

## **YEAR IN REVIEW-2015**



### **Injured Hawk Rehabilitated - January 2015**

A female Red Tail Hawk was injured on December 27, 2014, after colliding with an automobile near Kelly's Country Store on Grand Island Blvd. On Tuesday, January 6th, the hawk was released back into the wild at Buckhorn State Park by Dr. Karen Moran of the SPCA. Animal Control officer John Mondoux rescued the bird after the accident and took it to the SPCA facility on Ensminger Rd. Tom Burke passed along the photos and noted that he believes the hawk resides in a tree just south of the Long Rd. Thruway overpass, east side and that her mate has perched alone since the injury.



### **Three Fires Fought in First Part of January - January 2015**

A fire at Ransom Courts Apartments, Ransom Road on Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup> originated on an exterior wooden porch in the 12 unit apartment complex. Damage was limited to \$2,500 to the building and none to the contents. The apparent cause was careless smoking.

A fire on Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at the Baseline Road home (pictured above) of Brian Wylke originated in the kitchen and caused an estimated \$250,000 damage to structure and contents. Several pets were saved and no occupants were home at the time.

A third fire took place on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> at the Monica Road home of Jody Ward. Ms. Ward arrived home to find the living room engulfed in fire. She escaped with the family dog and no injuries were reported. Damage was estimated at an estimated \$60,000 to the structure and contents.

### **Council Position Remains Vacant - January 2015**

The Grand Island Town Board could not reach a consensus on filling the open Council seat after two months of interviews and discussion. Former Councilman Dick Crawford resigned in November to take a job with the GI Highway Department.

### Luke Gworek Named Honorary Survivor – January 2015



Renee Gugino Photo

The GI Relay For Life held their 13<sup>th</sup> annual kickoff on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Eight-year-old Luke Gworek was named honorary survivor for 2015, and the theme was announced as “One World, One Hope...Imagine Our World with a Cure!” The event was held on May 30<sup>th</sup> at Veteran’s Park. During the 2015 event season, Grand Island Relay raised \$129,244.53, with 33 teams and almost 300 registered walkers participating.



From left: Command SGM Isaia Vimoto, Raymond DeGlopper, R. Charles DeGlopper, General Joseph Anderson  
**DeGlopper Air Assault School Dedication – January 2015**

Family and friends of the WWII MoH Recipient Charles N. DeGlopper joined Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson, the XVIII Airborne Corps Commanding General, and Command Sergeant Major Isaia T. Vimoto, the XVIII Airborne Corps Command Sergeant Major, for the DeGlopper Air Assault School's renaming ceremony on Thursday, January 22nd in North Carolina. During the ceremony, the school's archway and a shadow box displaying the awards and the MoH citation of Charles N. DeGlopper were unveiled. The School would like to thank everyone, especially the family and friends of Charles N. DeGlopper, for attending the ceremony. The school trains soldiers in Combat Assault Operations, Sling load Operations, and Rappelling.

### Brick Oven Explosion Causes No Damage – January 2015

At 2:38 p.m. on Friday, January 16th, Grand Island firefighters responded to a reported explosion at the Brick Oven Pizzeria and Pub at 2457 Grand Island Blvd. Ass't. Fire Chief Omar Sortino stated that employees were startled by a sudden backflash which blew open an oven door. The gas supply was quickly shut off as GIFIC emergency 911 assistance was requested. There was no indication of damage and National Fuel was called to the scene to evaluate the problem.

### **Fire Company Paramedics Save Overdose Patient – January 2015**

On January 26th, Grand Island firefighters saved a 37-year-old male opiate overdose patient by administering two doses of Narcan. This was the first use of intranasal Narcan since starting service in 2014.



### **Ice Rescue Emergency Drill – February 2015**

On Saturday, February 7th, drill instructors Jordain Benoit and Sean O'Donnell conducted a special ice rescue drill at Beaver Island State Park. Rescue teams were outfitted with Mustang Ice Commander suits which are waterproof and insulated to protect responders from extreme, cold water temperatures for extended periods of time. An RDC Rapid Deployment Craft was then used to rescue a simulated ice floe victim.

