



Sharon Historical Society  
P.O. Box 363  
Sharon Springs, NY  
13459

Museum Open Daily  
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
July 1 - Labor Day  
Dorcas Comrie, Curator

March 2015

## From the President

Dear Members:

As I embark on my third year as President I see a busy year ahead for us. First, I wish to thank the Board of Directors, Officers, and Members for their continued support and giving of time, talents, and treasures. Our Historical Society could not exist without your dedication, interest, and hard work which all of you put forth when decisions must be made and work must be done.

The year 2014 found many of us working at the museum for the Garden Party Weekend, the Harvest Festival, selling books, having discussions with visitors about the history of Sharon Springs, introducing our new carriage barn and, of course, tours of the Chestnut Street Schoolhouse. On Memorial Day, we participated with our local American Legion to provide a plaque recognizing the five men who lost their lives in the Battle of Sharon.

Our Holiday Party in December brought directors, officers, members and guests together for a fun night of good food and the singing of Christmas carols under the direction of Karen Cookson. This was one of the largest groups we have had in many years. I can't forget to mention the gift exchange which at times appeared to be a frenzy of grabbing and hiding items so others couldn't "steal" their present. When it was over everyone was able to leave with a gift but no big wins from the many scratch-off lottery tickets that circulated the room that night.

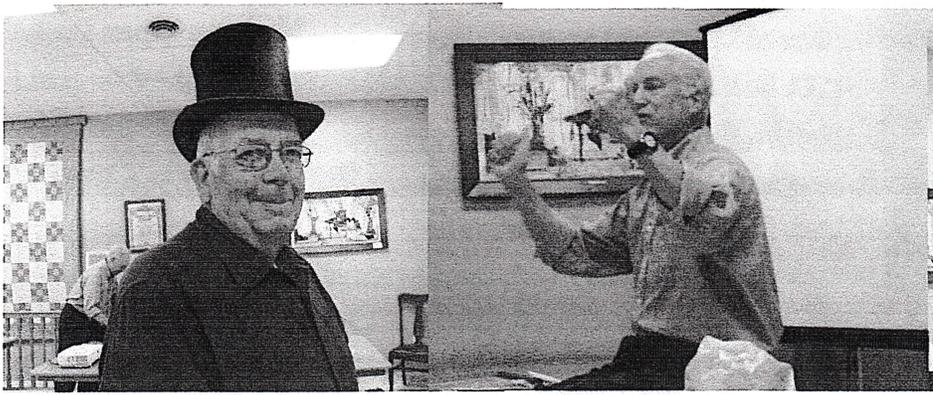
It is now 2015 and our first item of business will be the introduction of our new book put together by Nancy DiPace Pfau that will be available on March 9th. After many hours of research and proofing by Board members, the end result will provide the public with another look at our history.

We welcome Ellen Hall and Helen Bekerd to our Board of Directors and look forward to their input. We thank Norma Ullman and Jean Bakkom for serving as Directors and we appreciate all the work they did.

In closing, please mark your calendars to attend our meetings and events as posted in the enclosed program. Invite your friends to attend and perhaps encourage them to join. Let's have a productive year in 2015 promoting our Museum Complex and the history of our community.

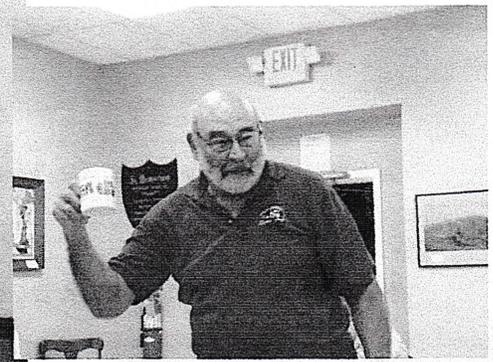
Sincerely, Mary Ann Larkin, President

# Sharon Historic Society



*"Abe" Vrooman (otherwise called Herbie) tried on Leon Lappeus' hat given to museum. Mr. Lappeus was the local funeral director in the early 1900s.*

