

Greece Historical Society



50th Anniversary Celebration 1969 - 2019

October 26, 2019
Red Fedele's Brook House

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of Service
to our Community!

50



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Greece Historical Society

50th Anniversary Celebration

1969-2019

Saturday, October 26, 2019

Red Fedele's Brook House

920 Elmridge Center Drive • Rochester, NY 14626

Program

Reception - Cash Bar

Music Provided by Richard Tosti

Welcome

Bill Sauers, GHS President

Invocation

Buffet Dinner

Introductions

Bill Sauers

Guest Speakers

Joseph Robach, New York State Senator

Devin Lander, New York State Historian

GHS Memories from Guests

Dessert

Raffle Drawing

Dan Silver

Closing Remarks

Bill Sauers

Greece Historical Society Board of Trustees

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Lee Strauss

50th Anniversary Celebration Booklet

Designed & Edited by Gina M. DiBella

Advertisements & Messages by Marie Poinan

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Greece Historical Society & Museum

595 Long Pond Road • P.O. Box 16249 • Rochester, NY 14616-0249

GHS Office Phone: 585-225-7221

Website: www.greecehistoricalsociety.org

Message from the President

Welcome to the Greece Historical Society's 50th Anniversary!

Fifty years ago, in 1969, Town Historian Virginia Tomkiewicz organized a new historical society for the Town of Greece. With her encouragement and assistance, our founding members went through the rigorous process of obtaining a provisional and eventually an absolute charter.



In the beginning, they were focused on collecting artifacts and stories, participating in parades, setting up information booths at the Mall, partnering with the Town of Greece to celebrate our country's Bicentennial and the town's 125th anniversary, welcoming the community to the annual strawberry festival, and publishing their first history book, *Eight Miles along the Shore*. Today, with financial contributions from the State and individuals, and thousands of volunteer hours, the Society owns and operates the History Center & Museum at 595 Long Pond Road.

Our all-volunteer Society is run by community members from a variety of backgrounds, who lend their time and talent to govern the organization, organize lectures, conduct school tours, create exhibits, research questions, maintain our building, care for our collections, administer membership, publish a newsletter and conduct fundraisers.

Congratulations to all members of the Greece Historical Society, both past and present, who have cared enough about our town to spend countless volunteer hours preserving its history. The backbone of our Society is the community. Without its support, we could not have existed for 50 years.

It is an honor to follow in the footsteps of our founding members. We hope the next generation and future generations will appreciate our work and continue to "save the past for the future." We will continue to give a sense of "roots" and a greater feeling of belonging by striving to provide our community with an awareness of the past, an appreciation of the present, and a vision for the future.

Bill Sauers
Greece Historical Society President

Greece Historical Society Presidents

1969-1970	George Caswell	1988-1989	Eric Peter Smith & Mary Lee Strauss, Interim
1971	Wallace Sterling		
1972	Robert Brookhouse	1990-1991	Arthur Beane
1973	Larry Marino	1992-1993	Eric Peter Smith
1974-1976	Kay Pollok	1994-1995	Lorraine Beane
1977	Edward Spelman	1996-1999	Stephen Voellinger
1978-1979	George Caswell	1999-2001	Thomas Schommer
1980-1982	Maurine Schauman	2001-2003	Viola White
1983	Cheryl Litzenberger	2003-2005	Bill Coe
1984-1985	Scott Willey	2005-2007	Jack Wallenhorst
1986-1987	Walter Goulding	2007-2019	Bill Sauers

Town of Greece Historians

Hazel Justice Herrick (1945-1949)

Albert Angevine (1950-1969)

Virginia "Ginny" Tomkiewicz (1969-1995)

Greece Historical Society/Alan Mueller (1996-2015)

Keith Suhr (2016-present)

What is a Historical Society?

By definition, a historical society is an organization dedicated to preserving, collecting, researching, and interpreting historical information or items. Unlike other states, which recognize cultural agencies as nonprofit businesses, New York State sees them as educational organizations. Chartered historical societies in New York are a significant part of our educational system, are incorporated under Education Law, are subject to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York, and have the recognition of being a member of The University of the State of New York.

