WINTER/SPRING 2020

SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS
Moving Towards Equity for Women
Value. The word can evoke images of dollar signs and department store sales. While that meaning applies to the “value” received for the price of admission or membership to the museum, I hope those reading this, as well as others, also recognize the intangible value of the RJD and what it contributes to individual experiences and the cultural and economic landscapes.

Let’s start with the tangible. Based on actual costs to keep the museum open each person who passes through our doors to enjoy the house and/or participate in a program costs us about $50. And yet, admission to the museum is $8 for an adult and $6 for seniors. We set a price based on market value, benchmarking ourselves against other historic houses of similar scope and size. Still, some wouldn’t pay at all to visit because they don’t see the value in that experience, although they’d easily spend $8 on a glass of wine or a couple of greeting cards. That’s when value becomes a VERB. People invest in what they value. The glass of wine is worth it because they’re socializing with a friend. The greeting cards pass on a heart-felt sentiment to a loved one. The value is based less on the actual cost than on perceptions and market.

Then there’s what YOU value. About the Museum. I’ve heard from many visitors and local residents that they value the beauty of the house and gardens. Or that they love history. Our neighbors may value the fact that we raise the value of their property by maintaining our historic building and garden or that they have a place to take their lunch breaks.

The Museum contributes value on an international scale by serving as a partner in the New Bedford Whaling National Park. All partners in the park contribute to the stories told and the value given to each visitor.

The Museum also contributes value to teachers and students, providing experiential learning in history and science outside the classroom. It offers a social outing for groups that meet regularly like the elders from the Immigrants’ Assistance Center or the volunteers of Blithewold who toured the museum this summer.

We can measure this type of value. Museums like the Isabella Stewart Gardner and Crystal Bridges have done studies to prove in a very compelling way the impact that even a single museum visit can have on a school student. At the RJD, we plan to conduct short program surveys so that we can measure the perceived value of our education programs. Sure, we can look at attendance, membership and annual appeal numbers to infer our value to the community we serve (we do hope you’ve made your annual appeal gift for the 2019-20 fiscal year)! At the same time, we’ll continue to ask you what you value about the museum—what its unique place is in the community—and why you continue to support us. Because we value your opinions. And even if we don’t ask, please tell us. This is your house. Your garden. And your history.

Dawn E. Salerno
Executive Director
On June 15, over 150 people celebrated the Duff era of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum with a mid century chic cocktail party fundraiser. The event generated over $21,000 for museum programs and operations.

Photos by Virginia Sutherland
A Tribute to Greer McBratney

BY PEG GILDERSLEEVE & BLAIR WALKER

In 2018 the RJD lost one of its favorite volunteers and mentors. Greer McBratney left behind a legacy of helping the Museum and the community at large. Greer helped then Director Kate Corkum set up the Apiary Program at the RJD in 1998. Both Greer and his wife Betsy shared their expertise, equipment and time with many visiting fifth graders. Students continue to attend the program today.

Greer had a special commitment to the RJD. A long-time history buff, he believed that knowledge of history was fundamental to understanding the present and the future. Greer delighted in New Bedford’s rich history and looked to the RJD as its steward.

Greer juggled many voluntary commitments. In the last decades of his life, Greer spent countless hours volunteering at the Wamsutta Club, his home away from home. There he weeded, raked, mowed, painted, and even cleaned bathtubs! Greer also gathered folks at the Wamsutta Club to celebrate monthly “two for one” dinners. Many a night he picked up people who couldn’t drive to these Wamsutta dinners. “The more the merrier,” he’d say.

In addition to his work at the Wamsutta Club, he mentored high school seniors who had an interest in medical careers. Two (early!) mornings a week, he met with a series of medically-minded students at Saint Luke’s Hospital and took them around to various departments, including the cardiac lab, the operating room and the blood bank, among others.

In the last few years of his life, Greer was unable to spend as much time at the RJD, but he remained a strong supporter to the end. We recently learned that his support extended beyond his death. We’re honored to announce that Greer provided the RJD a charitable donation in his will.

We all miss him and are very grateful for his support as a volunteer, mentor, and donor. Wherever he may now be, we know he’s cheering us on.

The RJD Staff and Board are grateful for Greer’s devotion to the institution and for the provision he made in his will for a gift. If you are inspired by Greer’s story and would like more information about putting the Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum in your will, please contact Jessica Brodeur at 508-997-1401.

