A big shout out to Tom Greer, John Gustafson, Ang Cimo, Tom Goodwill, Paul Bentley, Jim Wahlberg, Rick Lundquist and Al Johnson. The first floor hallway has been transformed into a beautiful space; ceilings repaired and painted, walls repaired and painted, woodwork touched up, and the floor shines. The Orientation Room has a repaired ceiling and walls. It is amazing how hard these 8 men worked, coming in for 3 weeks to get everything done. While the men were working on this project, we had another group of volunteers cleaning all of the exhibit rooms; Janet Wahlberg, Barb Cessna, Sherry Vesotski, Beverly McGraw, Linda Swanson, Sharon Matson, and our group from Aspire. Our new Curator, Therese, coordinated the cleaning and made sure that our collections were safe. The Fenton History Center is so fortunate to have such great volunteers!

The next step is installing some new exhibits and changing some old ones around. The plan is to have all of the new exhibits in place by the end of May. We will be using the Gala theme of the Roaring 20s and displaying information about the history of the Historical Society and the history of the groups that held their meetings in the building beginning in 1923.

The Fenton will not be having the Brown Bag Lectures this year. We will have Afternoon Lectures at 1:00 p.m. in April, June, and August. Evening lectures are scheduled at 7:00 p.m. in May, July, and September. Our first Afternoon Lecture will be Wednesday, April 12th, Busti:...CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
though her house was small, 16 feet in length, she was able to shelter up to 17 freedom seekers in her attic. The freedom seekers were escaped slaves from other states brought to her by white abolitionists. Catherine would hide them, clothe and feed them until they were taken to the next link in the chain of Underground Railroads. The goal of the freedom seekers was to cross over into Canada. Very few escaped slaves remained in the area because the bounty hunters were always on the lookout for those who had escaped slavery.

The Underground Railroad is misunderstood by many people. One had to be secretive if they had any part in assisting the “fugitives.” There were people who sympathized with the abolition movement, but it was still illegal to help or be involved with the Underground Railroad. It was a moral issue verses a legal issue. Assisting a fugitive could get you arrested. Many church congregations were torn apart over this issue. Remember that you could own slaves in the state of New York.

A myth about stops on the Underground Railroad: The houses connected with the Underground Railroad did not have underground tunnels. The freedom seekers would hide in barns, lofts, attics and root cellars. People will tout that their old house was part of the Underground Railroad because they find an old root cellar, however, with research the owners find out that their house was built after the Civil War.

Please visit our Underground Railroad exhibit in the lower level of the Fenton History Center. The museum is open Monday- Saturday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.

Authors note; My family in Chagrin Falls, Ohio were abolitionists and their house was a stop on the Underground Railroad. They hid the freedom seekers in their upstairs loft.
Fenton History Center presents

TRIVIA night

EVERY WEDNESDAY IN FEBRUARY @ 7 PM

@ Shawbucks
212 W. 2nd St., Jamestown, NY 14701

Cost: $10 per person (2-6 per team)

Thank-You to Our Sponsors!

This is a fundraiser and the proceeds benefit the Fenton History Center’s mission to share and preserve the history of our community.

(716) 664-6256 FentonHistoryCenter.org
The Kennedy Free Library has called upon the Fenton History Center to provide an historical display, which will be featured at the entrance of the library on a quarterly basis. This month, the Fenton History Center will be exhibiting a pair of Victorian ice skates c. 1890s, owned by C. Corliss Phillipps of Parkersburg, West Virginia. This antique Victorian Men’s P. Lowentraut US Club Metal Ice Skates No. 8 size 10, was donated to the FHC by Reverend Melvin Phillips (formerly from Jamestown) in May 1973 and accessioned in March 2021.

Our text label for these objects would include historical accounts from the Jamestown Journal, the Jamestown Historical and Industrial Review, the Post-Journal and oral histories, regarding ice skating rinks around Jamestown and Chautauqua County. Collections Manager, Norman Carlson, remembers reading about an enclosed ice skating rink built in 1879 at the northwest corner of Third and Washington Streets in Jamestown. It was later converted to a roller skating rink and condemned in 1882. The Post-Journal and residents interviewed by the Fenton History Center highlight ice skating rinks in Celoron in the 1890s and 1930s. Notable Jamestown ice skating rinks were located in Roseland Park in the 1940s; Ice-Land Skating Arena on Harrison St. in the 1950s; Allen Park Ice Rink in the 1970s and Evan’s Skateland in the 1980s.

Executive Director, Jane Babinsky, recalls hearing about the Norwegian figure skater, Sonja Henie, three-time Winter Olympics Champion: 1928, 1932, 1936, who set the stage (and style) for competitive figure skating. The 1932 Winter Olympics was held in Lake Placid, New York, where Henie won the Gold Medal for the Ladies’ Singles Event.

