



## *The Guide*

*Town of Duane Newsletter*  
*September 2012*  
*Vol. 4 No.2*

### Town “Beautification Day” Planned

The first issue of *The Guide* newsletter was mailed out in the spring of 2009. Included in the issue was a survey. The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback from town residents on several issues. One question asked residents about their feelings concerning a town clean-up day. Approximately 27% of the surveys were returned. Over 80% of the people responding indicated they would be willing to participate in a town wide clean up.

At the May 16<sup>th</sup> Town Board meeting, board member Carmella Teeple discussed the possibility of a town wide “beautification day”. Since that date Carmella has been working to put together the details for a Duane Beautification Day.

The Beautification Day will be Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. If necessary, Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup> has been established as a rain date. Anyone interested in volunteering should arrive at the Duane Fire Station around 9 AM. Volunteers will be assigned to one of the following projects: (A) Pick up trash along our highways (B) Remove debris from the nature trails behind church and (C) Clean up and remove debris from Town Park. All groups should plan to end work session at 12 noon. Hot dog and refreshments will be provided at the Fire Station at 12:30. Please dress appropriately and remember to bring gloves. Individuals picking up trash along the roadside will be provided with Hi-Vis vests. For additional information call Carmella at: 481-6726.



**Sue Nitto**

### Sue Nitto Seeks Town Clerk Position

Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup> is Election Day. Much attention will be focused on the presidential race. Locally the Town of Duane has only one position appearing on the ballot. Last November Patty Connors resigned as Town Clerk. The Town Board appointed Deputy Town Clerk, Sue Nitto, to the position of Town Clerk. Sue will be running unopposed on the November ballot. The polls open at 6:00 AM and close at 9:00 PM. Duane residents will be voting at the Duane Fire Station.

Interested in playing chess? Rita Gordon is interested in starting a weekly gathering of individuals who would like to play chess. If you are interested call Rita at, 483-4672.

# **Town of Duane Historical Notes**

## **Prepared by: Gloria Gori, Town Historian**

### **Our Duane Hermit**

As a youngster many of my neighbors were old bachelors living in their own little homes along the Duane roads. Only one was a true hermit, his name, Roy Briggs, lived deep in the woods, somewhere behind the old ruins of the schoolhouse on Studley Hill Road.

He left such an impression on me that I can vividly remember his appearance to this day. Roy was of short wiry stature with long gray hair, full facial hair that ended in a long beard. His bushy eyebrows framed and enclosed his little round spectacles. Roy was a true recluse, who wanted nothing to do with anyone. Harold McGowan, our mailman, and my Dad would always check on him and would bring him groceries or things he would need.

Roy Briggs was born in Constable about 1876. His parents, Norman and Henrietta Briggs moved to Malone when he was about 3. In school he was a very popular student. President of his class in 1894. Roy excelled in debating, and was a fine athlete. The Malone Farmer reported on his athletic accomplishments. Running Broad jump 16'1", 100 yd. dash 11.25sec., running hop step and jump 35'6" and he threw a baseball 307'.

After graduation Roy set out for the Klondike in the "gold rush" days of 1897-98, with Roy and Charles Paddock, also of Malone. They staked claims throughout the territory from Nome to Dawson. They dug for gold on Hunker Creek. It was a very slow process for they dug pits as far as the frozen ground would allow. The next step was to build a fire in the pit which would draw out the frost but a short distance, and then dig deeper. Only two fires were all that could be built in the pit in one day. This was done just to reach the bedrock, which then had to be broken through in search for the gold. It was far more difficult and labor intensive than panning in the streams.

Word spread that rich finds had been reported on tributaries of the Stewart River 350 miles away from their creek. There was a stampede to the area. Roy and his partners staked early claims there in the teens and were doubtless among the best prospects in the new territory. By the time they had returned to Hunker Creek they had walked overland 700 miles.

Roy returned home in 1905, and the local paper, Malone Farmer, reported he looked remarkably well and the vigorous climate and hardships of the wilderness must have agreed with him. In 1921, Roy's mother purchased the Duchard farm, 107 acres on Studley Hill. The property was known as the Trip Lot. At one time the house was occupied by Harriet Duane, in 1866. The lot had a comfortable cabin, a small garden with a few apple trees. This became Roy's home for the next 20 years.

