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President's Message

Hello Everyone!

How has your year of 2016 been so far? I have enjoyed it. By being with the Fabius Historical Society I am able to meet new people often and stay in contact with friends I have had for years.

Early this summer I brought 2 wooden boxes out of one of my closets. These boxes had belonged to my grandfather before 1952. One box contained a kerosene projector (also known as "a magic lantern"). The other box had many glass slides. I only knew my grandfather, William Glasgow, as a farmer. (He died when I was 4 years old.) As I studied the projector and slides, I realized that this was his hobby when he wasn't working the farm. What else did people do with no television, cell phones, computers, etc? Women did a lot of sewing and knitting. Quilting may have been a hobby. I remember my grandmother writing chain letters. This kind of letter would be mailed from one house to another and on to another in the same routine. On the paper would be a message to each of the recipients, at least 5. Do you have knowledge of any hobbies that your ancestors had that you can share? The projector and slides are on display in the Pioneer Museum.

In September I was involved in researching Baker Road. Two residents wanted to know where their road used to come out on Swift Road. It is now a dead end road which connects to Berwyn Road on its west side. After studying old maps we located the area. Across the road from where Baker Road stopped on Swift Road there used to be a saw mill. Two other people who grew up in that area remembered family members telling them, when they were young, that there used to be a hotel on Baker Road near Swift Road. That knowledge starts a person thinking about the number of hotels in the Fabius area when it was basically horse and buggy days. Even people who walked their animals to market needed a place to stay if they were traveling any great distance. A former inn, now a home, is at the corner of Toggenburg Road and Rt. 80.

This year the Pioneer Museum had 171 visitors.

If you are interested in becoming an executive board member, please let me know. We have board meetings 3 times a year: January, April, and October.

Sandy Beglinger

The following programs will be held at the Fabius Community Center in 2017:

Sat., January 7, 1pm— Emily Zaengle will present a program titled "Silos Nearby". She will discuss the structure of various silos used on farms in central NY.

Sat., February 4, 1pm— Sam Kelley, a retired professor from Cortland College, will talk about Black men in the service during WWI in France.

Sat., March 4, 1pm— Chuck D'Imperio, from Oneonta, will be talking about his latest book, A TASTE OF UPSTATE NEW YORK. Find out about foods such as potato chips (Saratoga), hot wings (Buffalo), and spiedies (Binghamton).

Mon., April 3, 7pm— CW Valetta, a Fabius graduate, will talk about his interest in honeybees.

Mon., May 1, 7pm— Ted Palmer of Manlius, a New York State Police retired Senior Investigator, will talk about the history of the NY State Police and their 100th anniversary.

Mon., June 5, 7pm— Dick Case, retired Post-Standard columnist, will talk about his new book, LOCAL TRIVIA. He has been spending time at the Onondaga Historical Association researching info about central NY.

Mon., July 10, 7pm— Dave Ruch from Buffalo, NY, will present "Traditional & Historical Songs of New York State".

Mon., August 7, 7pm— Performers from OHA will present a program about Syracuse China.

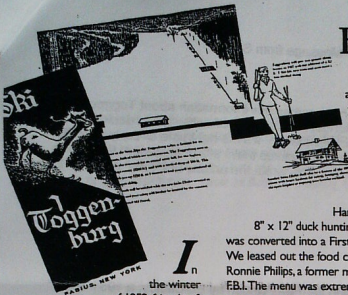
Mon., September 11, 7pm— Frank Stritter, a local resident from the Cazenovia area, will present a program about General George A. Custer, Lt. Col., USA— "Hero or Villain?" 1839-1876

Mon., October 2, 7pm— David Skeval, a local resident affiliated with Cornell University Cooperative Extension in Onondaga County, will discuss military lots, surveying, and tree growth over the years.

Mon., November 6, 7pm— A program will be presented about the Rowley families who lived in the Fabius area over the past 100+ years.

Mon., December 4, 6pm— Our annual pot-luck supper will be at 6pm. Please bring a dish of food and tableware. At 7pm we will be entertained by The McCarthy Family.

How Toggenburg Came



area and put in place. Long afterwards, one end was removed and an addition of the same size was added.

Harry donated his 8" x 12" duck hunting shack and this was converted into a First Aid Building. We leased out the food concession to Mr. Ronnie Phillips, a former member of the F.B.I. The menu was extremely simple consisting of sandwiches, etc. Water was provided by the Vaas family and carted across the road in large milk cans. Eventually, Mrs. Vaas took over the food operation.