*Richard Pfau gave a passionate talk on Fort Niagara.*



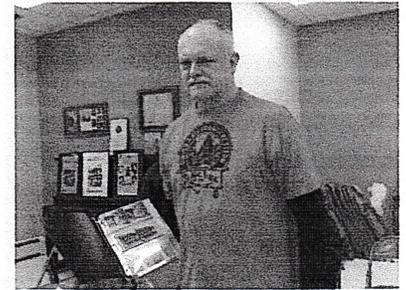
*Dan Renovetz is one of Sharon's natives and remembers the history well.*

## Looking Back to 2014

The year 2014 officially started on March 17th with Tony Desmond from the American Legion giving an update on the progress of the Memorial Plaque project which recognizes the five Patriots who died at the Battle of Sharon. Members also brought a variety of interesting items for Show 'n Tell which ranged from Sharon Springs souvenirs to old photos and books.

At the April meeting we were fortunate to have member John Duda who shared his expertise and his collection of post cards. John travels to our meetings from the Hudson River area of Fleishmanns and we're so glad he comes. He has his personal collection of Sharon Springs post cards which rivals many of the local collections. John explained how the Post Office has changed post card mailing regulations over the years. He showed us the various finishes, such as linen and photochrome, and also showed us the collectible "Tuck" specialized cards and how they have increased in value. Thanks John, it was great.

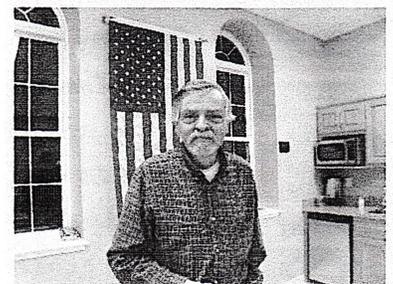
Richard Pfau's enthusiastic talk about Fort Niagara at the May 19th meeting put our memory of high school history to the ultimate test. His passion for our country's history showed in the presentation. Fort Niagara, built as a Stockade, was located at the mouth of the Niagara River and controlled access to the Great Lakes and the westward route to the heartland of the nation. Britain gained control of the Fort in 1759 during the French and Indian War and maintained control throughout the American Revolution, yielding to the U.S. in 1796. The Fort was captured by the British during the War of 1812 until being ceded again to the U.S. in 1815. After the Civil War, it was used primarily for training. It's a good thing there wasn't a quiz at the end!



*John Duda showed his collection of post cards.*



*Peter Mauhs told how his father dealt with gangsters, bootlegging gangs, and the Mafia.*



*Ted Shuart talked about the Battle of Cobleskill and the part it played in the Revolutionary War.*

## Looking Back to 2014 (Continued)

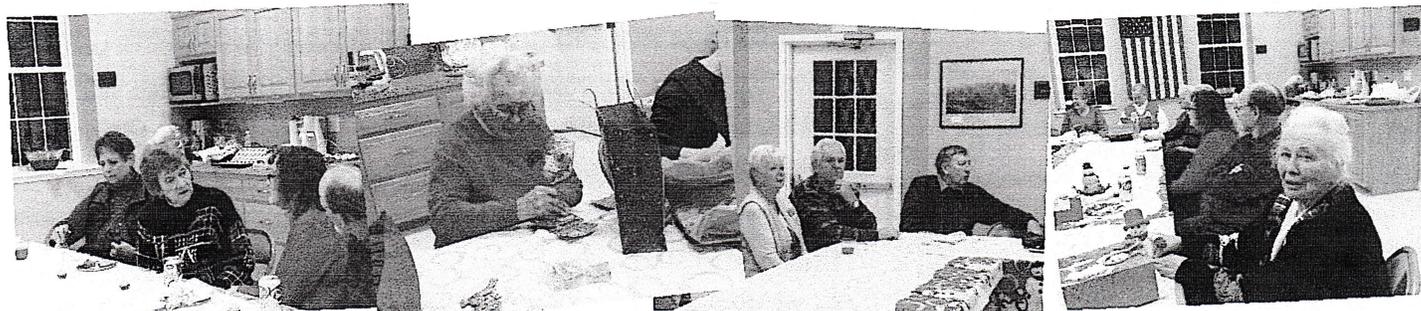
A sign in the hamlet of Argusville reads, "HOME OF DANNY RENOVETZ" and we are proud to include him as one of our own. (Actually he probably belongs to the Town of Carlisle but we'll claim him as a Sharon native.) Dan reminisced with members at the June meeting and shared his memories of living in Argusville during the 30s, 40s, and 50s. Dan now lives in Ohio but grew up on the family's 200-acre farm in Argusville. When he was a kid he walked 1 1/2 miles through snow and rain to the bus (oh sure, where have we heard that before?) unless he could hitch a ride with the milk truck. Dan remembers ice harvesting on the pond and when the family got electricity in 1944. Most interesting was the snowstorm of 1945. Dan was one of thirteen students who were stranded for 5 days, 4 nights on Argusville Rd. The students were taken in by the local families because they couldn't get home. Dan is also one of the famed Sharon Raceway drivers. Thanks Dan for the fond memories.

