## Fall 2025 Edition

Fall 2025 Vol. 48 No. 3



# The Cobblestoner



## Simply Christmas (Sat. December 6 at 11am)

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Greetings from the Cobblestone Museum!



Photo courtesy Brenda Radzinski

By Sue Bonafini, Assistant Director

Simply Christmas: A Community Musical "Quilt" is the chosen title for this year's holiday program to usher in the Christmas season.

Talented individuals from the local area will

participate. Cobblestone Board Member & Treasurer Maarit Vaga is working on this patchwork of instrumental music, vocals and more, to entertain the audience that will gather at 11am on December 6 at the Cobblestone Church, to hear about a 45-minute performance by all. It will include at least one sing-along selection to add to the fun! A quartet comprised of Susan Walders, Aaron Grabowski, Bradeen & Sebastian Erakare will sing Riu, Riu, Chiu, a Spanish Renaissance Christmas madrigal. Jan-Mikael Erakare will present Christmas readings. Former intern John Patt of Holley will play a violin solo. Fall intern Casey Starkweather of Carlton will sing, and former intern Eliya Cooper of Rochester will join Susan Walders of Albion for a clarinet & flute duet. Trustee Brenda Radzinski is a talented quilter, who is loaning us a few of her beautiful Christmas quilt creations to beautify the concert venue. (Photo left) Please join us for this free-will offering event. Light refreshments will follow at the lower level of the church.

## Holiday Shoppe (Sat. December 6: 10am-2pm)



By Sue Bonafini, Assistant Director

Join us for our Holiday Shoppe Open House on Saturday, December 6, to find affordably priced Christmas-themed goods,10 am – 2pm.

Whether you're looking for strings of lights, wrapping paper, a tree ornament, Christmas books, mugs, wreaths, or snowman, Santa and angel assorted items, consider stopping by to check out our brand new or gently used holiday merchandise. All sales benefit the Cobblestone Society & Museum.

We've already got plenty to choose from, too much to list, but because we anticipate many shoppers that day, why not DONATE your unwanted holiday decorations to us? We'll take anything you're ready to retire that would enhance our displays so that we can get them into a new home for the holiday season. In addition, Susan Walders will be selling handmade knitted and crocheted items to enhance the shopping experience, perfect for you or to give as a gift to keep winter's chill away. Call 585/589-9013 or email volunteers@cobblestonemuseum.org to arrange a drop off time for donations or ask questions.

## Historic Preservation Awards



Award Winners: (Front L-R) Andrew Meier, Don & Linda Prince, Cynthia Waters (DAR), Sue Beamer (Back Row L-R) Roz Starkweather, Sue Starkweather Miller, Doug Miller, John & Melissa Gailie and Hank Beamer

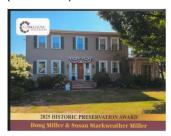
This year's Historic Preservation Award winners were celebrated at the banquet held at White Birch on Friday, October 10. The six honorees were given photo-awards and certificates from attending dignitaries from the US Congress, NYS Senate and Assembly, and Orleans County Legislature. There were 107 registered guests who enjoyed the evening's festivities.



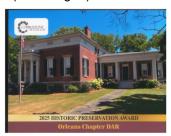


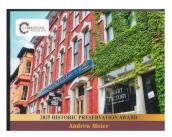
Special Thanks to our 2025 Sponsors Albion Agencies NBT Bank Rollin Hellner Development Brian Daddis Heritage Masonry

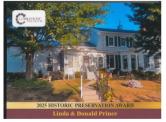
The keynote address presented by Megan Hillyard of Landmark Society of WNY (above left) and Brenda Tremblay of WXXI served as emcee (above right.)

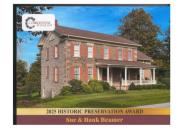












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\* Denotes Life Members

As an additional membership benefit, Patron level and higher levels are recognized in every issue of the Cobblestoner. Members at the Individual and Family levels are recognized in one quarterly issue at the time of payment. Major Donor levels, Heritage and above, are cumulative giving.

## **New Coverlet Donation**



We are especially grateful for the recent donation of a Jacquard coverlet once owned by an Orleans County family in the 19th century. The coverlet was donated by our longtime friend and member, Scott Barrett of Bloomington, Indiana. Scott also donated a coverlet in 2010.

While visiting the campus this summer, Scott spent time with us to film an informational video about the coverlet and his family. The video can be viewed on our website cobbestonemuseum.org or on our YouTube channel: Cobblestone Museum.

