IN SIDE

Volume 38 | Number 1
I’m really excited about the future of the Bennington Museum! As I look ahead I see great opportunities for the Museum to boldly enhance the experience of all visitors, whether they are excited by the history of this region, or inspired by their love of art.

At this time there are so many bright things to report and I am certain you too will be delighted with this positive news:

- You, our members and supporters, responded in a way we would have never imagined to the matching challenge from an anonymous donor last fall. She pledged to give $75,000 if you would match it 1:1. You stepped forward with such enthusiasm that we raised $145,000, matching it 2:1.
- Our 2017 Spring Annual Fund Campaign was also extremely successful allowing us to continue with our great exhibitions, diverse programs, and stimulating events. As we launch our year-end campaign, we look to you for your continued support.
- The results of both above statements is that for the first time a number of years, Bennington Museum is now operating with a balanced budget. Your generous support, and belt-tightening measures in 2016 have gotten us here and we look forward to keeping that momentum going.
- The outstanding success of this summer’s show, *Grandma Moses: American Modern* kept pace with the 46% increase in attendance garnered from last summer, and also received glowing reviews in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, and the *New York Observer* among other publications.
- We have also joined ArtCountry, a new consortium with the Williamstown/North Adams cultural organizations, including The Clark, Williams College Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival.

The future is bright, but our ongoing plans can only be realized with your continuing involvement. Your support truly makes a difference in helping us meet our mission: to engage and transform our visitors and our community by connecting them to our region’s diverse arts, rich history, and culture of innovation. Our fiscal year 2018 Annual Fund is underway, and for you to maximize your contribution to your favorite museum, please donate before December 31st. A donor envelope has been included in the newsletter for your convenience.

Thank you, and all best wishes,

Robert Wolterstorff
Executive Director
Bennington Museum is pleased to announce the opening of the Early Vermont Gallery. A permanent installation with rotating textiles, this gallery presents life in Vermont from the time when the earliest European settlers arrived in 1761 with only the bare necessities for survival in the wilderness to the early 1800s when Vermont craftsmen achieved a level of sophistication rivaling Boston and New York. Explored through stories and vignettes, this gallery showcases over 85 major pieces and smaller items from the Museum’s extensive historical collection of over 30,000 objects.

Initially, the land now known as Vermont was claimed by both the colonies of New York and New Hampshire, but it was New Hampshire’s royal governor, Benning Wentworth, who began issuing grants for towns in 1749, with the first settlers arriving in 1761. As soon as they were able, Bennington’s settlers built larger houses, acquired finer furnishings, and recreated the familiar culture they had been accustomed to in their hometowns. The earliest piece in this exhibit is a simple six board chest made by Peter Harwood around 1762 when he brought his young family to Bennington. This utilitarian chest is exactly what one might expect to find on the wilderness frontier. However, it was only eight years later when Jedidiah Dewey made a sophisticated corner cupboard and tea table for his son Eldad’s new house. Corner cupboards were built into the most public room of the house, and used to store and display fine china, silver, pewter, and other pieces necessary for entertaining. Tea drinking in particular was a highly ritualized social custom, and owning the furniture and accoutrements associated with serving tea showed off a family’s wealth and social status. The fact that Bennington homes had fancy cupboards and tables specifically dedicated to the social custom of drinking tea less than a decade after the town was settled, speaks to the rapid progress the settlers made.

By 1810, Vermont was one of the fastest growing states in New England. No longer an isolated frontier, Vermont artisans achieved a level of sophistication that rivaled urban centers of Boston and New York. In Rutland, Nichols Goddard created musical clocks that were masterpieces. The first globes in the United States were manufactured by James Wilson in Bradford. George Stedman crafted complicated “bombe” front chests in Windsor. And Phineas Bailey invented the first phonetic shorthand system in East Berkshire.

Growth came to a grinding halt in 1825 with the completion of the Erie Canal, which opened up the West with its flat, easily tillable farmland. Thus began a gradual depopulation of Vermont that has continued into the 21st century. The pace of life in Vermont slowed considerably. Today’s quaint villages and forested hills give little evidence of the early “boom” years. By the twentieth century, Vermont had developed an appeal to tourists as a place that time forgot. The Museum’s Early Vermont Gallery reminds us of the bold and innovative Vermonters who prospered during the state’s formative years.

Callie Raspuzzi
—Registrar and Curator of the Early Vermont Exhibition

New Gallery Highlights

85 major pieces
1762 Peter Harwood Chest
1770 Jedidiah Dewey Cupboard
1810 US Globe by James Bradford

Early Vermont: the newest permanent gallery
Photographs by Laura Gilpin and Her Circle: Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence H. White, and Clara Sippell. After Laura Gilpin’s death in 1979, photographs by her and members of her Circle were kept by her family. A selection of these are on view in this intriguing exhibition. Many of the photographs in the exhibition are platinum/palladium prints, a darkroom process that Gilpin and many Pictorialists revered for its long tonal scale.

