

# Claymont Society

FOR CONTINUOUS EDUCATION



## ***CSCE Chair's Annual Letter*** ***2018***

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Greetings, Members and Friends of the Claymont Society. I feel blessed to be able to write to you again about good and interesting things that are happening here this past year.

With the help of our dedicated Staff, Residents, and Volunteers Claymont continues to make itself closer to the original vision of our founders, particularly Mr. Bennett's vision, of a diverse community that is sustainably devoted to Continuous Education and dedicated to Fourth Way principles.

### ***The Seminar Business***

2018 has seen the Seminar Business continue its robust booking schedule, with roughly the same number of clients as last year. Year-end income may prove down a little from 2017 as some of the larger bookings have been replaced by smaller ones. Hiring of non-residential staff for the Business has continued, and brought the added benefit of greater familiarity between Claymont and the community around us. It turns out that Claymont is a pretty good place to work.

### ***The Barn***

There have been several improvements at the Barn this year, including some big improvements.

- The Movements floor in the Octagon has been replaced with high-end finish plywood and sealant at a cost of just over \$14,000. This was accomplished in partnership with long-time client Contact Jam, who contributed funds and hours of volunteer time.



*New Octagon Floor ready for Meditation Group*



*Driveway in progress*

- A new keyhole driveway has been added from Huyett road to the glass foyer doors in the center of the building. This will give improved client access and bring us into compliance with handicapped access regulations. I think it will also enhance appreciation and acceptance by the larger community. It looks good, and sends the message “We Are Open. A new sign will be installed, signifying that a functioning Seminar and Retreat Business is in operation.
- The women’s bathroom off the second floor Commons has been remodeled, with the men’s bathroom on the ground floor next on the docket.

- Doors on the barn have been upgraded to bring us into compliance with modern safety regulation and security practices.

## *The Mansion*

The big item this year was the restoration of the North Portico. Never having had rain gutters, water had, of course, migrated back up under the eaves and created lots of rot. Now it has all been repaired, including some leaks in the roof. Columns and railings are refurbished and soon there will be new landscaping around the base of the steps. The initial matching grant was provided by WV State Historic Preservation Office. Costs exceeded our initial estimates; however we were fortunate to receive additional matching funds from SHPO to complete the project.



I want to take a moment and thank the two Course Alumni who each donated \$1,000.00 to the Portico restoration, and to our friend from Seattle for her generous donation of \$1,200.00. I also want to thank the Anonymous \$5,000 donor. There were many smaller donations, and it is heartwarming to know that the Mansion is loved by so many. Total donations were in excess of \$13,500, most of our 50% share of the \$29,400 total cost. ***Thank you all!***

We are working through, as we are able, all the major repairs the Mansion requires. For example, a pipe that had been capped off at some point in the past but left pressurized in the wall rusted out, causing water damage along a chimney and some plaster ceiling collapse in the ballroom. All has been repaired, but I am coming to understand just how much the Mansion is capable of causing surprises. In the continuing restoration cycle, there are three leaks in the Mansion roof that demand attention, with plans to apply again for a SHPO restoration grant in March to help repair and restore the damage caused by the water leaking in. Look for funding requests next spring if we are successful in receiving an additional restoration grant!

The beautiful, historic Mansion will, no doubt, continue to be a source of surprises. And, therefore, will continue to require investment. We're also looking at repairing and restoring some of the outbuildings and the pavilion over by the old greenhouse.

Financial help is always appreciated! We are looking to establish a dedicated fund, perhaps a formal endowment, to support ongoing restoration and maintenance efforts. If you're interested, please contact me, [curtis.ewing@earthlink.net](mailto:curtis.ewing@earthlink.net) or Amy Silver, [executivedirector@claymont.org](mailto:executivedirector@claymont.org)

We are hosting more open houses this year for the community. Feedback has been positive. We'll continue to open the Mansion for the community to tour. Good relations with our neighbors are always good for enhancing safety and acceptance.

## *The Land: Permaculture!*



The decision a year ago to adopt the Principles of Permaculture as a land management strategy for Claymont has started to manifest results in a wonderful way!

New residents Emily and Sam have brought huge amounts of energy and modern media outreach skill to start the Initiative.

