



# The Roost

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

IRVINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2012

## IRVINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## Letter from the President



Dear Members:

What a busy spring we've had at the Historical Society!

We had the perfect sunny day for this year's House Tour. The tour highlighted some great vintage "Off Main Street" homes adapted for modern living. We also exhibited early photos of Irvington at Village Hall. So many people who viewed the images of historic buildings and homes as they were 100 years ago were then able to visit some of these homes as they are today. Thanks so much to our House Tour hosts, and to all the volunteers who helped with the exhibit and tour.

The Society also sponsored (and videotaped) a discussion at the Senior Center on the theme of the many changes in society over the lifetime of our senior community members. It is always so interesting to hear the personal stories and thoughts of people as history and change unfolds around them.

As part of the Society's mission statement, we encourage Irvington's youth to take an interest in history. For the second year, we awarded the high school's Academic Challenge Club close to \$1,000 for the entry fees to the National History Bee in Washington, D.C., and, once again, Irvington's students performed exceptionally.

We also hosted our fourth annual Tomorrow's Historians symposium at the high school. This program recognizes outstanding student research and writing on historical topics. Each of the

students gives a short oral synopsis of their findings and answers questions from the audience. At the end of the program, twenty-six students were awarded the Peter Oley Tomorrow's Historians Award for their excellent research and presentations.

I hope you all have a chance to stop by the McVickar House to see the Hobbies exhibit, open through the end of July. We will close for the month of August to mount our fall exhibit, Winter Wraps.

Don't forget to enter the annual photo contest. This year's theme is *A View from a Room*. Be creative and have fun; entry forms are available at the McVickar House.

And most importantly, thank you so much to all who have renewed your memberships. Your support is so important to us. If you haven't renewed yet, please don't forget us. We need you!

*Andy Lyons*

### Contents:

- 1 Letter from the President
- 2 Senior Center Event
- 3 House Tour and Reception
- 7 Hobbies Exhibit
- 10 Curator's Corner
- 11 Tomorrow's Historians
- 12 Save the Date

# Senior Center Event

On Tuesday, March 27, the Historical Society and the members of the Irvington Seniors enjoyed scrumptious desserts and a delightful conversation about Generations in Motion during which seniors shared their thoughts about the changes they have experienced in their lifetimes. Moderated by Historical Society member Patricia Bonomi, conversation topics ranged from gender roles and family structures to transportation and technology. The participants shared observations about generational changes and how they have impacted their lives and the lives of their parents and children. This focused discussion will be preserved as part of the Historical Society's Oral History archive.



Mary Umek, Virginia Clifford, and Agnes O'Neill



Terry Sullivan



Participants sharing their thoughts with moderator Pat Bonomi.



Peggy Baird, Helen Uszak, and John Maccia



Ruth and Ralph Goldsmith with Andy Lyons



Mildred and Jim Crosby

## Many Thanks!

The Irvington Historical Society would like to thank local resident and landscape designer Ann Acheson for the lovely planting of the tree beds outside the McVickar House. Acheson donated all of the plants and materials and, with the assistance of society board member Sue Maley, refurbished the beds and planted delightful flowers just in time for the House Tour.



# Historical Society House Tour and Reception

On Saturday, April 28th, the Irvington Historical Society held its fifth House Tour. Six lovely village homes, all off Main Street, welcomed visitors throughout the afternoon. In addition, an exhibit at Town Hall presented a pictorial history of these same “Off Main” streets and the partially restored Tiffany Room was open for viewing. Main Street bustled with activity on the bright spring day as tour participants strolled from house to house, stopping in at Town Hall, and visiting local shops.

A wonderful cocktail reception with light fare, a silent auction and several antiques appraisers followed that evening at the home of Suzanne Hart and Tom Casadei. Their beautiful, historic home proved the perfect setting for this delightful event. The Historical Society is deeply grateful for their generosity.



Signs marked each of the six homes on the tour.

The pictorial history of the village center at Town Hall.



Many residents touring the exhibit marveled at how many of our historic buildings still exist!



