



Plymouth 400 moves ahead with new schedule of live and virtual programs

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PLYMOUTH - Michele Pecoraro is obviously frustrated. Despite the best efforts of the Plymouth 400 Inc. executive director, people don’t seem to understand that the show must go on.

“If I hear one more person say Plymouth 400 is cancelled, I’m going to scream,” she said in mock indignation. “We have more things planned now than before.”

The community’s commemoration of its 400th anniversary may be somewhat delayed, but it will proceed – albeit with more virtual programs than initially planned. Pecoraro said her group is moving ahead with programming – both live and online – so the town, state, country and the world can commemorate the Mayflower’s journey and Plymouth’s founding in 1620.

“Plymouth 400 is still alive and well with several virtual events this fall and winter,” Pecoraro said. “We have added several virtual programs to our Signature Events and Programs. We are in a good place, having pivoted to embrace the current reality with a potential for more visibility for Massachusetts, Plymouth and our sponsors and supporters.”

This new plan, of course, became necessary because of the coronavirus pandemic. Since mid-March, activities around the globe have been uprooted because of the disease’s impact. Plymouth 400 was no exception. Many of the early events had to be rescheduled or changed to accommodate this alternate reality.

Plymouth 400 just released a new schedule, which includes a series of six virtual events with three live programs.

Virtual activities for 2020 and 2021 include:

'Massachusetts Chronicles' Launch Event

Sept. 9

Plymouth 400 is working with Bridgewater State University, Plymouth Public Schools and What on Earth Books to release "Massachusetts Chronicles," a book for students about the history of Massachusetts from its earliest time to the present day. A special online launch is planned with school superintendents, principals and teachers from around the state. Gov. Charlie Baker and Jeffrey Riley, the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, are expected to participate.

OurStory Exhibit Virtual Tour

September (date TBD)

Since a physical exhibit is impossible right now, "OurStory: 400 Years of Wampanoag History" is going virtual. Paula and Steve Peters of SmokeSignals have created a virtual tour of the exhibit, which will be accessible on the Plymouth 400 website, social media and YouTube channels. PACTV will also air the tour and share it with other community television stations. A portion of the exhibit is on display at the Wampanoag Trading Post on Mashpee Commons through September.

BSU Indigenous History Conference

Oct. 3, 4, 18, 25 and Nov. 1, 8, 15, 21, 22

The original live four-day conference was changed to a series of free virtual segments. It will be divided into lectures and panels for educators and students to access. Plymouth 400 is working with Bridgewater State University and Wampanoag Advisory Committee on content, speakers and timing.

17th Century Colonial Document Exhibit

October/November (release date TBD)

John Buckley and Tim White of the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds are working on a virtual tour of an exhibit they created. Prominent Plymouth and Massachusetts citizens will highlight the many early documents held at the Registry of Deeds, the oldest in the country. The virtual tour will include an introduction by Buckley and a question-and-answer interview.

Plymouth 400 Legacies and Illuminate Thanksgiving**Nov. 25 and other dates**

This special television broadcast by media partners NBC10, NECN and Telemundo will highlight the projects and legacy work that led up to this commemoration. Part one will focus on partnerships in the United Kingdom and Netherlands, as well as the OurStory Exhibit and Massachusetts Chronicles. Part two will present the themes of Illuminate Thanksgiving with interviews and footage from past events, interviews of One Small Candle Award winners and presentation of the 2020 honorees.

Plymouth 400 Virtual Winter Speakers Series**December through March**

Various authors and documentarians will discuss Plymouth's history and 400th anniversary. Six to 10 segments will be produced for the series. PACTV is partnering with Plymouth 400 for this program. More information will be announced in September.

Live events for 2021 include:

Plymouth 400 Remembrance Ceremony**Friday, April 23**

Former British Prime Minister John Major and Earl Charles Courtenay are expected to visit Plymouth for a private indoor ceremony with invited guests, including wreath-laying ceremonies at various monuments. The event will open the spring season and attract tourists to town.

Wampanoag Ancestors Walk

May 8

This event honors Wampanoag ancestors with a walk and stops at historic and spiritual sites in Patuxet, now Plymouth. The walk will begin at Memorial Hall with a drum ceremony and march through the town to Mayflower II, culminating with a speaker at the waterfront. Wampanoag tribe members will carry placards with the names of the original 69 villages of their nation. It will end with an homage to Native souls at Pilgrim Memorial Park. A reception and native craft fair are planned for Memorial Hall.

Plymouth 400 Maritime Salute and Festival

June 25-27

The maritime salute will include a fanfare, dockside events and a parade of sails. Narrated tour boats will join a regatta of wooden ships, yachts, work boats, official vessels and pleasure craft in Plymouth Harbor. Up to six wooden ships are expected to pay homage to the Mayflower voyage and Mayflower II. Band concerts are planned by the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and Coast Guard. A ticketed traditional New England lobster dinner will be held in a tented dining facility at Nelson Park.

More details about these events and activities will be announced in the coming weeks, said Pecoraro, who is excited to see Plymouth finally being able to commemorate its 400th anniversary.

“We’ve worked too hard to get to this point,” she said. “We’ve been planning some of these events for 10 years. It would break my heart to see this not move forward now.”

For more information, visit the Plymouth 400 website at www.plymouth400inc.org.