



The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

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In The Good Ol' Summertime

For the past seventy-five years, Alden's children and youth have enjoyed a summer recreation program supported by the Town of Alden. Now in its seventy-sixth year, the Recreation Program had its beginning in the summer of 1947. Gerald Heitman, a North Tonawanda physical education teacher and former Alden resident, was hired as director. A full-time summer program was planned plus a part-time program for the rest of the year.

Most of the activities were held on what used to be Grange lands on West Main Street. The Town had purchased the property in 1940 for a Town Park. Over the years, the activities have changed as interests have changed, but there have always been sports, games and crafts. Perhaps the best way to describe those activities is to listen to the memories of children and teens who participated in the activities.

There were horseshoes, tennis, basketball, track, and golf tournaments/ leagues that seemed to run non-stop.

Softball play days and tournaments to neighboring towns were great. Catch the bus at the Park in the morning and be gone all day playing softball.

We played waffle ball between the refreshment stand and the tennis courts, using the tennis court fence as our homerun fence, and upsetting the tennis players.

They got empty ice cream tubs from Neelands and we covered them with felt to make small waste baskets.

Made really cool wire flowers dipped in some sort of liquid that left a clear, plastic, opaque film. Probably something really toxic in today's world.

Crafts for 25 cents, 10 cent plaster crafts in the barn-like building. (The old highway barn.)

Crystal Beach trips, trips to Green Lake and to Indian Falls Lake for swimming lessons and trips to the Erie County Fair.

Special Days like Pirate Day and Indian Day, the Penny Fair and the Doll Show.

Roller skating at the roller rink with clip-on skates and a skate key. Raising the windows with a wooden brace to keep them open. Roller skating to organ music and records.

One person said it best, "Our Rec Program growing up was amazing!"

Continued next page

Previous to the Town Recreation Department there had been a Recreation Committee organized by businessmen during World War II to provide recreation activities for Alden's youth. Various facilities were used throughout the town—a rifle range in St. John's shed directed by Dr. Raymond May; roller skating and dancing in the Town Park Pavilion, supervised by community organizations such as the Alden Mothers Club; and an ice rink on the east side of Crittenden Street, under the supervision of Rev. Gordon Neufang. The Committee also opened the "Swing-In" and Soda Bar for teens in Liberal Hall (American Legion Hall) on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday evenings during WWII.

The Alden Recreation Committee received national recognition for its war time recreation program for young people in the "Recreation Bulletin" published in Washington, D.C. and distributed throughout the nation. The write-up lauded the Town and Village Boards for their cooperation with the Recreation Committee and gave credit to the parents and teens who helped make the program a success.



We wish the Alden Recreation Department another great program for Alden's children and youth in this good ol' summertime of 2023.

Karen Muchow

Message from the President

As you enter into the Village of Alden, either by Broadway, West Main or Crittenden, you may notice the flags on the streetlights and light poles. Take a minute (not while driving!) to take a look at the faces, names, and ranks. These are the Hometown Hero Banners which fly throughout the municipality from May to November. Paid for by individuals, the town or families, they are men and women who have represented and fought for our country from the War of 1812 to present. As you take a look, you may see family members, relatives, old acquaintances or even some new faces. They are also highlighted in a publication, thanks to the families and of course Town and Village Historian Karen Muchow, for a very interesting walking tour. The second printing is currently being completed at the Alden Advertiser, but will be available for purchase soon. So take some time to remember these heroes, some of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice and some who were able to return home to their loved ones. I know when I see my dad and father-in-law's banners, they bring a smile to my face and it warms my heart. I am sure if they were still here, they would be honored and proud. I know I am. Remember, it is the land of the free, because of the brave. Thank you.

Sue Galbraith

Alden Historical Society Sponsoring Student Scholarships for Local History Camp

The Alden Historical Society offered two scholarships for students residing in the Town of Alden, who will be entering grades 5-7 in September 2023, to attend the Hull Family Home & Farmstead History Camp this summer. The five-day camp is to be held at the Hull Family Home & Farmstead, 5976 Genesee St., Lancaster, NY 14086 from 9 AM – 4 PM, July 17-21, 2023. To be considered for the scholarship, students were asked to write 75-100 words explaining why they would like to attend the camp. More information about the Hull Family Home & Farmstead programs may be obtained through their website www.hullfamilyhome.com.

