

Life in Galway

Winter 2014, Issue Nineteen Good News for you to Peruse!



Free – Take One!

Sweethearts for Life * The Galway Preservation Society's Must-Read Book * What Mary Had to Say about that First Christmas * The Creative Touch

A Word from the Editor



It is here! Galway's yearly deposit of clean, pristine white snow has arrived and blanketed the ground. It is time to start up the snowmobiles and put on the skis or skates. It is definitely the time to get out the

gloves, overcoats, hats, long underwear, shovels, ice scrapers, snow brushes, and pray that it doesn't snow during your commute to work. Then there is that special winter activity - with a hot cup of coffee and a book or other reading material in hand, to get comfortable in your favorite chair and enjoy the warmth of your snug retreat. Hopefully, this issue of *Life in Galway* will provide a useful diversion from your shoveling.



In photo: new neighbor, Cesar Ortez in front of his home on East Street.

As always, I wish to thank the following whose monetary gifts helped with the printing costs: C. Donald Carpenter, Tim & Carole Jones, Barbara Palmer, Virginia Sawicki, and those who contributed through the donation box at Galway Market. We are also grateful to the Dockstader Charitable Trust which provided partial funding for the community information.

If you would like to help with printing costs, please make out a check to the Bible Baptist Church of Galway, designated for *Life in Galway* and mail it to PO Box 112, Galway, NY 12074.

If you have an interesting story that ought to be told or any questions about *Life in Galway*, you may write me at the above address, e-mail me at wrbrandow@yahoo.com, or call me at 518-882-6387.

Enjoy!

Wayne R. Brandow

Cover: East Street Galway, 2014

Sweethearts for Life

Did you recognize the couple on the cover? The photo was taken in 1972 at a Galway High School Field Day. It is none other than Jay and Michele Mechanick, the proprietors of Galway Village Home and Garden. Their partnership extends beyond their married life to even their business. Michele told me that it is not Jay's business; it is theirs. Michele does not work for Jay as they have a partnership. Everyone has an interesting story to tell. I'd like to tell you Jay and Michele's.



Michele and Jay, Village Home and Garden, December 2014

Jay was born on September 28, 1954. His parents, John and Elma Mechanick, lived on Hermance Road. They had an auto repair business on their property and both his mother and father repaired the cars. Arlene Rhodes said they had Elma work on their cars, and she was an excellent mechanic! I guess you could say Elma lived up to the name she acquired at marriage! John's regular job was an auto machinist in Schenectady. Given his upbringing, it is not surprising that Jay went to Morrisville State College and graduated with an Associate's Degree in auto technology in 1974.

Jay has always lived here in Galway. He went to Galway Central School and graduated from there in 1972. He told me that his parents were not the only ones who worked on cars in the 1950s and 60s when he was growing up. There were three places to get your car repaired in Galway:

Vasel's Garage, which was at the corner of Fish House Road and Route 29; Ralph Denison's, which became Quick's Garage on Route 29 next to the present day "Early Birds" restaurant; and the garage run by Tom Grimes, south of the village on Sacandaga Road. I asked if Jay played sports in Galway. He said that after school he was always working, either at his parents' garage or at Bob's Trees.

Michele was born at Ellis Hospital on May 12, 1955 and lived in Alplaus. Her parents were Peter and Barbara Reynolds. Peter was a union carpenter. His last job before retirement was at the Kesselring Site in Milton. Barbara was an assistant buyer for the Carl Company, a well-known store in downtown Schenectady.



In May 1969, the Reynolds family moved to Middle Grove which brought Michele to Galway Central School when she was fourteen. Michele told me that she always loved school, but in coming to Galway, she found something else she liked even more. It was a boy named Jay, in Mr. Gorga's study hall. In a typical teenage manner,

she asked a friend if she could find out if Jay liked her. Jay responded that he did, but he also liked one of Michele's friends, Sandy May. Reader, you know the rest of the story! (The photo is of Jay and Michele at Galway's Junior Prom. Michele made her dress!)

One of their high school adventures was going to the Watkins Glen Concert, a major rock and roll festival with 600,000 in attendance. They went with other Galway high school couples and were chaperoned by the newly-weds, Butch (Bob) and Rosie Eaton.