The Tiffany chandelier in the restored Tiffany Room.



Reception guests at the lovely home of Suzanne Hart and Tom Casadei.



Gerry and Pat Gilmartin with antiques appraiser.



Betsy Wilson hoping it's a treasure!



Kathy Mackie with an intriguing sword.



Andy Lyons viewing a silent auction item.

# The "Off Main" Homes



A unique adaptation of a commercial building into a stunning home.



A charming Queen Anne-style home with many original features.



# The "Off Main" Homes, *continued*



A lovely carriage house in Matthiessen Park.



A remarkable renovation/restoration along the Croton Aqueduct



# The “Off Main” Homes, *continued*



An “Off Main” home with a delightful hidden garden.



A beautiful Barney Park home bordering the brook.



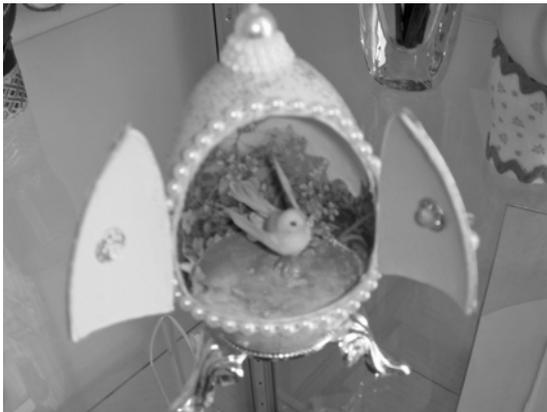
# Favorite Hobbies – Creating Beautiful Things

The Irvington Historical Society’s current exhibit, “Hobbies,” highlights a variety of crafts and interests that village residents pursue. The exhibit, curated by Anna Marie Sabatino and Mary Elizabeth Hartnett, showcases examples of needlework, calligraphy, painting and quilting, to name just a few. We asked several exhibitors to share with us a bit about their passion.

## Eggery by Joan Lobdell

I have always been fascinated by eggs, real and artificial. Perhaps it is because I was born in April and several times my birthday has fallen on Easter Sunday or very near it.

All variety and sizes of natural eggs can be decorated, but I have used only chicken and goose eggs. My main interest is in cutting them open and placing a tiny scene within the empty shells. Cutting a chicken egg is easy and can be done with cuticle scissors. However, a goose egg shell is porcelain hard and must be cut using a motorized tool or by scoring the shell several times with a sharp-pointed knife.



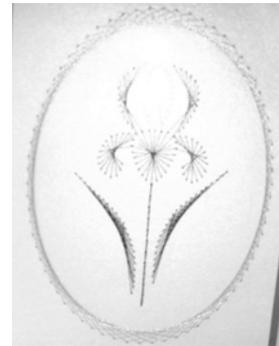
**A personal favorite, and one of my first efforts using a goose egg.**

While it is sometimes difficult to find objects small enough to fit in an empty shell, and gluing them in place requires patience and a steady hand, the creation of a pretty scenic egg makes Eggery a hobby that I have enjoyed for more than forty years.

## Paper Embroidery by Gail Matthew

Seeing beauty in simple, everyday moments fills life with pleasant surprises. A wise person once said to me, “In the best there is also a bit of bad and in the worst there is always a bit of good.” So, over the years I have learned to look for and find the good, the beautiful, and the positive in my days.

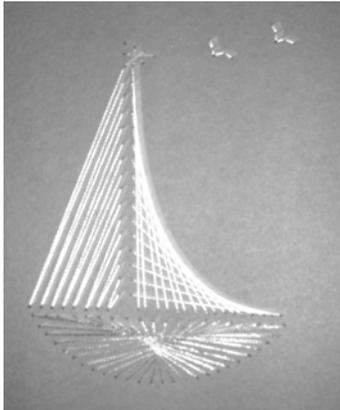
All of the creative arts have brought me joy over the years. But like most people, I have had to fulfill many roles: wife, mother, teacher, homemaker, etc., leaving little time to pursue this part of me. About 7 years ago, I discovered the creative outlet of paper embroidery. I found I could take simple, inexpensive materials and make unique, beautiful cards or items to be framed. These projects are easy to start and stop, and to carry in my purse. I can work on a picture or design while waiting for appointments, between meetings, or at any other time that I find myself with a few spare minutes.



