AARCH
# MATTERS
YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

# *Meet Our New Executive Director—Erin Tobin*

*The future looks bright — looking ahead to new leadership*

**Hello Friends!** I am thrilled to join Adirondack Architectural Heritage as its next executive director. Since my appointment was announced in August, I have received an incredibly warm welcome from the AARCH community. I have enjoyed getting to know the staff, leadership, and the organization's many friends and supporters over email, by phone, and at several of AARCH's legendary programs. I look forward to getting to know more of you and the many conversations to come.

*Erin Tobin at the Camp Santanoni Artist's Studio*

As a native New Yorker from Rochester, I first fell in love with the Adirondacks at summer camp on Beaver Lake. During graduate school, friends spent a summer interning at Great Camp Santanoni. Upon returning, they shared stories of a magical place with remarkable history, incredible craftsmanship, engaged visitors, and the particular quiet and peace of the mountains. I was intrigued, but it would be a few more years before I returned to the Adirondacks.

Once I did, the Adirondacks became a big part of both my personal and professional life, from paddling in the St. Regis Canoe Area, site visits reviewing Sacred Sites projects for the New York Landmarks Conservancy, to my husband's proposal on the front porch of the Essex Inn. Later, as parents with small children, we chose fire tower trails as our first family hikes — Kane, Hadley, Poke-O-Moonshine, and Hurricane mountains. Since 2008, we have enjoyed many Adirondack adventures with family and friends, using our 1920s camp in Lake Luzerne as a launchpad.

I have had the privilege of working collegially with AARCH for almost 20 years. In that time, I have admired the organization's work, as both a colleague and member, and have seen their outreach, influence, and programming grow under Steven's excellent leadership. My 14 years at the Preservation League of NYS included countless collaborations with AARCH. Workshops on bringing life to historic Main Street communities through upper floor reuse; programs on using the NYS and Federal Historic Tax Credits; advocating to save special places such as Plattsburgh's Old Stone Barracks; and supporting historic district nominations in Crown Point, Westport, Saranac Lake, Schuyler Falls and Malone, to name a few. These experiences gave me the background to lead AARCH through this important transition and into an

## *Meet Our New Executive Director*

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exciting period of growth and opportunity.

One of my favorite things about AARCH is that it has not only breadth, but depth of engagement beyond initial advocacy, at places like Great Camp Santanoni and the fire towers on Hurricane and Poke-O-Moonshine mountains. In addition, AARCH's programming not only draws people to the organization, but keeps them as lifelong friends. After experiencing an AARCH tour myself, I understand why!

I am honored to be entrusted with the opportunity to lead and steward AARCH as it builds upon the incredibly strong foundation created by Steven, the staff, and the board. The region's built environment works hand-in-hand with its natural one to make the Adirondacks such a unique and beloved place. I look forward to learning more from the AARCH community, *you*, about what you love about AARCH and how you think we might evolve to be even better. I also look forward to working to include more underrepresented voices, determining what stories we need to better amplify and represent, and how preservation can work within our Adirondack communities to create a better future that is accessible to all.

Erin

*The AARCH Staff at Camp Santanoni, courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*

Dear Members and Friends,

I couldn't be happier in handing over the leadership of AARCH to Erin Tobin. She is a consummate preservation professional with many years of nonprofit experience in program and project development, advocacy, and public policy. She is a great communicator and collaborator and leads through inspiration, persuasion, and by building effective partnerships. She knows AARCH, knows and loves the Adirondacks, and will be a great fit for this wonderful organization.

I am especially happy to be ending my time at AARCH on such a high note. We've been able to artfully and imaginatively navigate these pandemic years and still offer a great range of programs and activities, to complete the largest restoration project done to date at Camp Santanoni, to see our fire tower friends thrive, to do the most survey and National Register work ever in a single year, and to emerge financially healthy, too. At the heart of all this is a really incredible staff, a supportive board of directors, dozens of partners, and thousands of believers and supporters all over the region.

Although this *Year-in-Review* describes the really incredible year we've had, it is also interwoven with the myriad of ways that we are thankful to so many people and to so many organizations and partners who all make to make AARCH such a successful and effective organization.

Several years ago, when we started to plan for this year, in which I would step down as executive director, the board and staff did a survey to identify AARCH's organizational strengths and out of this exercise came a number of qualities you might expect to see highlighted: our curiosity, creativity, agility, high standards, accessibility, passion, and our

ability to form effective partnerships. All these qualities *have* served us well but beneath all of this is something even more fundamentally important – our love of place, our love of Adirondack communities, a love of people, and a love of stories and our shared heritage.

Because it is through this love that we make connections with each other. It is through these connections that we create community and it is through community that we see and support each other, that we get things done, and we make the Adirondacks a better place to live, work, and visit.

I am one of those truly fortunate people who have enjoyed going to work here every day for the last 27 years. This is because the work of the organization has been a great fit for my skills and passions but, more importantly, because I have had the great pleasure of working with so many incredible people, in almost every community in the Adirondacks, to do great things to improve the vitality of this extraordinary place we live in and love so much. It has truly been an extraordinarily rich and rewarding work life.

I thank all of you for your enthusiasm, participation and support and I hope you will give Erin and the AARCH staff and board all the love and support you have shown me for decades.