Jay and Michele were married on April 24, 1977, nearly three years after Jay graduated from Morrisville State College and Michele graduated from Galway High School. What were they doing during the interim? Jay got a job at General Electric



and Michele followed her mother's footsteps in landing a job in Carl Company when she was a senior in high school. She also worked as a trail rider at a horse ranch. (Photo on the bottom of the opposite page: Michele and Jay on their honeymoon in the Poconos).

The first project they tackled as a married couple was building a log home from a kit on a plot of land just east of the hamlet of East Galway on Route 29. The land was given as a wedding gift from Michele's parents. Jay, who never was one to shirk hard work, built it with the help of family and friends in his spare time when he was not working at GE. Michele's Dad was the 'foreman.'



(Photo: Jay and his good friend, Randy Wolfe, building the log home in September 1977. Left to right: Randy, Jay)

In 1978 Jay entered into the GE Apprenticeship Program and became a tool and die maker. Unfortunately, he experienced what many union laborers in the Capital District have experienced. In 1988 he was laid off from his job at Schenectady GE. He did however, land a job in the Waterford GE.

In February 1981, Justin was born. Michele became a stay-at-home mom. Once Justin was in school, Michele worked at Galway Market for 12 years.

In 1992, when Michele was just 38, the dark clouds of great trial moved into their lives together. Cancer! The doctor told her that she had breast cancer! Michele's great-grandmother died of it. Her mother had two bouts of breast cancer and survived only to die of lung cancer. When Michele first found out her mother had breast cancer when she was but 11 or 12, she was filled with fear. It must be in the genes. "I am doomed," she reasoned. From 1992 until this very year, Michele has battled five bouts of cancer. Three were with breast cancer and two were with uterine cancer. She is a survivor and the prognosis looks good.

Michele told me that she could not have made it without Jay. Tearing up, she told me that he was always there. He was at her side with every doctor's visit, operation, treatment, and recovery. I asked her what advice she would give to anyone facing the same chilling news. She told me that there will be some very bad days but also some very good days. Above all else, never give up! Stay positive.

There were times over the years when both Jay and Michele were greatly touched by the outpouring of love and care from the people of Galway. The Lions Club provided meals in one of the darkest periods when her uterine cancer had come back within a year.

Cancer has a way of putting what really matters in life into perspective. In 1995, they purchased a van and traveled to the American West. She still has impressed in her mind the beauty of the snow-capped Grand Tetons in the distance, with a meadow of yellow flowers in the foreground.

In the year 2000, Jay and Michele purchased Mc Chesney's Agway and renamed it Village Home and Garden. It is the modern counterpart of the old country store. It has supplies for backyard farmers and horse people. Here is everything you need for plumbing, electrical and lawn-mower supplies. There are plenty of tools and household items, furnace filters, rock salt, flowers (in season), nails, screws, bolts, washers, pet supplies, candy, and greeting cards. Since I am not that mechanical, I often ask Jay's advice about how to fix things and what to use.

After reading what was written and giving their approval of the contents, Michele asked that I might include the following: "Life is all about family, friends, and community and we are grateful for all the support we have received from all of them." ¹

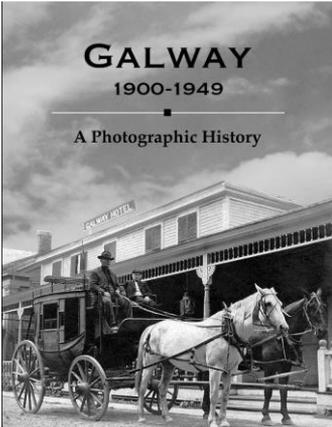
Thank you Jay and Michele for sharing your story. You have enriched the lives of those who know you here in the Village of Galway.

Life in Galway is written by Pastor Wayne Brandow of the Bible Baptist Church of Galway. I'd be delighted to have you visit us on Sunday at 11 AM at 2095 East Street, Galway, NY. **There is a Christmas Eve Service at 8 PM!**

All past issues of *Life in Galway* can be found in a digital format at lifeingalway.wordpress.com. Click "PDF Files of Each Issue" on the menu bar.

¹ Please note this – I make it a practice of having those I write about read the article over, so they might correct any mistakes and to receive their approval prior to publishing it.

The Galway Preservation Society's Must-Read Book



A review of Galway 1900-1949: A Photographic History of Life in the Town of Galway, Saratoga County, New York.

Once you start reading this book, you are going to find that it is hard to put down. Looking at photos of the first 50 years of the twentieth century and reading the story of the lives of the people of Galway during that era, one gets a picture of the transition that took place in Galway from a farming community to what it has become, a bed-room community.

