

# FRIENDS *Pruyn House*

March 2020

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A COMMUNITY  
CULTURAL CENTER

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Photo of Pruy House after Phase I of reconstruction. Notice the new roof and parapet! Photo by Tami Sherry

**Friends of Pruy House**

(518) 783-1435

[www.pruynhouse.org](http://www.pruynhouse.org)

[pruynhouse@colonie.org](mailto:pruynhouse@colonie.org)

## President's Message

### *A Time of Reflection and Appreciation*

Over the past year, the Pruy House site has experienced much change. From many needed updates to the structures and grounds, to additional programmatic initiatives, the dedicated Board of Directors of the Friends of Pruy House, along with the Town of Colonie, have been hard at work making sure the entire site stays safe and current. If you have driven by, you probably witnessed all the construction activity and its aftermath.

The Pruy House itself is in the final stages of the first phase of a large preservation project. The structure was reinforced; its exterior bricks exposed, deficiencies were repaired, bricked repointed, its rafters mended, its front entrance redone and its windows re-glazed. The building's white façade, which is now bare, will be replaced with an off-white stain that will be applied this coming spring. New shutters and needed repairs to the back entrance and porch are expected in the next phase of the project. Work was also done to the Buhrmaster Barn as well as the site's expansive brick walkway. The first phase of a three-year exterior lighting project was completed, making the site safer for activities and events that occur in the evening. Stay tuned, this incredible historic site, inclusive of its grounds, maintained gardens and structures will be back and better than ever!

The longtime Pruy House Curator, Diane Morgan, officially retired as of February, leaving a gaping hole to fill. We honored Diane for all her years of dedicated service at our Holiday Party in December, which drew a record crowd with so many of our wonderful members wanting to wish her well. Plans are underway to find her replacement. In the interim, Pruy House Assistant Curator Tami Sherry and members of the Friends of Pruy House Board have been filling in to ensure that the House and programs continue to run smoothly.

2019 was a busy year for the Pruy House Cultural and Historical Complex. There were three hundred scheduled events and approximately ten-thousand visitors to the site. We have fifty new members and many dedicated volunteers. We would like to thank these wonderful volunteers who help at the Concerts, Old Fashioned Sunday and other events. We would also like to thank our two Garden Clubs who are dedicated to this site and ensure its beauty.

*Continued on page 2*



## Capital Improvements Donations

since June 1, 2019

The Friends of Pruyn House would like to thank our wonderful Friends who have donated to the Capital Improvement Fund:

William J. Campbell

Ann and Bill Collins

Paul and Phyllis Cooney

Stephen and Marbry Gansel

Judith Gladstone

Elizabeth Hart

Eric and Priscilla Johnson

Elizabeth R. Kelly

Jacob Mishell and Kim Clash

Mary Ann Lewis

Diana Lindsay

Fred Miller

Cathy and Joel Powzyk

Sandra Rhodes

Peggy and Jack Seppi

T. Sherry

Florence and Ed Springstead

Dorothy Szymaszek

Blue Creek Garden Club

12th New York Regimental Association

## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

Several new educational initiatives have been added over the last year including the Fairy Garden competition, period-dressed actors at Old Fashioned Sunday and a Holiday Children's Party complete with Sinterklaas. The Friends of Pruyn House has realized a new children's activity book with the help of local artist Libby Lee. We want the community to know that we are "family-friendly", and are here as a resource to be shared. I will be chairing this year's Concerts in the Barn series and look forward to another musical season. The Concerts are a fabulous way to spend a Wednesday evening.

On behalf of the entire Board of Pruyn House Directors, the wonderful staff and incredible volunteers, I want to thank you for your patience during this time and your continual support. We could not do this without you and we look forward to seeing you at one of our many upcoming activities and programs.

Kindest regards,

— Diane Conroy-LaCivita, President

## Let our beautiful historic venue be the backdrop for your perfect wedding

It's also a delightful place for holding other events including bridal and baby showers, birthday parties, club meetings, and corporate events



The Pruyn House Cultural Center is conveniently located just off the Northway (I-87) near hotels and the Albany International Airport

**Pruyn House Cultural Center**  
**Town of Colonie**

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# HOLIDAY FUN!

