

YEAR IN REVIEW-2014

Blizzard 2014 - January 2014



The Blizzard of 2014 did not hit Grand Island anywhere near as bad as south of Buffalo. Frigid temperatures caused the Grand Island School District to close Tuesday and Wednesday, January 7th & 8th. Near white out conditions on and off throughout Tuesday, ended in a travel advisory in the Town for the afternoon and evening hours. An ice jam in the East River resulted in some flooding along the Grand Island shoreline.

Metz Building Sold – January 2014



The building that was formerly known as the Hooker Chemical, Occidental, Dunlop and most recently Metz building has been sold to Rudra Management and Rosewood Hotels of Cheektowaga for \$850,000. The building is located on Long Road. The first level is expected to be used for retail and office space. The second and third floors may be used for a hotel and residential.

Two Small Islands in the Mighty Niagara - January 2014



A presentation of "The Lore, Legend and Future of Strawberry and Motor Boat Islands", presented by the Buffalo Launch Club Heritage/Entertainment Committee and the GI Historical Society took place on Saturday, January 25th at 8:00 p.m at the BLC. Presenters of stories and photos included President of GI Historical Society Curt Nestark. BLC Historian Tom Frauenheim, Niagara River Historian Paul Leuchner. Gary Kenline, a member of the Kenline family who owned Motor Boat from 1937-1984 spoke and "Lefty" Lowenstroh, assistant to the caretaker of Motor Boat after 1937, told stories. Jeffrey and Lyle Dinsmore of LDC Construction spoke about the current reconstruction that is taking place on both islands.

GI Rod and Gun Club Present Plaque - January 2014

The Grand Island Rod and Gun Club presented Connor Middle School Vice Principal Eleanor Payne with a plaque of recognition for saving the life of a student in September, 2013 at the school. The student had collapsed in the hallway and had no pulse, Ms. Payne immediately began CPR, which got the girl breathing again and saved her life

Sub-Freezing Temps Hamper Island Firefighters Efforts - January 2014



Story and photos by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer

At 10:36 a.m. on Friday, January 24th, Grand Island firefighters responded to a reported "structure fire" at the Melrose Rd. residence of firefighter Mark Kowzan. Except for some "minor" extension into the residence itself, structural damage of \$50,000 and \$75,000 to the contents, was mostly confined to the garage. The cause was determined to be an accidental ignition of material stored on an electric stove, according to GIFIC Fire Investigator Chuck Berlinger.

Jess Dhaliwal Signs With U.B. - February 2014



Jess Dhaliwal (center) with parents and brothers.

GIHS senior Jess Dhaliwal signed a letter of commitment to the University at Buffalo for a full scholarship on Wednesday, February 5, 2014. Jess competes in the shot put and the discus in both indoor and outdoor track.

Debra Remson Memorial Concert - February 2014

The annual "Kaleidoscope String" concert was a memorial concert in honor of Debra Remson who passed away in early November 2013. Ms. Remson was the string teacher in Grand Island for many years and touched the lives of many students. The concert was held on Thursday, February 13, 2014.

Minus 16 Degrees at 7am - February 2014



Wednesday, Feb. 12 morning was reported to be -1 on local TV but in Reg Schopp's backyard it was -16! Thank goodness the sun is out and the temperature is expected to climb into the mid 20's by this afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Whiting Celebrate 70th Anniversary - February 2014



Long time Island residents Richard and Rosemary Whiting celebrated their 70th anniversary on March 4, 2014. A family celebration was held at the Culbert residence on Grand Island and dinner and accommodations at the Red Coach Inn, Niagara Falls, NY.

1000 Students Trained in CPR - March 2014

The American Heart Association (AHA) trained all available GI High School students the week of March 4-7th in Hands-Only or bystander CPR. Over 1000 students trained during gym class. Hands-Only CRP can be taught in 30 minutes or less and during class the instructors are also showing the students the operation of an AED (automated external defibrillator).

New Project Concerns Nearby Residents - March 2014

The Light House Pointe mixed residential housing project located south of Whitehaven and west of East River is causing a big concern to nearby neighbors on East River Road and Timberlink. The project needs to be rezoned from R2 to R3 and consists of upscale two story luxury apartments on the west side of the site and five, three story senior housing units on the east side.

