Syracuse Elfun Society Newsletter

Fall 2021

We have been saddened to learn of the deaths of the following current or former members of the Syracuse Elfun Society:

Charles R. Miller, 93, of North Syracuse, died at Crouse Hospital on August 14, 2021.

Malcolm M. Clark passed away on August 30, 2021 at the age of 97. (see pg. 4 in this newsletter)

Richard C. Bauer, 91, passed away Saturday, September 4, 2021 in Saratoga Springs, NY.

James E. Crowell, 83, of Syracuse, passed away Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center.

Alexander "Paul" P. Gross, 89, of Syracuse passed away peacefully at Francis House on September 11, 2021.

Hoobert "Hoot" Huhta, age 93, passed away on September 14, 2021 with family by his side, after a long and productive life.

Louis O. Eber, Jr., 93, of Liverpool, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family and caregivers on Wednesday, September 15, 2021.

Elliott Krackhardt, 94, passed away at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center on September 27, 2021. If you owned a GE Color TV, Elliott designed the picture tube.

Complete obituaries for local individuals may be found online at Syracuse.com.

Holiday Luncheon

Mark your calendars for Thursday, December 2nd, to gather for a festive luncheon at The Cavalry Club in Manlius. It is a significant change of location, but the club promises us a big open room, socially distant, with no other group in the building. This should afford us a setting that is COVID safe. The venue has a beautiful view, ample parking, and is easily accessible without multiple steps. As the location is unfamiliar to some, we will include a map and directions in the reservation confirmations. It is less than 4 miles from the I-481 exit and Wegman's in Dewitt.

The Cavalry Club, located on Troop K Road, is aptly named. Troop D was originally located at the Armory in Syracuse, but needed more room for military activity and, more importantly, horses. In 1909 they purchased the first parcel and established the "Troop Farm" with stables, paddocks and drill areas. This served as a base while the Cavalry served on the Mexican border and charged across the Rio Grande in pursuit of Poncho Villa. They also served in WW 1, and Troop D eventually evolved into Troop K. This is also the location of historic Camp Newayo, established in 1917 as the grounds for the inaugural encampment of the New York State Police. Here a are a couple of links if you would like to peruse the full history.

History - Cavalry Club:

- https://www.cavalryclub.org/getmedia/1685c419-cc54-412b-989a-332a42cf5e8f/Brief-History.aspx
- Camp Newayo (nysth.com)

The flyer appears later in this newsletter, contact your friends, and make plans to attend! Happy Holidays.

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Elfun Family Day at the Ballpark

Well, we finally had the chance to see each other, re-acquaint, and have some fun.

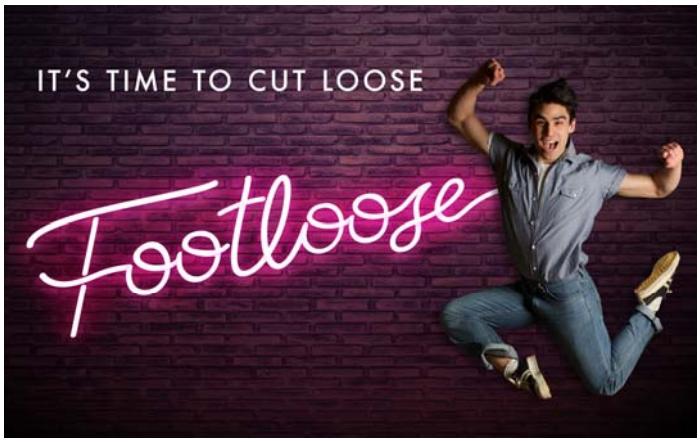
On Sunday August 22 we held our first outing since the December 2019 holiday luncheon. Elfun Family Day at the Ballpark proved to be a fine day weather-wise, so 37 Elfuns and family members and friends had no worries that the Buffalo Bisons won 9-2.

