



The Rufus Porter Museum & Cultural Heritage Center

The mission of the Rufus Porter Museum is to increase the enjoyment, knowledge, and pride of our communities by bringing to life the world and the inspiring works of Rufus Porter—a remarkable American artist and inventor

NEWSLETTER ~ SPRING 2012

RPM's New Vision and New Mission

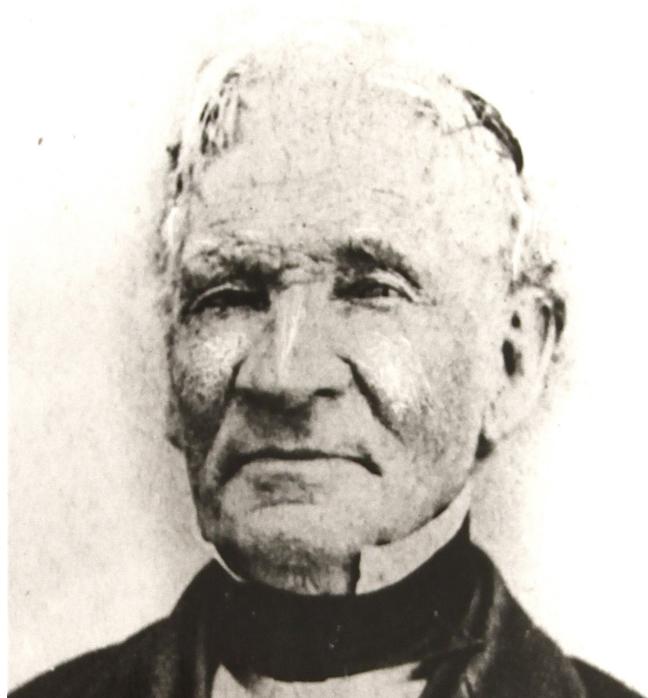
When Rufus Porter died in 1884 at the age of ninety three, *Scientific American* stated in his obituary that, “although he has not in any sense attained the fame and eminence of Morse, a Howe, or Edison, Rufus Porter will live as one of the best and brightest examples of the versatility of American invention.” That, of course, was not the half of it; Porter was also a musician, teacher, portraitist and painter of sublime wall murals. And an awareness of his significance has escalated.

With the growing interest in Rufus Porter, the acquisition of the Jonathan Poor murals, and the purchase of the Webb Gallinari house, the RPM Board of Directors decided to set an ambitious course for the museum from 2012 to 2015. They and the museum’s advisors, stakeholders, and the executive director worked diligently over the past six months to develop a shared vision and a strategic business plan to achieve the vision. Foremost in that vision is a commitment to offer museum visitors and its communities an expanded and lively experience in the art *and* science of Rufus Porter as well as the world and era in which he lived and worked.

Developing a strategic plan included crafting a mission statement that captured the driving, unifying idea for the museum’s new appearance, programs, exhibits, collecting policy, and reputation. This statement had to be meaningful and motivating to the staff, leaders, supporters, visitors, members, and volunteers. It had to point to Rufus Porter’s life, art, inventions, and writing as central but not limiting to its scope. **And it also had to convey the idea of a with those interested in the arts *and* sciences.** The museum is, above all, dedicated to capturing and sharing with the public Rufus Porter’s uniquely American blend of creativity, ingenuity, practicality, and energy in a setting that promotes an exploration of the world and era in which Porter lived and worked. We believe this is reflected in the new mission statement printed on our mast head.

Rufus Porter Fun Fact:

Did you know that the inspiration for Rufus Porter’s “Aerial Steamer” was his desire to rescue Napoleon from his imprisonment on St. Helena?



Rufus Porter aged about 80,
when he was living in Plantsville Connecticut.
Photograph from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

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Courtney Lancour
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From the Executive Director

It is an exciting time at the Rufus Porter Museum! I begin my journey as the new Executive Director with the guidance of a terrific Board of Directors and Advisors, a skillful staff, and an ambitious and promising strategic plan as our roadmap.



RPM's new Strategic Plan for 2012-2015 calls for a renewed emphasis on the arts and sciences of Rufus Porter and his world in all our collections, exhibits, and educational programs. It will be essential, if challenging, for the museum to maintain its unique and strategic focus on Rufus Porter himself while also developing and presenting a broader representation of folk and decorative arts and practical science that will keep the museum relevant, fresh, and innovative. I invite you to read our strategic plan (you'll find a link on our website homepage) and I welcome your comments on our Facebook page or by any means of contact listed below.