Student Suspended for NRA T-Shirt – March 2014

A student at GIHS was given a one day suspension after a perceived violation of dress code for content on a t-shirt worn by the sophomore student. After the situation went viral in the news media, School Superintendent Teresa Lawrence removed the suspension from the student's record and reviewed the dress code guidelines.

Car Vandalism Near High School - March 2014

The Erie County Sheriff's Department has reported almost a dozen Grand Island cars being vandalized recently. The cars were unlocked, so it is essential to lock car doors and remove valuables from the vehicles. Many vehicles were located near the Grand Island High School.

Chamber Announces Citizen of Year Winners - March 2014

The Grand Island Chamber of Commerce has announced the winners of the awards for the Chamber of Commerce's 48th Annual Citizen of the Year event. They are Nonnie Carroll - Volunteer Service, Cheryl Chamberlain - Educator 2013, Hizair Hair Salon - Business of the Year, Lynn Alan Konovitz - Professional Contributor, Teddy Linenfelter - Service to the Community. Congratulations everyone! The award dinner will take place on Thursday, April 24th at Byblos Niagara Resort.

Island Firefighters Handle Two Single Car MVA's - April 2014



Story and photos by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer

At 4:47 p.m. on Monday, March 31st, Grand Island Fire Company rescue personnel responded to a one car MVA on West River Road between Fix and Love Roads. Ass't Fire Chief Mark Sadkowski reported that 72 year-old Marilyn Helenbrook of Grand Island was traveling south on the West River service roadway, crossed over into the opposite lane, hitting a nearby fire hydrant and coming to rest against a utility pole. She sustained no life threatening injuries according to GIFC medics and was transported to Kenmore Mercy Hospital for precautionary medical evaluation.

At 6:28 p.m. Grand Island Fire Company personnel responded to another one car MVA on the Whitehaven Rd. overpass. 22 year-old Alexis Raepple of Grand Island failed to negotiate a curve on the entrance ramp to the northbound I-190 and crashed into a guardrail and light pole. Fire Capt. Dan Mathes reported that she was evaluated by GIFC medics at the scene but declined hospitalization.

Intense Apartment Fire Results in Occupant Fatality - April 2014

Update: The 81-year-old Grand Island woman who died when she was trapped Saturday evening in her basement apartment on Baseline Road was identified as Delores Bajak, by the Erie County Sheriff's Department.

Story by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer

Shortly before 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 5th, Grand Island firefighters responded to a reported "structural fire" at the Grant Court Apartment complex at 2462 Baseline Rd., across from Sidway Elementary school.

Fire Chief Matt Osinski stated that firefighters encountered heavy smoke and flames pouring out of the front of the building from a basement apartment. A Grand Island police officer and Erie County Deputy Sheriff had already attempted to rescue the 82 year-old female occupant but were unsuccessful due to the oppressive fire conditions. Eight other tenants managed to escape from the burning structure as Engines #4, #2, Ladder Truck #6, and Rescue #1 arrived on location. Grand Island Fire Company Fire Investigator Chuck Berlinger indicated that careless smoking was the probable cause of the fire and that in home oxygen use contributed to the intense fire load that firefighters had to contend with. Damage was estimated at \$75,000 to the structure and \$120,000 to the contents.

Jon Roth Receives Award - April 2014



At the annual NYS Athletic Administrators Association (NYSAAA) conference in Saratoga Springs in March, GIHS Athletic Director Jon Roth was presented with the Apple Appreciation Award for Section 6. The award recognizes individuals for "the loyalty and extra effort given to the NYSAAA". Jon has been a part of Grand Island athletics for 40 years and has been Athletic Director for the past 20 years. He received the NYSAAA Award in 2011 for Section 6.

Island Man Flees Accident at 100 mph – April 2014

Tyler J. Rice, 40, of Grand Island, was involved in a property damage accident on Whitehaven Road on April 30th and fled the scene at 100 mph. He was charged with driving while intoxicated, reckless driving and other violations.

