President’s Letter

There have been numerous articles reflecting on the difficulties that small museums are facing across the country. Financial issues seem to head the list of issues with membership retention, fundraising, programming, and overall relevance listed as major issues. The financial crisis has forced small museums to reconsider their programming and overall relevance. The museum must better recognize its many core strengths, the historic richness of its collections, and untapped opportunities which, if orchestrated with imagination and energy, can vastly increase the museum’s ability to offer a greater variety of informative, relevant and interesting events.

The museum has recognized and programmed initiatives. We have planned a majorifting and Promotion to the town along with that of the museum. The museum has three other assets that deserve far greater recognition.

The Civil War G.A.R. is a marvelous example of what the museum has to offer its membership and the community.

The newly restored Civil War & G.A.R. Museum, in the Old Trust House, opened to the public on Christmas. Well attended, the museum is a meeting place for the town’s outer room with stunning views. What a difference a day makes in the number of individuals participating in the various opening events far exceeded the number of G.A.R. visitors over the past five, maybe ten years. The combination of Marblehead’s patriotic participation in the Civil War, and afterward to the Grand Army of the Republic, is powerful recognition of Marblehead’s commitment to its country and to its returning veterans.
This year’s event featured Sea Shanties sung by Willard and friends. The Marblehead Museum is challenged by the need to expand its membership base, its fundraising activities, and its programming initiatives. But we are not standing still. We conducted a survey in late 2013 which received solid participation and both confirmed and supported the need for more progressive planning going forward. We are making every effort to revitalize the museum, attract new members, offer a real reason to invest in our future, and, bottom line, become recognized town-wide for being special and important.

We need your participation and support and thank those who have been loyal and generous friends. We are excited about our 2014 plans!

Frederick H. Settlemyer, President

TREASURER’S REPORT

2013 was a year with many challenges, as well as many successes. The museum’s programming and events continue to be well received and quality attendance and participation has improved. The museum is well established. Focus is on promoting and presenting the Marblehead Museum’s three properties, the Lee Mansion, the J.O.J. Frost Gallery and the Civil War G.A.R. Museum in the best possible way for the museum to move forward. The gardens, thanks to the Margaret to an innkeepers, have received tender loving care and have been sustained just as Martha would have done back in the 1700s. What a natural for landscapers and gardeners to participate in themed discussions and events. Such a lovely setting might also attract a concert on October 26th, and maybe an event or two at the Lee Mansion.

The museum’s mission and dedication to education continues. It was the driving force behind the major project of 2013, the improvement and reopening of the Civil War & G.A.R. Museum in the Old Town House. The major project for 2014 will be the renovation and reinterpretation of the J.O.J. Frost Gallery. By improving the Frost Gallery, the Museum will have raised the level of appreciation for all three properties, bringing this wonderful museum treasure to a new level that they deserve.

The Marblehead Museum has served the town’s school children, without any charge to students or schools, for over 50 years. This commitment continues, as the museum seeks funds from grants, foundations and individuals to accomplish the goal of making the Frost Gallery a resource for schools, local residents and visitors to Marblehead.

The lectures series sponsored by Marble Harbor Investment Counsel were both well delivered and well attended. Marblehead is indeed fortunate to have both a rich history and an array of excellent historians and speakers. Positive feedback was received from members especially at such social events as the garden party, the re-opening ceremony of the Civil War G.A.R. and at the “Friends of the Museum” party in October. The highly successful renovation of the Civil War & G.A.R. Museum was celebrated at the December 2013 re-opening ceremony, which was attended by an “army” of well-wishers and history buffs. The G.A.R. descendants party was a heartwarming success as numerous Marblehead families braved horrible weather to honor and celebrate their long lived history of patriotism and sacrifice.

The museum will continue in its efforts to expand its programming while simultaneously pursuing all opportunities to increase the museum’s revenues. The museum appreciates it loyal members and will make 2014 a successful year.

Michael Meehan, Treasurer (November 2013)