About the Greece Historical Society

Mission

The mission of the Greece Historical Society is to discover, research and preserve the history of the Town of Greece and to share that history with its residents and the local community through public programs, publications, museum exhibits, and accessibility to its archives and artifacts.



The Greece Historical Society is an all-volunteer not-for-profit educational institution chartered by the NYS Board of Regents. The Society owns and maintains a house and museum located at 595 Long Pond Road in Greece, New York.

Town Historian Virginia Tomkiewicz organized the Society in 1969. In 1978, the Town of Greece provided a house on English Road for the Office of the Historian and meeting space for the Society. In 1988, under the initiative of Supervisor Donald Riley, Wegmans Food Markets sold the house previously owned by Gordon A. Howe, former Greece Supervisor and Monroe County Manager, to the Society for \$1.00 and generously funded moving the house to what is now the Greece Town Campus. In 1992, with the help of NYS Senator Ralph Quattrociochi and Assemblyman Roger Robach, the Society was awarded a NYS grant to build a museum addition, and with additional financial support from Donald Newcomb, the museum addition was opened and named Newcomb Hall in his and his family's honor.

Today the Greece Historical Society offers free public programs, a museum gift and bookshop, exhibits and special events, programs for libraries, senior residences and organizations, publications, archival resources, and *The Corinthian* newsletter.

Funding for the Historical Society comes from memberships, contributions from individuals, organizations and businesses, museum shop sales, grants, and fundraising events.

History Timeline of the Greece Historical Society

- 1969 The Historical Society of Greece is organized by Town Historian Virginia Tomkiewicz. Fifteen people attend the organizational meeting held on September 30. By December, the Society has 70 members. Those who paid the annual dues before January 1 were named Charter Members. The Society began meeting in churches and schools while planning for a permanent home.
- 1970 The Society holds its first Tour of Historical Homes in Greece, which includes five homes: The Covert-Brodie-Pollock Cobblestone House (978 North Greece Road), The Rigney-Feeney Residence (1885 Latta Road), The Burns-Kirk-Newcomb Homestead (400 Newcomb Road), The Carpenter-Toal-Schoonmaker-Latragna House (3490 Latta Road), and the Colby-Shearman-Smith House (500 Latona Road, originally located on West Ridge Road).
- 1974 The Society receives its permanent charter from the New York State Board of Regents as a not-for-profit educational institution. The Historical Society holds its first Strawberry Festival.
- 1978 The Town of Greece provides a house at 1077 English Road for the Office of the Historian and meeting space for the Society. Monthly history programs are held at the house.
- 1982 The Society publishes *Eight Miles Along the Shore: An Illustrated History of Greece, N.Y.*, written by Virginia Tomkiewicz and Shirley Cox Husted.
- 1984 *Eight Miles Along the Shore* receives awards for printing excellence from the Rochester Club of Printing House Craftsmen and the International Association of Printing House Craftsman.
-

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- 1986 The first museum of local history opens to the public at the English Road house. Society membership has grown and once again monthly programs are held at area churches. The Board of Trustees begins the search for a home of its own.
- 1988 Town of Greece Supervisor Donald Riley arranges for Wegmans Food Markets to sell and move the former home of Gordon Howe, long time Greece supervisor and Monroe County Manager, to its present location at 595 Long Pond Road on property owned by the town. It becomes the new home of the Greece Historical Society.
- 1991 After 6,000 hours of volunteer labor, the house is renovated and museum exhibits move to the new site.
- 1992 Funded by a \$65,000 New York State grant received with the help of NYS Senator Ralph Quattrociochi and Assemblyman Roger Robach, a new 60' x 24' museum wing is added to the house.
- 1998 With the help of grants, community fundraisers, and donations, including a \$25,000 donation from Donald Newcomb, the interior of the museum wing is completed. The addition is named Newcomb Hall in honor of Mr. Newcomb and his family.
- 2001 A new sign incorporating the cupola from the recently demolished Greece Memorial Town Hall is constructed for the museum. The Society's name is changed from Historical Society of Greece to the Greece Historical Society.
- 2009 The Greece Historical Society celebrates its 40th Anniversary and receives the prestigious Marguerite Hare Browne Service to Education Award.
-

