

# Gustavus Historical Archives & Antiquities

## Preserving the History of Gustavus, Alaska

City of Gustavus Grant Administrator  
P.O. Box 389  
Gustavus, AK 99826

October 2, 2024

Re: Endowment Fund Grant Period 2024/2025

Please find attached:

1. GHAA Endowment Grant Application
2. "GHAA Accomplishments of Note" on a separate document
3. Support letter from Kevin Clement

Kevin Clement lived in Glacier Bay National Park and is owner/tour operator with Apex Expeditions. He organizes world traveling groups and has his ear to the ground of what participants want & expect in their destination travels

4. Support letter from Kris Nemeth

Kris and Dave Nemeth are long time Gustavus residents, have raised their family here, love the preservation of history and the Strawberry Point homesteading stories, and are both retired Glacier Bay National Park employees.

5. Support letter from JoAnn Lesh

JoAnn and Dave Lesh have been part of a family legacy here since the 1960's and have been affiliated with running the family business, the Gustavus Inn, since 1965. They have a keen sense for what the independent tourist looks for to peak their interest when choosing destination vacations.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Parker



GHAA  
PO Box 14  
Gustavus, Alaska 99826

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# City of Gustavus

## 2024 Endowment Fund Application

Gustavus Historical Archives & Antiquities (GHAA)

### **I. 2021 Endowment Grant History**

GHAA applied for a City of Gustavus Endowment Grant for this same project in 2021 and was granted only part of the requested funds due to other grant requests being made at the same time. With those funds from the City of Gustavus grant, GHAA was able to purchase the materials for the foundation and the complete framing package and hire Gustavus Construction to complete the foundation. To supplement the grant money, GHAA also used donations from (1) Glacier Bay Construction for all the site prep and the purchase and installation of a new submersible well and (2) Frontier Freight for shipping and handling of all the materials from Juneau. That work was completed in 2022. Now with the foundation in place and the framing materials onsite, we are ready to complete the project if we are fortunate enough to receive this year's grant request.

### **II-a. Two Phases to Occupation**

The completion of the project will be done in two phases: (1) framing, dry-in, windows and doors, roofing of the building and (2) the completion of the interior elements with insulation, electric, plumbing, appliances, lighting and interior walls. The division of work in these two phases exactly tracks the source of funds of the two phases. The first phase is thanks to the funds from the City of Gustavus grant that this application is requesting. The second phase will come from the funds and labor of donors and supporters who have made the commitment to complete the project to the point of move-in and occupation of the new museum addition by GHAA.

### **II-b. Project Summary**

Total amount requested by GHAA from the City of Gustavus grant: \$40,295.

Approximate additional amount from GHAA, directors, donors and fund-raising toward materials for volunteers to install prior to occupation: \$9,928

The requested funds along with GHAA's contribution will be used to more than double the size of the Strawberry Point History Museum. This doubling in size facilitates the

building of a 30' by 33' simple structure expanding straight out the back of the existing 30' by 30' operating museum. With additional floor space, GHAA will have the ability to add significant artifacts to its already packed (over 1000 artifacts currently displayed) exhibits that will in turn, magnify, enhance and preserve the tangible stories of our earliest homesteaders — all narrowly defined within the 1914-1959 pre-statehood years.

In addition to important exhibits, the expansion will provide room for the following; (1) a large exit door for transport in & out of over-sized artifact items that currently requires the front window to be removed, (2) add a very important 14' by 20' theater room with approximately 24 chairs to present an on demand, audio-video Strawberry Point presentation to museum visitors, while also providing a quiet, dry space for live presentations to scheduled travel groups—with stories, original music, and Q&A preceding their museum tour (currently we set up chairs on the front porch in all kinds of weather and compete with loud traffic noise), (3) allow for a small storage area for cleaning supplies, a table for artifact processing, cleaning & repairs, etc., (4) and finally, a gallery wall of enlarged photos carefully chosen to transport visitors back in time. Anybody who has visited the museum can attest to the fact that it is seriously cramped for space, and that GHAA has made use of every available inch. We would do the same within the walls of the new addition, utilizing as many materials gleaned from the old homesteads as possible — in keeping with our present re-imagined authentic use of original windows, doors, floors, & exhibit buildout walls.

