A Sense of Belonging: CHAUTAUQUA YOUTH SERVICES DIVERSIFIES

The Chautauqua Children’s School and the Boys’ and Girls’ Club create a separate world for children to occupy as their own, even as their parents are taking in the smorgasbord of lectures, performances, discussions and recreational activities across the Institution. Such isolation is by design, so that young Chautauquans have a campus and experience they can call their own. The joy and care that youth programs staff bring to the planning and execution of activities is exceptional. “I would hold up Club and Children’s School, both deeply rooted in Chautauqua tradition, as the best programs of their kind anywhere in the country,” says Matt Ewalt, Associate Director of Education and Youth Services.

At the same time, Youth Services is also ramping up efforts to bring attention to other options available to young Chautauquans while they are on the grounds. At any given moment in a season, fully one third of the population at Chautauqua is here for the first time. For children and teens, getting oriented and finding their way can be a challenge. “We know there are young people who might prefer robotics, spending the day writing, or enjoying an afternoon down by the lake painting or sketching,” Ewalt explains, “and we have taken steps to make sure that parents and children get the full picture of possibilities when they arrive.”

Youth Events and Special Studies

Robin Martin, a teacher with experience at both Club and Children’s School, worked hard last season to provide assistance and guidance to new families on the grounds and to share alternatives to Club, including Special Studies classes and a number of new activities. Martin led family orientation sessions on Sundays in Bestor Plaza to guide parents and children toward their preferences. “As more and more families are coming for one-week stays or shorter,” says Ewalt, “the challenge to Youth Services is to make sure that all kids have a true Chautauqua experience and know this place is for them. We want to instill a sense of belonging in every child.”

For the coming season, Martin will be working full-time to schedule and oversee additional youth events, guided in part by the conversations she has with youth and families. Activities already planned for the season include tours of the grounds early in the week, movie nights at the Hultquist Center, a “lecture and lunch” program and other “pick-up” activities on the grounds. During the off-season, Ewalt and his colleague Karen Schiavone have also pursued selective partnerships with local non-profits that have strong reputations for youth instruction and programming. Infinity Visual and Performing Arts in Jamestown is one such partner that regularly offers private lessons and group classes in music, dance, drama and visual arts to young people, with no prior experience or background needed. The Jamestown Audubon Center specializes in offering interactive nature workshops for the entire family. These and other partnerships allow Chautauqua to broaden its available programming inside Special Studies to targeted age groups, while also strengthening the Institution’s ties to Chautauqua County youth and educators.

“Though young people are often brought to Chautauqua by parents and grandparents, there are multiple ways we can help them build a greater sense of belonging and ownership of this Institution. We are open to new ideas.”

—Matt Ewalt

Volunteer Program

At the older end of the youth spectrum, Youth Services has been working with community members to create a volunteer program for high school students who may be interested in earning community service credit during the summer — a requirement now in many high schools. Volunteers may be assigned to assist the Chautauqua grounds crew with planting or maintaining rain gardens, set up arts venues for performances or work in the denominational houses to help with programming.

“The volunteer program we’ll pilot this summer is a great example of community-led efforts on these grounds,” says Ewalt. Artist and longtime Chautauqua Jamie Jamison brought the idea to Ewalt last year. Their conversation led to a meeting with four young Chautauquans eager to make the volunteer program a reality.

Intergenerational Experiences

Ewalt and Schiavone have also been looking at lowering the minimum age for some adult Special Studies classes so that teens with a passion for science or literature, or another relevant topic, can enroll and broaden the intergenerational aspect of select classes. They are also encouraging the participation of millennials as Special Studies instructors. Ewalt cites the example of a former Chautauquan Daily photographer who taught two photography classes and presented an exhibition at Hultquist Center during the 2015 season. “The older students were so excited to be working with a young woman at the start of what is clearly a promising career,” he says. Former students in the Schools of Fine & Performing Arts as well as former Club counselors are also instructor prospects for Special Studies.

Informal Play

Beyond these formal educational opportunities for different age groups, Youth Services considers it their charge to make sure that all young people see Chautauqua as a place for informal play and friendship building. “Kids who are not in Club are welcome at the YAC (Youth Activities Center) to play ping-pong, grab lunch, and socialize,” says Ewalt, “and our staff is also designing other activities for youth in between Special Studies classes.”

Ewalt also credits the work of other Chautauqua organizations at identifying opportunities to engage youth during the summer. Chautauqua’s Bird, Tree & Garden Club has made youth involvement in their programming a priority. In addition to the BTGC’s sensory garden at Children’s School and the weekly Bot Chats at Smith Wilkes Hall, they are looking at other sites on the grounds where they might engage
African American Denominational House Begins Programming

In the 2015 season, exploratory efforts toward the establishment of an African American Denominational House (AADH) found support among Chautauquaans who participated in a series of conversations led by the Rev. Sterling Freeman, the new AADH project manager. In the wake of recent police action in minority communities and the emergence of the “Black Lives Matter” movement last year, Chautauquaans were primed and ready to engage in a discussion through what Freeman called “the lens of the African American faith tradition that speaks to peace, justice, and hope.” Freeman invited participants to reflect on the effects of the Charleston church shooting and the power dynamics at work in confrontations between African American youth and police.

Freeman has been charged by the AADH board to establish a presence for the new organization through programming on the Chautauqua grounds. He is also an ordained Baptist minister and a nationwide trainer and facilitator in the areas of leadership and organizational development. He holds a B.A. in economics from Davidson College, certificates in business strategy and economics from the London School of Economics, and a Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The first AADH-sponsored program drew close to 100 participants for the discussion on Black Lives Matter. Several days later, another 60 Chautauquaans joined Freeman for a discussion of the work of theologian, pastor, and mystic, Dr. Howard Thurman in the Hall of Missions. The Board of Directors for the AADH includes the Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, former director of Chautauqua’s Department of Religion, and other leaders familiar to the community including Erroll Davis, Geoff Follansbee, Helene Gayle, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Rahsaan Harris, Edward Jones, Ernie Mahaffey, and the Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock. The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III serves as board chair.