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- 2010 The GHS lecture series draws from 75 to 165 attendees each month. Meetings are held at Greece Town Hall. (They move to the Greece Public Library in 2015.)
- 2013 GHS holds a community fundraiser to replace the roof on its headquarters.
- 2014 The Society secures a grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation for a historic marker for Paddy Hill School, a presence at the intersection of Mt. Read Boulevard and Latta Road for 175 years. It was unveiled and presented to the Greece Central School District on October 31.
- 2016 The Greece Museum's "Our Town in World War II" exhibit receives a Certificate of Commendation Award from the Museum Association of New York (MANY). GHS receives grants totaling \$14,000 from the Preservation League of New York State and the Landmark Society of Western New York to conduct a historic resources survey of the work of James H. Johnson, architect of St. John the Evangelist Church and the former Our Lady of Mercy Rectory in Greece and other iconic buildings in the area. (The survey is completed in 2018.)
- 2018 GHS dedicates a historic marker honoring Jean Brooks Greenleaf, president of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association from 1890-1896. The sign was funded by a grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation secured by GHS volunteer Maureen Whalen.
- 2019 The Society holds its 46th Strawberry Festival (now known as the Strawberry and Dessert Tasting Festival) and makes plans to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The Landmark Society of Western New York to present GHS with Special Citation Awards for its work preserving and sharing the history of Greece, NY and for its involvement with the James H. Johnson survey.
-

Greece Historical Society Memories

Greece became my new home in 1966 when my husband Richard began his orthodontics practice here. Although I am Canadian by birth, the history of Greece intrigued me. In 1976, I attended the Greece Historical Society's annual weekend event at Greece Town Mall. I was impressed with all their activity. Grace Van Putte, the Society's treasurer, drew me in with the stories of her family (the Justices) and her husband Bill's family (the Van Puttes). She brought history alive with her stories. I joined the Society that weekend. Richard and I became Life members.

Through the years it has been a privilege to work as a volunteer with such people as Kay Pollok, who opened her gracious Greek Revival cobblestone house on North Greece Road to Society teas and house tours, and Ginny Tomkiewicz, the Greece Town Historian, who invited me to attend luncheons with area town historians. Together we planned history tours in a double-decker bus. Richard and I participated in the Barnard Parade in which the Society had a float. And Strawberry Festivals at the 1835 home of Art and Mary Newcomb on Kirk Road were always a treat.

After my children were old enough, I became more active in the Society, serving as acting president in 1988 when we moved the Larkin-Beattie-Howe House. I can never thank Supervisor Donald Riley enough for arranging with Wegmans to sell and move the house for us. Using proceeds from the sale of Eight Miles Along the Shore, an anecdotal history of the town by Virginia Tomkiewicz and Monroe County historian Shirley Cox Husted, the Society paid \$32,000 for the foundation to be built and land graded.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Greece Historical Society will continue for years to come and provide programs and publications that tell the many stories of our town. No one could work harder than President Bill Sauers in making that happen. The interesting programs at the Greece Public Library always draw a crowd. The dedicated volunteers provide exhibits in the Greece Museum that educate children and adults alike. Future publications will go on telling about the life and times of our town.

~ Lee Strauss, former Acting President

More GHS Memories

Originally, our monthly meetings were held at John Knox Church and board meetings were held in individual board members' homes. We subsequently moved all our meetings to a small house on English Road adjacent to Basil Marella Park, made available to us by the Town. A small core of devoted members actively promoted our organization through annual events at the mall, fashion shows in vintage costumes, participation in the Barnard parade and so forth. We were particularly active during the Bicentennial year celebrations in 1976. I also have fond memories of the Newcomb family (Art, Mary, Tom and myself) hosting the annual Strawberry Festival and house tour at our historic home for over 20 years.

