

The Genesee Beacon

News from the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse Historical Society



*Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse
America's oldest surviving
lighthouse on Lake Ontario*

LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM • 70 Lighthouse Street • Rochester, New York 14612
(585) 621-6179 • Email: info@geneseeighthouse.org • www.geneseeighthouse.org

Open May 1 - November 30, 2010

Friday, Saturday and Sunday 1 pm to 5 pm, Monday 10 am - Noon (Free)

* Group tours by appointment

National Trust Awards the Lighthouse

The Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse was one of only 22 historic sites selected from across the nation – along with President James and Dolley Madison's home and the Woodrow Wilson Family House - to receive a prestigious grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors. "The grants go toward protecting the places that tell America's story and provide the foundation for important preservation work nationwide," said David Brown, executive vice-president of the National Trust, in making the announcement. We, in turn, are truly honored that the national significance of the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse complex has been recognized through this highly competitive grant award.

The grant will be used to guide the Lighthouse Society board in reevaluating the interpretation of the Lighthouse Keeper's Home (1863) and will result in a major report on all the keepers, their wives and children, the objects and furnishings they owned, the lifestyles they led, and their contributions as American civil servants to the urbanization of Western New York. Our prominent team of experts who will be completing the year-long study are: Cynthia Falk, professor at the Cooperstown Graduate Program in Museum Studies, who brings to the project her national experience in studying vernacular interiors; John Bero of Bero Architecture, Rochester, who will contribute his architectural knowledge of the Keeper's House; and Cynthia Hunt, graduate of the Cooperstown Program and a native Rochesterian, who has extensive experience in researching the lifestyles of Western New Yorkers.

Most especially, the project will involve you – our members – as well as visitors to the Lighthouse to help us determine how the interior of the Keeper's home should be used to interpret our rich heritage along the river and shoreline. What would you like to see in the keeper's home? A historically furnished home reflecting the life of a keeper or exhibits on local history or a combination of a furnished keeper's house and related exhibitions? What era(s) of history interest you? Last, but certainly not least, what would you like to learn on a visit to our site – the life of a lighthouse keeper and his family, local industry (boat building, blast furnace, etc.), the history of Charlotte, technology as it relates to water or ... what?

It's a process known as "shared authority" in professional museum circles. No longer do museums believe

they have the sole authority to determine what visitors should learn on a visit to their site; instead, it's equally important for us to learn what interests you so that we can share our knowledge in a way you'll find relevant. Cynthia Hunt will be surveying visitors throughout August and survey forms are also available in the gift shop so be sure to stop by during public hours and complete one. The survey phase will be completed by mid-September and we'll report the results in the next issue of *The Beacon*. This project – along with other studies to be conducted on the site – will provide the foundation for the Society to develop a long-range strategic plan for preserving and interpreting America's oldest surviving lighthouse on Lake Ontario well into the 21st century and we'll keep you posted every step of the way!

Volunteer of the Year: Tom Clayton

His "can do" attitude has played a key role in all of our recent achievements at the Lighthouse as members acknowledged when they voted Tom Clayton the "2010 Volunteer of the Year" at the Semi-Annual Meeting. Tom became a Lighthouse volunteer four years ago after retiring from a 41-year-career in supply management at the Eastman Kodak Company (while maintaining a second career as a tax specialist). His enthusiasm, talent, and commitment to our historic complex led to his nomination as a Lighthouse Society trustee and he has worked long hours on the trustee team that oversees the care of our buildings and grounds. Whether he's coordinating the effort to restore the Keeper's 19th century well, setting-up for a special event, or dropping everything to guide a new visitor up into the Tower, Tom exemplifies the positive spirit that is contributing so much to our museum's growth. Congratulations!



Tom Clayton accepts his "Volunteer of the Year" award from Board president, Bob Owens (photo by Fred Amato)

The Rest of the Story

After our highly successful new program featuring the Irondequoit Concert Band, we asked two of our best history detectives at the Lighthouse to offer some background on the tradition of music both in our neighborhood and on the water. – Ed.

wrote the following:

“The Shriner’s Excursion in the middle of the summer was a day people on both sides of the Lake looked forward to. Very early in the career of the NO. 1 it became a big-time extravaganza with the bands the Shriners brought

photographs, or documents relating to music on the water, we’d appreciate it if you could share them with us.

