



Editorial

Volunteers Are the Saving Grace In Tough Times

During the current deep recession, volunteers are saving the day in many Underground Railroad programs. As our article in this issue details, many Underground Railroad sites and organizations operate on such lean budgets that they are far more reliant on donated labor than actual income and are thus more resilient to economic recession. Though income might slow, their volunteers keep right on going.

As the 2009 Free Press Survey of the International Underground Railroad Community shows, two-thirds of Underground Railroad programs operate with an annual budget of less than \$25,000, half of those with no budget at all.

Many sites and community programs we've visited are run entirely by volunteers. We estimate that several thousand American and Canadian volunteers work at operating and promoting today's Underground Railroad. The revival of the Underground Railroad over the past ten years could not have happened without them.

Highest kudos to these keepers of the Underground Railroad flame.

Annual Free Press Prizes to Be Announced In Next Issue
Winners of the 2009 *Underground Railroad Free Press Prizes* for contemporary Underground Railroad advancement of knowledge, leadership and preservation will be announced in the September 15 issue of *Free Press*. The annually awarded prizes are the international Underground Railroad community's top honors.

School Children's Essays
Emma Carton, a third-grader at Erdenheim Elementary School in
(More on page two)

Underground Railroad Free Press®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

urrfreepress.com

July, 2009
Volume 4, Issue 19

Robert Stanton to Key Interior Department Post

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar has appointed former National Park Service Director Robert G. Stanton as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior. The National Park Service and its Underground Railroad Network to Freedom come under the Department.

Stanton served as the National Park Service's director from 1997 to 2001 when he retired to teaching posts at Texas A&M University, Howard University and Yale University, and to operating a consulting practice.

As head of the National Park Service, Stanton oversaw major planning and resource preservation programs at the White House and at Yellowstone, Yosemite and Gettysburg National Parks, and launched and oversaw the National Resource Challenge which expanded the Service's natural resource programs.

Before becoming National Park Service Director, Stanton served from 1988 to 1997 as Regional Director of the Park Service's National Capital Region which includes 40 national park units in and near the nation's capital.

In his new post, Stanton will be responsible for all policy, management, and budget matters at the Department of the Interior.

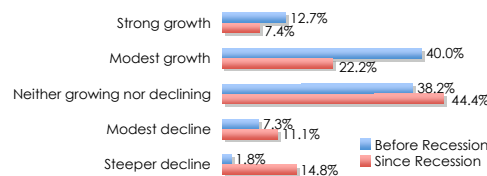


Said Interior Secretary Salazar, "Since beginning his career as a National Park Service ranger 47 years ago, Bob Stanton has dedicated his life to improving the conservation and management of our treasured landscapes and national icons. The Department of the Interior will benefit greatly from his vast experience, extraordinary management skill, and dedication to our public lands."

2009 Survey: Recession Hits Underground Railroad Programs

The 2009 *Free Press* Survey of the International Underground Railroad Community reveals that the recession has hit Underground Railroad organizations but not as hard as at many other organizations.

As in the chart here, the current overall experience of Underground Railroad organizations is from financial growth to contraction.



Respondents report that only half as many of their organizations are experiencing growth as before the recession, with three times as many now contracting as before.

However, so many Underground Railroad programs operate with no funding at all that the recession's financial effect on them is minimal. A majority of programs operate on annual budgets of under \$10,000 with a third having no revenues. Only one in ten exceeds \$250,000 in annual revenues.

Private-sector Underground Railroad organizations are being hit harder by the recession

—> Please go to Survey on page 3, column 1

Philadelphia's Purvis House Gets Some Help

The Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia is trying to persuade the City of Philadelphia or a nonprofit group to purchase and restore the home of Robert Purvis (1810-1898), a leading 19th century's abolitionist and orator, and a founder of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee. Purvis estimated that the Committee helped an average of one freedom seeker a day go north to freedom.

Built in 1859, the home is the only extant residence associated with Purvis who, among others, was called president of the Underground Railroad. Vacant, deteriorated and

delinquent in taxes, Purvis House sits in the Spring Garden Historic District and therefore cannot be altered or demolished without the approval of the local historical commission.

The Preservation Alliance notes that few house museums in Philadelphia interpret the 19th-century African-American experience and that Purvis House would serve well as an interpretive center dedicated to the period and issues Purvis worked on life-long: freedom for enslaved African-Americans, civil rights and women's suffrage. For more, visit preservationalliance.com.

Glenside, Pennsylvania, and Eli Sanchez, eighth-grader at Plum Point Middle School in Huntingtown, Maryland, are among the growing number of students now receiving Underground Railroad instruction. Impressed with their recent essays, we are featuring them on [our web site](#) along with an interview of Emma's teacher. Emma and Eli had headstarts on their essays: her father grew up on a farm which, quite coincidentally, was a safe-house operated by Eli's ancestors. Emma and Eli have now met by email.

How to Subscribe

Free Press subscriptions are free. To subscribe, send email addresses of those you would like to receive *Free Press* to publisher@urffreepress.com.

