

Anticipation Marked the Opening of Newfane's Time Capsule Placing a Capsule for the Next Generation will Cap this Bicentennial Year

The opening of the Newfane Time Capsule at the Apple Blossum Festival in May revealed many interesting memories, a few surprises and highlighted changes that have occurred in the community over the past fifty years. The time capsule was packed with documents and remembrances of the town's 1974 Sesquicentennial celebration and contained many records of town meetings and community events from the 1970s and previous decades.

Scores of envelopes, papers and memorabilia were removed from the capsule, but it was most surprising when we pulled out a 1976 copy of the Union-Sun & Journal and then a 1976 school yearbook. Everyone today assumed the time capsule was buried during the 1974 Sesquicentennial, but it turns out it was not buried until 1976. Apparently, they had begun planning the time capsule burial during the Sesquicentennial, but



decided to delay the encapsulation until our nation's 200-year Bicentennial celebration in 1976. It was clearly documented, however, that they intended us to open the capsule during this year's 2024 Bicentennial events. The photo above by *Wayne Peters* shows Supervisor John Syracuse, with Councilmen Rick Coleman and Robert Horanburg, preparing to open the capsule.

For many observers at the capsule unveiling, the most touching and significant findings were the personal letters local citizens placed in the capsule to be shared with their children and grandchildren fifty years later. Notes and remembrances from the late Grace and Adrian Banks and former Newfane historian Jud Heck had been preserved in the capsule and were eagerly opened and read by their family members present at this year's festival. Other family members have picked up letters that were left for them and we are still looking to connect with the following families that have envelopes intended for them.

McKnight (Sue/Kay/Scot)
The Edward Macek family
Donald Alan Rimer

Halstead/Haseley (Maxina, Nancy, Dale, Philip)
The Kenneth Sherrie family (Kenneth II)
The John Buyoff family (Eric, Greg, Todd, Joel)

Another highlight was the envelopes containing the names and signatures of Newfane Elementary school pupils attending Grades K – 6 in 1976. Several were present at this year's festival and had a great time reminiscing about their youthful participation 48 years ago ... these

folks are now 50 - 60 years old. Many of the envelopes contained lists of people who were members of various civic and community organizations, including the Newfane Senior Citizens, 4-H, Newfane Hospital, the United Methodist, Grace Baptist and Hess Road Wesleyan Churches. There were also member lists and details of almost every facet of the 1974 Sesquicentennial celebration; including 'the Spectacular' (the stage performance and play titled 'Legend of the Eighteen Mile Creek'), the organizing committees, 'Brothers of the Bush' beard contest, the Sesqui-Belles, Kangaroo Kourt and the Sesquicentennial Quilters.

Other noteworthy content from the 1976 time capsule included the following.

- Letters and town documents from John McNally, Newfane Supervisor from 1974 to 1977, who is expected to attend the August 24 Bicentennial Community Day and parade.
- Town and school accounts summarizing Newfane's early years and long history.
- A 1975 town newsletter.
- Several early postcards of Newfane and Olcott.
- A list of those attending the Bicentennial Ball in 1976.
- The 1974 Sesquicentennial Visitor's Register.
- Photos, slides and a recording of Sesquicentennial events.
- A 45-RPM recording by *Chicago* of their hit song *25 or 6 to 4*.
- A list of those purchasing stock certificates to fund the Sesquicentennial.
- A letter from the White House and President Richard Nixon congratulating Newfane on its 150-year Sesquicentennial anniversary.
- The Act approved by the NYS Legislature in 1824 authorizing the creation of the Town of Newfane.
- A 1976 Telephone Directory
- Programs for Girl Scout, Brownie and Boy Scout flag ceremonies for the nation's 1976 Bicentennial.
- 1976 Bicentennial U.S. Postal Service stamps.
- The *Delilah Wisner Merritt Autobiography* (A Newfane Pioneer, 1813-1899)

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