

President's Report for the 2019 Annual Meeting

Summary of the Year's Activities:

Board meetings took place 10 times in 2019. We meet the 3rd Tuesday of each month except December due to the holiday. Our next meeting will be January 21, 2019 at 6:00 pm.

This year our Board has made adjustments to meet the Board assessment that was completed at the end of 2018. We've gone from 11 committees to 4 committees (Finance, Development, Publicity/Communication and Governance), made adjustments to make sure the meetings are no longer than an hour and a half, and we're looking to revise our policies, the strategic plan and By-Laws to ensure they are meeting our mission.

Unfortunately, this year we did not have a Street Drive or a 5k Freedom Run. We are reviewing a variety of Fund Raisers to bring in more monies and if you have suggestions, please let us know. The Street Drive was scheduled for September but due to miscommunications, we were unable to hold it at short notice. The original date was changed and we did not receive the new date for the Street Drive until a few days prior to it. Because of this change, we were unable to pull together enough volunteers to man one area, let alone three of them.

We are having a second book published entitled, Freedom; Heroes who Fought Against Freedom, which was written by 4th graders at the Flint Hills School in Virginia. This was the same school that wrote the book last year on Harriet Tubman. Funding was donated by a member.

We have French translations of our exhibits. Next year, the John Thomas room will have English and French subtitles. The translations were done by Annie Rochon a French professor at Paul Smiths College. She is our Lantern Awardee this year.

Suzanne Jandreau Chaired the Town of Chesterfield Open House which took place on July 27, 2019. She was instrumental in bringing several vendors to display their products/services, provided refreshments and t-shirts that could be tie-dyed. Suzanne also had live entertainment by a local band.

The Building Committee has been placed on hold. We are hoping to restart that committee, to move forward with the building expansion in light of recent activities. On June 20 I signed the deed for this building. The Town of Chesterfield and the Board of Ausable Chasm gifted the building to the Association.

Anderson Falls Museum has requested a marker for the this building, also referred to as the Estes House, from the William G. Pomperoy Foundation. They provide grants to obtain signage in the forms of roadside markers and plaques. The marker, if we receive it, is to recognize the architectural design of the building and the historical significance of Herbert Estes's role in history. He was in the Civil and was captured in Salibury, North Carolina. During his time at the Confederate prison in North Carolina, he kept a diary. When he returned home, he was asked by Congress to talk about conditions at that prison. He read his entire diary which is online.

Carol Hetfield, a Docent for our museum, has taken on the project of overseeing the Interns Program. She has been working with Dr. Richard Schaefer, the Professor & Chair of the History Department & Coordinator of Religious Studies at SUNY Plattsburgh. She mentored 2 students this spring and has several more working with her currently.

We continued our Bus tours this year. I want to thank Don Papson, Helen Nerske and Peter Slocum for being tour guides again this year. We need to thank the Town of Chesterfield for loaning us a bus and a driver.

The museum had 5,329 visitors this year. (4338 adults & 991 children).

The Underground Railroad game was to debut in November 16, 2018, but due to the weather, it was delayed. The games debuted in April 2019. Julie Taylor and Christine Facticeau, teachers at Keeseville Elementary School, worked with 5th and 6th grade students to design 3 Underground Railroad games for the museum. The computer to access those games is in the Church Room. We've had mixed reviews from visitors.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee – Sherrie Schafer

Governance – Jim Kloiber

Planning Communications – John Mitchell

Development – Bobbi Perez

Presentation: Chinese Underground Railroad by Robin Caudell

Bio - Robin Caudell is an Associated Press award-winning journalist and videographer.

She has been a Staff Writer at the Press-Republican since 1990.

Born and raised on Maryland's Eastern Shore, she holds a B.S. in Journalism from the University of Maryland at College Park and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Goddard College.

She is a founding member of the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association/North Star Museum at Ausable Chasm and the Plattsburgh Air Force Base Museum.

A Cold War and United States Air Force Veteran, she served from 1986-1990 and rose to the rank of Sgt.

She is a Cave Canem (Coo-wave Ca-nem) alumni and served as an Adirondack Center for Writing instructor at Federal Correctional Institute Ray Brook for eight years.

She also was a counselor/writer for the summer-writing program of the National Book Foundation at Bennington College.

At this time, let's welcome Robin.

Nominations and Election of Board Trustees: Julius Archibald, Andrea Baer, Sherrie Shafer and Dick Ward. They were voted onto the board and will be the class of 2022.

Docent Recognition:

While we have many volunteers to help our cause, for individuals that volunteer as Docents they are the foundation of our museum. That's because they are here to guide the visitors through our museum, answer questions about activities in the surrounding area and ensure that everyone has a pleasant experience even if it is only a bathroom stop. While they make sure that the facility is presentable and that the visitors are enjoying our museum, their most important role is to listen to the stories and experiences that our visitors bring and relay, many times after viewing the exhibits. I would like for our Docents to thank our docents. They are the heart of our museum.

Lantern Awardee for 2019: Annie Rochon

This year our Lantern Awardee is Annie Rochon. Annie is an experienced Assistant Professor of Modern and Classical Languages at Paul Smith's College. She is skilled in French and Spanish translations, proofreading, student development and social media. Annie has a Master's degree in Secondary Education and Teaching and from SUNY Plattsburgh. In 2001, she started her business, Translation and Interpretative Services which provides translations, edits and proofreading of documentation. For three years, 2009 to 2012, she provided academic instruction to incarcerated adults. Annie has taught French at Ausable Chasm Central School.

Annie is our official translator and this year completed the translations of our exhibits. They have been placed in a booklet, so that individuals speaking only French can use while browsing our museum. We will also be adding French subtitles to our John Thomas room. They should be available when we open in 2020. Volunteering her expertise, so that those individuals who speak French can learn about the Underground Railroad in our area is why this year's Lantern Award is going to Annie Rochon. We have many Canadian visitors and it seems that the upcoming generations in Quebec only speak French. Since this history flows into Canada, it's important that they know about it. Please give a hand to Annie for her dedication in getting this booklet out to our French visitors.