


Word From the Junction

Newsletter of the Manassas Museum Associates - Winter 2021




(Re) Imagine YOUR MUSEUM

Have you driven by the Museum lately and seen the new banners hanging on the wall outside? Or perhaps you have visited and seen one of our new chalkboard walls in either the courtyard outside or the main gallery inside. Did you wonder what the words (Re) Imagine Your Museum meant?

We have exciting news to share about this! Museum staff and leadership are preparing for a major upgrade to the building and gallery spaces. New exhibits, new spaces and possibly a new addition are all being considered. To manage this exciting project, the City has hired GWWO Architects, a Maryland-based firm, to do the architectural work. GWWO is a world class firm that centers their work mostly in the museum field. In addition, Capital Museum Services, the museum's on call exhibit design firm, will be leading the work to reinvigorate our gallery spaces.

Before we dig that first shovel full of dirt or make any changes to the exhibits, we need YOUR feedback. What should these new spaces look like? What do you see going on there? What would you like to experience when you visit us? These and other questions are all part of our (Re) Imagine work.



In the weeks and months ahead, we will be hosting a series of Community Conversations to get your thoughts and ideas on what the Manassas Museum should look like in the future. We encourage everyone to participate in these discussions. If the meetings don't work with your schedule, we still welcome your feedback through our website or on one of the chalkboard walls. Keep checking our website, www.manassasva.gov/reimagine for announcements about upcoming meeting dates.

Our goal is to have all this work done and a newly (Re) Imagined museum open in April, 2023 in time for the City's 150th anniversary celebration. So, put your thinking caps on and let's get creative together. We look forward to re-imagining with you.



Curator's Corner

by Mary Helen Dellinger

It's a new year and that means new projects for the Manassas Museum. For collections and exhibitions, I wanted to bring two new things to your attention that we need YOUR help with!

Annual Student Art Show Now in It's 8th Year Opens on March 5

Our exhibit calendar has two new shows coming up soon. The annual student art show, *Artistic Expression*, opens on March 5 featuring the works of Osbourn High School students. Following that, on



The 2019 student art exhibit featured dozens of works in many different mediums.

June 4, we open a new temporary exhibition called *Manassas Faces*. This show will feature residents of our community who work hard behind the scenes to make Manassas the fantastic community it is today. We are looking for nominations on who to include in this special display. Anyone can be nominated, including people who lived in the past. We want this show to be made up of people that are not famous, so don't expect to see the usual names associated with Manassas in this display. Do you know someone you think should be a part of this exhibit? Reach out to our Curator, Mary Helen Dellinger and let her know. She can be reached at mdellinger@manassasva.gov with your suggestions. There is no official nomination form, just a simple email with who you are nominating and why will be fine.

Museum Collections Committee Seeking Nominations for People Who Wish to Volunteer

The Museum Collections Committee is also seeking nominations for people who wish to volunteer. This important committee, made up of members from the Museum's Historic Resources Board now includes, for the first time, two seats to be

See Museum Collections Committee, next page

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Manassas Museum Associates Board

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A PEEK AT PROGRAMS

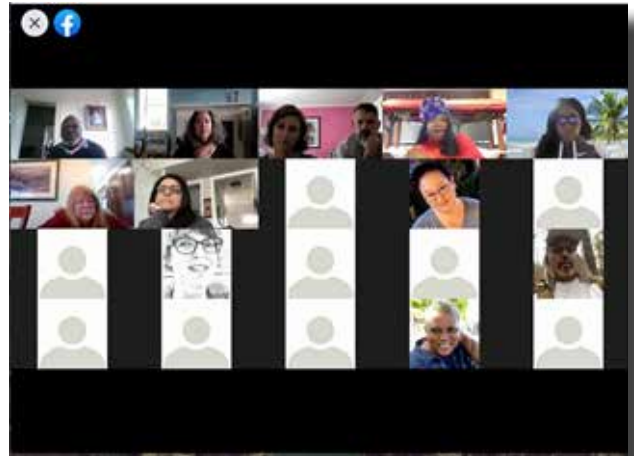
manassascity.org/leisure

by Rachel Goldberg



On December 5th, we welcomed Joe McGill, founder of the Slave Dwelling Project to Liberia house for two programs: A Front Porch Talk that was aired live on Facebook, and Empowering Descendant Voices, a Zoom program in which he discussed the challenges and opportunities of historic sites engaging with descendants of enslaved families who once lived and worked at those sites.

