

## - ECHOES -

Spring 1993

### A Tribute to Rosemary Coons

On April 27th, a few days after Rosemary Coons, President of The Friends of Elmendorph, passed away, Bruce Naramore, Site Manager of Clermont State Historic Site and a former board member, spoke about his long-time friend at the Friends of Clermont Spring Lecture Series in the south room of the Elmendorph Inn. Bruce's words perfectly express the sentiments of all of us who worked with Rosemary and were inspired by her vision for our historic Inn, and so we repeat them here with Bruce's permission.



*Tonight is a difficult evening for those of us who are associated with the Elmendorph Inn. On April 24th, Rosemary Coons, President of the Friends of Elmendorph, passed away at St. Peter's Hospital in Albany. This morning she was laid to rest in the churchyard at St. John's Reformed Church, just up the road in Upper Red Hook.*

*To say that Rosemary Coons was the President of the Friends of Elmendorph barely begins to describe this remarkable woman. Rosemary was a devoted wife and mother who nonetheless found the time to assume the role of surrogate mother to dozens of foreign exchange students — as both host mother and regional coordinator for the American Field Service — and who was friend and mentor to hundreds of schoolchildren and adults who had the privilege of knowing her.*

*Rosemary was a founder of Red Hook's historical society, a former Board member of the Friends of Clermont, and an organizer of Red Hook's bicentennial festivities and the Town's 175th birthday celebration. Just this morning I learned that in recent years she has been contributing countless hours to help others who, like Rosemary, were recovering from heart disease.*

*For many people in the area, when they remember Rosemary, it will be for her role as the guiding light in the effort to restore the Elmendorph Inn. Rosemary's interest in the Inn surfaced around the time of the American Bicentennial and her enthusiasm for the project, unlike many who were caught up in the excitement of America's 200th birthday, never waned.*

*Rosemary saw in the decrepit old building both a symbol of the community's past and a potential resource for the community's future. She rallied friends and neighbors in opposition to a plan to tear the building down for a parking lot, and then led the effort to buy the Inn from a supermarket conglomerate. Then the hard work really began. Rosemary committed herself wholeheartedly to the project of not just rehabilitating the building, but doing it the right way. Rosemary's enthusiasm was contagious; many of the talented people who became associated with the project were roped in by Rosemary Coons. She was more than willing to speak to anyone who would lend half an ear about the history and hoped for future of the Inn. Rosemary wanted everyone to become involved in saving the Elmendorph and was as genuinely appreciative of a three-cent donation from a second grade student as she was about a \$30,000 grant from the State.*

*Rosemary had a vision of the Inn as a place that was truly inclusive. She wanted everyone to feel a part of the restoration effort and to be able to share in the benefits she knew that the restored building would eventually bring to the community. If you remember the condition of this place just a few years ago, you can appreciate how difficult it was for many people to share her vision. But whether they truly believed or not, most of the time Rosemary was able to secure another friend for the Elmendorph Inn.*

*Rosemary was taken from us far too soon. Despite her past heart problem, she was still vital and in the prime of life when she died. By right she should have lived to see the job at the Inn completed. Fortunately, she did have the chance to see the building come back to life, with the Inn hosting regular gatherings of children's groups, the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce, the Historical Society and the Lion's Club and our own Spring Lecture Series.*

*During the past 17 years the restoration effort has certainly had its ups and downs. Frequently, when it looked to many of us that the restoration would never get off the ground, Rosemary would assure us that the "Spirit of Elmendorph" was looking out for the building and would see it through. Not particularly attuned to the supernatural, I would laugh such talk off, ascribing it to Rosemary's unbounded optimism when it came to things Elmendorph. In retrospect, however, I can see that the spirit of Elmendorph was indeed real — and her name was Rosemary. That spirit is still alive.*

*Rosemary was a good friend, a great person, and a true grassroots hero in the cause for historic preservation.*

Dear Friends,

As I write this, my first letter to you, our members, I can't help but think of the tragic event that led to my becoming president of the board — the loss of Rosemary. Those of you who knew Rosemary know that the Friends have lost a very special person. There is no way that she can be replaced. But we can continue on with what had become a very important part of her life, the restoration of the Elmendorph Inn. I believe that the greatest tribute that we can pay Rosemary is to complete the restoration of the Inn and to make sure that she becomes a part of its history.

Rosemary had already set the stage for this to happen by helping attract capable people who can carry out the work that remains to be done. I believe that those members who work in the shop, work on the restoration of the Inn, work on special events, and work in other areas are just the kind of members needed to realize Rosemary's quest. You can get to know some of these members through this newsletter, some who wrote articles or reports and some who helped produce it.

In closing, we would be grateful for any help you can provide in the restoration of the Inn, in making the Inn a meeting place for community organizations, and in making it a place where we can learn about the history of events and people of Red Hook.