### **GI Woman Treated for Hypothermia – February 2015**

On February 15th Grand Island firefighters treated Rena Fraser, 88, of Whitehaven Road for hypothermia. Mrs. Fraser had gone outside to check her furnace outlet and collapsed in deep snow. She was taken to DeGraff Memorial Hospital for evaluation.

### **Bomb Threat Hoax at 7-11 – February 2015**

On February 15th the Erie County Bomb Squad and explosive detection K9's were called to a convenient store on Love Road, after a store employee received a bomb threat via a phone call. An individual volunteered at the scene that he called the store and made the threat as a joke. Subsequently, the Deputy placed Louis Castro-Castillo, 22 of Grand Island, into custody.

### **R-2 Zoning Review Committee Formed – March 2015**

On Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> the Town Board adopted a 120 day moratorium on approvals in the R-2 zoning district and appointed a nine member committee to review the R-2 code. It was announced that the Professional Planning Services of AECOM have been accepted relating to the R-2 Zoning Review. Appointed as members of the committee were: Diane Evans-Conservation Advisory Board, Beverly Kinney-ECDAB, Dave Lyons-Planning Board, Bob Starzynski-Planning Board/Chairman, Betty Harris-Zoning Board of Appeals and at large members; Dave Bruno, Joe Lalonde, Dan Robillard and Ron Rezabek.

### **Two Arrested in Meth Lab Raid - March 2015**

Erie County Undersheriff Mark Wipperman reports the Sheriff's Narcotic Unit raided a meth lab in Grand Island on Thursday, March 19th. Working from information developed from investigators, The Narcotics Unit, along with the Drug Enforcement Agency, executed a search warrant signed by Judge Mark Frentzel for a commercial complex located at 2735 Bedell Road. Detectives charged Timothy Homa, 32, and Jennifer Carrigan, 44, both of Grand Island, with Felony Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance - methamphetamine, Unlawful Manufacturing of Methamphetamine, and criminal possession of agents to manufacture meth. Both are held at the Erie County Holding Center pending their arraignment on March 20, 4:30 p.m. in Grand Island Town Court.



#### **GIHS Alumni Donate Artwork - March 2015**

A reception was held on March 30<sup>th</sup> where the artwork "Perilous Flow" was unveiled at its new home in the GIHS Viking Mall. GI graduate & artist Neil Tetkowski (right) and alumnus Bill Whitford (left) donated the piece in honor of Bill's brother Bruce who passed away in 2006. It is part of a series titled "The Niagara Gorge Project." Tetkowski and Whitford were honored with the GIHS Distinguished Alumni Award in 2005.

#### **Herron Point Estates Gets Approval - April 2015**

The 31-acre, 232 attached multifamily unit residential project on Grand Island Boulevard is moving ahead after being granted a 6'8" building height variance for the 3 story apartment buildings at the Zoning Board meeting on April 2nd. There will be 4 - 26 unit 3 story apartment buildings and 16 - 8 unit 2 story garden apartment buildings. The development is intended to be an upscale project. It would have one entrance on Grand Island Boulevard with a clubhouse and other amenities. The buildings are designed to have a residential look with gabled roofs and some with attached garages.

#### **Town Dog Park Approved - April 2015**

The Town Board approved the use of a one acre site at the Nike Base for use as an off-leash Town Dog Park on April 6th. The site is located on the west side of the gravel driveway, south of the baseball outfield.

#### **Vandals Shatter Bus Windshields - April 2015**

Vandalism to Grand Island School District buses was discovered on Friday, April 10th. Three buses parked behind Sidway School, near the playground, had the right front windshield shattered.

#### **Two Arrested on Human Trafficking Charge - April 2015**

The Erie County Sheriff's Office arrested two out of state individuals on prostitution and human trafficking charges after being contacted on April 24<sup>th</sup> from a rental property on North Colony Drive. Deputies arrested Emal Nessary of Inglewood, California and Maxwell Cipriani of Zephyrhills, Florida.



#### **Huth Road Home Destroyed by Fire - April 2015**

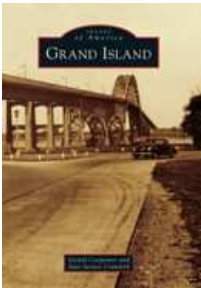
A ruptured gas line and swirling winds contributed to the destruction of a home at 1762 Huth Road on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.



