

Walsh, a Homeville Museum board member, and two other committee members who Walsh would not identify, received nominations from about 20 Cortland County residents and out-of-town people — some nominating more than one person — by March to be considered for the Hall of Fame.

“We got names even I wouldn’t of thought of,” said Mindy Leisenring, director of the Cortland County Historical Society.

Of the nominations, a 35-person list, grouped in individual categories, was developed. Residents, and non-residents were allowed to cast one vote in each of the seven categories — based on generations ranging from the pre-1850s to present.

More than 180 residents and a few non-residents voted on the list of 35 deciding the seven inductees, but Walsh said she and her fellow committee members felt there were a few runner-ups — who they would not unidentified — who held a great deal of significance in their nominated time period and were added to the list of inductees. That brought the list to 10 inductees, Walsh said.

“There were many deserving individuals who just could not be selected this year, in order to have adequate display space for each person honored,” she said in a prepared statement. “This is an ongoing project and we hope to see these names and others among the inductees

Catherine Bertini, former executive director of the United Nations World Food Program, speaks to a group of Groton High School students April 2, 2014. She is among the inaugural inductees to a Cortland County Hall of Fame. Bob Ellis/staff photographer

Hall of Fame inductees at a glance

Here are biographies of the 10 inductees:

Pre-1850

● Samuel Gilbert Hathaway (1780-1865) was born in Freetown, Massachusetts, and moved to Cincinnatus in 1805. He was a justice of the peace for 48 years and served in the state Assembly and Senate and in Congress. He was a major general in the state militia from 1823 to 1858.

● Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818-1894), born and raised in Homer, was an activist for women’s rights, suffrage and temperance. She became a columnist for her husband’s newspaper and later founded, “The Lily” in 1848. She also advocated doing away with corsets/petticoats, and wore a costume of a short dress with pants, which became known as “bloomers.”

1850-75

● William Osborn Stoddard (1835-1925), born in Homer, was an editor, author, inventor and assistant private secretary to President Abraham Lincoln and his wife. He was proud of personally making the first copy of the draft Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862. He wrote more than 100 books, including six about Lincoln.

1875-1900

● Chester Wickwire (1863-1910) was an inventor, businessman and philanthropist. His use of a carpet loom to weave wire was the

basis of his hugely successful business, which was the largest employer in Cortland in 1910. While he supported a myriad of civic organizations and causes, his biggest gift was the first Cortland County hospital.

1900-1925

● Elmer Ambrose Sperry (1860-1930), born in Cincinnatus, was the second most recognized inventor after Thomas Edison in the World War I era. His inventions included dynamos, ARC lamps for high intensity search lights, electric trolley cars, railroad safety devices and the first workable gyrocompass system, which was used by the United States, British, Russian and German navies.

● John J. McGraw (1873-1934), born in Truxton, played baseball for the pennant-winning Baltimore Orioles for 10 years and one year for the St Louis Cardinals. He became a player-manager for the New York Giants in 1902 and served as the Giants manager (1907-1932.) McGraw was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937 and is still in second or third place for several records.

1925-1950

● Levi Chase (1917-1994) was born in Cortland and joined the Army Air Corps in February 1941. He entered combat as a P-40 pilot in North Africa and became the leading American ace in Tunisia with 10 victories. He returned to combat in the China-Burma-India theater of

operations and also flew fighter jets in Korea. He retired in 1973 as a major general. He has also been honored with the Cortland County Airport naming Chase Field after him.

1950-1975

● Arnald D. Gabriel (1926-) was born in Cortland. He joined the Army in 1943, landed on D-Day with the 29th Infantry Division and received two Bronze Stars, the Combat Infantryman Badge and French Croix de Guerre for his service. After attending Ithaca College, he served as the commander/conductor of the U.S. Air Force Band Program 1951-1985 and earned a number of military and music honors.

1975-current

● Dr. Zenta Krauklis (1912-2003) was born in Latvia, emigrated to the United States in 1949 and settled in McGraw in 1952. She became a doctor in Latvia and continued to practice in Germany after fleeing the Soviets in 1944. She has been honored with The Cortland Memorial Hospital’s 1995 Physician of the Year.

● Catherine Bertini (1950-) was born in Cortland and began government service while still a student at the University of Albany. She served two five-year terms as the executive director of the 10,000-person United Nations World Food Program, and is credited with major reforms. She also funded a scholarship program for girls in developing countries.

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“I think we have a great group of people for our first class (of inductees),” Leisenring said.

The Hall of Fame will be a wall — which will cost between \$100 and \$500 — located in

the Homeville Museum in the Central New York Living History Center at 4386 Route 11 in Cortlandville.

The May 7 induction ceremony will be in the center’s au-

ditorium. Living nominees will be presented with their plaques while the deceased inductees will have someone at the ceremony to represent them. The ceremony is open to the public.

County roundup

Council tables smoking ban law

Despite support from residents, the city Common Council moved Tuesday to table proposed legislation that would ban smoking in and around city-owned property in an effort to make the law more concise.

The smoking ban was first proposed by Mayor Brian Tobin in February and seeks to ban the use of all tobacco products on and within certain distances near city-owned property.

While feedback has been mostly positive from residents — at least from those who spoke during the public comment portions of a subsequent meeting and public hearing in March — aldermen

decided Tuesday they wanted to tweak some of the language in the law.

During their discussion, the aldermen wanted to specifically name electronic nicotine delivery devices, or e-cigarettes, in the law so violators could not get around the “tobacco” language in the law. They also talked about being more clear about conveying how close is too close, is as it relates to smoking near city property.

Aldermen agreed to send any other suggestions to city attorney Ric Van Donsel within the next couple of days and residents will get a chance to weigh in on the proposed changes during a public hearing to be held before the council’s next meeting at 6:50 p.m. on April 20.

City applies for \$5.3M in grant funding

Aldermen unanimously approved applying for grant funding totalling \$5.3 million, which, if received, would go toward flood mitigation on the South End and making upgrades at the Cortland Waterworks.

The city is hoping to receive \$2.3 million to upgrade an air stripper and chlorine treatment systems for the Water Department.

The city is also seeking another \$3 million to replace culverts near Sunnyfield Drive and Pendleton Street in addition to Jackson Drive, off Pendleton Street, to mitigate flooding, something residents in those

neighborhoods have complained about for years.

A total of \$75 million in funding is being offered statewide through the state Environmental Facilities Corp.

Mack Cook, the city’s director of administration and finance, said Tuesday that part of the application process includes the city taking the steps to bond or borrow, for the total amount the city is looking for, which the council voted to do.

The council also went through the necessary State Environmental Quality Review, or SEQR, for both projects, putting the city in the position to submit an application to the state by the April 15 deadline.

Catherine Bertini, former executive director of the United Nations World Food Program, speaks to a group of Groton High School students April 2, 2014. She is among the inaugural inductees to a Cortland County Hall of Fame.

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