

# ASSOCIATION UPDATE

SPRING 2011

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*History Center of Niagara County*

Pamela Miller

*Dundee Area Historical Society*

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**Administrative Coordinator**

Terry C. Abrams

## What's New with WNYAHA

Spring has officially arrived, although there is still a bit of snow on the ground. While we dream of gardening, spring cleaning, and other outdoor activities, we continue to work to better serve you. Several WNYAHA members were spotted at the Mid-Atlantic Regional meeting of the Association for Living History, Farm & Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM). The regional meeting was very ably hosted by Genesee Country Village & Museum. Administrative Coordinator Terry Abrams attended a workshop in Frankfort, KY at the mid-winter meeting of the Field Service Alliance (FSA), an affinity group of the American Association of State & Local History (AASLH).

WNYAHA is pleased to welcome three new board members this year, Deborah Brundage, Anna Kowalchuk, and Pamela Miller. Information about them is on page 3. Regrettably, we say goodbye to our departing board members: James O'Brien of the McClurg Museum & Chautauqua County Historical Society, and Patrick Weissend, former director of the Holland Land Office Museum and current branch manager for the Bank of Castile. James served as President and Vice-President during his term, and Patrick served as Treasurer. We thank both of them for their service to WNYAHA.

At our last meeting, new officers were elected; Joan Schumaker was elected President, and Melissa Brown, was chosen as Vice-President. Sarah LeCount and Joni Blackman were re-elected as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Melissa was also elected to a second, three year term on the board.

WNYAHA is very dependent on your membership dues to sustain us. Your dues provide funding for the newsletter, the Grave Matters workshop series, and the annual conference held in November. If you haven't renewed your membership yet, please do so today.



WNYAHA board secretary Sarah LeCount (at left) shows off fabric swatches at a session during the Regional meeting of the Association of Living History, Farm & Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM).

The session, identifying textiles for period reproduction clothing, was presented by Carrie Fellows (center). She is the Director of Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, former Director of Corning – Painted Post Historical Society and former WNYAHA board member. The meeting was hosted by Genesee Country Village & Museum.

*Photo by Terry C. Abrams*

**More than 17 thousand people in NY were employed by museums & heritage organizations in 2008, according to the Museum Association of NY.**

**From *New York State's Museums: Building Community (2009-10)***

# Caring for Native American Beadwork

*By Nona McQuay, Curator, History Center of Niagara*

## **Importance to History:**

Many museums across New York State have Native American objects, artifacts and works of art in their collections. Most of these include the fragile and beautiful art of beadwork. Examples that I have interpreted or cared for include the gorgeous costumes from Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows and local Iroquois dress of leather and cotton; Tuscarora raised beadwork sold as souvenirs at Niagara Falls; and a rare bead sculpture of the Tree of Life, a symbol of the Creation Story. These pieces tell the stories of first contact and trade with European settlers, the need for tribal income after loss of land, and the beauty of a threatened culture. Because of the culturally sensitivity of some artifacts, you will need to establish alliances with tribal experts who can advise you on care. For some items, curators cannot handle, clean or alter the pieces; for others, exhibition may be prohibited by religious or cultural practices. Examples of these I have seen recently are turtle rattles used in ceremonies, and wampum belts which may be important historical documents or treaties.

## **Handling of Beadwork:**

When handling beaded pieces, provide adequate support structures below the piece, and use nitrile gloves, the new museum standard for handling artifacts. Nitrile gloves can be purchased in medical exam quality, are non-allergenic, smooth with good grip and sensitivity, and impervious to water and most chemicals. They do not leave residue on artifacts,

as do rubber, latex, or cotton gloves. Supports can be made of ethifoam or padded, washed, unbleached muslin or linen. Determine the likely content of your beaded piece. Is it made of glass beads, shell or porcupine quills? For quills, a conservation specialist is your best bet. (Quilled work is featured in the exhibit accompanying the "Trial of Red Jacket" at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.) For glass beads, are they loose, broken, or suffer from "glass disease", in which they look dusty or non-translucent? What is the substrate, cotton, velvet or leather? Are there added materials? One of our beadwork purses has a woven metal detail at the opening. If beads are loose or falling off, be sure to save them in ephemera bags. Document the condition of the article in museum software or in a condition report attached to the Deed of Gift. Also document any treatment given.

