



Friends of Pruyn House Newsletter

The Pruyn House - Ca. 1830 A Community Cultural Center Town of Colonie

Volume 29, No. 1

Tami Sherry, Editor

March 2018

President's Message -

Mary Brizzell

In the coming months, the snow blanketing the ground will give way to crocuses and tulips, signaling the beginning of Spring. As the weather begins to warm, we hope many of you will join us at the exciting events we have planned. In April, we will host the Colonie Art League Show in the House, and in May, the ladies of the Fort Orange Garden Club will sponsor a Plant Sale in the Barn. Further, they are planning ahead for June 6 and 7, hosting a special two day Flower Show in the Barn and School House. This summer we hope to see all of you for our July and August Concerts in the Barn.



**Mary Brizzell, President
Friends of Pruyn House**
photo by Tami Sherry

This year, the Friends of Pruyn House is celebrating its 35th year. In 1982, as a Town Board member, I worked with Supervisor Fred Field to acquire the Pruyn House site and restore it as an historical and cultural center for the Town of Colonie. Because of your interest and support over the past 35 years, countless cultural events, weddings, parties, picnics, and concerts have taken place there. Please join us on April 25th for our Annual Dinner Meeting and Celebration at the Century House, featuring photos and memorabilia that will help us commemorate 35 years of wonderful events and memories.

One of the reasons I am passionate about the Pruyn House site, is because it is a great place to gather. My husband, Bill, and I have so many fond memories of good times there with family and friends – and we look forward to creating future memories there as well. I sincerely hope you will visit the Pruyn House this year for our exciting line up of events and especially that you will help us celebrate our 35 years of history, culture, and family fun!

FPH Executive Committee

President Mary Brizzell
Vice President Mary Ellen O'Brien
Recording Secretary Nancy O'Connor
Treasurer Fred Miller
Asst. Treasurer Askold Wynnykiw

Committee Chairperson

Annual Dinner Meeting Nancy O'Connor
Buildings & Grounds Carol Fitzgerald
By-Laws Fred Miller
Concerts Courtney Antonucci
Finance Fred Miller
Membership Mary Ellen O'Brien
Programs Pamela Rowley

Diane Morgan - Curator's Report

January 2018

No doubt, 2017 was another successful year for the Friends of Pruyn House. A large part of this success is due to an active Board of Trustees, a great number of supporters and volunteers and a positive working relationship with the Town Board, officials, Department heads and custodial crew.

As always, our summer Concerts in the Barn are the highlight of our Programs. This year, approximately 2000 people attended with an intake of approximately \$9,000. In addition, generous donations from special groups and individuals covered the costs of the performers and publicity. Also, we had an amazing response to a special Children's concert which the Friends sponsored in June. Our Membership numbers remain steady, about 510, with most new members joining during the concert season.

Under our Program committee two enjoyable bus trips were planned, one a cruise to Herkimer House and another, on a lovely fall day, to historic Deerfield Village. Another great day was our Old Fashioned Sunday complete with Town Bands playing throughout the day, crafters, vendors, a magician, storyteller and pony rides for the children. Our year concluded with a December Open House weekend, successful Greens Sales sponsored by the Garden Clubs, and a Members' Holiday Party.

So many groups and individuals continue to rent this facility with a record \$61,400 received in rental income. Our Barn and spectacular Gardens are a big attraction. In May a local group held a special Cinco de Mayo celebration. We hosted eighteen wedding ceremonies and receptions, two group fundraisers, two large church picnics, an Art Show, Children's Art classes and the annual Weavers 4-day Show and Sale. Eight different groups regularly use the House

or School for meetings including the Garden Clubs, a neighborhood association, a music group and the 125th Regiment, Civil War re-enactors.

In April, a special gathering was held in memory of Jean Olton, past Town Historian and a Founder of Pruyn House. Also, donations were received in memory of departed Friends, Mary Kosinski, and members of the Henkes Family. Further, we are grateful for the generous response to our Annual Appeal.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee oversaw the replacement of three roofs on outbuildings, new front steps for the Schoolhouse and a rebuilt retaining wall at the rear of the House. Most exciting was a generous offer by Lowe's to donate materials and work at this site. Their personnel, called Lowe's Heroes, volunteered for a week which included scraping and painting the garage, and replacement of the fencing in front of the restroom facility. In addition, Lowe's donated paint, lumber, a post-hole digger, a power pump, plants, mulch and yard bags. Special thanks as well to Carol and Dennis Fitzgerald who made numerous repairs on the property.

