



The Guide

Town of Duane Newsletter
May 2014
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Duane Fire Department Honors Richard Brown

On March 8th the Duane Volunteer Fire Department honored Richard Brown for his 43 years of service. The special occasion was held at the Lobster House in Potsdam. The event was well attended by fellow fire fighters and their families.

In 1970 Richard Brown was one of the founding fathers of the Duane Fire Department. Over the past 43 years Richard has served in the fire department in various capacities. Most recently he has served as president. Last year he decided it was time to retire.

Fire Chief, Ned LeMieux Jr., presented a plaque to Richard honoring his service to the Duane Fire Department. Ned LeMieux Sr., Town Supervisor, presented a proclamation to Richard thanking him for his service to the Town of Duane.



Winter of 2013-14

It's May so I hope winter is over! Just how bad was last winter? According to my unofficial snow fall records we had: 22" in November, 38" in December, 22" in January, 45" in February, 73" in March and 3" in April. That totals to 201 inches of snow or 16 ft. 9 in. From March 10th to March 16th we had 37" of snow! I plowed a total of 31 times. How cold was it? I ran out of wood on March 27th. I read an article that stated 77% of the United States experienced the coldest six month period from October to March since 1912!

A special thank you goes out to our town's highway department. Through their tireless efforts our highways were plowed and safe. I know for a fact many long hours were spent plowing, sanding and making repairs. Thank you, Ned, Pam and Sean.

Renewed Interest in Debar Pond Lodge

Beginning in February, the town board began in earnest trying to once again drum up local interest in saving the Debar Lodge from demolition and making it useful again. The state owned lodge currently sits unused.

At the February 19th board meeting resident Jill Barnes shared information with board members concerning Debar Lodge. Jill met with Susan Arena and Steven Engelhard. Steven Engelhard is the executive director at AARCH (Adirondack Architectural Heritage). Their meeting focused on reinitiating the effort to save the Debar Lodge. The board was in agreement to pursue this suggestion. Several ideas were expressed and a possible petition to be signed by town residents got strong support.

At the March 19th board meeting Supervisor Ned LeMieux shared with board members a letter to be sent to Jeff Ferrell, an aide to Governor Cuomo. The letter outlined the town's position on Debar Lodge. Ned expressed hope the letter might lead to a conference call with the governor's office and DEC officials.

At the April 16th board meeting Jill Barnes presented the board with a petition form to be used to document public support. The board approved the petition and decided it should be circulated throughout the township for those interested in saving Debar Lodge by placing it on the National Register of Historic Places. Jill Barnes is heading up the effort.

The community will have until May 23rd to sign the petition in the town clerk's office. A downloadable version is available on the town's website, duaneny.com. Those who download the file and collect signatures may drop them off at the town clerk's office. Jill said she will be taking the petitions to a meeting with Steven Engelhart. Steve will be taking the petitions to the National Register's state Historic Preservation Review Board meeting in June.

Recently the Malone Village Board adopted a resolution to support the preservation of Debar Pond Lodge. The resolution was proposed by Trustee Joe Riccio, former editor of the Malone Telegram.

Paving Project to Continue on Old Meacham Road

Last year Duane Highway Superintendent, Ned LeMieux Jr., announced his plans to pave the Old Meacham Road over a period of years. Last year was the first year of the project and approximately a half mile was paved using the town's CHIPS money. CHIPS (Consolidated Highway Improvement Program) funds are available to all counties, cities, towns and villages in New York State. Recently Governor Cuomo announced an additional \$40 million would be added to the state's budgeted CHIPS monies. This will be an increase of 10% and each local government will share in this increase. The governor explained the increase was needed in light of the extensive road repairs as a result of the harsh winter weather.

Town of Duane Historical Notes

Prepared by: Gloria Gori, Town Historian

Mattie Haskin's Memories of Early Duane

Mattie moved to Duane at the age of seven. At that time Duane was a very rural farming community. If you take a walk in the woods, even the steepest hills you will find old stone walls that once marked where pastures, fields, and orchards once were. Families were self-sufficient, living off the land. They planted hops or potatoes to sell for income. Men hunted year around. Mattie said if they wanted meat, they went out and got it. Many of the men earned wages from guiding. They were hired from the Lake Meacham Hotel, the Ladd Hotel and the Peaceful Valley, former home of Silas Glassglow that is located across from the Park Line Store. Mattie, my parents, and other families opened their homes as a Bed and Breakfast to hunters from Syracuse, Albany and New York. A postcard for Peaceful Valley read "Best Hunting, Fishing, Chickens, Vegetables, Milk from Our Own Farm, Spring Water, Board, Rooms, Rates Reasonable."

Pack peddlers would come often before Duane had stores. They would carry socks, shoes, pans and clothing. If you offered them a meal they would pay for it with something out of their packs. Mattie remembered one, Old Jake Cohen, who had a horse and cart. Duane hired his daughter to teach in one of the Duane schools.

Gypsies would arrive with lots of wagons and park in the fields past the Methodist Church. They would stay for about 3 days and then move on. They would tell your fortune for 25 cents.

In the 1920 era during Prohibition, there was a lot of booze running through Duane. Mattie told of a car that pulled behind her home, turned the lights out and stayed till dawn. My dad found a wreck over an embankment with a trunk full. A good time was had by all at the weekly card game for many weeks.

Mattie felt the Depression had little effect on Duane, "We never had much before and we never had much after. Of course, years ago they raised everything they ate and just kept doing it. Maybe you went with a little less. I know I didn't have any money in the bank to lose, though they say some people did lose what they had."

