

# BOSCOBEL HOUSE AND GARDENS

GARRISON, NEW YORK



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

## Boscobel Mission Statement

The Mission of Boscobel House and Gardens is to enrich the lives of its visitors with memorable experiences of the history, culture and environment of the Hudson River Valley.

## Boscobel Brand Idea

The past shapes who we are today – our culture, our style, our values and our traditions. The history of the Early Republic is woven into the fabric of our society. It lives on through stories and experiences here. Boscobel's extraordinary location in the Hudson River Valley offers an immersive window into our past, bringing it to life to enrich and delight our visitors in a way that is relevant today.

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## A Letter From the President & Executive Director



Barnabas McHenry  
President



Steven Miller  
Executive Director

Dear Friends:

This is Boscobel's first annual report after almost 60 years of service, so a natural question would be: why? The answer is simple. Many people know one aspect of what Boscobel offers – for example, the magnificence of the House – but are not familiar with other things that happen here. This report shows there is far more going on than initially meets the eye.

Consider these highlights of 2016, which are described in more detail in subsequent sections of the report:

- ◆ **Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now:** This landmark special exhibition, lauded by the New York Times, juxtaposed centuries-old pieces of furniture with new “masterworks” created by current Hudson Valley craftsmen. Gallery attendance doubled our previous year levels.
- ◆ **School Programs:** Boscobel reached more than 1,000 young students through a combination of outreach programs, such as “Patriots & Loyalists,” at area schools and hosted programs on premises.
- ◆ **Sparkle:** Our signature winter event again lit up Boscobel like a gigantic fairyland, drawing about 2,000 visitors, the second highest total in its history.
- ◆ **Military Re-enactment:** Musket fire echoed through the valley in August on our second Re-enactment Day, giving 500 people a real-life taste of history.
- ◆ **Hudson River Artists Garden:** Three more bronze portrait sculptures of artists of the Hudson River School were installed in the new Sculpture Garden, slated for completion with a total of 10 in 2017.

## A Letter From the President & Executive Director

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*Exquisitely Beautiful — An architecturally beautiful house with exquisite furnishings and decor. Very fine collection of antique furniture. Lovely view of the Hudson River. If you see only three houses on the Hudson, this should be one of them.*

— TripAdvisor Review, 2016

The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival continues to attract large, enthusiastic crowds with their brilliant combination of wit and drama under the direction of Davis McCallum. We meet frequently to explore areas for future collaborations, such as the production of a play about Benedict Arnold, to be staged in conjunction with our Military Re-enactment Day in August, 2017. Collaboration with Hudson Valley organizations is important to us, as further evidenced by our summer hosting of the Cold Spring Farmers' Market and the wonderful relationship we enjoy with the Philipstown Garden Club, the members of which tend our lovely herb garden.

Looking ahead, we are beginning an exciting process to update our Strategic Plan. We have important statistical inputs from a survey instrument developed with Marist College experts that enables us to take the pulse of our visitors on a variety of subjects whenever we choose. We also enjoyed a stimulating “think tank” session with House Museum experts of the Chipstone Foundation in January, 2017 that further opened our eyes to future opportunities.

None of this would be possible without the initiative and support of an extremely capable staff, to whom we all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. They are the heart and soul of Boscobel.

We also applaud our Board of Directors. This diligent group is devoted to sustaining and growing all that is special and important for and about Boscobel.

We trust that this report will bring new “flavors” of Boscobel to your senses, and that you will join us soon to experience them. Thank you for your support and friendship.

Barnabas McHenry  
President

Steven Miller  
Executive Director



### Hudson Hewn

On April 16, Boscobel opened *Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now*, an exhibition featuring 38 examples of contemporary furniture by 17 living Hudson Valley artists/firms. Each piece was selected to (1) represent the current Renaissance of Hudson Valley craftsmanship and (2) draw attention to Boscobel's permanent collection through comparison or contrast. To achieve the latter goal, the exhibition was installed in the gallery alongside comparable permanent collection works and throughout period rooms in the mansion. *Hudson Hewn* was interpreted by docent-led house tours and an illustrated catalogue, and complemented by three lectures, an artists' panel, an artists' demonstration day, and a chair-building workshop for children.

