



A RANSOM NOTE

Clarence Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2024

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Clarence Town Board Liaison

Mark Woodward, Town Historian

Board Meetings are held the 1st Thursday of each month.

Meetings begin at 6:30 pm at the Clarence History Museum.

President's Comments

The 2023 season is coming to a close. We want to thank everyone for your support at the museum and the programs. We have next year's programs all lined up and hope to see you at them. As many of you probably know, our Liaison, Bob Geiger, is stepping down from Councilman & Town Government at the end of 2023. Bob has been our Liaison for many years and has helped us with many projects over that time. He has religiously attended our Trustee Meetings and kept us informed of items from Town Board Meetings and within the Town of Clarence. We would like to thank Bob for his outstanding service and support to the Historical Society and we are looking forward to the new Town Board Liaison after the first of the year. Happy New Year!

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March 12, 2024 Program

We are pleased to kick off our 2024

Programs with Rick Falkowski

presenting "Early Buffalo Music."

Rick has been a great addition to our speakers and we look forward to all our programs in 2024!

Riding the Peanut

By: Harold Ahlstrom, Niagara Frontier Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

It was the summer of 1946, World War II was over, the ban on railroad travel was lifted, and Russ Shapley, President of the Buffalo Chapter, NRHS, yearned to run a special train on some freight trackage in the area. Arrangements were made with the New York Central to run a train from Buffalo to Dunkirk and then over the Valley Branch (DAV&P). Notice went out and the response was great. At the last minute Central Officials told Russ that the Valley Branch did not have clearances for passenger equipment. We later made two trips on the line, but this was a decision of one official at that time! The Central did offer to run a train of air conditioned heavyweight coaches and a full diner over the Peanut Line on July 21st.



What and where was the Peanut? It was a New York Central Branch dating back to 1853 starting at Tonawanda and running easterly through Clarence Center and passing through Akron and Batavia. It then proceeded through Caledonia to Canandaigua. Research reveals that it was originally built as part of a Niagara Falls connection for the Erie from Elmira. One would travel over the Erie to Elmira and then proceed over the tracks of the Canandaigua and Elmira and the Canandaigua and Niagara Falls

to reach the Cataract City. Originally a six foot, or broad gauge, railroad tie in with the Erie, it was converted to standard guage and acquired by the New York Central in 1858. At the time of acquisition, Dean Richmond, Operating Vice President of the Central, reportedly referred to it as "only a peanut of a line" and the name stuck. The 1868 Official Guide showed two round trips daily on the Batavia-Canandaigua section, and one round trip between Tonawanda and Batavia.

New notices went out from the Chapter to the membership announcing the substitute train and a most interesting routing. Starting at Central Terminal, the special train would proceed over the Belt Line to North Tonawanda by way of the Falls line. From here we would go on the Peanut Branch to Caledonia, then eastern end of the branch. Returning through Batavia after seeing the connections at Caledonia with the Lehigh Valley, Genesee and Wyoming, and BR&P, the train was switched to the West Shore at Akron Junction and back to Central Terminal.

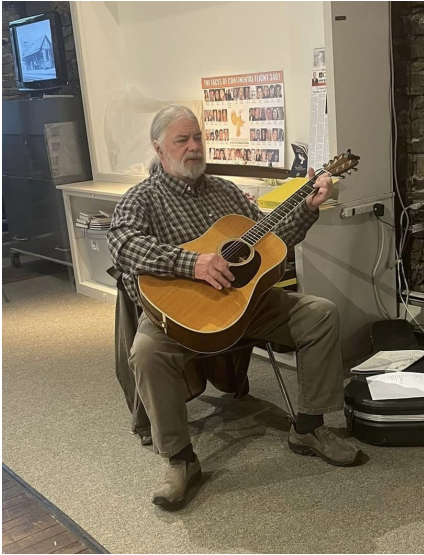
The "peanut" theme was carried out in the diner where a foot-long imitation peanut was hung on the end wall and dishes of peanuts were placed on each table.

The second trip over the line was done at the request of the committee running the Village of Akron Centennial. The Chapter was invited to make the arrangements for a trip over the line with the Akron Group selling the tickets and assuming the financial success of the trip.

