

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

November 1993

Photo Selection

The last meeting for 1993 took place on the 8th with 15 people testing the early darkness of Eastern Standard Time. Based on a vote this summer, our regular schedule of meetings on the 2nd Monday of the month will resume in April, with one additional meeting on Saturday, March 5th at 1 pm. A reminder will be made again in the Annual Report which will be mailed in February.

Before the program, Don reminded everyone about calendars. Harriet Rasmussen updated us on her diary transcription and has finished the 1870's. She read some of the Taylor family history, especially about the 50th anniversaries of three different couples of the Taylor, Allen, Lawton house on Rt. 67.

The main program ensued. Having selected 100-125 photos that he thought were likely candidates for calendar selection, Don spread out a display (barrage?) of photos that were passed around the table. Each of us had a chance to select our own choices for a spot in the next two or three years of calendars, recording our list (of not more than 20-25 favorites, as was threatened). Don will tabulate the results and use those photos getting the most votes somewhere in the 1995, 1996, or 1997 calendar.

Actually, although the above paragraph is true, it barely begins to relate all the stories that the various pictures instigated. The wealth of pictures keeps growing, and they continue to show events and people and buildings from all parts of the town. So, in knots of twos and threes, or for the whole group if someone could get everyone's attention (Ray seemed the most successful in doing that), stories of so-and-so, or some place (which recalled a story about so-and-

so), or some building (which recalled a story about some place which recalled a story about so-and-so) lit up like wild fire as they passed through the maelstrom of pictures that circled, traversed, reversed, and wandered around the table. A wonderfully chaotic organization (how's that for an oxymoron?) was apparent by evening's end.

The net result will be a selection for the 1995 calendar which means Don can start working on the captions. Be prepared for questions and information requests as the winter creeps along.

In the meantime, keep working on your projects and we'll meet again in March.

Sincerely,



PS: This newsletter's back includes a copy of a recent article of the Greenville Family Health Center. Even though it seems rather ordinary, it will be the type of article I wished I had clipped and filed. And, should it remind anyone to write about any topic of town history over the winter, so much the better.

Greenville Family Health Care (GFHC), like its thousands of patients, is making a healthy recovery with a newly prescribed business plan.

Greenville Family Health Care is a diagnostic and treatment center offering comprehensive medical services and is located in a 3,017 sq. ft. space at Bryant's Country Square Plaza on Route 32 in Greenville.

The facility, started in 1985 by Gloria Fuina-Darrah, a Registered Physician Assistant, has struggled to provide rural health care to the people of Greene County's towns of Coxsackie, East Durham, Greenville, Freehold, Norton Hill, Catskill, Athens, the Westerlos, parts of Albany County, Altamont, Delmar, Feura Bush, and East Berne.

And it has succeeded.

But like many rural health care facilities, until now it has had growing pains not unlike the many children it treats daily.

"It's tough in this area of compliance to be the real care provider you want to be," said Fuina-Darrah, Medical Practitioner-Administrator at GFHC. "The paperwork is overwhelming. Yet we do it well and still manage to keep our focus clearly on patient care. The medical system, like many things in our country, is upside down. The focus has not been on the patient. I can assure you that at Greenville Family Health Care, it is squarely on the side of our patients."

Fuina-Darrah asserted that the relationship between health care practitioner and patient is critical. "It is important to respond in a timely fashion, consistently," she said. "This can only be demonstrated to a patient over a period of time. That's the real test in patient caring, the long haul. Confidence eventually builds in the patient and this helps build the practice."

If the patient list of GFHC is any indication, the practice is alive and well. It also had a healthy beginning, but the road was not all ways so bright.

The GFHC's specialty in family practice and internal medicine was supported by two full-time physicians in 1987 and two full-time physician assistants and was serving almost 10,000 patients a year. In July of 1988, however, one of the physicians left. The facility continued to engage in the private practice of medicine until April of 1991 when the remaining physician left the practice. According to Fuina-Darrah, this is not an uncommon occurrence.

The government gives doctors financial incentives to participate in health care in under-served rural areas. At the end of the commitment, doctors leave primarily due to the crushing workload and low salaries. However well intentioned, the program has become an expedient answer to a non-urban health care problem. The disillusioned rural community becomes a passive bystander to the arriving and departing health care givers" she explained.

