

# The Bluff Point Association (BPA)

www.bluffpoint.org

MARCH 2019

## Revisiting the 2018 Annual Meeting

Close to 60 concerned citizens filled the meeting hall of Keuka College's Lightner Library on the morning of July 14 last year. Attendees were informed about a wide range of topics including Penn Yan Schools, local museums and natural resource issues. Questions were raised regarding the steep increase in property assessments; Pat Killen informed the group that New York State had advised the Town of Jerusalem that their valuations were too low. Pat also highlighted an activity on Sugar Creek to pull the invasive plant, starry stonewort, to be held in September. The BPA provided funds to hire a lifeguard for that event. Some very disappointed residents of West Bluff Drive voiced dissatisfaction with the lack of service and answers from NYSEG during a number of power failures over the hottest part of the summer. A draft letter was provided to us by a member; we were asked to consider contacting NYSEG on the behalf of those affected by the outages. We not only considered it, we did it – the final version of the letter is published in this newsletter. On a positive note, CEO of the Finger Lakes Economic Development Council (FLEDC), Steve Griffin, reported that Yates County has increased its manufacturing production by 29% and total jobs in the county were up 19%. What the county is struggling with is finding employees. FLEDC is working with school districts to try and fill those vacant positions. Our last speaker, Paul Barden, encouraged us to spread the word about Garrett Chapel's fundraisers in support of the renovation of this special sanctuary perched on the top of the Bluff.

Thanks to all who took the time out of their summer day to come and learn, as well as to voice their opinions on matters of interest.

*Complete Annual Meeting minutes can be found on [bluffpoint.org](http://bluffpoint.org)*

Nicole Landers, Editor

## Adopt-A Highway

Eleven volunteers helped pick up the roadside on Tuesday, September 11, 2018. Plans changed due to the incredible rains that came on the previous day. The group gathered 4 bags of trash and donated 40 recyclable cans to the Branchport Library. The Overlook signs were cleaned and overhanging branches were trimmed to help "frame the view" around the history sign.



The next 54A Road Clean-up will take place on Monday, May 13 (as always, the day after Mother's Day). Volunteers are asked to meet at the Overlook at 9:00 AM for a group photo before embarking to remove litter from their section of the roadside. Bring work gloves, wear long sleeves and pants, and appropriate footwear. Collection supplies will be provided. The job should take about an hour.

If you have questions please email Annette Toaspern at [KAToaspern@hotmail.com](mailto:KAToaspern@hotmail.com).

## Traffic Safety Around the Bluff

A number of BPA members have approached us with reports of speeding cars along the Bluff, so we reached out to Sherriff Spike for the facts. The Sherriff accepted our request and provided us with a report under the Freedom of Information Law. These numbers include violations recorded from January 1, 2018 to August 17, 2018.

Location	Qty.	Type
Skyline Drive	3	Car/Deer accidents
	1	Vehicle stuck on seasonal portion
	1	Vehicle speeding in #4500 block
	1	Vehicle littering on highway
West Bluff Dr.	1	Vehicle property damage only
East Bluff Dr.	4	Vehicle property damage only
	4	Vehicles excessive speed complaints <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- #6000/7000 block</li><li>- #9000 block</li><li>- Culver Hill</li><li>- South of Keuka College</li></ul>
	2	Illegal parking complaints

## Jerusalem History Club Events

The Jerusalem History Club will present three summer programs for the public in the summer of 2019.

**Tuesday, June 25 at 7 pm** Geology of the Finger Lakes presented by Professor David Kendrick of Hobart William Smith College, at the Branchport Library.

**Tuesday, July 16 (rain date Thursday, July 18), at 7 pm** Native American Storyteller, Ronnie Ritter. Keuka Lake State Park - Outdoor bonfire at lakeside. Bring your own blanket or chair for hillside seating, below the pavilion on south shore of beach. Closest parking is

behind the pavilion. Donations will go to Yates County History Center - Park admission is free.

**Tuesday August 6, at 7 pm** Native Americans in Yates County, presented by David Schewe at Hunt Country Winery. We will include new sites in the Town of Jerusalem recently researched. Donations will go to Yates County History.