It sure is good to be an Elfun! The Mets were happy to welcome us back, and they seated us all by ourselves in the brand-new left field terrace. Look at these seats with movable stools, room for our snacks, and lots of area to move around, including the new 3rd base berm. There is no such thing as plain old stadium seating for us. Thank You Mets!

The safety net now extends the full length of the seating on both sides. That does not mean that foul balls won't land in the stands (as the sign indicates!). This ball came within a head of Bob Blake's head, then safely landed. Fortunately, no Elfuns were harmed by this exciting event.

Let's keep the Delta and Mu variants at bay and plan to gather for this family event again in 2022.

Broadway in the Finger Lakes



Just a few days later, 21 of us gathered at the Merry-Go-Round Playhouse in Auburn, helping the building celebrate its 100th Anniversary.

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Many of us recall the movie "Footloose" from 1984, and the musical parallels the movie. As we left the theater, we heard patrons remark that many of the songs were familiar. They should be...the studio released the soundtrack prior to the movie with the thought that movie-goers who knew the songs would be more emotionally invested in the story. That strategy must have worked, as 37 years later we still know the songs. The song and dance numbers, the live orchestra, as well as the costumes, were all stunning. It is remarkable that only 13 days ensued from the arrival of cast members in Auburn to the opening of the show.

We all look ravishing in our masks. You might also note some pink dots, which indicate that Rev Theater verified our vaccine credentials before allowing entrance to the theater. And why the preponderance of sweaters and jackets on September 1? The new ventilation system, with 4 UV-C fans (whatever they are, but Rev pointed them out to us) made the theater feel more like it was November. Other covid enhancements included reduced refreshments and a digital playbill. What did not change was Rev Theater's regard for the audience. As usual, Elfun Society received a warm shout-out at the beginning of the show.

We did not plan our usual after-theater dinner, but a few Eluns made their way to the classic Sherwood Inn for an informal bite to eat. With luck, we will be back to both the theater and dinner next season.

Something From The Past

We think of radio today as something that we can listen to on our iPhones, or something that you can

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tap on your car's touchscreen to choose a station to listen to. Around the turn of the century, 1900, not 2000, things were a lot more complicated. General Electric pioneered the development of radio transmitters that could reach across the Atlantic Ocean. They were a bit larger than today's radios - think like 50,000 pounds, and required a crew of 10+ to operate. One of those radios still exists and periodically operates.

The story of this radio appears on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter. A video of this radio in operation on July 4, 2021 has been posted on the Syracuse Elfun Society's YouTube page - it does help a little if you understand Swedish……

Missing Mal

The Elfun Board says Goodbye and Godspeed to former at-large member Mal Clark. Several years ago, Mal stepped up to take a seat on the board and monitor news relevant to our senior members (nearly all of the membership, as you well know). We relied on his wise counsel as well in planning bylaws, social events, and the annual meeting. We could count on Mal and Beverly to attend every social event. When Beverly left us, we were joined by Barbara and then Carolyn, and enjoyed their company so much. Mal eventually declined to stand for re-election, on the grounds that surely we could land a new board member under the age of 90! Thank you, Mal, for your friendship and service to the Syracuse Chapter.

Local Scams

The following spam text messages to our phones seem to have been tailored to our area:

"M&T Bank: Call us immediately at (470) 634 -6980 Your account ending in #9336 has been temporarily BLOCKED. Do not ignore. uf6R Notice-ID:fhg7ty"

"Thank you. Greetings. This is an automated message from the Disconnection Department of National Grid Electricity Company to inform you that you will be experiencing a disconnection of service today within 30 minutes due to nonpayment on the account. Please press 1 to speak with a representative. Thank you…"

