



DECEMBER 2022

MUSEUM NOTES

News from the Iroquois Museum

AND IT'S A WRAP!

Once again, we look back on the season with gratitude at the creativity and commitment of our guest artists and presenters and amazement at the unflagging generosity of our members and supporters.

The summer's Echoes of Tradition: The Language of Dance offerings included individuals well known to the Museum including, the Haudenosaunee Singers and Dancers from Onondaga Nation; Onota'a:ka (Oneida Nation Dancers); and Iakonikonriiosta and the Native American Travelling College from Akwesasne. Our artist demonstrations included Samantha Jacobs, an award-winning Cattaraugus Seneca moccasin maker and several new faces including Kelly & Tyson Back of Fire Loom Creations who shared their complex loom-beaded original designs; Anita Ferguson from Tuscarora Nation known for her raised beadwork cuffs and collars; Maxine Malone from Onondaga Nation who brought a number of her favorite traditional outfits; and Seneca craftsman Mike Crouse from Steamburg, NY who deftly transformed wood into rattles, canes, bowls, ladles and other traditional items.



Kelli Back

Each of these talented individuals did an exceptional job at representing their culture and themselves as they demonstrated their creative processes, answered questions, and engaged visitors young and old.



Haudenosaunee Singers & Dancers

OPEN HOURS

April & November: Monday-Wednesday: Closed; Thursday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday: Noon-4 p.m.

May-October: Monday: Closed; Tuesday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday: Noon-5 p.m.



Rubber Band

In case you missed it, the Museum's annual fundraiser, Roots, Rhythm & Ale, showcased some of the local talent right here in the Schoharie Valley. Thanks to Schoharie County Arts Laura Gagnon and Becca Frame opened the night with original material and some astonishing covers including Richard Thompson's 1952 Vincent Black Lightning. Following tight on their heels, the always-phenomenal Rubber Band christened our new dance floor with 2 sets of blues and Zydeco infused songs. Lavender Manor Farms, Mandy & Susan Tarbell, Earthly Remedies by Erin, Smyth/CID pottery, and many other artisans marketed their locally-produced specialties. Members of SCA also demonstrated weaving. A "Mohawk auction" rounded out the evening's festivities. We're already planning for next year and you should too! If all goes well, we may even offer a 30-minute Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson to kick off the night and get you moving and grooving to those up-tempo Louisiana tunes.



Sky Dancers at the 39th Annual Festival

After a two-year absence due to Covid, the 39th Iroquois Arts Festival returned to welcome an ever popular line up of presenters including Perry Ground, the Sky Dancers, Kevin LaForme, Kelly Martin, and Barry Keegan and art market vendors from the Haudenosaunee communities of Six Nations, Onondaga, Oneida, Allegany, Akwesasne, Tuscarora, and Kahnawake. Special thanks to Richard Chrisjohn, Crystal Henry and their children for opening and closing the event with the Words That Come Before All Else.

BEST WISHES TO RALPH THE RENAISSANCE MAN

Ralph Castro, the Museum's custodian, groundskeeper, and all around jack of all trades retired from his position on October 27 due to health issues. Ralph has been on staff since 2015 and was an integral part of the IM team.



From day to day maintenance and mechanical needs; to constructing hands on stations in our children's museum; to developing inventive solutions to display problems in our gallery, Ralph met every challenge with quality workmanship, imagination, and a good attitude. Ralph enjoyed interacting with visitors, helping with the three sisters garden and keeping the Museum grounds looking neat and trim. We will miss him immensely and wish him well.

WELCOME TO ALAN LIVENGOOD

Alan has accepted Ralph's former position and started his first day on the job with the normal set of unexpected challenges that accompany most tasks at the Museum. Alan was raised in Duanesburg and brings a host of applicable skills to his new position. Alan managed his own lawnmowing business for 20 years in FL, is a small engine mechanic, and recently completed renovations on his 1850s post and beam home. His hobbies include motorcross, snowmobiling, and playing acoustic guitar. His other (no less important!) claim to fame is that he is the husband of Heather Livengood, Assistant to the Director and Marketing Coordinator and dog dad to the lovable Sadie.

