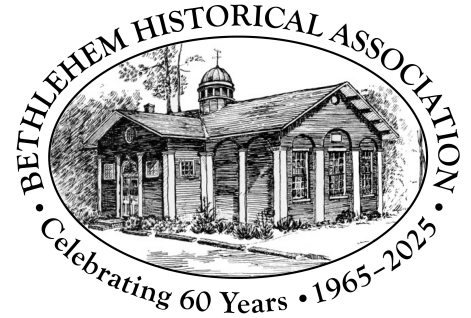


Bethlehem Historical Association

NEWSLETTER

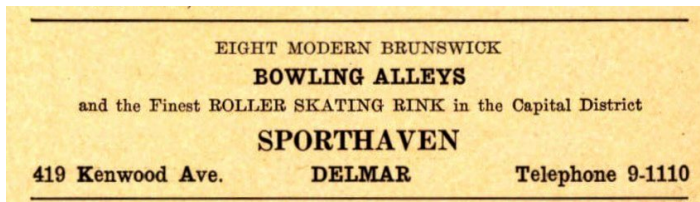
Spring 2025



SPORTHAVEN – Roller Skating, Bowling and More!

By John Smolinsky

From 1940 to 1983, Sporthaven (aka Delmar Sporthaven) was a community establishment which provided entertainment, exercise, relaxation as well as competition and education. Located near 4 Corners at 419 Kenwood Ave. (now Barbara's School of the Dance). Sporthaven began in 1940 and offered "Eight Modern Brunswick Bowling Alleys" and "The Finest Roller Skating Rink in the Capital District" and provided recreation for generations of Bethlehem residents.



Ad from 1941 Tri-Village Directory

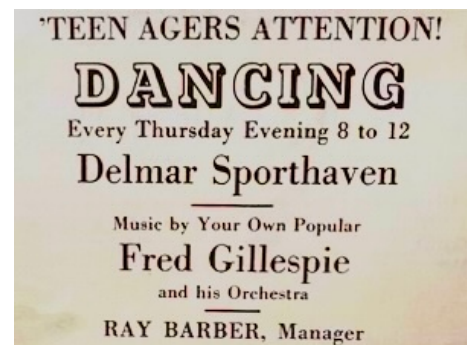
In an interview with the Altamont Enterprise in 2024, a 102 year old former Delmar resident, Ken Bailey (1922-2024), recalled Sporthaven - "Downstairs was roller skating and upstairs was bowling". More importantly, he reminisced about meeting his wife of 63 years at Sporthaven when he was 18 and how he skated with her for many years afterward.

The Golden Age of Roller Skating, from approximately 1937–1959, represents a period when roller skating was the number one participatory sport in America.

During WWII, civilians, war industry workers and military personnel, both in the states and overseas, sought out roller skating rinks to

relieve the stress of the times, propelling roller skating to the top sport by the end of the 1940s. An estimated 5,000 rinks were in operation and 18,000,000 Americans roller skated during the peak of the trend.

The reputation of roller skating was transformed into a sport for all adults to enjoy as recreation. In 1938, dancing on roller skates became popular and spread from the east to the west coast. National competitions were established for speed skating, skate dancing, and figure skating. Sporthaven proudly advertised "Attention! Skate to the Music of Our New Hammond Electric!" In other ads they advertised "Teenagers Attention! DANCING"



Ads from the 1940s

Continued on page 2

Sporthaven continued from page 1

In the new exhibit at the Museum, **Fun and Frolic**, BHA has put together a collection of artifacts from many sports and fun activities in Bethlehem. Among the artifacts are a pair of roller skates w/ pompoms and photos of a fancy shirt once worn by a Sporthaven skater. Courtesy of the NYS Museum, we are displaying these photos of a shirt from a roller skating club (or team). The shirt has rich velvet sleeves with the name of “Eddie” embroidered on the front and “Sporthaven Travelers” along with couple on roller skaters embroidered on the back.



Actual sticker size 5 5/8
X 5 5/8 inches



Photo Courtesy of the
NYS Museum

In the early 1940s, at the dawn of the “Golden Age” of roller-skating, rink operators struck upon a simple means of promotion: stickers. Designed in a range of shapes and colors, each sticker acted as a kind of calling card for a particular rink. Sporthaven was no exception!

Skaters would plaster them on their roller skate cases, collect them when they traveled, and even swap them with fellow enthusiasts.