Walter vom Saal, the grandson of Fredrick and Meta vom Saal, led the program in September. He talked about coming to Sharon in his youth to visit his grandparents. He had slides of what the house was like and talked about the temples in the park. He told us about the owners of the estate from Henry Bang to the present. The vom Saal family had owned the property back to 1877. One memory he shared was swinging high on a porch swing in order to fly off into a pool on the property. This property is now owned by Denise Kelly and Glenn Goldfarb

Peter Mauhs, an attorney in Cobleskill, presented a program in October. He is the son of Sharon Mauhs, once District Attorney in Schoharie County (who was named after Sharon Springs.) The Mauhs family owned the Park View Hotel around the 1900s but later moved to the Cobleskill area. His father was hired as a special State Prosecutor to help clean up the bootlegging gangs in the 1920s. Gangsters like Leggs Diamond stopped in the Albany/Troy area on their way to Canada. Peter was a small child and wasn't told much of gangs and crime but remembers "overhearing" things he wasn't supposed to. We're glad he could share those memories with us.

We were fortunate to have Schoharie County Historian, Cobleskill Town Historian and re-enactor Ted Shuart at our November meeting. Ted told us about the Battle of Cobleskill and the part it played in the Revolutionary War. Ted also participated "in costume" at the dedication of the Battle of Sharon plaque at Sharon's Memorial Day Ceremony. Thanks Ted for all you do to promote the history of Schoharie County.

The Annual Holiday Party potluck dinner was held on December 13th in the Community Room at the Library/Municipal building. Karen Cookson graciously agreed to play Christmas carols on the "out-of-tune" piano. Singing was enthusiastic even with the sour notes. Several members contributed to the entertainment with stories after the lively gift exchange. Thank you Karen for putting up with the "sour note" piano.



*The above photographs are from the 2014 Holiday party. From left Denise Leinbach, Karen Cookson (pianist), Mary and Robert Speidell. 2nd photo shows Jean Bakkom enthusiastically scraping a scratch-off with her goblet to find out if it was a winner. 3rd photo is Ellen and Roy Hall and Walt Manko. 4th photo shows Curator Dorcas Comrie unwrapping a "snowperson" for her gift.*

## New Book "Sharon and Sharon Springs"

The Sharon Historical Society's newest publication, *Sharon and Sharon Springs*, was assembled by local resident and Sharon Historical member Nancy DiPace Pfau. Nancy worked with Arcadia Publishing to create this publication as part of their "Images of America" series. The book recaps the well-known history of the area as well as bringing readers up to the present time telling of newcomers to the community.

Nancy describes recent rejuvenation in Sharon Springs with the Beekman Boys' new store "Beekman 1802 Mercantile" as well as other local establishments which have contributed to the increased success and popularity of the downtown area. A book signing will be held April 18th at the American Hotel. Hope to see you there.

## Sharon Springs Mug

The mug pictured below (ca. 1900) is an example of a souvenir which visitors to the springs might have purchased as a



memento of their trip here. It is very collectible and worth between \$50 - \$100 depending on the condition.

## Museum Summer Re-Cap

The Museum was open July through August 21st but then heavy and continuous rain caused flooding in the Museum and we were forced to close for the season. There wasn't serious damage but the carpet was wet (again) and had to be dried out. However, Bernadetta Vrooman tells us we did have 136 visitors who signed the guest book in the short time we were open. Visitors came from 37 other places in New York State other than Sharon Springs. Others were from 16 states other than New York and from Canada, Denmark, and Spain. A couple of comments include, "I love to know old people's life", and "Soooo.....interesting! Thanks."

