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ECHOS

Fall 1992




Please Join Us For

- A CHRISTMAS WEEKEND at the ELMENDORPH -

5th Annual Old Dutch Village Garden Club Greens Show
Saturday, December 5, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

3rd Annual Family Christmas Open House
Sunday, December 6, 1 - 4 p.m.

See Article Inside for More Details



Dear Friends,

I need your help on a special project. The Friends of Elmendorph, Inc., the Egbert Benson Historic Society, the Red Hook Conservation Advisory Committee and Hudson River Heritage have formed a partnership to prepare an Historic and Natural Resources Survey of the town for the Environmental Protection overlay map of the proposed zoning law. This will include documentation of historic buildings, farms, landscapes, scenic roads and vistas, significant trees, waterfalls, unmarked cemeteries, etc. This will assist the Town of Red Hook to enhance the sense of place for residents, formulate policy, and expand tourism opportunities.

While we cannot provide financial assistance for the project, we can and should provide volunteers who know the back roads, hidden resources and unique features of the town to do historic research, photography, identify sites or drive a car. There will be a meeting at the Elmendorph on Monday, November 23 at 7:30 p.m. to explain the project and assign you sections of Red Hook to explore. If you cannot come but would like to help, please contact me at 758-6334. If you would like to contribute to this project, make your tax-deductible check payable to Hudson River Heritage (for Red Hook Survey project).

So much is happening. Restoration is going well. The beehive oven is completed, the shop has had another outstanding year. The art show reception was a huge surprise with the large number of people who attended. Our deepest gratitude to Ed Fisher and all his volunteers for the very successful Art Show, to the Bielenbergs who spend about 75% of their lives at the restoration site, and to the special folks who volunteer at Elmendorph Etc., bringing in the bulk of our restoration funds. You deserve a good winter's rest.

On a recent Sunday, a few of us went to Eastfield Village, the restoration project of Donald Carpentier, our beehive oven builder. We were enchanted with the village and the dedication of Don to preservation. We are so fortunate to have him work on our project.

Be sure to see the new historic marker in front of our neighbor, the Historic Village Diner. Nice going, Sam and Arleen Harkins.

Finally, our past Board member and strong supporter, Pat Merrall, owner of The Bookery, has donated an IBM PC XT computer and printer - something we have long wished for.

Come to our Christmas Open House and say "hello." We'd like to meet all of our supporters. We'd also like to show you the restored exterior and our beehive oven which we hope to be using when you visit.

Have a Special Holiday Season!

Gratefully,

*Rosemary E. Coons
President*

PS: While crossing the State of Virginia this summer, I visited Appomattox, where I was startled to see the name of General George H. Sharpe in front of the tavern there. General Sharpe was a witness to the signing of the treaty by Generals Lee and Grant. I was taken aback because George H. Sharpe was our first innkeeper who died in 1796. Thanks to the research that Wint Aldrich did in Albany and Faith Compo did in Kingston, it was determined that General Sharpe was the grandson of our George Sharpe of Revolutionary War era. General Sharpe was also the speaker of the New York State Assembly following the Civil War.

SECOND ANNUAL ELMENDORPH ART SHOW

- Ed Fisher

Early October brought a bustle of activity to the Inn as preparations for the Second Annual Art Show got under way. The display flats from last year were hauled out of storage and set up in the South Room by the Committee with one new section added to accommodate the expected increase in entries, which arrived in abundance on Saturday the fifth. By the end of the day a total of 106 pieces were received, including three fine steel sculptures. This was a gratifying response to the announcement which had been sent to some 82 local artists during the summer.

During the week, the work was arranged and hung under the skillful direction of Ruth Zipser. On Friday night the show opened with an enthusiastic attendance of about 120 happy viewers at the Artists Reception. As the show continued over the weekend, the number of sales rose to 17. The prize for the most popular work went to Patricia Billeci for her beautiful watercolor of the Old Stone Church Entrance.

Norma Liuzza, Bob and Barbara Bielenberg, Barbara Field, Rosemary Fisher, Mary Cioffi, Seb Eggert, Doug Traudt, Dave Brown, Richard Coons, Shirley Brown and the staff of Elmendorph Etc., Harold Fell, Helen Lasher and numerous others contributed toward the success of the show. To the great relief of the Chairman, Ed Fisher, it met expenses and made a profit of \$375.

RESTORATION COMMITTEE

- Barbara W. Bielenberg

Many of you have watched the restoration of the Elmendorph since our last newsletter — or read about some of the activity in local newspapers. As I write this, the siding on the north facade and the south side of the kitchen wing looks "good as new," the original window sash is being reglazed with old glass and an impressive brick and stone bake oven projects from the east wall of the kitchen. But these bare facts don't begin to convey the tender, loving care which has been lavished on our historic building by a team of dedicated and skilled professional craftsmen.

