Always a Wow Factor at the Historical Museum!

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This has been the year of balloons for me. It was GHM Inc. President Lisa Anderson who suggested that we needed lots of balloons to help make our special events and historical celebrations more festive. The ephemeral nature of balloons, not to mention the havoc an escapee can have on our fire and security systems, was not a natural for a museum professional used to saving things for posterity. But you know, I am now a believer. The presence of balloons on multiple occasions every month has marked the investment we are making for immediacy and presence, and an emotional connection that is at the core of engagement. The balloons awaken my inner child and evoke the sense of wonder and joy that I first had with every childhood museum visit.

We’ve had many green balloons, both in City green and our own distinctive lime green color, especially for the Greensboro City Birthday Bash in March. We brought in multiple vibrant colors in honor of so many different partners for our festive Roaring 20s Flashback, and you can be sure Fresh Market green will be present at our Wine Gala (don’t forget to buy your tickets). Our Annual Dinner on November 13th will have lots of gold balloons, as we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Greensboro Historical Museum Society led by a group of incredible ladies, including Mrs. Hiram Bell, Mrs. J. S. Betts and Mrs. D. H. Blair.

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving them

As the end of 2014 draws near, I am delighted over the smashing success that we have experienced at the museum. From our fantastic 90th anniversary celebration on July 12th (which was a tour de force, and brought hundreds of people through our museum each hour) to another bright season of O. Henry plays, we have ignited our community’s excitement for our museum and the richness we add to so many lives.

In reading this quote by Henry David Thoreau, “What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving them,” I could not help but to think about our year together.

This was to be a year of engagement. We wanted to engage our members and for them to feel valued. We wanted to engage our staff and board around significant programs and events that mattered to all in our community. And, we wanted to engage our community…reaching beyond our current audience to groups of “first-timers,” and creating in them a thirst to return and become life-long museum goers. Well, I believe we achieved this meaningful level of engagement. But more importantly, I believe we gained a level of “oneness” among our board, staff, and members of our community that is critically important to our sustainable success. This solidarity, coupled with our incredible collection and programming, is a recipe for a type of success that will last for generations to come.

Thank you for your support in making this year so memorable. I look forward to celebrating with you at the Annual Dinner on November 13th!

Lisa Anderson, President, Greensboro Historical Museum, Inc.

P.S. Consider the gift of membership this year—for every one you purchase at the Annual Dinner, I will give you a free balloon!
Items of Interest

A DuMont Teleset: Mid-Century Luxury

On September 22, 1949 the citizens of Greensboro viewed the first WFMY-TV broadcast. While most local families didn’t own a television yet, the manufacture of televisions was well underway.

In 1948, DuMont Laboratories produced the Teleset, which combined television, high fidelity audio, radio, and a phonograph in one console. The most expensive and elaborate TV available, The Westminster model cost $2495.

This console originally belonged to J. Spencer Love, founder and president of Burlington Industries, who had it in his Palm Beach, Florida home. The photo shows Love with his wife, Martha, in the late 1950s during a stay in Florida.

WHAT THE MUSEUM MEANS TO ME

“My museum connection goes back several generations to my great-grandfather, Rev. J. Henry Smith, who was minister at First Presbyterian. I’ve always loved the building,” begins Trustee Chris Carlson, adding, “my dad [Carl Carlson] would tell the story of my grandmother, Mary Lynn Smith Richardson, who, with my great aunts, bought the former First Presbyterian Church complex and gave it to the City of Greensboro. Made us both feel so proud.” His interest began with family drives and then was cemented thanks to school field trips. “I clearly remember being amazed. Seeing the next generation feel the same way means a lot.”

Carlson follows in his family’s footsteps through his service as a museum trustee. “I’ve really enjoyed being a board member. And since I’m in the marketing field, chairing the Marketing Committee has been great. At first I thought, wow, this is an incredible and interesting challenge. Now I feel we’ve made a big impact with limited resources—the nearly 1000 folks at the Roaring 20s event just one example.” He concludes, “I’ve been really impressed with the teamwork and commitment showed by the entire board. The museum means a lot to all of us.”

Postcards provide some of the few color images of Greensboro before color photography, and during 2014 we have added more than a dozen new postcards to our collections, including this one.

