

FRIENDS of Pruyn House

March 2019

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A COMMUNITY
CULTURAL CENTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Curator's Report | 2
Capital Improvement | 2
Cooperstown Trip | 3
Girl Scout Program | 3
Spring 2019 Trip | 3
Board of Trustees | 4
From the Collections | 4
New Members | 4
Holiday Events | 5
Reading For Info | 6
Annual Appeal | 7
In Recognition | 7
Concert Schedule | 8

Friends of Pruy House

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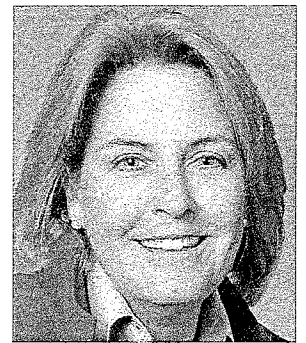
President's Message

Greetings to All!

As the Board of Directors, dedicated staff, and volunteers of the Pruy House prepare for yet another exciting year of activities and programs, I accept the honor of being selected to be its next President with tremendous humility. This year, we will be honoring the 36th anniversary of the Town of Colonie's purchase of the property to become its cultural, educational and social center. Having grown up literally right down the road from the present-day Pruy House, I knew its previous owner, played with gangs of other neighborhood children in its fields, woods and greenhouses, and attended the estate sale when its private contents were auctioned off. I have known many incredible individuals who have given so much to the property and its purpose. Realizing how fortunate we are to have such a community resource available to all, I look forward to seeing and working with many of you at an upcoming event, activity, or program.

Sláinte!

— Diane Conroy-LaCivita, President



Winter View

Photo by Tami Sherry

Curator's Report

As we look forward to the programs and events of this new year, it is still a pleasure to remember the past. In 2018, we were celebrating our 35th Anniversary recalling that in 1983, the Town purchased this property to become a cultural, educational and social center for this area and beyond. Over the years so much has been accomplished!

Last year, there were 288 scheduled events and use, approximately 10,500 visitors to this site, and \$59,884 received in rental income. The Friends acquired 31 new members, and \$15,184 was received in membership dues. At year-end we were grateful to all for the \$10,000 sent in response to Annual Appeal letters, a record amount for this Appeal.

Under the Buildings and Grounds Committee, many improvements were planned and completed. The Buhrmaster Barn received new lighting and increased power capacity. The potting shed was newly painted and the steps to the Schoolhouse rebuilt. Along with help from the Town crew and Highway Department with a man and bucket truck, several dead trees and branches were removed from the grounds. The Friends, with a \$1500 grant, arranged for a professional lighting study to plan for adequate lighting of the grounds and the replacement of all the aging lampposts on the grounds. Most important is our Board's ongoing collaboration with Town officials on the much needed exterior restoration of Pruyn House, a project which may span more than two years.

The highlight of our summer, the beloved five Concerts in the Barn, were presented with the help of generous supporters whose donations totaling \$6,560 helped underwrite the expenses. Under our Education Committee, there were four programs arranged, two musical and two talks. One of these by historian Michael Barrett covered the history of the Meneely Bell Company and highlighted our own 1864 Meneely Bell hanging in the Schoolhouse. Also, in partnership with the Historical Society (HSTC), two different bus trips were planned. In the spring, members and friends visited sites in the Berkshires, and in the fall traveled to Cooperstown.

Serving on our House Refurbishing Committee is Board Trustee Gary Thompson who was previously Librarian at Siena College, now retired. Gary has found many 19th century newspapers and books to add to our Collections. During the year, several of our dear members passed on and we are grateful for the gifts to Pruyn House donated in memory of these loyal members. Over the years, we have received special period pieces from members and others, adding to our Collections.

With all of the activities we have promoted, we must mention the important role of our volunteers. These are our Board members, greeters at all our events, helpers at the Concerts, the members of our two Garden Clubs and many others. In this exciting year ahead we have scheduled nineteen weddings, many community group events and meetings, programs, bus trips, and, as always, the Concerts, Old Fashioned Sunday and Holiday events. We value and rely on the assistance we receive from Town officials and Departments. Staying in touch with you, our members, is important as we continue with our newsletters, e-mail contacts, and through our Website and Facebook page. The office staff is here to help in any way we can and welcome your input and suggestions.