The Annual Festival - Time for the Holidays celebrates the creativity of wide range artists as they respond to the works of Nichols Goddard’s Musical Clock, c. 1810 one of the highlights of the new Early Vermont Gallery. The original art created by regional artists is available through a closed-bid auction that ends December 28 at 4:00 pm.

Photographs from the Weichert-Isselhardt Collection of glass plate negatives reflect a life of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Buy Local! depicts the shops and shopkeepers that made Bennington a thriving and vibrant town at the turn of the century.

Early Vermont Life Gallery presents life in Vermont from the time when the earliest European settlers arrived in 1761 with only the bare necessities to the early 1800s when Vermont craftsmen achieved a level of sophistication rivaling Boston and New York. This gallery showcases over 85 major pieces and smaller items from the Museum’s extensive historical collection of over 30,000 objects.

COMING IN 2018

February 1 through March 13
Annual Student Art Show

February 1 through May 6
Southwestern Vermont Health Care - A Century of Caring.

March 31 through June 13
Bennington Collects

June 30 through November 4
Crash to Creativity: The New Deal in Vermont

1. Clarence H. White (1871–1935). The Orchard, 1902. Platinum print, 8 x 6 1/4 inches, courtesy of Brooke Allen
2. Wills Thomas White (1874–1956). Wm. Winslow Hardware, Bennington, VT c. 1899-1920. Glass Plate Negative, 5 x 7 inches, Weichert-Isselhardt Collection, Gift of Tords Hlg Isseihartd and Museum Purchase

Exhibitions made possible in part by the S. Lane Faison Jr. Exhibition Fund.
The George Aiken Wildflower Trail in the Hadwen Woods at the Bennington Museum is a large and engaging woodland garden intended to showcase the many native plants, ferns and flowering shrubs that Aiken — one of Vermont’s best-known and most-respected political figures — grew at his nursery in Putney, wrote about in his book “Pioneering with Wildflowers”, and urged others to grow their gardens as well. Now, entering our ninth year of work by volunteers, a new phase has begun that’s intended to transform the wildflower garden in major ways.

For starters, many of the towering pines at the lower end of the trail have been removed and replaced with birches, other native trees and flowering shrubs such as azaleas and rhododendrons. Many of these pines were already dead or diseased, and weakened to the point where fifty-five of them came down in a single winter storm two years ago. Thinning out these dead and diseased trees allows the sunlight needed for existing hardwoods and new plantings to reach their full potential. At the same time, the open field at the far west end of the trail is being transformed into a large wildflower meadow for sun-loving plants, with more formal plantings -- including coneflowers, ironweed, Queen of the Prairie, New England asters and climbing vines -- around the large post and beam pergola that also has benches where people can relax and enjoy the view.

Many of the logs from the removed trees have been used to form borders for the trails and borders for the planting beds for the wildflowers. Many new wildflowers and flowering shrubs have been added with money from three generous grants provided by the Whipstock Hill Preservation Society.

The Hadwen Woods is an area of a little more than six acres that was donated to the Bennington Museum by the late George Hadwen, the founder of the Bennington Pennysaver and a former museum trustee. The “trail” is actually a series of five connected trails that wind through the pine grove and down along Jennings Brook. Since 2009, close to 500 native wildflowers and shrubs have been added, including Virginia Bluebells, Bleeding Hearts, Dutchman’s Breeches, Mayapples and many others. In addition to planting, watering and weeding, the volunteers have spent many hours widening existing trails and creating new ones, and removing thousands of invasive plants such as buckthorns, briars, bittersweet, burning bush and brambles.

The trail is open to the public, free of charge, and is a delightful place to hike, walk dogs (on leash) and picnic. The long-term goal is have the garden include most if not all of the 318 species of native wildflowers and 44 species of native ferns that Aiken — a two-term governor and six-term U.S. Senator and a true “wildflower pioneer” — wrote about in his 1933 book that eventually went through five printings.

Since work began in 2009 the wildflower trail has been developed and maintained entirely by private donations and volunteers, including Master Gardeners, the Bennington Garden Club, local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, students from the Career Development Center, local residents and students from Southern Vermont College and Bennington.

