

Ocean View Historical Society



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Ocean View Historical Society 2018 Significant Accomplishments

This Annual Report of significant accomplishments is written for our members, local partners, and potential funders. In 2018, the Ocean View Historical Society celebrated its 10th year of sharing the history of south eastern Sussex County. The past decade has delivered more than we could have ever expected, thanks to the enthusiastic “grass roots” support of our members, visitors, local business, and major funders, including The Crystal Trust, Fairplay Foundation, and Contractors For a Cause.

Our all-volunteer organization and its Board of Directors are most proud of providing meaningful historical experiences during 2018, while our buildings and grounds were undergoing significant change.

Public Educational Programs

- On Wednesday, February 7, at 7:00 p.m. in the Ocean View Town Hall, Tom Summers, Manager of Outreach & Public service for the Delaware Public Archives, showcased the many resources located in Dover and on-line as preserved by the State of Delaware. **“Treasures of the Delaware Public Archives ,”** drew over fifty adults who enjoyed Dr. Summers presentation of historical documents with their accompanying Delaware specific stories. He also described the host of genealogical records (birth, school, death) kept by the Archives.
- On Wednesday, March 7, a Dine and Donate was held at “Just Hooked” restaurant in Fenwick Island. \$489.00 was donated by the owner in support of OVHS goals.
- On Wednesday, March 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the Ocean View Presbyterian Church, needlepoint expert, Cynthia Steinhoff, displayed numerous **“Antique Delaware Samplers”** to explain how needlework differed by Sussex, Kent, or New Castle County. She shared the individual stories of the women needle artists discovered in

her research, and commented on the age and styles of samplers that attendees brought to the presentation. Forty women and men participated.

- On Tuesday, April 10, thirty adults from the University of Delaware's Osher **Lifelong Learning Institute** toured through the historical complex buildings and the Coastal Towns Museum.
- Beginning Wednesday, May 30 and continuing every Wednesday throughout August until Labor Day (excluding July 4th), the historic complex and the Coastal Towns Museum were open to the public 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. for our **Summer Open Houses**. FREE admission and free parking were available in the Ocean View Town lots. Docents were present to answer questions and tour guests through the Civil War restored house, outhouse, 1889 Post Office, 1923 chicken house, Hall's Store Visitor and Education Center (under construction), and the developing Coastal Towns Museum. Total attendance numbered in the hundreds, with numbers varying based on weather and site.
- On Friday, June 1, an evening of **Fun and Feasting in the Garden** at The Good Earth Market raised \$5,539.50 for the creation of the Coastal Towns Museum and Hall's Store Visitors and Education Center. Culinary delights of food and drink, prepared by Chef Nino Mancari, were passed and stationed in the lovely lighted garden, while attendees bid on unique live and silent auction items. Event sponsors, Made By Hand International Cooperative and Heather's Homeworks, generously sponsored the event. Board members briefly spoke about the Society's developing Visitors Center and Museum, and the benefits they will bring to southeastern Sussex.
- On Saturday, July 28 (rain dated from July 21) 10 a.m-2 p.m., a **BBQ Chicken Lunch** was offered at the Masonic Lodge, in Millville to support the Coastal Towns Museum and Halls Store. Volunteer Board Members prepared the platters, with chicken donated by Mountaire and smoked by Masonic Lodge members. \$1532.00 was raised to support Society initiatives.
- On Saturday, October 6, 10:00a.m. - 4:00 p.m., the **Historic Coastal Towns Cottage & Lighthouse Tour** in Fenwick Island benefited the creation of the Coastal Towns Museum. Tickets were \$25 and proceeds of \$10,486.33 doubled last year's, as well as attendance which jumped from 180 to 330. Kimberly Grimes solicited advertisers and sponsors for the tour booklet which served as the admissions ticket and also provided historical insight on each cottage, the Lighthouse, and Fenwick Island. 22 volunteers helped on tour day including members of OVHS, Bethany Cultural & Historic Affairs Committee, South Bethany Historical Society, Fenwick Island Historical Group, and the Lord Baltimore Women's Club. The event raised awareness

of Society activities and goals, and generated new memberships. Next year's Coastal Towns Historic Homes Tour will be held in South Bethany, which is celebrating its 75th Anniversary in 2019.