— Diane Morgan, Curator

Capital Improvement Donations

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

Margaret Blanco

Judith Daniels

Zelda Golden

Eric & Priscilla Johnson

Jack & Peggy Seppi

Tim & Maggie Vinciguerra

Norbert & Mary Ann Blum

Phil DiNuzzo

George & Loretta Hackney

Edward & Mary Alice Morgan

Alfred & Lois Siegel

William Campbell

Jim & Barbara Feiden

John & Theresa Hart

Thomas & Dorothea O'Brien

Dorothy Szymaszek

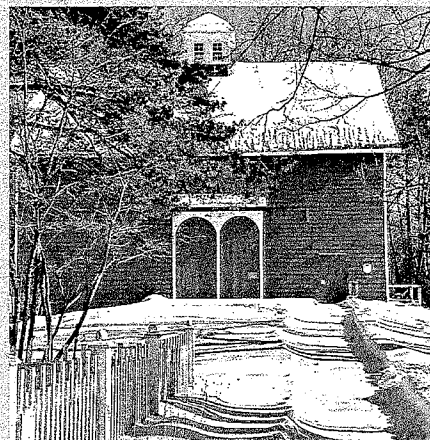
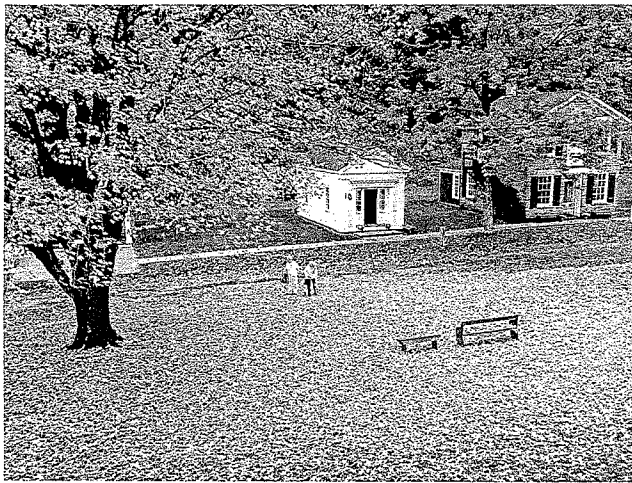


Photo by Joanne Razzano



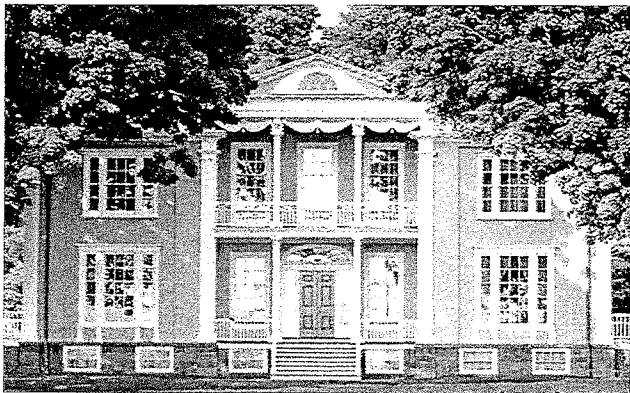
The view from the Tavern at the Farmer's Museum.
Photos by Tami Sherry



Bonnie Perry, Sarah Wellen and Georgina Aumick riding the carousel.

October Trip To Cooperstown

A lovely time was had by our Friends of Pruyn House and Historical Society of the Town of Colonie members exploring Cooperstown! We spent the morning at the Fenimore Art Gallery, dined at the beautiful Otesaga Hotel and roamed the fascinating Farmer's Museum in the afternoon. We really loved the Empire State Carousel!



Spring 2019 Trip

The Historical Society of the Town of Colonie and the Friends of Pruyn House invite you to join us for a bus trip on June 13, 2019 to historic Boscobel, a Neoclassical restored mansion with extraordinary gardens. We will lunch at Shadows on the Hudson—a three course meal with a view! In the afternoon we will visit the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Gallery on the Vassar College campus.

The cost is \$80 for members, \$85 for non-members. Space is limited to 35 people.

Please call us at 518-783-1435 to make your reservation!

— Tami Sherry, Assistant Curator



Girls Scouts Visit

Above, Girl Scout Troop 1 of Albany, spent an evening touring the Pruyn House, learning about quilts, and making crazy quilts of their own! We will see them again in the Spring for a visit to the Verdooy Schoolhouse.

