

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your contributions to our recent branding sessions. In many ways, the OHS knows what it is, where it came from, and what its overarching goals are: our Strategic Plan, which was the product of lots of hard work in 2015, makes that clear and provides our roadmap. As we jump into 2017, we are using the branding sessions to build on the Strategic Plan to address several interrelated questions regarding implementation of our mission:

- What is the OHS brand? How do we identify and differentiate our organization in order to attract and retain loyal members? What are our key attributes?
- How do we best market our brand? How do we communicate our key attributes consistently and effectively?
- Who are our audiences? Who are our members and visitors that make up the OHS community? Who are we reaching now, how are we reaching them, and who do we want to reach in the coming years?
- How best can we expand our outreach through programs? What programs are most successful now and how can we a) reach more people and b) better connect to our current members and visitors through improved or new programs? What draws people to the OHS, both to our physical campus and to our virtual presence, and what makes them come back or remember us after they have left? What inspires that warm fuzzy feeling in our young people that means they will always love the OHS and support us for years to come?
- How can we raise the impact of our collections? We have an amazing collection of artifacts, including structures, objects, and archives. How do we effectively share the stories that these artifacts represent?

On the pages that follow, Harold has summarized the brainstorming that has happened at our branding sessions to date. As you can see many exciting ideas about programming in particular, as well as how our visitors connect to the OHS campus, arose from these sessions. We will now work hard to implement some of these ideas in the coming years, first ensuring the continued excellence of our existing programming and then implementing new programs with due consideration to resources.

With very best wishes,

Elsbeth

To: Branding Committee

From: Harold House

Date: January 3, 2017

Re: Second Meeting Synopsis

Action Items:

1. We need to have another meeting to discuss the following pages as well as answer a few branding issues that are unresolved. Would you please send me a best time to meet – perhaps during the weekend of the 14-15 of January or perhaps we can try a skype or GoToMeeting session if we can't make a weekend work. (please call me at 631.323.2480 or write at marketing@ohsny.org)
2. Second, we want to take a "field trip" to New London and Mystic. Any interest in attending meetings and tours of New London/Maritime and Historical Society and Mystic Museum of Art. Would you be interested?

NB. The discussion and suggestions that follow can, with test and learn and small steps, give us planning tools and possible events for the next two years. Gardiner has specifically directed us to formulate a concept that makes us more appealing to a broader area and that begins to tap into coastal Connecticut for both visitors and participants as well as strategic partnerships with museums and historical societies. We should concentrate some of our time to this in the next meeting.

Last Session

There was some discussion at our last session regarding OHS being a Nexus or a Hub (your words). The general idea was formed in the first session that OHS connected the community to the OHS collection and activities. In our last session, it developed past that into our being an active and pro-active force in finding events, interests, etc. and finding resources (people, other museums, professional skills, etc.) and providing a forum where both "ends" could meet on our common ground. In this last meeting, we sought to expand on the ideas and concepts put forth at meeting #1.

We are exploring these ideas based on participant suggestions and interests and because it is important to expand our outreach to both the local community and to visitors from surrounding regions. Our unique position means that we are ideally situated to reach out to both the North Fork and to New England visitors.

In order to accomplish this, we feel it is necessary to make some adjustments in the hours the museum will be open this coming year and therefore we suggest increasing the time open from 9 hours a week for 17 weeks to 21 hours a week for 26 weeks.

We ascribe to the feeling that expressed to us that the Society isn't open at times best suited to the communities we serve. For us to be hub of ideas, history and learning that puts our community "in touch", we need to take some direction from them as to convenience.

Topics and Suggestions:

Operational Changes

1. Days and Hours

Exhibitions Open

Wednesday – Friday 1-5p

Saturday 10a-5p

Sunday 1-5p

Exhibition Year:

VH SG WH May 1 - October 30

Office Hours

M-F 10am – 3pm

Sat 9am – 1pm

2. Signage

Elsbeth has suggested that we work toward better signage, not only on buildings for identification and "history of" as well as general signage along the front walkways about upcoming events and society history generally. A map of the society grounds also seems to be appropriate.

Signage would most likely be confined to signage and short descriptions of places of interest outside of all OHS buildings PLUS area maps that demonstrate historic reference points outside of campus, and general area history, oldest buildings, etc..

We need to take a “better look” at OHS’s role Branding Pyramid – [Bonding to Oysterponds](#)

Next we sought to explore the branding pyramid. As you will note or remember, the test of a good brand is the emotional attachment – be it loyalty or simply the “feel good” association a member has with the society.

In exploring how this takes place, we noted that “people to place bonding” (attachment) gains **meaning** because of personal experiences that are associated with the “place”. The “3 P’s” description applies:

Person – Process – Place

Person: People experience stronger attachments to places that they can identify with or otherwise feel proud to be a part of.

