

Save the Lyon Commission Newsletter-Our 2019 Success Story



A brand new entrance for the old cafeteria

In 2019, the Save the Lyon Commission went “over the top” with a new roof for the cafeteria, the long sought-after new entrance with handicap access, and a new bathroom. Thanks to generous donations, and hard-working volunteers, we were able to raise the \$75,000 match for our NYS EPF grant for the entrance and bathroom. We were also fortunate to receive a New York State Main Street grant to install the new roofing. Local contractors J.J. Coots and Hane Roofing) were selected through the required bidding process to do the excellent work that you see in the photograph above. All of this was overseen by our architect, Clinton Brown Company Architecture of Buffalo, New York.

We were full of enthusiasm for the next step after this hard won success. The Board of Directors continued to pursue possible options for restoration and use of the larger 1923 section of the school building, while we began to consider how to launch arts programs for the community through our Waterman Center for the Arts. Patty Gurecki attended her own Class of 1974 reunion, and her sister’s Class of 1969 reunion in September to bring them up to date on our progress, and to recruit artists from those two fabulous classes.

In December, Julie Rock and Patty Gurecki took a little road trip to 171 Cedar Arts Center in Corning. Director Beth Landis generously gave them a complete tour, and shared many important facts and figures about what it takes to operate a successful multi-faceted arts center, discussing the workings behind the scenes, such as gallery lighting, dance floor surfaces, security, writing arts grants, and even the challenges of what to do with aging pianos and pottery wheels. The Waterman Center for the Arts will be casting out large nets to capture Haverling alumni who have experience in these sorts of areas.

Throughout 2019 we had our annual fundraising events, beginning with the Valentine's Day baskets raffle, Steuben County Fair parking (always fun and a great way to tell people about the STLC project), Tops cards, and an auction in the cafeteria of assorted of items donated to the STLC.

At the very end of 2019, on December 31, Rosalie Niemczyk, a long time champion of the school preservation effort, passed away. Rosalie never lacked creativity or fierce determination in the fight to save the school from destruction. She drew from her earliest employment years as a legal secretary to help build the winning legal battle facing the fledgling Save the Lyon Commission. As a retired public school teacher, she naturally chose to learn, and educate the community, about the interesting history and value of the school. As she often said, she "did her homework" relentlessly, even researching the architectural firm that designed the 1923 section of the school.

Rosalie was creative and generous in fundraising efforts to support the newly created not-for-profit Save the Lyon Commission. The 2009 cookbook fundraiser project was compiled and financed entirely by Rosalie. In another very generous and sporting effort, she set up a fishing derby fundraiser, held on her beloved Hidden Pond Farm.

Rosalie consistently acknowledged the efforts of each of the founders of the Save the Lyon Commission, and each of the members who served throughout the years. She was proud of the small group of citizens who had built an organization, won the legal battle, and succeeded with the first renovation phase of The Annex.

We thank all of the volunteers who help with grounds maintenance, snowplowing, and general building maintenance, and the generous donors who support the work of the Save the Lyon Commission and future Waterman Center for the Arts.