Joe Kavaky  
President  
Board of Directors

## MEET YOUR NEW DIRECTORS

- Faith Compo

We are delighted to announce the addition of our wonderful new board members with the following brief biographical notes:

**David Brown** teaches Technology at Todd Junior High in the Spackenkill Schools. He is already well known to us for his ongoing work at the Elmendorph, particularly with the auctions. David was born in Germantown and attended the public schools there prior to attending the State University at Oswego. He and his lovely wife, Mim, and son, Doug, who is now in kindergarten, are residents of Rhinebeck.

**Betsey Wacker** (nee Baxter) has been a resident of Red Hook since 1946 when her family moved to the wonderful farm with the commanding white brick house at the four corners of Budds Corner Road and Whaleback Road. A dedicated lady, Betsey is completing her 31st year of teaching in the Red Hook schools where she currently teaches Remedial Math in the elementary school.

**Richard Coons** was born in Barrytown and attended the Red Hook schools starting in the days when private homes were rented for classes. When the Linden Avenue School was completed, then K-12, Richard entered the 4th grade and was graduated from the high school here. He served 17 1/2 years in the Marine Corps, most of them as a Supply Chief, during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. His last tour during the Vietnam conflict was as part of the Commanding General's Inspection Team.

**Catherine Jones** is Assistant to the Director for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. Among her academic credentials are a graduate degree in Medieval Studies from the University of Bristol in England plus two additional years of medieval research at the University of York. A lady of many interests, Catherine ran a bakery in Millbrook before deeply involving herself with the Mill Street Loft in Poughkeepsie which is still an association dear to her heart. Catherine lives in the Village quite close to the Elmendorph.

**Larry Thetford**, a research entomologist at the Ciba North East Research Station, holds a unique position as a new board member since he is currently Co-President of the Egbert Benson Historical Society as well. Born in Missouri, raised and educated in Iowa, Larry has an abiding interest in Native American culture which he attributes in part to his genetic heritage from his part Crow Indian grandmother.

**FRIENDS OF ELMENDORPH, INC.**

**May 1993**

**NEW MEMBERS**

MR. & MRS. DANIEL BAXTER  
CARRIE ELLEN BURGER  
ELMA CARLSON  
MR. & MRS. WILLIAM DOTY  
MR. & MRS. MORTON GREENBURG  
MR. & MRS. BRENT KOVALCHIK  
THE LOWERY FAMILY  
LARRY THETFORD  
CHARLES WEGMAN

**LIFE MEMBERS**

ROBERT ASCOLI  
FAITH COMPO  
PEGGY LOVE

**DONATIONS: CABINETS**

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN  
- in Memory of  
ELIZABETH WINTHROP CHAPMAN  
JOHN & LOUISE DENTER  
- in Memory of ROBERT L. HAPEMAN  
GTE TELEPHONE OPERATIONS  
JEANNE ROCKWELL  
- In Memory of  
THOMAS EDWIN FRANCIS NOONAN  
DOMINICK & EUNICE TIBERIO  
DOUGLAS F. & ANNE R. WICKS  
- In Memory of DR. & MRS. W. W. WICKS  
MR. & MRS. FINN RENNIE  
MARY E. WILLETS  
- in Memory of  
MR. & MRS. JOHN R. WILLETS  
ROSETTA WUNDERLICH  
- in Memory of ROBERT WUNDERLICH

**MONETARY DONATIONS**

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION  
DR. & MRS. KENNETH APPELL  
MR. & MRS. DANIEL BAXTER  
MR. & MRS. HEINZ BERTELSMANN  
DR. & MRS. GEORGE CURRAN  
MR. & MRS. TERRENCE DEWSNAP  
CHRIS EGGERT  
BARBARA EWING  
JANE FERGUSON  
MICHAEL FITZMAURICE  
FRIENDS OF CLERMONT  
M. GLADSTONE  
PAULA GOLDEN  
PATRICIA MASIA - In Memory of  
EDWARD F. MASIA  
BETTY MILLER  
MRS. ALISE NORTON  
FREDERICK OSOLOWITZ  
RED HOOK LIONS CLUB  
MR. & MRS. RAYMOND RHODES  
MATHILDA SKRIVANEK  
PHYLLIS SMITH  
ELEANOR SPICIARICH  
MR. & MRS. BERTRAND STEPHENSON  
LARRY THETFORD  
MR. & MRS. STANTON TREMPER  
MURRAY VanNESS  
DR. & MRS. EDWIN VanVALEY  
MR. & MRS. JOHN VanWORMER  
- In Honor of STANLEY LYNK



## ELMENDORPH, ETC.

- Shirley Brown

April 1993 was a sad month for all of us. We lost **Harriet Johnson**, charter member, as well as our President, **Rosemary Coons**.

