

CHEQUAQUET LOG

The Newsletter of the Centerville Historical Museum
www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org



THREE WEEKS OF FUN, FANTASY AND FINDINGS *THE SPEAKEASY*

Sometimes, it is wise to peruse the historical calendar to find the kernel of an idea for the museum's displays. Criteria for changing displays requires thought, originality, decision and theme, plus a long look through what lies in our museum's entire collection.

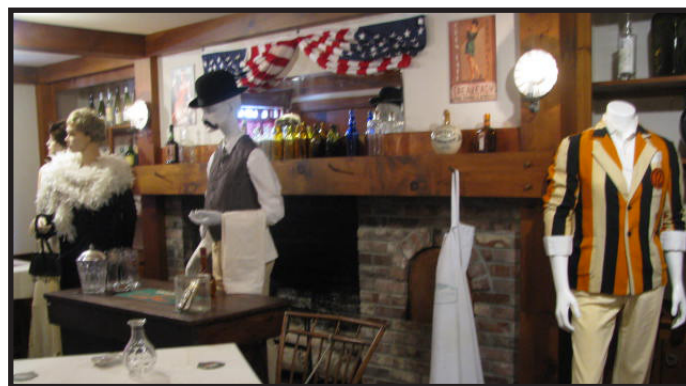
This is the year 2020. What happened 100 years ago? Can a new rendering from the museum's storerooms reveal that event with authenticity?

1920-that was a very important year. Right away two momentous events come to mind. One is the 19th amendment to our country's constitution, which gave women the right to vote. Another was the 18th amendment, prohibiting the sale, manufacture and distribution of alcohol throughout the nation. Both amendments were staggering in their influence on American lives. One opened up half the population to a freedom which still stands, the other reversed itself in 1933, a failure in inevitable regulatory and human desires.

Naturally, our amazing volunteer crew decided to showcase "The Speakeasy." It took a bit to thoroughly research the history of Prohibition in the 1920's-30's as an American phenomenon, but once the facts were in, the research scrutinized and the general idea agreed upon, it was time to look at the museum's space for designing a speakeasy. What had been the keeping room or colonial kitchen area was chosen. The room was small enough, the setting quite amiable in its layout, so with imaginative minds and a lot of changes



in what stayed and what was removed, the entire conception of a speakeasy came into focus.



Next was what to showcase. Centerville itself had an answer as a house near the museum still has wall paintings, caricatures and poetry used for decoration in a speakeasy that was popular for the locals during Prohibition. What a find! If only those walls could speak. Photos from this basement are now part of the exhibit.

A collection database search revealed clothing for both men and women, and what a sight it is, in the mesmerizing styles of the male and female figures of the day. There is even a bartender. Labels of popular brands of spirits in the 1920's were recreated. The details truly make this rendering of a local speakeasy remarkable. Lighting had to be nuanced, jewelry had to sparkle, the fashions of the day had to delight, the story boards explaining it all had to be interesting, yet concise, and the atmosphere had to draw in the visitor. It certainly does.

Come and see. A smile will definitely appear. Three weeks to change a room from an 18th century kitchen to a 20th century speakeasy has happened. You will be drawn to a time 100 years ago that seems so different from today, yet was real and important to our history.

W H A T ' S C O M I N G

MURDER MYSTERY THEATER

Saturday, March 28

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Limited seating -- Reservation required by March 21st. 508-775-0331

\$25 members; \$35 non-members

Murder! Mayhem! And, Music! Come help solve the mystery of WHO DUN OUR CHUCKIE IN? The Centerville Museum presents the Murder Mystery Theater Improv troupe who'll set the stage and lead the audience through a comedic evening of mystery and mayhem.

It's 1920 at the Charles Ayling Estate, aka the museum. Our beloved Mr. Ayling is throwing his annual Centerville Ball. Only he won't be there this year. Someone murdered him. The police are stumped and have brought in the world-famous detective Shirley Holmes and her world-famous musical muse, Steve Gregory. There are several suspects at the ball but chief among them are: Grey Ayling, the nephew, gambling debts up to his ..., Lala, the French maid, recently hired, with a suspicious French accent, Colonel Bottomley, retired from the Army, now a blue-ribboned rose grower, Miss Applecourt, murder-mystery writer, her books are popular with a "certain set." Flint, the crusty old butler.

Hors d'oeuvres, wine and beer, prizes, and period music by Steve Gregory will all be part of the evening fun.
Period outfits encouraged.