Ivory Stores operated six self-service groceries located all over the city in 1940. This building, which still stands on Walker Avenue near its intersection with Cedar Street, housed a store in one half and the company offices in the other from about 1935 to 1950. Today it is occupied by the SHOPPE, a program that provides vocational training and job placement for developmentally disabled adults.

Elise Allison, Archivist
Susan Webster, Registrar/Curator
Thanks to musician Wally West and fellow musicians who came together as the Gate City Hot 5 Jazz Band. They were the bee’s knees!

Young guests stayed busy all afternoon. Some became Junior Curators and shared their feelings about their favorite exhibits. Others talked with costumed interpreters portraying people from Greensboro’s past. Lots made their own headwear, where the only limit was their imagination.

The smiles and laughs were infectious, the delight palpable with a standing room only crowd at the Greensboro Public Library Program Specialist Ronald Headen’s Silent Film Screening. No one had ever seen anything quite like it, as our library colleague and film expert pulled classic clips featuring Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd. If you’d been there, you’d also have seen Edna Purviance, Bebe Daniels and Snub Pollard.

Just before the film, Miss Tammy from the Greensboro Public Library had an audience on the edge of their seats with stories that harkened back to the Roaring 20s.
The Piedmont Car Club drove some beautifully restored 1920s automobiles right up to the museum entrance. Not only that, but members dressed in costumes and talked with many visitors. Antique automobiles are always a hit at the museum, and on this day, even more so.

Where were all these folks headed? To a wonderful lunch tasting courtesy of Dame’s Chicken & Waffles, our downtown neighbor to the south on Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Oh, was everyone happy with their meal.

It was hard for the visitors to stay in their seats as the Piedmont Swing Dance Society took to the museum stage. Oliver Twists and floor flushers all (slang for skilled and enthusiastic dancers) pleased the crowd.

The group welcomes new members, from beginners to experts, at dances every month at the Oriental Shrine Club.

Where were all these folks headed? To a wonderful lunch tasting courtesy of Dame’s Chicken & Waffles, our downtown neighbor to the south on Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Oh, was everyone happy with their meal.
EXHIBITION

Warnersville Community the Focus of New Exhibition

The museum is very excited to announce an exhibit on the Warnersville community opening November 23, 2014. Warnersville, the first planned African American community in Greensboro, has a rich and unique history yet many residents know very little about this neighborhood or how it came to exist.

After the end of the Civil War, Yardley Warner, a Quaker from Pennsylvania, traveled to several cities in North Carolina, searching for a place to create a community for recently freed slaves and other African Americans. He was not warmly received in many places he visited, but in Greensboro—perhaps because of the large Quaker community—he managed to purchase 37 ½ acres outside the city limits.

The land was subdivided into one acre plots and sold to families so they could raise their own provisions and become self-sufficient. Warner also built a house, which served as the community’s first school. That Warner lived in the community was extremely unusual, even for Quakers. Harmon Unthank, a former slave and one of the original residents and leaders, is credited with naming the community in Warner’s honor. Despite the doubts of many townspeople, this experimental neighborhood grew and prospered during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This project began with Lisa Scheer, whose interest led her to research and conduct oral and video histories. The work continued with collaboration and participation by the Warnersville Historical and Beautification Society, David D. Jones Elementary School, Warnersville Recreation Center, neighborhood churches and community members. There were many informal conversations with current and former residents, who talked about their interests and concerns and the importance of creating a museum exhibition. People expressed their deep community pride even after the loss of so many buildings and landmarks; they shared the significance of Warnersville’s early history and the importance of recognizing outstanding achievements.

UNCG graduate student Angela Thorpe and I began oral history interviews, asking about neighborhood memories and questions about specific events. We heard about schools, the recreation center, and the impact of redevelopment on their families and businesses.

About a year ago, we invited community members to join an exhibit advisory team to participate and provide feedback during the exhibition process. Working in tandem with museum staff, seven themes have emerged: The Significance of History, Life in the Neighborhood, Erasure of the Landscape/Perseverance, Life in the Neighborhood—Post Redevelopment, Warnersville Today & in the Future, and Recognizing & Celebrating Individual Contributions. Audio and video of fascinating stories and personal memories will provide the foundation for the Warnersville exhibition.

