



HASBROUCK FAMILY  
ASSOCIATION

# JOURNAL

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There are exciting developments at the Abraham House and Locust Lawn! See the specifics in the Our Houses section on page 2.

On the other hand, the news of our finances is certainly not exciting – more like upsetting! With the continuing economic and financial malaise, our investments have declined further since my yearend report. Compared to yearend 2007 (close to the Oct. '07 market peak), as of April 30 our Endowment Fund was down 43%, our General Fund down 39%, and the Anderson Fund down 20%. Our income is also suffering (but much less so, fortunately) from dividend reductions/eliminations in stocks and mutual funds we hold, as well as interest rates now less than 0.5% on our money market fund reserves. At this point it looks as if our income this year will be about 10% below last year. This still leaves us able to operate our activities at a basic level and fund near-term plans for the Abraham House (from the Anderson Fund) but unable to provide much more than minimal support for the Jean House and Locust Lawn at a time when both houses are urgently in need of it (see Our Houses on page 2). While recognizing that many of us are also experiencing shrinking finances, I hope you will maintain or step up your support for HFA with contributions (send checks to our post office box address on the masthead), which you can designate (if you wish) for a specific house or for the Endowment or General Funds. Your support is especially needed in times like these!

Robert W. Hasbrouck, Jr.

## HFA ANNUAL REUNION

Our reunion in New Paltz this year is on Saturday, October 10. It will probably follow the usual format: registration/socializing and service in the French Church in the morning followed by an on-site update at the Jean and Abraham Hasbrouck Houses, lunch at Deyo Hall, a personal visit from Abraham's widow, Maria Deyo, and our annual meeting. An added attraction will be a "Celebration of the Arts" festival on Huguenot Street until 6PM, so you can enjoy its exhibits after our meeting. If you are coming from a distance and want to visit Huguenot Street in some detail, plan to spend at least one night here because the reunion will take up most of Saturday, and you will need at least one additional day on the Street. The houses can be visited only on guided tours and are closed Wednesdays.

If you will be a first-time visitor, contact us to help with your planning. The Hudson River Valley is full of beautiful scenery and tourist attractions; you can easily spend an entire vacation here. And many special events are planned this year to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hudson's discovery of the river in 1609. Anyone planning an overnight stay should make reservations as soon as possible. The reunion is during the foliage season, and accommodations usually sell out early. New Paltz has three good motels: Super 8 (845-255-8865), EconoLodge (845-255-6200), and Days Inn (845-883-7373). You can also get information on bed & breakfast inns in the area from the Chamber of Commerce (845-255-0243), including a Hasbrouck House B&B in nearby Stone Ridge.

HHS is offering a wide variety of other programs and events in the New Paltz area during the year for adults, children and families. You can see the schedule on their website: [www.huguenotstreet.org](http://www.huguenotstreet.org). Take your HFA (or HHS)

membership card whenever you visit to get free house tours and a 10% discount at the museum shop.

## **OUR HOUSES**

### **Abraham Hasbrouck House**

The HHS task force recently formed (with HFA participation) to decide on, integrate and pursue restoration, interpretation and furniture plans is well underway and has already agreed on two critical items:

1) The period of interpretation will be approximately 1760-1775. This is in line with the recommendation (for the mid-1700s) endorsed by HFA under the direction of Kenneth Hasbrouck's son Charles (a preservationist/historian like his father) when he was HFA president in 1986-7.

2) During this period the house was owned and occupied by Daniel Hasbrouck's widow, Wyntje Deyo. (She owned it from Daniel's death in 1759 until her own in 1787.) Reflecting her ownership during this time, the interpretation theme for the house will be the role of women in New Paltz during this period. This will be a new emphasis for Huguenot Street and fits well with the HHS objective of making the visitor experience more attractive and rewarding by providing a variety of interpretation themes at the different houses.

The house will be supplied with period furnishings (some original, some reproductions) for all rooms. A few interior modifications have been suggested and are still being deliberated at this writing.

Restoration work will include exterior and interior painting, plastering, carpentry and rafter stabilization. The goal is to have the restoration complete for the start of the 2010 tour season in May. The house will be closed when work commences, but the detailed planning process is still far from complete. Meanwhile it is open for tours with the same interior setup as last year.

