

Passing The Torch

by Lynne Belluscio

LeRoy's Statue of Liberty will soon be repaired. Thanks to all of the folks who sent in checks and made donations, we have reached our goal of \$10,000. In fact we have surpassed our goal and some people are still sending in checks. That is OK, because, as we look at the pedestal we know there will be additional repairs that we didn't anticipate. And until we can take a closer look after the statue is removed, we have no idea what will be necessary.

On Thursday, August 13, we held an informal gathering on Wolcott Street in front of the Statue of Liberty. Michele Panepento and her daughter Anna (Class of 2025), agreed to join us in costume. You may have seen them in the Oatka Festival parade.

First I asked - Evan and Jacob Williams (Class of 2023 and 2022 respectively) to read some interesting facts about the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor: "The original name of the Statue of Liberty was "Liberty Enlightening the World." The face of Lady Liberty was supposedly the face of the sculptor Auguste Bartholdi's mother Charlotte. For comic book fans, the comic book character Miss America was given her powers by the Statue of Liberty. The statue in New York's Harbor wears a size 879 shoe and has a 35 foot waistline.

Both the French and Americans contributed money for the Statue of Liberty and remarkably 80% of the donations were a dollar or less. Lady Liberty wears a crown of seven spikes for the seven continents and the seven seas. When the original Statue of Liberty was completed in France, it was necessary to ship all 350 pieces across the Atlantic Ocean. They were packed in 214 crates and were almost lost at sea during a terrible storm. It is estimated that the Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor is struck by lightning on an average of 600 times each year. This October, the New York Statue of Liberty will be celebrating its 129 Anniversary."

After the boys read their reports, it was time to take in the checks. We asked that the checks

be given to one of the students, who would read the amount and the donor, and then present the check to Michele, representing Lady Liberty. The students were told that the care of the Statue was now their responsibility. They were to watch over her and make sure she would always raise her torch to "enlighten the world."

First there was a \$200 check from the class of 1958. Then the Alumni Association, of graduates from over 50 years ago, presented a check of \$1,280. The Class of 1970 - - the largest class to ever graduate from LeRoy Central School presented a check for \$1,000 which was matched by a \$500 check from one of the 1970 alumni. The Women of the Moose presented a check for \$647.05 and the LeRoy Moose Club, proudly presented a check for \$3,650, which they had collected during the Oatka Festival event. The generosity of the Moose Club

was in commemoration of their participation in 1950, when the Moose Club purchased the Statue of Liberty and presented it to the local Boy Scouts.

Very soon, in early September, the Statue will be removed and taken to Orcon Industries on Lake Street, where she will be fitted for a cushion. Then I hope to take her to Oberlin, Ohio to the MacKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory where Thomas Podnar will have

an opportunity to evaluate her. Work will continue through the winter and in the meantime, we will look at the pedestal.

We know it is leaning toward the creek and we will probably have to make some adjustments. The plan is to have her reinstalled by next July and rededicate her during the Oatka Festival. We hope you will join us next summer as the generations of the future take the torch of liberty.

