

The Altamont Enterprise

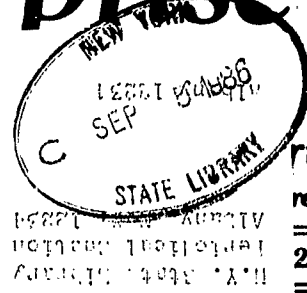
Our 103rd Year

Serving the Towns of
Guilderland, New Scotland, Bethlehem, Berne, Knox,

Including Altamont, Voorheesville, Westmere, Guilderland Center, Slingerlands, I

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Scottish Games Returning To Fairgrounds

The Capital District Scottish Games return to the Altamont Fairgrounds this Saturday, Aug. 30, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This annual event, which seems to have gained in attendance over the past few years, features the northeastern U.S. pipe band championship with approximately 25 pipe bands from the northeast and Canada expected to compete for this coveted award. Individual band members also compete for piping and drumming prizes.

Piping and drumming, however, are not the only attractions. The sponsor of the games, the Schenectady Pipe Band, has prepared a schedule of events to interest young and old, and those in-between.

One attraction is the exhibition of Scottish breeds of dogs. Held in cooperation with the Albany Obedience Club, this event focuses on the origin and development of such breeds as the Cairn, Skye, Deerhound, and West Highland terrier. There will also be a special demonstration by "Jodi," a border collie owned by Charles and Mary Anne Zuberla of Scotia. A companion event is a demonstration of border collies handled by Dave and Virginia Peters of Esperance herding sheep and geese.

Appearing for the first time at this year's games are two major special attractions: John Cunningham, and Katie Harrigan and Hamish Moore.

John Cunningham, who has been playing since age 7, is a virtuoso fiddler who draws his repertoire from traditional Irish and Scottish music. He has performed at the Nyon (Switz.) International Festival; Cologne International Festival; and in the U.S., at the Vancouver, Philadelphia, and Wheeling (W. Va.) folk festivals.

Described by the Boston Globe as the "Wayne Gretzky of fiddle playing," Billboard magazine had this to say about him in a review of

top album picks: "Fiddler Cunningham has crafted a haunting album of traditional Scottish and Irish airs, jigs, ballads and planxtip, embroidered with keyboards, guitars, and deft Uilleann pipes, flutes and concertina. A lovely instrumental folk outing." Cunningham has produced 10 albums and has performed for television, film, and theater.

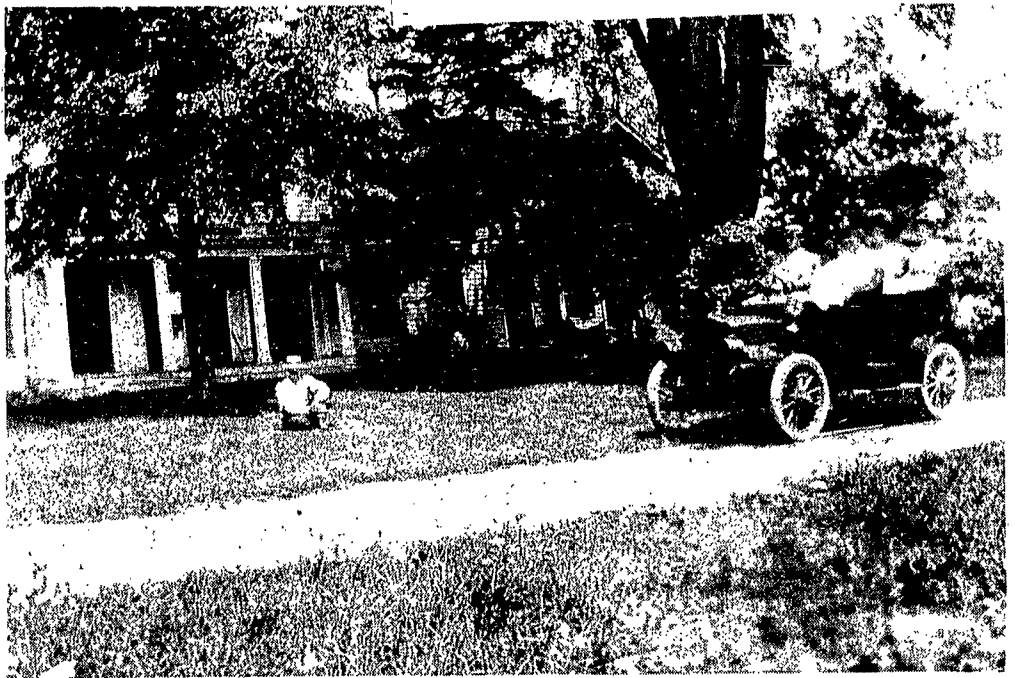
Harrigan and Moore are renowned for their music on the cauld wind pipes, clarsach, whistles and piano, with vocals from Ms. Harrigan. Katie Harrigan was first prize winner for solo clarsach playing in 1980-81 and runner-up in the solo clarsach section of the 1982 Pan-Celtic Folk Festival in Killarney, Ireland. According to one review, "Katie Harrigan is fast gaining a reputation as one of the most exciting and technically expert harpers." She appeared with Hamish Moore at the 1985 Edonburgh Festival's performance of Harvey Holton's "Fionn."