Anyone interested in doing volunteer work or donating money or plants should contact the co-chairs of the project, Jackie Marro at jcminvt@hotmail.com or Sara Bonthuis at sarabonthuis@gmail.com.
**Book Corner**

Bennington Museum Store has a wide variety of books and catalogues for purchase. Over the past year, Jamie Franklin, curator at the Museum, has played an instrumental role in writing and designing three catalogues which accompanied exhibitions at the Museum. We are certain that you will enjoy your purchase.

**Gatherum of Quiddities: Paintings by Pat Adams**
Pat Adams has been creating rich, lovingly wrought abstract paintings for more than six decades. With sumptuous colors and richly encrusted surfaces built up with stone dust, crushed eggshells, and mica, Adams seeks to bring from the “gatherum of quiddities”—that stew of un-namable visual and emotional qualities of the world—a visual situation intended to generate both intense engagement and quiet contemplation in the viewer.

Her beautifully illustrated 64-page catalogue presents a selection of works surveying her entire career. The book contains an essay by Jamie Franklin, excerpts from selected writings by Pat Adams, and twenty-nine plates and other images. **$24.95 plus shipping.** The exhibition of the same name was on view at Bennington Museum April 1 through June 18, 2017.

**Grandma Moses: American Modern**
In conjunction with the Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont, Bennington Museum was proud to co-curate Grandma Moses: American Modern that was on view at the Bennington Museum through November 5, 2017. The catalogue that was created to accompany this exhibition is scholarly and fully illustrated, and features essays by Jamie Franklin, curator of Bennington Museum, Alexander Nemirov, professor of Art History at Stanford University, Diana Korzenik, professor emerita at the Massachusetts College of Art, and Thomas Denenberg director of Shelburne Museum.

Grandma Moses: American Modern restores Moses’s rightful place within the canon of mid-century American Art. One of the best-known artists of her time, and a true American legend, Anna Mary Robertson “Grandma” Moses (1860–1961) was often marginalized as a latter-day “folk” painter or a phenomenon of popular media. This 128-page book looks at her paintings and the artist’s compelling biography to reassert her role in the development of a culture of modernist art at mid-century. Presenting fresh research, several scholars examine Moses’s name, public persona, painted world, and wildly popular place in American pop culture. Available from the Museum Store at **$30 plus shipping.**

**Holding the Line: Ceramic Sculpture by Stanley Rosen**
By the late 1950s, Stanley Rosen was in the vanguard of American ceramics. He was one of a small cohort—among them Peter Voulkos, John Mason, and Ken Price—who revolutionized ceramics, making of it a freely inventive and richly expressive art form. From February 4 through May 21, 2017 Bennington Museum had on view **Holding the Line: Ceramic Sculptures by Stanley Rosen.** The exhibition surveyed for the first time, a unique, evocative body of abstract ceramic sculpture representing more than a half-century of artistic creation, and established Rosen’s place among the masters of 20th- and 21st-century American ceramics.

Representing this exhibition is a 60-page catalogue that includes a twelve page essay by Jamie Franklin, as well as excerpts of interviews with Kenji Fujita, Pamela Skewes-Cox, and Tom Fels. These were edited by Mary Barringer and reflect Rosen’s Early Life, his Teaching, and Working. The book contains numerous plates interspersed throughout. Available from the Museum Store at **$24.95 plus shipping.**

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Allen McCullough and Randollyn Zinn
Lucie McKee
Donald and Melanie McKenna
Bob and Jean Mead
Antonio Mendola and
Colleen E. Kelley
Nancy Miller
Graham and Justine Mongeon
Renate Moore
Bill Morgan and Judy Matz
Mary A. Morrissey
Jared Newell
Cail O'Brien
Bob and Kathryn O'Leary
Elise Paris
Cathy and Ned Perkins
George and Marianne Peters
Denise Petri
Robert and Alice Pezzulich
Thomas Platt
Kathleen Priorius
Ted Pritchard
Charles and Linda Putney
Jane Radocchia
Ron Radliff and Suzanne Kirkpatrick
Doug Reed and Peg Winship
John and Carolyn Reed
Amalie and Bill Reichblum
David Rekas and Jill Horhoro
Paul and Susan Rice
Bob Richardson and Joan O'Brien
Kenneth and Margaret Roberts
Francis D. and Dorothy B. Robinson
Raymond and Dawn Rodrigues
Stanley Rosen and Jane Sobel
Marshall and Susan Rosenthal
Sanford and Deanne Salzwende
Virginia Sandy
Joanne Sauer
Andrew Scheater and Krissa Coombs
Robert and Martha Sermer
Ron and Alissa Stufle
Eileen and Neal Sherman
Jill Simon and Bette Smith
George and Grace Sohn
Sydney and Heidi Stokes
James and Marilyn Stupka
Isa Svoboda
Robert and Beth Tegart
Gail and Katherine Tiffany
Pat Tobin
Donald Tracht
Randy Tryon
Ronald and Joyce Van Orden
Sarah and Maarten Van Ryckevoer
Susanne and Jim Warren
Carolyn Webb
Tom Webb
Phyllis and Michael Wells
Pat White and Kathy Wagenknecht
Madeline and Robert Whittum
Bob and Michelle Wiegars
Peter and Vicki Wilcox
Beth and Darwin Wilwol
Patrick and Kim Winburn

