

GSMT News

The Newsletter of The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen

Founded in 1785, The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen is dedicated to improving the educational and cultural opportunities for people in the City of New York • Spring 2016

Lt. Governor Hochul Leads 230th Anniversary and Craftsmanship Awards Festivities

At five o'clock on November 17, six bagpipers were tuning up their instruments in our executive offices to play their opening role in the festive celebration of The General Society's 230th year, following its founding on November 19th, 1785. The bagpipes are our traditional annual bow to Andrew Carnegie, the generous Scotchman who financed the conversion of our historic building into its present construction and gave the building its beautiful, three-story skylit Library. The festivities began when Executive Director Victoria Dengel stepped to the podium to introduce our distinguished guest, Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul. The Lt. Governor said she was "one



thousand percent in awe of The General Society building and so proud of our early craftsmen who had the foresight, 230 years ago, to provide a legacy where skilled craftsmanship was positioned to help make this City and this State one of the greatest places to live and work." She said that she, too, had a working class background with an uncle who was a plumber, as well as others who are members of trades and unions and a nephew who is an architect. She noted that what The Society is doing is not just nurturing craftsmanship, but also passing these skills on to another generation through our educational programs. She said this is critically important because the State cannot attract enough young men and woman into these jobs. Lt. Governor Hochul congratulated the honorees, Jonathan Resnick as the 2015 Craftsmanship Award honoree, and Charles Thornton, PhD, P.E., as our Civic Leadership Award honoree and noted that Mr. Resnick's grandfather, Jack, had graduated from the MI plumbing program and Mr. Thornton's father, Charles Sr. was a Mechanics Institute Alumnus who became a General Society President. On behalf of Governor Andrew Cuomo, she again congratulated The Society on its 230 years of service to the City.

GSMT President Introduces Craftsmanship Honoree, Jonathan Resnick, President, Jack Resnick & Sons

General Society President, Gerard Drohan, Jr., welcomed the many individuals in the room who contributed to this 2015 Mechanics Institute benefit which helps make our tuition-free programs possible. He reported that this semester, we had over 350 students enrolled in our 2 and 3-year programs in Electrical Technology, Plumbing Design, HVAC&R and Construction Project Management, Facilities Management and Historic Preservation. He said we were here "tonight to honor two New Yorkers who have each made outstanding contributions to our City." Both have worked hard in their profes-

sions throughout their careers in the construction trade and it gave him great pleasure to introduce our first honoree, Jonathan Resnick, President, Jack Resnick & Sons, one of New York's pre-eminent family-owned real estate development and management companies and to present to him The General Society's 2015 Craftsmanship Award. As President of his company, "Jonathan Resnick oversees approximately six million square feet of commercial office and retail space and approximately 900 rental apartments. He is directly involved with asset management, capital projects, leasing and the day-to-day operations of the firm." Mr. Drohan listed many of the projects now being developed and noted that Mr. Resnick also found time to handle a number of philanthropic and industry duties as a member of numerous Boards of Directors. Mr. Resnick then took over the podium and thanked The General Society "for inviting me to accept this meaningful award." He credited the evening's phenomenal turnout to his fellow honoree, Charlie Thornton, PhD., as a "true innovator and visionary in the field of engineering" and said it was an "honor to be sharing this celebration with him." Turning to the birth of The General Society, which co-



Victoria Dengel, Jonathan Resnick, and Gerard Drohan, Jr.

...continued on page 3

■ **Mechanics Institute Classes begin January 25**

(see page 6 for details)

■ **Artisan Lecture Series begin March 8**

■ **Labor, Literature and Landmarks begin February 16**

(See page 5 for details)



GSMT President Introduces Craftsmanship Honoree continued from page 1

incided “with the re-birth of the City of New York,” he noted that The Society was founded by 22 craftsmen of different trades “for simple reasons: to realize respect and recognition for their crafts in the City; to alleviate the troubles their overwhelmed City was experiencing; and to restore business and commerce in the City. Its slogan: “By Hammer and Hand, all Arts do Stand.” Its original purpose, 230 years ago, also founded a welfare fund to provide assistance to its members, their widows, and orphans. Bringing the construction industry view into the twenty-first century, Mr. Resnick commented on the healthy position of the industry today with worker shortages, wage inflation up, and shortages in mechanical skills, with many contractors at capacity. But, he continued, “This boom will not last forever and ... it’s the skilled workers and trades people who will remain employed and will continue to work on projects that shape and change and improve this City.” And he said he hopes that, “The Mechanics Institute will continue to educate working mechanics and crafts people on the job who wish to continue to learn ... and make their own mark on the City as my Grandfather, Jack Resnick did.”