There were no toilet facilities, so once again, Harry's Dad's company constructed two outhouses. They were painted a bright red with signs indicating "Ladies" and "Men." On the way down to the area, tragically one of the outhouses blew off the truck. This occurred on Rt. 91 in Fabius. It was the talk of the village!

The main slope had a natural bowl just below the brow of the hill and was marked by a single large maple tree. Skiers would stop and rest at this point and we eventually called this tree the "Gossip Tree."

Due to the death of Harry Ehle's father, Harry had to assume full control of the lumber company and sadly had to resign as a partner and that left just Doc. When we acquired the property we were completely innocent as far as laying out the area as to the proper exposure, prevailing wind, etc. It was a "hill". We needed someone to advise us on grading and seeding the tilled land on the slope. Luckily, Doc met Mr. Frank Mueller, a Jamesville farmer who offered to help with the soil preparation and seeding of the slope's surface which had been levelled and prepared by Mr. William Saunders, a man from DeRuyter, who was widely known for his experience with a bulldozer. We were open for mogul nine days the

first year, using the rope tow. Tickets were sold in the lodge. Eventually, a ticket house was erected outside and Mr. Mueller's son Franny took over the job of selling tickets.

In 1955, two years later, after observing the skier's acceptance, we decided to put in a 2800' T-Bar on the south side of the slope. Mr. Victor Hall of Watertown had been designing and erecting skillits all over the United States and Canada. We decided to hire "Vic". As it turned out, this T-Bar would be the second one installed in New York State. Snow Ridge in Turin has the first one.

Now it became necessary to make things more interesting and Gene Beckeman, a former PSIA instructor at Turin Ski Area joined us and helped in the laying out of trails. Gene became head of our Ski School, a position now held by Jim Morris, PSIA certified.

Time marches on. Mr. Robert T. Kells our next door neighbor in DeWitt, a Carrier Corporation executive, as well as a long time skier, expressed a desire to join in a partnership with Doc and Frank Mueller.

Following this, a second Hall T-Bar was installed where the rope tow was. After a few encouraging seasons we took the bull by the horns and decided to erect a double chair lift.

We also gave considerable thought to having a small slope for beginners and intermediate skiers. This was further to the south and was serviced by a small Hall T-Bar. It was referred to as "The Bunny Hill".

From here on, it was obvious that the local skiers were supportive and we planned on making improvements as finance permitted. Night skiing was becoming popular so we chose to make that our next venture.

We also acquired a second Sno-Cat which allowed us to pack the hill much faster. Doc, Ginny and the kids would go down to the area at 4 a.m. to start packing the hill. Doc would lead the way and Ginny in the second "Cat" would follow closely. These Tucker Sno-Cats did not

In the winter of 1952, friends of ours, Harry and Agnes Ehle of Liverpool, stopped at our home (we lived in Dewitt at that time), on a late Sunday evening, after skiing at Speculator Mountain. The remark was made that "We need a ski area closer to home." Doc spoke up immediately saying, "I know just the spot!" The next day Doc took Harry down to look at a hill located in Fabius and owned by a farmer, Mr. Robert L. Harris. Mr. Harris had every type of animal that was listed under the heading of farm animals. They roamed freely within the confines of the pastures and over what are now trails. Mr. Harris leased the land to us and subsequently we added more acreage on top from Mrs. Mabel Patrick, Mr. Walter Knapp and Mr. Carl Vaas.

The main slope, as you know it now, was covered with thorn apple trees and these had to be cleared. Getting the 1250 foot rope tow installed was truly a unique affair. (This was located where the short T-Bar is today) Mr. Harris loaned us a blind mare named "Maud". Doc would harness her up to a telephone pole and lead her up to the top of the hill; come back down and start all over again. There were fifteen poles. Needless to say, they were both exhausted. The holes were dug with the aid of an auger on a 3 point hitch tractor.

Subsequently, we had to think about a lodge or warming hut. Harry solved that problem by constructing a 24' x 48' building at his Dad's Liverpool Lumber Company and it was brought down to the

Into Existence

have a front snow blade so it was impossible to shave down the moguls. We made a mogul planer out of heavy chain and this would replace the roller. This was drawn by a triangular draw-bar to which was welded a heavy piece of channel iron. This did a remarkably good job cutting down the moguls as did a strip of page-wire fencing that spread out the loose snow behind.