WAMPUM INSTALLATION

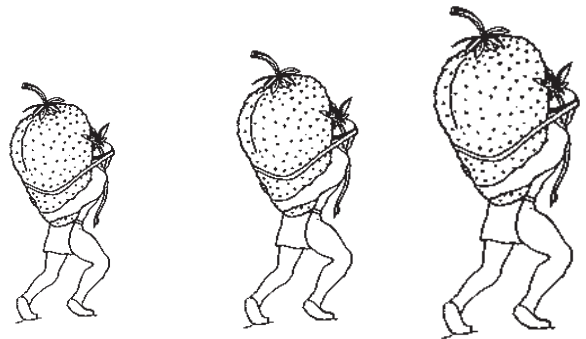
The late summer season also featured Let Our Hearts Be One - Community Wampum Belt, a participatory sculpture project with Mohawk artist Jay Havens. Jay is a multi-disciplinary artist known for his murals and high profile public art projects in Vancouver, Toronto and other parts of Canada. His thoughtful installation was developed in conjunction with Material Shift, the 2022 exhibit in our main gallery. In the same way that the works in the show interpreted traditional Haudenosaunee concepts with unconventional materials, Jay's concept features an original wampum belt design constructed with metal fencing, plastic pvc pipe and coated wire. Over 125 visitors of various ages assisted with its construction and enjoyed watching the Belt gain in length and impact on the landscape as it began to take shape over the 6-week residency. Hundreds more learned about the symbols, inspiration and message of the Belt. Although the installation builds on the foundations of earlier Haudenosaunee wampum belts and incorporates some similar elements, Let Our Hearts Be One is an original design intended to demonstrate the power of wampum not just as an ancient contractual agreement, but as a living language that can communicate new understandings and relationships.

Let Our Hearts Be One is now a permanent sculpture and teaching resource located just outside the Museum's outdoor amphitheater. Signage explaining the symbols and message carried by the belt will be erected in May of 2023. Funded by a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, this project's lessons will continue to benefit visitors for many years to come.



YOU KNOW HOW WE LOVE A CHALLENGE!

This fall, the Museum received an interesting proposition from a private foundation. For every \$3 we can earn before March 2024 the foundation has agreed to give the Museum \$1 up to \$15,000. The 1:3 challenge grant is earmarked for our 2023 education programs and must be NEWLY raised funds from the challenge date of October 2022. So far, we've raised \$5000 through Facebook birthday contributions, Facebook comments (points for "likes") and tee-shirt sales. Our goal is to have \$45,000 in place and dedicated to enhancing the Museum's in-person and virtual education offerings as we enter our next season. If you've any leads on new foundations, businesses, or other ideas for ways that we can secure our match that don't involve a massive investment of staff time, we're all ears!

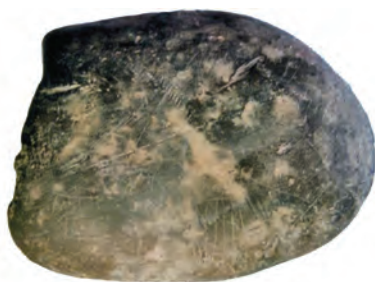


SCHOHARIE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

The Museum's head of archaeology, Fred Stevens, has handled thousands of artifacts in his years of excavations. Some finds however, are so distinct that they raise questions and warrant attention years after their discovery.

Fred shares his observations for this issue of Museum Notes: "An interesting artifact from the Schoharie Valley came to my attention recently when reviewing a large collection of surface-collected pre-contact period artifacts my friend Paul and I collected in the mid 1950s from a variety of sites within the Valley. This artifact was found in a cultivated field on a high knoll above the west bank of the Schoharie Creek about mid-way between the current villages of Middleburgh and Schoharie. A small campsite dating around 2500 – 5000 BP existed in close proximity to a flowing spring which probably attracted these early occupants to this particular location.

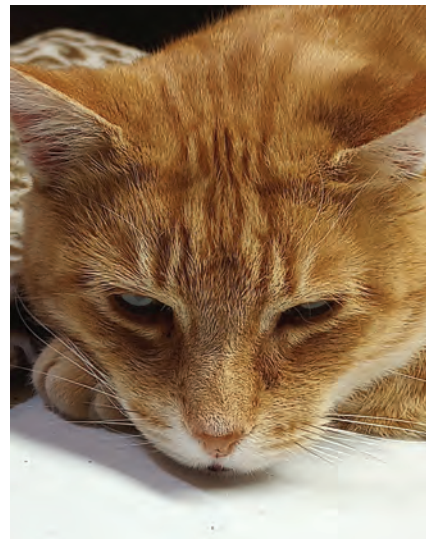
This object is oval in shape and features two relatively flat faces. It appears to be water-worn, made of a dense black chert-like material, and is lightly coated with a light-colored surface coating or patination (physical changes caused by age and weathering) on all surfaces. What makes this object so unusual is the large number of incised parallel lines and cross-hatched marks appearing on both the flat sides of the cobble. In addition, an incised line runs along the entire outer edge of the cobble. The photo included with this report shows one face of the cobble with both parallel and cross-hatching visible. The simple sketches point out the large number and variety of these "etchings" on each side of the cobble.



One can't help but wonder what the artisan had in mind when these patterns were so deliberately etched into this cobble. Since the incisions include the coating or patination as well as the stone surfaces, this manipulation or decoration of the stone surface likely dates to thousands of years ago. This is a unique find and can be added to a growing list of incised stones reported through the Northeast."

