Hello Friends,

What an amazing year 2015 was at the Village! While I love all the seasons here in New England, the fall—ending with the Christmas by Candlelight program—is one of my favorites. If I could sum up the year in two words, it would be “Record Breaking!”

Education and historic preservation were high priorities, and we could not have done it without you. Thanks to your generous response to the Freeman Farmhouse and Knowlton Education challenges, the farm will have a new roof and students will have amazing educational experiences. Thank you!

Due to a strong marketing effort—and a little help from Mother Nature—we have had a record breaking Christmas by Candlelight program. Advance ticket sales nearly doubled over 2014, and attendance increased by more than 5,000 visitors!

Further, all divisions have exceeded their year-to-date revenue projections. Our Board and staff rolled up their sleeves and got the job done. Without their leadership, this year would not have been possible.

I could not be more honored to serve as the Village’s President as we continue to improve on every front. We remain focused on providing the best visitor experience from entrance to exit, and we are expecting an even better 2016!

Thank you again for all your support—financial and otherwise. OSV supporters are truly the lifeblood of the Village. With your assistance, we will continue to preserve the past and embrace the future.

Sincerely,

Jim Donahue, President and CEO

‘Tis the Season for Record Breaking!

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Caps Off to the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges

The Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges were refurbished and re-opened in 2013 due to the generosity of Trustee Robert Reeder and his wife Lorraine Reeder.

While the house would not open to guests until 1985, two important events would occur before that time. First, in 1979, the motel was renamed the Old Sturbridge Village Lodges, which helped to refame the facility, giving it a central role in the longevity of the museum, and directly linking it, by name, to the institution it helps to sustain. Second, in 1982, the Oliver Wight house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, ensuring its place in history and at the Old Sturbridge Village Lodges.

By 2006, it was clear that the Lodge could not remain viable in their current state. In need of maintenance and renovations, the Lodge was temporarily closed. Fast forward to 2012, Old Sturbridge Village Trustee Robert “Bob” Reeder and his wife Lorraine took an interest in the lodging property. Reminiscing about relaxing and enjoyable stays during previous visits to the Village.

Continued on page 4
Arriving at Old Sturbridge Village is like coming home for Lisa Wells Markham. Her grandfather, Joel Cheney Wells, and his brothers were the museum’s founders. While a young child growing up in nearby Southbridge, Lisa spent many days at the Village with her brother and their mother, Gertrude Wells Brennan. From apples and cider at the store to the clocks chiming in the Joel Cheney Wells Clock Gallery, to walks around the Common, the Village was and still is part of the family.

Old Sturbridge Village is Lisa’s heritage — her mother made sure that her children experienced this very special place — and she is very much Lisa’s inspiration as a Trustee and advocate for the museum. As Lisa stated, “It is imperative to advocate for the Village and encourage others to visit this special outdoor living museum that symbolizes life in the 1830s. I strongly believe that it is important to continue our heritage and spread the word. Being a Trustee is like being an ambassador; it’s my job back East.”

Although she now lives in California, the Village is never very far from her thoughts. She sees so much promise and opportunity for it, especially as the Village continues to grow as an educational institution and embark on new programs. Even though with time comes change, Lisa is heartened by the fact that the core mission of the Village remains the same and said that “educational experiences are vital to the Village’s success. A school was always a dream in the early days at the Village. How neat it will be to have children learn and grow in this environment. I wish I lived closer!”

If she did, then you might very well see Lisa in costume as an interpreter!

Save the Date!

The Federalist Society Dinner will be held on Friday, June 10, 2016, at the Oliver Wight Tavern at Old Sturbridge Village.

About the Federalist Society: Donors of $1,000 or more are welcomed into the Federalist Society. These very special donors provide crucial support to the Village and are invited to the annual appreciation dinner, as well as other special events and programs throughout the year. To become a Federalist, please call Anne McBride at 508-347-0300 or email amcbride@osv.org.