## Our holiday celebrations were a great success!

Blue Creek Garden Club decorated the House beautifully, with a "Festive Holiday Trees" theme. The Open House showcased the American Recorder Society. Norman Thibodeau introduced children to old-fashioned instruments. The children were also treated to a visit from Sinterklaas. The Fort Orange Garden Club and Blue Creek Garden Club each hosted a greens sale and Rosanne Hargrave and Michael Clement delighted us with seasonal music at their Holiday Concert.



Clockwise from above: Diane Morgan, Paula Mahan, Diane Conroy-LaCivita and Linda Murphy; Sinterklaas and visitors at Open House; Blue Creek decorations in House; Michael Clement and Rosanne Hargrave performing at our Holiday Concert; and Schoolhouse decorated by Fort Orange Garden Club.

Photos by Tami Sherry, Diane Conroy-LaCivita and Jolene Dirolf



## Welcome New Friends!

*The Friends of Pruyn House  
extend a warm welcome  
to our new members:*

*New Members as of June 1, 2019*

Mark Armstrong  
Ellen Chernoff  
Mary Craven  
Denise D'Angelico  
Tess Everett Murphy  
Eleanor Ferraro  
Kathy and Mike Foley  
Halena Gajewski  
Kathy Goodman  
Philip and RoseMarie Hawver  
Jean Hill  
Barbara Hrachian  
Patricia Ilnicki  
Marion Jaffarian  
Jacob Mishell and Kim Clash  
Nancy Kotlko  
Susan Lawson  
Ruth Lyons  
Marylou Paulli  
John Petiet  
Teresa Rossi  
Margaret Shinorokian  
Maureen Toohey  
Sharon Wesley

## 2020 Board of Trustees

President: Diane Conroy-LaCivita  
Vice President: Patrick Dillon  
Secretary: Maryann Brennan  
Treasurer: Richard Friedman  
Past President: Mary Brizzell

### **Trustees:**

Jolene Dirolf  
Jamie Easton  
Nicole McNamara  
Fred Miller  
Nancy O'Connor  
Judy Quinn  
Mary Smith  
Maggie Vinciguerra  
Marjorie Ward

### **Associate Trustees:**


Carol Fitzgerald  
Linda Murphy  
Mary Ellen O'Brien  
Gary Thompson

### **Staff:**

Tami Sherry  
Joanne Razzano

*Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 – 3:30*

## Thank You!

 Many thanks and gratitude goes to Charlie Goddard, Friend of Pruyn House and member of the Northeast Woodworkers Association, for his generous gift of time and knowledge in repairing several pieces of furniture. Charlie fixed a couch, two gaming tables, a bench and a gentleman's desk. We would also like to thank Jim Dirolf, another wonderful Friend of Pruyn House, for repairing the gaming table in the Dining Room. It was a difficult job and we thank him for his time!

Also, many thanks to Key Bank for their generous donation of \$1,000 to help underwrite the cost of our upcoming Annual Dinner. The dinner will be held at Shaker Ridge Country Club on April 29th. Invitations to follow shortly!



## SPRING TRIP — JUNE 11, 2020

**Join us for our Spring Trip on  
Thursday, June 11th!**

We are going to Staatsburgh, a New York State Historic site, built in 1895. This Beaux Arts Mansion belonged to Ogden Mills and his wife Ruth Livingston Mills. We will lunch at the Beekman Arms Hotel, which has been in operation since 1766 and in the afternoon we will have a tour of both the Beekman Arms and the Henry Delamater Inn, which has been in operation since 1844.

The cost for members is \$80 and includes bus, driver tip, lunch, gratuity and all tours. You can bring a non-member friend for \$85. Please call for reservations—518-783-1435.

The trip is sponsored by Friends of Pruyn House and the Historical Society of the Town of Colonie.