#### **Lawn Mower Race Results - May 2015**

The results from the Lawn Mower Race held at Town Commons on Saturday, May 2nd are as follows.

Stock-John Dingey, Pro-Stock- Scott Endres, Vintage-Scott Endres, 1-Cylinder Mod-Pete Marston, 2-Cylinder Mod-Pete Marston, Super Modified-Rob Schooping/BAD Racing.



#### **Photo Book of Grand Island Released - May 2015**

Island resident June Justice Crawford has co-authored a photo book of Grand Island history with Dr. Gerald Carpenter, "Images of America: Grand Island". A book sale and signing was held at the Town on Tuesday, May 5th. Proceeds benefit the Grand Island Historical Society.

#### **Transportation Groundbreaking - May 2015**

The Grand Island Central School District held a ceremony on Friday May 8th, 2015 to officially break ground on a new Transportation Center behind Sidway Elementary School. The new \$6.3 million Transportation Center will be located next to the current building, which will become the Buildings & Grounds headquarters.

#### **Gus Macker Announcement - May 2015**

A press conference was held on Thursday, May 14th announcing that Grand Island will be the site of the 2015 Gus Macker basketball tournament on August 29 & 30. The event promoter was Islander Corey McGowan. It will take place on Grand Island Blvd. between Whitehaven and Baseline Roads.

#### **GI Fire Company Celebrates 77 Years of Service - May 2015**

Local government officials, family members and special guests, including mutual aid representatives, gathered together at Fire Headquarters on Saturday, May 16th to thank the GIFC for 77 years of first rate community service. Board of Directors Chairman Greg Butcher credited the 1938 founders of Volunteer Fire Company #1 for setting in motion key elements of the "strong, effective and rewarding" organization that exists today.



## **Veterans School Tax Credit Voted In - May 2015**

The Town of Grand Island residents voted in favor of the Veterans School Tax Exemption on May 19<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 1297 to 338. The average taxpayer increase on a \$180,000 assessed value home would be \$41.42. The combat vet decrease would be \$355.21. This local law will be effective for the 2016-2017 school year, and shall continue until rescinded or amended by resolution of the Board of Education.

Voted into the School Board positions were: Joy LaMarca - 834, Glen Bobeck - 787 and Richard D'Agostino – 749.



**Photo by K & D Action Photo**

## **Father's Day Lawnmower Race Results - June 2015**

Bubble Race: Sammy Geblein, Ryan Kearney, Peter Marston

Stock: Kaden Smith (9 yrs-old), who beat out Floyd Doring in the first elimination heat.

Vintage: James (Skip) Bartolotta 1 Cylinder Mod: Pete Marston

2 Cylinder Mod: Dan Wasicwicz

Pro Stock: Scott Endres (special mention to AJ Custodi)

Super Mod: Rob Schooping

Special recognition to Jim Mazza for the "most patriot, best GI Viking and having a special touch with a candelabra on the hood of the machine."



## **Alley Cutting NFL Pitcher of the Year - June 2015**

Grand Island Senior Alley Cutting has been named the 2015 NFL Pitcher of the Year. This making her a two time recipient of the honor. Alley has played Varsity Grand Island Softball for five years. In her career she has been selected to the NFL All Star first team, all five, as a pitcher and a hitter.



#### **Town Flowers Provided by Erie County Correctional Facility- July 2015**

The beautiful flowers in the beds around Town Hall, the Town Common and the Nike Base were grown by inmates at the Erie County Correctional Facility. The Horticulture Program, a victim of the red/green budget days of the mid-2000s in Erie County, has been brought back through the efforts of the Legislature, including District 4 Legislator Kevin Hardwick, representing Grand Island. Recently Town Hall Caretaker Jim Linenfelser and Town Supervisor Mary Cooke had an early morning tour of the Correctional Facility Greenhouses and brought back to the Island 25 flats of plants and 4 hanging baskets.