*Hudson Hewn* was open for four months and the results were spectacular: glowing press reviews, accolades from local legislators, enthusiastic visitor response – surpassing previous exhibitions – and great goodwill among this influential group of artists. Gallery attendance doubled over 2015 figures, and anecdotal evidence suggests that a larger number of visitors came to Boscobel specifically to see this exhibition – there were dozens of requests for private tours from woodworkers, furniture specialists and friends of the artists. Most importantly, *Hudson Hewn* helped focus attention on Boscobel's superb permanent collection.

This signal success was certainly a team effort, but the unquestioned leader of the team was Boscobel curator Jennifer Carlquist, who did a masterful job of selecting artists and objects, installing “old” and “new” to have maximum impact, writing the catalogue and fielding press inquiries.

“The exhibition highlights the continuity of an advanced design vocabulary and gestural sophistication in New York furniture-making, positioning ... today's renaissance of Hudson Valley craftsmanship as a parallel to the golden era of the early 1800s.”

— *New York Times*, July 15, 2016





### Hudson River Artists Garden

The first stage of this permanent outdoor exhibition, located near the Carriage House, opened in late 2015 and the project gained momentum last year with the installation of three more busts by sculptor Greg Wyatt, bringing the total to six. When the project is completed and dedicated in November, 2017, Boscobel will honor a total of 10 leading artists of the Hudson River School, including Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, Jasper Cropsey and Asher B. Durand. Brief biographies accompany each of the busts.

This project is being underwritten by the Newington-Cropsey Foundation, to whom Boscobel extends its most sincere gratitude.

### Coming Soon:

#### “Make-Do’s: Curiously Repaired Antiques”

This major 2017 exhibition will highlight visually and historically intriguing objects. Like Boscobel itself, make-do’s illustrate the complex relationships between everyday people and the things that they choose to save. As with *Hudson Hewn*, the “make do’s” will be installed in the mansion’s period rooms as well as in the exhibition gallery.

*Greg Wyatt’s work is based on the philosophy of “spiritual realism”...His lyricism evokes poetry while his work process is attentive to craftsmanship and the fine details of cast bronze.*

— Dr. Anthony Janson,  
*W.H. Janson’s History of Art*

## Education



The Education function, which has only been formalized at Boscobel in recent years, continued to grow in importance in 2016 through outreach to local schools, site-specific programs and intensified staff development. The “ringmaster” for this effort is Lisa DiMarzo, who serves as salesperson, teacher and administrator in her capacity as Museum Educator.

Expanding school outreach to bring Boscobel and American history alive to young people is one of our priorities. In 2016, Lisa brought her popular “Patriots and Loyalists” and “Now and Long Ago” presentations to elementary schools in Fishkill, Wappingers Falls, Hopewell Junction, Rhinebeck and Brinkerhoff. At the same time, schools were sending children on field trips to Boscobel. They came from both sides of the river and from New York City, including Storm King School in Cornwall, Garrison School in Garrison, Manitou in Cold Spring, St. Denis-St. Columba School in Hopewell Junction, Soundview Preparatory School in Yorktown Heights, Girls School of Viznitz in Monsey, and Summit Academy in Peekskill. In total, Boscobel reached more than 1,000 students through these initiatives, and surveys of participating school teachers show that our programs are highly regarded.

That does not even begin to tell the complete Education story. Boscobel offered a number of exceptional family programs, ranging from *Rhyme Time on the Hudson* to *Bring the Kids, Starlab Planetarium*, and *Hands-On Boscobel for Homeschoolers* to adult programs including the annual Design Lecture series that features presentations by speakers such as Susanna Salk



“Through storytelling, Lisa was able to see how much the students knew about the topic. Then she taught the content through time-traveling. Awesome!”

— Patriots and Loyalists outreach program

“It fits perfectly with the 2nd grade Community Program. Thank you, Lisa! You were amazing.”

— Now and Long Ago program at Boscobel

## Education



on contemporary interiors and Gary Hilderbrand on landscape design. All of these programs were well-attended and critically acclaimed.

Finally, senior staff benefited from an initiative headed by Board Education Chair William Burback. They visited Winterthur Museum, Gardens and Library in Delaware and the Tenement Museum and Merchant's House Museum in New York City. These visits allow staff and committee members to experience, first-hand, innovation by others, investigate areas of possible improvement, and “renew our enthusiasm for all that Boscobel is and can be.”

“Being able to see real items and comparing and contrasting. My favorite part was everything!”

— Primary Source program at Boscobel.



