Steaming Ahead

Steamboat Era Museum
2014 Annual Report
The Steamboat Era Museum collects and preserves artifacts of the Steamboat Era on the Chesapeake Bay. Through the design of dynamic exhibits and educational programs, the Museum illustrates and interprets the important economic and lifestyle changes steamboats brought to Virginia and Maryland communities on the Bay from 1813-1937.
Greetings Shipmates!

It was a very busy 2014. We once again began steaming ahead. After a few economically challenging years, the tide appears to be rising for a brighter future. Our visitor count was up, our events were well attended and a newly painted museum and redesigned exhibits delighted our members and visitors.

Our Third Annual Irvington Crab Festival, the museum’s largest fund raising event of the year, was a rousing success. It was joined by a Holiday Marketplace which was visited by over 500 holiday shoppers. The highlight of the Marketplace was the introduction of two museum published books, We Are Who We Are Because Steamboats Were by Anne Long McClintock and Dining on the Chesapeake Bay by a team of collaborators led by Sallie Dashiell.

Last year, at this time, we made the announcement of plans to restore the pilothouse of the steamer Potomac and bring it into the museum as a permanent exhibit by 2017. This will not be an easy task, and, as we draw up plans, we hope our members and the community will take part in this endeavor. The completed exhibit will stimulate tourism, encourage stronger economic activity and open educational opportunities for local school children and visitors.

None of this would be possible without our team of enthusiastic volunteers, who are the backbone of the museum. Thank you.

We look forward to Steaming Ahead in 2015.

Eric Nost
President,
Board of Directors

Barbara Brecher
Executive Director
The Board of Directors made a commitment to restore the steamer Potomac's pilothouse and install it in the museum by the 2017 season.

2014 started with refreshing and reorganizing the museum space to give visitors a better first impression of the facility and a better educational experience.

In March, prior to the official May public opening, a Community Open House hosted more than 200 visitors, many of whom had never seen the museum.

The museum hosted group tours and participated in the “History on the Go” program with volunteers with other local museums.

We received $10,000 in grants for our Oral History Project from the Catherine B. Chilton Endowment of the River Counties Community Foundation and the Nettie Lokey Wiley and Charles L. Wiley Foundation.

Fundraising events in 2014 included both old and new special events.
An invigorated retail shop was filled with many quality items related to the museum.

Three books were published by the museum, and each is available exclusively at our shop. *The Houses of Irvington* by Steven Reiss and *We Are Who We Are Because Steamboats Were* by Anne Long McClintock. The third book, *Dining on the Chesapeake Bay*, grew out of a volunteer Thank You Coffee in 2013.

In May the Steamboat Era Museum was voted one of the “Best of Virginia” in the Historic Museum, Eastern Virginia category.

This year there was an aggressive print and radio advertising campaign. Public relations efforts included stories in local newspapers and a new logo which helped tie together all our efforts from outside recognition to products in the museum store. We also redesigned and updated the web site.

The number of volunteers increased significantly this past year, including support as historic guides, front desk managers, mail processors and event planning workers.

No organization such as the museum can survive without membership support. This year we changed membership levels and benefits to make it even more appealing to join. There were also two member events in 2014.
The year began by painting the interior of the museum. This much needed refreshing was made possible by the final part of the Burgess Carrington bequest. All the exhibits were removed from the walls and we started the year with a clean canvas.

To make space for a new steamboat building diorama the Cannery exhibit was moved next to the Wharf, the Wharf was shortened, and the Wharton Grove Tent was moved next to the Country Store. This was no small feat and we thank our dedicated board members and friends for making it happen.

Museum volunteers Mary Ellen Tetrick and Karen Feuerman, along with the museum’s Executive Director, Barbara Brecher, took on the task of putting the museum back together. They reviewed all the existing exhibits and, with much of the research and information already available, they began redesigning the exhibits and signage, as well as moving museum models and artifacts to improve the visitor experience. In addition, they discussed new exhibits such as a map showing not only the Steamboat Ports in the Chesapeake Bay but, with a series of lights, showing a typical steamboat route. A new Steamboat Era timeline, an exhibit about Steamboat President Warfield, new panels for the James Adams Floating Theater, new signage and exhibits in the Lancaster Room, and new lobby signage were also on the wish list. Great ideas but how to pay for them?
A light bulb went off and the three were soon running around the museum placing pieces of kraft paper on the walls with information about what was needed to take the museum to the next level. For example, on the wall where a new steamboat port map now hangs, there was a drawing of a map with a description and cost of a 4 foot by 8 foot map of Steamboat Ports with lights to indicate a typical steamboat route.

