

**Lower Adirondack Regional Center for History**  
**President's Annual Report**  
14 June 2024

In preparation for writing this year's Annual Report I spent some time re-reading our Monthly Minutes, Director and Committee Reports and looking through my files. I really didn't need to scan my appointment book because I was acutely aware that I, along with members of the Executive and Finance Committee, spent hundreds of hours addressing many necessary administrative issues as we pivoted into a new era.

This past year we have changed our name, added six new parcels of land to our property, including a new revenue generating commercial property that makes our presence highly visible at the "Western Gateway. We established new banking, insurance and accounting relationships. We installed Square, a new payment processor that includes new software for our retail merchandise operation, and we finalized the development of a new web page that is more informative, easier to navigate, and makes us more visible in the digital universe.

People are what makes an organization. I am so fortunate to have a great working Board of Trustees and staff. We were happy to add two new board members: Marsha LaPointe and Christopher Michalak. Our Secretary, Susan Hayes, has brought together a unique and dedicated garden cadre that has helped to make great strides in the development of the garden. Treasurer Linda Bhatia has done great yeoman work with the accounting system, making the difficult transition from a desktop to an online version of Quick Books while simultaneously working through the complicated process of securing a new CPA firm. As we were adding new properties, she also was engaged in securing additional insurance coverage for them. In another financial venue, David Hayes led the way in developing and bringing forth the establishment of a completely new Investment Policy.

Summertime is always a busy season. We did a change up for our Summer A-faire, and it was a success. Planned along the "trunk sale" concept, we had the favorites – white elephant, book and plant sales. For education and fun, we had the Adirondack Spinners demonstrating the art of weaving and folk music to round out the well-like summer event. We were fortunate to hire an excellent intern, Natalie O'Neill. Working under the oversight of Brian O'Connor, she made a major contribution in the accession of the ***Stapley Adirondack Collection*** into the Library and the Past Perfect software. Director, Diane O'Connor, put together another of her trademark diverse program schedules, weaving old favorites with programs that were diverse and educational.

Late summer we had a European surprise, when Prof Cathleen Dauigan and husband, educators from Wales, sought out our assistance in their research and visited to

Ticonderoga to trace the footsteps of Dr. Kathleen Carpenter, an early British expert of **on** freshwater fish. During the summer of 1929, Dr. Carpenter led a major research project in the region, ***The Biological Survey of the Champlain Watershed***, that included the LaChute River. I researched Dr Carpenter's 1920's travels and offered a power point presentation, then led them on a foot trek along the river, describing its condition then and now.

As noted in our Year End Appeal letter, "Christmas Arrives Early", after nearly six years of frustration we finally closed on the purchase of several acres of vacant and commercial property from the dissolved Moses Ludington Hospital Corp. These parcels are located just southwest of the Liberty Monument rotary. Combined they have historical significance from the French & Indian and the early settlement eras era as well as containing environmentally sensitive lands.

To maintain our regional culture presence, it is important that we continually seek out and keep good relationships with our regional partners. This year trustees attended workshops sponsored by two longtime grant sponsors. Brian O'Connor, Library Chair, was a participant at a Northern New York Network meeting. He joined important discussions about historic newspapers and heritage databases and their finding aides, and grant opportunities. Treasurer, Linda Bhatia and I traveled to Basin Harbor, Vt for the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership Annual International Summit where we learn about their new grants and the changes in how grants are to be processed, along with contact information. Over the years we have been awarded several valuable grants from these two funders including funding for our summer interns and summer programs and exhibits.

During the year we have had some disappointments. The E&F Committee work so hard to prepare two grants for the Town of Ticonderoga's "Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) – Rehabilitation of the Hancock House and a Main Street Landscape plan for around the "Western Gateway." Unfortunately, these grants were not funded. In late February, the Hancock House's building and property suffered sever wind damage due to a freak storm. The house's roof, chimneys, balcony, fences and signs were affected. As of this date we are still working through the insurance claim. Preliminary estimates of the cost of repair are in the \$150K range.

As always, we continue to maintain the House in good repair while making capital improvements. The largest funded outlay of approximately \$10K was spent on installing a new air source heat pump for the Meeting Room. This unit provides both heat and cooling to this area. Also, after months of delay, we were able to install new water lines and a new drainpipe to the men's restroom sink.

Again, collectively we can be proud of maintaining a valuable asset to this community and region.

William G. Dolback, President