## Spa Investors Update

In our Newsletter from two years ago dated March 2013 we wrote about the Spa investors' lack of progress for the previous 7 - 8 years. Well, here we are in 2015 and nothing has changed except the buildings are in worse shambles and disrepair. We recall these beautiful buildings of yesteryear with the unique architecture and we wish things were different. The Adler Hotel has had a leaky roof for the past few years which has never been repaired so the hotel continues to deteriorate. The boards are falling off the Inhalation Bathhouse and the Imperial Bathhouse is in saddened condition. The Lower Bathhouse and Columbia Hotel were supposed to be torn down but if the owners wait long enough, the buildings will fall down and then they will be forced to clean up the remains. The Washington Hotel was taken down and cleaned up in August 2013 but it had previously collapsed from a heavy snow load. The Sulphur Temple has always been the icon of the community but that too is in critical deterioration. We hope they get their act together soon. Buildings which once had a glorious past are now a disgrace. All their promises amounted to nothing.

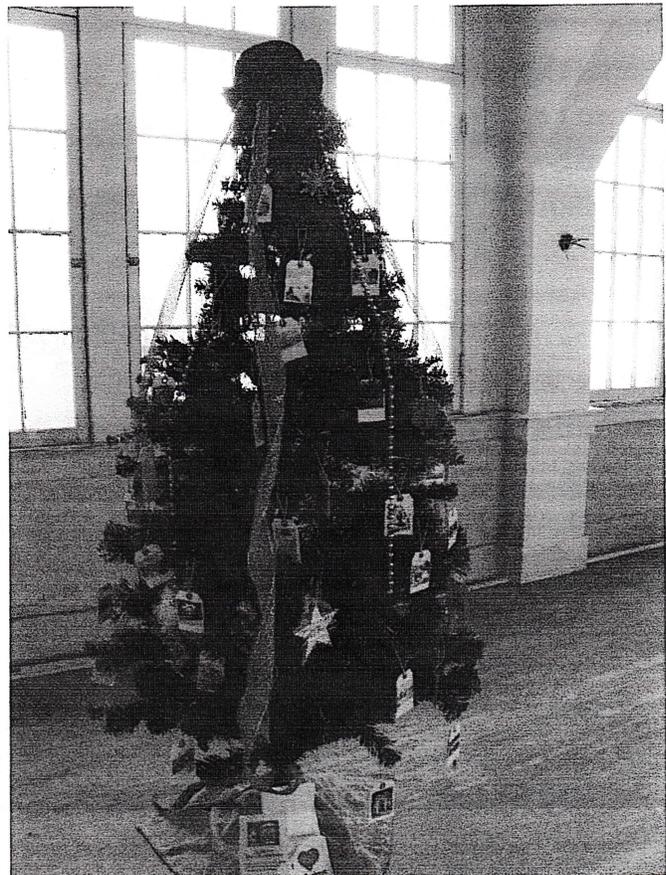
# The Festivals

It started a few years ago as "one" Sharon Springs Festival in September but has now grown to three festival weekends throughout the year, with the Garden Party on Memorial Weekend, the Harvest Festival in September, and the Victorian Holiday in early December. Dozens of visitors come to our small museum infatuated with the unique history of this small community.

Most of the vendors are located near the American and Roseboro Hotels and not everyone makes it down to the lower end of Main Street but it's still a great success for the Museum and a lot of good public relations. It is estimated that the Harvest Festival on Sept. 20th and 21st had 10,000 people over the two-day weekend with all kinds of events, food, and musical entertainment.

The Victorian Holiday was expanded beginning Friday night December 5th through Sunday December 7th with activities for all ages. A Parade of Lights kicked off the weekend on Friday night with the laying of a wreath by the War Memorials in front of the school, continuing on to NBT Bank for caroling and tree lighting. It was a nice ceremony with the community coming together! Saturday began with a French toast breakfast at the firehouse and activities throughout the lower Village including carolers, a real reindeer with a huge 38-point rack, vendors, and a recitation of "The Christmas Chicken" by Mayor Doug Plummer. The highlight of the weekend was the festivities at the Roseboro Hotel with animated Christmas figurines and the Festival of Trees. The Historical Society participated with its own version of ornaments with images of local historical buildings printed on shipping tags. It was fun to share and join in the fun.