## **II. Brief Overview of Organization**

**Type of Organization:** 501c3 Non-Profit Corporation, formed in 2005, incorporated on June 16, 2006. Tax ID: 20-5090234. In good standing with the State of Alaska (Entity #101918). Lee Parker, Director.

**Contact Information:** P.O. Box 14, Gustavus, Alaska 99826. Linda Parker 907-209-2673. Web page [www.GustavusHistory.Org](http://www.GustavusHistory.Org). Principal contact: Lee Parker, Director, 907-209-2674. Email [LeeParker@GustavusHistory.Org](mailto:LeeParker@GustavusHistory.Org) with a copy to [leeparker@shipfrontier.com](mailto:leeparker@shipfrontier.com).

### **Key Personnel & Team Members Qualifications:**

Lee Parker, as Director, has many years of proven, relevant experience. Please see attached sheet outlining “GHAA Accomplishments of Note”. From visionary to follow-thru, and working with our GHAA volunteers and partners, GHAA has accomplished every

project they have set out to do—including the design and construction of the monument building at the cemetery. Lee Parker has 50 plus years of experience in private real estate building & remodeling, and as owner of numerous businesses has demonstrated the skills required to keep projects on budget, interface with contractors, and provide organizational and leadership talents to see a job to successful completion.

Linda Parker has received training from the State of Alaska in the preservation of historic artifacts and documents. She has been instrumental in bringing the concept of a museum from beginning to fruition. She has supervised volunteers and overseen the construction of the buildout of the present museum, from collecting artifacts from nearly every original homestead family, qualifying & preparing artifacts, artistic display, utilization of space & exhibit design, and providing the relevant stories.

Gustavus Construction is a local construction company with many happy residents as consumers and with community added value of being friends and neighbors to all. They have already completed the necessary site prep and foundation work and have committed to seeing the job as defined to its finish. They particularly enjoy projects that contribute to the community richness that Gustavus (and its visitors) have historically enjoyed.

Leonard Best is the “in charge handyman of all handyman’s” and has committed to volunteering his services, to oversee other volunteers, to finish interior, and exterior paint jobs as he has done so skillfully in the past.

The entire GHAA team, from Director to volunteers and contractors, have demonstrated more than enough abilities and proficiencies to successfully manage and complete this project from beginning to end. GHAA has always existed to contribute to the Gustavus community and provide value-added experiences to both our residents and tourists alike.

## **IV Project Description**

**Problem Statement:** In one word...SPACE! GHAA is very thankful for the existing 30’ by 30’ space that is Gustavus’s very first and only historic museum. Many of our earliest homesteaders brought with them household artifacts that were already vintage at the time. Some items date to the mid to late 1800s. In addition, most of them were resourceful and innovative and designed and hand-made many of their necessities and contraptions. And given our remote location, and since they just never knew when something broken or no longer needed could be repurposed, they *never* threw anything away—though much as been rescued on the brink of crumbling deterioration. GHAA has been methodical and diligent in editing and salvaging the best and most unique artifacts for preservation of Strawberry

Point/Gustavus history for antiquity. We have precisely determined that a construction addition of 30 more feet (doubling the existing building) will be sufficient in housing the best of the artifacts and telling the stories to paint a colorful and complete picture of early pioneering in Alaska—right here at Strawberry Point. We have been told by world traveling visitors to our museum, that they hold our little museum as one of the best they have seen. Not that we are the Smithsonian, but that we capture the life and times in a significant way. We want to do more of that! With the space we request, we can provide this community with a completed jewel that will stand the test of time.

