

Ticonderoga Historical Society
President's Annual Report
14 June 2019

As the Society ends its 43rd year here at the Hancock House, I am pleased to report to the members of this organization that the trustees, officers and staff during this past year have worked very hard to meet the guiding principles of our Mission Statement, first expressed in the establishment of the Ticonderoga Historical Society in 1897.

The initial Mission Statement was detailed and lengthy. Over the years the context has been distilled into a much more succinct and broader level of contemporary interpretation:

“The Ticonderoga Historical Society advances the preservation and interpretation of history through our collections, programs and community outreach, preserving our past for our future. The Ticonderoga Historical Society makes area history an integral part of community life by connecting our region’s past and present to shape our future.”

Developed and implemented by our Managing Director for the last four years, we have presented exhibits and programs in a complementing venue that have led to a rising recognition of the Society by the public, fellow organizations, and institutions. As an example, we can cite two multi-year world events that were used to connect back into the history of the Adirondacks: “Women’s Suffrage” and “World War I”. Each has spurred greater public interest. In validation of this strategy, the Society has received a growing number of requests to present these programs throughout our service area. This strategy has also provided enhanced sponsorships, grant funds for program development, and some underlying operational funding.

This past year our diverse programming was highly successful, bringing new audiences as well as familiar faces from the past to our programs. When Joe Zelinski, a recognized authority on Lake George shipwrecks, returned after a long absence to the Hancock House Program Series to give his talk, “Lake George Shipwrecks”, many old faces were in attendance. “Adirondack Jews and their Contributions” gained us recognition and access to an entirely new and wide audience. Our Halloween program, “Victorian Ghost Photography”, resulted in a standing room audience. A second, encore presentation, scheduled for those turned away from the first, was also well attended. Our lawn programs continue to be great hits.

We have, or are having, our challenges. First, the Hancock House is approaching its 100th anniversary. Over the years we have maintained it to high standards. However, for a building of this age there is a need for capital improvements and upgrades, even to those items that were worked on during 1992/3 when many building deficiencies were addressed, including the furnace and radiators, electrical systems, windows, the roof and balustrades.

We are in communication with the administration at the Fenimore Art Museum, developing a schedule to review, evaluate and develop a plan to resolve these deficiencies.

For the Society, it is now more important than ever to undertake a serious review of our operations to meet current and future development across the board: financial, staffing, technologies, library and collections, volunteers, and trusteeship. As a small organization these categories are central to our operations. It will take a special individual willingness and great effort in personal fortitude to make strides to overcome these challenges.

For the last 43 years many have contributed in so many ways to making the Society what it has become. It always has been about having a sense of believing in “the cause” and making “things happen”. We have a solid foundation and a good organizational structure that nonetheless need some attention. With your continuing interest and support we can make great strides. As Horace Moses said – “Achievement is My Goal”.

Thank you each one for your continuing support. I look forward to working with you for another year, and hopefully we can report together what great strides were accomplished during this New Year.

William G. Dolback, President