After the walls were covered and caution tape was placed around platforms, the museum held an Open House for the community in March. More than 200 visitors were asked to comment on the proposed exhibits and vote for their favorite. Before long they were pledging financial support for signs, exhibits, a timeline, the steamboat map and even mannequins. In four hours the community donated almost $7,000 for the museum’s new exhibits. Thank you to the donors who made it possible to create new exhibits and signage.

**OPEN HOUSE DONORS**
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Mr. William Wright

It was a rush to make the May 1 opening date, but with a few minor exceptions, all was ready for the 2014 season.
A large ship building diorama, built by Col. William Wright, George Frayne and the late Robert Butler, is one of our most popular exhibits!

A new time line introduces our visitors to important dates and information about the history of Steamboats on the Chesapeake Bay.
Our amazing models are front and forward in the main exhibit hall.

New mannequins add interest to the Wharf and Cannery exhibits!
A refreshed shop with museum related items was popular with our visitors.

In addition to new panels, interesting objects of the times were added to the James F. Adams Floating Theater exhibit.
Our Commitment

In 2014 the Museum’s Board of Directors announced plans to restore the pilothouse of the steamboat Potomac and bring it into the museum’s main exhibit hall by the 2017 season. The pilothouse is the only known surviving intact section of a Chesapeake Bay steamboat. The Potomac was built in 1894 in Philadelphia for the Maryland & Virginia Steamboat Company. It measured 176 feet in length and included 37 staterooms with a crew of 36. The Potomac served 42 years in freight and passenger service.

After it was retired as a passenger vessel and during its conversion into a barge, Captain Ben Colona preserved the pilothouse and the adjoining officer’s quarters. He had it barged to White Stone Beach for use as his personal summer cottage.

In 2000, the museum acquired the pilothouse and brought it to Irvington where it was on display next to the museum for several years. Today, the pilothouse sits covered in shrink-wrap at the White Stone boatyard of Capt. Meredith Robbins.

The restoration is a major financial undertaking for the museum. The Board of Directors will unveil a fundraising campaign in the near future.
The museum hosted group tours from various organizations including a group of home-schooled children. JoAnne Pheris, a longtime museum volunteer took part in the “History on the Go” program, where she joined volunteers from other local museums in a visit to a Middlesex elementary school.

The 2014 season began a new direction for the museum shop. Museum related items such as mugs, t-shirts, posters, puzzles, coasters and other items with the Museum logo became available for sale. The two biggest sellers were the *Cannery Labels of the Northern Neck* and *Steamboat Ports of the Chesapeake Bay* posters! Other items offered in the shop included American made crafts, home goods and books.

In 2014 the Museum published three books. All are available exclusively at the museum shop.

*The Houses of Irvington*, by architect Steven Reiss, was originally published by the Village Improvement Association in 2013. In 2014 a larger format soft cover edition was published by the museum.

*We Are Who We Are Because Steamboats Were* by Anne Long McClintock was published in November. This book tells stories about the people who rode and worked on steamboats as well as information about the boats. Anne’s grandfather was a steamboat captain and many of her stories come from personal experiences. It is currently in its sixth printing!
At the Volunteer Thank you Coffee in 2013, volunteers served desserts from the Steamboat Era. Many of the recipes were handed down from grandmothers, mothers and aunts. Soon a book, Dining on the Chesapeake Bay, was in the works. Sallie Dashiell spent months collecting recipes from local residents. In addition, she collected recipes to recreate all the food from two authentic steamboat menus. Heather Reitze’s beautiful design makes this book a treasure to own.

There was a buzz in the community about the Steamboat Era Museum and much of that was because of the extensive public relations and advertising efforts put forth in 2014.

It started in May when we learned the museum was voted as one of the “Best of Virginia” in the Historic Museum, Eastern Virginia category. For the first time, the museum purchased a full page ad in Virginia Living Magazine’s “Best of Virginia” issue. This was followed by paid advertising in the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce magazine, the Local Scoop, The Rappahannock Record and South Side Sentinel, and the Northern Neck Tourism Map.

Three months of paid advertising and PSAs on 101.7 Bay FM/104.9 WIGO Country added to the buzz.

The museum had numerous stories in the Rappahannock Record and Southside Sentinel throughout the year, and we thank the editors and staff for supporting our efforts.

Our new logo began appearing on all of our communication pieces as well as on mugs and t-shirts and other museum-oriented materials. With the help of Carter Bonner, of Molehill Designs, the museum’s website was redesigned and updated.
The Third Annual Irvington Crab Festival was once again a rousing success. The sold out event, with over 750 participants, raised $25,000 for the museum. A silent auction and a mini museum shop added to the fun and revenues.

A big thank you to Frank Tetrick and his amazing committee for making the festival the best “crab picking party” on the Northern Neck. Once again Jumbo Lump Daddy and the Backfin Boys provided the lively music.