Process: Process is divided into Effect/Cognition/Behavior. Affect is being in a place draws feels of happiness and contentment: “I’m comfortable”. Cognition is awareness of memories associated with a place “I’ve always enjoyed....” Behavior....ever been homesick? Behavior to cure that feeling is often returning to the place or, in the alternative, populating your current location with things that remind you of home.

Place: This is what do we attach to. It can be social as in a place where social relationships are developed and enjoyed (working on a committee, seeing friends often at events, etc.)

Physical: It could be considered a “comfort zone”; simply the “how do you feel” when in a place to which you are attached.

[Application of the Branding Pyramid](#)

In moving forward, our growth will be strongest when our connections with the membership and community as well as in our role as a hub/nexus provides opportunities for people to bond with us at the highest level of our brand, by developing an emotional attachment full of positive aspects of the “3 P’s” cited above. *Most important in the people-place bonding is to offer programs and events that people identify with and are proud to be a part of.*

OHS evokes pride in the community generally; we contribute to the fabric of village/area life in a positive way for all concerned and that when people engage with us (OHS) it is something that they, individually, feel proud about by simple association.

Although we currently provide social activities for the community our work in this regard could be a lot more strategic and effective. When planning events we should take this into consideration.

In thinking about our campus and programs, we want to institute regular programs throughout our campus to encourage our members and visitors to develop deep feelings of attachment to the

OHS as a place. (See this link - <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/579565> - for the article “Why Old Places Matter” by Thompson Mayes)

As a result of adopting the “Place Bonding”, the following lists some ideas that we brainstormed during the meeting. Elsbeth is working on refining it together with the Program and Education Committees and other interested Board members and volunteers.

Facility Utilization; making the most of what we have

Using Our Campus for Social Programs:

- Amanda Brown/Red Barn Area

“Artisan Saturdays”

Each Saturday from 10am – 1pm

Farmer’s Market approach to artisan goods – Lead associate “North Fork Gifts”

<http://northforkgift.com/pages/featured-artisans-1>

June/July/August Saturdays. The artisan products would and should also populate the museum store.

- Space between the School House and Hallock

“Every Other Friday”

June 15 – Labor Day

We will not be “selling” drinks and the idea is not to turn a profit here but to provide a community social gathering place on a somewhat regular basis where the membership is encouraged to mingle. We are also exploring what is needed from the liquor authority to accept donations. For \$34.60 staff can take a food handler’s course from NY State so that in the event we do serve some small food items that we can do so without violation of the law.

Kids and Education

Kids programs should continue and expand. They are perhaps our most successful ongoing program. As our education committee is stretched to the breaking point, we should examine importing self-contained programs from the outside (see MMoA section) as well as constantly seeking to expand our programs to include more children from afar and that we (OHS) shouldn't be the only museums contributing to the cause.

One simple method is to offer Pop Up courses from MMoA such as:

Can't make it to the MMoA? MMoA will come to your classroom! MMoA educators help students make critical observations about artworks and the creative process and each student creates an artwork of his or her own. An artist, medium or theme is the focus of each program.

Grades Pre-K-2

Art and the Five Senses: Art materials are tactile, edible, scented or all of the above!

Home-made Clay & Paints: Students create their own paint or clay using household ingredients.

Nature-made Art: Students use materials from nature and the natural elements to create artworks.

Weather & Art: Students explore the colors, shapes, and textures representative of each season.

Yoga & Art: Children build strength, independence, and creativity through the practice of yoga poses, art activities and relaxation techniques.

Grades 2 & up

Art Around the World: Students learn a traditional art form from across the globe.

Anime or Cartooning: Students develop characters and draw them in the traditional style using pen and paper.

Drawing & Painting: Fundamental skills and media are explored.

Graphic Novel (5 class minimum): Students develop a fiction or non-fiction story accompanied by comic-style drawing.

Master Artists: Students learn more about a famous artist by using his or her techniques or ideas.

Nature-made Art: Students use materials from nature and the natural elements to create artworks.

Print-making: Students learn how to design printing plates and to print multiple artworks from them.

Recycled Art: Students transform trash to treasure.

Sculpture: Students learn to conceive ideas and build in three dimensions.

Scheduling Your Pop Up Studio Program

Class length: 1-hour. Topics above can be explored in a single class or as series of five sessions.

Preferred class size: 15 students. Up to 25 students possible with minimum 1 chaperone. Materials provided; classrooms with sinks preferred.

Fee: \$125 per 1-hour program. Beyond 10 mile radius: Additional charge of \$.45 per mile RT*

We are envisioning “home and away” mutual events the first year whereby we select a workshop topic from MMoA and teach one day at their campus with their staff and students and our students and the next or meeting on our campus with our staff and both sets of students.

II. [A Great Idea That Needs a Push.](#)

Example of how we can perhaps breathe some life into an idea that on face appears brilliant but did not flourish.

