



# GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

February 2011 Vol. XXXIII No. 3

## THE GASLAMP

Illuminating Our Past

[www.glenridgehistory.org](http://www.glenridgehistory.org)



### Candidates Needed for the Preservation Award

#### *President's Letter*



I'd like to give special thanks to Edith Payne for her generosity in opening her house to us for our Holiday Party in December. The house, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, was especially welcoming that cold evening, with its beautiful cypress ceiling and characteristic Cherokee Red floor. It was a treat to explore the various rooms with their unusual cabinets and to gather around the diagonal dining table built into the end of the kitchen. Thanks also to Margot Garrison and Alden Provost for organizing and serving the food and drink to the large group who attended.

January brings the beginning of our Preservation Award program. Every year the Historical Society recognizes Glen Ridge residents who have undertaken especially thorough restoration work on their houses. We look for projects of all sizes that seek to rebuild historically accurate design and construction. If you would like to nominate your own project, the project of a neighbor, or just a house in town that you have seen and admired, please contact me at [karinrobinson.arch@verizon.net](mailto:karinrobinson.arch@verizon.net) and I will send out an application form. The award, along with a slide show about the house, will be presented at our annual meeting in April.

The snows of winter may keep all of us indoors for the next few months, but I hope you will be able to attend our winter program open to the

public on February 9th at the Congregational Church. Our Town Historian, Sally Meyer, will present the history of the oldest section of Ridgewood Avenue, which runs south from Bloomfield Avenue. Details are in the box below.

**Karin Robinson**

#### **Winter Public Meeting**

##### **Ridgewood Avenue Revealed!**

Sally Meyer will give an illustrated talk on the early growth of Glen Ridge along Ridgewood Avenue to the south of Bloomfield Avenue.

Members and the public are invited to the program at the Congregational Church, 195 Ridgewood Avenue, on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 At 7:30 pm.

Refreshments will be served

#### **Evening Meetings**

If you would like a ride to an evening meeting please call Sally Meyer at 973-239-2674.

Sally will attempt to find someone to give you a ride.

## Saving the Glen for Future Generations

### News from the Town Historian



Glen Ridge was called Ridgewood until a rival for the name surfaced in Bergen County. Its default name is perfect nonetheless. The town includes a tract of land that extends over a long ridge between Bloomfield and Montclair. Near its mid-point, an elongated lowland and stream bisect the ridge forming the most characteristic feature of the town, the Glen. The history of this bucolic green space shows the farsightedness of its original caretakers.

Industrialization of the Glen began with the opening of the Cadmus copper mine in 1731. Early settlers soon discovered a dynamic source of water power in this "slice of Eden": Toney's Brook. The first of three mills was erected before 1800. These sprawling operations used water wheels, ponds, dams, and furnaces to produce goods for over a hundred years including rolled copper and brass, colored papers, pasteboard boxes, dyed calico, sewing machine belts, bicycle chains, and asphalt .

In spite of noise and pollution from the mills, children found the Glen to be a virtual playground. They swam in and ice skated on the ponds, and spent hours crossing from bank to bank on moss

covered rocks. They captured polliwogs and killies, and picked watercress that grew in the shallows. While picnicking near jack-in-the-pulpit and honeysuckle bushes, they watched for eels and muskrats and goldfinches that perched in the willow trees. Some talked the train engineer into a free ride to Montclair.

By 1899, the mills were finished. Bromley's Mill was torn down, Brower's Mill burned down, and the Moffat Mill property was offered for sale at public auction. There was a growing movement among Glen Ridge citizens to protect against further commercial development along Toney's Brook. When rumors spread that a syndicate planned to build a beer garden, a committee was formed to bid on the property. They bought it for \$9,000.

To avoid the "real and imminent danger" of forthcoming "unattractive business houses or inferior tenements," the committee formed the Glen Ridge Park Association. Stockholder funds were solicited in the amount of \$10,160, and with the aid of mortgages, other tracts of land were purchased. In 1901 the borough voted a bond issue of \$35,000 to take over the acquired lands, return money to the stockholders, and establish a fund for future purchases. Eventually, all tracts along the lower, middle, and upper Glen were either purchased or donated with the purpose of maintaining the area in perpetuity as parkland.

Our forefathers would delight in recent efforts to revitalize the Glen. While age, erosion, vandalism, graffiti, and pollution have taken a toll, the inherent beauty and tranquility of the Glen remain for us to enjoy.

*The Museum Room is located in the Glen Ridge Congregational Church. Please call Sally Meyer at (973) 239-2674 to make an appointment.*

**Sally Meyer**

### Officers and Trustees

President	Karin Robinson	Trustee (2012)	Margo Garrison
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**Editor's Note...** The feature article on page 3 of this issue is by Glen Ridge resident Jon Russo. He combines an interest in history with a talent for acting and cartooning. He tells us how, after moving to Glen Ridge, he became fascinated by Glen Ridge's rich history and began drawing cartoons about it. Our apology for the small size of the text in the cartoons; space constraints don't allow for larger type;

**Herb Addison** - herb.addison@verizon.net

## Accurate History in Cartoon Form

### The Origin of "A Smidge of Glen Ridge" Cartoons

Two things I am passionate about are cartoons and history. I was the cartoonist for my high school and college newspapers. As a child my father took me to old forts around our New Orleans home: Fort Pike, Fort Macomb and Fort St. John. The cartoons of John Chase, which revealed long forgotten historical elements of the Crescent City, tantalized my imagination. I suspect that's how it started.

