

Ticonderoga Historical Society  
President's Annual Report  
10 June 2022

This past fiscal year the continuing COVID pandemic-related challenges had a material impact on the Society's ability to transition back to pre-endemic period of normalcy in the operation of the Hancock House and its scheduling of programs and events.

**Programming:** Although there were some reductions because of COVID guidelines, we were able to schedule a number of lectures, exhibits and festive events that pleased patrons anxious to move back into community related public activities. Our multi-year programming plan of showcasing our region's important place in New York State and American history continues to bring greater recognition to the Society. As an example, during September the Society joined with Ti Arts to host a very successful "Plein Air Festival" reception here at the Hancock House. A number of artists, many from out of the region, enjoyed learning about the house and our art collection while engaging with our staff and trustees. Of note is the continuing interest of our partnerships with organizations throughout the region to present our programs to new audiences.

**Buildings & Grounds:** This past year it was finally recognized by the administration of the Fenimore Art Museum that there was an urgent need to advance with securing professional assistance in evaluating the many degradations to the building's operation systems, lack of environmental controls and to meet code standards. The furnace continued to be a source of concern. During the early spring the furnace malfunctioned, and the house filled with smoke. The sensing units, for unknown reasons, were not activated and it was only through an observant fireman noting heavy smoke emitting from the chimney that we avoided some serious damage. Fenimore's administrators did approve our request to engage, using a RFP process, the solicitation of consulting engineer firms to make a thorough review of the entire building. Upon our completion of this process and presenting the results to them, as of this report no action has been taken by them to engage with our recommendations. The appearance of our lawns and gardens have continually been praised and been recognized as enhancing the Western Gateway approach to the town.

**Library & Collections:** Staff, trustees and volunteers spent many hours during the year in making changes to the library and its holdings. Recognizing our ever increasing "Adirondack" collection, and the recent acquisition of a major donation to this collection, it was decided to change out several sections of library shelving to make this collection more readily accessible. The old material was re-indexed, boxed and moved to annex storage. Currently, the library's collection is being reviewed and the Past Perfect data base is being audited with necessary changes to the records being updated. The Society was fortunate to have received a grant of about \$6,300 to purchase a new computer operated microfilm reader which was needed to make again available our large collection of microfilm records.

**Property Acquisition:** The purchase of several land parcels from the Moses-Ludington Hospital Corporation is ongoing. During the year MLH continued to be engaged with federal authorities to resolve old issues. Also, during our continued work researching and surveying the land it was noted that one of the contracted properties, the “Information Booth Lot”, did not belong to the Hospital, but in fact was owned by the former New York State Historical Association. That parcel was pulled from the sales contract and NYSHA, now the Fenimore Art Museum (FAM), was notified of its legal status. The Society and FAM are negotiating the transfer of this property directly to THS.

**Other:**

1. A new “Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2027” was approved.
2. Our accounting system has been updated. We engaged a new accounting consultant who has assisted in making adjustments to our Chart of Accounts to recognize the future acquisition of the land purchase and to establish the acquisition of a commercial rental property.
3. A review of insurance policies led to changes of brokers and policies that resulted in significant reduction of overall insurance expenses.
4. For the second year we received a federal grant in the amount of \$5000 to hire a graduate summer intern.
5. Completed an agreement with the Town of Ticonderoga that resulted in an increased contribution of \$6,000 per annum from the Town.
6. Engaged a web designer to make improvements in our webpage for administrative purposes, to recover the Veteran’s Honor Roll file, and to provide access to the website via mobile devices.
7. A major review and update of our Donor Files has been beneficial in maintaining a good relationship with our membership and has helped control direct mailing expenses.

William G. Dolback, President