

Harpers Ferry Historical Association Annual Meeting

September 11, 2016, 3:00p

Upper Classroom, Mather Training Center

President Dave Gilbert started off with welcome and introduction of board members:

Board members in attendance: Dave Gilbert, Jim Jenkins, Bob Johnson, Doug Perks, Jim Silvia, and Wayne Welty.

Staff members in attendance: Cathy Baldau, Jen Barnard, Deb Piscitelli, and Whitney Richards.

Introduction of Executive Director Cathy Baldau

Cathy thanked the Board for the support and the opportunity to serve. Thanked the members of the park staff.

Change can be scary, so Cathy wanted to give the Board some insight as to how she came to this point in order to try to alleviate some fears.

Born in a northeastern Ohio steel town, and attended college in Pittsburgh. Worked in the office furniture industry. She held many positions, several were with governmental agencies. In her spare time, she likes to visit National Parks, especially battlefields. Almost exactly 25 years ago, she took a tour @ Harpers Ferry. At St Peter's, she had a special moment and thought that she would like to live there some day.

She made the decision to move Harpers Ferry. Following the birth of her second child she answered an ad for a part time position with the HFHA.

When Deb decided to retire, she had another decision to make about jumping back into the workforce full time.

Rebecca Harriet Presented the Report from the Park

The Park is in good shape. We have had an extraordinary year, which can be attributed to the Centennial celebration and its events. Focus of the centennial was not just honoring the past, but also to focus on the future. Welcoming a new generation of stewards of our parks.

Recognized was Dennis Frye, Todd Bolton, Kim, Cathy Baldau (designed and formatted the booklets for the Centennial), as well as anyone involved with the planning and creation of the programs that came together this year for the Centennial.

Every Kid in a Park – This program promoted involvement of 4th graders as well as their families. Over 4,000 of the free passes were handed out in the local area. It has been very successful, and will be continued into 2017

Programs – Over 1500 programs were offered through the course of the year

Garnett Jex Paintings – program that came up after the programs were printed – great program, that Deb Piscitelli helped to bring to fruition

Multiple Events – Rebecca reviewed several of the additional events that occurred @ the park through the course of the year.

Don Redmond – The concert returning to the Storer College campus was a great win for the park

2 Projects – designated as Centennial projects – Point Accessibility project & the Acquisition of the 13 acre Alstadt property

Visitation is up by over 10% for the year

The porch on the Bookshop building will revamped soon.

Rebecca is retiring on September 30, 2016. Vacancy announcement for her position will go out for her position shortly. She is hopeful that the position will be filled shortly.

Rebecca thanked the Association, stating she appreciated the honesty during tough times, and being able to work through challenges.

Cathy Baldau Furnished Report of Finances & Executive Director's Report

2015 was much improved over 2014. We were @ \$381K revenue which was up over \$80K over the previous year. Reported that cumulative aid to the park is over \$2.8million. 7 of the 1st 8 months of the year have been up over the previous year. June was the best June on record for the Association.

Association Activities – Sue was not able to be here because of knee surgery, but is a key part of all of the Association events. Whitney has been promoted to Operations manager and is doing a great job while learning the ropes with Cathy. George Best works for the park. He will be helping with some research and editing. Jen Barnard – newest associate in the bookshop. She has taken on processing of memberships. Kaitlin Simmons – currently manning the bookshop, and is a student @ Shepherd.

Programs – 2015 revenue from the Tour Guide Program increased 25% in 2015 over 2014. Lewis & Clark

Publications – Towpath Guide in 2015 – this month in 2016 – next edition of the Harpers Ferry Walkers Guide – and the cookbook – Next up is a Storer College book to coincide with the anniversary of the founding of the College. It will focus on the people and the stories.

Membership Activities – We had set a goal of 100 new members for the Centennial. We currently have 73. We have a small but loyal membership base. – Revenue in 2015 was \$9,000 from membership. Goal for next year will be to break the \$10K level.

Member Recognition – Ran through the members who have supported the Association at high levels as well as Charter members who have supported for many years.

Deborah Piscitelli Fund – created to support the park in Deb's name. During the first 3 weeks after the announcement of the fund, \$2,905 has been raised. With Deb's affinity for the former artists in residence program and the Garnett Jex paintings, we are thinking that we may do something with bringing artists back to the park.

Dennis Frye Furnished Cooperating Association Coordinator Comments

Dennis has one word for us to remember – independent – The HFHA is independent. Most parks do not have this arrangement. Other parks are removing this independent status of the cooperating association. It is likely that the new Superintendent will not have worked with an independent association, and will need to be educated as to the benefits.

George Best worked as an intern, then as a ranger student. At that point he had to go off the rolls of the Park. The Association was able to keep him involved with the Park. Small but important example of how the association helps the park.

Intern Help– There was an intern who had been with the Park for 7 years. While she was on vacation, the Human Resources department advised Dennis that she had to be terminated immediately. The Association was able to utilize some funds that had been put aside to be able to keep her on the rolls.

Employee Retention – It is becoming more and more difficult to keep “veteran” workers on board. The Association is committed to providing opportunities to keep some of these people working and involved with the Park, while continuing to offer a quality product.

We need to ensure that we are able to maintain this independence. Board members and Association staff will be critical to maintaining this independence.

\$2925 in the Deb K. Piscitelli fund – Dennis is announcing that we have a member that is willing to match the amount that is raised. They believe in the organization, as well as the people involved.

New Business –

The name of the Association – in the past we have felt that the name Harpers Ferry Historical Association has been a little misleading. We are proposing a name change to Harpers Ferry Park Association. Thus gives us a little better recognition and connection to the park.

Jim Jenkins voiced concern that we should have “National Park” included in the name, and not just “Park”. Dennis asked Deb Piscitelli to provide some information regarding the difficulties that the Association encounters on a regular basis because of the current name. She advised that the public thinks of the Association as an historical society for genealogy and historical research.

The motion was made to accept the name as “Harpers Ferry Park Association” the vote was 20 to 3 in favor, and the motion carried.

Board Members – incumbents – Suzanne Silvia, Ed Wheelless, Wayne Welty, as well as Cynthia Gayton as new board member – The motion was made and seconded, with unanimous approval.

Dave Gilbert adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:55p so that members could enjoy the picnic.