While artifacts, objects, and art are what fill a museum, it is the people who make it. RPM's bold new vision depends vitally on people: a professional staff of exceptional quality and commitment; a strong and active Board of Directors to offer guidance, help, ideas, work, and resources; and a host of dedicated volunteers, inspired interns, and most critically, supportive citizens. Some of the pleasures of my job are meeting new people, working with talented people, and thanking people who care about the museum and give so generously of their time and resources. Today I want to especially thank Nelle Ely, the president of the RPM Board of Directors for the past two years; we wouldn't be where we are today without *you*, Nelle! Come join us as patrons, docents, committee members, and donors—it's going to be a fun and meaningful journey!

Sincerely,

Andrea



**Find us on
Facebook**

For weekly updates about events and fundraisers, please check us out on Facebook. Also visit our website for more information on registering and online donations.

Feel free to call us at 207.647.2828 or email us at rufusporter museum@myfairpoint.net

The Rufus Porter Museum™

207.647.2828

67 North High Street, PO Box 544 Bridgton, ME 04009

rufusporter museum@myfairpoint.net

www.rufusporter museum.org

New Faces at the Rufus Porter Museum



With a long family history in Bridgton and having lived in Naples most of my life, I have a deep appreciation for the unique and charming history of our area. So I am excited to be joining such a great organization that is working to preserve our community's culture. Recently, I graduated from Emmanuel College in Boston with a BA in history and am currently working on my MBA online at Southern New Hampshire University. I hope to bring my love of history and passion for community service to an already amazing organization.

New Administrative Assistant, Samantha Scarf

During the past three years I have been living in Haines, Alaska, a small town in the northern panhandle. I have enjoyed the salmon, glaciers, and hiking that Haines has to offer, but I am very excited to return to the “lower 48” to explore Bridgton and to tackle some new education projects at the Rufus Porter Museum. I started working in museums at the age of 16 as a docent at the Millard Fillmore Museum. Since then I have been working towards a career in museum education. Most recently I have been serving as the Education Coordinator at the Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center, in Haines. In the fall, I will pursue a master's degree in Northern Studies and Museum Education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Education Intern, Susannah Dowds



My name is Courtney Lancour and I am from Burlington, WI. After completing this internship I will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) with a B.F.A. degree in Graphic Design and Arts Management. I stay involved on campus through our UWSP student chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Art (AIGA) and through volunteer activities at our Newman University Parish. Throughout my time at UWSP I have had several internship opportunities that include Renaissance Learning Inc., the Q Artists Co-op Gallery, the Student Involvement Office, and the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra. Outside of school I like to travel, hike, camp, and paint. This will be my first time to Maine, and I am very excited for the opportunity to promote the Rufus Porter Museum.

Marketing Intern, Courtney Lancour

2012 Events Calendar

June

2012 SPECIAL EXHIBIT “THE ART OF GAMEBOARDS”



Colorful gameboards have long intrigued folk art collectors with their small size, wonderful graphics, and association with fun times in the past. Much like collectable Amish quilts, folk art gameboards reflect contemporary taste. The special exhibit for summer 2012 at the Rufus Porter Museum will feature 19th century decorated gameboards such as Checkers, Parcheesi, and Wheels of Fortune. Game playing is an extension of the real life chase, hunt, and battle or the competitive human spirit. This exhibit will surely remind us of happy childhood hours spent in the “chase” with family and friends, and perhaps suggest fun ideas for decorating our homes. Make plans to visit us on June 12th for the exhibit preview!

June 12: Preview Party fundraiser for the 2012 Special Exhibit at 5:00pm at the museum. \$20 suggested donation and please RSVP by June 8.

June 13: Opening day Noon-4:00 pm

June 23: Unique House Tour, see page 8 for details

Children’s Schedule:

Children’s Heritage Series at the museum: June 16, 30; July 7, 14; August 4, 18

“Books Alive” at the Bridgton Library: June 27; July 11, 25; August 8 from 4:00-4:30

Exciting Children’s Summer Series

Young visitors have always been welcome at the Rufus Porter Museum, but this year promises to be especially kid-friendly, featuring a variety of programs just for kids! We’ll be kicking off the summer with “Children’s Cultural Heritage Days.” Starting on June 16th children and families are invited to discover the museum through special tours, observation and hands-on activities, bringing the world of Rufus Porter to life.

In addition to new children’s programs at the museum, we are excited to work with the Bridgton Library to promote reading and exploration with the summer reading program. The museum will offer “Books Alive,” a story hour at the Bridgton Library, featuring a Maine-themed book and exploring the stories of our community.

