Consideration of the DH: Spring 2017

Since the last Friends newsletter in December, the Museum completed holiday activities and closed for annual cleaning. A few important maintenance issues were addressed. Staff and volunteers took a deep breath of refreshment and rest before preparations began for spring. Typically from the week after St. Patrick’s Day through Memorial Day, the Museum sees one-third of its annual visitation. As the weather begins to warm and the flowers bloom the world comes to our door, such is the blessing of a historic site in a world class tourist destination. We can serve!

In February, in anticipation of the tourist rush, the DH executed a successful docent training class in order to get its work force in order. Eight eager and excited new docents will soon be added to our corps of excellent veteran docents of which we have over seventy! Yes, there are at least seventy people in our community, who right now, could give a presentation of our story in a credible and delightful way if called upon right this moment. And the DH needs every one of them! Some are high school students, some college students, many others are retired people or professionals who find it thrilling to share our story with whomever comes through the shop door. That is a tremendous achievement and a tremendous compliment to have so many people committed to our story. This sets the DH apart!

This group has discovered that it is not just the artifacts and the building which should be cherished, cultivated, and preserved. We are guardians of an important story that continues to evolve and for which our visitors are eager to hear. They want to know Savannah and they want something real, personal and provocative. We can offer them Isaiah Davenport, the emigrant builder, who erected his home as a showplace; his strong wife Sarah and their children, and the nine enslaved workers, including Nancy and Davy, who ran away and were brought back. We tell them of the seven women who woke up the community to the idea that preservation made better economic sense than demolition. These stories have universal themes of perseverance and survival, but are rooted in Savannah.

For the next few months, the DH will be in the “execution mode,” of serving numerous walk-in visitors and group tours. Then we will celebrate! Our next date to gather for mutual congratulations will be at our end-of-season garden party on Sunday, June 4th, because it would not be Savannah without a party. Following that we will again look to maintenance issues, research and planning. As for now we are excited about the great service that you make possible through your kindness and support. Thank you for your commitment to the DH which allows us to tell our authentic Savannah story!
Our shop manager of less than one year, Gaye Kurmas, is transforming the DH's retail experience. We recently asked her about her work.

**What do you like about your job?**
Gaye, who is a professional librarian, says, “I tell my friends NOW I can shop for books AND tea pots! There are similarities between being a museum shop manager and a librarian. You need to find out what people are looking for – what good book or what mementoes to take home.”

**What changes have you brought to the DH Shop?**
“I have been told it is brighter and more approachable. I have been changing the merchandise around so it looks like there are always new things around.”

**What is your merchandising philosophy?**
“We create displays based on what kind of programs are happening at the Museum. For example, in October during our Yellow Fever program and Halloween, the shop had a niche that included haunted house books. Currently we have a display of Madeira glassware and goods as well as St. Patrick’s Day items. In thinking about new items, I look ahead to what is next on the program schedule and what sorts of things can go along with those programs. I am concentrating on acquiring one-of-a-kind or custom items for the shop. I have been lucky in what I have been able to find. New inventory includes a new ornament featuring our ironwork, a new mug with a picture of the house and a write up, custom jewelry also featuring our iron work, DH wine stoppers and trivets. We have new inventory items from local artists including black and white photographs of our garden gate, note cards featuring a painting of a cotton plant by DH volunteer Judy Crisp and black and white prints from Pam Lee. We are looking out for books by local writers. I am still learning and looking for a good balance between lower, medium and higher priced items. While we are primarily a tourist shop, my goal is to get the word out that the DH is a fantastic shop for gifts – wedding presents, birthday presents, greeting cards. If you live downtown, come to our shop for gifts instead of driving to the mall. You can find a unique gift at an affordable price at the Davenport House Museum Shop!”

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**REBECCA BUSTINDUY** has been the DH’s tour coordinator for six months. She got her feet wet during the October season and is now primed for the spring rush! We talked to her about her new job recently.