MUSIC ON SHORE by Jack Kemp, Village History Group

Charlotte has had an extensive history relating to its love of music, especially band music. Unfortunately little has been documented except through advertisements found in local newspapers. Most of these advertisements refer to bands brought in by the Ontario Beach Park management. There were, however, some bands which stood out. One of these was the 54th Regiment Band with Fred Zeitler as conductor. The Park Band was also a frequent entertainment provider. The Charlotte Village Band, although not quite as well known, was well admired. If any reader of this article can enlighten us concerning these bands, or the people in them, we would certainly appreciate it, or of any other bands that played here. Pictures would be especially desired.



Dancing and listening to the performance of a fiddle band aboard the ONTARIO No. 2. Date unknown, but definitely post-World War I judging from the attire. Photograph from the Frank J. Knight Collection in the archives of the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse Historical Society.

MUSIC AFLOAT by Tom Brewer, Lighthouse Marine History Group

The ships most remembered in Charlotte were the ONTARIO No. 1 and ONTARIO No. 2. They operated from November 1907 until the service ended on the last day of April 1950. Both ships were over 300 feet long, could carry 28 railroad cars and were licensed to carry 1000 passengers.

Music would help to entertain the passengers on the five hour trip across the lake. Lillian Roemer, former chair of the Marine History group at the Lighthouse, in her book Remembering the ONTARIO NO. 1 and the ONTARIO NO. 2

with them playing all the way across the Lake, a group of clowns giving out favors, balloons and refreshments to those on board and to the townspeople after they docked. Cobourg loved it; the passengers on the boat loved it. As soon as they heard the ferry whistle when she touched the dock, the celebration began with flag-waving, greetings, music and young boys diving into the harbor for coins. The band marched up the street to the band shell for a concert and there was dancing in the pavilion.”

Dwight Bliss, a member of our Lighthouse Marine History Group, tells us that, in addition to the Shriners, other groups such as the Masons and the Knights of Columbus would bring their bands along for the trip to Cobourg. If any of our readers have memories,

*The **Lighthouse Marine History Group** will resume meeting on the second Saturday of the month, 10 a.m., beginning September 11th.*

*The **Village History Group** meets on the third Saturday of the month, 10 a.m., with their next meeting scheduled for September 18th.*

President's Message



Bob Owens (left) and Mike May (right) from the Lighthouse, with Bill Sauers (middle) from the Greece Historical Society, at this year's Museums in Conversation Conference (photo courtesy of Museumwise).

This year, like so many other initiatives, we've also become new members of Museumwise. Formerly known as the Upstate History Alliance, Museumwise is an organization of paid and unpaid stewards of historic sites and museums across New York State. As members, we support and foster a sense of community among small to mid-sized museums in New York ... celebrate our successes ... and help each other conquer the obstacles and keep the passion alive which drew us to saving our rich heritage.

Thanks to a GO! grant from Museumwise this spring, trustee Mike May and I had the privilege of attending the 2010 Museums in Conversation Conference in Albany – the largest statewide conference for museum leaders and volunteers. It was a thoughtful, challenging and immensely rewarding experience where we learned the importance of strategic planning in today's uncertain economic climate ... the importance of expanding our web presence (yes, it's on to Facebook) ... the importance of increasing sources of unrestricted operating support ... and much more.

Now, thanks to a GET SET! grant from Museumwise, we're ready to implement some of our new knowledge by improving service to you, our members and staunchest supporters. For many years we've place the burden on members to track their membership

expiration date (located on the newsletter mailing label) and renew accordingly. Analyzing a mailing label is not something most of us are in the habit of doing these days – a fact reflected by the growing number of Lighthouse members (including trustees!) who were inadvertently allowing their Lighthouse membership to lapse.

More importantly, we were also losing track of members. Because we mail the newsletter and all of our literature at special not-for-profit "bulk" rates (a judicious use of our modest budget), it also means that mail is NOT returned to us if someone has moved nor is a new forwarding address supplied to us. In other words, we mail our newsletter and have no idea whether a member has received it or not!

The solution, as we've learned, is something the majority of museums

have already implemented: once a year, when a membership is due to expire, sending a renewal notice for the cost of a first class stamp. At first class postage rates, the renewal notice will be returned if a member has moved and show a forwarding address so we can update our mailing lists and it removes the burden of trying to remember when your membership is due to expire.

We tested the concept this summer and mailed renewal notices to members whom we had not heard from over the last three years. More than 20 "former" members responded (many with new addresses) and rejoined our ranks! Our membership committee has now recommended that we send renewal notices to all members and continue the experiment into fall. Let us know what you think and we'll also keep you posted on other new concepts for upgrading our membership program to better honor your support of the Lighthouse.