Legend

1. Jesse Chrimer, Eric Gargiulo, Karen Nelson and Scott Cipoletti
2. Victoria Dengel and Charles DeBenedittis
3. The 230th Anniversary Gala
4. Frank Sanchis and Scott Leurquin
5. Victoria Dengel, Charlie Avolio, Charlie Murphy and Teddy Civetta
6. Polly Guerin and Gerard Dengel
7. Chris Gallin, Brian McAuliffe, Theresa McAuliffe and Tom Gallin
8. Bagpipers Tuning up
9. Victoria Dengel, Jonathan and Joelle Resnick, Judy and Burton Resnick
10. Thomas Donahue and Gottfried Weissgerber
11. Terrance C. Holliday and Andis Woodlief
12. Peter Gluck, Rella Fogliano and Ken Fisher
13. Teddy Civetta, President Gerard Drohan, Jr. and Rick Ellman
14. Victoria Dengel and Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul
15. John Tripketn, Jr., Dan Tripketn and John Tripketn, Sr.
16. Kathy Thornton O’Connell, Kaitlin O’Connell, Denise Tomasetti, Diana Thornton Eidenshink and Brian O’Connell
17. Al Brand, Francis Arland and Rick Ellman
18. Guests at Craftsmanship and Civic Leadership Awards
19. Victoria Dengel and Daniel Rose
20. Robert Seria and Paul Shields
21. Frank Gibbons, Rella Fogliano and Joseph Tiebialo
22. Jon DiBiase and Robert Zirkel
23. Scott Sabbagh and Rhett Butler

2015 Civic Leadership Honoree Finds ACE Mentor Program

General Society Executive Director, Victoria Dengel, now at the podium, welcomed attendees to the Historic General Society Library, saying it is now a special space in New York City and has been home to significant educational and cultural programming for over a century. She announced that our Civic Leadership Award Honoree was a founding principal and formerly chairman of the internationally acclaimed structural engineering company, Thornton Tomasetti. He has received many honors through the years for his innovative engineering creations. For this event, tonight, however, we are focused on his gathering together an influential group of dedicated engineers, architects and real estate developers in 1994 to organize ACE. Ms. Dengel reported that only about an hour ago we learned that Dr. Thornton would not be back in New York to accept the award. Because of weather, his plane could not take off from St. Louis. She then introduced his daughter, Diana Eidenshink, who accepted the award for her father. **Ms. Eidenshink reported that nationally the ACE Mentor Program which started in 1994, now reaches over 8,000 high school students annually.** It provides the students with a deep knowledge of what a career in construction could offer. ACE has contributed over eleven million dollars in scholarships to enable students to continue their education. Ms. Eidenshink described the outstanding opportunities and results that ACE mentoring provided so interested students could actually achieve their dream. She noted that ACE Mentor encourages a passion for the industry with students saying it is so important to know that somebody cares and that somebody spent time with them.



Diana Eidenshink and Richard Tomasetti

They also learn about careers in the trades, “without which the construction industry will not continue to grow.” She then introduced Charlie Thornton’s partner, Richard Tomasetti, who had joined at the beginning in organizing and recruiting for ACE. After congratulating Jonathan Resnick on receiving the 2015 Craftsmanship Award and acknowledging the many contributions the Resnick family had made to the City, he then described how Dr. Thornton pushed ACE and recruited everyone he met with the admonition: “Get involved with ACE.” While giving Dr. Thornton full credit for bringing the culture of the construction industry to the students, he also credits the great students who, through various projects and relationships, pay tribute to the people who actually put the buildings together, “which is what the Mechanics Institute is all about.”