**Community Benefit:** Museums play a crucial role in preserving local culture. With careful documentation and artifact preservation, a culture (in this case the homesteading years of 1914-1959 Statehood) is recorded, remembered, shared, and understood. The Strawberry Point History Museum documents daily life and the ingenuity and perseverance that played such an important role in adaptation and survival of the remote territorial years in Alaska. Our historic museum educates and connects our tourists, families & children with our homesteading heritage, preventing cultural loss that otherwise would take place over time. Without museum space, the alternative would be for some of these important artifacts to have no place, shielded from public view and perhaps eventually lost. From responses to the museum so far, many of our citizens are very thankful and encouraging of this ongoing community commitment. Local innkeepers, lodges, tour shuttles and taxis report positive value that the displaying of these stories and artifacts bring to our community. Again, we want to be able to complete the museum, to tell the whole story, and offer the best possible product, preserved for future generations.

**Link to City's Goals:** The City of Gustavus does not currently have an operational plan (or even stated goal) for the preservation of important historic documents, artifacts, and stories. From the beginning, GHAA has strived to fill that community void and has spent years collecting, storing, documenting, authenticating, archiving, and recording stories from the residents and descendants of homesteading families now scattered all over the country. The Strawberry Point Museum, with the current room available, has been GHAA's attempt, to date, to bring it all together for an informative and enjoyable experience for all. And now with the possibility of telling the comprehensive story with the remainder of the artifacts and exhibit displays (some quite large with written documentation in the history books) and having a media/video room designated for a Strawberry Point documentary and presentations...well, we are thankful to even be considered for this opportunity. The real winner, if GHAA is awarded this grant (to double our size & capabilities) will be the community of Gustavus, as the GHAA team are all volunteers committed these last 19 years (and thousands of hours) to this labor of love.

**Concluding Statement:** The Strawberry Point History Museum had its successful soft opening in 2021. Over 600 people have been able to see and learn of our homesteading beginnings and have been enriched to be transported back in time, experiencing our one-of-

a-kind colorful past. But there are many more artifacts and exhibits lacking only the needed space to have their stories preserved immemorial. There are only a handful of contributors left (due to advancing age and health) that have a thorough grasp on what artifacts belonged to who, where they are stored, how they were used and where they are yet to be gathered — individuals spread around the country who can yet shine light on important historic facts.

At the point of time that these artifacts are identified and displayed in the museum exhibits, they are preserved for future generations of Gustavians and for all future sojourners and visitors. Once the museum is complete, friends of history can easily carry on for years to come with the volume of work that has been handed over to them. But the bulk of the setting up, identification and use of all the original materials to build out and plan exhibits effectively, the preservation of items now in precarious storage situations, and the authentic telling of the stories in a documentary form (and a space to view it—like Skagway’s film/video room) *must* be done while there are still people with the unique abilities and the dedicated heart and passion to do so.

With thousands of early photos, original recorded music, actual voices of our homesteaders, and their own written stories, a video-on-demand presentation would provide an incredibly entertaining snapshot of what it was like to live at Strawberry Point over 107 years ago. But first, GHAA will need the space to accomplish that goal. In addition to all the other benefits as outlined throughout this grant request, a physical space to meet and present for scheduled travel group visits, is key. Currently we have had to host these groups with chairs set up on the front porch, with some standing outside—wet conditions, competing with the noise of traffic and all.

GHAA believes (and not without experience and merit), that we have demonstrated ability, talent, and particular skills to see this project, as requested, to completion. And all to the benefit and enrichment of our beloved Strawberry Point/Gustavus. Without this funding assistance, this project cannot be undertaken. For years, GHAA has endeavored to accomplish its stated goals of collecting and preserving Strawberry Point and Gustavus history as a sacred trust for the entire community. And for years we have accomplished much on a shoestring budget by a troop of volunteers who believe that our mission is vital. We have also been blessed with a few small grants that have boosted our efforts along the way. In short, GHAA has a long record of being of benefit and a go-to resource to this community, successfully completing every project it has undertaken.

**Another Important Benefit:** Parts of the current building needs repair. The back wall is failing, weather-warped and leaking. Part of the existing roof needs replacement/repair. This project would entirely fix the back wall problem as it would be eliminated in the expansion. By replacing the existing roof at the same time to match the new construction roof metal, would save time and costs when accomplished all at once. Thus, the timing of this project as requested would overlap and solve additional important needs at the same time.