### **Jean Hasbrouck House**

Planning continues for roof replacement next year, which will require a major fundraising effort.

### **Josiah Hasbrouck House (Locust Lawn)**

This site (which includes the Terwilliger House and the Little Wings bird sanctuary) has always been somewhat of an orphan because of its distance from Huguenot Street (3 ½ miles) and its tenuous connection to HHS's primary emphasis on the early development of New Paltz and its Huguenot roots. The long-term goal for the site is for it to be self-supporting. HHS has taken the initial step in this direction with a decision to gradually separate the operation/management of the site from that of Huguenot Street and, with that in mind, ultimately to establish a separate staff and board of directors and to attract interest/support from the local area (Gardiner/Modena).

As the first step to implement this process, HHS has appointed Kevin Van Kleek from its preservation staff as part-time manager for the site. Kevin will provide a valuable incremental resource in identifying and working on the many problems and opportunities applicable to this site. HHS will maintain ownership and direct oversight for the near future, but over the next few years the site will hopefully become more independent and self sufficient.

More immediately, work planned for this year includes exterior painting plus gutter and trim repairs. The house is open for one-hour tours at 2PM on Saturdays and Sundays.

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Dues (\$20/year) for renewal of annual memberships should have been paid by October 1, but there are still quite a few laggards out there. If you don't have L (for Life member) or 09 on your mailing label, you're 8 months delinquent by now. But it's never too late to get yourself up to date! We need your support. If you wish to maintain your membership and feel you cannot afford the dues, please tell us your situation and request a waiver. We don't want to abandon members whose current financial condition makes the dues a hardship.

## **HFA OFFICE**

Our New Paltz office is open by appointment only. But if you are planning a visit to the area, leave a message on our answering machine or send us a fax or e-mail (see numbers on the masthead), and

Meryl will contact you to arrange a visit where you can get information, look at our genealogy files and publications, and check our archives. If you are doing family research, you may also want to see what is available in the HHS Library. Call them (845-255-6738) to make an appointment.

Our office is just half a mile from Huguenot Street in the Pine Office Center at 124 Main Street. It's across the street from the Citgo gas station and far back from the street, but there is a sign at the driveway entrance, ample parking and handicapped access. In the same building is the New Paltz Chamber of Commerce, where you can get information and brochures on a wide range of attractions and accommodations in the area.



### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

The deadline for scholarship applications this year is August 31, which means that awards will apply to the spring semester rather than the fall semester. To be eligible you must be (at that time) a college sophomore, junior or senior and be able to document your Huguenot heritage. If you are interested, contact HHS for detailed requirements and an application: (845)255-1660 or [info@huguenotstreet.org](mailto:info@huguenotstreet.org) (click on Learn on the homepage).

### **HASBROUCK-ELTING FEUD**

Although present-day relations among the old New Paltz families of HHS are friendly, it was not always so. In his "History of New Paltz" (1909), Ralph LeFevre writes of a feud between the Hasbroucks and the Eltings "which formed so important a part of the history of those times." LeFevre describes the dispute as follows:

"The origin of the feud was, as nearly as we can ascertain, the attempt on the part of Noah Elting and Nathaniel LeFevre to obtain from the Colonial government a patent for 3,000 acres of land lying on the south of the Paltz patent. This was strongly opposed by Col. Abraham Hasbrouck (Ed. Note: grandson of the patentee)

and others in behalf of the balance of the Paltz people, alleging that the original Paltz patent covered a part of this tract. Making the fight more bitter, an action was commenced against Noah, who resided where the late Edmund Eltinge lived, and it was claimed that the land he occupied and which his father purchased of Solomon and Louis DuBois, Jr. in 1726, was also a part of the Paltz patent and therefore his title to it was invalid. Finally the matter was settled without coming into court. In 1755 Col. Abraham, together with Louis Bevier of Marbletown and Jacob Hasbrouck, obtained a grant of 2,000 acres of land south of the New Paltz patent and in the neighborhood of the present Clintondale depot." It's not clear whether this was the same land that Noah Elting had sought.

More unpleasantness occurred during the Revolutionary War. In 1775 with the war only recently begun and not going well for the Americans, Roelif J. Elting, a nephew of Noah, was operating a store in what is now called the Bevier-Elting House. Although he had signed the Articles of Association espousing the Revolutionary cause, the adverse military situation and the decline in value of the Continental currency made him pessimistic about the war's outcome; and as a prudent businessman, he decided to stop accepting the Continental currency at his store.