Contact Annette Toasperm at (315) 536-9887 or katoasperm@hotmail.com.

## NYSEG Questions and Answers

Last summer was challenging for electricity customers on and near West Bluff Drive. We heard the concerns from our members and sent a letter to NYSEG – we have provided a copy of it below. No response has been received, so we encourage you to contact NYSEG in support of our requests. Perhaps collectively we can get some answers.

*October 15, 2018*

*Dear NYSEG Representative,*

*The Bluff Point Association was founded in 1988 in order to promote the common good and general welfare of the residents and landowners of the Bluff Point area in the Town of Jerusalem, New York. During the summer of this year, a large number of residents on West Bluff Drive and beyond lost electrical power on multiple occasions, some lasting for longer than 24 hours during temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The unreliability of NYSEG's service in this area, especially when it is most needed, is unacceptable. The purpose of this letter is to make a number of requests in an attempt to facilitate accurate communication to our members (your customers) and to prevent this situation from happening again.*

*As representatives of residents on the Bluff, we request an official, written statement providing the following:*

- *The cause of each power outage that occurred on the Bluff during the summer of 2018*
- *What was done to address each outage on the Bluff during the summer of 2018*
- *NYSEG's long-term plan to address the issues causing these particular outages*

*The residents of the Bluff collectively provide their portion of financial support for the lines and equipment that deliver their electricity and expect better reliability and communication from your company. We expect you to live up to the words found on your website:*

*"We know you count on us to provide you with the power you need, when you need it, and we take that responsibility seriously. As part of our commitment to provide safe, reliable service to all of our customers, we are investing in our delivery system that will provide additional power to fill growing demand, increase reliability, and accommodate growth and economic development in our service areas."*

*We look forward to your timely response to our request.*

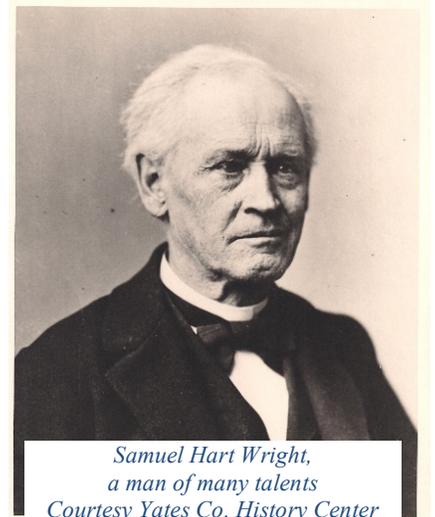
*Respectfully,  
Board of Directors  
Bluff Point Association*

### **Yates County's Early Naturalists**

*This is part II in a series on the early naturalists of Yates County. In the May 2018 issue, the subject was Henry Parker Sartwell, mentor to Samuel Hart Wright.*

### **Samuel Hart Wright**

Raised in a farm family in the Town of Starkey, Samuel Hart Wright found that "farming yielded small pay for much work," and gave it up in 1850 to



*Samuel Hart Wright,  
a man of many talents  
Courtesy Yates Co. History Center  
February 18, 1825 - October 7, 1905*

become a self-taught astronomer and author of almanacs by trade. He applied his mathematical talents to the calculation of solar eclipses in 1854, establishing his success. He continued developing almanacs until 1870, but simultaneously began to pursue other interests.

In 1854, Wright began studies with Dr. Henry Spence to become a physician, resolving to overcome the widespread "quackery" of the times. In January 1865, his practice brought him a Doctor of Medicine degree, conferred by the Geneva Medical College. Late in the 1800s, Wright wrote a column of mathematical puzzles and solutions for the *Yates County Chronicle*.

About 1856, Wright reports, he also grew interested in botany. His "proximity to the late Dr. J.P. Sartwell of Penn Yan," he wrote in 1869, "was the means of affording me very many sweet botanical and scientific interviews with him."