Free Press Prize Nominations

Visit urffreepress.com to learn more about these top honors in the international Underground Railroad community and to download a nomination form.

Link Your Web Site or View Lynx

Visit urffreepress.com to view Lynx, the central registry of Underground Railroad organizations. To add your link, email its web address to publisher@urffreepress.com.

View or Add to Datebook

Email us your upcoming events and we will add them to Datebook. Click on Datebook at urffreepress.com to view a comprehensive calendar of events.

Send News, Letters, Articles or Ads

News, letters or articles:

editor@urffreepress.com

Advertising: ads@urffreepress.com

See the notice on our web site for specifications, rates and restrictions.

Underground Railroad Free Press®
Independent Reporting On
Today's Underground Railroad

Peter H. Michael, Publisher
publisher@urffreepress.com
301.874.0235

Underground Railroad Free Press is a free newsletter published by Underground Railroad Free Press Publications, 2455 Ballenger Creek Pike, Adamstown, Maryland, 21710. Back issues are available free at our web site. *Underground Railroad Free Press* is distributed by email. Send email address changes and new subscriber email addresses to publisher@urffreepress.com.

Underground Railroad Free Press welcomes news articles and letters to the editor of 800 words or less. All rights to submissions including email and letters will be treated as unconditionally assigned to *Free Press* for publication and copyright purposes, and subject to our unrestricted right to edit and comment editorially unless otherwise negotiated with authors.

Underground Railroad Free Press accepts tasteful nonpolitical advertising and reserves the right to reject advertising which for any reason in our sole judgment is not acceptable. Submit advertising in pdf, jpg, tiff, png or gif format or text. Visit urffreepress.com for rates and layout specifications.

All contents of this and other issues of *Underground Railroad Free Press* are protected by copyright and may not be reproduced in whole or in part for any reason without prior written approval of the publisher. Underground Railroad Free Press is a registered trademark.

Indianapolis to Host Network to Freedom Conference

The National Park Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program and the program's private-sector arm, Friends of the Network to Freedom Association, will host their third annual conference September 16 through 19 in Indianapolis. The conference will be co-hosted by Georgetown College's Underground Railroad Research Institute, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Indiana Freedom Trails.

Entitled Freedom Trails at the Crossroads: Paths to Telling the Underground Railroad Story through History, Teaching, and Technology, the 2009 conference is funded in part by the American Express African-American Experience Fund.

The conference's web site states that this year's gathering takes its cue from host city Indianapolis, which is often referred to as the Crossroads of America, by exploring the Un-

derground Railroad as a meeting place where cultures, geographies, regions, races, ethnicities, religions and political ideologies met and interacted. In addition to exploring past Underground Railroad connections, the conference will explore ways in which present-day interest in the story of the Underground Railroad "transcends local history by making national connections with global significance."

The four-day conference will feature exhibits, speakers, workshops and several pre- and post-conference events. As have previous conferences, the 2009 meeting will emphasize the presentation of academic papers.

To receive conference updates, travel and conference discounts, registration packets and the latest conference information, visit ugrfriends.org. The advance registration deadline is July 31, 2009.

Tubman Center Wins Grants, Expands

Within a month recently, the Harriet Tubman African-American Museum was awarded two grants to significantly expand the museum's programs and underwrite operations.

The AT&T Foundation, philanthropic arm of American Telephone & Telegraph, awarded the museum \$150,000 to create a new classroom which will use the latest technology to significantly broaden the Museum's educational programs.



The grant will fund a new classroom furnished with laptops, wireless internet, multimedia projectors and screens, digital video cameras, video editing equipment and software where students, teachers, and museum educators can develop fully-immersive explorations of African-American art, history, and culture.

The Museum also received a general support grant of \$25,000 from the City of Macon, Georgia, where the Museum is located.

The Harriet Tubman African-American Museum was founded by Father Richard Keil who made a downpayment on a dilapidated former warehouse in downtown Macon in 1981. The purchase marked the birth of what is today one of the South's most important cultural institutions. The Museum's mission is to educate on African-American art, history and culture and promote harmony among all races. Visit tubmanmuseum.com for more.

Christiana Riot Tour Set for September

The Christiana Historical Society of Christiana, Pennsylvania, will conduct a day-long tour on the Christiana Riot, the first armed defense by African-Americans against slave catchers and a pivotal event in American history.

The September 12 driving tour will include a documentary on the Christiana Riot, nine sites associated with the uprising, speakers, reenactors, artifacts, a book-signing and a museum tour.

For more, email bretttew@comcast.net, view youtube.com/watch?v=yQ9ttwwFuuOM or call 610.593.5199.

When Edward Gorsuch of Frederick, Maryland, in 1851 led a party to the home of William and Eliza Parker to capture two freedom seekers who had escaped from him, neighbors, black and white alike, came to the aid of the Park-

ers and the fugitives. In the ensuing shootout, Gorsuch was killed and the others run off. The Christiana Riot realized the worst fear of the South, that African-Americans would resist slavery with arms. Shown here is an 1895 photograph of the Parker home.



