



Director's Report: Sagamore 2015 Homecomings

In 2015, **Great Camp Sagamore** celebrated the 40th anniversary of its founding as the Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks, heralding the beginning of a preservation effort that has continued to the present. To mark the occasion, Sagamore dedicated its Annual Benefit for Historic Preservation on August 8 to Barbara Glaser and Howard Kirschenbaum, the two individuals who led the effort to save Sagamore, and also used the event as a reunion for staff and friends covering the entire period of the Institute's history. The benefit drew more than 130 people from the all corners of the Park and included many who were active in our programming and preservation efforts through the years. The event raised nearly \$100,000 to support operations and for Sagamore's new Music & Trails Fund, established with the help of the Adirondack Foundation. This fund supports much of the music and environmental programming that has been at the core of the camp experience over the last four decades.

The contributions of those who saved Sagamore and worked to build its many programs and create the experiences that we all have today cannot be overstated. Those contributions harken back to the Institute's earliest days, when the complex was almost lost to history, saved by a pioneering group of young idealists who stepped up to save Sagamore when others looked at the complex as the metaphorical equivalent of a white elephant. They also include the efforts of staff and interns who have worked through the years to build a wonderful suite of programs, events, workshops, and experiences that keep members and guests returning to camp year after year. Sagamore was fortunate that so many former staff and board members came back to visit this year, as many do every year. Some come for the Annual Benefit, others for various programs, still others just to drop in. It's always good to see familiar faces.

In February of 2015, Sagamore received word of an extraordinary gift in a share of a charitable lead trust from long-time friends David and Janet Griffith of New Hartford, NY. A charitable lead trust is a planned giving instrument whereby a donor sets aside a sum of money for a defined period of time. During this period, a charity like Sagamore receives a share of the interest from the fund to help run its programs and restore buildings. In honor of the Griffiths' commitment to Sagamore our internship program will be named the David and Janet Griffith Internship.

Among the most important of our supporters, of course, are the Sagamore volunteers. Throughout its history, Sagamore has benefited from an incredibly

dedicated group of volunteers who come back year after year to open and close camp, perform repairs and restorations on the buildings, plant flowers, mow lawns, even paint the signs that guide visitors through camp. The volunteer program started in 1977 and continues to flourish, with many participants coming year after year to make sure their "home in the woods" remains in good shape to welcome visitors and guests. The value of their work can't be measured in simple economic terms (though it does provide matching funds for grants that typically total tens of thousands of dollars each year), but also in the connections it fosters between the institution and the people who share the common vision of a preserved Sagamore for the enjoyment of all.

Building on the work of our many supporters, in December of 2015, Sagamore learned that we had been awarded \$251,950 from New York State through the North Country Regional Economic Development Council. These funds will underwrite a rehabilitation project in the Chalet in the Upper Complex, bolstering its value as an interpretive center for Sagamore programs throughout camp and into surrounding Forest Preserve. Work performed under this grant will include: rehabilitating all interior spaces and constructing accessible bathrooms, and expanding an exhibition and store area into the cafe area to create one point of contact for visitors to tour our complex or purchase items. Included in the grant are planning funds from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) that will help us develop a new approach to interpreting our historic complex as well as the natural features that surround camp. After the planning cycle is completed in 2016, Sagamore will be eligible for further implementation funding through subsequent rounds of the Regional Economic Development program.

May of 2015 marked a somber anniversary, the centennial of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania, which not only precipitated the United States' entry into World War I, but also led to the death of Alfred G. Vanderbilt, Sagamore's owner at the time. Working with Adirondack historian Caroline Welsh and exhibit designer Collin Harty, the staff produced a new panel exhibit for the barn that examined this event and its repercussions on Sagamore and the surrounding region. The exhibit includes historic photographs and materials new to Sagamore's collections, along with images borrowed from museums in the U.S. and England. ■

Members and Donors

We have tried to be accurate, but welcome your additions/corrections. Thank you.

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Katharine Zappala, *in honor of Hilary Russell*

In Memoriam: Paul Reber

Sagamore lost a great friend and supporter with the passing Dr. Paul Reber in August of 2015. Paul was an innovator in the field of history museums and deeply committed to their educational purpose. As Executive Director of Stratford Hall in Virginia he led the restoration of key structures and the rethinking of the role of historic sites in contemporary society. He served Sagamore as a board member and as President from 2001–2008 when he led with energy and foresight.

