

## **President's Annual Report for June, 2009-June 2010**

2010 is the year that NCUGRHA took decisive steps to move to a new level of development. We went beyond the inspirational stage to a greater emphasis on organization. Frank Kinelly got a handle on our membership and finance components; Jackie Madison assumed responsibility for our Development Committee and Helen Allen Nerska took over responsibility for publicity, events, bookkeeping, and Power Points.

We had setbacks. New York canceled nearly \$25,000 in funding for one of our exhibits, and work on the Estes House was delayed so many times we could not open this spring. But Town of Chesterfield Supervisor Jerry Morrow held on to the dream. Thanks to Jerry's persistence, demolition of the inside of the Estes House began this week. On Wednesday June 23, the crew started on their second dumpster.

Our Board and Steering Committee members were the first to contribute to our \$10,000 Manager's and Contingency Fund. We raised over \$3,000. Our Board and Steering Committee members contributed to the Stephen Keese Smith fund and then solicited businesses and raised over \$2,000. Some of us discovered that we could do more than we set out to do: Frank asked Stewarts for a \$25 donation and ended up getting \$500.

Since our last annual meeting we have activated our Finance, Development, Historic Sites and Education Committees. In 2009, we learned how much more we can accomplish if we emphasize the word "we". If NCUGRHA is to fulfill its vision and mission, it must be about more than "Don and Vivian." NCUGRHA must be about each of you, each one of our members and each one of our friends. If WE see that is so, we will grow.

### **Highlights**

- Adoption of revised By-Laws and Constitution
- Activation of Development, Finance, and Historic Sites and Education Committees and the S.K. Smith Barn Stabilization Committee
- Gifted with a leg iron found 40 years ago in the former home of Pliny Hoag on Hallock Hill in the Town of Ausable
- Conversion from Quicken to Quickbooks
- Manager & Contingency Fund initiated and \$3,150 collected toward a goal of \$10,000
- Board members helped raise \$2,000 in conjunction with our March History and Freedom: *Herstory* program for the S.K. Smith Barn stabilization
- A Memorandum of Understanding signed between NCUGRHA and Frank and Jacquelyn Perusse regarding work on and use of S.K. Smith barn
- National Park Service officially recognized the old Rouses Point Pier as a Network to Freedom site and the most important UGRR stop in the Champlain Valley
- Provided support to the Erie Canalway initiative to have New York's canal system officially recognized by the National Park Service as a Network to Freedom site

- Town of Chesterfield had asbestos removed from the Estes house and a new roof installed, then signed a contract with Riznick Corporation; demolition of interior of the Estes House began in June of 2010.
- Expanded our use of PastPerfect software
- Selected North Star Underground Railroad Museum for the name of our museum in the Town of Chesterfield Heritage Center
- Although New York State's financial crisis resulted in a loss of nearly \$25,000 in funds awarded to the Essex County Historical Society for the *Onward Your Country to Save!* exhibit, our exhibit's designer Mike Hanke said he would still complete the exhibit
- Benefited from IMLS workshops on Development and succession planning not-for-profit Boards
- Board members participated in a Development Workshop led by professional fundraiser Jake Beauvais
- Obtained a grant to send Jackie Madison to the African American Historic Sites Sustainability Workshop in Rhode Island in January and to send Helen Nerska to the Upstate History Alliance Conference in Albany
- Underground Railroad Historian Tom Calarco gifted us with his research collection; the cataloguing process has started
- SUNY Plattsburgh student Joan Estabrook became our first intern
- Hired Helen Nerska as a contract employee to serve as our interim manager for the Heritage Center for first quarter of 2010
- Subsequently Helen Nerska was assigned to us for two years through the SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program) and became our Administrative Assistant
- Heritage New York UGRR interpretive panels dedicated at the Essex County Courthouse and the First Presbyterian Church in Plattsburgh
- Glenn Erb and Bill Umbreit removed a dangerous section of overhead flooring in the S.K. Smith barn and made it safe for Andy Black to lead a crew of Potsdam and SUNY Plattsburgh students in exploratory excavations
- Our membership increased
- New logo and pin commissioned
- Participation in Museum day
- Presented UGRR lectures for the Quad and for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Brown's burial

### **Plans for 2011:**

- Web redesign
- Implementation of a comprehensive Development (i. e. fundraising) Plan
- Grand Opening of the Town of Chesterfield Visitors Center and North Star Underground Railroad Museum
- Implementation of first Annual Program Plan
- Completion of Rechartering application to the New York State Education Department
- Completion of S.K. Smith barn stabilization
- Increased focus on programs for teachers, students and children