A Welcome Embrace

“Sterling’s presentations generated a lot of buzz on the grounds,” says the Rev. Dr. Robert Franklin, Jr., current director of the Department of Religion. “Of course that is what Chautauqua is — people yearning for the fabric of Chautauqua and seeks to inspire, and to be inspired by, the Chautauqua values of lifelong learning, civil discourse, and exploring the best in human values. AADH itself represents the ecumenical cooperation of numerous historically African American denominations that have thrived since the nineteenth century — predominantly African American congregations within other denominations — as well as more recently established independent congregations.”

In the 2016 season, AADH programming during both Week Three on “Moral Leadership in Action” and Week Nine focusing on “America’s Music with Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center” will be led by Freeman and other clergy in residence who will be aiming to broaden the reach of this new initiative.

Stark Reckoning

The year 2015 was a year of stark reckoning around racial inequities in this country, as Dr. Franklin describes it. “We have a lot more work to do with our children in terms of helping them understand the act of terror in Charleston and the violence of others who have lashed out. These acts of terror are the cry of the unheard who are saying, in effect, that society is not listening to my voice. Some voices are anti-democratic and immoral. But we have all contributed to this climate. Few are guilty but all are responsible. That’s the charge I want to give Chautauquaans as we continue here to build an inclusive community where all voices can be heard and respected.”

Franklin and his predecessor, the Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, first met in the 1990s when African American churches were being burned across the south. “Thanks to Joan’s courage, vision and community building, we are a lot further along than we were in the mid-90s.” He says Chautauquaans have been eager to learn more about the idea of the AADH, and want to know how they can help. “They want to know if it represents a single denomination, or is it an ecumenical house or a cultural center? I would say that it is likely to be a combination of the latter two — an ecumenical and cultural center. We see it as a meeting place for leaders inspired by the ministry of Martin Luther King Jr.”

Brown Campbell, former director of Chautauqua’s Department of Religion, and other leaders familiar to the community including Erroll Davis, Geoff Follansbee, Helene Gayle, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Rahsaan Harris, Edward Jones, Ernie Mahaffey, and the Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock. The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III serves as board chair.

On the AADH website (aadhouse.org) the mission of this body is described as serving, “as an interfaith community that is woven into the fabric of Chautauqua and seeks to inspire, and to be inspired by, the Chautauqua values of lifelong learning, civil discourse, and exploring the best in human values.”

“Education Wednesdays” initiative, which provides a free gate pass for Chautauqua County school personnel and students every Wednesday of the season. Built upon the strong foundations of Children’s School and Boys’ and Girls’ Club, Chautauqua’s increased efforts to engage youth and families is ongoing, Ewalt explains, and it includes collaborations across departments, as well as efforts to bring more local area students here to experience the Institution and the diversity of youth programs being offered.

“Though young people are often brought to Chautauqua by parents and grandparents, there are multiple ways we can help them build a greater sense of belonging and ownership of this Institution,” says Ewalt. “We are open to new ideas.”

YOUTH from p. 1

“Education Wednesdays” initiative, which provides a free gate pass for Chautauqua County school personnel and students every Wednesday of the season. Built upon the strong foundations of Children’s School and Boys’ and Girls’ Club, Chautauqua’s increased efforts to engage youth and families is ongoing, Ewalt explains, and it includes collaborations across departments, as well as efforts to bring more local area students here to experience the Institution and the diversity of youth programs being offered.

“Though young people are often brought to Chautauqua by parents and grandparents, there are multiple ways we can help them build a greater sense of belonging and ownership of this Institution,” says Ewalt. “We are open to new ideas.”
Reaching the Promise

As the Institution begins the search for a new president, the importance of successfully concluding the Promise Campaign at the end of 2016 comes into sharper focus. As of the end of last year, Chautauquans had made $92.8 million in commitments toward an overall goal of $98.2 million. As a community we should take pride in the great distance we have already come with those initiatives designed to bring greater sustainability, innovation, inclusion, engagement and civility to Chautauqua.

Consider the sustainability work on the Chautauqua environment — stormwater management, shoreline restoration, improvements to our beaches and wetlands — that have all been made possible by a combination of generous support from donors and competitive grants. Philanthropy has also played an essential role in igniting a spirit of innovation that’s evidenced by the inter-arts initiatives, expanded youth programs and new leaders such as Deborah Sonya Moore, Steven Slaff, Matt Ewalt, Karen Schiavone and Meg Pickard, all of whom are featured in this issue. Chautauquans have endowed three critical senior leadership positions, which help to undergird the strength and vision of our Institution going forward.

The Institution’s work on inclusion is also taking shape as we increase our connections outside the gates in local public schools and in the greater Chautauqua County community. We are participating in the development of an African American denominational house and providing special opportunities for young-adult engagement through the NOW Generation. Chautauquans have added $1 million to our endowment for scholarships that help make it possible for extraordinary young artists, regardless of their economic status, to study and perform here.

The engagement of new and longstanding program partners is also a critical development in the life of the Institution, and in this issue of PILLARS we look toward a season that features collaboration with National Geographic in Week Five, and Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center in Week Nine. Our foundational commitment to civility has also been at play in the Promise Campaign as the community considers the future of the Amphitheater. The construction project, which began in February, is now fully funded even as we seek gifts toward a permanent maintenance endowment for this 100-year facility.

At the same time, the Foundation has recently received an unexpected gift that made possible the purchase of the Lewis Miller Cottage. The acceptance of this gift reaffirms the Institution’s commitment to the aesthetic character of the community and to the preservation of the only building within these grounds to be designated a National Historic Landmark. See the story on Page 7. In so many ways, Chautauqua Institution is well positioned as we move toward the coming leadership transition and reach — with profound appreciation and hope — toward the conclusion of the Promise Campaign.

