

TOUR GUIDE PEG BAILEY HONORED

She washed curtains and clothes...sewed fragile cloth...helped refinish furniture and restore ancient frames for early 19th century mirrors, or "looking glasses." She did that for more than 30 years, and earlier this summer Peg Bailey, a

tour guide at historic Lansing Manor, was honored there by staff and visitors at a special celebration.

When Bailey arrived at the manor house in 1971 it was far from ready for visitors. The Power Authority agreed to restore the 1819 structure when ground was broken for the nearby Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project in 1969, but not until 1977 was the manor ready for its debut, after several years of painstaking restoration. A more ambitious rehabilitation was completed in 2002 to improve historical accuracy, add climate controls and enhance weather proofing to ensure protection of its structure and historic integrity for decades to come.

Now, complemented by an 1881 dairy barn, ice house, smoke house, tenant house and other structures, the manor evokes the state's simpler, agrarian past. NYPA and the Schoharie County Historical Society jointly operate it as a museum.

"Actually, the house mirrors the lifestyle of a fairly prosperous family for several generations," said Bailey. John Ten Eyck Lansing, a member of the Dutch aristocracy that played a key role in developing New York, was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, chief justice of the state Supreme Court, and chancellor of the state. "He built the house for his daughter, Frances," she said, "and her husband, Jacob Sutherland, who became a state Supreme Court justice and one of the fathers of the state Constitution." Bailey and other tour guides devoted long hours to restoring a sound but neglected property to an accurate example of pre-Civil War affluence. "We had 10 rooms on two floors, an underground kitchen, dining room, wine cellar and utility

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When NYPA and the Schoharie County Historical Society scheduled a recent 30th anniversary of Lansing Manor, they also celebrated Peg Bailey's years of contributions to the major regional museum. With Bailey, seated, are, back row, from left: Carle Kopecky, director of the historical society; Steve Ramsey, regional community relations manager; and tour guides Roma Buel and Joan Adams. Front row, from left: tour guides Marianne Raso, Cathy Riedl, Bertha Haskin and Adrienne Gable.

Wildlife Day, Energy Expo Set for Sept. 22

It's likely the furred and feathered stars of B-G's 22nd annual Wildlife Festival, set for Saturday, Sept. 22, will be more used to the music, demonstrations and general hub-bub this popular day generates than will the hundreds of families expected.

The names hint of a day for lively sights and sounds. So far, reservations have been made for the Harvest Moon Alpacas; "Have Alligator Will Travel;" the Rainforest Reptiles; several raptors; "Dean Davis with Living World Ecology;" Vic and Stics, a storytime band; Sylvia Markson, a professional ventriloquist and a comical cast of characters; and the Irish Step Dancers.

The day-long, free-admission event is not for kids alone: parents will be drawn to booths and exhibits of professionals offering guidance on saving energy.

Representatives of the state Public Service Commission; the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority; the Middleburgh Stove Company; All Seasons Construction of Schoharie and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will provide counsel on installing energy-saving products and services in homes and businesses, and on low-cost financing to make it all feasible. ♦

Raptors, reptiles and more are set to return to B-G's Visitors Center for the popular Wildlife Festival, set for Sept. 22.



VN Notes

Help From SUNY

The first of the Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Project's four pump-turbine units was overhauled from September 2006 to this past May.

Replacement of each unit's large spherical valves will mean, as it did last fall, a water-level reduction of the upper reservoir.

Earlier this year, *Valley News* reported on a successful program directed by the State University of New York-Cobleskill's Department of Fisheries whereby about 30 students, donning hip boots, hard hats and life vests, moved through the dewatered upper reservoir, to rescue more than 500 game fish and a half ton of tiny emerald shiners.

"We were delighted with their work," said NYPA environmental scientist Phillip Thompson.

The team was responsible for removing fish from unsuitable areas in the reservoir and penstocks, close to the equipment controlling water flow through the turbines. They were relocated elsewhere in the 360-acre reservoir or in a lower reservoir.

"They handled walleye, rock bass, brown bullhead, small mouth bass,

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Nine “absolutely vital” fire, rescue and safety organizations were presented with donations to help support their role as first responders to potential emergencies at the Blenheim-Gilboa project in mid-July. NYPA’s Central New York regional manager Allen Schriver, seventh from left, presented checks to members of the

Middleburgh Fire and Volunteer Ambulance Corps; Conesville Fire Department and Rescue Squad; Jefferson Fire Department and Rescue Squad; Grand Gorge Fire Department and Rescue Squad; and the Blenheim Hose Company.

For Peg Bailey, Thanks

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rooms to decorate with accurate wall coverings and carpets from the period,” she said. “My husband remarked more than once that with the washing, arranging of clothes, the whole interior looked like the back room of a Chinese laundry.”

Fellow tour guide Doris Crasper confirms the impression. “We’ve had expert guidance in ensuring that everything—desks, chairs, etchings, tea chests, glassware, books, pianos, sofas—was either from the original families or created during that early 1800-time frame. That’s meant lots of checking, measuring, decorating and redecorating to stay authentic.”

That’s apparent in a tour of the manor’s reception room, drawing room, dining room, kitchen, pantry, root cellar, wine cellar, wood cellar, milk and pickling rooms and library. Upstairs, four bedrooms once vibrated with the joys and demands of eight daughters and a son.

“I enjoyed every minute of those years,” said Bailey, looking back through decades of tours, school groups, questions and more questions. “I can’t count the number of letters and phone calls we’ve received after tours. I think the surprise for visitors is in the details—antique toys, little carts, authentic clothing, really an intimate

look and a trip to a time when the house was one of the valley’s most fashionable homes.”

And for those surprised reactions, said Steve Ramsey, regional community relations manager, “we’re deeply indebted to Peg Bailey’s labors of love for the past 30 years.” ♦

CALENDAR AT THE BLENHEIM-GILBOA VISITORS CENTER

It’s been a busy summer at the Blenheim-Gilboa Visitors Center. But, here in the valley, activity does not cool with the weather:

September 22: Annual Wildlife Festival and annual Energy Expo

October 27: Annual S’cary Halloween event

November 4, 11, 18: Sunday matinee movies are set for November’s first three Sundays.

December 8: Santa, of course, will make one of his most important stops.

Note these dates. For more details on each, call **(800) 724-0309**

VN Notes

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sunfish and carp,” said Thompson. “We’ve asked them to return this fall, and they’ve agreed. It’s vitally important to us, and a learning lab for students who are considering careers in fisheries management.”

For several years NYPA has funded a Cobleskill program to raise walleye fingerlings for stocking waterways in Schoharie County, including the B-G reservoirs. The fisheries team has committed to stocking walleye fingerlings—better suited to the daily change in reservoir water levels than trout—when the multi-year B-G upgrade is complete in 2010. ♦

About Valley News

Valley News is produced periodically by the New York Power Authority to update our neighbors on activities at our Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project and its visitors center, and as a community newsletter for residents of the Schoharie Valley.

If you have questions, comments or suggestions, please contact Steve Ramsey, NYPA’s community relations manager, at 518-287-6380, fax 518-287-6381, or at steve.ramsey@nypa.gov. ♦