Magdalyn Chauby Awarded Scholarship - April 2014



Theatre in the Mist, a local community theatre group, presented one of two Lisa Gravel Memorial Performing Arts Scholarships to Magdalyn Chauby, a senior at Grand Island High School with aspirations to attend college in the fall for Vocal Performance.

Easter Egg Hunt at Town Commons – April 2014



Mary Stewart Photo

The Island Easter Bunny Visit and Egghunt was a well attended event on Saturday, April 19th at the Town Commons. The Recreation Department reports that approximately 200 - 250 kids were on hand to find the 2,500 eggs and 24 golden eggs hidden throughout the Commons.

GI Wins Tech Wars Five In A Row - May 2014

It was another great showing by the Grand Island High School Technology students this year at the N.C.C.C. Tech Wars Engineering Competition. Over 50 students competed this year in events ranging from Vex Robotics to large scale bridge and seismic tower design. The students took the 1st place trophy home again for the 5th year in row. The GI team took the top three spots in the Hockey Bots competition. First place, Noah Teator and Will Hughes, second place-Ricky Hoover and Lucas Robinson and third place - Shane Quaratillo and Simon Pannullo.

Aerobics For All Ages for 35 Years – May 2014



Karen Figler started an Aerobic dance class in 1980, while still in college and hasn't stopped. Her class meets twice a week and is attended by 40-90 year old "fit" ladies. The group has been generous in their support of many fund raisers to help the community of Grand Island. Karen stated "I am grateful for having this opportunity for all of these years, and hope to share many more with my wonderful and "fit" ladies." The aerobics class is at St. Timothy's Church at the corner of Staley and Stony Point Roads. Aerobics class is on Monday and Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Dansereau 2014 Legionnaire of the Year - May 2014



From left Commander Fred Wornick and Lieutenant Colonel Paul Dansereau.

The Grand Island American Legion Post #1346 has awarded Lieutenant Colonel Paul Dansereau as 2014 Legionnaire of the Year for the Post. The qualifications for the honor include being a member in good standing, having shown outstanding service within the Post and community involvement and exemplifying the Motto for God and Country. Commander Fred Wornick noted that Paul's hard work and service really stood out.

County Surplus Program Saves Town \$ - May 2014



From left: Supervisor Mary Cooke, Rec. Supervisor Joe Menter and Erie County Legislator Kevin Hardwick

Grand Island, NY... Erie County Legislator Kevin Hardwick and Grand Island Supervisor Mary Cooke announce that the county and town have partnered to outfit various offices in town hall with furniture from the county's surplus warehouse, saving the town money. Among the items donated are a book shelf, tables, chairs, dry erase board and a turnstile that was used at Ralph Wilson Stadium. The furniture will be used throughout town offices, including the Recreation Center, Town Hall and the Police Department.

Mitch Weise, Lacrosse Player - May 2014



GIHS senior Mitch Weise has been the manager and the ball boy for Coach Reddien's jv lacrosse team for the past four years. On Wednesday, May 14th in the final game of the year against Williamsville North, Mitch got his chance to play thanks to the coaches and teams. Grand Island resident and WGRZ TV personality Mary Friona did a heart-warming story on Mitch this week.

Esther Lozo Celebrates 100th Birthday – May 2014



Esther Bertha Lozo celebrated her 100th birthday on Saturday May 17, 2014, with family & friends at the VFW Pavilion on Grand Island. Esther was born in Buffalo on May 19, 1914. Esther, one of the eight Webb children, grew up on the Henry Schutt (her grandfather's) farm on Stony Point Road and attended School #9, a two-room school. She met her husband, the late Clifford Henry Lozo, while he was working on the Hardy farm on Ransom Road (where the high school and middle school are now located). They were married in Trinity Church on June 5, 1941. Mrs. Lozo has three children, Richard Lozo, Sr., Linda Lozo and JoAnn Holmes, all who reside on Grand Island. Esther passed away August 26, 2014, peacefully at home.

GIHS DECA Travels to Nationals! - May 2014



Three Grand Island High School students qualified for the 68th Annual DECA International Career Development Conference in Atlanta, Georgia where they competed against students from all over the world in business related events. Ashley Franz competed in Hotel and Lodging Management and the team of Nancy Dahlquist and Christopher Swagler competed in the Hospitality Team Decision Making event.