## V. Project Goals and Objectives

**Schedule:** The exact start date will be driven by Gustavus Construction with their best wisdom and expertise. Weather and coordination with other projects (as is normal with contractors who juggle contract jobs), etc. will/can all determine the onset of this project. However, the hard goal is to have the project completed (dried in, siding & roof, window & door) no later than the end of November 2025.

**Milestone 1:** Immediately upon award of City of Gustavus grant, the GHAA Director will sign the contract with Gustavus Construction, agree on the general startup and completion as outlined above, and order material packages necessary to complete the project.

As in all construction projects, it is necessary (imperative in remote locations) to keep constant contact with the various material vendors to ensure the materials list and shipping are moving along in a timely manner. This is a fluid process. The GHAA director has many years of experience coordinating and working with contractors, manifests, vendors and shipping, and will work with the flexibility required. If there are delays for unforeseen reasons, he will work with the contractor and/or vendors to resolve issues quickly, securing outside help to get back on track if necessary.

**Milestone 2:** The GHAA director together with Gustavus Construction confirm that all materials needed for the framing package are stored on site in the covered veranda and are ready for project startup. The roofing package, windows & door will arrive in a timely manner to coordinate with the construction timeline. Although we anticipate a project startup in the spring, because of some other large projects that Gustavus Construction will be finishing, we hope that an August 1st deadline for work startup for the framing (again, this will be dictated by multiple factors and contractor's timing) is doable. Windows and doors will be on site by or before May 1<sup>st</sup>. Roofing will be on site by or before July 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Milestone 3:** Our volunteers will begin the interior elements as soon as the dry-in is complete. Funds will be provided by GHAA, our volunteers and our directors.

**Milestone 4:** Success! The final milestone is the construction and completion of this project, as outlined, by late fall (November) 2025. The Gustavus Construction Company is a professional, highly skilled and a proven local entity. GHAA has high confidence in their decisions of when & how much work can be accomplished along each facet of the building considering their work/project calendars. GHAA will not micromanage their time and effort or make interim progress demands and will only intervene if August arrives and the project is not progressing. Given our small community and the fact that Lee Parker has a constant working relationship with Gustavus Construction, involving materials for their other projects, there will be frequent conversations regarding the GHAA project. It would be extremely unlikely that anything involving materials or scheduling will "fall through the cracks". *This*

*basic structure addition is critical, as a building block foundation to what we can accomplish as you will see as you read on.*

**Project Development Funding:** As Gustavus Construction completes work and invoices GHAA, GHAA will pay these statements in full. GHAA will submit paid receipts to the City of Gustavus for re-imbusement from the grant monies. This process will repeat itself and will cover the basic building/construction up until \$40,295 of the entire grant awarded is spent & accounted for. Careful consideration will be given to curbing costs wherever/whenever possible to stretch the grant dollars as far as possible.

**Building Components Not Covered Under this Grant:** Interior components of the building (insulation, wiring, lighting, plumbing, customized interior walls & exhibit build-outs, etc.), and the labor to install them will be supplied by GHAA and volunteers as has been successfully done in the past. GHAA will create a specific campaign to raise funds (or donate goods) for the purchase of those components as required, as was done with the Monument Building at the cemetery, the 1957 Air Crash Memorial at the Cemetery and our present Museum. This last phase of the construction is not anticipated to be completed within the timeline of this grant unless Gustavus Construction completes the dried in portion earlier than what we are projecting. Nonetheless, the building can and will be put to timely use, with an immediate build-out expansion of several existing exhibits that can be open to the public for initial use. Early use of the structure will permit important space for the placement of several large artifacts for immediate enjoyment of our visitors. Also of note, scavenged original homestead building materials for additional exhibits already exist in storage, so that construction can begin almost immediately as GHAA volunteers find moments here & there to combat the obstacle of time.