As word spreads and more people take part, the parade and the festival will be bigger and better.



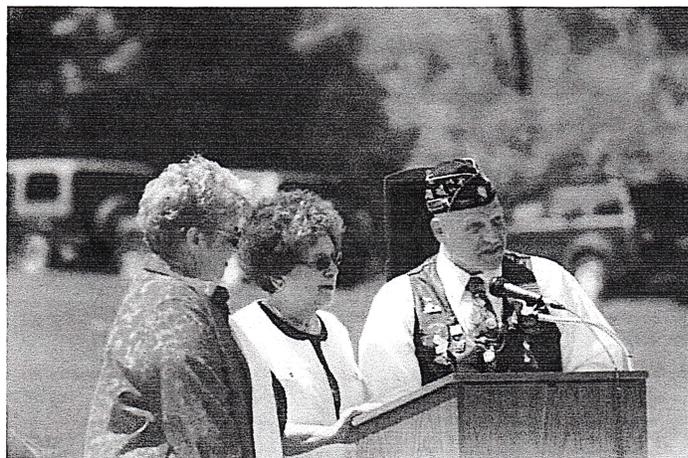
*This lonely tree looked better on the day of the festival with lights and surrounded by all the other trees, animated figures, skaters, shiny red walkway, and the room decorated to the "nines". It looked beautiful! The tree is wearing Omer Cousineau's derby.*

## Quilt for APHNYS

The Association of Public Historians of New York State asked for help in creating a quilt. Each block is represented by a municipality or organization who were willing to participate. Lori Nolfo agreed to draw the sulphur temple and Ellen Hall agreed to transfer the image to material. So now the Sharon Historical Society will be officially represented on the NYS Historians quilt. Special thanks go out to Nancy Pfau who coordinated the project and to Lori and Ellen who actually made it happen.

# Battle of Sharon Plaque

The five Patriots who died at the Battle of Sharon were honored in a ceremony on Memorial Day, May 26, 2014. Members of American Legion Post 1269 and the Sharon Historical Society worked jointly to engrave a bronze plaque to honor the five men who died. The ceremony included re-enactors as well as the local American Legion members. The plaque was on exhibit in the museum window during the summer months and will be installed on a boulder from the battleground, land currently owned by Harry Edsall. The monument will be placed on the grounds at Bowmaker's Pond for public view.



*At the dedication ceremony on Memorial Day Commander Paul Todd of American Legion Post 1269 introduced President Mary Ann Larkin of the Historical Society who presented the Battle of Sharon Plaque to Town Supervisor Sandra Manko. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful ceremony by the American Legion done with dignity and grace.*

## Spelling Bee

The Sharon Historical Society sponsors the Scripps-Howard Spelling Bee every year.

2014 Winners for the 30th annual Bee were:

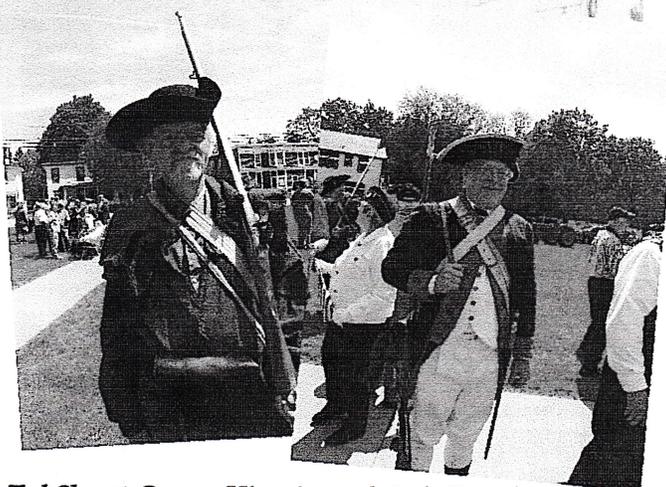
- 1st place - Xander Olsen
- 2nd place - Aidan Witham
- 3rd place - Brendan Burke

2015 Winners for the 31st annual Bee were:

- 1st place - Xander Olsen
- 2nd place - Jayden Kendle
- 3rd place - Bella Schuler

Other spellers who advanced for the 2015 classroom spelling bees were: Abrianna Reynolds, Colin Brown, Aidan Witham, Thomas Islip, Megan Mahony, Rachel Burke, and Sean Crompt.

