President's Report for the 2026 Annual Meeting

Summary of the Year's Activities:

Members and the public are welcomed to our Board meetings which occur the 2nd Tuesday of each month except December due to the holidays. We meet on the second floor of the Plattsburgh Library at 6:00 pm, January thru October.

The North Star Underground Railroad Museum opened again this year on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from Memorial weekend through Indigenous/Columbia Day. We had 1,668 visitors and 356 under 18 this open season. Visitors came from around the nation and internationally. They included the following states: Oklahoma, Vermont, Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, South Carolina, Washington, Ohio, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Maine, Texas, Montana, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Alaska, Georgia, Rhode Island, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Wyoming, Indiana, Minnesota, Alabama and Kansas. Internationally, visitors came from several provinces in Canada, Peru, India, Portugal, Sweden, India, Netherlands, Malta, Singapore and France. These numbers are higher than 2025.

Special tours this season included students from BOCES, students from SUNY Plattsburgh's history department, staff from Northern New York Library, parent with three 10 years old, father and daughter with the Adirondack 102 Club, and Home Schoolers. We had several private tours before our open season, as well.

Our museum continues to need volunteers for the open season, as docents. Docents can arrange the time they are available to work. If you're interested especially in meeting and interacting with visitors, I would encourage you to sign up by emailing us at ugr@frontier.com. Training is provided as a group session in the spring and one on one with a docent during your time at the museum. We are not expecting anyone to be able to know a lot about our history. We have materials docents can use and the exhibits give clues to information to provide.

We are always seeking volunteers in other capacities such as board or committee members, grant writers and other opportunities. If you have a skill or expertise that you would like to share with our organization, please consider signing up.

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I'm continuing as a community member on the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Advisory Committee which is an initiative of SUNY Plattsburgh's joint Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work. I'm a board member for AARCH and Women's Rights Alliance of New York State. I serve on the Advisory board for PBS and Chair the MLK committee.

I attended Governor Hochul's State of the State Address in January, the 55th Annual Conference of The New York State Association of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislators and Women's History month celebration at the Governor's home in Albany with Allison Heard, Janet McFetridge, and Helen Nerska.

We've received a grant from Essex for the Colors of Freedom Juneteenth program in the amount of $1000. Allison received a grant from New York State Division of Human Rights for $2,054.29, Robin Caudell received $4,400 from Fred's grant, and $1,000 from Adirondack Lakes for the documentary she is doing entitled Witness Tree at Union Road. Our program is on the Freedom Trail Murals and we've received 8,050.

The following programs were produced this year; Colors of Freedom in the North Country for Juneteenth holiday and Women's Equal Rights Program. The Colors of Freedom was a collaboration with Essex County Arts Council, Clinton County Historical Association, John Brown Lives, John Brown Farm, New York State Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation, SUNY Plattsburgh Arts Museum, DEI and TRHT Departments, Elizabethtown and Adirondack Museum, Paul Smith's College. This year it ran for 3 days and included a band, tour of Underground Railroad sites, art exhibit of African Americans in the area from the start of the twentheith century and a celebration at the John Brown Farm. Women's Equality Day was a collaboration with Clinton County Historical Association, the League of Women Voters of the North Country, the the Champlain Valley Business and Professional Women, the Kent-Delord House Museum, the Saranac Chapter of the DAR, and Delta Kappa Gamma Society Psi Chapter. In preparation for the 250th celebration of the Revolutionary War, we partnered with Clinton County Historical Association to showcase African Americans, indigenous and women's activities in the Revolutionary War.

I presented at the Unitarian Church, SUNY Plattsburgh for Dr. Wendy Gordon's class, Dr. Connie Shemo's class, Strand as part of Juneteenth, the Saratoga Quaker Meeting House, John Brown Farm, the Clinton Community College, I will give a presentation at Senior Center in December. I participated in World Water Day. I continue to assist at the Peru Historian's office and acquire documentation for our archives.

The book of the Underground Railroad in the Adirondack/Lake Champlain area has been written and is being edited by Dr. Neal Burdick, the great-great grandson of Steven

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Keese Smith. We're seeking funding to get it published. The last book was written by Tom Calarco more than 20 years ago.

We are seeking to replace the projector in the John Thomas room and would like to expand the stories in that room. I've spoken to the producers of the John Thomas story about adding the story of Isaac Johnson, who was a master mason in this area.

We are seeking to do some work on the museum starting with the deck, windows and a lift to make the building ADA compliant.

Quote - A man who believes in freedom will do anything under the sun to acquire, or preserve his freedom. Malcolm X