Photo by Tami Sherry

New Members

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

Mark Brennan
Dan & Maryann Brennan
Timothy & Deborah Close
Starlyn D'Angelo
William & Cynthia Davies
Arthur & Sheila Glaude
David & Carol Hebert
William & Sharon Herald
Camille Hoheb
William & Rosalie Morris
Donald & Donna Putnam
Rita Roberti
Joseph Shish
Lee Stanton
John & Patricia VanVoorhis
Martha Zibro



Photo by Tami Sherry

From the Collections

This lovely compote is late 19th Century porcelain from the Sevres factory in France and a form of porcelain that is highly prized. On this piece is the inscription, "Exposition Universelle Paris 1878". This was France's third World's Fair, inviting the world to attend, and confirming confidence in the new Republic. Gift from the estate of Mrs. Paul Washburn.

— Diane Morgan, Curator

2019 Board of Trustees

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Vice President: Patrick Dillon

Secretary: Nancy O'Connor

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Asst. Treasurer: Gary Thompson

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Jamie Easton
Diana Lindsay
Fred Miller
Maryann Riviello
Brennan

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Carol Fitzgerald
Linda Murphy
Mary Ellen O'Brien
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Staff:

Diane Morgan, Curator
Tami Sherry, Asst.
Curator
Hours:
Mon. – Fri
9:00 – 4:30

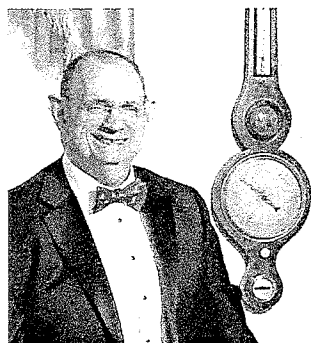


Catherine Townsend, Adele
Everett and Camille Hoheb at the
Member Party. Photo by Tami Sherry.

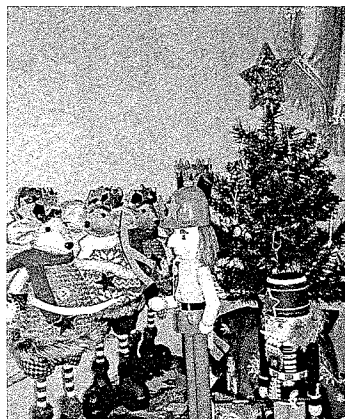
Maggie Vinciguerra

Holiday Fun!

Blue Creek Garden Club decorated the House magically with "The Nutcracker Suite" theme, Open House showcased the American Recorder Society, and the Fort Orange Garden Club and Blue Creek Garden Club each hosted a greens sale.

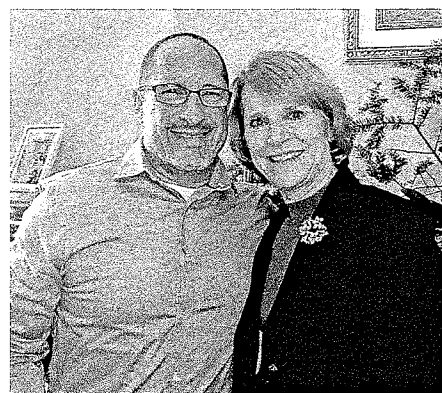
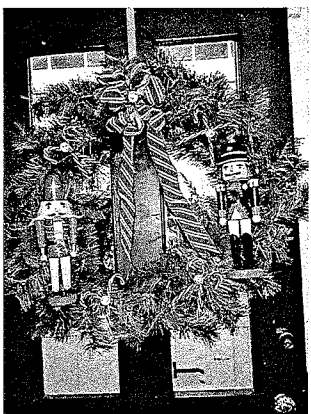


We hosted Rosanne Hargrave, Michael Clement and Michele Boretti for a magical Holiday Concert. Thanks to all who came!
Photo by Diane Conroy-LaCivita



Mary Brizzell passing the gavel to our new President for 2019.

Photo by Tami Sherry



Volunteers Diana Lindsey and Don keep the bar running smoothly!

Photo by Tami Sherry

"The Nutcracker Suite" theme, decorations by the Blue Creek Garden Club.

Photos by Tami Sherry

We had a wonderful time at our Members Party where we enjoyed the music of pianist Rebecca Benjamin and welcomed many new members!

Photo by Diane Conroy-LaCivita



Reading To Acquire Useful Information And Knowledge



”

The wise man perceives that every advance he makes in knowledge opens to him some new and unexpected prospect.

