

Join Us On June 8th To Celebrate LeRoy's Bicentennial

by Lynne Belluscio

The Bicentennial Committee met this last Saturday and plans are well underway for the June 8th event. We are halfway to our goal of 200 at \$20 to help pay for the fireworks and we hope to reach \$4,000 in four weeks. If you haven't sent in your donation or dropped it by the Town Hall, we certainly could use your help.

The historic marker which will be installed on Trigon Park has been ordered. It will mark the site of the first Town meeting. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the William Pomeroy Foundation that will pay for the marker. The time capsule has been ordered and as soon as it arrives it will be on display in the Town Hall lobby. In the next few weeks we will collect items that will go inside.

Today I went up to the Town Hall and Laura Brodie and I put up two huge broadsides in the windows. When I mentioned that I was working with the *Pennysaver* to design a broadside, no one knew what I was talking about, but two hundred years ago, announcements and events were publicized with a printed broadside. Today we would call them posters. Many thanks to the *Pennysaver* and David Grayson who helped with this.

I found reference to posting notices for town meetings in the 1827 New York Statutes: "No previous notice need be given of the annual town meetings; but the Town Clerk shall, at least eight days before the holding of any special town meeting, cause notices thereof, under his hand, to be posted at four or more of the most public places in the town; which notices shall specify the time, place and purposes of such meetings." - Actually, two hundred years ago there were no newspapers or printers in LeRoy, so probably the announcement for the town meeting was a hand written note that was tacked up at the Ganson Tavern, the schoolhouse, Asher Bates' house (which served as the post office) and maybe Stoddard's mill.

Today we depend on e-mail,

twitter, Facebook, cell phones, land lines, radio, television, newspapers and the mail to let people know what's going on.

When you think about communication two hundred years ago, there weren't many choices. At the Bicentennial meeting we were talking about calling people to the town meeting and someone suggested ringing a church bell, until I reminded them that there were no church buildings in 1812. We decided that we will use two of the large brass hand school bells that we have in the Historical Society collection. It will be like a town crier.

Steve Barbeau, the Town Supervisor will be conducting the meeting and we will be looking for a very large gavel for him to use. And in deference to our contemporary ears, we will be using a PA system. Few people today have the ability to project their voice to a crowd. (Reminds me of "Friends, Romans and Countrymen, lend me your ears." In the 19th Century, politicians, ministers and orators were known for their ability to be heard in a large crowd. On the other hand they didn't have to compete with truck traffic and sirens.

Two hundred years ago, the people of LeRoy were granted the right to assemble and to establish a local government. There may be no better example of the power of our democracy than what is witnessed at a town meeting. President James Madison had said, "A pure democracy is a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person."

At that first meeting on Trigon Park, there were veterans of the

Revolutionary War, who only a few years before, had been engaged in a heroic effort to secure freedom from Great Britain. One can only imagine their emotion as they and their neighbors gathered to exercise their right to vote and to establish a local government. Ironically, all too soon, when their new homes would be threatened, they would be called again to defend their freedom during the War of 1812.

Perhaps your ancestors were the pioneers who arrived by ox cart and settled in log cabins and witnessed LeRoy's first meeting. Some of you may trace your family to immigrants from foreign

countries, who discovered LeRoy as a community that offered opportunities and a better life in the United States. Perhaps you are some of the recent settlers who believe that LeRoy is a community with a unique heritage and a tenacious commitment to the future. Whatever your origins, LeRoy has become your home, and we hope you feel welcome to join us for this Bicentennial Celebration.

Come join us on June 8 as we celebrate two hundred years of American freedom as we once again renew our belief in a town we proudly call, LeRoy.

All Citizens And Freeholders Of The Town Of Bellona To Be Hereafter Known As

LEROY

Are Requested To Assemble
At 7:30 PM
On Friday
JUNE 8, 2012
Near The School On
TRIGON PARK

For the
BICENTENNIAL

Re-creation of the
**FIRST
TOWN MEETING**

Supervisor Stephen Barbeau Will Conduct The Meeting In The Absence Of Dr. William Sheldon

The Committee Of Arrangements Has Secured For The Enjoyment Of The Citizens Musicians And Students Of Exceptional Talent To Perform A Selection Of Music To Stir The Patriotic Bosom

Business Of The Meeting Will Include, But Not Be Restricted To: The Dedication Of The Historic Marker: The Presentation Of The Time Capsule: The Reading Of Proclamations: And The Appointment Of 28 Overseers Of Highways. The Meeting Will Conclude With Thirteen Traditional Toasts To The Past. The Present And The Future.

Preceding The Meeting Will Be An

OX ROAST AT 5 PM

Games On The Park. And The Painting And Display Of The Official Town Barn Quilt

FIREWORKS AT 9:30 PM

From The Creekbank



