

Remaining Q&A

Community Webinar on 09/22/25

1. Closing the DC office seems to make sense. Is the contract for the space resolved or will there be a continued expense for the space? — Kate Hogan

- The DC office space is currently on the market. The space will continue to be listed for sublease until the lease expires in 2028. We are hopeful with current activity that the space will be sublet soon.

2. With concerns about attendance and future financial sustainability, what was the thought process in moving the season one week later than usual? Families with children and grandchildren as well as youth counselors and employees from non-NE areas start and end their summer vacations earlier than the NE (In many states weeks earlier). With this change in when Week 1 starts, families, children and youth from the other areas of the U.S. now have less time available to them to participate in all CHQ has to offer. Over time, this change seems to me will greatly impact multi-generational attendance, property ownership, and our youth program. — Jennifer Sawyer New

- We appreciate the suggestion and understand the issues surrounding planning the summer and coordinating everyone's busy schedules. When it comes to planning the dates for the nine-week Summer Assembly, the process is established by tradition. We start with the closing Sunday, which is always the last Sunday before Labor Day weekend and then work back nine weeks.

3. Have you considered reducing expenses for security? The security seems to me to be an overreaction to the Rushdie affair. — Ellen Harrison

- We understand that the increased security presence may feel like a strong response, and we appreciate your perspective. While the Rushdie attack was certainly a catalyst for reviewing our protocols, the decision to enhance security was not based solely on that event. It reflects a broader commitment to ensuring the safety of our patrons and staff in an increasingly complex environment. We've taken a measured approach and continually assess the effectiveness and necessity of these measures.

4. What is being done to support the still existing accommodations? Particularly the guest houses and inns? — Beth Adler

- The Institution still operates an accommodations directory that is available at a small annual fee to all property owners who rent. We also engage regularly with the Property Owners Who Rent (POWER) group of the Chautauqua Property Owners Association (CPOA).

5. My family is here until October 12 this year and we have noticed how pleasant it is in the month of September. Is there any effort underway to expand the season through September? Even if there were just a fraction of the concerts, speakers, and amenities available we believe many retirees would enjoy being here. Plus, the wedding season brings many newcomers which is a missed opportunity to showcase what CHQ is like during the season. — Deanna Charles

- For those of us fortunate enough to enjoy Chautauqua during the fall season, we couldn't agree more that it is a beautiful time of year on the grounds. While there are no plans to extend the nine-week Summer Assembly, we are looking at the possibility of more concerts like the Bonnie Raitt concert we had in September. While there isn't traditional programming during the fall, the gates are open and we welcome everyone to take advantage of the amenities that are available, like the Chautauqua Bookstore and library.

6. There are not enough dining options here. Are there any efforts being made to attract pop-up restaurants or designate nice pop-up areas? Some of the food tents and food trucks on Bestor Plaza wreck the ambiance and it's hard to take nice photos of the plaza. — Deanna Charles

- The dining options are always under review and options are being considered for the upcoming season. We appreciate any suggestions on how we can improve the dining experience without impacting the ambiance for patrons. This remains an area of attention.

7. The gate pass situation is too stringent for people who have homes on the grounds and want/need visitors. I couldn't interview a prospective babysitter from off the grounds because she didn't want to bother to go through the Welcome Center. Have kiosks been considered for the entrances where visitors can print pre-approved passes for various time slots (akin to airport boarding passes?) — Deanna Charles

- Yes, we have looked into kiosks. They are part of long-term planning efforts but not something that will be implemented in the immediate future.

8. Will you charge for an electronic subscription to the Daily as many other publications do? — Patricia Beagle

- We are considering options for both e-subscriptions and a paywall for the Daily's website. We will still have a printed Daily. These options are in addition to the printed version or could be alternative subscription options for patrons.

9. I expected a Season Gate Pass price increase and have not heard this yet, am I correct? — Eileen Conroy

- You're correct that we haven't announced any changes to the Season Gate Pass pricing yet. This pricing is determined as part of the budget development process and typically announced after the November Board Meeting.

10. Would Chautauqua Institution consider leasing office space during the nine-week season and/or off season to professional individuals offering services to owners & visitors of Chautauqua? [This would generate] revenue for Chautauqua especially in the off season.— Tracy DuRei

- Thank you for the suggestion. While we are always looking for new, mission-aligned ways to generate revenue, leasing office space is currently not part of our immediate plan.

11. This was a great overview, will there be more granular information provided? — John Luker

- The plan is to continue to operate in a transparent manner. You can expect community webinars every 30-60 days with updates from Kyle Keogh during the offseason.

12. Will the slides that you used be available? — Jeffrey Wood

- The slides are available here in the newsletter and ongoing on the Community Portal at chq.org

13. How has the Climate Change initiative changed? — John Luker

- The major change to the Climate Change Initiative is that it must now be supported entirely by dedicated philanthropy, meaning it will have zero subsidy from the Institution going forward. The Initiative will retain three primary areas of focus: Program (Summer Assembly Season), Chautauqua Lake (year-round), and Climate Action Plan (year-round). Mark Wenzler will remain as director and take on an additional role as a senior gift officer in the

Office of Advancement.

14. Any negative impact on the CHQ Cinema? — Carla Hengerer

- There are no plans in place for any changes at the CHQ Cinema.

15. What is an NPS score? And did I space out or did Deborah skip explaining the Broadway Boot Camp? — Fred Zirm

- Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a customer loyalty metric that measures the likelihood of a customer recommending a company or its products/services to a friend or colleague.
- Deborah did mention that this program will operate with the help of the Chautauqua Theater Company through Special Studies for youth, providing a pathway for budding Broadway lovers.

