



DECEMBER 2021

MUSEUM NOTES

News from the Iroquois Museum

Howes Cave, NY, www.iroquoismuseum.org

A Dream Come True!



MORTGAGE BURNING CELEBRATION!

Never in our wildest imagination did the current staff and board think that we would be making this momentous announcement in 2021! With a generous donation of \$225,000 from the Nicholas J. Juried Foundation the Museum has paid off its two mortgages. In 1992, the Museum trustees borrowed 800,000 dollars to construct our (then new) award winning facility. 30% of all nonprofits fail in their first 10 years and an educational institution located in a rural area with a specialized mission and little corporate support represented a precarious undertaking. For the

last 29 years, in lean and leaner yet times, the Museum's operating budget has included two substantial monthly mortgages. In the beginning of 2021, having squeaked through the impact of Covid without furloughing any of our small staff, the Museum still had 18 years of mortgage payments to sustain. In October of 2021, with a significant financial gift from Nick Juried and 37,000 from the general operating budget, the Museum was able to pay off its USDA loan, leaving one mortgage down and one to go! That, in itself, was a major milestone. On November 12, 2021 with 19,000 raised via a GoFundMe Campaign, membership and

annual appeal earmarked for the mortgage, and a second incredibly generous donation of \$125,000 from the Juried Foundation the Museum paid off the remainder of its outstanding mortgage held by Bank of Richmondville. The Museum's director Steph Shultes explained that the elimination of the Museum's monthly mortgage payments will represent an additional \$30,000 per year that can be directed to raising staff salaries, re-establishing an acquisitions budget (an item which has not been part of the budget for more than a decade), and making needed capital improvements

"... some grants give me more pleasure than others and my grant to the Iroquois Indian Museum is among those grants because it makes such a dramatic, important difference in the mission of the organization. I wish I could be present for the exciting announcement and presentation of the check to the Bank of Richmondville but be assured I will be there in spirit!" – Nicholas Juried.

OPEN HOURS

April & November: Monday-Wednesday: Closed; Thursday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday: Noon-4 p.m.

May-October: Monday: Closed; Tuesday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday: Noon-5 p.m.

WHAT IF WE GAVE A PARTY AND NO ONE CAME?

We had no idea what to expect when we opened our doors this April with COVID protocols in place after being closed to the public for 14 months. We were pleasantly surprised! Despite concerns limiting travel, people of all ages eagerly expressed their willingness to get out and participate in in-person experiences again. A record day in July saw 200 visitors and overall visitation for 2021 is projected to be 9100 when we close for the season on Nov 28. Those numbers exceed 2019 attendance, which was previously the highest attendance the Museum had seen in ten years. This is an even more impressive accomplishment considering that these numbers do not include the Labor Day Iroquois Arts Festival, which had to be cancelled this year and which normally attracts another 1000 – 1200 individuals.



Marilyn Hill demonstrating finger weaving.

IT'S A WRAP

With the trees void of leaves and the days getting colder summer may feel long past. But what a full summer it was! NYSCA funded **artist demonstrations** included Teio Elijah and Ishi Brown (traditional outfits, gustowehs), and Keeya Greene (moccasins); and Jamie Jacobs (quillwork). Marilyn Hill offered both a demonstration and a participatory workshop in the uncommon art of fingerweaving. The Allegany River Dancers from western NY, Haudenosaunee Dancers from Onondaga, and Ononta'a:ka Dancers from Oneida, NY performed social dances, interpreting age-old songs passed from generation to generation, and modelling their individually distinctive outfits.



A member of the Ononta'a:ka Dancers thrills the crowd!