~ Judy Newcomb, Charter Member

Looking back to 2002, when I was president of this Society, I marvel at the vision we all had. Our treasures and memorabilia have been used in many of our projects. Our displays have sparked interest in our schools with tours. Back then Carolyn Brewer and I had visions of a larger gift shop. Today, it is still in place and a great place to get last minute gifts. Our 1930s kitchen exhibit still sparks interest as a teaching aid. We enjoy our town garden clubs, Lakeshore and Shore Winds, keeping up the gardens at our museum. Our town history has been passed on in newspapers, in our Corinthian newsletter, and the volunteers' work through our programs. We have built a beautiful treasury of history for this town.

~ Vi White, past President

My Mom, Marion Litzenberger, and I started going to Greece Historical Society meetings long before it had a permanent home. I remember going to a meeting in the old Gordon Howe house on the property currently owned by Wegmans (corner of Long Pond and Latta Roads), and the day that it was moved to its current location. Eventually, it would become the GHS Museum. My Mom also initiated and coordinated the very popular and successful GHS Country Fair at Greece Town Mall where historical crafts were demonstrated.

~ Cheryl Litzenberger, Charter Member and past President

Retirement! We joined the Greece Historical Society in 1986 and the fun began! Many fond memories, moving the house, painting, planning the Strawberry Festival and "Smith" and Phyllis "Brown" went about begging for money. We loved it!

~ Marion Smith

More GHS Memories

Through the 20-plus years that I have volunteered, my fondest memories are those with the school groups. I have seen thousands of young students marvel at the house and museum. My mentor was the late Dorothy Schommer. I learned from the best.

~ Kathie Firkins, Education Committee Chairperson

For years my mother and father hosted the annual Strawberry Festival for the Greece Historical Society. This was one of the biggest events of the year for the family, especially for my father. My father was deeply involved in the early days of the Historical Society. He especially liked going to cemeteries, to get names and dates off the gravestones to collaborate information on the pioneers and early settlers of Greece. He was dedicated to supplying information about Greece to the Society.

~ Don Newcomb, Charter Member

Since moving to Greece in 1963, I have been very interested in learning all I can about the Town's extensive and interesting history. When I learned that the Larkin-Beattie-Howe farmhouse was to be used as a Greece Museum of History, I immediately felt a need to be involved.

While on the Board of Trustees, we focused on insuring that the house was well-maintained and bringing forth educational programs, speakers, fundraisers, social events, new technology, and an enhanced gift shop operation. We also raised funds to complete the exhibit hall addition. Thanks to a major donation by Don Newcomb, a member of one of Greece's pioneer families, our goal was reached.

Celebrating a 50-year anniversary is certainly very special for any organization. As I see it, for the Greece Historical Society, it is also a celebration of the dedication, loyalty, caring, leadership, effort, and teamwork that was provided over the years at various times by hundreds and hundreds of volunteers. All the effort made, and time given over the 50 years has certainly brought forth a well-organized and very productive Greece Historical Society and Museum, one that definitely lives up to its mission "To preserve the past for the future."

~ Bill Selke, past Vice-President/Board of Trustees Member

Membership

Your membership dollars help support the preservation of our town's history and enable the Society to share it with the community through programs, the Greece Museum exhibits, and publications. Your dollars also help maintain our historic farm house, owned solely by the Society, which sits on land leased from the Town of Greece.

Member benefits include: a subscription to *The Corinthian*, the Society newsletter, mailings about current activities, free admission to all programs, advance registration privileges for special events and tours, and discounted tickets for selected events.

To join or renew by mail, complete the membership form below and mail it along with payment to: MEMBERSHIP – GREECE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 16249
ROCHESTER, NY 14616-0249

To join or renew online, visit our website:

<http://greecehistoricalsociety.org/join-us/membership/>

Greece Historical Society & Museum Membership Application

Name(s) _____

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Email Address _____ Phone _____

Membership Classifications	Annual Rate	Select
Senior (62+ each), Student	\$15.00	_____
Individual Adult	\$20.00	_____
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Donation		_____

Select one:

New application Renewal Upgrade Donation

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Memberships are deductible under Section 501(c)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code.

