LAKE GEORGE MIRROR.

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# A Banner Year for LG Battlefield Park Alliance

By Anthony F. Hall

The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance capped what its president recently called a "magnificent" year, pointing to landmark commemorations, surging membership, increased visitation and a growing regional profile for the nonprofit organization.

Speaking at the Alliance's Aug. 15 annual meeting in Lake George, President John DiNuzzo said the organization's past 12 months were highlighted by two major undertakings: a December commemoration of Henry Knox's passage through the region and the May return and reinterment of the remains of 44 people discovered during construction on Courtland Street in Lake George.

"It has been another fabulous year for the Alliance," DiNuzzo said.

The December events commemorated Knox and the "noble train" of artillery he transported from Fort Ticonderoga toward Boston during the opening months of the American Revolution.

PulitzerPrize-winninghistorian Rick Atkinson participated in the commemoration, visiting Lake George High School classrooms and meeting with students before taking part in public events. A historical reenactment of Knox's arrival at the head of Lake George drew a couple hundred spectators, DiNuzzo said.

Demand for a reception with Atkinson exceeded expectations. Originally capped at 120 people, attendance was expanded to 150 before ultimately reaching about 170. A public program at the Lake George High School auditorium drew an estimated 450 people.

The Alliance followed that event with another major undertaking in May: the return to Lake George of the remains of 44 people whose graves had been uncovered during construction on Courtland Street.

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On May 20, a motorcade carried the remains from the New York State Museum in Albany north along Route 9 to Lake George, with stops in Saratoga Springs and Glens Falls. State Police, local law enforcement agencies, state military officials and volunteers assisted with the procession. The remains were reinterred May 22. Nearly 100 people contributed money toward the effort, DiNuzzo said.

The new repose site has quickly become a focal point at Lake George Battlefield Park.

"We have a lot more traffic now in the visitor center, and certainly to the battlefield memorial across the road there, that people are flocking to," DiNuzzo said.

The Alliance has updated its printed material to include the repose site, using a grant from the town of Lake George. A composite model of the site has also been added to the visitor center. DiNuzzo described the site as the park's new "marquee attraction."

The Alliance also reported substantial membership growth. Membership stood at 365 as of Saturday, compared with 306 at the same time last year, a 19% increase, DiNuzzo said.

Public attention has grown along with membership. DiNuzzo said the Alliance tracked 46 news stories about the organization in 2023, 50 in 2024 and 76 last year. It had already counted 67 articles in 2026 as of the annual meeting. Regular public programs now routinely attract audiences of 100 to 150 people, he said.

Beyond its two largest events, the Alliance sponsored programs on the Battle of Lake George, the Bloody Morning Scout, the Johnson encampment and the military hospital at Fort George. It also continued operating the Battlefield Park Visitor Center and adding exhibits there.

Physical improvements to the park were another focus. DiNuzzo credited trustee Jay Levinson with overseeing improvements around the Mohawk Warrior sculpture and fountain, including the addition of native plants. The state Department of Environmental Conservation, which owns the park, is also expected to undertake new ADA-compliant restrooms and walkways on the park's east side, with work hoped to begin in September.

Looking ahead, the Alliance plans to continue maintaining and promoting the repose site while pursuing additional historic preservation projects. DiNuzzo said other human remains held by Fort William Henry and the State Museum could eventually be reinterred at the site, although the timing is outside the Alliance's control.

The organization is also considering a roughly 30-minute documentary tracing the Courtland Street remains from their discovery through their reinterment. DiNuzzo said much of the funding appears to be lined up, with the goal of completing the film around the first anniversary of the reinterment and making it available to educators and potentially public television.

Other priorities include preserving remnants of Fort George, strengthening protection of the Bloody Morning Scout site, renewing an agreement supporting the Lake George Submerged Heritage Preserve and seeking a change in the Battlefield Park's state classification from intensive use to historic.

The Alliance will also prepare for a leadership transition. DiNuzzo said he and Vice President Fran Cocozza, reelected Saturday, probably would not seek another term in 2027 and would spend the coming year developing a transition plan.

DiNuzzo credited the Alliance's volunteers, members and expanding roster of government and community partners with the organization's growth.

"We're in a position of prominence, influence in the history community, an important voice in preserving our cultural pursuits at Lake George," he said. "We can all take pride in where we've arrived and how we're positioned in the near term and the long term."

"It's been a magnificent 12 months," DiNuzzo said, "and we look forward to even more in the next 12 months."