Syracuse Elfun Society Board of Directors

SyracuseElfunSociety.org

Position	Individual	E-mail	Phone
Chairperson	Carl Chermak	CarlChermak@gmail.com	315-637-0380
Vice-Chairperson	open		
Secretary	open		
Treasurer	Joe Kinzel	jakinzel@msn.com	315-303-7347
Webmaster/DB	Bob Ruth	RuthRob@msn.com	315-451-0685
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Seniors	Fred Wenthen	Fred.Wenthen@gmail.com	private
Social Events	Cindy Chermak	Chermak@msn.com	315-637-0380
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At Large	Don MacLaughlin	donaldjmaclaughlin@gmail.com	315-652-5792
At Large	Ray Terry	raygterry@gmail.com	315-677-3008
At Large	Nick Vaccaro	nvaccaro@twcny.rr.com	315-457-3632
At Large	Pete Scalzo	none	315-457-0598

Alexanderson Alternator

This product was developed by General Electric in Schenectady, NY in the early 1900's. Radio broadcasting was in its infancy back then, there were few local stations, and international communications were limited by the power levels and bandwidth of the spark transmitters in use at that time. Ernst Alexanderson developed a high power (200,000 Watt), low frequency (17,200 Hz) transmitter that allowed reliable communication across the Atlantic Ocean. The following is a description of Alexanderson's invention.

Development

(The following is taken from "*Men and Volts- The Story of General Electric – 1941*") "In 1902, a stalwart recruit, noticeably Scandinavian of feature, boarded a train bound for Schenectady and General Electric. He had left Sweden a year or two earlier and his English was still halting.

This recruit eagerly watched the buildings on the river flats glide into view from the train window. In his eyes there was a look of curiosity and expectancy. But what he was searching for, and how successful he would be in finding it, time alone would reveal. For the next year or two no one heard of Ernst Alexanderson.

The thing that first drew attention to his talents was the Alexanderson single-phase railway motor of 1904. Not long after, when he asked for a chance at another problem, he was assigned to the new field of radio

General Electric had designed and manufactured spark transmitters working at the low frequency of 500 Hz. The great need of the moment was for a generator to produce alternating current of high frequency. Professor Reginald Fessenden had attempted unsuccessfully to build such a generator, but finally he took his problem to General Electric. The person to attack the problem was young Alexanderson.

For two years he devoted himself to it. At the end of two years, the results were amazing. The first models of his high frequency alternator would generate two kilowatts of alternating current at 60,000 Hz. Soon they reached 100,000 Hz.

An alternator invented in England produced a frequency of 120,000 Hz, but its output was only a fraction of a watt. Alexanderson produced an alternator of 200,000 watts. In it, precision was combined with the most delicate adjustments. The alternator when ready for the market was a ponderous affair, including a huge rotating disc that weighed tons and an array of supplementary parts which maintained exact operating regulation.

The immense rotating disc revolved in strong magnetic fields, and its periphery travelled 700 miles an hour; in four hours it could have rolled across the Atlantic. There were fearful moments in the laboratory when the first models were brought up to speed, and furtive glances toward the door. Yet for all its speed, that huge disc was not permitted to vary from its position by so much as the three-hundredth part of an inch. And the speed was kept constant, to the smallest fraction of a revolution."

Remaining Alternator

The only known operating Alexanderson Alternator is located at a World Historical Site in Grimeton, Sweden. It is powered up several times a year for demonstrations, most recently on July 4, 2021, and is operated at a power of 80,000 wats instead of its full rated power of 200,000 watts. The Alexanderson Alternator consists of three major parts: the **Driving Motor**; a **Gear Drive**, and the high frequency generator, commonly called the **Alternator**. These are assembled on a solid base of steel weighing about 50 tons. If you tour the station (it is open to the public) here's what you'll see:

The **Driving Motor** is a 500 HP induction motor operating from a 2,200 volt supply. When the driving motor rotates at 711.3 rpm, the alternator produces the desired frequency of 17,200Hz.

