



**Craftsman Farms
Catch the Spark Gala
October 15th, 2011**

I am delighted to be with you at this grand finale of the Craftsman Farms Centennial year as we all Catch the Spark and forge ahead in realizing Gustav Stickley's vision for this historic landmark. Thank you all for your presence and for your continued support which helps ensure that the Craftsman Farms survives, and thrives, so future generations can learn from its treasured past.

I salute the Craftsman Farms Foundation Board of Trustees, its executive director, the very talented and dedicated Heather Stivison and the countless volunteers for their vision and tireless efforts in preserving this rich history.

They say that it is a common history that bonds a community. And that the telling and retelling of

the shared history is part of the glue that keeps a community together. And so it is that I remember my first intimate encounter with friends of the Craftsman Farms....on Saturday, December 10, 1988... my late husband, Alfred, our former master craftsman Luzlo Gustav Gigatz and I arrived at Christie's for the "Highly Important American Arts & Crafts" auction which included furniture from Gustav Stickley's house in Syracuse, NY. As eager participants and spectators awaited the bidding, several spirited individuals appeared wearing large buttons with simply 3 letters, SOS. Chairperson of the group, Elaine Ellis explained, "This stands for Save Our Stickley." It was accompanied by a flyer about the formation of the Craftsman Farms Foundation, which in "cooperation with the Township of Parsippany Troy Hills will restore Gustav Stickley's log house and its associated buildings, set in 30 acres of woodland and streams, as a center for the study of the American Arts & Crafts movement." As many here recall the Craftsman Farms, at the time, was to be developed as a cluster of 52 town houses. With determination, ingenuity and perseverance the all-volunteer group, working hand in hand with the Town of Parsippany prevailed and the bulldozers remained reverently silent. Shortly after, I visited the Craftsman Farms and Murial Berson, activist and board member, took me on a grand tour. Her energy was boundless and her enthusiasm was infectious.

That visit reminded me of my first visit to the original L. & J.G. Stickley factory in Fayetteville, NY in November 1973. A place Alfred was deeply in love with. A few months earlier Louise Stickley, Leopold's widow called and said, "Alfred you're the only one who loves Stickley enough to keep its quality, will you buy it?" With unabashed enthusiasm and exuberant youth Alfred

replied, “It will be a dream come true, if only I can afford it,” and I being the eternal optimist said, “why, of course you can.” Alfred grew up sleeping in a Stickley bed and his father, E.J. Audi was a close friend of Leopold Stickley & his largest dealer. As a freshman at Colgate University, Alfred caught the spark when he accompanied his father to the annual Leopold Stickley birthday party.

As I walked through that old factory, now home of the Fayetteville Free Library and the Stickley Museum, I realized why they say that “love is blind.” I felt so sorry for Alfred and for both of us because by then Stickley was so far gone, there was hardly a sign of life and there was so little to love...but Alfred, like many of the early and very dedicated volunteers at the Craftsman Farms Foundation, was a visionary and he dared to dream big dreams. I am certainly glad to have shared his dream and this very exciting journey of revitalizing Stickley.

Over the years I have witnessed with great delight the revival and staying power of the Arts & Crafts movement. Its enduring impact on our lives is largely due to its powerful ideology and philosophy and to the many educational programs such as those at the Craftsman Farms, conferences like the Grove Park Inn and others throughout the country, and scholarly exhibits on all that is Arts & Crafts. It is also due, in no small measure, to adapting the Arts & Crafts aesthetic and style to the reality and spirit of the times and making it available and affordable to a much broader audience. Today Arts & Crafts furnishings and decorative arts are not merely a symbol of a bygone era; they are part of our living legacy, a nod to the past and a pathway to the future.

While Gustav Stickley’s vision for the Craftsman Farms was never fully realized, the Craftsman Farms Foundation, with the support of Arts & crafts enthusiasts from all over the country, has over the past 22 years succeeded in keeping his dream alive and transforming his garden of Eden into a valued cultural and educational center for the study of the American Arts & Crafts movement. Gustav would be proud! And so should you.

Enjoy the evening and help write a new chapter in the continuing legacy of Gustav Stickley – please bid high and bid often and have a marvelous weekend!

— *Aminy I. Audi*
President & CEO
L. & J.G. Stickley, Inc.