The roads were dirt. Tools were simple. Rakes and shovels were \$1.50 each. The town owned 4 snow rollers or packers, \$15 each. From early town records there was a Road Overseer and he had a list of all the residents on his road. From what I could gather, it was his job to see that all the neighbors were responsible for taking care of the road that bordered their property lines. Eventually the town hired men to maintain the roads. A teamster who drove a horse to pull the rollers was paid

55 cents an hour and a laborer was paid 27.5 cents an hour. That was in 1917. In 1927 the town purchased from Manson Bros. of Malone, a 5 ton Reo Truck equipped with a Good Roads Snow Plow for \$3,022.54 on a lease plan, \$1,822.54 to be paid in 1928 and \$1,200 in 1929.

Telephone service arrived July 1, 1923. A four party line cost \$2.50 a month. Duane received electric power in the early 1940's. This came as great news to residents for Duane was one of the last in the state to be provided with power. For many years the franchise had been owned by the Paul Smiths Power Co., but no power was provided. The Paul Smith's firm wanted to relinquish all rights to the Central N.Y. Power Corp., for they did not want the cost of cutting the power lines through the wilderness, the state property and crooked roads to reach Duane.

Mattie told of three store owners. George Shenette, Tom Kelly and George Wilson. George Shenette's store was located in the Ladd Hotel. He sold canned goods, shoes, and clocks. George Wilson's store was located in the hotel and carried a greater variety of products for he had a car and could go to Malone more often for inventory.

A log cabin across from the hotel served as a dance hall was owned by Hiram Curtis. He would hire fiddlers and hold dances every 3 or 4 weeks. Elmer, Mattie's husband would often play. Elmer could play several instruments. When he came to our house I would beg him to play our piano. He could really tickle the ivory and play ragtime and blues. That cabin burnt down and the dances went across to the Ladd Hotel. The building was rebuilt in later years by Neil Savage. He opened a small café and sold beer and lunches. It stayed open for just a short period of time.

In World War II rationing priority stickers were issued for gas. The families would receive a ration book that contained stamps for food, clothing, shoes and gas. Blackouts were required at times when all lights had to be turned off at night. Going to the movies kept everyone's spirits high and helped them to forget about the war. They watched their favorite cowboys, Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy or Gene Aultry. It cost a dime for the show, and 5 cents for a candy bar. Gasoline was 19 cents a gallon. There were no televisions, families listened to the radio. The favorite shows were Jack Benny, Charlie McCarthy, Fibber Magee and Molly, The Shadow and Suspense Theater.

Thank you Mattie for giving us a glimpse of what Duane was like in the good old days. Again this will be a two part article. The next article will be about Mattie's life devoted to public service.

Sources: Reynoldston Research and Studies Collections, Malone Evening Telegram, Franklin Historical Review Vol. 48, early Duane Town Records

Highlights from Town Board Meetings

February 19th meeting:

Absent: Mark Young

The board reviewed Proposed Resolution #2 of 2014 to authorize Supervisor LeMieux to enter into a contract with County Life Flight, Inc. the medevac program. The board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

Supervisor LeMieux presented a proclamation to the town board for review to honor Richard Brown for his years of service to the Duane community. After all signatures are obtained, the document will be presented to Richard Brown with copies being filed with the Duane Town Clerk, The Duane Fire Department and Franklin County.

Duane resident, Jill Barnes, addressed the board regarding the Debar Lodge property. She shared information with the town board about a meeting she had with Susan Arena and Steven Engelhart at AARCH about reinitiating the effort to save the Debar Pond structures. Steven is director of Adirondack Architectural Heritage. The town board was in agreement to pursue this venue. The discussion included a possible petition to be signed by town residents. A resolution is to be voted on at the next board meeting.

March 19th meeting:

Absent: Mark Young

The board reviewed and passed Resolution #3 from Franklin County Office of Emergency Services regarding Fire Mutual Aid Plan.

Supervisor LeMieux addressed the board regarding Governor Cuomo's plan to cut property taxes. He discussed the benefits and drawbacks of the proposed plan and the possible impact on our town.

Supervisor LeMieux also informed the board about a recent letter he sent to Jeffery Farrell in the Governor's office regarding the Debar Lodge. He is hoping for a conference call including the governor's office and the DEC office.

April 16th meeting:

Absent: Mark Young

Jill Barnes reported to the board that the topic of the Debar Lodge is on the agenda for the AARCH meeting to be held in June. Steven Engelhart at AARCH would like to see this property listed on the National Registry for Historic Sites. She presented a petition form to be used to document public support.

The town board reviewed Resolution #4 for shared highway services between municipalities within Franklin County. All members present voted in the affirmative.

Supervisor LeMieux reported that Bob Crossman will issue an article 5A poultry license to Harmony Hills. This will provide for an increase in production over their current operation. Pam LeMieux presented a slideshow of the damage which occurred due to recent flooding. Much of the damage was on the Studley Hill Road. The highway department is filing necessary paperwork with FEMA to recover some of the repair expenses.

Dates of Upcoming Meetings and Events

June 18th- Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM

July 16th- Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM

August 20th- Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM

September 17th- Town Board Meeting at the Fire Station 7 PM

Next issue of *The Guide* to be mailed out at the end of September 2014

Any suggestions or questions concerning *The Guide* should be directed to Gary Cring (483-2611).

The Duane Angels sponsor a town wide garage sale every other year to benefit the Duane Fire Department. This is the off year so no town wide garage sale.

It's that time of year again when the snow melts and nature leaves behind the ugly trash from the winter months. The last few years I have asked people to take a plastic bag with them when they take a walk and pick up this trash. I've seen the difference on several of our roads. Our highways are clean and litter free. I and your neighbors thank you.