert Barstow, Director
Frances Pallozzi, Mezzo Soprano
Keith Kibler, Bass/Baritone
Soprano and Tenor to be announced.

This concert is presented in loving memory of Dr. Jay Schechter and underwritten by his wife, June, along with The Golub Foundation/Price Chopper.

Proctor's Theatre • Scheneectady
Box Office 346-6204 • Adults \$15/ Students \$7
Family Plan Students FREE with Adult
The SSO receives partial funding through the NY State Council for the Arts and the Scheneectady County Local Arts Initiative Regrant Program.