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Museum closed for the season on Nov 27, 2022 and reopens on April 1, 2023. While our seasonal staff is off, our core staff continues to work. The most commonly heard question this time each year is, "So, what do you do there when you're closed?" Visions of us spending our days internet shopping and dancing in the galleries appear to be prolific. Most years our time is spent developing new exhibitions, writing grants for future projects, repairing, repainting, and deep cleaning. This winter however the staff and volunteers face a huge task. During the month of December, the entire 12,000 piece archaeological and 2400 piece ethnographic/art collection and all of its current shelving will be physically removed from the collections storage area and temporarily relocated in the galleries in preparation for the next step. In January, the new state of the art collections storage units will be delivered and installed. In February and March the collection will be reorganized and reinstalled in the new storage units.



Some staff take a much needed break!

CONDOLENCES

At this time of year, we invite you to reflect on those who parted from us in 2022. As we gather this season with family and friends, we will remember them with fondness. Their love, their laughter, and their knowledge will be missed enormously.

Joanne Shenandoah/Tekaliwakwah 1957 – 2021

Joanne is fondly remembered for many things, but her most enduring gift was her shimmering, extraordinary voice. In an all too brief career she earned recognition as “the most proficient and creative aboriginal composer and performer of her era.”



From 1989 – 2021 she produced 15 CD's, fusing traditional Haudenosaunee styling with contemporary expression and concerns. She received an unprecedented 14 Native American Music Awards (NAMMYS), was selected as an Independent Native Artist of the year and International Native Album of the Year from the Canadian Music Awards, multiple Syracuse Area Music Awards (SAMMYS), and a Grammy in 2005 for Best Native American Music Album for her tracks on Sacred Ground: A Tribute to Mother Earth. Joanne composed Skywoman which was performed by the Syracuse Symphony in 2002 and featured in a PBS show from the Kemo Theatre in New Mexico with R. Carlos Nakai, Mary Youngblood and Bill Miller.

Joanne's internationally successful music and reputation as a polished performer garnered her opportunities around the world with concerts at the White House, Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden and venues in South Korea, Australia, Africa, and Europe. Joanne performed several times at the Iroquois Museum, at Festivals, at the opening for Buckskin to Bikinis: Haudenosaunee Wearable Art; and was featured in the Museum's Native Americans in the Performing Arts exhibit in 2009. Joanne was Oneida Nation Wolf Clan.



John Fadden/Kahionhes 1938 - 2022

John leaves behind a rich legacy as both an educator and an artist. The son of Ray and Christine Fadden, he excelled in art from an early age. John earned his BFA from Rochester Institute of Technology and taught 7th and 8th grade art at Saranac Central School District for 32 years.

Alongside his parents, John helped establish the Six Nations Indian Museum (now the Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center) in Onchiota, NY which opened to the public in 1954. Thus began a lifelong effort to educate visitors about the rich and vibrant culture of the Haudenosaunee. Every summer season since its opening, John was on hand, telling stories, giving historical lectures, answering questions and simply chatting with visitors to the Center. Today, his sons David and Donald continue to maintain this very special tradition.

From the Iroquois Museum's beginning, John lent his support in many ways by sending us drawings for Museum Notes and teaching us that the personal interaction of all staff with visitors is primary.

In addition to being a cherished culture bearer, John was a widely respected artist. His artwork appears in over 90 publications. His expressions draw from the vast repertoire of Haudenosaunee stories, history and traditional themes, as well as from the endless diversity of the natural world. John served as a consultant and advisor on education projects for the NY State Museum; the NYS Ed. Dept; the American Indian Program at Cornell University; the Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian; the Iroquois Museum; and the Adirondack Museum. John was Mohawk Nation Turtle Clan.



Ralph Escobar 1947 - 2022

A resident of Baldwinsville, NY, Ralph was a familiar and welcome guest at the Iroquois Museum for many years. He retired from Teamster Local Union 1149 via Anheuser-Busch. Shelia Escobar, Ralph's wife of 33 years, was featured in many of the Museum's exhibitions and occasionally demonstrated her beadcraft skills for our visitors. When Shelia was here for an event or art opening, Ralph was never far away. His generosity, humor, and cheery good nature earned him many a friend among our museum staff.

WE INVITE YOU TO BECOME A PART OF OUR 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 Museum Endowment Fund; William N. Fenton Research Fund; Staff Support; Public Program Support

To discuss your proposed gift or bequest, please contact us at: Iroquois Museum, P. O. Box 7, Howes Cave, NY 12092 or at info@iroquoismuseum.org or call us directly at 518-296-8949. Ask for our Director, Steph Shultes.

Connect with Us

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Museum Director	Stephanie Shultes
Curator of Exhibitions	Colette Lemmon
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