A Driving Force: Volunteers at the Rufus Porter Museum

Our volunteers make the Rufus Porter Museum who we are. As we reflect on 2017 and look forward to the 2018 season, we want you, our members, friends, donors, and volunteers to know how much we value the work of RPM’s volunteers. The museum would not be able to open its doors without them!

As soon as the snow melted in 2017, our facilities committee volunteers were hard at work alongside contractors ensuring that the new ADA accessible deck and entrances into the museum buildings were completed for opening day in June. The Nathan Church house needed a great deal of attention its move. On the heels of the deck connector and ramp project was the re-wiring of the electrical system in the Church House. John Schuettinger of All Service Electric, a dedicated facilities committee member, generously gave his time to ensure the electrical wiring was safe and functioning. Cleaning the Church House and setting up the “On the Move” exhibit was an all-hands-on-deck job working with director-curator Martha Cummings.

Over the course of the 2017 season our dedicated volunteers designed the Children’s Hour activities, gave tours, manned the museum store, manned the Ice Cream Social, the Plant and Yard Sale, ran the successful Mystery History Tour in August. The week of Curious Arts was a success because of friends and volunteers who gave their time to teach classes and give lectures.

The HVAC system was installed in the Webb House, funded by a grant from the Kendal C. and Anna Ham Charitable Foundation. Volunteers, members, visitors and staff will stay cool this summer and the museum collections will be safe, dry and in a climate controlled building.

Over the winter, with heat in place, facilities committee members completed the renovation work on the second floor of the Webb House. There are two functioning office spaces and a meeting room for staff and volunteers now. RPM volunteers are a vital driving force behind the success of the Rufus Porter Museum!
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For more information visit: rufusportermuseum.org

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Farewell from our Museum Director-Curator

What an exciting year 2017 was at RPM! We introduced many first-time visitors to the Rufus Porter Museum. We also welcomed families and for the first time homeschool groups. Plus, we accomplished some major goals with building improvements.

It has been humbling to reflect back on the year to see all of the progress we have made together. Now the museum has a four-season building which opens up many wonderful programming opportunities; our facilities volunteers have worked tremendously hard to ensure that our museum is accessible, in great shape and clean. They have transformed the second floor of the Webb house into functional office and meeting spaces; our collection grows steadily and our exhibit on Porter continues to develop; programs for children and adults were well-attended and well-received in 2017; last, but most importantly, our volunteers, staff, and visitors enjoyed our energetic museum that exudes the spirit of Rufus Porter.

There are important changes coming to RPM as we head into the spring of 2018. I am saying farewell to you, our members, volunteers and friends of RPM as I take a full-time position as Executive Director with the New Hampshire Boat Museum in Wolfeboro, NH this April. My husband Al and I are excited to move back to his home state and to be closer to family. I will miss RPM, but I leave knowing that our museum is on a great course for the future. My four years here, beginning as a volunteer with the facilities committee, then serving as trustee, and then these past two years serving as director-curator have been humbling and rewarding. Our volunteers are wonderfully talented and dedicated individuals inspired by Rufus Porter whose sage advice “be active, be active” is taken to heart. Thank you for the opportunity and privilege of working for you and the opportunity to lead this museum through a major transition. I also know that I will be leaving RPM in good hands. Onward!

A Message from the Board of Trustees

For the past two years, the Rufus Porter Museum has had the privilege of the directorship of Martha Cummings. Regrettably, that tenure is coming to an end this spring as Martha moves closer to her family in Massachusetts. Martha’s guidance, talent, and patience have served the Museum well.

At the time of her appointment, the RPM was at a major crossroad. The Museum was moving from North High Street to the Webb House on Main Street in the heart of Bridgton. The remaining property on North High was in the process of being sold. The Church House was slated to be physically moved to the new campus to the corner of Main and Church Streets. The renovation of the interior of the Webb House was far from finished, having no plumbing, no heat/ac, no functional office space. The finances were at a challenging point with new funding needed for just about everything. Somehow, Martha was able to accomplish miracles.