Her “Job Back East”. Why Lisa Markham loves Old Sturbridge Village

This year, Overseers Ron and Kathy Vairo will lead our Gala Committee for a third consecutive year. Coming on the heels of the most successful Gala the Village has yet seen, the Vairos are “honored to help this event continue to grow, and this year, plan to celebrate the 70th anniversary of OSV as part of the Gala festivities.”

Ron and Kathy first came to the Village as children. Members for over 25 years, they recount a lifetime of enjoying OSV exhibits and programs. Their daughters, Gina and Julie, first visited OSV when they were young toddlers in strollers. Now, as adults, when they arrive back home, the first thing they want to do is visit the Village. And of course, they very much enjoy serving on the Gala Committee with their parents!

With a family tradition of supporting OSV, it comes as no surprise that the Vairos would embrace the Village over the years, as they have. They are inspired by Kathy’s love of animals and American history, and Ron’s interest in the history of how the Wells Family created the Village, as well as their connection to the American Optical Company (where his father held a management position from the 1950s through the early 1970s). Ron and Kathy feel strongly that “the Village is not only a local, but national treasure!”

The Vairos were elected Overseers and, in 2013, were honored as The 1946 Circle Honorees. Through their enthusiasm for the Gala and fund raising experience, they were invited to Chair our 7th Annual Gala in 2014. A sold-out event for the last two years, the Gala has only grown under the leadership of the Vairos.

“Our devoted, passionate and energetic committee members have helped to make the Gala the preeminent event in central Massachusetts.”

Our Gala Chairs

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Alexis Conte

Vice President of Visitor Services

Alexis Conte, Vice President of Visitor Services, has been part of the Village family for more than ten years. She currently oversees the Culinary and Lodging divisions as well as the Visitor Center.

Interests: Alexis is devoted to all aspects of dog rescue. “My husband and I have done everything from fostering to adopting and everything in between. Our most recent rescues are Doo & Wyatt — two 11-month-old shepherd mix siblings.”

Hidden Talents: “I break into song multiple times a day — it doesn’t matter what the song is or how I sing it, a quick verse of song can lift a mood, create a smile and, most often, get a laugh or two. If not a “What was that?” from the office next door.”

Favorite Way to Travel: Alexis and her husband love road trips. “There’s nothing better than driving across the country and getting to know different people and places. We are starting to plan our next voyage to (hopefully) Italy, Greece and Macedonia, but not until we finish our U.S. driving tour first!”

Why she loves working at OSV: “I feel we sometimes get too caught up in the day-to-day operations that we don’t fully realize what we are a part of. Our staff and volunteers are truly those who make the magic happen at OSV, and I feel so fortunate to have gained the experiences I have by working with them. They make it look so easy, which continues to amaze me each and every day.”

Favorite Village Experience: “I’ve had so many wonderful Village experiences that it’s hard to choose a favorite. From enjoying Dinner in a Country Village with my husband and mother, to viewing the simple beauty of the Village at night during a wedding — they’ve all been memorable experiences.”

Wish for OSV: “Success, sustainable growth and longevity. My wish is that the experience continues to grow and succeed, thus allowing future generations to know the treasure that is Old Sturbridge Village.”
Big things happen when the Village goes to the Big Apple! Thanks to Vice Chairman Robert “Bob” Reeder, the Village was invited to give a presentation to the partners at Goldman Sachs as part of the company’s charitable giving program. Goldman Sachs Gives is a donor-advised fund through which Goldman Sachs and its senior employees provide counsel on giving opportunities to qualifying nonprofit organizations.

On a somewhat dreary November morning, with redware and spices in hand, we headed off on a whirlwind trip. About thirty senior Goldman Sachs employees gathered to learn about the Village and how important it is for education and public history. Esteemed documentary filmmaker Ken Burns kindly joined us for the morning to discuss his work and how his experiences at the Village have changed the trajectory of his career. An expert on all things Old Sturbridge Village, Ken held the audience’s attention for an hour and spoke about how the Village is poised to make a positive impact on education in Massachusetts and the nation.

