ADIRONDACK ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

The Year In Review 2011

There's Always the Unexpected

As well as we might plan a year of activity and work, there are certain things that no one can really plan for and 2011 had this in spades. In late 2010 we were suddenly faced with the challenge of trying to save a very important military structure in Plattsburgh from an inappropriate development project. In January Hubbard Hall, a restored National Register listed local landmark in Elizabethtown burned to the ground. Then there was the spring flooding that wreaked havoc with many Lake Champlain communities and, in late August, Tropical Storm Irene caused unprecedented flooding and property loss in the region, with the worst damage occurring in the upper Ausable Valley. In some of these cases the losses were irreversible and in other instances the healing and rebuilding will take many years. These are reminders that so much in life, including special historic places, is fragile.

The Old Stone Barracks. "The Old Stone Barracks, built between 1838 and 1843, is historically significant as the oldest extant structure on the Plattsburgh Air Force Base, which is itself historically notable as the most long-standing combat-ready, military installation in the United States." So reads the introduction to the 1995 Historic Structures Survey, prepared for the U.S. Air Force just before the closing of the base. The barracks was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

Late in 2010, the Barracks was sold to a Montreal developer who initially proposed developing the seven acre site with 60 units of new housing and acres of parking. Response to this proposal from the community was so swift and convincing that the developer announced in the spring that he was abandoning his initial plans in favor of an historic preservation project for the Barracks, preferably with a nonprofit partner. AARCH was part of the *Friends of the Old Stone Barracks* effort which helped to successfully articulate a persuasive case for its preservation.

Hubbard Hall. Hubbard Hall, built circa 1840, was both the home of Orlando Kellogg, a United States Congressman, and it served as the Elizabethtown Community Hospital from 1927 to 1967. In 1994, it was condemned by Essex County but the County was persuaded by AARCH and others, through the Town of Elizabethtown, to sell the property. It was acquired by Darren Tracy of West Branch, Inc. and, by placing the building on the National Register and taking advantage of federal investment tax credits, he completely restored the building for a variety of commercial uses. In 1998 he received an AARCH award for his exemplary work. Hubbard Hall was completely destroyed by fire on January 11, 2011.

Flooding from Tropical Storm Irene. Beginning on August 28, Tropical Storm Irene swept through the region, dumping up to 9" of rain in the High Peaks region. By morning the Ausable River had swollen to record levels and parts of St. Hubert's, Keene Valley, Keene, Upper Jay, and Ausable Forks were underwater. When the water receded, roads and bridges had been washed away; homes, businesses, and public buildings were in ruins; and several historic properties were lost or badly damaged. In

Upper Jay, the National Register listed Wells Memorial Library was badly damaged by water and mud and the remains of Arto Monaco's Land of Makebelieve, including its iconic Castle and Cactus Flats, were wiped away completely. In Wilmington, Arto's other fantasy park creation, Santa's Workshop, was badly damaged but has since reopened. In Keene, the National Register listed Walton Bridge, a rare 1885 lenticular truss bridge, was completely destroyed. For more information how to help these devastated communities, visit:

keenefloodrecoveryfund.org
helpjayny.org

Left to right: Old Stone Barracks (Plattsburgh), Hubbard Hall (Elizabethtown) in flames, and the flooding of the Wells Memorial Library (Upper Jay). Above right: Westport Central School technology students at the Walton Bridge (Keene) before its destruction .
(Photo credits L-R: Old Stone Barracks facebook page, Plattsburgh Press Republican, Wells Memorial Library website)

Now—An Even Better Home for AARCH

This year we substantially completed the restoration and rehabilitation of our **Stone Office Building** in Keeseville. Here we now have a cluster of offices, two gallery spaces, a resource center, meeting room, and a rented upstairs office suite. The last of the work completed was the transformation of an unfinished basement into the Clayton Family Resource Center and Gallery (above right). The work was done by Cloudsplitter Carpentry and was made possible by our successful 2009-2010 capital campaign and a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. In the gallery space we mounted *Places of the Spirit,* a photographic exhibit of Adirondack churches originally put together by the Lake Placid Institute, with some assistance from AARCH.

