

# Skene Manor Newsletter - The Castle Cryer

AUTUMN 2017

The volunteers at Skene Manor have had a very good time during this 2017 season welcoming the many people who come to the Manor for lunch, to enjoy the fellowship and good food served at the monthly dinners, or perhaps just to see the amazing "castle on the hill" built by Joseph and Catherine Potter as their "empty nest" house. However, the season hasn't ended, and we can look forward to the dinners on October 25<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup>. Don't wait to make reservations for these popular evenings because seating is limited, and in September even the President of the Board couldn't get as many seats as he wanted for the Italian feast.

We can also look forward to the Skene Manor Basket Party on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Whitehall Central School Gymnasium. You will find more details about this annual and popular event elsewhere in this newsletter. Baskets are already beginning to appear in the rooms of the Manor which gives visitors a preview of the wonderful prizes at the party. Donations of filled baskets or financial sponsorship of baskets is greatly appreciated. Please call us at 518-499-1906 for more information.

Skene Manor is a perfect house for the Christmas season, and each year the decorations are truly beautiful. Remember each room will have a Christmas tree, and the whole house becomes a Victorian Christmas postcard! The Manor will participate along with other organizations in Whitehall in a special weekend celebration of the Christmas season. Perhaps your organization or group would like to sponsor/decorate one of the trees or wreaths at the Manor. We'd be delighted to talk to you about it. Of course, we want children to enjoy the Manor, too, and so Santa and Mrs. Claus will pay a visit on December 16<sup>th</sup> so that the children can give last minute instructions to Santa for getting their presents into their homes.

Of course, all the activities mentioned above, while they are great fun in and of themselves, are ways in which we raise the money to keep the restoration of Skene Manor inching forward. This season has seen some great things happening in that regard as well. The roof and gutter repairs are 99 percent complete. The rear gutters have completely stopped the kitchen and store room floods that used to follow heavy rains. I feel confident in saying so because this year we had some very heavy rain to test the roofers' work! This work also makes it possible to proceed with the replacement of the front windows in the southwest bedroom and replace the sills and flooring near those windows.

If you have visited the Manor during the spring and summer, you cannot have missed the extraordinary work done on the front garden terraces. Led by Kris Miner's sister Jen and other volunteers, much brush and debris and weeds which were overtaking the gardens has been removed. The view down to the village and the canal is no longer hidden by trees! Also, tea room volunteer Judy Sullivan has been using her green thumb to make the porches a colorful place to sit and enjoy the view (not to mention the herb and tomato garden by the kitchen entrance!) Recently, the two sets of steps leading to the Gazebo from the parking area have been rebuilt and the handrails firmly secured.

The docents were very pleased to learn of the generous gift of beautiful Victorian bed and marble-topped dresser to the Manor by volunteer Arden Blount and her husband Chuck. It is almost a perfect match to the bed in Judge and Mrs. Potter's bedroom, and will ultimately be placed in the southwest bedroom when work in that room is complete. I should also say that it took the volunteer efforts of three strong men to move this gift and a settee from over Saratoga way to Whitehall. Thank you Jason Quinones, Charles Perkins, and Dan LaRose!

This year, as we have in years past, we have welcomed a new generation of the descendants of Joseph and Catherine Potter to Mountain Terrace as the house was called when the Potters lived here. The 4<sup>th</sup>-great-grandchildren have visited Skene Manor this summer and were very enthusiastic about their ancestors' home. We hope they will return to visit when they are in the area in the summer months.

It has, so far, been a season of dinners and lunches and bus-tours and walk-ins and Red Hats and High School graduation parties and High School reunions and weddings and ghost hunters and senior continuing education and visitors from California and Florida and Maryland and Texas and Quebec and a host of other places.

All of this activity, the dinners, the lunches, the guided tours, the grounds work, the maintenance on the house itself, is made possible by the extraordinary dedication of the volunteers who work week after week to make experience of Skene Manor a memorable one for everyone who comes through the door. If you are not already a volunteer, then join us for the good company and the good feeling that comes from sustaining this village treasure.

Richard F Brewer, President

We are grateful to those who have made cash gifts to the restoration of Skene Manor in 2017. We will recognize those who have supported our work in the year-end issue of the Castle Cryer. Skene Manor Preservation, Inc. was a beneficiary of the will of the late Roy Myer of Granville, NY. Many will remember Mr. Myer as a frequent participant in the monthly dinners and as a supporter of the basket party through gifts of honey from his bee hives. Mr. Myer's significant gift will enable the continuation of the on-going restoration work.