



PO BOX 16
VAN HORNESVILLE NY
13475

VHCC MEMBER PROFILE:

Beverly (Bev) Guilfoyle

BY STEVEN COLLINS

Imagine a mountain of food totaling 29,792 pounds. That's the quantity of food that the Van Hornesville Area Food Pantry distributed in 2024!

Coordinating this massive operation is Bev Guilfoyle, a 44-year resident of Van Hornesville and a member of the VHCC. I had the privilege of meeting her in June, and was delighted and impressed to hear of her life's journey.

Raised in Sussex County, New Jersey, she and her husband Glenn moved to our community from Newton, New Jersey in 1981, following on the heels of their good friends Willie and Mark Crisman. Willie and Mark had purchased land that was once a farm owned by Owen D. Young. They subdivided the land, and the Guilfoyle's purchased three acres and a house, just south of the sharp curve on NY-80 as it rises from the Post Office.

With a degree in education, Bev went on to a 32-year career at Owen D. Young Central School, where she taught first, third, fourth, and sixth grades. Asked what drew her to teaching, she replied that she had loved children and babysitting when growing up, and her

mother, an art teacher, was also an inspiration, as well as her dad. While teaching, Bev raised three children, all of whom were also her students at ODY, and even managed to find time to earn a master's degree at SUNY Oneonta as a reading specialist!

Ten years ago, after retiring from ODY, Bev took up her next challenge at the Food Pantry. She "learned the ropes" by working with Nancy Smith, who had started the Food Pantry with her husband Ron in 2003. Bev is assisted by several dedicated volunteers in the community. Her regular duties include coordinating with the Food Bank of Central New York and applying for funds to cover the rent and other expenses needed to run the Food Pantry.

Serving an average of 30 families each month, the Food Pantry needs a diverse and reliable source of nutritious, wholesome foods. Among the local family farms that donate are Auger-Doody Farm, Otsquago Creek Grass-Fed Beef, and Roedale Farm. Grocer Aldi provides eggs, and local gardeners generously assist as well. Regarding the biggest challenges of operating the Food Pantry, Bev points

to how incredibly busy it can be on the first Wednesday of each month, as well as knowing ahead of time which food items will be available and which items will be in most demand.

I ended my conversation with Bev with a question about how we as individuals can make our world a better place. Her wise words bear quoting in full: "Be kind, do not judge others, and help people when they need it." Nothing I could end with would top that! 🏠



THE SQUAWK

autumn 2025

What's Next for the Old Stone Mill?

BY CATHY WOODRUFF

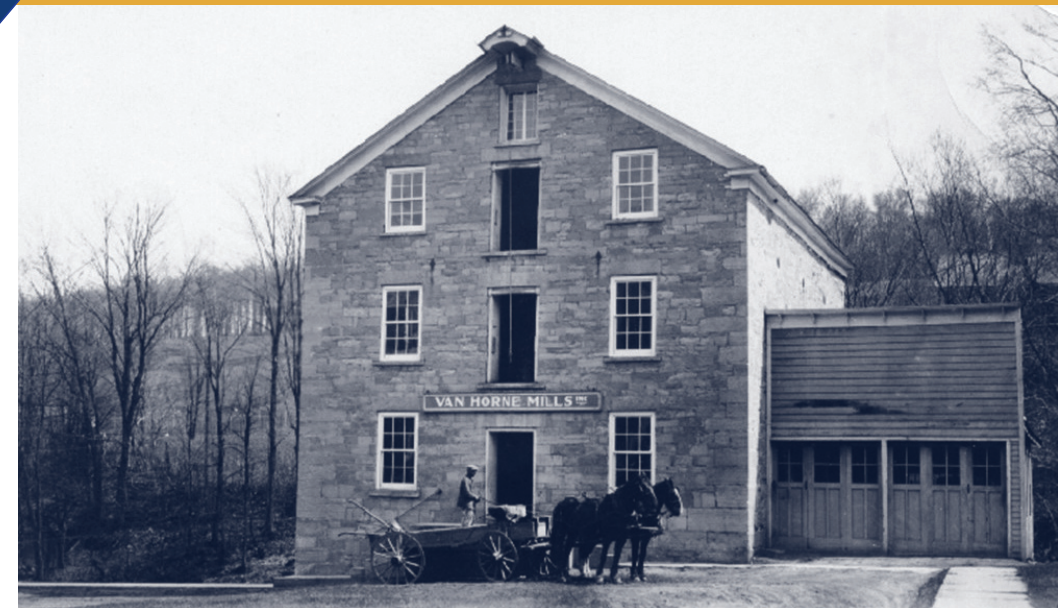
One of Van Hornesville's earliest 19th-century mill buildings has endured well into the 21st century. But now, after its longtime tenant the Van Hornesville Milk Producers Co-op has closed, community members are considering what its next chapter should be.

