

# Old Schwamb Mill · Works in Progress · Spring 2026

17 Mill Lane Arlington, Massachusetts 02476 781-643-0554 [www.oldschwambmill.org](http://www.oldschwambmill.org)

## The Old Schwamb Mill in 2036

The directors of the Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust, Inc., have organized a retreat for the afternoon of June 7. Over three hours, the directors will consider three broad topics relevant to the Mill over the next five to ten years: people, financial resources, and programming. Where there is agreement on broad goals, detailed steps toward accomplishing them will follow. The board is thankful to **Doreen and Al Stevens** for opening their home for this meeting.

The Mill last underwent a serious examination of priorities in 2001 following the passing of founding trustee **Patricia Fitzmaurice**. This resulted in regular open hours of Tuesday and Saturday, a paid consultant to manage programming and give tours, and rotating art exhibits in the former offices of the second floor. An annual newsletter was instituted.

A quarter-century later, it is time for another look at this unique living-history museum. With the creation of the Richard A. Duffy Fund, the Mill's first endowment fund, directors have a new reason to look at operational costs and to balance these with the need to grow the fund through investment. Many of the Mill's signature events like Oktoberfest, the Holiday Craft Fair, and the annual frame lecture are well established. Preservation of the Mill's structure is up to date. How can current work be sustained, and what should come next?

Like most cultural institutions, the Mill seeks to involve younger people and prepare them to understand and eventually help to run this 501(c)(3). "People" also includes our audiences: are we reaching people of every interest to which the Mill is relevant? As noted in our appeal letter, finances are always a focus of the board; however, the retreat offers an opportunity to brainstorm new sources of income, including additional sources of grant funding and ways to devote more funds to serve the Mill's public. The Mill's programs are varied and well advertised, but there is always room for improvement. Is there enough educational outreach and hands-on involvement in learning about the Mill? Are the Mill's offerings varied enough?

Input from the Mill's supporters – the Friends of the Mill – is always welcome. Simply email us at [info@oldschwambmill.org](mailto:info@oldschwambmill.org).



(top to bottom) CPA-funded restoration of Mill's exterior envelope, Oktoberfest crowds on Mill Lane, gallery talk by photographer Lou Jones.

## Volunteers – Young and Old – Are Making a Difference

Museum Manager **Kayla Graffam** is completing her master's thesis in history at University of Massachusetts Boston this year. She is also Assistant Manager of Visitor Services at Lexington Historical Society. As a current student and museum professional, Kayla has fostered connections with the next generation of historians. At Kayla's suggestion, the history faculty from UMass Boston held their end-of-semester meeting at the Mill, a first visit for nearly all of them.

Kayla has also enlisted peers to volunteer time at the Mill. **Ryan Robinson**, a history student in his third year at UMass Boston, gives tours at the Mill on Saturday. He is exploring a plan to fabricate woodworking tools as part of a future exhibit at the Mill. The Mill is also developing an internship with another history graduate to research the lives of several workers from the Mill. The research will result in a lecture or mini-exhibit.

Younger volunteers bring new approaches to historical studies, along with a strong sense of social media culture and new technologies. Their work is opening doors to a new generation of history lovers and museum visitors.

## Technology and Outreach

Keeping up with technology and social media can be a "when we get around to it" task at local museums. This spring we've made some overdue improvements:

- Creating and regularly posting to the Mill's **Instagram** account **@oldschwambmill**
- Updating the Mill's website for ease of use and readability **www.oldschwambmill.org**
- Adding **Venmo** as a donation option both online and onsite at the Mill
- Placing a screen with events and exhibit images in the visitor area.

The Mill's Instagram posts (mirrored on Facebook) are lots of fun – be sure to follow us.

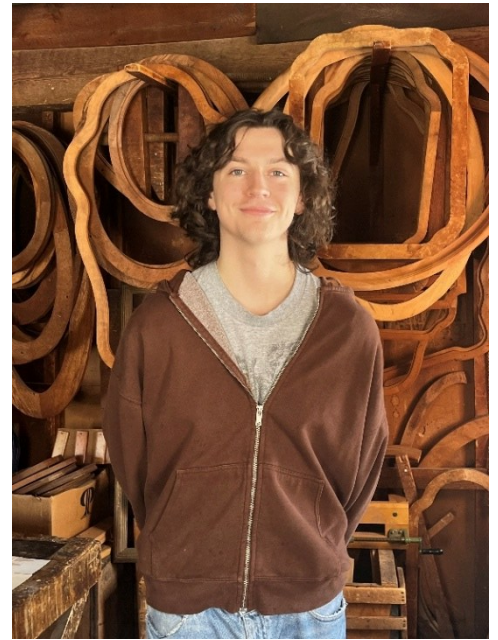
## The Benefits of NARM – The North American Reciprocal Museum Association!

The Old Schwamb Mill joined the **North American Reciprocal Museum Association** in 2023. Since then **139 Friends of the Mill** have upped their donations to Sponsor level (\$100 or more) and gained access to the benefits of the Mill's NARM membership. When people sign up through a participating NARM institution, they can receive reciprocal membership benefits at over 1500 museums.

Free admission is available at some notable museums such as **the Addison Gallery of American Art** in Andover, **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum** in Boston, and the **Peabody Essex Museum** in Salem. But the NARM museums also include Massachusetts gems such as **Gore Place** in Waltham, **Discovery Museum** in Acton, and the **New Bedford Whaling Museum**.

Please consider taking advantage of the Mill's joining NARM with a donation of \$100.00 or more.

***You can contribute as a Friend of the Mill securely online at [www.oldschwambmill.org](http://www.oldschwambmill.org)***



**UMass history student and Mill volunteer Ryan Robinson**



**Scan this QR code to donate as a Friend of the Mill today!**