

FORT LA PRÉSENTATION



*Where History Comes To Life*

Fort La Présentation  
Association  
P.O. Box 1749  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
www.fortlapresentation.net

# Le Courrier de la Fron

Winter 2008

## President's Address to the Annual Dinner Friday, October 26, 2007

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### E-mail Addresses

We ask Fort Association members to provide e-mail addresses so we can send the newsletter and other communications electronically. This economical method allows us to put money toward the Fort and not postage. We guard your personal information.

**We do not sell our membership list!**

### About the Newsletter

The content reflects the interests of the Fort Association and the history related to the Fort's six decades of existence.

### Send Comments To:

Michael Whittaker  
arpent\_blanc@yahoo.ca

### The Remarks of Barbara O'Keefe

We have a great deal to celebrate this evening, and I will get to that shortly, but I would be remiss if I did not mention our challenges and how we are addressing them.

The ExxonMobil-New York State Settlement is not finalized. The world's richest company is still forcing a small, grassroots community organization to divert some of its valuable resources of time, energy and money.

Resources that should be spent reconstructing Fort de la Présentation! The compensation monies and additional land would bring us closer to construction and provide us with much needed space for interpretation and archeological research.

Our lawyer, Marc Gerstman, tells us we are still in the game. We have a major challenge in raising the eight-million dollars necessary to resurrect Fort de La Présentation. We have an endowment fund of \$112,000, with a goal of one-million dollars to make the Fort project sustainable.

Thanks to Senator James Wright we are working on a \$250,000 grant from the Dormitory Authority. We are investigating additional grants and other funding sources and have been reaching out to other successful grassroots groups and historic institutions as well as State officials and agencies.

Our feasibility study has been done. The design phase of our project with Foit-Albert Associates has been completed. Currently we are conducting a

membership campaign and are in the process of developing strategic and business plans.

The cleanup of Lighthouse Point has contributed to solving the 150 year old mystery of where the Fort was actually located. An archeological team from the NYS Museum uncovered four feet of landfill from the City's industrial past to reveal Fort de La Présentation's chapel floor.

We have applied to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places as an archeological site. If successful, the designation will open up additional funding sources.

Next year we will have permanent signage and a limestone kiosk interpreting the history of Fort de La Présentation/Fort Oswegatchie from 1749 through 1813. This will hopefully allow us to be placed on the Heritage Trail.

The planning for the 2010 Fort de La Présentation/Fort Levis final signature event for the NYS French and Indian War 250th Anniversary Commemoration has begun. We are the only designated site without a physical presence. It is our sincere hope to complete the reconstructed fort in time for the commemoration of the last major battle of the War in 2010.

This year's event, at Fort William Henry in Lake George, drew approximately 23,000 spectators with 1,200 reenactors participating. The reenactment brought an estimated 2.5-million dollars into that community. We want those dollars for our community.

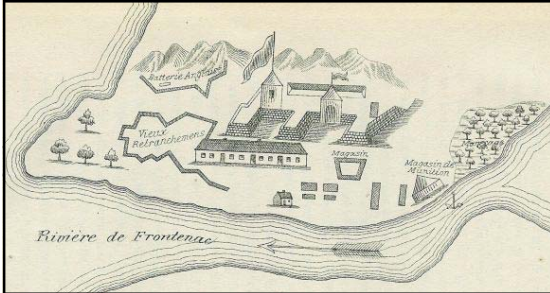
(cont'd on page 7)

## French Settlement on the St. Lawrence River

Fort La Présentation was not the first or only French outpost on the St. Lawrence River above Montreal. Just across the river, in what is now Ontario, the French built a supply depot in 1673.

La Galette was established where the community of Johnstown stands today. This waypoint on the river provided logistical support to the strategically located Fort Frontenac. La Galette and its powder magazine were eventually fortified, but the post was captured by the British when they invested Fort de Lévis nearly 90 years later.

Fort Frontenac, originally called Fort Catarqui, was a trading post where Lake Ontario enters St. Lawrence at the mouth of the Catarqui River. In July 1673, while Governor Frontenac was talking peace with the Iroquois, the log and stone fort was taking shape for a two-fold purpose; protect Montreal (then known as Ville-Marie) and nurture the fur trade around the Great Lakes and in the Ohio Valley. Fifteen years later, after the Iroquois besieged the fort, it was ordered abandoned and burned by then Governor Dennonville.



