

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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EVER SEEKING



Seated is William Nestle, President of the Society and Museum. Standing from left to right are Stanly J. Keysa, the featured speaker for the occasion; Delia Robinson, Director of the Cobblestone Resource Center and Barbara Merrill, Chairperson for the 30th Anniversary.

On Saturday, November 10 the Cobblestone Society celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a banquet at the Village Inn and a program in the historic Cobblestone Church. Over sixty people were in attendance for this event including the ones pictured above. Seated is William Nestle, President of the Society and Museum. Standing from left to right is Stanley J. Keysa, the featured speaker for the occasion, Delia Robinson, Director of the Cobblestone Resource Center and Barbara Merrill, Chairperson for the 30th Anniversary.

The Cobblestone Society was established October 23, 1960 with intent to acquire cobblestone buildings at Childs, N.Y. and establish a museum and library there. To this end the society was further established to restore and maintain these cobblestone buildings with the goal to promote public knowledge and appreciation of this regional form of masonry construction. Along with this the society was also charged with collecting all related forms of regional art and architecture. Over the past thirty years seven historic buildings (3 cobblestone) have been acquired to make up the Cobblestone Museum at Childs, N.Y. In 1982 the Cobblestone Resource Center was established as a headquarters to house and disseminate information on cobblestone buildings. In the spring, the center will be reopened in the Robert W. Frasch Room which is now under construction located on the ground floor of the Cobblestone Church at Childs.

To help celebrate the 30th anniversary, a key-

note speaker was selected who could speak directly to the concerns and interests of Cobblestone Society members. He is the Hon. Stanley J. Keysa, an attorney from, and Supervisor of the Town of Lancaster, N.Y. Mr. Keysa is well versed in the construction of the cobblestone masonry wall. Starting around eight years ago he decided to build a cobblestone garage. In order to make a building which has the appearance of an authentic mid-19th century cobblestone structure, he first had to reinvent the cobblestone masons' techniques, which I might say, he has done admirably. Having collected and sorted stones small, medium and large he has proceeded to put up a cobblestone veneer over concrete blocks. This was a time-consuming process which took several years as Mr. Keysa has a very busy schedule and could only devote spare time to the construction of his garage. In his talk, he showed how he laid the stones up by use of a straight edge. Because of the importance of this simple device in forming walls, Mr. Keysa made a model of it which he presented to the Cobblestone Museum for educational purposes. His talk was illustrated with slides which not only showed the garage, but also an addition to his home which is being built out of cobblestone. The main portion of Mr. and Mrs. Keysa's new home is designed to replicate a mid-19th century Greek Revival farm house. This and his cobblestone walls you would swear are 150 years old. As they say, "Where there's a will there's a way."

Mr. Keysa is active in local politics and preservation causes. He spear-headed the restoration of the Lancaster Opera House and is recognized as a man of many skills and talents. Mr. Keysa proves that the formation of the cobblestone wall is no secret. He has also proved that patience, persistence and self-taught skills can create a masterpiece. What he has learned and was able to impart to the Cobblestone Society is of great assistance to any cobblestone home owner interested in the preservation of these landmarks. The seeking of more information concerning these building techniques is always in the making. Just when we think we know it all we find something else.

Recently we have discovered that several cobblestone homes erected in the 1840's were stained with some sort of solution to color the cobblestones and mortar. In most cases this has either faded or eroded and in early examples from the 1830's we are not aware of any staining. In other words, we believe that no pigment was added to the mortar mix, but rather, applied to the entire building upon completion. With Mr. Keysa's hands on research and others, perhaps some day we will know more about cobblestone construction which thirty years ago was considered a lost art.