## **Cleaning Beadwork:**

If the object can be safely handled, removing dust is the most common cleaning need. Some items, (such as Plains Indian Ghost Dance shirts), cannot be dusted as it would remove materials of cultural practices such as coating the inside with corn meal or scented oils. Beadwork should never be immersed in liquid, but can be carefully dusted to prevent abrasion and degradation of the piece; or acidic deposition in a humid atmosphere. Prevent dust by keeping objects in dust proof storage or exhibit cases when possible.

Frequently vacuum and clean floors to lessen airborne dust, especially in historic houses. Remove dust by one of the following methods: first and preferable, is vacuuming with the aid of a brush. Use a HEPA filtered vacuum if at all possible; there are inexpensive models available. A regular vacuum just puts the dust right back

into the immediate environment. The vacuum nozzle is held to the side, the nozzle is covered with fine mesh to prevent bead loss, and a camel's hair brush is used to lift the dust toward the nozzle one inch away. Second, less preferable, is wiping with a dust cloth called a "dust bunny", or microfiber cloth, taking care not to rub the surface. If the piece is still dirty and dull, some curators will damp clean the glass beads using Q-tips with soft handles, or homemade cotton swabs with medical cotton and swab sticks. The liquid used is distilled or deionized water, or 10 parts of de-natured alcohol or ethanol (drugstore grade) with 8 parts distilled or deionized water.

Never use tap water, detergent or ammonia. The swab is barely moistened, then blotted on paper toweling or clean rag, then gently swabbed up and away on each bead. When the swab shows dirt, it is discarded and a new one chosen. A controversial method used by some beadmakers consists of swabbing with human saliva, on the basis that the known buffering action of saliva can inhibit bacteria and fungi. If in doubt, or the underlying substrate is deteriorated, no action is better than a cleaning that will break threads or soak into the fabric beneath. A conservator should be consulted for important pieces. He or she will provide detailed analysis and description of treatment, as was done for our important bead sculpture.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Board Member Spotlight

This issue, we spotlight our three new board members.

**Deborah Brundage** is the new Director of the Cobblestone Society & Museum, in Childs, Orleans County, NY. Previously she was the Manager of School and Family Programs at The Farmers' Museum and the New York State Historical Society (NYSHA) in Cooperstown, NY for over 4 years. She also worked at the Strong National Museum of Play for over five years.

Trained as a professional educator, Deborah began her teaching career in Bangkok, Thailand and then Osaka, Japan. Upon returning to her hometown of Webster, NY, she redirected her energies to teaching in the museum world. Deborah states, "As soon as I was old enough I assisted with the student programs at The Landmark Society and this started me on the path of museums and education. I enjoy learning about what life was like in the past and then sharing that knowledge with others."

As the current Museum Administrator for the Livingston County Historical Society and Museum since 2008, **Anna Kowalchuk** is also the first hired staff person for the institution. She received a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the University of Delaware and a Master's Degree in Child and Family Studies from Syracuse University.

Her entry into the museum world did not follow a traditional career path. After a decade of teaching in the public schools and staying involved in area education, Anna joined forces with the Society's Board of Directors to affect positive change, momentum, and vision. She is instrumental in securing consultants and guiding reports to help propel the Society and the Museum onto a new and invigorating path. When not across the street at the museum she can be found spending time with her husband and two boys, ages 11 and 13, gardening, taking walks, or enjoying a zumba class.

**Pamela Miller** was born and raised in the Triple Cities (Binghamton, Endicott, & Johnson City) of New York. She attended Union Endicott High School and Broome Community College where she graduated with an Associate Degree in Business Administration. She married her childhood sweetheart in 1977, having met him at the tender age of fifteen, and moved to the Finger Lakes, Dundee specifically. For the last three plus decades, they have worked and made their home in Yates County.

