

Views From The Veranda

"Palisades Amusement Park: A Century of Fond Memories"

Monday, November 20th, 2017 ~8pm
82 Union Street~Montclair, NJ



In 1898, a rustic picnic ground on the New Jersey Palisades overlooking the Hudson River and Manhattan began a transformation into one of the greatest amusement parks in the world. Its attractions over the course of nearly seventy-five years of operation reflected the popular culture of a changing nation: from the high-diving horses of the twenties to the rock 'n' roll shows of the fifties and sixties, along with perennial favorites like the fun house, and the Tunnel of Love, the famous Cyclone roller coaster, and the carousel. The Park was the place where many turn-of-the century dwellers saw their first flying machines, and it was the backlot for several early motion pictures.

The Victorian Society in America, Northern New Jersey Chapter is pleased to present Vincent Gargiulo, author of *Palisades Amusement Park: A Century of Fond Memories*. With the cooperation of hundreds of residents, former employees, and executives of the Park, Mr. Gargiulo has provided a comprehensive history of the Park ever written. The Park's personnel included such notables as Arthur Godfrey and Buster Crabbe; W. C. Fields, Jean Harlow, Johnny Weismuller, and Jackie Coogan were among the many celebrity regulars. Top entertainers like Tony Bennett, Chubby Checker, Diana Ross & the Supremes, the Jackson Five, and Frankie Avalon performed for record crowds at its famed open-air theater. The Park inspired a hit

song, Freddy Cannon's "*Palisades Park*," and it played host to numerous contests, such as the Diaper Derby and the Miss American Teen-Ager pageant. Every summer weekend thousands of visitors enjoyed "the world's largest salt-water pool", vinegar-soaked french fries, and the cacophony of sounds on the midways.

For the millions who visited the Park until it closed in 1971, this book is sure to bring back cherished memories. And for amusement park and roller coaster fans never lucky enough to have entered its colorful gates, it will re-create the thrills, laughter, and joy that was "Palisades."

Mr. Gargiulo, a lifelong Bergen County resident, grew up in Cliffside Park, just a short distance from the famed Palisades Amusement Park.. His book on the Park became the fastest selling book in the publisher's history. In 1998, he wrote and co-produced the PBS documentary

on the Palisades Amusement Park for public television. He is the founder and executive director of the *Palisades Amusement Park Historical Society*. and the webmaster for www.palisadespark.com, where the Park's memories are kept alive for future generations.

Please join us on November 20th at 8pm for a visual rollercoaster ride!



Greetings from the President



Dear Members:

At our last meeting John Zinn enlightened us about the origins of baseball and it had nothing to do with Abner Doubleday. Originally New Jersey Base Ball was a social club based on one's social acceptability, not on one's ability to play. The game has gone through many changes; for example, the winning team was the one who scored 21 points first. How long did that game take?—a week. The pitchers threw underhand and the catchers wore no gloves. The extension of the railroad lines meant that teams could travel further away to play different teams.

These and other fascinating facts will be available in John Zinn's book Cradle of the National Pastime: New Jersey Base Ball 1855-1880 to be published in July 2018. Look for it in your local book stores.

Our November meeting will feature Vincent Gargiulo, who will present a comprehensive retrospective of the former Palisades Amusement Park. I can still remember my first rollercoaster ride on the wooden coaster in Palisades Park. Just when I thought the ride was finally over, the car went careening down the steepest part of the track. It looked like the car was going to smash right into a tree in the middle of the track but at the last minute the car swerved and came to a stop. My heart was pounding. I'm sure all of you have great memories of this magical place. Come and share them at the next meeting.

Have a Great Thanksgiving!!!

~Jane



*Meetings of The Victorian Society in America, Northern New Jersey Chapter are normally held on the 3rd Monday of the month at 8pm at the Montclair Women's Club - 82 Union Street - Montclair, NJ. Meetings are free for members - Non-members \$5 - Yearly membership only \$30! Why not consider joining today or giving a gift membership to a friend? Call Catherine Sullivan at 973-762-6453, or send her your contact info at 9 Vose Avenue Apt 220, South Orange, NJ 07079. If your last name begins with the letters **A,B,C,&D**, please bring refreshments to the next meeting. Any questions please contact Christina at 973-744-5916 or at christinapmayer@gmail.com.*



THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

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Northern NJ Chapter

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The VSANNJ is part of the only national non-profit organization committed to historic preservation, protection, understanding, education, and enjoyment of our nineteenth century heritage.

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82 Union Street is
handicap accessible