## **VI. Return on investment for the City of Gustavus, businesses in Gustavus and GHAA**

**Financial Benefits to the Revenue of the City of Gustavus and the revenue of GHAA:** (a) Museums are a proven draw—an important checkmark and determinate factor in many travelers’ decisions. With this museum’s unique offering, showcasing Strawberry Point’s homesteading history during the state’s territorial years, the City of Gustavus can offer a destination “must visit” tourism dollar benefit as a marketing tool for the independent traveler and group visitors alike (please see attached support letters). Increased tourism benefits all of Gustavus; including inns, taxis, restaurants, sales and room tax, to name a few. (b) And in addition, the GHAA organization will bring in new revenue with an increased ability to host and sponsor group tours with indoor seating and the stage & screen for documentaries. Although GHAA charges nothing for our visitor tours, donations are larger when we can raise the bar of the offering that GHAA can provide the visitor. For example, one tour group of 10 last summer (sitting outside in the cold & rain for a half hour presentation) donated almost \$500 in GHAA’s donation box after the visit. And this type of



show of appreciation is not an exception. The new live/media room space would provide a new source of future revenue with the showings of a Strawberry Point homesteading documentary. All present and future museum revenue streams serve to cover operating expenses such as electricity, heat, internet service, maintenance and repairs.

**Success by GHAA's measurements:** *Anything* additional of value GHAA can offer our guests that contribute to our complete homesteading story is a success and an enrichment to every resident and visitor that arrives or resides on our community's shores. This enlargement of our present museum provides a physical structure in which we can advance our mission statement of "Maintaining the Historical Integrity of Strawberry Point/Gustavus by Collecting and Preserving Important Early Documents, Photos, and Artifacts"—making them available to the public *and* telling their stories. It is anticipated that the dried in video/media presentation room could be put to use almost immediately (even with an incomplete interior)—a far cry from our present group set-ups outside in all kinds of weather. Several of the current exhibits can be almost immediately expanded into the new space. GHAA has demonstrated years of proficiency at "plugging away". And just like our present museum, GHAA will get it done.

# Project Budget

## City of Gustavus Grant

Item #	Description	Amount
1	Framing – Labor	\$15,840
2	Exist roof replaced to match new construction roof	\$8,445
3	Roofing – Labor & Materials	\$7,105
4	Door & Window – Labor & Materials	\$2,365
5	Mobilization	\$745
6	Temp protection – Labor & Materials	\$965
7	Freight	\$1,900
8	Contractor Fee	\$3,830
9	Total	\$40,295

## GHAA Funded

Item #	Description	Amount
1	Insulation	\$2,466
2	Joists	\$1,143
3	Studs, plates for interior walls	\$247
4	Interior wallboards & ceiling panels	\$992
5	Electric wiring, panel, lights, boxes	\$480
6	Bath fixtures & plumbing	\$500
7	Heater	\$1,900
8	Interior doors, trim, misc	\$700
9	Freight	\$1,500
9	Total	\$9,928

# GHAA Accomplishments of Note

Founded in 2006 as a nonprofit organization, GHAA has endeavored to accomplish its stated goals of collecting and preserving Strawberry Point & Gustavus history as a sacred trust for the entire community. To do so, we have planned events & projects to bring our colorful history to the people, to make it fun, accessible and memorable. We have yearly fundraisers (such as July 4<sup>th</sup>) to further our mission, but with a very conscious effort of not burdening, or becoming a public nuisance wearing out our welcome with constant requests for funds. For years we have accomplished much on a shoestring budget by a troop of volunteers who believe that our mission is vital and are willing to dedicate time, materials, and back-breaking support. We have also been blessed by a number of small grants that have boosted our efforts along the way. *In short, GHAA has a long record of being of benefit and a go-to resource to this community, completing every project (or managing every on-going project) it has undertaken.*

- GustavusHistory.Org website. Hundreds of records scanned and documented. GHAA continues to be contacted from around the world, by researchers and families who have found some critical information they are looking for. For example, the 1957 plane crash children who never knew the details about their father's deaths, or that a plane still existed, and have since come to visit and make life-long friends.
- Writing and publishing over 60 historic articles high-lighting the early Strawberry Point/Gustavus lives of our settlers as gleaned from historic documents, photos, and artifacts.
- Sponsoring historic educational presentations at the Gustavus library and to Gustavus public school classes with artifacts and documents as "show and tell", and "hands-on" field day events for the later at original homesteads.

