



SEPTEMBER 2023

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MUSEUM NOTES

News from the Iroquois Museum

OPENING RECEPTION

The 2023 season kicked off with a reception for *Oil & Water: Works by Ernest Smith, Jesse Cornplanter, and James Beaver*, our featured exhibit for 2023. Showcasing recent gifts to the Museum's collection, the exhibit celebrates three early Haudenosaunee illustrators and explores the impact of the Seneca Arts Project, part of the WPA Indian Arts Project (1935 – 1941). Special guest Perry Ground, the nephew of Ernest Smith, provided an enjoyable and engaging talk on "Uncle Ernie" and shared background on the stories that served as inspiration for Smith's paintings.

COBLESKILL-RICHMONDVILLE STUDENT ART EXHIBIT

Once again the Museum hosted a Cobleskill-Richmondville Student Art Exhibit. Ceramic turtles created by 2nd grade students of art instructor Lori Masterson were displayed on the interactive level of the Museum from May 23 – June 4. The turtles, produced in a variety of sizes and colors, were inspired by the student's study of the Haudenosaunee Creation Story. A reception for families and fans was held on June 4.



Lori Masterson with two of her student artists.



Navajo dancers

DINEH TAH' NAVAJO DANCERS

While the Museum's focus is on Haudenosaunee culture and art, we mixed things up a little this season. In keeping with the Haudenosaunee spirit of extending hospitality to travelers, the Iroquois Museum welcomed the Dineh Tah' Navajo Dancers to our performing arts space. The troupe was journeying across the United States, performing traditional Navajo dances and songs of the Navajo "Dine" people and sharing their rich and individual history and cultural traditions. Under the direction of Shawn Price, the troupe has received many awards and honors in traditional Navajo performing arts and educated audiences around the world. Their May 13 presentation was a special treat for Museum visitors and provided a striking contrast to Haudenosaunee musical expressions.

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.

DEMOS AND DANCERS

The 2023 summer season welcomed a delightful roster of talented artists. A number of these creatives were first time presenters at the Museum. Seneca leatherworker Cliff Redeye shared his very original hand tooled leatherwork and the thoughtful messaging behind each piece. Visitors of all ages were invited to try their hand at tooling their own designs on scrap leather under Cliff's careful supervision, an opportunity that fostered an appreciation for the advanced skills of the artist. In keeping with the subject matter of much of Ernest Smith's work in our Oil & Water exhibit, we also showcased the art of contemporary Mohawk painter Bruce Boots who, like Smith, draws from long forgotten Haudenosaunee stories.



Cliff Redeye

Mohawk illustrator/storyteller Arihlonni David shared his interpretations of The Woman and the Flying Head and Skunny Wunny and the Stone Giant. Seneca storyteller Leeora White reinvigorated the age-old oral history tradition of entertaining, offering lessons, and explaining the world around us through stories.



Penny Minner speaking with visitors

Penny Minner, a true veteran of the demonstrating artist circuit and a frequent guest at the Museum, returned to convey her knowledge of Seneca-style basketmaking and cornhusk work to a host of lucky visitors. Cliff, Leeora, and Penny's presentations were made financially possible through their status as Creatives Rebuild New York award recipients, a program that encouraged artists to pursue promotional opportunities that will enhance their careers.

The Niagara River Dancers from Tuscarora under the leadership of Randy Greene and the Allegany River Dancers under the leadership of Bill Crouse wowed audiences with their energetic demonstrations of Haudenosaunee social dancing. Each troupe shared the meanings and history of the various dances they presented and explained the significance of their traditional outfits and instruments. Their contagious enthusiasm got even the shyest of visitors up on the floor to bust some moves.



*Harper Jonathan,
member of the Niagara
River Iroquois Dancers*

NO STOPPING THE SHOW!

Neither wind, nor rain, nor hail prevented The Rubber Band from putting on a heck of a great party for Roots, Rhythm, and Ale, the Museum's August community event. The Catskill Gamblers kicked things off and Ron Bruschi tempted audience members onto the floor for a 30-minute Zydeco dance lesson. Schoharie County Arts sponsored the Catskill Gamblers and demonstrator Maria Lange. Local nonprofits and small businesses such as the Schoharie Railroad Museum; Goodies Bakery; Landis Arboretum; and others sheltered under tents and inside the Museum to share their offerings. And of course, no Museum event is complete without food! High on the Hog, Chris's Concessions, and Serious Brewing brought scrumptious food and libations. Thank you to all who came out to support the Museum despite the horrendous weather! See you next year!



