

# ADIRONDACK ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER

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Left: Mace Chasm Road farmhouse, Keeseville. Right: Warrensburgh

## The 100-Mile House

Why the greenest building might just be the one that already exists

By Steven Engelhart

In many aspects of AARCH's work—lectures, tours, workshops, advocacy, and other educational offerings—we make the case for the preservation of historic buildings.

- Historic buildings have aesthetic appeal.
- Buildings and places connect us to our history as well as shaping our individual and collective identity.
- Historic preservation is rich in new economic opportunities.
- The preservation of historic buildings can be transformational for communities.
- Using existing buildings and concentrating new growth in already settled areas is both good for the vitality of a community and helps to protect wild and open spaces.

And all of this helps to make our communities better places to live, work, and visit.

One of the things that has, thankfully, changed in the last few decades is a greater interest in energy conservation, climate change, and sustainability. But in many ways this change has not been good for historic buildings, as they are often portrayed as hopelessly antiquated and energy inefficient. It's difficult these days

**It takes an average of 40 years for an energy efficient new house to recover the carbon expended in construction of the house.**

*Empty Homes Agency, 2008*

to even have a rational conversation about keeping versus replacing historic windows, for instance, because there is so much hype and misinformation out there, mostly from replacement window manufacturers, even when the objective data shows that the energy payback of a replacement window could be as much as 50 years. And this for a product that may only have a life of 30 years!

So we increasingly make the case for reusing existing buildings from the point of view of energy conservation and sustainability and we try to show that historic and existing buildings can be made to be energy efficient. But these structures also have one other important thing going for them compared to new construction. That is that the energy used to make the materials for these existing buildings—the masonry, glass, metal and wood products, and plaster—has *already* been spent. This is the “embodied energy” contained in a building. For new construction, a significant amount of new energy has to be spent to produce the building materials used in the project and it can take decades of comparative energy savings in performance to recoup the initial energy expenditure in new materials.

This article is not about making a historic building more energy efficient. This process—adding insulation where it makes the most difference, weatherstripping windows and doors and installing storms, improving the efficiency of heating systems, and stopping air infiltration wherever possible—will likely be covered in a future newsletter. Instead this article explores the very nature of a historic building—where the materials came from, how it was made and who made it, and the idea that existing buildings contain a tremendous amount of embodied energy, energy spent a long time ago.

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Members,

Let me begin by thanking you for your continued interest in AARCH and for your generous support. We hope we are serving you well as AARCH pursues its mission “to promote better public understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the Adirondacks’ architectural heritage, historic buildings, and unique communities through education, advocacy, technical assistance, and direct action.”

I first became involved with AARCH just three years ago because of those last two words in the mission statement: “direct action.” I had heard from friends of the great tours and terrific programs. However, I had not attended any AARCH events and really didn’t know much about the organization. As a lifelong summer resident of Keeseville over the decades I had seen a once lively picturesque village deteriorate. But suddenly there was a stone building being renovated. Here was a preservation group that was acting as an agent of change by not only adapting a historic building but serving as a catalyst for Keeseville’s rejuvenation. AARCH was putting its money where its mouth was! I walked in their door and met a friendly professional staff; toured the Mill with Steven; and learned of the two-decade commitment and leadership by volunteers with names like Kirschenbaum, Johnston, Hislop, and Monster—and many others. I realized it was time to step up to the plate and give back a little for the Adirondack life and architecture that I enjoy. AARCH means different things to each of us, but it’s the mission that binds us.

Our mission describes what we do and how we do it. AARCH has accomplished much over the years. As we approach our 25th anniversary in 2015 it is again time to think about not just our mission but also our vision for the future and how we might achieve it. After several months of work the current board has just adopted a vision. A vision is a description of a preferred future state some years from now, described in the present tense as if it were happening now. It is not what we think of ourselves currently but what we would like to say a few years from now. Here’s what we would like to be able to say: “AARCH is the renowned advocate and educator for a region where historic architecture is cherished and its preservation contributes to flourishing communities.”

We certainly aren’t there now and it will be a challenge to accomplish. Strategies will have to be developed and implemented to see the vision turned into reality. The board will be creating these strategies between now and its July meeting. If you have some ideas, we would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Meanwhile please enjoy and participate in AARCH’s upcoming programs and events.

