

# Star★Review

EAGLE NEWSPAPERS

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## 'A paragon for public education'

### Liverpool super gives State of the District address

By Sarah Hall

Dr. Richard Johns' fourth annual State of the District address painted a particularly rosy picture of the Liverpool Central School District, highlighting instructional gains, successful capital projects and improved graduation rates, among other developments made over the last year.

"Each one of these reports indicates significant improvement in the systems in place to respond to the needs of our children," Johns said. "I am extremely proud of the individuals employed by the district in both the support and instructional sides of the house, and I can attest that the work of these individuals is highly synchronized, effective and producing never-before-attained results."

The 2011-12 school year was not without struggles, however, according to Johns' report. Budgetary concerns dominated board discussions and stressed relations with the community, and enrollment continues to decline, though at a slower rate than it has in the last 10 years.

Johns' address, given at the Sept. 24 LCSD Board of Education meeting, was divided into eight sections, each tackling a different aspect of the district.

#### School improvement

Johns had high praise for the district's Improvement Division, led by Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement Dr. Maureen Patterson.

"It is very obvious to me... that the efforts of the Improvement Division have paid huge dividends in terms of the professionalism of our staff, the focus of our programs and the classroom benefits to our students," he said.

The Improvement Division, with the aid of administrators, lead teachers and instructional staff, have developed Essential and Enduring Learnings (E2s) and Data Point Assessments (DPAs), which provide School Excellence Teams (SETs) with information that help formulate plans for students to help them master basic skills. If the students are unable to master those E2s at the same pace or in the same as their peers, they're able to develop plans to assist them.

"Our educational staff can hold their heads very high in terms of what they have developed and the obvious implications it contains for student accomplishment," Johns said. "This improvement model is truly a paragon for public education."

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## Haunted history

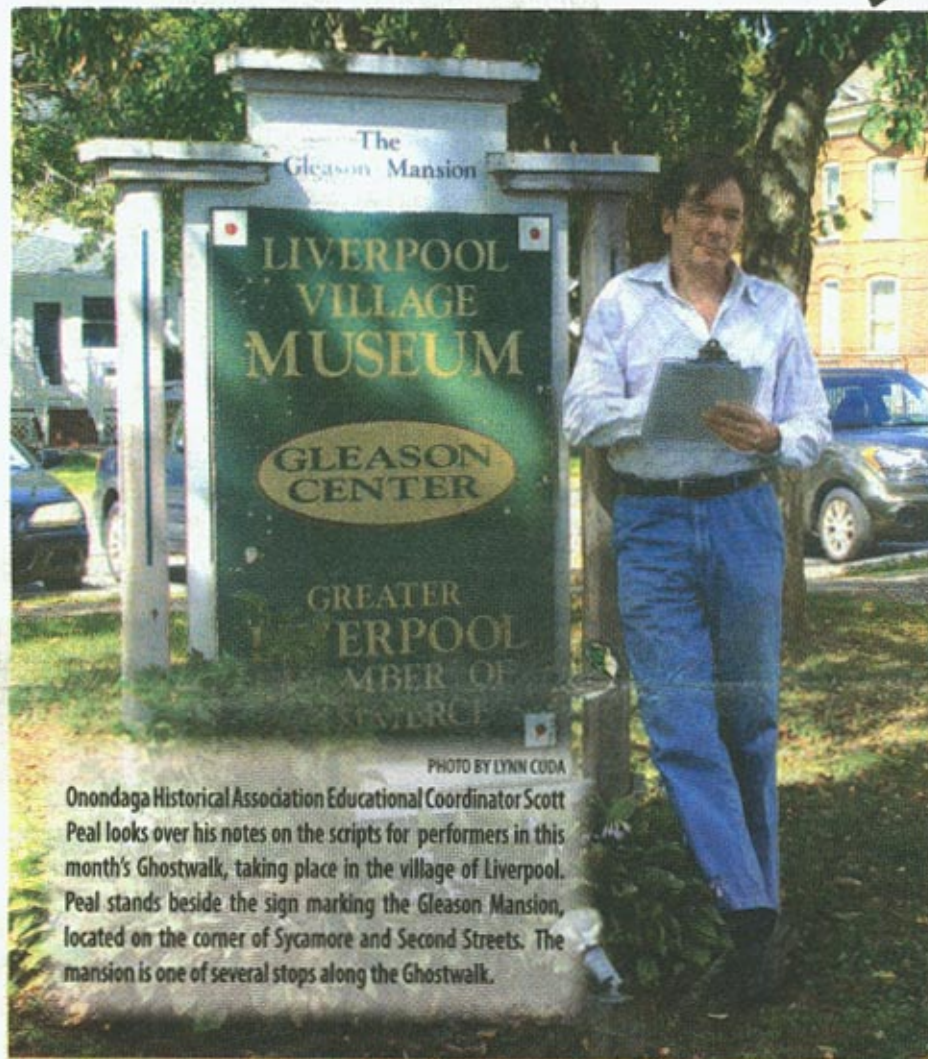


PHOTO BY LYNN CUDA

Onondaga Historical Association Educational Coordinator Scott Peal looks over his notes on the scripts for performers in this month's Ghostwalk, taking place in the village of Liverpool. Peal stands beside the sign marking the Gleason Mansion, located on the corner of Sycamore and Second Streets. The mansion is one of several stops along the Ghostwalk.