**Improv at the
Museum**

**"Who Dun
Our Chuckie
In?"**

**A MURDER
MYSTERY
THEATER
IMPROV**



V O L U N T E E R I N G

JANE HATTEMER-STRINGER'S CREATIVE STYLE BRINGS US A MURDER MYSTERY

Mark your calendars. Put a red circle around March 28th, from 7 to 9 pm. You will not want to miss this, the first ever Murder Mystery held at the Centerville Historical Museum. What a hoot!

A murder mystery night has always been on the list of a fun evening's entertainment for the museum, but it was not until member Jane Hattemer-Stringer came up with an original idea and that idea is now ready for its debut, with a lively and swell evening planned.

The museum is fortunate to have various skilled volunteers, those with gifts that bring public and members together in what it presents. The volunteers, who blend their strengths, keep our displays and entertainments at a high level.

Jane Hattemer-Stringer arrived on the scene a couple of years ago. Last year she staged a one woman show, this year she has written and directed a murder mystery, *Who Dun Our Chuckie In?*, an evening for members and guests and it's going to be a happy one for all.

Jane is originally from Kentucky. She found her acting bug when she appeared, at the age of four playing the fairy godmother in a production of *Cinderella*. From then on the theater was her north star and through the years she has done many theater productions as actress, director and writer.

In 1972, Jane arrived on Cape Cod. "I never left," she says. "I've been involved with every community theater here. I had my own puppet company and did that for twenty years and made the puppets, the costumes, wrote the scripts and did the marketing." She has directed Cape theater plays, taught theater at the Cape Cod Conservatory, Cape Cod Academy and the Cape Cod Academy of Performing Arts. Quite a resume!

Acting has always come naturally to Jane. Bringing a character to life is more forthcoming than talking about herself. "Give me a script and it's relaxing to me," she notes.

By chance, it is her hairdresser and mainstay in museum volunteering, Bonnie Wenger, who introduced her to the museum. When Bonnie mentioned the World War I display, Jane and her husband visited the museum to see it. Her grandfather had suffered shell shock in the conflict.

For the upcoming March 28th evening, Jane had ideas for several scenarios. The final one is a play without a word for word script; a mostly improvisational event. That means there is a script, but the characters are given free rein to put their own spin on the story and their personalities. Rehearsals have begun and the actors are locals known to Jane, who is directing. The actors will be in 1920's costumes and the audience is asked to dress for the Flapper Age if they wish.

As with all that the museum does, this initial mystery evening promises to be very enjoyable. For Jane, who loves the theater and all it brings to us, doing this at our museum is a good thing. "I am grateful the museum and I are working together. It is a place where new ideas thrive and the support has been wonderful."



I N T E R E S T I N G H I S T O R Y

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THIS BEHEMOTH SHOWED PROMISE. IT MAY AGAIN.

In the late 1920's and 1930's, before the commercial airplanes could travel the Atlantic, the zeppelin was the answer to air travel. Also known as the blimp, airship and dirigible, the zeppelin had been invented by a German, Ferdinand von Zeppelin as an airship since it floated in the sky using heated air and had a steering mechanism, unlike a hot air balloon which moved solely by the wind.

At first, zeppelins were used in World War I to spy on and bomb enemy locations, with Germany having the advantage. In the United States, The Goodyear Company in 1916 created a subsidiary known as the Goodyear Zeppelin Company, to build nine giant airships, using advanced technology and improved engines for control. American airships began their military use scouting and bombing the enemy in 1917.



First used for advertising purposes after The Great War, the ideas in commercial flight began to take hold. Most American ships utilized helium to become airborne, most zeppelin ships burned heated air or hydrogen. Other European companies also invested in airships, as they were considered safe, comfortable and efficient.

A typical dirigible could cross the ocean in 43 hours, the fastest ocean liner five days. When World War II broke out, Ohio's Goodyear Zeppelin Company designed and manufactured 104 airships for military purposes. One disaster, however, in 1937, almost destroyed the airship industry. In January of that year, the German zeppelin, Hindenburg, disintegrated in a fiery crash at an airfield in New Jersey, instantly killing 36 people. The dream of hydrogen-filled air travel died, too.

Surprisingly, that dream, of air transportation by airship has been revived. Scientists are looking at zeppelins as something more than hovering billboards like the Goodyear Blimp. The reason is that airships are more fuel efficient than cargo ships or airplanes.



Today most airships use non-flammable but expensive and rare helium to fuel their crafts, but new technology has lessened the explosive danger of hydrogen, which is ridiculously abundant. Research has been picked up by space agencies and the military to advance airship capability, for passenger and cargo transport.