With love and gratitude,

Steven

**To Our 30-Year Members**
*Thank You for Being There from the Beginning!*

Steven Engelhart
Howie Kirschenbaum
Colleen & Peter Prescott
Karl Smith, III
Adirondack Experience Library
Nancie Battaglia Photography
Owen & Carol Beeder
Anthony Brankman
Robin Brown
Margaret Datz
Drs. James & Caroline Dawson
Carl DeSantis
John Eldridge
John & Janet Friauf
Amy Hanninen
David Hislop, Jr.
Historic Saranac Lake
Joseph & Lesley Hoopes
Cynthia Howk
James Keebler
David Kupiak
William & Meredith Johnston
Jane McCloskey & Charles Carson
Francis Morigi
Kevan Moss & Stephen Horne
William & Wendy Nolan
Janet Null
John & Susan Omohundro
Peter & Patty Paine
Ann Parks
Douglas Scott & June Deery
Jeffrey Sellon & Marilyn Burns
Margaret Jackson Smith
John Smolinsky & Ellen Prakken
Michael Sorel
James Spring
Carl Stearns
Elizabeth Thorndike
Donald Williams
Helen Weltman
Pat & Tom Willis
Bob & Blaikie Worth
Anne Van Ingen
Ingrid Zimmermann

## A New Preservation Easement — Flat Rock Camp

Historic preservation easements are a great way to protect historic properties in perpetuity. These voluntary agreements between a landowner and an easement holder, often a nonprofit preservation organization, are a binding commitment between the parties to uphold certain preservation standards. Prior to this year, AARCH held five preservation easements, including on Hemlock Ledge on Tupper Lake (1999), two buildings associated with Noblewood Park in Willsboro (2000), The Castle in Keene(2007), and Northbrook Lodge on Osgood Pond (2012).

We are delighted to announce that we now hold a preservation easement on Flat Rock Camp in Willsboro. This extraordinary property on Lake Champlain has been owned and lovingly cared for by the Paine family since the late 1890s when it was built for Augustus G. Paine, Jr. In 2006, AARCH wrote the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the camp which includes nearly 20 structures.

Distinguishing features of the property include it's low shingled compound of buildings in a U-shaped plan around a beautiful courtyard, a series of farm and support structures, and its setting on the lake. Note that Flat Rock Camp is not open to the public.

## The Biggest Year Ever at Camp Santanoni

We had an incredible year at Camp Santanoni. The staff interpreted the site to thousands of visitors and did some great conservation work, we completed the biggest restoration projects done there to date, a new diorama was installed, and volunteers continued their good work at the farm.

Three terrific staff people joined us this summer – Anna Forsman, Sophia Beigeliesen, and Stevie Malenowski. They interpreted the camp to visitors, did window restoration, and almost completely repainted the exterior of the Farm Manager's Cottage. Some of you will remember that this building was within a year or two of being completely lost to deterioration, so seeing it now restored and brightly painted is inspiring. Anna also came up with the brilliant idea of providing visitors with more creative activities to do while they are at camp, so we've put out drawing paper, building blocks, and note paper and already we like what we're seeing, so look for more of this in the years ahead.

But the biggest news of the year is that we've completed the largest restoration project ever to be undertaken at Santanoni. Thanks to a $370,000 grant to AARCH from the National Park Service's *Save America's Treasures* program and matching funds from New York State ($250,000) and the Town of Newcomb ($120,000), we hired Titan Roofing, Inc. to install new shingles on the lodge's 18,000 square foot roof and to complete log repair and replacement, stone masonry repairs, and foundation work. Titan and their subcontractors did a tremendous job. Randy Crawford of Crawford & Stearns, Architects and architect and AARCH board member Chuck Higgerson were also amazing to work with.

If this were not enough, late in the summer we received word that New York State DEC was providing an additional $140,000 in funding for a new roof for the Gate Lodge. This was matched with $40,000 in town funding and so in September we amended our contract with Titan and they proceeded to re-shingle this very complicated roof, completing the work in October.

Many of you have enjoyed seeing the model of the Santanoni barn and the diorama of the entire farm that were made by Tim Sauter and are now found in the Gardener's Cottage. These allow visitors to really see and imagine what the farm operation was like when it was in full swing in the 1920s. This year, Tim made a diorama of the "caretaker's complex" that existed near the bridge over the outlet of Newcomb Lake. This cluster of buildings included a stable, garage, laundry, icehouse, and staff quarters, all in support of life at the Main Camp. As Tim describes it "I was introduced to Camp Santanoni by my wife Dianne and her mother, Virginia Pruyn Coffey, who is a descendant of the Pruyns of Albany. We were devastated by the fire that had destroyed the main barns in 2004 and, a few years later I decided to put my art background to work by constructing a model of the barn."

Howie Kirschenbaum also led three workdays at the farm and Jennifer Betsworth held several special events, including tours of the Gate Lodge. We ended AARCH's tour season with a day-long outing *30 Years of Advocacy and Preservation at Camp Santanoni* in which, over the course of the day, co-leaders Howie Kirschenbaum and Steven Engelhart shared their decades of experience there to save the camp from state neglect, undertake more than $3 million dollars in restoration work, and make it a popular and exciting destination in the region.

***We are Thankful*** for three amazing and dedicated Town of Newcomb supervisors whose support and enthusiasm for Camp Santanoni over 30 years made our collective success there possible. **George Canon** was a tireless advocate for Santanoni and was instrumental in getting the state to change its policy toward the site in the 1990s. It was also George who made sure that we had local funding for staff, planning work, and conservation projects. His successors, **Wester Miga** and **Robin Deloria**, have continued the town's tradition of deep and meaningful support for Santanoni.

