The preservation of Sailors’ Snug Harbor was a long and tedious road. By the late 1940s the historic buildings began to deteriorate and in 1951, the hospital, sanatorium, farm buildings and several service buildings were demolished. A year later, the white marble Randall Memorial Church followed. The community was outraged at the historic loss and then momentarily relieved in 1965 when the front five Greek revival style buildings and the chapel became designated landmarks of the City of New York. Frustratingly, the designation was challenged by the Sailors’ Snug Harbor Trustees in 1968. Local art organizations and citizen’s groups fought long and hard to keep the designation. Finally on February 2, 1971 Mayor John V. Lindsay announced the City’s decision to acquire the

Continued on p. 2
The Art in the Architecture

By David L. Businelli, AIA
Staten Island Museum Board Treasurer

Staten Island Museum at Snug Harbor, 1st Floor Hallway.

Museum expansion projects are usually measured in years, perhaps a decade, but in the case of the Staten Island Museum the project has spanned over four decades. It is a story of vision, perseverance, and how great architecture can turn ideas into reality.

Back in the early 1970s, the Staten Island Museum committed to occupying two of the historic Front Five, grand, Neo-Classical buildings at Snug Harbor. The project began in the 1980s but soon stalled during the initial construction phase. The project languished until Elizabeth Egbert was appointed as the Museum’s Executive Director in 2002 and became the driving force behind the resurrection of the visionary project.

The design team at Gluckman Mayner Architects were faced with the deteriorating remnants of the short-circuited project and the daunting task of how to best respect the historic buildings while providing the modern facilities, including climate control, that the Staten Island Museum’s collections required.

While others may have viewed the task as too daunting, the architects at Gluckman Mayner considered the limitations beneficial and helped guide the team to optimal solutions. The ability to borrow art from other museums drove the design and the level of environmental control.

To achieve the necessary climate control a “building within a building” was designed. What was left of the interior after the first renovation attempt was removed, leaving only the original exterior walls. A steel structure was put in place inside of the original “envelope,” thereby creating new walls at the perimeter that gave the building proper thermal and moisture protection. The new framing could handle the weight of different types of exhibits, freeing the Museum from anticipated limitations. The landmarked windows were kept and an innovative inner glass wall was built at each creating a climate controlled transparent cavity to allow for an abundance of natural light and the viewing of the original windows from inside the galleries.

During the course of the project a curve ball was thrown in the form of a historic stair case at the building’s core. Originally slated for removal because of location and construction issues, the Department of Design and Construction requested that the stair remain in place even though its riser and tread ratio didn’t meet current building code provisions for egress stairs. With the stair remaining, there were now problems with the floor to floor height, which they now dictated. For example, the cellar ceiling height is low in order to accommodate the stair design and the core that was created is in its entirety a fire rated safe area.

The building is on its way to achieving LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Gold Certification from the US Green Building Council. Many strategies were used to achieve this rating, ranging from the 499 foot deep geothermal heating and cooling system – which uses the heat of the earth with
The Elizabeth Egbert Gallery

Elizabeth put her heart and soul into making the Staten Island Museum at Snug Harbor a reality and we would like to commemorate her commitment by naming the 2nd Floor North Gallery in her honor.

To do that, we need your help! Thanks to you and all of our generous donors, we have already raised $50,000 toward the naming opportunity and have $200,000 more to go.

Thanks to you and all of our generous donors, we have already raised $50,000 toward the naming opportunity and have $200,000 more to go.

The 2nd Floor North Gallery has already been earmarked for Elizabeth's namesake. When the Museum opens in September it will house the Staten Island SEEN exhibit, followed by selections from the Museum's permanent collection including Elizabeth's exceptional artwork.

Any contributions that have been made in Ms. Egbert's name have gone toward her naming opportunity.

Donations in Elizabeth's name can be made to the Staten Island Museum through the Museum's website www.statenislandmuseum.org/about/elizabeth-egbert, by calling 718.727.1135 or mailing a check to the museum at 75 Stuyvesant Place, SI, NY 10301. Please put "Capital - NEH Challenge" in the subject line to activate a match from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a prestigious award of which Elizabeth was extremely proud.

www.StatenIslandMuseum.org/about/elizabeth-egbert

STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM at Snug Harbor

Friday, September 18

Exclusive Invite Only Preview
Special surprise guests, entertainment, Museum tours, food, drinks, and more.
Want an invite? Become a Founding Member today!

Saturday, September 19

Ribbon Cutting and Public Opening
Free to the public, all day festivities, Museum tours, and more.

Sunday, September 20

Opening Festivities
Free to the public, music, and more.

The Only Living Bartram Oaks in New York

By Will Lenihan, Curator of Science

While working in Davis' attic, I am always surrounded by the rigid, chitinous exoskeletons of insects that once made his acquaintance. However, I recently had the seemingly improbable experience of being re-introduced to a living acquaintance of Davis, who has yet to reach middle age. In 1907, Arthur Hollick, then director of the Museum, along with William T. Davis and Howard Cleaves, had gathered at Clove Valley (now Clove Lakes Park) in excitement over the discovery of a Bartram oak, which is a hybrid of willow and northern red oak. This hybrid occurs nowhere else in New York apart from Staten Island and no farther north on the Island than Great Kills. This January marked the first time I had seen the tree in at least 16 years. Knowing the tree's history made this experience feel like being in the presence of the physical manifestation of time itself, which is not far from the truth. Carbon atoms from the air Davis was breathing in 1907 are locked in the tree's heartwood. While in more recent years, carbon atoms from carbon dioxide molecules that vibrated in the air with the sound of pop music blaring from speakers at the nearby WWII Veterans War Memorial Ice Skating Rink have been sequestered in the tree's younger sapwood; this reality makes Davis' Bartram oak a beautiful Staten Island anachronism.

"This hybrid occurs nowhere else in New York apart from Staten Island and no farther north on the Island than Great Kills."

George B. Wilmott, Bertram Oak at Clove Lakes, 1932.
Staten Island Museum at Snug Harbor
DOORS WILL OPEN
SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 19, 2015

Staten Island Museum at Snug Harbor / Staten Island Museum in St. George Hours
Monday - Friday: 11:00am - 5:00pm, Saturday: 10:00am - 5:00pm, Sunday: 12:00pm - 5:00pm
For more information or to plan your visit, please call 718.727.1135 or visit www.StatenIslandMuseum.org

The Staten Island Museum is housed in City-owned facilities. It is supported in part by public funds from NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, Mayor Bill de Blasio; NYC Council Staten Island Delegation and Council Members Debi Rose and Steven Matteo; and Staten Island Borough President James S. Oddo. Additional public funding is provided by NYC Department of Youth & Community Development; New York State Legislature and Senator Diane Savino and Assembly Members Michael Cusick and Matthew Titone; NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historical Preservation; New York State Council on the Arts; New York Council on the Humanities; and Institute for Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Arts, and National Endowment for the Humanities. We appreciate the support from individuals, our members and donors, and corporations and foundations.