

Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, Inc.
Annual Meeting Minutes 5 January 2025

The Meeting was called to order by President Christoph O'Donnell at 2:05 pm.

President O'Donnell thanked Orchard House Executive Director Jan Turnquist, the Orchard House staff, and the many volunteers for a "tremendous" year at Orchard House. He applauded Jan's steadfast and tireless devotion, the excellence and hard work of the staff, and the generosity of time and energy by the volunteers.

The 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes were read by Secretary Anna Winter Rasmussen.

A motion to approve the Minutes was then made, seconded, and unanimously passed.

The Slate of Board Officers and Board Members for 2025 was read:

<i>President</i>	Christoph T. O'Donnell
<i>Vice President</i>	Robert A. O'Neil, Jr.
<i>Secretary</i>	Anna Winter Rasmussen
<i>Treasurer</i>	Lowell S. Smith

Board Members John Brady, Charles & Gloria Clough, Kim Erskine, Denise Haartz, Elizabeth Neeley Kubacki, John Matteson, Marylou Muirhead, P. Eric Robb, and Ann Webster

*A motion to elect/re-elect the Slate of Officers and Board Members
was made, seconded, and unanimously passed.*

The Slate of Corporators was presented in written form, with the following new Corporators nominated:

- Robert & Ann Gross
- Christine G. Price
- Jonathan Ressler

There being no objections or additions from Annual Meeting attendees, a motion to elect/re-elect the Slate of Corporators was made, seconded, and unanimously passed.

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Treasurer Sandy Smith delivered a Financial YTD Report for 2024:

- The market value of our invested funds serving as Endowment stands at \$1.7 million, which is up by \$100,000.00 from 2023.
- Look-back investment returns for the past five years have been as follows: ('24) 12.4%, ('23) 14.4%, ('22) -13 1/4%, ('21) 15%, and ('20) 14.4%.
- The 5-year annualized return was positive at 7.6%, but it shows that “one bad year” for equity and fixed income markets, having negative returns as they did in 2022, can significantly affect long-term compound returns.
- A member of the Investment Committee gifted 200 shares of Ford Motor stock, and Sandy thanked that Committee member for their thoughtful generosity.
- Regarding Operations: Sandy stated that the signs for Orchard House are positive: YTD (as of Nov), paid admissions were up 2.8%. Orchard House welcomed 43,649 visitors for an increase of 1,200 visitors over 2023 numbers. Our two largest sources of revenue, Admissions and Museum Store sales, already exceeded the budgeted goal for the year. The Annual Appeal, our third largest source of revenue, is on target to also exceed our budgeted goal for the year – underscoring our expectations for a positive net income to close out 2024.
- Sandy suggested Jan and her staff rest up as the upcoming events for 2025's 250th Anniversary of April 19, 1775 will increase visitation to Concord and to Orchard House.
- Sandy expressed special thanks to all the Investment Committee members for devoting their time, dedication, and expertise over the past year, and all the years prior, to securing and growing the financial stability of Orchard House.

Executive Director Jan Turnquist delivered her Director's Remarks:

In Memoriam

Jan honored the following Corporators and past Board Members whose lives touched Orchard House over many years: Micheal W. Wilson, Elizabeth H. (“Libby”) Wilson, Nancy Lu Kohl, Mary B. Johnson, and (the longest standing employee) Elizabeth G. (“Betty”) Damon. Jan also honored Frederck Alcott (“Pat”) Pratt, stating that Pat was a descendent of Anna Alcott (“Meg” in *Little Women*). Pat was a Corporator, a Board Member, Investment Committee member, and a financial supporter. His passion, wisdom, and knowledge of all things Alcott was invaluable, and the love of nature he shared with Bronson Alcott was an inspiration. Jan recited the poem “The Chickadee” in memory of Pat.

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Director's Report

- Jan remarked that Orchard House is about the legacies of lives past that uplift the present and the future.
- “That is what Orchard House is all about,” she added. “The Alcotts were about hope and uplift, and Maria Powers’ hard work, each and every day, keeps this message strong, as *hope and uplift* reflect the very heart of Orchard House.”
- Jan offered a round of thanks to the Board, Investment Committee, and staff. She mentioned the tireless devotion and hard work of Facilities Manager Jay Powers and Education Director Lis Adams, landscape volunteers - including certified Massachusetts Master Gardener John Althouse, Lorriane Mastropieri (who tends the entrance and front door gardens), and Susan Ellsworth and Ellen Whitney (who care for the *Little Women* Garden and are also neighbors). Jan remarked: “The grounds have never looked better.”
- Orchard House remains the #1 Most Visited Site (in Concord) on TripAdvisor (Top 10% globally).
- Positive comments recounting the visitor experience include: “We love the house, the family, and the story.” The site is “alive” and brings “joy” -- and Jan noted: “That is why we exist. This is why preservation of the actual home is so critical. Recent preservation and restoration work has gone into the Art Studio, Nursery, and various original windows. Street drainage running into the [East] yard still remains an issue to be resolved with the Town.”
- Jan reported that important collaborations continue with colleges and universities, public and private schools, and writers’ workshops. She added that international collaborations are our “hidden gems.” With the help of Kiko and John Mills, the *Wakakusa Monogatari (Little Women) Club* has attained the necessary status in Japan to raise money directly for Orchard House, and Jan is so grateful for their passion and partnership.

Video (for view at OH throughout the year) was presented

Jan Turnquist Video Interview of Historian Robert A. (“Bob”) Gross – New Corporator, Professor Emeritus of the University of Connecticut, and author of The Minutemen and Their World (2022, 2nd ed., Macmillan, 1976)

Jan opened the video making mention that the first two rooms (top and bottom) of Orchard House date to the mid-1600s. The home was owned by and descended through the Hoar/e family for generations. On April 19th, 1775, it was a “Witness House” to the march on Concord by the British troops. Bob Gross described the history of the

house as located on 100 acres of farmland (double the size of the average farm in the area). They grew corn, rye, and oats and raised cattle and sheep. He recounted the military history of the Hoar family, which included Timothy Hoar Sr. and Timothy Hoar Jr. (58 years of age and 16 years of age respectively on April 19th, 1775). Timothy Sr. heeded the call at the North Bridge that day, and Timothy Jr. would later serve with George Washington's Continental Army.

Bob then described the complexities involved in the final decision of the Hoares to take up arms against the mother country. He described the Hoare family as "opposed to radicalism" and being more inclined to embrace a "moderate" position -- like other prominent Concordians of the day. He said: "They didn't support actions of the mobs, such as tarring and feathering antics, but they weren't keen on what Britian was doing. Like many moderates, the Hoares preferred to work within the system, legally and constitutionally, but when the system proved unresponsive, failed to provide fair representation, positioned the colonists as second class citizens, and marched armed troops on Concord on April 19th, - the choice was to side with the King or your neighbors - and resist. The Hoare family chose to resist." Bob and Jan agreed and stated that standing up against injustice and inequality is never easy and is often complex and costly; it calls for bravery and, as history shows, the inhabitants of the same home - the Hoares and the Alcotts - shared very similar qualities of both courage and resolve.

After the conclusion of the video presentation, President O'Donnell adjourned the meeting at 2:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Winter Rasmussen, Secretary
Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, Inc.