NEW HOME FOR THE RUFUS PORTER MUSEUM

When the Webb Gallinari house (above) went on the market last fall, the RPM Board of Directors seized the opportunity to preserve this well-known landmark in downtown Bridgton and to improve the museum’s visibility. In January 2011 the Board purchased the Webb Gallinari house (c. 1840) and began to develop a multi-phased plan to move the museum to this important new location.

In the first phase of this project the rooms in the Webb Gallinari house will be turned into gallery, office, research, and gift shop space. The second phase of the project will entail moving the red Church house building (c.1790) on North High Street (in which the museum is currently located) to the Main Street property.

The Lindberg Family purchased the current museum property in 2004 to preserve the murals in the Church house and to make them accessible to the public. They generously donated the Church house and the adjacent green house and property to the museum in 2011. The green house and property on North High Street is for sale and when sold the proceeds will retire the mortgage on the Webb Gallinari house.

The final phase of the museum’s plan will be to construct a new barn/gallery, which will house murals by Rufus Porter and his nephew Jonathan Poor (see article on donated Poor murals). The end result will be a museum campus comprised of the barn, the Church house, and the Webb Gallinari house. This campus next to the library will create a new cultural center for the town.

The RPM Board has taken a leap of financial faith in order to make the museum more integral to the community while providing a home for murals created by the Rufus Porter School of Landscape Painting, which are some of New England’s greatest art treasures. This ambitious plan will give Bridgton an art museum of the highest quality.
2011 INTERN PROGRAM

Our fifth summer intern program was an essential part of our successful 2011 season. Interns devote half their time conducting tours of the museum, and half toward developing a goal for their career that will also benefit the museum. We thank Amy Summer from Indiana and Adriene Katz from Vermont for joining us.

Amy Summer (right) is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Library Science, and received university credit for organizing our archives and conceptualizing plans for a research center in the Webb Gallinari house. Her contacts with libraries in local non-profits will be invaluable as we continue to develop the research center.

Addie Katz (left) is a social media expert and she developed guidelines for the museum to become more involved in communication via the internet. Having completed her Master’s Degree in museum studies, she wrote a timeline on the life of Rufus Porter for the Scientific American website in September, which has had great visibility. Rufus Porter, as you will remember, founded the publication Scientific American.

WOMEN’S LITERARY UNION

The WLU relocated to a smaller space in Portland this past fall and donated many of their period furnishings to the RPM, including furniture, entertaining dishes, and smaller items that will be beneficial in furnishing our new facility. We are most grateful for their generosity.

EULA SHOREY

Eula Shorey (seated) was the guest of honor at the museum’s June 20th preview party for the 2011 exhibit on weathervanes, “Folk Art On High.” She was an early appreciator of weathervanes and her photographic images of them in southern Maine were an important part of the exhibit. Eula Shorey passed away this past November 2011. She will be sorely missed by this museum as well as the Bridgton community.

VOLUNTEERS & DOCENTS

Our growing list of volunteer museum consultants now includes Tom Johnson, Linda Lefko, and Miranda Peters. A Finance Advisory Committee with community leaders Norm Nicholson, Mike Tarantino, and Chuck Renneker was formed to guide us through our monetary decisions in the coming year.

Our docent program, more important than ever, increased in numbers this summer. Docents contributed more than 192 hours this season. We offer special educational programs to our docents, which included a trip to Boston in September to view the new American Wing at the Museum of Fine Arts, featuring a Rufus Porter wall mural on exhibit. Our ability to be open to the public on a regular basis is dependent on our volunteer docents, and we cannot thank them enough for their tireless efforts in the 2011 season. If you want to join the program or want to volunteer your services in 2012 please call us at 207.647.2828.
Excitement at the museum increased in April 2011 when Norma and Glenn Haines signed a deed of gift to donate three rooms of wall murals located in their East Baldwin home to the museum. In their new book, *Folk Art Murals of the Rufus Porter School, New England Landscapes, 1825-1845*, scholars Linda Lefko and Jane Radcliffe identified these walls as the best work of Jonathan D. Poor, a nephew of Rufus Porter. Poor decorated most of the known walls in Maine, but these are his best. They are signed, dated “1840,” and have never been over painted or covered with wallpaper. The Haines’s generous donation will enhance the museum’s status as the central source of information on the Porter Landscape School, providing visitors with an experience viewing the best folk art in New England.