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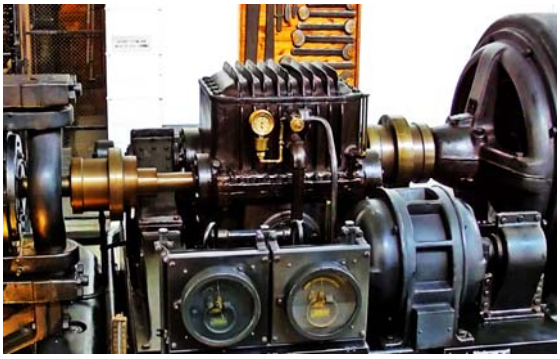
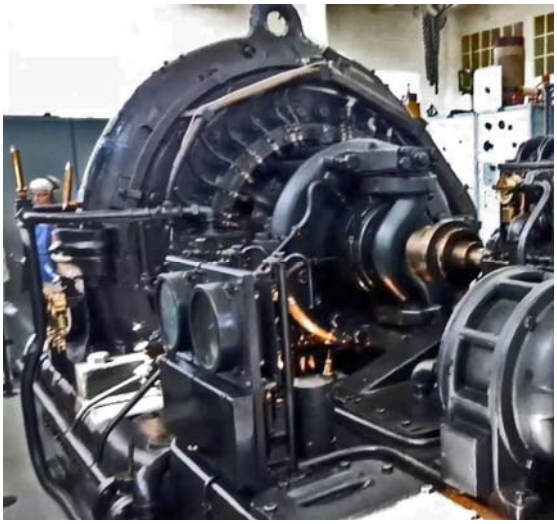


The **Gear Drive** increases the speed of the driving motor from 711.3 rpm to the alternator speed of 2115 rpm. This results in the alternator producing a frequency of 17,200 Hz.



The **Alternator** has a unique design. This is caused by the fact that it is supposed to produce a frequency of 17,200Hz, which is an extremely high frequency for rotating electrical machines. To keep the iron losses at a reasonable level, the stator is wound from very thin iron ribbon. The rotor of the alternator is a steel disc, 1.6 m in diameter and 7.5 cm thick at the periphery. The steel disc has no winding. Instead, 488 slots are milled at the periphery. The slots are filled with non-magnetic material (brass), in order to reduce air friction.

To obtain efficient transmission of the radio signal generated by the alternator's low frequency, a very large **Antenna** which consists of six 400+ foot towers with 150 foot crossarms supporting a multi-wire antenna is used. (This photo looks a bit like some of the sunset photos of GE's OTH Radar antennas - different frequency range, though.)

Most of the complicated electrical devices that we use today are controlled by a simple ON/OFF switch, or if there's a start-up sequence, it's controlled by timers or digital controls. The situation was much different in 1918 when start-up and operation was manually controlled by operators using large, complicated (and dangerous!) electrical switchboards.

During its most recent operation on July 4, 2021 a video was produced by the amateur radio operators that operate the alternator several times a year. An edited version of this video has been posted to the Syracuse Elfun Society YouTube channel and can be viewed at **https://youtu.be/b1ovf0DxKDc**. One caution – narration is in Swedish but the subtitles may help a bit.

Syracuse Elfun Society Holiday Party

Yes that was 2019, but now it's 2021, most COVID restrictions have been relaxed, and it's PARTY TIME again!

Thursday, December 2nd 2021, Cavalry Club in Manlius
11:30am - Arrive & Social Time - Cash Bar
12:00 noon - Luncheon Buffet
Cost is only $30 for each dues paying Elfun and guest.
Reservation deadline is Saturday, November 20th!

TEAR OFF AND MAIL

Mail to: Cindy Chermak, 10 The Orchard, Fayetteville, NY 13066 NO LATER than Saturday November 20th.