Craig Marchessault and **Mason F. Lord, Jr.** of **Hudson Valley Preservation** and their associate, **David Seegers**, have patiently and with great skill removed and repaired with epoxy each piece of north facade siding, prime painting each board on both sides before returning it to its original location. All of the original window sash has been carefully taken apart and repaired and missing muntins recreated where necessary. Even the old kitchen door has been taken apart, repaired and reassembled to serve another 150 years! The east and south walls are being re-sided with new boards to match the original, replacing later "novelty" siding. Structural repairs have been made where necessary and all walls have been insulated with fiberglass.

We were privileged to have restoration specialists, **Don Carpentier** and **Mike Kelly** recreate the original kitchen bake oven and restore the firebox of our kitchen fireplace. The men worked six long days, excavating and building our oven using the original foundation stones and bricks remaining in the fireplace wall as a guide. Don and Mike have recreated the original beehive oven, significantly larger than most home ovens of the period, but suitable for a commercial establishment such as the Elmendorph. Stones removed from a pile in the basement of the Elmendorph and bricks from an old house demolished near Albany were used in the construction. Hudson River sand matching the color and texture of the original was used in the mortar. The design of the fireplace and oven and other original surviving architectural details suggest that the Elmendorph kitchen was added to the building around 1830.

Don Carpentier is a nationally recognized authority on the architecture and decorative arts of the 18th and 19th centuries and directs a summer school in period technology at Eastfield Village, his privately-owned collection of historic buildings in East Nassau, New York. Mike has helped Don disassemble and move many of the structures to Eastfield, recreating stone foundations and brick and stone fireplaces, ovens and chimneys, plaster walls and decorative and structural woodwork where necessary. During recent winters, Don has taught himself to reproduce English creamware, a pottery commonly used in the Federal period in American homes and taverns, including the Elmendorph. This winter he will be recreating a complete set of dinnerware for display in one of the historic buildings at Colonial Williamsburg. Some day we hope to be able to have Don replicate pottery found in our archeological digs for use at the Elmendorph!

As you can imagine, a complex restoration project requires many on-the-spot decisions and we are grateful to **Herman Gorgens** for his constant attention and consultation. Herman provides your Board with weekly reports which form a day-by-day diary of the work. We also thank **David Brown** for loaning us his video camera so we could tape the reconstruction of the bake oven for future viewing.

In closing, we must report what fun we had performing some amateur archeology in the back yard of the Elmendorph. **Shirley Brown** and **Elsa Kreider** began the project of sifting each shovelful, searching for bits and pieces of ceramics, glass and metal. Later they were joined by **Bill Alexander**, **Linda Keelling** and some energetic youngsters from the neighborhood. We recovered two trays of material including part of a wine glass, pipe stems and bowls, 18th century lead-glazed slipware and deep blue transfer-printed ware as well as rusted iron, shells and bones. All these fragments add to our knowledge of life at the Elmendorph in the 18th and early 19th centuries and remind us, once again, what a valuable educational and historic resource the Elmendorph is.



GALA CHRISTMAS WEEKEND AT THE ELMENDORPH

December 5th and 6th

- Barbara Bielenberg

Christmas comes early to the Elmendorph this year as we once again open the holiday season with our annual celebration of the traditional Dutch St. Nicholas Day. Our very special 3rd Annual Family Christmas Open House will be held on **Sunday afternoon, December 6th from 1:00-4:00** and, as in the past, the Inn will be decorated with greens and fruit in the 18th century manner. A tall Christmas tree will await garlands of cranberries and popcorn made by children at a special work table set up for the purpose. Homemade Christmas cookies, cocoa and mulled cider will be served.

Admission is free and all are invited to bring children and grandchildren to this festive event. This year, as a special treat, we hope to include a special fire-lighting to celebrate the restoration of the kitchen fireplace. Thanks to your generous support, we have real accomplishments to celebrate this year, so please join us and share our joy.

On Saturday, December 5th, the Old Dutch Village Garden Club will host its 5th Annual Greens Show at the Elmendorph from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Garden Club members will present holiday decorating ideas with displays of wreaths and decorations to inspire your own Christmas preparations. Refreshments will be served at the Greens Show and all are welcome to attend.

Plan to start the holiday season by visiting the Elmendorph Inn on December 5th and 6th!

ELMENDORPH ETC.

