



# MUSEUM NOTES

324 Caverns Road, Howes Cave, NY 12092 • (518) 296-8949 • [www.iroquoismuseum.org](http://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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## THE YEAR IN REVIEW: SUMMER & FALL GOINGS ON...

Congratulations Educators Brenda LaForme, Mike Tarbell, staff, and volunteers! IIM school group attendance is UP by 500 students from last year! That's great news and represents an 18% increase from 2016 and 2017 group attendance numbers. Let's see if we can't go for 2020 in 2020!

The NYSCA funded **Echoes of Tradition Series** explored Haudenosaunee social dance and traditional art forms that are integrated into and nurtured by the practice of dance. This year's guest dance groups included the Niagara River Dancers and the Haudenosaunee Dancers and artist demonstrations by Tahatie Montour (gustowehs); Adrian John (drums & rattles); Dan Hill (silverwork); and Mary Clause (beadwork).

**Women of Influence: Each Block a Story** was on exhibit from October 1 – November 30. This very special quilt features the work of 41 Indigenous women. We were sincerely honored to have 15 of the women who created quilt blocks share their personal and inspiring stories of resilience at the opening reception on October 12. The women carpoled over 5 hours from western NY and were received by an appreciative audience. Nya:wèh to all for your courage and thoughtful expressions. The IIM component of this project was supported in part with a grant from the American Quilt Study Group. AQSG is based in Lincoln, Nebraska and one of the oldest and largest member organizations dedicated to quilt related studies in the world.



*Women of Influence artists who attended the opening.*

*Front row l to r.: Penny Minner, Karen Russell Hodge, Janine Gates, Julie Marie Lay, Sheila Escobar, Barb Thomas, Marissa Manitowabi  
Back row l to r.: Deb Hoag, Mare Stevens, Sam Jacobs, Mary Jacobs, KarenLyne Hill, Terri John, Lori Seneca, Dawn Doctor*

The **38th Annual Iroquois Arts Festival** saw good weather and healthy attendance. A record number of artist vendors came from throughout Iroquois Country. Longtime favorites such as storyteller Perry Ground, early technologist Barry Keegan, and the Sky Dancers joined Kevin Laforme who demonstrated corn soup making. Together with first time guests, Anenhainton/Josh Sargent and author Ernest Rugenstein they created a fabulous event with opportunities for visitors of all ages to learn, create, dance, and sample traditional foods.



*The Sky Dancers welcomed guest lead singer Chris Thomas to this year's Festival.*

Our main exhibit, **Treasured Traditions**, featured three special guests. At the opening reception in May, Jennifer Stevens presented her knowledge about the revival of the Haudenosaunee ceramic tradition in her community of Oneida, Wisconsin. On July 28, Iakonikonriiosta/Sheree Bonaparte spoke about Mohawk quilting traditions and their connection to the still thriving 38-year old Akwesasne Freedom School. And, last but by no means least, artist Grant Jonathan rounded out our season. Grant shared his research on the stylistic characteristics and role of beadwork at Tuscarora and accompanied his presentation with dozens of amazing Victorian Era pieces from his own collection. Presentations were made possible with funds from a Humanities NY Action Grant.

### **GOOD NEWS! ...**

Efforts to raise \$110,000 for the IIM's Sharing the Gifts Initiative for 2019-2020 met with exceptional success. As of this printing we have successfully raised \$80,000 towards our goal. The principal contributors who saw promise in what we proposed and invested in our future include the Nicholas Juried Family Foundation. Although Nicholas Juried established his career in Austin, TX his youth was spent on his family's farm in Gilboa (Schoharie County). Mr. Juried remains deeply connected to this area and received the Otsego/Schoharie Historic Preservation Award for his philanthropic efforts in 2016. With the announcement of a \$30,000 award to the IIM he wrote "While attending the dedication of the Nicholas J. Juried History Center on the Gilboa Museum campus in July 2017 I did have an opportunity to also visit the Iroquois Indian Museum...and was thoroughly impressed with the experience. That visit, along with the wealth of information on the formation of the Iroquois Indian Museum and current Museum Notes which you sent me, suggests strong consideration of support."

A second generous supporter, the A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation has supported IIM education programs in the past and also gave \$30,000. The O'Connor Foundation supports health care, substance abuse, violence prevention, schools, early childhood programs, environmental groups, law enforcement, fire departments, libraries, performing and visual arts, historic sites, museums, hiking trails, sports camps, music festivals and Native American culture and history. An anonymous private donor contributed \$10,000 after visiting the museum. The New York State Council on the Arts awarded the IIM another \$10,000 through a competitive grant process.



