

# *THE OLD TOWN HALL AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE*

We've all watched our favorite town building, now racking up 107 years, undergoing renewal. For a long time, the Town Hall looked so old and frayed around the edges. It was hard to open the front door because there was a hump in the original flooring. Maybe old buildings need a little shaking up every 50 years or so. The last move in 1986 - up, backwards, and down, did the trick and the floor settled down.

Long ago, the original (cracked) plaster walls were covered with plywood and stained a warm brown. Not exactly high class, but you can't beat 60 years of zero maintainance.

Some improvements came at a more leisurely pace. In 1973, two election judges wrote to the Town Board complaining about rotten floor boards in the "outside toilet facilities." Without a doubt, meetings were shorter in the old days. But things suddenly changed in 1991 when new siding, windows, adjoining offices and "inside facilities" were installed.

Ten years ago, our Town Centennial renewed local interest in this building and, before long, history sprouted up all over Bthe place. The clerk's antique roll-top desk, with its secret locking rods, was always admired, but now some old Auto Club furniture, logging tools, memorabilia in the showcases and on the walls gave us a real sense of "time warp."

The 1895 steel safe had to be shoved into the corner, but it turned out to be a handy place to stack our three old gravestones. This hall has become a "two-for" experience: attend a meeting and bone up on history.

A hard-eyed realist might say the Y2K and beyond require more sophisticated facilities for the complexities of modern government. Maybe. But people need meetings and where else can you discuss the future with the past "in your face." Besides, our extra fax machine would fit nicely on top of the old gravestones.

No... this old hall, all gussied up with sparkling white siding, ain't what it used to be but, if you listen carefully, you'll hear echoes of old voices coming from the walls. The PLAWCS committee might even hear the controversy over spending \$64 for "Fenton's Sewer" in 1896. So it goes. . "deja vu all over again."

*Kathryn Adams and the Canosia Historical Society*