- Shirley Brown

Congratulations to the Elmendorph Etc. committee for completing another successful season of Garage and Lawn Sales. Our spirits were lifted when we could look out the windows of the little brown building and see the restoration of the north wall of the Inn. It has been a "shabby view" for 15 years! Spurred by this visible progress, we set a goal of \$20,000 by the end of October, the last of our six-month season.

Richard Coons, our weekend Boss, led our Lawn Sales, assisted by **David and Dougie Brown**, and a great deal of the credit goes to him as we met our goal on October 17th!!

The last week in October is our traditional half-price sale. Given a non-rainy weekend for a change, we should be able to report an amazing total at the Annual Meeting.

ADOPT-A-CABINET

Now that the bake oven and fireplace in our 1830 kitchen have been restored and made ready for use, we are more than ever determined to remove the modern kitchen cabinets and sink so that we can demonstrate early 19th-century cooking techniques in a period setting and offer samples of fireplace cooking at our receptions and parties. In the course of restoring the fireplace, we have had to remove some of the plasterboard ceiling and have discovered old ochre-painted wooden ceiling boards and beams hidden beneath. What other wonderful surprises will we find when we begin full restoration of the kitchen?

We are very grateful to all of you who have contributed to our fund to create a new kitchen adjacent to the old one. This space will serve as an all-important workroom for the cleaning and preparation of material donated for sale at the Elmendorph, Etc. shop as well as allowing us to expand our activities to include fund-raising receptions, dinners and other social events.

Please consider a year-end donation to our kitchen fund. Gifts in any amount are welcome. Donations of \$100 or more will be acknowledged on a plaque which will be permanently displayed in the new kitchen.

ACQUISITIONS

We are extremely grateful to **Pat Merrill**, the proprietor of The Bookery in Red Hook, for the generous donation of an **IBM PC XT computer**, complete with printer, oak cabinets and matching file, and also for the years of service she has given to the Friends of Elmendorph and the Red Hook community. Pat is leaving the community to join her husband in California. She will be sorely missed.

Pat's computer will be installed in the office/workroom which is due to be created with our Natural Heritage Trust grant from the State of New York. The office will include a bookshelf dedicated in appreciation of Pat Merrill, long before we learned of her most recent contribution! We have already acquired a number of reference books for the shelf including recent donations of *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America* by Ivor Noel Hume and *The Preservationist's Progress* by Hugh Howard.

Thanks to those of you who contributed to our unrestricted furniture fund, we have just acquired a 19th-century work table which is presently being employed in the South Room but which will move to the middle room after the room is restored this winter. When the office and middle room are completed, we will have many more needs to share with you.

DONATIONS AND NEW MEMBERS

Donations

Terence and Catherine Dewsnap
Mr. & Mrs. John J. Gilfeather
Steve Saland
Mrs. Edward Shields
Elizabeth (Lee) Smithers
Mr. & Mrs. John Somma
Mr. & Mrs. Otto Tatar
Ethel Wilken

New Members

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Bulkeley
433 West Kerley Corners Rd., Tivoli, NY 12583

Valerie Soderini
214 Roxbury Rd., Garden City, NY 11530

Beverly H. Teator
1293 Route 9, Tivoli, NY 12583

Two quotes from 19th-century homemaking books offering advice useful for our new beehive oven.

Heating ovens must be regulated by experience and observation. There is a great difference in wood giving out heat; there is a great difference in the construction of ovens, and when an oven is extremely cold either on account of the weather or want of use, it must be heated more. Economical people heat ovens with pine wood, faggots, brush and such light stuff. If you have but hard wood, you must remember that it makes hot coals, and therefore less of it will answer. A smart fire for an hour and a half is a general rule for common sized family ovens, provided brown bread and beans are to be baked. An hour is long enough to heat an oven for flour bread. Pies bear about as much heat as flour bread; pumpkin pies will bear more.

The American Frugal Housewife
- Lydia Child

A new oven should be heated three times, in order to season it before baking food in it. An oven of the best make and construction can be made by careful attention and a little judicious management, to do five successive bakings with one heating; first the bread then the puddings, then pies, then gingerbread, and then custards, which will bake sufficiently by being permitted to remain in a long time.

From A Practical Housekeeper, The American Practical Cookery Book
(Philadelphia: G.G. Evans, 1859)
30th Ed. (New York: Samuel S. & William Wood, 1845)



*THE BEST WISHES OF THE
HOLIDAY SEASON
TO ALL!!*

*See You At Our Open House
Sunday, December 6*

FRIENDS OF ELMENDORPH



Friends of Elmendorph, Inc.
P.O. Box 1776
Red Hook, New York 12571

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