## Advocacy Work

We've been advocating for the preservation and public use of **Debar Pond Lodge** (Town of Duane, Franklin County) for more than 15 years. The lodge was designed by Saranac Lake architect William Distin and was constructed in 1939 for Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wheeler. The complex includes a massive log lodge, caretaker's cottage, small boathouse, a greenhouse, and several other outbuildings. It's located in a breath-taking location overlooking Debar Pond and Debar Mountain. New York State acquired the property in 1979 and took full ownership of the site in 2004. When the state announced plans to demolish the complex in January, the public outcry was loud and practically unanimous in favor of its preservation.

Under the leadership of AARCH's Howie Kirschenbaum in partnership with the Debar Pond Institute crafted a strategy to save Debar Pond Lodge through a constitutional land exchange amendment. This plan, if approved by two sessions of the state legislature and the voters of New York, would exchange about six acres of land around the lodge for a nearby parcel of at least equal value and merit to be added to the Forest Preserve. The Debar Pond Institute, a private nonprofit, would then operate the lodge for a variety of public educational and recreational purposes. The public would also retain full access to the lake and other state lands. Although this process will take several years, we are confident that this "win-win" solution will gain the support and approvals needed.

We've also taken a big role in advocating for the preservation of the **Cornell Cooperative Building** at the Essex County Fairgrounds in Westport. In response to Essex County's plan to demolish and replace this 1924, National Register-listed building, AARCH and others have mobilized public support for its preservation and continued use as a home for agriculture-related nonprofits. This work has included: a pitch to the Essex County Board of Supervisors (by Westport Supervisor Ike Tyler), communications with our Congressional delegation (a source of possible federal funding), an on-line petition, a video, and the creation of the *Friends of the Essex County Fairgrounds.*

*The CCE building is an integral part of the Essex County fairgrounds and holds an important place in the history or our town and county. From a sustainability standpoint as well, it is important to remember that introducing new buildings and materials has a negative impact on our earth and this project is coming about where we must be hyper aware of our place in the environment to ensure a healthy happy future for the Adirondack Park.* Annette Stephens, Wadhams, NY

In September, AARCH received a $5000 grant from the Cloudsplitter Foundation to hire Crawford & Stearns, Architects to provide new conditions assessment, scope of work, and cost information for rehabilitating the building. This is being done to challenge the prevailing view among some supervisors that the cost of rehabilitation is too high. As a result of these efforts, the Board of Supervisors has "opened the door" to the rehabilitation option – a hopeful sign.

But not all the advocacy news is goodl. Despite having turned away a proposal to build a **Dollar General Store in the Warrensburg historic district** in November 2019, another proposal was brought forth this summer that involved demolishing another National Register-listed building in a different part of the historic district. This one also met with significant public opposition.

AARCH wrote a letter of support, we attended a public meeting about the matter, and Steven gave an impassioned talk at an event sponsored by Warrensburg Beautification and the Warrensburg Historical Society but, ahead of any approvals, the property owner went ahead and demolished the historic building anyway.

***We are Thankful*** for all the people who care about the preservation of historic buildings and understand the important role they play in the economic and social health of a community, the people who speak up at public meetings, write letters, sign and circulate petitions, speak with their elected officials, and create the fervor that is sometimes needed to change minds and hearts.

## *National Register & Technical Assistance Work*

From National Register of Historic Places nominations and a town-wide reconnaissance level survey, to dozens of technical assistance requests, to help with historic tax credit projects, 2021 has been a very busy year.

We completed five **National Register nominations** in 2020: the Sprague-North House in Essex, Hague Baptist Church, St. Regis Presbyterian Church near Paul Smiths, Keene Valley Country Club, and the Downtown Commercial District in the village of Malone, and all were approved by the State Review Board in December and listed on the National Register in January 2021. The nominations reflect a great range of architectural styles, communities, and historic periods within the North Country. Listing on the National Register has allowed the owners of these properties to apply for grants or take advantage of the homeowner and commercial historic tax credit programs available to them as preservation incentives.

Another large project completed this past year was a town-wide reconnaissance level survey for the **Town of Schuyler Falls** (Clinton County). Funding for the survey was made possible by a grant from the Preserve New York program of the Preservation League of New York State and New York State Council on the Arts. The Town initiated this survey in response to the loss of some notable historic buildings and its wish to prevent more losses of historic buildings in the future. This survey is an essential tool in identifying historic resources within the town, raising awareness of their importance, and eventually in providing opportunities and incentives for their preservation. Schuyler Falls boasts a surprisingly rich and diverse collection of buildings, including farmsteads, a grist mill, churches, commercial buildings and all kinds of houses from many periods that the survey reflects. The survey identified and made recommendations for four National Register districts as well as several individual National Register listings. We look forward to working with the town and individual owners to further explore these possibilities.

Our ongoing National Register and tax credit work includes **Camp Veery** on Big Moose Lake, **Camp Allouette** on Lake Placid, the **Graves Mansion** in Ausable Forks, and the **Berkeley Square Expansion District** in Saranac Lake.

But the biggest National Register project on our plate is a large residential historic district in **Malone,** the largest such project AARCH has ever undertaken, about 300 buildings in all. The fieldwork for this was advanced this fall, thanks to the great work of **Jenny Fulton,** our part-time seasonal staff person, who has spent many hours photographing and recording the district. Funding for this $18,000 project comes from the Village of Malone, the Malone Revitalization Foundation, and a Preserve New York grant.