For the past nine years, Harriet had seldom missed a day at the shop. She was responsible for recruiting the majority of our faithful workers and a constant cheery presence. It was with heavy hearts that we worked in preparation for another season without her.

We are grateful that Harriet's husband **Bill** continues to assist us. **Richard Coons**, our "Saturday Boss" is continuing to work with us. We are all dedicated to the project so important to Harriet and Rosemary.

♦ ♦ ♦

The first Garage Sale of the year was held on May 1st as part of Red Hook's Apple Blossom Festival. The often repeated refrain from Committee and Supporters alike was, "Now I know it's spring!" Donations this first month were most generous, and we look forward to another good year.

Elmendorph Etc. is the major fundraiser for our restoration effort, and we need your support with donations of time as well as merchandise. The building is straightened up, new items are sorted and marked, and shelves are stocked on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) are usually sale days. If you think you could help us, call us at the shop (758-5887) and volunteer!

The shop is tiny, and we run out of shelf room. With Richard Coons as director, we hold Sunday afternoon Yard Sales to help ease the problem. We particularly need help setting up and cleaning up on those days.

Remember us when you're spring cleaning and find things you no longer need. Then come join us and know you're part of the great things that are happening to that wonderful old community building.

## KITCHEN COOKERY

- Barbara Bielenberg

Old and new technologies combined on May 2nd when we served more than 100 bowls of homemade soup, salad and hearty loaves of bread baked in our brick bake oven. Visitors to Red Hook's Apple Blossom Festival filed through our handsome new kitchen to help themselves from eleven steaming crockpots of delicious soups before passing on to the historic 1830 kitchen. There, **Catherine Jones** produced fourteen loaves of brick oven bread, dozens of biscuits and several delicious apple pies for a delighted audience while a chicken roasted in a tin reflector oven in front of the fireplace. Catherine was assisted by fire tenders, **Roger Scheff** and **Joe Kavaky** and apple peeler, **Mary Cloffi**.

We are especially grateful to our contractor, **Kent Garlinghouse**, who skillfully levelled floors and straightened walls and installed our beautiful cabinets from **Kitchen Kreations** in time for the big event. The new wiring installed by the **McCarthy brothers** was successfully tested by those eleven crockpots!

Special thanks to **Betsey Wacker** for cookies and cashiering, to **Vera Cole**, who presided over the coffee urn and to **Ann Germain**, **Faith Compo**, **Ursula Frey**, **Johanna Schofer**, **Doris Wedlake**, **Esther Higgins**, **Elsa Kreider**, **Cleo Hamm**, **Mim Brown** and **Catherine Jones** (and, Faith notes, Barbara Bielenberg) for their delicious pots of soup. Thanks to **Doreen Alexander**, **Barbara Paul**, **Susan Ellis**, **Ilse Balough**, **Barbara Maple**, **June Elsemore**, **Barbara Ewing**, **Alma Bowman**, **John Cloffi** and **Jackie Appleby** for their wonderful salads and dressings and to **John Johnson of Kitchen Kreations** who arrived with a huge tray of fresh donuts to sell with our coffee and tea. We netted well over \$400 from the lunch and cooking demonstrations and won many new friends for the Elmendorph Inn and its restoration.

And last, but certainly not least, we are very grateful to the **J. M. Kaplan Fund** and to all of you who adopted cabinets and made our bright new kitchen possible.

## RESTORATION COMMITTEE

- Barbara Bielenberg

By the time you read this, work on our new office/workroom and handicap accessible lavatory will be nearing completion. The successful bidder for the project was Hudson Valley Preservation Corp. and we are delighted to welcome back Craig Marchessault and Mason Lord, who did such excellent work on the exterior of the Elmendorph last fall.

We are now in the final stages of preparation for the restoration of the Middle Room which has provided extraordinary challenges and some real surprises. First the surprises — underneath eight layers of wallpaper we discovered a lovely blue-gray and white floral paper tentatively identified as a French block printed paper made in the early 1820's! The next layer is a very exotic black on white copper plate engraved paper. The French experimented briefly with engraved papers around 1823 but surviving examples are rare. Both of these papers were found above the chair rail only and each is trimmed by a colorful border paper.

We thank Joanne Kosuda-Warner, Assistant Curator of Wallcoverings at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York City for her help in identifying our papers. Now we are challenged to discover how such sophisticated wallcoverings found their way onto the walls of our country tavern! In the meantime, we are planning to gradually restore and retain examples of both papers and borders on one wall of the Middle Room.

Planning the restoration of the Middle Room, which is part of the original 1760 building, has provided numerous technical challenges. The plaster, for instance is applied over mud and straw on several walls, directly on brick adjacent to the fireplace and on wood lath elsewhere. Missing plaster must be replaced with material compatible with the old surfaces and with the surviving plaster, to the end that old and new will blend and co-exist without cracking at the joint. There is evidence of a long-gone chimney cupboard to the left of the fireplace. What did it look like?