When Frontenac returned as Governor in 1695, the fort was rebuilt entirely of limestone. Fort Frontenac remained in French hands until British forces under Colonel John Bradstreet captured it in August 1758 during the French and Indian War.

To reinforce the defenses of New France, a star-shaped fort and boatyard were constructed at Point-au-Baril (Maitland, Ontario) in 1758. Here the ill-fated, 10-gun barks *Outaouaise* and *Iroquoise* were built to keep the British from the descending the river. A year later, the post was abandoned and destroyed to prohibit the British from using the site.

(Cont'd on page 3)

## Treaty of Oswegatchie 1760

In early 1760, France's native allies knew British forces were on their way to certain victory. Representatives of the Roman Catholic Iroquois living on the *réductions* (reservations) of Oswegatchie, Kanesatake and Kahnawake sought assurances in February 1760 that the Six Nations would not attack them in the last stages of the French and Indian War.

A proclamation issued April 26, 1760 by General Jeffery Amherst declared, "His Majesty has not sent me to deprive any of you of your Lands or Property," and promising, in return for their support, their "just rights," would be maintained, including their hunting territories.



When Amherst's army reached La Présentation and Fort de Lévis in mid-August, William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, met delegates from the "Seven Confederate Nations of Canada." Johnson promised to confirm their possession of their lands and their freedom of religion. In return for a promise not to be treated as enemies of Britain, France's former allies agreed to be neutral for the remainder of the war.

At Kahnawake in September 1760, the terms of the Treaty of Oswegatchie were confirmed. A letter to the British prime minister from Johnson said the Indians "ratified a treaty with us." In 1994, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the Treaty of Oswegatchie.

Based on an article by Cornelius J. Jaenen in the Canadian Encyclopedia. See [thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0010705](http://thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0010705)

## French Settlement (cont'd)

In the summer of 1760, as General Amherst's forces moved down the St. Lawrence against Montreal, both barks fell to British gunboats and went into British service. The *Iroquoise* was captured in mid-August off the then-abandoned Fort La Présentation.

The French and Canadiens had withdrawn three miles downstream to Isle Royale (Chimney Island) and built Fort de Lévis in an attempt to prevent the British descent on Montreal. The fort fell after a three-day battle in late August 1760, but only after the defending forces had exhausted their gunpowder.

The British rebuilt the fort under a new name, Fort William-Augustus (the remains of which were obliterated during Seaway construction in the 1950s).

They also refurbished La Présentation. Renamed Fort Oswegatchie, it was finally ceded to the United States in 1796.

### Related notes:

The native population of Fort La Présentation is cited as 3,000. However, this does not mean such a large community clustered immediately outside the walls. Abbé Picquet's parish also included La Galette, Sugatzo, Ile à Galop, and Ile Picquet.

Abbé Picquet was the founder of La Présentation, but he did not "build" the Fort. This work was under the supervision of the King's Engineer, Étienne Robbert de la Morandière.

The name La Galette was inspired by a low-lying island just off-shore. A galette is thin buck-wheat pancake.

Point-au-Baril was restored and briefly held by the British. The remnants were ultimately submerged by successive efforts to make the St. Lawrence fully navigable.

The stabilized remains of the Fort Frontenac are located on the east side of downtown Kingston, Ontario.

The *Iroquoise*, renamed *Anson* by the British, was wrecked in 1761 off Carleton Island at the head of the St. Lawrence River. The wreck has been explored and documented. See [http://home.netcom.com/~srhf/SRHF\\_REPORT.html](http://home.netcom.com/~srhf/SRHF_REPORT.html)

### **The Aboriginal History of the St. Lawrence River**

*Kaniatarowanenneh*: River of the Iroquois

[www.wampumchronicles.com/kaniatarowanenneh.html](http://www.wampumchronicles.com/kaniatarowanenneh.html)

## Fort Association Members

In August 2007, the Fort Association membership campaign began in the Ogdensburg area. There are now more than 177 members, and we look forward to welcoming many more new members.