- Bob Owens

A Winning Season

Our Treasures for a Treasure Garage Sale raised nearly \$1,000 – the most ever in the four years we've been holding this annual fundraising event to support the preservation of our historic site. Many thanks to our members, friends, and neighbors who donated a record number of collectibles, china, books, and "stuff" for us to sell and many thanks, as always, to our volunteers (welcome back, Ann Stear!) who spent many hours sorting, tagging, and arranging all of these donations for a quick sale.

A record number of visitors stopped by our booth at Harborfest (resulting in a record number of mer-

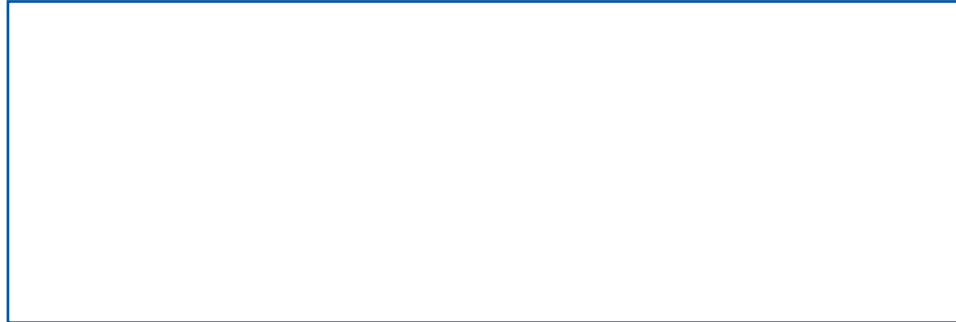


Concert-goers on the Lighthouse lawn enjoying the sound of American music performed by the Irondequoit Concert Band. For photographs of all of our special events this season, go to: www.geneseelighthouse.org and click on "Recent Events." (Concert photo by Fred Amato)

chandise sales) and the winners of our free raffles were ... Joe Marinucci, who won a beautiful framed poster

(continues on back page)

DELIVER TO ADDRESSEE OR CURRENT RESIDENT



Board of Trustees 2010

OFFICERS

Bob Owens, President
Doug Moran, Vice President
Linda Taylor, Treasurer
Mary Lee, Secretary

TRUSTEES

Fred Amato	Father John Lee
Bill Briggs	Sandi Marino
Neil Budd	Dee Mastro
Tom Clayton	Mike May
June Coddling	Peg Roach
Gene Edwards	Liz Rush
Chris Franco	Gerry Sauter
Joe Genova	Nirk Simpson

Fred Amato, Public Relations Chair
Ann Salter, Editor

The Beacon
© 2010 CGLHS

The following businesses support the
Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse Historical Society, Inc.

Airborn Fire Safety Co.- Georgia Engles
Herrema's Market Place
Irondequoit Concert Band
Irondequoit Lawn & Landscape- Jeffrey Riesenberger
New Venture Title Agency, LLC- John Ciccolone
Shumway Marine
Turnkey Operations

A Winning Season (continued)

of the Lighthouse created by Karen Pelc, and Tom Karadag, who won a copy of Rochester: A Panoramic History by Blake McKelvey and Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck.

The Lighthouse Is For the Birds, our new birding expedition led by popular columnist and author, Bob Marcotte, was a sell-out ... our first annual Lighthouse Keeper's Festival attracted over 250 young and young-at-heart to learn about 19th century life long ago at the Lighthouse ... a record number of artisans displayed their wares at the 4th Annual Arts and Crafts Show/Sale ... and nearly 200 people enjoyed an evening of toe-tapping music courtesy of the fabulously talented Irondequoit Concert Band.

Our expanded visitation hours have attracted a record number of visitors (an increase of nearly 800 visitors compared to last year at this time) so we are well on our way towards achieving a record-breaking season of serving residents and visitors alike who wish to discover our community's heritage along the river and lakeshore. There's more to come as we will remain open (new) through the month of November AND continue our roster of new and traditionally favorite programs as follows:

RETURNING!

Rochester Romances the River
October 9 and 10, 2010

RETURNING!

Hauntingly Good Halloween Stories
October 29, 2010

See you at the Lighthouse!

NEW!

Historic New York:
From Sea to Shining Lake
November 7, 2010

NEW!

Holiday Shopping at the Lighthouse
December 4 and 5, 2010