## Wish List

**Did you know Pruyn House  
has a wish list?**

*Can you help with any of these?*

**Oven**

**Microwave**

**Work table**

**Light fixtures**

**Floor lamps**

**Desk lamps**

**Period furniture—1800's**

Items don't need to be new, but should be in good working order.

**THANK YOU!**

## Upcoming Events

The Colonie Art League will host their annual **Art Exhibit at the Pruyn House** from March 2nd through March 27th. This exhibit features approximately 60 jury selected works of art by members of the Colonie Art League. Pruyn House is open Monday—Friday, from 9:00—3:30 for viewing. This show is free—bring a friend!



**The Fort Orange Garden Club's Annual Plant and Tag Sale** kicks off with a preview day on Friday, May 8th, 3:00—5:00 pm (with \$5 donation). Sale continues Saturday, May 9th, 9:00—2:00 pm in the Buhrmaster Barn at the Pruyn House.

Sale features eye-appealing perennials, annuals, colorful patio planters, tomatoes, herbs, Mother's Day arrangements, garden accessories and advice.



# Remembrances of Life on “The Farm”

Edited by Joanne Razzano

**R**ecently, we received an email from Diane Davison, a cousin of the Henkes Family, who at one time owned the Pruyn House. During the 1950's the house and the surrounding acreage was owned by the Haswell family. Diane, known to family and friends as Dede, was friends with Catherine Henke's niece, Mary Haswell, whose mother was also a Henkes.

Dede writes, “In those days, the Pruyn House was just called, ‘The Farm.’ I remember happy times with the horses taking my little brother, Tommy, on the stone boat for a ride behind Frank, the big black horse. The family also had a pony named Silver. One day, we put Tommy on Silver, who didn't like the idea of riding him around and threw him off into a manure pile. What a stinky mess! Mary, her Uncle Bill and I picked him up and headed to the barn to clean him up.”

*[A stone boat is a type of sled, usually home built, for moving heavy objects like stones and bales. It's also used for clearing fields of rocks and stones.]*

“The hired man, Wasso Dumchek, paid us to clean out the pony's stable on the weekends. Mary's Uncle Bill also worked the farm and we did chores for him like hoeing the peppers and green beans. We used our earnings to go swimming at the Mid City Pool in Menands.”

*[Built in the 1930's, the Mid City Pool was part of the larger Mid City Park on Broadway in Menands next to the old Hawkins baseball stadium. The park, pool, and stadium were closed in the 1960s; the site is currently the location of the New York State Workers Compensation Board.]*



Here is Tommy picking the “fowers” at The Farm. In the background, you can see Wasso Dumchek's quarters just in front of the greenhouses. When the Town of Colonie purchased the property in 1983, the greenhouses were in very poor repair and had to be torn down.

“It was fun playing in the barn,” Dede continued. “Wasso was always good to us, even when I hid in the hayloft making ghost sounds...woooooo...wooooo...One day, in good-natured fun, Wasso found me and ran after me with a pitchfork to ‘drive those ghosts away.’ Needless-to-say, the ghost sounds stopped after that.”

The summertime was idyllic. Dede recollected, “Mary's dad, Lloyd Haswell, played softball with us in the back driveway and I learned how to catch a ball from him. Back in those days, there were trivia games in the newspaper. To get the answers, you had to research it in an encyclopedia, so Lloyd thought it was a great idea to give us kids ‘assignments’ to play along. Of course, being summertime, this was not a game we really wanted to play, but in the end, we did learn how to use the encyclopedia in a fun way.”

“Eating homemade ice cream during the summer was much more fun. How Mary and I each loved taking a spoon and dipping it into freshly made coffee ice cream.”

“One of the best summer memories,” Dede said, “was the field of strawberries! How my brother Tommy loved the ‘fowers.’ They did look like flowers and we all enjoyed sitting in the strawberry fields eating the sweet, red berries as fast as we could pick them.”

“The third floor of the main house was used for storage. It was a great place to play hide and seek at any time of year, just as long as we didn't tip over the boxes and scatter the contents,” Dede said. Of course, today, the third floor is an integral part of the house where the Colonie Historical Society has a rotating display, along with bedrooms and the office of the Pruyn House property.