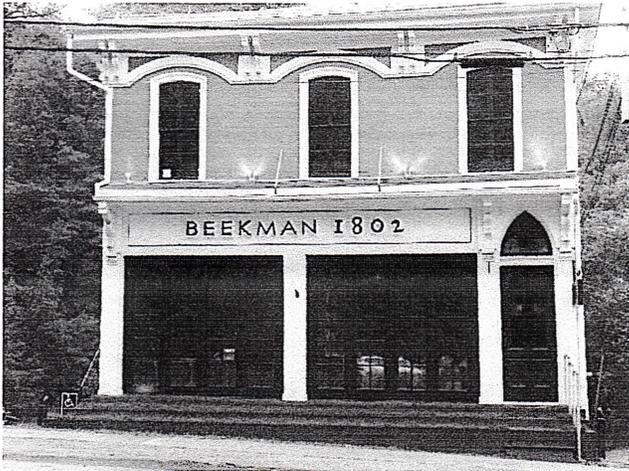
Thank you to Chairman-Barbara Cousineau for coordinating the event and making it happen and Karen Cookson for presenting the awards. Also thanks to the sponsors: James MacFadden & Sons, NBT Bank, Bunker Hill Farm, and Cindy Howell. Congratulations to all the spellers. You make us proud.



*Ted Shuart-County Historian and Carle Kopecky-Director, Old Stone Fort Museum, participated as re-enactors at the Memorial Day Ceremony. Mr. Kopecky guarded the plaque while on display.*

## Beekman 1802

The Beekman Boys, Josh Kilmer-Purcell and Brent Ridge, bought Leila and Phillip Durkin's Village Hall Gallery (previously the Village Hall /Library building), and moved their store from the Roseboro Hotel's Howland House wing to new quarters. The building looked sharp when Leila and Phil renovated and repainted it. However, it looks sharper yet with the new "firehouse" doors, paint job and lights. A recent addition to their mercantile is a furniture showroom on the second floor. We're sure Judge Beekman would be proud his name is being used in such a classy way.



## Preservation Awards

We thought the Preservation Awards were a thing of the past but apparently they are still alive, except nothing is happening. Ellen Pope, Executive Director of Otsego 2000, says the 2013 ceremony was postponed because the chair of the preservation committee resigned. It left them short-handed so they decided to hold off on organizing an awards competition for 2014 until the committees could be restructured with new members. They are hoping that the ceremony will be in May 2015.

## Who Remembers This Sign?



Do you remember the little boy licking the ice cream cone on top of Dairyland Ice Cream Store in Cobleskill from many years ago? Previous owners of Dairyland-Sharon Springs, Ron and Denice Perrotti acquired the sign, had it repaired and installed on top of Dairyland. It makes a fine addition and looks great! The business is now owned by Kyle Conley.

