

Grand Island Historical Society

Post Office Box 135, Grand Island, New York 14072
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Spring 2017 Newsletter

2016-17 GRAND ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

President - Curt Nestark 864-8697

Vice President - Programs - Adele Upton 773-5847

Recording Secretary - Robin Shipman 912-6590

Corresponding Secretary – Mary Cooke 255-5838

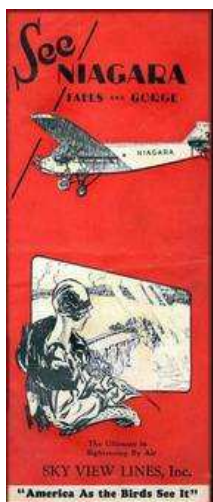
Treasurer – Arlene Ehde 773-3881

A Message From President Curt Nestark

Do you believe this weather?? In the winter of 2014-15, River Lea had icicles over 20ft. long hanging from the second-floor roof; this year no one has anything like that on their homes. What a winter season!

In addition to our monthly programs so ably arranged by Vice-President Adele Upton (schedule included in this newsletter), the Board of Trustees has planned several other exciting events for Spring 2017. First, there is a Community Education course at the high school starting in March, about the history of Grand Island, arranged and taught by several of our members. Second, in April we are taking another museum road trip, this time we are going to the Niagara Aerospace Museum. This tour is for members only and invited guests; please see details below. Third, our Erie County Legislator Kevin Hardwick has secured a \$1,000 grant for the historical society which the board has decided to use to update our collections process. Fourth, in May we sponsor the fourth-grade tours, by far the Society's largest tour project. Your help on one of the school buses or at River Lea is always needed and appreciated. Please help where and when you can to keep the fourth-grade tour alive for the children. Please see details on page 5. Finally, Beaver Island Park Manager Andy Hillman has moved on to work at Knox Farm State Park. We are grateful for Andy's many accomplishments for the Historical Society including a 5-year agreement with NY State Parks, River Lea outside painting (except the front), front porch security light and a new bathroom toilet. These are just some of the things that Andy accomplished with us; there are many more. In closing, I want to thank all the members and volunteers who work so hard to keep our museum, River Lea in Beaver Island State Park, always prepared for guests.

GI Historical Society Annual Spring Field Trip



Field Trip – **Friday, April 21** – Niagara Aerospace Museum

Meet at **9:30 am sharp** at GI Plaza, near Family Dollar

Cost: \$8 (over age 62 = \$6) -\$1 if attendee is a Historical Society Member + lunch off the menu at Four Points Sheraton

Return to GI Plaza parking lot by mid-afternoon

Reservations to cnestark10@hotmail.com or 864-8697 by 4/18

Join fellow Historical Society Members for a great tour!

Eat lunch overlooking the mighty Niagara and northern Grand Island!

Grand Island Historical Society
Programs, Events, and Open Houses: March 2017-July 2017

Join us for our monthly meetings, our interesting lineup of programs and speakers and enjoy some refreshments while visiting the historic River Lea farmhouse in Beaver Island State Park.

All programs are free and open to the public!

Thursday, March 2, 2017--7:00 pm general meeting and program. Our guest speaker will be Ray Wigle with a presentation on the ***Lockport Locks and Erie Canal***.

Sunday, March 19, 2017--**OPEN HOUSE AT RIVER LEA**--2:00-4:00 pm. Come celebrate Grover Cleveland's 180th birthday! "Profiles in Courage", a two part, made for TV movie about Grover Cleveland, begins at 2:15.

Thursday, April 6, 2017--7:00 pm general meeting and program. Our own member, Carol Rogers, will share a power point presentation: ***"Lighthouses of the Seaway Trail"***.

Friday, April 21, 2017--**FIELD TRIP**: Niagara Aerospace Museum followed by lunch at Four Points Sheraton. Details on page 2.

Sunday, April 23, 2017 --**OPEN HOUSE AT RIVER LEA**--2:00-4:00 pm. View the new GI Historical Society dvd "Island Homes in the 1950s"

Thursday, May 4, 2017--7:00 pm general meeting and program. Sandy Starks from Forest Lawn Cemetery will make a return visit to River Lea with a presentation entitled ***"Historic Heroines of Western New York"***.

Saturday, May 6, 2017--**LOVE YOUR PARKS DAY!! OPEN HOUSE AT RIVER LEA**, 2:00-4:00 pm. We love being part of the NYS Parks!

Thursday, June 1, 2017- 6:30 pm--Installation of Officers and catered dinner at River Lea. Please call Carolyn Doebert at 773-2643 for dinner reservations by May 24, 2017. Entertainment TBA.

Saturday, July 29, 2017--Paddles Up. Contact Curt Nestark if you can take a shift at the Historical Society table where we sell breakfast items and have a display and sell historical memorabilia. Even one hour is a big help!

Lockport Locks & The Erie Canal



Photos of the restored locks, part of the March program on Thursday, March 2 at 7 pm at River Lea. Hope to see you there!