## Events



Boscobel is many things to many people. For some, it is the House and its history-drenched grandeur. For others, it may be the spectacular view along the Hudson River from the Belvedere or the comedy and drama in the summer performances of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. Still, for a growing number, Boscobel is defined by its many Special Events that have become annual traditions.



Foremost among these is Sparkle, which lights up Boscobel the first three weekends in December and draws crowds to hear and see a combination of live music, roaming entertainers, Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus, Twilight Tours of the House and more through a prism of lights that blanket the grounds and the air above it. Notably, our guests include a large number of children whose “oohs” and “aahs” put a smile on everyone’s face. The brainchild of our Marketing & Events Manager Donna Blaney in 2013, Sparkle had a 2016 attendance of roughly 2,000, the second highest in its history. (Its highest was in 2015 when balmy temps helped attract nearly 5,000 visitors!)



A somewhat different audience flocks to the grounds in August, when Boscobel hosts a Military Re-enactment featuring appropriately garbed soldiers from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, all equipped with period firearms. The guiding force in this event, which just completed its second year with an audience of 500 people is Colonel (Ret.) James Johnson, a Boscobel Board member who taught history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point for many years.

*Sparkle was beautiful. All the lights and decorations were breathtaking. I loved it and will do it again next year...”*

*Had a great time at the Bonfire... loved watching the grandkids having fun toasting their marshmallows. Also gazing at the stars. Just a perfect night. Grounds are breathtaking, as well. Strongly recommend this beautiful peaceful place.*

## Events



Drawing a like number of visitors is our Family Bonfire Night in October, which lights up the grounds in spectacular fashion while providing marshmallows and live country music for family fun. Other noteworthy events include our Big Band Concert and Sunset Picnic, when Boscobel swings to the tunes of Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman, and the Annual Snapping Turtle Walk, when hundreds gather on the Belvedere in June (since 1994!) to view huge snapping turtles who make an annual pilgrimage from Constitution Marsh to Boscobel to lay their eggs. Finally, no event list would be complete without noting that Boscobel is also the outdoor venue of choice for the 300 or so people who attend its Yoga with a View program Monday evenings June through September.



*I brought my mom and dad to Boscobel's Big Band Concert & Sunset Picnic for 10 years. Now I bring my children; it's a terrific tradition.*

*Yoga with a View at Boscobel is a very unique experience. The view overlooking the Hudson River is phenomenal and because you are outside all your senses are stimulated.*

## Weddings & Property Rentals



*Hudson Valley Magazine* has named Boscobel the best place for a wedding in the Valley, and the vitality of our wedding activity speaks to that point. In 2016, Boscobel hosted 17 weddings ranging from a three-day celebration using both the East Lawn and the West Meadow to two international weddings whose guests represented 17 countries to a wedding reception attended by the former President and First Lady and a host of political dignitaries.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of Boscobel's wedding success is that we can only book these events in April, May, September and October because the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival is delighting its audiences in the June to August time frame. There are already 16 weddings booked for 2017.

Weddings are hardly the only events that Boscobel hosts under the direction of Property Rentals Coordinator Colleen Fogarty. Other 2016 activities included a Bat Mitzvah, Christening, memorial service, six celebrations, a two-day educators retreat, a two-day workshop, rehearsal dinner, a Harvard Business School dinner and a Teamsters Union dinner, and nine photo sessions, including one commercial TV shoot for the internationally acclaimed production *Fireball Run*.

“Boscobel is the most beautiful wedding venue in the Hudson Valley...Colleen was a dream to work with...My guests were blown away by the incredible view of the Hudson River. Breathtaking! The grounds are immaculate too – it couldn't have been more perfect!

— Lindsay, bride





### Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival

The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival (HVSF) celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2016, with over 35,000 audience members enjoying effervescent performances under an open-air theater tent at Boscobel. The season included productions of *AS YOU LIKE IT*, *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*, and *MACBETH* by William Shakespeare in honor of the writer's internationally recognized 400-year legacy. These performances received significant critical praise from *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

The season also included a newly-devised, family-friendly clown play called *SO PLEASE YOU*. The show — featuring HVSF's Conservatory Company, a professional training program for early career actors — is now enjoying a second life as a commission at the New Victory Theater in New York City. Also on the road is the much-acclaimed *AS YOU LIKE IT*, which has since moved from the grounds of Boscobel to Washington, D.C.'s Folger Theatre at the Folger Shakespeare Library.