If you love Galway, its people and quality of life, you will enjoy this publication of a past era in its history.

Some folks that you know in their eighties are seen as children and teens, such as Hume Donnan, Virginia Drake Kulpa, Leah Hunter Olendorf, Florence Turek Reedy, and Gloria Ruduk Wheeler. Changes in scenery are also evident in the photos, such as tree-less farmland now forested, and the tree lined Galway Village streets of the past, in which the bordering trees were taken out to widen the roads.

Fires have altered the landscape. Probably the greatest change in the village came about during the great fire that burned down the hotels, stores, and shops on North and East Street in 1908, as well as the fire that came along in 1948 that burned down the stately Presbyterian Church in which the Methodists and Presbyterians had joined together to form the United Methodist Church of Galway. It was also interesting to note that the site of the two homes on East Street just east of the Methodist Church was at one time occupied by the Village Hotel, which had a large ballroom that was used for literary and debating societies, dance classes, balls, and a singing school. A fire destroyed that hotel in the 1860s.

You will also find the changes that came about when electric service came to Galway and the roads were paved. Until the end of World War II, Sacandaga Road, north from Schenectady, was paved only up to Scotch Church on Route 67. You will learn how the centralized school became a part of the social life of the larger community. You will read about dance halls during Prohibition, with their fiddlers and square dance callers.

There are stories and photos of the brave young men and women who served their country in World War II. I especially liked the photos of farming with horses and oxen.

After a brief introduction by Arlene Rhodes, there are a number of helpful maps to locate places mentioned in the book. Chapters one through five are each devoted to life and photos of the five decades from 1900 through 1940s. Chapter six highlights the Donnan farm in the 1940s. These chapters are followed by Acknowledgements, Selected Bibliography, and Index.

Carefully researched and written over a period of 15 years, this book will be a standard history of Galway for this time period. It was the collaborative work of a number of individuals in the Galway Preservation Society. Those who labored together in this project were: Don Carpenter, Tom Cwiakala, Ray David, Bonnie Donnan, Evelyn Hanna, Phyllis Keeler, Herb Kopper, Lucille Millarson, Arlene Rhodes, and David Weaver.

I like the fact that what was happening in the larger world during each decade is the starting point of the photos and stories that follow. On occasion, glimpses of Galway's earlier pre-1900 history are mentioned so as to give a fuller picture. I asked Arlene if she included a photo of Horace Carpentier, a very intriguing person of the early 1900s. She said no, because the only known likeness of him was from the 1800s. Only photos from 1900-1949 would be found in the book.

The book has a lot to say about Carpentier. He had such a lasting impact upon Galway. Horace improved the road north of the Village of Galway through the swamp. This has become Sacandaga Road, which is now the major north-south thoroughfare through the Village. (Photo of Horace Carpentier from the 1800s.)



Horace Carpentier was born in nearby Providence, NY. After graduating with a law degree from Columbia University, he sailed to California during the gold rush. He



HOBACE W. CARPENTIER, THE QUIET LITTLE MAN WITH A PENCHANT FOR WATER FRONTS.

lived there for 20 years, had a law office in San Francisco, became the first mayor of Oakland, and made a fortune in real estate. He came back to New York and lived in New York City. When he died in 1918, he left an estate worth more than 20 million dollars. He also had a residence on East Street, Galway. He was a very private person and like most people in politics had his share of enemies.

The cost of this book is \$40. It can be purchased at the Galway branch of the Ballston Spa National Bank, the Galway and Providence Town Halls, and Waterwheel Village. For more information go to the GPS link galwaypreservationsociety.org

What Mary Had to Say about that First Christmas

Did you know that one of the Gospels contains Mary's point of view regarding that first Christmas? Luke wrote in the beginning of his account of Christ the following:



Adoration of the Shepherds,
by van Honthorst, 1622

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

In Luke's research, based upon eyewitness accounts, he tells us over and over again not only aspects about the Christmas story that Mary would be privy to, but also what she actually thought. Was Mary one whom Luke interviewed? Consider the following segments in the narrative:

At the Annunciation – When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she was to give birth to the Son of God, we read in Luke 1:29 that she was greatly troubled and questioned how this could be as she was a virgin. The angel answered her:

³⁵ . . . The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called

the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 1:35-37).