- On Wednesday, October 24, 7:00 p.m. at the Ocean View Town Hall, local historian and author Sandie Gerken shared **“Spooky Sussex Stories,”** bringing to life the Cypress Swamp Monster and other tales of infamous locals. Thirty-five people enjoyed Halloween refreshments while hearing about May Asher Carey, the Omar woman who was the only female ever hung in Delaware. As with all our public lectures, there was free admission for members; \$5 for the general public.

- On Sunday, October 28 (rain dated from Saturday, October 27) 1:00- 4:00 p.m. the Ocean View Historical Complex was open free to the public for the **“Cops & Goblins”** celebration in the Ocean View Town Park. Dressed in Halloween garb, over 150 children and parents toured the chicken house, post office, outhouse, and Tunnell-West House where docents dressed in period garb greeted them and explained artifacts.

- On Saturday, November 3, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. local genealogist and OVHS President, Barbara Slavin, led a **tour through St. George’s Cemetery in Frankford.** 12 attendees registered in advance and paid \$10, or \$15 for non-members. \$125.00 was raised for Society activities.

- On Saturday, December 8, 1:00-3:00 p.m. the Society held an **1860 Coastal Christmas Open House** at its historical complex on Central Avenue. The Tunnell-West House abounded with festive decorations, and the sounds, smells, and tastes of winters gone by. Len Wolek, a mandola player in period dress, filled the parlor with harmonious sounds. Sunshine and cool temperatures prevailed, and attendance was very robust as over 100 adults enjoyed the free hot cider, cookies, and festivities. The society, aided by “The Gardeners By The Sea” made wreaths, swaths, and Christmas bags and sold them outside the TW House and at Made By Hand in South Bethany following the Open House. The garden club plans to help us annually with our Christmas decorations. This event is planned each year in conjunction with the Town of Ocean View’s Christmas celebration, but this year the town did not hold its event.

Society Growth and Goal Accomplishment

Membership

During 2018, membership in the Ocean View Historical Society grew from 214 to 230, as numbers continue their slow, but steady increase. Membership files were “cleansed” of names

who relocated, died, or had not paid dues in 3 years. Membership allows free lectures, electronic and/or mail notification of all events, and early registration, as well as charitable deduction.

Hall's Store Visitors Center

The most exciting event of 2018 was the ground-breaking and completion of the exterior of Hall's Store Visitor and Education Center. The Ocean View construction firm of Miranda, Hardt, and O'Leary, LLC was contracted to build Hall's Store Visitors Center in accordance with city, county, and state regulations. Phase 1 construction, to grade the site, install underground utilities, lay the concrete pad, and put the building "under roof," was completed by May at a cost of \$169,000. When more funds are raised, phase 2 to complete the interior will begin. See the appendix for photos of construction progress to date. Society members are thrilled with the exterior appearance of Hall's Store, and anxiously await the day when its two meeting rooms, bathrooms, and galley kitchen will be available for Society and community activities. In the fall, gutters and downspouts were installed at a cost of \$3,529.00 to prevent water damage to the foundation.

Coastal Towns Museum

After acquiring the **Evans-West house and out- buildings** one year ago on February 16, 2017, the Coastal Towns Committee began to dispose of some of the house furnishings via sale and relocation to make room for museum displays. Members cleaned out the attic and performed routine house-keeping to ready the site for a "soft opening" during the **Wednesday afternoon Summer Open Houses**. On each of those days, the future Coastal Towns Museum was open to the public, free admission, with a docent present to explain the displays that will eventually reside in each room. The property's barn and woodhouse were also open for inspection, and upstairs an antique loom was partially assembled in preparation for future demonstrations of rug-making.