**Paper embroidery has become a great hobby for me.**

I began when I saw a book by Erica Fortgens called *Basics of Embroidery on Paper*. I used it to teach myself and then searched the internet to see what else was out there. There are several names for this craft but I Googled *paper embroidery* and followed several leads. My sister, Grace, lives in Arizona. She found a woman running a club in Sun City who taught this and many other paper crafts. We have met with Linda several times to learn tricks, special techniques, and the best kinds of paper and products to use.

## Favorite Hobbies – Creating Beautiful Things, *continued*



A beautiful card graced with an embroidered sailboat.

Grace and I have shared ideas, patterns, and different presentations of our designs. It is always more fun doing things with others who have similar interests. I have taught many people to do paper embroidery—from 7-year-old students to senior citizens. It is an easy craft, if you enjoy detail work. It is not expensive and it creates special and one-of-a-kind gifts. I would love to meet with others who do paper embroidery or would like to try. Please feel free to contact me (591-7246) and perhaps we can start a group here in Irvington.

### Ribbon Art by Lenore Munigle

Of all the crafts I've done, ribbon art is my favorite. It requires minimal supplies, is portable, and has the added benefit of allowing me to work with luxurious satins, silks, and velvets. I've loved ribbon ever since I was a little girl, when one of my treasures was a picture, hanging in my bedroom, of an elegant lady whose bouffant skirt was fashioned of lavender ruched-satin ribbon. In hindsight, I'm sure it was probably an example of tacky-tacky 1950s home décor, but I adored it and was entranced by its construction.

My childhood fascination for all things ribbon and lace notwithstanding, you could say my love of gardening led me to ribbon art or, more accurately, to Frank's Nursery, where I found the gorgeous ombre ribbons that began my collection of buttons,

ribbons, lace, and vintage trims, much of which I then used in my various floral projects.



A collection of ribbons and lace.

The techniques I employ in my ribbon craft are loosely based on traditional millinery methods. All have been hand-sewn. Each blossom is created from a length of ribbon using a small, straight, running stitch that, when pulled, gathers the fabric into the desired shape. More intricate forms like pansies, violets, and daffodils require sectioned and folded wire ribbon. As the ribbon is gathered, the flower seems to magically “bloom” into shape, revealing unexpected colorations. The center areas I embellish with pearls, embroidery buttons, and beads. I have applied my “garden harvest” to fabric frames and albums. I have also made nosegays, Victorian-inspired corsages, and a variety of hair jewelry.



The tiniest of posies I fixed on barrettes for my granddaughter, Bella Smith.

## Favorite Hobbies – Creating Beautiful Things, *continued*

### How a Sculptor Feels by Michele Firpo-Cappiello

Creating something out of nothing is thrilling.

You start by looking at the model. Really looking. Not at the surface—the skin, the hair—but at the masses, the movement or “gesture” of the pose. To feel the form (without touching!) you draw with pencil or charcoal on paper. It’s the soft beginning of your piece. On a wooden board with some wires, you start to place the firm but pliable clay, looking to the model’s bones and flesh for guidance.

At first, it looks like a mess and it continues to look like a mess. Then, when you create a large enough mass of clay, you stop. You look at the model; you look at the clay. You begin to shape it—now with the ball of your hand, now with a wooden paddle, now with your fingers. You turn the sculpture stand this way and that, looking back and forth between your piece and the model. You add a little here, scrape away a little there. It starts to look like something.

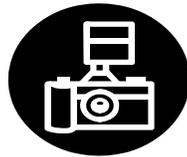
The looking, shaping, choosing can last for

days or weeks. You begin to make smaller and smaller movements when you touch the clay. And one day, you stop touching it. You turn the piece around and around on the stand as you look from the model to the art you’ve created from nothing. It might be worth casting, it might not. But the creating felt wonderful.