There will be ____ of us this year, and at $30/person that comes to $_____. A check payable to "*Elfun Society*" is enclosed. Directions to Cavalry Club are on the back of this flyer and will be included with your reservation confirmation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone & E-mail:

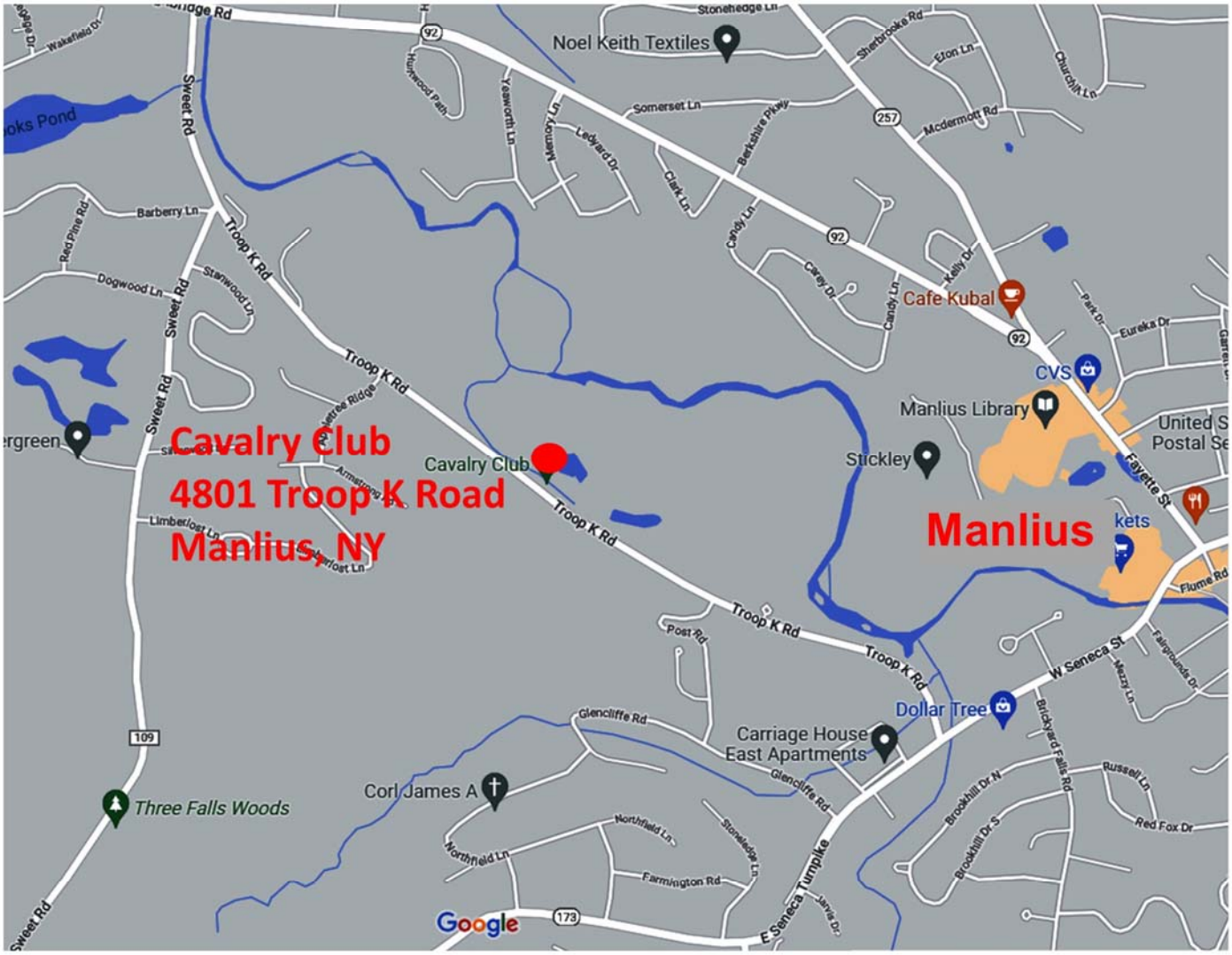
If possible, please seat us with: _____

_____

Syracuse Elfun Society Holiday Party Location

The Cavalry Club is located west of Manlius at **4801 Troop K Road**.

The easiest way to get to the club, taking weather and traffic into account, is to just plug this address into Google MAPS on your smartphone or your car's navigation system and let the software guide your to your destination via the fastest route.



Liverpool to Cavalry Club is about 20 minutes.