





## Off the Top...

“At Cohoes there is a great fall; about a mile above the falls, the river, broad and deep as it is, has been hemmed in by a dam, and a great portion of its waters drawn off by a water-power company. The little town of Cohoes is entirely manufacturing. It is the Lowell of New York. Here are the great Harmony Cotton-Mills; and here, also, are some twenty-five woollen-mills, besides paper-factories and other industries. The falls of Cohoes are quite close to the Harmony Mills; and a capital view can be obtained of them, either from the bank in the rear of one of the mills, or from an island in the river, at some distance below. Very much depends upon the season of the year as regards the impression which the falls make upon the mind of a traveller. In the dry season there is but little water, and hence the upper part of the falls appears like a series of grand rapids. In the early summer there is one tremendous descent of water, falling over seventy feet. The banks on either side are high and shaly, crowned generally with dark pines at the summit, and showing, below, a diagonal stratification, as if they had been upheaved.”

This is an excerpt from an 1872 book called *Picturesque America*. This book was issued as the American Centennial approached and it was an early attempt to give readers an understanding of the size and beauty of America. Most people reading this newsletter are probably local (or were local) to Cohoes. When was the last time each of us has visited the Falls for the sake of seeing the Falls? A secretary in my building was coerced into taking her daughter to see the Falls. Neither of these Troy residents had seen them. The SCHS recently had a group from Diamond Ridge tour the Visitor's Center. June and Walter, two of our devoted members, convinced the group to take the time to swing by the Falls - they were thrilled. Some of them had never seen the Falls and some had not seen them in years. When was your last time?

Go ahead, make a visit. Better yet, stop by the Cohoes Visitor's Center and pick up one of our tour maps that include the area of the Falls (Harmony Mills Historic District or the Erie Canal in Cohoes) and make a morning or afternoon of it. Don't forget to see the rededicated Col. Robert Craner Veteran's Memorial Park while you are in that area. As the summer approaches we are all making plans to get away and see things, yet we often overlook what is in our own backyard. So find the overlook to the Cohoes Falls and see what we do have. Enjoy your summer!

Paul D. Dunleavy  
President

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Cohoes High School Art Show



On Saturday May 6, SCHS hosted an opening reception for a show of artwork by Cohoes High School students. The work included drawings, paintings in watercolor, acrylic and oil, mosaics, computer graphics, sculptures and calligraphy.

The show was up through the month of May. This is the fourth year that SCHS has sponsored this event.



*A group of student artists at the show opening with teacher JoAnn Johnson. From left: Jabreel Smith, JoAnn Johnson, Keri Bushey, Chelsey Sturtevant, Dan Pertierra.*



*Melissa Salway with her artwork.*

## Cohoes Recalls a Hero – Remembering Col. Robert R. Craner

This spring, the Cohoes Remembers Veterans Committee sponsored several events to honor the memory of Cohoesier Col. Robert R. Craner, a Vietnam veteran who was held for five years as a prisoner of war. Among the events was a commemorative dinner on March 23 for “Robert Craner Day” which marked the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the day Craner was welcomed by the citizens of Cohoes following his release from captivity. On the same day this year a retrospective exhibit chronicling Robert Craner’s life was opened by SCHS at the Visitor’s Center. The collection of photographs and newspaper articles was up through early May, and there are plans for an additional showing in the fall.



*A panel from the Robert Craner retrospective with photographs and newspaper articles from Robert Craner’s homecoming to Cohoes on March 23, 1973. Other panels show Robert Craner’s early years in Cohoes, his days as a pilot, and later years as a military attaché.*

On May 20, Craner Park, located a block from Craner’s boyhood home on Church Street, was rededicated as Col. Robert R. Craner Veterans Memorial Park. The park, formerly Devlin Street Park, was originally renamed for Craner on Memorial Day 1974; its new name now honors Craner and all Cohoes veterans. New additions to the park include a group of flagpoles, each bearing a flag of one of the armed services, a wall, park sign, paved plaza and pillars at the northern entrance of the park, a refurbished stone monument, and an interpretive sign telling Craner’s life story.

Among the participants in the park dedication ceremony were several members of the Craner family, veterans who served with Colonel Craner,

and local dignitaries. Events at the dedication included the landing of a Black Hawk helicopter, ceremonial flag-raising, parade of Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard and Albany mounted police, and the unveiling of the interpretive sign.



*A group stands with the Craner interpretive sign on the day of the park dedication. Some in the photograph are MISTYs, an elite group of pilots who flew some of the most dangerous missions during the Vietnam War. Craner, a skilled pilot, was also a MISTY. First from left is Don Jones. Second from left is Guy Gruters, who was a prisoner of war with Craner. Garret Van Ripper is third from left and Ray Bevivino is on the right. Also in the photograph are Robert Craner’s son Lorne and daughter Charlys (fourth and fifth from left).*

*The sign was sponsored by the Cohoes Remembers Veterans Committee and designed by Paul Dunleavy, Tor Shekerjian, and Daniele Cherniak.*

## Tours of Cohoes and the Visitor’s Center for Niskayuna and Diamond Ridge Seniors

On Saturday April 1, SCHS offered a guided tour of Cohoes to a group of residents of a retirement community in Niskayuna. The group started with a tour of the Visitor’s Center and a viewing of the film “A Day in the Life of Cohoes.” They took a tour of the city’s sites led by Bernie Ouimet. Highlights included the Harmony Mills District, the Falls, sites of the Erie Canal, and the city’s historic downtown, all accompanied by a vivid narrative of Cohoes’ history and stories of the many immigrant groups that have given the city its character.

On May 9, residents of the Diamond Ridge retirement community visited the Cohoes Visitor’s Center, and enjoyed the permanent exhibits, film and the Cohoes High School art show on display. They also visited the Cohoes Falls and were thrilled to see this natural wonder enhanced by recent rains.