The Rufus Porter Museum enjoyed a stellar 2015 season. The RPM had a huge increase in visitors, especially children, docents and contributions. 2016 will bring even greater change as the RPM focuses on opening in the Webb House with an even greater emphasis on Rufus Porter’s full life and achievements. *Scientific American*, one of his many lasting successes, gives us great insight into the man. As these excerpts from Volume 2 of 1846 show, Rufus Porter not only emphasized science, but the arts, humor, sage advice and fun. His quote, from when he started *Scientific American*, “… it will convey more useful intelligence to children and young people than five times its cost in school education,” along with what he published provides the Rufus Porter Museum a sound foundation to build our organization.
Dear Friends,

2015 has been an exciting year. Many firsts have been had and the prestige of the Rufus Porter Museum has grown greatly. This is all due to the generous gifts of many in time and funds. The RPM is a reflection of all involved and we thank you.

I want to also express a warm thank you to our outgoing President, Judy Graham, who helped guide the new vision for the RPM. Without her strong leadership the RPM would not have advanced as it has.

Please join us in anyway you can this coming year as we build on our 2015 successes, too numerous to name. As important as bringing Rufus Porter’s prototype rifle to the museum was, the biggest success in my mind was our new Exploratorium, a place for children of all ages to discover the genius of Rufus Porter. This companion exhibit never failed to excite and challenge our visitors.

Always,

John

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From the Museum Director - Curator

Our remarkable docents and interns definitely keep us going in the right direction!

(L to R): Kathy Snyder, Marcia Harris, Donna Boatwright, Frederica Baxter, Therese Johnson, Ginny Eilertson, Barbara Yates, and Laura Friedman. Beth Cossey, Judy Graham, Adrianna Wissmann (intern), Pat McHatton and Midge Curry. Not Pictured: Carol Davis, Carole Ayer, Deb Fitts, Martha Cummings, Kaylee Martin (intern), Margaret Sanborn, Drew Sanborn, Anne Snodgrass, Bonnie Trafford, Marian Precht, and Sally Chappell.

2015 Docents and Interns

Have you joined the Circle of Friends?
www.rufusportermuseum.org/#!support/
The 2015 Facilities Committee has been very busy this past year. They have been very active in the renovation of the Webb House and maintaining the existing RPM properties. They were instrumental in assisting John Michalowski, Jr. and Samantha Scarf in installing the 2015 exhibits. A huge thank you to Joe Barth, Martha Cummings, Don Eilertson, Jeff Frey, Judy Graham, Dave Johnson, and John Schuettinger, along with all the other volunteers you recruited to help!

The RPM would like to thank Samantha Scarf for all her hard work the past 3 years. Samantha has joined the Portland Symphony Orchestra and will be sorely missed.

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**Cultural Conscience**

The old adage that human beauty is only skin deep and true character is the beauty lying within is also true in the world of folk art. Most of what we consider folk art today was utilitarian in its day, serving a need beyond just visual enjoyment. Murals by the Rufus Porter and others where story boards of the times and those who commissioned them. Many of their residential over mantels gave insight into the homeowner or the use of the home. Below is a photograph of the Church House over mantel which has a church in the middle of a town, symbolic of the home’s use, but also signifying the importance of the Church House in the community. At one time the Church House was central to life in Bridgton and its moral fabric. Stories and history lie within folk art.

The Hopi Clown Kachina in the photograph to the left is a fine example of folk art and one that you should look below its surface beauty. Finely carved from cottonwood root, this Kachina not only reflects the artist’s ability, but it also speaks of Hopi life. Both the rain stick and ear of corn symbolize two of their needed staples provided by the spirits. It is beyond the surface, though, that we find a much more significant story. Referred to as the conscience of the community, the Clown Kachina stands as a reminder to society the need to be serious about life, but to also have fun when appropriate. Kachinas are visual storytellers of the parables of Hopi life.

The Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe speaks volumes in its Mission Statement on this topic. “We believe Folk Artists create and share their beliefs, dreams and cultural values; and that people understand themselves and each other better through seeing, creating and interacting with traditional arts.”

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“It is the duty of all to be industrious, and improve all their precious time in doing what is useful.”

Rufus Porter

1852 – *Essential Truth* – Page 23
2015 in Photographs
The Movers and hopefully not Shakers of Bridgton!