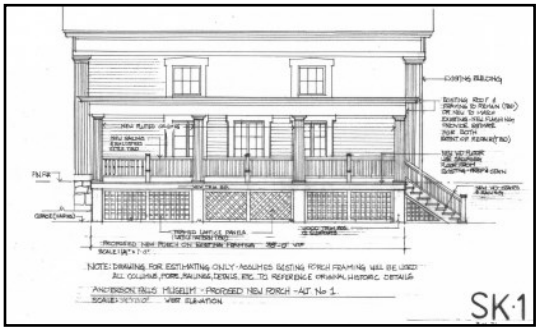
Our work to put the Graves Mansion on the National Register is just part of the

*Photos: Commercial and residential buildings in Malone and Schuyler Falls, and Camp Veery on Echo Island, Big Moose Lake (bottom right).*

support we're giving to the new owner of this remarkable historic property. This architectural marvel had been on the AARCH Endangered Properties list for over a decade. The mansion was built in 1878 for Henry Graves, who was the President of the J & J Rogers Company. Originally, the 15,000 square foot Mansard-roofed mansion featured 32 rooms, elegantly paneled walls and ceilings, nine fireplaces, nine bathrooms. Despite several very well-intentioned efforts to restore the building, the last decade or so has seen it deteriorate, be vandalized, and the last owner recently lost it to his creditors. The property was recently purchased and the new owners are taking up the challenge to restore this Victorian gem. We applaud their efforts and are excited to be a part in its restoration and rebirth.

We are providing the mansion's new owner with information and guidance on finding consultants, craftspeople and specialized building materials, on utilizing the tax credit incentives, and to develop a strategy for undertaking such a large project. We are also collaborating with the owner to use the mansion for a series of hand-on preservation trades training workshops set for 2022. These workshops are made possible thanks to funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This funding, as well as other funding received by AARCH in 2022 for our waterfront park project, was obtained in part thanks to assistance from Kara Page, a grants consultant available to us through the generosity of the Cloudsplitter Foundation.

AARCH also continues to respond to technical assistance requests from across the region. These typically are relatively simple responses that provide information on National Register listing, tax credit information, finding an architect or contractor, solving a conservation problem, or preservation funding. In some instances, this work can be quite involved, such as the work at the Anderson Falls Heritage Society to provide drawings to replace the existing failing porch on their historic museum building in Keeseville or designing a new doorway surround for the Clinton County Historical Association Museum in Plattsburgh, which they built over the winter.




It has been an exciting year, my work taking me to several counties throughout the park. I have been fortunate to see some amazing buildings and communities, listened to fascinating and touching stories from home owners, and met individuals passionate about the communities in which they live. 2021 has been an exceptional year and I am looking forward to 2022!

*Christine*

***We are Thankful*** to Mary Scharf , President of the Malone Revitalization Foundation. The village of Malone has no greater champion than Mary Scharf. Her tireless energy, enthusiasm and passion for her beloved Malone has been the driving force for historic preservation and revitalization in the community.

## Value, Meaning, and Gratitude

Another AARCH season of great stories, joy, and excitement has come and gone! When it comes time for us to pause after a busy season of tours, workshops, and special events, we reflect on the themes we explored over the course of the season. In this reflection, we also hope that we did right by the stories we told and communities, sites, and histories we explored.

This year, a few pervasive themes that resonated with us are ***value***, ***meaning***, **and** ***gratitude***. We find that most of our outings exhibit these traits and are what make the experiences AARCH brings together so rewarding and impactful.

As a now three-decade old nonprofit organization, we hold dear the institutional values that consistently guide and inform our work all over the Adirondacks. Our culture of curiosity and compassion help us navigate the deep layers of our work and brings us to places that continue to surprise, enlighten, and surprise us. Participants in AARCH events invest in finding *value* wherever it may appear in the Adirondack landscape.

One such outing was our "Beyond the Blue Line" tour to Chesterwood, the estate of late 19th and early 20th century sculptor Daniel Chester French in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. French, noted for his work sculpting the statue of Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial, among other major public works, did not have a direct Adirondack connection that we know of besides his association with Saratoga's Trask family. However, the site today is a National Trust for Historic Preservation-operated site and connects past and present through sculpture and artistry. That's why the fabulous work of contemporary Sacandaga-area sculptor John Van Alstine was recently exhibited on the grounds of Chesterwood, which provided a rare opportunity for AARCH to explore the site and see John's work with him as a guide. Here, value was everywhere–in the complex's historic buildings and calm surrounding landscapes, in the history and stories told at the site, in John's work itself, and in the very personal and direct way spoke of his artwork. Having a willing and amazing guide like John, and so many friends that volunteer their time are energy, offer tremendous value to AARCH experiences.

Closer to home, our members and friends found value in both new and classic outings across the region – valuing the foundation of rustic architecture on Raquette Lake, or a new exploration of the wealth of vibrant, historic infrastructure present in Malone where historic preservation plays a big role in the village's future. Similarly, places like Gloversville and Hudson Falls, both communities aiming to reinvent themselves and revitalizing one building at a time, show us the value of compromise and coming together to define their own collective values, and to make good things happen. One would be hard-pressed not to see the value of saving the places and stories that help shape the future aspirations of communities, large and small.

In a year where uncertainty continuously pervaded our work on all levels, it was so heartening to be able to host outings that safely brought people together, connected our members and friends to each other, and through *meaningful* experiences and exploration, connected attendees to the communities and magical places we serve.

On each outing, the group goes around in a circle and shares their name and where they came in from that day, but I always make sure to ask them to explain a bit about why they found this outing relevant and meaningful. Answers vary, but a few common threads that folks point to–wanting to learn more, seeing something they otherwise would not, connecting with a story, person, or place, wanting to see how a building or landscape has been saved or brought back to life–all converge to create *meaning* for each person, something to "take home" with them from the experience.

