



SCHENECTADY/NIJKERK NEWSLETTER

November 2013

schenectadynijkerk.org

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

A letter from Connie:

I would like to extend my sincere THANK YOU'S to all the members of this group that has helped me and come to my rescue when needed. I appreciate each and every one of you.....

Ellen McNett, my strength and right arm, my true friend and confidant. I need her all the time.

Michael Brockbank, my friend and trusted advisor who has always put my mind to rest and made sure all was well. He is a very caring person and is so appreciated.

Laura Lee Linder, my go to person and always there for me. She keeps me leveled and educates me in a most wonderful way – I have learned a lot from her.

Amy Brule, who has always said “I will do it” even though she had a plateful already. She is everybody's mom, nurse and caretaker. Does all that is possible for one person to do.

Wayne Brule, our “keep us on track and focus” person and he picks up the rear – always. Never need to worry when he is around.

Gay Doolittle, always cheers me up and tells me that it will be ok. She always says “what would you like me to do” and she does it without thinking twice.

Joe Doolittle, my always thinking of how we can raise the money needed, is there to chip in and say “I think that we can do that” – and we do.

Ron Lagasse, what can one say about Ron. He is there always and is a true leader. He is the rock of this group. Has never said an unkind thing about anything or anyone. He is always happy for another's good fortune and concerned for those that are having a problem. He is my inspiration.

Donna Lagasse, the sweetest, nicest person in the world. A trooper thru and thru. Jumps in to help at EVERY occasion. A talented person that does some of the nicest presentations for all to share. Donna has given of herself time and time again, despite some of her own restrictions. She is so wonderful.

Jo Slater, the hostess with the mostess!! Always there in so many ways and always made us feel so warm and welcome. Greatest energy of all of us.

Laura Erano, an angel with a tender heart. Jumps in to help without being asked, keeps our records and also has time to do fund raising. She never thinks twice about getting involved – and she has such a busy life.

John Wilkinson, the money man. Never had to worry about the books. Keeps the best records and is always willing to go the extra steps to make sure all things were going smooth. No one has better records. He is so willing to give us the time it takes to keep us on the up and up.

Kay Ackerman, our person that is the contact with all those people that we need to go to, has great records of all our membership payments and those that sign up to work on committees. Kay is a very important person in the Nijkerk Council – she has been involved from the very beginning and is the “fountain of knowledge”. A very good supporter.

Don Ackerman, our Past President, our go to person on appointments and fundamental information regarding the Nijkerk Council.

Dr. Jan van de Kuinder – my mentor!! I have learned the ways of the Dutch from Dr. Jan. He has been a true friend, teacher, and confidant throughout my time on the Nijkerk Council. I have the highest regard and the fondest memories of my time with Dr. Jan. He and Carla have guided me along my path with the exchanges. I think of them as dear friends and owe the success of these exchanges to his mentoring.

Edith Terscheggert, our future. The easiest person to work with and a bundle of energy. She is so capable and a person that gets things done. I respect and admire her. She is absolutely the right person to lead these exchanges. Marvelous person.

There are many, many more people involved and I thank each and all of them. They are the backbone of the Nijkerk exchanges. The behind the scenes people – the silent ones that contribute so much and continue to be the support system. I count them as my friends and supporters.

I am NOT resigning at this time – a promise that I made to someone very special. I will continue to lead the group until such time as I can no longer do the job with dignity and energy.

Your friend
Connie Colangelo

Adult Exchange June 28-July 11, 2013

Thirty-three Adults from Schenectady traveled to Nijkerk to be part of the **600th year celebration**. We arrived at the Schiphol Airport of Amsterdam, receive a warm welcome from Edith Terschegget, Foundation President, and Harm Heimensen, Treasurer, and then we boarded a bus to Nijkerk. After a brief welcome, coffee, and meeting our host families, we were on our way to settle in for the next few hours with our host families. After a very short rest, we were off to City Hall to celebrate the recognition of Schenectady as a Twin City of Nijkerk. We were greeted by Mayor G. D. Renkema of Nijkerk and our own Mayor Gary McCarthy at the Nijkerk City Hall. Together they both signed several proclamations declaring the **twining of our two cities**. Next we all marched with many local residents to the city square to witness the unveiling of a board that will be placed at the Nijkerk city limits announcing that Schenectady is the twin city of Nijkerk. A festive celebration continued at the Princess Restaurant.