#### **Fire at Grand Island Small Animal Hospital - July 2015**

*Story and photo by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer.*

At 4:19 a.m. on Friday, July 3rd, Grand Island firefighters responded to a structure fire at the Grand Island Small Animal Hospital, 2323 Whitehaven Rd. Deputy Fire Chief Chris Soluri stated that Engines #2,3,4, LT6 and fire suppression crews encountered a working fire in the incinerator section of the building complex. Total damage was estimated at \$50,000 to the structure and \$25,000 to the contents. All animals on scene were examined and had no after-effects.



#### **Fire Destroys Luxury Vehicle - July 2015**

*Story and photo by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer.*

At 2:21 p.m. on Thursday, July 16th, Grand Island Fire Company rescue personnel responded to a vehicle fire and three car collision at the intersection of Baseline and Whitehaven Rd. Upon arriving on location, firefighters encountered a fully involved 2012 Jaguar with an injured driver who had already escaped from the burning vehicle. 68 year-old Frank Colucci of Grand Island was evaluated for a minor injury and declined hospitalization. The other two drivers, 63 year-old Sam McBride and 54 year-old Dan Mazurek also of Grand Island denied any serious injuries. Fire Captain Ryan Ayers declared the Jaguar a total loss with estimated damage at \$55,000.

### **Byblos Sold to Long Island Firm - July 2015**

The McSam Hotel Group of Great Neck, Nassau County, paid \$6.25 million for the Byblos Resort after two years of ownership by Byblos Hospitality Group of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

### **Holiday Inn Express Proposed for Former Dunlop Headquarters - July 2015**

A story in Buffalo Business First reported on July 22, 2015 that the former Hooker/Dunlop/Metz building will become a 75-90 room Holiday Inn Express, with a 2016 opening.

### **Ransom Road Safe Routes Sidewalk & Stormwater Improvements - July 2015**

The long awaited Ransom Road Safe Routes to School sidewalk installation is moving along at a brisk pace. The project installed sidewalks on Ransom Road from International Lane to Stony Point Road and a crosswalk to the middle/high school complex. Work was done by Tom Long of Sam Long's Landscaping/Excavating Inc.



### **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Paddles Up - July 2015**

From left: Paul Leuchner and Joe Mentor



Photos by K & D Action Photo

The 10th Annual Paddles Up was held on Saturday, July 25th at Beaver Island Park. The 7:00 a.m. Poker Run was followed by a Paddle Fair and demonstration, and then the Niagara River Fun Paddle. Former chairman, Paul Leuchner was presented with a plaque of appreciation after stepping down from the position after nine years by new chairman, Joe Menter, of the GI Recreation Department.

### **Gus Macker Given Green Light - July 2015**

The Gus Macker Basketball Tournament scheduled for August 29 & 30, was given the green light on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> Town Board meeting by a vote of 3-1. There were speakers for and against the event. Event planner Corey McGowan said he had filled every request presented by the Town Board over the course of 14 meetings. Councilman Gary Roesch was the dissenting vote.





### **Whitehaven Road Baptist 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - August 2015**

Mary Stewart Photo.

Whitehaven Road Baptist Church celebrated its 100th anniversary this past weekend. A family fun night on Friday, August 21st, kicked off the event. Kids enjoyed the bounce houses, face painting, games, and a magician. There was also live music, food and lots of fun for all. Following the special Sunday service, which was open to everyone, a buffet dinner was served. The church had its beginning in Buffalo 100 years ago and eventually relocated to Grand Island. The church changed its name to Whitehaven Road Baptist Church.



### **Gus Macker Problem Free - August 2015**

Mary Stewart Photo.

The Gus Macker on August 29 & 30 was problem free and close to 200 teams enjoyed their time playing on Grand Island. Some local businesses were happy with the increased traffic, while others thought the influx of people kept their regulars from coming into their shops. Other stores closed for the day.



### **St. Timothy Childcare Expansion Dedication - August 2015**

St. Timothy Lutheran Church dedicated their Legacy project child care center expansion on Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>.



### **Kaegebein Playground Dedication & Construction - September 2015**

Mary Stewart Photo.

The Kaegebein playground committee held a dedication on Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> and construction took place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Many years of fundraising went into the project.