*The Architecture of William Prescott*, an ever-changing and always popular outing, brought us from Plattsburgh to Lake Placid this year and showed us the value of meaning. Guided by the featured architect's daughter, Susan Prescott Buck, the group gained a personal perspective that is rare for an AARCH experience. Through Sue's spirited interpretation and personal stories, the architecture we explored carries so much more meaning. Her personal touch lights up what would otherwise be a story found only on blueprints and drawings. Furthermore, Sue speaks of how the experience of developing an AARCH tour around her father's work more intimately connected her

## NOLAN'S TOUR NOTES

**Tour Miles on Nolan's Car:** *2,580! Let's all try to reduce our carbon emissions in the future by doing more carpooling on future outings.*

**Favorite Outings of 2021:** I loved 30 Years of Advocacy & Preservation at Camp Santanoni *because it conveyed the sheer dedication of Steven Engelhart, Howie Kirschenbaum, AARCH, and our Santanoni partners in making the site what it is today.* Sackets Harbor on the Adirondack West Coast *gave me my first opportunity to explore this wonderful village, where I had the amazing opportunity to "play" the church bells to a captive, public audience.*

**Crowd Favorite:** *By far the most sought-after outing was the outing to the Twitchell Lake Inn and Rap-Shaw Club and it indeed was an outing that folks won't soon forget!*

**New Outing Sure to Become a Classic:** *"Sketching Adirondack Architecture" – a wonderful hands-on workshop, led by architect J. B. Clancy, was a spectacular success, and gave people new skills and knowledge that they can take out into the world.*

**Best Weather:** *"Gems of Greenwich" – a perfect, calm autumn day!*

**Hottest:** *"Chesterwood: Adirondack Sculpture in New England" — high humidity and high temps in the Berkshires, but a wonderful "walk-and-talk" around this historic estate looking at Adirondack sculptor John Van Alstine's work!*

**Coldest (or Rainiest):** *Elizabethtown — An infamous downpour drowned out the afternoon, but several folks hung on until the end!*

**Hidden Gem:** *"Malone's Marvels" – What a fantastic community, with a surprising array of diverse, high-style architecture and a wealth of unique stories, figures, and history.*

with his memory, and by extension, connects all of us with the family's story and deeper architectural legacy.

A brand-new outing to the town of Greenwich, sandwiched between the North Country and the Capital region, proved to be very meaningful to the group. Starting the day with a tour of the village with five(!) local experts, historians, artists, and residents gave us the full breadth of its history and vivid architecture. Each place carried meaning, in homes belonging to long-time local families, some that were saved and preserved by caring owners, and some that offered spaces of Black liberation for freedom seekers escaping slavery on the Underground Railroad in the 19th century. The afternoon brought us to a recently saved historic schoolhouse that owners Jill Tefft and her father Rick thoughtfully and lovingly restored. Their efforts carried so much meaning since Rick's father and grandmother (Jill's great-grandfather and great, great grandmother) attended the school. Lastly, we finished our day at the childhood home of 19th century reformer and women's rights champion Susan B. Anthony, a building owned by New York State and where Anthony grew up and really cut her teeth on the progressive ideas she espoused throughout her life. Our friends at the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation kindly opened the doors to us and explained their goal to share the meaning of this place with the public as they invest in its preservation and future.

Lastly, people define *gratitude* in numerous ways, but at the heart of it we can collectively be grateful to so many wonderful friends and partners across the region who share their inspirational work with us on AARCH outings. This past season, we are especially grateful to John Culpepper, the outgoing Director of Sustainability and Facilities at the North Country School, who shared with us on our "Going Green" tour the many sustainability practices implemented at the school to curb carbon emissions. We also saw the campus's two Net-Zero "green" buildings. His knowledge and the great work done at this school offer a roadmap on how more sustainable infrastructure can contribute to a healthier, greener future.

We are also grateful to two exceptional workshop leaders this summer, who both allowed participants to walk away from their AARCH experiences with new and practical skills. Architect J. B. Clancy taught a small group the fundamentals of architectural sketching, using the beautiful and historic Grace Memorial Chapel on Lake George as subject matter. Then Leisa Almekinder, owner of AG Construction, a talented contractor, and wonderful teacher, taught a small group of women how to use power tools during our *Power Tools for Women* workshop. The feedback we heard from this course was that it was empowering and gave participants the confidence to undertake home improvement and DIY projects themselves.

Ultimately, each AARCH experience from this past year carried these themes as a connective tissue. If our members and friends can connect with the people, places, and stories we seek out while finding *value, meaning,* and *gratitude* along the way, we feel that we have done our jobs!

Lastly, I want to say THANKS to all of you who attended, hosted, guided, or otherwise participated in our programs and events this year! We were so thrilled to be able to come back together after a tough year to rediscover the stories, shared history, and strong bonds that ties us to this beautiful region and to each other.

*Nolan*

## 2021 AARCH Preservation Awards

***Our AARCH Preservation Awards*** *annually recognize exemplary historic preservation work throughout the region. We honor examples of sensitive restoration, adaptive reuse, community revitalization, and long-term stewardship. Our 2021 recipients represent the wide range of projects, places, and people who are helping to preserve and enhance the unique heritage and built environment of the Adirondacks.*

After COVID hindered the usual way we come together to celebrate our annual awardees last year, it was a joyous occasion to gather and honor this year's awardees at the historic Hotel Saranac, a 2018 AARCH awardee.

