

APHNYS 2009 Annual State Conference & Quadricentennial  
Commemoration

“Navigating Four Centuries for the Future”

April 27-29, 2009

By Alan Woodruff, Bellerose Village Historian

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Location: NYS Cultural Education Center, Albany

181 Historians attended- 8 from Region 2 (Long Island, Nassau/Suffolk) including me.

(Riverhead, Farmingdale (2), Valley Stream, County Historians (3) )

Monday April 27

**Welcoming by NYS Education Commissioner- Richard P. Mills  
and Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education Jeffrey W.  
Cannell**

Theme “our efforts keep history alive”

NYS has a long history of documenting and teaching it’s own history.

George I keep history from the public in order to control them

How many of us have actually read the “Declaration of Independence” ?

**Q&A Session on NYS Library on Line**

What’s new?

1) Overview of Clemency Indexing project- Records AO 597-78 1895-1926, includes all records from war and prisons not previously available under law, but now public records under FOIL (Freedom of Information Act)

2) Motion Picture Film Index- Includes every film made in the state, 2500 boxes of material.

### **Resources for Public Historians at the New York State Library**

Call ahead service- because of our position, we can call ahead and have them pull material for us.

Grants- Offered for state organizations involved in preserving deteriorating research materials.

Newspapers- From all over the state dating back to the eighteenth century.

Residence Program- The Cunningham Residency is available for projects which are working towards publication.

Outreach Program-NY State Library buys out of print publications from NYS authors or about NYS and re-publishes them.

Manuscripts and Special Collections- Includes:

- Manuscripts, letters, personal papers and organizational archives.
- Rare books, maps and atlases.
- Prints and Photographs
- Broadsides and posters
- Musical scores and ephemera

### **Tour of Museum World Trade Center- Rescue, Recovery and Response**

This is a very touching display of artifacts from 9-11, anyone visiting Albany should see it.

### **Behind the scenes tour-NYS Museum History Collections**

Fascinating tour of all the historical artifacts kept in the NYS Museum History Collection. Some of the ones I liked:

- 1) Fisher Price Toys (company based in NYS)
- 2) Suit Cases
- 3) Windsor Chair Collection
- 4) Shaker Furniture

## **The New York State Archives**

Learned about the *Bilingual Teacher Resource* which houses historical documents in both English and Spanish.

Learned about the *Electronic Schoolhouse* which combines the versatility of historical documents with the power of technology.

I was given the record series which contain information about local communities  
(the record series related to Bellerose Village include: transportation, health & welfare, land titles, marriage records)

I was given a list of the archives collections, some of interest to Bellerose are:  
-Census, Education, Fiscal & Budget, Land Development, Photographs and Transportation.

We were given instructions on how to scan documents, including

- 1) Minimum resolutions for different types of media
- 2) Evaluating quality of scan.
- 3) We were given a “scanning terms” sheet.
- 4) Work Flow model of scanning
- 5) Criteria for scanning

For Fun, we were given a “Test your knowledge” quiz by the Archives partnership trust.

Two interesting facts to share:

- 1) Who was a New York Female Author who outsold Mark Twain during his era? (*Marietta Holley*)
- 2) Where was the first commercial nursery in the country opened?

*(The Prince Family Nursery in Queens 1730, customers included Thomas Jefferson) Note- John Lewis Child opened the first mail-order seed company in 1874 only a few miles away.*

## **Lobby Day**

Lobby Day was a fascinating day in the state capital. The main hall was full of lobbyist booths with all different causes. The press held interviews all over the capital steps.



Jack McEnemy



Craig Johnson



Tom Alfano

I met with Assemblyman *Jack McEnemy*- who was our host and sponsor of the Historians Bill. Under the Historian's Bill, every municipality must appoint an historian (has been a law since 1919) Another part of the law is that municipalities are not allowed to sell historic assets to pay debts.

I also met with Senator *Craig Johnson*, and discussed support of the renewal of the Historian's Bill as well as the development plans for Belmont Racetrack. We talked about the LIRR expansion as well. Sen. Johnson wants to develop the Belmont property by building a mall, hotel and is in favor of casino type gaming. I pushed a concept of refurbishment, and expansion of the LIRR station at Belmont for commuter parking. Sen. Johnson indicated that it is hard to develop the Belmont LIRR station but still block the expansion of the LIRR "third rail" project.

Current Bills Johnson is sponsoring/considering:

S955: Fair Pay act

S766: Belmont revitalization

S953: Resolutions to be passed prior to third track consideration.  
(results of environmental impact study)

S1558: Naming of public facilities after public officials (may deter the current trend of naming after corporate sponsors)

S1153: Neighborhood Preservation Act- This would go after banks holding property mortgages and force needed repairs.

S1991: Renewable Energy Bill- May have impact on our BAR decisions

S1597A: School Bus rider ship bill

Assemblyman Tom Alfano, I did not meet with, but did talk with his staff.

Current Bills Tom Alfano is sponsoring/considering:

S766: Belmont (see above) position is for entertainment, but not electronic gambling.

Nassau Coliseum (Lighthouse project) for this project in conjunction with an expansion of Hofstra facilities.

LIRR cuts hurting Nassau County

Hosted Floral Park Students visit in March 2009

Suggested we don't send format/chain emails, not effective, drafted emails and letters are all read. Put your own words to an issue.