The Rubber Band



Zydeco dance lesson

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

While day to day Museum operations are carried out by the staff, the Museum's board of directors is ultimately responsible for the direction, policies, financial health, and future of the institution and adherence to its mission. As a united group they work to bring community resources to the table and insure that the positive and professional reputation of the Museum among donors, members, visitors and Haudenosaunee is sustained. Ideally, a board includes individuals with a wide diversity of interests and talents.

The Museum is very pleased to welcome Matt Avitable and Lori Masterson, two new board members to the roster. While several of our trustees reside several hours away, Avitable and Masterson are quite local. Matt has been a Middleburgh, NY resident for over 20 years. He is the publisher of The Mountain Eagle newspaper which serves Schoharie, Delaware, and Greene County. Matt served as the Mayor of Middleburgh from 2012 – 2020 and holds an MA in History with a specialization in European History. He teaches at the State University of NY (SUNY) Oneonta; SUNY Cobleskill; and Hartwick College (Oneonta, NY). With baseball among his interests, and a dyed-in-the-wool Yankees fan in the house, there could be some good natured rivalry in our future.

Lori Masterson was born and raised in Middleburgh. She teaches art at the elementary level at Cobleskill Richmondville Central School. Prior to acquiring her position at the School in 2016, Lori served as the Museum's Marketing and Public Relations Manager. In 2022, Ryder Elementary School (Cobleskill, NY) launched Makerspace, a STEAM program that integrates science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics experiences. Under Masterson's supervision, participants explored a range of projects from robots to architecture. She has continued her involvement with the Museum with an annual exhibit of her students' artwork. In her new role as trustee Lori explained that she expects to "bring my knowledge of educational curriculum to help build programs and facilitate relationships between the Museum and the schools. She adds, "I hope that my experience as an artist and general enthusiasm for the Museum will be beneficial to future projects and funding." We look forward to fresh, creative, and community contributions from both of these individuals.

IM RECEIVES IMLS AWARD FUNDING

In early August the Museum was singled out by Heather Henson, the founder of Ibex Puppetry (yes, THAT Henson!), for an unexpected micro grant for organizations that support local Tribal communities and initiatives benefiting the North East region. Museum staff met Heather through our participation in support of a performance of Ajijaak On Turtle Island at Catskill Mountain Foundation (Hunter, NY) in 2023. Henson's funding "supports vital resources to grassroots projects centered on Native Land Based Learning, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, outdoor education, and preserving traditional wisdom." The award represented \$1000 from the DAF National Philanthropic Trust.

Also in August the Museum received the very welcome news that we were awarded \$38,769 from the Institute of Museum & Library Sciences. The Inspire! Grants for Small Museums award, which was submitted in October of 2022, was selected through a competitive peer-reviewed process. The funds will support the development and installation of our 2024 feature exhibit and some very exciting complementary programming. We're keeping the details under wraps until our winter issue of Museum Notes but you'll want to stay tuned!

NEW STAFF

Please welcome Shane Shultes of Middleburgh who has stepped up to the plate to take Al Livengood's position as Museum Custodian and Groundskeeper. Like the other positions at the Museum, Shane's job requires the ability to employ creative solutions to day to day tasks and a willingness to wear multiple hats in terms of responsibilities. If his name sounds familiar it should! Shane is director Steph Shultes' older brother! Shane is an avid gardener, the neighborhood handyman, and most importantly, a huge admirer of museum mascot Little Boy.



AUTUMN EVENTS

Although our season is beginning to wind down, there's still plenty of interesting programming yet to come! On October 7 at 2 PM, Scott Manning Stevens, PhD, will present Ernie Smith and the WPA Project, an engaging talk on the impact of the Seneca Arts Project (1935-1941) and Smith's paintings in the context of Haudenosaunee cultural revitalization. This program is presented in conjunction with Oil & Water, our feature exhibit, and sponsored by Humanities NY.

Early Technology Day returns to the Museum on October 14. Watch and participate in the process of flintknapping, firemaking, cordage construction, spear throwing and early archery. This is also a terrific chance to bring your stone points, nutting stones, and other interesting finds and ask the experts to assist with their identification.

Have you ever marveled at the impeccable detail on a knife sheath, bag, or moccasins ornamented with porcupine quills? Here's your chance to sample these ancient quillwork techniques for yourself. October 21 and 22 features a very special opportunity to learn this uncommon art from master artisan Jamie Jacobs (Tonawanda Seneca). In 2022, when Jamie demonstrated his award-winning skills, many of our visitors expressed interest in learning this exquisite art form.

