



# Portland Poynts

## The Chronicle of the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society

May - June, 2021

27 Prospect Circle, P. O. Box 108, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716-0108 ♦ [www.AHhistory.org](http://www.AHhistory.org)

### President's Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society, I thank you for your support during the Covid pandemic. Our condolences to any family that lost a loved one, and our hopes that life will return to normal sometime during 2021.

Abiding by mandated Covid restrictions, the Strauss Mansion Museum reopens on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. It will be open Sundays 12:00 - 4:00 pm through December for self-guided tours. Volunteer docents will answer any questions you may have. Visitors will be required to sign a Covid waiver and wear a mouth-and-nose covering while on the premises.

We welcome Ben Ascone, Lori Ann Oliwa and Lisa Walling as provisional Board members. Ben Ascone is currently a paraprofessional in the Middletown Township Public Schools and is a pharmacy technician in Atlantic Highlands. Lori Ann Oliwa is the Executive Director of the Atlantic Highlands Chamber of Commerce and the founder of The Write Angles L.L.C., a public relations/marketing/event consultancy. She received the Trailblazer and the Tel Heart Service Award for her initiatives in changing the landscape of business for female entrepreneurs. Lisa Walling has been very active with local non-profits and community organizations since the late 1990s and demonstrates a willingness to take charge. She joined us in 2013 to assist with our October fund-raising events. We are very excited to welcome them to the Society's Board and look forward to working with them.

A special thank-you to long-time Board member Eileen Zengel who is leaving the area. For many years she organized the Society's annual House Tours. We wish her well as she begins a new chapter in her life.

Beginning on Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, and continuing on the last Thursday of each month, **Music at the Mansion** returns for its seventh season, with outdoor events orchestrated by the incomparable Audra Mariel. Performer details will be found in the EVENTS link on our website, [www.AHhistory.org](http://www.AHhistory.org).

The annual Arts and Crafts Fair is scheduled for Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, at Veterans Park with 45-50 crafters displaying handmade jewelry, crafted wood and fabric, photography, paintings and much more.

We have a tentative date with Captain Dan on his paddle-wheeler boat, the Navesink Queen, for an afternoon or evening three-hour cruise on Saturday, August 14<sup>th</sup>.

The annual Flea Market is scheduled for Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Atlantic Highlands Harbor, featuring limitless goodies from the past and present, as well as some good old home cooking.

Our October Halloween events are still being finalized and will most likely be a combination of film presentations, spooky stories and scary tours.

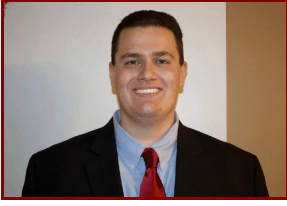
**NOTE: All events are subject to the evolving State-mandated Covid policies, so check our website for updates and sign up for our email notices.**

Our deepest thanks to volunteer Walter Johnson for his continuous creative efforts in organizing, writing, photography and layout of Portland Poynts, the Society's newsletter. We are indebted to him for all his efforts.

On a personal note, I want to thank all the Board members, friends and relatives who pitched in for several days in April to spruce up the Strauss Mansion Museum which had been closed for much of 2020. You all did a great job and I can't thank you enough.

*Ken Frantz*

## New Board Members



**Ben Ascone** is currently a high school paraprofessional in the Middletown Township Public School district, assisting the lead teacher and helping students to complete work as needed, as well as maintaining student records and data to ensure accuracy. Additionally, he is a pharmacy technician at ReUnion RX in Atlantic Highlands, following New Jersey guidelines for the preparation and delivery of medications to nursing homes, long-term care facilities and rehabilitation centers throughout New Jersey. Ben has volunteered at the Strauss Mansion since 2015, including participating in the annual reopening cleanup and assisting in the October ghost tours and Halloween fund-raiser party where, he says, he has done everything from working the admission door to giving regular tours.



**Lori Ann Oliwa** is currently the Executive Director of the Atlantic Highlands Chamber of Commerce where she uses her experience in marketing, event planning, membership development and business advocacy. She also serves as public relations manager for the Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership. She has founded several business enterprises and in 2009 started The Write Angles L.L.C., a public relations/marketing/event consultancy. As a publicist, Lori Anne leverages her journalistic experience with extensive media contacts and connections to further client interests, including several celebrities. A lifelong community volunteer and philanthropist, Lori Ann has served on a variety of local, county, regional and national boards, committees and commissions. She was the first president of the Friends of the Middletown Township Public Library and only the second female president in the 85-year-history of the Middletown Lions Club.



A self-proclaimed Navy brat, **Lisa Walling** spent her early years “filled with movement, upheaval and very little in the way of roots” on-and-off Naval bases around the world where she began volunteering and working with the community. Living in Union Beach, she is a poll worker, member of the PTA, bowling leagues, kids sports and other organizations, particularly those associated with Hurricane Sandy recovery. Since 1998, Lisa has been engaged in the family landscaping business, proudly in its fourth generation of ownership. She also operates a spiritual advisor/tarot card reading business, which is how she became associated with the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society during its October events in 2013. As a result, she fell in love with Atlantic Highlands and the Strauss Mansion. Taking care of the Strauss Mansion and the history of the area has become an all-important endeavor and being a steward for history has been “incredibly fulfilling.”