Keep your eyes peeled around town, the Rufus Porter Museum just might crop up. In anticipation of our move to the Webb Gallinari house, we’ll be celebrating the 4th of July by playing “All American Games” on the side lawn of our future location. Later in July, we’ll be bringing children’s art activities to “Art in the Park,” Gallery 302’s annual art festival in Shorey Park. Stay tuned for more events throughout this summer, posted on our new website calendar at <http://www.rufusportertermuseum.org>.

Parcheesi? Cribbage? Checkers? We are looking for board games for visitors to play. If you have a board game that you would like to donate please call Susannah at 207.647.2828.



July

July 4: All-American Games, special 4th of July event on the side lawn of the Webb-Gallinari house, 121 Main Street, the future museum site

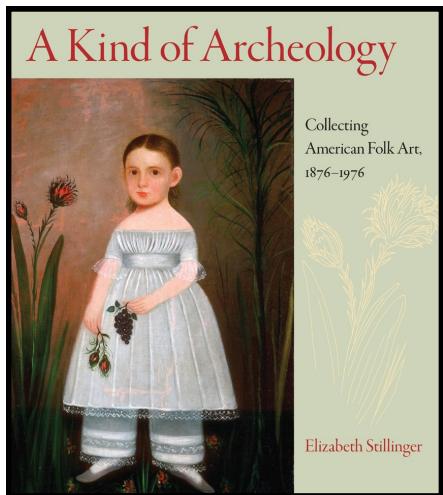
July 21: "Art in the Park", 2-4 pm Shorey Park, base of Highland Lake in Bridgton

July 23-July 28: Cultural Heritage Series

The Rufus Porter Museum is holding its annual Cultural Heritage Series (CHS) from July 23-July 28. The CHS is a variety of classes that teach traditional folk art techniques. The classes this year include: making stained glass, floorcloth painting, tin piercing, creating Rufus Porter style wall murals, market basket, painting a game board, the art of quilling, vinegar graining, paper making, hook rugs, learning to play board games and theorem painting. This program follows our mission to increase the enjoyment, knowledge, and pride of our communities by bringing to life the world and the inspiring works of Rufus Porter—a remarkable American artist and inventor. For more details regarding classes and registration, check us out on Facebook, visit our website, call us at 207.647.2828 or email us at rufusportertermuseum@myfairpoint.net.



July 27: Reception and book signing at 5:00pm at the Rufus Porter Museum, Keynote talk by Elizabeth Stillinger and Ruth Wolfe **7:00 pm**, at First Congregational Church, 33 South High Street, Bridgton.



This year's Cultural Heritage Series Keynote speaker, Elizabeth Stillinger, is a distinguished scholar and lecturer in the fields of American decorative arts and collecting and author of six books, most recently *A Kind of Archeology: Collecting American Folk Art, 1876-1976*. She will discuss her book and the pioneer American folk art collectors, highlighting the impact of Jean Lipman on the collection of American folk art in the 20th century. Stillinger will be joined by Ruth Wolfe, a prominent writer and editor in the field of American folk art and a long-time associate of Jean Lipman at *Art in America* magazine. Wolfe also worked with Lipman organizing exhibitions at the Whitney Museum.

Fall 2012

Fall Cultural Heritage Series: September 14-15th

In addition to our summer Cultural Heritage Series, we will be holding another, shorter series this fall. The fall series will focus on the techniques of traditional textiles, including tatting, knitting, and spinning. Our keynote speaker will be Katherine Dirks, recently retired from the National Museum of American History as a textile curator. She will discuss the conservation, caring and dating of textiles both in a museum setting as well as at home. Look for more information about fall classes coming soon on our Facebook page and our website.

Progress On The Museum's New Home

When the museum purchased the Webb-Gallinari house on Main Street in Bridgton in January 2011, the plan was to be operating from the site by this summer. Several grants were received for some restoration both inside and out, and estimates were made for the necessary work, and then the asbestos was identified so all work ceased. President Nelle Ely forged ahead, however, and secured funding from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to assess the remediation needs and to fund the removal of the asbestos.

As this was not completed until June 1, the plan now is to be in the building by this winter, dependant on receiving grants to fund the restoration this summer. Work on the exterior renovations, funded by the Community Development Block Grant, will not begin until August 1 after bids have been accepted.

So, while it has not appeared anything was happening at the new site, progress has continued. Community members Andrew Lowell and Roger Lowell volunteered their time and equipment to remove two trees causing deterioration to the house, and were assisted by Blaine Chapman and Jon Richardson in the clean up. We are very grateful to all of them, and to Hayes True Value Hardware for providing the use of a lift to aid in the project, and to the Rolfe Corporation for receiving the resulting brush gratis.