In so many ways, Chautauqua Institution is well positioned as we move toward the coming leadership transition and reach — with profound appreciation and hope — toward the conclusion of the Promise Campaign. Only a few objectives remain, including the creation of 20 additional endowed scholarships to ensure that we can attract top students to study with the likes of Tim Muffitt, Marlena Malas, Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux and our other artistic leaders. We also hope to create two more endowed chairs to ensure the continuity of excellence we have come to expect in the fine and performing arts, Boys’ and Girls’ Club and Children’s School. And we need to reach our goal for the 2016 Chautauqua Fund, ensuring the delivery of $22 million in operating support for the six years of the campaign.

I hope you will consider making a gift toward the remaining objectives in this campaign, including the Amphitheater or Miller Cottage endowments, along with renewing your annual commitment to the Chautauqua Fund. We will meet the Promise of Chautauqua because of your generosity and your continuing belief in the value and role of this Institution in your life, in your family’s future, and in the betterment of our nation.
Leveraging the Power of Partnerships

Inviting new audiences to experience Chautauqua is not just the task of the Institution’s marketing staff. Establishing relationships with peer organizations and their followers is a tremendous opportunity for expanding Chautauqua’s reach and program content. Recent collaborators include Sesame Workshop, George Eastman House, Colonial Williamsburg and the International Spy Museum. The 2016 season has two prime examples of the power of partnerships to stimulate and challenge new and returning Chautauquans.

In Week Five, longstanding and popular partner National Geographic helps Chautauquans consider our relationship with the natural environment 50 years after environmentalism became a movement and 100 years after the founding of the National Park Service. Are we out of touch with nature? How has public policy and policy-making changed in connection with preservation? What are we losing?

Speakers confirmed for Week Five include National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore, journalist Bryan Christy, and Nalini Nadkarni, director of the Center for Science and Math Education at University of Utah.

Since 2009, Chautauqua Institution has partnered with National Geographic for weeks on “Exploring Our World,” “Water Matters,” and “Feeding a Hungry Planet.” Staff from both organizations work together to craft an overall theme for the week, identify speakers for the Amphitheater lecture platform and program master classes and other special events.

Global Reputations

“The best program partnerships bring credibility and clear expectations to the week,” says Matt Ewalt, Associate Director of Education and Youth Services. “With a global reputation for excellence in journalism and education, National Geographic shares Chautauqua’s commitment to lifelong learning and civic engagement. But with that depth and substance also comes the promise of an exhilarating week in the Amp, driven by compelling stories of exploration and complemented by breathtaking photography.”

Expanding Audiences

Chautauqua staff is also leveraging the power of partnerships for Week Nine of the 2016 season, in an effort to reach new audiences while also taking advantage of the availability of additional venues on the grounds. Planning for a week on “America’s Music with Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center” began with historian and Chautauqua lecturer Geoffrey Ward, who saw the common educational mission between the two organizations and brought the idea to Sherra Babcock, Vice President and Emily and Richard Smucker for Science and Math Education at the University of Utah. Planning for a week on “America’s Music with Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center” began with historian and Chautauqua lecturer Geoffrey Ward, who saw the common educational mission between the two organizations and brought the idea to Sherra Babcock, Vice President and Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education, and President Tom Becker.

In a week that has the potential to draw the greatest percentage of newcomers to the grounds, Chautauqua and Jazz at Lincoln Center offer a robust demonstration of the Institution’s unique mix of arts, educational and religious programming. Musicians from Jazz at Lincoln Center will be in residence the entire week, offering performances and special workshops. In addition, on Wednesday evening, Garth Fagan Dance, a company from Rochester that has worked with Marsalis many times, will make its Chautauqua debut.

The week’s morning lecture platform opens with Marsalis on Monday and Ward on Tuesday, while the Department of Religion’s Interfaith Lecture Series spends the week exploring “America’s Spiritual Songbook.” Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO) will play prominently into the week’s art offerings, beginning with the Logan Chamber Music Series performance on Monday at 3 p.m. Marsalis has again chosen positive Aspen experience for the artists.

Meanwhile, Deborah Sunya Moore, Chautauqua’s new Vice President and Director of Programming, had an idea: What if the program department had both an artistic director (herself) and someone whose job was to focus primarily on operational details? The latter would be charged with maintaining a master schedule for all performing arts venues, while also synthesizing and helping manage the budgets and processes across arts programs of the Institution. And, Moore reasoned, why shouldn’t Chautauqua also take advantage of new computer
Leveraging the Power of Partnerships

A Tale of Two Talents: Steven Slaff Joins Programming Staff

And so it is that Steven Slaff has joined the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra. Chautauquans were the first people to hear Marsalis’ violin concerto in 2015 and they will again be the first to hear Marsalis’ newest work, composed for the 100th anniversary of the historic Harlem congregation led by Pastor Calvin O. Butts, will be performed on Friday night with Marsalis, JLCO, the 70-person Chorale Le Chateau, conductor Damien Sneed, and Rev. Butts narrating. All were participants in the original performance at the church in 2013.

“I can’t think of any other group who could present a week like this except Jazz at Lincoln Center,” says Chautauqua’s Vice President and Director of Programming Deborah Sunya Moore. “We are so fortunate. Wynton Marsalis is not just one of the country’s leading musicians, but he is also one of our top music educators. This week represents our commitment to engage more audiences, invite more diversity, teach young people about our current administrative processes and evolve them. It turns out I was looking for Steve!”

“Was Marty Merkley really two people?” Slaff asks, grinning. “The sheer amount of things that he could get done was incredible, but by my taking on the logistical matters, Deborah will be freed up to focus her time and energy on artistic planning and additional programming innovations.”

During Slaff’s interview for this position, he and Moore were both pleasantly surprised at the complementary nature of the individual gifts they bring to their work. They already share a connection to Oberlin and the Chautauqua experience as musicians.

“Building Relationships

Maintaining relationships with program partners and pursuing opportunities for new ones is critical to Chautauqua’s planning efforts, particularly in the early stages of developing weekly lecture themes. Planning for the 2017 season is well underway, with staff having identified opportunities for gauging the interest of existing and potential partners. New partnerships are often forged by building upon already existing relationships, following a memorable lecture on the Amphitheater stage by an individual, such as Ken Burns and Dan Ariely, or the leader of an organization.