When Sartwell died in 1867, S. H. Wright honored him with a detailed obituary and inherited his remaining plant collections. Several years later, he turned the almanac business over to his son, Berlin Hart Wright, and let his growing botanical collections,

and a new interest in shells, occupy his later years. He amassed a “fine herbarium of over 5,500 species,” and corresponded and exchanged specimens with many of America’s noted botanists. During a trip to Florida in the 1860s, he discovered a new plant in the aster family, named *Hartwrightia floridana* by Dr. Asa Gray of Harvard University in honor of its collector. This plant is dependent on wet conditions and now threatened by habitat loss as a result of draining and development.

Wright’s chief claim to local fame may be his discovery (with his son Berlin Hart Wright) of “the remains of an aboriginal settlement,”

known as the Bluff Point Stoneworks, on property owned by Howland Hemphill. Together, father and son carefully surveyed the ancient structure, said to predate the Native American peoples encountered by European settlers. The New York State Museum published their results and detailed map in 1884. The complex stoneworks have been attributed to Mound Builders from Ohio or even Celtic explorers, but we may never know, as little remains today of this enigmatic ruin.

After Wright died in 1905, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History acquired his

extensive plant collection. Curators consider it “one of the most valued collections in the herbarium.” More than 1,000 New York specimens have been digitized, along with plants from twenty other states. The natural history collections S.H. Wright and his mentor H.P. Sartwell left to posterity are still available for study today, and their curiosity and efforts continue to inform future students. These two men, residents of Yates County, were united in their love of botany and have left their marks on that science, thanks to their own dedication and their association with Dr. Asa Gray.

Samuel Hart Wright’s grave, in Lakeview Cemetery of Penn Yan, is a natural wonder in itself. By special permit, the family obtained a large petrified log from Arizona for use as a marker. This distinctive monument memorializes several family members, especially its notable patriarch, Samuel Hart Wright.

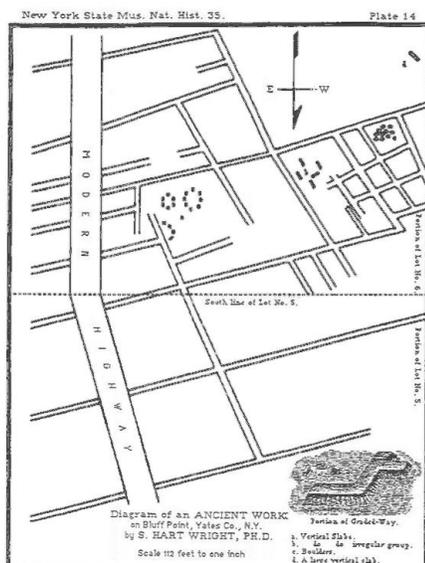
*“Political distinctions I have never had, and never expect to have, preferring the quiet and ennobling study of nature to the uncertainties and anxieties of political strife.”*

— Samuel Hart Wright, 1869

Sally White

### Annual Christmas Bell Ringing

The Bluff Point Association participated in the bell ringing efforts of the Yates Christmas Program in Nov/Dec 2018. Our Board members were located in front of Tops producing over \$500 for our efforts. That amount went towards providing toys, books and clothing to over 700 children this year. We will notify you of “our” date this year – please consider joining us!



*Wright's diagram of the Bluff Point Stoneworks, 1880s*

## Penn Yan School Voting Date

Three vacancies for the Penn Yan Central School District Board of Education are to be filled at the Annual Vote and Election of Board Members May 21 – polls open noon to 8 pm in the PYA gymnasium. Petitions for nominating candidates must be completed and filed with the District Clerk no later than Monday, April 22. Contact Katie Dean, District Clerk, at 315-536-3371.

## Watercraft Stewards Volunteers

The Keuka Lake Association will be coordinating the invasive species monitoring programs on watercraft and along the shoreline again this year. Contact Laura Bailey [lb698@cornell.edu](mailto:lb698@cornell.edu) or Maria Hudson [mwhudsn4@gmail.com](mailto:mwhudsn4@gmail.com) if you'd like to participate.