In September of 2015, a special working committee of current and emeriti board members began implementing a multi-phase project to rehabilitate the Conference Building. This sorely needed work included in its first phase, painting interior surfaces, cleaning and spot repair of woodwork, recarpeting floors and installing new lighting. Future work will include new furnishings and electronic presentation devices on the first floor, rehabilitated guest rooms and office spaces. Eventually, the entire building will be upgraded so that it can be used for formal guest functions and business meetings.

Other Historic Preservation projects involved completing design specifications on an upgrade to the water system with Plumley Engineering. It includes work necessary to disconnect historic reservoir piping, removal of two non-functional hydrants, and new four-inch ductile pipe and valves to upper camp. This required construction of an underground vault to house valves and drains, a new curb stop and valve box to improve water service throughout camp. Trail work maintenance through Adirondack Mountain Club included ditching and stone fill on the Powerhouse trail; each June a dozen or so of their volunteers work with our staff to improve our trail network. In 2015, this included better marking of Beaverflow trail, replacement of missing bridge boards, and continuation of brushing and pruning all trails throughout the historic district. ■

Sagamore benefits each year from the generosity and hard work of a dedicated crew of volunteers. At weekends in the Spring and the Fall these people come from across the region to help us do historic preservation activities, open and close the facility, and do special projects. In 2015, volunteer hours amounted to more than 1,478 and were valued at \$39,699. The following awards were given for service:

■ **Red Chair Awards:**

Doug Francis, Rachelle Francis

■ **Work Weekend Hosts:**

Marilyn Vona, Lisa Clark, Haley Clark ■

Bequests To ensure the future of Sagamore, please remember us in your will and trusts. Speak to your attorney or accountant for more information on planned giving that benefits you and Sagamore. ■

Each summer for over twenty years, Great Camp Sagamore has hosted a variety of **traditional folk artisans** from throughout the North Country to demonstrate the arts and crafts that make Sagamore a unique place. In the summer of 2015 we hosted the following demonstrations supported by the New York State Council for the Arts:

- **Bill Smith** Rustic Carvings
- **Helen Condon** Rug Braider
- **David Woodward** Blacksmith
- **Chris Hubbard** Chair Caning
- **Jane Desotelle** Herbalist
- **Pat Smith** Cedar Canvas Canoe Builder
- **Chris Woodward** Guide Boat Builder ■



In 2015, Sagamore began new partnerships with the George Eastman Museum, Yoga Mandali of Saratoga Springs, and the Adirondack Folk School of Lake Luzerne to expand our program schedule. The workshop on early photographic methods from the Eastman Museum and Yoga Mandali workshops were fully subscribed. A packbasket program offered with an instructor from Adirondack Folk School was also quite popular.

Road Scholar listings were expanded this year in a new effort by staff to develop off-season programs in the Saratoga area. Focused on the history of the region, guests stayed in Saratoga and went on day trips to battlefields and museums. Sagamore successfully launched weeks of Saratoga programs to very positive reviews from participants.

One person commented:

"I especially loved the Saratoga experience for lodging, restaurant, and meeting spaces. I enjoyed learning the history of this area of New York State. I believe that this program provides a very nice balance of historical significance of the region. Jeff and Hannah complemented each other very well and I believe that with time this will become an excellent program. The leaves were beautiful!" ■

Guided Tours

Summer Tours • 10:00 am & 1:30 pm
Spring/Fall Tours • 1:30 pm

4,109 people toured Sagamore in 2015



2015 Board of Directors



Great Camp Sagamore NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks

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GreatCampSagamore.org



2016 Annual Benefit

August 5-7 • Patty Lane, Chair

This year's benefit honors long time supporters **Janet Null, Gene Lindman**, and their son **Alec Lindman**. They have given in many ways through the years: Janet is Sagamore's Preservation Architect who has overseen many restoration projects; Gene is a Sagamore sponsor; and Alec grew up participating in volunteer weekends at camp. Together, they have made an extraordinary contribution to the preservation of this beautiful piece of Adirondack history. The benefit's theme is "Hidden Treasures of Sagamore." We will be exploring hidden features of camp from architectural details to newly discovered recipes of Vanderbilt family favorite meals.

- Marion Goethals** Chairperson of the Board (8 years on board)
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- Alfred Vanderbilt** Financial Affairs (4 years on board)
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Directors Emeriti:

**Barbara Glaser, Christine Swann, Tony Cashen,
Rich Torkelson, and Gary Jesmain**

Executive Director Emerita:

Beverly Bridger

Great Camp Sagamore 2015 Staff

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Kenny Nguyen *Historic Interpretation Intern*

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Joanne Uris *Store Manager*

Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks is the steward of Great Camp Sagamore and is dedicated to its use for education and interpretation. Our mission is to foster understanding, care, and respect for nature, people and their critical interdependence.