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“THE QUEEN OF AMERICAN LAKES”

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“Incredible” First Year for LG Battlefield Park Visitor Center

By Mirror Staff

The Lake George Battlefield Park Visitors Center, which includes a wide array of artifacts uncovered by archaeological digs in the Park, concluded its first season at the end of “Path Through History Weekend” on Monday, October 10.

Throughout the weekend, the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance conducted free guided tours through the Fort George/Battlefield Parks, pointing out the stone ruins of Fort George, the burial place of four unknown soldiers who were killed in the 1755 Battle of Lake George, the Park’s historic statues and the events and historical figures they commemorate, and the remnants of hospitals and kilns that served soldiers during the two 18th century conflicts.

According to Dr. Russell Bellico, a trustee of the Battlefield Park Alliance and the author of several books about the region’s social, military and maritime history, “This site was a place of conflict and suffering from the Battle of Lake George in September 1755 up to the destruction of Fort George by the British in October 1780. Given the perspective of time, we can now better appreciate the Battlefield Park for its inspirational American history and inherent natural beauty.”

After having been the site of battles in 1755 and 1757, the base at the head of Lake George became the headquarters of the British as they prepared to launch attacks on the French at Ticonderoga, Crown Point and Montreal. In 1759, General Jeffery Amherst ordered a stone fort to be constructed, replacing

a stockaded fort. During the War of Independence, the fort was the largest military hospital in North America.

In October, 1780, in the last encounter between the Americans and the British during the war, British Major Christopher Carleton raided Fort George. Those who were not killed were captured and sent down the lake to Fort Ticonderoga, controlled by the British since 1777.”

According to the Alliance’s leaders, the Visitor Center’s first season was a successful one.

“The interest of the public when visiting the Center has been very exciting—many connected with a history they did not know had happened in this area,” said Alliance Trustee and past President Dr. Lyn Karig Hohmann, who headed the

process of securing the Center’s artifacts and loans from the State Museum and other institutions.

John DiNuzzo, current President of the Alliance, said more than 2,500 people visited the Center and more than 200 people registered for one of the tours of the parks.

“Our first-year attendance figure was really incredible,” said DiNuzzo. “There was no certainty that anywhere near this number of people would visit a new history venue.”

DiNuzzo added that membership in the not-for-profit Alliance organization grew by 43% in 2022.

Planning for 2023 has already begun, said Bellico and Hohmann.

New exhibits include two related to major events of the

French and Indian War, an expanded maritime exhibit and displays of artifacts of Indigenous life found in the parks but not available until recently.

“After being first proposed 125 years ago, The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance finally has an interpretive center, displaying artifacts, fort and vessel models, paintings, descriptive history panels, and other museum items that explain the rich history of the park through two 18th century wars and beyond. It has renewed interest in the historic Northern Lake Tour, which will also encourage tourists to visit other regional historic sites,” said Bellico.

“This had been a work of love with support from the membership, the community and funding organizations,” said Lyn Hohmann.