



Black Rock
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**1st Quarter Issue:
January/March 2019**

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The Year in Review: 2018

by Doreen DeBoth, *President*



In case you haven't visited the museum recently, we now have a new façade with wonderful large windows, allowing natural light to flood into the museum, creating an illusion of a much larger space. We are also rearranging our exhibits to allow visitors a clearer understanding of our place in local and national history.

There is much to look forward to in 2019 as we anticipate upcoming events combining history and music (see page 4), a new approach and venue for our annual fundraiser in May, and a series of three talks this spring focused on the preservation of historic properties. As members and friends of the museum, you will be sent notices or you can visit our website for our schedule of all activities.

In October 2018, we applied for our permanent charter and had a site visit in November by the Chartering Coordinator from the New York State Education Department. Our application is now being reviewed by the Board of Regents and we are very optimistic that we will be approved.

Let's now reflect back on our accomplishments and activities of the past year.

In January, we kicked off our 5th annual **History in your Neighborhood** essay contest. This year students wrote a new Erie Canal Song. International Preparatory School participated, yielding nine songs, both inspiring and humorous. Awards were presented in April.

Tours began in early spring with North District Councilmember and Buffalo State history professor, Joe Golombek and his students.

Our successful annual fundraiser, 'Breaking the Ice,' was held in May. Later that month, a presentation "*Veterans of War Entombed within Saint Francis Xavier Cemetery - Buffalo, NY*" was given by Mat Crissey, a grad student from the Museum Studies Department at Buffalo State College who had been interning at the museum.

June was a very busy month. We joined with members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in their annual Fenian Ceremony at foot of Hertel. We also had the largest group we've ever had (50 people) tour the museum from Iowa and Kansas.

Meetings for the Erie County Bicentennial to be held in 2021 began, as cultural organizations met to discuss the commemoration at The Buffalo History Museum. A second meeting was held in September at the East Aurora Library and another meeting is planned for later this month.

Also in June, our exhibits coordinator, Michele Graves, held a Polish Heritage exhibit at the Discover Amherst Street Festival headquarters, with egg coloring demonstrated by board member Mary Ann Kedron.

Tours continued with Joe Golombek's history and social studies students and another tour from Leadership Buffalo headed by Diane Beehag from the International Institute.

During the summer months, we held an exhibit next door to the museum at Argus Gallery titled: *Power & Progress: Buffalo's Black Rock Lock*.



Left to right: Joanne & Chuck Gilbert, retired CEO of Planning Division at US Army Corps of Engineers, board member Bill Butler and sculptor, Kevin Bowen.

This year Delta District Community Day was held at Tapestry School next to D District



Exhibits coordinator Michele Graves explains how dust was removed from rugs before the invention of vacuum cleaners.

Police Station. Exhibits included antique ice and roller skates that are always a big hit with children, and items that were used during the Erie Canal

era. We also had games and coloring for children.

Our Fall Speaker Series was attended by near capacity audiences, beginning with urban planner Angela Keppel's presentation: "Who was Mr. Hertel? Are there lots of birds on Bird Avenue?" She discussed the origins of the names of many Buffalo streets to a very attentive audience.

Next, Douglas J. Perelli, Ph. D., RPA, Director, Archaeological Survey and Clinical Assistant Professor, Anthropology at University at Buffalo, came back to give us an update on the research that has been ongoing to locate exactly where the historic War of 1812



Doug Perelli (white shirt) with his colleague Ryan Austin (to his left).

Battle of Scajaquada Creek Bridge took place. His findings include three locations along the creek from Niagara Street to Grant Street. We will ask him to return as his research continues.

In November, Rick Falkowski, founder of the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame, and Buffalo Music Awards, as well as entertainment coordinator for Tonawandas Gateway Concerts and author of the book *History of Buffalo Music & Entertainment*, kept the audience enthralled with his presentation on "Early Buffalo Music & Entertainment." This year's BRHS fundraiser will be held at Sportsmen's Tavern and will feature entertainment his-



tory by Mr. Falkowski, from the canal days through the 1960's, this time interspersed with live music. More info will be sent out as we approach Sunday, May 5. This will be great fun for all!

The Speaker Series concluded with husband and wife team Ron Shrewsbury, a practicing New York State EMT, and Christina Shrewsbury, a guitarist and singer. Together their program brought 19th century medicine, music, and dramatic accounts into the present day with their program titled "Erie Canal: Medicine and Music Then and Now." She sang Erie Canal era songs dressed in period clothing and played the guitar. In between, Ron covered topics that included life expectancy, morbidity and mortality during that time, and



Christina Shrewsbury

how medical practices progressed to the next era including home remedies, and patent medicines and quackery.



Ron Shrewsbury with some scary outdated medical implements

The busy and productive year culminated in the **4th Annual "Art as History"** project with schools. This year three schools participated—Early Childhood PS 17, Our Lady of Black Rock, and Riverside High School. We asked students to create art works with the theme **Envisioning a Better Community**. A variety of media



1st place winner Jessenya Myree from PS 17 centered her school around her community.

were used to express their visualizations. Many thought-provoking works were created. PS 17 \ ELA teacher Kristin Smith had written explanations accompanying their works.

Winners from PS 17

Early Childhood Center were: 1st place—Jessenya Myree, 2nd place—Maria Barron, 3rd place—Mariana Diaz with Honorable Mentions: Saye By and Martha Mazeh.