Originally a Highland piper, Hamish Moore is said to be one of the better players associated with the revival of the bellows-blown pipes of Scotland. These are the Scottish small pipes, the lowland (or border) pipes, and the pastoral pipes known collectively as cauld wind pipes. A review of his album noted that it "demonstrates both his superb technical command of his instruments and his innate musical artistry."

Dancing is another major feature of the games, since Altamont is the site of the northeastern U.S. open Highland dance championship. This event attracts more than 100 dancers who perform throughout the day on the main stage. Among the dances are the seann truibhas, Highland fling, sailor's hornpipe and the sword dance.

In addition to Scottish dancing, traditional Irish dancing will be demonstrated by a popular local

(Continued on Page 3)



Charles Bender and his first automobile, a black Maxwell, around 1913. Bender and Gladys Schell share the front seat; Bender's wife Annie and Alice Forester sit in the back. Bender's foreman, Mike Forester, sits on the front lawn of the Bender homestead. It is rumored that a fire in one of Bender's barns destroyed the car the week after this picture was taken.

Business: The Bender Melon Story

By DENNIS SULLIVAN

If you keep your eyes peeled as you ride past the many roadside vegetable stands in this area, sooner or later you will come across a sign advertising Bender melons.

Oddly enough, the melons being sold at these stands are not Bender melons, for the real Benders haven't been grown on a wide scale in this area for over 40 years.

The farmers are not engaging in false advertising, it's that the Bender name is as generic to melons as Xerox is to copy machines and Kleenex to tissues.

For those who don't know why or have forgotten the story, the Charles Bender melon farm during the first part of this century was arguably the greatest melon farm in the country, certainly in New York State.

And what made it famous was Charles Bender's Golden Queen, a sweet, juicy, thick orange-fleshed

melon with prominent ribs that was so large that at times it reached weights of over 10 pounds.

The story of how this melon came to be among the most sought-after delights of summer is the kind of story you read in fantasy books, and is worth telling for that reason alone.

But the story bears repeating also because it is about the life of a farmer who was the epitome of care, who treated each melon as if it was his own child. Charles Bender was so proud of his children that when the first chance came he was ready to share them with the entire world.

Fortuitous Beginnings

On an early August evening in 1905 Town of New Scotland melon farmer Charles Bender boarded the night boat at the port of Albany headed for New York City. Aboard the boat with him were two barrels of his best looking, most aromatic cantaloupe melons, which he called his Golden Queens.

Four years earlier Bender had developed this distinctive variety of melon after 17 years of persistent experimentation with some of the best varieties known at the time. He had marketed the melons upstate in select stores and markets, now he was on his way to the capitol of American cuisine to peddle what would become one of the leading varieties of melons ever grown in New York State.

Bender was confident that these sweet, juicy melons with their characteristic thick orange flesh and prominent ribs, averaging seven pounds, would win the hearts of every gourmet restaurateur and hotel owner in the big city.