By working closely with the dedicated RPM volunteers who provided expertise, know-how and guidance, the new campus became a reality. As Martha moves on to her new position in New Hampshire, the Rufus Porter Museum is fully functional, financially stable, and well organized. Best of all, it is serving its purpose as a beacon on Main Street providing residents and visitors with classes, camps, lectures, history, exhibits and friendships. Martha’s efforts in every aspect of the Museum have been so appreciated. She will be sorely missed.

The Board will also be welcoming a new trustee to take Vincent Osgood’s vacated seat. Vince was instrumental in setting RPM on a better financial course during his term on the board from 2015 - 2017. He was a dedicated trustee and a member of the finance committee who guided the Museum through accounting software changes. Vince left the board just in time to become a new father, as his son Asa Osgood was born only weeks later. We are thrilled for Vince embarking on the journey of fatherhood, but miss having him on the board. Thank you Vince!

~Judy Graham, Trustee
The Rufus Porter Museum Board of Trustees is happy to announce a new board member. Bridgton resident, Noreen Eagleston, was appointed to the Board this January 2018. Noreen is originally from Massachusetts and holds a bachelor’s degree in business from Florida Southern College and a master’s degree in education from University of Southern Maine. She spent most of her career as a field auditor with AIG, with a brief stint as a kindergarten teacher. She has served on several association boards in many capacities. The Board of Trustees is extremely pleased to have discovered Noreen in our midst. Noreen first came to the attention of the Board when she participated in a class during RPM’s Curious Arts Program last year. She and her husband had recently relocated to Bridgton. The Eaglestons had spent over 20 years in the area living in both Fryeburg and North Bridgton. They then spent 5 years in South Carolina, caring for parents. As Noreen says, they decided to move “home to Bridgton”.

She loves all that the Bridgton area has to offer, including year-round sports, good food, a movie theater, and the arts (especially the Rufus Porter Museum)! Noreen will be taking on the role of Secretary to the Board. We welcome her enthusiasm and expertise!

**Introducing Our New Director: Caroline D. Grimm**

The Board of Trustees are pleased to introduce incoming director, Caroline Grimm. Caroline is a long-time resident of Bridgton who is well-known around town. For many years, Caroline has been active with the Bridgton Historical Society, even overseeing Narramissic one summer and marrying her husband, Mike Corthell, on its porch with its amazing view. She loves local history and has written a series of novels called *Voices of Pondicherry*. Caroline has poured over old diaries and records, steeping herself in the lives of past Bridgton residents. Other books, include a story that takes place in Acadia National Park and another series for juniors about a little church mouse named Perley who, rumor has it, may have lived in the South Bridgton Congregational Church.

Caroline moved to Bridgton as a child, living in an old farmhouse full of old treasures and books. After time spent travelling, she finished her undergraduate degree at UMaine - Machias. Later, she earned her master’s degree in business administration at Husson University with the goal of owning her own business. She achieved that goal as an accountant and consultant, helping small businesses and organizations (including RPM) increase their financial efficiency. Her business acumen will serve the Museum well. Where did her interest in history come from? Caroline credits her fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Flint, for making Colonial America come alive by having projects and activities where the students could “live history”. Caroline has carried that memory with her and will use that same model in her vision for RPM activities.

Caroline has also taught in several community colleges and was an assistant professor at Andover/Kaplan. Additionally, she was the assistant bursar at Southern Maine Community College. Martha and Caroline have worked together in the past year teaching a class at senior college in Bridgton, on lectures, and on applying QuickBooks to RPM’s needs.

Though we are very sad to see Martha Cummings move on to a new job, we feel that Caroline’s strong background as a historian and her financial expertise will ably take the Museum into the next chapter of growth.