Our August fundraiser, **Roots, Rhythm, and Ale**, once again featured the Rubber Band with a high octane mix of Cajun, zydeco and blues-flavored music that brought the audience to the dance floor. Opening the evening was Seneca/Onondaga artist Mike Jones. Armed with a mean harmonica, acoustic guitar, and a well-honed repertoire of blues favorites and original songs, Mike set the scene for the fun to follow. High on the Hog, Serious Brewing, and other local artisanal vendors rounded out the evening with tasty food and beverages, yarn goods, and hand crafts. Special thanks to lead sponsors Harva Company Plastic Fabricators (Schoharie) and Price Chopper/Market 32 (Cobleskill) for their important support of this community event.

These events are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, Humanities New York, Poets & Writers, and friends and members of the Iroquois Museum.

INVESTIGATIONS: FROM STONE TOOLS TO CONTEMPORARY ART

Like many other things this year, two of our special events took place in a revised time frame. Our always popular Early Technology Day, which usually occurs in April took place on Oct 16. The day featured demonstrations and opportunities for flintknapping with Barry Keegan, Alan Kroninus, Jay MacManus, and D. Michael Price. Museum Educator Mike Tarbell showcased his expertise in recreating early tools of the hunt. Artifact identification was offered by Archeology Department volunteers Fred Stevens, Tom Anderson, Jon Vidulich, Steven Spretnjak, and Anthony Giardenelli. If you missed the Day and have an interest in learning more about archaeology, contact the Museum and consider joining the team in the field next season.

The opening reception for Identity/Identify, our main gallery exhibit, was also postponed from May to a reception on October 9. Several of the artists were on hand to speak about their work including: Andrea Chrisjohn from Kingston, NY; Karen Ann Hoffman who traveled with her family from Oneida, WI; Lance Hodahkwen and his family from Syracuse; Danielle Soames with friends and family from NY City; Shelia Escobar and her husband Ralph from Syracuse; and Mike Jones from western NY (who missed the reception and photo shoot but not the food)!



A budding flintknapper at work

VIDEO VISITS AND IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS

Between American Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Month, the fall has always been a busy time at the Iroquois Museum. This year was no exception. The new video visits launched at the peak of COVID remained popular. With a brand spanking new “green screen” the Museum was able to create a professional looking “studio” for Brenda to bring her cultural knowledge to over 635 young and adult learners from Alberta, Canada to Austin, Texas between October and November alone. In-house programs this fall served another 400 students.



OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION

Once again, the Museum has been extending its mission beyond our four walls. This summer, new work from the collection was installed on the concourse at the Albany International Airport. This highly visible location sees one and a half million travelers each year. On August 23, Museum curator Colette Lemmon served as a guest for a virtual panel presentation on the work of Mohawk artists Babe & Carla Hemlock in conjunction with the Adirondack Experience’s Artists & Inspiration series. Additionally, Lemmon served as one of the judges for the Adirondack Experience’s Mohawk & Abenaki Art Market on August 28. We also worked with the Tyler Arts Gallery at SUNY Oswego to arrange for the loan of 34 objects from the Museum’s collection for their Native New York exhibit. The show was open from 10/8 – 11/14, 2021. Cultural Interpreter Brenda LaForme was interviewed by documentary filmmaker James LaRocca of Hudson, NY for an upcoming production. LaRocca’s films explore philosophical ideas around the world through the language of cinema.



DIGGING IT WITH THE BIG DOGS!

For those of you who wonder what it's like behind the scenes on one of the Museum's archaeological excavations, we thought you'd enjoy some excerpts from volunteer Beth Suter's Facebook post about the last field day of 2021.

November 10, Schoharie Creek, Archaic site, NY — 'Tis the last day for us Iroquois Museum volunteers, one sifting screen was already being disassembled. Three or four other 2 m² [meter square] units were being backfilled.

Phil Hilferty and Stephen [Spretnjak] did a beautiful job raking the project area back to normal.

But I'm working on what we see is a significant feature in Test Unit 8; it's a dark stain with FCR [fire cracked rock], chert flakes, sandstone, charcoal, artifacts.

Meanwhile, Fred Stevens and I are buzzing left and right — labeling A, B, C, D artifact bags — which means that there are significant artifacts that need separate bags, notations, XYZ coordinates.

