

At Lincoln's Hearthside House, Roaring Twenties return

Day and evening of events will include music, food, exhibits and a Bootlegger's Ball.



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LINCOLN, R.I. — The Hearthside House Museum is hosting an elaborate extravaganza Saturday with a Roaring Twenties theme.

"The Decade That Roared: A 1920s Rhode Island Experience" features live music, dancing, food and a number of exhibits — including radio, the Internet of the day — in the 1810 Federal-style house and on the grounds, with festivities culminating with the Bootlegger's Ball in the evening. There will also be raffle prizes and a

silent auction.

"All the familiar aspects of the Roaring Twenties come to life during this day and night event," according to a news release -- "cool jazz, glamorous flappers, vaudeville acts, gorgeous fashions, live radio and speakeasies."

One striking item of fashion on display is a woman's fetching red bathing costume that is more like a dress. Other period pieces include a couple of 1928 Ford Model A cars, a 1928 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, Art Deco jewelry made in Providence and modern versions in the same style.

Silent-movie clips promoting Providence are "kind of like a 1920s version of 'Cooler and Warmer,'" said Kathy Hartley, president of the museum, referring to the much-criticized state advertising campaign torpedoed by Governor Raimondo. Other movie clips include an old Mickey Mouse cartoon, all of which will be shown on an antique projector.

Additional exhibits include one dedicated to children and another to voting, reflecting the 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

Hartley said the inspiration for the show was a homemade still used to make moonshine during Prohibition, which lasted from 1920 to 1933, that was given to the museum about 10 years ago. "We've waited all these years to display it," she said. "It needed the right kind of exhibition."

Indeed, the still will be displayed in a barn at the rear of the house that will be made up like a speakeasy, complete with a sliding peephole set in the door, so visitors can pretend that they need a password to enter, just like during Prohibition. Appropriately, drinks will be served inside.

Memorabilia from downtown Providence will include items from the Biltmore Hotel, which opened in 1922. "Downtown Providence was booming with department stores, theaters, even a financial area," said Hartley.

She added that an exhibit on radio will include items from the collection of

historian Len Arzoomanian. Among the items are components such as tubes that were manufactured in Providence.

At the same time, radio itself was "the Internet of the day," according to event organizer Seth Hamilton. A page from a 1929 edition of the Pawtucket Times advertises an Earl Radio for \$99.50 with a special promotion: "We will demonstrate [the radio] in your own home."

"It was a new technology providing shared experiences such as prizefights, election results, baseball games," said Hamilton. "That had never existed before."

Transportation was changing, he added, with cars and planes, and even dirigibles, added to trains. And political cartoons reflected the issues of the day, including one showing Uncle Sam building a wall along the Mexican border. "You could run it today with no disclaimer," he said.

General admission for the daytime event, which will run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children under 14. Tickets can be purchased at the door. Refreshments will be available throughout the day.

The Bootlegger's Ball will be held from 5 to 9:30 p.m. and will feature drinks at the speakeasy, "live jazz and dancing in the style and spirit of a night at the Providence Biltmore's Bacchante Room back in the day," according to the news release.

Performers include Chifferobe's Cigarette Girls, dancers from Providence Swings, and Jessy Carolina and the Hot Mess, a New York City-based jazz band. Tickets, which are \$40 and include two cocktails, are limited to 150 and must be purchased in advance by calling Hearthside at (401) 726-0597.

Hearthside House is located at 677 Great Rd., Lincoln. Parking will be at the nearby Chase Farm Park.

For more information, email kathy.hartley@hearthsidehouse.org or go to: [facebook.com/HearthsideHouse/](https://www.facebook.com/HearthsideHouse/)

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