



OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE MUSEUM of ORIENT
and EAST MARION HISTORY

Winter 2008

NEWSLETTER

OHS' New Director, Ellen Cone Busch by John Henry

If Ellen Cone Busch hadn't gone to West Point, she wouldn't be the new director of the Oysterponds Historical Society.

No, Ellen didn't attend the United States Military Academy. But it was in the academy's hometown that, two summers ago, she experienced what she calls "an aha! moment" that ultimately led to the job in Orient.

At the time, she was executive director of the Planting Fields Foundation, a private group that supports Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park on the former Coe estate in Oyster Bay. There, she was planning and supervising the site's educational and museum operations. Everything was on a big scale: the estate had 409 acres, the Tudor Revival Coe mansion had 65 rooms, Ellen had 10 full-time employees on her staff, and she had overseen a \$3 million capital campaign.

But when she attended a leadership development program for managers of nonprofits run by Columbia Business School at West Point in 2007, Ellen had an epiphany.

"Your vision becomes so much clearer. The organization" - Planting Fields Foundation - "had grown to where I needed to be more of an administrator," she says. "It had gotten to the point where it would be weeks before I could walk into the museum," even though "education and collections were the reason I went into museums. For me to keep growing, I needed to keep being involved with collections and education."

And that's exactly what she's doing at Oysterponds, where she became director in July, succeeding the interim director, Sherri Duell. These days, Ellen, working from her basement office in the Old Point Schoolhouse, supervises just two part-time employees, and her professional domain encompasses just three or four acres. But she also oversees the society's "absolutely phenomenal collection." "The more I see," she says, "the more amazed I am."

Ellen, who grew up in Nassau County, has long had a passion for history. It was one of her two majors (along with secondary education) as a student at the University of Delaware, from which she graduated cum laude in 1995.



OHS' new director, Ellen Cone Busch

That year, she joined the predecessor organization to the Delaware Historical Society as a curatorial assistant. "I loved it!" she says. "I thought museums were awesome."

She pursued a master's degree in American cultural history at the University of Rochester but returned to Long Island in 1997, when her father became gravely ill. Soon thereafter, Ellen began her career at Planting Fields Foundation, starting as coordinator of its volunteer program, advancing three years later to become curator and four years after that to become executive director.

Her breadth of experience at the foundation stood her in good stead when she interviewed for the director's job at Oysterponds. "She had a combination of all the responsibilities you have here," says Sara Garretson, a member of the society's search committee, who also appreciated Ellen's knowledge of Long Island and her interest in history. "I think she is a gift."

For her part, Ellen is grateful to the society's board for not only for hiring her but supporting her during a difficult pregnancy that forced her to go on bed rest for more (continued on page 2)

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www.oysterpondshistoricalsociety.org

OHS Welcomes New Trustees at September Meeting

Board of Trustees:

Tazewell Smith, President

George Hossenlopp,
VP Finance

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Ellen M. Cone Busch,
Executive Director

Karen Haley,
Office Manager

Amy Folk,
Collections Manager

George Hossenlopp and his wife Linda have owned a home in Orient for over thirty years and visited since childhood. George maintains a home in Florida and in June '08 retired from Florida Rock Industries. The Hossenlopps' three children grew up summering on Village Lane, attending classes at the Amanda Brown Schoolhouse and enjoying the summer highlight, Eighteenth Century Day. "Orient and the activities of the Historical Society are a part of our family heritage. Our children and their spouses along with our five grandchildren now enjoy summers in Orient." George joined the board because of his strong belief that OHS adds character to the community and that the heritage of East Marion and Orient must be preserved. He says, "Now that I have the time and resources, it is a pleasure to lend a hand!"

Priscilla Bull was born in Orient, the oldest of Martha and Lloyd Terry's five children. She attended Orient Union School, a four-room schoolhouse that stood where Oysterponds School is now. Priscilla graduated from Greenport High School and the Grace-New Haven School of Nursing. She worked as a registered nurse before marrying and moving to Maine where she raised her four children, Karen Haley, Alan, David and Larry Bull. She managed a small restaurant for seventeen years before moving back to Orient and returning to nursing at San Simeon. Priscilla retired in 2003 and is very active in the community at the Congregational Church, OCA, North Fork Chorale and Orient Stakeholders, among others. She also enjoys time with her grandson Thomas.

New Director (continued from page 1) than a month just two weeks after she became director. (The pregnancy ended happily with the birth of Sarah, now four months old, the second child for Ellen and her husband, Leigh Busch, an information technology specialist who's now a stay-at-home dad. They have a 2 1/2-year-old son, Nathaniel.)