**Introducing our New Trustee: Noreen Eagleston**

The Rufus Porter Museum Board of Trustees is happy to announce a new board member. Bridgton resident, Noreen Eagleston, was appointed to the Board this January 2018. Noreen is originally from Massachusetts and holds a bachelor’s degree in business from Florida Southern College and a master’s degree in education from University of Southern Maine. She spent most of her career as a field auditor with AIG, with a brief stint as a kindergarten teacher. She has served on several association boards in many capacities. The Board of Trustees is extremely pleased to have discovered Noreen in our midst. Noreen first came to the attention of the Board when she participated in a class during RPM’s Curious Arts Program last year. She and her husband had recently relocated to Bridgton. The Eaglestons had spent over 20 years in the area living in both Fryeburg and North Bridgton. They then spent 5 years in South Carolina, caring for parents. As Noreen says, they decided to move “home to Bridgton”.

She loves all that the Bridgton area has to offer, including year-round sports, good food, a movie theater, and the arts (especially the Rufus Porter Museum)! Noreen will be taking on the role of Secretary to the Board. We welcome her enthusiasm and expertise!
The financial picture for 2017 saw growth and stability for the Rufus Porter Museum. The main sources of revenue for operations continue to be annual appeal, membership, and the Circle of Friends (COF). The multi-year COF pledge program, in its third year has made a tremendous difference in the stability of RPM and is a level of membership which RPM. Another renewed source of income was from admissions.

The retail income from the museum store paid for itself. This revenue source is one that the museum expects to see continued growth. The word is spreading that RPM has an attractive and high-quality museum store. Our goal: for the revenue from the store to reach a level where it can support general maintenance and operations of the buildings.

Business sponsorships for 2017 made it possible to present the Curious Arts Series (CAS) and the Mystery History Tour (MHT). Norway Savings Bank was the underwriter for both CAS and MHT.

Other sources of income were: Amazon Smile; Clynk Bag bottle redemption program; Hannaford’s Bags 4my Cause: Hannaford Helps; RPM’s Annual Plant & Yard Sale; annual Harvest Supper; MHT; and a month of bottle redemption at the Bridgton transfer station (Thank you volunteers who sorted cans and bottles!).

Capital projects in 2017 included the construction of an accessible ramp onto a connector deck between the buildings plus two new entrances all meeting ADA compliance totaling $14,000 completed in the spring which was paid for by funds from the 2016 sale of 67 N High Street property. The other project was the heating and air conditioning system for the Webb House completed in the fall of 2017 funded by a $20,000 grant from The Kendal C. and Anna Ham Charitable Foundation. For the first time in RPM’s history, the museum now has a four-season building!

RPM applied for four grants at the start of 2018. Funding requests were made for: the exterior restoration of the Nathan Church house including storm windows, conservation of a plaster wall, and summer internships. More grants are being sought. Donor and membership cultivation remain as both short term and long term goals. Further development of planned giving will continue as well.

Update on donor/membership database: in the early spring of 2017 RPM began using a new donor/membership management database. With the help of two dedicated volunteers, Frederica Baxter and Judy Graham, the painstaking work of checking names, addresses, email addresses, etc, is nearing completion.
Thank You to our Supporters

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The Circle of Friends members are a society of loyal donors who support RPM at the highest level with a 3 to 5 year commitment of $1,000 or more. They help to ensure the success of RPM for years to come. Their support seeds innovation, bridges funding gaps and builds a solid foundation as we increase programming and outreach in the community. 10% of COF annual pledges goes into the Collections / Acquisitions Fund to aid the development of RPM’s collection.

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**2017 Event Photos**
“Rufus Porter, Billerica,” was the name and town boldly printed on the painted metal dial of a cherry longcase clock. As I related during my presentation in Bridgton on July 31, 2017, I noticed this clock at a November, 2015, auction at Skinner in Marlborough, Massachusetts. Because I had serviced clocks in a house with Porter wall murals, I was vaguely familiar with the artist, but on that auction day I was even more attracted to the town name; Billerica is less than 14 miles from my home in Andover. My final bid, against just one competitor in the sales room, was enough to win me a ‘local’ clock and then kickstart my deep interest in Porter’s lifelong mechanical pursuits and inventions.