*Museum Educator Brenda LaForme (Onondaga) (upper left) poses with a group of international students.*



*Alicia was frequently assisted by IIM Chief Feline Officer Little Boy!*

### **STAFF CHANGES...**

This fall the IIM bid a fond farewell to Alicia Burnett, the IIM's Marketing & Promotions Coordinator. Alicia joined the staff in September 2016, redesigning our web page, and creating promotional materials for events, fundraising campaigns, Facebook posts, and print ads. Her distinctive work on the exhibition panels and gallery guides for *From Girder to Ground Zero* (2017); *Tonto, Teepees & Totem Poles* (2018); and *Treasured Traditions* (2019) drew extensive praise from visiting museum professionals as well as the public for their striking layout and contemporary styling. Alicia accepted a fulltime position (with benefits – YEAH!) as Marketing and Communication Specialist at Brown Rudnick in Boston. We will sorely miss her talent, imagination, and good nature and wish her all the best in her new job.

The IIM will be interviewing candidates for the Promotions & Marketing position in early 2020. Watch this space for news of a new staff member (Little Boy approved of course) come spring.

### **NYSCA STEPS UP WHERE IT COUNTS...**

If you've been associated with the IIM for any length of time you know that our programming monies are obtained almost exclusively through grant support. Basic but essential costs such as heat, salaries, fire safety and security, and general upkeep represent much less attractive (ie: "sexy") areas of support for funders. NYSCA General Operating (GO) grants are the super valuable exception to that rule. This October the IIM received the welcome news that we were awarded \$8,000 through a competitive grant process. The GO award will be a fixed contribution towards the very real everyday expenses of sustaining and maintaining the IIM over the next 3 years.

### **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT ...**

From its earliest beginnings the Iroquois Museum has depended on the generosity of volunteers. 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 publically acknowledge their contributions to the quality and effectiveness of what the IIM offers we highlight one of these individuals in each issue of Museum Notes.

This issue's Volunteer Spotlight is on Sue Hess from Schoharie.. For 25 years Sue and her husband participated in Revolutionary War and French and Indian War re-enactments as sutlers (store owners) who sold items to the soldiers and followers at Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Stanwix, Fort Oswego and Fort Niagara. Sue and her husband also participated in fur trade era events across the US where they built their knowledge of other Native nations.

Sue has been an IIM volunteer since 2004. She can often be found at Steph's desk updating the gift shop sales inventory and wrangling with Steph's cantankerous, ergonomically-correct computer mouse. Sue keeps the IIM shop records accurate and up to date but she also possesses the indispensable talent of deciphering the staff's often illegible handwriting! Sue reflects on the motivation for her sustained IIM involvement, "I appreciate and admire Native American arts and crafts, their skills and their reverence and respect for the earth and the animals and how they can provide for us. We are very fortunate to have a museum in our area that promotes the arts and crafts of the Iroquois and teaches their history to those who visit. Fifteen years ago, when I retired from the State University of New York as a systems analyst, I began volunteering at the museum. I enjoy working with the staff and am glad I can be of service to the museum."

In addition to her work with the IIM Sue volunteers at the Old Stone Fort in the genealogy library and office. She enjoys taking classes with S.C.H.O.O.L. (Schoharie County Home of Ongoing Learning) and is helping to develop new applications for their database. During the summer she enjoys bicycling and canoeing and is active in the arts year round as a member of two local quilt guilds and the Schoharie Valley Singers.



### **VOLUNTEER PARTY...**

On Sunday, Nov 3 the IIM hosted a recognition party for our many FABULOUS volunteers. Volunteers from the Museum's archaeology department, grounds, festival, and children's programming areas were represented. Together these indispensable individuals donated well over 1000 hours and greatly enhanced the Museum's ability to provide quality programming and create a safe and welcoming environment for visitors. While we appreciate every hour that is contributed, three of our volunteers have made a commitment to the IIM that merited special notice. Individuals who donated more than 100 hours of time were awarded silver bear pins hand crafted by Onondaga artist Sheldon Gibson. Yvaine Melito from Cobleskill joined our volunteer team in 2018 when she offered to assist with parking and tickets for the Labor Day Festival. Yvaine helps visiting students with traditional craft activities and assists Brenda in preparing materials for these activities. When Yvaine's not volunteering she also staffs our reception desk and is part of the All Nation's Women's Drum Circle. The second silver bear recipient is Stephen Spretnjak from Schoharie. Stephen can usually be found getting down and dirty with the archaeology department but is also willing to pitch in anywhere that he's needed at the Labor Day Festival. Vic DiSanto from East Cobleskill joined our volunteer force in 2018. Vic can be found sharing his knowledge and personal teaching tools with students of all ages, planting and watering the Three Sister's Garden, and even welding a paintbrush where the museum could use a little sprucing up. Whether you help only at the Festival or you volunteer on a regular basis, we appreciate (and need!) each and every one of you. If you aren't a volunteer and think you might like to be a part of this splendid group, please contact Chris Hanks at [iroquoismuseumchanks@gmail.com](mailto:iroquoismuseumchanks@gmail.com) or call the Museum at 518.296.8949.

