



# Underground Railroad Free Press®

News and views on today's Underground Railroad

urrfreepress.com

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## Editorial

### What Is On Readers' Minds

We thank respondents to our 2007 Underground Railroad Survey for their many thoughtful suggestions as to how *Free Press* can be made more useful. Here is what we are now doing based on your recommendations.

### More Reader Involvement

*Free Press* will solicit reader input on certain future topics. Expect to hear from us either in *Free Press* or by special email notice for your input.

Our invitation to submit news releases, articles, letters to the editor and advertisements had been buried in the small print of each issue's legal notice. This invitation has been reformatted more prominently on page two.

### Links to Other Organizations

Each issue of *Free Press* will include a link to a page on our web site with direct links to other Underground Railroad organizations large and small. See page two to add your link.

### Wider *Free Press* Distribution

Despite its having twice the circulation of its closest Underground Railroad news competitor, many survey respondents urged us to make *Free Press* even more widely available.

The survey showed circulation in Canada and the Midwest needs to be much broader so we have strengthened measures to grow our readership. The survey for example sought new subscribers which increased our circulation by eight percent.

Executives and senior staff of the major Underground Railroad organizations have been asked to distribute *Free Press* to their  
*(continued on page two)*

## Head to Head: September to See Competing Meets of Two Major Underground Railroad Groups

The Freedom Center and the Network to Freedom, the nation's two top Underground Railroad organizations, are both sponsoring major national get-togethers within two weeks of each other in September.

Cincinnati's National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Rochester's Workforce Diversity Network and five other organizations are sponsoring the **2007 Frederick Douglass International Underground Railroad Conference** in Rochester September 28 to 30.

The conference is geared toward Underground Railroad researchers with 21 historians, academicians, archivists and curators presenting on a variety of mostly historical topics in five sessions over two days.

Journalist Juan Williams, National Public Radio's senior correspondent for "Morning Edition" and host of NPR's "America's Black Forum," is Friday's opening speaker.

Delivering the Saturday keynote address is Bernice Reagon, founder of internationally acclaimed Sweet Honey In the Rock, Professor Emerita of History at American University and Curator Emerita at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

For more information or to register, visit [work54.sslcert19.com/iur\\_onlinereg.aspx](http://work54.sslcert19.com/iur_onlinereg.aspx).

More mainstream is what Georgetown College's Underground Railroad Institute is promoting as the "first **Underground Railroad Summit**" September 10 to 15. The event will be co-hosted by Friends of the Network to Freedom, a new adjunct group of the National Park Service's Network to Freedom.

Separate from the Georgetown College summit, the eleventh annual Underground Railroad summit of the Ohio Underground Railroad Association will be held October 19 and 20. In addition, the State of Indiana's Department of Natural Resources has hosted annual Underground Railroad summits since 2001.

The Georgetown College event is billed as a celebration of history and research associated with the Underground Railroad story, and will feature exhibits, speakers, workshops and performances. For more information or to register for the conference, visit [ugrri.org/guest\\_book.asp?id=334161&page=3](http://ugrri.org/guest_book.asp?id=334161&page=3).

Georgetown College is located in Georgetown, Kentucky. Its Underground Railroad Institute is headed by Alicestyne Adams and publishes the *Voice of Freedom* newsletter.

*Underground Railroad Free Press* will report on both events in the November issue.

## New International Calendar of Underground Railroad Events

A frequent request by 2007 Underground Railroad Survey respondents (see page two and the editorial) was a universal calendar of events of Underground Railroad organizations. To meet this need, *Free Press* has now added Datebook to its web site. Visit us and click on Datebook to view upcoming events

by United States and Canadian Underground Railroad organizations large and small.

We welcome calendar entries and encourage their submission. Email the name, brief details, dates and venue your event to us at [datebook@urrfreepress.com](mailto:datebook@urrfreepress.com).

## Late-Breaking News

### Duffield Street Neighborhood Gains Ground

This historic New York City area, threatened with destruction by a developer, is mounting a multifront attack helped by recruiting key elected officials to its cause. A trumped-up historical report has been debunked and City officials are having another look.

### More Changes at Freedom Center

Cutting costs further, the Freedom Center has let go president Spencer Crew and vice president Love Collin, both moving to teach-

ing posts. Crew was earning \$320,000 making him among the highest paid museum presidents. Love was making \$203,000.