Bevier-Elting House on Huguenot Street where Roelif Elting had a store at the start of the Revolutionary War

The first customer to experience this new policy was Ester Hasbrouck Wurts, a sister of Col. Josiah Hasbrouck and daughter of Capt. Jacob Hasbrouck, Jr., one of the parties to the earlier dispute with Noah Elting. Roelif offered to sell her

the goods on credit. She initially accepted the offer and took her purchases home but later returned them. With the British occupying New York City and Long Island, more customers tried to pay with Continental currency and were rebuffed. With patriotic fervor running high, this refusal was sufficient grounds for arresting Roelif as a British sympathizer and treating him as a prisoner of war for nine years! During this time he was shuttled among a number of locations, including periods of parole in the care of relatives. But he was separated from his family most of the time and was also imprisoned at times. In May 1777 he was ordered to spend time in prison ships moored in Esopus Creek near Kingston, and he was delivered there from New Paltz by none other than Capt. Jacob Hasbrouck, Jr., Ester's father! He was in jail in Kingston in October and was hastily evacuated as the British invaded and burned the town.

In 1784, about a year after the war ended, Roelif was finally freed and allowed to return to his family in New Paltz. It would seem that he paid a grossly excessive penalty for behaving prudently at a time when such prudence was deemed to be unpatriotic.

Legend has it that Roelif's experience produced hostility between the Hasbroucks and Eltings for the next 100 years. That appears to be untrue. There is no evidence that Ester Wurts personally denounced Roelif as a loyalist, and it seems likely a coincidence that his escort to the prison ships was her father. But the most convincing evidence is that in 1797 Roelif's son, Johannes, married Ester's daughter, Jannetje! And checking our genealogy reveals a number of other Hasbrouck-Elting marriages during that 100-year period. In any event, it's just as well that the feud is by now a barely remembered historical curiosity.

### **OLD NEW PALTZ DAY**

After a year's absence Old New Paltz Day was celebrated again on Huguenot Street on May 30. Due to the timing of this newsletter, we are unable to cover it here in any detail except to say that it generally followed the same format as the previous one in 2007. Our thanks to HFA volunteers Richard and Chris Hasbrouck, who welcomed visitors at the Jean House, and

Frances Ryder at the Abraham House. We expect to have some pictorial coverage on our website soon as well as the online edition of this newsletter. We'll send an e-mail notice to members when they are available for viewing.



Spinning yarn the old fashioned way at Old New Paltz Day 2007

### **THE EARLIEST HUGUENOTS IN AMERICA**

We usually think about the Huguenot emigration to America as beginning in the mid-1600's, which is when the New Paltz founders came. But the first group of Huguenots already arrived in 1564 – in Florida. They established a fortified settlement near what is now Jacksonville and named it Fort Caroline in honor of their king, Charles IX. The settlement prospered but drew the wrath of the Spanish, who were incensed by this group of heretics living in territory claimed by Spain. In 1565 King Philip II of Spain sent a force led by Admiral Pedro Menendez to wipe out these Protestant heretics. He did just that, massacring most of the settlers in his assault and hanging the survivors under a sign that read, "I do this not as to Frenchmen but as to heretics." A few weeks later he executed more than 300 Huguenot shipwreck survivors near St. Augustine. Thus the first Huguenot settlement in America was short lived and virtually forgotten as a footnote of history. We are fortunate that our own Huguenot settlement in New Paltz encountered a much more friendly reception and that the DuBois Fort never had to serve a military purpose!

## **ANOTHER HASBROUCK GHOST STORY**

When in our newsletter a year ago we referred to possible ghosts on Huguenot Street, we were being facetious. But at the “Behind the Scenes” tour of the newly reopened Jean House, we met Aletta Vett, a lady with first-hand experience in that subject. Here is her story:

“My husband, John, and I were the curators of the Jean Hasbrouck House in 1961. As a matter of fact, we spent our honeymoon night, February 19, 1961, in our apartment in that lovely old house. In the spring of that year I was interviewed by a reporter from the NY Herald Tribune, who was writing about interesting day trips from New York City. At one point, he asked me if there were any ghosts in the house. I easily replied no and quipped that although there were creaks and noises, upon investigation, there was always a “scientific” explanation. Well, I was soon to be taught a lesson I’ll never forget. “It was shortly after that interview that strange, unexplained things started happening. The upstairs lights would be on at odd times of the day and night. It was difficult to put the lights on upstairs. One had to push open a very large ceiling door and latch it open before you could continue to the second floor in order to find the cord that turned on the upstairs lights. I never left the lights on since Mr. Kenneth Hasbrouck, who was the president of the Huguenot Historical Society, was quite strict about that.