“Building a week for 2017 with a partnership already in place allows us to go into the 2016 season with a theme that tells a clear and compelling story, even without the names of lecturers in place,” says Ewalt. “Going forward, we have the partner’s expertise and resources to help guide our programming, and we can pursue opportunities for reaching new audiences more familiar with that partner’s work.”

Technology to coordinate the volume and breadth of events taking place on any given day during the season? And so it is that Steven Slaff has come back to Chautauqua, where he is now the Managing Director of Performing and Visual Arts — a new position for the Institution.

Moore’s desire for such a position grew out of the need for her to focus on vision work, new initiatives and long-range artistic planning. “Every organization has its major times of transition and it is that time for Chautauqua. In addition to overseeing four companies, visual arts, festival schools, popular music and more, I am also currently focusing on new arts education programs.” Moore’s arrival coincided with the transition of four out of five artistic directors over two years.

“While I greatly enjoy this work to shape and mold the arts” she adds, “the need for someone with the ability to simultaneously grow our operational and administrative processes was clear. I was looking for someone who could think critically about our current administrative processes and evolve them. It turns out I was looking for Steve!”

“Fletcher didn’t exist when I was here before. Of course, Bellinger is the same — I never could remember how to navigate all those twists and turns.”
Gaining Ground:
SHARING THE CHQ EXPERIENCE

The Institution’s home for more than 140 years has been in Chautauqua County, on a beautiful lake loved by generations of residents and visitors to the area. While the gates are open during 43 weeks of the year, many of the Institution’s local neighbors have never witnessed a performance at Chautauqua, or toured one of the galleries, or dipped their toes in the water by the bell tower during the nine-week season.

There is a bit of mystery to all that goes on each summer beyond views of the practice shells and the buildings visible to one traveling along Route 394. While Sundays have always been free and open to the public — and there have been various efforts over the years to demystify the Institution for local audiences — there is a renewed and growing focus on making the Chautauqua experience both more accessible and welcoming for area families.

Family Entertainment

Some offerings have been available for several seasons, including the Family Entertainment Series (FES). FES performances held in the Amp, followed by Wild Kingdom featuring Peter Gros in early August.

The Institution has created many other entry points for local families and children, including a free Family Entertainment Series offered in Smith Wilkes Hall and Elizabeth S. Lenna Hall that has been sponsored in recent years by DFT Communications, a local, family-owned company. In 2016, the series opens with an evening performance on June 28 by the Chautauqua Theater Company, where CTC actors will perform the winning plays written by Chautauqua County elementary school students who have participated in the Young Playwrights Project, in collaboration with Florida Studio Theatre and supported by Chautauqua Georgia Court. This special presentation will feature young playwrights from Chautauqua Lake, Panama and Jamestown’s Fletcher elementary schools. Building on a growing partnership with area schools (see below for more), Chautauqua is extending invitations to students and families that have come to better know the Institution through off-season arts programming.

Sunday afternoon performances in the Amp are also free and open to the public, sponsored in part by the establishment last year of an endowment fund, the John Alfred and Oscar Johnson Memorial Trust. For more than 15 years, the Johnson Foundation of Jamestown supported the series with an annual grant before creating this endowed fund.

Education Wednesdays

Beginning in 2015, every single Wednesday now affords free gate passes to current K-12 students, teachers, and staff from Chautauqua County schools through a new effort called “Education Wednesdays at Chautauqua.” Passes include access to all events at the Amphitheater, including the Family Entertainment Series, participation in the CLSC Young Readers program (see Page 2) as well as a 10% discount at the Chautauqua Bookstore. Efforts are also underway to build on a longstanding partnership between the Institution and Chautauqua Lake Central School that enables their current students and teachers to enroll in Special Studies courses, splitting tuition costs so there is little to no cost to the participant.

In 2015, Panama Central School District became another partner in this program and conversations are underway with Chautauqua County superintendents to expand this opportunity to more schools.

Another exciting opportunity for local residents is a scholarship awarded annually to a family visiting the grounds for the first time. The family scholarship includes gate passes, tuition for Special Studies classes and children’s activities including Children’s School and Boys’ and Girls’ Club.

Through the Children’s School +1 Program, area families who enroll their child in Children’s School for the first time enjoy a free morning pass good for five days of attending the 10:45 a.m. lectures or exploring the grounds. These passes extend to 2 p.m. so that, after Children’s School dismisses at noon, the parent and child can go to story time at Smith Memorial Library, visit Children’s Beach, or share a lunch on Bestor Plaza.

“Our aim through all of these programs,” says Vice President and Director of Programming Deborah Sunya Moore, “is for Chautauqua to become a vital resource to the communities of Chautauqua County. If more local children engage with us at their schools and on the grounds at Chautauqua, they will be comfortable here, even if their parents or grandparents didn’t visit as young people. We hope this experience will give them the desire to come to the grounds for enrichment and consider Chautauqua as their own.”

“We can always use additional gifts and support to advance these opportunities for the families and children of Chautauqua County, as well as promote these valuable programs across the region,” says Foundation CEO Geof Follansbee. “For instance, thanks to funding from the Lillian Britik Education Fund, Education Wednesdays have been expanded this year to include members of the Southern Chautauqua County Retired Teachers Association.” Anyone interested in making a gift to support these efforts to build connections with the local community may contact foundation@cuweb.org for more information.

Institution and Two Local Schools Named as Kennedy Center Partners In Education Team

Chautauqua Institution’s arts partnership with Jamestown Public and Chautauqua Lake Central Schools has been tapped as one of only 10 such collaborations to be inducted this year into the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Partners in Education Program. Through this award, leaders from both school districts, along with Chautauqua’s Deborah Sunya Moore, will attend a special professional development session in Washington, D.C., in April.

The Kennedy Center program will help build on the Institution’s engagement with local schools in the area of arts integration.