Jon B. Zachman, Curator of Collections
MUSEUM SHOP CORNER

Jump Start Your Holiday Shopping on November 15

Shopping for family and friends is truly a pleasure in the Museum Shop, and never more so than on Saturday, November 15 when you will meet local vendors and enjoy an additional 5% discount by offering a friendly ROAR. Simply mention the word “Roar” and the discount is yours. You’ll also enjoy live music by a talented singing group led by Pam Murphy, celebrating the museum’s founding 90 years ago in November 1924.

It’s “Give the Gift of Greensboro” Day. Shop staff and volunteers can help you create distinctive baskets filled with treats from the Gate City. Are you buying for a foodie, or someone who has asked for nothing to dust? Choose from our new signature Vida Pour teas, classic Boar and Castle sauce, locally-made spice combinations or Moravian cookies. Seeking one-of-a-kind jewelry or pottery by Greensboro artisans? Search no further. And soaps and lotions with the museum’s imprint are customer favorites, as are Greensboro-themed books about memorable people, places and events.

That’s just a start. We are pleased to offer gift wrap, phone orders, online shopping (shop.GreensboroHistory.org) and affordable shipping.

MUSEUM GUILD

Fellowship and learning are the hallmarks of the Museum Guild, which meets on the third Monday of the month from September through May. We promise a variety of programs, a holiday luncheon and a bus excursion to an interesting site. This fall, from the comfort of the museum’s lecture hall, we’ll visit the Mendenhall Plantation in nearby Jamestown and observe a Coast Guard captain in action, then hear a one-of-a-kind Christmas story at our December gathering.

The Guild’s mission is to embrace our local history through leadership, education programs and tours, and to show our support of the museum through volunteer service, donations and public awareness. Our meetings begin with social time at 10, followed by the program at 10:30. Guests are always welcome. If you’d like to find out more, please call me at 378-1531.

Betty K. Phipps
First Vice-President
CALANDER OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 11
3G Downtown Harvest Festival
Including fun in Richardson Park

Thursday, October 16, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
The Fresh Market Wine Gala
Lawndale Store
See page 2; buy tickets at GreensboroHistory.org

Monday, October 20 at 10 a.m.
Museum Guild Meeting
“An Armchair Tour of Mendenhall Plantation”
with Director Shawn Rogers
Guests welcome

Monday, October 20 at 6:30 p.m.
Belle Meade Society Fall Meeting
“The Guilford Limner: A Mysterious 1820s Watercolor Artist”
with Sally Gant, MESDA
Invitations forthcoming

Saturday, October 25 from 2 - 6 p.m.
Ghoulash
Ghostly Cemetery Walk
from 2:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Ghost Stories in the Graveyard
with Cynthia Brown at 2 p.m.
Phantom of the Opera
Silent Movie at 2:30 p.m.
The Cat and the Canary
Silent Movie at 4:15 p.m.

NOVEMBER

Tuesday, November 11
Museum Closed

Thursday, November 13 at 6:30 p.m.
Membership Annual Dinner
Voices of a City Local History Award
“The Greatest Great of the Great 1920s”
with Dr. Elliot Engel
Greensboro Country Club
Members $50; Guests $60

Saturday, November 15 from 1 - 4 p.m.
Museum Shop Holiday Shopping
“Give the Gift of Greensboro”
Local vendors, additional discount
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Monday, November 17 at 10 a.m.
Museum Guild Meeting
“Thirty Years as a Coast Guard Captain”
with Royce Garrett
Guests welcome

Sunday, November 23 from 2 - 5 p.m.
Warnersville Exhibit Opening
See page 6

Thursday - Friday, November 27 - 28
Museum Closed

DECEMBER

December 2 - January 4
Museum Decorated for Holidays

Thursday, December 18 at 11 a.m.
Museum Guild Holiday Luncheon
“A North Carolina Christmas Story”
with Fred Hamlet
Greensboro Country Club

Wednesday - Friday, December 24 - 26
Museum Closed

Thursday, January 1
Museum Closed

On the Cover: Having fun at a museum event. Photo by Lynn Donovan

For more information, visit GreensboroHistory.org/events

Greensboro Historical Museum, Inc.
2014 Board of Trustees

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Brian Clarida, Vice President
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Open Tuesday - Saturday
10 AM - 5 PM
Sunday 2 PM - 5 PM
Free Admission
GreensboroHistory.org

O. Henry Magazine

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