

Ticonderoga Historical Society
President's Annual Report
11 June 2021

Welcome all to this 2021 Annual Meeting of the Ticonderoga Historical Society as we complete another year in unusual circumstances. At this time last year, I mentioned in my presentation that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the mandates from both the federal and state governments to help mitigate the rapidly advancing health affects being experienced throughout society, would seriously impact our ability to present our calendar of programs and events fully or in the venue publicized. However, as the summer season waned there was some relaxing of the mandated health guidelines that gave us the opportunity to offer some of our programs in a lawn setting using strict standards of numbers allowed and adhering to social distancing. Fortunately, of the several lawn events offered, most were fully attended and for some well over subscribed. The Hancock House remained open through the end of the year and the Festival of Trees events were very well received in an appointment or limited access mode.

The Society was fortunate to have received a federal grant to hire a graduate student, Bridget O'Keefe, as a summer intern. The purpose of the grant was to provide her the opportunity to have the exposure of working in a small museum and to learn about the administration, operations and other aspects of running a small museum. She proved to be a great benefit to us and very much willing to fully engage in all matters of our limited operations.

I want to thank all the trustees for the many hours of their volunteerism in helping with the administration and operation of the Hancock House. Your efforts helped paint the parking lot fence and other needed painting projects in the house, maintain the colonial garden and hold a successful – first of the kind – plant sale. You enabled us to keep the Summer A'faire going, you put up and took down the lawn canopies, worked on membership and fund-raising projects, rearranged the library, addressed numerous research inquires and many other projects.

Finally, I believe we have some good news on the Society's purchase of lands from the Moses-Ludington Hospital Corp. As many of us know, this has been a lengthy and tiresome endeavor – there have been many more bends to this saga than in the meandering waters of Trout Brook. The financing is in place, we are waiting on some title papers , and we are closing in on securing insurance coverage for the properties. Although not necessary for the closing, the surveyors are still doing field work.

I wish to say that we have had some success in establishing a meeting with the Fenimore Administrators. The Vice President of Operations, Joseph Siracusa, was to meet with us in October, but that did not come about due in part to COVID. However, we have been in communication with him on Hancock House matters, such as problems with the furnace,

water and sewer issues, and fuel tank replacement. One good piece of news that I can report is we were successful in securing an increase of the Moses Fund contribution for the administration and operation of the Hancock House to \$51,000 from \$36,000.

Our Treasurer, Linda Bhatia, has made great effort to ensure that both the old and new NYS political officials were reminded and informed of the long outstanding CCAP grant of \$50,000 and to ensure that those funds were secure into the fiscal year. The last word from Dan Stec's office was that the backlog of those old funds was slowly being distributed.

I want to thank Diane O'Connor, our Managing Director, for her efforts during this trying year in adjusting to the extraordinary demands of managing the numerous challenges that arose as a result of the COVID pandemic. She's a true professional. It was a personal enjoyment assisting with her continuing efforts to liaison with regional organizations to complete some of our jointly scheduled programs. Her continuing ability to present thoughtful exhibits, programs and events has made a material difference in maintaining the Society's public standing in high esteem in our community and service area.

Again, my thanks to all for your dedication and the great effort each of you offered me in helping to advance the Society's mission and in keeping us an asset in our arena as a cultural and educational organization.

William G. Dolback, President