Several weekend events have already happened bringing dozens of new participants to Claymont. As described by Emily:

- **Permablitz** in April - cleared out the bamboo grove and built a meditation space inside - 35 volunteers attended.
- **Renewal Weekend in July** - focused on introduction to permaculture and responsible land stewardship - 30 people attended, with another 30 or so for the concert - joined by 5 other partner organizations working in the environmental space.
- **Renewal Weekend in August** - focused on social permaculture and healthy community - 45 people attended, with another 20 or so for the concert - joined by 5 other partner organizations working in the community development / organizing space.
- **Upcoming:** Permablitz will be planting an edible food forest to preserve the riparian buffer zone along the Bullskin Run - anticipating 40+ volunteers to join. And this from Kit McGinnis, long-time member of Claymont: There will be two weekend events: on October 27th we'll be planting nearly 500 trees, later in November we'll plant another 400 for a total of 900 - with a mix of

native fruit and nut trees and other trees that do well in wetland areas, such as sycamore and black walnut. It's a huge project, so please invite whomever you think might be interested. We'll need everyone we can get!!

Funding for trees and other plants was provided by WV Division of Forestry for the Chesapeake Watershed. Thanks to these good folks, and, to Kit for putting it all together.

Donations to support the Permaculture Initiative are greatly appreciated. Tools and supplies, including plant stock, is always needed. Additionally, Permaculture Initiative events are offered at barebones cost to participants to encourage attendance by people from across the economic spectrum. Donations can be made to support specific events to help offset costs of bringing in speakers and musicians. It is my hope that we will soon establish an Endowment to support the Permaculture Initiative to purchase supplies and provide positions for Residential Interns.

The Initiative has been successful attracting new people to Claymont, especially young people, many of whom expressed interest in learning more about the Fourth Way. A working group (tentatively calling itself the EcoSpiritual Task Force!) has been established to explore congruencies between Fourth Way ideas and Permaculture Principles and, when possible, include these ideas and exercises during Permaculture events.

You can find out more about the Permaculture Initiative on our facebook page ***permaculture center at claymont*** or on our website events page: ***society.claymont.org/events***

### ***Curriculum***

The International Movements Group, which alternates its 10-day retreats between Claymont and the island of Corfu, held its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary retreat this year in Corfu. Next summer it will be back at Claymont, and is open to people with some Movement experience or the permission of the instructors. Do come, as there is always room for another row.

Monthly Movements classes continue to be offered, and all skill and experience levels are welcome. Claymont also supports an ongoing Fourth Way weekly study group and we are continuing to hold regular work weekends and work days. Check the calendar on the website at ***society.claymont.org*** for more information. If you are interested in presenting the theme and/or leading one of these please contact ***Amy Silver*** to put a proposal before the Event Planning Committee.

### ***The Library***

The Library at Claymont is slowly growing. Fourth Way books, particularly by Mr. B., are making their way onto the shelves outside the Barn office, in the Commons room, and in the Library

Room at the Mansion. All donations of all books on Spirituality are welcome, and now books on Permaculture are welcomed, too.

## *The Website*

The Society Website ***society.claymont.org*** has been revamped and updated. And of course, it will continue to evolve and change.

## *In Conclusion*

So, that's the news, or a lot of it, anyway. As always, Claymont is looking for volunteers and donors. We have many special projects, including beautification of the grounds, where we could use help, financial and otherwise. All donors' intentions will be honored. You may click on the donate button below or contact myself, ***curtis.ewing@earthlink.net*** or Amy Silver, ***executivedirector@claymont.org*** if you're in a position to help. Again, my thanks to everyone who donated this year.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the One Heart One Mind Interpretive Center folks who have their center in the old Dairy Barn. They've done great work in repairing the Gatehouse foundation and utilities. But more importantly, they're always around helping to shovel walks and cut up downed trees.

Finally, I want to thank the larger Claymont community. Without the enormous effort made by dozens of people in the past forty years we would, no doubt, have lost this sanctuary years ago.

And thank you all for your continued support.

Many blessings on you and yours, and on us all.

Curtis Ewing  
Chair and President, CSCE

Oh, and Claymont has a new tractor, armed with a front-end loader and mower deck, a brush hog, an augur, and a box grader. Watch out jungle overgrowth, rotten fence posts, and potholes!

**DONATE**

*Claymont Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization  
All donations are tax deductible*

**CSCE Annual General Meeting with Workday  
November 3rd-4th**

The Claymont Society Annual General Meeting (AGM) is

scheduled for Sunday, November 4, 2018 beginning at 9:30 am. The AGM will be held at the Mansion.

In addition, there will be a work day including a movements class on Saturday, November 3rd (more details to follow).

You are encouraged to come to the AGM to find out what has been happening at Claymont over the past year and provide your input on the focus, direction, activities and endeavors for the future.

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*Note from the editor:* Your ideas and feedback are always welcome! We would love to hear from you. To contribute to the newsletter, please send pictures, Claymont articles, or community announcements to: [claymontoffice@claymont.org](mailto:claymontoffice@claymont.org)