Basic research after the auction led me to the two editions of Jean Lipman’s book, and then to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts where I paged through every crumbling issue of American Mechanic. Porter published and wrote much of this groundbreaking 1842 newspaper for about a year before selling what became the template for his founding of Scientific American three years later.

While these publications were fascinating for their mechanical and scientific content, and included some interesting watchmaker ads and horology tidbits, they contained nothing about my clock. The only relevant reference I could find was in my book listing American horological patents, showing one that was issued to Porter on June 22, 1832. The one-line entry appears in the book’s section titled “Striking Part of Clock” with no further details. The disastrous 1836 Patent Office fire in Washington, D.C. destroyed the documents and models which would have told me the entire story.

Those details perhaps are revealed, however, in some unique features of my clock’s eight-day weight-driven movement. While it was fabricated mostly from standard brass and steel parts, probably imported from England, modifications to a few strike-system components were unfamiliar to me and to expert colleagues who also examined the movement. Porter appeared to be addressing technical issues related to moving the hands backwards and easing friction.

The movement’s plates, the two brass rectangles which hold all the wheels in place, also were unique in shape and style. They were connected with screwed-in pillars, rarely seen here or in England. Better yet, “PR” was punched onto the front plate; Porter’s initials, I believe, stamped in reverse order. It is a common and understandable mistake to punch letters, or create a lettered metal punch, in the wrong sequence. There was no other contemporary New England clockmaker with those initials in either order, and I seriously doubt that Paul Revere was involved. To my eye, the form of the letters appears quite similar to the few extant Porter signatures.

There are no other known examples of clocks with Rufus Porter’s name, and there is no indication that he made the solid cherry case, or that he painted or lettered the face. My theory is that, in the early 1830’s, he conceived a few improvements, worked with a nearby clockmaker to incorporate them into a longcase clock movement, filed his patent, and had the clock case built by a local joiner. Most likely, he then stood the clock in the Billerica home where his first wife and children resided while he traveled and pursued his many artistic and mechanical vocations. I visited the old cemetery in Billerica where Eunice Porter was buried in 1848. Two sons, Washington Irving Porter and Stephen T. Porter, occupy adjacent graves. How the clock ended up in another Massachusetts collection until my purchase is undetermined.

The April 4, 1833, issue of New England Artisan: Laboring Man’s Repository reported the issuing of a Rufus Porter, Billerica, clock patent, but seemingly a different and later one. The brief nine lines of description do not correlate to my clock or to the “striking parts” referenced in the 1832 patent. In this 1833 notice, mention is made of improvements to the escapement, how the hour hand is “acted upon”, and most interestingly, an alarm system which strikes a match and lights a candle at the selected time. No specifics about this invention are known either, again probably a victim of the 1836 conflagration, but the identical concept reappeared in actual clocks manufactured and sold by the Ansonia Clock Company in the early 1870’s. I must wonder how many domestic conflagrations of that time could be traced to a malfunction in this automatic nighttime match-striking device.
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These two clock patents seem to confirm that Porter, a true polymath, focused occasionally on clockmaking. This would not be surprising, as the design and mass production of timekeepers was a leading force in the 19th century American industrial revolution spearheaded in New England. He would have been aware of the emergence of many clockmaking firms and innovations, and the resulting flood of affordable timepieces spreading across the new nation. There may be other Rufus Porter clockmaking connections awaiting discovery. Some of his later published inventions also employ clockwork, such as a fire alarm he patented December 28, 1840. He died in 1884 in Bristol, Connecticut, a hub of clock manufacturing, where a local newspaper reported that “there were very few present” at his funeral.