Volunteer Robert Ross performed many tasks of routine maintenance and grounds keeping at the Coastal Towns Museum during 2018. Bryce Dolby removed all paper from the downstairs parlor and painted the walls to brighten the space for exhibits. In December, Coastal Town Museum members met with Elaine Faye, a museum designer to begin planning exhibits and costing out needed renovations to lighting, access, signage, etc. A sign denoting the property as The Coastal Towns Museum was ordered, re-designed, and installed on the front porch (in accordance with Town of Ocean View regulations) at a cost of \$900 plus \$60 to Town of Ocean View for a permit. A three-seater (family style) outhouse donated by the Shaffer family, was moved to the Coastal Towns Museum on Oct. 30.

Historical Complex Maintenance

Society members, Bob Svenson, Dick Nippes, Barbara Slavin and Carol Psaros, repainted the two seater outhouse. Natural wreaths were made and hung on complex buildings for the

Christmas season. A grass cutter was employed to cut both properties as needed during the warm months. On May 5, eighteen members of the local Boy Scout Troop cleaned up the Hall's Store Visitor Center construction site.

OVHS secured the professional services of Brasure's Pest Control. Our insurance policy through Pratt Insurance (Liberty Mutual) was thoroughly evaluated and revised at \$2,817 for property and \$1,373 for Liability. The two main historic buildings were protected by the Signature Alert Security System (\$846).

Digitization of Archives

In May, the digitization of OVHS documents came to a halt when Archivist Al Yergey was tragically killed in a bicycle accident. Al had customized an archival database to fit OVHS needs, and scanned 5 boxes of OVHS documents and loose leaf notebook material into "portable document format", pdf, for ease of storing, indexing, and referencing. OVHS is seeking a volunteer to continue scanning records using the scanner the Society purchased for this purpose.

Public Image and Information

- Reporter exemplar, Maria Counts of the local **Coastal Point newspaper**, conducted multiple interviews and wrote numerous news articles to publicize OVHS lectures, Open Houses, the Coastal Towns Historic House Tour, and the Coastal Towns Museum. See the attachments to this report for some samples. The Coastal Point featured one historic home each week and printed color photos without charge to OVHS. OVHS purchased three (3) quarter page ads in The Coastal Point for the Historic Cottage Tour and three (3) for Fun and Feasting in the Garden, and had its house tour booklet printed at the Coastal Point.
- Each public event (Open House, Lecture, Fundraiser) was promoted by Publicity member Carol Psaros in local newspapers and weekly digital and print calendars, including ***The Coastal Point, The WAVE, The News Journal, The Coastal Delaware Sunday Insert of the News Journal, The Delaware State News, The Cape Gazette, the Delaware Beach Life magazine, and several electronic calendars like "Eventful."*** Society member Lene Kuhblank made colorful **flyers** for many of the events which members posted around town. Member Emilie Cook designed colorful posters for "Fun and Feasting in the Garden", and the Coastal Towns Historic House Tour.
- Secretary Marty Pratt recorded excellent **Board Meeting Minutes** that were distributed monthly to Board Members and interested others.

- Member Dr. Kimberly Grimes wrote a historical feature about Victorian vehicles of transportation (long and arduous) to Bethany, South Bethany, Fenwick, and Ocean View. The article was published in the 2018 Delaware Beach Book (11,000 copies) which is given to hotels, realtors, and local businesses, thus enhancing interest and knowledge of local history.
- Treasurer David Coll provided detailed monthly reports, refining use of the Quick Books Accounting system purchased last year.