On another note, the past month has been most enjoyable for me. I have met such wonderful people and I am learning new things everyday. I am very grateful for everyone’s encouragement and support.
ANNUAL FUND DONORS: THANK YOU!

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Janet Wahlberg
Frank Walzer
Kari Wendel
Bruce Widen
Martha Zenns & Gilbert Lindahl
Today I am going to discuss some material we were recently offered even though it probably will not end up in our collection.

Tom Goodwill in 2013 published a book on the churches of Jamestown. The earliest local historians saw Jamestown and Chautauqua County’s pre-Civil War population as composed religiously of two groups: Protestant Christians and others. The others ranged from people who attended church (and may even have been members of the legal “religious societies” associated with most churches at the time but not actual church members) to those who did not attend any church, conspicuous secularists, and maybe a few outright atheists. Mormons were a separate, strongly disliked group. By 1900 the situation was more complex. Catholics and Jews were acquiring social respectability. Orthodox Christians were not numerous enough to be strongly judged and Muslim Albanians and Turks were here in even smaller numbers.

In the 20th century there was a proliferation of small, religious and quasi-religious congregations and organizations, Christian, quasi-Christian, and non-Christian. They had a few 19th century predecessors, mainly Brocton’s Brotherhood of the New Life, Kiantone’s Harmonia, James Townsend’s Lakeside School of New Theology, and the more enduring Lilly Dale centered Spiritualists, but the hallmark of the 20th century was a muddling proliferation.

The 1960’s saw the most tumultuous changes in American thought ever to that time, religious beliefs not excepted. The established churches lost members as science diminished the plausibility of biblical accounts and televised football co-opted His reserved day. But as Emile Cammaerts and G. K. Chesterton observed, people will not believe nothing. They will believe anything. In the case of baby boomers that meant anything except what their parents believed. Today we have the internet and social media which give anyone the opportunity of recruiting followers for any ideas, including religious ones.

I just finished reading a new book at the Prendergast Library that covers a multitude of religious sects that arose after World War II around the concept that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft craft. Years ago, I read George Adamski’s 1953 Flying Saucers Have Landed. Adamski was the original contacted, although he didn’t pitch a religious angle. His books are full of good looking aliens and saucer joyrides to Venus and the far side of the moon. Adamski was a wonderfully imaginative hoaxer. He grew up in Dunkirk. Dunkirk could do much more to exploit this colorful element of its history.

One day recently a man brought in a three quarter inch stack of correspondence and pamphlets from the early 20th century. I explained as I often must that we do not purchase items for the museum, nor can we appraise or estimate their value. He left the material for me to examine but did not grant permission to copy.

The material apparently had belonged to Grace Barnes on Washington Street. She was vice president of the local chapter of the Theosophical Society. The Society receives a brief mention in Goodwill’s book. Our research volunteer, Al Johnson, confirmed the chapter existed in Jamestown actively only a few years either side of the turn of the 20th century. Someone should research the life of Mrs. Barnes and determine how active she was in Theosophy. The papers show considerable correspondence with Katherine Tingley and others at the headquarters of the American branch of the movement near San Diego, California. Theosophy originated in Europe, mainly in the fertile imagination of Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891). I call Theosophy the grandmother
of the New Age movement. New Age is a religion by my definition, though without any organization, without any consistent concept of deities, without any ethical or behavior code and very much without declaring itself a religion. “I’m not religious. I’m spiritual.” is the definitional cliché of baby boomers. Theosophy is the source of New Age interest in Tibet, far eastern (particularly Indian) religions; astral projection, trance states, Atlantis, karma, reincarnation, occultism, astrology, metaphysical “energy,” “vibrations,” “planes,” and countless other faith or imagination based ideas.

Historians should be objective and detached. They should investigate the who, when, how, and where of everything past, especially monumental transformations of thought and society. Of course they do no such thing. They are creatures of their time, caught up in the ideas of their society both conventional and trendy, noticing what they are supposed to notice and saying what they are supposed to say, be it Christian, patriotic, Marxist, or woke. Perhaps more to the point, especially for professional historians, he who pays the fiddler calls the tune and makes no exception for historians. Museums get most of their money from foundations and government. As George Orwell said, “he who controls the past controls the future.” Nobody knows that better than those who are out to control the future. People hired to control the future are called politicians. My version of it is that everything written about the past tells you more about the time it was written in than the time it was written about. With history, as with everything, be skeptical. Any historian who can not see the emperor’s new clothes or persistently talks about the elephants in the room finds mobs outside his door, unemployment, and the horrible awareness in his soul that history and the future are both comedy and tragedy.

Grace Barnes died in 1943, just one generation short of seeing many of the ideas espoused by her beleaguered little congregation adopted en masse by a whole generation in an historical instant. But nobody is asking how.

