



# MUSEUM NOTES

324 Caverns Road, Howes Cave, NY 12092 • (518) 296-8949 • www.iroquoismuseum.org

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The Iroquois Indian Museum is an educational institution dedicated to fostering understanding of Iroquois culture using Iroquois art as a window to that culture. The Museum is a venue for promoting Iroquois art and artists, and a meeting place for all peoples to celebrate Iroquois culture and diversity. As an anthropological institution, it is informed by research on archaeology, history, and the common creative spirit of modern artists and craftspeople.*

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## SPRING RECAP..

It's hard to believe our last issue of Museum Notes was in March! We reopened for the season on April 4 and hit the ground running! Kicking off the year was Early Technology Day. IIM Board member Barry Keegan and his cadre of talented flintknappers demonstrated their specialized skills and offered visitors of all ages the opportunity to sample toolmaking and early hunting techniques. Fred Stevens and members of the archaeology department were on hand to identify visitor's finds and offer suggestions on their dates and use. The day offered lots of interaction, from sampling flint tool making to trying an atlatl, a tool that predated the bow and arrow. This early tool utilized the laws of physics to greatly increase the force and distance with which a spear could be hurled.

May featured the opening reception for Treasured Traditions: A Statement of Place with guest speaker Jennifer Stevens from Oneida, Wisconsin. Several of the artists featured in the exhibit were in attendance including beadworker Mari Annette Clause and members of her family. Special guests (driving all the way from Oneida, Wisconsin) also included traditional potters Coleen Bins, Stephenie Muscavitch VanEvery, and Brenda John.



*l to r.: Mari Clause, Brenda John, Colleen Bins, Stephenie VanEvery, & Jennifer Stevens at the exhibit opening.*

In June, the IIM showcased artwork by 1st and 4th graders from Cobleskill Richmondville Central Schools. Art teacher Lori Mollitor instructed the students in the construction of clay turtles and personalized dreamcatchers. The turtles relate to the Haudenosaunee story of Creation and the dreamcatchers to a concept originated by the Ojibwe and made popular by many Native groups today. The exuberant and colorful creations were on exhibit for two weeks in the children's area of the Iroquois Museum.



*Intern Bri Melick helping at the archeo dig.*

## SAFE JOURNEYS TO BRI MELICK.....

The time went much too fast! Bri Melick arrived in early June and spent a whirlwind 6 weeks as an IIM intern. Bri is a student at University of Mary Washington in Virginia where she is studying Historic Preservation with a focus on archeology and a minor in museum studies. She worked on a range of projects during her IIM internship. Bri had hoped to spend more time in the field with Fred Stevens and the archeo team but the unusually wet spring offered few days conducive to digging. Undaunted, Bri cheerfully tackled a variety of indoor tasks. Her internship included working on the online database of contemporary Haudenosaunee art, and photographing and doing layout for an upcoming publication on the archaeology of the Schoharie Valley by Fred Stevens. Bri also earned the prestigious and much sought after Little Boy stamp of approval. We wish her the best in her studies at Mary Washington this coming year.

### NEW COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE...

The IIM has teamed up with Melinda McTaggart at the Old Stone Fort and Ted Shuart at the Palatine House to produce and promote Schoharie Valley Experience, a 3-stop package tour to elder groups and bus tours. The package offers a different interactive experience of Schoharie County at each institution for one low price. We've already secured two bookings for September and are hopeful that Experience tours will pick up momentum in 2020. If you represent an elder or community group and are interested in learning more about the Schoharie Valley Experience package contact us for a brochure or call Melinda at outreach@theoldstonefort.org or 518.295.7192.



*Vic DiSanto on left met up with his former professor John Overbeck at the IIM exhibit opening. Photo by Jennifer Stevens*



*Oneida Nation students. Photo by Vic DiSanto*

### VISITORS FROM NEAR & FAR...

Already this season we've welcomed visitors from across the United States as well as the Netherlands, Australia, Spain, Belgium, Norway, and the Czech Republic. But nothing pleases us more than having Haudenosaunee visitors show their support by stopping by. This spring we were delighted to welcome artist and filmmaker Shelley Niro from Six Nations as part of her research for an upcoming project. Equally enjoyable was a visit by a group of Oneida Nation Wisconsin students who included the IIM as an element in their Senior Field Trip to traditional Haudenosaunee territory. In July, a group of adult Mohawk language learners took a break from their studies at Kanatsiowareke to enjoy the Museum and share their knowledge with us.



