Museum Announces Fall Campaign

This year we are again revisiting the concept of Friends of the Page Farm and Home Museum. The Friends group began in 1996 as a group of 200 contributors, each pledging $100 a year for three years. The campaign was announced in the spring issue of the newsletter and the Museum was in a much different position. The Winston Pullen Carriage House had yet to be built. The Smithy and Anne’s House had yet to be delivered. The campaign to endow the Museum had just begun and the Museum’s exhibits filled just two floors of the barn. The one thing that has not changed, however, is the shakiness of the economy and the inconsistency of our funding.

As you know, for the past two years due to the sharp downturn of the stock market, we received almost no income from our Endowment Fund. At that time, it seemed very likely that we would have to close the doors of the Museum, or at least drastically alter its hours of operation. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we were successful in raising enough money to keep the Museum afloat.

With support from our Friends and the University, not only did the Museum survive, but wonderful things happened. We have many new exhibits and expanded programming. The Museum has developed new tours for school children that fit into the curriculum of Maine’s Learning Results. Public school teachers greatly appreciate being able to bring their pupils to the Museum to gain insight into Maine’s agricultural history.

The Page’s barn is the oldest building on the campus of the University of Maine. It was built in 1833 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. It stands as a proud symbol of the University’s origin as a land grant institution with special responsibility in educating and serving the farming community of the state. We take very seriously our duty to preserve and maintain this important structure to honor its history.

How Our Garden Grows

Sarah Martin created a guide to the plants in the Robert Stubbert Herb Garden as her Environmental Horticulture course project. On Maine Day, Bodwell Center volunteers did a fabulous job preparing the vegetable garden for planting. We held a plant sale in late May and raised enough money to buy all of our seed and seedlings, some tools and a small cultivator. The Kitchen Garden sale featured a variety of heirloom, open-pollinated and hybrid, healthy seedlings. All seedlings were locally farm-grown from seed. The sale offered a broad variety of plants for a Cook’s Garden, including plants for...
The Cracker Barrel

Curator’s Corner


We have chosen this piece to pull “out of the attic” to showcase in this issue of the Cracker Barrel. These artifacts are not literally stored in an attic. They are fragile textiles that require specific storage or display conditions and are pulled from collections storage and the special “micro-climates” created for them only for brief periods of time. Artifacts on display are exposed to various environmental threats, such as light, heat and humidity, and it is best to limit the time they are left out.

This circa 1900 Walking Dress was donated to the Museum in 2008 by the late Edgar Lord of Orono, Maine. Walking Dresses were worn to be seen and often referred to as Promenade Dresses, a very literal definition of their purpose. Because they were meant to be worn outdoors, the full costume of the Walking Dress always included a head covering of some kind, an outer garment or wrap, and gloves. This Walking Dress will be on display in the Museum’s Victorian Parlor exhibit until October 18, 2011.

Coming Events

• American Folk Festival, August 27th & 28th featuring Whatzit and the Buzz on Bees exhibits
• Common Ground Fair, September 23, 24, & 25 featuring Early American Decoration exhibit and country painting classes
• Homecoming/Annual Meeting, October 14 featuring a harvest dinner and the election of officers
• Fiber-Maine-ia, October 15 & 16 featuring wet and needlefelting workshops
• Holiday Shoppe, November 5 featuring Olde Oak Farm and Daily Bread
• Wreathmaking Workshops, November 26, 29 & 30

New Internship Program Benefits UMaine Students and Others

The Museum has hosted many interns for the Department of Art’s Museum Studies program and through the History Department. Recently, there has been significant interest from students for non-credit-earning internships. They are interested in attaining the experience of an internship and come away with a qualified work experience.

An internship at the Page Farm and Home Museum is a structured learning experience scheduled within a specific time frame, and provides students with valuable, hands-on experience and training in museum work. Interns may assist with Museum collections, exhibits, preservation and storage, research and documentation or public education and programming. Placement depends on the interest and/or areas of expertise of each individual intern, as well as what projects the museum needs completed at the time. Presently, the Museum offers only unpaid internships, however, University of Maine credits are available based on the number of hours committed.