The scholarships were made possible by a donation the Historical Society received from the family of the late Bill and Joan Gadd.

Elli DeFilippo

Curator's Corner - Growing Up As a Tomboy- 50's and 60's

I was born in the fall of 1951 with two older sisters and one brother.



Despite the fact that I was dressed in ruffy dresses until about age 4, I was never a girly-girl. I had dolls and toy dishes that I occasionally played with, but I much preferred bikes, roller skates, cowboy clothes and play guns and more masculine activities. Because the school didn't allow girls to wear pants, I wore dresses to school and immediately changed to "dungarees" when I got home. My usual playmates were a boy cousin and a girl who was a few years older. She was a "tomboy" too. We spent hours riding stick horses through the neighborhood and climbing trees. My cousin and I explored the Slate Banks and came home with muddy sneakers and bags of fool's



gold. Rik got a paper route when he was about eleven and I wanted one too. The newspaper man said that I couldn't have one because I was a **girl**. It was the same with Little League. Girls can't play baseball! I intensely disliked the sexism of those years but I never wanted to be a boy. I accepted my role as a girl as I matured but at almost 72, I remain an outdoorsy woman with no regrets about it.

Kris Rogers

Town of Alden's Year Long Bicentennial Celebration Wraps Up

The Town of Alden's year-long Bicentennial celebration came to a conclusion with the presentation of, "Remember When, Alden? - A Ghostly Stroll Through Alden's History" on Saturday, March 25 at St. John's Church. Alden's history came "alive" with this fun play, written by Kathy Sutter, with consultation by Town & Village Historian, Karen Muchow. Birthday cupcakes and wind-blown fireworks followed at the conclusion of the production. Our own trustee, Elli DeFilippo, played the role of a German Lady. Several images from the Society's collection were used to help illustrate the play throughout.



Alden Hosts Erie County Historical Federation Meeting

The Erie County Historical Federation (ECHF) held its annual meeting on Saturday, April 29 at the Whistle Stop in Alden and at the conclusion of the meeting, the Heritage Center was opened to welcome attendees. Some very interesting & useful information was shared, including a testimonial presentation on how to use State resources to organize your Society's collection, how to become your family's historian and the role (and legalities) of the Historian for each town and village in New York State. Alden Historian Karen Muchow gave presentations on the history of the Whistle Stop building and the Black Water Baths to the 17 organizations in attendance.



Christopher Gust

PLEASE NOTE: PROGRAMS WILL BE ON SUMMER BREAK DURING JULY AND AUGUST

September 14—Alden's Historic Building Spirits Alden Community Center 7 pm



We welcome you to join Melanie Rimkus on a journey into the history of Alden to hear stories of spirits from the past that have blessed our present. During this presentation she will share a bit of history of some of the most well-known historic buildings and spirits that still inhabit them. The presentation will include the history of the Black Water Bath locations which was quite the destination for many travelers over 100 years ago. It is sure to be a spirit filled evening.

Welcome Back

Former trustee Debra Crist has been welcomed back to fill a vacant seat on the Board of Trustees until the November election. She will be a great asset to the Board. Thanks Deb.

Help Wanted

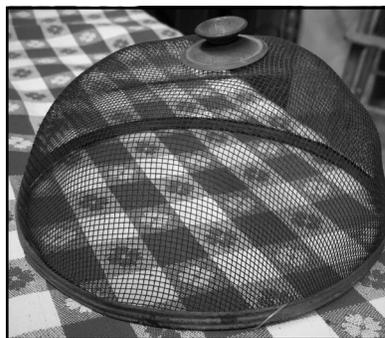
We are looking for someone interested in helping the Curator and Archivists with filing, accessing artifacts, setting up displays, etc.; preferably able to help on Wednesday mornings, 9:30 to 11:30 am. If interested, please leave a message at (716) 937-3700 or email Aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

Karen Muchow and Kris Rogers

What Am I?

Can you identify this item from our collection?

(Answer on page 6)



Century Homes



Would you like to list your home as a Century Home? There are many of these fine older homes in our Town and Village. If you are interested, please email us at: AldenHistSoc@gmail.com. We have Century House signs for sale for \$55.