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT...

From its earliest beginnings the Iroquois Museum has depended on the generosity of volunteers. In 2019 Board President Chris Johanssen Hanks began actively recruiting volunteers primarily to assist with our education and outreach programs. These individuals share their knowledge, teach crafts, prepare materials, and lead walks in the nature park. Many also pitch in to help in important and unexpected ways. To publicly acknowledge their contributions to the quality of what the IIM offers and to our ability to be a viable resource in the community we will showcase one of these individuals in each issue of Museum Notes.

This issue highlights volunteer VIC DISANTO. Vic resides in East Cobleskill. In addition to assisting with programming at the Iroquois Museum, he volunteers at the NY State Museum (Albany) and the Old Stone Fort (Schoharie). For many years Vic maintained a large team of demonstration sled dogs. While his team is smaller now, Vic and his canine ambassadors still do mushing demonstrations for special events. At the Iroquois Museum you can often find Vic surrounded by children and adults, using objects from his personal teaching collection to illustrate early contact period Haudenosaunee life. Vic has also taken a special interest in developing the outdoor space at the IIM as an education tool. With this in mind, he has planted a series of peach trees by the lower cabin and is responsible for the pumpkins, squash, and beans in our Three Sisters Garden. With IIM staff members Ralph Castro and Brenda Laforme's dedication and Vic's help, the gardens are thriving and serving as a focal point for visitors in their exploration of Haudenosaunee philosophy and lifeways.

### CURATORIAL COLLABORATIONS...

This summer the IIM has been involved in two offsite exhibitions. IndianInk: Iroquois and the Art of Tattoos, the IIM's 2013 feature exhibition will be traveling to Onöhsagwë:de' Culture Center (the new Seneca-Iroquois National Museum) on Allegany Reservation. IndianInk includes artwork by Peter Jones, Alex Jacobs, and Carson Waterman from the IIM collection, work by John B. Thomas, and over 50 photographs of tattooed expressions from Seneca and other Haudenosaunee community members. The opening reception will coincide with the Seneca Museum's 1 year anniversary celebration. IndianInk will run through 2021. This project represents the first formal collaboration with a tribal museum in the IIM's history. We're honored to be granted this opportunity and look forward to future such exchanges.

The second project is a consulting partnership with SUNY Oneonta's Martin-Mullen Fine Art Gallery. The Land of Which We Gather opens at the Gallery on September 3 and runs through October 18. The exhibit focuses on contemporary Indigenous artists in New York State and features the work of Eric Gansworth, Beatrice Glow & Alexander Girardeau, Melanie Hope, Tom Huff, G. Peter Jemison, Peter B. Jones, Luanne Redeye, and Jolene Rickard. Opening Reception is Sept 5. A second reception to honor the installation of SUNY Oneonta President Barbara Jean Morris on Oct 2 will feature the virtual reality experience Mannhatta VR and guest speakers Beatrice Glow and Brent Stonefish. Both receptions are from 5 – 7 PM. For hours and information 607.436.3456.

### YET TO COME!...

As we roll into late summer there are still plenty of exciting events on the docket. On Saturday August 10 our Echoes of Tradition: The Language of Dance series features Seneca artist Adrian John. This will be Adrian's first visit to the IIM and he will be demonstrating the construction of waterdrums and horn rattles. Next up in the series is Dan Hill, Cayuga silverworker and musician. Dan will share his extensive cultural knowledge and demonstrate the art of silverworking on Saturday August 17. August 24 will feature the ever popular Haudenosaunee Dancers from Onondaga Reservation. And of course the IIM's annual Iroquois Arts Festival on Labor Day weekend bids a fond farewell to summer with new and returning artists, presentations by cultural educator Anenhainton/Joshua Sargent from Akwesasne, Native food, children's activities, storytelling by Perry Ground, and more.