”

— Solomon Southwick, Albany, 1821

By the 1830's, American reading interests were changing from the Bible and religious piety to more secular topics for self-improvement and social reform. It was a new utilitarian age of the “book farmer” and literate clerks, mechanics, and merchants. People moving to cities for jobs and excitement needed to read street signs, public notices and business correspondence. Workers sought advancement by learning new skills by reading manuals, textbooks and self-help books. Citizens read newspapers, pamphlets,

almanacs and magazines to keep up with civic affairs and social reforms. In the urban milieu with increased schooling and leisure time, adults frequented libraries, lyceums, athenaeums and coffeehouses. Denizens wanted to expand their horizons through books about “stages of life”, “household management” and home editions for medicine, law, philosophy and agriculture. The Pruyn House library includes *The Complete Home* (1879), *Means and Ends or Self-training* by Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1840), and *Plain Home Talk about ...Embracing Medical Common Sense* (1888).

To be successful in this rapidly changing business and social climate, 19th c. Americans needed to be able to read purposively, converse effectively, and network widely. Casparus Pruyn would have relied upon local publications such as the *Cultivator and Country Gentlemen* magazines, the *Young Farmer's Manual* and Webster's *Calendar* for advice on farming his plot on Old Niskayuna Road. At the Albany Academy, the Pruyn sons — Robert, Francis and William — studied oratory, surveying, bookkeeping and other practical skills so that they could converse with professionals in business, law, and engineering. The Pruyns had access to books and discussion on a wide range of topics at the Albany Lyceum of Natural History (f. 1824), the Albany Institute (f. 1823), and the Apprentices Library (f. 1821). The Young Men's Organization (f. 1835) had a library and a reading room to encourage profitable use of leisure time. Albany's *Northern Light* magazine founded in 1841 was devoted to “free discussion and the diffusion of useful knowledge”.

Stephen Van Rennselaer helped found The Society for the Promotion of the Useful Arts in New York State in 1819. Later Robert H. Pruyn was President. In the society's 1813 annual address, Dr. Theodore R. Beck described the zeitgeist: “Knowledge advances civilization, gives new energy to the mental powers... The maxim ‘knowledge is power’ is daily elucidated in the affairs of life.” The Pruyn family would have been active members in the various reading clubs, societies, and special purpose organizations in Albany designed to promote reform and individual improvement. In conversation and debates, the “cosmopolitan” men (and later women) strutted their knowledge of current events, culture, history, science and travel in a manner similar to what we do today through “social media”.

— Gary Thompson, Trustee

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!

Nicholas & Annette Argyros	Elizabeth Hart
Al Armstrong	Steve & Laurie Heider
Mark Armstrong	Fred & Donna Hershey
Elizabeth Asadourian	Camille A. Hoheb
John & Carol Asiello	Carol Houlton
Georgina Aumick	Leon & Peg Hovish
Edward Bardon & Kelly Fahrenkopf	Stephen & Louise Iacabucci
Kathy Batchner-Mascelli	Alan Inget
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Judith Gladstone	John & Joanne Razzano
Fred Gonsowski	Sandra Rhoades
Grassland Equipment & Irrigation	Rick & Gerri Rimash

Mike & Laurie Scaringe
Cheryl Scott
Jack & Peggy Seppi
Robert & Tami Sherry
Patricia Shoemaker
Jacqueline Smith
Ed & Florence Springstead
Ilene Stein
Gail Taylor
George & Patricia Taylor
Bertha Teplitzky
Angelica Trzepacz
Shirley Tschumi
Peter & Kathleen Tunny
Tim & Maggie Vinciguerra
Peter & Donna Wayner
Grace Westney
Earl Zimmerman
M.J. Zink



In Recognition

We want to recognize our many long-time members, some of whom have been with us since the beginning of the journey to save this historic home and site. We must bid farewell to two of these life-long members who were instrumental in helping to organize the Friends of Pruyn House, **Patricia Parry Pogge** and **Camille Hoheb**. We shall miss them and thank them for their vision and dedication to Pruyn House.

Also, the Board of Trustees wishes to highlight long-time member **Margaret Charron** for naming Pruyn House in her will, and leaving a most generous donation to be used for preservation.

2019 Concerts in the Barn

July 10

- **JADE**

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

July 17

- **Todd Meredith and THE RAVE-ONS**

All the way from New York City, bringing Buddy Holly music!

July 24

- **GERMAN NIGHT with THE MOUNTAIN BRAUHAUS BAND**

July 31

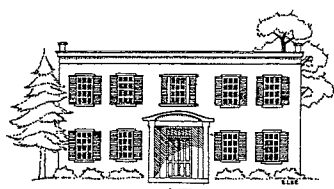
- **IRISH NIGHT with GET UP JACK**

August 7

- **STUDIO TWO — the BEATLES BEFORE AMERICA**

Music: 6:30 – 8:30pm

Admission: \$5 Adults, Children 12 and under free



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

FRIENDS
Pruyn House

DATED MATERIAL

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