

**Annual Meeting for 2013
Executive Director Remarks
August 11, 2014**

Good afternoon and welcome to the Museum's Annual Meeting covering the year 2013.

2013 was an amazing year of accomplishment and change for the Museum. It is really thanks to the Board, Board Committee members, staff, interns, freelancers and volunteers that we did so much and did it so well. All of you share in the success of what we were able to provide to our communities and our audiences—members, students, scholars, year-round and seasonal residents, as well as tourists.

What these people and children saw, heard or experienced when they came to our Edgartown campus or lighthouses was an institution that is in the process of transformation, from an introspective historical society to an extroverted educational and community-service modeled museum.

Although the comprehensive capital campaign has been a focus for many individuals for the twelve months ending in December 2013, many of them and others have been beyond busy with our daily operations: we have been creating a vibrant present while shaping a brilliant future.

In brief, I want to review the top ten things that we accomplished in 2013 (and so this list is like the David Letterman top ten, except clearly more serious as it is a Museum's annual meeting):

10. Collaborated with the Harbor View Hotel on a series of *Pecha Kucha* nights (six-minute cultural interest presentations).

9. Added 34 new oral histories, cataloged nearly 110 old interviews, and digitally preserved more than 170 taped interviews

8. Published *The Smiths of Pohogonut*, based on our early 19th-century diaries, edited and underwritten by Marian Halperin.

7. Celebrated the Museum's 90th Anniversary in July 2013 with a sold-out Evening of Discovery Party, attracting a record 342 people.

6. Conducted a year-long multiage unit with three classes at The Chilmark School and it was in large part due to financial support from The Beagary Trust.

5. Opened five new temporary exhibits (one on the Fishing Derby, one on Toys from our collections, and others), plus hosted a high school history class in a show of Vineyard athletics, and expanded our *Hands-on History* installation with a new "Block and Tackle" exhibit supported by the Leavens Foundation and the MV Cultural Council.

4. Actively participated in the "Save the Gay Head Lighthouse" initiative, helping to have that site awarded a designation as one of the National Trust's 11 Most Endangered in America.

3. Partnered with MV Film Society to present Ric Burns' "Into the Deep" and Cornell/Hamilton "This is Our Island" to oversold audiences.

2. Replaced and successfully transitioned two senior management positions, welcoming a Development Director in Dan Waters, and an Education Director in Ann DuCharme.

1. Received our largest private grant ever: \$294k from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and CLIR (Council on Library and Information Resources) for a two-year project making our archives holdings searchable online.

Last year I talked about the Museum as a four-legged stool of Collections, Programs, Planning and Finance. It is indeed critical for us to keep each of these legs balanced in order have a stable Museum. But today I want to leave you with a thought that is becoming more true to me as I move soon to my five-year anniversary as your Executive Director.

It is almost obvious and pretty simple: The Martha's Vineyard Museum is in the people relationship business.

Yes, we are in the collecting business: we do care for and continue to covet collections, but collectors and dealers and artists and craftspeople are the key to those acquisitions and gifts.

Yes, we are in the exhibitions business: we do present exhibitions and related events, but curators and scholars and interns and authors are the people who imagine and present those shows, lectures and films.

And yes, we are in the education business: however, it is the inspiration of a teacher educator matched with the aspiration of a student or life-long learner where that magic of enlightenment really happens.

So relationships are fundamental. Our most valued relationships are with you, our members, the people who we can regularly count on to support us. So we really have you to thank for making 2013 a great success.

David Nathans
Executive Director