### NEW EXHIBIT OPENS IN OCTOBER...

"Women of Influence: Each Block a Story" will open at the IIM on October 1 and run through November 30, 2019. The project, Honoring Our Women as We Piece Together Our Stories, began on Tuscarora Reservation with a lecture by respected Mohawk elder Norma Jacobs sponsored by the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force's Tuscarora office. Norma set the project into motion as a vehicle for healing as it provided an opportunity for representing stories of women's resiliency in the community. Back home, 42 Indigenous women created fabric and beaded blocks to honor a woman who made a positive difference in their lives. The blocks pay tribute to mothers, daughters, aunties, elders and friends who stood as role models for overcoming struggle, for courage, for artistic inspiration, for strength and encouragement. The blocks were then joined to create a quilt and banner and the stories behind the blocks recorded.

The healing quilt was completed in September of 2018 and exhibited for the first time at the Seneca Nation Fall Festival alongside 80+ pieces of artwork, where it earned Best in Show. Next, it was displayed at the International Iroquois Beadwork Conference at Akwesasne. Following that it traveled to Ohsweken, Ontario for a fundraising gala for Ganohkwásrà, an organization that addresses domestic violence issues on the Six Nations territory. From January – April, 2019, the quilt was installed at the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts in Cedarburg, Wisconsin as part of the Native Fiber exhibit.

This fabric-based expression of healing arrives at the IIM in October. For the first time in its exhibition history a touch screen device will be available for visitors to hear each of these stories in the words of the quiltmakers, a wonderful new addition to the display made possible through a grant from Humanities NY and the technical assistance of IIM Director Steph Shultes. The opening reception for Women of Influence will be Saturday, October 12 from 1 – 4 PM. A large number of the artists will be on hand to speak about the project, its significance, and the meanings behind their individual blocks. On October 19 the IIM will host a Make & Take workshop for multiple generations based on the exhibit. Women of Influence is made possible in part by a grant from the American Quilt Study Group.

In November, Tuscarora beadworker and scholar Grant Jonathan will offer a fascinating talk on the history and resilience of Tuscarora beadwork. Exact date to be determined.

## WE INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN A TRADITION OF GIVING

**Make a Gift:** Make a donation to the Annual Appeal or give online through our website.

**Matching Gift Program:** If you work at a company that has a matching gift program, ask your employer for a matching gift form and send it in with your contribution.

**Give Appreciated Securities:** By donating directly to the Museum appreciated stocks or other securities held for at least one year, as a general rule you can avoid the federal capital gains tax that would be incurred if you sold the securities and you can obtain a charitable deduction equal to the fair market value of the securities.

**Include the Museum in Your Will:** Bequests can help transform the future of the Museum and the process is simple. You may specify a portion of your estate or a specific dollar amount for the Museum. We urge you to consult your attorney for appropriate bequest language to carry out your charitable goals. The following sample language may help in the preparation of your will:

*I give and devise to the Iroquois Indian Museum, located in Howes Cave, New York, the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (or percentage of your estate) as an unrestricted gift to be applied to the Museum's general uses and purposes (or for the support of a specified fund or purpose).*

**Type of Gift or Bequest:** An unrestricted gift or bequest allows the Museum to determine the best use of your donation at the time the Museum receives it. An earmarked gift or bequest allows you to support the program of your choice. Earmarked donations are welcomed for the following established funds and purposes: Iroquois Indian Museum Endowment Fund; William N. Fenton Research Fund; Staff Support; Public Program Support; and Long Term Debt Reduction (mortgage).

To discuss your proposed gift or bequest, please contact us at: Iroquois Indian Museum, P. O. Box 7, Howes Cave, NY 12092 or at [info@iroquoismuseum.org](mailto:info@iroquoismuseum.org) or call us directly at 518-296-8949. Ask for our Director, Stephanie Shultes

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### SIGN UP FOR ELECTRONIC MUSEUM NOTES

In an effort to reduce our ecological footprint, we are offering members the choice of receiving future Museum Notes in digital rather than print form. **Better yet the digital form features full color photos!**

If you prefer to have Notes e-mailed to you in pdf format, please send us an e-mail at: [info@iroquoismuseum.org](mailto:info@iroquoismuseum.org)

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