“Through this and projects like the Young Playwrights Project and integrated residencies for students with and without disabilities, the Institution is committed to being an arts education resource in the lives of Chautauqua County children and their families,” says Sunya Moore. “The goal for this partnership was set two years ago as a result of the Institution’s strategic plan which outlined a desire to reach our community beyond the summer season and beyond the gates. Working with superintendents Ben Spitzer and Tim Mains has been an honor and I’m excited about our joint future in serving children through the arts.”
Chautauqua Foundation Acquires Historic Lewis Miller Cottage

When longtime Chautauquan and philanthropist Tom Hagen learned that the owners of the Lewis Miller Cottage had decided to put the found ing family’s home on the market, he asked for a tour. “In all the 60 years I’ve been coming to Chautauqua, I realized that I had never been inside the cottage,” Hagen explained. “I was quite amazed and taken with how nice it is.”

National Historic Landmark

Miller Cottage, built in 1875 by Chautauqua’s co-founder Lewis Miller, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964, the only structure on the grounds to hold this National Park Service-issued title. “I realized that it was absolutely essential and important that the Institution own the only remaining founder’s cottage, right across from where the Assembly first met,” Hagen explained. He decided to donate the funds required to allow the Chautauqua Foundation to purchase the house from the then-owners Ted and Kim Arnn. The Foundation is now working with Jeff Kidder, AIA, a preservation architect and partner at Kidder Wachtler Architecture & Design in Erie, Pa., to document the current condition of the cottage and recommend any structural repairs needed or alterations required by the building codes or otherwise appropriate for potential future uses.

“This is a preservation project, not a restoration project,” Kidder said. “The building has been in one family for its entire history. It has been maintained very well.” Only one major renovation was ever undertaken at the Miller Cottage by Mina Miller Edison, the wife of Thomas Edison and daughter of Lewis Miller. In the early 1920s, Mrs. Edison created a large open living room with a dual staircase to the second floor, added new wood trim, built-in bookcases, finishes, light fixtures and furniture. Miller descendents Ted Arnn and his sister, Kim Arnn, inherited the house from their mother, Nancy Miller Arnn. It was Nancy who had bought the cottage years ago from her cousin, Charles Edison (Mina’s son). As Ted and Kim prepared to inventory the contents of the house for appraisal, they found all of the invoices for the furniture Mina Edison purchased in 1922, along with precise information about paint colors and fabrics. “Eighty to ninety percent of what was in the house back then — especially the furniture, china cabinets, and books — are still there and accounted for in our inventory,” Ted Arnn said.

During her renovation project, Mina Edison also engaged Ellen Biddle Shipman, a pioneering landscape architect in an era when men dominated the field. Shipman’s garden plans have been preserved in the Chautauqua Archives and will inform the future restoration of the grounds surrounding the cottage. According to historian Robin Karson, Shipman was known for using plants in a painterly fashion, employing a variety of colors and textures that would bloom over the seasons. Though she designed many residential landscapes for distinguished American families such as the Astors, Rockefellers and Vanderbilts, Shipman also undertook public landscape projects such as the Sara P. Duke Gardens at Duke University, the plantings along Lake Shore Boulevard in Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan, and the Longue Vue Gardens in New Orleans, Louisiana. “I’m particularly interested in the Shipman landscape plan and how to recreate as much of that as is possible,” said Kidder.

Future Uses

While the Foundation awaits a full architectural assessment from Kidder, there are tentative plans in development for the cottage’s ongoing use. Options under consideration include having Miller Cottage serve as an intimate facility where the Institution can house a small number of resident guests in the five bedrooms. Depending on access, it may serve to host small gatherings for lectures, receptions or intimate dinners inside the house, as well as larger events outside in the gardens. A catering kitchen and handicapped-accessible restrooms may be housed in a structure adjacent to the original facility. Hagen is especially keen to see the cottage used as a means to showcase Chautauqua’s history and heritage for newcomers to the Institution. Kidder also notes that the social history of the house — the prominent guests that the Miller and Edison families entertained here — is an important story. In addition, the cottage is one of the first prefabricated buildings of its kind, “a ‘stick style’ built with diagonals and diamonds on the charming exterior that sets the tone for the interior. The scale, materials, details and the projecting second floor balconies are all significant,” said Kidder.

Kim Arnn fondly remembers how her mother enjoyed working in the garden, and how much fun it was as a child to sit in the living room playing cards and seeing the gardens in back, while having a clear view of Miller Park and the lake out front. Arnn also remembers a summer in the 1980s when a wild storm struck. Her mother heard glass breaking and saw pieces of brick from the chimney raining down. One of the original 13 maple trees that surrounded the cottage had fallen. “We were lucky our mother was still alive because the tree hit the chimney instead of coming through the roof,” Arnn said.

“We are certainly grateful to Tom Hagen for making it possible for the Chautauqua Foundation to acquire the house,” Ted Arnn added. Both Ted and Kim have made gifts toward the $150,000 challenge grant that Hagen has pledged to match, dollar for dollar, to endow future maintenance of the cottage. "Once again, the Hagen family has helped us make Chautauqua’s past come alive for future generations," said Foundation CEO Geoff Follansbee, “and I hope others will be attracted to support the endowment for Miller Cottage. We are exceedingly grateful to Tom Hagen and the Arnn family. In the coming years, we will work diligently to ensure the cottage continues to stand as a tangible connection to the founding of this place and as a tribute to the many prominent Americans who passed through its doors and gardens.”

“In all the 60 years I’ve been coming to Chautauqua, I realized that I had never been inside the cottage. I was quite amazed and taken with how nice it is.”

—Tom Hagen
At the Turning Point: CRAIG AND ALISON MARTHINSEN

“At the Turning Point: CRAIG AND ALISON MARTHINSEN

“I like the vision of making Chautauqua sustainable for the next 100 years. I think we are at a turning point.”

