The 2018 season will be another exciting year for the Chautauqua Women's Club, full of interesting programs about contemporary issues, opportunities for in-depth dialogue, opportunities to contribute to the scholarship fund and fun special events designed to enhance your Chautauqua experience.

We are excited that the CWC House will be featured in the annual Bird, Tree & Garden Tour next July 12. As many of you may know, under the direction of our third president, Mrs. Anna Penny Fisher, funds were secured to raze the former clubhouse and build the present Georgian-style house, which was dedicated in 1929. The house was last renovated in 2014, before our 125th birthday, and we are happy to be able to share its beauty with the Chautauqua community this summer. This is the first time the CWC House will be featured on the tour—mark your calendars for July 12, come join the tour, and help support both clubs this summer.

In 2018, our Saturday afternoon Contemporary Issues Forum lectures will be moving to the 2 p.m. time slot at the Hall of Philosophy, featured as part of the new Chautauqua series, sponsored by the Chautauqua Institution. A list of exciting speakers including retired U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski, Dr. Cheryl Franklin, author and Washington Post columnist T.R. Beirne, and aerospace scientist MJ Marggraff are on the schedule.

The Women's Club will continue to sponsor three additional speaker series at the house every week for the Chautauqua community: Monday's Professionals' Network, Wednesdays' Contemporary Issues Dialogue and Thursday's Chautauqua Speaks series, featuring prominent members of the Chautauqua community. In addition, we offer recreational programs every week: Monday evening’s Friends on the Porch, Wednesday’s Language Hour, Mah Jong on Mondays and Fridays, bridge on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and our 5 p.m. Sunday at the CWC House gatherings. Summer Gatherings will again be part of our 2018 summer and are an intimate way to experience the real Chautauqua, gathering with friends and new acquaintances, while raising money to support Women's Club programming, scholarships for students in the Schools of Performing and Visual Arts, and our operations. Members and friends will host various events throughout the season at private homes and the CWC House. Activities will include boating, lunches, dinners, meet and greets, and children’s activities — plus much more. Our popular Chef’s Tours will also continue this season. A complete listing of Women’s Club events will be available for sign up in late spring.

The Flea Boutique will open Week Two. Besides producing income, the Flea Boutique is a community treasure, recycling at its best. Donations will be accepted beginning in May. The Chautauqua Women’s Club looks forward to welcoming all Chautauquans to join us to form and celebrate friendships, listen to relevant speakers, engage in dialogue and contribute to scholarship opportunities and service to Chautauqua.

A “painted lady” that housed registration for the original St. Elmo Hotel, a garden of edible flowers, and a peak into one of the most elegant of all Chautauqua houses — these are among the offerings for the 2018 Bird, Tree & Garden Club House and Garden Tour from noon to 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 12.

Guided tours of several Chautauqua Institution public gardens and three beautiful private gardens — along with 14 unique Chautauqua homes — will be among the offerings for the 2018 tour.

The tour will also showcase the 100-year-old Bird Arboretum, where the Johnsons have created a new life with fresh plantings of trees, hedges and under tree peripherals. Following the devastation of the emerald ash borer in recent years, the Arboretum is again an example of nature in balance as well as a traditional catalog of trees.

Among the 14 homes to be featured is the historic and beloved Hollyhock House. Located at 10 Ames, Marriette and Paul Perry wonder if their house is a great painted lady with a garden or a great garden with a painted lady. Built in 1889, the “Hollyhock House” proudly states its heritage of Queen Anne design by showcasing full color portraits of a true “painted lady.” The house looks surprisingly like it did when H.L. Johnson built it on what was an old tent site as a single family home.

In 1904, the Hollyhock House was converted to a boarding house for women by the Norton sisters, who ran a very tight ship. No gentlemen were allowed above the first floor. Later, guests of the new St. Elmo Hotel registered as hotel guests at 10 Ames. The “living room” created in the living room today is the desk used for those St. Elmo registrations.

Each of the four gables has a different shape and pattern of shingles. Many architectural details inside the home including the original pastel-tone stained glass windows, beautiful staircases and period rosettes on moldings throughout the house remain and reinforce the Queen Anne style so popular at the end of the 19th century. Many Chautauquans remember the infamous incident during the 1998 renovation when a guest sitting in the house to create a new foundation dropped the house from its structural supports. Fortunately, that restoration included the creation of the beautiful garden that the current owners have developed on the lot next door, which has been part of the property of 10 Ames since 1909.

In addition to the 14 homes and unique gardens that will be highlighted on the tour, special discounts and gift drawings will be available at Chautauqua shops and restaurants. Tour tickets include an 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. gate pass to Chautauqua’s historic grounds.

Tickets are $43 for individuals, $38 each for groups of 5 to 24, and $35 each for groups of 25 or more. A limited number of tickets are available and can be purchased online at chautauquabtg.org. Proceeds allow the BFG to provide programming about the natural world — birds, trees, gardens, lakes, bats, butterflies and more — during the nine-week Chautauqua season.

CPOA kicks off its Moving Forward Campaign last year and set new goals. One of them is to reach out to our Area Representatives with expanded visibility within their neighborhoods and the Chautauqua community in general. For instance, last summer we introduced area potch parties in several areas. They were well attended and we plan on doing more of them this coming season. We would very much welcome any community interest in hosting one of these potch parties. It’s a great way to meet — or get to know better — your neighbors and Area Representative. And often a Chautauqua board member will be in attendance as well. There are many ways to host or contribute to a potch party, please reach out to your Area Representative for details.

The “Living in Chautauqua” booklet will be ready for publication this spring. The online version will be available online on the CPOA website (copa-chautauqua.org) as well prior to the season in June. Obviously, the online version is easier and cheaper to keep updated but due to so many requests for a hard copy (especially from owners who rent and know that guests will be unlikely to go online, we will be producing a run of 1,000 copies. Copies will be available Week One to the Chautauqua homes of all owners who have paid their 2018 dues. Alternatively, you will be able to pick up a copy by contacting your Area Rep.

CPOA encourages you to take any inquiries and concerns to your Area Rep first. If they cannot answer your inquiry, the Rep will bring it to the CPOA board. You will be answered! Area Representatives are listed below:

Area 1: Miller Park/Chautauqua Center District
Karen Conover
CPOAArea1@gmail.com

Area 2: Amherst District
Linda Turri
CPOAArea2@gmail.com

Area 3: Club District
Jane Finley
CPOAArea3@gmail.com

Area 4: Overlook District
Mary Henderson
CPOAArea4@gmail.com

Area 5: Linwood Park District
Alice Hood
CPOAArea5@gmail.com

Area 6: Main Gate District
Suzanne Shull
CPOAArea6@gmail.com

Area 7: Arts (Garden) District
Currently open

Area 8: Elm Gate District
Stephanie Dawson
CPOAArea8@gmail.com

Area 9: North East District
Mary Clements
CPOAArea9@gmail.com

Area 10: President’s Cottage/Colden Hill Park District
Carrie Zachry
CPOAArea10@gmail.com

As usual during the winter months, our thoughts begin to turn to another wonderful summer at Chautauqua. We look forward to seeing you there.