

EXPRESSING HER OPINIONS

Submitted by Village of Richfield Springs Historian Harriett Geywits

“Why did I come to Richfield Springs?” This was the question asked of a new visitor to the Springs in 1889. The answer to the question was given as follows:

“Because I am a good soldier and always obey the orders of commanding officers. My physician, Dr. J. H. Salisbury of New York, has great faith in the air and waters of this locality. ‘Go to Richfield Springs’ said the doctor ‘and you will get what you need - mountain air, beneficial baths and rest. Stay at the Sprig House and you will have good food, which is absolutely requisite for health.’”

“I came, I have seen, I am convinced. The air is excellent, the bathing a tonic and Mr. Proctor is an ideal host. Thanks to Dickel (Dickel’s Riding Academy brought horses from New York City to Richfield each year for the summer season) there are good saddle horses and as riding is my way of taking exercise, I feel that my summer could not have been cast in a better place.”

“If the local magnates are wise in their generation, they will make paths for pedestrians and will keep the roads in better condition. This is a bad season for roads, owing to excessive rains, but there is no reason why the roads should not be well built and why they should not be intelligently

repaired. The ride around Canadarago Lake is very attractive. so, too, is the excursion to Cooperstown while the view from the Observatory, six miles away, is beautiful.”

Who was the lady who was being interviewed? Her name was Mary Katherine Kimmie “Kate” Field - now a mostly forgotten person but one who had gained great notoriety in the 1800s. She was known to her friends and family as Kate, born October 1, 1838 in St. Louis, Missouri, the daughter of actors Joseph M. Field and Eliza Riddle. Kate showed an early interest in literature, publishing her first poem at nine year old in the newspaper that her father then owned. In 1844, she was sent to live with relatives in Massachusetts while she attended Lasell Female Seminary and at the age of sixteen she was sent to Europe to travel as a form of education. While in Italy studying voice, Kate began what was to be part of her career as a journalist including a lecture tour in the mid-western United States which she later said that she would never repeat as she loathed the life and the majority of the



Kate Field

country audiences. She stated that she did it for the money. Not one who was afraid to explore various occupations, Kate also ventured into acting, dance, song and recitation, but had no great success with those. Her adventures with the stage, led her to obtain the reputation of being eccentric. In 1882-83 she headed a Cooperative Dress Association in New York which also was a failure.

In 1889 she established

alluring. It seems a shame to shut one’s self up within four walls while the sun shines. I confess, however, that much of my time is spent in reading the amiable remarks made about me by Prohibitionists in different parts of this country. Because I believe in temperance, which means the use and not the abuse of good things, because I am deeply interested in viticulture, which I believe is the means toward this same good of temperance, because I am officer of the State Viticultural Commission of California, fanatics brand me as an enemy of mankind and exhaust invective in their endeavors to depict my depravity. Poor things, I pity them from the bottom

of my heart. They mean well, but they don’t know. (The purpose of the State Viticultural Commission was to impart instruction in methods of culture, pruning, fertilizing, distilling and treating vine diseases of grapes used in the making of wine.) If Prohibitionists, before jumping at conclusions from false premises, made a study of human nature in history as well as by observation, they would learn that you cannot legislate people into

morality,. It is certainly most unpleasant to be the target of vile abuse, but as I feel profound contempt for people who have not the courage of their convictions, no amount of gross misrepresentation will prevent me from telling what is to me the truth.”

Temperance wasn’t the only topic that Miss Field (she never married) offered her opinions on. She often took on controversial topics. She opposed the Statue of Liberty as a poor use for an island; worked on female clothing reform; opposed the immigration of ‘less desirable’ people, and even declared herself as a ‘cremationist’ as she felt that this was the healthiest and cleanest, not to mention poetical way of disposal of the deceased - all the while stating that the United States was the best country in the world and its people the most civilized.

The peak of her career was in 1873 when she was more prominent as a journalist than Mark Twain. Described as a unique figure in the history of American journalism, Field died in 1896 of pneumonia while in Hawaii. As an independent woman who wasn’t afraid to express her thoughts to, and about others, making an impression wherever she traveled and whatever she did.

Fishing Tournament Results

Recently, the Richfield Springs Community Center held its annual Bass Fishing Tournament fundraiser departing from the New York State Boat Launch on Canadarago Lake. The event drew a record number 42 boats and 88 anglers. Anglers came from all over Central New York as well as far away as New Jersey.

Tournament winners are determined by weighing the three largest bass from each boat for a total combined weight. A “lunker” contest is also held for the tournament’s single largest bass caught. Top honors went to: 1st Place: Don Hoag 10.62 lbs.; 2nd Place: Tom Meninger, Beck Meninger, Steve

Muoelle & Steve Covaleski 9.73 lbs.; 3rd Place; Don and Matt Green 8.83 lbs. The heaviest lunker, weighing in at 4.90 lbs., went to the 2nd place team.

Event organizer and Community Center Board Director, Bill Kosina, said the tournament was a huge success. “This fishing tournament was my dad’s idea for a fundraiser for the Community Center many years back. He had a bait shop and was in the Susquehanna Bass Association. He passed away in 2015, and this is one way of keeping his memory going,” said Kosina.

Sponsor donations and 25% of the entry fees funded the \$1385 prize

pot. Sponsors for the tournament were: Andela Products/Ruby Lake Glass, G Tech Marine, Inc., Bello Electric and Excavating, James Jordan Association-Architects, and the JC Bait and Tackle Shop.

The Bass Tournament is held in cooperation with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation – Central Region and was paid for in part by a grant from Otsego County Government.

For information regarding the Richfield Springs Community Center call 315-858-3200 or visit us at www.richfieldspringscommunitycenter.org

Brooks’ Chicken BBQ Scheduled

Brooks’ BBQ chicken halves will be available for \$8.00 by pre-order only on Saturday, August 13, at the Church of Christ Uniting, 22 Church Street, Richfield Springs. Proceeds will benefit programming at the Richfield Springs

Community Center.

The drive thru pickup will begin starting at 12:00 noon. To reserve a time slot call Carla at 315-858-1451 by August 12. For pickup, enter the church’s circular drive way then proceed to the pickup point.

Proceeds will benefit the Richfield Springs Community Center. Go to www.richfieldspringscommunitycenter.org, check us out on Facebook at RichfieldSpringsCommunityCenter or call 315-858-3200.

Community Center Announces Top Run/Walk Winners

An all-time high of 102 runners participated in the Richfield Springs Community Center’s 20th Annual Sundae Run/Walk fundraiser recently. The event features a 5K and a 10K. Races started near the intersection of Bronner and Lake Streets in the Village of Richfield Springs.

Overall top Male and Female winners in the

10K and 5K categories were: 10K Male-Charles Hollister 39 minutes 42 seconds; 10K Female-Lydia Dillon 44 minutes 32 seconds; 5K Male-Jordan Hoffman 16 minutes 19 seconds; 5K Female-Jeannine Macera 21 minutes 28 seconds.

In keeping with the event name of Sundae Run and Walk, Stewart’s Shops once again donated the

makings for ice cream sundaes for everyone to enjoy post event. In addition, Stewart’s Shops was the event’s first exclusive Corporate Sponsor.

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