## Roseboro Hotel

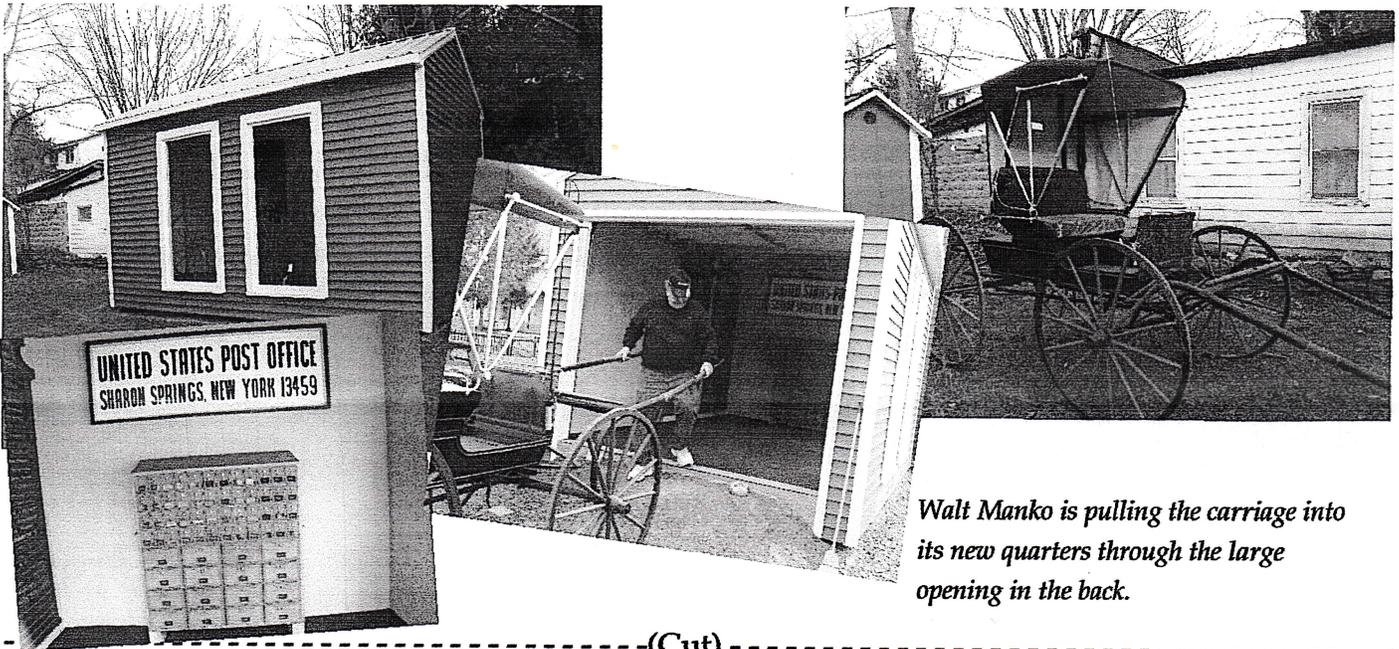
All kinds of exciting things are happening at the Roseboro Hotel. New owner, Ron Ketelsen expects his new family-style restaurant to open in the spring. The second floor will be renovated for shops, run like a co-op with one central checkout. Mr. Ketelsen is a collector of Titanic memorabilia and will display his collection on the hotel's second floor. He has distribution rights for Titanic merchandise, which along with his own Roseboro themed items will be sold in another of the building's shops. The third floor will be renovated for guest rooms.

The old laundry building behind the Roseboro Hotel will eventually house another restaurant offering sandwiches and pizza.

Ron is the new president of the Sharon Springs Chamber of Commerce. We welcome Ron to our community and hope all of his dreams come true.

# New Carriage Building

The Sharon Historical Society can boast of a new building with a new exhibit. Several years ago, Doris Ciperley gave the Museum a mail carriage, once driven by her husband's father, Stanley Ciperley on his mail route. The carriage was stored in the Museum barn but hardly anyone had an opportunity to see it. Walt Manko and Wes Ullman designed, measured, and drew up plans for an exhibit building. Andy Olsen built it according to their specifications. The overhead door allows the capability of moving the carriage in and out as needed, The windows are low enough for children to easily see in the structure. Also exhibited are the post office boxes and sign from the U.S. Post Office at Sharon Springs when it was located "downtown" in the Samson Block building before they moved "uptown" in 1989. A large sign from the 1940s and 1950s which advertises the hotels and boarding houses is also on display. Thanks Walt and Wes for a job well done!



Walt Manko is pulling the carriage into its new quarters through the large opening in the back.

------(Cut)-----

*Yes! Please sign me up as a 2015 member of the Sharon Historical Society.*

For only \$10.00, I am entitled to all the benefits of membership in one of the most active and friendly organizations in Sharon, dedicated to the preservation of the history of the region.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Street)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

(Please return to Sharon Historical Society, P.O. Box 363, Sharon Springs, NY 13459 or bring to Treasurer at the next meeting)