

# Views From The Veranda

## "The 2015 Preservation Award"



"Thursday, May 14th at 6pm  
The Hotel Indigo ~ Newark, NJ



The Victorian Society in America, Northern New Jersey Chapter is pleased to announce that it will present its 2015 Preservation Award to the Hanini Group of Newark on **Thursday, May 14th at 6pm.**

The Society will honor Samer and Thafer Hanini for their outstanding work in the restoration and conversion of the historic Beaux-Arts 1912 National State Bank landmark at 810 Broad Street at Edison Place in Newark, NJ. The former bank is now reimagined as the upscale boutique *Hotel Indigo*. The presentation will be made in the rooftop garden of the hotel with its magnificent views of New York City.

Designed by turn of the century celebrity architect Cass Gilbert, this landmark structure was acquired in 2012 by the Intercontinental Hotel chain specializing in the tasteful and sensitive conversion of historic buildings into contemporary hospitality venues. Originally, the National State Bank building was fully occupied until the 1970s when its upper floors were closed-off. The street level retail stores

lasted into the early 2000s, when the building was finally shuttered.



In keeping with the aesthetic shared by Intercontinental Hotel and the Hanini Group, interior and exterior design details incorporate historical elements and references. The hotel reflects the presence of the former Edison laboratory on nearby McCarter Avenue that was contemporaneous with the building's early days. There is a mosaic mural tile of Edison's ticker tape writer displayed in the lobby, as well as the *Alva* restaurant and café *Workshop*. The lobby lights are also reproductions of early Edison fixtures. A number of historical objects discovered in the course of construction, including exposed brick, are showcased as well. This renovated eco-friendly hotel features 108 rooms, state-of-the-art internet access, spa-inspired bathrooms, a roof garden bar, panoramic views of New York City and is conveniently located near the Prudential Arena and NJPAC.

*continued on page 2*



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 \$25! 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 168 Vose Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079.

**Please note day, time and location change for this month!**



## Greetings From the President

*Dear Members:*

*Our April meeting featured award winning artist Lynn Vergano who shared her love of the ancient art of Oriental Painting. She brought dozens of her finished paintings and silk scrolls, as well as genuine handcrafted brushes, rice paper, watercolors and inks. It was truly an inspiring and informative show and tell presentation!*

*May is National Preservation Month. Part of the VSA's mission is to support historic buildings and places. This year our chapter is honoring the Hanini Group for their renovation of the old National State Bank in Newark into the fabulous boutique Hotel Indigo. Come and see the hotel firsthand as we recognize this achievement.*

*As our program year draws to a close, I'd like to reflect on all the astonishing spectrum of topics covered by our chapter. This year we had local legends of Montclair, the architecture of Cuba, the influence of Artemus Ward on Mark Twain, art pottery, the Morris Canal and the Titanic. We enjoyed a musical Holiday Party at Evergreens, and a fall trip to the "Gilded Age" of Long Island Sands Point Preserve. The spring trip to Connecticut delighted us with beautiful art and architecture as we visited The Bruce Museum, the Bush Holly House and the Lockwood Mathews Mansion. Our Silent Auction provided for the National VSA Summer School Scholarship fund. And we still have our upcoming Preservation Awards meeting and the June Garden party! It's most incredible we are able to do all this and still keep the cost of membership at \$25.00. I wish to thank all the members of the board who contribute a lot of their time and energy to make this a special organization. Thanks to you members as well for your enthusiastic participation.*

*~Jane*



*Lynn Vergano with some of her artwork at our April 20th meeting*



*continued from page 1*

To assist our members and their guests, a shuttle will be provided for transport from the Montclair Women's Club on Union Street to the hotel. The shuttle will leave at 5:15pm and then will leave from Newark about 8pm. Transport reservations are required: call Richard at 973-621-7999 or email [rgrossklaus@optonline.net](mailto:rgrossklaus@optonline.net) with your contact info before **May 8th!** Paid parking is available in local lots on Edison Place for those wishing to drive.

Hotel Indigo has graciously offered to give our members a tour of their deluxe facilities before the start of the preservation awards meeting. Come out for a special evening as we applaud this well-deserved preservation award!



*photo courtesy of [CardCow.com](http://CardCow.com)*

## In the Limelight: Cass Gilbert (1859 ~ 1934)

Cass Gilbert was the American architect responsible for the traditional style and regal proportions seen in many of the nation's finest public buildings, including the *United States Supreme Court Building* in Washington, DC. He believed strongly that architecture should serve the established political and social order. His neoclassical Beaux Arts style reflect the optimistic American sense that the nation was heir to Greek democracy, Roman law and Renaissance humanism.



