

Curious New York

by Lynne Belluscio

Cindy Perman called the other day and wanted some updates for her new edition of *"New York Curiosities."* The first edition was published in 2008 and she will be coming out with a new edition next year, so she wanted to make sure all the information about the Jell-O Museum was correct – and most of it was, although we have changed our web site from jellomuseum.com to jellogallery.org.

"New York Curiosities" is - - well I guess it's curious. Her topics about Western New York include the *"Sauce Beneath Their Wings"* - or the true story about the Anchor Bar in Buffalo and Dominic Bellissimo's mother Teresa who whipped up the first batch of Buffalo wings in a "secret" sauce and served them with blue cheese and celery.

And she includes the story of granola – well actually it was first called granula. (Funny, my spell check accepts granola but not granula.) This story begins with James Caleb Jackson who owned an abolitionist newspaper, but poor health forced him to retire at an early age and hoping to find a cure, visited a spa for a water cure. After a miraculous recovery he bought the spa in Dansville and renamed it "Our Home on the Hillside" and it became one of the most popular spas in the world. In 1863, he introduced "granula" a cold breakfast cereal. Several years later, Kellogg in Battle Creek imitated the cereal and renamed it granola to avoid trademark infringements.

Cindy includes brief stories about the two knife museums – the Cutco Ka-Bar in Olean and the American Cutlery Museum in Cattaraugus. Or how about "Shoe Tree" in Lyndonville which was started in 1986 by Diane Bane. Anyone can throw a shoe up into the tree – actually there are five trees with shoes and you can find them at the intersection of Lake Shore and Foss Roads. Guess I'll have to drive over sometime.

One of the more interesting stories concerns Niagara Falls. I never realized that falling water creates negative ions and negative ions clean the air and



boost chemical serotonin which relieves stress and boosts energy. That's why taking a shower gives you a new lease on life. With 37.4 million gallons of water going over the falls each minute, the output of negative ions is phenomenal! (As Cindy writes, how can something so negative make you feel so good!)

I'm still not sure I understand the story about going up hill, both ways, in Middlesex, on the east side of Canandaigua Lake. It seems that if you head north on Newell Road and you put your car in neutral, it will appear that your car is being pulled backward ... up hill! Cindy goes on to write that kids try it on their bikes - - and it works and it's all because there was an Indian chief who was killed in battle and his spirit still lingers there, causing strange phenomenon. Of course there is another story about a man named Silas Pratt who lived nearby and it's his ghost that causes all the problems. Guess I'll have to drive over to Middlesex and see what happens.

I recently bought an alligator purse from the Susan B. Anthony House Museum (no, it's not real alligator). I noted that Cindy has a story about "The Lady With the Alligator Purse. Maybe you remember the kids rhyme: Miss Suzy had a baby – She named it Tiny Tim. She put it in the

bathtub to see if he would swim. He drank up all the water. He ate up all the soap. He tried to eat the bathtub but it wouldn't go down his throat! Someone call the doctor! Someone call the nurse! Someone call the lady with the alligator purse." Well, the lady with the alligator purse was supposed to be Susan B. Anthony because everywhere she went she carried her alligator purse.

Of course Cindy poses the question, why would a suffragist be mentioned in this kids rhyme? It seems that the story started

in California where Susan B. spent several months lobbying for women's rights and the kids were jumping rope and everyday they saw this lady walking by carrying her alligator purse, so they included it in their story to rhyme with "nurse." Believe it or not. And of course, Cindy has included the Jell-O Museum in a story *"Jell-O And Welcome to America."* We're all looking forward to her next edition, to see what's new in *"Curious New York."*



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