For this year of 2018, the focus is on upgrading the power and light fixtures in the Barn as well as a number of lampposts on the grounds. In collaboration with the Town, a primary goal is to begin the repair work needed on the exterior of the House. This year we will be celebrating our 35th Anniversary as a historic and cultural center. We continue to reach out to you our Members through our website, Facebook, our Newsletters and mailings. This is your Center! Our greatest source of strength is from you and people in the surrounding area. We look forward to your input and suggestions. Let us hear from YOU!

Committees! Committees! Committees!

The Friends of Pruyn House has standing committees which are chaired by members of the Board of Trustees, as directed by our Bylaws. For the Committees to be most effective we should have members from the Friends at large. We'd love to have your help on any of these committees: Membership, Programs (Concerts, Old Fashioned Sunday, and Holiday Events), Buildings and Grounds, Newsletter, and Furnishings. Tasks are varied and working together for the benefit of our House is fun and a worthwhile enterprise. Call the office or send an email to wbrizze1@nycap.rr.com. Thanks!

Annual Appeal Update...

We had an impressive response to our 2017 Annual Appeal letter with over 90 people participating. We are pleased to announce \$6,870 in donations! Your generous support helps with maintenance, repairs, and general upkeep of the facilities. Thank you for your donations!

FRIENDS OF PRUYN HOUSE 2017 ANNUAL APPEAL (as of 2/21/18)

\$500+

Michael and Kate Hayes
Dan and Deborrah Heller

\$250-\$499

Judith Gladstone
Peter Hess
John J. Nigro
Newton Plaza Associates

\$100-\$249

Arthur and Janice Bowen
Teresa Broadwell
Charles and Eva Carlson
Anne Christman
Toni Cortese
Phil and Ann DiNuzzo
Dennis and Carol Fitzgerald
Joe and Maureen Fogarty
Hart Alarm
Fred and Donna Hershey
Rickey and Michelle Karlquist
Joe and Diane LaCivita
Morris and Marilyn Leno
Mary Lewis
Joe and Paula Mahan
Frances Maurel
Louise McColgin
Frances McDonald
Don and Ann Morton
125th New York Regiment
James and Nancy O'Connor
Joel Powzyk
Stephen C. Pruyn
Joanne Razzano
Roma Importing Co., Inc.
Jack and Peggy Seppi
Jacqueline Smith
Ed and Flo Springstead

Up to \$99

Carol Aisello
Henry and Anne Bankhead

Ed Bardon
Joan W. Beach
Audrey Beaver
Carol Bevilacqua
Carole Bulger
Betty Canape
Paul and Phyllis Cooney
Catherine Crohan
Herb Dahlem
Harriet DeGraff
John Dellavilla
Ann Diamond
Carole and Wayne Diesel
Tom and Carole Doody
Jim and Barb Feiden
Kathy Franklin
Elizabeth Hart
Steven and Laurie Heider
Camille Hoheb
Leon and Peggy Hovish
Steve and Louise Iacabucci
Dan and Joan Johnson
Eric and Priscilla Johnson
Karen Jones
Jack and Marcia Keefe
Latham Kiwanis
Tully and Mary Lenihan
Kathy LeRoux
Lynn Lodge
Tom and Susan Lyons
Matt McCue
Paul and Kathy McElligot
Frederic McLaughlin
Marcia Metzger
Floyd and Isabelle Milbank
Marjorie Morelli
Doris Morrison
Ken and Dorothy Mortenson
Jack and Linda Murphy
Dorothea O'Brien
Patricia Opar
Erika Parry

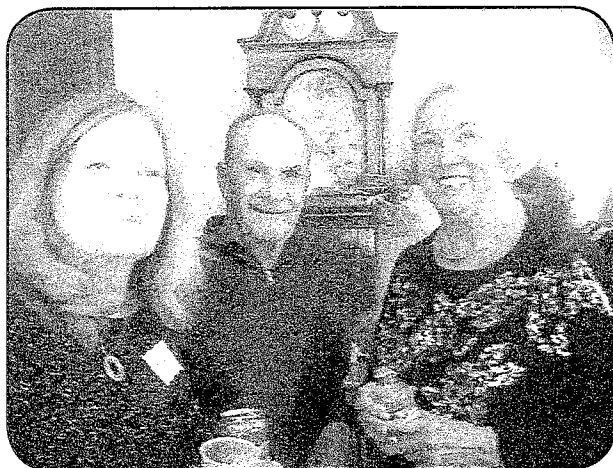
Bonnie Perry
John and Pat Pinkans
Peter and Janet Plourde
Miranda Rand
Rorick and Gerri Rimash
Mr. and Mrs. George Scaringe
Cheryl Scott
Tami Sherry
Irwin Smith
Patricia Stack
Ilene Stein
Jack and Lee Tabner
George and Pat Taylor
Grace Jorgensen Westney
Askold Wynnykiw
Earl and Jody Zimmerman



*Christmas Decorations by Blue Creek
Garden Club – photo by Tami Sherry*

Looking Back...