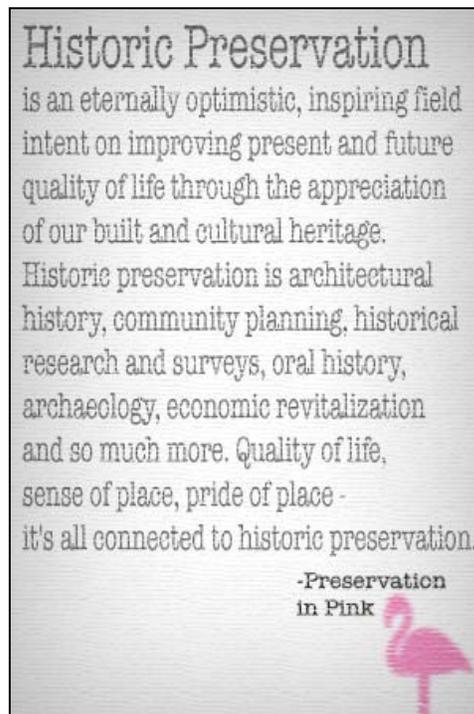


Andy Prescott  
AARCH Board President

### STAFF AND BOARD CHANGES

In October, Virginia Siskavich-Bosley joined the AARCH staff as part-time Archival Specialist. She holds a double BA in English Literature and Psychology from SUNY Plattsburgh and is working toward her masters degree in Library and Information Science through the University of San Jose online program. In her free time, she adores being “Aunt Ginny” to her 18 nieces and nephews, researching genealogy, eating and cooking international cuisine, sampling microbrews and jogging off the indulgences. Originally from Lyon Mountain, Virginia now lives in Plattsburgh with her husband Dan and their two dogs Jake and Frankie.

AARCH also welcomed a new board president this year. Stepping down is Willem Monster of Northville. As a long time AARCH supporter and preservationist, Willem brought extensive first-hand experience to the board. We thank him for his service and look forward to his continued participation as a member of the Advisory Council. Taking the reins is Andrew Prescott, AIA. Andy was a founding principal of Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture and Engineering, a large international firm with offices across the US and overseas. The firm’s primary specialty is the adaptive use and preservation of historic structures. Andy was also a founder of Historic Albany and since his retirement from EYP served on its board and was president of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), the organization that regulates the practice of architecture through the United States. For six generations Andy’s family has summered on the shores of Lake Champlain and he and his wife Kathy are now year-round residents at their camp in Port Douglas, near Keeseville.



*Definition of Historic Preservation by  
Kaitlin O’Shea, editor of the blog,  
Preservation in Pink*

That historic buildings, especially those up until the turn of the 20th century, were largely a product of the local environment in which they were made is also an attribute we should appreciate as one of their greenest features.

Many may know of the movement to eat only, or primarily, food grown within 100 miles of where you live — the *100-Mile Diet*. This diet is healthier, has a much smaller carbon footprint, and has a greater positive impact on the local economy.

There is a corresponding, although much smaller, movement in house construction — the idea being to build a house only from, or primarily from, materials acquired within 100 miles of where you live — the *100-Mile House*. This has the same kinds of big impacts, including a smaller carbon footprint, a bigger local economic impact, and a healthier and more aesthetically pleasing building. When new construction is one's only option, this is, of course, a great way to go. But most 19th and early 20th century buildings are already *100-Mile Houses* because most of them were made of local materials and constructed by local builders. And the energy spent to create the materials often came from renewable local sources and was spent a long time ago.

Energy Use for Building Construction, 1976		
Embodied energy of building materials		
Material	Unit	Btu/unit
– Lumber	board foot	5,229
– Brick	each	13,570
– Concrete	cu ft	95,738
– Glass	sq ft	41,828
– Steel	pound	21,711
– Aluminum	pound	90,852

*Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 2009*

So let's look at the anatomy of some typical existing homes in the region and explore what these buildings are made of, where the materials came from, how the work had been done, and what this means in terms of energy and climate issues.

Until the turn of the 20th century, most foundations were made from local stone. Depending where you were in the Adirondacks, the stone was sandstone,

granite, marble, limestone, or fieldstone. Sometimes it was quarried, but most often it was easily available, scattered across the ground, and often was the product of making land suitable for agriculture. This stone was quarried or was gathered using human and animal labor, with simple machines, and delivered to the work site by teams of horses or oxen, fed by locally grown grain, grass, and hay.