*Editor's Note: The bronze sculptures by Michele Firpo-Cappiello on display at McVickar House are being offered for sale. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Historical Society.*

## The Historical Society’s Annual Photo Contest “A View from a Room”



The Society is now accepting entries for its annual photo contest. Entrants may submit up to three photos, either color or black-and-white, by July 31st. All submitted photos will be on display at the McVickar House during the month of September during which time the public can select their favorites. Contest rules and entry forms are available at the McVickar House or online on the Society’s website: [www.irvingtonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.irvingtonhistoricalsociety.org). An afternoon reception for contest winners and the public will be held on September 29th.

# Curator's Corner

by Barbara Sciulli



The Curator and a very hardworking band of volunteers have been sequestered at our Archive, cataloging the inventoried cartons of items previously given to the Society. Each donation has been evaluated, numbered, tagged, boxed in acid-free cartons, and stored on numbered shelves. In total, 750 items were catalogued, using the system prescribed for small museums and historical societies by the New York State Board of Regents. Now we need a volunteer to enter the data from our notebooks into "Past Perfect" computer software (which we can teach you). Are you that person? If so, please call 591-1020 and leave a message for Barbara Sciulli.

Many photos were added to our Photo Archive, which is our most utilized collection. The photos are used for displays, publication, and reference. They are a visual history of our village, events,

and people. Names, dates, and addresses may fade but the images remain.

Our collection includes most of the types of photographic development: daguerreotypes, tintypes, carte de visite, gelatin prints, cyan prints, and slides, to name a few. Unfortunately, the digital age has decreased the number of prints we receive. To encourage donations, the Society sponsors an annual photo contest. Talented photographers share their work and thus preserve the visual heritage of our village. This year's theme is "A View from a Room"; contest details can be found on the Society's webpage.

We also invite you to donate copies of your personal photographs to the collection. Interior shots are particularly needed. Consider that your family's history is also part of Irvington's history and today's photos become tomorrow's historical record.

Two of our interior photos.

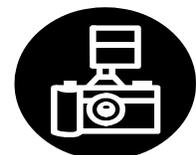


Two tintypes from the society's collection.



## Wanted

A photo of the Town Hall's double staircase. If you have one to share, please leave a message for our curator, Barbara Sciulli, at 591-1020. Thank you.



# Tomorrow's Historians



Cleo Aukland and Michael Saad



Charlotte Follari, Miguel Anderson, and Suyash Bhatt



Reuben Milan-Polisar and Aidan Walsh

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, the fourth annual Peter K. Oley Tomorrow's Historians Student Historical Research Symposium was held at Irvington High School. This year's theme, *An American Expo*, showcased the history and culture of the United States. Following opening remarks by our President, Andy Lyons, and Mr. Chris Barry, Social Studies Chairperson, the program's producer and host, Social Studies teacher and Historical Society board member, Dr. Erik Weiselberg, introduced the first of three panels of students who presented their research findings in the following three categories: *The United States' Power Abroad*, *The Perils of Power at Home*, and *American Culture from Different Eras*.

A lively and informative question-and-answer period followed each of the three panels. To add to the evening's interest, several students enacted a mock trial of John Brown, the radical abolitionist who had hoped to put an end to slavery by conducting an armed rebellion. Each of the twenty-six panelists then received a certificate and a copy of a brief history of the Village of Irvington. Dr. Weiselberg expressed gratitude to the students, teachers and guests who turned out in support of these "Young Historians" and the evening concluded with a reception in their honor. The Irvington Historical Society is once again proud to collaborate with the High School Social Studies Department in sponsoring this exciting research symposium, which highlights exceptional historical research by exceptional Irvington High School students. — *Barbara Carrozzi*



Courtney Buell, James McLoughlin and Yoshio Funakoshi



Dylan Goldstein and Ciara Morley



Dr. Erik Weiselberg



Andrew Baker and Olivia Jacobsen



Maria Lewis



Max Jackowitz, Heidi Marschke and Sam Colon

# The Roost

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