

2-8-2012

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Richards, Liz, "Exhibit Praises Unsung Poet and Advocate" (2012). *Emma Lazarus: Voice of Liberty, Voice of Conscience Documents*. 1.
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Exhibit praises unsung poet and ad

By Liz Richards
THE STYLUS

Not many people recognize the name Emma Lazarus, let alone the title of her most famous poem, "The New Colossus." Although many people may be familiar with select words from it, such as: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

If you recognize those words, it's because they are written on the plaque that graces the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty. The ongoing Emma Lazarus exhibit in Drake Memorial Library reveals a woman who is respected as a great American poet, but also someone who has become a powerful symbol beyond literature.

The exhibit, titled "Emma Lazarus: Voices of Liberty, Voice of Conscience," is located on the main floor of Drake. It boasts a circular gallery lined with green pillars, each displaying facts and documents pertaining to Lazarus' life, and the principles she defended.

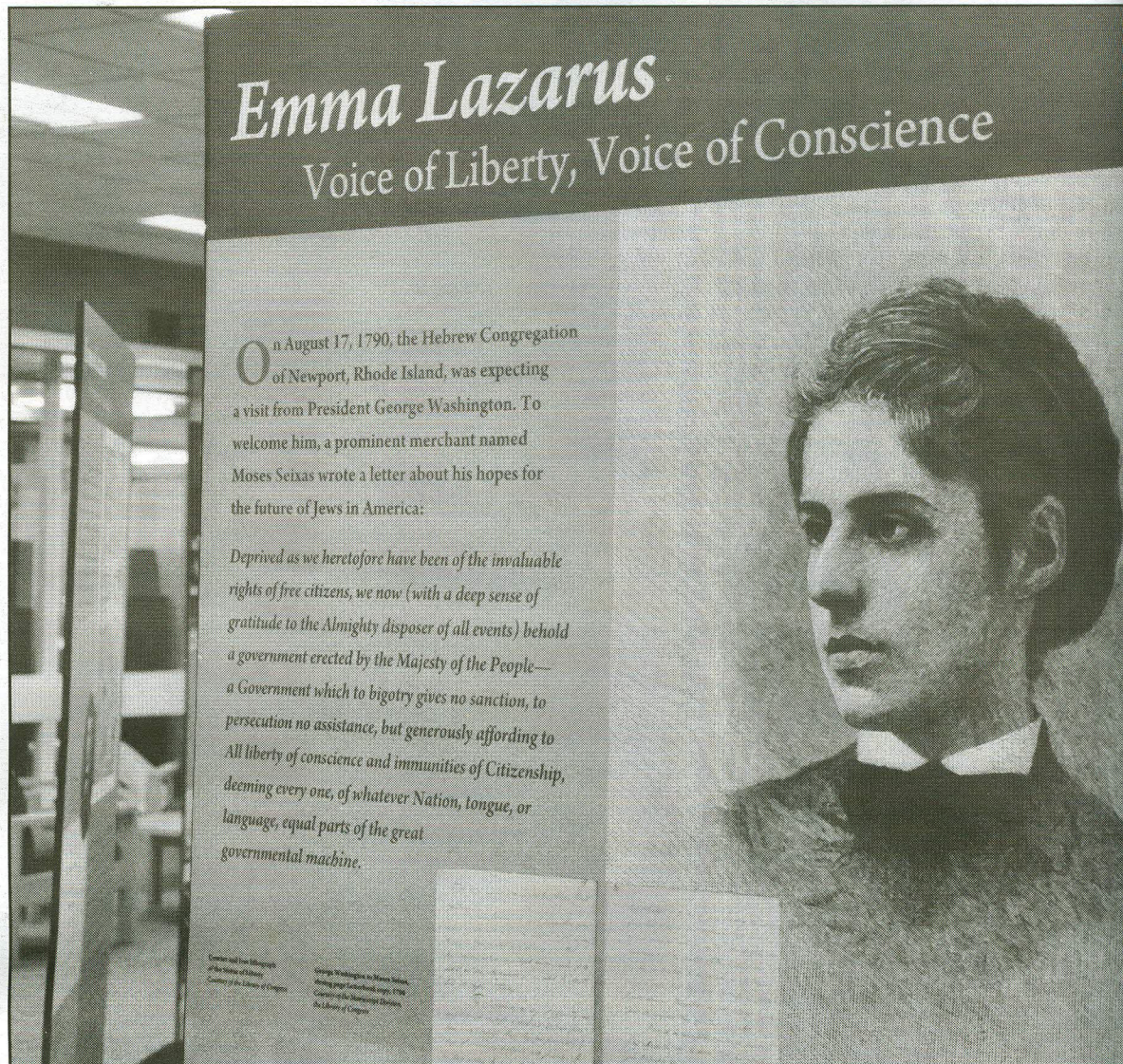
Lazarus (1849-1887) was a Jewish-American woman who faced daily prejudices against both her religious beliefs and gender.