*Quarry workers*

Besides being used for foundations, stone was also used for entire buildings. This is especially true in communities where stone was abundant — sandstone in Keeseville, Peru, and Potsdam and limestone in Chazy and Willsboro. It was also used for specialty items, often within brick buildings, like sills, lintels, and steps. This was both an aesthetic touch and because the cut stone is stronger and can be more easily shaped into regular blocks.

In many regional communities, a tradition of making buildings from brick existed and, through much of the 19th century, this was a locally produced product. All it required was a source of clay. The bricks might have been made right on the property where a building was being constructed, but more often they were made at a local brickyard where clay was dug from the ground, mixed with sand and water in a pug mill powered by horses or mules, and baked in kilns fueled by wood or charcoal from hardwood trees in the local forests. The mortar for the stone and brick work would have been made locally, too, by burning limestone in kilns to make lime and then mixing it with sand and water.

The predominant building material in the Adirondack region was wood and almost every community, especially those with

water power, had a sawmill. Here rough sawn lumber was milled from local white pine and spruce trees, cut by axes and sawn by hand, transported to the mills by water or horses, and milled by machines powered by rivers and streams. Skilled carpenters could transform rough sawn wood into most anything, but many communities also had businesses that made finished wood products — windows, doors, cornice trim, clapboard, cedar shingles, hard and softwood flooring, and interior moldings.

Especially in the eastern Adirondacks, where iron ore was abundant, local iron also supplied blacksmiths with the raw materials to make nails and most wrought iron work for house and barn like hinges and latches, as well as tools and agricultural implements.

So what in a typical 19th century house or barn wouldn't have been made right within this 100-mile or even 10-mile radius? Perhaps the window glass, the finer door and window hardware, and the plumbing and kitchen fixtures. And this might not have come from all that far, perhaps from Burlington or Albany or Syracuse. To get here it would have traveled by some combination of train, lake boat, or horse-drawn conveyance.

This is to help us appreciate that a large percentage of the materials used for most 19th and early 20th century houses in the Adirondacks came from a stone's throw away and that all the energy expended to make it came from the sweat of animals and people, from the flow of the river, and from the heat of wood and charcoal and it was expended more than a century ago. So, in addition to all the other ways that we appreciate historic buildings, we should celebrate their green qualities: that they were likely made with local materials, labor, and energy; that they were truly products of the places and people in which they were built; that they contain a significant amount of embodied energy.

**A building is the largest, most complex thing you'll ever get to recycle.**

## The National Register: A Primer

By Susan Arena



Every year we list the properties in our region that have been added to the National Register of Historic Places, and often when discussing or visiting a site we make it a point to note if it's on the National Register. This recognition is clearly a badge of honor, but what does it actually mean?

**The name.** It is the National Register of Historic Places. It is *not* the National Registry, or the Historic Register. National Register or the Register are acceptable.

**Definition.** The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

**Eligibility.** The three main components are age, integrity, and significance. The building should be at least 50 years old and should retain a majority of its historic materials and character. Significance is generally determined by the property's association with important events or developments, important people, architecture or engineering achievements, or archaeological remains.

**Benefits.** First and foremost, this is an honorary accolade. It's the National Park Service publicly stating that this place is important. There are potential financial

benefits as well. Listing on the National Register is often a prerequisite for consideration of grant money, preservation easements, tax credits, or other assistance.

**Restrictions.** None. Inclusion on the Register in no way inhibits an owner's control over his property. It is a common misconception that by listing your property you're giving up the right to make changes. This means that listing on the Register also doesn't guarantee a property's protection, as care and maintenance is in the hands of the owner. The one case in which standards for rehabilitation must be followed is if state or federal monies are funding the project.

**Process.** The first is to contact your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to help determine whether the property is eligible. Nomination forms and other useful information are available on the National Park Service website or through your SHPO. Completed nominations must be approved at the state level, at which point the property will be listed on the State Register, before being sent to the National Park Service for consideration on the National Register.

The Register isn't just for buildings. A quick glance at the sites listed in the Adirondack region last year reveals homes and camps as well as a battlefield, a boat, and a military quarters. According to the National Park Service website, the National Register consists of more than 80,000 properties, representing 1.4 million individual resources—buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects."