### Newest Tubman Biography

Until 2003, the most recent Harriet Tubman biography dated from the 1940s. Beverly Lowry's *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life* is the fourth in the last four years. Lowry's book shines in vividly painting the backdrop of Tubman's deeds but misfires on several matters of historical accuracy.

staff or to provide us with email addresses for distribution.

We appeal to you here to let us know of those you would like to receive *Free Press*. Just email us their email addresses as below.

Keep letting us know what improvements you would like to see put into *Underground Railroad Free Press* and we will do our best to incorporate them.

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## 2007 Underground Railroad Survey Results Released

The *Underground Railroad Free Press* 2007 Underground Railroad Survey conducted in June has provided very useful results on the following five topics. We thank the many respondents across the international Underground Railroad community who participated in the survey. Readers may find detailed survey results on the *Free Press* web site at <http://urrfreepress.com/#Survey>.

### Underground Railroad Knowledge

Respondents' Underground Railroad knowledge is gained mainly from the internet, books, articles and lately *Underground Railroad Free Press*.

Despite their affinity to Underground Railroad matters, survey respondents had no better than above-average knowledge of the Underground Railroad, with a surprising number believing that the Underground Railroad did not have a strong effect in shaping United States history.

About half of respondents received instruction on the Underground Railroad before graduating from high school with the proportion at 80 percent for youngest respondents dropping to 20 percent for the oldest. The proportion of survey respondents receiving Underground Railroad instruction did not reach half until about 1970.

### Modern Underground Railroad Institutions

The National Park Service's Network to Freedom is by far the best recognized Underground Railroad organization, with the Freedom Center and *Underground Railroad Free Press* distant seconds. Respondents feel that all eight Underground Railroad organizations mentioned in the survey are important in promoting and building awareness of contemporary Underground Railroad matters, with the Network to Freedom again heading the list but, in this case, with the others close behind.

On how best to promote and support Underground Railroad work, respondents want stronger emphasis of the Underground Railroad in curricula, dramatic and documentary Underground Railroad films and television programs, a well-known spokesperson, a new central Underground Railroad internet nexus, more frequent communication among and more active press relations by Underground Railroad organizations and good coordinated marketing of the Underground Railroad.

### Site Knowledge and Opinions

Respondents offered 49 Underground Railroad listings involving 43 lesser known sites, to more than half of which they gave a top Wellman Scale rating. For classifying and formally listing Underground Railroad sites,

respondents expressed strong preferences that undocumented sites with convincing oral traditions be listed with their Wellman Scale ratings and for making clear distinctions between sites which were for and against the Underground Railroad.

### Underground Railroad Free Press

*Free Press* has twice the readership of its closest competitor. Respondents gave *Free Press* high ratings and expressed a wide variety of opinion on desired content. Ways most often suggested for improving *Free Press* were making it more widely available, involving readers more and *Free Press* providing links to other organizations. See this issue's editorial on how we now better serve readers.

### Respondent Demographics

Survey respondents were older, at the CEO or staff-levels in their careers, well educated, almost exclusively from the United States and rather heavy on researchers and writers. The most typical respondent was a 55-year-old, staff-level, American female researcher with a master's degree.

Two-thirds of respondents have been involved in Underground Railroad matters other than reading for one to ten years and one-sixth for less than a year. This exemplifies now recent is the resurgence of interest in the Underground Railroad in the United States and Canada.

### Recommendations

Based on survey respondents' opinions, we have shared recommendations in the following three areas with CEOs and senior staff of the major Underground Railroad organizations who were mailed copies of our report.

**Raising Underground Railroad visibility** by broad Underground Railroad information on a single web site, regular business meetings among national Underground Railroad organizations to strengthen press relations, coordinate communication and implement a national Underground Railroad marketing plan, and persuading a major studio to produce a feature-length Underground Railroad drama with top stars in leading roles.

**Standardizing Underground Railroad site listings** of Underground Railroad groups by using the Wellman Scale to provide accurate historical rendering of the Underground Railroad as it existed in its time.

**Promoting Underground Railroad education** by consistent emphasis in the United States and Canada on universal instruction in school and university curricula, and underscoring to students and adults how North American history and consciousness were shaped by the Underground Railroad.