Due to the design of the Tucker Cats it was necessary to grease the steel wheels everyday. A very tedious and arduous job that no one relished. After Doc and Frank greased the Cats several times they became more interested in the acquisition of the latest in grooming equipment and blew the "wad" and purchased a Piston-Bully. This made grooming a pleasure. Everyone wanted to try it. The Piston-Bully worked so well and when it died we traded it for two LMCs and these vastly improved the drudgery of grooming.

Regarding the naming of the area and trails, it was decided to call the area Toggenburg after all the Toggenburg goats that roamed the hill and also after a village in Switzerland. Ginny and Georgia Kells spent many hours pouring through various books pertaining to goats. They also stencilled the colorful picnic tables.

A few years later we added a new ski shop with a lounge upstairs on the North end of the lodge.

In June of '86, sadly, the building and contents were destroyed by fire. We started immediately to plan for a new building. This plan resulted in what now exists. Various changes occurred from year to year, inside as well as outside, such as the installation of a Triple Chair at the South end where the "Bunny Hill" was.

It will take too much time to elaborate on the various improvements; i.e. snow making, etc.

Nevertheless we will continue to upgrade the facilities as is warranted for the benefit of our skiing patrons.

Message from Sandy:

When I had come across this information about Toggenburg Ski Center amongst my dad's paper collection, I decided to include it in this newsletter. It's the right time of the year to think about one of the businesses that's still doing well in the Fabius area. I don't know who wrote the article, but "Doc" was Dr. Hickey.

The following item was written by Ed Clancy, a 1961 Fabius High School graduate.

"I was born in Syracuse, NY, and grew up in the tiny town of Fabius, with what can only be described as bodacious snowfalls, not to mention the occasional blizzard. As a young boy I remember walking on the country road in front of my house dwarfed by the snowbanks created on both sides of the road by the county snow plows. In my youth, snow was second nature to all of us, and when a snowfall of any measurable size fell, we were all up at five in the morning to listen for school closings on the radio. When the announcer said, "All Fabius public schools are closed today,"—which was laughable, because there was only one school in town, Fabius Central, grades one through twelve,—all heck would break loose in the Clancy household. My brother and I would scream for joy and my mother contemplated putting up with us for an entire day inside a cramped farmhouse with nothing to do but watch television and get underfoot. I might do something like help my mother bring in the laundry from the line which meant standing all the trousers and shirts upright since they were frozen stiff as boards. They would literally drip dry all over the kitchen floor and gradually sink into a heap, at which point we would put them on a line inside the house to finish drying."

Lorana Zirbel's granddaughter was in Mrs. Janaushek's class of 1995-1996. Each student had completed a personal history report. Liz's report on the Fabius Hotel adds to the hotel section in my president's message. Keep in mind that Liz put her report together 20+ years ago. MurNick's is now a private residence, east of Anna's Country Store (formerly Shea's Store).

THE FABIOUS HOTEL

By Elizabeth Gordon

Fabius has a lot of history. On December 1, 1945, the Fabius Hotel built in 1799 burnt to the ground. It was located where MurNicks is built today.

Fabius had no fire trucks. Fire trucks came from Jamesville and Cazenovia to put out the fire. By then the Hotel had burnt to the ground and they sprayed water on the hot spots.

I found it interesting that Fabius was once called Franklinville. The fire was caused by an explosion from a kerosene stove in the store room. There were several sheds in back of the hotel that people parked their horse and buggies in. Some people who had cars, parked them in the sheds also.

The M.G. Shea General Store was saved because the wind was blowing to the east. The only things saved were a refrigerator and some clothing.

Of interest to people in Fabius today is that the well in front of Murnicks was called the "town well". People who ran out of water could get water at the town well.

Sources: Newspaper clipping dated Dec. 1, 1945
Person - My Grandmother, Lorana Zirbel

COINCIDENCES OR _____?

- * Mark Twain was born during an appearance of Halley's Comet in 1835 and died on the day of its next appearance in 1910.
- * Abraham Lincoln created the Secret Service on April 14, 1865—the very same day he was shot at Ford's Theatre.
- * John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826—exactly 50 years after signing the Declaration of Independence.

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source: dailycognition.com