



## ***March 2025***

*~Carol Schweizer*

The February program, presented by member Alan Maddaus, was about the crash of a B 47 jet in the High Peaks of the Adirondacks. It was quite a surprise that we had several guests from beyond Galway—Melrose, Rock City Falls, Ballston Lake, Gloversville and Broadalbin! They were all very interested in hearing Alan’s program. It was an interesting presentation, and while it was technical, it was easy to understand. Kudos to Julie Hoxsie who provides our publicity.

There have been many accolades to Theresa Ferguson and her February article about “Winter Memories” from around 1934. Alan Maddaus was inspired by Theresa, and possibly our request for members to write of memories from the past. In this newsletter, Alan shares a story he wrote many years ago about a winter experience he will always remember.

The March program will be presented by Charlene DuBuque, Education Director at Saratoga County Historic Center. “Passing the Time in Victorian Saratoga County” is about social activities, entertainment, fashion, soirees, fairs, church socials, all that shaped leisure time then and influenced how we spend our free time today. Hope you can join us on Monday, March 3 at 7:00 pm at Galway Town Hall.

## ***Adventures in Winter Driving***

*~Alan Maddaus*

Inspired by Theresa Ferguson’s article: **Winter Memories**, in the Galway Preservation Society’s February Newsletter, I located in my files the story **Adventures in Winter Driving** that I had written 20 years ago but never submitted. It tells the story of my late-night encounter with a stranded motorist on Jockey Street during a February, 1965 winter storm that brought high winds and heavy snowfall to the Galway area. It has a happy ending – I was able to drive the man to the vicinity of his home and return to mine on East Street safely – and the memory of companionship under adverse conditions will remain with me forever.

### Adventures in Winter Driving

February, 1965, a winter storm dumps 18 inches of snow in 12 hours.

Snowplows keep the roads open until late evening, when increasing west winds create blizzard conditions

I depart for Galway at midnight from my girlfriend's home in Burnt Hills.

As she kisses me goodnight, Barbara murmurs, "Don't do anything stupid, if conditions are really bad, come back and stay overnight"

Lake Hill and Stage Roads are open to Charlton, Jockey St. is nearly impassible

With my father's two ton, chrome encrusted, '58 Chevy locked in second gear, backend slithering and knobby snow tires churning and whining intermittently due to limited traction, I batter my way through drifts to Holbrook's corner.

One hundred yards short of the intersection with Route 67, a long drifted section slows progress to a crawl, and in the swirling spindrift a white apparition appears.

Approaching the car, it assumes human form under a snow-covered blanket.

Instinctively I lock the door and then open the window a crack. A voice from under the blanket says:

"Sonny, don't bother continuing, my Lincoln is stuck in the drift 100 feet from here, you won't get by and it will take a tow truck to get it out."

"What are you going to do?" "Walk home to Barkersville."

"Hop in, we'll drive back to Charlton and see if we can go north on 147".

The return to Charlton is difficult, the wind has picked up, and more drifting has occurred.

But a chance encounter with a snowplow at Packer Rd. results in a cleared lane to the village.

And while Charlton Rd and Route 147 are heavily snow covered, slow travel is possible. Arriving home at 2:30 am, my father offers my companion a room for the night but is politely turned down. "Thanks, I'm going to sleep in my own bed, even if I have to walk the rest of the way."

"Can you get him there?" "Yes, I think so." "Well, try but if the driving becomes dangerous turn around"

We continue: north on 147, east on 29, then left at Fonda's store on Barkersville road, until a heavily drifted section ends any further progress.

"I'm within easy walking distance from my house", says my companion, opening the door to the icy blast, "Take my blanket in case you need it, and don't bother returning it. Thanks for the lift".

Back on Route 29, five miles from home, the engine overheats. In my final act of resistance to Mother Nature that evening, I kneel in the darkness on the roadway, wind driven snow swirling around me, and pry packed ice and snow out of the Chevy's grill. Airflow to the radiator restored, the engine cools down and I complete my journey.

I never saw my companion again, and have long since forgotten his name.

But his blanket lies neatly folded on the back seat of my car, a pleasant reminder of adventure and the value of companionship in adverse conditions.

Oh, yes, and the girlfriend, Barbara, is my wife of 38 years and the love of my life.

ADM - 7/20/05

## **Post Script**

***Upon reviewing this article 20 years after writing it and 60 years after the event, several thoughts come to mind:***

***First, why didn't my companion stay with his car, which was parked in the middle of the roadway, until help in the form of a town or county snowplow arrived? He could have run the engine intermittently for heat, taking care that the exhaust pipe stayed clear of the drifts to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and remained relatively safe and warm. Beyond that, while I don't know the year of his car, leaving a high-end vehicle - in this case a Lincoln - parked in a roadway snowdrift seems to represent a significant financial risk.***

***Second, did he expect that a motorist would come along and give him a lift toward home? If he did, he was lucky that I happened to be nearby, as in our travels to Galway and beyond the only vehicle we encountered was the snowplow that led us back to Charlton and then went in a direction different from ours. Perhaps his plan B was to knock on the door of a house along the way, if he reached the point of physical exhaustion or hypothermia, and ask for shelter.***

***And finally, with the apparent moderation of snowfall and temperature over the last sixty years-***

***I remember in my childhood that winter night time temperatures were occasionally below zero and snowfall accumulations routinely more than a foot - and bringing in the car battery at night to keep it warm so the car would start in the morning.***

***Combined with more capable and numerous snowplows and passenger vehicles having primarily front wheel drive with improved traction not to mention cellphones for emergency calls would such an incident happen today? Probably not.***