Answers to these, and numerous other questions, have come from Don Carpentier of Eastfield Village in East Nassau who built our magnificent beehive oven. Don has collected and restored 18th and early 19th-century buildings since childhood and have become a recognized expert and practitioner of the many historic trades required to authentically build and furnish a period building.

We were encouraged to seek expert advice by our team of overseers at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, which must approve all work done on the Elmendorph Inn. The State recognizes the importance of its historic structures and requires that any building which receives State funding adhere to the highest standards of restoration as outlined in guidelines established by the Secretary of the Interior in the days when Federal funding flowed to preservation projects. A very small but dedicated group of professionals administers the State's preservation grants and, although we sometimes become frustrated by delays and demands, we know that, like a stern parent, the State's mission is to patiently guide us to the best possible preservation of the unique historic treasure we call the Elmendorph Inn.



AUCTION '93

AUCTION '93

## ELMENDORPH INN BENEFIT AUCTION

Sunday, August 29th  
12:00 Noon

Preview begins at 10:00 a.m.

Auctioneer: George Cole

Come to a real country auction - under a tent - at the Elmendorph Inn, Red Hook. George Cole of Rhinebeck will serve as guest auctioneer to help raise funds to continue the restoration of our historic inn.

The success of past auctions have been based on the volume and quality of donations. These have included old and new treasures from the kitchen to the attic to the garage, mirrors, lamps, china, artwork, collectibles, old linens/antique clothes, jewelry, old tools and furniture (couches, tables, chairs, beds, dressers, and benches) are all acceptable (large appliances or contemporary furniture in poor condition are not acceptable). Some items may go to the Elmendorph Etc. shop.

We will be happy to pick up items from your home or you may bring donations to the Elmendorph Etc. on Tuesday/Friday/Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please call ASAP as we will be preparing a list to advertise.

We have been fortunate to receive "service" donations — gift certificates for dinner, lunch, books, etc. If you would like to donate or help acquire these, your assistance is appreciated.

As the auction day nears, keep an eye out for promotional news articles in our local newspapers . . . and also plan to attend. In the past we have had many first-time auction goers who have enjoyed themselves immensely.

..CLIP.....SEND.....SAVE....CLIP.....SEND.....SAVE.....CLIP.....SEND.....SAVE.....CLIP..

### ELMENDORPH INN - AUCTION '93

- ☐ I have at least one donation for the auction, so please call me to arrange delivery.
- ☐ You can't believe the stuff I have; I better have you come over and sort the trash from the treasures!
- ☐ I can't spare a thing. . .but I would like to volunteer for a committee.

___ Food donation/sales	___ Acquisitions
___ Setup/Tear down	___ Pickup/Delivery
___ Auction Floor Worker	___ Recorder

- ☐ Sorry, I can't help with the Auction, but I would like to make a donation to Friends of Elmendorph to help cover Auction expenses. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ What is an auction? Sounds interesting. . .so please call.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Eve Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

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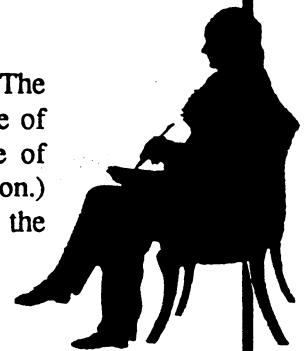
CALL: 914-876-<sup>2000</sup>3000 EVENINGS/WEEKENDS  
914-758-5887 TUESDAY, FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS  
914-758-8604 SHIRLEY BROWN

From: *The Old Post Road, The Story of the Boston Post Road*  
by Stewart H. Holbrook, McGraw-Hill, 1962

There is plenty of evidence that New England taverns were notorious, to Tories, as subversive places where plotters against the Crown agitated for liberty. John Adams tells of listening while several pub-crawlers of the period got well wound up in a country tavern on the Post Road. In 1774 when he was on a tour of the circuit courts of Massachusetts he . . .

. . . "stopped one night at a Shrewsbury tavern about forty miles from Boston and, as I was cold and wet, I sat down at a good fire in the barroom to dry out my great-coat and saddle-bags, till a fire could be built in my chamber. There presently came in, one after the other, half a dozen, or half a score substantial yeomen of the neighborhood, who, sitting down to a fire after lighting their pipes, began a lively conversation. I sat in total silence to hear them."

One of these lads started the ball rolling with the statement that "The people of Boston are distracted." (He may or may not have been one of the proficient *agents-provocateur* set in motion by Sam Adams, one of John's cousins, who has been called The Great Agitator of the Revolution.) The remark touched off a discussion that grew more "treasonable" by the hour, and was still going strong when John Adams went to bed.



Friends of Elmendorph, Inc.  
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