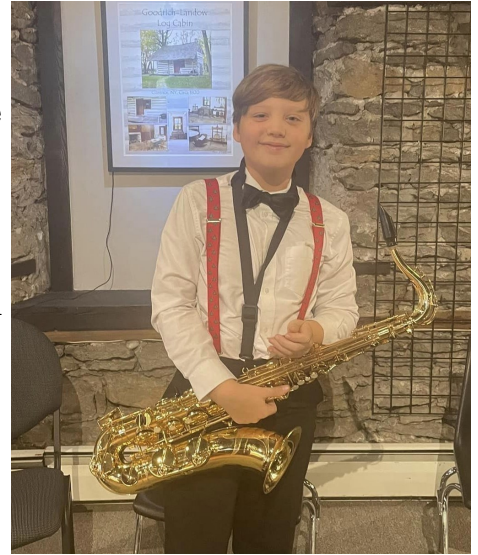


This train also carried a diner from Akron to North Tonawanda and return with roving bands of musicians livening up the party on August 28, 1949. The Peanut Line was discontinued in sections. By 1967, it ran from Akron Junction to Transit Road with its trains coming out on the West Short to Akron Junction. During the 1950's, when the New State Thruway was built, it was necessary to build a large fill and bridge over the line at Pembroke. Soon after this, the Peanut no longer ran in this area, and part of the roadbed was used when the Pembroke Interchange was built. The Batavia-Caledonia track is still in at this writing, but no longer used.

Holiday Party 2023



What a wonderful Sunday afternoon we had for our last open hours of 2023! We would like to thank John O'Hare and Gabe McGreevy for providing such jazzy holiday music. A very special thank you to Kathy Herle McCarthy for making the conference room table look so festive and putting decorations



around the building and bringing in homemade treats for everyone! Thank you Kathy!

We would like to thank our great Members, Visitors, Clarence Parks Department, Clarence Highway Department, our wonderful Town Liaison Bob Geiger, Clarence Town Security, and most of all, our loyal volunteers for all the support and help over the past year. Its time to close the doors for a few months and let our volunteers rest a little and start some fun new projects in the museum! Stay tuned for a very exciting 2024 season...we are just getting started! Happy New Year and see you in March 2024!



Notes from Elaine

We couldn't end our 2023 Newsletter Season without a special message from Elaine! Makes me happy to see she still has her sense of humor!



From the Desk of Gabe McGreevy

Gabe is currently enjoying a much needed Christmas break! Gabe will be back in action in the spring!



MEMBERSHIP CORNER

It is Membership Renewal Time!!!

You can renew your membership on our website or in person.

We have different tiers to choose from:

Student Under 18—\$5

Individual—\$15

Couples—\$25

Family—\$30

Business—\$50

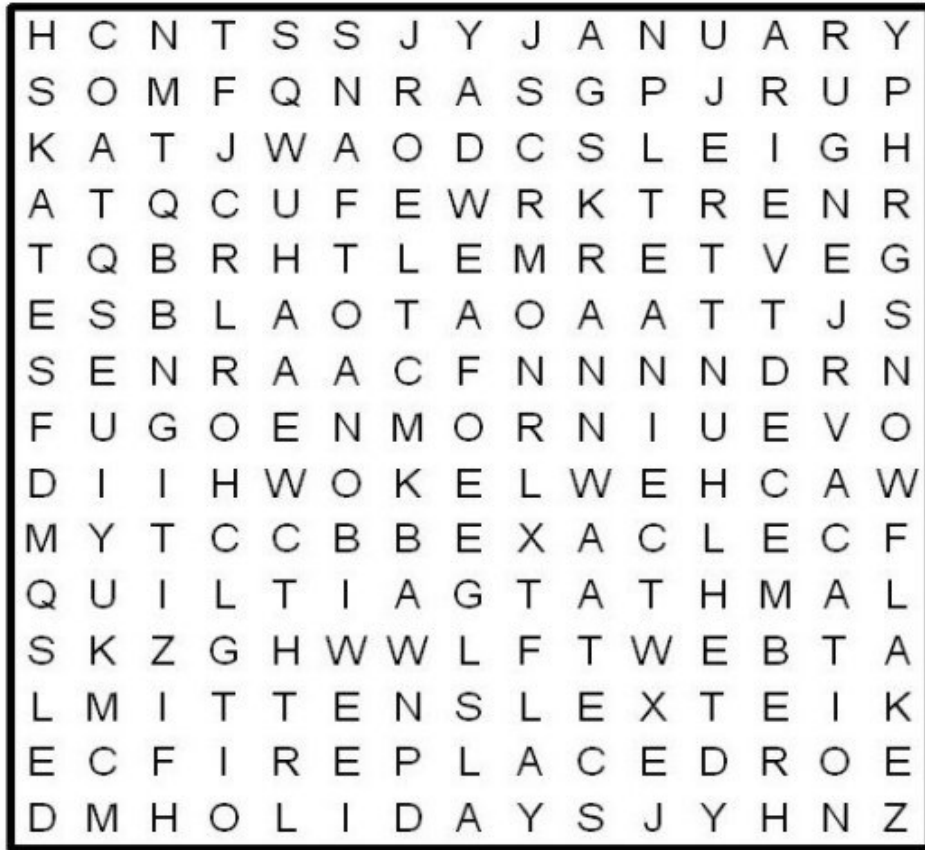
Individual Life Member—\$150

You can also notate if you would like to volunteer by helping during open hours, giving tours, working on exhibits, and office help! We can always use an extra pair of hands!