This past summer and fall the Poor murals were extricated from the house along with the original woodwork, flooring, and staircase. This delicate project is under the guidance of David Ottinger, an expert in the field who has previously removed over 100 murals. The photo below shows an eighteen foot wall being lifted out of the upstairs of the East Baldwin house by a crane.

News stories about the donated walls appeared in the *Bridgton News*, the *Portland Press Herald*, the *Boston Globe*, and even the *New York Times* (April 5th). The widespread publicity for this mural gift recognized it as one of the most important donations of an art treasure for many years in Maine. Since the museum had no funding in place to cover the unexpected and urgent expense of removing the walls and restoring the home for Norma and Glenn Haines, we have been reaching out to the community, collectors, and philanthropies for help. Many have given generously towards completion of this worthy project, but much more is needed.
The Rufus Porter Museum was awarded several important grants this past year:

* The Maine Arts Commission Cultural Facilities Accessibility Program awarded the museum $3,700.00 to prepare the first floor front rooms of the Webb Gallinari house for use as exhibit galleries.

* The Maine Community Foundation awarded the museum $2,475.00 to be used for The Cultural Heritage Series and lectures.

* A Federal Community Development Block Grant for $24,200.00 was awarded to improve the outside appearance of the Webb Gallinari house.

* The Davis Family Foundation granted the museum funding to cover the salary of the two 2011 interns, and to support a series of public lectures and art classes for children planned in the coming year.

We thank these funders for their support and faith that the Rufus Porter Museum makes life better for our community.

Our June 20th preview party for the 2011 exhibit, the Historic Home Tour in July, Cultural Heritage Classes, the Mystery Party fundraiser in August, and the November 5th dinner at the Black Horse Tavern have greatly contributed to our increasing efforts to fund our new projects. It is so important when our members, staff, and volunteers to join in the fun of planning and attending fundraising events. We hope to see you at our new fundraisers during winter/spring 2012!

Director Diane Hoppe left RPM in May 2011 after bringing new professionalism to the museum. She accomplished much since her arrival in 2010 and the museum was fortunate to have her expertise and dedication during a difficult growth period. Rufus Porter Museum wishes her the best in all of her new endeavors.

Andrea Hawkes, Ph.D. (right), who is working with the Board of Directors as a museum consultant continues as the Interim Director. Dr. Hawkes formerly served as Executive Director at Tate House Museum, and worked for the Museums at Old York and Historic New England. A Maine native, she earned her degrees at UMaine and has taught American history, and edited and published several books on Maine history.
A heartfelt thank you goes out to our sponsors for their continued support of our fundraising efforts and educational programs. They make so much of what we do possible. Please mention our name when you visit their establishments.

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**In Kind Donations**
- Robert Kimball, Esq. of Harrison, Maine, has provided the museum's legal work pro bono since the museum was founded in 2005. His in-kind donation was especially important this year with the Lindberg Family's donation of the North High Street property, the sale of the acre lot behind the donated property, and the purchase of the new museum property on Main Street. We are deeply grateful for Mr. Kimball's generosity.

**2011 Contributors**

- Allen & Joan Erler
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- Jan Whitlock
- Timothy Wile
- Charles & Phyllis Wilson
- Marge Zacharkow
- Annette Zadnik

Volunteer efforts by our docents, Board of Directors, Advisors, and the growing list of Volunteers who have given their time to work on the Web Gallinari house, make this museum a reality—Thank You!
2012 SPECIAL EXHIBIT  
“ART OF THE GAMEBOARD”

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 in June for the opening!
Folk Art Murals of the Rufus Porter School: New England Landscapes 1825-1845 are on sale now for $59.99 plus tax where applicable, shipping and handling. Orders can be placed by calling the museum @ 207-647-2828 or by sending a check to: The Rufus Porter Museum, PO Box 544, Bridgton, ME 04009. Books will also be available to purchase at the museum gift shop during our seasonal open hours June through October, Wednesday thru Saturday Noon to 4PM.