How does this tie in with AARCH's mission and work? The National Register is an important tool in furthering our goal to increase awareness and appreciation of our region's treasures. We contract with private property owners and municipalities to research and write nominations. Of those on the 2012 list, the nomination for Knollwood, a third-generation camp on the Oswegatchie River, was prepared by AARCH staff. We consulted on or offered guidance to

### PROPERTIES LISTED ON THE NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES IN 2012

#### National Register

- Lake George Battlefield, Lake George, Warren County
- Knollwood, Wanakena, St. Lawrence County
- Hepburn Library of Colton, Colton, St. Lawrence County
- Vergennes (canal boat), Westport, Essex County
- Big Moose Community Chapel, Big Moose, Herkimer County
- Pikes Cantonment Site, Plattsburgh, Clinton County
- Talichito, Schroon Lake, Essex County
- Putnam Camp, St. Huberts, Essex County
- Cure Cottage at 43 Forest Hill Ave, Saranac Lake, Essex County

#### State Register

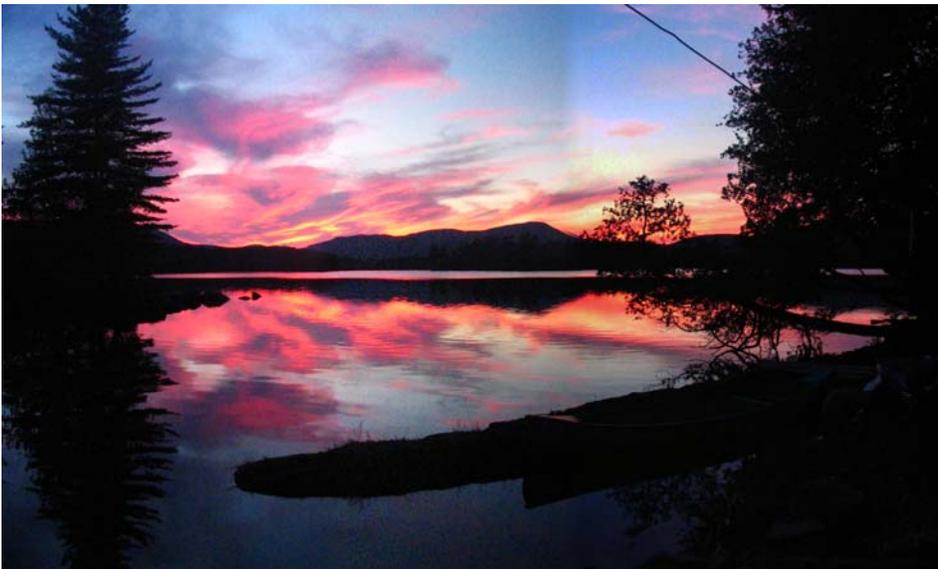
- Ligonier Point, Willsboro, Essex County

the people at Putnam Camp, Big Moose Community Chapel, and Ligonier Point. We also field inquiries on a regular basis, directing people to the best resources, and the correct contact at the state historic preservation office. Sometimes we take on the nomination ourselves. If you are interested in listing your property, contact AARCH for help getting started.

To learn more about the National Register of Historic Places, visit [nps.gov/nr](http://nps.gov/nr)

## Camp Santanoni Heals 9-11 Survivors

By Dede Nash



*Sunset from Santanoni boathouse over Newcomb Lake*

*In 2011, Dede Nash, a trustee of the Preservation League of New York State, attended the AARCH Annual Meeting at the Seagle Music Colony in Schroon Lake to present Howie Kirschenbaum with the League's "Excellence in Historic Preservation Award." In her comments at the gathering she shared the story below as a way of illustrating just how important places like Camp Santanoni are to our emotional and psychological health.*

An Albany architectural firm (JGWA) has a small satellite office in New York City just four blocks from the World Trade Center site. On September 11, 2001, the young staff there became engulfed in the terrorist drama that took place in their neighborhood. Their building sustained minor damage from blast debris and as they fled the building they were swallowed up by the wreckage cloud that filled the streets. They were part of the mass exodus walking over the Brooklyn Bridge, which we all witnessed on television.