“When I started finding the lights on, I became concerned that someone was trying to take an artifact out of the house; but nothing was ever out of place. At one point, I started secretly placing a small piece of tape on the ceiling door to see if anyone was going upstairs, but it was never disturbed.

“In the upstairs section of the house (now called the garret) was a small ante- room, and attached to it was an even smaller eave room. I could never get myself to explore the tiny eave room as it always gave me an uneasy feeling, and I shrugged it off to claustrophobia. The oddest thing though, was that my Great Dane dog, Phoebe, absolutely refused to go into the ante-room. It was my job to make sure the exhibits were clean and in good order. Phoebe would follow me throughout the house while I did my

chores but always stopped dead in her tracks at the entrance to that little room.

“John was a musician and often worked at night, leaving me alone in the house. One night, there was much shuffling about upstairs in the house. It had been happening off and on for weeks, and I passed it off as squirrels; but this particular night it was no squirrel! I gathered up my courage and my very big dog, Phoebe, checking all the locks to make sure the house was secure and started up to the second floor. I figured if someone was up there, Phoebe would know right away. When I got to the main part of the downstairs floor, the noise stopped. Phoebe was unconcerned, and the tape on the ceiling door undisturbed. I returned to my own side of the house for a difficult sleep.

“The following day I had to go upstairs! I just had to! The frightening feeling from the night before would not leave me. Up I went, pushing open the ceiling door and latching it, turning on the lights and finally reaching the landing. Nothing was disturbed, but I was extremely uneasy and for some reason did not want to go into the ante-room. Well, I finally did and started talking out loud. “I don’t know who you are, but you have to stop this stuff. You scare my dog, and you are really starting to scare me. I wish you no harm. Can’t we just get along?” I continued talking in that vein, crying and really feeling uncomfortable. Some minutes later, I started calming down, and the next thing I knew Phoebe was standing next to me in this room she would never go in. Something had changed. I no longer felt frightened, and from that time on I never heard any unusual sounds, no lights on at odd hours, and Phoebe found the ante-room a great place to hang out. I was even able to go easily into the eave room. Whatever it was, we had made our peace.”

That was 49 years ago. As far as we know, the peace has not been disturbed there since Aletta’s experience.

## **AN UNEXPECTED CONNECTION – BUT MORE INFORMATION NEEDED**

HFA President Bob Hasbrouck writes, “Some years ago I received a promotional leaflet from a museum illustrated with items from its collection, including a painting of a ship named *John L. Hasbrouck* (see photo). I was curious about the ship and its namesake but didn’t have time to research it; so I filed it and more or less forgot about it – until I

prepared the article for the last newsletter about Hasbrouck Camp in the Adirondacks and found that the owner's father was John L. Hasbrouck. Was the ship named for him? I was unable to find conclusive proof, but the circumstantial evidence is overwhelming."

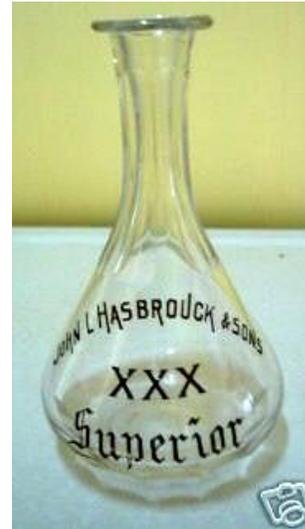


Hudson River steamship *John L. Hasbrouck*  
1865 painting by James Bard

John L. Hasbrouck (1813-1895) grew up on the Hudson River. As mentioned in the last newsletter, his father, David, died when John was ten, and he was raised by his uncle, Abraham J., who operated a Hudson River freight shipping business from Rondout, known also as "the Strand" and now part of Kingston. We have no details of this relationship (if you do, please let us know), but obviously John was exposed to this business. Since Abraham's business passed to his son Jansen, it appears that John did not work long – if at all – in his uncle's firm. We learned that he was a steamboat agent in partnership with John W. Woolsey for one year (1838). It appears that either he or Jansen was the Hasbrouck partner in Terry & Hasbrouck, Rondout steamboat agents from 1834 to mid-1836 (after which Jansen is listed as the sole agent). The Hasbrouck-Woolsey partnership also took over the Terry & Hasbrouck store at Rondout Landing.

