



# Upcoming this Year

## Fall 2025 Dinner

Raymond Cianfrini, a former Genesee County legislator, will deliver an illustrated presentation at the Byron Historical Society's annual dinner meeting and program in October, 2025 at the Byron Fire Hall.

"The Clash of Cultures," a presentation Cianfrini has been giving for more than 25 years, follows the rise of the "northern" Ku

Klux Klan in Genesee County during the early 20th century. Cianfrini is expected to discuss how this rather surprising development followed a substantial influx of immigrants into the county at that time, and the resulting resentment that precipitated the movement.

Cianfrini will use town and county records, newspaper articles and photographs as he tracks the rise and fall of the KKK.

## The Clash of Cultures by Ray Cianfrini

Cianfrini, a retired attorney of Oakfield, is a second-generation Italian immigrant. He said the period of the early 20th Century was a period of tremendous change.

"This northern Klan, as I refer it, was different, quite a bit different, from the southern Klan that moved out after the Civil War," Cianfrini said during a previous interview. "That Klan was focused pretty much on the racial lines after Reconstruction, trying to keep the blacks from getting too much power."

"In the 1920s, the northern Klan started gaining tremendous movement, power and recognition, but their basis wasn't predicated so much on racial grounds ... (as it was) anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish and anti-immigrant themes. That was their primary goal – keep those people in place."

Cianfrini said the first documented presence of the KKK in the area was in 1922 at a town of Alabama church. There were also photographs of a funeral of the second in command of the KKK in Oakfield, also in 1922.

The dinner is scheduled for 6 p.m. at the Byron Fire Hall. A date will be chosen next fall. Cianfrini's presentation will follow the dinner. Both events are open to the public. Reservations are required for the dinner; admission to the talk is free.

After eight years as an Oakfield village trustee, 11 as an Oakfield-Alabama school board member, seven as village mayor and 10 as a county legislator, he wants to see new people take charge and continue them.



**SPEAKER | Ray Cianfrini**

## History With Our Historians, Bob & Beth Wilson

Interviewed by Jacob Iverson

Our favorite thing is getting kids or people who have never been through the museum to come through and let them look at their own leisure, let them ask questions. For the school kids, we used to have the Victrola primed and ready for them. One of the things Dora Jones

and we agreed was that part of history is being able to touch history. Not everything is fun to go through a museum if you can't touch anything. Playing the Victrola for them was a form of touching, because they could see and

hear it. There are certain things we let kids touch, then there are other things that they learn we can't touch because of skin oils or handling them, they get frail, and then nobody can enjoy them.

## Museum Revitalization

*There have been a number of efforts to keep our museum looking fresh and running efficiently.*



### Insulation Project

Blown in cellulose insulation was accomplished last spring. The insulation has saved electric kilowatt hour usage and has stopped the accumulation of flies we experienced every winter.

The Town of Byron paid for the insulation after budgetary approval for 2024. Andy's Insulation of Rochester did a great job in the walls and ceiling areas.

### Approval of the Painting Project

The Town of Byron has approved the painting of the exterior of the museum for this year. Stafford Painters will also power wash the agriculture building and clean all gutters and downspouts. We are anticipating painting in late spring or summer.



### Storm Windows

We have received quotes for placing storm windows on the museum windows. This winter we placed plastic stretch wrapping on the interior of the windows, which helped to decrease cold air seepage. Placing new windows with double pane glass with argon gas between panes will greatly decrease outside air intrusion.

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## Museum Records Digitization

Joanne Spitzner and Don Yaxley have been working weekends to digitize old typewritten inventory records. With the purchase of the CZUR Book Scanner last year, we scanned the old typewritten records. Thereafter, the CZUR software converted the scans into Word and Excel documents.

Using Excel, we can find and sort all inventory records for a variety of reasons. Joanna has also created lists to describe the contents of the four drawer file cabinet in the meeting room.



## Graduation Photos

The South Byron High School Graduation photos project is progressing. All frames have been repainted, all photos scanned, and new matting, labels and UV protective glass are currently being put together by Jan Kent, Michael DePumpo, and Karen Jaczynski. Joanna will create a new banner which will hang over the photos soon as well.

## Get involved

### DONATIONS

Donations are much appreciated. They are used to enhance the museum and its collection of items. Donations should be made to the "Byron Historical Society" and mailed to Byron Historical Society, PO Box 228, Byron NY 14422. If needed, we will provide a proof of donorship for tax purposes.

### VOLUNTEERING

If you have time to assist in various small projects, your help would be greatly appreciated. We strive to have the museum and its over 3000 items on display in the best conditions possible. There are always small projects needing attention.

**Contact Jan Kent at 585-739-0447 or Don Yaxley at 585-548-7762.**