Both the **OVHS Facebook Page and Website** were up-graded and routinely maintained for accuracy and current information. Webmasters Marsha Evans and Barbara Slavin are OVHS members and volunteers who perform a valuable service to promote our public image. The OVHS Facebook page secured 102 new 'likes' in 2018 bringing the grand total to 779, which means that each of these individuals is automatically receiving OVHS posts in their Facebook feed. The top 3 posts that received the most 'engagement' in 2018 were:

#1) Ocean View School photo - dated 1913

#2) 'Fun and Feasting in the Garden' fundraising event at Good Earth Market

#3) Fenwick Island Historic Cottage & Lighthouse Tour

- Carol Psaros kept the **outside informational box** at the historical complex stocked with a handout describing the buildings for public distribution when the Complex buildings were not open. Two hundred (200) people took the handout, slightly down from last year because of the substantial on-site construction.
- OVHS's acting Communication Director, Lene Kuhblank, sent **regular electronic and/or print communication** to all members, current and otherwise, about upcoming Board Meetings, Lectures, Open Houses, or historical events sponsored by OVHS or neighboring towns. Over time, we have improved our communications methods and now have established a good track record for effectively informing the public in advance. See the appendix documents for samples of print articles in newspapers and magazines. Member Kimberly Grimes donated money for printing of House Tour posters and Campaign cards.

Town of Ocean View Partnership

- This current document, January 2019, is the annual update presented to the Town Council of Ocean View each year as required under the Town's lease to OVHS.
- During 2018, OVHS paid the Town of Ocean View \$1,776.50 in fees for permits, considerably less than last year's \$7,800 (construction permits for Hall's Store). Since its inception (10 years ago), OVHS has received no funds from the Town of Ocean View, unlike the historical groups in the towns of Bethany, Millville, South

Bethany, and Fenwick Island. In the coming year, our officers and Board members are looking forward to working with Ocean View's new Town Manager on projects and activities mutually beneficial to both parties.

- 2018 concludes the eighth year of a 20 year lease from the Town of Ocean View for the Society's property at 39 Central Avenue. The fee for the lease is \$1 annually.
- During the October Cops and Goblins Celebration, OVHS coordinated its programming with the Town of Ocean View. Events were scheduled to complement each other, and both organizations mentioned the other's activities in their event advertising.
- The Town offered its Old Town Hall free of charge for use by the Ocean View Historical Society for two of its three public lectures, and one Board meeting.

Finances

General Finances

The implementation of the Accounting System Quick Books during mid 2017 provided an enhanced clarification of all of OVHS' financial transactions for the entirety of 2018. Further, because of the Accounting System, during 2018, OVHS began assigning income and expense transactions to its various venues and asset categories, an endeavor that continues to be perfected.

The two banking accounts held by OVHS consist of a **Campaign Building Fund** and an **Operating Account**. The Balance in the Campaign Building Fund at the beginning of the year was \$158,503 and as of end of December 2018 was \$22,632.53. Sources of funds for this account are grants and donations which presently are designated for the construction of a project known as the Hall Store and Visitor Center. Distributions for the Hall Store project during 2018 equaled \$168,451. The other account held by OVHS is its Operating Account. At the beginning of the year the balance in the Operating Account was \$6,231, and, as of the end of December it was \$18,339.24. Sources of cash for the Operating account are primarily dues, donations and fund raisers. The use of the Operating account is to fund routine and ongoing operational expenses. The general operation of our two historic properties annually requires nearly \$10,000, of which \$4,000 is sourced from dues. Currently there is enough money in the account to pay all our fixed expenses.

During 2018 all expenses incurred by OVHS were paid in a prompt and timely manner. Further, it is worth noting that if the amounts associated with the Hall Store Project (dedicated funds) were discounted, OVHS would have produced a positive cash flow as of the end of October 2018 in an amount of \$26,767.