Our 2021 Preservation Award Winners :(from left to right) Ted Comstock – Adirondack League Club, Ben Strader & Adam Bailey – The Blue Mountain Center, Travis Proulx – The Basselin House, Beryl & Bob Ierardi - Camp Paradiso Trovato

*Photo courtesy of John Eldridge.*

### The Adirondack League Club

***Long-term Stewardship***
***Town of Webb, Herkimer County***

The Adirondack League Club (ALC) was established in 1890 as a private landowners' organization, used mainly as a hunting and fishing club. The Club has 53,000 acres of woodlands, dozens of lakes, and miles of river frontage. It also has one of the most interesting collections of late 19th and early 20th-century rustic buildings in the region and is one of the area's best kept secrets.
The main clubhouse at Little Moose Lake, completed in 1914, was designed by Augustus Shepard, as were many of the Club's private camps. Shepard's book *Camps in the Woods* (1931) is a compendium of his League Club lodges, camps, and boathouses, and it helped to further define the Adirondack rustic tradition, which influenced the design of National Park Service structures.

Within the ALC property are three distinct complexes, on Honnedaga, Bisby, and Little Moose lakes, and each has its own clubhouse and enclaves of cabins and camps. There are also "outlying" camps owned by the Club for the use of its members. Historically, the club's three complexes were fairly self-sufficient and, except for the lodge at Little Moose Lake, most camps and lodges were rustic and simple. Each complex includes buildings owned and maintained by the Club and camps owned and maintained by private owners.

At Honnedaga, there are approximately 22 camps built between the 1890s and 1930s, most of which have boathouses. At Bisby Lake, there is a Club-owned clubhouse, boathouse, guest cabins, and tennis courts, and a couple dozen privately-owned camps from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Little Moose Lake is the most developed of the club's complexes, mainly due to its ease of access. Club-owned buildings include its large Main Lodge, a guide's house, Winter House, powerhouse, utility buildings, guest cabins, and tennis courts. There are also dozens of privately-owned camps around the lake.

While a primary interest of the club is the preservation, protection and enjoyment of its forests, waters, and wildlife, the Club has always maintained a deep respect for its architecture, history, and the preservation of rustic camp life. The ALC's multi-focused approach preserves its forest, lakes, and wildlife and has made major commitments to preserving its buildings and historic infrastructure for its entire history. Even new construction is mandated to "blend in" and this ensures that the overall architectural integrity of the club remains. These design guidelines specify size, scale, siting, and paint colors. Since its founding in 1890, the club has preserved and maintained its historic buildings, grounds, and traditions with remarkable and admirable success.

## The Blue Mountain Center

***Long-term Stewardship***
***Town of Indian Lake, Hamilton County***

Toward the end of his life, Harold Hochschild, a New York City businessman and founder of the Adirondack Museum, collaborated with his son, Adam Hochschild, a noted author and co-founder of *Mother Jones* magazine, to convert a portion of their family property on Eagle Lake into a nonprofit retreat center for artists and writers. For this project, they chose the clubhouse and other nearby buildings that were once at the center of a William West Durant-designed country club complex there.

Founded in 1982, the Blue Mountain Center provides support for writers, artists, and activists. A 501(c)(3) organization, the center also serves as a resource for various progressive movements by welcoming and curating conversations among the progressive community.

Over several decades, the center's founding Director Harriet Barlow and its current Executive Director Ben Strader shaped and grew the organization we know today.

The relative quiet of last year offered a unique opportunity to work on several preservation projects that could not be accomplished with artists in residence. First, the work team removed giant solar panels from the 1980s designed to generate heat for the hot water system before the new electric solar panel system and efficient water heaters were installed. Because of those system upgrades, the panels hadn't been used for five years, but were the first thing you'd see—big shiny aluminum boxes. Underneath the panels was old asphalt roofing, which was in decent shape, but did not add to the character of the building. The work team planned to replace those shingles with the original 1938 copper patina shingles that Ben had salvaged years ago from another Eagle Nest building.

In spring 2021, the team restored the leaking, circa-1980s skylight over the big fireplace, allowing light to pour in over the central congregating space in the clubhouse. A group of volunteers also started staining the whole house with a fresh coat of brown stain. Ben Strader explains "I tell people who are helping anything that's brown has to be brown again. As soon as you finish staining everything on a house this big, it feels like it's time to start again," reflecting the scope and scale of the work in front of the team.

However, the nurturing of the building was not limited to the exterior and Christian Grigoraskos lemon oiled all the wood walls throughout the building's interior.

An annex to "Harriet's Cottage," the building closest to the clubhouse, is being converted to accommodate wheelchair accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide universal access. This is part of the long-term goal to make the BMC property entirely accessible, so physical ability is not a factor anywhere throughout the campus.

This project took more care than a simple accessibility modification because the team wanted it to feel like and be as beautiful as the rest of site. The work group didn't want this to feel like a token handicap-accessible space, but a room where anyone visiting the center would want stay. Daniel Edelstein was the architect and Craig and Brian Lamphear the contractor.

Another big project was to replace the rotted boathouse piers and Douglas Butterworth's thoughtful and patient approach to restore these piers in the exact manner was inspiring. Together, these caring and thoughtful preservation projects will help the center to not only continue to shine as a superb nonprofit in the region, but to help its defining and historic buildings retain their character, life, and beauty.

## The Basselin House

**Travis Proulx**

***Town of Croghan, Lewis County***

AARCH first discovered the Basselin House on a tour of the Town of Croghan in 2020 which visited numerous properties there including the Basselin House. It was then that we learned about Travis Proulx and efforts to rehabilitate the property. Travis purchased the home in February 2020 and set about stabilizing and repairing not only the manor house but the property's other historic buildings, which include a barn and a guest house that was originally an office. This property is impressively intact, retaining key features that help tell the story of the Basselin family and the influential role they played in Croghan.

