



Gouverneur Historical Association

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TO: Members and Hopefully New Members
From: Joe Laurenza, President

Our longtime members are probably wondering why membership renewal is coming in October. Last year many people's letters and envelopes got lost in all the December mail we all receive, and were late in their renewals or forgot all about renewing their membership. I sent out a second mailing to several long term members, who all responded with "Oops!, I misplaced my renewal envelope". The Museum Board decided that maybe bringing you up to date, and asking you to renew in October, might more beneficial to our financial pocketbook and yours, since December is a very costly month for most of us.

We have had a very busy year. The Garden Club did a wonderful job decorating the Museum for Christmas. Paula Towne's Art Show was also a huge success in December. Shirley Jones's Needlepoint, etc., show in the spring was also very well attended. These special events highlighting area talents help bring people from all over the area to our wonderful museum. We get so many positive comments from our visitors about what a nice museum we have for a small town. Your continued financial support through dues and donations make us well respected as a preserver of local history.

We have a new exhibit planned for this December and you will be receiving an invitation to revisit the museum. We have so much local talent; it is fun to put these special events together.

Our museum is coming out of the dark ages and into the 21st century. We have contracted with Rainbowtech Designs owner Shari Barnhart to build us a website. This will involve a virtual tour of the museum, and having access to all our records, and other related websites. Now people call me and I dig through all our information and mail what I find to them. Getting into the computer age, better late than never, will make it easier

to access information. They will also be able to continue to call me for assistance. More information for them and the museum will be available because of the access we will all have to other websites.

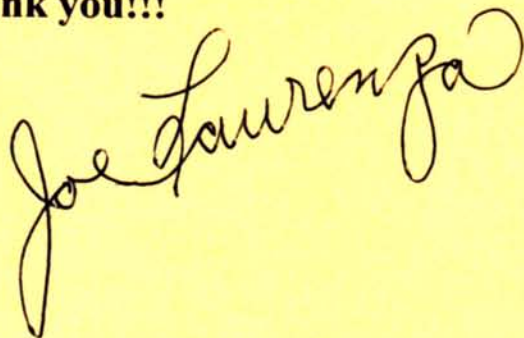
This will be an expensive undertaking and will probably take two fiscal years to complete. I will be writing a grant in hopes of some of the funding, and your membership and donations will help us with the remainder. If you are interested in what it may look like, you can go to the recently completed DeKalb Historical website at www.dekalbnyhistorian.org. The Gouverneur Museum website will be more extensive than DeKalb's, but you will get an idea of what is ahead for us.

The most interesting contact person this year was just recently, a Dr. Joseph Gouverneur from Virginia. He is trying to find out if he is related to Gouverneur Morris. He is a historian. Gouverneur Morris's mother's maiden name was Sarah Gouverneur, thus the possible connection. I sent him what little information I did locate in our archives.

Another interesting research job this year was from a Texan seeking genealogical information on a Rufus Smith. When he came East this summer visiting family and friends on Long Island, he went home by way of Gouverneur. Ron Taylor, Riverside Cemetery Superintendent, and I were able solve his missing information. This Rufus Smith family he was researching was also an ancestor of Paul Smith whom many of you had as an English teacher at GHS.

I get several calls yearly from individuals seeking ancestral information, and these will probably increase when we are on "the web". I really enjoy digging for information in our scrapbooks, files, directories, etc. I also get to talk with and meet many people from here and away.

The board appreciates the 40-plus volunteers we have and all of our members. We could not do it without **you**. **Thank you!!!**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Laurenza". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a flourish at the end.