In thanks to the Hudson Valley community for their 30 years of support, HVSF also produced a citizen-driven production of *OUR TOWN* by Thornton Wilder in 2016, in association with Boscobel House and Gardens. The show enjoyed four free performances over Labor Day weekend, featuring three professional actors and 36 community members. These volunteer actors ranged in age from 11-80, and represented local communities from Poughkeepsie to Tarrytown and beyond. In total, HVSF's *OUR TOWN* engaged 230 volunteers through free theater arts workshops, 19 separate Hudson Valley communities, 22 local business and non-profit partners, and over 1,300 audience members.

### Cold Spring Farmers' Market & Philipstown Garden Club

Boscobel's collaborative efforts go well beyond the HVSF. Since 2012, we have hosted the Cold Spring Farmers' Market on Saturdays from early summer to late fall and offered free grounds passes to all guests during this period. The CSFM is a vibrant local entity and it is a pleasure to have their culinary artists and artisans on our property.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Philipstown Garden Club. These volunteers have been responsible for the upkeep of our Herb Garden and they do a marvelous job.



## Visitor Services

Boscobel signaled a new emphasis on customer service with the appointment of Edward Glisson as Visitor Services Manager several years ago. That emphasis has certainly paid off because 2016 was a banner year in every respect. Consider these milestones:

- 10,000+ individual visitors took the Mansion tour, more than any year in recent history
- October was the highest volume month for Mansion tours in the last five years
- The number of visitors who came via group tours surpassed 3,000 – a 17% increase over 2015, whose totals had risen 12% over 2014

Boscobel has developed a strong relationship with the internationally-known Tauck Tours organization, whose guests particularly enjoy a special lunch after their tour of the Mansion and grounds. We welcome repeat visits from life-long learning groups such as the Warwick Center in Warwick, NY, Road Scholars in Boston, MA, and Academic Achievement Abroad in NYC, all of whom marvel at the group tour experience we provide.

Beginning in 2015, Boscobel began to regularly survey our guests to determine their level of satisfaction with our people and program. The survey instrument was developed in conjunction with the opinion polling experts at Marist College and enables us to get real-time feedback on our status. We are very pleased to report that 87% of our respondents rated the overall Boscobel experience “excellent.” This a credit to our staff and docents.

## Gift Shop

A similar percentage of those who shopped in the Gift Shop said that they would recommend it to their friends. This is a credit to Renate Smoller, who has managed the shop with an eye to retail trends, as well as merchandise that reflects Boscobel’s heritage and that of the Hudson River Valley.

# Financial Highlights

## 4-Year Trends:

16% increase in Admissions Revenue

65% increase in Membership Revenue

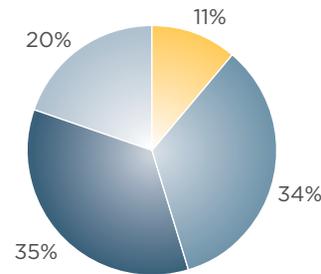
3% growth in Contributions and Sponsorships

## Admissions



	Admissions	Membership
2016	\$152,401	\$25,370
2015	\$139,338	\$25,540
2014	\$144,822	\$26,513
2013	\$131,872	\$15,400

## Revenues



- Contributions & Grants
- Investment Net Income
- Program Revenue
- Additional Investment

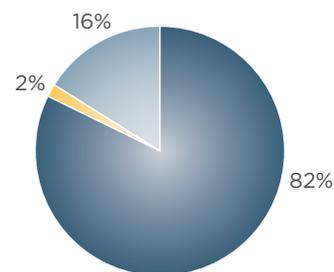
## Operating Sources:

Contributions & Grants	\$208,394
Investment Net Income	\$642,139
Program Revenue	\$653,462
Additional Investment Funds to Operating	\$363,788

## Total Sources

**\$1,867,783**

## Uses



- Fundraising
- Administration
- Program

## Operating Uses:

Fundraising	\$28,332
Administration	\$256,446
Program	\$1,330,820

## Total Uses

**\$1,615,598**

2016 Excess

\$252,185

# Supporters

*Boscobel's ever-expanding programs are made possible by the donations of a wonderful group of individuals and organizations. To them we offer our sincere appreciation and deepest thanks!*

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