

## **Introduction:**

**We need more membership money, We need more people to take an active part moving us forward.** We all know that, but how do we move forward?

We are at a time when we need a professional plan to grow our resources. Harold House has helped us examine who we are, and what our attributes are and finally, how we can use our best resources to move us forward. Let's make use of this valuable advice and let's use our exercises to inform our actions.

Moving Forward means taking stock of where we will be when our building program is finished. Gearing up for that and the time between now and opening our new set of doors. We have time to plan, start adapting to our future home sort of playing house, make adjustments and improvements and launch a new Society along with a new building

The completion of our new building program will set a benchmark standard for the island. There's nothing quite like it on the island now, and we can expect a growing interest in our Society and a growing need to meet an even broader spectrum of community.

We need to structure professional programs and media to elevate communication and visitor engagement if we are to take advantage of the new stage that will be before us as the building program progresses.

**This means growing our membership dollars and our volunteer bank concurrently.**

We can do this by using face to face marketing at events, as well as digital, and print media in a mutually supportive way. Engagement is the operational word here.

This effort needs to start with our Board of Directors. It's all about a different kind of development work than the one that starts with a shovel and a ceremony. While the two new programs may start with the Board of Directors as it should. It must move out into functioning committees (or call the departments) where they will become part of our core and culture.

Growing Membership Dollars & Volunteer Hours to meet our new challenges.

**GOALS, & IMPLEMENTATION**

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***Our Overarching goal is to out maneuver and out-class the competition by creating a strong and attractive model for the future growth of our upcoming SI Historical Society campus.***

- It's essential that Membership & Volunteer goals be approached at the same time.
- First stages should be in place for both by June 1, 2015 (First Farmers' Market)
- Set a high standard for clarity of communication and the fulfillment of visitor expectations.
- Building The Start-up Committees
  - We need two separate committees for Membership Benefits & Volunteer Services to spearhead our rebuilding.
  - Review Membership and Volunteer Goals outlined in our meetings with Harold House and converse with committee members.

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**Sample Committee Deliverables for membership and volunteer efforts.**

- Create a financial and organizational structure that advances benefits for both Membership and Volunteer programs.
  - divide the responsibilities between two committee heads for each area
  - call on others to take part in the committee who will energetically support the work.
- Create a calendar with benchmark goals for the reinvigorated programs
  - establish a budget and time table and list accountability for tasks
- Determine collateral needs; (materials, and necessary forms)
  - **Present the new programs to the board.**

## MEMBERSHIP: CREATING MEMBER BENEFITS

### Background:

***Every successful museum and historical society has tangible benefits for its members.***

We have lots of visitors! Visitors come to our events, they visit Havens House Museum, shop in our store, use the barn to attend rental activities and also tap our archives for information that's nominally free. If we ask them for contributions they might give us a dollar or two. It's a passive affair with a jar sitting on a table looking a bit sad, and the table can't ask anyone to become a member. Even if we ask them to become a member, it's strained and almost embarrassing because it's obvious we're probably doing something else. So we're polite, and cheerful, hoping they might come back and we can then ask them to join us.

At the same time our current members get the benefit of a bill once a year They also get notices about our events and exhibits if they check their email or read one of our ads.

The visitors can get the same benefits, but without a bill and without sending a check. So we're a bit like NPR, and NPR must give out a service that seems free, however, They need to plead for money, and they do frequently, but they are still supported in part by tax dollars. We don't even get any tax dollars, NPR does.

**Who can blame the islanders who think that we're a public service and we're supported by tax dollars. Or maybe it's someone secretive keeping us afloat. That's the impression we give!**

It's not just the visitors that need a reason to join us, so do the existing members. If they feel strongly about our value because they value keeping history alive, they might feel all the more positive about us if there were tangible benefits for membership. Wouldn't you?

## MEMBERSHIP GOAL: TURN VISITORS INTO MEMBERS

Build Membership Benefits with real Value.

Background: We have a community that has wide disparities in income, education and interest in the island we share. It's probably wider than anyone imagines, for we don't see some of the residents at all and others just in the Summer season. Getting our message to everyone may be unrealistic but it's certain we're missing some islanders that could help us in many ways. The new building will be a magnet for attracting new members and volunteers. Those that have supported our Blueprint program have created our biggest asset. It's not visible yet and setting aside the time and money we need to grow a larger membership plus a volunteer base needs to be addressed now. **We really can't afford to have our new visitors see us as just a better designed public building than the library. We need all our visitors to join us, not merely visit us.**

Below is a sample that outlines how other non-profits attract members. ( A tiered membership structure) There are lots of samples out there. Start by researching how other non-profits do it. But keep it in mind that we're not going to compare ourselves to those that look like us or are close neighbors.. We do know that the quality of all we do must be very high to live up to our new digs. Everything we send out must look and feel wonderful. It also must have a personality, and not just be informational. Writing is just as important as the way it looks, It's our own voice and it's asking for money and help. Lets talk about where the money is going. Even our members know about all we do. Telling about all we do is a necessary component of the drive. **Please review and revise what's below. It's just a conversation starter.**

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## **Suggested Membership Tiers: Member Benefits and Services**

### Student Memberships are Free

all students at Shelter Island Schools and those attending off island schools and high schools or equivalent schools.