Historic Well Restoration Continues



As you can see by comparing the photo above, taken in October, and the photo on the newsletter cover page from earlier, repairs have been made to the well that was relocated to the front lawn of River Lea in February 2016. A huge thank you to masons John Anderson and Tyler Anderson for shoring up the lower portion of the well. Historical Society member and leader of the well project, Paul Leuchner, reports that with the onset of the winter season, restoration work was suspended. Remaining work needs to be scheduled with the new Parks Manager and should begin soon after the good weather arrives this spring. Check out progress when you are at the park this spring and summer. The fall 2017 newsletter will include an update.

We Need YOU for the 4th grade Tours



Society Member Bryce Shipman showing the 4th graders some of the collection of historic farm implements.

In May every 4th grader on Grand Island takes a tour of River Lea, Town Hall including the Town Court, Clerk's Office and the jail cell, and a bus tour of historic sites around the island. It is the Historical Society's single largest annual outreach program and requires many people to be a success. Won't you consider helping? Volunteers ***DO NOT*** need to work for every tour (we have 3 days and 2 of the days have 2 tours for a total of 5 tours of River Lea) and even a couple hours of your time can be a huge help. Tour day tasks include River Lea room docent (explain a few things in the room to which you are assigned), River Lea tour guide (move groups from one room/area to the next) and bus guide (teams of two guides on each bus explain the historic sites around the island). Information and guidance are provided to guarantee success at whichever spot you choose. For River Lea jobs, please contact Curt Nestark at 716-864-8697 or cnestark10@hotmail.com For bus guides, please contact Mary Cooke at 716-255-5838 or maryscooke@roadrunner.com Please consider joining us for this most important effort!

Comment [MC1]:

River Lea Library Alert! From Barbara Birt

First of all, a big "Thank You" to all of you who worked in the Historical Society library this past year. A year ago, when I sent out a plea for help, the response was terrific. Some worked for a few mornings, others for many. At that time, we were overwhelmed with years of accumulation of newspapers, clippings, who knows what all. With the help of many hands, we have made great progress. However, there is still a lot to be done, to assess and weed the remainder of the collection and bring the resources we have into the 21st century. So, it's back to work. I would like to schedule work days, on Tuesdays as follows:

10 am – 12 noon on March 7, 14, 21, 28, April 4, 18, 25. Note: NOT April 11

At the end of April, we will figure out what's next.

Please call me at 773-5300, or email birtgrisny@gmail.com with any questions or to let me know that you plan to help, so that, if for some reason we cancel, I can notify you. Thanks!

Holiday Lunches a Huge Success!



The 2016 Holiday Luncheons were a huge success! River Lea looked fabulous decorated in the style of Williamsburg. A very beautiful and delicious meal was enjoyed by all. Society Member Nancy LaChiusa (on the right in the photo below) presented a most informative program about Miniatures. She brought a wide variety of her work for everyone's enjoyment and was ably assisted by a fellow miniature enthusiast, Denise Voelker, pictured below on the left. The Country Store, held in the library, added extra income to this very important fundraiser. Thanks to everyone who helped---there were so many of you! And thanks to all who helped take down Christmas in February—because of the great response from members, it was done in 2 sessions!



Announcing 2017 Holiday Luncheon Dates

Mark your calendars for a festive holiday lunch at River Lea on one of these three days:
Tuesday, December 5; Friday, December 8 or Saturday, December 9

The Remington's will be catering and the house will be beautifully decorated! Back for 2017, in response to many requests, will be a Saturday lunch for all those who work during the week. Spread the word to all of your friends, especially those who tried to get a reservation in the past and couldn't. Reservation details will be in the fall newsletter.

Kudos Collette & Dennis Remington!

For more than 20 years, the very talented and hard-working Collette & Dennis Remington have catered the beautiful and delicious Holiday Luncheons and Installation Dinners for the Grand Island Historical Society. They stopped for a moment at the last luncheon in December to pose for a picture so we could include it in our newsletter and thank them for so many years of faithful service! Come to the Installation Dinner on June 1 to enjoy yet another delicious meal from the Remingtons! We're very pleased to have them on board for the 2017 Holiday Luncheons! Thank you very much, Collette and Dennis!



Just Arrived at River Lea

Accessions Chairs Carolyn Doebert and Sharon Nichols report that the beautiful doll shown in the photo to the left was recently donated to the Historical Society by Jeanette Ray. It is a turn of the century German bisque doll that has been beautifully restored by Marcia Hutt. When the Grand Island Historical Society was formed in 1962, their first task was to save River Lea from demolition. They succeeded and have spent the next 55 years making River Lea what it is today. The immense collection of items in the museum have come from generous donations, for which the Society is ever grateful!



GRAND ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Please Print)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ email _____

- ___ Individual membership @ \$20 per person
- ___ Couples @ \$35 (married couples)
- ___ Family membership (3 or more persons residing at same address) @ \$40
- ___ Lifetime membership (one time dues payment) @ \$250
- ___ Business/Professional membership @ \$100
- ___ Student membership @ \$10 per person

Return form with check or money order (made out to the Grand Island Historical Society)
to:

Jeri Benzing, Membership Chair
Grand Island Historical Society
2136 Baseline Road, #225
Grand Island, NY 14072

Membership year is September 1 – August 31