Roy considered himself a prospector and spent much of his time prospecting for gold, and was successful in finding small amounts. His second past time was hunting and fishing, and he more or less lived off the land. One story that has been handed down was that on a Sunday hunting, his gun went off accidentally and a ball entered his foot. That was a bad omen to him or a warning and he never hunted or fished on Sundays again.

His only means of transportation was a bicycle which he would ride to Westcott's store at Chasm Falls.

The expression, "We all march to a different drummer." Roy Briggs chose a lifestyle of seclusion, with as much isolation as possible. He preferred the solitude of the wilderness to the companionship of neighbors

Roy was widely known as “The Hermit of Studley Hill”, and sadly to say he died in Ogdensburg State Hospital in the early 1950’s.

Gloria Gori, Duane Town Historian

Sources: Malone Farmer 1894,1902,1905,1880 US Federal Census, *Water Over the Dam* by Floy S. Hyde

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## **Highlights from Town Board Meetings**

### **May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

*All members were present for meeting.*

A presentation of the newly updated Town of Duane website was provided by Jim Lalonde. Additional photographs and information for the community calendar are welcome. The website may be viewed at [www.duaneny.com](http://www.duaneny.com). Supervisor Ned LeMieux also discussed contacting Governor George Pataki regarding 4 wheeler trails for the Town of Duane. Board member, Carmella Teeple discussed the possibility of a town wide “beautification day”. The board was receptive to the idea more details will be forthcoming. Gary Cring informed the board due to unforeseen circumstances he would not be able to publish the May 2012 newsletter, The Guide.

### **June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

*All members were present for meeting.*

Carmella Teeple initiated further discussion regarding a “beautification day” for the town. She suggested a possible September date. A copier will now be made available for use during town board meetings if necessary. Supervisor LeMieux addressed the board regarding former town assessor Doug Tichenor’s desire to “buy back” retirement time from NYS Retirement Program. There is a potential shortfall in town contributions which, with interest, would cost the town approximately \$4,126. The Supervisor was also approached by some residents on Eagle Pond concerning a sound/noise ordinance.

### **July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

*Absent: Carmella Teeple*

Supervisor LeMieux reported the findings of his research on the use of water turbine and riverside dams for power generation. Currently a project would be cost prohibitive for the town. Supervisor from Belmont sent a letter requesting support to pursue a grant for broadband internet. Board members expressed a willingness to support effort. Highway Superintendent Ned LeMieux Jr. asked for support to pursue work on Studley Hill Road, the project appears to be \$1,100 over budget. The board agreed the project should move forward.

### **August 15<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

*Absent: Mark Young*

Supervisor LeMieux discussed with the board tentative budget proposals for the 2013 budget. A discussion ensued relative to the Town Church. Work required to fix the door and make repairs to the foundation would cost an estimated \$1,000. Future discussion is required to determine if the town should continue to maintain church or consider selling the property. Carmella Teeple addressed the board concerning the “Town Beautification Day”. It is scheduled for September 22<sup>nd</sup> with details being explained through the newsletter.

## Dates of Upcoming Meetings and Events

October 17<sup>th</sup> - Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM  
November 21<sup>st</sup> - Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM  
December 19<sup>th</sup> - Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM  
January 16<sup>th</sup> - Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM  
Next issue of *The Guide* to be mailed out at the end of January 2013.

Reminder from your Fire Chief, Ned LeMieux Jr.: As we approach the heating season if you burn with wood please remember to have your chimney cleaned and checked.

The next newsletter is scheduled to come out at the end of January 2013. Before that date the Duane Angels will be sponsoring two community events. The first being the Halloween Party in October and the second being our annual Christmas Party. Both are fun filled events for the young and old. Watch for your informational mailing with dates and times.

*All comments and suggestions concerning the newsletter should be directed to Gary Cring, 483-2611.*



### Smokey says.....

If you haven't driven past the Duane Fire Station lately then you haven't seen this Smokey Bear sign. This beautifully painted sign was donated to the Duane Fire Department by town resident John Streiff.