Thank you, Dede for sharing such wonderful memories of the Pruyn House in days gone by.

# Annual Appeal Donations

*The Friends of Pruyn House Board of Trustees would like to thank the following Friends who donated to our Annual Appeal. These donations will be used to help improve the Pruyn House. Thank you!*

Al Armstrong	Judith Gladstone	Tom & Kathy Norton
Edward Bardon	Fred Gonsowski	Reeva Nowitz
Joan Beach	Grassland Equipment	Elinor Obuchowski
Tony & Mary Brankman	David & Carol Hebert	Jim & Nancy O'Connor
William & Mary Brizzell	Steven Heider	Vince & Bonnie Perry, Sr.
Debbie Brown	Deborah Sutter Henkes Heller	Janet Plourde
Douglas Bucher	Fred & Donna Hershey	Joel & Cathy Powzyk
Dorothy Buckley	Camille Hoheb	Paul & Diana Praus
Ed Buhrmaster, Jr.	Hillard's Greenhouse & Produce	Stephen Pruyn
Carole Bulger	David & Christine Houghton	Elizabeth Hudson Purcell
Patricia Campbell	Carol Ann Houlton	Joanne Razzano
William Campbell	Stephen & Louise Iacabucci	Rita Roberti
Betty Canape	Sally Jack	David & Pamela Rowley
Thomas & Joann Carabis	Charis Jenkins	Dawn Rufer
Anne Christman	Eric & Priscilla Johnson	George & Joanne Scaringe
Bill & Ann Collins	Karen Jones	Mike & Laurie Scaringe
Linda Colonno	Joseph & Paula Mahan	Schuyler Companies
Joseph & Diane Conroy-LaCivita	Kathy Mascelli	Cheryl Scott
Paul & Phyllis Cooney	Massry Charitable Foundation	Karen Senecal
Toni Cortese	Mary Ann Matthews	Jack & Peggy Seppi
Catherine Crohan	Betty Lou Mathis	Tami Sherry
Herb Dahlem	Louise McColgin	Lorna Skaaren
Harriett DeGraff	Helen McCumber	Jacqueline Smith
Virginia Dollar	Paul & Kathy McElligott	Ed & Florence Springstead
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Jim & Barbara Feiden	Floyd & Pepper Milbank	George & Patricia Taylor
Dennis & Carol Fitzgerald	Fred Miller	Angelica Trzepacz
Joanne Fitzgibbon	Kathleen Mioducki	Shirley Tschumi
Kathleen Foley	William Mirabile	Peter & Kathleen Tunny
Kathy Franklin	Marjorie Morelli	David & Beth Vail
Richard Friedman	Donald & Ann Morton	Maggie Vinciguerra
Marbry Gansle	Lowell Nichols	Peter & Donna Wayner
	John J. Nigro	

## 2020 Concerts in the Barn

### July 8

JADE—Bring your dancing shoes for music of the 50's & 60's

### July 15

THREE QUARTER NORTH—Bluegrass in the Barn!

### July 22

GERMAN NIGHT with THE MOUNTAIN BRAUHAUS BAND

### July 29

IRISH NIGHT with GET UP JACK

### August 5

CAIT & THE CRITTERS— Swing Dance time!

**Music: 6:30 – 8:30pm**

## Docents!

**Pruyn House is in need of Docents! Would you like to become a Pruy House docent?**

We are offering two docent training classes — Wednesday, April 22nd at 6:30pm and Thursday, April 23rd at 10:30am. Please call us at 518-783-1435 to reserve your spot!

Training will be taught by our very own Pruy House expert—Diane Morgan!



**FRIENDS**  
*Pruyn of House*

207 Old Niskayuna Road  
P.O. Box 1254  
Latham, NY 12110-8574

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[www.pruynhouse.org](http://www.pruynhouse.org)  
[pruynhouse@colonie.org](mailto:pruynhouse@colonie.org)



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