As if juggling children and career weren't demanding enough, Ellen has assumed the directorship at a particularly trying time. She notes that Gov. David A. Paterson's proposed budget calls for what she characterizes as "devastating" cuts for the New York State Council for the Arts, which

MaryAnn Liberatore was born and raised on Staten Island "before the Bridge," and says, "I feel an affinity for Orient and the North Fork because it looks so very similar to Staten Island in the fifties." Before she left to live in Japan, MaryAnn was the Manager of the Public Finance Department of Mudge Rose, et. al., where she was responsible for all Public Finance non-legal staff and operations in the New York, Palm Beach and Los Angeles offices. More recently, she worked as the Deputy Director of a local development corporation in NYC. MaryAnn is committed to preservation at OHS, which has its root in her college major, American History with an interest in the Colonial period. Her other interests include gardening, needlepoint and reading. MaryAnn hopes to contribute to the future planning of OHS.

Ruth Ann Bramson's family has summered for six generations on the bay in East Marion, since her grandfather bought the property in 1921. Her great grandfather, noted American landscape artist Charles Henry Miller, is called "the artistic discoverer of Long Island." With deep roots in the history of Long Island, Ruth Ann has a keen interest in learning about and preserving the local lore. She is particularly committed to contributing to research into East Marion's history and raising its profile in OHS. Ruth Ann's background includes a degree in American Studies as well as master's and doctoral degrees in public administration. She has held positions as a government manager, a consultant to public and non-profit agencies, and as a fulltime college professor.

provides operating support to the society.

"There are definite challenges," she concedes. "But one reason I came here is the fantastic board. I have confidence that with their ingenuity and support we're up to meeting the challenges." She adds, "We're also fortunate in having a good grants committee with Freddie Wachsberger and Sara Garretson."

Something that sustains her in her new job is the extraordinary role the society plays in Orient and East Marion. "I have never come across a community that has such a sense of ownership of its historical society," says Ellen. "People feel this is part of their life here."

Winter Lecture Series & Special Programs

Concert: Scottish Fiddler Alasdair Fraser

Sat., January 10, 4pm at Poquatuck Hall, \$25/\$22 Members

Scottish fiddle music of unrivalled beauty, passion and eloquence. Premier Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser and American cellist Natalie Haas. Limited seating, please reserve tickets early by calling 631-323-2480.

Lecture: What Makes It an Antique & Why?

Sat., January 17, 4pm at Peconic Landing Auditorium, Free

Hear the answers to those questions (and more) when veteran antiques dealer and appraiser Doug Constant of Orient deconstructs an 18th-century chest of drawers, employing the same kind of detective work that leading New York auction houses use.

Movie: Beyond the Expressway

Sat., February 21, 5pm at Old Point Schoolhouse, \$3/Members Free

Join us for a viewing of this popular documentary about Orient and East Marion as told by its residents. Call 631-323-2480 for reservations.

Lecture: At Home in the Museum: MoMA & the Challenge of Architecture on Display, 1932 - Present

Sat., March 7, 4pm at Peconic Landing Auditorium, Free

Part-time Orient resident Barry Bergdoll, Philip Johnson Curator of the Museum of Modern Art's department of architecture and design, traces the fascinating history of MoMA's trailblazing architecture department, which introduced European modern architecture to a wide American audience, defined what came to be known as the International Style, and shaped American taste and debate on design for generations.

Lecture & Reception: East Marion History Project

Sat., March 28, 3pm-5pm at Old Point Schoolhouse, Free

OHS and the East Marion Community Association invite you to a reception and program to view materials from East Marion in the Society's museum and archival collections and learn how you can help preserve our community's history for every generation.

For more information, call (631) 323-2480 or visit our website:

www.oysterpondshistoricalsociety.org

Help Solve a History Mystery

In 1807, Abraham G.D. Tuthill painted portraits of Augustus Griffin and his wife, Lucretia. OHS is interested in locating these portraits, if they still exist, in order to include photographs of them in an upcoming publication of *The Diaries of Augustus Griffin*. Anyone with information about their whereabouts is kindly requested to notify OHS at (631) 323-2480.

Keep OHS' Newsletter Coming!

OHS' Spring/Summer 2009 Newsletter will be new and expanded with more recent news, upcoming events and insights into the Society's world-class museum and archival collections.

Only members of the Oysterponds Historical Society will receive copies of the Newsletter by mail so please keep your membership current so you don't miss any of the exciting news and events ahead!

Our Membership Drive is Underway...

If you have already sent in your membership renewal for 2008-2009 — thank you! If you are not yet a member, or have forgotten to renew, please consider doing so. Your membership dues are an integral part of our operations here at OHS. The benefits of membership include unlimited free admission to the museums, discounts to special events and programs and a discount on all purchases at the Beach Plum Gift Shop. Most importantly, you will experience the satisfaction of helping to preserve the heritage of Orient and East Marion for the benefit of every generation!

Individual \$30 Family \$50 Associate \$100 Sponsor \$250 Patron \$500 Benefactor \$1000

Renew by check: Please fill out info below and mail form & payment and to: OHS, PO Box 70, Orient, NY 11957.

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Join/Renew by credit card: Circle one: Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover

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Oysterponds Historical Society - Preserving the Past for Every Generation



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