This two-day participatory quill workshop includes all materials. Member cost \$75/ non members \$85. Sign up early! Class has a maximum enrollment of 12.



November 25. Clothing with a Message! Artist demo by Kawenniiosta Jock, Mohawk Wolf Clan. Kawenniiosta is an activist, land protector, master seamstress and the co-director of the Waterfall Unity Alliance. As a young girl she learned sewing at the Akwesasne Freedom School and continued her studies at the Academy of Art School of Fashion (San Francisco, CA). Combining color, pattern, and applique in exceptionally original ways, Kawenniiosta's outfits are wearable statements of cultural pride, sovereignty, and calls to action.

IN THE PLANNING...PLEASE CALL TO CONFIRM

Nov 12, 2 PM. Special Veterans Day program with army veteran Mike Tarbell (Mohawk). Serving at 5 times the rate of other ethnic groups, Haudenosaunee have fought in every major US conflict from the Revolutionary War to today. In recognition of Veterans Day, museum educator Mike Tarbell will share the amazing story of one very special veteran – his father Albert A. Tarbell. Albert was the very first Mohawk to graduate from paratrooper school and served with the 82nd Airborne Division of the US Army during WWII. He would become a member of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment and participated in the Anzio Beachhead assault in Italy, made a combat jump in Graave, Holland, and the Waal River Crossing which was made into the movie “A Bridge Too Far.” Albert entered and helped free Concentration Camp prisoners near Ludwigslust, Germany. A chance wartime friendship between Albert and a young man in Netherlands was recently the subject of an exhibit at the Freedom Museum (Netherlands, 2022).

Dec 2 & 3. Introduction to Hide Tanning with Brenda LaForme (Onondaga). This outdoor workshop will give participants a hands on experience with the beginning steps of tanning a deer hide. Hides and all materials will be provided. Participants and observers welcome. No charge, donation appreciated.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

This summer the Museum welcomed Elijah Johnson from Cobleskill, NY to the staff. Elijah, age 16, comes to the Museum through the Summer Youth Employment Program, part of Workplace Solutions for Fulton, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties. The goals of the Program are to assist economically disadvantaged youth develop job skills and explore career opportunities. Elijah brought enthusiasm, an interest in trying new things, and polite, outgoing communication skills to his position at the museum. He has helped with physical upkeep of the grounds and interior of our building; kept the children’s museum organized; assisted with shop inventory; and event photography.



Artifact Pot by Peter Jones

IM COLLECTION TAKES TO THE ROAD

One of the Iroquois Museum’s strengths is its extensive collection of contemporary Haudenosaunee art. Throughout the year we serve as a resource for artists and other institutions throughout New York State and beyond. In 2023, seven pieces from the Museum collection by Onondaga ceramicist Peter B. Jones will be featured in *Continuity, Innovation, and Resistance: The Art of Peter Jones* at Syracuse University (Syracuse, NY). The works on loan include pottery and sculpture and were produced between 1983 – 1996. The exhibition runs from August 24 - December 15, 2023, and is organized by SU faculty members Sascha Scott, Associate Professor of Art History and Scott Manning Stevens, Associate Professor and Director of Native American and Indigenous Studies. Three additional pieces: *Bear Dancer*, *Artifact Pot*, and *Storyteller*, are on loan to the New York State Museum (Albany, NY) for their new exhibit, *Each One Inspired: Indigenous Art Across the Homelands*. *Homelands* runs from August to March, 2023.

Our loans are not limited to large galleries and institutions. The Iroquois Museum’s equitable loan policy is based on the concept that our unique collection can also forward our mission by being experienced in settings where viewers may not expect to encounter Haudenosaunee artistry. This season the Museum installed a small one-month display at Museum member, Albany Public Library’s Delaware Avenue Branch (Aug 1 – August 31). An exhibit at the Albany International Airport has been maintained with objects rotated each year since 2017 with the same objective.

WE INVITE YOU TO BECOME A PART OF OUR 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 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 Museum Endowment Fund; William N. Fenton Research Fund; Staff Support; Public Program Support

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

Connect with Us

Website www.iroquoismuseum.org
E-mail info@iroquoismuseum.org
Facebook IroquoisMuseum
Instagram @iroquoismuseum &
 @iroquoismuseumkitty

Mailing address
 PO Box 7, Howes Cave, NY 12092

Physical address
 324 Caverns Road, Howes Cave, NY 12092

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