80th Foot Gage's Light Brigade, David Austin  
Pauline Amo  
Laura Ashley  
Jack Backus  
Tim & Shannon Baker  
Steve & Barb Barlow  
Patricia Barr  
William Barr  
Maurice & Lucinda Barry  
Basta's Flower Shop, Joe & Jane Basta  
R. Timothy & Patricia Bell  
Sylvia Berbrich  
Bertrand's Construction, Bernie & Lera Bertrand  
Ada Blair  
Colin & Avery Brabant  
Herbert Brian  
Eric Brunet  
William Brunet  
Bill & Marianne Bruyere  
Shirley & Bob Burns  
Sam Burns  
Dave & Ellen Bush  
Louisa Calcaterra  
Holly Capuro  
Mary Ann Caufield  
James & Allison Chadwick  
Sheila Cipriani  
Christopher Clegg  
Joseph Cosentino  
Timothy Cryderman  
Doug Cubbison  
Philip & Phyllis Dailey  
Hector Demers  
Mr. & Mrs. Denny  
Joe, Marcia Derrigo & Family  
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Dodds  
Mary & Robert Dolan  
Terri Doucette  
Robert Downey  
Anna & Thomas Dupré  
Warren & Dorothy Durand  
Dennis Egburtson  
Francis Fitzgerald  
Matthew Flynn  
Michael Forrest  
David Franz  
Randall & Anne Frick  
Andrew Fritz  
Teresa Gage  
Peter, Sharen Gendebien & Family  
Linda Griffin  
Kay & Tom Hannan  
Rollin Hanson  
Fred Hanss  
Bruce & Judy Harland  
Karen & Lee Heiss  
Mary & Bill Herzog & Family  
Ron Holla  
John & Elaine Hollis  
Don & Margaret Hooper  
Marsha Hough  
Michael & Nancy Hubschmitt

(Cont'd on page 8)

## Annual Dinner Awards Presentation



Barb O'Keefe (right) reads the citation on the Persis Yates Boyesen Award for outstanding contribution toward the historically accurate reconstruction and ongoing presence of Fort La Présentation. Plaques were presented to DEC employees (left to right) Lincoln Fancher, Darrell Sweredoski, Gregg Townsend and Sandra LeBarron.



Michael Whittaker presented Harry Needham (left) with the David L. Dickinson Annual Volunteer Award for his outstanding commitment of time and effort dedicated to Fort La Présentation.

## Archaeologists Find Fort Site



Archaeologists from the New York State Museum were on Lighthouse Point in October 2007 to pinpoint the remains of Fort de la Présentation.

The researchers, led by Ogdensburg native Aaron Gore, uncovered one of three of the fort's bastions indicated in an earlier search with ground-penetrating radar. The fourth bastion was not found.

A cobblestone floor was uncovered in the northeast bastion suggesting this was the chapel as shown on period drawings. Gun flints and a musket ball were found on this floor.

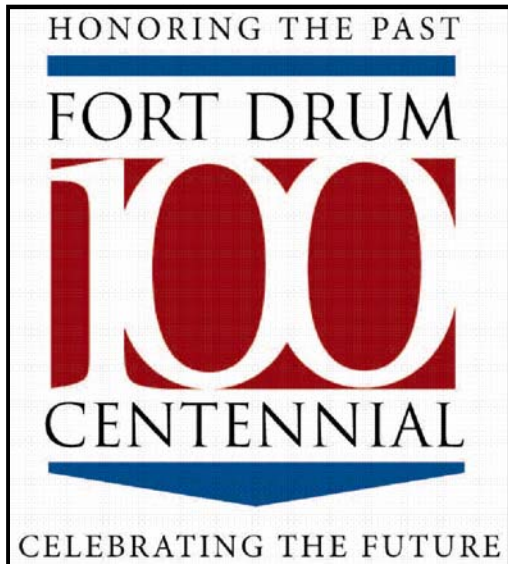
The dig confirmed the location of the Fort and put to rest the question of its exact location.

Although up to six feet of accumulated overburden was removed by heavy equipment, the work undertaken in the Fall barely scratched the surface.

Decades more detailed archaeological investigation lies ahead as researchers have the opportunity to investigate the remains of Fort La Présentation.

The location of the original shoreline remains undiscovered.

Photos courtesy of the Ogdensburg Journal



## The First Army at Fort Drum

In the winter of 1756, the French decided upon an aggressive raid to interdict the British supply line between Albany and Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario. A Marine Officer, Chaussegros de Lery, was chosen to lead.

He gathered a small, but formidable force of French Marines, Canadiens, and Native American Warriors at Fort La Présentation in March 1756, and between March 13-27, 1756 they trekked to Fort Bull on the Mohawk River (near modern day Rome).

The winter raid was audacious. On snowshoes, in severe cold and heavy snow, they pulled sledges containing supplies along the Indian River from Fort La Présentation, crossed the modern-day Fort Drum, then followed the Black River to Fort Bull.