Knowing this, Fuina-Darrah knew the present system would not fit her needs. She decided then to change the operating structure in order to hire a medical director and physicians. This was the only way she could bring the kind of health care that the community so sorely needed. For the next 12 months she waded through the complexities of applying for and finally receiving designation as a NYS Certified Article 28 diagnostic and treatment center.

"I began a one year nightmare of paperwork in which I mortgaged my home, cashed in my IRA and questioned my sanity in keeping the facility going," said Fuina-Darrah. "It was tough. The clincher that made me fight on," she continued, "was the night that a little three-year old came in with a 104 degree temperature. Without us close by, that child would not have had easy access to needed care. I knew what we had to do."

New rules for accounting, billing

And retraining of staff in order to comply with Article 28 required the help of a professional business manager. Fuina-Darrah retained the services of Stanley Simkins of the Management Advisory Group of Albany. His recommendations to continue the focus on the family and set up systems to monitor all billing have put them right on target for new sources of business capital. What Simkins found unique about Fuina-Darrah was that she had "an entrepreneurial spirit and dedicated vision--the strength to develop a long-term strategic plan to survive." Another organizational and human resources consultant, Lisbeth Calandrino of Albany, was also retained to implement these plans with staff. "Gloria had a true

sense of community commitment," said Calandrino, "all that was needed was a method of imparting these values to the staff and following them through the whole chain--reinforcing this caring, responsive focus with the community." As part of this effort, Calandrino also created a marketing and public relations plan to make the community aware of these positive changes.

The facility now has 6 part-time physicians on staff, formal affiliations with St. Peter's Hospital in Albany and a cardiologist, Dr. David Putnam of Albany Cardiology Associates, who spends one day a week at the facility. Debra Lupe is part of a newly-formed health care administrative team. She has ten years experience in medical practice management and is currently a senior at Southern Vermont College seeking a B.S. in Business Administration. Part of her new responsibilities at GFHC are to develop new programs to bring more clients to the facility and ensure compliance with growing health care regulations.

The GFHC plans to upgrade its emergency support from 9 to 9 on weekdays, and 9 to 5 on weekends. In the works are more health prevention seminars, blood work, Chest x-rays, diabetes training, pulmonary care programs, and breast cancer support groups. Two new specialties are planned in the new

year — pediatrics and obstetrics/gynecology.

The scope and responsiveness of the center is not lost on the community it serves: "I love my doctor (Internist Greer Pomeroy, MD)" said Kay Stamer, Director of the Greene County Council on the Arts. "She's local, caring and courteous. The whole center is. I discovered this wonderful, caring place when I switched my health care plan. In fact, that is one of the nice things about Greenville Family Health Care. They take all the major medical plans."

According to Pam House, Deputy Director of Printing for the New York State Assembly and a resident of East Berne, it was something more serious than health plans that made her put her faith in this facility.

"Gloria Fuina-Darrah is always

pro-people and works with you every step of the way. She has brought in a pulmonary care specialist — quality people is what this facility has."

"But, if it wasn't for Gloria's people skills — persistence, friendship, and medical knowledge — my son would not be here today. At eighteen months of age he was diagnosed by another doctor with cystic fibrosis. Gloria convinced me not to give up hope concerning this deadly disease. By helping me seek further advice, we found that my son did not have the disease but simply a lack of certain enzymes that restrict his ability to use foods."

"My husband was also on the receiving end of that special care, too," continued House. "When he was diagnosed with lung cancer, Gloria coordinated all the testing.

On the night it was removed, there was Gloria, sitting in my kitchen at 4 a.m., drinking coffee and calming me. That kind of care is priceless."

**Greenville Family Health Care  
At A Glance**  
(Located at Bryant's Country

Square,  
Greenville, NY (518-966-8786  
or 8787)

Gloria Fuina-Darrah, RPA/Medical Practitioner/Administrator  
Joshua T. Rosenfeld, M.D.,  
Medical Director

Keith A. Leibowitz, M.D., Gastroenterology, Internal Medicine  
Jeffrey I. Monkash, M.D., Gastroenterology, Internal Medicine  
Alan Olmstead, RPA

David L. Putnam, M.D., F.A.C.C., Cardiologist, Albany Cardiology Associates P.C.

Dr. Pratibha P. Shah, Internal Medicine

Dr. Leonard J. Sonne, M.D., F.C.C.P., Internist, Pulmonary

# On The Road To Recovery: Greenville Family Health Care

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