You will receive your membership card(s) and receipt by return mail.

Our membership year runs from May 1st to April 30th.

Greece Historical Society on the Move: The Larkin-Beattie-Howe House

The first home of the Greece Historical Society was a small brick house located on English Road near Basil Marella Park. In 1978, the town offered the house to the Historical Society. The Office of the Town Historian was located on the second floor. The garage was packed with artifacts that had been collected since 1969. By 1986, GHS opened the first museum of local history in the living room, bedroom and kitchen of the house. Around that time the Board of Trustees began the search to find a home of its own.



An opportunity presented itself in 1987 when a house and acreage surrounding 3177 Latta Road was sold to Robert Wegman, who was planning a new supermarket at the corner of Long Pond and Latta Roads. The farmhouse had been built by John Butz about 1855. In the



1860s, John Larkin bought the house and farm. The Larkin family owned the property until 1896 when it was sold to Gustavus Haller, a blacksmith. In 1904, Haller's widow sold the farm to Frank Beattie. The Beattie family owned the farm until 1941, when Gordon and Lois Howe purchased the 25 acres at the southwest corner of Latta and Long Pond. They lived in the house from 1941 to 1965 and raised their three children there. Howe was long-time supervisor of the Town of Greece and later Monroe County Manager. The Howes sold the property to Edward Wegman (not related to Robert) whose son and family

lived in the home for a short time and then it was rented to tenants. At the time it was purchased by Robert Wegman, the house was unoccupied, fallen into disrepair, and was slated for demolition.



(continued on page 16)

Greece Historical Society Through the Years

1969-2019



Members of the Historical Society of Greece, N.Y. costumed to march in the Barnard Parade, July 1973.



Guests wait in line to tour the home of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Newcomb at the GHS Strawberry Festival in 1974. (Greece Post)



GHS publishes an Illustrated History of Greece, N.Y. ... Eight Miles Along the Shore in 1982.



GHS members participate in the 1985 Barnard parade.



Carline & Scott Wiley assemble their "Ridge Road Wheel of Change" exhibit in 1986.



Gretchen Howe says a prayer that her family home will arrive safely on its new site just before the move begins.



The Strawberry Festival moves to the grounds of the Greece Historical Society's new home.



The Greece Memorial Town Hall cupola is incorporated into the Society and Museum's new sign. (Greece Post)



Retired Greece Historian Virginia Tomkiewicz at the 40th Anniversary.



Former Executive Director Lorraine Beane with former Supervisor Don Riley.



Architect James Johnson speaks at a GHS meeting in May 2012 at St. John the Evangelist Church.



Historian Alan Mueller is honored by the Greece Chamber in 2016.



The GHS and community members unveil a historic marker honoring Jean Brooks Greenleaf in 2018.

GHS On the Move—*continued*



Greece Supervisor Donald Riley knew of the Historical Society's desire for a larger place to expand the Greece Museum and suggested that the house be given to the Greece Historical Society if it could be moved elsewhere. In 1988, the house was sold to the Historical Society

for one dollar and Wegmans paid \$24,000 to move the house to town-owned land one-quarter mile north on Long Pond Road. Proceeds from the sale of the Society's history book, *Eight Miles Along the Shore*, helped to fund the \$32,000 needed to excavate and build the basement. Volunteers worked 6,000 hours to renovate the house and create the museum.



A new museum wing was added to the house in 1992, funded by a \$65,000 grant from New York State, obtained with the help of NYS Senator Ralph Quattrociocchi and Assemblyman Roger Robach. Six years later, with the help of grants, fundraisers and a

generous \$25,000 donation from Donald Newcomb, the interior of the museum wing was completed, and the addition was named Newcomb Hall in honor of Mr. Newcomb and his family.



Congratulations to the
Greece Historical Society
on your
50th Anniversary!