The mostly 20- and 30-something staff scattered to their various homes during the ensuing days to wait for permission to return to their office and assess the damage. Their colleagues in the Albany office tried to think of a way to reach out

and offer some emotional support to them, and came up with the idea of inviting the NYC staff upstate for a weekend getaway.

Not fully understanding the tragic experience the NYC staff had just been through, we thought we were simply providing a weekend getaway from the catastrophic drama in the city. To that end, we decided to take the young people to Newcomb and then to Camp Santanoni for a weekend day. We did not have any expectations that it would be anything other than the opposite experience from what they had recently been through. We packed lunch for our journey and the day had the atmosphere of a carefree outing.

One of the paramount, non-urban experiences of Camp Santanoni is the effort required to reach the camp and its nearby lake. Since the five-mile wagon road is closed to motor vehicles, we hired a horse-drawn wagon to cart the group of about 15 people into the wilderness camp. Not one of the NYC folks had ever traveled by such a slow vehicle and they all talked about how quiet it was—just the sound of the wheels on the road and voices in the wagon.

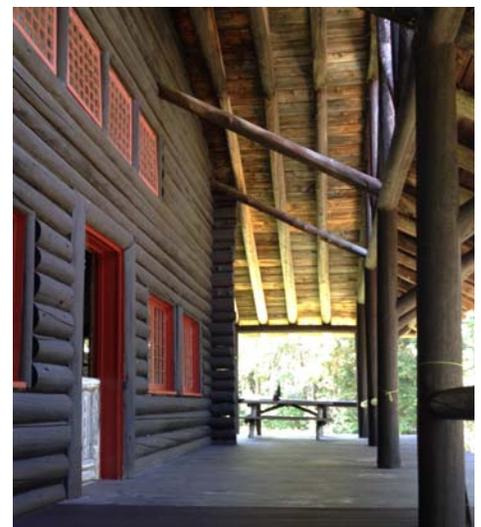
What we had not anticipated was the effect that being at the camp would have

on the young people. As we approached the main camp house, most were awestruck at the grandeur of the secluded built environment, sheltered within the encircling forest. Most of them had never seen anything like the great camp, and became quiet and still as we approached.

Rather than investigate as a group, or take part in a tour, every single person made their separate way out into the forest, or to the boathouse, or into the lodge interior, or out to the edge of the lake. Over the course of the afternoon they made their way singly and in pairs back to the picnic basket but would then retreat again into the tranquil surroundings. Before we had to leave for the day, each person, one by one, found themselves seated on the floor of the back porch looking out to the lake. It was a silent and introspective group—very different from the talkative crowd that had arrived there earlier in the day.

As we rode the wagon back to the highway, it occurred to me that there was probably no better place for a post-traumatic retreat than Camp Santanoni. The ride out was silent, each person lost in his or her own thoughts with faces turned toward the afternoon sun. Revived and comforted, the NYC people were helped more by their time at Camp Santanoni than perhaps anything else that could have been done for them.

It is times like this that the National Trust motto, "this place matters," becomes especially meaningful.



*Santanoni main lodge porch*

Thank you to our friends and members who submitted responses to the question,  
“What place matters to you?”

“The outpouring of support to restore the library in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene was proof of the special place libraries hold in the hearts and minds of individuals.”

~Marie-Anne Azar Ward  
Wells Memorial Library Board President



Wells Memorial Library  
Photo courtesy of *ssprince.com*

“Ticonderoga is where my folks first introduced me to the Adirondacks. We stopped at a boarding house, called The Tall Oaks. The owner said they were full but felt the young five year old lad really wanted to stay. That lad was me! She set us up in a spare room and we all slept in one bed until better accommodations became available. The owners and my folks became life long friends.”

-Al Crispo, Upper Saranac Lake

“Years ago my dad who has been on the lake 30 years, was kayaking and saw a small sign on the dock (of Alpine Village) that was handwritten and said breakfast. There are some old cottages and a main Adirondack house. I always go early in the morning...and just enjoy the quaintness, quiet and reasonably priced breakfast.”

~ Sharon Kendall, Lake George

“Growing up in the Adirondacks offered countless activities for every season. As a young kid I looked forward to the Spring when I received my camp brochure for Skye Farm Camp (Warrensburg)...I have many memories of early morning polar bear swims, volleyball games, tie-dying, campfires, swamping canoes...the list is endless.”