We know that John was active in other areas as well. Around 1833 he married Mary Tremper, whose family was also very active in Hudson River shipping. Between 1834 and 1855 John and Mary had seven sons and three daughters. The 1850 census for New York City lists him as a grocer living in lower Manhattan, and in other references he is described as a merchant. From the whiskey bottle pictured in the last newsletter we know that from 1837 he was in

the liquor business and that at least some of his sons later participated in it. We found addresses for the firm in lower Manhattan between 1880 and 1915, indicating that the firm (which at some point included a distillery) lasted at least twenty years beyond John's death.



Liquor bottle from John L. Hasbrouck's distillery

His several business interests made him wealthy, as indicated by his residence in Manhattan and his summer home (see photo) on a different Manhattan Island in the Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence River near Alexandria Bay, NY. A contemporary description of the Thousand Islands described Manhattan as "the most elegant among the most beautiful" of the islands. Perhaps it was this idyllic retreat which inspired his son Frederick to build the Hasbrouck Camp on Raquette Lake (see February newsletter).

It seems a safe assumption that John continued his involvement with Hudson River shipping during this time, and it is likely that his business in New York City consisted mainly of shipping supplies up the Hudson to upriver merchants. We learned that in 1861 he teamed with steamboat captains John Ketchum and Absalom Anderson to commission the building of a new paddlewheel steamship, the *Mary Powell*, which ultimately attained legendary status along the river, where it operated for 56 years. Then on May 1, 1864 the same trio founded Rondout and New York Steam Transportation, Inc. That same year the steamship *John L. Hasbrouck* was launched. Although we could find no proof, there is virtually no

doubt that this firm was responsible for the ship and its name.

The *John L. Hasbrouck* had a sister ship, the *Daniel S. Miller*, launched two years earlier. Both were steamships powered by beam engines geared to a propeller – the first engines of this type ever built. The *John L.* was 149 feet long and rated at 16 knots, considered a fast speed in the earlier years of its service. Both ships were used as passenger and freight carriers (sometimes towing barges with either type of load) on the Hudson River between New York City and various river towns as far north as Hudson.



John L. Hasbrouck's summer home on Manhattan Island in the Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence River

It would appear that John's association with his namesake ship was relatively brief. Both the *Miller* and the *John L.* were sold in 1867 to Doughty, Cornell & Co. and then in 1875 to the Poughkeepsie Transportation Co.

The *John L. Hasbrouck* was a familiar sight on the Hudson River, where it operated from 1864 to 1896. We found a newspaper article from March 1872 describing a trip up the river in which the ship fought its way through the winter ice and was hailed by a cheering throng when it reached its destination in Poughkeepsie. However, it was winter ice that ultimately brought the *John L.* to an untimely end. In 1896 it was approaching the New Hamburg dock and was only 500 feet away when the ice pushed it onto a reef, which tore several holes in its hull. It filled with water in twenty minutes and listed 45 degrees onto its starboard side. In the next several days 5,000 people visited the wreck, attracted by the spectacle of a large ship high on the rocks; and

souvenir hunters stripped the nickel numbers from the doors, light fixtures from the cabins, and anything portable, before public visits were halted. It was a sad end for a proud ship bearing our family name. But the image of its better times survives in the painting pictured here.

We have covered some gaps in our knowledge about John's life with reasonable assumptions. But if you can fill any of them with facts, please let us know. Our thanks go to Donna Hasbrouck, whose internet research provided valuable information for this article.