### **Taste of Grand Island - October 2015**

The Taste of Grand Island on Saturday, October 3rd was chilly and damp with passing showers, but that couldn't keep the diehard Island residents away from the delicious vendors. Kudo's to those vendors for braving the inclement weather!

### **Five Car Collision at Roundabout - October 2015**

At 7:17 a.m. on Tuesday, October 6th, Grand Island Fire Company rescue personnel responded to a multi-vehicle pileup at the Grand Island Blvd./Staley Rd. roundabout. Fire Chief Matt Osinski stated that a driver reportedly caused a chain reaction MVA when he entered the circle and struck the car in front of him, which then involved several other cars that had slowed down. According to Chief Osinski, the roundabout has been in use since August of 2010 and has been relatively safe since then.



### **2015 Candidates Night - October 2015**

A Candidates Night sponsored by the Lions Club, Isledegrande.com and Island Dispatch/PennySaver was held on Thursday, October 15th at Kaegebein School auditorium. They were; Supervisor candidates Mary Cooke and Nathan McMurray. Candidates for Town Council; Bev Kinney, Mike Madigan, Jim Maloney, Cyndy Montana and Gary Roesch. Candidates for Town Justice; Sybil Kennedy and Mark Nemeth made opening statements and were not asked questions. Town Clerk Pattie Frentzel also made an opening statement and was not asked questions as she is running unopposed. The moderator for the evening was Mike Rayhill. Over 200 people were in attendance.

### **BOE Votes to Begin Superintendent Search - October 2015**

On Monday, October 19, the GI Central School District Board of Education voted to begin the search process for a new superintendent. Superintendent Teresa Lawrence's contract was not extended and will expire in June 2016. No explanation was given.



### **Fire Company Open House - October 2015**

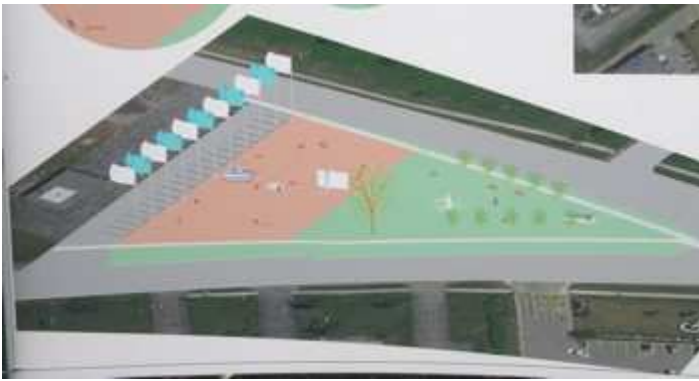
The evening Open House visitors viewed an "awesome" live fire demo, as a simulated bedroom fire erupted into a blazing inferno. Within minutes, the blaze reached temperatures of 1000 degrees. The kids got to experience hose practice and view vehicles and personnel from the NY State Police, Erie County Sheriff's Dept., Erie County Haz Mat Team & Bomb Squad, helicopters from the Erie County Sheriff's Dept. and Border Patrol. Also in attendance were the Coast Guard Marine Unit, City of Tonawanda Fire Department, Brighton Volunteer Fire Department, Sheridan Park Volunteer Fire Department, Red Cross Disaster Relief Unit, GI CERT Team and Twin City Ambulance.

Fire Chief Matt Osinski presented a special 2015 Fire Prevention commendation to Getzville fire fighter Brian Will, for his quick actions on May 5, 2015, when he began initial fire suppression after discovering a backyard fire on Blackmon Road.



### **Inter-Municipal Shared Service Agreement - October 2015**

Town of Tonawanda Supervisor Anthony F. Caruana, Town of Grand Island Supervisor Mary Cooke and City of Tonawanda Mayor Rick Davis were joined by Town of Tonawanda Deputy Supervisor Joseph H. Emminger in announcing the Towns and City have reached agreement on terms for an Inter-Municipal Shared Service Agreement. The Agreement will result in Judy M. Tafelski, SCA continuing to serve as the Town of Grand Island Assessor, with the Town and City of Tonawanda sharing services and costs. Ms. Tafelski has served as Town of Grand Island Assessor since August 2010.