16. Any thought given to integrating ABC with the morning lecture series. — Selden Campen

- While there are currently no plans to integrate ABC with the morning lecture series, we're always open to thoughtful conversation around programming and collaboration. We will continue to engage with ABC and others for ideas and collaboration opportunities.

17. Can there be a way for us to purchase a lecture channel subscription as gift? — Patricia Beagle

- Regrettably, gifting a membership to specific individuals is currently not a functionality of the YouTube channel platform and is inherently tied to Google's privacy practices. We understand that the inability to specifically gift a membership is disappointing, and we continue to give feedback to YouTube about the desire of this feature.

18. What is the change in support of science-based lake improvements, if any? Is this still a part of the 150 Forward four focus areas. What is change in support to climate change (beyond the noted \$103K)? — Richard Gunnell

- Chautauqua's Board now has an Environmental Sustainability and Lake Sub-Committee, and we are planning to address our involvement in the lake and climate initiatives going forward. Our commitment to the lake and climate has not changed, but the way we manage those commitments may change slightly. More to come. Thanks for the question, your incredible help and

commitment to these areas of Chautauqua and the Institution as a whole!
Thank you!

19. The Bonnie Raitt concert brought in many people from the surrounding area. Presumably, they didn't need overnight accommodations. In the short term, wouldn't this be a way to increase attendance before having additional housing on board? — Phyllis Schultz

- Indeed, it is! It's tricky to find dates around our wedding business, but we DO hope to do this again, and to have a future with multiple concerts.

20. Are there any savings in upgrading to more efficient and lower carbon heating and cooling? — John Luker

- Yes, and in certain situations we have already pursued these opportunities. However, the majority of the facilities on Chautauqua Institution's Campus are seasonal buildings, and they are already very economic/efficient in the way that they are heated and cooled, and to change that would increase their carbon footprint and their cost of operation

21. Any reduction in businesses owned and run by Chautauqua was not discussed in detail. Can we forego the climate initiative of the lake while we stabilize our finances? — Sabeeha Rehman

- We are reducing the operation of The Gallery Store from year-round to summer season only, and we are looking at other year-round operations to optimize operating hours. The Chautauqua Climate Change Initiative remains an important expression of our mission and program focus, and it is also entirely funded by philanthropy. There would be no positive impact to modifying its budget further.

22. I don't own an electric car, but I understand that the rate to charge one's vehicle is very cheap compared to other places. We might look at the pricing there. — Carol Collins

- Thank you for the suggestion, we will take a look at the current EV charging rates and consider whether adjustments are needed.

23. Have we considered offering an annual membership to Assembly? This might help with costs to maintain. — Kiki Lichtig

- Regrettably, we are no longer able to offer an annual membership plan. In our transition to YouTube, we returned to a monthly membership program giving viewers more flexibility with their accounts and viewing needs.

24. Are there any considerations for building a structure to protect our CHQ buses in the harsh winters? Bad weather takes a real toll on those vehicles, and shelter seems a prudent move. Thoughts? — Jeff Long

- Thank you so much for this great question. We do not currently have any plans for any additional facilities to house our buses. That may change going forward as resources become available and priorities change. Thank you!

25. We, as property owners, enjoy having guests through the season and are grateful knowing their passes and purchases help our future. I noticed multiple homes on the grounds this season that never had occupants at all —sitting empty. Is there conversation on how to motivate these owners to contribute to needed revenue? — Chris Teat

- Thanks for this question. We hope it may be seen by some who fall into this category, but we are not currently planning to inventory or reach out to these property owners.

26. I need the archives for ongoing research. Is there a new staff person, and are there new hours for the off season? — Mary Lee Talbot

- You'll be receiving a call from me this afternoon. Sorry for my delay; just getting back from some time away.

27. What does "reducing siloing" mean in the presentation? — Jeff Long

- "Siloing" as we use the term is where each department or area operates without close coordination and operational knowledge of other departments. Our new organizational structure will help us be more engaged with each area, enhancing our knowledge of all Institutional operations, leading to greater efficiencies, savings and improved services/offerings.

28. Will the archives be closed? — Martha Carnahan

- No, the Oliver Archives Center will not be closed, only temporarily as we work through a transition. You are welcome to contact me and Emily Carpenter (jsteves@chq.org and ecarpenter@chq.org) if you need access in the interim until we settle on the operational plan for the space.

29. We love the wedding experiences....it is a joyful time to see happy couples uniting! A big concern, however, is the new prevalence of fireworks. CHQ has always been fire-phobic, and as a resident of Los Angeles, we have seen and experienced the incredible devastation caused by blowing embers. It's almost impossible to save structures when those embers get in the eaves of buildings. We are very concerned for Chautauqua. The fact that these firewoks are "set off on a barge in the lake" does not make these fire events safer. Let's not set CHQ on fire! — Carol Ramsey

- Thank you for your thoughtful message. We share your appreciation for the joy weddings bring to our community.
Regarding the fireworks: Often these displays are arranged by private wedding parties and managed by outside vendors. They are not organized by Chautauqua Institution. While they are launched from a barge on the lake to reduce risk, we understand your concerns and take fire safety very seriously.

30. How are you thinking you could cut almost \$10,000 from Morning Worship? How would you do that that without diminishing the impact that denominational volunteers provide to the Institution? — Welling Hall

- We'll share more information about that very soon.

31. On attracting younger patrons, one important way would be to offer lower gate pass pricing for 26- to 40-year-olds. In the past, you said you would consider that. Is that still being considered? — Irene Cramer

- That is not under consideration at this time. The Grounds Access Pass was an experiment that was targeted to this age group, among others. It did not prove financially viable.

32. Who is expected to run the Religion Programs? - Rick Rieser

- A search for someone to fill the position of Director of Religion will be underway soon.