Some of the other highlights of our visit included visiting the Neeltje flood barrier, a walking tour of old Nijkerk, a tour of Delft, the canal boat ride in Amsterdam and a visit to the Royal Palace, a tour of Overloon War Museum for the men and tour of Palace ‘het Loo’ for the ladies. Several new people from Schenectady joined the exchange this time and also several families from Nijkerk hosted for the first time. We all felt very privileged to be part of this exchange. Special thanks goes to all the host families, the Nijkerk/Schenectady Foundation and the City of Nijkerk for inviting us to be part of the Nijkerk 600th Celebration..

City of Nijkerk Honors Connie Colangelo and Michael Brockbank

The City of Nijkerk bestowed the highest Medal of Honor to Connie and Michael for over 30 years of leadership with Adult and Youth exchanges between Schenectady and Nijkerk. Both Connie and Michael have played a vital role in developing and enriching our Dutch heritage. Early last spring information about their leadership was requested from our Council and applications were made for both of them to receive this award. Edith Terscheget submitted the application on behalf of the Nijkerk Schenectady Foundation. Mayor G. D. Renkema made a surprise visit to the final dinner for this exchange. Michael was asked to come forward, that is after he was given a borrowed sports jacket. Mayor Remkema told stories of the many contributions Michael has made to Schenectady and Nijkerk. Michael was pinned with the sterling Medal of Honor from the city of Nijkerk and he received a proclamation honoring this award. He was speechless at first. All this came as a total surprise to him. In Dutch and then English, Michael thanked the City of Nijkerk, our Council and the Nijkerk Foundation for this prestigious honor.

Connie was unable to make the trip to Nijkerk so Mayor Gary McCarthy invited her to a City Council meeting. Her assumption was that this was to be time to honor the service of the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council. Several of our Council members, who knew what was about to happen, came to support Connie. Mayor McCarthy, acting on behalf of Mayor Renkema, told Connie’s story. Connie was presented with the sterling silver Medal of Honor from the City of Nijkerk and she too received a proclamation honoring her 30 years of leadership with the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council and the Nijkerk Schenectady Foundation. Connie was also very surprised and humbled to receive such high honor. As Connie thanked everyone, she was able to express her thanks to the City of Nijkerk because this part of the City Council meeting was televised live to Nijkerk. To view a copy of this event, Google Schenectady/ Nijkerk Council and scroll down to Nijkerk Presentation- Schenectady City Council meeting. Pictures of Michael and Connie with their awards can be viewed on the news toolbar at the Nijkerk Schenectady Foundation website.

All of our Council and our brothers and sisters from Nijkerk were pleased to see Connie and Michael receive this recognition. We all need to thank Connie and Michael for their leadership in keeping the Dutch heritage active in Schenectady and Nijkerk. Everyone who has been a part of the exchanges has made many life-long friendships. Our lives and both of our communities have been enriched by the contributions from Connie and Michael.

Picture Presented to Connie Colangelo

This past June, Connie was honored for her service and leadership for over 30 years to the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council. Ron and Donna Lagasse organized this event. Donna presented Connie with a wonderful scrapbook she put together filled with letters, pictures and special memories. Connie was presented a beautiful painting of her home done by Kitty Trimarco. Thank you, Kitty, for sharing your artistic talents. Many members sent personal letters and cards filled with years of memories honoring Connie.

Youth Exchange Nijkerk to Schenectady July 25-August 5, 2013

A group of 10 Nijkerk Youth and chaperon, Gos Terschegget, arrived in Schenectady July 25th for a 12 day exchange. Host families, former youth who hosted and youth, who went on previous exchanges to Nijkerk, helped plan a program for the exchange. Great ideas came out of these planning meetings. The Nijkerk youth reported that some of their favorite activities were disc golf in Central Park, miSci Schenectady Museum, Six Flags and the Adirondack extreme adventure course. During the exchange, many of the families open their homes to BBQs and swim parties. What a pleasure it was to see how this group of youth bonded together. We need to offer special thanks to the Gallants, Agnellos and the Ackermans for giving the youth times to just hang out and have fun. The Agnello family also hosted the final dinner at their home. This exchange would not have been possible without the generosity of our host families. Some families had youth from the families that hosted their youth during a previous exchange to Nijkerk. We also were delighted to have many new host families. The Council would like to extend a warm thank you to all those hosting for this exchange. Much of what was planned would not have been possible without the enthusiastic and generous support from our Council members and our Sponsors.