Survey

than public-sector efforts which have marginally higher funding with a higher proportion from contributed income.

Private Sector vs. Public Sector Programs

For the first time in the 2009 survey, information was gathered on the characteristics of respondents and their Underground Railroad organizations according to whether they operate in the private sector or public sector. The contrasts were interesting.

The typical private-sector organization is an Underground Railroad site or small unincorporated community organization. The typical public-sector organization is a state, county or municipal department with an Underground Railroad unit, program or interest.

Aside from differences in weathering the recession as above, public-sector organization income is half again higher than that of private-sector organizations but mean incomes are very low in either case. The donated-versus-earned split in income is 81:19 for public-sector organizations and 59:41 for private sector organizations.

Private-sector institutions show considerably more involvement with site rating and listing, and involving younger people in hiring, programs and education.

Private vs. Public Respondents

Public-sector and private-sector survey respondents are demographically similar but with different degrees of Underground Railroad involvement.

Respondents from the two sectors show very similar age distributions and educational attainment. The most frequent types of Underground Railroad involvement for both groups are program operators or employees of these programs. In contrast, private-sector organizations far more often use site rating and listing tools. Use of the Wellman Scale site rating system had been used five times as often by private-sector respondents and the MapMuse listing of Underground Railroad sites nearly twice as often. These findings came as a surprise.

World Heritage Sites

An overwhelming majority of 91.3 percent of respondents favor qualified Underground Railroad sites being listed as World Heritage sites. This finding will lend strong support to the efforts of the United States government in nominating at least two Underground Railroad safe-houses to the World Heritage list.

Underground Railroad Community's Knowledge and Status

Respondents' ratings of their overall Underground Railroad knowledge has remained stable through three annual surveys at above average but not high. Sources of Underground Railroad knowledge remain as in previous years with books, the internet and *Underground Railroad Free Press* as the most frequent sources. *Free Press* continues to be the top Underground Railroad news source. The proportion of survey respondents having ever visited an Underground Railroad site is growing at about five percent per year.

Underground Railroad Institutions

From 2008 to 2009, there were significant shifts in respondents' evaluations of both the familiarity and importance of major Underground Railroad organizations. Perhaps most notable is the emergence of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African-American History and Culture, a federal government program, which will not even open until 2015.

Also notable is that overall familiarity and importance rose. The National Park Service's Network to Freedom continues to top both the familiarity and importance lists and its fundraising arm, the Friends of the Network to Freedom Association, rose significantly. The two federal government programs are ranked virtually equally as most important.

Underground Railroad Free Press

Respondents continue to rank *Free Press* high in both familiarity and importance and *Free Press* readership continues to expand. Awareness of the annual Free Press Prizes is considerably higher than *Free Press's* Lynx central registry of Underground Railroad organizations and its Datebook central calendar despite Lynx's and Datebook's high ratings.

Subscribers' content preferences remain the same as in previous surveys with historical articles the favorite followed by preservation reporting. Respondents' ratings of topic relevance, quality of reporting and *Free Press's* overall value continue to be high to very high.

How the Survey Was Conducted

The more than 2,100 *Free Press* subscribers as of May, 2009, were invited to take the survey. *Free Press's* mailing list comprises a broad cross-section of Underground Railroad site owners, descendants, elected officials and their staff, Underground Railroad program executives and employees, researchers, writ-

ers, enthusiasts and others. We invited subscribers to invite others interested in the Underground Railroad to participate in the survey.

The invitation to participate in the 2009 Underground Railroad Survey was sent by email in early May, 2009, and was followed up by a notice in the May, 2009, issue of *Free Press*.

The survey was administered by a 45-question instrument at the web site of SurveyMonkey.com during the first three weeks of May, 2009. Survey data were analyzed by proprietary survey analysis software provided by Michael Strategic Analysis and customized for this survey, and more deeply analyzed through personal inspection by a well-qualified statistical analyst. There were no difficulties encountered in collecting, tabulating, analyzing or reporting survey data. *Free Press* thanks those who took the time to participate in the survey.

Receive the Full Survey Report

Please go to the *Free Press* website at urFreePress.com to view or download the report on the 2009 Survey of the International Underground Railroad Community. You may copy and distribute the report freely.

Contest

What do you think would be the best name for a creek which runs beside an Underground Railroad safe-house? A *Free Press* subscriber is looking for an appropriate name for the creek and thought that a contest among subscribers would be likely to turn up a good name. The unnamed creek flows into, appropriately, Freedom Creek.

Email your contest entry to name the creek to editor@urFreePress.com. We'll announce the winning name in the September issue and the winner will be invited to visit the creek and its safe-house. What a deal!

Did You Know . . .

That Betty Friedan in her landmark 1963 *The Feminine Mystique* cites the Underground Railroad?

Long recognized as important antecedents to the Women's Rights Movement, women involved in the Underground Railroad were understood by Friedan as adding momentum to the quest for women's rights in the United States for having participated in the quest for freedom.