The recent donation was a coverlet that he inherited from his mother. The stunning coverlet shown below features the name of the Bullard family, once prominent here in Albion.

We are pleased to let you know that you are welcome to stop by and view our permanent exhibits, including the 20+ coverlets on display, throughout the winter months when the museum is normally closed. Just give us a call at (585) 589-9013 and we'd be glad to help arrange your visit.



## **School Field Trips**



Intern Collin Capurso addresses 4th grade students from the Fred W. Hill Elementary School in Brockport who are seated at the west end of Farmers Hall. Their field trip to the Museum took place on May 23.



This 4th grade student points out modern mortar used in repair, different in color and texture from the original soft lime mortar used in 1836 when the Ward House was built.

## **Historic Markers**



We are pleased to present the newly released book, "Historic Markers of Orleans County, NY," compiled by Catherine Cooper, County Historian. This book is available for purchase in our gift shop for \$15 (call for an appointment to pick up at 585.589.9013) or by mail using the form on the back page of this newsletter.

## **Genesee County Cobblestones**



By Richard Palmer, Cobblestone Blog

There are many fine examples of cobblestone houses in Genesee County. Two are on Fargo Road in the town of Stafford. This house at 9180 Fargo Road was known for many years as the William Hanson House. It was built of field stones in 1831 by John Warren who came from Bishop's Taunton, Devonshire, England, the previous year. It features a modern Prairie style addition in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright.



This house at 9295 Fargo Road was built by Giles Minor, a prominent farmer, in 1840. He came here in 1826. He died on February 14, 1883 at the age of 80. Later the house was occupied by his son, Henry Clay Minor, who was the inventor of Minor's patent automatic stanchion for cattle.



Detail of design of wall at 9295 Fargo Road. This is a technique called "piping," where as a final step in construction, raised mortar joints are added between the stones. The mortar was applied using a tool made from a piece of pipe cut lengthwise and bent slightly. In this case, the tool had a flat bottom instead of rounded. It is unusual to find this technique employed in the 1840s. It is usually found on a few late-period cobblestone buildings, but continued in use on other masonry (like foundations and chimneys) on late Victorian buildings. This is the only entire house that I could find built of this design. "Piping" was usually only applied to foundations of a much later period.

## Legacy Society

Silver.....Up to \$99,999

Gold......\$100,000 to \$249,999

Emerald .....\$250,000 to \$449,999



Platinum.....\$500,000 to \$999,999

Diamond .....\$1,000,000 and above

DIAMOND LEVEL (\$1,000,000 & Above)

**Gail Thompson Johnson** 

SILVER LEVEL (Up to \$99,999) David Hawley

## The Erie Canal Influenced Local History (Part 3)

This year, as we celebrate the Bicentennial of the Opening of the Erie Canal (1825-2025), we will reflect on the importance of the Canal to our local history in several articles in our "Cobblestoner." This is the third of occasional contributions. (Editor)

Eagle Harbor, once a thriving Erie Canal community, was the scene of a devastating canal breach in August 1927, that caused damages estimated at over \$3 million in today's economy. The sleepy canal town instantly became the scene of an enormous work force numbering several hundred people that worked 24 hours a day to restore canal commerce.



Photo courtesy NYS Barge Canal Western Division

The underpinning of the disaster can be attributed to the design of the canal in what became known as the south wall of the "Trough at Eagle Harbor." During the Barge Canal expansion in 1912, a massive embankment or trough with a height of about 50' feet raising above the level of Otter Creek was created to contain the canal and pass over the creek. The embankment was constructed from earth, concrete and stone.



A portion of the embankment passing over Otter Creek today, known as state canal culvert #86.

A short excursion along the towpath at Eagle Harbor quickly identifies the immense scale of the construction project, also seen in the picture above. The creek itself was channeled through a culvert that was buried 6' beneath the canal, creating a trough of water 12' deep above.

On August 3, 1927, bridge tender Leon Walters, received word from two boys that they had seen a small leak open up in the canal near the embankment. The small leak foretold of the disaster that was about to follow. A local man, L.E. Bennett, reported seeing a 3' square hole open up later that day. This opening began spilling thousands of gallons of water from the canal into the surrounding countryside in a short period of time. The breach occurred about 100' west of the Otter Creek culvert. Quickly, a massive hole opened up and the south wall of the canal broke apart creating a hole 50' across and 7' deep.