## Village specters return to educate, entertain

By Lynn Cuda

You can meet the most interesting folks here in Liverpool, and they don't even have to be alive.

The Onondaga Historical Association is preparing its 13th annual Ghostwalk, and the spirits will be summoned right here in the village of Liverpool. The walks will take place on Friday, Sept. 28, Saturday, Sept. 29, Friday, Oct. 5 and Saturday, Oct. 6. While the evening tours are scheduled for 6 p.m., on Saturday, Oct. 6, an afternoon tour commences at 2 p.m.

"If you're up for this kind of spirited entertainment and you enjoy local history, this is sure to be an event you will remember long after it's over," said OHA Educational Coordinator Scott Peal, who wrote the scripts for performers involved.

An eerie twist on "live" theatre, this autumnal village stroll will start at the Liverpool First United Methodist Church, the church with the purple doors, at 604 Oswego Street, entering through the back doors. There is ample parking available right behind the church. After signing in, participants will follow their leader as a handful of stories spring to life before their eyes.

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### Business



Sweet Jimmy's Liverpool man bakes, markets cookies out of his home.

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### Sports



L'pool beats F-M Another win for the football warriors.

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### Community

Salina prepares for budget season

Town board holds public hearing to discuss exceeding the state's 2 percent tax cap.

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Tour-goers will visit about a half dozen different locations throughout the village's business and residential districts. There you'll meet restless specters from the 17th to 20th centuries.

"The stories you will hear are all based on truth, encompassing humor, tragedy and adventure," said Peal, an experienced historical recreator.

In researching this month's Ghostwalk script, Peal consulted with Liverpool village historian Dorianne Guierrez, who, he added, provided a wealth of information needed to make the scripts both personal and realistic. Peal was reluctant to divulge too much information prior to the Ghostwalk, fearing it would "spoil the fun and take away from the first-hand accounts," but he was willing to admit that the ornate Italianate Gleason Mansion, situated on the corner of Sycamore and Second streets in Liverpool, would figure prominently in the stroll through the village's colorful past. The Gleason Mansion, current home to the Liverpool Village Museum and Chamber of Commerce, was once where hometown boy Lucius Gleason (1819-1893)

hung his hat, after amassing a fortune as one of this area's early capitalists.

The large elegant corner structure was inhabited by Lucius, who never married, his spinster sister, aged parents and brother Orson. Lucius made his mark in local history by first manufacturing salt when salt was a commodity in great demand, but when the price of salt plummeted, the intuitive entrepreneur shifted his attention to two large farms he owned, one in the town of Salina, the other in Clay. Planting willow, Gleason became the willow basket magnate of the area. This area's largest producer of willow, Gleason had his banner year in 1892, seeing 33,000 dozen baskets produced, which set a record. That's 396,000 willow baskets, made by hand. Liverpool still has fine examples of willow barns scattered throughout the village, and the Willow Museum, located adjacent to the Gleason home, is dedicated to keeping this part of local history alive.

As often happened with community founding fathers, Lucius Gleason was named president of the Third National Bank of Syracuse, after investing \$300,000 of his own money in the

project. He remained bank president until the day he died, at age 74. The Ghostwalk will not focus on Lucius Gleason's death, which was neither mysterious nor controversial; however there is much of the story yet to be told and concerns what happens *after* his death. It is likely the Ghostwalk will touch on that part of his history.

OHA's most recent Ghostwalk, which is used as a fundraiser for the organization, was staged last June at Syracuse's historic downtown Oakwood Cemetery. That Ghostwalk included the spirits of a convicted criminal, an artist, an inventor, a Civil War major general and a rather shady — though shapely — "gold digger." If you missed that one, Peal promises a second chance as Oakwood Cemetery will be revisited in June 2013, but with different spirits.

Meanwhile, reservations for the Liverpool Ghostwalk are highly recommended, as the Oakwood event quickly sold out. The cost is \$12 per person, or \$10 for OHA members. To make your reservation, call Karen Cooney at 428-1864, extension 312, but call soon. People are *dying* to be a part of it.