



UE Loyalists Bridge Annex, UELAC's 1st Virtual Branch set to officially launch June 9th at 8:00 am with unique cross-border launch event!

With the slogan: *"A virtual place where real people meet,"* the board of UELAC's newest and first virtual branch is excited to announce they will have their official launch in an online event that will bridge international borders, generations, technology and tradition. Beginning at 8:00 am and throughout the day on Saturday, June 9th, UE Loyalists Bridge Annex board members will begin the day with a video message followed by live feeds, video clips and photo postings on their social media accounts. Two members will be attending the UELAC Conference in Moose Jaw, SK, while the other three members will be at the American Revolution Conference in the Mohawk Valley in Johnstown, New York, where they will be sharing their Loyalist knowledge with others. All will share with their online community the highlights of each of these conferences, as well as the sights of the regions, the festivities and fun.

The names of the board members will be familiar to many:

Jennifer DeBruin UE, President, is also an active UELAC member currently holding the positions of Central East Regional Councillor, Public Relations Chair, Genealogical Processes Chair and is a member of St. Lawrence Branch. An historical researcher, author, and presenter, Jennifer sees this new branch as an opportunity to provide an additional way for others to connect with Loyalist history, of which is proud to be descended from.

David Hill-Morrison UE, Vice-President and Webmaster, is well known to many, and in addition to this new role he is UELAC Central West Regional Councillor and a member of the Grand River Branch. A proud descendant of Joseph Thayendanegea Brant, David will drive the expanding our historical narrative by focus on acknowledging, respecting and celebrating the key Aboriginal support for the Original United Empire Loyalists. A member of three nations, Canada, the United States, and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), David can help this new branch create bridges to new understanding and individuals.

Patricia Groom UE, Treasurer and Secretary, a champion of Loyalist history, she is often encouraging others to become involved. Her management skills and enthusiastic support of creating new ways for connecting people to Loyalist history have ensured this new and innovative branch is poised for success. Patricia currently serves as President of the Toronto Branch, UELAC Central West Vice-President, Promotions Chair, and Public Relations committee member.

Amanda Fasken UE, Public Relations, is a key player in the historical community, and among her many activities, she is a re-enactor in several units spanning the American Revolution, War of 1812, and the US Civil War. In addition, she serves on historical boards for Fairfield-Gutzeit Society (Bath ON), and The Friends of Crysler's Farm Battlefield (Morrisburg ON), and is a UELAC Public Relations committee member, Loyalist Gazette Designer, webmaster and member of the Kingston Branch, and a member of St. Lawrence Branch.

Charlene Widrick UE, Genealogist, is the first person to hold her primary membership in the UE Loyalists Bridge Annex. Having recently received her first two certificates of descent through UELAC, Charlene has long been involved in researching her own family history. In addition to discovering her descent from the United Empire Loyalists of the Mohawk Valley, NY, who settled in the Cornwall, Ontario area, she has learned in recent years that her grandfather was a British Home Child (BHC), a history he never shared. Charlene is active in preserving her proud history through her membership in several historical societies, and as dual citizen of Canada and the United States, is an ambassador for bridging two nations, our shared history, and our collaboration going forward.

More about the Board can be found on their website: <http://uelac.org/UELBridgeAnnex/>

The choice of the term *Annex*, rather than branch, was born out of the philosophy of creating a virtual meeting place where discussion and collaboration would be at the forefront of learning, sharing and promoting the legacy of the United Empire Loyalists. While this branch will host no physical meetings or regular events, they do plan on creating a robust online community that will result in the creation of virtual and physical events, collaborative projects, and support education. Having recently attained their incorporation through the Ontario Historical Society (OHS), UE Loyalists Bridge Annex is also in the process of applying for charitable status in order to support their mission to create unique and dynamic educational opportunities.

Excerpt from UE Loyalists Bridge Annex website:

More engaging than an online forum, this Branch offers unique opportunities for members to determine how and when they would like to experience the UELAC.

Through the use of online technologies, we'll be offering a variety of services aimed at assisting, informing, educating and entertaining members on the shared interest of acknowledging, celebrating and perpetuating the sacrifices of our Loyalist ancestors.

Together, we'll bridge gaps that sometimes prevent members from participating and sharing their contributions through conventional Branch memberships.

Due to the trans-border nature of the internet world, we're excited to open the UELAC up to new communities and Nations which may have not been offered as accommodating invitation as they should have been.

Moreover, we hope to stimulate interest in Loyalist history and heritage among those who perhaps have never considered how intricately bound their own history and heritage is with respect to the Loyalist experience.

More than simply a 'British Canadian thing', the Loyalist history includes all walks of life along with undeniably diverse national and ethnic backgrounds. Of particular note, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy played a critically vital part in defending and aiding their Loyalist friends and neighbours.

In time for the official launch will be a new online membership management system which will allow members to join UE Loyalists Bridge Annex as their primary or secondary branch, and they will be able to pay online, e-transfer or through traditional methods (cheque/money order). The website will continue to evolve and will come to include exclusive member features in the near future.

Join the UE Loyalists Bridge Annex Official Launch online at:

Instagram: uelbridgeannex

Facebook: / BridgeAnnex

Twitter: UELoyalistsBridgeAnnex

Email: uelbridgeannex@gmail.com

All are welcome!