"I believe it should be preserved somehow because it's part of what Van Hornesville is, in my opinion," said Rick Bronner, who retired in 2020 after decades as the Co-op's general manager. The mill property is owned by the Van Hornesville Community Corporation.

Milling in Van Hornesville has its roots in a sharp-eyed discovery by two enterprising New Jersey soldiers who passed through the area during the Revolutionary War and noticed the potential of water power on a section of the Otsquago Creek in what is now the southeast corner of Herkimer County.

Abram Van Horne and his cousin returned after the war and built the first feed mill for surrounding farmers in 1793, according to accounts published in a 1989 issue of the Herkimer County Historical Society's *Legacy* magazine.

According to the account, the current mill was built on the site in 1836 by Daniel Van Horne – although a carved stone above the front door bears the initials D.V.H. and a date of 1833. It



Van Horne Mills, ca. 1932

operated on water power until 1961, when it was converted to electricity.

Farmers from earlier settlements surrounding Van Hornesville – known then as Pumpkin Hook, The Chyle and The Squawk – welcomed the arrival of the first Van Horne grist mill and its successor to grind their grain into feed for their livestock.

One of the Van Hornesville mill building's recent fans is a relatively new resident, Susan R. Williams, whose home overlooks the historic structure. Susan's academic subjects included vernacular architecture, which she describes as the study of "ordinary buildings," and the history of technology. "The two of those converge in that building," she noted. "The mill is modeled on a design invented by American engineer and businessman Oliver Evans. Evans was a pioneer of industrial innovation and developed a

milling process called 'vertical integration,' which moves grain to a top level, directs it down through a series of tubes and chutes as it's ground, and brings the finished feed to the bottom, where it is bagged and carted away. This was very innovative, but not unusual for this region.

The mill is a beautiful, well-preserved example and has a lot of potential, both for its historical significance as something that transformed industrial production of grain, and because it was the engine that drove the economy of Van Hornesville for almost 200 years."

While the building is structurally sound, it would need substantial renovations if it is to be made suitable for a different use. A team of VHCC members is currently creating a plan for the future of the Mill, as well as the Millpond, and other VHCC properties. You can expect to hear more at the November meeting. 🏠

For generations, Van Hornesville residents nicknamed our beloved Otsquago Creek, "the Squawk". Even the early settlers named their little village up on Jordanville Road "Squag" or "Squawk". With a bow to our past and to reflect the larger community connected to the Otsquago valley, the VHCC newsletter has been christened "The Squawk".