In a sharp action, de Lery's command destroyed Fort Bull, and caused a supply crisis at Fort Oswego by destroying numerous provisions intended for this fort. De Lery's force successfully returned via Lake Ontario to Fort La Présentation.

This was the first use by a European military force of what is today Fort Drum. This type of courageous, light infantry raid is representative of the type of mission the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division employs today.

## WAR TRAILS SOUTH A FORT DRUM CENTENNIAL EVENT

**The French de Lery Raid on Fort Bull  
March 1756**

**The weekend of March 15-16, 2008 a number of narrated commemorative events are planned for reenactors and the public in Ogdensburg and at Fort Drum.**

**1200, Saturday, March 15** - Lighthouse Point, Ogdensburg. The French, Canadiens and Natives will reenact the council persuading the Natives to join the raid. The raiding party will head off on snowshoes and with sledges around the peninsula

**1230, Saturday, March 15** - Lighthouse Point, Ogdensburg. Reenactment of the skirmish outside Fort Bull. The French, Canadien and Native raiding party will engage British pickets in a to-and-fro action from which the British retreat.

**1100, Sunday, March 16** - Clark Hall/Fort Drum Heritage Center, Fort Drum. The French, Canadien and Native raiding party will traverse the Fort Drum portage on snowshoes. British forces will establish a picket, relieve sentries and build warming fires.

**1200, Sunday, March 16** - Fort Drum Heritage Center, Fort Drum. The French, Canadien and Native raiding party will scout the British position and launch their attack. Following a see-saw action the British will be defeated and flee pursued by the raiding party. Warm refreshments and washrooms will be available at the Heritage Center following the skirmishing.

**1300, Sunday, March 16** - Fort Drum Heritage Center, Fort Drum. At the Fort Drum Museum, the Fort La Présentation Association opens a temporary exhibit on the history of Fort La Présentation. Jack Vargo will present a lecture on the Fort Bull Raid.

### **For more information, please contact:**

Douglas R. Cubbison, Command Historian  
10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)  
Building P-10000 (Hays Hall)  
10th Mountain Division Drive  
Fort Drum, NY 13602-5052  
(315) 772-0084 / Fax (315) 772-3248  
[Douglas.Cubbison1@us.army.mil](mailto:Douglas.Cubbison1@us.army.mil)

## The Battle of Ogdensburg, February 1813

British and Canadian troops stationed in Prescott, Ontario (then Upper Canada) celebrated George Washington's birthday February 22, 1813 by attacking Ogdensburg.

They'd have likely stayed on their side of the St. Lawrence, except for shopping at David Parrish's store. However, a Southern hothead, Captain Benjamin Forsyth had come to town in August 1812 with a company of the 1<sup>st</sup> US Rifles to monitor enemy movements on and along the river.

Forsyth, who had no love for anything British, had a very proactive understanding of monitoring the other side. His Riflemen burned the Crown storehouse at Gananoque in September 1812. In February 1813, Forsyth heard of an incursion from the Canadian side into New York and 53 American prisoners carried back to Elizabethtown (Brockville). Fearing they may be executed, he launched an attack from Morristown the night of Feb. 7.

In the early hours of Feb. 8, there was no resistance. The jail was surrounded and all prisoners freed, save one Canadian awaiting the gallows. Forsyth took several prominent Canadians as prisoners to Ogdensburg and liberated 134 muskets, 20 rifles, two casks of ammunition and other supplies.

Not long after the Rifle Company was safe in Ogdensburg, a couple of adventurous types slipped back across the river ice and stole horses from a Canadian farmer.

Col. "Red George" MacDonnell had no love for anything Forsyth, but when his emissaries, sent under a flag of truce to retrieve the animals, were sent back with only a message from Forsyth, the die was cast. Forsyth informed MacDonnell he would gladly meet him on the ice at the earliest opportunity, and that day came Feb. 22.

That day 800 British and Canadian troops mustered on the ice, but instead of the customary drill the American were accustomed to seeing, they divided into two forces and headed toward the American shore. Forsyth, who knew of the drilling, was slow to react.