I would like to offer a special thank you to Wayne Brule, the planning committee and the many people who just came forward to assist Wayne as I had to step aside because of health reasons. So many of you just pitched in and took on extra tasks. For all this, I say thank you and felt so blessed to have such great support from all of you.



Mayor Gary McCarthy and Dutch youth at City Hall 2013

SAVE THE DATE

The **Potluck Holiday Dinner** is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 11th** at First Reformed Church, Assembly Hall at 6 :30 PM. You are asked to bring a dish to share. Make sure you plan to stay for the special program following the dinner.

Youth Exchange to Nijkerk

Ten of our youth will go to Nijkerk the end of June 2014 for a two week stay. **We are looking for a person to chair this exchange.** If you know of any interested youth between the ages of 16-18 who would like to go on the exchange, give that information to Connie.

Good and Welfare of the Council Members

Jean Wilkinson is doing very well – she is recovering from a heart attack

Kabby Lowe is doing well after breaking her hip – playing tennis – a real trooper

Amy Brule is doing well after surgery in August - currently in PT twice a week

Donna Lagasse has been ill – send cards and well wishes to Donna, 138 Acorn Drive, Scotia, 12302

Josephine Slater's son is doing better – on going illness

Susan Senecah is fighting lyme disease

Congratulation to :

Dave and Ann Vincent on birth of their newest grandchild

Laura Lee Linder on birth of her newest grandchild

Debbie Dingman on her new job

MEMBERSHIP 2014

It is time to think about renewing your membership for the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council for 2014. Attached to this newsletter on the last page, you will find a renewal form. Membership is open to everyone. Membership allows you to take an active role on the Council and to be a voting member as decisions are made at the Council meetings. You also will have wonderful opportunities for you or your children to travel to Nijkerk. Offering to be a host family is a fantastic way to share our Dutch heritage and cultural diversity. Your dues help to support programs for the Adult and Youth exchanges

Thank you to all who have paid membership dues to the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council

We currently have 36 paid memberships for 2013

Next Youth and Adult Exchanges 2014-2019

2014 Youth from Schenectady to Nijkerk
2015 Youth from Nijkerk to Schenectady
2016 Adults from Nijkerk to Schenectady
2017 Youth from Schenectady to Nijkerk
2018 Youth from Nijkerk to Schenectady
2019 Adults from Schenectady to Nijkerk

Schenectady/Nijkerk Council Officers

President: Connie Colangelo
Vice-President: Michael Brockbank
Secretary: Laura Erano
Treasurer: John Wilkinson

Board Members: B. Donald Ackerman
Anneka Bull, Amy Brule
Alden (Joe) Doolittle
Ron Lagasse, Laura Lee Linder
George Trimarco

Committees and Chairs:

Adult Exchange:

Youth Exchange:

Membership/Nominating: Kay Ackerman

Fund Raising: Alden (Joe) Doolittle

Newsletter: Amy Brule

Meeting Coordinator: Laura Lee Linder

Hospitality: Gay Doolittle, Jo Slater

Membership Form 2014

Since 1984, the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council has been arranging for cultural, educational and business exchanges between the residents of Schenectady County and the City of Nijkerk in the Netherlands. As of the fall of 2013, we have shared 35 exchanges with Nijkerk. We invite you to be part of the "Dutch Connection" either as a traveler, as a host family or as an interested participant in events as they unfold.

Now it is time to show your support for the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council as a new or returning member. Membership dues are \$25 (not-for profit tax exempt) annually. Let us know of your interest by returning this form along with your dues. Please check the volunteer form below and let us know how you would like to help carry on the work of the Schenectady/Nijkerk Council.

SCHENECTADY/NIJKERK COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP – 2014

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ Zip _____
PHONE _____
E-MAIL _____
_____ \$25 (FAMILY) MEMBERSHIP ENCLOSED
Make checks payable to Schenectady/Nijkerk Council and return to: Kay Ackerman, 806 Pinewood Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12309

THE SCHENECTADY/NIJKERK COUNCIL COULD USE YOUR HELP IN 2014

I would like to help with the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| _____ Adult Exchange Committee | _____ Meeting Arrangements |
| _____ Auditing Committee | _____ Membership Committee |
| _____ Board Member | _____ Council Officer |
| _____ Fund Raising | _____ Nominating Committee |
| _____ Hospitality | _____ Youth Exchange Committee |

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE SCHENECTADY/NIJKERK COUNCIL

Not sure if you have paid dues for 2014? Contact Kay Ackerman 393-5000.