She was highly active in the fight against anti-semitism in the and advocated for the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine before anyone used the term Zionism.

For someone who had such a crucial impact on American literary and cultural canon, it's strange that Lazarus isn't better remembered. Wendy Prince, evening library supervisor, and organizer of the display wondered the same thing.

Through research that she called "quite a process of discovery," she found that much of Lazarus' memory had been repressed by her sisters, who Prince described as "decidedly unfeminine."

Lazarus' work was progressive for her era, and many considered it to be radical. Lazarus, who came from an affluent home and befriended many of her contemporaries, including Ralph Waldo



Despite that the famous quote on the Statue of Liberty was written by poet and activist Emma Lazarus, she is currently the subject of an ongoing exhibit.

Emerson, spent her life calling attention to repressed groups.

She fought for the acceptance of immigrants, respect for Judaism in America, women's rights, and was open to same-sex couples, a very uncommon occurrence in the 19th century.

Lazarus embarrassed her sisters, and after her death they largely altered public memory of her.

However, the long lasting effects of Lazarus' advocacy and activism are still evident today in the many movements and advocacy groups that have emerged from her work.

The best known of these is probably the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's

Clubs. Nicknamed "The Emmas," the organization was founded in the early 1940s as a means of educating and providing awareness for Jewish women as a cultural and historical identity.

Organizations such as this have not been idle in the fight for universal human rights. The exhibit in Drake displays a photograph of members of the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Club smiling confidently at the famous March on Washington, Aug. 28, 1963. This is an example of a group of women who, much like Lazarus herself, remind us of the beauty and importance of equality in America.

Lazarus has become a prominent figure in discussions about religious liberties, women's rights and immigrant's rights. The exhibit features a desk displaying books about Ellis Island, a children's book illustrating a biographical account of Lazarus' life and work as well as a selection of books about the immigrant experience and what it means to be Jewish in America.

The traveling exhibit was provided by Nextbook Inc., a non-profit organization that ensures support for Jewish literature and culture, and the American Library Association Public Programs Office. It is open until Feb. 26.

