Happy New Year! After a year of unexpected circumstances, many of us have been looking forward to saying those words, and getting our next fresh start. I’m hopeful that this will be a year of change and transformation for the Fenton, also, as we take the lessons we learned in 2020 and carry them forward.

One change I’m looking forward to exploring more in 2021 is the use of technology to enhance our exhibits and our public offerings. We feel fortunate to be included in a program through the Museum Association of New York that is linking around 100 museums across the state to each other, and promoting the use of technology solutions to advance our missions to educate and preserve our state’s great history.

This program will give us access to new software and hardware, as well as some top-notch training, that should help make our efforts a little more professional and our programs a little flashier.

To accompany this expanded toolset of program options, we are also looking to expand the range of our content and our offerings this year. We’ve been fortunate to be able to work with representatives from the LGBTQ+ community of Chautauqua County throughout 2020, to document a portion of our community’s history that had not received the attention it deserved. These efforts will culminate in an exhibit, scheduled to be opened in early March, which will focus on the history and experiences of our local LGBTQ+ community in our local area. I’m hopeful that this exhibit will be the first of many to come that highlight the diversity of our community, and the incredible contributions that so many have made to the area we are fortunate to call home.

As part of that process, I am also hopeful that our audience will become more involved with our efforts to collect and preserve community history as we move forward. In a series of conversations we had throughout 2020, an interest in building a community archive arose. A community archive is more than just the collection of documents and primary sources that we already have at the Fenton – it is a marketplace of ideas and reminiscences, driven by the interest and dedication of all of you as you remember the moments and experiences in Jamestown and Chautauqua County that made you love this area. As our technological prowess increases, I will be looking to find a platform to start our own community archive, so that we can all talk...
It’s hard to believe it’s already time to take down our Holiday exhibit for the season. We are very thankful to everyone who was able to see The Nutcracker exhibit, and to the Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet for allowing us the privilege of sharing their costumes.

2021 holds great promise for the Fenton Historical Society. We are looking forward to new exhibits, and new events. Our summer exhibit, “Protest and Pride: The LGBTQ+ Community in Chautauqua County” is set to open in March, and we are exploring both virtual and in person events for the coming year.

January is usually a quiet month at the Fenton other than taking down the holiday exhibit. We are having another virtual paint night to help break up the boring winter. Paint night will be January 21st at 7 PM. $20 for canvas, supplies, and link to the Zoom Painting session. Reservations can be made by stopping by the Fenton History Center Gift Shop to pick up materials or by calling 716-664-6256.

These are just a few of the fun ideas we’re looking into as we move into the new year. For all of its hardship and upheaval, 2020 did give us the chance to step back and evaluate more closely what it is we want to do as an institution and how to get there. It also showed us repeatedly how generous and incredible our community and our members are. Thank you to everyone who supported us and helped us throughout 2020 – I hope to see you all again in 2021!
For $20 we provide everything you need to paint this, including the 8"x10" canvas. Call the Fenton or stop in to reserve your spot!

Join us via Zoom to paint the picture above

Call 716-664-6256 to register and stop by the Fenton Gift Shop to pick up your kit!

FENTON VIRTUAL PAINT NIGHT

FENTON HISTORY CENTER
67 Washington St
Jamestown

JAN. 21ST
7PM

JANUARY 2021   3
FENTON HISTORY CENTER PRESENTS

VIRTUAL LOCK-IN

Experience the Annual Lock-In, from home via Zoom!

JAN, 9, 2021 | 10 AM TO 10 PM
SUGGESTED DONATION $10

This year we’d like you to set aside all or part of the day for some home research. You can join us on the Zoom call. We will have researchers in the library for part of the day. At noon there will be a presentation by Andrew Kolstee titled "Blown To Atoms". This is a very interesting story of a gentleman who was transporting dynamite in the 1800s. This story is a Lock-in favorite!

Go to fentonhistorycenter.org/event/virtual-library-lock-in/ or call 716-664-6256 to register. Zoom link will be sent via email before the event.
One of the ways you can support the Fenton History Center is through our Amazon Wishlist. Of course we accept gifts purchased in other places, or monetary donations too!

www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1PU3BVS0HQ5E0
The recent election was one of the most contentious in American history with the facts in dispute and controversy, anger, and suspicions still lingering. Both major parties had made extensive preparations ahead with legal arguments, strategies, and law firms contracted, and practiced like major sports teams. They both obviously either expected or intended to cause disputes and controversies after the polls closed.

We here in Jamestown have a special perspective on this. Until 2002 effectively all New York jurisdictions and many other locations throughout the nation used the Automatic Voting Machines manufactured in Jamestown. When you finished voting and threw the exit lever on the built in booth, your vote was cast, anonymously, definitively, and unalterably, accompanied by clatter and the dramatic swish of curtains. When the polls closed, the backs of the machines were unlocked and tallies were printed out mechanically immediately. The machines were deliberately engineered to thwart cheating, fraud, and bias. The only electricity used was in their overhead light bulbs. They could not be digitally hacked. The only recounts possible were quick reviews of the printed totals. There were no ballots to count or be discarded, manufactured, or altered. There were no signatures to match or verify. Controversies were rare and manipulators had to seek opportunities elsewhere. Problems occurred other places with other systems. Places with voting machines rarely had problems. Nevertheless, we fixed what wasn’t broken along with what was and problems have only increased.

The last Automatic Voting Machine was made November 11, ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
The Fenton History Center’s Genealogy Support Group serves as a support to both experienced and amateur researchers by acting as an educational offering our members. Meetings feature invaluable lectures, discussions and are an excellent way to become familiar with the Fenton History Center’s impressive collection of resources.

The Support Group typically meets on the last Wednesday of each month at the Fenton History Center in the historic Hall House building, located at 73 Forest Avenue in Jamestown, New York. Doors open at 6, and the meeting begins at 6:30 with a brief business meeting followed by a program. Program topics and speakers are subject to change.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, January 9, 2021
10:00 AM to 10:00 PM
Virtual Lock-In (online event only)

Wednesday, January 27, 2021 @ 6:30 PM
MyHeritage
presented by Andrew Kolstee

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 @ 6:30 PM
African American Research
presented by Tina Scott

Wednesday, March 31, 2021 @ 6:30 PM
Researching Areas that Have Changed Hands
presented by Vince Courtney
Lorna Parker grew up in Dewitt-ville, and then moved all the way to the big city of Hartfield (Mayville mailing address). She attended Mayville School until she was 16 and her father broke his leg in an accident (it was permanently broken for 17 years).

She married Kenneth, in the 1980s and had Victoria, the Fenton’s Curator, in 1990.

Lorna was and is an avid collector and yard saler. She taught Victoria what every weird old thing was for at sales. This skill has served Victoria very well in her current role in the collections department.

She is an active member of Sherman Community Church, in charge of Vacation Bible School Crafts there. She has served in this capacity at 5 different churches in the past for a total of about 27 years.

When we hired Victoria, we got a two for one deal as Lorna has been helping decorate the beautiful Victorian Mansion for Christmas since 2017. She willingly assists Victoria with all the other “crazy ideas I come up with”. This has included the Halloween events, paint nights, and Christmas events. She filmed almost all the Museum From Home videos that were posted on the Fenton Facebook page since March when we shut down. This was possible as she and Victoria shared the same “Covid Bubble.”

I would like to add a personal note. Lorna is a treasure for the Fenton as she works so willingly and quietly behind the scenes to enhance the many projects that Victoria undertakes. One example was her sharing of her large collection of Nutcracker figures (some of them life size) that enhanced the Nutcracker Christmas display this year at the mansion.