Plans for the new museum are exciting as the new RPM in a central location will grow in its success and contribute greatly to Bridgton's downtown revival by adding an important attraction increasing foot-traffic and commerce, elevating reputation and pride, and offering expanded and relevant educational programs to adults and children. In turn RPM is counting on citizens and businesses of Bridgton and the Lakes Region to promote and help it.

Please call us if you would like to join us in this worthwhile venture; there are many volunteer opportunities and we sincerely appreciate all donations.



MEMBERSHIPS: Our new membership year as of 2012 is from January 1st to December 31st. The Rufus Porter Museum is growing at a very fast pace and we are counting on as much support from our members as possible. Every dollar we receive goes directly to the museum and our programs. We are trying to increase our revenues through fundraisers, store sales, and grants, but our members provide us with a major portion of our income.

DONATIONS: If you would like to make a donation to support the museum or special projects like the Jonathan D. Poor Mural Restoration, please call us at 207.647.2828. We are now able to accept your donations of stock. And Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

The Rufus Porter Museum is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

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Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

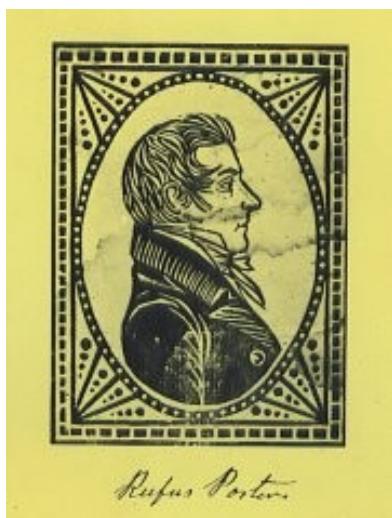
Membership Level:

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$25)	<input type="checkbox"/> Samuel Farnsworth Circle (\$250)
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$40)	<input type="checkbox"/> Enoch Perley Circle (\$500)
<input type="checkbox"/> James Lombard Circle (\$100)	<input type="checkbox"/> Richard Kitson Circle (\$1,000)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rufus Porter Circle (+\$1,000)

Make checks payable to THE RUFUS PORTER MUSEUM, PO Box 544, Bridgton, ME 04009
MasterCard Visa
Card # _____ Exp Date _____ CVV # _____
Signature _____
Cardholder's name (printed as it appears on the card) _____

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Docent Volunteer Opportunities



Interested in donating to the museum, but want to get more involved with actual day to day activities? Our docent program might be just what you are looking for. Docents are a key component to the operation of the museum and our ability to remain open regularly to the public is dependent on them. Docents give guided tours for visitors through the Museum, discussing the works on display and answering any questions. They also assist us in the small gift shop attached to the museum. Another important role that docents play within the museum is their work on committees that include collections and program, infrastructure, operations, and planning and external development. We are grateful for the time and energy our docents put into the Museum, and we cannot thank them enough. We do offer special enrichment programs for our docents. In the past we have gone to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston to see an exhibit in the new American Wing that featured a Rufus Porter wall mural. We

will be holding training sessions for our docents on June 5th at 1:30 pm and 12th at 10:00 am. If you are interested in becoming a docent for the 2012 season, please call us at 207.647.2828 or email us at rufusportermuseum@myfairpoint.net.



*The Rufus Porter Museum
and Cultural Heritage Center*
67 North High Street ~ PO Box 544
Bridgton, Maine 04009

“Rufus Porter Museum Unique House Tour.”

Once in a Lifetime -- Rare Opportunity to
View Important Bridgton History...

June 23, 2012 from 5 to 7 pm

Only 60 tickets available!

\$60 per member, \$75 for nonmembers

(please consider becoming a member for lower price!)

Join us for hors d'oeuvre and libations and exclusive tour of this historic home filled with American antiques.

Kindly RSVP by June 18

Make checks to: Rufus Porter Museum, PO Box 544,
Bridgton, ME 04009

Please include your email address and you will receive electronic confirmation

WHITEFARM c 1825

Dr. Farnsworth, Jr. was the son of Bridgton's first physician. He attended Bridgton Academy, later becoming a trustee, and received a medical degree from Dartmouth College after studying medicine with his father. He practiced in Bridgton his entire life. An esteemed citizen, he served as selectman, town clerk, and treasurer. In 1825, Dr. Farnsworth and his wife, Nancy Mussey Farnsworth built a beautiful Federal style house near Bridgton village, now the subject of the second annual. The stunning family portrait of this prominent Bridgton family was painted in 1827 by George Washington Appleton shortly after the Farnsworth moved to “Whitefarm,” and is the property of the Rufus Porter Museum. It will be on display in the house once again in celebration of the important evening.

