

We've Been Busy! Here's What We're Doing...

August 8, 2023

A mid-year update from Thea Burgess, Board President and Communications Committee Chair

July marks the halfway point of not only the summer but the year itself. Looking back over the first six months of 2023, I realize that Historic Red Hook has achieved a number of milestones we want to celebrate.

Winter evenings warmed up when two American history scholars presented via Zoom: Dr. Mark Boonshoft spoke on his book *Aristocratic Education and the Making of the American Republic* in February, and in March, Dr. Thomas Summerhill discussed his book *Harvest of Dissent: Agrarianism in Nineteenth-Century New York* (view recordings here: historicrodhook.org/past-events). A Valentine's Day-themed evening, chaired by Dee Karpel and Ellen Phelan, was a success, as was the return of our famous Soup Night in March, also organized by Dee and Ellen. As our reseeded Elmendorph Green "greened" up in March, on the heels of the village sewer project's completion, the Facilities Committee met with the Village of Red Hook Public Spaces Initiative and then planted the pollinator garden at the entrance to our parking lot.

Realizing a long-term goal, trustees and volunteers moved our archives down from the second floor of the Elmendorph Inn, across the Elmendorph Green, and into to our newly opened StoryStudio at 5 Cherry



HRH's facilities committee met in March with the Village's PSI Committee to plan the planting of a pollinator garden in June.

Street. In conjunction with the move, the Collections Committee has been surveying and cataloguing our archives in our cloud-based software program CatalogIt. Treasurer Jim Haskin and Secretary Claudine Klose have shepherded our collections committee as they have updated this resource, and we saw a preview of its potential during our member appreciation event in April. In May, Historic Red Hook sponsored two of Dutchess County Historian Will Tatum's Tavern Trail programs, one held at Red Hook's Rose Hill and another at Rhinebeck's Foster's Coach House.

Also in May, newly appointed Trustee Beth Goldberg, Director Elisabeth Tatum, Secretary Klose, and I staffed an information table at Hardscrabble Day in the Village of Red Hook where we previewed our Then & Now festival. The eight members of the oral history project had their initial training on May 12 under the guidance of Eileen McAdam; a follow up training session will occur later this summer. Elisabeth and I represented Historic Red Hook at the May 15 unveiling of a historic marker located on the grounds of Montgomery Place and denoting Lafayette's Tour in 1824.

The Programs Committee put in many hours of work culminating in the fun Then & Now festival. The event committee was spearheaded by Vice President Amanda Bodian and assisted by Trustee Rick East and succeeded due to the help of countless volunteers, organizations, local businesses, and artisans. Held in early June, Then & Now included a self-guided walking tour of the Four Corners of the Village of Red Hook; over 300 people attended our displays on-site, and the StoryStudio officially re-opened.

Looking ahead, the trustees of Historic Red Hook will be having a strategic planning session to consider next steps following our completion of the Capital Campaign, the creating the Elmendorph Green, and the re-housing of our archives in the StoryStudio. We are gearing up for our third annual Cemetery



Many hands made lighter work as we transported collections down from the second floor of the Inn over to the StoryStudio.

Crawl and scavenger hunt kicking off on Hardscrabble Day, planning for our annual meeting in October, and wrapping up the year with our fundraising auction in November and holiday open house in December. The second half of 2023 will be as exciting and fulfilling.

These events are all possible due to our many members, sponsors, volunteers, committees, board of trustees, executive committee members, and executive director Elisabeth Tatum. To continue our progress, we invite each of you to support Historic Red Hook in a number of ways. Become a member if you aren't already. Renew your membership when the invitation



Tabling at Apple Blossom Day.



Unveiling of new historic marker.



Oral history training.

comes in December. Donate to our organization. Attend our programs. Volunteer at an event. Join a committee. Visit the StoryStudio. For information about any of these possibilities, contact Elisabeth Tatum at director@historicredhook.org or me at president@historicredhook.org or by clicking on the links provided.

Here's to a stellar rest of 2023!
Thea Burgess, President

PS—Congratulations to our executive director Elisabeth Tatum who successfully passed her qualifying exams as she works toward her Ph.D. in American History at SUNY-Albany.