Genealogy Support Group

The Fenton History Center’s Genealogy Support Group serves to support both experienced and amateur researchers. Meetings feature invaluable lectures, discussions, and/or research nights and are an excellent way to become familiar with the Fenton History Center’s impressive collection of resources. Meetings are typically held on the last Wednesday of each month at the Hall House Research Center (73 Forest Avenue). Program topics and speakers are subject to change. Most meetings are also often held via Zoom in addition to in-person.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 23, 2023
  Research Night 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Saturday, March 25, 2023
  Workshop 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM
  Top: Ireland Research - presented by Janet Wahlberg
Wednesday, March 29, 2023
  Research Night 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
  Program - TBD @ 6:00 PM
YOU’RE INVITED

FENTON HISTORY CENTER
60TH ANNIVERSARY

Gala

SAT., JULY 29, 2023 6-9 PM
GOV. REUBEN FENTON MANSION
67 WASHINGTON ST., JAMESTOWN, NY 14701

$100 INDIVIDUAL / $175 COUPLE
TICKETS GO ON SALE JUNE 1, 2023
This month we are featuring Beverly McGraw an RSVP volunteer. She works at the Mansion at the main desk greeting our guests with her lovely smile and engaging personality. She also helps out wherever asked, a truly priceless help. And now Beverly’s story in her own words.

I am from the area and attended Jamestown schools. Currently I live in Greenhurst, New York and spend my free time crafting and decorating. When the weather allows, I enjoy gardening and caring for my houseplants.

Volunteering at the Fenton fits in nicely with my love of history. The house that I live in was built in 1819 at a cost of $532. I truly enjoy meeting people during my time at the Fenton and sharing some of the history of the family and the house.

I love people and I believe in God. I’ve read the Bible thru many times and believe that tells me how to live, love, work and be helpful to others. I love animals especially dogs.

I love to go to the beach at Barcelona and I prefer winter to summer because I do not like to be too hot. Although I love being outdoors doing yard work, I have too much to do (I am a widow). God is good to me; I am able to volunteer 3 days a week.

I worked at Crawford Furniture in the office for a few years. Then after my children were in school, I worked at WCA Hospital for 23 years. I started in admissions, then switchboard, the out-patient outside the ER and ended up in the cashier’s office.

We at the Fenton are now blessed to have Beverly volunteering for us on Tuesdays. Stop in and say hi to her and check out the upgrades that are happening.

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Local Trivia

Q1. In the 1940s, Johnny’s Lunch was located near this well known complex, name it.
Q2. Who was the publisher of the Post-Journal in 1986?
Q3. What famous inventor married the daughter of one of Chautauqua’s founders and spent many of his summers there?
Q4. What was the former name of South Main Street?
Q5. What organization started the midget football program in Jamestown?

See page 13 for answers.
This year marks the 60th Anniversary of the Fenton Historical Society and their move into the Governor Fenton Mansion in 1963. That alone makes us grateful enough, but in reality, our appreciation needs to turn back even further, to the one man whose dogged determination saved this building from being torn down.

His name was Echel George Lindstrom, and he was born in Sweden on Feb. 24, 1879. His parents, Gustaf and Matilda and their young boy, George, came to America and settled in Oil City, PA. George attended public school and later worked as an apprentice for the Oil City Derrick newspaper.

George traveled to Buffalo in 1901 for the Pan American Exposition and was there for the opening when President McKinley attended a reception in the Music Building. He was standing nearby when the President was shot twice by Leon Czolgosz. George raced to the telegraph station to get word to the Oil City Derrick newsroom.

Later he and his parents moved to Jamestown, where he was one of the first linotype operators at the Jamestown Post newspaper. He then moved to New York City and worked for the New York Herald in 1904, to Boston where he worked for the Boston Globe, and to Ohio where he worked for the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Catholic Weekly Universe.

Perhaps due to the fact that his parents were getting older, he came back to Jamestown and worked for the Jamestown Evening Journal. George was encouraged to run for Supervisor of Ellicott, a position he was elected to and held from 1910 to 1916. During that time, Supervisor Lindstrom felt very strongly about two local needs and set out to make a difference.

He began a campaign against Tuberculosis and became Secretary of the Jamestown Tuberculosis Committee. He wrote articles and spoke often about the need for a TB hospital in Chautauqua County. Success! Mrs. Elizabeth Newton bequeathed $150,000 in her will in 1913, and Newton Memorial Hospital was built in 1919 on approximately 200 acres of land.