Photo courtesy Orleans County Historian

Newspapers stated that canal officials estimated 1 billion gal-



lons of water spilled out of the canal into the surrounding fields, creating an artificial lake about 2 miles long by one-half mile wide with a depth of 20'-60' throughout. Numerous houses were flooded with some victims stranded in their second stories until the next day.

The reconstruction efforts began immediately and were supervised by Canal Commissioner Thomas Farrell. Early estimates stated that the canal west of Rochester would need to be closed for ten days, but when the full scope of the disaster was realized, the project dragged on for six weeks. Some sources reported that during that time, upward to two million bushels of grain were stopped at Buffalo due to the canal break, along with untold amount of other agricultural products from other locales around the Great Lakes. Local farmers pleaded with Farrell to keep the canal open to the Lattin Bridge Guard Gate so that commerce into and out of Albion (eastbound) could be maintained to help minimize the impact in Orleans County.

Over 200 men were put to work round the clock to make the repairs. Heavy equipment operators were employed to operate about 20 trucks, six steam shovels, concrete mixers, pile drivers and other pieces of earth moving equipment to complete the project.

(Continued on next page.)

## **Erie Canal Breaches (Continued)**

## **Iowan Charter Bus**



(Continued from previous page.)

The break became an overnight sensation, drawing motorists thought to number in the thousands to the region. In addition to the cost to repair the canal, many local farmers suffered devastating losses, the ill effects of which lasted a few years in some cases. Local farmer John Potter reported his field of potatoes was submerged under 10' of water for weeks. Other farmers reported losses of cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers and grain products.



Repaired canal structures passing over Otter Creek at Eagle Harbor today. Note use of concrete retaining walls on both sides of the canal.

When final reports were published, state officials postulated that the underlying culprit in the disaster was a colony of errant muskrats, close cousins to the otters of Otter Creek fame, that had burrowed into the wall of the embankment, thus setting up the cataclysmic series of events that led to this historic disaster.

(The next installment will cover other historic breaches including a more recent event in 2012.)



Gail Pennebaker and Rebecca Egbert of Missouri posed by their Neihart Tours charter bus that brought Midwestern visitors to the Museum on August 16. The shiny bus is reflecting the Cobblestone Church in this image. The ladies are actually facing the church.

## Fall Intern—Casey Starkweather

By Sue Bonafini, Assistant Director

This fall we are very pleased that our newest intern, Casey Starkweather, is with us to serve as an additional tour guide, while learning about museum operations as part of her coursework at SUNY Brockport. She is earning volunteer hours as well as college credit for this internship based on 90+ hours of



service during the fall semester. Thanks to Trustee Bill Lattin and other volunteer mentors, she was provided accelerated training to complete our program for Museum docents. Casey writes:

My name is Casey Starkweather. I have lived in the Town of Carlton my whole life. I graduated from Albion High School in

2020 and am now in my senior year of college at SUNY Brockport for a degree in History with a minor in Museum Studies. I am also the treasurer of the SUNY Brockport History Club.

Casey has been introduced to our PastPerfect Museum Software that generates our databases for Membership & Donations, Collections, the Resource Library, and more. She assists with our Used Books self-serve operation, where she has been lending a hand to sort community donations and keep the bookshelves filled. Director Doug and I appreciate her enthusiasm to help us with a myriad of projects twice weekly, and no doubt, we're thankful that she chose the Cobblestone Museum as her placement to fulfill her course requirements.

## **Announcing our 2025 Award Winners**

For their Contributions to the Cobblestone Society & Museum





Congratulations to our 2025 Award Winners (left) Jeanette Riley, Chris Capurso and Marie Bell. (Right) Pat & Marissa Olles/Pat's Auto Repair received their award at the Vagg House.

By Sue Bonafini, Asst. Director

The Annual Meeting of the Cobblestone Society & Museum was held on Saturday, November 1 at the Gaines Carlton Community Church. It included the presentation of awards for those who have made significant contributions in support of the Society & Museum.

Marie Bell, owner of Country Treasures Quilt Shop in Brockport, received the Business Partner of the Year award. Since 2016 she has extended financial support toward programming connected to quilts, whether live or virtual. In 2025 she was the exclusive sponsor of a virtual program featuring a remarkable textile held by the Kentucky Historical Society, the Elizabeth Roseberry Mitchell Graveyard Quilt, c.

