



DECEMBER 2020

# MUSEUM NOTES

News from the Iroquois Indian Museum

Howes Cave, NY, [www.iroquoismuseum.org](http://www.iroquoismuseum.org)



From left: Alyssa Mt Pleasant, Joe Stahlman, Christina Hanks, Colette Lemmon, Steph Shultes, Lisa Anderson, and Fred Stevens (with Little Boy in front)

## Archaeology planning group meets

Work began to review and re-imagine the museum's archaeology exhibitions this November, when a group consisting of Haudenosaunee consultants and anthropologists, archaeologists, museum professionals, (and Little Boy) met at the Museum on Nov. 1 and 2.

Thanks to a Vision Grant from Humanities New York, IIM has been able to start the process of updating the existing archaeology exhibits, which have been in place since the building opened in 1992. Since then, exhibit presentation styles have changed and new research has come to light, making our displays outdated.

As a museum that focuses largely on the continuity and vitality of Iroquois culture, it is only fitting that we incorporate a multidisciplinary and non-

western approach to the project. Haudenosaunee academics Joe Stahlman and Alyssa Mt Pleasant joined IIM Director Steph Shultes, IIM Curator of Exhibits Colette Lemmon, and Board Members Christina Hanks, Lisa Anderson, and Fred Stevens to discuss how to update the exhibitions in a way that respects Haudenosaunee traditions, shares authority, and fulfills IIM's mission to educate and foster an understanding of Iroquois culture, as well as creates a more meaningful visitor experience in the years to come.

Stahlman, Ph.D, is a member of the Tuscarora Nation and the director of the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum on Allegany Reservation. He has been a research fellow and visiting scholar, an Archaeological Research Assistant for

the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Heritage Office, and the Native American Archaeological Site Monitor for the Tuscarora Nation.

Mt Pleasant, Ph.D, is a member of the Tuscarora Nation and an assistant professor in the University at Buffalo's Department of Transnational Studies. She specializes in Native American and indigenous studies, with a focus on Haudenosaunee history. She has presented at numerous conferences, consulted on museum exhibits, and speaks on current scholarship with various audiences.

We had hoped to include Mohawk scholar Phillip White-Cree from Akwesasne in our project, but COVID-19 travel restrictions prevented his involvement at this point.

## Museum wins grant for virtual tours

We are thrilled to be one of only four New York State museums to receive a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services via the CARES Act. The grant for more than \$40K will allow us to create virtual tours on our website so people can experience the museum wherever they have an internet connection.

### *Tour Topics*

- Introduction to the Iroquois
- Iroquois and the Natural World
- Early Technology
- Oral History and Storytelling
- Stereotypes
- Wampum

- The Creation Story
- The Formation of the Confederacy

## 2 PROGRAMMING



Brenda LaForme (and Little Boy) host a virtual field trip from the Museum.

### Virtual Field Trips attract ‘visitors’ from across New York State

More than 40 virtual field trips for groups ranging from 10 to more than 100 participants have been booked since October. During the virtual field trips IIM Cultural Educator Brenda LaForme presents a lesson introducing the Iroquois via Zoom and then takes questions from participants who are remotely watching from all across New York State, as well as places as far away as Boston. The virtual field trips, which are about an

hour, have been popular with students in 4th, 7th, and 8th grades, but the program has attracted adult groups, too. Groups of adult professionals from institutions including Harvard Law School in Cambridge and the Museum of Natural History in New York City have taken IIM virtual field trips with LaForme. The programs have been so popular, IIM is completely booked through December and will be offered through June 2021.

### Iroquois artists discuss tribal belonging during virtual art opening

During the virtual art opening in October for the 2021 exhibit “Identity/Identify,” seven artists discussed for more than 50 attendees at the Zoom online event topics including how blood quantum and the matrilineal aspect of the culture contribute to Iroquois identity, generational trauma, and how those who are enrolled and not enrolled are represented in communities.

Danielle Soames, Mike Jones, Pete Jones, Robert D’Alimonte, and Margaret Jacobs for sharing their insightful thoughts and perspectives.

Opening in April 2021, “Identity/Identify” presents artistic responses from across Iroquois country that speak to who is considered Haudenosaunee and who decides.

Thank you to artists Melanie Printup Hope, Hayden Haynes,

The virtual art opening can be viewed on the Iroquois Indian Museum’s YouTube channel.



**Outdoor Exhibit:** The summer outdoor exhibition “Tonto, Tepees, and Totem Poles: Considering Native American Stereotypes in the 21st Century” attracted visitors and media attention, including TV outlets such as Spectrum News Albany, seen above with IIM Curator Colette Lemmon. The exhibit was a remount of the Museum’s 2018 featured show, which staff reimagined in the pavilion as a safe way to welcome visitors to our physical location.

