

MVM Annual Meeting  
August 17, 2009

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Martha's Vineyard Museum. Since its founding in 1923 the museum has welcomed many thousands of visitors from all over the world.

The Vineyard has served as a crossroads for people engaged in trading, whaling, fishing, farming and local industries, and the Museum's collection of artifacts, written records, and works of art reflect all of these aspects of the Island's history. What a treasure we have and what stories we have to tell.

It is our challenge to take care of the collection for the generations to come and to interpret the collection through programs, exhibits, lectures and publications to the broadest possible audience including school children, adults, and scholars.

The Museum owns ten acres of property in West Tisbury and one acre of land in Edgartown. The Edgartown Campus houses the Research Library, the historic Cooke House, Pease House, a carriage shed that houses vessels and vehicles and the magnificent Fresnel lens that was given to the Museum in 1952. In addition, the Museum is the steward of three Island Lighthouses: Gay Head, East Chop and Edgartown. We are an Island-wide institution.

The Board of Directors has confirmed its intentions to have additional facilities in West Tisbury and when the economic environment improves, a serious effort will be made to raise the funds to do so as we greatly need increased space. In the meantime, every effort will be made to take care of our collections, to continue the successful outreach to Vineyard schools, to provide a rich program of exhibitions and lectures on the Edgartown campus and at other Island venues.

2008 was a banner year for the museum

- We paid off the debt and achieved financial goals that ended the year with a positive cash position
- We streamlined the Governance policies
- We successfully cultivated new donors who care about the future of MVM

2009 has seen a stunning increase in the number of visitors

- The three new exhibits at Pease House attracted more than 1000 visitors for each of the summer months.
- This year the Edgartown Lighthouse has brought in more than 6,500 visitors from all over the world.
- The increased attendance can be attributed in large part to the excellent exhibitions and programs that have been offered.

The successes would not have happened without the hard work of a truly dedicated staff; they are to be congratulated because the work they do above and beyond the call of duty is truly remarkable:

Keith Gorman, Executive Director  
Amy Houghton, Director of Development  
Betsey Mayhew, Finance Director  
Dana Street, Curator  
Linsey Lee, Curator Oral History  
Nancy Cole, Education Director  
Anna Carringer, Assistant Curator  
Susan Wilson, Development & Publications Coordinator and Editor, Dukes County  
Intelligencer  
Paige Roth, Administrative Assistant  
Catherine Mayhew, Genealogist

I would also like to pay special tribute to the some 75 volunteers who welcome visitors, guide visitors through Cooke House, sell admissions and gift shop items, and keep our grounds looking neat and tidy. Although there are too many volunteers to mention each name, it is my understanding that those of the longest service include Mary Ellen Hill, Kay Mayhew, Eileen Robinson, and Terry Burke and our newest volunteer Steve Garth, who assists with gardening came on board just a few weeks ago. We are grateful to you all.

A special volunteer Chris Murphy serves as skipper of the Museum's historic boat, the Vanity. By providing an opportunity for a sail on this beautiful catboat, the museum is able to thank those who have supported the museum through services and/or contributions. Chris is not only a most capable skipper, he is also a fine ambassador for the museum.

We are also grateful to:  
Richard Skidmore, the Gay Head Lighthouse Keeper  
Rob Hammett, the East Chop Lighthouse Keeper.  
Their dedication to taking care of the lighthouses and to providing tours of the lighthouses to visitors is greatly appreciated.

There are seven members of the board who are schedule to rotate off after serving two consecutive three year terms:

Judy Bruguiera who has served for many years on the Evening of Discovery, Planning and Collections committees;

Paula Conover who has served on the Development and Personnel committees;

Craig Dripps who has served and will continue to serve on the Lighthouse committee;

Catherine “Kay” Mayhew, who has been Secretary of the Board, preserving our institutional history, as well as serving the Museum’s volunteer genealogist;

Chris Morse is a former chair and has served on the Collections, Development, Planning committees and will continue to serve on Executive Committee as Chair Emeritus;

Mark Snider, a member of the Finance committee will continue on that committee; and,

Joe Sollitto who has served on the Personnel committee.

I would like to pay a special tribute to Keith Gorman who will be stepping down as Executive Director at the end of this month. His accomplishments during his 18 month tour of duty as Executive Director are to be commended. He has successfully managed the museum through a challenging transition, mapped out and executed strategies for programs and exhibitions, has been diligent in keeping expenses in line, and has been an excellent communicator to both board and staff. I shall miss him as a colleague and as a friend.

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce David Nathans, the Executive Director elect who will officially begin his duties the day after Labor Day. David is native to western Massachusetts: he received his undergraduate degree in history from Hamilton College and an M.B.A. from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. His museum management experience includes time spend as the Director of the Emerson Gallery at Hamilton College and Assistant Director at the Art Museum at Princeton. As Principal and Director of The Sydney Company, he served as consultant to museums in the areas of development, fundraising, marketing and operations. May I present David Nathans!

The next order of business is to ask for a motion for the approval of the minutes of the last Annual Meeting.