When the boat docked in the morning Bender rented a horse and wagon. He loaded the melons onto the wagon and, a street peddler for the day, headed for the hotel and restaurant district.

He began knocking on doors. He went from restaurant to restaurant, from hotel to hotel, only to be turned down by every buyer. The stewards were either too busy to

see a melon grower from Albany or they had already made arrangements for their season's supply of melons.

Bender's stop at Rector's at 1510 Broadway, then the pinnacle of haute cuisine in New York, proved to be no different. But fate has a strange way of smiling on even the worst of situations. As Bender was making his way back to the wagon he recognized one of the bellboys at Rector's as someone he knew from Albany, probably an acquaintance from the days when he worked as a grocery clerk at Coughtry's on Hamilton and Eagle Streets.

A conversation ensued. Bender told his new-found friend about his unfortunate day thus far. He probably split one of his prized melons and gave a piece to his former acquaintance with pride. He then talked his friend into getting Mr. Rector to try one of the melons. It's not known what the bellboy said to the famed restaurateur but shortly after Mr. Rector approached the wagon at the curb.

Charles Bender ran his knife along the rib of his ripest melon, lifted out a slice of the juicy thick orange flesh (carefully scraping the seeds into a container to bring back to the farm with him) and offered it to George Rector. As they say, the rest is history. "Send them in!" exclaimed Rector, "Tell the chef I want these melons for my breakfast in the morning."

Soon the Golden Queens were a regular feature at Rector's and through the influence of this noted epicure, Bender's melons were soon added to the menus at the Waldorf-Astoria, the Savoy, the Lambs and other fine hotels and restaurants in New York City. The Belmont Hotel for years had a standing order of 10 baskets a day, each basket weighing as much as 50 pounds. This hotel's bill alone for one month's melons ran as high as \$2,200.

The fame of the Bender melon spread farther and farther each

(Continued on Page 4)

ABC, PBS Plan September Literacy Campaign

By BRYCE BUTLER

The American Broadcasting Company (locally Ch. 10) and the Public Broadcasting Service (locally Ch. 17) have joined in a season-long effort to spread information about illiteracy in America.

The media blitz will effect every department of the stations' programming, according to Joe Urso, chairperson for the local task force of Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS), as the effort is called. Channel 10 will begin with a special documentary Wednesday, Sept. 3, at 10 p.m. Channel 17 will air a special Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 8 p.m. with a follow-up panel discussion.

News and magazine format shows like 20-20 will highlight the problem of illiteracy in feature stories. But made-for-television movies and regular situation comedies will also feature the theme. Illiteracy will further complicate the hopelessly entangled lives of soap opera characters.

Scope Of Problem

Illiteracy has been discussed by lonely prophets such as Johnathan Kozol (author of "Death at an Early Age,") and in a widely-discussed government report ("A Nation at Risk"). But few Americans realize how many of their countrymen cannot read a newspaper or fill out a job application.

Over 10 percent of adult Americans, some 23 million, are listed as functionally illiterate.

The figure is uncertain, in part because illiteracy is not clearly defined. Virginia Gilbertson, program director of Literacy Volunteers of America, Albany Chapter, offered two definitions of literacy which were miles apart:

—A 1975 University of Texas definition included, among other items, the abilities to: address an envelope so it would reach its destination, write a check and make change for a \$20 bill. Inability to do these things should certainly count as illiteracy. But ability to do them and similar tasks

hardly constitutes literacy, even in the state that gave us J.R. Ewing and the mechanical bull.

—In our own state, a student must be able to read on a ninth grade level to graduate from high school. Considering that daily newspaper front pages are written well below that level, this hardly constitutes a minimum definition.

The figure most often used is ability to read on a fourth-grade level. Through 1970, the census gave numbers of people with no education and with education through grade four. Both groups were regarded as illiterate. The lowest the 1980 census goes is grade eight — hardly a fair criterion of illiteracy.

In the 1970 census, the following numbers of individuals in local towns reported that they had no school (NS) or school only through grade four or below (G4): Guilderland, 39 NS, 52 G4; New Scotland 5 NS, 26 G4; Bethlehem 23 NS, 30

(Continued on Page 3)