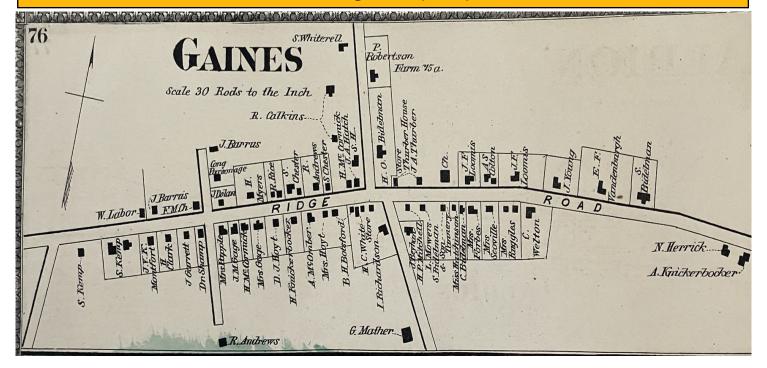
1843.

The Riley Family of Albion graciously allowed members and friends of the Society to visit their magnificent gardens on the north bank of the Erie Canal for our Midsummer Celebration in July. They received the Donna Rodden Hospitality Award, which recognizes the hosting of events on behalf of the Museum. This special event has become an ideal fundraiser for the Museum, and we greatly appreciate the family's efforts to prepare and share their beautiful location with all of us.

Pat's Auto Repair of Albion, Patrick & Marissa Olles, owners, received the Community Partner Award. Museum members at the Bronze Membership level, the Olles have sponsored several events when funding was needed, including sponsorship of two of our virtual programs during the 2025 off-season, and they were the exclusive sponsor of last year's Solar Eclipse celebration in April. They have provided more than one gift basket for our events, they've donated some merchandise with their company logo for our use, and they went home with more than one item from our Membership Dinner auction this past May, which equates to additional financial support for our organization.

Chris Capurso was named Volunteer of the Year. She is a trustee of the Cobblestone Society and a volunteer since 2021. Chris has demonstrated a willingness to take on a variety of roles to assist staff with daily operations, special events or other projects. One of our newer docents, she is now sharing the history of our buildings with the public. This past season she tackled several special activities, including the sorting of 110 boxes of donated books for our Used Books building.

## Looking Back (1875)



By 1875 the hamlet of Gaines had achieved considerable size, as seen here in the regional atlas. The cross roads show route 104 (Ridge Road) and Route 279 (Gaines-Waterport Road looking north and Gaines Road heading south.)

## **Donors and More!**

Many thanks to our members and friends who have made donations to the Cobblestone Society since our last issue of The Cobblestoner. Many people kindly donated items, finances, in-kind services, or artifacts to help the Museum continue to grow.

Larry Albanese Albion Gr. 3 teachers & parents, Ronald L. Sodoma Elem, Sch. Erin Anheier & Russ

**Bosch** M. Scott Barrett Sue & Jim Bonafini Shirley Bright-Neeper Garth & M. Karen Brokaw Roy Bubb

Richard & Becky Canuteson Darrick Coleman **Grace Denniston** Doug & Lois Farley Shirley & Stanley Farone Robert & Pat Flagler The Garret Club (Buffalo) Gail Haas in honor of Richard P. Canuteson

Catherine & David Henn

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## Annual Appeal Challenge

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Jack Batchellor Susan Beamer Carolyn Beeman Dr. Joseph Bencloski Jean Benson Russ Bosch

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## **Preservation Awards Banquet**

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Jaime & Michael Beach (Patron)

Sue & Hank Beamer (Patron)

Bill & Jackie Bixler (Bronze) Albion Agen-

Shirley Bright-Neeper and LeRoy Neeper (Patron)

Chris Capurso in memory of Al Capurso Joyce Chizick (Patron) in memory of James Chizick

Adrienne Daniels

Ann & Eugene Czajkow- Gwen Hughson ski (Patron)

Brian & Suzanne Daddis (Bronze)

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Gail Johnson (Gold) in memory of Hannah & Charles Thompson

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Ruth Mathes (Patron) Andrew Meier (Bronze) Betty Sue & Fred Miller

(Bronze) Marissa & Pat Olles (Patron)

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Brenda Radzinski (Patron)

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(Patron) in honor of Hank & Sue Beamer James Wells in memory of Margaret & Dudley Mathes

Doreen & Gary Wilson (Patron)

Beatrice Young (Patron) Del Young

## Cobblestone Museum Events 2025

**Art Exhibit—Tom Zangerle**: (Ongoing) In conjunction with Mr. Zangerle's painting classes, Tom has mounted an exhibit of his paintings at the Visitors Center. Visit during Museum hours or call for an appointment.