My Bridgton talk referenced other Porter patents, among more than two dozen, which preceded later successful inventions and products. Few of Porter’s concepts appear to have been developed during his peak years since he had little capital and mostly was unable to convince investors to take his ideas to market. His “Aerial Locomotive” is the most alluring with its obvious similarities to blimps and zeppelins. His “Steam Carriage” anticipated the Stanley Steamer and other automobiles, his “Rotary Plough” resembles modern disk ploughs, his “Elevated Railroad” preceded above-ground tracks still seen in many cities, and WWII U.S. Navy dry docks mirror his 1835 “Floating Dock”. Samuel Colt paid Porter $100 for a revolver patent which could have inspired the multi-shot firearms that made Colt’s vast fortunes; an inspiration at odds with Colt’s later recollections of how he conceived the idea. Of course, dreamers are not always the ones enriched by their visions.

I have seen two Rufus Porter inventions which did reach the market. The museum at Historic Deerfield displays in visible storage one of his hand-cranked corn shellers patented in 1938. The AAS in Worcester has an example of his “Revolving Almanack”; another of these was in the collection of famed folk-art expert Nina Fletcher Little. According to a period advertisement, the device new cost 62 cents, wood frame included.

A year after my clock purchase, I placed another high bid for a Rufus Porter item at Skinner. This lot will be much more familiar to his admirers and collectors. It is a small watercolor profile portrait, in its original gilt wood frame, of Sylvester Norton of Suffield, Connecticut. The little painting now hangs on the wall next to my clock, completing for now my They will be separated again while my clock joins a Rufus Porter exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art in Brunswick, Maine. This show, projected for 2019, promises to further bolster Porter as one of our finest exemplars of 19th century Yankee ingenuity.

Bob Frishman has been a horological restorer, scholar, writer and lecturer since 1980. He has repaired more than 7,000 clocks and watches, sold more than 1,700 antique timepieces, written more than 80 published articles, and lectured nearly 100 times on the subject. He is a Fellow of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Chair of its Time Symposium Committee, and a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers in London. He lives and works in Andover, Massachusetts. See www.bell-time.com for more about him. Bob’s article is based on a talk he gave at the Rufus Porter Museum in July 2017.
Volunteer Spotlight: Judy Alderman
By Judy Graham

Judy is the RPM Volunteer Coordinator, responsible for training and scheduling not only the day to day volunteers but those for special events as well. Her dedication to this job is remarkable. So, exactly who is Judy Alderman? If you have been in the Bridgton area for a few years, you surely have met this dynamo. As Judy says, “I like variety and activity in my life.” And she lives this creed, with a smile on her face seemingly at all times.

Judy followed her mother’s footsteps into nursing, serving as an RN for over 30 years in PA, FL, and CA working mainly in surgical areas of the hospital. When she was ready to move on, she began to travel, her true passion. After many years of proposing to her confirmed bachelor (her words!), she married her long time beau, Pete Alderman, a renowned waterskier and a Floridian. At the time, Pete was a senior airline pilot and Judy took advantage of his travel passes to ride along with Pete on his flights. When Pete retired, they took to the roads in a travel trailer, touring the country’s perimeter which is what brought them to Maine. They located a “wow view” piece of property in the Lake Region and moved into their new vacation home in 2002.

Judy joined the Lakeside Garden Club to learn about northern plants and soon became the club president. During this time, the group presented a flower show at Gallery 302, “Art in Bloom,” where the exhibited art was interpreted in fresh flower arrangements, now an ongoing event. As she became more involved at Gallery 302, she saw the need for a “NEMOs” (Non-Exhibiting Member Organization) and rounded up a group of 15 volunteers who would pitch in when the need arose. This group is still going strong, helping out Gallery 302. It was there that exhibitor artist (and RPM board trustee), Beth Cossey, became acquainted with Judy. Beth admired the program of volunteers that Judy was manning and she asked Judy to help out at the Rufus Porter Museum. Soon, Beth was able to turn over her position as Volunteer Coordinator to Judy. In Judy’s words: “I started in June 2017, meeting Director Martha Cummings and the volunteer ‘staff’ members, observing and refining scheduling procedures, learning about the collection, and how to tell Rufus’ story as a docent in the newly-opened Webb House with the relocated Church House next to it.

