**2015 CAA President’s Annual Report**

2015 was a fabulous year for the CAA --- A year filled with great

accomplishments. We must, of course, start with the move to our

new official office at the Horse Park in June. Jack Pemberton’s

remark “Come on in!, everybody” expressed the sentiment well

at our **Grand Opening**. A “Thank you” to all who contributed to the

Capital Campaign to make this a reality. Colonel Davis continued to

work diligently through many details until the proud day arrived –

June 25, 2015.

I invite you to take a look at our **newly designed website**. Kathleen Haak, a CAA Member, spearheaded the new design, and we debuted “live” online in July. Have some fun exploring the new site and provide us with your comments and suggestions as we stay in pace with the digital world.

Let me share with you our new way to bring the CAA to all geographic areas- **CAA On Location**. Bill and Lyn Neel of Eugene, Oregon were gracious hosts this spring for a weekend program on mules and mule driving. Bill described, demonstrated and then provided hands on experiences with his beloved mules. Through the Neels, more people in the western U.S. were introduced to the educational format of the CAA and to the CAA Driver Proficiency Program. In August, another CAA On Location was organized by Sally Armstrong of Texas. She coordinated a visit to view the touring display of Hapsburg carriages from Vienna, Austria. The same exhibit had traveled to Minneapolis earlier and was viewed by members of the Minnesota Whips and Wheels Carriage and Driving Society.

The **CAA Driver Proficiency Program** continues to be popular with drivers and deserves another word of praise. Two of our evaluators, Trish Demers and Jerry Trapani, have traveled widely this year for evaluations and have been encouraged by the interest of so many drivers throughout the country. To date, over 500 candidates have been awarded level one, two, or three certificates. Our panel of evaluators continues to compile information on areas of deficiencies of the candidates. Based on this data, we will be able to develop further educational and reference material to be available in the future.

The **CAA International Travel Program** continues to merge the North America members with those in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Argentina, and many other countries. The Royal Windsor Horse Show Trip and the associated Coaching in Norfolk opportunity was again a success. The CAA continues to **sponsor the Light Trade Carriage Division** at The Royal Windsor Horse Show giving worldwide recognition to our organization.

Your Board of Directors dusted off their Bermuda shorts and traveled to Bermuda for their February meeting. The local CAA members planned a weekend packed with activities. The days were filled with pony racing and visits to carriage collections, while the nights were Dark and Stormy. We appreciate the fabulous hospitality of our Bermuda hosts.

The newly added trip to Sweden was well planned and an educational experience that will need to be repeated. Unfortunately, due to adverse weather, the trip to Argentina was cancelled for 2015. The widespread participation in our travels shows that the CAA truly wears a worldwide face.

The annual **Carriage Showcase** drew sixteen quality entries this year. The standards of restoration and the supporting documentation presented a truly educational experience. The Showcase Committee continues to encourage a high standard. The increased number of entries in the last three competitions reflects the importance that our membership places on historically correct restorations.

The **Fifth Annual Carriage Festival** was hugely successful and continues to grow. More the seventy antique carriages were turned out promoting the importance of traditional driving. The addition of the picnic class was welcomed and popular.

The 2015 **Annual Conference** was held this year in conjunction with The National Drive. This joint venture increased awareness of the value of CAA membership and resulted in adding 45 new members. The October conference offered educational talks for the first time in our Edith Wasserman Educational Center, and featured hands on demonstrations as well as the opportunity for Driver Proficiency evaluations.

Driving clubs also play a special part in growing our membership. Since 2013, we have welcomed twenty driving clubs as **CAA Chapters**. These new affiliates now bring our roster to 54 Chapters. We provide each chapter with a CAA banner to display at their local functions. As your president, I have traveled to meet with several of our chapters, both new and previously established, to promote the CAA. Our chapters create a strong network that crosses the entire country.

**Our membership** roster continues to be strong. The Membership Committee continues to develop additional membership benefits. A few of the benefits include a 10% discount on purchases through the CAA shop and a 5% discount on purchases over 100 dollars at Driving Essentials in Pennsylvania. We now offer one, two, and three year, sustaining and life membership levels. We also have youth and museum memberships.

This year two new committees were established to support the mission of the CAA. The **History Committee**, chaired by Randy Solle, has made great strides in obtaining and categorizing photos and articles from the CAA’s past activities. These records, if not preserved, are lost over time and will be valuable for future study. The **Past President’s Advisory Committee** was formed to assist the current president in decision making. The executive knowledge and experience of these former leaders is another treasure of the association that is not to be overlooked.

**Publications** are another form of outreach for our organization. Jill Ryder and Jennifer Singleton continue to publish the ever popular and widely acclaimed ***“Carriage Journal***”. The “World on Wheels”, a compendium of the proceedings of the 2014 CAA/CWF International Carriage Symposium, published this year was another accomplishment of our prized staff. Facebook, Chapter Chatter, and the weekly Spokesperson give timely internet contact to our members and followers.

We have accomplished **great strides** in all of our endeavors. With your continued support, we will grow in advancing our mission to promote both safe and enjoyable traditional driving and preserving the history of animal drawn transportation for future generations. 2015 was truly a banner year for the Carriage Association of America.