MacDonnell led 500 men toward the town. Captain Jenkins took 300 toward Lighthouse Point and the

## Reenactment of The Battle of Ogdensburg

Lighthouse Point  
February 16-17, 2008

**Commemorated for more than 20 years by  
reenactors from the US and Canada.**

**Reenacted battles at 1:30 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday.**

unrestored Fort Presentation, as the Americans then called it. Jenkins force was shattered by artillery fire, Jenkins himself severely wounded and they withdrew through the deep snow to the Canadian side. They were met by Bishop MacDonnell who organized the fit troops into units and sent them to join MacDonnell's attack.

At the corner of Caroline and Washington Streets in the thinly defended village, MacDonnell's force formed into two wings to sweep back the opposing troops. The Americans were forced to yield on the east bank of the Oswegatchie. Then, with captured American artillery, the British and Canadians compelled Forsyth to abandon his position across the river on Lighthouse Point.

In less than an hour, the Battle of Ogdensburg was over. Forsyth and his men withdrew toward Sackets Harbor. Eleven artillery pieces were captured along with all American ordnance, marine, commissariat and quartermaster-general's stores. MacDonnell's troops burned the armed schooners *Dolphin* and *Niagara*, two gunboats and the barracks. Seventy prisoners, including four officers, were taken back to Canada.

Not long after the battle, the British and Canadians returned to Ogdensburg to patronize Mr. Parrish's store and to have tea with Mrs. Parrish.

An overview of the War of 1812 along the St. Lawrence can be found online at [http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/English/exhibits/1812/kingston\\_battles.htm](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/English/exhibits/1812/kingston_battles.htm)

**The Official War of 1812 Bicentennial Website  
Celebrating 200 Years of Peace**

[www.visit1812.com](http://www.visit1812.com)

## President's Address (cont'd)

Now for the celebration part! The Fort Association is very pleased we will be working with the City of Ogdensburg to get the land, once owned by Bernier and Carr, cleaned up and transferred to the Association. We believe using the parcel to develop a replica of the original Oswegatchie Indian Village will help make the proposed Fort de la Présentation project an even more economically-viable tourism attraction that will draw visitors to our community.

This is an example of the partnership between the City and the Association to use our rich history and culture to help reinvigorate our economy, bring new life to our waterfront, and visitors to our community. We are fortunate to have a dedicated association who share their time and talents to bring the reconstruction project closer to fruition.

The Fort Association owns 22 acres free of petroleum contamination on Lighthouse Point adjacent to the original fort site. The City currently has our land assessed for one-million dollars and we do not owe a cent on the property.

In 2000 many people thought we were attempting the impossible by trying to force ExxonMobil, one of the world largest corporations, to clean up the Fort site; however our long battle is over. The Fort Association is an example of what a committed grass roots organization can accomplish.

There is an individual at the head table who told me in the beginning he did not believe we could accomplish our task. The key to our success was that we did not do it alone, but by forging a partnership. I would like to share an analogy this former disbeliever shared with me.

The pinky represents the Fort Association. By itself it is weak, especially when compared to the resources of a corporate giant. But like David against Goliath, we had a mission and would not give up.

Add to that (the second finger) our elected officials who from the beginning showed faith in our vision. Congressman McHugh, Senator Wright, Assembly Woman Scozzafava and Assemblyman Aubertine provided the resources necessary to investigate and cleanup the petroleum on Lighthouse Point.

The City of Ogdensburg pitched in to administer grants for us. In addition to their moral and financial support, these individuals have been our voice in Albany to insure the cleanup did occur, and to the extent that met

our needs, which resulted in the pristine waterfront property we have today.

Our environmental consultants are the third finger making us still stronger. One of the first things we had to do was to prove we had a huge problem. Not knowing where to start, Don Hooper suggested talking to Marijean Remington of Atlantic Testing Laboratories (ATL). She agreed to give us a little of her time to meet with Sandra LeBarron, Regional Director for DEC. Well, after seven years she is still here.

ATL is so well respected they worked in consort with the DEC to take samples and collaborate on remedies and approaches. Marijean also found a good lawyer for us who also volunteered to give us a few hours. For more than six years, Judy Drabicki provided our legal strategy which resulted in clean land and the setting of several NYS precedents including ExxonMobil's "voluntary" reimbursement of our attorney and environmental consultant fees without being sued.

The pointer finger is reserved for our honorees - Region 6 NYS DEC\*. I remember my first meeting with the regional director, Sandy LeBarron. I was so nervous I would jeopardize the cleanup by saying or doing the wrong thing. My preconceptions were so wrong. Sandy and her staff walked us through the process, came to Board meetings, and were available for questions and listened to our concerns.