### **A HASBROUCK'S INVOLVEMENT IN A PRESIDENTIAL COVERUP**

The year was 1893, and – strangely like now – the nation was engulfed in an economic and financial crisis. The country was on a gold standard, whose integrity was endangered by a popular movement which succeeded (through the Sherman Silver Purchase Act) in monetizing silver on an equal basis with gold in backing the currency. Foreign governments and traders reacted by buying the Treasury's gold with silver, quickly depleting the nation's gold reserves and leading to bank failures, unemployment and growing panic. President Grover Cleveland, determined to defend the gold standard and restore financial stability, called a special meeting of Congress (which was in summer recess) on August 7 with the objective of repealing the Sherman Act, the primary cause of the trouble.

On June 18 Cleveland had his personal physician, Dr. R. M. O'Reilly, examine a rough spot on the roof of his mouth. It turned out to be cancerous (he was a regular cigar smoker). His trusted medical advisers recommended immediate removal. But that prospect created a serious political problem. With the nation in turmoil and the President considered critical to its solution, it was feared that news of his being out of action with possibly life-threatening cancer would very likely produce a national panic. A plan was hatched to keep the removal operation and the President's subsequent period of recuperation a secret from all except the attending physicians and a few trusted government officials.

Arrangements were made to perform the operation on *Oneida*, the yacht of Cleveland's friend, Commodore Elias Benedict. The President's medical advisers, Drs. O'Reilly and surgeon James

Bryant, organized a team including a famous surgeon, Dr. W. W. Weeks of Philadelphia, and a skilled dentist, Dr. Ferdinand Hasbrouck of New York. Dr. Hasbrouck was an expert in the relatively new use of nitrous oxide (popularly known as laughing gas) as an anesthetic. Because of President Cleveland's physical condition (overweight, gout, and impaired cardiovascular system) the use of heavy anesthetics was dangerous and needed to be minimized. Nitrous oxide is a light anesthetic, which was preferable for the early part of the operation.

*Oneida* docked on New York City's East River on June 30, and the President came aboard after dark with his Secretary of War, Daniel Lamont. They had left Washington without informing the press corps. The White House staff was told that he was going to spend the July 4 holiday at Gray Gables, his summer home on Buzzards Bay near Cape Cod in Massachusetts.



Artist rendering of President Cleveland's secret operation shows Dr. Hasbrouck (left center) checking the effectiveness of the anesthetic while Dr. Bryant prepares to operate and Dr. Keen (right) readies for his role

The next morning the yacht moved up the East River into Long Island Sound, beginning its trip to Buzzards Bay, and the operation began around noon. Dr. Hasbrouck administered the nitrous oxide; and when it was effective, he extracted two bicuspids to make room for the surgeons to work. After Dr. Bryant made an elliptical incision around the cancerous area, a stronger anesthetic was required (dangerous though it was) for the removal process; and ether was then substituted by Dr. O'Reilly. Dr.

Hasbrouck's work was now completed, and he asked to be put ashore. His request was refused, both on grounds of secrecy and because of the possibility of hemorrhaging, which would require more nitrous oxide. The cancerous tumor was successfully removed by Drs. Bryant and Keen without any adverse reaction, and President Cleveland was up and walking around the next day. But by then Dr. Hasbrouck was becoming increasingly agitated because he was by now 48 hours late for another critical operation. In response to his pleas, the others relented and allowed him to go ashore at New London, CT. *Oneida* continued on to Buzzards Bay as President Cleveland steadily regained strength. On July 5 he arrived at Gray Gables to begin his recuperation, and the press – clamoring for news after four days of silence about the President – was told that he had been treated for two ulcerated teeth and a recurrence of his rheumatism.

The coverup had apparently worked. President Cleveland's cancerous tumor was successfully removed without arousing public concern over his condition, and the pace of his recovery gave cause for optimism that he would be ready for the strain of bending Congress to his will at the special session beginning August 7. But, as it turned out, this affair – and Dr. Hasbrouck's involvement in it – were far from finished! Due to space restrictions we'll have to conclude this story in our next edition.

(Most of the information for this article came from a description in the October 1957 edition of *American Heritage* magazine and a similar description under "Health of Presidents" on the Internet Archive website. And we owe thanks to Donna Hasbrouck, who turned up additional information on the internet, including the picture of the operation.)

### **WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS:**

Patricia Anderson, Ridgefield, WA  
Randy Gilmore, Birdseye, IN  
Craig Hasbrouck, Point Pleasant, NJ  
Lawrence Hasbrouck, Briarcliff Manor, NY  
Wesley Masten, Lauderdale Lakes, FL