Art Exhibit—19th Century Orleans County Painters: (Ongoing) Bill Lattin has put together an outstanding exhibit of 19th century paintings at the Thompson-Kast Visitors Center.

**Art Exhibit—Rogers Groups:** (Ongoing) We are pleased to exhibit Bill Lattin's personal collection of 20 John Rogers statuary from the 19th century. A full color catalog is also available.

**Historic Coverlets**: (Ongoing) An exhibit of over 20 historic 19th century coverlets is on display at the Visitors Center. Visit during Museum hours or call for an appointment to see this display from the Museum's own collection. A full color catalog detailing each coverlet is available by donation.

Victorian Mourning Art Exhibition with Color Catalog: (Ongoing) Join us to view an exhibition of over 200 examples of mourning art objects and images that have been loaned

from the personal collection of retired art educator and Museum director Bill Lattin. Bill installed this exhibit in late 2022 in our Upper Gallery and recently added over 20 new pieces.

**Simply Christmas III:** (Sat. Dec 6 at 11am) We will be gathering at the Cobblestone Church for "Simply Christmas: A Community Christmas Quilt" on Saturday, December 6th at 11am, for songs, readings, and more. Following the program, light refreshments will be served in the Proctor Room. Come share the warmth and joy of Christmas with us! Free-will offerings gladly received.

**OCHA Annual Meeting**: (Sat. Dec. 6 at 12:30pm) Our friends at the Orleans County Historical Association have invited us to join with them for their Annual Luncheon Meeting & Program, held this year at neighboring Tavern on The Ridge. (See information below.)

Holiday Shoppe Open House: (Sat. Dec. 6 from 10am-2pm) Here's your chance to get ready for the holidays with hundreds of low priced Christmas themed goods. Browse the Holiday Shoppe that is bursting with treasures and stocking stuffers. (See Page 1 for more details.)

## **Orleans County Historical Association Annual Meeting**



Notice & Invitation To Members & Friends

OCHA Annual Luncheon Meeting & Program

Tavern on the Ridge—Corner Routes 104 & 98

Saturday, December 6 at 12:30pm

OCHA is pleased to invite everyone to attend their annual meeting. A delicious lunch served at the Tavern on the Ridge will be followed by a featured program by Dennis Carr whose topic will be: "Susan B. Anthony—Her Arrest & Trial."

Please call for reservations and menu selection by Thursday, December 4 at (585) 589-4174. You may pay at the door or send check & choices to OCHA at 3286 Gaines Basin Road, Albion, NY 14411. \$30 per person.

Menu Choices:

(1) Vegetable Lasagna, (2) Cottage Pie, or (3) Winter Salad with Chicken Breast

Relish Trays—Beverage & Dessert—Included

This has been planned so that those who wish may attend both the Cobblestone Museum "Simply Christmas" concert at 11am and the OCHA luncheon and program.



Our Cobblestone Gift Shop is happy to help keep the memory of America's first Santa Claus School and Christmas Park alive through the sales of this book detailing the life of Albion's Santa Claus, Charles Howard. This keepsake was prepared by the Albion Middle School Service Learning Club. You can order your copy on the last page of this newsletter. The price includes postage to your home.

Also available for holiday gift giving are the special 200th Erie Canal Anniversary publication and our recent reprint of "Architecture Destroyed in Orleans County."

## Five Year Capital Pledge Drive for the Thompson-Kast Visitors Center

## \$252,000

Gail Thompson Johnson\*

#### \$152,000

Kathy (David) Kast

#### \$40,000

Elizabeth Dye Curtis Foundation

#### \$30,000

Roy Bubb

#### \$25,000

Erin Anheier & Russ Bosch Orleans Chapter,

National Society
Daughters of the
American Revolution

Patricia & Peter Hurd Ingrid (Roger) LaMont John Nipher

## \$21,000

Debby & Jack Batchellor

## \$20,000

Sue & Jim Bonafini

#### \$15,000

Gabriella & Lawrence Albanese\*

Albion Agencies— Jackie & Bill Bixler

#### \$12,500

Dunn Martin Fund-Camilla VanderLinden & Robin MacLeod

#### \$10,000

The Baird Foundation Rebecca & Richard Canuteson and family in memory of original board member Bertha and Dr. Richard Canuteson