Sue Galbraith

Past Programs

Origin of the Electric Chair Presented April 13



1. Presented by Maria Blair, owner/operator of No Illusions Tours. Ms. Blair shared that the electric chair, intended to be a faster, more efficient and painless means of execution, was invented in Buffalo in the 1880's by Alfred P. Southwick, a dentist, inventor, and professor. The first offender sentenced to death, after conviction by the courts, was Buffalo resident William Kemmler, sentenced for a crime he committed in Buffalo where he was tried and convicted. The chair did not fulfill its intended goal of painless and efficient execution and has been removed from the methods of execution in most states where the death sentence is still an option.



History of Exchange Street Depot May 11



Held at the Exchange Street Railway Depot, Mark Casell presented the history of the depot, which he and his wife Diane own. The depot was constructed in 1868 for the Attica-Buffalo Railway line, which offered both freight and passenger service. The depot ceased operations in 1963, having ended passenger service in 1957. The sidings, previously located on the north and south sides of the depot have been removed as trains no longer stop for passengers and freight delivery or pick-up. Later owners were the Erie and Erie-Lackawanna lines. It is currently owned by the Norfolk-Southern Co.



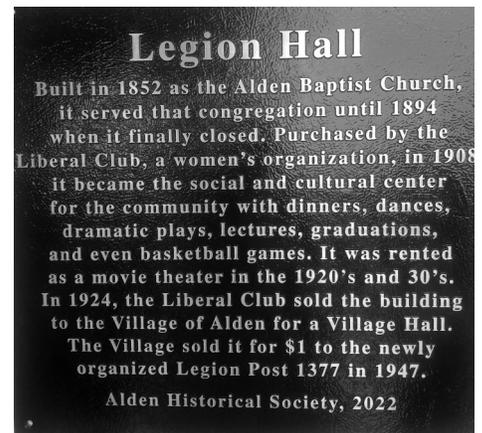
Articles Elli DeFilippo Photos Christopher Gust

Historical Marker Presented June 8



An historical marker was presented to the Alden Legion Post 1377, followed by a presentation by NYVFW Past State Commander Marlene Roll with rules about appropriate flag protocol. Alden Town and Village Historian Karen Muchow reviewed the history of the Legion Hall from its origin as a Baptist Church built in 1852, to its purchase in 1908 by the Alden Liberal Club, who hosted a variety of community activities. The Village of Alden purchased the building in 1924.

The newly formed American Legion Post 1377 took possession in 1947, and is the current occupant. Roger Erny identified some renovation work that has been done and the current goal of renovating the kitchen. He thanked the community for their support and donations over the years and that donations for the current project would be greatly appreciated.



Article Elli DeFilippo Photos Renée Nelson

Updated Banner Book



Alden Hometown Heroes, is an updated guide to the hometown heroes banners. Using information given by the sponsors, Town and Village Historian Karen Muchow gives information about the Heroes so you can learn more about them as you walk along. The names are arranged alphabetically. The new banners extend eastward down Broadway and along Crittenden Road.

Individual Renewals

Battista, Carol
Dalusio, Angelo
DeVita, Connie
Galbraith, Sue
Hanson, Christopher
Kent, Greg
Kocher, Shirley
Loehr, Laura
Manicki, Michael
Nelson, Renée
Rickard, Nancy
Satkowski, Charleen
Schall, Donna
Senecal, Audrey
Small, Beryl
Strong, Jennifer
Tucker, Lynda
Weider, Rhonda
Wolcott, Sharon

Family Renewals

O'Hara, Kerry & Vincent
Redmond, Erin & Scott

Couple Renewals

Downhower, Jr., Francis & Judith
Francis, Larry & Donna
Giczkowski, Helen & Jim
Kegler, Dick & Betty
Kingswell, Mike & Diane
Matthies, Carl & Ann
Rickard, Paul & Joanne
Savage, Rick & Karen
Shriver, Matthew & Antoinette

New Members

Hopkins, Cynthia (Individual)

Business Renewals

Alden Chamber of Commerce
Alden State Bank
Cooke & Steffan, Attorneys
Mike Cole, Attorney
Neill & Strong, Attorneys
Reserve Gas
Terra Et Spiritus

Donations

Burke, Jane
Casell, Marlyn in memory of Robert A. Casell
Casell, Marlyn in honor of Mark & Diane Casell
Cryulik, Catherine in memory of mother, Helen
R. (Williams) Cronin
DeFilippo, Elli

Annual Dues Were Payable by April 1

We value your membership in our Historical Society, and we would like to thank you for your continued support. Your dues help to continue our mission of preserving Alden's rich history. Please remit your dues promptly. If you have already renewed, THANK YOU!