SUNY Cobleskill volunteers led by Illona Gillette-Ferguson, PhD. Associate Professor Chair, Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics spent a Saturday spreading crusher run along the walkway to the log cabin behind the Museum as well as doing some trimming.

Once again the Brothers from SUNY fraternity Alpha Gamma Rho spent a morning doing some major weed eating along the Museum's driveway and path to the Nature Trails.



*Alpha Gamma Rho brothers after their day of trimming.*

### **BOARD NEWS...**

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Andrea Chrisjohn to the IIM's Board of Directors in September 2019. Andrea is a certified paralegal and grew up surrounded by Oneida traditions. She is the granddaughter of the artist Dick Chrisjohn; daughter of Richard Terry Chrisjohn and niece of former board member Rita Chrisjohn Benson. Andrea has been a goldsmith apprentice, a demonstrator and workshop facilitator for post colonial Haudenosaunee art, and collaborator on multiple projects produced by family members. As part of her board responsibilities, she will be assisting IIM staff with the new gallery exhibit opening in April of 2020.

Trustee and Art Historian Carol Ann Lorenz will be stepping down from the board in January in order to pursue several interesting projects. Dr. Lorenz was a frequent attendee and supporter of IIM events and an astute voice on the board. She served a 3-year term.



## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING BEHIND THE SCENES...

Here's a snapshot of just a few of the things the IIM has been up to this year that weren't highlighted in previous newsletters.

- Consulted on props, costuming, and content for the television program *Billions*, Season 5 on Showtime.
- Provided recommendations for the Rockwell Museum in Corning on programming for an upcoming exhibit.
- Assisted art teacher Rem van den Bosch from Belgium by providing Haudenosaunee contacts and introductions for his upcoming educational documentary.
- Loaned artwork from the collection to the Vestal Museum for their exhibit honoring Haudenosaunee women.
- Worked with Noel Chrisjohn Benson (Oneida); Carrie Hill (Mohawk), Peter Jones (Onondaga), and Grant Jonathan (Tuscarora) to review and add cultural and technical information to the object records for the Museum's contemporary art collection.
- Helped judge the Mohawk & Abenaki Art Market at the Adirondack Experience Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.

## 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 world of Haudenosaunee art, and/or to the success of the Museum.

**Florence Benedict/Katsitsienhawi (6/3/1931 – 3/27/2019)** Florence was Mohawk Wolf Clan and resided on Cornwall Island. She is recognized throughout the north country for her black ash splint and sweetgrass baskets. A basketmaker for nearly 80 years, Florence is perhaps best known for her large globe baskets, an original design she created with her daughter Sally Benedict. Her baskets are in the permanent collections of the Iroquois Museum, the NY State Museum, and the Akwesasne Cultural Center. Florence was also active in preparing hot lunches for the children at the Cornwall Island Indian Day School a teacher at the Akwesasne Freedom School.

**Phyllis Bomberry (5/1/1943 – 1/3/2019).** Phyllis was Cayuga Wolf Clan from Six Nations Reserve. For many years she attended the IIM's annual festivals selling Indian tacos and frybread, in addition to her art. She made a wide variety of leather and beaded items, including wallets, purses, belts, moccasins, jackets, shirts, dresses, lighter holders, and barrettes. Often she created tooled leather decorative items using wampum, clan animals, and other images from Iroquois stories. Phyllis taught leatherworking at the schools on the reserve, and has demonstrated her art at Western University in London, Ontario.

**Larry Joyce (10/6/1934 – 2/13/2019)** Larry served as an active member of the Iroquois Indian Museum (IIM) board from 1993 until the spring of 2018. From a transitional period in the IIM's history to 2013 he also served as President of the Board. Larry was Professor Emeritus from SUNY Cobleskill in the fields of History & Sociology. He served as Social Science Department Chair from 1993-2005 and served as a liaison between SUNY Cobleskill and the IIM. He received the United University Professions Award for Excellence in Teaching, SUNY Chancellor's Award Excellence in Teaching, Honorary Alumni October 2011 SUNY Cobleskill, and outstanding Academic Advisor.

**Bruce King (10/2/1950 – 11/27/2019)** Bruce was Oneida Turtle Clan from Oneida, Wisconsin. He spent much of his life in Santa Fe, NM and graduated from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM. Bruce was a musician, actor, writer, painter, black belt, and Vietnam veteran. He has been represented by several fine art galleries during his long career. His work has been presented in the US, Canada, Germany, Australia, and Japan and is in the permanent collections of the Iroquois Museum; Institute of American Indian Arts; North American Congress on Latin America; and Six Nations Museum operated by the Fadden family.

**Sheila Sayers (6/26/1949 – 5/10/2019)** Shelia was Oneida Bear Clan and resided on the Tuscarora Reservation before moving to Oneida, NY. She found pleasure in doing beadwork, making and selling earrings, bracelets, and rings. She also enjoyed bingo, powwows, traveling with her fellow elders, and attending the Oneida Senior Center.

# 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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