

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES, *Community Opportunities*

66th Annual Meeting of the League of Local Historical Societies & Museums

Virtual Conference: October 30 & 31, 2020

For over 60 years, historical societies & museums across Vermont have come together to learn and network at our annual conference. But what do you do when you can't be together in person? We think the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic can also point towards opportunities. Join us for a new opportunity to come together virtually and talk about creative responses to our mutual challenges. Support for the conference provided by the Walter Cerf Community Fund.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: WENDY ZUCAL

Wendy Zucal has been the Executive Director of the Dennison Railroad Museum for 30 years, building the institution from the ground up. The 2018 Ohio Museum Professional of the Year, Wendy is also the President of the Ohio Local History Alliance and founder of the Ohio Museum Leadership Exchange. She is a graduate of Marietta College and has her Masters from Carnegie Mellon University. She has a great deal of experience in grant writing, place-making, and creative leadership.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE *(all activities are virtual)*

October 30	October 31
10:00 to 11:00 am– Welcome & Keynote	9:00 to 9:45 am– Coffee Chat
11:30 am to 12:30 pm– Lunch Discussions	10:00 to 11:00 am– Session 1
1:00 to 2:00 pm– Session 1	11:30 am to 12:30 pm– Session 2
2:30 to 3:30 pm– Session 2	12:45 to 1:45 pm– Wrap-up Lunch

REGISTRATION

Registration fees include all sessions & keynote. Session recordings will be available afterwards for all registrants. Registration Fees: \$5 VHS Members/\$15 Non-Members

Contact Community Outreach Manager, Eileen Corcoran at eileen.corcoran@vermonthistory.org for invoicing options or other registration questions.

Updated details & registration available online at <https://vermonthistory.org/league-meeting>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

All sessions will take place via Zoom

OCTOBER 30

10:00 to 11:00am

Welcome & Keynote

Small But Mighty: Finding our Superpower for the New Normal

Wendy Zucal, Executive Director, Dennison Railroad Depot Museum

Times of uncertainty call for superheroes. Small museums and historical societies are the backbones of our communities and they have the opportunity to emerge as leaders, finding success out of chaos. Wendy Zucal has seen the power of museums. She has proven that a museum can save a community. The first thing she will tell you is: Never let the size of your museum determine your value or limit your role. Wendy will share ideas on how museums and historical societies can find relevance in a world with bigger problems, and how collaboration and strategic thinking are the orders of the day. As the dust settles from one of the worst pandemics in American history and a new normal emerges, how will the role of museums change? How do we best invest our limited time and resources to have an impact and leave a stronger legacy?

11:30am to 12:30pm

Lunch with Colleagues

Bring a sandwich and your questions and join VHS staff in one of two breakout rooms for some Q&A and informal discussions.

Collections Management Software with *Teresa Greene, Collections Manager*

Donor Stewardship & Data with *Tori Hart, Director of Development*

1:00 to 2:00 pm

Pandemic Pivoting: Tackling Changes (or Not) During Uncertain Times

Sarah Rooker, Norwich Historical Society

Like many Vermont cultural institutions, Norwich Historical Society quickly closed its doors, gathered on Zoom, and got the exhibit online. The past six months have been a journey for the organization which is emerging with a deeper understanding of its mission, a more robust set of administrative procedures, a reinvigorated Board thinking strategically, and a greatly enhanced connection to the community. Sarah Rooker will explain how this happened, share thoughts about the future for the organization, and provide some practical suggestions for weathering unexpected storms.

2:30 to 3:30pm

Virtual Teaching with LCMM

Matt Harrison & Elizabeth Lee, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

Join the education staff at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum as they review the museum's experience this summer with virtual education, through their summer camp programs. Staff will share strategies, thoughts, successes, and challenges over the course of this season.

OCTOBER 31

9:00 to 9:45am

Coffee Chat with the Collections Care & Conservation Alliance

Start the morning with conservators & collections professionals from the CCCA (<https://collectionsalliance.org/>) who will be on hand to answer your collections care & preservation questions.

10:00 11:00 am

Advancing Diverse Stories in Vermont History: Teaching Representation and the Legacy of Alexander Twilight

Mahala Nyberg, Old Stone House Museum & Rehana Nazareli-Ruddy, Smith College student & VHS intern

Modern renderings of history communicate as much about the present as they do about the past. Historians and educators craft narratives that both reflect and influence the way we see the world: certain stories are included, and others omitted, lives lived long ago are preserved—or forgotten—by the present moment. This session asks the question: what can Vermont educators grappling with issues of diverse representation learn from the history of our state? The extraordinary life of Alexander Twilight represents one of these stories.

11:30am to 12:30pm

Online Exhibits in 2020

Amanda Gustin, Vermont Historical Society

Museums rely on their exhibitions to share objects and attract visitors. How do we keep sharing history in a world without in-person visitation? Learn about the basics of online exhibits – how they're similar and how they're different from traditional physical displays, what pitfalls to avoid, and what can make you stand out. We'll have time to share good examples and discuss your institution's own challenges.

12:45-1:45pm

Wrap-Up Lunch & Awards

Wrap-up the conference with us as we reflect on presentations and where we might go in the future, as well as learning about our 2020 LLHSM Achievement Awards winners.

Updated details & registration available online at <http://vermonthistory.org/league-meeting>

Making the Conference More

We know virtual conferences can never take the place of in person gatherings. But here are a few ideas for how you can maximize engagement and learning together.

Organize a group viewing party for your organization. Gather a small socially-distanced group to watch the sessions live, or even do it afterwards using the session recordings.

Grab a conference buddy. Talking through what you just heard with colleagues is a great part of conferences. Ask a friend to be your conference buddy. Need help finding someone to chat with? We'll set you up with a conference buddy, just indicate your need when registering.

Get the Discussion Going. Hop on over to our Discussion Board before, during, or after the conference to share your thoughts, questions, or to keep talking with your friends and colleagues.



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There's no doubt that 2020 has presented a set of challenges to historical societies and museums around the world. But, often with challenges come opportunities and ways to think creatively and collaboratively that we haven't before. Join us at our annual conference to hear about ways in which some organizations have responded to the unforeseen hurdles and disruptions to "normal" operations, and to talk together about how we can use what we've learned to be great community organizations for the future.

Special Thanks... To our keynote speaker, all the workshop presenters, the Walter Cerf Community Fund, and all of the incredible local history organizations who make connections through Vermont history.