She spoke on our behalf in Albany. Without her efforts to remove the consent order that gave the polluter all the rights, we probably would not be celebrating tonight. The project managers Darrell, Swerdoski Gregg Townsend, and Lincoln Fancher listened to our vision and passion and oversaw the cleanup to meet the association's intended use for the property and worked around our events. State employees are sometimes taken for granted. We want you to know how much we appreciate your dedication.

Finally, the New York Environmental Protection and Spill Compensation Fund was the thumb that provided the money...and the **punch** to get the job done!

Thank you.

\*Sandy LeBarron, Darrell Swerdoski, Gregg Townsend, and Lincoln Fancher winners of the 2007 Persis Yates Boyesen Award for outstanding contribution toward the historically accurate reconstruction and ongoing presence of Fort de la Présentation.

(See awards photographs on page 4.)

Wayne Izzo  
 Dianne & Ernie Jeneault  
 Tom & Caroline Joannette  
 Joseph Johnston  
 Mary Keenan  
 Janet Kelly  
 Joyce Kelso  
 Donald & Beverly Kelso  
 Joseph Kennedy  
 Kimro's Medicine Place, Kim & Rose Demers  
 Kiwanis Club of Ogdensburg  
 Michael & Ann Koscinski  
 Chuck Ladouceur  
 Pat & Sally Ladouceur  
 Candy Lamacchia  
 Sam Lamacchia  
 Ed & Karan LaVamway  
 Bill & Janet Leary  
 Robert Leroux  
 Judy Lesperance  
 Ann Lesperance  
 Harry Luchetti  
 Tom, Pam & Michael Luckie  
 Julie & Patrick Madlin  
 Patricia Mahoney  
 Betty Mallott  
 Anita Mandat  
 Michael Marino  
 Glory Martel  
 Edward & Constance Martin  
 Emerick & Ruth Mazar  
 Anne Mazzotta  
 Brad McAdam  
 Thomas McCullough  
 Landin McDonald  
 Haydin McDonald  
 Kevin McGill  
 Sue McLean  
 Louise McMillan

## Fort Association Membership

Shirley & Jim McNally  
 John J. Miller Jr & Family  
 John & Maureen Missert  
 Stacy Mix  
 Elizabeth Montpelier  
 Robert & Virginia Morrow  
 Mort Backus & Sons, Mort Backus  
 James Mulvey III  
 Dorothy Murphy  
 Msgr John Murphy  
 David & Debbie Murray  
 Harry Needham  
 Bill Nelson  
 North Country Management, LTD  
 Ogdensburg Chamber of Commerce  
 Barb & Jack O'Keefe  
 Daisy O'Keefe  
 Siobhan O'Keefe  
 Ann O'Neil  
 Myrna O'Neil  
 Betty & Paul Oves  
 Thomas Patterson  
 Elizabeth Payne  
 Doris Payne  
 Dan Pearson  
 Sara Perkins  
 Steven Perkins  
 Paul & Donna Pirie  
 Jackie & Marlene Planty  
 Sandra Porter  
 Christine & David Proven  
 Kerin Puccia  
 Barbara Putney  
 Alfred Rapin

Jim Reagen  
 Sheila Rendon  
 Allen & Jane Rishe  
 Thomas Robarge  
 Rhonda Roethel  
 Frank & Barbara Ruggeri  
 Sally Rusaw  
 Laura Russell  
 Judy Ryan  
 Kris & Bill Sammons  
 Marsha Sawyer  
 SeaComm Federal Credit Union  
 Howard Shaw  
 Nelson & Judy Sholette  
 Nancy Siegel  
 Martin & Michelle Snye  
 St. Lawrence Fed. Credit Union  
 Greg Stahl  
 Wayne Storie  
 Swamp Angels  
 Larry Tombolilo  
 Joseph & Marion Tracy  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Trapanese  
 Bill & Keitha Tupper  
 Martha Valley  
 Ron & Lynda Van House  
 Jack & Donna Vargo  
 WalMart, Chris McAfee  
 Waterfowl USA, Dan Skamperle  
 Sue Watson  
 Marilyn Weeks  
 Everett & Lorraine Wells  
 Michael Whittaker  
 Dave & Solange Wiest  
 Arthur Wilson  
 Richard & Cynthia Wilson  
 Michael Woods  
 Jeanne Wright

**Thanks to all !**

**Fort La Présentation Association  
 Box 1749  
 Ogdensburg, NY 13669**