— Alison Marthinsen

Fast forward to 1976 when Alison — while earning an MBA from the University of Delaware — reunites with Craig Marthinsen, who is also a University of Delaware graduate, and is working in Toronto. They marry, and take up residence together in Toronto. By the time their second son comes along, Alison decides it’s time to leave her post at IBM. After their third son is born, the family heads to England in 1993 where Craig will lead Eurobond sales for TD Securities. In 2000, the Marthinsens leave London and return to Toronto where, in 2002, Craig becomes Managing Director of Sales and Marketing for a financial information company called Markit. Craig is the 10th person hired to work in the company. At his retirement last March, there are 3,500 employees, and the company has gone public. Craig had the pleasure of ringing the bell at NASDAQ on the day of the IPO. Throughout the rush of all these years, the Institution has been a constant for the Marthinsen family. While living in England, they traveled each year to enjoy family time at Chautauqua. They’ve engaged deeply in the life of the Institution as leadership donors to the Chautauqua Fund and as supporters of the Department of Religion through endowments that sponsor a chaplain in residence for a week of worship services in the Amp. In 2015, the Marthinsens honored Alison’s late mother and grandmother by establishing the Gladys R. Brasted and Adair Brasted Gould Memorial Chaplaincy. Alison also sings in the Chautauqua Choir.

“In 1999, after years of renting on the grounds, the Marthinsens bought their present cottage, rebuilt in the 1990s on the site of the original Chubb Cottage. “I can remember when the Institution had financial concerns, in the 1970s,” Craig says. “Things were falling apart. We are grateful for the spending on infrastructure that’s been made by the Institution. The current administration has done a fantastic job,” he continues. “Every year a couple of the main roads are improved, the gardening is amazing, and the new brick walks are so attractive.”

Alison has most recently served as a volunteer for the Promise Campaign. “I like the vision of making Chautauqua sustainable for the next 100 years,” Alison says. “I think we are at a turning point.”

Now that they are settling into retirement, the Marthinsens are sharing Chautauqua with friends from all over the country. They also enjoy time at Chautauqua with their children and grandchildren. “We have a boat and the kids like hanging out on it. We play golf, ride bikes and I challenge my youngest son every year to try and beat my time in the Old First Night Run,” Craig says, noting that “the old man” has bested his son more than once.

The family has also recently spent some time at their cottage during winter, snowshoeing and sitting by the fire. The greatest satisfaction, however, after raising three boys and having the last one “just launched” from graduation into a job, is seeing how each young man has turned out all right, each one different. “Chautauqua has been a big part of my family’s life, past and present,” says Alison. “This is what compels me to give back; to ensure that Chautauqua will be here — and be sustainable — for future generations.”

At the Turning Point: CRAIG AND ALISON MARTHINSEN

Craig and Alison Marthinsen’s home at the corner of Peck and Fletcher is full of family memorabilia. The stairwell between the first and second floors is a veritable gallery of Alison’s grandfather’s 8” x 10”, black-and-white photos from Chautauqua in the 1930s. Among the images are a shot of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) class of 1932 marching with their banner that features Lindbergh’s Spirit of St. Louis, a group of young ladies flying high on a swing set, and portraits of women posed in striking hats.

In addition to his photographic talents, Alison’s grandfather Howard Brasted was also a physician from Hornell, New York. After his death, his wife, Gladys, continued the family tradition of spending summers at Chautauqua and welcomed their granddaughter Alison, a native of Wilmington, Delaware, for her first visit to Chautauqua right after she finished college. Alison planned to visit for a week, but ended up staying a month in her grandmother’s rented house on Roberts Avenue. In subsequent years, she returned to enjoy all that Chautauqua had to offer, including working as the hostess in the dining room of the Carey Hotel (now the Carey Cottage Inn).

“I like the vision of making Chautauqua sustainable for the next 100 years. I think we are at a turning point.”

— Alison Marthinsen

The Rev. James Walters, 2015 Week Seven Chaplain

EMERGING MUSICIANS SHARE THE STAGE

Kam Franklin of The Suffers performing in the Amp in August 2015.

Stacey and Evie Berger, who have been coming to Chautauqua since the mid-1960s, recently decided to invest in their passion for live music by supporting a new musical series that will present emerging artists in the Amphitheater on select nights. “We want to help introduce and expand the Chautauqua community’s awareness of new musical performers who are coming along in their careers,” Stacey Berger explained.

“Balancing tradition with innovation is a key feature of Chautauqua’s mission for the arts going forward,” said Vice President and Director of Programming Deborah Sunya Moore. “From emerging artists such as The Suffers and Kristin Diable, to established artists such as The Avett Brothers and Straight No Chaser, popular entertainment at Chautauqua will continue to cover a mix of genres and generations. Searching out emerging artists...
Meg Pickard:
WALKING THE TALK AT A BRISK PACE

At Turner Community Center, Meg Pickard rushes in and takes a seat in what was once the central office of Chautauqua Lake Turner Elementary School, built in 1968. Beside her on the desk that Turner Community Center, Meg Pickard rushes in and takes a seat in what was once the central office of Chautauqua Lake Turner Elementary School, built in 1968. Beside her on the desk that front the school’s old intercom system is an enormous tray of crisp veggies that Pickard had delivered this morning for her staff. She aims to walk the talk, making sure her trainers, teachers, and fitness staff eat healthy and take breaks, even during the most hectic weeks of the Chautauqua season.

It’s July and Pickard has been on the job as Chautauqua’s Director of Recreation for less than a year. It’s a big job that includes responsibility for the golf course, the sailing and fitness centers, the tennis center, the Sports Club with its boat rentals, shuffleboard courts, and nearby lawn bowling, and all of the league sports that the Institution offers.

Pickard grew up in Bemus Point and attended public schools there. Her father, Jack, was a dentist, avid golfer, runner, fisherman and woodworker. Her mother, Margaret, was a nurse and native of Jamestown. Meg began figure skating and taking ballet lessons at the age of five. Later, her parents brought her to performances at Chautauqua. She dreamed of living after graduating. “The local music scene is a big part of our lives here,” Evie explained, “and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival is a great way to hear new acts.”