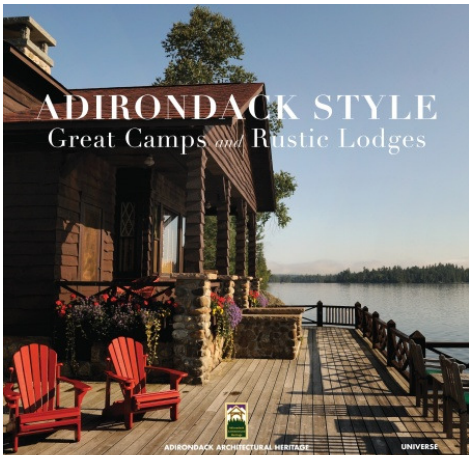
Now that we're settled into the Stone Office Building, we've turned our attention to the redevelopment of the 11,000 square foot **Stone Mill** that sits right on the Ausable River. To help us plan this project, we hired SD Atelier Architecture of Saratoga Springs to do some initial planning, including an existing conditions assessment, schematic designs, and cost estimates. Based on these findings and on other site, program, and financial considerations, we are exploring a number of redevelopment options including commercial, light industrial, residential, and mixed uses. Whatever the ultimate plan, this project will surely bring new economic and social lvitality to the community.

We have been fortunate to attract some major public funding for this project, including a $630,000 grant from the Restore New York program. The program is an excellent fit for this project as it primarily funds the revitalization of vacant and abandoned buildings in community centers. We've also received support from the *1772 Foundation.*

At the same time that we're moving forward with the Stone Mill project, we're also part of a new effort to **revitalize Keeseville**. This fledgling group is looking at ways to support and grow local businesses, make the village more attractive, build on its considerable assets, and change its reputation.

A New Book

AARCH played a big role in the development of *Adirondack Style: Great Camps and Rustic Lodges,* a new book about the region's camp architecture. We helped the principle photographer f-stop Fitzgerald to select and gain access to camps, to recruit the book's writers, and in shaping the final product. The book was published by Rizzoli in August.



Lake Champlain Bridge Commemoration

Ever since the demolition of the National Register listed 1929 Lake Champlain Bridge in 2009, AARCH has been part of a working group that is guiding a series of commemoration activities about the bridge, including a web site, series of exhibits, documentary, and book. These products will become public over the next six months.

SD Atelier elevation drawing of AARCH's Stone Mill

Camp Santanoni

At Camp Santanoni, we continued our work to conserve and restore building exteriors, to interpret the camp to thousands of visitors, and to plan new projects and initiatives in the future.

In 2010, the foundation of the two-story kitchen wing was very cleverly stabilized with new below-grade concrete walls and by the insertion of stainless steel trusses within the vertical logs around the perimeter of the building. This paved the way for Michael Frenette and our summer staff to remove and restore windows (right), replace deteriorated logs, level the wing further, and stain the exterior of the building. They also removed the Homosote wallboard in the kitchen to reveal the original underlying wainscoting material.

This year's summer staff included Jennifer Betsworth, Andria Darby, and Sam Heindel (inset right). Kate Stojsavljevic also returned for her third year .

In September, Michael turned his attention to putting new concrete and stone piers under the boathouse on Harris Lake, behind the Gate Lodge. This building, setting for years on concrete blocks, had been damaged by high water in the spring, so getting it on a proper foundation was long-overdue.

After more than ten years of using the *Santanoni Historic Area Unit Management Plan* as a guide to our work at Santanoni, AARCH has initiated the process of revising the unit management plan to allow other activities to take place at Santanoni that will further enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the site. These changes could include language that would allow the rebuilding of the barn that burned in 2004, some additional farm landscape restoration, and more widespread interpretation at the site.

Fire Towers

AARCH has been involved in the preservation and public use of fire observation towers since the early 1990s. We were responsible for putting many of the region's towers on the National Register and we provided our expertise and nonprofit support for four "friends" organizations. In 2011, we readopted the *Friends of Poke-O-Moonshine* and are working with the Adirondack Fire Tower Association to encourage further fire tower preservation work in the region. AFTA's work has helped to create, in cooperation with SUNY Potsdam, a broader interpretive program of fire towers and has helped to secure funding for fire tower restoration and education projects.