**We
our
MEMBERS!**



Wintery Wordsearch

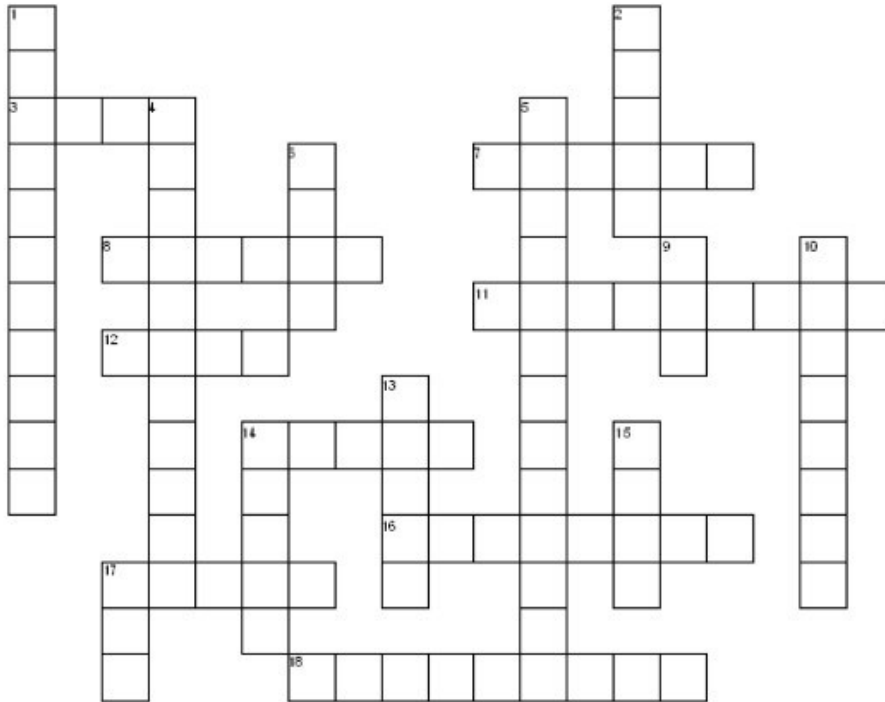


blanket
coat
comforter
December
February
fireplace
flannel
heater
hibernate
holidays
hot chocolate
jacket

January
migrate
mittens
quilt
skates
sled
sleigh
snowball
snowflake
snowman
vacation
winter

Chilly Crossword

WINTER WEATHER



ACROSS

3. The process by which snow or ice changes to water.
 7. A period of very cold winter weather that damages plants.
 8. Intensely cold temperature.



11. The temperature felt by the human body when wind makes it feel colder than the actual temperature.

12. Mildly cold feeling.

14. Bright with sunshine.

16. Snowfall that is so heavy one can see little or nothing on the horizon.

17. Ice crystals on a frozen surface; "Old Jack _____."

18. A large mass of snow that slides down a mountain.

DOWN

1. A standardized measure of how hot or cold it is outside.

2. Rain that freezes as it falls.

4. A tool used to measure the temperature.

5. Water that falls to the earth in the form of rain, hail, mist, sleet, or snow.

6. Pieces of ice falling from the sky.

9. A solid form of frozen water.

10. A storm with heavy snow, strong winds, and severe cold.

13. Covered with snow.

14. A mixture of snow and water.

15. Precipitation in the form of small white ice crystals that form inside clouds.

17. Thick water vapor that makes it hard to see.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE TOWN OF CLARENCE

Founded in 1954

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Facebook: Historical Society of the Town
of Clarence

“To collect, preserve, and share the history and heritage of the Town of Clarence”

The Historical Society of the Town of Clarence Inc is formed for the following purposes:

- To identify, preserve, and display materials of historical significance of Clarence
- To encourage historical research, analysis, and study for the publication of historical papers, articles
- To educate the community through lectures, tours, online resources, school field trips and research opportunities



The Historical Society of the Town of Clarence deeply appreciates the support of the County of Erie, the Town of Clarence, our members and the community as a whole.