Owen D. Young at the Van Hornesville Post Office and General Store, ca. 1950

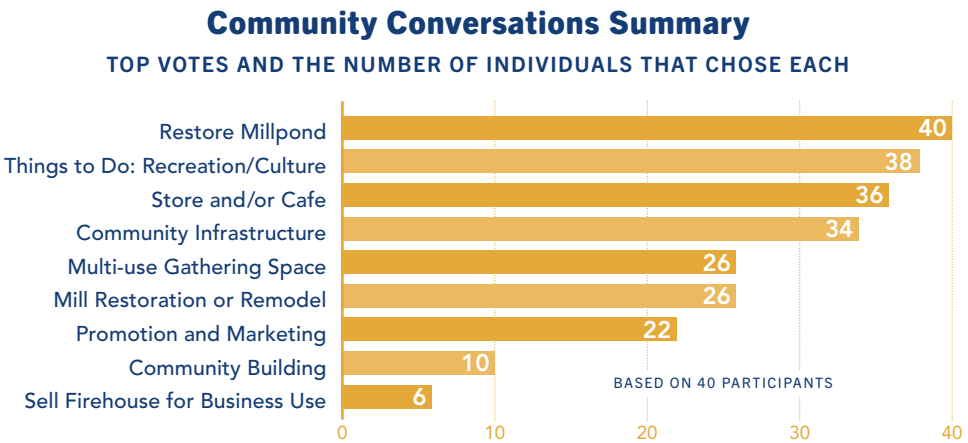
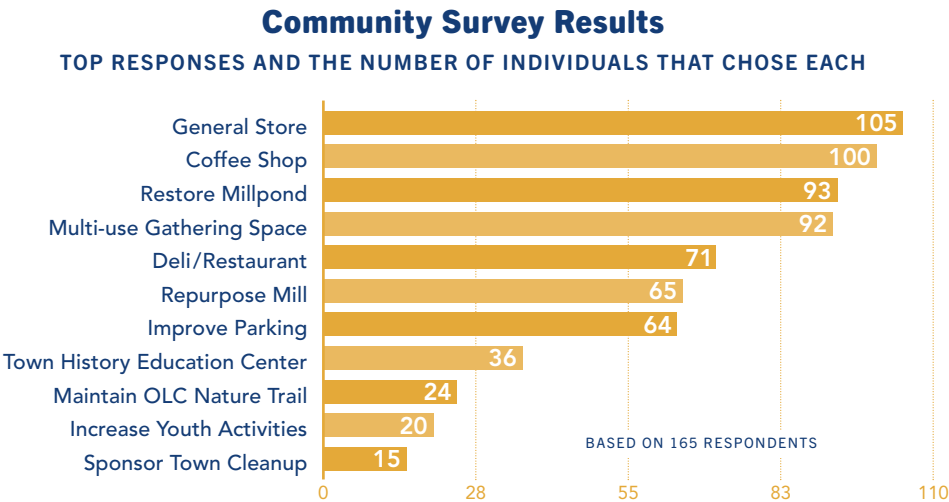
Sharpening a Vision for Van Hornesville

BY BOB CIERNIA, VHCC BOARD PRESIDENT

At the VHCC Spring Meeting in May, I gave a quick review of what the Van Hornesville Community Corporation (VHCC) has done to learn about the projects that are the most meaningful to our community, and the steps we’ve taken thus far toward bringing those projects into fruition. Here’s a recap and more info.

As many of you know, starting in 2024 the VHCC asked Van Hornesville residents and area neighbors to let us know what they would like to see for the future of Van Hornesville. To reach as large an audience as possible, we distributed surveys by mail, in bulk at local locations, and electronically. We received thoughtful responses from 165 people. Additionally, we hosted two open lunch gatherings that yielded engaging feedback from 40 attendees. Compiling data from these efforts, the Survey Team, comprised of VHCC members, felt they had a good handle on what the larger Van Hornesville community would like to see take shape.

The obvious question? Which of the various needs and wishes expressed in all the collected data are the ones that should receive top priority now?



Most of the suggestions would benefit from some level of funding coming from outside the community. And while money should not be the only factor in deciding what projects to put higher up on the priority list, it’s certainly an important consideration.

Community Planning Team

To hash out these questions and recommend an Action Plan, a critical document toward obtaining funding, a Community Planning Team (CPT) was formed. Their task is to evaluate the feedback received to date, taking into consideration how the projects the community wants to pursue relate to each other, and help determine which projects should be tackled first. How we start out will shape where we end up, and the CPT understands the necessity to make recommendations that will support future projects while benefiting people, here and now.

