

President's Report for the 2020 Annual Meeting

Welcome Everyone

Opening Song: Swing Low Sweet Chariot –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwkWSAJZmlw>

Recognize the Board and Volunteers.

I would like to thank the board and volunteers that were instrumental in helping to get the word out about our museum during the pandemic.

Summary of the Year's Activities:

Board meetings took place 10 times in 2020. We meet the 3rd Thursday of each month except December due to the holiday. Our next meeting will be January 21, 2019 at 6:00 pm. Since the shut-down because of the virus, we meet via Zoom.

This year was an exceptional one. With the arrival of the pandemic we were unable to open the museum. To bring our history to the public we created a virtual web site that contained books written by 4th graders from Flint Hills School in Virginia, video clips and games related to the Underground Railroad. The address for the Web site is <https://northcountryundergroundrailroad.com/virtual-museum/>. In addition to the web site, Anja Bouchard created an app that gives you a virtual tour of the museum on Facebook. The app can be obtained from a banner that was designed by a committee that Jim Kloiber chaired and is displayed on the museum's deck. You can get access to the Facebook page when you sign in at <https://www.facebook.com/northcountryugrr/>.

Unfortunately, this year we did not have a Street Drive or the Bus Tours due to the virus. We hope it can occur next year.

French subtitles have been added to the John Thomas room. The translations were done by Annie Rochon a French professor at Paul Smiths College, who is translating the third children's books by the students from Flint Hills School.

I gave presentations at the Beekmantown's Bicentennial, Plattsburgh Lion's Club, SUNY Plattsburgh, Cultural Geography of the Adirondacks – hosted by Paul Smith's College and sponsored by Adirondack Research Consortium, and Diversity Fellows at the Museum on Blue Mountain Lake.

An unveiling of the Herbert Estes Marker took place on October 3. This was a joint effort with the Anderson Falls Historical Society. Don Papson, the Founder of the North Star Underground Railroad Museum, with the Town of Chesterfield Supervisor uncovered the marker. The unveiling took place outdoors to meet the COVID-19 guidelines.

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Governor Cuomo signed a State of New York Executive Chamber Proclamation proclaiming September 2020 as the Underground Railroad Month to denote New York's role in this movement. The I Love New York produced an Underground Railroad video that highlighted stories from 5 museums in New York to recognize September as the Underground Railroad Month in New York. The North Star Underground Railroad Museum was one of the museums and I told the story of Lavinia Bell.

Carol Hetfield, a Docent for our museum, worked with the Master Gardeners (Jolene Wallace and Jim Cayea) and they put in a raised garden that contained plants African Americans raised to eat. They included peppers, eggplant, collard greens and lettuce.

Our organization is updating Addie Shield's book on the Underground Railroad in Clinton County which will be published next year.

Our newest exhibit is from Bill McDowell. It is photos of immigrants going into Canada via Roxham Road with an explanation of those photos beneath it.

Renee Moore did a question and answer session on Zoom for the Solomon Northup's Day Celebration. The video is on the virtual web site.

We are a part of Vermont's African American Heritage Trail, which is dedicated to freedom and equality.

This week I learned that Robin Caudell and I will be participating in MANY's (Museum Association of New York) Building Capacity, Creating Sustainability, and Growing Accessibility project. This project requires museums to develop, deliver and assess two programs virtually. One of those programs must be in partnership with a regional library. Our projects will focus on the Tankard family and Stephen Keese Smith's hiding place.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee – Sherrie Schafer the Treasurer

Planning Communications – John Mitchell the 1st Vice President

Development – Bobbi Perez, Board Trustee

Governance – Jim Kloiber the 2nd Vice President

Presentations:

Ethan Depo, Educational Consultant, Peru Central School

Nicole Hylton-Patterson, Adirondack Diversity Initiative Inaugural Director

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Nominations and Election of Board Trustees:

Members received a ballot and an envelope in the Annual meeting packet that went out in the mail. Please return it by December 1st. The results will be posted on the website. Two of the individuals on the ballot are James Kloiber and John Mitchell. You will also be voting them back into their positions as an officer Kloiber as 2nd Vice President and Mitchell as 1st Vice President.

Closing Comments:

After our closing song, we will have a virtual discussion. With everything that has happened in 2020, we wanted to offer our members and their guests an opportunity to talk about issues that they have in light of our social distancing mandates. Since the pandemic started, America has dealt with hurricanes, fires, and racism. And, because many of us cannot visit family and friends like we use to before the pandemic, we wanted to offer this discussion session to our members. If you think it is beneficial, we can schedule a discussion round table monthly. And, if any member would like to manage these round tables, I welcome it.

Finally, I ask that each of you wear your mask when you're in public places, wash your hands, and socially distance from those not in your immediate household. We need to do our part to get through this trying time. Have a great Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Closing Song:

Oh Freedom – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veiJLhXdwn8>