

Old Schwamb Mill · Works in Progress · Fall 2022

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Mill Welcomes Lynette Aznavourian in New Role As Museum Director

The Mill is delighted to announce that **Lynette E. Aznavourian** will officially begin the new position of Museum Director in January of 2023. In this role, Lynette will participate in event planning, visitor services, leading tours, and communications, as well as day-to-day administration of the living-history museum.

Lynette's work with the Mill began as a publicist and program consultant in 2015. In developing relationships with local reporters, Lynette has successfully landed coverage of the Mill's lectures and exhibits in the *Boston Globe*, *Arlington Advocate*, and other local publications. She has written and published the Mill's monthly e-news for many years, a project she initiated. She completely redesigned the Mill's website and moved it to an easily editable platform. She has been indispensable in handling the logistics of the Mill's annual historical exhibits and Oktoberfest.

Lynette holds a Master of Science in Public Relations from Boston University, College of Communications, and a Bachelor of Arts, with majors in English and psychology, from Tufts University. In addition to her seven years at the Old Schwamb Mill, she has worked in communications and newsletter publication at the Archeological Institute of America, Historic Newton, Massachusetts Nurses Association, and other organizations.



Lynette Aznavourian

We look forward to continued work with Lynette in this exciting new role at the Mill.

Keeping the Mill Safe and Sound

Thanks to a **Community Preservation Act** grant in 2021, the Mill commissioned a structural engineering report from the firm of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger. This report was recently completed and includes some recommendations to reinforce particular joists and rafters. The proposed remediations, subject to approval from Massachusetts Historical Commission under the Mill's preservation restrictions, will bring these elements in total to their recommended strength.

In 1975, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger reported on the Mill and identified areas in the Mill building and Barn that required immediate attention. Those areas of concern were addressed at that time, with the added footings and columns all visible and confirmed by visual inspection in this recent report. In contrast, the few remediations recommended in this new structural report are straightforward.

Over the Mill's life as a working factory, some joists over the shop floor were notched to make room for belts and wheels that are no longer there. These joists will be strengthened in such a way (to borrow the report's words) "where the new work is intended to be legible as new, while not necessarily calling attention to itself." In addition, while the gently sloping roofs on the southwest and southeast additions have withstood the snows of 148 and 133 winters respectively, the spans across each section will be strengthened to insure they will continue to meet current snow load requirements. Some restoration of

the brick work on the northside sub-basement will also occur, strengthening the place where water once departed the building after turning the Mill's waterwheel.

The Mill's CPA grant proposal included funds to meet remediation suggested in the structural engineering report. Once again, relatively modest grant awards -- made possible by Arlington voters in approving the Community Preservation Act -- are proving their worth in preserving historic buildings and insuring their safe enjoyment by the public.

The Mill and Its Community

The primary purpose of the **Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust, Inc.**, as stated in its charter and mission statement, is preservation of the Mill, its machinery, and the frame-making craft. The value of preservation from a historical perspective is a given. Yet as the Mill's Directors go about their work, the question arises continually: Who are the people, today and in the future, who are to appreciate and value this place?

The Directors strongly believe that there are many ways of appreciating the Mill. We constantly adjust our programs and outreach to reach as many audiences as possible. We encourage visitors with specific interests in industrial archeology, nineteenth-century wood frame structures, wood turning, and German-American history. Seniors who recall "how life used to be" and school age groups discovering the past their grandparents experienced are natural audiences for a living-history museum like the Mill.



Summer concert at the Mill, August 2022

Every big day at the Mill ends with a recap of new visitors and the often heard comment, "I've lived in Arlington for years and had no idea this was here!" With our year-round program of events, we hope to give every visitor a reason to come back.



A notched joist above the shop floor made to accommodate a belt and machine no longer in the Mill. Metal clad wiring later secured within the notch suggests the notch pre-dates 1920 when the Mill first received electric service.

Casual appreciation of our preserved building and its largely unchanged interior is another sort of benefit. The Holiday Craft Fair, the annual frame lecture, the Oktoberfest, and the summer music series give visitors a repeated chance to enjoy a unique event and a venue redolent with local history. Three art exhibits each year in the Mill's upstairs galleries are a reason many visitors come back to the Mill, and with each visit notice something new -- the smell of basswood, the shimmer of moulding knives and drive shafts, the early twentieth-century notice of limited working hours for women and minors.