Roller skating at Sporthaven continued to the mid-1940s and was eventually replaced by more bowling lanes. Popularity of Bowling increased during the 1940s and 50s and even became a theme, along with a variety of bowling images, used in mass marketing everything from magazines to cigarettes to chewing gum to flashlight batteries! Professional bowler salaries rivaled those of major sports figures and professional bowling tournaments attracted many fans. Bowling also became a major participatory sport in the United States. By 1946,



419 Kenwood Ave.

Sporthaven discontinued advertising roller skating and within a year or two expanded to 14 bowling lanes and eventually 16 lanes by the mid-1950s. As with most bowling alleys, friendly competition took the form of Leagues made up of teams sponsored by local businesses and team members sporting matching

shirts with credit to sponsors. Team names like The Bowling Belles, Ross Drive Inn, Delmar Plaza Barbers, Bert’s Chop House, Star Super Market (nicknamed the Marketeers) and Altamont Tilers (nicknamed the Tilers) were common. Bowling in the “Mixed Nuts League” at Sporthaven surely must have been fun! During a season of 6 months or so, teams met for weekly matches and tournaments resulting in awards and trophies and, of course, bragging rights! Sporthaven sponsored Junior programs as well as a Senior League on Sunday afternoon. Local sports pages filled columns of their papers with local individual and team bowling scores. In the late 1970’s, Sporthaven was also the location for the Bethlehem Central High School physical education bowling classes.

Over the years there has also been an apartment, and several businesses in the back of the Sporthaven building.

In December 1978, a well-known beloved resident, Anna Mae White, “lost her house at 104 Elsmere Ave to fire; she lost all her possessions and all the clothes she had except those she wore to the bowling lanes.” Anna Mae had been out bowling at the time of the fire. John Germann, proprietor of Sporthaven (and Del Lanes) and an accomplished athlete (A Hall of Fame bowler and Normanside Golf Champion!) as well as a successful businessman, donated the use of an apartment in the Sporthaven building where Anna Mae could live “as long as she needs to”.

Continued on page 5

Afternoon Tea with **Eleanor** “The First Lady of the World”



Presented by Phyllis Chapman

sponsored by



Saturday, April 26, 1:30pm

Delmar Reformed Church
386 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY 12054



Enjoy tea sandwiches and fancies
RSVP by April 18 as seating is limited

For information, email bbcastle08@gmail.com
or call Barbara @ (518) 439-4351

\$20 for BHA members
\$25 for general public

Make checks out to Bethlehem Historical Association
and mail to:
Barbara Castle, 161 Adams Street, Delmar NY 12054

Events Calendar

Wednesday April 16, 7 p.m.

Fun On Two Wheels: A Short History of The
Bicycle

Presented by David H. Chinery at the Bethlehem
Public Library. Registration required. Call the
library at 518-439-9314 or [https://
bethlehem.librarycalendar.com/](https://bethlehem.librarycalendar.com/)

Saturday April 26, 1:30 p.m.

Afternoon Tea with Eleanor Roosevelt
See page 3 for details.

Thursday May 22, 6 p.m.

60th Anniversary Dinner and Annual Meeting
Details soon!

Monday May 26, 11 a.m.

Memorial Day Parade

Call Susan at 518-209-5855 to sign up to walk with
BHA in the parade.

Friday June 6, 4 p.m.

Out and About to the Van Ostrande-Radliff House
48 Hudson Street, Albany

Sunday June 8, 2 to 4 p.m.

Annual Ice Cream Social
At the museum

ELEANOR: “THE FIRST LADY OF THE WORLD”

One hardly has to include her last name to know who President Truman was referring to when he called her “The First Lady of the World.” Her life story and achievements are both astounding and inspiring. Orphaned at 10 years of age, Eleanor Roosevelt was a fearful, self-conscious child. Her marriage to Franklin D Roosevelt, a distant cousin, promised a bright future that was rocked with his infidelity and later, his contracting polio at 37, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. Both Eleanor and he persevered; in supporting his political aspirations during his illness, she discovered she had the aptitude and passion to become a skilled politician herself. Focusing on helping the poor, the disadvantaged, minorities and people of color, as well as young people, she and Franklin partnered in successfully steering the country through its most trying times- the Great Depression and the Second World War. Following the War, and Franklin’s death, she became a world-wide advocate for peace and human rights.

*Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) will be portrayed by
Phyllis Chapman of Vintage Visitors during our
Afternoon Tea on April 26*

Slate of Officers for 2025-2026

We are pleased to announce our slate of nominees to fill our upcoming vacant leadership roles. We thank everyone who participated in making these important decisions. We are especially proud of this well qualified slate of candidates and appreciate their willingness to give their time and talent to keep the Bethlehem Historical Association strong and vibrant. The election will take place at our Sixtieth Anniversary Celebration on May 22 at Normanside Country Club.

President - Jeff Lurie

Vice President - Don Klime

Recording Secretary - Barbara Castle

Corresponding Secretary – Open*

Treasurer - Susan Leath

Trustee - Ralph Rio

This office just recently became vacant. Won't you consider joining our team? Contact Susan Leath, susanleath2011@gmail.com or Karen Beck (karenclasbeck@gmail.com) to discuss, if interested.