The Cracker Barrel

featuring Balsma Fir and White Pine

Whatz It?

What is a Whatz It? A Whatz It is an artifact that is no longer commonly used in modern times, and often would not be easily recognized. These objects frequently have practical as well as truly innovative uses, however, in many cases modern technology has rendered them obsolete. For example, an intricately carved butter mold provided a beautiful centerpiece for the table at a time when everyone made their own butter, yet it is now less expensive and more efficient to purchase butter at the store. Examining a Whatz It reveals a great deal of information about days gone by, illustrates the development of technology in rural and agricultural areas, and opens our eyes to the loss of some remarkable inventions. E-mail us at patricia.henner@umit.maine.edu and let us know what you think this Whatz It is.

Molly Elwell, Student Education Specialist

Wish List

The Museum’s newest exhibit, “The Buzz on Bees,” will be paired with “Wild Blueberries and the Honeybee,” already on display in the Museum. Beekeeping played an important role in the development of agriculture in America. However, the honeybee (Apis mellifera L.) is not native to the western hemisphere. Honeybees were not introduced to the region until the 1600s, when colonies of bees were shipped from England to America. The earliest record of such a shipment was to the Colony of Virginia in 1622. From there, beekeeping soon spread to the rest of the colonies and had reached the west coast by 1850. Beekeeping was a valuable asset to the early settlers of America, since bees not only provided honey, they were also essential to effectively and efficiently pollinating crops.

Beekeeping methods have developed over the years, yet some elements remain unchanged. The earliest hives used in America were likely built out of straw, but as lumber became more accessible, they soon began to be constructed from wood.

Early beekeepers were unable to manipulate their hives and remove the combs until 1852 when a congregational minister from Pennsylvania, L. L. Langstroth, designed a hive with movable frames. This design is still in use today, and beekeepers continue to find ways to work with bees without disturbing or destroying bee colonies.

Our antique beekeeping collection needs a frame hive, veil and feeder. If you have one of these pieces kicking around and would consider donating it to the Museum to help complete this collection, please call Museum Director, Patty Henner, at 581-4100.

New Acquisition

Helena Jensen of Portland, Maine recently donated this beautiful antique double inkwell and pen holder. The antler pen holder was popular from about 1890 to 1910. Judy Penz Sheluk wrote in the November 2005 issue of The Antique Shoppe Newspaper, “The demise of the inkwell began in the 1880s with the invention of the first practical fountain pen by Lewis Waterman. Not only did Waterman’s writing instrument carry its own supply of ink, the flow of the ink was emitted in a regular, controllable stream. In 1939, Liszlo Biro, a proofreader from Hungary, patented a design is still in use today, and beekeepers continue to find ways to work with bees without disturbing or destroying bee colonies.

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dye or fragrance, culinary, cutting or everlasting, and medicinal herbs and heirloom vegetables. The Facilities Management Grounds Shop hauled away our compost heap, or as we like to call it, our “bed of nettles.” Our work study assistant, Cody Smith, used pallets donated by the Grounds Shop to build a multi-stage compost system to replace the compost heap.

Erika’s Garden" featuring maple syrup, vinegar and honey. As well as the Wreathmaking Workshops, November 26, 29 & 30 featuring Balsma Fir and White Pine.


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Travel from Past to the Future
Join us and become a Friend of the Page Farm and Home Museum

___ Yes, I/we wish to support the membership of the Museum

  ____ Enclosed is my $25 membership donation
  ____ Enclosed is my additional donation in support of the Museum $__________
  (make all checks payable to the University of Maine Foundation)
  ____ I wish to charge the amount of $_______ to my (circle one) Visa   Mastercard

  Acct. #_____________________________ Ex. Date: ________________

  Name:_________________________________________ Telephone no.__________________
  Street:________________________________________ City_______________ State__________ Zip:_______

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Send your donation to: The University of Maine Foundation, Two Alumni Place, Orono, ME 04469-5792.