### Facebook Live Event Series

In lieu of in-person events, artists and educators offered virtual demos and mini lessons during a Facebook Live event series this summer. Watch the videos on the Iroquois Indian Museum’s YouTube channel. The series was made possible by a grant from the New York State Council of the Arts.



**Quillwork with Jamie Jacobs**



**Fingerweaving with Marilyn Hill**



**Beads/Moccasins with Anna Thompson**



**Thanksgiving Address with Mike Tarbell**



**Iroquois Women’s Roles with Brenda LaForme**



**Traditional Outfits with Teio Elijah**



**Stereotypes with Mike Tarbell**



**Hide Tanning with Brenda LaForme**



**Top:** Volunteer Pat Hults gardens in front of the Museum this fall.

**Middle:** IIM neighbor Julian Gagnon, 6, made a duck house as part of his Cub Scout project and donated it to the IIM for our Nature Park. You can visit the duck house by the stream on the 45-acre property.

**Bottom:** The IIM installed new educational signs on its property like the one above in front of the entrance.



**Above:** (From left) IIM Board President Christina Hanks and volunteers Tom White and Vic Disanto add topsoil and compost to make the vegetable garden more fertile for the 2021 harvest. The Museum grows sunflowers, tobacco, pumpkins, and the Three Sisters (corn, beans, and squash).

### IIM offers articles, children's book support

In 2020, the IIM has welcomed opportunities to safely forward our mission as an educational resource. Among these was an invitation to submit an article to the fall 2020 issue of *Catskill Tri-County Historical Views*, a biannual publication produced by the Gilboa Museum and Juried History Center. The IIM article, "A Tradition Born of Fire," looks at the importance of museum collections in the recovery of the once-extinct Haudenosaunee pottery tradition. The publication has a readership of 6,400. A second article is planned for the spring 2021 issue.

IIM staff also assisted San Diego-based children's book author Patricia Morris Buckley with an upcoming nonfiction picture book about Mohawk ironworkers. Buckley's great grandfather was one of those killed in the Quebec Bridge Disaster near Kahnawake in the early 1900s. "To Walk

the Sky" is scheduled to be published by HarperCollins/Heartdrum in early 2023.

### New artist bios added to the online database

Thanks to an IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) grant, we recently digitized our collection, which includes a searchable online database that features our prominent collection of contemporary art works and artist bios.

After hosting several Haudenosaunee art specialists for input on the significance of pieces in our collection, we began adding artist bios to each of the more than 2,000 pieces in the collection.

Most, if not all, the bios should be linkable by the time you're reading this. Objects are viewable from several angles and sections of each photo can be enlarged to examine details.

With the addition of artist

bios, the online collection will represent an even more significant and accessible resource for anyone interested in Haudenosaunee creativity.

### Thank you, volunteers!

It takes more than a pandemic to discourage IIM volunteers. While the interior of the IIM remains closed to ensure the safety of our staff and visitors, volunteers chipped in to keep our grounds looking pretty and welcoming.

Special thanks to volunteer Vic DiSanto for painting and staining the rails along our handicapped ramp, picnic tables, and benches, planting sunflowers and pumpkins, and tending the Three Sisters Garden. We also wish to thank volunteer Pat Hults for weeding the flower gardens and planting many colorful annuals along our walkways. Thank you, also, to our neighbor, Julian Gagnon, for building a duck house for our Nature Park.

Get a free tote bag when you become an Iroquois Indian Museum Member. Information is on [iroquoismuseum.org](http://iroquoismuseum.org), or call us at 518-296-8949.



The Museum Shop offers a variety of dreamcatchers like this purple one by Janet D'Alimonte of the Tuscarora Nation.



Art prints like the above by Alex Jacobs is available in the online Museum Shop at [iroquoismuseum.org](http://iroquoismuseum.org).

# Gift Guide



IIM Communications Manager Cassandra Miller models beaded earrings by Mohawk artist Susan Hill that are available in the Museum Shop. Miller has purchased three pairs!

The holidays are around the corner, and if you're looking for something meaningful to give loved ones that they not only will enjoy but will support one of your favorite organizations, the Museum is a one-stop-shop for gift ideas.

Each year, IIM staff members travel throughout the Northeast to buy items directly from Iroquois artists for the Museum Shop. We've recently launched the online Museum Shop, with items ranging from beaded jewelry and pottery to art prints, sculptures, and books.

Don't want to deal with shipping? You can purchase a decorative tile of your choice that you can personalize. It will be added to other sponsored tiles in the Museum's outdoor pavilion, which you can view in person when we hopefully reopen in 2021.

Another idea is to become a Museum member. All new members receive an Iroquois Indian Museum tote bag—perfect for sustainable shopping. Whether you buy an item from the shop, a pavilion tile, or a membership, every purchase supports the Museum.



Decorative tiles (6x6") feature photography, 2D works, and 3D works like this bronze bear with fish sculpture by Noel Benson.