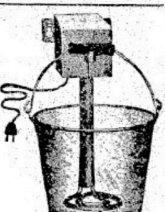
Anna Mae worked at the Normanside Luncheonette and did private catering for local organizations and clubs, oftentimes refusing payment. Along with Mr. Germann, many organizations, including Elsmere Fire Company, and local merchants, contributed goods, furnishings and money to Anna Mae, including creation of a trusteeship to secure her financial future.

<p>FOR FAMILY TYPE BOWLING ENJOY</p> <p>SPORTHAVEN LANES</p> <p>Completely Modernized KENWOOD AVE. and ADAMS ST. IN DELMAR 439-1110</p> <p>OPEN BOWLING—JOIN A LEAGUE</p>	<p>DEL LANES</p> <p>1 BETHLEHEM COURT IN ELSMERE</p> <p>24 Lanes • Air Conditioned 439-2224</p> <p>Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge</p> <p>OPEN BOWLING—JOIN A LEAGUE</p> <p>John Germann, Prop.</p>
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1974 Ad, Ten Forty Times

Several businesses also occupied space at the back of Sporthaven. In the mid 1940s, Moore Brothers Corp., a Dairy and Farm supply business from Albany, had a branch store and warehouse in the rear of the Sporthaven Building.

**Attention Dairymen!
Complete Line**

<p>DAIRY</p> <p>STRAINERS COTTON AND FLANNEL FILTERS</p> <p>BURPEE'S GARDEN AND FLOWER SEEDS</p> <p>BLACKSMITH SUPPLIES</p> <p>DAIRY INSTRUMENTS FEED AND BAG TRUCKS</p>	<p>RUBBER PARTS FOR ALL MAKE MILKERS</p>  <p>PORTABLE ELECTRIC WATER HEATER</p> <p>FREEZER LOCKER SUPPLIES— FREEZER PAPER — CELLO- PHANE — STOCKINETTE — BOXES AND BAGS</p>	<p>SUPPLIES</p> <p>MILK CANS PAILS — KETTLES STOOLS — STIRRERS</p> <p>GARDEN TOOLS AND LAWN MOWERS</p> <p>FOR POULTRY</p> <p>BROODERS WATERERS FEEDERS REMEDIES HOPPERS</p>
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The MOORE BROTHERS Corp.

MAIN SALESROOM AND OFFICES
280-291 HUDSON AVENUE (CORNER OF DOVE STREET)
Albany, New York

WAREHOUSE AND BRANCH STORE
419 KENWOOD AVE. (Sporthaven Bldg.) DELMAR, NEW YORK

NOT OPEN SATURDAYS
ALBANY PHONE 4-8340 DELMAR PHONE 9-2931

1947 Ad, Altamont Enterprise

In the early 1950s, Bartley's sold flooring, wallpaper and paint. And in the 1980s, Karen's Korner, a next-to-new shop, occupied a Sporthaven space for several years. Sporthaven closed at the end of the 1983 bowling season and began to sell the furnishings.

KAREN'S KORNER

417 Kenwood Ave., Delmar
Behind Sporthaven Lanes

Hours: Tues. - Fri. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**NOW ACCEPTING
FALL & WINTER CLOTHING**

For more information 439-5050

1980 Ad, Spotlight

<p>ATTENTION BOWLERS</p> <p>"Sporthaven Lanes is Closed" But You Can Still Bowl In The Delmar Area</p> <p>Call</p> <p>DEL LANES (In Elsmere Across From Delaware Plaza)</p> <p>We Still Have Openings For Teams & Individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Leagues with Babysitting • Mixed Seniors & Afternoon Leagues • Senior Men's Semi-Classic (Tuesday Afternoons) • Evening Leagues (Men's-Women's-Mixed) • Saturday Junior Program • Sunday Morning Adult-Junior Program <p>Don't Wait 439-2224 Call Now</p> <p>MEMBER CDBPA</p>	<p>FOR SALE USED BOWLING LANES</p> <p>Full Lanes or Cut Sections.</p> <p>Entire contents of Sporthaven Bowling Lanes 417 Kenwood Ave., Delmar will be available May 2, 1983.</p> <p>Full Lanes or Cut Sections DELIVERY AVAILABLE</p> <p>Many Uses Workbenches, Chopping Blocks, Bar Tops, Cocktail Tables, Sub Floors, Etc.</p> <p>Also Available Chairs, Refrigerators, Tables, Snack Bar Equipment, Office Equipment, Etc.</p> <p>Call 272-0808 Days or 439-9103 Nights</p>
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April/May Ads, Spotlight 1983

Peter Harris, a discount clothing store, began renovation of the building in May 1983, in preparation for their move from their Four Corners location (now Delmar Marketplace/McCarroll's). The Sporthaven building at 419 Kenwood is now occupied by Barbara's School of the Dance.