- Raising historic cultural awareness by creating and hosting many community events such as the 2 hr. production “The Chronicles of Strawberry Point” available on DVD, that played in the school gym to standing room only, and the 3-day community-wide Centennial event in 2014 with dozens of features and attractions, attended by many state dignitaries and culminating in the final nights production “Tales: You Win”, (again to a full gym audience) and much more...
- Responded to numerous requests by local residents for providing and clearing land to build and maintain a 200-plot cemetery for residents who choose Gustavus as their final resting place.
- Applied for and received a grant that was used to create the Monument Building located at the cemetery which houses a museum room for our homesteader’s 10’ lathe and a quiet, reflective records/story room. High on the roofline is the community’s only bell tower used for special events.
- In collaboration with resident Rita Wilson (now deceased), GHAA wrote and published the “Complete Guide to the 1957 Plane Crash” booklet which is widely available and purchased at cost by our many yearly visitors.
- Applied for and received a grant for the construction of a bronze plaque Memorial to the plane crash victims located in the veteran section of the cemetery. Grand Opening was attended by a number of the children whose father’s died, and military dignitaries who flew in from Anchorage to play taps and take part in the unveiling ceremony.
- GHAA has completed the project of preservation of over 1000 artifacts in museum exhibits now on display, and furthered our mission of *Safe, Secure, and Permanent Preservation* for the important historic records of Strawberry Point/Gustavus by setting up the document research center in the fireproof cabinets provided by a small City of Gustavus grant (2018).
- GHAA applied for and received a \$4,937 grant from the City of Gustavus for a 12 unit listening device, utilized in the museum as a self-directed tour of over 1000 authentic early homesteader’s Strawberry Point artifacts. This facilitates that every visitor who purchases this service for a small fee, will not miss out on any of over 25 highlighted stories and the direct association to numerous artifacts directly in front of them...a physically impossible task for the museum docent to provide equally to every visitor.

- Gustavus/Strawberry Point's first ever historic museum (narrowly focused on the homesteading years 1914-1959 Statehood) had its soft opening June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Over 120 residents toured the museum that day. 110 plus residents and tourists have subsequently visited the museum with overwhelming positive feedback and many tourists declaring it the highlight of their visit. GHAA has given additional presentations to scheduled travel groups providing museum tours, stories, original music, and Q & A's.
- With the aid of a City of Gustavus endowment grant, GHAA broke ground in 2022 on an expansion project that would double the square footage of the museum. That grant provided enough funds to complete the excavation and foundation.
- In the summer of 2023, GHAA sponsored and organized a community open house for the museum featuring new artifacts and exhibits along with free refreshments. Over 150 attended.
- In June 2024 corresponding to our 110<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the date of our first homesteaders arriving at Strawberry Point, GHAA sponsored a strawberry moon community wide open house event at the museum. On display were the just recently discovered wooden strawberry baskets from Edith Parker's 1917 strawberry patch that were found hidden in the Les Parker home prior to demolition.

Just one more time...because it cannot be said enough...GHAA is grateful for the many hundreds of hours that community members have volunteered, giving selflessly of their time, creativity, and resources to make the completion and enjoyment of all these projects a reality.

Kristine M. Nemeth

P.O. Box 360

Gustavus, AK 99826

[Nemeth.km@gmail.com](mailto:Nemeth.km@gmail.com)

October 17, 2021

To Whom It My Concern,

I am delighted to write a letter of support for the expansion of the Gustavus Historical Museum located in Gustavus, Alaska. At this summer's grand opening of the museum, I was pleasantly surprised at the breadth, depth and professional quality of this museum in a remote Alaskan town. This town's rich history begins with glacial ice sculpting the land and the settling of this new landscape by the Tlingit people and later the early pioneers. This museum brings to life the hardships, celebrates the daily life, and walks us through changes over time by showcasing excellent exhibits with authentic artifacts, sharing compelling stories, and displaying and storing original historical documents and photos.