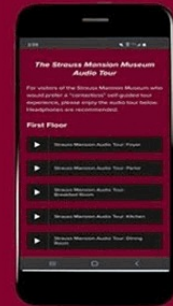


Food & Wine just named New Jersey as the best place to eat pizza in the country right now. David Landsel wrote: “The state is one in an elite group remaining true to their heritage, through long periods of time when others were too busy crashing ahead into the future to care about theirs.” Food & Wine paid further homage to the state’s pizza-rich history with salutes to several pizzerias including Una Pizza Napoletana in Atlantic Highlands.



**NEW!**

A Room-by-Room  
**AUDIO TOUR**  
of the  
**STRAUSS MANSION MUSEUM**



*Join historian Greg Caggiano for a self-guided tour of the 1893 Strauss Mansion Museum in Atlantic Highlands, NJ. Enjoy a history of the house, our town, and various tidbits focusing on our vast collection of antiques, furniture, artwork, cultural items, and areas of restoration throughout 17 of the Mansion's 21 rooms.*

Available for free on your mobile device at  
[AHHISTORY.ORG/AUDIO-TOUR!](http://AHHISTORY.ORG/AUDIO-TOUR!)



Based on the tour guide written by Dr. Paul Boyd and Laura Poll, 2008.  
Revised, edited, and updated by Walter Johnson and Greg Caggiano in 2019.  
Hard copies available in the Strauss Mansion Museum Visitor's Center.

# MUSIC

## AT THE STRAUSS MANSION

hosted by the incomparable Audra Mariel

To comply with State-mandated Covid restrictions, all concerts are currently planned as outdoors events on the Strauss Mansion Museum spacious rear lawn with social distancing and Covid protocols observed.

In the event of inclement weather, concerts will be rescheduled for the following Thursday. Updates will be posted on the Society's website and via e-mail.

Tickets are \$20/person and may be ordered online @ [AHhistory.org](http://AHhistory.org).

Concerts begin at 7:30 pm and are **B.Y.O.E.** (Bring Your Own Everything) including chairs, blankets, refreshments, etc.



April 29<sup>th</sup> ~ Anthony Fuscaldo Trio

May 13<sup>th</sup> ~ Rang Cherries, Insomniac Hotel and Êmu

**FUNdraiser**

May 27<sup>th</sup> ~ The Wright Trio

June 24<sup>th</sup> ~ Fire in the Garden

July 15<sup>th</sup> ~ Timothy Ogunbiyi Trio, Trio Joe **FUNdraiser**

July 29<sup>th</sup> ~ Twin Peaks with Rolando Alvarado and an  
all-star band, Martin Howth to open

August 26<sup>th</sup> ~ Timothy Ogunbiyi Trio

September 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Kasey Jean, The Wright Trio **FUNdraiser**

September 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Trio Joe

Performers subject to change

Back in 1895... the Strauss family would have been reading about...



May 1 ~ The Chicago Board of Trade Building opens for business.

May 2 ~ Good Housekeeping magazine goes on sale for the first time.

May 2 ~ Cree and Assiniboine people win the Battle of Cut Knife, their largest victory over Canadian forces during the North-West Rebellion.

May 2 ~ Congo Free State is established by King Léopold II of Belgium.

May 6 ~ Theodore Roosevelt becomes president of the New York City police board, effectively becoming the police commissioner.

May 7 ~ Russian scientist Alexander Stepanovich Popov demonstrates his invention, the Popov lighting detector, a primitive radio receiver.

May 12 ~ North-West Rebellion: The four-day Battle of Batouche, pitting rebel Métis people against the Canadian government, comes to an end with a decisive rebel defeat.

May 22 ~ Prior to burial in the Panthéon, the body of Victor Hugo was displayed under the Arc de Triomphe during the night allowing Parisians to pay their last respects.

May 25 ~ The Republic of Formosa is formed with Tang Ching-sung as president.

May 27 ~ U.S. Supreme Court decides that the Federal government has the right to regulate interstate commerce, legalizing the military suppression of the Pullman Strike.

May 28 ~ El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua form the Greater Republic of Central America.

May 29 ~ Southern Russian Doukhobors burn their weapons as a protest against conscription by the Tsarist Russian government.

June 3 ~ In the last military engagement fought on Canadian soil, Cree leader Big Bear escapes the North-West Mounted Police.

June 9 ~ Treaty of Tientsin is signed to end the Sino-French war, with the Chinese Qing dynasty eventually giving up Tonkin and the Chinese province of Annam (most of present-day Vietnam) to France.

June 17 ~ The 350-pieces of the Statue of Liberty arrives in New York Harbor.

June 20 ~ The Kiel Canal, crossing the base of the Jutland peninsula, is officially opened.