Pamela has been the Executive Director of the Dundee Area Historical Society for the last fourteen years now and absolutely loves her job. She says, "I have learned so much about running a museum, doing research and archival preservation, and meeting wonderful people from all walks of life during my tenure at the Society." In her spare time, Pamela enjoys gardening, reading historical fiction, and restoring her huge Victorian house that is filled with antiques that she also loves collecting.

## Conferences & Workshops

**AASLH Exhibit Makeovers Workshop**  
**Chicago History Center**  
 Chicago, IL  
 April 28-29, 2011

Do the exhibits in your museum lack something? Do you want to improve the way you tell the story of your area's history? In *Exhibit Makeovers*, a workshop from AASLH based on the book *Exhibit Makeovers: A Do-It-Yourself Workbook for Small Museums*, attendees will learn the basics of exhibit planning, organization, text writing, and design. The workshop will be held at the Chicago His-

tory Center in Chicago, IL, where participants, working hands-on in small groups, will experiment with ways to make exhibit content meaningful and memorable for visitors.

Each attendee will receive a copy of the book *Exhibit Makeovers* by Alice Parman.

This workshop, scheduled for April 28-29, is intended for museum staff and volunteers who want to create more engaging and effective exhibits. It's also an opportunity for managers and board members to gain insight

into the processes of exhibit development and design. A supportive, team-based environment will build skills, confidence, and a network of colleagues.

For more information or to register for this exciting new workshop, visit <http://www.aaslh.org/ExhibitMakeovers.htm> or call Bethany Hawkins at 615-320-3203.

# Membership Renewals

*Following are the new members and renewal memberships as of March 28, 2011:*

## Individual

Anthony Barone  
 Leonora Brown  
 Melissa Brown  
 Castile Historical Society  
 Dansville Public Library  
 Susan Eck  
 Shirley Edsall  
 Sally Florence  
 Hamburg Antiques Study Group  
 Eric Hooker  
 Babette Huber  
 Mary Lowther  
 Vincent Martonis  
 Nancy Nixon  
 Karen Noonan  
 Catherine Roth  
 Joan Schumaker  
 John Sipos  
 Elaine Timm  
 Marilyn Turnbull  
 Kathleen Urbanic

## Organizational

Allegany Area Historical Society  
 Angelica Boosters Citizens\*  
 Arcade Historical Society  
 Aurora Historical Society  
 Avon Preservation & Historical Society  
 Bakers Bridge Historical Association

Heidi Bamford, Documentary Heritage Program  
 Big Springs Historical Society  
 Cheektowaga Historical Society  
 Cobblestone Society & Museum  
 Concord Historical Society  
 Corning-Painted Post Historical Society  
 Dundee Area Historical Society  
 East Springwater Historical Society  
 Elma Historical Society  
 Gowanda Area Historical Society  
 Greece Historical Society  
 Honeoye Falls-Mendon Historical Society  
 Hull House Restoration Foundation  
 Lancaster Historical Society  
 Letchworth State Park  
 Lewiston Historical Association  
 Livingston County Historical Society  
 Middlebury Historical Society  
 Museum of disABILITY History  
 Niagara County Federation of Historical Agencies  
 Niagara County Historical Society  
 North Collins Historical Society  
 Nunda Historical Society  
 Pembroke Historical Association  
 Penfield Local History Room  
 Portville Historical & Genealogical Society  
 Rochester Medical Museum & Archives  
 Salamanca Rail Museum

Sanborn Area Historical Society  
 Seneca-Iroquois National Museum  
 Steel Plant Museum  
 Susan Greene, American Costume Studies  
 Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Historic Site  
 Tonawanda-Kenmore Historical Society  
 Town of Somerset Historical Society  
 Wayland Historical Society  
 Webster Museum & Historical Society  
 Western Monroe Historical Society  
 West Sparta Historical Society  
 Wheatland Historical Association  
 Wilson Historical Society