This historic home is most known for its association with Theodore Basselin, who lived there from 1854 to 1914. He was Lewis County's first millionaire, and his financial success began with that of his family's general store and grew with investments in the lumber and railroad industries. He was also one of the original State Forest Commissioners, who were instrumental in determining the boundaries of the "Blue Line" of the Adirondack Park.

The Basselin House was constructed in 1854 for Anna and Dominique Basseline, who had just moved to the United States from Lorrain, France with their three-year-old son, Theodore. The couple ran a general store out of the first floor of the building and lived on the second floor. Their general store soon became a vital feature of Croghan's community and its success enabled the Basselins to expand their living space in 1875, doubling the size of the house. The added wing was more

ornate than the original portion of the building, with ornamental plaster and wood moldings and a grand fireplace in the parlor. Theodore joined his mother in running the general store in 1873 (his father had passed away in 1861) and subsequently invested in the lumber and railroad industries as well. As his fortune grew, he continued to improve his family's home with another addition in 1900, which converted the general store into additional living space. In addition, he constructed the Basselin House Business Office at that time, which has since been converted into a residence.

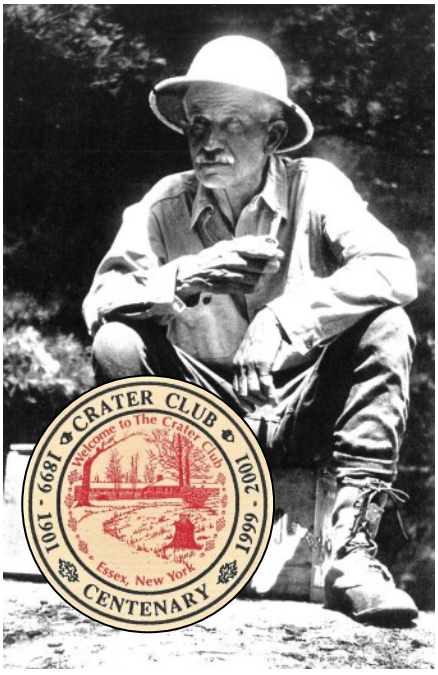
Much of this history is still visible in the Basselin House property today thanks to the work of Travis Proulx, along with his mother and stepfather, Kay and Kenneth Gerow. The foundation, roof, and porches of the Basselin House required major repair, and every effort was made to match the historic fabric and details. New siding was installed to match the existing in areas needing repair. They stabilized the barn, residing it with matching clapboards and removing trees and vegetation that were causing harm and they rehabilitated the Guest House (former office). In addition, the family has carefully brought the remaining interior accents back to life, stripping off decades of paint and finishes to reveal the original features. Any elements that could be salvaged were – some, such as windows and doors, were found in the barn – and those that could not were brought to the Croghan Island Mill for reproduction.

The rehabilitation of the Basselin House property has already had a significant impact on the community of Croghan. Events such as bake sales not only helped to raise money for the property's repairs, but also reestablished it as a vital hub in the community. Now, Travis Proulx is using the Basselin House to give back to his community, hosting fundraising events for local projects like the revitalization of the Croghan village playground.

## Camp Paradiso Trovato

**Robert & Beryl Ierardi**

***Crater Club, Town of Essex, Essex County***




Camp Paradiso Trovato (formerly Lochanbrae), is part of the historic Crater Club founded by John Burnham in 1899. In the fall of 1910, Burnham built Lochanbrae for Lillian D. B. Carr from Chicago. It was one of the few camps designed by an architect, but several changes were made by Burnham to make the camp more rustic in appearance. Burnham's building style has been called, *Rustic Simplicity*, adhering to a Simple Life Philosophy that was taking hold in America at this time. Burnham built simple, matter of fact architecture using whatever material could be found on site. He also designed and built much of the furniture. This is considered the best-designed house in the club. In 1924 the camp was purchased by Harry Mulliken, and it remained in the family until Bob and Beryl Ierardi purchased the property in 2012.

By 2012 the camp had not been maintained for quite some time and fallen into disrepair. The fireplace wall was leaning 9" out of plumb, and the entire building was in danger of collapsing. A second-story sleeping porch had become dangerous and required immediate removal. The foundation work to stabilize and gradually move the building into plumb involved hand digging out 20 piers and replacing them with sono tubes and structural I-beams. A series of cables were run through the building and attached to trees on the opposite side to bring the building back to plumb. Through a process of slowly pulling and lifting, the building was eventually back in place. The resulting holes from the wires were skillfully filled and finished so that holes appear as old pegs or knots. The structural work is only evident if one explores underneath the building.

Remarkably, the original Burnham furnishings were still in the camp and, while needing some TLC, were in good condition. John Burnham was fond of using trees found on the property to create rustic furniture and equipped each camp with tables, cabinets, shelving, and built-ins. Every Crater Club camp also was fitted with the same set of caned chairs. At Paradiso Trovato, all the furniture has been cleaned up and preserved. The Ierardis were intent on keeping the camp as it originally was conceived and constructed, and great attention was paid to every detail. Before starting renovations, Bob removed all the glass towel bars, hardware, lighting, and plumbing fixtures to be cleaned, repaired, and reinstalled. The original piano is tuned annually and still enjoyed.

Since 2012, the Ierdardis have devoted endless hours, resources, and love to bring the camp and the grounds back to their original state. While most of the heavy lifting was done within a few years, bringing back all the finishing touches continues. All the floors and walls have been lovingly restored and the camp's artifacts or mementos preserved.

***We are Thankful*** to all our awardees past, present and future. Your passion, dedication and deep appreciation of these historic places preserve the rich history and built legacy of our region and make the Adirondacks a better place to live, work, and visit.