Meeting our docents, helping with special events, and watching the inquisitive community explore the new addition to downtown was exciting. Every day brought new adventures and problem-solving that offered positive energy to the latest attraction on Main St. It was very reassuring to know how hard everyone worked for the good of this project, seeing it grow in importance and prestige, and to be part of the process.” Judy’s example of the ultimate volunteer is mirrored in the friendly volunteer group who feel strongly about the historic and artistic value of the museum as well as RPM’s influence on education, tourism, and business in Bridgton.

Photo Highlights from the 2017 Mystery History Tour
## 2018 Calendar of Events

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<td>Opening Day</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Member Event: Preview Party</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Curious Arts Series Lecture</td>
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<td>Annual Plant Sale</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bridgton Residents Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-13</td>
<td>Camp Invention</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td><strong>Curious Arts Series Classes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Art in the Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Curious Arts Series Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<th>August</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ice Cream Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>Making Maine Memories</em> Auction Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Curious Arts Series Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<th>September</th>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Harvest Supper at Narramissic</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Museum Day Live</td>
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<th>October</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Last day of the regular season</td>
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<tr>
<th>November</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 - 18</td>
<td>Ladies’ Weekend Out Shopping</td>
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<th>December</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Holiday Open House</td>
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For up to date information on Children’s Hours, programs, events, and talks go to: [rufusportermuseum.org/events](http://rufusportermuseum.org/events)

### Camp Invention July 9 - 13

For students K - 6th grade

In partnership with the *National Inventor’s Hall of Fame* and Stevens Brook Elementary School.

The camp is a hands-on program for kids learning about science, technology, engineering and math.

Innovative and fun!

**Registration forms and information are online:** Rufusportermuseum.org

**Making Maine Memories**

Auction Event at Bridgton Highlands Country Club

**Friday, August 10**

An evening of fun to support the Rufus Porter Museum. Putt for a prize, silent and live auctions, heavy hors d’oeuvres and drinks.

Ring in Bridgton’s 250th with RPM!

### 2018 Curious Arts Series

**July 18—20 and more**

The Curious Arts Series will extend beyond the one week this year. It will include a lecture series on Thursdays in June, July, and August. More classes will be offered throughout the summer as well.

July 18 - 20 will include floor cloth painting, stenciling on fabric, and Paint like Rufus Porter.

For more information please visit: Rufusportermuseum.org
2018 ANNUAL FUND IS UNDERWAY

If you have already made a gift to the 2018 annual fund, thank you. Any size contribution is welcome and appreciated - to make a gift now use the form below or visit our website at rufusportermuseum.org.

NAME

E-MAIL ADDRESS

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

HOME PHONE

ALTERNATE PHONE

☐ WORK  ☐ CELL

I want to make a contribution to the 2017 Rufus Porter Museum Annual Appeal in the amount of:

☐ $10,000  ☐ $5,000  ☐ $2,500  ☐ $1,000  ☐ $500  ☐ $250  ☐ $100  ☐ $50  ☐ $35  ☐ Other $________

☐ Enclosed is a check in the amount of $________

(Please make checks payable to Rufus Porter Museum)

☐ Please charge my credit card (MasterCard, Visa, Discover)

NAME ON CARD

CARD NUMBER

EXP. DATE

CVV CODE

SIGNATURE

☐ I have enclosed my company’s matching gift form.

☐ I have included Rufus Porter Museum in my will.

☐ I wish to remain anonymous in RPM publications.

Rufus Porter Museum, PO Box 544, Bridgton, ME 04009

The Rufus Porter Museum is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.