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GROOMS TAVERN GAZETTE

Fall 2010

Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern

P.O. Box 116 Clifton Park, NY 12065

www.grooms-tavern.org

Toys of Our Past

By John L. Scherer

Do you remember your favorite childhood toys? Do you still have them? Chances are they are now valuable antiques. I remember recently seeing a Hopalong Cassidy lunch box that I used to carry to school at an antique show selling for \$500. Unfortunately my lunch box is long gone. However, I still have my Lionel electric train as well as my father's American Flyer.

Toys reflect the adult world in miniature, and the era in which they were popular. Pull toys from the nineteenth and early twentieth century are farm animals and represent the agrarian life that was dominant at the time. One such pull

toy, a miniature cow on wheels, covered with cowhide, has a trap door in its back so that a small amount of milk could be added and the child could actually milk the pull toy cow.

During the first half of the twentieth century trains were the chief method of transporting both people and freight. An electric train set was the Christmas wish of every boy. Toy cars and trucks resembled the styles popular at the time, and today are very collectible.

Popular culture influenced the popularity of toys. In the 1930s, movies made Shirley Temple every child's idol and dolls in her likeness were acquired by girls everywhere. In fact there was a whole line of Shirley Temple merchandise. This is much like the toys that were promoted by popular TV shows of the 1970s and 1980s. It seems like every action hero had its doll or action figure that could move in multiple ways. Paper dolls of movie stars and celebrities were also produced.

In the days before television, when entertainment was chiefly live, children were entranced by traveling circuses and many toys of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represent this interest in the circus. Miniature cast iron circus parade wagons hold miniature cast iron lions and tigers. The Schoenut Toy Company of Philadelphia sold an entire toy circus made of wood. It was a very popular toy during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Fisher Price Toys became very popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Do you remember the toy auto garages, farms, pull toys, and the weeble people who could be placed in miniature Ferris wheels and cars? Fisher Price is still producing toys today at their factory in East





Toys of Our Past (continued Page 1) Aurora, New York, but the earlier toys have become collectible. My favorite was always the hound dog pull toy with the floppy ears and spring like tail. The wheels were not quite round so the dog would wobble as you pulled it along the floor.

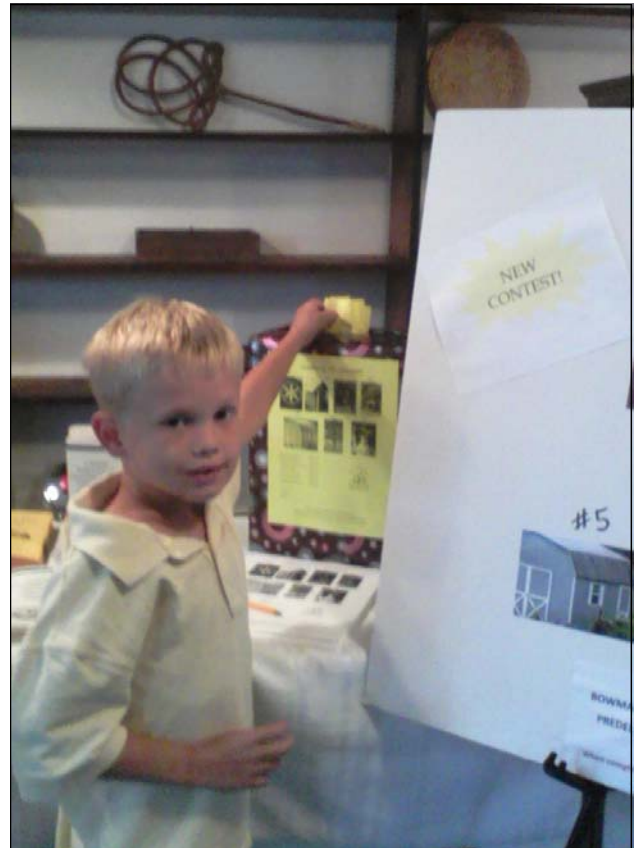
In the days before video games and pocket computers, board games were king. You would sit around the table with friends and family to play Monopoly, Clue, Easy Money, or perhaps Chutes and Ladders. Other board games were patterned after popular TV shows of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Board games of the 1930s and 1940s might reflect super heroes popular at the time. One board game called "Titanic," required you to escape the ship in a timely fashion before it sunk.

