

Presented at the Annual Business Meeting at Glen Magna Farms  
May, 25, 2016



**'Preserving Past Memories and Creating Future Memories', by Thomas M. Page**

I want to thank every one of you for allowing us to share this beautiful evening together at Glen Magna Farms amongst the grandeur of the McIntire Tea House and the floral displays of the Chamberlain Garden. This is your estate; this is your home.

Over a year ago, I received a call at my office at Salem State University from Mrs. Sheila Cooke-Kayser of the Danvers Historical Society. Little did I know she was about to take me on a 'magical mystery tour'! She had discovered an article I had written called 'The Quiet Reformer: Anne Lemist Page'.

I must tell you all, at the outset, Sheila is a quiet but very determined person. I spent considerable time with Sheila during the following week, going to Wellesley College to see the Ann Lemist Page Memorial Building on the Wellsely campus, meeting with other Trustees, and finally with Wayne Eisenhower, the President of the Danvers Historical Society. Sheila had a plan; she wanted to convince me, with all the ammunition at her disposal, of the several reasons why I should become a Trustee.

Well, here I am 1 year and 6 months later; President of the Danvers Historical Society. I resigned my faculty position at Salem State University and my position as Trustee of the Alumni Association. What made me make such a decision? Surely, I felt fulfilled in my capacity as a college Professor and mentor to so many young people in their preparation for life and career. Was I ready to give the time, energy, and money that I felt this position deserved to a group of people I hardly knew?

It was not an instantaneous decision; I dedicated six months to listening and observing at Trustee Meetings. Initially, I witnessed a great deal of frustration and anxiety. Why did some Trustees 'give up' while others remained undeterred? What was the reason for those who remained under less than desirable circumstances?

Over time, I made this conclusion; that those who remained were in possession of an intangible passion and determination. As a Marine Corps veteran, I am clearly aware of what people can accomplish under conditions that are motivated by passion and determination.

But these were not naïve people. How did they allow themselves to stay focused on their convictions when their stated goals and objectives were so indefinite; it was like being on an endless flow of ice. The answer was that these individuals found traction in their **cause**, a cause that motivated them individually. A cause that is both personal and unique; each viewing it through a rare and solitary lens.

Their cause, their principle or ideal, was directed toward the concern for loss. They intuitively understood that a society that abandons its history, in a sense, loses itself. A society that abandons its culture and traditions is tantamount to losing one's freedom. In part, what we fear the most is the abandonment of our individual and collective memories. **The loss of our past is the loss of our future.**

So those of us who remain, remain for you, our town, our community, our region and ultimately to the nation as a whole. Our generational stories, yours and mine, constitute a microcosm of the story of America.

**So this is my purpose and this is my goal: Preserving past memories and creating future memories.**

Tonight I am asking you to join with me and my fellow Trustees and our Staff in our cause. Make this your cause. Make this personal and unique. For example:

**#1. For Youth**

One of the wonderful experiences you have made possible by your contribution to the Danvers Historical Society's Sustaining Fund is the creation of future memories for Brayden Tardiello.

As Matthew Martin, our Certified Arborist and Buildings & Grounds Restoration Manager states so elegantly:

"When a child plants a piece of nature into the ground, it becomes a lesson learned that can be applied to any aspect in life: that everything we do in life should have meaning and value; nature is a wonderful classroom, learning how things grow and using one's hands in its formation is an incredible experience. For me, it is amazing to watch a child, in that moment of pride, when they realize they have created something of value and that what they have accomplished matters!"

**Join with me and make this your cause.**

**#2. For Youth**

The Danvers Historical Society's Horticulture and Landscape Intern Program at Glen Magna Farms is now in its ninth year of serving youth with learning disabilities.

"Come Grow With Us" is a new program originated by Matthew Martin and Cathy Gareri, our Business Manager. It is a program titled : "Cultivating Unique Horticultural Opportunities for Youth With Disabilities".

What is needed at this time is a safe year round indoor space to enrich and expand this program. We are seeking to restore the Lord and Burnham 1930's greenhouse to include classroom space, a hands-on work space, and a retail space to sell the products the students will grow.

The project includes replacing the glass roof system, heating, ventilation, water and electrical systems, rebuilding work benches, potting stations and exterior clapboards.

This program is currently recognized by People's United Bank who recently awarded \$10,000 in start-up funding . Several thousands more is needed.

**Join with me and make this your cause.**

### #3. For Adults

Join our newly launched 'Legacy Society'. Our goal in this effort is to provide our loyal members and those passionate about the preservation and education of Danvers history an opportunity to make a meaningful commitment through their estate plans. By letting us know your intentions now, we are able to acknowledge and appreciate your generosity today, as well as prepare for the gift in the future.

Our new Trustee, Mr. Mike Randall, Director of Major Plan Giving at Salem State University has agreed to serve and dedicate his primary efforts to our Legacy Society. We will be happy to share more details as they become available.

**Join with me and make this your cause.**

### #4. For Adults

'Keeping the Memories Alive' is an initiative of the Danvers Historical Society that preserves your own Danvers memories through the gathering and sharing of personal stories and pictures of Danvers life for the purpose of sharing with present and future generations.

Recently I posed the question: What would happen if the stories of our historical heritage were lost?

Well, I did not have to wait very long. Jim Russell, Maryann Kowalski, Eleanor Ross, Carl Crossman, and Susan Ortins joined with me. This is a composite of what was expressed:

*'Since my childhood, I have found many things have changed over time. As I tell my children and grandchildren about places I've been and things I've done as a child, I realize it is so different from what they do now. It is hard for them to envision what I experienced. I believe it is important to pass on memories and stories. I enjoy listening to our residents talk about places, and things that they did when they were young. I can relate to a lot of their stories, but it is harder for younger generations because they never saw what we saw.'*

**Join with me and make this your cause.**

In summary, 'Join with me' means making these projects and programs part of our common awareness, your volunteered time, & yes, your financial support. There are many activities happening within your Society. I have mentioned just a few. Your time is needed for them to move forward. Your funding will help sustain them.

**Please join with me to preserve past memories and create future memories.**