CPT members Richard Bronner (Town of Stark Supervisor), Bob Ciernia (VHCC board president), John Constable (VHCC board member), David Dragicevich, James Eckler, Jane Klump, Bonnie Nestle, Lori Wrench, and Cathy Woodruff will weigh several factors in making a recommendation. Those factors include the likelihood of achieving funding, how much may need to be required for

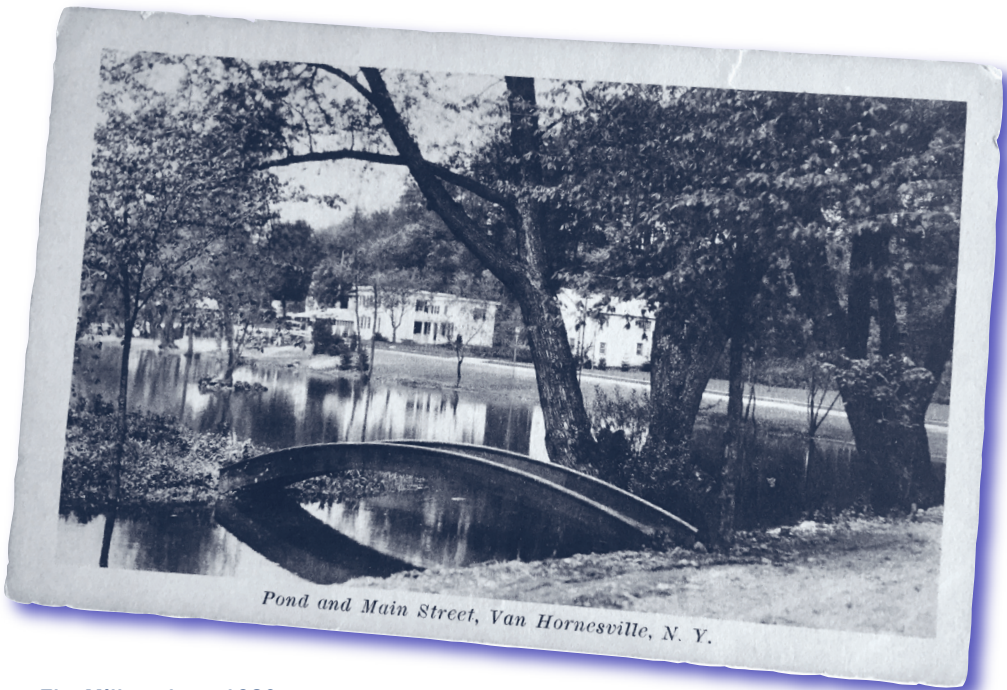
a particular project, and whether the desired projects are in compliance with town, county, and state regulations. The CPT’s job is not to determine a project’s feasibility, but rather to make certain that the people who can make that determination are included in the process before pursuing grants that have no chance of being awarded.

The Action Plan

The VHCC Board will review and modify the CPT’s draft Action Plan and take it to the Town of Stark Board for their review and suggestions. It is hoped that once we are ready to start the grant-writing process, the Town of Stark Board will write letters of support, endorsing our grant application(s).

After the Town’s input is incorporated into the Action Plan, the community at large will be invited to attend a meeting to review and comment on it. After incorporating the community’s feedback from this meeting, the VHCC Board will create a final document as a guide to acquire funding for one or more of the stated priorities.

To learn more about the proposed plans for our community and other VHCC news, join us at the **VHCC Fall Meeting on Saturday, November 8th at 10am. All are welcome.** 🗑



The Millpond, ca. 1930



Young and old expressed their creativity at Community Art Making night in July.

SAVE THE DATE

FRI | SEPT 26 | OCT 24 | NOV 21

Line Dancing

Kid’s Class / 6–6:45pm, Adults / 7pm
Millpond Community Center

SAT | SEPT 27

WEATHER PERMITTING

OLC Cleanup

9am–1pm, Outdoor Learning Center
behind Owen D. Young Central School

FRI | OCT 31

Trunk or Treat

Afternoon, Fire House in Starkville
Sponsored by the Van Hornesville Fire Dept.

Halloween Open House

Spooky Decor / Treats / Hot Drinks
5–8pm, Millpond Community Center

SAT | NOV 8

VHCC Fall Meeting

10am, Millpond Community Center

SAT | NOV 22

VHCC Benefit Concert

Folk / Blues / Jazz / Rock
7pm, Millpond Community Center

SAT | DEC 13

Holiday Open House and Caroling

Holiday Treats, 3pm, VHCC Office

VISIT VHCCORP.ORG FOR DETAILS.