Cambridge P hysical Society
9
Bennington was changing rapidly at the turn of the 19th century and local photographers captured the people and landscape using negatives on thin plates of glass. Bennington Museum has acquired nearly 2,000 glass plate negatives from Madison Watson (active in Bennington 1888-1899) and Wills T. White (active in Bennington 1899-1940). When White retired he left the glass plate negatives in the attic above his former studio located in downtown Bennington. The building also housed the Bennington Banner and in 1958 the negatives were found by Robert Weichert, photographer for the Banner. Weichert started collecting historic photographs and later hired Tordis Isselhardt to help organize the collection.

Years later, Isselhardt realized that this treasure trove of Bennington images needed to stay in the community. Through a partial purchase and partial gift, the Museum acquired the collection in 2015. Staff, volunteers, and interns have been scanning, cataloging and identifying the collection. Thanks to a grant from the Edwin S. Webster Foundation, the museum’s collection records are now online including over a thousand images from the Weichert-Isselhardt Collection. Over the years these images will provide fascinating material for exhibitions that explore aspects of life in days gone by.

In addition to the Weichert-Isselhardt Collection, the online catalog accessible through our website includes photographs by John Hubbard, Mary Sanford, Frederick D. Burt, William Hayden, and others, as well as art, historic artifacts, books in the museum’s research library, as well as the museum’s other notable collections. We hope you explore this feature and enjoy seeing the many objects housed here at the Bennington Museum.

Callie Raspuzzi
—Registrar
Calendar

**Programs and Events**

**Sunday, December 31**
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Kids’ Noon Year’s Eve Party** - Kids can welcome in the New Year with music, party hats, sparkling grape juice, and the countdown to Noon. $3/member, $5/not-yet-members. Accompanying adults can party with us free of charge. (Does not include admission to the galleries.)

**Saturday, February 3**

**Community Day** is a special day at the Museum when everyone is admitted at no charge and are among the first visitors to see the wonderful spring exhibitions. Explore the galleries, walk the George Aiken Wildflower Trail and more. Mark your calendar to join us.

**Sunday, March 11**
2:00 pm

**Music at the Museum** presents Sue Ann Kahn on the flute, and Susan Jolles playing the harp in a program that includes a flute solo composed by Lionel Nowak, and the premiere of a new composition for flute and harp by Allen Shawn.

**Friday, April 13**

**Spring Party** plans are in the making to celebrate the return of **Bennington Collects**. Meet the collectors represented in this exhibition and find out what inspired them to begin their collection. Refreshments and more. Watch for details.

**Third Thursday of every month**
except January
1:30 to 2:30 pm

**Bennington Museum ABCs** – Designed for children ages 3 to 5 and their caregivers, this pre-school story hour includes stories on the month’s topic, visits to the galleries to observe and talk about a piece of art or object, plus an art or craft activity. The monthly program was developed and is offered in collaboration with the Bennington Free Library. Admission: Free. Registration: Not required. Sponsored by The Bank of Bennington. Watch our website for details about our 2018 schedule. Our first gathering will be on February 15.

**Bennington Historical Society Meetings** are normally held the third Sunday of each month from 2:00 pm. to 4:00 pm in the Ada Paresky Education Center located on the second floor of the Bennington Museum. Each meeting explores a wonderfully interesting topic on the history of Bennington and the area. Watch for details.
NEW GALLERY — *Early Vermont*

Desk and Bookcase owned by James Wilson, ca. 1800, Unknown maker, Cherry, pine, Gift of Mrs. Donald Spencer

Looking Ahead …

Thursday, December 28
Through December 30

December 31
February 1 through May 27
February 1 through May 6
March 11
Opening March 31, 2018
Summer, 2018

The Festival Art Auction closes

Photographs by Laura Gilpin and Her Circle: Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence H. White, and Clara Sipprell

Kids’ Noon Year’s Eve Celebration

*Enthusiasms: Personal Paintings by Jessica Park*

*Southwestern Vermont Health Care - A Century of Caring*

Music at the Museum

*Bennington Collects*

*Crash to Creativity: The New Deal in Vermont*