If any of this strikes a chord with you, Marilyn Sassi's presentation on Antique Toys will surely be of interest. She will be speaking at the Grooms Tavern on Sunday, October 3, at 2 PM. Feel free to bring one of your favorite toys!



HOWDY DOODY DOLL BASED ON THE POPULAR TV SERIES OF THE SAME NAME THAT RAN FROM 1948-1960 WITH BUFFALO BOB SMITH AND CLARABELL THE CLOWN.

♦ . Farm Fest Tavern Contest



DAN WATSON SON OF BUD AND KIM WATSON OF ALPLAUS SUBMITTED THE ONLY PERFECT ANSWER SHEET IN THE FRIEND'S "WHAT IS IT?" CONTEST DURING CLIFTON PARK FARM DAYS.

CONGRATULATIONS DAN!

HISTORIC CEMETERY TOUR

Join Clifton Park Town Historian, John Scherer, on Saturday, October 23 for a tour of Clifton Park cemeteries, a journey into Clifton Park's past. This tour will explore family cemeteries as well as church cemeteries. Funeral practices and customs will be discussed, and tombstone styles and symbolism will be pointed out. The tour will feature the final resting places of former Clifton Park residents, both notable and unknown, some of whom will actually materialize courtesy of the Clifton Park Not So Common Players. Reservations are necessary. Contact the Town of Clifton Park Parks and Recreation Dept. at 371 6667. Fee is \$16.50 per person.

**MARILYN SASSI TO SPEAK ON
ANTIQUE TOYS
GROOMS TAVERN,
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3 AT 2 PM**

Marilyn Sassi of Schenectady, former Director of the Schenectady Historical Society and long time antique dealer and lecturer will present a slide lecture on Antique Toys at the Grooms Tavern, Sunday, October 3, at 2 PM. This fascinating talk will examine the toys that children played with through the years and what they tell us about the culture that produced them. Join Marilyn on this nostalgic trip back to both your youth and your grandparent's youth. (See related article).

**Fall Colors...
from a Different Perspective**

Join us at 7pm on October 1 for a color slide that presentation will illustrate a surprising palette of colors and hues annually displayed by more than 150 species of forbs (those plants that are not trees, shrubs or grasses) that we often overlook while leaf-peeping at our woodlands each autumn. The presentation is set to music and will be followed by a question and answer session. Come to see what you may have been missing and to answer the question: "What's that leaf?"

Presented by Clifton Park resident David Behm, this session is one of the topical presentations in the Town's "First Friday" fall speakers series. David's photography may be viewed on his web site, Curious By Nature (www.curiousbynature.mysite.com), which features seasonal landscapes and wildflowers from throughout the Capital Region. Imagery on the web site changes with each season of the year. Also, a free wildflower guide for the Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve is available for download on the web site.

**Calendar
of
Events**



October 1
Friday
7:PM

Fall Colors

Celebrate Fall with David Behm

Oct 3rd
Sunday
2PM

"Marilyn Sassi Lecture
On
Antique Toys
FOHGT Annual Meetings

Monthly
Meetings -

September 27th
November 22nd
December 27th
January 24th
February 21st
March 28th

**All Meetings
Held At
The Grooms
Road Tavern**

*****NOTICE*****

**The Annual Meeting of
the Friends of Historic
Grooms Tavern**

Sunday October 3, 2010

Election of Officers

**Join Us
Bring A Friend**



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P.O. Box 1166

Clifton Park, NY 12065