Since it aired on December 5, 2020, Mr. McGill's Front Porch Talk-



-which showcased The Slave Dwelling Project and the work they do--has been viewed over 600 times. The Zoom program, Empowering Descendant Voices, was an intimate and honest conversation between Mr. McGill and Linneall Naylor, who is descended from Samuel and Nellie Naylor who were once enslaved at Liberia House. This program was virtually attended by people from around the country who were interested in hearing how and why historic sites work with descendant communities. It was through this Zoom program that our work with Ms. Naylor at the Manassas Museum caught the attention of a group of historians in Bristol, Rhode Island.

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Museum Collections Committee

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filled by members from the community. Wondering what the Collections Committee does? They are in charge of considering all offers of donations to the museum's collection of objects. Other duties including approving loan requests from other museums and, from time to time, removal of objects from the collection. Not only do you get to see the objects up close before anyone else, you help make the decisions on what to keep. It is really quite fun and since they only meet twice a year, is not a huge commitment of time. If you are interested in joining this fun group to help shape the museum's collection, please reach out to our Curator Mary Helen Dellinger (email above) for more information.



This storage area holds part of the museum's archival collection.

Zoom Programming


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During the 18th century, Bristol, Rhode Island was one of the largest slave ports in the U.S. and was home to the De Wolf family, who, between 1769 and 1820 brought nearly 10,000 Africans to America and sold them into slavery. It's possible that over a half a million descendants of those original 10,000 are alive today.

Research Inspired by the Possibilities

A small group of women are doing research into the lives of the free and enslaved African Americans and Indigenous people of Bristol, Rhode Island and the surrounding communities. Their research was inspired by the possibility of placing a Middle Passage Port Marker in their community due to the significant slave trade activity there during the late 18th and early 19th century. They are curious about sharing their research with descendants of enslaved people, but are unsure how to go about contacting them, which led them to reaching out to Ms. Naylor and me to discuss our work together. Their research focuses on compiling primary source documents that pertain to the lives of over 200 people of

color who lived in Bristol, many of whom survived their enslavement and lived to add to the fabric of the community.

They wanted to hear from us about how they might support people who may be searching for their ancestral history in a way that is sensitive, helpful, and respectful. They were curious about our experience and how we came to be working together, and we shared very honestly and openly about how the Manassas Museum came to cultivate this relationship with Linneall Naylor. They especially wanted any advice on how to support their local descendant community without - even unknowingly - trying to control or slant the narrative. 



After our Zoom conversation, I received a very grateful email from our new colleagues in Bristol:

If you would be so kind as to please extend our sincere gratitude to Linneall - hearing her perspective and the journey she has taken to better understand her ancestry was incredibly inspiring. Her words of support for this research work, coupled with your proven examples of how to create space for these connections to develop, and how to empower descendants in this work in Virginia have energized us to keep moving things forward here in Bristol.

We look forward to continuing this relationship with the group in Bristol and staying up to date on their research while also continuing to bring you more interesting programming of our own on this topic. To view either of the aforementioned programs, visit facebook.com/cityofmanassasleisure.



Welcome to the PCR Team

Jane Marsh is the newest Visitor Services Aide with the Manassas Museum. After graduating from high school, she enlisted in the Air Force and spent the next 23 years traveling to many different countries and retiring as a SMSgt (E-8). Jane graduated Summa Cum Laude from Averett University with a bachelor's degree in business administration. In March, she will be married 25 years to her husband, and together they have three awesome sons and a Chiweenie dog. She homeschooled her boys through elementary school, worked as a substitute teacher for PWC schools and most recently was the Grant Communications Coordinator for the NRA Foundation. In her free time, you can find Jane on a golf course, in her small garden or spending time with her family. She is an avid Steelers fan and more recently a Nationals fan. Jane is so pleased to be a part of the museum team and is looking forward to the museum renovation and the many updates at the gift shop.

Jane Marsh
Visitor Services Aide



Notes from the President's Desk

By the time you read this, we will be well into the new year. As we await the end of the pandemic, the Associates have stayed busy and continued to support the Museum in various ways. This past winter we purchased a piece of statuary for the garden at Liberia – a lovely pineapple with large base. To compliment this piece, we also ordered a sundial, which should be delivered soon. The pineapple and sundial will be installed in the garden early in the spring, so look for them when you visit Liberia. The Civil War period haversack that was out for conservation has been returned and looks fantastic. Claudia Walpole, the conservator, did a lovely job in cleaning the haversack, reattaching the original button and mending some minor tears to the fabric. We are excited to see this piece back on exhibit later this year at the museum.



Thank you to everyone who has continued to support us through this extraordinary time. We look forward to assisting the Museum with outdoor activities and other projects as they come up in 2021.

Pat Beuch, President



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