**What have learned from your time at the Davenport House?**
“No two days are alike and everything works itself out.”

**What are your big accomplishments at the DH?**
“I digitized tour reservations, streamlined the reservation and invoicing process for group tours and organized a group tour to DC. I am currently working on digitizing volunteer docent tour sign ups”

**What is your impression of busy season?**
“It is crazy and I like the chaos!”

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**DH Gate Pendant.**
Retail: $68

**Wine Stopper.**
Retail: $3.95

**DH Mug.**
Retail: $5.95

**Cotton Plant notes.**
Artist—Judy Crisp. Retail: $9.95

**Save the Date!**
**DH Spring Garden Party**
Sunday, June 4 from 6 to 8pm
Friends of the Davenport House 2016-2017 Appeal

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Mary Jane Watters

These are donors who responded to the Friends of the Davenport House Annual Giving Campaign since the appeal which began in November 2016.

If you do not see your name, please send in your 2016-2017 Friends of the Davenport House Annual Giving contribution to continue the museum's good work!

The DH needs you.

Corrected and updated 4/5/2017
The DH put on a fundraiser like no other in February. Throughout the fall and winter Davenport House volunteers planned a new event which gave our annual Oyster Roast a rest. Instead of being located at a private home away from the city, the Davenport Soirée was centrally located at Savannah’s storied eatery Elizabeth on 37th Street. The owners, Grey and Gary Butch and events manager Morgan Gallo orchestrated the site to best suit the pleasure of our attendees with treats available and areas to socialize. The garden, dressed with camellia arrangements, provided the venue for Kim Michael Polote to croon and delight. Interior spaces housed the successful silent auction!

The Davenport House Museum community is grateful to all who made the event successful.

2017 Davenport House Soirée Committee: Diane Kaufman, Chairman; David Barwick, Frances Côlon, Diane Eakins, John Leonti, Meghan Lowe, Linda Meyer, Jennifer Palmer, Jan Vach

Please know we thank our fantastic sponsors:

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Kendra Scott;

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Charles Taylor and Samir Nikocevic

Because of the generosity of sponsors the Museum presented a special evening program called **Sarah’s Social** prior to the **Soirée.**

**Sarah’s Social Volunteers:**
Olivia Arneson
Diane Eakins
Jeff Freeman
Maddie Holt
John Leonti
Jody Levy
Raleigh Marcell
Linda Meyer
Gayle Mongrandi
Doug Mund
Hillary Mund
Olivia Villanova
Grey Vach
Jan Vach
Brooke Wilford
Alexis Williamson
Ann Durant, Music

**Food:**
Noble Fare
17Hundred90
B. Matthews
Back in the Day Bakery
FraLi Gourmet
Marche de Macaron
39 Rue de Jean
Starland Cafe

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**Soirée Volunteers included**
Rebecca Bustinduy
Pat Fraker
Ric Fraker
Jeff Freeman
Meredith Halloran
Gaye Kurmas
Jody Levy
Linda Meyer
Jan Vach
Greg Vach
Olivia Villanova

**Dessert Makers:** Rebecca Bustinduy, Jamie Credle, Pat Fraker, Linda Garner, Caroline Holder, Gaye Kuramas, Gayle Mongrandi, Ann O’Leary, John Sorel, Joyce Zehl, Brooke Wilford, Denise Winn

**A successful celebration of the DH and springtime!**
Please be aware of our in-kind donors for both events and the silent auction!
17Hundred90 Inn & Restaurant
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**DH Program Calendar: Late Spring 2017**

**EARLY BIRD’S PRESERVATION WALKING TOUR OF THE LANDMARK HISTORIC DISTRICT’S EAST SIDE**

*Saturdays in April 2017*

**PROGRAM DATES:** April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

**TIME:** 8 a.m.

**ADMISSION:** $21. Plus tax.

**LENGTH OF PROGRAM:** 100 minutes.

**DISTANCE OF WALK:** 2.5 miles

Take an early morning walk through one of the oldest and most varied neighborhoods to learn how historic preservation has revitalized downtown Savannah. Tours are led by the Davenport House director, who will introduce the personalities, structures and issues that have enthralled Savannah’s preservation movement. Coffee and treats in the Davenport House garden to follow.

**TEA IN THE GARDEN AT THE DAVENPORT HOUSE**

*Thursdays and Fridays in May 2017*

**PROGRAM DATES AND TIMES:** May 4, 5, 11, 12 at 4:15 p.m. and on May 18, 19, 25 and 26 at 5 p.m.

**ADMISSION:** $18. Plus tax.

Reservations recommended. Limited attendance.