Life Members

If you are a life member of the Alden Historical Society, we would like to connect with you and update your information. Please leave a message at 716-937-3700 or email AldenHistSoc@gmail.com with any new phone numbers, addresses or email addresses. You are important to us and we thank you in advance.

Did You Identify the 'What Am I'?

The answer is a 'mesh food cover', used to cover food from insects and other airborne particles while food is exposed.



*Alden
Historical Society*
Established 1965

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www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org

Alden Heritage Center

The **Alden Historical Society's** many exhibits are located in the village at the Alden Heritage Center, 13213 Broadway, across from Alden State Bank. The mission of the historical society is to preserve, promote and present the history of Alden and its people.

HOURS:

The **Alden Heritage Center** is open to the public from 11 AM to 1 PM the first and third Saturday of each month, **EXCEPT during January and February and March.** Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 716-937-3700 or 716-392-4295.

MEETINGS:

Program meetings are generally held at the Alden Community Center on the second Thursday of the month at 7 PM. Notices will be published in the **Alden Advertiser** in advance of the program. Open to the public, these programs are both informative and interesting, often featuring a guest speaker. You are very welcome to come and share your memories and experiences about the evening's program, followed by an informal social complete with homemade refreshments, as protocols allow. In the event of inclement weather, we will postpone when Alden school activities are closed.

Trustee meetings are held at the **Alden Heritage Center** at 7 PM. Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month in February, April, June, August, October and December. Trustee meetings are open to the membership.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New members are always welcome. Your support will assure that the Alden Historical Society will continue to grow and prosper for years to come.

Please note: The membership year is April 1 through March 31, with the annual renewal due by April 1.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

ANNUAL DUES

Single \$12.00

Couple \$20.00

Family \$25.00

Business \$50.00

Please include your Business card

Name.....

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Please make checks payable to Alden Historical Society

Mail to:

Lynda Tucker, Membership Secretary
Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

NOTE: Donations are tax deductible

Membership—Lynda Tucker, Susanne Galbraith, Jennifer Strong

Collections—Jane Burke, Carol Battista, Sandy Dussault, Kyle Kavanagh, Karen Muchow, Renée Nelson, Kris Rogers

Publicity/Newsletter—Lynda Tucker - Editor, Elli DeFilippo, Susanne Galbraith, Christopher Gust, Carl Matthies, Karen Muchow

Program/Refreshments— Sue Galbraith, Jennifer Strong, Elli DeFilippo, Sandy Dussault, Greg Kent **Refreshments**—Renée Nelson

Audit—Elli DeFilippo, Jennifer Strong, Christopher Gust, Carl Matthies

Building and Grounds— Christopher Gust, Carol Battista, Greg Kent, Jennifer Strong

Fundraising—Sue DeWitt, Jane Burke, Elli DeFilippo, Sandy Dussault

Nominating—Jane Burke, Elli DeFilippo, Kris Rogers

Budget—Sue DeWitt, Christopher Gust

Historical Marker/Signs— Sue Galbraith, Greg Kent, Karen Muchow, Jennifer Strong

Members are welcome to serve on any of the committees. Contact us at 937-3700 or at aldenhistsoc@gmail.com.





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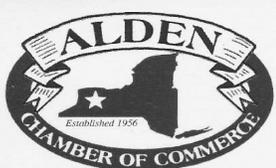
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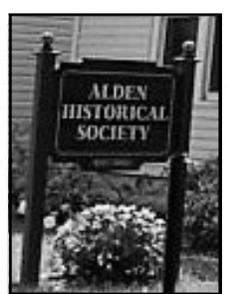
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Melanie Rimkus
Psychic Medium
Certified Reiki Practitioner

MISSION STATEMENT

The Alden Historical Society, founded in 1965, is a volunteer supported organization whose mission is to preserve, promote, and present the history of the Town of Alden and its people.



*Chartered by the Board of Regents
New York State Education Department*

*Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004*

*Find us on Facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety
on the web at www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org
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We appreciate the support we receive from the Town of Alden.

Thank you.
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