### Member: \$50./ dual/family memberships \$60.

free tour of HH Museum, one free consultation with archive dept.

special discounted event rate to Ticketed Events with admission charge

exact amount can be spelled out for each or % Car Show, Oyster Event, ODH, etc. (Black and White probably not part of this discount)

our newsletter mailed (& or email)

HH store 10% discount at special seasonal sale events.

1743 button, or yearly historical postcard reproductions, (something tangible)

Early admission to events for talks.

### Supporter: \$ 100- \$400

free tours of HH Museum for two, two free consultations with archive dept.

Special invitations to island History lectures

### Archivist: \$500- \$900

all of above plus invitations to visit our archive day event and get a special viewing of rare archival materials

### Historian \$1000 and above

all of above plus entrance to ticketed events are free. Historian pin SIHS (brass)

Honorary: It may also be a good move to make a Free membership available for some volunteers who work tirelessly it might be an honorary membership, like an honorary degree. It's a bit tricky, but needs to be discussed.

## **We can get these new names and emails at Events like our Farmers' Market**

Make use of Face to Face contact at our membership tent at FM and every event. Find an enthusiastic people with good social skills to review the membership benefits and define our many unknown accomplishments and ongoing works for new members.

- ***“Hi, can I get your email address so I can send you info. about our events?”***
- Think of multiple ways to **get visitors email addresses** with the ploy that they will get Constant Contact to let them know what events are available for them. They will get the same CC as our membership. NO MONEY IS ASKED FOR AT THIS STAGE. but they can get an email follow up in some form.
  - volunteer members with a clip board walking around FM
  - sign up sheets that say ‘get info about our events and exhibits, and special store sales’
  - incentives to sign up while paying for an event ticket, (event button, postcard, stamp or feathered ballpoint pen.) This kind of immediate gift strengthens the bond to our society.
  - are there other methods, ideas?
  - once visitors are connected to us and know more about us they will be more likely to join...and will probably go to more events. We should follow up with a personal “thank you” (we have their email)

### **We need to list and explain all we do for the islanders:**

Educational events for adults

Educational events at the Shelter Island School

How are archive works, show some artifacts & documents

How we participate with other island groups

How some groups participate with us (Mashomack)

and there's so much more we can add.

### **CC is the best and cheapest follow-up resource we have.**

No postage, it comes weekly, sometimes bi-weekly and while it will take time to enter the visitor's names. We can probably target them separately down the road and ask them to become members. But the best part is that the visitors will start to know about all the things the Society does just by taking a quick look at CC. It sets the stage for that online request for membership or perhaps one of our new volunteers comes up to them with a clipboard and asks them to join. It's a head start we need to start.

## **A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Structuring a volunteer program is undoubtedly more difficult than coming up with member benefits.

It's probably a good idea to see how others do it. Research is the most important starting point for developing this kind of program. Who is successful, What makes it successful, How do you navigate this kind of program? Hearing about how other non profits handle volunteers is key.

There are obvious pitfalls. And big problems can occur. Do we need insurance protection? How do you select and remove volunteers. That's all difficult unless we start working from an existing model or models, then modify it for our needs.

## **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

Probably one route is to look at the volunteers you now have, especially those that have volunteered for years.

Word gets around when there's an award for someone. It's good news and builds public interest. Public thanks in the form of a button or pin isn't expensive and goes a lot farther than a thank you note to create good will for the Society.

We can find a way to acknowledge those that have been loyal for years.. Again, some research will help make reasonable decisions on how this can be structured.

## **LIST OUR MANPOWER NEEDS**

*(let's just not call everyone a Volunteer: let's try to give their job a title and a T shirt or button something to brand their community efforts with the SIHS)*

### **Sample Volunteer Categories:**

Spokespeople (membership sales)

Shopkeepers: (related to Havens Store)

Farm hands: (set up Farmers' Market)

Carpenters: (for so many things)

Historians: Those with special knowledge (at events: car show, One Day in History, etc. to tell stories)

Building & Grounds Crew: Maintain, Set up and Clean up of Grounds for Events

Gardeners: For the Pollinator Garden, and Gardens to be for our new building greenery