Gilbert was born in Ohio in 1859. After the death of his father in 1868, his mother apprenticed him to an architectural firm where he completed his education and trained as a surveyor. He studied architecture for a year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before embarking in 1879 on the customary grand tour of Europe, undertaken by many young men at that time. His travels to England, France and Italy exposed him to many of the classic architectural styles that would dominate his later work.

Gilbert returned to the United States and was employed for a time at the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White. He then moved to Minnesota, started a practice and raised his family. His completion in 1898 of the *Minnesota State Capitol Building* with its majestic domed structure gave him the national attention that enabled him to move his base to New York. He was awarded the design commission for the *US Customs House*. Many projects followed, such as the *Essex County Courthouse* in Newark, banks, museums, libraries and numerous municipal buildings around the country. In 1913, the *Woolworth Building*, with its tremendous height and inventive use of terra cotta was a huge success and made Gilbert a celebrity.

One biographer described Gilbert as "*purposely impressive in manner and rather pompous at times.*" This description could easily be applied to the public buildings he designed: classical and timeless themes which inspired him as a young man traveling in Europe.



*The National State Bank (corner of Elm and Broad in Newark) through the years:*



Circa 1830s, 1870s, and after 1912

You can also see the *The First Presbyterian Church* (founded 1666), next to the bank in each photo.

*Above images courtesy of the Newark Public Library.*



## For Your Social Calendar

### **Saturday, May 16th, 2015 at 10:30am - "Historic Walking Tour of Anderson Park"**

- Meet at the boulder at the park's northeast entrance, 274 Bellevue Avenue, east of North Mountain Avenue, Upper Montclair. Heavy rain reschedules to Sunday, May 17, same time.

### **Sunday, May 17th, 2015, noon to 3pm - "Victorian Day in Essex County Anderson Park,"**

- To celebrate the park's 110th anniversary: there will be a Wheelmen display of antique bicycles and tricycles, Victorian lawn games, live music, demonstration cricket game, birthday cake, tree planting and other delights. Spread out a blanket and bring a picnic. Free. For information for both above events: [FriendsOfAndersonPark.com](http://FriendsOfAndersonPark.com) or (973) 477-7207.



Note: Our VSA chapter will be hosting an informational table at the Victorian Day in Anderson Park. If you can help us anytime on May 17th with set-up and/or greeting, *please* call Adriana at 973-650-6039. Your assistance is needed, and it will be fun!

**Tuesday, May 26th, 7:30pm "More Magic Lantern Slides: The Town Improvement Association (TIA) - Their Photographs and Their Accomplishments: An inspirational story about Bloomfield's Environmental Activists of 1907"** - at the Bloomfield Civic Center, 84 Broad Street. Sponsored by the Historical Society of Bloomfield and presented by Rich Rockwell. See [hsob.org](http://hsob.org) for more info.

**Monday, June 8th - "VSANNJ Garden Party"** Time and location to be announced. Stay tuned!

**Saturday, June 13th - "League of Historical Societies Meeting"** at the Merchant and Drovers Tavern Museum in Rahway, NJ. Visit [lbsnj.org](http://lbsnj.org) for more info.



The Valley Arts Firehouse Gallery and Hands, Inc in Orange, NJ are having a multi-event 10th year anniversary celebration starting on May 11th, 2015! Visit [valleyartsnj.com/valleyarts10](http://valleyartsnj.com/valleyarts10) for a full listing, and don't forget about their grand Street Festival on June 13th!

### **Elections of the VSANNJ chapter officers**

for the 2015-16 year will take place at our May 14th Preservation Meeting. The following slate is presented for your vote:

*Jane McNeill - President*  
*Richard Grossklaus - Vice President*  
*Pat Sanders - Secretary*  
*Kevin Cooney - Treasurer*



### **THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA**

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

Northern NJ Chapter

PO Box 717

Montclair, NJ 07042

*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.*

#### **Contact Information:**

President: Jane McNeill  
732-832-1878

Programs: Adriana O'Toole  
973-744-8267

973-650-6039

Membership: Catherine Sullivan  
973-762-6453

[cicisull@msn.com](mailto:cicisull@msn.com)

Newsletter: Rose Shaw  
862-215-3518

[19valleyrose@gmail.com](mailto:19valleyrose@gmail.com)



82 Union Street is handicap accessible

Sadly we must announce the passing of one of our very early members,

**Marion Balavender,**

who passed away on April 9th, 2015 following a stroke. She will be greatly missed.