“My musical tastes are pretty broad,” Stacey added. “When we’re at Chautauqua we go to the orchestra and the MSFO, and we love the laid-back, casual environment where we can walk to the Amp to hear great classical music and world-class musicians.”

The Bergers are also Promise Campaign volunteers. “We have a deep love for Chautauqua and understand what it takes to run this Institution,” Evie said. Service to Chautauqua is part of their family’s legacy, too — Evie’s father, Blue Greenberg, served on the Board of Trustees and the Architectural Review Board for many years.

“By establishing the Evie and Stacey Berger Endowment for Emerging Artists, we hope to encourage others to support this series and new popular entertainment at Chautauqua,” Stacey said.

“Are we so grateful to the Bergers for making this innovation possible and for bringing more variety to our Friday night offerings,” said Moore.
A Lifelong Ethos of Community Service: SUSAN GRELICK

Susan Grelick gives credit to her parents and to Chautauqua for sparking her interest in lifelong learning and community service. Grelick is Legislative Director and Counsel at the New York State Senate and is an adjunct faculty member at the University at Buffalo Law School. She was the first woman to serve as Town Clerk (1992-1996) and then Town Supervisor (1997-2005) in Amherst, N.Y., the second largest municipality in western New York.

In addition to her degree from the Western Michigan University Law School and a master's in American history — all from SUNY Buffalo, Grelick earned an MBA in finance and accounting, a master's in information and library science, and a master's in American history from Buffalo State College.

Grelick calls the three master's degrees which preceded her venture into the field of law, “a search-and-discovery period. I just wanted to learn as much as I could,” she explains. Her appetite for knowledge was first whetted at Chautauqua Institution, which her parents, Robert and Mille Grelick, discovered on their honeymoon at Bemus Point in 1945.

Both of Grelick's parents grew up in Buffalo. During the Depression, her father launched a jewelry business out of his car, selling pens and watch bands door to door. Together, Bob and Mille later launched BOMI Jewelers in Buffalo, a business that continues today under the ownership of Susan's brother, Gary.

The family would make day trips from Buffalo to Chautauqua during the summers when Susan was growing up. “I remember how peaceful and tranquil it was, even though there was so much activity,” she says. “We would walk the grounds and appreciate the architecture, go to the shops and take in whatever was going on at the Amp.”

Grelick’s parents were particularly fond of the music and visual arts programs at Chautauqua. “They loved the opera and theater, too,” she says.

As she matured, Susan was encouraged by her parents to get involved in community service. As a teenager she volunteered at hospitals and nursing homes, which naturally led her toward involvement with a number of service organizations during her career. She has served on many nonprofit boards including the Buffalo History Museum, YMCA Buffalo Niagara and Girls Town, and has been very active in Rotary.

During her tenure as a public official in Amherst, Grelick was instrumental in the development of town-wide arts celebrations, bike paths, improved senior and recreation services, pesticide reduction, waterfront revitalization, improved parklands and land preservation. She also took a leadership role in financial reform, improved fiscal management and upgrades to Amherst’s bond rating.

Though both her parents passed away in the late 1990s, Grelick has continued to come to Chautauqua for a week or two each summer. “And I have watched the Institution grow stronger every year,” she says.

In 2010, Grelick — along with her partner of 25 years, real estate lawyer John Heffron — bought a condo near the Elm Gate. They are spending more and more time on the grounds even though Grelick must also spend a lot of time traveling in her role in the state senate.

“These days,” she says, “I think the most satisfying program for me is the Chautauqua Symphony. You get so much with three concerts a week during the season. I believe that Rossen Milanov is going to have an incredible run. I love that he is getting people of all ages in the Chautauqua community more involved. He’s got some great ideas.”

In recognition of how much Chautauqua has meant to her throughout her life, Grelick recently joined the Eleanor B. Daugherty Society, providing for Chautauqua in her will by establishing the Susan Grelick Endowment — a general fund for the Institution to use as needed. “I know that all communities change and mature,” she says, “and you never know down the road what might be needed. We can’t anticipate the changes. Chautauqua will have different needs going forward, and I want these resources to be used as required. I hope this gift will insure that Western New Yorkers will benefit from Chautauqua in future generations.”

Heirloom Restaurant Continues Innovations

Travis Bensink emphasizes teamwork in his kitchen. The executive chef of Heirloom Restaurant, a full-service restaurant at the Athenaeum Hotel, is headed into his third full season at Chautauqua and believes in close communication across every station — from prep to soup and sauce to sauté and on down the line — to those who are plating, serving and dishwashing.

Members of the team — many are young folks in their 30s, as is Bensink — are expected to put aside ego and strive for the best for guests of the Athenaeum, as well as those Chautauquans who have only recently discovered the hotel’s new menu and restaurant schedule.

On many nights the team will serve some 300 guests in the dining room. On other nights, when there is a catered dinner at the President’s Cottage and another in the parlor, the total meals prepared in the kitchen may top 500.

The schedule is rigorous from the shoulder season in May through the nine weeks of Chautauqua's summer season and continuing through fall when the hotel hosts many groups and weddings. Bensink manages his team through it all, while also devoting time to his wife and their four young children. “I was able to coach my son’s T-ball team this spring,” Bensink says. He is a native of Clymer, N.Y., and is thrilled to be back in the area after high-level jobs at two fine-dining establishments in Greensboro, North Carolina.

During Bensink’s time at Chautauqua, the dining room has received a noticeable facelift. The twining roses on the wallpaper were replaced with a fresh coat of paint. New window treatments and ceiling fans were also installed. More significantly, however, the chef debuted a daily tapas menu available from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on the hotel’s popular porch or in the dining room, so that Chautauquans can come by for wine and small plates, or a lighter meal overlooking the lake, before the evening’s programming.

On Friday and Saturday nights Heirloom is also open from 9 to 11 p.m. for late-night tapas.