We could not have had such a successful event without the support of businesses and individuals in the community. We are grateful to our sponsors and hope you will thank them by supporting their businesses.

It was a beautiful night for eating crabs!
The annual holiday Home Tour was replaced in 2014 by a Holiday Marketplace. It was held the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving. Over 500 people came to the museum to purchase holiday gifts. The main exhibit hall and the Lancaster Room were filled with crafts from local artists. Local authors signed their books. We Are Who We Are Because Steamboats Were by Anne McClintock, The Houses of Irvington by Steve Reiss, Rivah Friends by Barbara Brecher, ‘tis the Season by Polly Ward, Chippiepierre’s Magic Paintbrush Tail by Barbara Deitz and Dining on the Chesapeake Bay were all big sellers.

In addition, the sale of fresh greenery and flower arrangements, Steamboat Memorabilia donated by the family of Jerry Nault, a limited print edition of a poster entitled, The Northern Neck and holiday gift items contributed to a very successful event. The museum raised almost $10,000 from this event. We would like to thank our vendors and authors, all of whom donated a share of their profits, for making the Marketplace a big success.

Barbara Brecher    Anne McClintock
Jennifer Brit     Rick Nesossis
Carolyn Carpin    Andrew Pitts
Barbara Deitz     Lori Roberts
Jack Eley         Cheryl-Sadler Pugh
Barney Harris     CarolAnne Taylor
Alfred Harris      Ron Taylor
Teresa Howard     Polly Ward
Richard Kantor

In addition...

The museum held two Mahjong events in 2014. Both were well attended and, while helping raise funds for the museum, the participants enjoyed lunch from Willaby’s followed by spirited competition.

In September, the museum once again took part in the River Counties Community Foundation’s Amazing Raise. For the second year in a row we raised over $1,700. Thank you to everyone who took part in this “virtual” fundraising event.

Our last fund raising event of the year was the Annual Challenge Grant. Because of our generous supporters we were able to match the $10,000 grant and raised $22,000 at the end of the year. Thank you.
Our Volunteers

Led by Barbara Baxter and Fran Kelly, the number of volunteers significantly increased in 2014. The roles these volunteers played in the life of the museum were historic guides, managers of the front desk, mail processors and event planners/workers.

At the top of the list of volunteers, we must recognize Nancy Newlin for being amazingly faithful and willing. She never hesitated, when called upon, to step up and take responsibility. Nancy has moved to Virginia Beach but we trust she will be with us for special occasions.

For strong support when needed, we thank Karen Feuerman and Mary Ellen Tetrick. During the winter of 2014 they gave countless hours working on the new design of the museum. All the volunteers appreciated their wonderfully simple, easy system for the front desk.

Special thanks to Anne McClintock for her outstanding floral arrangements to enhance our events.

One of the most thankless jobs in any organization is keeping track of the membership rolls. We are so lucky to have Susan Judd Ellis, who has shown grace and humor while diligently working on membership lists and making sure renewal and thank you letters were on time and all questions were responded to quickly.

2014 volunteer orientation luncheon...Learning the ins and outs of the reception desk.
Barbara Baxter was a strong leader in managing our events and mailings. We recognize all those who skillfully helped with these projects . . . but we did wonder why they were always laughing. Could it be that it is just simply fun to volunteer at the Steamboat Era Museum?

Barbara Baxter
Mary Barany
Nancy Newlin
Fran Kelly
Virginia Fleet
Jean Hess
Jayne Jackson
Anne McClintock
Kay Micklin
Cathy Polhamus
Doris Willett
No organization like the museum can survive without the support of its membership. Without this support we would not be able to continue our mission preserving and interpreting the importance of the Steamboat Era to the Northern Neck.

2014 saw a change in membership levels and benefits. For the first time benefits for some levels included tickets to the Irvington Crab Festival, free admission to the museum and a Steamboat Era Museum car decal.

The museum held two member events in 2014. The members Annual Meeting was held in April. In addition to electing board members and taking care of other official business, members enjoyed drinks and refreshments while exploring the newly designed museum and exhibits.

In December the members were invited to a Holiday Party. No speeches here, just holiday cheer with refreshments and special member discounts in the Holiday Marketplace!

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This report includes donations and memberships from 1/1/14 - 12/31/14. While every effort has been made to include all donors and members some errors may have occurred. Please contact us with any concerns. We apologize for any omissions.
2014 Finances

INCOME

Donations (30%)

Grants (7%)

Membership (8%)

Special Events (48%)

Gift Shop (4%)

Admission Fees (3%)

EXPENSES

General & Administrative (51%)

Special Events (20%)

Building R&M (14%)

Exhibits (7%)

Advertising (4%)

Gift Shop (4%)

For more in depth financial information, please contact the museum office.
2014
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