

Preserving a Local Landmark

The *Hunt Memorial Preservation Committee*, incorporated in January 2003 as a not-for-profit membership organization, created to preserve the architectural integrity and historical significance of the **Hunt Memorial Building in Liberty Square**, Ellenville, was notified in July that the Internal Revenue Service has determined that the *HMPC* is exempt from federal income tax as a 501(c)(3) organization.

The laying of the cornerstone of the **Hunt Memorial Building** was celebrated in May 1915, and its dedication was held January 31, 1918. Funds for the construction of the building came from a bequest to the local *Women's Christian Temperance Union* by John R. Hunt, an influential businessman and community leader at the turn of the century. For many years, **Hunt Memorial** provided space for a wide variety of civic events, as well as a home for the *Ellenville Public Library* for almost fifty years. The tradition of public events using **Hunt Memorial's** porch and lawns has continued unbroken to today. *Music in the Square*, the annual **Chamber of Commerce** street fair, rallies, and similar community gatherings focus on **Hunt Memorial** and the **Square** as their site.

Local residents concerned about the fate of **Hunt Memorial** in recent years banded together late in 2002 to form the *Hunt Memorial Preservation Committee, Inc.* In addition to the multitudinous details related to the formation of a new organization, *HMPC* focused on completing an extensive application for inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Village of Ellenville, as current owner of **Hunt Memorial**, approved the application earlier this summer, and the document is presently being reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A SHPO representative made his site visit in July and the process is following its required steps.

Negotiations with a potential buyer for **Hunt Memorial** are ongoing, but the *Hunt Memorial Preservation Committee's* work is not complete. The group is considering the expansion of its activities to other local historic buildings and sites and may revise its stated purposes to include this expansion at the annual meeting scheduled for November. Memberships and donations have provided the financing for expenses to date, but the *Hunt Memorial Preservation Committee* plans various community fund raising activities for the future. A one-day gourmet art tour is scheduled for Tuesday, **September 9th**, leaving at **8:30 AM** for the Norman Rockwell Museum, lunch at the Red Lion Inn, and a private tour of Chesterwood, the summer estate of Daniel Chester French.

For further information, call Linda at **255-5256**.

Tribute cards – marking a celebration, a personal milestone, or memorializing an individual's life – are available by calling Phyllis at **647-7582**. The cards, carrying a view of the **Hunt Memorial Building** in its glory days, were generously donated by *Stedner Printing* to benefit the *HMPC's* activities and can be purchased for a minimum **\$10** contribution.

Donations to the *Hunt Memorial Preservation Committee* are deductible as provided in section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code to the extent that their contributions are gifts, with no consideration received.

Memberships start at **\$10** per calendar year for individuals, **\$25** for a family membership and on through



A photo of the **Hunt Memorial Building** during its early years. Note the Home National Bank sign, no steps to the far right balcony, the balustrade and flagpole on the roof, and a fountain that is neither the "Boy with the Boot" nor the swan.

higher levels. Membership brings with it the right to vote at the annual meeting and eligibility for nomination to the Board of Directors. The current nine-member Board of Directors includes Marion M. Dumond (President), Iris Friedman (Vice President), Barbara Hoff (Secretary), Robert Berger (Treasurer), Sally Berger, Raymond Matthews, Phyllis and Stan Rubin, and Mary F. Sheeley. Three terms expire at the end of 2003 and all incumbents are eligible for reelection.

By supporting the *Hunt Memorial Preservation Committee* you will aid in achieving the goals of the organization, to help maintain the integrity of historical buildings within the community. By involving the citizens of Ellenville, it is hoped that appreciation for the beauty of our village will be rekindled. 

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