*Thank you for keeping
the rich history of our
town alive!*



Senator Joe Robach

56th District

2300 W. Ridge Rd
(585) 225-3650

Robach@nysenate.gov
robach.nysenate.gov

To honor **Lorraine Beane**,
former Executive Director,
for her many years of
leadership to GHS.
From **LEE STRAUSS**

G.H.S. 50 YEARS!
A tribute to
Virginia Tomkiewicz
and our founding members.
BILL SAUERS

Happy Golden Anniversary!
Thank you for keeping and
sharing Greece's history.
From **MAUREEN WHALEN**

Recognizing **Lee Strauss** for
her 40+ years of dedication
to Greece Historical Society.
Compliments of
MARIE POINAN

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CARLINE WILEY
one of the founders
of the Greece Museum.
From **LEE STRAUSS**

In honor of
LORRAINE & ART BEANE
for their many years
of dedication.
From an anonymous donor

Happy 50th Anniversary.
I have been a volunteer for
over 20 years. I am proud
to be a part of preserving
the history of our
Town & Society.
KATHIE FIRKINS

Congratulations
Greece Historical Society on
50 years of preserving
Greece's history
for future generations!
**GINA DIBELLA &
AL GONNELLA**

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Thank you, GHS, for
treasuring our town heritage
and encouraging others
to treasure it also.
JANE M. GRANT

In memory of
Virginia Tomkiewicz
Town Historian
Our founder in 1969.
From **LEE STRAUSS**

In Memory of
Dr. Daniel Burrell
Loved History and the GHS.
Love, from his wife
ELLEN DONAHUE

Thanks to all who
over the years contributed
so as to make a 50-year
celebration possible!
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Congratulations to the
Greece Historical Society
For 50 years of service !



**Ontario Beach Park
Program Committee**

A special Thank You to
Kathleen Firkins,
Chair Education Committee,
and all our docents.
From **LEE STRAUSS**

Best wishes!
Here's to another 50 years.
From the
**FRIENDS OF THE
GREECE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Many thanks to the amazing
and dedicated volunteers
who devote their time to
make GHS a first-class
Historical Society!
JEAN L. IZARD

Remembering the fond
memories of our retirement
years with our GHS friends
and my husband Peter.
MARION SMITH

Thanks for
saving our past
for the future generations.
From **SANDRA L. PECK**

Best Wishes
and
Continued Success!
DAVE & RITA GARRETSON

Thanks for saving our
history!
In memory of the
Samuel G. Thayer Family
From
MABEL & VICKY THAYER

To honor
**Chief Milton Carter and
Officer Bill Hincer**
Greece Police Department
From **GIL HOLTZ**




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Congratulations!

To the Greece Historical Society on
celebrating 50 years!



“We celebrate you for
helping to preserve
our community’s
rich history.”

Adam Belto

Monroe County Clerk

Congratulations on
achieving this milestone!
Best Wishes,
CATHERINE CYRULIK

To honor dedicated educator
Alva E. Margeson, principal
Barnard Union School
From **GIL HOLTZ**

Saluting the
**Henry & Harriet Mitchell
Family**
Residents of the
Town of Greece since 1840.
LINDA KOSTIN

The GREECE RIDGE LIONS,
serving Greece since 2001,
recognize the work
of the
Greece Historical Society.

Thanks for all of your
hard work!
Best Volunteers ever!
JIM & BETTY TUDISCO

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founder of
Rock's Hair Design

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D. Miles Ed Wilcox
From **GIL HOLTZ**

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The Greece Historical Society
meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the
month (except June, July, August &
December) at 7 p.m. at the Greece
Library. The Museum is open
Sundays, 1:30-4:00 p.m. (except
major holidays and late-December-
January) or by appointment.

GHS to Receive Special Citation from The Landmark Society

The Landmark Society of Western New York will recognize the Greece Historical Society on its 50th Anniversary with a Special Citation Award at its annual Awards Ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 17 at 3 PM at Rochester City Hall.

Over the years, GHS has been an important preservation advocate in the Town of Greece by supporting the establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission, assisting with a Historic Resources Survey of the town's 100 most significant properties, and sponsoring the recently completed *Historic Resources Survey of the Architecture of James H. Johnson*. The Johnson survey will also be recognized with a Special Citation at the ceremony.

All are welcome to attend the Landmark Society Awards Ceremony.



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