## Finger Lakes Museum Update

### Selection of Upcoming Events

April 27, 9 to 12 – Volunteer Site Clean-Up  
May 4, 8 to 12 – Woods Walk  
May 11, 8 to 10 – 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Bird Walk  
May 14, 8 to 1 – Timber Frame Raising  
May 18, 10 to 2 – Open House  
June 8, 10 to 2 – Paddle & Wetlands Walk

For a complete list and to register visit:

<https://www.fingerlakesmuseum.org/>

## **SAVE THE DATE**

**BPA Annual Meeting**  
**Saturday, July 13, 2019**  
**8:30 – 11:00**  
**Keuka College**

## Membership Renewal

We are pleased to provide you with this issue of the Bluff Point Association Newsletter. To continue receiving future news and to support our many efforts affecting the Bluff, we invite you to renew or join the many other Bluff residents who support the BPA with their annual membership gift of \$15.

### **Bluff Point Association, Membership Form 2019**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Address 1**

Jan  Feb  Mar  Apr  May  Jun  Jul  Aug  Sep  Oct  Nov

Dec

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Bluff Point Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Address 2**

Jan  Feb  Mar  Apr  May  Jun  Jul  Aug  Sep  Oct  Nov

Dec

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal  New membership

Annual **Membership** Fee is \$15. Make checks payable to **Bluff Point Association**.

Send checks to: Bluff Point Association, PO Box 72, Bluff Point, NY 14478

Please check here if you would prefer to receive newsletters electronically.

I am including my contribution to the Bluff Point Fund, check made out to The Finger Lakes Land Trust; memo: Bluff Point Fund.

## **The Bluff Point Association**

P. O. Box 72

Bluff Point, NY 14478

[www.bluffpoint.org](http://www.bluffpoint.org)

### **Bluff Point Association**

Art Adams, Director	678-319-0984
Tom Close, Ex Officio	315-536-2779
Wendy Disbrow, Director	585-813-3173
Marcia English, Director	315-536-9436
Fred Geyer, Director	315-536-7183
Martha Johnstone, Secretary	585-748-6078
Nicole Landers, Director	315-521-9857
Rodge Williams, Treasurer	315-536-3456
Lisa Saether, liaison to FLLT	315-536-2620

### **Federal**

29<sup>th</sup> District House of Representatives

#### **Representative Thomas Reed**

email via website: <http://reed.house.gov>

202-225-3161 Washington D.C Office

607-654-7566 Corning Office

### **New York State**

#### **Assemblyman Phil Palmesano**

E-mail: [palmesano@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:palmesano@assembly.state.ny.us)

607-776-9691 Bath Office

#### **Senator Tom O'Mara**

E-mail: [omara@nysenate.gov](mailto:omara@nysenate.gov)

607-776-3201 Bath Office

#### **Governor Andrew Cuomo**

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of New York State

NYS State Capitol Building

Albany, NY 12224

518-474-8390

[www.governor.ny.gov](http://www.governor.ny.gov) and choose 'Contact'

### **Keuka Park Association** Ph. 315-536-0940

7pm 4th Wednesday of month at KP Fire House

### **Yates County Legislators**

417 Liberty Street, Penn Yan, NY 14527

[www.yatescounty.org](http://www.yatescounty.org) Ph: 315-536-5150

[legislature@yatescounty.org](mailto:legislature@yatescounty.org)

Douglas Paddock (chair), Edward Bronson,

Timothy Cutler, Elden Morrison

### **Town of Jerusalem**

3816 Italy Hill Rd., Branchport, NY 14418

[jerusalem-ny.org](http://jerusalem-ny.org)

Ph: 315-595-6668

Colby Peterson, Septic Inspector 315-536-5188

Pat Killen, Town Supervisor

Paul Anderson, Town Board

Jamie Sisson, Town Board

Raymond Stewart, Town Board

Daryl Jones, Town Board

Sheila McMichael, Town Clerk

Vincent Fischer, Town Assessor

Zac DeVoe, Town Code Enforcement

Rob Martin, Highway Superintendent

### **Community Meeting Dates**

#### **Yates County Office Building**

County Legislature: 1pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of month

[yatescounty.org](http://yatescounty.org) 315-536-5150

County Planning Board: 7pm, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month

Town of Jerusalem Offices 315-595-6668

Planning Board: 7pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of month

Zoning Bd. Appeals: 7pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of month

Town Board: 7pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month

Penn Yan Central School Board: 315-536-3371 7pm,  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed. of month at Penn Yan Academy