June 28 ~ U.S. Court of Private Land Claims rules that James Reavis' claim to the Barony of Arizona is "wholly fictitious and fraudulent." Under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase, the U.S. was required to recognize and honor existing land grants made by either the Spanish or Mexican governments. If granted, Reavis would have had ownership of 18,600 square miles of land in central Arizona Territory and western New Mexico Territory.



The Strauss Mansion reopens for Sunday visits on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 12: - 4:00 pm. Self-guided tours are available. Covid restrictions are observed. Free admission; a \$5 per person donation is suggested.



## Pieces of the Puzzle Vol. 2

By Greg Caggiano

In this series, we are taking a look at some of the more “hidden” aspects of the Strauss Mansion Museum and its vast archives and collection. These “pieces of the puzzle” are interesting items to look for when you tour the 21-room Victorian “summer cottage”.



### Chinese Food, Anyone?

I found this crate in the basement of the Museum in 2017 or 2018. Why would there be a fish sauce crate in our basement, you may be wondering? Well, the last owners of the house (Fun Wah and Mary Ann Chin, 1970-1980) also owned a local Chinese restaurant. They probably kept supplies in the basement, and this box (though empty) was long forgotten. We put it on display as it is a personal connection to the museum’s past.



### Do Not Use

The second floor bathroom was heavily damaged but still a working bathroom in 1980, but it is unknown if the Strauss family used it as a “water closet”. Atlantic Highlands would have had plumbing on the hillside in 1893. Given the family’s wealth, it is doubtful they would have used an outhouse, at least not for an extended amount of time. The room has been restored and contains a toilet, an antique sink, and a claw foot tub — none of which are connected. Some trivia on the

room: for those interested in a good ghost story, this is the location of the best piece of visual paranormal evidence in the Mansion. In October, 2014 a shadow was captured on film moving in the window. Also of note: you will see a “Do Not Use” sign on the toilet and the bathroom door has been removed. The reason? Five years earlier, right in the middle of a ghost tour, someone used the bathroom. And it wasn’t pretty. That just might have been the scariest incident to occur in the house’s history! Just ask longtime board member Lou Fligor who made the “discovery”.



### Gaslighting

Walk around the second and third floors of the Strauss Mansion Museum and you may notice several knobs protruding out from the wall. They hearken back to the days of Victorian Era gas lighting. These caps cover the end of the gas lines which still exist in the walls. You may recognize the term “gaslighting” for its more modern usage— a form of psychological manipulation where one person tricks another into thinking they are crazy. The phrase comes from a 1938 stage play and several film adaptations to follow, all of which are set during the Victorian Era. The Mansion not only had gas lights, it also had two gas fireplaces (both on the first floor). Visitors often ask why there are only two fireplaces in this large 21-room house. Remember, this was erected as a summer cottage and the need for year-round heat was unnecessary.



### Making His Mark

As you enter the Strauss Mansion Museum, you may noticed a small “F M” etched into one of the shingles by the front door. Those are the initials of Ferdinand Minroth, the second owner of the Strauss Mansion, who lived here from 1907-1923. He must have really enjoyed his residency there because he carved a second set of initials further down the porch!

# Atlantic Highlands Student Wins First Place

Fifteen-year-old Atlantic Highlands resident Samantha Yannarelli won first place for her original song, *They Swore*, in the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey's (PDFNJ) *Your Song! Your Voice! Shout Down Drugs* New Jersey music competition, supported by 95.9 WRAT and the New Jersey Broadcasters Association



Samantha Yannarelli

A student at Mater Dei Prep, her unique message on substance use prevention won her a \$5,000 music contract. She will perform her original song at statewide events over the next year.

“These talented New Jersey high school students have shown their commitment to being peer leaders on the issue of substance use prevention,” said PDFNJ’s Executive Director Angelo Valente. “The participants have displayed not only creativity and musical talent, but also determination to make a difference in the lives of their peers by using their talent to spread important prevention messages.”



## spring cleanup at the Strauss Mansion Museum

With the scheduled reopening of the Strauss Mansion Museum on May 16<sup>th</sup>, several volunteers descended on the building to dust, vacuum rugs, polish floors and clean windows. In addition, several displays were re-imagined to create a better sense of what life was like at the Mansion during its heyday. This is an ongoing process that will bring new life to our exhibits and collection.



# MEMBERSHIP

Join the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. Your membership supports the outreach and educational programs of the Society.

Membership categories:

★ \$10 student

★ \$50 family

★ \$200 sustaining

★ \$25 individual

★ \$100 supporter

★ \$500 benefactor

Join online by clicking on MEMBERSHIP, then clicking on CREDIT CARD ORDERS.

## PORTLAND POYNTS

Electronically published bi-monthly March-November by the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society, 27 Prospect Circle, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716.

Portland Poynts is the original name of the area that became Atlantic Highlands.

Incorporated in 1974, the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society at the Strauss Mansion Museum is a volunteer-run 501(c)3 tax exempt organization committed to promoting interest in the past and present heritage and history of Atlantic Highlands through a variety of services and programs to the community at large. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The Strauss Mansion Museum is open to the public Sundays, 1:00 - 4:00 pm, April through December. Free admission, \$5 suggested donation. Self-guided tour.

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