President’s Message

Lawrence J. Yerdon, President & CEO

It is exciting to report that Strawbery Banke Museum has just completed its best year for attendance, ever. More than 90,000 visitors enjoyed an experience here on Puddle Dock—time-traveling through history with a costumed role-player, attending a holiday celebration; enjoying wine or beer and the company of friends; learning a new craft or garden skill; or ice skating under the stars.

The new Visitor Center café, the extraordinary shopping experience that is Pickwick’s at the Banke, the new craft experiences and the Labrie Family Skate at Puddle Dock Pond all demonstrated, beyond doubt, that an outdoor history museum can “sell.” Tell the story; meet the people; cook, weave or dig with the guiding hand of an expert; in an authentic, intentionally conserved and interpreted place, and word will spread that this is a unique and “must visit” experience for the bucket list.

Strawbery Banke has many reasons to be grateful for the support of those who make this endeavor possible. The laurels — from the National Trust to TripAdvisor — belong to everyone who has a hand in keeping this a place to learn, a place to gather and a sustainable resource for the community.

On the Museum’s part, the promise is to keep imagining, to keep enchanting and to keep welcoming each and every person who comes through the gate to discover what’s happening at Strawbery Banke. A new season is about to start. In appreciation for sustaining all these efforts, I invite you to come see what’s new.

On the heels of the announcement that Portsmouth, New Hampshire will have its own square on the Monopoly board come September, Strawbery Banke Museum announces the theme of its 2015 exhibit is “Game On! In the Pursuit of Play on Puddle Dock.”

As those following the competition to be chosen one of the 20 cities included in the 80th Anniversary “Here & Now U.S. Edition” of Hasbro’s Monopoly have learned, the game dates back to 1904 and Elizabeth Magie’s creation of the “Landlord’s Game.” Individual and group games are not just a 21st century “Angry Birds” or “Call of Duty” obsession. Games are both fashionable reflections of their times, of cultural influences (think Parcheesi and mahjong), and of the evolution of leisure time and the ways in which it was spent.

Game On! In the Pursuit of Play on Puddle Dock covers another aspect of daily life in the Portsmouth waterfront neighborhood from 1695 to 1954. Visitors may remember card game settings in Pitt Tavern, playing card décor on the Thomas Bailey Aldrich House and hula hoops in the yard of the Shapley-Drisco House. The new exhibit, presented in the Rowland Gallery showcases parlor games, toys and the story of how and what people played in the Puddle Dock neighborhood. The exhibit includes an ivory scrimshaw cribbage board from the Strawbery Banke Collection, an early 20th century baseball bat on loan, and ephemera from dance halls and other entertainments. Oral histories, photos and diaries give depth to the exhibit’s examination of the games played, specific sites used and the personalities who created distinctive elements of common play.

“Games raise our competitive edge, hone skills and perhaps most importantly, help create community,” commented Elizabeth Farish, museum curator. “Game On! explores the lighter side of life in the Puddle Dock neighborhood.”

The exhibit is open daily, May 1 through October 31, 2015, 9 am to 5 pm. Admission is included in the regular daily Museum admission.
May is National Historic Preservation Month

For the second year in a row, Strawbery Banke Museum celebrates National Historic Preservation Month in May with a series of lectures and tours focusing on local historic preservation initiatives. The National Trust for Historic Preservation created Preservation Month to encourage preservation and Main Street organizations to use this month-long opportunity to showcase how they are celebrating and saving historic places year-round. This year at Strawbery Banke, programs include a talk on the archaeology underway during campus construction at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, tours of the five historic sites currently completing preservation projects funded by the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), and a presentation and discussion on the proposed National Register Historic District in Portsmouth.

All programs are free and open to the public and begin at the Tyco Visitors Center at Strawbery Banke Museum (14 Hanover Street, Portsmouth). Light refreshments served. For information call 603-433-1100, visit www.strawberybanke.org or contact Museum Curator Elizabeth Farish at efarish@strawberybanke.org.

Thursday, May 7, 5:30 PM
Meghan Howey, PhD., Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of New Hampshire, presents “Sustaining Cultural Heritage at UNH.” Dr. Howey discusses the impact on cultural heritage sites at the University of New Hampshire, presents “Sustaining Cultural Heritage at UNH.”

Thursday, May 21, 5:30 PM
Peter Michaud, National Register, Preservation Tax Incentives & Easements Coordinator and Laura Black, Special Projects & Compliance Specialist, introduce the proposed Portsmouth National Register District.

NH Division of Historical Resources consultants are working to define and survey a National Register of Historic Places district for Portsmouth. The program explores the project and how Portsmouth fits within national historic preservation efforts. Time is planned for Q&A, following the presentation.

Summer Camps at Strawbery Banke

Have fun with history in Summer Camps at Strawbery Banke! The past is our playground in our active, small-group programs led by talented museum educators. Kids explore behind the scenes, try real skills in authentic settings and work closely with professional writers, archaeologists, character roleplayers, curators and historians. There’s something for all ages. Space is limited and programs fill fast!

Stories Alive (ages 6 – 8) 9 AM – 3 PM
Stories Alive: Voyages and Discoveries (June 29 – July 3)
Stories Alive: Adventure and Invention (August 3 – 7)
Crafty Kids (ages 8 – 10) 9 AM – 3 PM
Crafty Kids: Traditional Trades (July 27 – 31)
Blast to the Past (ages 8 – 11) 9 AM – 3 PM
Blast to the Past: Games and Sports (July 6 – 10)
Blast to the Past: Kids in the Kitchen (August 10 – 14)
History at Play (ages 9 – 11) 9 AM – 3 PM
History at Play: Growing Up Colonial (June 29 – July 3)
History at Play: Growing Up Between the Wars (July 13 – 17)
History at Play: Growing Up Victorian (August 17 – 21)
Uncovering the Past (ages 10-12) 9 AM – 3 PM
Uncovering the Past: Building Detectives (July 20 – 24)
Junior Detective (ages 10 – 12) 9 AM – 3 PM
Beginner Jr. Roleplayers: The Victorian Era (August 3 – 14)
Advanced Jr. Roleplayers (July 13 – 24)
Registration
Pre-registration is required for all programs. Cost is $250 per child for members ($300 for non-members) except for the Junior Role-player programs which are $500 for members ($600, non-members). Sibling/Multiple Camp Discount: Register one child for any summer camp at the full price and receive a 10% discount off each additional camp for the same child or siblings. To register or request more information, please contact us at camps@strawberybanke.org or (603) 422-7541.