Simultaneously to his work on the need for a TB Hospital, another item was distressing Supervisor Lindstrom. The Fenton home was vacant, as Mrs. Fenton had died in 1901, and Jeanette and Josephine were both married and had their own homes. Washington Street was not even dreamed of and Fenton Place went down into Brooklyn Square. There was a push to tear the Fenton Mansion down and...continued on page 11
make a large parking lot, but E. George Lindstrom had another plan. He tirelessly campaigned to save the Governor Fenton Mansion by having the City of Jamestown acquire it, allowing the local Patriotic Organizations and Societies to use the rooms for their meetings. Again he spoke and wrote articles in an effort to persuade the community of the waste of a beautiful 50 year old home belonging to Governor Reuben E. Fenton, New York’s 22nd Governor. Success! The City did purchase the home and grounds in 1919, to be used as a Soldier and Sailor Memorial. WWI was over and the Veterans were forming Legions and VFWs and other Patriotic organizations were interested as well. But, they all gave first dibs to the Civil War Veterans who chose the Fenton Drawing Room for their Grand Army of the Republic meetings. Therefore, Echel George Lindstrom is our HERO, because the Governor Fenton Mansion was still here so that the Fenton Historical Society could move in and begin safe guarding the Mansion, the property, and our local history. Sixty years later, thanks to all of the dedicated City Officials, City Grounds Keepers, Historical Society Board Members, Volunteers and Staff – we have many wonderful things to be thankful for – and Veterans still meet here!

NEXT FENTON CANTEEN
AT THE GOV. REUBEN FENTON MANSION
SAT., MARCH 11, 2023
10 AM - 12 PM

FENTON TRAVELERS PLAN TRIP TO GENESEE COUNTY VILLAGE

by Cindy Dustin
Volunter

The once popular Fenton Travelers Group has fallen by the wayside in recent years. After an impromptu brainstorming session last summer, we are, with the help of Laurie Quattrone and the Just For Fun Bus Trip group, planning a trip to Gene-see Country Village on Wednesday, August 16, 2023.

Plans have not yet been finalized as to the cost and other stops, but we will let you know as soon as they are. We would have a coach bus to accommodate our group, and we will merge with the Just For Fun group to have the required 50+ people.

Would YOU be interested in going? Please email me at jc-dustin@hotmail.com or call or text me at (814) 730-6915 to be placed on the interest list. This isn’t signing up to go, it is just so we can gauge the interest. More information will be available as soon as things become finalized.

Thank you!
Recycle your household bags and wrap! The Fenton is collecting 500 pounds of plastic in order to get a heavy duty, weather-resistant bench for seating in our Blue Star Memorial Garden! We have a box inside the Fenton Mansion and at the Hall House Research Center!
NEED FOR A DEHUMIDIFIER

Caring for our exhibits and artifacts requires constant temperatures and levels of humidity. Our basement area can get quite damp in the summer and requires that we run a dehumidifier continuously. We would welcome a new one if you are able to help us out.

Recipe of the Month
Transcribed by Cindy Dustin, Volunteer

Date Nut Butter
by Ruth Burmaster

1 cup dates
2 cups boiling water
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 1/2 cups brown sugar
3 tablespoons shortening
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 cup nut meats
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
3 cups flour
1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix the dates, baking soda and the boiling water together and allow to cool. Mix all the other ingredients except the nuts together and then add the cooled date mixture. Stir thoroughly and add nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Makes 2 loaves.

The Fenton History Center has an extensive collection of local cookbooks in its archives. This recipe comes from the Sheridan Firemen Ladies’ Auxiliary The Best in Cooking in Sheridan published around 1971.
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION
• Your membership is vital for keeping the museum and research center running!
• As of the summer of 2022, memberships now run January - December. Memberships purchased between September 1 and December 31 are good through December 31 of the following year.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS
• Unlimited complimentary admission to the Governor Reuben Fenton Mansion.
• Unlimited access to the Hall House Research Center.
• Reduced fee for Fenton events and programs unless specified.
• A 10% discount to the museum gift shop.
• Members only e-mail updates.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LEVELS
• Student $15
• Senior (age 62+) $30
• Individual (under age 62) $40
• Family $75. Includes 2 adults. All children in the household under 18 are included.

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP LEVELS
• Supporting $120. Includes 4 complimentary admission passes for guests.
• Friend of Fenton $250. Includes 6 complimentary admission passes for guests.
• Representative’s Circle $360. Includes 8 complimentary admission passes for guests.
• Senator’s Circle $500. Includes 16 complimentary admissions for guests, lunch with Executive Director, and a behind the scenes tour of the Gov. Reuben Fenton Mansion for up to four people, a free book from our gift shop, and a Fenton branded t-shirt.
• Governor’s Circle $1,000. Includes unlimited complimentary admissions for guests, lunch with Executive Director, a behind the scenes tour of Gov. Reuben Fenton Mansion for up to four people, a behind the scenes tour of Hall House Research Center for four people, a free book from our gift shop, and a Fenton branded t-shirt.

You can also process your membership payment online and have the option to set your membership to automatically renew each year. Thank you for your support!
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