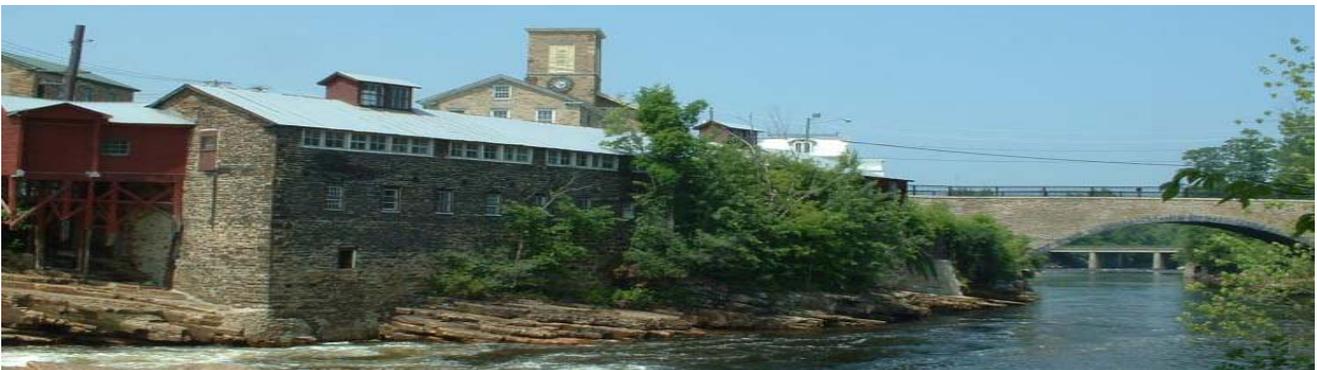
~Heidi Bolebruch, Gloversville



The Old Stone Barracks in Plattsburgh (*right*) as featured in the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “This Place Matters” campaign.

## *Wanted: Tenants and Investors for Historic Stone Mill Project*

AARCH is seeking prospective tenants and/or investors to participate in the redevelopment of its 11,000-square foot, National Register-listed building on the Ausable River in Keeseville. AARCH has already raised \$650,000 in public funding and will make use of investment tax credits for the project. Many reuses are possible—housing, commercial, educational, and light manufacturing. For more information, contact Steven Engelhart at (518) 834-9328 or [steven@aarch.org](mailto:steven@aarch.org).



**BIG MOOSE LAKE** The Big Moose community lost two marvelous people, who were great supporters of AARCH, over the past year. Mark Barlow was a lifelong summer resident of the lake who, with his wife Jane and others, wrote “Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks” published by Syracuse University Press in 2004. Mark died at age 87 in June. C.V. “Major” Bowes was the proprietor of Covewood Lodge from 1951 until his death in October at the age of 93. Covewood was designed, built, and operated by Earl Covey, one of the preeminent rustic builders in the region, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Major had a great sense of humor and was a wonderful storyteller. Mark and Major were great stewards of their historic properties. They welcomed people on our popular Rustic Architecture of Big Moose tours with open arms for more than a decade. We will miss them.

**BIG MOOSE STATION** Progress is being made on the restoration of the rail line between Utica and Lake Placid. For several decades the middle portion of the track, from Thendara to Tupper Lake has been closed to passenger service, but recent improvements, led by the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, have reopened a dormant stretch of rail; May 25th will mark the inaugural run from Thendara, 14 miles north to Big Moose Station. Another sign of progress comes from the Iowa Pacific/Pullman Sleeping Car Company, who has recently shown interest in creating a New York City-Lake Placid excursion, for an entirely new tourism opportunity. The ASR continues to seek support and funding to complete restoration of the remaining track with a goal of reopening the entire line.



*Big Moose Station  
Photo courtesy of waymarking.com*

**GABRIELS** The fate of Camp Gabriels in the Franklin County Town of Brighton is still uncertain. Originally built as a tuberculosis sanatorium in 1894 by the Sisters of Mercy, the property was also owned and used by Paul Smiths College for their forestry program between 1965 and 1980. It was then sold to New York State which created a minimum security prison on the site that operated between 1982 and 2009. From the sanatorium era are seven historic buildings including a chapel, shrine, and several dormitories. The state attempted to sell the property in 2010 and 2011 but received no bids. Historian and photographer Bruce Harvey photo-documented the buildings in 2011.