“Ken is a wonderful friend of the Village, and we are grateful for his generosity in sharing his time with the Village. This event also would not have been possible without Bob’s support of the Village and his relationships at Goldman Sachs. Events like this make a difference in bringing the Village to the attention of wider, and sometimes unexpected, audiences,” said Village President and CEO Jim Donahue.

For many of the people in the audience, this was their first introduction to Old Sturbridge Village. For others, it was a trip down memory lane. They were intrigued by the museum’s history and the educational resource the Village is and continues to be. We hope that our new friends in the Big City will become big supporters of our little Village.

Inspired by their extraordinary love and passion for the Freeman Farm, they decided to challenge their fellow Old Sturbridge Village members to donate to the project. The challenge was to raise $5,000, which Dave and Tess Schwartz wanted to help make sure the Freeman Farm had a new roof. As they put it, “The Freeman Farm is always a highlight of our visits to the Village, but it was disheartening to see this special place in disrepair.”

When asked why Old Sturbridge Village is important to them, Dave said, “The history of New England is rich with lessons on life and the progress that we’ve made as a country. The experience that the Village provides is unparalleled in its ability to remind us of our story as a nation and as a people. We support the Village in order to preserve this experience for the next generation of visitors.”

Trips to the Village as a child are among Dave’s favorite memories, and he now loves sharing the experience of visiting the Village with his own children. As he put it, “The Village provides us a small glimpse into a world where our modern amenities could not have been imagined. Allowing our children to witness the challenges of yesterday permits them a better understanding of the challenges that were overcome, the need to innovate, and the triumph of the human spirit. All of the lessons are as applicable today as they were in the 1830s.”

Because events are subject to change, please confirm dates before you visit at www.osv.org.

Longtime Members Help to Save a Village Icon

Elise Hauenstein with her husband OSV Trustee Norm Abram with Dave and Tess Schwartz.

The phone rang at the Executive Office one afternoon, and the caller had a question, “How is the Freeman Farm project going and what can we do to help?” Longtime members Dave and Tess Schwartz wanted to help make sure the Freeman Farm had a new roof. As they put it, “The Freeman Farm is always a highlight of our visits to the Village, but it was disheartening to see this special place in disrepair.”

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2016 Calendar of Events
Engaging Events Boost Attendance Numbers

It was a carefully orchestrated feat of engineering and expertise, but the large evergreen behind the Administration Building was cut, hoisted and installed as the centerpiece of Christmas by Candlelight. The tree had grown so large that it posed a threat to the building and the staff who work there. Although we could have simply cut the tree down, the Interpretation and Museum Operations staff seized the opportunity to use the tree as part of our Christmas by Candlelight program. Yet, the question remained: How do you transport a 50-foot tree from one side of the campus to the other?

Enter Ray Waugh Trucking of New Braintree, Massachusetts. Ray generously donated the use of a track and 48-foot trailer, as well as his time to get the tree from the Administration Building and into the Village. It was a momentous undertaking, and as Senior Vice President of Museum Operations Brad King explained, “Ray was instrumental in facilitating the tree’s safe transport to its intended location on the Common.”

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MORE KUDOS...

Overseers Joan and Richard McGrath, Josephine Sheldon and her husband Leslie, Pat Goode, Kathy Cambo and Rick Predella, along with his daughter-in-law Christina, were enormously helpful with our drive to increase membership during Christmas by Candlelight. Thank you for taking the time during the busy holiday season to encourage membership at Old Sturbridge Village!

Charlton Fence Company has once again donated a supply of fencing material. Their continued support through in-kind donations truly makes a difference. Look for bright new pickets, posts, rails and boards on fences throughout the Village next spring!

Volunteers give their time and energy in every department, and their dedication is inspiring to all of us. Joyce Rivers, Sandy LeMieux and Overseer Pat Goode joyfully spent hours dusting and cleaning in the Collections Storage Building, helping to install exhibits and assisting the curatorial staff in myriad ways. Debbie Becroft has been busy filing and helping in the Development Department. Diane Engle, Pauline Borden, Alan Curboy and Kathy Howard are also familiar faces throughout the museum and especially in costume throughout the Village.

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