Pottery like this Sky Dome Vase by Onondaga artist Peter B. Jones is available in the Museum Shop at [iroquoismuseum.org](http://iroquoismuseum.org).

## IIM receives support through grants, fundraisers

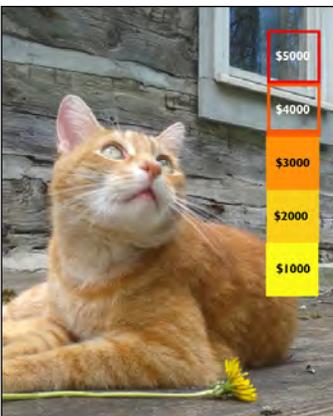
The Museum does not receive any designated funding from the state or county and is completely supported by grants, donations, and admissions sales. Because of the Museum's closure, it has lost a significant amount of its operating budget. We're thankful to report contributions from grants and fundraisers that has helped us continue operating even without the income from Museum and event admission sales.

In addition to the Institute of Museum and Library Services via the CARES Act grant of more than \$40,000 to produce virtual tours, the Museum received a \$2,500 grant from SEEC (Schoharie Economic Enterprise Corp.) and a \$30,000 donation from the Nicholas Juried Family Foundation. A generous donation of \$30,000 from a private individual has also helped us stay operational.

Through IIM fundraisers, members and supporters have contributed more than \$15,000. IIM members donated more than \$9,000 during the spring campaign. In place of the in-person raffle during the annual Labor Day Weekend Festival that was canceled this year, the museum hosted a virtual raffle that raised more than \$3,000.

The Museum received support through an NBT Bank PPP loan and a three-month deferral of its mortgage by the Bank of Richmondville that helped keep it operational even though its doors have been closed to the public.

Our CFO (Chief Feline Officer) Little Boy launched a [GoFundMe campaign](#) in October, which has raised more than \$3,000 of a \$5,000 goal. Please consider contributing to help him reach his target!



Read about more ways to participate in a tradition of giving to the Museum on the back page. Your support is the reason the Museum exists. It could not continue its work of fostering understanding of Iroquois culture using Iroquois art as a window to that culture without you. Thank you for supporting the Museum's work!

## Remembrances

As we reflect on the year's gifts and accomplishments we also want to acknowledge the loss of several people and extend our condolences to their families and friends. Each of these individuals brought something special to their communities, to the Haudenosaunee art world, and to the success of the Museum.

### Thomas Greenless

Aug. 2, 1926-July 17, 2020

Thomas was a founding member of the IIM Board of Trustees in 1980 and served on the board for many years. A long-time resident of Cobleskill and a surgeon, he held leadership positions in the Schoharie County Industrial Development Agency, Schoharie County Rural Preservation Corporation, Schoharie County Area Development Agency, and the Schoharie County Board of Health. Thomas also served on the College Council and College Foundation for SUNY Cobleskill.

### Vernon W. Chrisjohn

Oct. 4, 1940-July 2, 2020

Vernon was a member of the Oneida Nation. Part of the large and artistically gifted Chrisjohn family, Vernon was a traditional woodworker and one of the last Iroquois-style bow makers. He spent many years demonstrating his art at festivals and fairs along the pow wow trail.

### Neville Spring

Feb. 19, 1940-July 4, 2020

Neville, a former member of the IIM Board of Trustees, was Seneca Nation Beaver Clan. He resided at Tonawanda where he founded the Rez Smoke Shop. He was an accomplished artisan who did silver and antler work and made traditional snapping turtle rattles. Neville spoke about his work and the spiritual aspects of his process in the IIM's 1991 Faces of the Iroquois video. He has more than a dozen pieces in the IIM's permanent collection.

# A Tradition of Giving

## Decide the 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).

We invite you to participate in a tradition of giving to support the Museum. Whether you make a donation to the Annual Appeal or through our website, give through appreciated securities, or include a bequest to the Museum in your will, your contribution will help us continue fostering an understanding and appreciation for Iroquois art and culture.

## How You Can Give

### 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).*

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

### 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.

### Make a Gift

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

### Ask Your Company to Match a Gift

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.

## Connect with Us!

**Website** [iroquoismuseum.org](http://iroquoismuseum.org)  
**Email** [info@iroquoismuseum.org](mailto:info@iroquoismuseum.org)  
**Facebook** [IroquoisMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/IroquoisMuseum)  
**Instagram** [@iroquoismuseum](https://www.instagram.com/iroquoismuseum) and [@iroquoismuseumkitty](https://www.instagram.com/iroquoismuseumkitty)

**Mailing address**  
PO Box 7, Howes Cave, NY 12092

**Physical address**  
324 Caverns Road, Howes Cave, NY 12092

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<b>Museum Director</b>	Stephanie Shultes
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