Our Holiday celebrations began with our annual **Open House Weekend**. Members of the Blue Creek Garden Club adorned the house with decorations reflecting their "**Sleigh Bells Ring**" theme. Guests enjoyed mulled cider and members of the American Recorder Society performed holiday music. The Fort Orange Garden Club and the Blue Creek Garden Club each hosted a greens sale and holiday boutique. Mother Nature sent us some beautiful snow for our **Members' Party!** There was good conversation, holiday songs, special dishes, and homemade desserts to enjoy. We would like to thank all who volunteered and our pianist, Rebecca Benjamin.



*Frank and Sandy Kiepora and Joanne Fitzgibbon
enjoying the Members Party – photo by Tami Sherry*

*Friends of Pruyn
House gathered
together at the
Holidays
photo by Tami
Sherry*



Thank You

The Friends of Pruyn House would like to thank Carol Fitzgerald for stepping in to fill the role of President for 2017. We are most appreciative of her hard work and dedication to this site. Whether spear-heading the Buildings and Grounds committee or researching grant opportunities, Carol is focused and determined and truly a wonderful friend to Pruyn House.

*2018 President Mary Brizzell thanking
2017 President Carol Fitzgerald
photo by Tami Sherry*





Search the Scriptures. Albert Alden, "Scriptures." Barre, Mass., Lithography Collection. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

What the Pruyns Read: Christian Texts and Moral Stories

Second of series – by Gary Thompson

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation made the Bible available in vernacular languages so ordinary folk could learn from the Bible. By the early nineteenth century spurred by the Second Great Awakening, most homes in America had a Bible. Children learned Bible verses by rote and recited them to the family. Unfortunately, we do not have the Pruyn family Bible. By the 1830's the American Sunday School Union, the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society had traveling agents distributing thousands of Bibles, concordances, catechisms, children's lessons and parables and religious tracts. The Pruyn House library has examples of these publications as well as popular adult Christian texts such as Robert Russell's *Seven Sermons*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Grotius' *Truth of the Christian Religion*. Grotius probably had special interest for the Pruyns due to his Dutch heritage. The Pruyns would have discussed traditional and contemporary religion during family time in the parlor.

During this period a reform movement took hold in America, with an emphasis upon self-improvement and social betterment, including temperance, abolition and women's rights. Supporting this movement, intensive and serious reading was targeted towards deep understanding of texts, devotional inspiration and moral edification. Noah Webster, whose first American dictionary was published in 1828, admonished children to "think what you read in your spare time". In 1813 Elisa White wrote: "The end of reading is not attained by getting through the book, but by receiving those serious and deep impressions which will have practical influence upon the future life." Publishing of children's books began to abound with moral lessons for boys and girls, so that they could grow up to have good character. Some examples in the Pruyn House Library are: *Marcus, or the Boy-Tamer* by Walter Aimwell and *Young Woman's Friend, or the Duties, Trials, Loves, and Hopes of Woman* by Daniel Eddy. We also own issues of a magazine, *Child's Paper*, published by the American Tract Society in 1855, which contained stories, poems and essays intended for enjoyment while teaching children how to behave. The popular *McGuffey's Reader* said: "Read because mama tells me that play will not be of any use to me after I grow up, but if I love to read I shall be wise and good."

2018 Upcoming Events

April 9 – May 4

Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm

Colonie Art League Exhibit

a juried show with approximately 40 paintings.
Most paintings are for sale. Free admission.

April 25

Wednesday, 6pm cocktails,
7pm dinner

Friends of Pruyn House 35th Annual Dinner Meeting

at the Century House. Invitations will be coming soon!

May 12

Saturday, 9am – 2pm

Fort Orange Garden Club Plant Sale in the Buhrmaster Barn.

Free Admission. Hundreds of annuals, perennials and rare and unusual plants. Proceeds used to purchase plants and supplies for the Pruyn House garden.

June 6-7

Wednesday, 3pm – 5pm
Thursday, 10am – 2pm

Garden Verse, Language and Lyrics: A Garden Club of America Flower Show, presented by the Fort Orange Garden Club. Buhrmaster Barn and Verdoy Schoolhouse. Floral Design, Horticulture, Photography, Education and Conservation entries. Show is Free.

**July 11, 18, 25,
August 1 & 8**

Concerts in the Barn, Wednesday evenings.
Music starts at 6:30 p.m.



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DATED MATERIAL