### **Veterans Day Service – November 2015**

The annual Veterans Day Service was held at Charles N. DeGlopper Memorial Park this year instead of Veterans Park on Bedell Road. This was due to a big announcement that the American Legion Post 1346, Grand Island Moose and the VFW Post 9249 are purchasing the land next to DeGlopper Park and going to enlarge the park. Former VFW Commander Mike Mehlretter made the announcement with Eric Anderson of the Moose Lodge and Ray DeGlopper of the American Legion.

### **Final Election Results – November 2015**

**Supervisor Nathan McMurray, Councilwoman Beverly Kinney, Councilman Michael Madigan, Town Justice Sybil Kennedy.**

### **MUDD OX ATV Coming to GI – November 2015**

The former Sihi Pumps facility at 303 Industrial Drive was recently acquired by a English company, Mudd Ox ATV. Thirty new employees are expected to be hired at what will be an all-terrain vehicle assembly plant. The authorized representative in the sale wrote a glowing letter to the Town Board saying Town employees "were key in our decision to acquire this property on Grand Island".

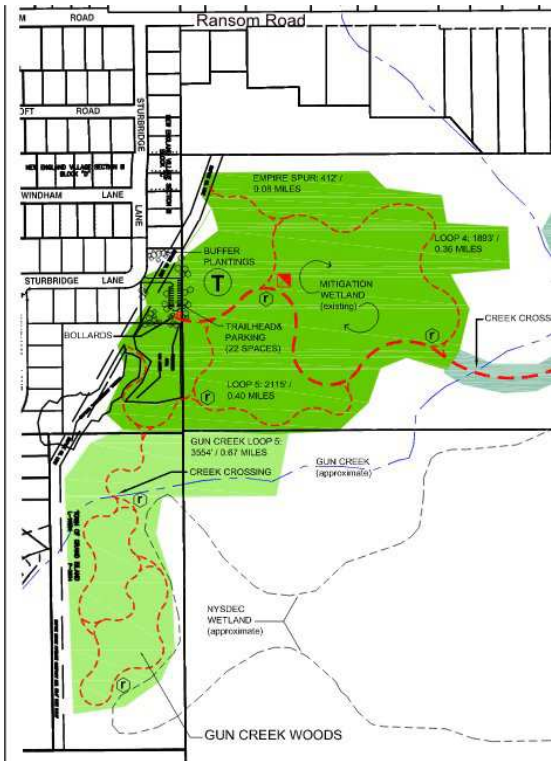


### **Fire Company ACLS Class Has Special Visitor – December 2015**

*Story and photo by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer.*

A recent Saturday morning ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) training session at fire headquarters had a special visitor stop in for an informative discussion of ALS procedures. Edward "Ted" Rayhill, M.D. was the first medical director of the Grand Island Fire Company and is recognized as the driving force behind establishment of one of the finest BLS/ALS units of any volunteer fire company in New York. The benefits of his invaluable stewardship hit home in a big way on October 6th of this year, when Ted received successful life saving cardiac treatment from the GIFC medics. In expressing his eternal gratitude, he commented "you've come a long way, keep up the good work."





**Grant for Scenic Woods Bicentennial Park - December 2015**

New York State Senator Marc Panepinto announced the 2015 Regional Economic Development Council Awards (REDC) for the 60th State Senate District. Grand Island will receive \$197,634 for Phase 1 and Phase 1A of the Scenic Woods Bicentennial Park, located off of Ransom Road and Sturbridge Lane. Phase 1 consists of Sturbridge Lane parking, trailhead, buffer plantings, mitigation area trail loop, one watch tower and 3 rest intervals. Phase 1A consists of Gun Creek trail loop, two rest intervals and one creek crossing.



**New Rescue Vehicle at GI Fire Company - December 2015**

*Story and photo by Ray Pauley, Public Information Officer.*

Fire Chief Matt Osinski reports that a new 2015 rescue vehicle #7-1 was recently placed in service to replace a 1987 rig which had previously received a body "remount" in 2001. This 2015 Ford F550 vehicle is 4WD equipped and has an extended cab which can accommodate 6 firefighters or EMS personnel as needed.