Want to nominate a project for a 2022 Award? Projects large and small in the Adirondack region are eligible for consideration. Contact Christine Bush at christine@aarch.org.

## AARCH Special Events

*We were grateful this year to once again hold most of our annual special events in-person. Over the years, these have become landmark points in the year that allow us to gather with our members and friends. These special events are times for us to connect, share inspiring stories, conduct business, and raise funds to support our important work.*

### *Celebrating Steven Engelhart: Afternoon Benefit for AARCH*
### Valcour Inn & Boathouse, Peru

On August 14, AARCH's friends and family came together at the Valcour Inn & Boathouse to honor Steven's 30 years with the organization. It was a joy to gather again after so long and we had a record turn-out. The afternoon featured remarks by some of Steven's long-term colleagues and friends as well as music by the Wickmoore Jazz Trio. Our venue, the turn-of-the-century boathouse, provided a lovely backdrop, made more festive with commemorative AARCH pennants and hand-decorated cookies. Thank you to our honorary committee and College Auxiliary Services at SUNY Plattsburgh, who helped make this event possible.

*Photos courtesy of Susan Darrin.*

### *Annual Meeting & 26th Annual Preservation Awards*
### Hotel Saranac, Saranac Lake

We held both our Annual Meeting and Preservation Awards on September 18 at Hotel Saranac. A 2018 AARCH award winner itself, the hotel provided an elegant venue in which to mingle, conduct business, and celebrate this year's awardees. In addition to the usual business, Annual Meeting included remarks from our outgoing and incoming executive directors, Steven and Erin, respectively. We also heard from guest speaker Chessie Monks-Kelly from Historic Saranac Lake (HSL), long-term partners of AARCH and neighbors of Hotel Saranac. Chessie, the Archivist & Curator at HSL, shared the organization's latest news and projects as well as invited attendees over to their current exhibit. In the afternoon, we reconvened for our 26th Annual Preservation Awards luncheon, which honored four exemplary accomplishments in historic preservation throughout the Adirondack region. *See pages 10-13 for more information on this year's award winners.*

### Board Changes

In 2021, AARCH elected three people to our board of directors including two first-time board members. **Sarah Heffern** first joined AARCH as a summer staff person at Camp Santanoni where she helped to create the new Camp Santanoni website. Sarah interned during a brief sabbatical from her work as a social media specialist for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Previously, she managed website and e-mail communications for Historic Hotels of America. Sarah received a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from Siena College and earned a Certificate in Historic Preservation from Goucher College. She lives in Washington, D.C. **Maria Russell** is retired from a career on the public relations faculty at Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications, including four terms as the Public Relations Department Chair. Previously she enjoyed a fourteen-year career in the private sector, including supervision of the press center for the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. She earned a Bachelor's Degree with Honors from College of St. Rose and a Masters in Journalism from Syracuse University's Newhouse School. Maria lives in Fayetteville.

### Staff Changes

*Left to Right: Christine Bush, Samantha Johnson, Erin Tobin, Steven Engelhart, Nolan Cool at this year's Preservation Awards Luncheon at Hotel Saranac. Photo by John Eldridge.*

We also welcomed back **Ed Hodges,** who has deep personal and professional experience in historic preservation. He is currently the Principal and CEO of DiMella Shaffer, Architects in Boston. About being a member of the AARCH board, he said "My interest in Adirondack architecture is rooted first in the fact that I am an architect, second that I am a woodworker, and lastly, that special places often need advocacy." Ed previously served for six years on the AARCH board and is AARCH's new Vice-President.

## MEET *Samantha Johnson*

In May, AARCH welcomed **Samantha Johnson** as our new Administrative Director. A Schuyler Falls native, she first worked for AARCH as an intern while studying art history at SUNY Plattsburgh. Since then, she has gone on to earn an M.S. in historic preservation from the University of Vermont and most recently worked at an architectural firm in New York City that specializes in historic restoration. Samantha has long been passionate about history and has had the opportunity to follow that curiosity through positions at museums, archives, and archaeological sites. She brings this diverse perspective along with her North Country roots to AARCH, where she is eager to help the team continue to explore and preserve the rich legacy of the Adirondacks.

## MEET *Jenny Fulton*

**Jenny Fulton** (B.A. Brandeis, M.F.A. Yale, M.S. UVM Historic Preservation Program) is originally from central Michigan; since 2012 she has called Vermont home. Her work as a preservationist is informed by her first career as a designer for theater, film, and residential design-build, and by her undergraduate degree in Anthropology which included a year at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, training in fieldwork and oral history. Presently she works part-time for the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation/ Historic Sites Section and from June to October 2021 she joined the team at AARCH, working on the Malone Residential Historic District nomination survey, the Flat Rock Camp easement, and other projects. She has absolutely loved her time with AARCH.

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*PRESERVING THE ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITIES OF THE ADIRONDACKS THROUGH EDUCATION, ACTION AND ADVOCACY*

## *OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR BACKBONE*

*31 years ago, a small group of concerned individuals came together to save Camp Santanoni and begin AARCH's broad and effective work across the region. We ended that first year with 150 members.*

*Today, over a 1,500 people — people just like you — are AARCH members. You come from all corners of the Adirondack Park, four countries, and 38 states!*

*Everything we do — advocacy, education, and preservation — is supported primarily by your donations to our Annual Appeal and through membership contributions.* ***Thank you for your continued support.***

JOIN online at **www.aarch.org**. We're available by phone at 518.834.9328 and email at info@aarch.org.

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