The education committee put together “suitcase” exhibits complete with lesson/instructional plans. These “pop ups” were given to several local schools with great “Pre-“interest but little follow through. We recommend that this concept be explored as a cooperative venture with local and Ct. museums in the hopes 1.) figuring out how to make the project successful and expanding it or 2.) say this isn’t going to work and abandoning it. Regardless, it looks like a reasonable idea and a way to engage other museum entities.

[On Site Participation for the Community\(ies\) We Serve.](#)

[Spring and summer – Entertainment at Oysterponds](#)

Expanded Events and Programs. We feel that positive association of Place can be fostered by some additional “events” during the course of the year.

[“Flapper Night”](#)

Perhaps a late spring kick-off. Suggested Band: <http://vincegiordano.com/>

This would be a moderately priced event, dancing, costume would be fun.....

[Film History Nights](#)

In conjunction with Victoria’s husband, short talk about some aspects of film – for instance a night with a silent movie and early talkie, a film noir etc.

Could be a monthly event.

[Telescope Night\(s\)](#)

Navigation and telescopes – optics

In conjunction with Custer Institute. David Berson from Greenport also teaches celestial navigation and would be willing to teach. Best perhaps to think about this being the start of something of an astronomy club. We also have a collection of navigation instruments that could play into a future exhibition.

ART

In keeping with our central role as a hub and nexus that connects the community with its resources, we noted that the primary talent pool and focus of our community's interest was art. Therefore, we are looking at 4 art instructional workshop weekends from the following (and others to be added) talents:

- Pottery
- Photography
- Pastels
- Oils
- Drawing
- Watercolors

Photo/Film Festival “Festival of Light”

- a. General Theme of Light and Optics. Can also be a workshop for kids – pinhole cameras? Trip to Greenport's Camera Obscura. How to take pictures, composition, film examples. This may turn into a curated exhibit. Randy Dadonna or EJ come to mind. Victoria leads the way with Randy. Also we note programs at the Mystic Museum of Art that could enhance this or that we, as a group, may wish to attend.
- b. Lecture Series on the Arts
- c. Period Art perhaps, set of three or four lectures either summer or fall, some aspect of art from a technical and aesthetic approach. Can include professional artists, art of the time, relationships of artists and art schools/movements, folk art, etc.
- d. Pop Up Museum/Exhibition
- e. A traveling exhibition for under a 10x10 popup tent? To take to various community festivals – or here for that matter. Can also go to Peconic Landing or on our campus. Primary targets would be the State Park at Orient Point, Maritime Festival, Founders Festival in Southold plus outreach to Connecticut.

Connecticut Outreach

- a. Alliances and sharing with Connecticut historical societies and museums.

Custom House and New London Historical Society

Goal is to cross interest us and our event offerings with these two New London societies.

Exhibition Exchange

Suitcase Educational Programs

- b. Mystic Museum of Art (MMoA)

Educational Art/Craft programs for kids and adults

Adopt some of their methods

Instructor Exchange

- c. Field trip to New London, Griswold, Mystic in January to visit and start the dialogue

Areas of concern that need some help

Writing a True Short History of Orient

Wiki and most online “histories” of Orient/Oysterponds are full of the same, shared misinformation. We should take the lead in setting the record straight and publish, online correct and corrected histories.

Also it might be a good idea to address the Genealogical History of the founding families.

Docents/Training/Young Adults

We note that a major issue in expanding the hours of the society and the scope of the society’s offerings will be the plain fact that we are short of volunteers – particularly docents. We think there should be a discussion of a training program/internship for 2-3 high school upper class persons to receive a stipend and eventually credit hours to serve as docents to relieve the pressure on staffing and to free up volunteer time for other projects.

We believe that a fund be established, either by donation or grant, that would address the issue of a 20 open hours per week staffing problem. A reasonable instructional program and a rotating supply of energetic and mobile docents plus a stipend or honorarium would go a long way to open up the volunteer commitments.

Peconic Landing Service and Interest

We believe that Peconic Landing is both a wealth of talent for our programming/event needs and a natural yet underserved audience.

Some suggestions are:

1. Inclusion of PL members into our events by invitation.
2. Finding talented and knowledgeable members to participate in our programs
3. Incorporating outreach to PL with our membership drives.
4. John H. perhaps taking the lead?

Summary

Current thinking is that we need more time to interact with our communities and we can do that by both expanding our hours and our calendars. Second, we need to stress the social events that provide for person-place relationship building. Third, we need to expand our range both through our ordinary and usual events and education and also through programs that draw in different audiences. We can become more of a hub between interest and resources and thus, with little effort on our part, we draw out the talents and match them with perceived needs; hopefully to add aspects of the “3 P’s”.

Finally, the Gardiner Foundation, a major funder, has strongly suggested that we “think big” in order to build our future. They point us to Connecticut as a reasonable expansion area for drawing in visitors, alongside our current focus on the North Fork. We are not talking about tour boats but rather a steady if not modest overture that, over time, builds a stronger base for all.