GI Fire Company Celebrates 76 Years of Service - May 2014

Town, county and state government officials praised the Grand Island Fire Company for its "proud tradition of community service" over the past 76 years. This anniversary celebration took place at fire headquarters on Saturday, May 17th, 2014.

Big Six Marina Improvements - June 2014



Improvements to Big Six Marina are almost complete. The floating dock system is in place with 144 boat slips available. Three fishing docks are also in place. Two are accessed by a new bridge over the creek and a pathway is under construction.

GI GAC 55th Anniversary - June 2014

The Grand Island Golden Age Center had an open house to celebrate its 55th anniversary this past Saturday, June 1st.

Relay Rocked Veterans Park - June 2014



Aaron Bobek photo.

The Relay for Life event on Saturday, May 31st was a huge success. Facts & figures from Relay for Life 2014: 35 relay teams, 346 participants, approximately 1000 additional attendees, 100+ survivors, and \$104,459.39 raised so far.

Pfc. Charles N. DeGlopper – June 2014



June 9, 2014 marked the 70th anniversary of the death of Island native and World War II hero Charles DeGlopper. [See story.](#)

The Miracle League of Western New York Kicks off its Third Year - June 2014



Sabre alumni Derek Smith, player Ian Cameron and Sabre alumni Darryl Shannon.

The Miracle League of WNY held opening day on Sunday, June 1st at Veterans Park on Grand Island. Buffalo Sabres Alumn, Derek Smith and Darryl Shannon were in attendance to throw out the first pitch. The Buffalo Sabres and the Buffalo Sabres Alumni have been instrumental in providing financial support for the building of the field.

Millstone Donated to River Lea - June 2014



A millstone, dating back to the old Stamler farm on Whitehaven Road, has been donated by Kathy Bridgeman, who is the present owner of the portion of the farm where the millstone has been for a number of years. Ricky Hoover of Boy Scout Troop 630 made a Eagle Scout project out of it and had help from fellow scouts. A special thank you to Kathy Bridgeman for donating the millstone and to her grandson Caleb Armbruster, who had spent hours digging around the stone prior to the scouts, giving them a head start in removing the millstone.

New Recycling Totes Arrive - June 2014

The new recycling totes were delivered in the beginning of June and caused a bit of a stir to the Island. Some complained of the size, for storage and maneuverability. Others like them very much.

Wagon Decorating Contest



From left: Luke and Brody Winarski

This year's winners, and defending champs from 2013, are Luke and Brody Winarski, ages 8 and 6.

Lions Club Picnic - July 2014



The Grand Island Lions Club hosted its 56th Annual "Special Kids Picnic" on Wednesday, July 16th at the Buffalo Launch Club. Over 900 children attended the event and got to enjoy all the hot dogs and hamburgers they could eat, along with popcorn and beverages.

Islanders in the News - Kara Dudley - July 2014



Kara Dudley doesn't know super model Karlie Kloss is behind her.

Former Island resident Kara Dudley moved to New York City January 1st after graduating from college to become an actress. Just this week, Kara had her 15 minutes of fame after being photographed coming out of a store in NYC with Victoria Secret super model Karlie Kloss behind her. Kara is the daughter of Mike and Lisa Dudley.

Paddles Up Niagara - July 2014



The 9th Annual Paddles Up Niagara went off without a hitch on Saturday, July 26th. Despite a bad weather forecast by local media, over 80 paddlers were at the early morning Poker Run and 227 individuals in 210 watercraft participated in the afternoon voyage.

Fire Destroys River Oaks Rest Room - August 2014



An early afternoon fire on Tuesday, August 12th destroyed the the rest room at the end of the 16th hole of River Oaks Golf Club. Numerous fire trucks and fire fighters were on hand to keep the flames in check.

Lightning Strikes Tree near Love Road Residence - August 2014



Tree struck 15 feet from home. Story and photos by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer.

At 6:25 p.m. on Saturday, August 2nd, Grand Island fire fighters responded to a reported lightning strike at a Love Rd. residence.