*Gabriels Chapel  
Photo courtesy of Bruce Harvey*

**INDIAN LAKE** Since the fall AARCH has been working with a group of people seeking to preserve the “Mouth of the Indian River Farm” that was part of the Gooley Club leasehold property. The property will become part of the Forest Preserve in 2013 and advocates for the site would like to see the farm designated as historic under the State Land Master Plan and operated as a museum dedicated to interpreting the rich history of hunting and fishing clubs in the region. The future of the site will be debated through the unit management planning process once the property comes into state ownership.

**LAKE LUZERNE** This area is famous for its historic dude ranches. Many of them—Northwoods, Rocky Ridge, and Hidden Valley—were built by the prolific and imaginative developer Earl Woodward and they provided romantic western inspired vacations complete with horseback riding, rodeos, and square

dances. Architecturally they were typically log buildings that evoked both the frontier cabin and huge western lodges. Despite the waning in popularity of these enterprises, many dude ranch buildings still survive and are used for other purposes, including restaurants and children’s camps. But in August 2012, the Heritage Steakhouse, originally part of Woodward’s Northwoods Dude Ranch, burned to the ground. In December, another important dude ranch building, The Hitching Post, was put up for sale, so the future of this 14,000 square foot log building is uncertain.

**NEWCOMB** The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), AARCH, the Town of Newcomb, and SUNY-ESF’s Adirondack Interpretive Center have again partnered to open Camp Santanoni for three winter weekends. Camp Santanoni is a popular cross-country ski destination because snow conditions are usually excellent, the trip itself is of only moderate intensity, and the camp on its remote lakeside setting makes for an interesting destination. The round-trip, cross-country ski and showshoe trip is 9.8 miles on a sloping carriage road. These weekends are rare opportunities to visit the camp in winter, enjoy a brief tour, and have a place to warm up. The last open-house weekend will be March 16-17.

**SCHROON LAKE** The Adirondack Shakespeare Company ([www.adkshakes.org](http://www.adkshakes.org)) looks forward to their fourth season of innovative summer programming, which will feature Macbeth and The Tempest. Performances will alternate between the Boathouse Theater and the historic outdoor amphitheater that was once part of Scaroon Manor. The Company hopes to work with NYSDEC over the coming years to restore the amphitheater so that it better serves the public’s theatrical experiences there.

For more information on any News and Notes items, please contact AARCH at (518) 834-9328.

## SAVE THE DATES 2013

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Duncan Cameron *Paul Smiths*  
Kimmey Decker *Saranac Lake*  
Richard Frost *Plattsburgh*  
David Hislop *Essex*  
Sheila Hoffman *Beekmantown*  
William Johnston *Westport*  
Nils Luderowski *Keene*  
John McDonald *Ticonderoga*  
Joyce McLean *Lake Placid*  
Wester Miga *Newcomb*  
Willem Monster *Northampton*  
Andy Prescott, AIA *Port Douglass*  
Julia Tansor *Plattsburgh*  
Marcy Weisburgh *Port Kent*  
Janice Woodbury *Lake George*

### STAFF

Steven Engelhart *Executive Director*  
Susan Arena *Program Director*  
Bonnie DeGolyer *Administrative Assistant*  
Virginia Siskavich-Bosley *Archival Specialist*

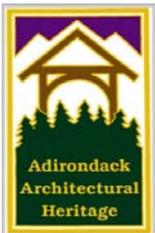
Please keep the following dates in mind:

- **Saturday, June 15** - Annual Meeting at the Silver Bay YMCA on Lake George
- **Saturday, July 27** - Benefit Event at Kenjockey, Westport
- **Monday, August 26** - Golf Benefit at the Westport Country Club
- **Monday, September 30** - Annual Awards Luncheon at Lake Clear Lodge

### ABOUT ADIRONDACK ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Adirondack Architectural Heritage is the nonprofit, historic preservation organization for the Adirondack Park with an educational mission to promote better public understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the region's architecture and communities. We fulfill the mission by sponsoring tours and workshops, giving public slide presentations, offering technical assistance, and supporting local governments, organizations, and individuals in their preservation efforts.

AARCH is a membership organization with 1000 members. Members receive a biannual newsletter, discounts on AARCH sponsored events and publications, and are invited to attend our annual meeting.



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