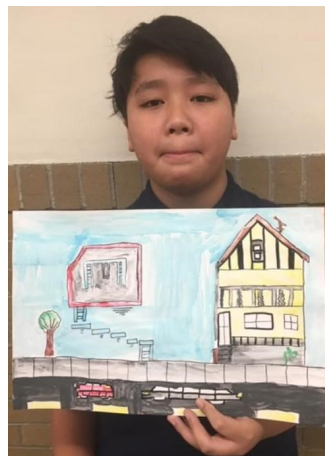
Winners from Riverside High School were: 1st place—Hasson Hassan; 2nd place—Anry Son; 3rd place—Cher Soe with Honorable Mentions: Ali Mberwa and Annis Yasin. Art teacher Carol Cureo suggest-

ed that students visualize their community now and include actual houses within the community, and another painting farther into the future, hence two paintings.

Art teacher Meagan McCormick from Our Lady of Black Rock had her students engaged in the



1st Place winner Hasson Hassan from Riverside HS covered a current house with graffiti. The house of the future is captured with abstract



Shaw Reh from Our Lady of Black Rock won 1st place for also depicting houses of the present and future.

expressiveness of painting. Further, each student who completed the project received a Certificate of Community Service along with age-related materials on substance abuse, anti-bullying and parental tips. The finished art works were judged by leading Buffalo artists, Elizabeth Leader and Barbara Rowe.

The BRHS and WSYDC (West Side Youth Development Coalition) combine their missions of engaging youth in their environment to promote pride and ownership of their communities. The Art as History Project allows for creative thinking, visioning and learning. Other positive aspects of engaging youth in an art project include adequate supplies to create art, healthy competition, and a chance to explore their environment, offering alternatives to risky behaviors.

We thank our sponsor, WSYDC, and our project coordinator, Michele Graves for all her work. The project helps the BRHS fulfill its mission to educate youth in our community.

Currently, our second project with the schools— **"History in Your Neighborhood"** is underway and in its 6th year. The topic chosen is— **"Your Neighborhood: What Would You Keep and What Would You Change?"** focusing on how to make your community better. Students can describe what a perfect neighborhood would be like, who would live there, and what businesses and community organizations should be included. Also what can they can do to improve their neighborhood and what they would change? Students will be given the opportunity to think about their surroundings while improving and enhancing their writing skills. Previously, we focused on historical events, but we believe that awareness at an early age of what will make a better community is something that they can carry into the future as adults.



Black Rock
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1902 Niagara Street
Buffalo, New York, 14207

Museum Hours:

Mon. & Wed. 5:30-8:30 PM
Tues. & Thurs. 10- 4 PM
Fri. & Saturday 11-3 PM

Find us online!

www.blackrockhistoricalsociety.com



The BRHS

Seeks Volunteers

Your interest and/or love of history are the best reasons to volunteer! Students, seniors and everyone in-between are welcome to volunteer in various areas of interest: office/computer, education, outreach, maintenance, etc. You can strengthen your community, learn about preservation, and meet new people. Every volunteer can make a difference. To volunteer, contact us via email on our website or call 716-510-4007.

Artifact Donations

We continue to seek items and photos that tell the story and history of our area. Cleaning out an attic or basement, not sure if the family items are important or not? Give us a call or bring the items to the museum for donation or loan. Things that depict local family and or commerce history such as artifacts, vintage household items, old tools, period clothing, written history, photos, etc. can be brought to the museum for review or we can pick up. Please call to set up an appointment or discuss your finds. (call 716-510-4007).

Upcoming Events: Free and open to the public

BLACK ROCK SUNDAYS

at



326 Amherst Street Buffalo, NY 14207

Home of the Americana Music Foundation

2 - 3:30 PM

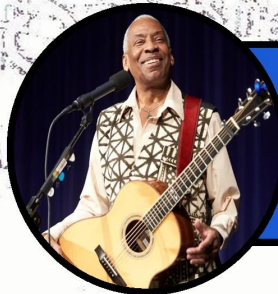
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 24

Canadian musician and historian extraordinaire **IAN BELL** will perform a concert (augmented by historical images) highlighting the role of Lake Erie and Great Lakes on the development of our area.



SUNDAY MARCH 24

Musician, international performer and cultural ambassador **REGGIE HARRIS** will perform a concert of music and stories from the Underground Railroad, a significant topic indeed for Black Rock and the WNY region.



SUNDAY APRIL 14

Experiential theater artist **GRETCHEN SEPIK** will portray "Surly Sal McMurray," an Irish cook working on a packet boat travelling the Erie Canal in 1840. Laugh while learning about one of the engineering wonders of the world.



Photo by Pat Mead

Dave Ruch will be on hand to host and emcee each event, followed by a short discussion and Q&A.

These events are free and open to the public.

Sponsored by:



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BRR Alliance
Black Rock River and Erie Alliance

Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities



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Thank you Artifact Donors

Ron Agnello Cynthia Conides
Jeanine Baran David Gardner
Mary Ann Kedron
Daneen Woolstrum

"A Pictorial History of Black Rock" photo book is

on sale now at the BRHS. Because of high demand, it will be going into a second printing so please call first to make sure we still have them.
716-510-4007