26-year Con Edison Employee is Popular MI Instructor in Electrical Technology Program



Alexander Luke grew up in Queens and received his B.S.E.E. Degree in 1989 from Polytechnic University, which is now the NYU/Polytechnic School of Engineering. During his 26 years with the company that lights up New York, Mr. Luke developed his field experience as a line-supervisor for 10 years, and was responsible for the safety and the work performed by his mechanics, technicians, and electricians. In 2002 he attended select Project Management courses at Mechanics Institute to gain a better understanding of construction contracts, planning, and project management. Currently, Mr. Luke is a Senior Engineer at Con Edison, and his team of engineers and electrical designers are responsible for the planning of major electric distribution and engineering projects for Manhattan. During the fall 2015 MI semester, Mr. Luke taught two courses in the Electrical Technology program: the Direct Current 1 (DC1) and Alternating Current (AC1) Circuit Analysis and Electric Theory classes. He will be teaching the continuation courses DC2 and AC2 in the spring 2016 semester. Each of the classes Mr. Luke teaches has over 30 students and runs two hours a night, and two nights a week. Mr. Luke realizes that his students learn and progress at different rates, and it can be challenging to break down and present the course materials so that his students can better understand the fundamentals and concepts. He is pleased when his students grasp and understand the concepts and develop more confidence in themselves and their abilities.

A Jump from Journalism to Construction Was Career Path for Student, Daniel Zic



After attending the University at Stony Brook and graduating from St. John's University with a degree in Journalism, Daniel Zic worked in that field for several monthly business newsletters. After a few years, he realized he would be happier in other work, and five years ago settled into a position on the office staff of a plumbing company where he is presently working as an estimator and proposal writer. To learn more about the new world he had entered, he registered in Plumbing Design at The Mechanics Institute. This year he is learning CAD at MI with Instructor Eni Zejnati, and enjoying the professional expertise and humorous enthusiasm that Instructor James Gallo brings to his teaching. Mr. Zic lives in East Elmhurst, Queens.

Recent Graduate Stops In with "Thank You" for Mechanics Institute Education



In the summer of 2012, William Johnson and forty-eight facilities employees of The New York Public Library took part in an MI intensive thirteen-week-industry-training course, participating in a survey of Facilities Management skills, which included courses in Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC&R and Facilities Management. At the completion of the Industry Training program, many of the participants enrolled in MI's three-year programs. In May, William Johnson and six others from the NYPL graduated in different disciplines. NYPL Library President, Anthony Marx, marked this accomplishment with a luncheon where he presided and then awarded three significant promotions to Mechanics Institute graduates Archie Jackson, Electrical Technology, Steven Rodriguez, HVAC&R, and William Johnson, Plumbing Design. The following day, Mr. Johnson walked over to give a personal thank-you to Victoria Dengel, Executive Director, which he asked be passed along to the General Society Board of Governors, his MI instructors and other students with whom time had been spent preparing for the often tough exams. Three years of classes, eight hours a week, had given him an impressive background in the field to draw on. William Johnson expressed gratitude for his Mechanics Institute education, saying it had a huge impact on his career journey.

Take Your Career To The Next Level BUILD YOURSELF • BUILD NEW YORK

The Mechanics Institute has focused on workforce development in New York City ever since its founding in 1858. Tuition-free evening instruction in trades-related education has provided many students with the skills needed to improve their job opportunities. Our programs continue to serve those employed in the building and construction trades who are striving to improve their skills and expand their knowledge to increase career opportunities. Each fall, nearly 400 students enroll in Mechanics Institute's educational programs, including Plumbing Design, HVAC&R Systems Design, Electrical Technology, Construction Project Management, Facilities Management and Historic Preservation as well as AutoCAD and Building Information Modeling (BIM).

MECHANICS INSTITUTE

Workforce Development Since 1858

an educational program of

**The General Society of Mechanics and
Tradesmen of the City of New York**

Labor, Literature and Landmark Lectures

The General Society's Labor, Literature and Landmark lectures continue a tradition that began at The General Society in 1835, during the days when Chitaqua was popular across the country and audiences were entertained by such exotic subjects as "Astronomy" and "Moral Philosophy." The format changed in the past decade to cover more current topics. The Landmarks Lectures in 2016 are curated by Lisa Easton and shared with New York Landmarks Conservancy members. The landmark lectures are set for the year and we suggest you reserve space for these lectures which usually fill the room. All lectures start at 6:30 p.m.



Tuesday, February 16 – Matthew Silva, filmmaker and co-founder of People For the Pavilion will discuss the New York State Pavilion built for the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. The film, *Modern Ruin* tells the story of the Pavilion during the glory days of the fair and chronicles its demise over the past 50 years as its advocates searched for ways to re-purpose the structure.



Tuesday, March 15 – Nancy Hudson, Structural Engineer with Robert Silman Associates, will discuss the intricate and delicate renovations at the Guggenheim that extended over three years. To remain faithful to Frank Lloyd Wright's original intent, many compromises needed to be made with materials used in the reconstruction.