New Exhibit - Fun and Frolic: Sport, Recreation, Competition and Community

Be sure to visit the museum to take in our new Fun and Frolic exhibit. Over the years Bethlehem residents have enjoyed all kinds of sport and recreational activities. The exhibit highlights just a few including sledding, skating, golf, baseball and bowling. Many thanks to the Fun and Frolic team: Tim Beebe, Ricki Foreman, Susan Leath and John Smolinsky. Exhibit contributors include Beth Anderson, Karen Beck, Debbie Croscup, John Leath, Don Newkirk, Nance Newkirk, Ellie Prakken, Linda Schact, Bill Seyler and Helen Warner.



From kites in the sky to snow on the ground, the exhibit covers winter and summer activities.



In the early 1970's BHA friends try out the sled



The large bobsled had been stored in our Carriage House for many years. Here the guys work to bring it inside the museum.

Roller Skate Treasure

As the BHA Exhibit Committee gathered objects for this exhibit we were lacking a pair of roller skates. We asked around and finally went to the Cocksackie Antique Center. After searching through over 100 antique dealer booths, we came up empty handed. The owner of the center had seen skates in the past but not recently. After a few thoughtful minutes he pointed to a box in the back room – filled with mostly discards and heavily discounted items. A clerk helped move a small mountain of what-not and got the box down and opened it to a pair of ladies roller skates with red pom poms and even a pair of 100% wool socks. This was perfect – classy skates with an official case and to top off the treasure, the price was only \$10.!! After getting the skates home, the case was reopened, the skates cleaned, and there was another discovery. There is a name plate inside with the name:



The Perry Family

The Perry family of South Bethlehem is important to this exhibit. Jane Perry (1930-2024) was the sister of John L. Perry Jr., who gifted the 10 person bobsled to the Museum. While we can't date the skates, we know that Jane graduated from RSC HS in 1948, graduated from Lasell University in 1950 and went on to a long professional career with NYS Ag and Mkts.

We can only imagine the fun Jane had in the skates with the red pom poms!

News and Notes

Find out more about early Dutch architecture when we go Out and About on Friday, June 6 to the the Van Ostrande-Radliff House, the circa 1728 house that Historic Albany is restoring. Meet at the house on 48 Hudson Ave. Albany at 4:00PM. Please RSVP to Vicki Folger at 518-439-1824 or vhf49@yahoo.com.

Save the date for our 60th Anniversary Dinner and Annual Meeting to be held May 22 at Normanside Country Club. Invitations with ticket information will be in your hands soon. We are putting together a slide show of our 60 years of history. Please send along any pictures you would like to share to info@BethlehemHistorical.org.

Our Ice Cream Social is June 8. We need someone to work with Susan Leath to help coordinate the day. Please give her a call or text at 518-209-5855

Our Young Historians are in the midst of planning and scheduling visits to all of Bethlehem Central's fourth grades as well as the fourth graders at Becker Elementary School (part of the Ravana, Coeymans, Selkirk district that is in the town of Bethlehem.) These young at heart retired teachers have put together a fun and informative program that introduces students to our local history.

Below are photos from last November when the Young Historians of BHA hosted 17 homeschooled students and their chaperones. Debbie Croscup and Linda Davies did a presentation complete with artifacts, and everyone enjoyed the experience. The students ranged in age from 7-17.



Volunteer Opportunities

We are a busy, interesting organization. Along with the other non-profit organizations in Town, BHA serves to enrich the lives of our residents and strengthen our community ties.

Our programming depends on the strength of our volunteer engagement as we have no paid staff. Perhaps there is something you would enjoy doing that fits your unique skills, interests and schedule? We will welcome and support you. Won't you consider joining us?

To discuss possibilities, call Karen Beck (518 439 9260) or email: info@BethlehemHistorical.org.

Currently, we anticipate leadership vacancies for our Speaker Series Coordinator and Publicity Coordinator. Both positions have the opportunity to work alongside the current chair. We are also on the lookout for a Corresponding Secretary.



Bethlehem Historical Association

Cedar Hill Schoolhouse Museum

P.O. Box 263

Selkirk, NY 12158

The Bethlehem
Historical Association
Cedar Hill Schoolhouse Museum

1003 River Road
P.O. Box 263
Selkirk, NY 12158
(518) 767-9432
info@bethlehemhistorical.org
BethlehemHistorical.org

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Vice President: Jeff Lurie

Recording Secretary: Deborah Croscup

Corresponding Secretary: Jan Cornell

Treasurer: Mary Ann Shubert

TRUSTEES

Tim Bebee, Karen Beck,

Linda Davies, Vicki Folger,

Mary Kelle, Andrew Reilly, Sharon Sestak

Ex Officio: Town Historian Bill Ketzer

Newsletter Editors

John Berninger & Susan Leath

*Live for Today Dream for Tomorrow
Learn from Yesterday*