Business affairs took my wife and me out of New Orleans and eventually landed us in a city steeped in historic eminence: Paris. I reveled at the minute details of historic localities as Parisians and tourists alike sauntered by unaware. I stood on the balcony of Hotel Meurice where German General von Choltitz pondered the fate of Paris. I trekked to the spot in the Palais Royale where Charlotte Corday purchased the kitchen knife that she sank into Marat as he soaked in this tub. I stuck my finger in the holes of the wall of the Church of St. Roch caused by "a whiff of grapeshot" that Napoleon directed at an unruly mob.

After five years abroad business affairs changed again in 2008, so we relocated to Glen Ridge. After New Orleans and Paris our gas-lamped hamlet seemed somewhat like a docile "Stepford." I felt a need to dig deeper to discover the time-hewn character of this pristine municipality's past.

manufactured railroad flares in Glen Ridge. A "Lizzie Borden" style ax murder occurred in 1905. Mega-star Tom Cruise got his start on a Glen Ridge stage. I felt a need to put these unique facts into a cartoon concept and thus developed a dozen ideas. I presented them to *The Glen Ridge Voice* and they agreed to publish my "A Smidge of Glen Ridge" on a weekly basis.

### A Smidge of Glen Ridge

by Jon A. Russo

His Secret Gum Recipe  
Stuck with him to the Grave.



Glen Ridger Robert LeGrand Johnstone developed a popular chewing gum named "Mo-Jo" in 1914. He built a large factory to produce his concoction behind his home at 96 Ridgewood Ave. However when Johnstone died in 1926 he'd never told anyone his secret formula for the gum. After numerous attempts to discover this formula, the family gave up and the factory was demolished in 1934. Thus Johnstone's gum recipe stuck with him to the grave.

I derive my ideas from many sources: the Internet, books purchased on eBay, the New York Times archives, the Glen Ridge Public Library's archives and the Glen Ridge Historical Society's archives. My research is not an onerous chore but rather fun and challenging much like an archeologist unearthing some lost morsel of historic significance.

From the "big stories" to quirky bits of trivia like a runaway pet alligator, I've found fascinating tales about our borough. Glen Ridge may not be Paris but it's my own personal *pièce de résistance*. **Jon Russo**

### A Smidge of Glen Ridge

by Jon A. Russo

The Mayor, The Admiral and the Inventor.



The Hero of the Battle of Santiago Bay hailed from Glen Ridge! Admiral William T. Sampson commanded the US Fleet in a Spanish-American War naval battle resulting in the destruction of the Spanish Fleet in 1898. Sampson, who resided on Clark St., returned home to parades and adoration. A reception and banquet were thrown in his honor where Mayor Robert Rudd and other prominent citizens greeted the admiral. Sampson was also introduced to famed inventor, Thomas Edison, who gave a tour of his laboratory, displaying his latest inventions. That day, Sampson let his hair down!

After speaking to Town Historian, Sally Meyer, and doing some minor-league research small discoveries began to appear. Thomas Edison

### A Smidge of Glen Ridge

by Jon A. Russo

The German Count  
who stands in  
Glen Ridge.

Ulrich Eberhardt emigrated to Newark as a young boy in the mid 1800's. Despite being from nobility as a Count of Wurtemberg, he yearned for greater opportunity in America. The ambitious Count Ulrich had a knack for mechanics and started work in Ezra Gould's small foundry. So industrious was the Count that Gould made him a partner in 1877 and at Gould's retirement in 1890 the Count took full control.

The firm of Gould & Eberhardt became well known worldwide for the products they fabricated. During World War II they produced military equipment and after the war, products for the automotive industry.

However after 170 years in business the venerable firm of Gould & Eberhardt went bankrupt in 2005. But Count Ulrich Eberhardt's name can still be found on a scant few of Glen Ridge's lamp posts. One can be located on Midland Ave. and Carteret St.





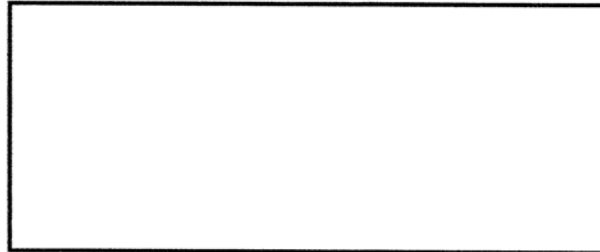
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### Coming Events

February 19-20, Cape May Crafts and Antiques Show; admission \$1.00. Details: 609-884-5404 or 800-275-4278 or visit [www.capemaymac.org](http://www.capemaymac.org).

February 21, George Washington Birthday tour of

historic homes; Historic Village at Allaire; For details contact the Historic Village at Allaire office during business hours, M-F from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 732-919-3500 or visit website at [www.allairevillage.org](http://www.allairevillage.org).

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### News Briefs

Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen; The 20<sup>th</sup> century transformation of the kitchen from Post-WW I to the late 1960s; Museum of Modern Art, NYC, through March 14, 2011.

Kandinsky at the Bauhaus, 1922-1933; Vasily Kandinsky began teaching at the Bauhaus in 1922, when the school was still in its city of origin, Weimar, Germany; he taught several courses, including the widely influential basic design course with Paul Klee; he remained with the Bauhaus through its move to Dessau, and finally to Berlin, where it was shut down by the Nazi government in 1933; Guggenheim Museum, NYC, ongoing.