GIHS Chalk Walk Team - August 2014



From left: Abhiraj Grewal, Ali Price and Lovepreet Kaur

On Saturday, August 9th, the talented and artistic team from Grand Island High School took home the People's Choice trophy along with Third Place honors at the 30th Annual KeyBank Chalk Walk Competition.

Miracle League Playground Dedication - August 2014



The Miracle League of WNY dedicated their new playground on Saturday, August 16th. At the event a tree was dedicated "in Loving Memory of Joan A. Droit, One of the Founders of the Miracle League of Grand Island and WNY for her lifelong commitment to all Children and Young Adults."

12U Go To States - August 2014



A proclamation was given to the GI Little League 12U team who made it into the NY State Championships in Cicero, NY, as one of only six sectional winners, representing all of WNY. This is the first Grand Island team to make it this far and the first WNY team to make it to states since Orchard Park in 1993.

New Van for Golden Age Center - September 2014



The Golden Age Center received a \$55,000 Community Block Grant with help from Erie County Legislator Kevin Hardwick which was used to purchase a 8 passenger, fire engine red van. The van was delivered on Tuesday, September 2nd, which also happened to be Center Director Barbara Gannon's birthday!

37th Annual Antique Boat Show - September 2014



The 37th annual Antique Boat Show and Race Boat Reunion was held on Saturday, September 6th at the Buffalo Launch Club. The event included more than 150 restored vintage wooden and fiberglass boats and newer models on display.

Islanders in the News - Luke Gworek - September 2014



Cancer patient Luke Gworek started a kid friendly band aid drive. Luke has received band aids from the Grand Island community and from all over the country. Massachusetts, New Mexico, California, Pennsylvania, Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, and Wisconsin are just a few.

Friday Night Under the Lights - September 2014



Kevin & Dawn Cobello photo.

Time Warner Cable and the Buffalo News estimated there were 3000 people on hand to re-dedicate Gene Masters Field and to honor retired Athletic Director H. David Meyers by naming the sports complex after him on September 19th. The Vikings took on longtime rival Williamsville South and battled back from a 14-0 score at the half to come close, with the Billies winning 28-21.

Taste of Grand Island - September 2014



The Taste of Grand Island on Saturday, September 27th was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Paul Leuchner - October 2014



Paul Leuchner wrote: This weekend brought us an array of exciting weather. The attached photo was taken during the late afternoon of October 4th when the sun appeared briefly between lake effect rain showers.

Dan McMahon, Veteran of the Month - October 2014



New York State Senator Mark Grisanti named Dan McMahon as the ninth recipient of his "Veteran of the Month" recognition program. A resident of the Town of Grand Island who served in the Army and spent time deployed in Vietnam, McMahon is the ninth recipient of the monthly honor.

Byblos Niagara Up For Sale - October 2014

Byblos Niagara Resort, formerly the Grand Island Holiday Inn, is back on the market. The owners are asking close to \$10 million dollars for the 263-room property.

Fall Lawnmower Race Donates Funds - October 2014



Members of the Fall Lawnmower Race committee and the winning Super Modified team presented a check for \$1000 to Dave Brand, Chairman of the Kaegebein playground committee.

Shirley Luther's 90th Birthday - October 2014



Mary Stewart Photo

An open house in honor of Shirley Luther's 90th birthday was held Sunday, October 12th, at old Trinity Church. The open house was hosted by Shirley's daughters and was enjoyed by the many friends who came to wish Shirley a happy birthday.

Schroeder-Watt & Masters Join Hall of Fame - November 2014

The 2014 Section VI Hall of Fame Inaugural Class was inducted at a ceremony at Ralph Wilson Stadium on Friday, November 7, 2014. There are two islanders in this class. Stacey Schroeder-Watt, a former state champion in discus and shot put and legendary GHS Coach Gene Masters, the first baseball and football coach. They were both previously inducted into the NYPHSAA Hall of Fame.

Councilman Crawford Resigns - November 2014

It was announced at the November 17th Town Board meeting that Deputy Highway Superintendent Joe Donlon has resigned after 12 years with the Town Highway Department. Councilman Richard Crawford has been appointed to the position and has resigned from the Town Board after 19 years of service.