Until then the library will run a series of events relevant to the

Village police chief honored for service to co

By Carolyn McMenemon
NEWS EDITOR

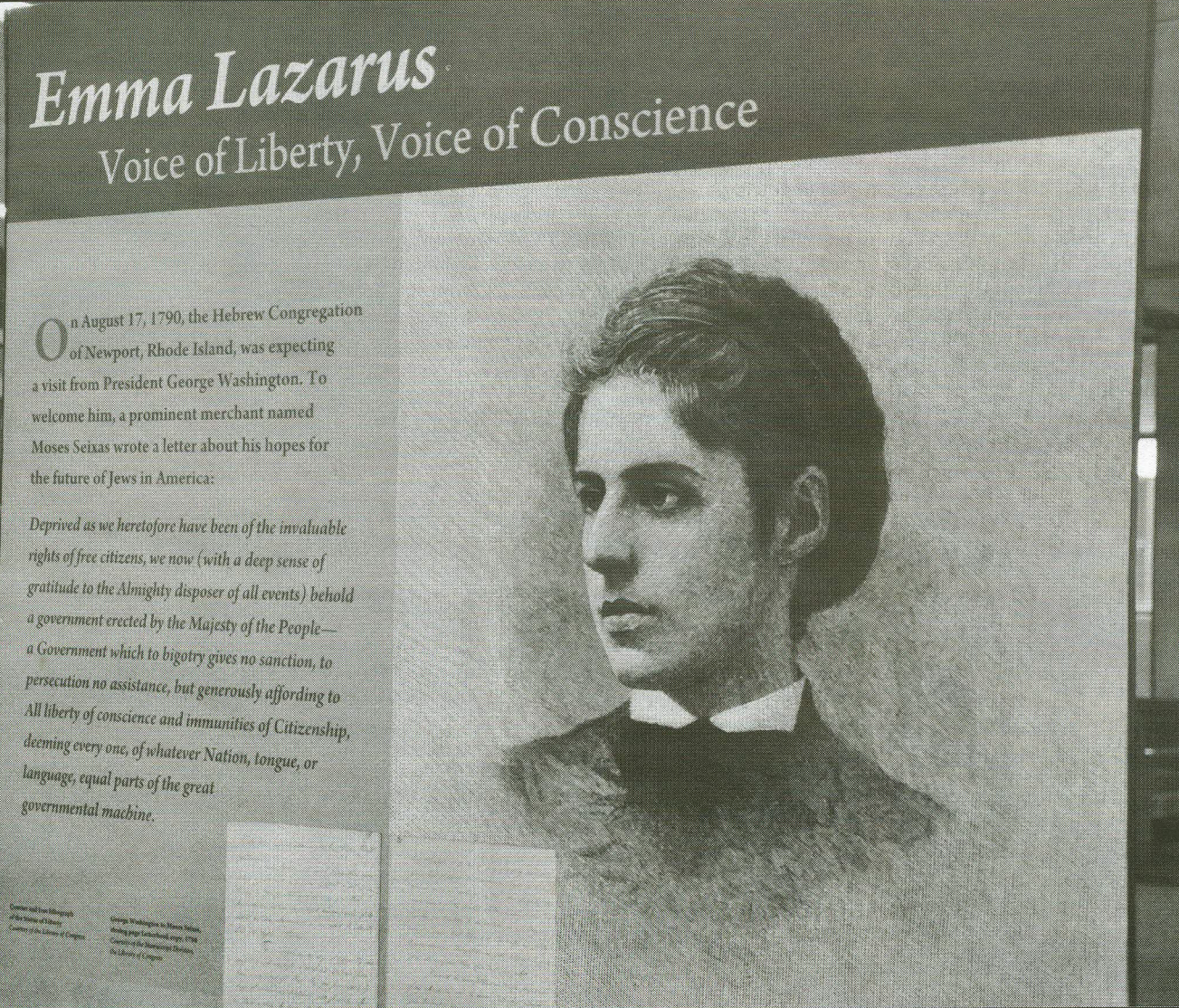
Brockport Police Chief Daniel Varrenti was recently honored for his work over the past 10 years with the Brockport

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After a lengthy application process headed by Varrenti, the BPD was accredited in 2004. With the approval of the accreditation of Brockport, all of the law agencies in Monroe



raises unsung poet and advocate



Rebecca Poretz/PHOTO EDITOR

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Until then the library will run a series of events relevant to the

life and work of Lazarus. These events include guest speakers, films from the era and a poetry contest.

A schedule of these events, along with guidelines for the poetry contest can be found under the "Research Guides" section of the library homepage, accessible from the Brockport homepage.

The poetry contest aims to celebrate America and what it means to be an American. Submissions are due online by Feb. 15.

The winner will be announced Feb. 22, and an awards ceremony will follow on Sunday, Feb. 26.

The Emma Lazarus display shows Lazarus provides more for us than the words inscribed on Lady Liberty.

Chief honored for service to community

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