Tuesday, April 19 – Glenn Boornazian, President and Principal Architectural Conservator for Integrated Conservation Resources will discuss the role that architectural conservation plays in the development of conservation programs for mid-century modern structures. Glenn will cite a number of recent ICR projects including the Saarinen TWA building, Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, and Wright's Florida Southern College.



Tuesday, May 24 – Richard W. Southwick, Partner, Beyer Blinder Belle will discuss "The Life, Death and Rebirth of the TWA Flight Center." He will describe: the historic context of the building; the design process; its critical acclaim in 1962; and how within a decade it was obsolete; and the preservation efforts that led to the current design proposal.

Season 6: General Society's Artisan Lecture Series Continues

Jean Wiert originated this popular series, a series so warmly received that we have formally established The General Society as the **Home of the Artisan** and developed special events to bring together artisans in the tri-state area, at the Society. Mr. Wiert's daughter, Camille Wiert now curates the lecture series. Please visit our website for updates, additional lectures will be announced. All lectures start at 6:30 p.m.

2016 Artisan Lecture Schedule



Tuesday, March 8th – Béatrice Coron will present "Stories Cut from Paper." Béatrice Coron will introduce the many facets of contemporary paper cutting as well as their historical roots. From a panorama of international artists and her own work she will demonstrate the endless possibilities and applications of this simple media.



Tuesday, April 12th – Rhett Butler, owner and founder, E. R. Butler and Company, a custom hardware manufacturer of fine architectural builders' and cabinetmakers' Early American, Federal and Georgian period hardware.



Tuesday, May 10th – Glenn Boornazian, President and Principal Architectural Conservator for Integrated Conservation Resources will discuss the varied skills and equipment required in the design of Architectural Conservation programs for historic buildings and monuments. Glenn will present this information by reviewing some recent ICR projects including, the conservation of four temple complexes at Angkor, Cambodia; the Cloister at St. Trophime in Arles, France; the McKim Building at the Morgan Library and some mid-century modern structures as well.



Tuesday, June 14 – Alix Soubiran, Founder and Creative Director, Princes & Crows. This artisan designer of custom murals, wallpaper and décor will explain the processes she employs to design and create wallpaper.

Tuesday, June 21 – "Turquoise Mountain: Artists Transform Afghanistan." A lecture inspired by the exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

The Artisan Lectures and the Labor, Literature and Landmark Lectures are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council. The Artisan lectures are also supported by the Friends of the Artisan Lecture Series.



The General Society's Windows Inspire Sculptor, Thomas Donahue, to Create Holiday Fantasies for Pedestrian Pleasure



Thomas Donahue is an internationally known, classically trained artist who began his career at New York's prestigious Pratt Institute. He works in various media ranging from canvas to bronze as well as architectural design. Donahue shared his experiences as a master sculptor, restorer and art director with attendees to the GSMT's January 2015 Artisan Lecture Series. He was inducted as a member of The General Society in April of last year and has become an enthusiastic admirer of The General Society's historical landmark building at 20 West 44th Street. A prominent feature of the building's street level are its six brass

framed vitrine windows. This year's Holiday season coincided with The General Society's 230th anniversary and the initiation of the Artisan Series Windows. Mr. Donahue was commissioned to create several seasons of holiday windows for Tiffany & Co.'s flagship 5th Avenue location. He joined a short list of artists including Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg in this uniquely New York honor. The General Society's whimsical Holiday windows are crafted of cardboard, masking tape and brightly colored paint. These delightful scenes surprised us with weekly additions to each sculpture – a bow to the General Society's continued growth in its mission of serving New Yorkers. *To watch Mr. Donahue's lecture, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsINv9EoAEE>



Anniversary 230 Years Young: A Living History

1. The Blue Cuckoo
2. With A Cherry on Top
3. Brunellesci's Bundt Cake
4. The Bonsai Window: "A Living Tradition"
5. Framing and Farming
6. The Anniversary Cake

Birth of the "Steam Team"

Four members of The General Society: the international expert on 19th century steam systems, writer and lecturer, Dan Holohan, has joined with two Master Plumbers, John Cataneo and James Gallo and Alex Weiss, P.E. to determine how to handle an urgent need of The General Society's historic building – improving the steam system to increase efficiency and save money on Con Ed bills. In a series of meetings and electronic communications they've debated the best way to handle needed repairs and upgrades. Along the way they interrupted the Swiss skiing vacation of "Johnny White," principal of Taco, heating system customizer, to ask him to consider a contribution. They ended up getting a heat exchanger as a donation and are now awaiting delivery before moving on to the next step. According to writer Holohan, these 19th century steam systems are extremely efficient if handled properly. They are to be found in many historic buildings and often create major maintenance problems for modern plumbers who have not worked with them extensively.