## Organizational Supporting

Genesee Country Village & Museum

## Donations to Annual fund:

Joan Schumaker

**\* New member**



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 Niagara County Historical Society*

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 Executive Director

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[www.niagaracounty.org](http://www.niagaracounty.org)

## Caring for Native American Beadwork *(continued from page 2)*

Fungal outbreaks on beaded pieces can result in mold and mildew, and left untreated may cause permanent stains. Mold is easily detected – just sniff! If the characteristic musty odor is there, immediately remove the item from poor environmental conditions. If the relative humidity is above 50%, mold will be noted, and will grow rapidly above 80% humidity. A low cost way to determine humidity is to use a temperature and humidity gauge along with a pencil and paper pad, and note temperature and humidity at each visit to the site. If there are wild swings instead of gradual changes, or high humidity, address the site with increased air circulation, desiccants, and

dehumidifiers. To treat the object is vital as mold can darken fabric, change colors, and decrease the strength of the cloth or thread. If badly infested, wear a HEPA-filtered respirator (NIOSH-approved) before handling, as mold can cause serious health hazards if pathogenic, especially in individuals with immune system compromise for any reason. Then vacuum as stated above.

Freezing may also halt the growth of mold and mildew. Sunlight is good treatment, but do not leave the article outside after sunset. Loose beads can be reattached with a contrast color thread, so future conservators can recognize the repair. Broken beads may need to be removed to protect adjacent areas from harm, but should be saved for the future. Learn beading from an expert, if possible, to reproduce the stitches in use.

### Exhibition and Display:

Beaded souvenir items are displayed at the History Center of Niagara on a slanted board covered with cotton fabric in a sealed glass case. Lighting is ambient, and the fluorescent tubes are covered with UV light reducing film. A window facing south provides natural light with the display case placed away from direct glare. The window is covered with venetian blinds closed against direct rays. The display was recently dusted and realigned, allowing a condition survey. Light is the enemy of exhibited items, and can be quantified with a handheld LUX meter.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Regents Need Your Comments About Proposed Deaccessioning Rule

Please send or email all comments (positive or negative) by April 15<sup>th</sup> to: **Jeffrey W. Cannell, Deputy Comm. for Cultural Education, State Education Department, Cultural Education Center, Room 10C34, Albany, NY 12230; jcannell@mail.nysed.gov**

As a result of the work of an *ad hoc* Deaccessioning Committee, the Regents now have a draft regulation to amend Regents Rule §3.27, Relating to Museum Collections Management Policies specifying criteria for deaccessioning. The proposed amendment would apply to chartered museums and historical societies authorized to own and hold collections under Rule §3.27, and would:

Enumerate ten specific criteria under which an institution may deaccession an item or material in its collection.

Specify that proceeds from deaccessioning be restricted in a separate fund to be used only for the acquisition of collections or the direct preservation, protection or care of collections.

The draft reads, in part (new or amended language is underlined):

(e) deaccession. The criteria and process (including levels of permission) used for determining what items are to be removed from the collections, which shall be consistent with paragraph (7) of this subdivision, and a statement limiting the use of any funds derived therefrom in accordance with subparagraph (vii) of this paragraph;

[(iv)] (v) ensure that collections or any individual part thereof and the proceeds derived therefrom shall not be used as collateral for a loan;

[(v)] (vi) ensure that collections shall not be capitalized; and

[(vi)] (vii) ensure that proceeds derived from the deaccessioning of any property from the institution's collection be restricted in a separate fund to be used only for the acquisition of collections, or the preservation, conservation or direct care of collections.

*(Continued on page 7)*

*You never know what you'll find at  
the Historical Society...*



**except for a  
good time!**

Hit Party on the Portico, our live-music happy hour,  
with iconic views of Delaware Park...

...or bring the kids to our all-age May Day Celebration...

