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The Honorable
Ronald N. Weiser

December 22, 2004

Molly Williams
2716 North Ninth St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Dear Molly Williams,

Thank you so much for your letter. The Henry Ford values our visitors' opinions and appreciates feedback on our programs and classes. I respect your opinion and concerns regarding The Henry Ford's decision to discontinue our American Contra Dancing classes in the Lovett Hall Ballroom.

As you may know, we have instituted many exciting changes and improvements at The Henry Ford in recent years. The transformative restoration of Greenfield Village, a new flexible gallery in Henry Ford Museum and new permanent exhibitions are all part of our Board-approved strategic plan that re-focuses the institution on its core business and audiences.

As part of this effort, we have evaluated many programs and special events offered at The Henry Ford to identify those with the greatest fit with our educational mission and our market. Those evaluations are guiding the investment strategies for our limited financial and personnel resources, and forcing our management team to make some tough, but strategically necessary decisions regarding a number of programs and classes we have offered throughout the years.

The fact of the matter is, attendance for our contra dancing classes has dwindled in the last few years and expenses have increased. The Henry Ford subsidizes this program each time it is offered. Moreover, the contra dancing classes' hidden costs such as staff time, set-up, the waxing of the ballroom floor, facility cleaning, etc. are absorbed by the institution. The diminishing attendance mixed with added costs and limited staff resources forced us to cancel this class in these tight economic times.

It is important to note that the decision was made by the senior management team (of which I am a member) and was based solely on achieving ambitious goals in a time of scarce resources. Our catering department had **nothing** to do

with this decision. Catering personnel simply do not make decisions about programs offered.

Decisions like this do not come easily; we understand and appreciate the disappointment they are likely to generate. But to remain a vital enterprise, The Henry Ford must respond rationally to current market needs and interests, and the reality of its limited resources. I hope that you will understand our need to make this difficult decision.

While we will no longer have this program on our class schedule, I would like to extend the opportunity for this group of contra dancers (like other organizations we host) to rent our facilities for their future use. Please contact Nancy Wolter at 313-982-6100 ext. 2300.

I hope this letter clarifies our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian W. Overland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "O".

Christian W. Overland

Director

Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum

The Henry Ford