Lois & Doug Farley Courtenay & Maurice Hoag

Gwen Hughson Galen Lewis & The Lewis Family

Christopher Mitchell Funeral Homes Shirley G. Bright-

Neeper and Le Roy E. Neeper Kim & Dick Remley

Christine Sartwell Brad (Patricia) Shelp

## \$5,000

Rita Burrell
Andrew W. Meier
Betty Sue & Fred Miller
Scott & Janet
Schickling
Gerard (Patricia)
Morrisey

## \$3,000

Grace & John Denniston

## \$2,500

Rev. Dr. Don Algeo Anonymous Leigh & Kevin Hamilton Maureen & Paul Marshall Family Clara & Jeff Martin Sibyl & Richard Pilon

#### \$2,000

Anonymous

Karen & Mark Bower

#### \$1,100

Elinor Sartwell LeClair & Ed LeClaire

#### \$1,000

Doris F. Antinore
Margy & Eric Brown
Dr.& Mrs. Donald W.
Bishop, Jr.
Mary Anne Braunbach
Robert Bruning
Farm Credit East

Bonnie Howlett
Linda & Tim Kirby
Amy Machamer & Jose

Amy Machamer & Joe Sidonio

Ruth Thompson Mathes & John Mathes Diane & Keith Palmer\*

Toni Plummer

Brenda & Mark Radzinski

Susan & Michael Thaine in memory of Janice Barnum Thaine Ann & John Raskopf Elaine & Dan Specht

Beverly (Gary) Thompson

Christine & Ross Thompson Maarit Vaga & Jan Mikael Erakare

Jean Woodcock

Up to \$999 Anonymous

Sandra Andrews Cindy & Bill Applegate Brett Baker

Darcy Beeman
Jeanette & William

Behnke Jean Benson

Sandra Brown

Kathleen Clarke Kathleen Danley in memory of John G.

memory or a

Richard Dunham

Barbara Filipiak Diana Flow

Gail Foss Linda Fraser

Linda Frasei

Sylvia Goodstine Harriette Greaser

James P. Harold Cynthia Howk

Michael Kaye

Linda Kozubal
Edna Kriner-Kirby &

Bruce Kirby Wendy & Dennis Kirby

Kludt Farms Allen Lackey

Allison Lattin

C. W. Lattin\*
Jana Laxa (David

Sturges)

Gail & Nathan Lyman Susan & Jerome

Machamer

Judy & Donald Manley Janice Mann-Beech

Catherine D. Moore

Susan Mull Tom Noon Lorraine Oakley

Guinevere & Alan

Panek

William Pilon

Eloise & Chuck Puls Mr. & Mrs. Ronald

Radzinski

Mariana Rhoades Rush's Vegetables

Marti & Brad Ryan Susanne & Don Sack

Daniel W. Schiavone, DDS

Jean Shervin

Jane & Neal Smith

Joann Smith
Kathleen M. Smith
Kyle Somerville

Clark Stritzel

Marty Taber

Mark Tillman— Tillman's Village Inn

Kay VanNostrand

Diane Ecker Wadsworth & Donald

E. Wadsworth
Mary Jean Welser &

Marty Schlabach Loretta Tomasino Beatrice Young

\* Denotes Life Member

Thank you to all of our Donors!

Total Pledges to Date: \$1,620,821

Thank you to all who have contributed to our Visitors Center Capital Campaign. Please remember to forward any unpaid pledges outstanding for Year Five of the campaign by December 31, 2025.

Thank you again!

## Cobblestone Museum 2026 Membership & More!

hone Number (Home)				(Cell	)		
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		19 10	_	The second second	USTAINING		
Membership Levels	\$30	\$50+	\$100+	\$250+	\$500+	<b>Gold</b> \$1000+	\$2500+
Free Admission	x	X	Х	Х	Х	X	X
Free Cobblestoner Newsletter	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Discounts on Events & Tours	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10% Discount in Gift Shop	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advance Notice of Events	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Use of Resource Center	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cobblestone Perks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recognition in Newsletter	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recognition in every Newslette			X	X	X	X	X
Recognition at Membership Din	ner		X	X	X	X	X
Free Admission for Guests	L' D'		2	4	All	All	All
Free Raffle Tickets at the Meml	persnip Dinne	r		X	X	X 2	X
One Free Ticket to Event (s) Advertisement on Website					1 X	X	4 X
Complimentary Lunch for Two	at Annual Me	eting			^	X	X
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Complimentary Dinner for Two	at Membersh	in Dinner					X
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