

Overview of the Lenox School Website Initiative Including the Creation of Archival Disks [Repository]

Note: This is a more detailed version of the same-named article that appears in the December 2020 edition of the P&S. It is one of the two memorabilia-related briefings by LSAA Inc. President Bob Sansone at the recent Zoom Annual Business Meeting. Though not an exact transcript of the briefing, the text incorporates the content of the slides and Bob's narration to fully cover what was presented in the briefing. A two-page Wireframe diagram that graphically depicts the Proposed Website Design, along with a separate one-page Introduction, is also posted on this website. This briefing provides the current thinking and status in regards to the creation of the 'Lenox School Website' that among other things ensures that the Legacy of the school endures for future generations through sharing its memorabilia. It also addresses the feasibility of creating Archival Disks to provide a physical backup once the memorabilia no longer exists and to archive the memorabilia not displayed on the website. RH

The Purpose of the Website Initiative

After looking at the limited options available to us, we felt that a website seemed to provide the widest possible public access to tell the Lenox School and LSAA Inc. story to this and future generations through the display of its memorabilia and LSAA-prepared documents. In addition to telling the school's story and describing its campus and school experience, the website has the purpose of: ensuring that the school history, legacy and principles endure; honoring the service of faculty and staff and their wish that the school not be forgotten; providing a resource to research the experiences of individual students, faculty and staff; and telling the LSAA Inc.'s efforts to perpetuate the school's mission, spirit and legacy.

Phases of the Initiative and Who's Responsible

The Website Initiative will be accomplished in four phases, some tasks of which may overlap in the future. We're currently about 60% done with the Phase I or Design Phase which involves creating the design, identifying the items, and developing introductions and item/image captions. In Phase II, Keith Simpson '70 will create a database by scanning the provided hardcopy items; downloading pdf and jpg item files; and affixing the name to each item. In Phase III, using Keith's software, the LSAA organizes the items into the website's design order and adds captions, from which an archive tree and schematic is generated. Phase IV, involves whatever additional tasks are required to create the Archival Repository, if we decide to do so.

Timeframes Covered By the Website

The website will focus on two major timeframes. About 88% of its images will focus on Lenox School, from the decision to locate it in Lenox to its decision to merge with the Bordentown Military Institute 1924-1971. About 12% of its images will focus on the LSAA, Inc. from its establishment to the present [1989-2020]. Subsequent Campus Users/Owners will be briefly addressed [1972-Present]. But we decided not to cover the one Bordentown/Lenox School year [1972-1973], because despite the dedicated involvement of some Lenox School masters and trustees, it was a totally different school with different values.

What's Included and What's Excluded from the Website

The website will contain about 766 items or about 36% of the total items in the Memorabilia Collection; to include all 34 published yearbooks and 3 P&S graduation supplements, which covers every year from 1934 to 1971 except for 1963; 270-plus Lenox School and LSAA Inc. P&S editions; and links to at least 9 CDs/DVDs [4 video, 3 photo, 2 audio]. We also had to decide what type of material would be excluded from the website and here's that list. It will not contain personal material and correspondence from Lenox faculty and staff unrelated to the school or expressing negative opinions about the school or its individuals; LSAA Inc. internal correspondence, records, minutes, and legal documents or references to them; and members' current contact information, unless it's still the same as published in the 1965 or 1970 Alumni Directories, which are included on the website.

Current Status and Current Efforts

As to the current status of the Initiative, again we're 55% to 60% done with Phase I. We've completed the website's proposed design and identified almost all the items to be displayed. And by creating captions for most items and photo images, we hope to have created a rudimentary backup website search capability using Keith's current software, though it looks like Keith will utilize some Optical Character Reader search technology capability, as well.

We're also creating detailed instructions that provide all the information for anyone to be able to organize the items into the desired website design in Phase III, thus creating necessary redundancy. What primarily remains to be done in Phase I is creating the 100-plus required Introductions to the different subjects addressed, each of which is a separate item; and collating the various pdf and jpg items and images into files to accompany the hardcopy items.

Proposed Website Design and Organization

Now let's take a look at the website's design, organization and types of material displayed. The website is composed of three Major Sections, consisting of 11 major subject-matter categories and 99 sub-categories. The Website Design described below is depicted in a two-page Wireframe diagram, with a separate one-page Introduction, follows on this website.

Introductory Section

The first section is the 'Introductory Section'. As its name implies, it introduces and provides an overview of the school, its founders, headmasters, trustees, and symbols through the following four major categories.