Awards and Recognition

In April, AARCH's collaborative work with NYSDEC and the Town of Newcomb to restore and interpret Camp Santanoni was recognized when AARCH received DEC's ***Earth Day Volunteer Partnership Recognition Award***. The award cited AARCH's leadership in saving Santanoni, interpreting it to thousands of people every year, and in completing more than $1.7 million in restoration work at the camp over the past decade.

Left to right: Tom Martin, DEC Region 5 Forester; Elizabeth Lowe, DEC Region 5 Director; George Canon, Town of Newcomb Supervisor; Willem Monster, AARCH President; and Susan Arena., AARCH Program Director.

In May, AARCH founding board president Howie Kirschenbaum was given an ***Individual Excellence in Historic Preservation*** award by the Preservation League of New York State . This statewide award recognized Howie's role in creating and nurturing AARCH, in saving several Great Camps, and in being an outspoken champion for historic preservation in the region.

Technical Assistance and Support

We routinely provide technical assistance to owners of historic properties on a range of preservation issues each year. This past year has included providing support for National Register nominations, distributing information on preservation grants and tax credits, giving conservation advice, and helping to nurture fledgling preservation organizations.

This year we did this kind of work in communities like Crown Point, Keene Valley, Westport, Schroon Lake, Upper Jay, Newcomb, Tupper Lake, Brighton, Port Henry, Johnsburg, Peru, and Willsboro.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2011 AARCH Award Recipients
L-R: Drew Canning, Robin Canning, Mark Wilcox, Gail Murphy, and Jennifer Tufano

Brad and Monica Bradbury's home in Keene Valley was built in 1890 and has been in Monica's family since 1903. This was part of our Keene Valley tour this year.

Tour group outside the Wellesley Hotel in Thousand Island Park.

AARCH Preservation Awards

The 16h annual AARCH Preservation Awards were held on September 26th at Garnet Hill Lodge in North River. This year's recipients were:

- Joanne and Rich Dwyer for their sensitive restoration of the Owl at Twilight in Olmstedville
- Lake Placid-North Elba Historical Society for their long-term stewardship and sensitive restoration of the Lake Placid Train Depot
- Mark "Willie" Wilcox for his sensitive restoration of the Walker Farm in Essex
- Town of Webb Historical Association for its sensitive restoration of the Goodsell Museum in Old Forge
- Robert and Ursula Covino for their sensitive restoration of Blythewood on Lake George
- Drew Canning for his family's long-tern stewardship and sensitive restoration of the Edmond Pickett House in Saranac.

Four of the recipients were present to accept the awards and spoke about the challenges and successes related to their projects. Mark Wilcox was exceptionally passionate as he spoke about the road that led him to preservation. He sited the ever dwindling number of older buildings and his desire to take part in saving a piece of history. All the awardees have made great contributions to their communities and preservation as a whole. Their dedication and work is greatly appreciated.

Tours, Workshops, and Special Events

This summer marked another successful season of AARCH tours and events. Several new tours were introduced, including *Lyon Mountain, Keene Valley, Gloversville,* and *Children's Camps of the Fourth Lake Region,* and others such as *Otis Mountain Camps, Spiritual Retreats of Lake George,* and *The Miners of Chazy* were brought back after several years off the schedule. In addition, we welcomed people to the Seagle Music Colony, Camp Carolina, and Garnet Hill Lodge for our annual meeting, benefit event, and awards luncheon. Despite being ravaged by lake and river flooding both at the beginning and end of the season, which led to canceling the Valcour Island tour, golf benefit at the Ticonderoga Country Club, and the World of Arto Monaco tour, we still had an extraordinary summer. Between June and September AARCH hosted over 800 people on 30 tours and events!

We also ventured outside the region with a new overnight trip, *Beyond the Blue Line: Exploring the Thousand Islands*. Twenty one people joined us as we toured Thousand Island Park, the Antique Boat Museum, and Boldt Castle in the river communities of Alexandria Bay and Clayton.

We are privileged to offer this remarkable selection of educational outings each year and are able to do so because of the generosity and cooperation of property owners, historians, and educators throughout the region. Their support is greatly appreciated, as is that of our members, who travel all over the Adirondacks to participate in events and share in the celebration of the Park's architectural and cultural legacies.

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