

Underground Railroad graphic rail dedicated in Youngstown



Pictured are Pauline Goulah, Gretchen Duling, Dennis Duling and Karen Noonan. At right, a shot of the crowd.

BY KAREN NOONAN

Youngstown celebrated its role as a final stop on the Underground Railroad on Saturday, Sept. 5, with the dedication of a graphic rail at Constitution Park. This is a difficult history to document, but Gretchen and Dennis Duling traveled across New York state visiting historic societies and churches to locate the narratives of individuals such as John P. VanDeusen of Newark, who recorded in his 1855 diary that he gave in-

structions to "James (a fugitive slave) to go to Lockport and then to Youngstown to see the hardware merchant Mr. Pardee," who was in business at 409 Main St. Following completion of their research and publication of their book, "A Final River to Cross: The Underground Railroad at Youngstown, NY" (2017), the Dulings worked with me and graphic designers at Goulah Design to create a graphic rail illustrating the Village of Youngstown's pivot-



al role during the decades before the Civil War. The Niagara River was the final river that fugitive slaves cross, and Youngstown ferrymen (some operated "horse ferry" boats) were among those who made it possible for at least 17 individuals to reach freedom on the Canadian shore. Identifying those who assisted in this effort, the Dulings uncovered a long-forgotten history of Youngstown ferrymen and a

woman who operated the ferry service across the river to Canada. The park sits just above what many believe to be the foundation for one of the ferry houses located along the river bank. Dating from the 1840s, the village protected the structure, removing a 20th century addition that had been built on top of it. Standing on the platform above the structure, one can look across the river and reflect on the experience of those fortunate to have

reached the Niagara Frontier and freedom and safety in Canada. The graphic rail was financed by the Niagara Frontier National Heritage Area and Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, with assistance from the Village of Youngstown and the Town of Porter Historical Society. The dedication included a musical program with African American spirituals sung by William Cooper, assisted by Bob Sowydra on bass and Dennis Duling on piano.

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IN THE NEWS

Lewiston Senior Center meetings announced

The Lewiston Senior Club and Lewiston Travel Club announced this week their September meetings – typically held on the first Tuesday and Thursday of each month at the Lewiston Senior Center – have been moved to the first week in October with the site remaining closed due to COVID-19.

The Lewiston Travel Club will resume its meeting schedule on Thursday, Oct. 1, while the Lewiston Senior Club will resume Tuesday, Oct. 6.

For more information, contact the Lewiston Senior Center at 754-2071.

'Coffee with Chris' at Cristoforo Colombo

Niagara Falls City Council Chairman Chris Voccio has scheduled a "Coffee with Chris"

event for 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at the Cristoforo Colombo Society, 2223 Pine Ave., Niagara Falls.

Voccio will provide hand sanitizer and ask attendees to sign in should contact tracing become necessary. He will bring Tim Hortons coffee. Guests need to bring a face mask.

For more information, call Voccio at 696-0086.

HAL resumes programming

The Historical Association of Lewiston is pleased to announce the start of its monthly meetings with the September program: "Time Capsule in Your Backyard." Peter Jablonski will present this event at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, at the Red Brick Municipal Building gym, 145 N. Fourth St.

Jablonski will share a most intriguing presentation on the treasures of the past excavated from privies or outhouse pits in the area. The lecture will cover how to locate a privy, why garbage was thrown in them, and the history of local glasshouses and how to date bottles. He will in-

clude a large display of artifacts such as bottles, chamber pots, clay smoking pipes, marbles, doll heads, coins, stoneware, china, etc. Video footage from digs will be shown.

Jablonski is a science teacher for Orleans Niagara BOCES in Medina. On the side, he deals in antiques. He resides with his wife, Heather, in Akron; they have five children. He is an avid privy digger and collects bottles, decorated stoneware, breweriana, occupational shaving mugs and postal history. He also writes articles for Antique Bottle & Glass Collector and the WNY Heritage Magazine.

This community event is free and open to all. Use the north door on Onondaga Street.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all guests must wear appropriate facial coverings and practice social distancing during the presentation. Hand sanitizer will be available. There may be a seating limitation.

There will be no refreshments served at this meeting.

For more information on HAL, visit its website at <http://historiclewiston.org>.

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