A Man for All Seasons

The Academy fetes its beloved president

Nick Van Alstine, who has served as president of the Spencertown Academy over the last decade—and in several other key capacities for even longer—was honored at a dinner on Saturday, October 6.

The "Nick Gala," held at the home of Jo-Anne and Richard Bilotti and catered by Dan Smith of John Andrews restaurant, was organized with a twofold purpose: to celebrate Nick’s accomplishments and continuing leadership on behalf of the Academy, and to raise funds for the ongoing restoration of the Academy building.

“As president, Nick has strategically thought through problems, mobilized tactical forces and done the actual work of fundraising and operations when needed,” says Nick Gala chair and Academy board member Jerry Croghan. “For the past 15 years, no job has been too big or too small for Nick—including guiding our successful transition to an all-volunteer organization.”

Attendees were given the opportunity to pledge donations to underwrite the cost of various structural elements in the Academy’s restoration, including windows, columns, fencing and pavers. To date, more than $450,000 has been raised toward the project’s $600,000 goal. Photographs on page 3.
Full Circle  It’s that time of year again

They say that time speeds up as you get older. There may be something in that. It couldn’t have been more than a month or two ago that 2017 was winding down and we were eagerly looking ahead to the holidays. Somehow, we blinked and summer was over. Now we’re deep into fall and the year will turn before we know it. To quote Yogi Berra, it’s déjà vu all over again.

What’s amazing is that the faster the years go by, the more we pack into them at the Academy. Once again, our signature events—Hidden Gardens, Revels and Festival of Books drew big crowds and rave reviews. And turnouts for our concerts and gallery shows were huge and enthusiastic.

But if I were pressed to single out one highlight of the year, it would have to be the progress we made on the restoration of our historic 1847 building—perhaps most visibly, the new roof and reconstruction of the bell tower, cornice and chimney. The work will continue over the winter with the restoration of the windows. Next comes painting, which is scheduled for the spring.

Meanwhile, the pace of activity inside the building shows no sign of slowing as we plan for another exciting year. Our all-volunteer committees are busy organizing concerts, gallery shows and programs for 2019. Revels will be here before we know it—a mid-winter moveable feast and early marker of spring. Then it’s on to Hidden Gardens again and the start of summer—and then the Festival of Books and Handmade Holidays…but let’s not get ahead of ourselves. This is a season to savor.

And, of course, it is a time for giving thanks. Your donations in past years have sustained and strengthened the Spencertown Academy, for which I am deeply grateful. As we look ahead to a new year, your help will be no less crucial as we continue to revitalize and expand our programming and serve our community. I hope you’ll again give generously when we launch our year-end appeal.

Meanwhile, my warmest wishes to you and yours for a happy, healthy and peaceful Thanksgiving and holiday season.

Revels 2019

Come in from the Cold! Revels Is Winter at Its Warmest

As you haul out your sweaters, scarves and snow boots from storage, consider this: There is actually an upside to winter. It’s called Revels—and it’s set for Saturday, January 26, 2019.

The Academy’s longest-running signature event, Revels is a great way to beat the winter blahs, enjoy a delicious dinner and support the Academy. And this year’s Revels will offer something new: an escape to the tropics.

As always, the festive evening will begin at the Academy at 5:30pm. Guests will be treated to sumptuous hors d’oeuvres, including Caribbean specialties, and a selection of fine wines and cocktails (festooned with paper umbrellas, of course). Then it’s off to one of the many elegant dinner parties hosted by friends of the Academy. “Revels has been a fixture of our winter calendar for over 30 years, and it keeps getting better and better,” says Academy board member and Revels co-chair Judith Choate. Adds co-chair Anita Fiorillo, “it’s a wonderful way to meet new friends and catch up with old ones over a great meal and support the Academy.”

Revels is made possible by the generosity of many people, including friends of the Academy who open their homes, benefactors and patrons who underwrite the cost of the event, and committee members and volunteers whose creativity and hard work bring it all together.

If you would like to host a dinner or have any questions about the event, email the Academy at info@spencertownacademy.org or call 518.392.3693. Tickets will go on sale soon. Meanwhile, mark your calendar for January 26
If you've been thinking about being an Academy volunteer, this is a perfect time to turn your thoughts into action! Handmade Holiday is around the corner and there are several ways you can get involved—as a shopping attendant, cashier, wrapper or stock organizer.

Of course, there are many other volunteer opportunities throughout the year at Academy events and gallery shows. Volunteering is rewarding, fun and a great way to connect with friends and neighbors. Plus there’s the satisfaction that comes from knowing you’re having a positive impact on your community. So please pitch in! We warmly welcome your ideas, your enthusiasm and your company. For more information, visit spencertownacademy.org, or email Ann Vartanian at volunteer@spencertownacademy.org.