To summarize, 2018 was the year of construction. Hall's Store Visitor and Education Center was begun after extensive delays from **permit approvals** by the Town of Ocean View and the Southern Conservation District of Sussex County. These permit approvals required OVHS to spend \$50,000 that had been earmarked for building construction. The Ocean View **construction company Miranda, Hardt, and O'Leary** oversaw every aspect of construction. Mark Hardt, who is closely associated with the non-profit **Contractors for a Cause**, coordinated donation of labor and materials from local contractors, saving OVHS considerable funds. The \$150,000 in our treasury when construction began in March allowed exterior completion of the 1500 square foot center, making it weather tight. As small funds have become available thru donations and fundraising, gutters have been installed and rain barrels purchased. The exterior of the building is receiving accolades from the community, but the interior is just studded walls, without utilities, drywall, plumbing, fixtures or wooden floors. Currently the building fund is near zero and waiting an infusion of funds that allows construction to reconvene.

Tax Reporting

The Society filed **its Tax Form 990** for 2017 as required by law, contracting a CPA to prepare the longer form (now required by our finances) at a cost of approximately \$600.

Grants

OVHS did not contract with a grant writer in 2018, but individual board members submitted grant requests that resulted in the following resources:

\$5,000	Draper Charitable Family Foundation	Carol Psaros submitted
\$5,000	Fair Play Foundation	donation by Blaine Phillips
\$6,000	Sussex County Council	2 grants of 3,000 submitted by Slavin/Psaros
\$6,115.86	Fulton Bank Tax Credits	Bert Edwards and Gordon Wood submitted

OVHS submitted grant requests to the Longwood Foundation and its sister funder, Welfare Foundation (Nippes and Slavin submitted), but both were denied. We must wait two years before re-applying to Longwood, and Crystal Trust, which suggested we wait until this year.

Fundraising

The **OVHS Fundraising Committee**, led by Kimberly Grimes, met regularly to plan and implement fundraising strategies which resulted in:

March 7	Dine and Donate at “Just Hooked” restaurant in Fenwick Island
June 1	Fun & Feasting in the Garden at Good Earth Market in Clarksville (Chair Anne Del Vecchio Powell)
July 28	BBQ Chicken Lunch at the Masonic Lodge, Millville (Chair Kimberly Grimes)
October 6	Second Annual Historic Coastal Towns Cottage & Lighthouse Tour in Fenwick Island (Chair Kimberly Grimes)
On-going	Continuation of commemorative brick sales (Dick Nippes Chair)
On-going	Receipt of electronic payment by Pay Pal (Barbara Slavin Chair)

This year, registrations to fundraisers were enhanced by on-line payment through the Bethany-Fenwick Chamber of Commerce (Quiet Resorts). This strategy increased the Society’s exposure and outreach to a new pool of participants. The solicitation of Ads and the printing of the Historic House Tour Booklet at The Coastal Point, also provided significant new income. Member Dr. Kimberly Grimes published a new book, “Barefoot in Fenwick,” and is donating a portion of its sales to OVHS. OVHS and members established “GO FUND ME” sites and encouraged members to register OVHS on Amazon Smile electronic orders. Both new strategies have produced nominal income.

Board Member Support

- The thirteen-member **all-volunteer Board of Trustees** met 10 times in 2018 (every month but July and December) on the third Thursday of the month, usually at the South Coastal Library. Meeting rooms at the Library, which are free, are becoming more difficult to obtain due to the number of civic groups seeking space. OVHS makes a small monetary donation annually to the Library as a “thank you.”
- Many **Board Members donated** supplies, postage, materials, mileage costs, expertise and labor to the Society. Collectively, they reported 1,614 hours spent during 2018 in Society activities or support, and \$4,024 in support services and operations (i.e. in-kind and real purchases donated).

SUMMARY

Ocean View Historical Society is extremely grateful to its members, Board members, and all the individuals, businesses, and grantors who have donated funds during 2018 to keep us moving forward toward our goals of creating a Coastal Towns Museum, building Hall’s Store Visitor and

Education Center, and providing programs to keep the history of southeastern Sussex County alive. Much progress has been made during 2018, for which we are thankful.

*Report written January 2019 by Dr. Carol K. Psaros,
Board Member, Ocean View Historical Society*