Artifacts: nutting stones, hammerstones, a sweet massive biface, side-notched projectile point base... and an Archaic Genesee projectile point! Over 4 inches long, 11 cm. Plus there is a charcoal sample!\$!

Oooh, baby, mmm. BizzzyBeth is organizing floor plans/graph paper map, so Stephen, the artist in the group, can pencil in the feature and its surface artifacts.

Then I taught Barry Keegan how to bisect a feature, while I screened our dirt and wrote our feature notes.

Camera/PhotoBoard, North Arrow, tarps for shaded photographs: check one, check two, check three.

Photos: pre- and post- bisection.

And of course on the last hour, of the last day of the dig – Boom! The BIGGEST most perfect COMPLETE projectile point I've ever seen: Genesee-o baby! Date: 4,000 Yo [years old], so big.

"So big, damn, point almost looks Paleo. Know what I'm sayin'?"

"Bam, take that you megafauna, ya' like my atlatl <dart> ?"

"Yeh gettin' my point, or am I sooo Archaic?"

Showed four or five others how to "Munsell" the feature.

Tape measures and line levels out for CMBD, centimeters below datum, for our Z-axis coordinate.

"Hey Artifact, put that in your D-Bag, Baby!"

"And, yo, what's your X,Y,Z-?" asks Cartesian Grid.

"Then, take that to the Lab, AnthroDude, don't care if you don't like labels, can you say 'trinomial'?"

Exciting last hour of the last day of the dig. Not to worry though, and please stay tuned, because we winterized (ha ha) Unit 8. We'll be back next season.



Barry Keegan, Beth Suter, & Phil Hilferty showing off the Genesee projectile point.

STAFF CHANGES

Once again, we bid farewell to a young and talented Marketing and Promotions professional. Cassandra Miller joined the staff in March 2020 just weeks before we were forced to close because of Covid-19. During her stint with us she helped to brainstorm our successful Roots, Rhythm, and Ale event, pumped up our social media presence, promoted our gift shop, and brought many great ideas to the table. Cassandra left the Museum in June 2021 for a full time position as the Executive Director of Catskill Symphony Orchestra in Oneonta, NY. We wish her the best in her challenging new endeavor.

With Cassandra's departure, the Museum re-imagined the promotions position into a new position that would provide some much needed administrative support for our director. With an indomitable attitude and a wealth of organizational skills, Heather Livengood was appointed as the Museum's new Assistant to the Director in July 2021. Heather resides in Duanesburg, NY, is a former educator, and is well known to many of our visitors (especially children) as she drives the Duanesburg Central School bus route. She handled the Museum's reception desk throughout the summer season greeting visitors and doing shop sales. Already she was able to garner the Museum time slots on WAMC's Roundtable and WMHT's A House for the Arts (AHA). As Heather gets familiar with her new job, she'll also be taking over the membership, social media posts, marketing, and booking our virtual and in person education programs. We look forward to heading into an exciting 2022 season with Heather as part of the Museum's unstoppable team.

RAFFLE

While we couldn't host the annual Labor Day Festival this year, we still managed to make some folks out there very happy! Raffle winners Leslie Hooper of Middleburgh, NY won the Diane Shenandoah pot and John Morette of Schenectady was the lucky recipient of a Mike Jones print.

CUE THE CLOSEUPS!

The Museum's Identity/Identify exhibit was featured on a recent episode of WMHT's **A House for the Arts**. If you missed the program, you can catch it here: <https://www.iroquoismuseum.org/press>

FURNACE

On one of the first cold days of October the Museum's aged furnace stopped working without warning. The repair company was called and the diagnosis was dismal. The 30-year old equipment would need to be repaired (\$10,000) or replaced (\$30,000). With its age a consideration, the board decided a replacement was in order. The bad news is that the equipment is back ordered until late December/early January so the staff has been layering up as if for North Pole expeditions and working with space heaters and our final visitors for 2021 have been cheerfully wearing their coats without complaint. The good news is that the Nicholas Juried Family Foundation came to the rescue with a gift of \$30,000 for the new furnace so that by mid-January Little Boy and the staff will be cozy warm once again.