The Rufus Porter Museum is truly "on the move." An important step is to move the red Church House physically downtown—but, we asked, how do we do that? To that end, as museum director, John Michalowski, often suggests, we asked the question: "What would Rufus do?" In answer, we begin the moving process with an "ingenious" fundraising project: anyone can donate $10 for each foot the house must travel to get to its downtown destination. That distance is 3500 feet. $10 per foot equals $35,000 which will move the building. Thank you Cindy Gompert for the initial idea!

We don't have the horse-drawn Porter moving machine, but Mr. Dana Watson, who moved the house up to North High Street, will move it back down for us with his house moving truck and equipment. We think Rufus would approve.

We want to have the Church house resting on its Church Street foundation—very well-named, we think!—by June, so be the first on your block to donate and help us fill the squares to reach our goal!
“CLYNK - CLYNK” Toasting Success!

The Rufus Porter Museum is always looking for new and different ways to raise funds for education and operations. This past year, we instituted two new programs. Trustee Sally Chappell, an avowed environmentalist, signed us up at Hannaford for their “Clynk” program. The Museum was provided with green recycling bags labeled with a bar code for RPM. The bags have been distributed to anyone who agreed to donate the proceeds from their redeemable bottles and cans to RPM through Clynk. The donor simply fills the green bag, takes it to Hannaford and scans the bar code before depositing. The proceeds from our Clynk donations slowly mounted up over the summer months. At this writing, RPM has received over $120.00! If you are interested in joining our efforts, please call the office and Clynk bags will be available to you. We would like to expand this program and need new donors.

Sally Chappell was also able to sign up RPM for the month of October to be the recipients of all the donated redeemables at the Bridgton Transfer Station. This actually was a labor intensive undertaking. Sally, her husband Jon and Brian Cushing shouldered the bulk of the work by collecting the donations all four days that the Transfer Station is open. This was a big and not-so-clean job! They loaded the cans and bottles and transported them to the redemption center to drop them off. At last count, the month of October yielded over $600. An “easy” way to fund raise?? Yes and no, depending on who you are asking! Our sincere thanks to the Chappell’s and Brian Cushing for their tireless work.

Do you have a fund raising idea for us? We are always looking for new ways to increase our funding. Can you help us out? We welcome new volunteers!!

Changes at RPM! And clarification:

The Trustees would like to update you on some staff and board changes at the Rufus Porter Museum.

After a few months sabbatical, we welcome John Michalowski back to the helm! While we restructured our finances, John was able to take a well-earned break but has returned as the Museum Director—Curator. John made many changes during his time with us over the last year and a half. He strongly encouraged us to focus not only on Porter’s murals and art but on the amazing inventive genius of Rufus Porter. He was able to obtain a loan from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art of the original prototype of Porter’s revolving rifle, the forerunner to the Colt revolver. We also now have a replica of the elevated railroad from Porter’s original design as part of our collection due to efforts by John. Under John’s guidance, we have moved leap years ahead on the renovations at the Webb house. We are most fortunate that John will continue his association with the Museum.

Our Associate Director, Samantha Scarf, recently began her new position with the Portland Symphony Orchestra. Sam came to us as a recent college graduate and embraced the Museum. She began as our admin and was promoted several times. Samantha’s breadth of knowledge will be sorely missed by all of us! She has continued to help us out during our transition time. We wish Samantha the best in her new position.

We also have many changes on the Board of Trustees. After serving as president for three years, Judy Graham has passed the reigns on to two people! She will continue on as a board member while Beth Cossey and Margaret Lindsey Sanborn will lead the Board as co-chairs. Board members, Sally Chappell and Brian Cushing are matriculating off of the Board and will be sorely missed. Happily, longtime Trustee Deb Fitts will be returning and new two new Trustees, Therese Johnson and Dianne Barth, will be great new additions. Ginny Eilertson will take over as secretary and Barbara Yates will continue as treasurer. Rounding out the Board are Trustees Martha Cummings, Don Eilertson and Vince Osgood.

On our annual appeal letter, as the Board of Trustees were updated to reflect the new positions, long time Trustee, Judy Graham, was inadvertently not re-added to the list. Be assured that she is continuing her long association with the Rufus Porter Museum!