...and be sure to visit the magnificent exhibit,

*Fact, Fiction & Spectacle: The Trial of Red Jacket*

### Upcoming Schedule:

May Day Celebration  
Saturday, May 1

Museum Family Day  
Saturday, June 12

Party on the Portico  
June 17, July 15, August 19

For more information visit  
[www.buffalohistory.org](http://www.buffalohistory.org)

or call (716) 873-9644

Groups or schools,  
please dial extension 311.

Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society  
25 Nottingham Court, Buffalo, NY 14216



# Regents Draft on Deaccessioning *(continued from page 5)*

In no event shall proceeds derived from the deaccessioning of any property from the collection be used for operating expenses or for any purposes other than the acquisition, preservation, conservation or direct care of collections.

2. Paragraph (7) of subdivision (c) of section 3.27 of the Rules of the Board of Regents is amended, effective June 8, 2011, as follows:

(7) Deaccessioning of Collections. An institution may deaccession an item in its collection only in a manner consistent with its mission statement and collections management policy and where one or more of the following criteria have been met:

(i) the item is inconsistent with the mission of the institution as set forth in its mission statement;

(ii) the item has failed to retain its identity;

(iii) the item is redundant;

(iv) the item's preservation and conservation needs are beyond the capacity of the institution to provide;

(v) the item is deaccessioned to accomplish refinement of collections;

(vi) it has been established that the item is inauthentic;

(vii) the institution is repatriating the item or returning the item to its rightful owner;

(viii) the institution is returning the item to the donor, or the donor's heirs or assigns, to fulfill donor restrictions relating to the item which the institution is no longer able to meet;

(ix) the item presents a hazard to people or other collection items; and/or

(x) the item has been lost or stolen and has not been recovered.



# Caring for Native American Beadwork *(continued from page 5)*

Automatic light shut-off when motion is not detected can reduce light emissions in buildings not in use on a regular basis.

Revolving your exhibits helps prevent long-term light damage. To detect such damage, observe a cloth underlay after your exhibit has been up for a few months, and you will see if the outline of the objects are visible. (Or use ISO Blue Wool cards to determine fading after a few weeks.) UV light reducing plastic window and exhibit case screens can help. These are available in sheets or film, and are cut to shape to cover windows.

Avoid interior lights in cases, especially those that produce heat such as incandescent and halogen bulbs, which can be fire hazards. Consider fiber optic light systems in exhibit cases provided the light source is mounted outside the case. The standard limit for lighting varies with the material being exhibited. For resources and help to care, treat, and exhibit your beadwork, contact the author at the History Center of Niagara County, 716/434-7433.

## ASSOCIATION UPDATE

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Newsletter editor: Terry C. Abrams

Special thanks to Ann Marie Linnabery of the History Center of Niagara County for assistance with proofreading and editing.

# This Space Available !

**Advertise your museum/historical society, service or product in the newsletter. Discounted rates for WNYAHA members! The ASSOCIATION UPDATE goes to our members in a 12 county region (and beyond!)**

Ad size	Non-member/issue	Member/issue	Non-member annual (4 issues)	Member annual (4 issues)
Full page	\$150.00	\$100.00	\$450.00	\$300.00
½ page	\$110.00	\$80.00	330.00	\$240.00
¼ page	\$75.00	\$50.00	\$225.00	\$150.00
1/8 page	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$120.00	\$90.00
1/16 page (business card size)	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$75.00	\$45.00

Organizational Supporting members get 1 free ad (1/8 page)! For more information, contact the WNYAHA office at P.O. Box 39 Getzville, NY 14068, or by phone (716) 539-6293 or email wnyaha@yahoo.com.

## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Categories:

Student \$15 \_\_\_ Individual \$30\_\_\_ Organizational \$50\_\_\_ Organizational Supporting \$100\_\_\_

Yes! I would like to make an additional contribution: \$10 \_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Check or money order to:

Western New York Association of Historical Agencies, P.O Box 39, Getzville, NY 14068

Phone: (716) 439-6293 email: wnyaha@yahoo.com

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