The Cat 1 – **Lenox School Home Page** introduces Lenox School and the website utilizing a narrative; descriptive facts about the school; and links to school videos and photo CDs. The Cat 2 – **Lenox School Overview** provides an introduction and overview of the school's founders, headmasters and trustees; its uniqueness; and its history using headmasters' keystone documents and newspaper articles; Dr. Seamans '36's National Air and Space Museum's Oral History's recollections; and LSAA White Papers.

The Cat 3 – **Finding Someone** provides instructions on how to use the website's documents to find someone who attended/graduated from Lenox or was a faculty or staff member, and provides two Alumni Directories to start the search. The Cat 4 – **Lenox School Symbols** explains the school's various symbols including its Patron Saint, motto, crest and school songs; and displays the crest's use in artwork and on decorative items.

Chronological Section

The second section is the 'Chronological Section'. This one-category section, Category 8, is divided into two parts. The first part **Lenox School History – Headmaster's Writings** documents the chronological evolution of the school from Founders' letters in 1924 to its closure in August, 1971 and decision to merge with the Bordentown Military Institute in October, 1971, primarily through headmasters' writings, annual trustee and Synod reports, school catalogs, fundraising brochures, letters and other documents.

The second part the **Lenox School Alumni Association, Inc.** provides a look at the LSAA Inc.'s remarkable efforts to keep the school's spirit and legacy alive since its creation in 1989 to the present, told through Reunion activities photos; LSAA Inc.'s P&Ss; members' letters on the school and the association; other documents; and its Hall of Fame.

Main Body Section

And then there is the Main Body Section, whose six major categories address every facet of the school, its campus and its experience. The major categories and their content are as follows.

Cat 5 – **Lenox School Publications** provides recurring publications published by either the school or its students; to include all the yearbooks; all available P&S editions; and samples of the Alumni News/Alumni Magazine, Lenox-In-Portrait Calendar, and Literary Supplement.

Cat 6 – **Lenox School Campus, Buildings and Facilities** provides a detailed look at the campus; some unique aspects of it; the history, description, photos, and use of each building and sports venue; the St. Martin's Hall painting, architect's plans and sketch; and a look at the dedication ceremonies and programs of those buildings opened since 1956. Cat 7 – **Lenox School Athletics** provides an overview of athletics to include school policy; the history of each sport at Lenox; the different team uniforms throughout the years; athletic Letters; fan gear; non-team athletic clothing; seasonal team schedules; game programs; and trophies and plaques.

Cat – 9 **School and Student Life** provides a detailed look at Outreach Programs; daily activities and major events to include worship, dining, and social life; school clothing, patches and jewelry; administrative guidance; school and faculty stationary; and Norman Rockwell student models. Cat 10 – **Faculty/Staff and Academics** highlights the many faculty duties; staff positions and iconic individuals; classroom activities and items; academic policy, requirements, and scheduling; report cards; and graduation locations, invitations, events, awards, programs and diplomas. And Cat 11 – **Extracurricular Activities** explains their purpose and all those ever offered by the school; focusing on the choir, glee club and dramatic club through photos, programs, flyers and recordings.

Creation of Archival Disks [Repository]

It's now time to take a quick look at the purpose and feasibility of creating Archival Disks as a repository for the already digitized items on the website and for those remaining items in the Memorabilia Collection not displayed on the website. The idea originated when we realized that once the physical memorabilia was gone, that should there be a problem with the website, there's no longer any physical backup for it.

Purpose of the Archival Disks

From there the idea expanded to digitizing collection items not displayed on the website and providing it to the local organizations such as the Lenox Library, Lenox Historical Society, and

Berkshire County Historical Society, as an easy way to store a mini-memorabilia collection, while providing Berkshire Taconic with a physical website backup.

Feasibility of the Archival Disks

However, we don't know if this project is technically feasible [is the website software downloadable and easily accessed]; or possibly cost prohibitive, [type, quantity and cost of required storage devices]; so it remains a second priority. Additionally, if the download and storage of the website is not feasible and/or cost prohibitive, then perhaps we can go ahead with only archiving the non-website portion of the collection. If we do go that way, why not add some of those items to the website, as well.

The Way Ahead

Finally, listed here are some of the tasks that we've mentioned, and which we'll focus on accomplishing in the coming year. Finish the remaining 40% of Phase I tasks previously described. However, we may begin scanning yearbooks and P&Ss in the near-term prior to the completion of all the desired Phase I tasks. Obtain Board approval of the Website Design. Determine the feasibility of creating Archival Disks. Determine a website and archival disk cost estimate with Keith. And scan all hardcopy material prior to the 2021 Reunion.

~ Randy Harris