**LENGTH OF PROGRAM:** 60 to 75 minutes.

Learn about tea traditions and experience an early 19th century tea in Davenport House’s beautiful courtyard garden. Patrons will visit areas of the home where tea service took place and will participate in an afternoon tea given with costumed interpreters in the garden.

*On inclement weather dates, tea will be taken inside the house museum.*

**EARLY BIRD’S WALKING TOUR: DISCOVERING 1820S SAVANNAH**

*Saturdays in May 2017*

**PROGRAM DATES:** May 6, 13, 20, 27

**TIME:** 8 a.m.

**ADMISSION:** $21. Plus tax.

**LENGTH OF PROGRAM:** 120 minutes

**DISTANCE OF WALK:** 2.5 miles.

See what survives of the 1820s Savannah that master builder Isaiah Davenport knew. Beginning at the Davenport House Museum (1820), participants will walk by some of the finest examples of preservation in the city and learn about what no longer remains. Coffee and treats in the Davenport House garden will follow.
Stories that Make the World Better: Story Tellers at the DH

Recently we listened to a commentary by Derek Thompson, author of the new book *Hit Makers: The Science of Popularity in an Age of Distraction*, who said, “Society is bound by the stories that we tell each other. . . . They are stories that had to be invented, constructed, told and believed.” He goes on to say, “History is full of men and women who successfully championed justice and equal rights. Empathy and equality are powerful stories. They need equally powerful storytellers.” On the front page of this newsletter we told you about the 70 or so people – at this very moment – and tell the DH story. They are good storytellers, and they only get better with practice and study. As we hone our DH story through research, interpretation and artistry, we work with a powerful narrative for our story tellers - docents, Junior interpreters and stakeholders (that’s you) – to use. The DH’s story is Savannah’s story which is filled with the ideas of chance, perseverance, beauty, strategy and survival. Here are some of our story tellers!

DH High School Seniors

Taylor Cobin and C’Asia Griffin have volunteered as Junior Interpreters at the DH throughout their high school careers. Now they are headed off to a broader world. The DH wishes them well!

Name: Taylor Cobin  
Parent: Yolanda Cobin  
School: Savannah Arts Academy

What things have you been involved in here? Since I’ve been here, I’ve been a part of JI Day, Lafayette Fete, Tour of Homes, Davenport House parties, Super Museum Sunday, and helping a few times with in coming JIs.

What can you say about your time at the DH and how it prepared you (for anything)? I got to learn about what happened in Savannah a long time ago, got to do fun and interactive activities that were done a long time ago, and make new friends! It taught me how to interact with people. I know how to grab an audience’s attention and how to speak out and with confidence. These things will be essential when I go out into the world!

What do you think will be a fond memory of your time here? My very first tour I gave during the summer time when I was a freshman. Cierra, a senior, assisted me. I was so afraid, but Cierra found a way to just "throw me out there." I accepted the challenge. In the end, my first tour turned out great and I was even given great reviews!

Future plans? I will attend Morehouse College this fall. I am going to major in business administration and I hope to work for Google or another huge corporation similar to Google.

Name: C'Asia Griffin  
Parent: Sandra Griffin  
School: Early College

What things have you been involved in here? I have been involved in tours and different volunteer activities such as the Tour of Homes & Gardens, Super Museum Sunday, and the annual DH Christmas Party.

What can you say about your time at the DH and how it prepared you (for anything)? The DH has allowed me to network. It has also greatly enhanced my communication skills.

What do you think will be a fond memory of your time here? My very first tour I gave during the summer time when I was a freshman. Cierra, a senior, assisted me. I was so afraid, but Cierra found a way to just "throw me out there." I accepted the challenge. In the end, my first tour turned out great and I was even given great reviews!

Future plans? I plan to attend college, preferably a university located in Atlanta, Georgia, where I will obtain my bachelor's degree in mathematics with a minor in business. I want to pursue actuarial studies while also being an entrepreneur.
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Patti Burger
Traveling to DC: With You!? 

The DH has made arrangements for a Washington, DC experience and you can come along June 5 thru 8. The impetus for the trip is to see, as a group, the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Also on the itinerary—a day trip to Mount Vernon, a tour of both Ford’s Theater and Gadsby’s Tavern. You may participate in some or all of the activities. A block of rooms has been reserved at the George Hotel, if you please.

Contact Rebecca @ rbustinduy@davenporthousemuseum.org or 912/236-8097 at the DH for information or to put your name on the list as attending!