Family Escapes Fast Moving Residential Fire - November 2014



At 8:19 p.m. on Saturday, November 22nd, Grand Island firefighters responded to a reported structure fire at the Palumbo residence on Broadway. The owners 24-year-old son discovered smoke in the second floor bedroom area, immediately called the GIFC for assistance, and escaped from the building with two other family members. The fire was brought under control with 40 minutes. The fire originated in the kneehole space on the second floor and is considered accidental. Total damage was estimated at \$50,000 to the structure and \$30,000 to the contents.

Slick Roads Cause Major Accident on North Bridge - November 2014



Story and photos by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer

At 6:25 p.m. on Thanksgiving day, November 27th, Grand Island Fire Company rescue personnel responded to multiple MVA's on the North Grand Island Bridge, northbound. Ass't. Fire Chief Mark Sadkowski reported that after a vehicle was t-boned by another driver, approaching vehicles could not stop due to the slippery conditions and slammed into each other and nearby guardrails. Up to 56 cars were reportedly involved. A total of 12 patients were transported to local hospitals with relatively minor injuries. The bridge was not reopened to traffic until after 10:00 p.m. that evening.

Happy 100th Birthday Jean Wholahan - December 2014



Congratulations to our long-time Grand Islander, Jean Wholahan, on reaching the milestone of a one hundredth birthday! When she walked into the Fellowship Hall of the Island Presbyterian Church on Sunday, November 30th, she was greeted by her many good friends from her church, and a large group of her League of Women Voters friends.

Lighthouse Pointe Public Hearing - December 2014

The Lighthouse Pointe development public hearing on December 1st was well attended.. The lone speaker in favor of the development was their own lawyer, Sean Hopkins, who described it as 246, 2-3 bedroom rental units, priced from \$1395 and up. Three phases would be planned with the first to start in the center of the property. Hundreds of concerned citizens packed the courtroom and the foyer to show their displeasure at the newest plan. Joe LaLonde and Hank Cushing began the over 90 minute comment period against the project. Another dozen spoke their mind on why the project is not welcome and in some of their eyes illegal. They covered rentals versus home ownership, HOA laws, green space issues, flooding potential, vacancy issues in pre-existing apartment complexes, auto, pedestrian and bicycle traffic issues, among others. Most of the surrounding homes are upper middle class neighborhoods. The bottom line for most is the project does not fit in, it is commercial. Many speakers thought the Town Planning Board had let them down after their approval of the Preliminary Plat.

Middle School Receives Play 60 Grant - December 2014



Congratulations to Carley Antonelli and the Physical Education Staff for receiving the NFL Play 60/Fuel Up to Play 60 Grant. This grant is sponsored by the Buffalo Bills and the National Dairy Council. The students were at the Sunday, November 30th Buffalo Bills game against the Cleveland Browns, students from VCMS were presented with a check in the amount of \$5,000.00 for iPad mini's, dance instruction and various prizes for participating students.

NOCO Express Grand Re-Opening - December 2014



NOCO Express celebrated its grand re-opening on Tuesday, December 16th at 9:00 a.m. The new store is 4,000 square feet and includes wi-fi, self-serve U-Swirl Frozen Yogurt, many snacks and beverages.

Saving Historic Island Buildings - December 2014



June Crawford

The Historic Preservation Advisory Board is hoping to have an ordinance passed in the next few months that would establish regulations for the preservation of buildings that have historical significance. Advisory Board member June Crawford is speaking with community groups to spread the word. On Friday, December 19th she spoke with four of GIHS teacher Robert Simpson's government classes, outlining the basics of the ordinance and giving a power point presentation of properties that have been lost and those still here. Ms. Crawford said "historical properties can be a catalyst for new business by becoming a stopping point for tourists". An ordinance can help owners with funding and tax breaks. At this time the only Grand Island property that is on the National Register of Historic Places is the Spaulding Boathouse on West River. The National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. Mrs. Crawford will be speaking with 7th grade Social Studies classes at VCMS on Monday, December 22nd and with the Golden Age Center members on January 22nd.