A study has concluded that one airship, five times the length of the Empire State Building, while riding the jet stream, could circle the globe in 14 days, faster than any oceangoing ship.

Although European airships have used zeppelins for transport since the 1910's, 20's and 30's, perhaps a new wave of them, built with new ideas and safer than before, will revive these floating giants as they move deftly through the skies.

MUSEUM MATINEE MOVIES

The Centerville Historical Museum's first movie series of 2020 explores three different themes/periods: Courtroom Dramas, Makes/Remakes, and Films of the 1950s.

All shows are at 1:00 p.m., Saturdays. Admission, popcorn and candy are free. (Donations gladly accepted.) After-film discussion with Anthony Ambrogio, for anyone who cares to stay.

Courtroom dramas have been a staple of the cinema, especially once the movies learned to talk. You can find a lot of talking in the courtroom (and a lot of drama—especially in the movies, which leave out all the boring bits of a real trial). This sample of courtroom films gives us a pair of pre-Code examples, a couple of classic 1930s pictures, a courtroom drama that shows up in the middle of a medical movie series, and a couple of classic 1960s pictures on the subject.

Saturday, March 14, 1PM: *The People vs. Dr. Kildare* (1941) 78 m. Released 05/02/41

Dr. Kildare (Lew Ayres) saves the life of an ice skater (Bonita Granville), but, even though her leg heals, she still can't walk and sues him for malpractice. This seventh entry in the popular MGM series also features series regulars Lionel Barrymore as Dr. Gillespie, Laraine Day as Nurse Mary Lamont, Alma Kruger as Nurse Molly Byrd, and Red Skelton as orderly Vernon Briggs.

Saturday, March 28, 1PM: *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961) 179 m. Released 12/19/61

1948: Spencer Tracy heads a three-judge panel considering the guilt of four Nazi judges (including Burt Lancaster). Richard Widmark is the prosecuting attorney; Maximilian Schell (who won an Oscar) is the defense attorney; Montgomery Clift and Judy Garland are two of the witnesses. The picture also won a Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar.

Saturday, April 4, 1PM: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) 129 m. Released 12/25/62

Alabama, 1932: Gregory Peck is small-town lawyer Atticus Finch, a widower raising two small children. (He won a Best Actor Oscar for his performance.) He is called upon to defend a black man (Brock Peters) accused of raping a white woman.

Makes/Remakes. Countless movies have been remade, sometimes more than once, often with varying results. Makes/remakes is a topic we hope to return to periodically in our series, since there is a great deal of material there and much that's of interest. We'll try to select originals and remakes that complement or contrast with one another (sometimes both things at once)—as indicated by the four pictures we've picked for our initial offerings.

Saturday, April 18, 1PM: *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933) 77 m. Released 02/18/33

Ivan Igor, after surviving a fire caused by his unscrupulous partner some years before, continues to create figures for a new wax museum, but in a sinister way. Fay Wray plays the object of his unwanted attention (this was the third and final teaming of the two); Glenda Farrell takes on the role of the crusading (nosy) newspaper reporter; and Frank McHugh is her editor. The pre-Code film was released in both black and white and two-strip color.

Saturday, April 25, 1PM: *House of Wax* (1953) 88 m. Released 04/25/53

This 3D remake (unfortunately, we can't show it in 3D) sets the story in the nineteenth century instead of the present day and tones down certain elements that were then prohibited by the Code. It launched Vincent Price's horror-film career (although he had played in several horror films in the late 1930s and early 1940s). Phyllis Kirk and Carolyn Jones play objects of his odd affection; Frank Lovejoy is the cop on the case; and Charles Bronson turns up in the role of a henchman.

Saturday, May 9, 1PM: *Anna Karenina* (1935) 95 m. Released 11/01/35

One of Garbo's most famous roles. In the first sound-film version of this story, she plays Tolstoy's tragic heroine, married to Basil Rathbone's Alexi Karenin but in love with Count Vronsky (Fredric March). Freddie Bartholomew is her son; also starring Maureen O'Sullivan (Tarzan's Jane) as Kitty.

Saturday, May 23, 1PM: *Anna Karenina* (2012) 129 m. Released 09/07/12

This film, which is at least the eighth (and most recent) sound-film version of this oft-filmed tale, was scripted by renowned playwright Tom Stoppard and directed by Joe Wright, who'd made *Pride and Prejudice* [2005] and *Atonement* [2007] with Keira Knightly. Here, Knightly portrays Anna; Jude Law is her husband; and Aaron Taylor-Johnson is Vronsky.

Films of the 1950s series schedule will be posted in our next Chequaquet Log or go to our website for the full schedule

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