Ever helpful Little Boy assists volunteer Sue Hess with shop inventory.

REMEMBRANCES

As we reflect on 2021's joys and accomplishments we also want to acknowledge the loss of those that we lost. Each of these individuals brought something special to their communities, to the Haudenosaunee art world, and to the success of the Museum. We extend condolences to their families and friends.

Penny Hudson

Nov 5, 1956 – Oct 31, 2021

Penny was Tuscarora Nation Turtle Clan. An avid beadwork artist, she honored the artistic traditions of her mother Doris Hudson while taking the art form in new directions. Penny shared her knowledge of beadworking at home on the Tuscarora Nation and through workshops at venues such as the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the Castellani Art Museum. In 1996, Penny was invited to assist a team of 5 Tuscarora women in the repair of a late 1800s beaded blanket from the National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian collection. Penny explored the history of Tuscarora beadwork in preparation for the restoration and independently for her own interest. While earning her Associate Degree in Liberal Arts Penny co-established a slide collection of Tuscarora beadwork at Niagara County Community College. Penny is represented in private as well as permanent collections including those of the Iroquois Museum, Cleveland Natural History Museum, Castellani Art Museum, and Joe Jacobs Museum.

Gloria Sky (Em)

1938 - March 12, 2021

Gloria was a Faith Keeper at the Sour Springs Longhouse at Six Nations Reserve. She was involved in Six Nations Minor Lacrosse and Hockey, a member of the Mother's Auxiliary for Minor Athletes, and an Active and Long Standing Honorary Member of The Six Nations Arrows, Ohsweken's Jr. box lacrosse team. She also volunteered as a baseball coach for the Lassie Girls and as a hairdresser at the Iroquois Lodge, a profession she enjoyed for 60 years. Gloria was one of the original Jim Sky Dancers at the Museum's annual Festival which started in 1982. Decked out in her

distinctive leather regalia, Em kept the Dancers on their toes.

Gerald "Jerry" Schenandoah

January 23, 1946 – Oct 11, 2021

Jerry was a member of the Oneida Nation and the son of the late Wolf Clan Mother Maisie Shenandoah. Jerry, his wife Cheryl, and daughter MJ have been regular visitors to the Museum's Iroquois Arts Festival for many years and were well known to all who travel the powwow circuit. Jerry performed social dances across New York in his younger days as part of Maisie's educational presentations. He was best known for his expertise in deerskin clothing. Together with his co-creator and wife Cheryl, he outfitted Haudenosaunee leaders, celebrities, and others across Turtle Island in elegant traditional and contemporary buckskin clothing. His skills earned him a commission to design more than 100 outfits for the dioramas at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum. He also designed and created the attire for his sister Joanne Shenandoah and her family for her 2001 GRAMMY award nomination.

Jerry's legacy will continue to live on in the creative expressions of his children.

Rose Westheimer

1932 - May 13, 2021

Rose was a long time resident of Schoharie County and employed as the Museum's bookkeeper from 1996 – 1999. Born in Germany, at the age of 6 Rose escaped the Nazi Holocaust by fleeing to France with her family. She immigrated to the US in 1952, married and ran a farm in Middleburgh, NY with her husband Paul. Later, she and Paul opened the still-operating Carrot Barn in Schoharie which, in addition to vegetables, sold handcrafted items, and baked goods that followed Rose's personal recipes. She was also involved with the local PTA and the Girl Scouts. Rose continued to support the Museum after she left our employee. As a member of Agudat Achim Synagogue in Niskayuna, NY, she regularly extended an invitation to the Museum to set up at the Synagogue's annual Carrot Festival. Rose was also a volunteer and a Museum member for over 35 years.

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