Mary's response was, 'I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.' Who would know this apart from Mary and the angel?

At Mary's Visit with Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!" (Luke 1:39-45).

Who but Mary would know this interchange between herself and Elizabeth? By the time Luke was on the scene, Elizabeth would have been already dead. During the time of the story Mary would have been a teen and Elizabeth a senior citizen! The story continues with Mary being present at the birth of John the Baptist before returning home. It is very likely that Elizabeth filled Mary in on how an angel had announced to her husband Zacharias about John's birth to this previously childless couple which is also found in Luke's first chapter.

At Jesus' Birth (the traditional Christmas story of Luke 2:1-20)

This is the story we all love to read at this time of year with the babe in the manger and the angelic visit to shepherds watching their flocks by night. The angel said that in the town of David (Bethlehem) a Savior has been born and that this newborn is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10). The story continues:

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ **But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.** ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Think about verse 19. Who would know what is in Mary's heart, apart from God? No one, unless if she told others what she was thinking.

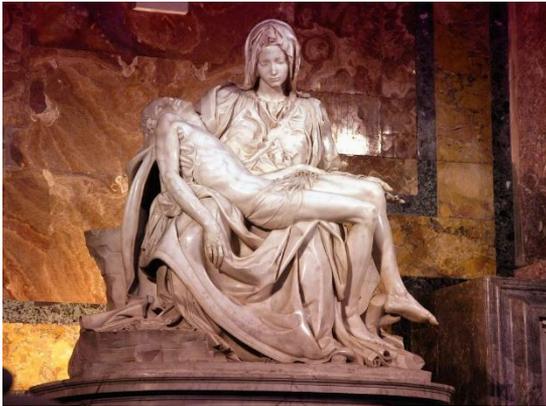
At Baby Jesus' Presentation in the Temple

At this occasion, Joseph and Mary's path crossed with the paths of two individuals: Simeon and Anna.

Both Simeon and Anna praised God and gave thanks to God upon seeing baby Jesus. Then Simeon said something to Mary. Notice that he did not say this to Joseph. The narrative spotlight is upon Mary, as it has been throughout Luke's account of the nativity of Christ. Pay attention to how Luke states it.

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." (Luke 2:34-35).

Heaven and nature sang on that first Christmas. Imagine, the joy and the wonder of young Joseph and Mary as they held that helpless little infant in their arms especially in light of all the unusual angelic visitations and the pronouncements of those who saw the baby Jesus. We sing about it today, "Joy to the world!" "Good Christian men rejoice!" "O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!" "Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies!" Yet, there was a painful aspect of how this story would unfold. Thirty-three years later, Mary would with great soul-piercing grief witness her greatly beloved son's crucifixion and death. In His anguish upon the cross, Jesus would speak lovingly to her in His instructions to



John to watch over His mother. As Christ was dying, Mary no doubt, remembered Simeon's words as her heart was breaking.

In light of what occurred, I often think of Michelangelo's famous sculpture, *La Pietà*. There is a detail that does not fit reality but artistically speaks volumes as to what we know transpired in Mary's

heart. There is an age discrepancy. By the time Jesus is thirty-three, the supposed age at his death, Mary should have been in her late forties. It may be that what I am about to say was not in the mind of Michelangelo. Perhaps, he could only view Mary as a young virgin, irrespective of her actual age. But I ask myself this – could this not portray, by Mary's youthful visage, Mary at the cross remembering her youth when she held baby Jesus in her lap? Or, if a prophetic depiction, could it be Mary at the

nativity looking ahead to the sword that would pierce her soul? The Christmas story in Luke, as well as in Matthew, chronicles both the wonder and joy, as well as the struggle and sorrow that came when God took upon flesh to rescue men and women from their sins.

The story has a good ending. To all who will come to Christ and follow Him, He will give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, for no one will be able to take them out of His hand (John 10:27-28). **It was good news the angels sang that first Christmas, for unto us a Savior was born!**

The Creative Touch!

I would like to highlight a gifted artist who has recently come to reside in the Village of Galway. Cathryn Hunt, an elementary school art teacher for the past seven years, makes Dutch Delft Pottery. She and her son, Hunter, are also historical re-enactors, so she mixes her love for art and history by specializing in historic replicas.

Cathryn also gives one-on-one pottery lessons to those wanting to learn this craft.

If you are interested in her work or would like to take classes, you may contact her at <https://www.facebook.com/beltanepottery>



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