### **Conference Plenary- Celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> (Quadcentennial)**

Speaker was Len Tantillo who is an artist specializing in paintings of the Hudson Valley. We were treated to a slide show of his paintings telling the history of the state.

## Performance of Albany City Hall Carillon

Performed by Dr. Charles J. Semowich, Carillonneur

A Carillon is a set of 23 specially tuned bells, the Carillonneur plays these bells using wooden handles with his fists and feet. Only 100 Carillonneurs exist in the United States.



## Tour of the Statehouse



Our tour was led by Assemblyman Jack McEneny, who is a member of the Capital Restoration Commission.

Major points:

- The Capital is a stunning example of 19<sup>th</sup> Century architecture
- It was 30 years in construction-completed 1899.
- It was the most expensive building of it's time, 25 million dollars (1/2 billion in current dollars) New York was flexing It's wealth as the "Empire State" The State capital was twice the cost of the US Capital.

- It would have been even longer in construction, but Governor Teddy Roosevelt “finished it” as a campaign promise in 1860 (although it was not really finished, original aspects of the building were never completed)
- Because it was so long in construction, the architects changed three times:  
1867-75 Thomas Fuller  
1875-83 Leopold Eidlitz and Henry Hobson Richardson  
1883-99 Issac G Perry  
Fullers original vision was inspired by a French Hotel called *Hotel de Ville*.

And sure enough, it does look a little like that building:



Eiditz and Richardson are given most credit for it's current look, however they were conflicting looks, as Eiditz wanted Gothic style and Richardson wanted Romanesque.

- It is 1 year older than the incorporation of New York City.
- This is actually the 2<sup>nd</sup> State Capital building, the first stood on what is now the front lawn. The first state house also housed Albany City Hall and the State Library.
- Famous features include:
  - 1) “The Million Dollar Staircase” 160 foot long eastern staircase, which was the center of the renovation effort. The bottom of the staircase is full of engraved fish, while the top of the staircase is notable men. This is to show the “evolution of man”



One of the 77 carvings in the staircase

2) Maine white granite, used on the exterior- was cut by prisoners in Sing Sing.

3) Skylight over the Eastern Staircase- which was uncovered during the restoration.



4) Medallions of every governor

5) Liberty and Justice statues- Liberty was originally topless and had to be re-done.

6) Governors waiting room is “Japanese theme” with a centerpiece rug given to the governor after WWII.

7) Secret elevator installed for Roosevelt, so he could come and go in his wheelchair and not be seen.

8) Flag Room

1000 flags of note, flown in battles, or famous locations

## **Business Meeting of APHNYS**

1) Bylaws were revised:

Members are in good standing as long as they are paid up within 9 months of membership becoming due (vs. 6)

Bi Annual Meetings are now annual meetings

Livingston County was moved from region 11 to 12

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## 2) State Historian

It was suggested that we invite the State Historian to our local communities.

## 3) Historical Marker Program

State program needs updating.

4) Municipalities should be taking and submitting an “inventory of homes”

5) Need to turn in an annual report to the State Historian.

6) Treasury for APHNYS is \$23,279

Long Range Planning Committees/Work Groups were formed:

- 1) Governance and Finance
- 2) Programming and Education
- 3) Membership & Marketing

## **Keynote Speaker – Lance Ingmire**

Mr. Ingmire did a presentation on how he found out that he was related to Abraham Lincoln. The goal is to show that if you look far enough, you will come across someone famous in your family tree.

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## **Making a PowerPoint Presentation that Sticks**

This presentation was given by Linda Lucey, Ph.D., chief academic officer “Successful Practices Network”

Some key points:

- 1) Use handouts wisely, they should be a reminder of what you are saying, not re-telling it.
- 2) Use success principles:
  - Keep it simple
  - Keep it credible- use footnotes and credentials
  - Use the “unexpected” – effects which will grab attention.
  - Concrete- Have a solid point of view
  - Emotional- appeal to the audience’s senses and feelings on the topic.
  - Make sure you tell a story, your presentation should have a beginning, body and end which wraps it up.
- 3) Use large type- keep slides uncluttered
- 4) Do use too many effects- because your audience may lose sight of your message.

## **APHNYS Survey Results**

Were distributed- some points to share:

50% of the Historians have physical offices provided by their local government

2% of the Historians hold multiple offices.

Average time in service: 13 years

Average age: 66

58% Female

Average budget: \$11,042

Average Salary (Village): \$1,088

Key needs Historians want from APHNYS:

- 1) Better access to government
- 2) Salary/compensation/budget help
- 3) Regional Meetings
- 4) Keep Historians current with State trends/happenings
- 5) Resources needed for job
- 6) Assistance with Landmark Ordinances

37% of members are “Somewhat satisfied with APHNYS (33% very satisfied and 1% very dissatisfied)

## **Arcadia Publishing**

Picked up information on Arcadia Publishing who does books on local history. It would be a great project for Bellerose, but we would need to get our records in order first.

### **Contacts made:**

Crissy Oliva- Chief of Staff, Senator Craig Johnson

Georgette Case- Historian, Riverhead

Rebecca Zack- Capital Management Services (management group for APHNYS)