The museum has become a highlight for residents, their families and many visitors. The expansion would allow for enhancing the experience by providing more space for current and future historical exhibits, visitor gatherings around the displays and access to historical items and documents that are carefully stored. Before retiring, I spent years developing visitor centers, displays, and educational programming for visitors and students. I am sure that this museum will attract and enrich visitors' experiences and keep pioneer history alive through high quality exhibits and programming.

Thank you for considering this project for your grant. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Kris Nemeth

# KEVIN CLEMENT

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c/o General Delivery  
GBQ4 Park Road  
Gustavus, AK 99826  
(360) 932-9585  
[kvncmnt@gmail.com](mailto:kvncmnt@gmail.com)

October 26, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I write in support of the Gustavus History Association, what they've already accomplished, and what they can create if given the resources.

Ever since I arrived in the Gustavus area and began to learn about its colorful history, I've been struck by how rich that history is, and yet how little most local residents understand about it. There was very little information available to them until the GHAA began to supply it. There is now a growing feeling of pride in the community—a feeling greatly enhanced by the advent of the GHAA's new museum.

Lee and Linda have done a beautiful job with the museum, and it is a great credit to the town, a testament to the richness of our history, and an eye-opening experience for some residents.

In my job as a trip leader, I brought the first group of outside visitors to see the museum this last summer, with Lee and Linda as hosts. My people were very impressed with the facility and enjoyed the experience immensely. It was the centerpiece of what I called our "Gustavus City Tour", and a highlight of our time in the area.

Gustavus has always been regarded by tourists as little more than a gateway to Glacier Bay National Park. The vast majority of visitors merely passes through; only a few stop over at all. But, unlike most national park gateways, Gustavus has a pioneer and homesteader history that predates the park, and would be of great interest to visitors—if they knew about it.

Meanwhile, better tourism infrastructure, in terms of transportation and lodging, has begun to appear. At the same time, travelers nowadays are seeking more in-depth and authentic experiences, and more connections to the places they're visiting—and these are all things that Gustavus has to offer in a way that few other places do.

The other thing Gustavus needs in order to capitalize on these opportunities is more things for visitors to do while they're in town, and that is a need that the museum can help fill. An expanded museum could form the core of an enhanced Gustavus City Tour, perhaps with a full historical focus.

It seems to me that there is great potential for Gustavus to grow, both in terms of its tourism economy and in the pride that its residents take in what they have—and the GHAA museum is at the center of all of this. Expanding the museum and its services would benefit both goals, and I urge you to lend these efforts your support.

Sincerely,  
--Kevin Clement

# JoAnn Lesh

To Whom It May Concern,

October 20, 2021

In our small community, we have to be resilient, innovative and self-reliant. What better way to teach, inform and provide inspiration than a museum that delights in the innovation of our founding homestead members? From daily life, inspirational stories, the work of the day, survival in the wilderness and homestead tenacity, GHAA's Strawberry Point Museum shows us how it used to be in a place we are still trying to survive, many of us needing the same innovation to overcome the same challenges. With their extensive collection, I look forward to learning more homesteader ingenuity from the carefully curated artifacts.

Will this be of interest to tourists? Yes, as homesteading history elucidation is scarce in SE Alaska and of high interest. The many homesteading shows on TV have made fans of our homesteaders' resilience and living arts and have ardent national fans, who are coming to our town due to Glacier Bay National Park. This museum can stand the scrutiny of any history buff, with its attention to authenticity and actual real artifacts showing adaptation to our life here. I look forward to seeing what is stored away and the many new stories it will bring back to our community.

It will be a successful must see draw to the community for economic development. As an owner of one of the few remaining homesteads in Southeast Alaska, having run the Gustavus Inn successfully as our family's business since 1965, each time a simple draw is added, guests will easily see how they need to stay longer and increase independent tourism, the highest spending visitor. We have seen that happen with adding kayak tours, art galleries and Saturday markets to the National Park visitor itinerary, simple but effective at boosting tourism revenue in our small market.

I encourage you to help build this addition and bring more homestead insights and tourism life to Gustavus.

JoAnn Lesh