Mechanics Institute Classes Start January 25 Registration continues through January

About 350 students registered for their spring semester programs before the end of 2015. Because classes require a specific order, new students in mechanical courses can only begin their programs in September so we have waiting lists for next fall for these programs. Our six programs include tuition-free classes in Plumbing Design, Electrical Technology, HVAC&R Systems Design, Construction Project Management and Facilities Management. We also offer courses in AutoCAD and BIM. The school committee has been reviewing all curriculums, focusing on topics most important to the construction industry for workforce development. While workforce development has been a primary purpose in all our programs, needs change as new technologies are developed. For a complete catalogue, please visit our website at www.generalsociety.org.

***"By Hammer and Hand
All Arts Do Stand"***

Hammering On...

General Society Receives Grants for Historic Skylight Restoration

Important news for December: The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen of the City of New York is the recipient of a \$500,000 grant from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for the restoration of The General Society's Library skylight. We are deeply grateful for this significant award which will help to restore the century-old skylight which houses the General Society Library and its archives dating back to 1785. The General Society Library is a center for educational and cultural programming for the Society as well as many other nonprofits. Earlier in the year, two grants from New York City officials provided the foundation for replacement of the historic skylight in The General Society Library. We gratefully acknowledge the \$400,000 awarded for this project by Gale A. Brewer's Office of the Manhattan Borough President and the \$100,000 provided by District 4 Council Member, Dan Garodnick. The General Society will need to raise additional funds to complete the budgeted project set to begin late-2016. Facilities Chair, Rella Fogliano led the team who completed the applications.

New Archival Program

The General Society was selected to take part in the Culture in Transit project by METRO (Metropolitan New York Library Council.) The project will scan significant items from our collections. The newly created digital content will then be uploaded to METRO's Digital Culture site, and contributed to the Digital Public Library of America. The Society's archivist Angelo Vigorito is currently assembling the material to be scanned for the project.

New Video Provides Short Introduction to General Society Programs and History

Drawing on GSMT's extensive archives and illustrations in Polly Guerin's new book: *The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York: A History*, film producers John Rokosny and Andriette Redmann of NewYorkMVP.com have developed a three-minute film about The Society's history with voice over by Andriette Redmann. The video will be used on the GSMT website and at many public programs to introduce visitors to our programs and provide information about our historic 230-year-old organization.

Over 160 Classics Read by Library's Book Group

Career Librarian Barbara Hellering, who has led the group from its beginnings fifteen years ago, has announced that in February the group will be reading Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and in March, Muriel Sparks' *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Discussions are held at 1:00 o'clock on the "First Thursday of the Month" at Library of The General Society. New members are welcome. Just come in and introduce yourself.

**Celebrating 230 Years of Education and Service
To the Building and Construction Trades
and the People of the City of New York**

The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen of the City of New York

"By Hammer and Hand All Arts Do Stand"

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The General Society Newsletter Spring, 2016

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*For GSMT Event Calendar, visit the
General Society website at
www.generalsociety.org*



The General Society of
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Check our web site for current updates on General Society Events and send us your e-mail to receive event information: www.globalsociety.org

GSMT Membership Certificates Admired

The General Society's 230th anniversary caused us to think about the origins of our membership certificate. One of the original certificates hangs on the wall of the Society's offices. The art and engraving were attributed to Abraham Godwin (1763-1835) -- famous in his day. While the engraving had been printed in black on white paper, it had been lovingly enhanced with different water colors representing various crafts. This early engraving showed the simple buildings which housed the trades of those early mechanics and artisans. Then as the 1800s progressed, artisans became more prosperous owners. They built storied brick buildings and began to wear the clothes that gentlemen merchants had affected from early days. Around 1820, when GSMT's School and Library were founded, a new artist, Charles Canda (1792-1866) provided a new drawing to be engraved for the certificate. This shows a GSMT member in a top hat and morning coat leading a child toward education while another man is comforting a widow with children -- one of The GSMT's first missions in those early days when self-help societies were gaining popularity. The original copper engraving of this second certificate remains in our archives. Around the beginning of the 20th century, GSMT returned to the original design, now with member names inscribed by internationally known calligrapher and General Society member, Bernard Maisner.

