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Skaneateles Historical Society to receive OHA medal
Award is highest honor given by Onondaga Historical Association

by Jason Emerson

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Due to its ongoing work in restoring the Creamery museum and in expanding its public programming, the Skaneateles Historical Society in September will be honored by the Onondaga Historical Association with the group's most prestigious award, the OHA Medal.

The decision was made in recognition of the Skaneateles Historical Society's "long, outstanding and meritorious service to local history, and to the preservation and interpretation of history of Onondaga County," wrote Gregg A. Tripoli, OHA executive director, in his letter of notification to the SHS.

In its award citation, the OHA specifically named the historical society's "ongoing project" to renovate and expand the Creamery museum, which includes the creation of the new Boat and Transportation Museum that houses vintage watercraft built by Skaneateles boat companies. The citation also mentions the museum's artifacts related to the area's farming, manufacturing, transportation, commerce, art and architecture, as well as the maintenance of an online archive for genealogical research.

"It's very exciting," said SHS Director Laurie Winship about the award. "It'll be nice to get that kind of recognition in a wider community outside of Skaneateles, to make more people aware of all the hard work the board and the steering committee has done since 2007."

Winship said the award was not only exciting, but also shocking: the SHS did not apply for the award and did not even know anything about it until the notification came in the mail.

The OHA Medal is a two-sided, bronze piece originally struck in 1894 to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the founding of Onondaga County. The face of the medal portrays the icons of the Haudenosaunee Indian Nation, and the reverse is a map of portions of the old military tract.

The medal is awarded periodically to an individual, a company or an organization by action of the OHA Board of Directors in recognition of either a specific, extraordinary and distinguished project, or a lifetime of service to the cause of preserving and interpreting the history of the region. It has been given just 19 times since its inception in 1945, according to the OHA.

Presentation of the OHA Medal will be held at a breakfast event from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 22, at the Genesee Grand Hotel's Tiffany Ballroom.

Winship and SHS Board President Karlene Miller will attend the reception to accept the award, Winship said.

The public is invited to attend the event as well. Single tickets cost \$50, patron tickets \$125, and tables of 10 can be reserved for \$400. Reservations include a full breakfast and are available by contacting Karen Cooney at 428-1864 ext. 312.