Farm to Table

On Tuesdays, a locavore menu features food sourced from farms within a 125-mile radius of the grounds, including great specialty cheeses, fresh vegetables and organic meats. Murray’s Chicken, for example, is raised in the Pennsylvania and New York countryside by a select number of family farms that provide their birds an all-vegetable diet, free of antibiotics and hormones.

Another supplier, CHQ Local Food, is a Mayville enterprise that emphasizes sustainable products from Chautauqua County. Beer from breweries in the region have also joined local wines on the menu. Every day at lunch and on Friday
A Culture of Volunteerism: LINDA STECKLEY

Linda Steckley's family roots are deep in Western New York. Her grandparents lived in Lockport on the Erie Canal, and as a child Linda would come back to the region in the summer with her parents. In her career, Steckley has held chief fundraising positions at Duke University Law School, NYU Law School and the University of Miami, her alma mater. She has served on many boards over the years and is a founding board member of the Fund for Education Abroad. Her most recent appointment is to the board of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History in Chautauqua County. Steckley retired last year from her post as Senior Major Gifts Officer for the Chautauqua Foundation. She and her husband, Pete Weitzel, still spend five and a half months of the year at their Chautauqua cottage. PILLARS sat down with Steckley at the Brick Walk Cafe for a conversation last season.

I fell in love with Chautauqua in 2005. Though I had heard about the place all my life, I came to the grounds for the first time with the Brookings Institution to help plan a week of programming on Russia. I was here for 48 hours and that was it — it was like an injection. I came home and told my husband, Pete, that I found the place I had been looking for all my life. We returned the next summer, bringing our family, and this past season was our 10th season being here all together.

Five years ago I was so thrilled to be invited to come on the staff at Chautauqua. It's a funny story. Pete and I were in Washington, D.C., with Geof Follansbee and Gay Didget. It was a cold night, and we were walking along the street. I told Geof I was thinking to retire from Brookings, and he asked me if I would consider talking to him about coming to work for the Chautauqua Foundation. I was so excited that I tripped on the curb and went sprawling into the street. My husband Pete looked at Geof and said, "I think that means yes!"

I was already supporting Chautauqua and wanted nothing more than to have this place become a greater part of our lives. That's when we bought our cottage, and I went to work at the Foundation.

Transformational Effect

I have come to see that the Promise Campaign — growing out of the strategic plan developed by the trustees — is having, and will continue to have, a transformational effect on Chautauqua. and what I mean by that is it can insure the sustainability of the Chautauqua that we love and take it forward, well into the 21st century. This is a very different time than the late 1800s, and while the mission of Chautauqua remains the same, the way that mission is carried out has to be different. That's why upon retiring, I continue to be involved as a volunteer for the Promise Campaign.

The challenge now, given the large and growing group of people who come here for only one or two weeks in a summer, is how to communicate well with this group, encourage their commitment to Chautauqua, and expand the base of support.

As I walk the grounds and attend programs that I was never able to do when I was working full-time, I am struck by the importance of finding ways to engage people more quickly. Each of us can do something to reach out to newcomers and all of us should volunteer.

Adopt-an-Artist

For the first time this year, Pete and I have experienced a different kind of volunteerism. We have "adopted" four daughters. One is a dancer, and this is her fifth summer with the Chautauqua Dance School. Another is a young reporter for The Chautauquan Daily. Another is in the opera program — an incredible young woman who is in the graduate program at Northwestern, a mezzo soprano. Our fourth "daughter" is the administrative intern in the offices for Chautauqua Dance.

We are enjoying them so much! They come to the house for a meal or to do their laundry. Being engaged with the Chautauqua Connections program — which puts arts and journalism students in touch with families, and the Opera Guild and Friends of Chautauqua Theater which also have adopt-an-artist programs — is a great satisfaction. When you think of it, these activities also represent many people volunteering their time, their homes and offering their affection to these young artists. Often they will follow their careers for many years and the stories of these talented young people are fantastic!

Chautauqua has changed the lives of these artists. I believe we need to share these stories and build on this culture of volunteerism.

How can we better express this love of Chautauqua to newcomers and help them recognize and appreciate the things you can do only at Chautauqua? So much of what I have learned about the arts and religion has been at Chautauqua and I'm not the only one who feels that way — the gratitude and appreciation for this place is huge. We have to find more ways to engage everyone in the culture of giving back at Chautauqua.
For Mike and Marge Metzger, moving to the Chautauqua grounds was the dream of a lifetime. Marge, a Jamestown native, taught for 32 years in the Chautauqua Central School district. Now, she’s retired and Mike, originally from Rochester, is the president of Blackstone Advanced Technologies in Jamestown, a specialty metal fabricator with clients ranging from GE Transportation in Erie to the U.S. Navy submarine program in Newport News, Virginia. After living in Bemus Point since 1983, the Metzgers bought and renovated a home on Harper Avenue near the Elm Gate inside the Chautauqua grounds. “It’s a great spot,” Marge says, “We love it and now we’re among the hundred or so sturdy folks who are on the grounds year round!”

The Metzgers raised two daughters in Bemus Point. Rachel, the eldest, is now the mother of five-year-old triplets and is a pulmonologist at the Cleveland Clinic alongside her husband, who is a nephrologist. Laura, the mother of a 3-year-old boy and 1-year-old girl, is a financial analyst for Western Alliance Bank, while her husband is the Coordinator for the Milwaukee Brewer’s Phoenix, Arizona, complex. For the triplets, Marge says, Chautauqua is already a dream come true. “They can’t believe they get to ride their bikes on the road here,” Mike adds. “And they made friends with the tram operators on the grounds this summer. The drivers were always asking us, where are the triplets?”

The Metzgers met as college students at St. Bonaventure University and began to “fall in love with Chautauqua,” as they put it, once they settled at Bemus Point. In the mid-1990s, Marge also began bringing her classroom students to the grounds for various programs. “It’s such a great place for them to learn about local and American history,” Marge says. In 1996, her entire sixth grade class came to the Institution to witness Bill Clinton preparing for the presidential debates.

“Now that we’re living on the grounds, I feel like an enthusiastic college student going to class every day during the season.” —Marge Metzger