People

News

APPEAL 2020: BE PART OF OUR SUCCESS
The Annual Appeal is the foundation of all we do at the RJD. Funds raised go directly to supporting our operations, preservation efforts, and educational programming. Please consider a gift to the Appeal in 2020. Donate by calling the museum, or visiting the website http://rjd.org/support/. For those of you who have already given, thank you!

MUSEUM “BUZZING” THIS PAST FALL
In September and October each year, the Museum offers a school program called, Growing Ideas: Cultivating Connections. Students visit this unique urban setting where they are introduced to the lifecycle and anatomy of honeybees, their important role in the pollination of food crops and the production of honey. This past fall, over 400 students visited the museum for these hands-on experiences; all programs are offered to New Bedford schools at no charge, thanks to the generosity of donors. In addition, the program could not run without the help of volunteers; namely: Jane Ash, Charlotte Bermann, Janice and Dave Baker, Norman Buck, Joan Bullard, Susan Czernicka, Brenda Dias, Nancy Griswold, Russ Hensel, Ken Lauderdale, Charlotte Murphy, Joanne O’Leary, Joseph Tardif, Anna Whitcomb. They are truly the Bees Knees!

BABY, IT’S COLD OUTSIDE
Warm up with convivial conversation! During the coldest months of the year, Museum Members are encouraged to bring guests for a visit to the RJD. We’re making it easy for you: any member visiting from January 2 to March 21 may bring up to three guests at no charge. There’s always something new to see at the RJD.
BY BLAIR WALKER

New Bedford, known for its Quaker principles, has been home to many women who have advocated for changes that have improved the lives of others. The RJD's winter 2020 exhibition, "Shaking the Foundations," features photographs of local New Bedford suffragists and some clothing from the suffragist period. The exhibition aims to help visitors understand why women protested and the incremental changes that were made towards equality. Also included are photographs of women in loose garments resembling Greek togas, dancing in the style taught by Isadora Duncan (1877–1927).

In 1848, Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793–1880) became the first to sign the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments. A Quaker who grew up in Nantucket, Mott had been raised with the value of equality for all imbedded into her thinking, a value commonly expressed through the phrase “equal pay for equal work.” The Declaration called out the rights of all people regardless of race or gender and outlined the right each person should possess to express his or her own opinion through a vote.

Clothing of the 1920’s reflected a new boldness, powered by women’s liberation. Women rode horseback wearing jodhpurs or drove around in motorcycle sidecars. In the 1920’s they danced the Charleston and sneaked into Speakeasies.

A portrait of Marie Equi (1872–1952) is on loan from the New Bedford Whaling Museum for this exhibition. Equi, a suffragist who grew up in New Bedford, attended the local schools, and worked in local textile mills. She later moved west to pursue a career in medicine in Portland, Oregon. She joined the newly formed Progressive Movement, where she found her political voice. According to the historian Michael Helquist:

“Oregon’s innovations reflected a new force in the nation’s body politic—a political vision and undertaking called Progressivism—that expressed a yearning for social change. Progressives hoped to forge a new political paradigm free of domination by corporate power brokers and guided by a robust exercise of citizen engagement.”

Equi joined Oregon’s Equal Suffrage Association led by founder Abigail Scott Duniway and Susan B. Anthony. Duniway chose methods different from the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA), but the drive demonstrated by both groups resulted in growing support through several national elections. In June 1919, Congress submitted a suffrage amendment that was ratified as part of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution on August 18, 1920.

Suffrage continues to be a contentious issue in the United States. While the right to vote could no longer be denied due to one’s sex after the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, some states would continue to create obstacles that impeded voters from being able to exercise that right.

Speaking to that, the exhibition features videos from the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial campaign that demonstrate ongoing voter suppression. Having the right to vote in an election and exercising that right form the basis of American democracy. Yet that right remains threatened today, mainly for non-white or marginalized citizens, suggesting that suffrage is still a present issue 100 years after the 19th Amendment.

Exhibition Calendar 2020

SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS: MOVING TOWARDS EQUITY FOR WOMEN
January 18 – May 17

SEW-FUL WORK: AN EXHIBITION OF HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY NEEDLEWORK
June 5 – December 24

LAURA CHRISTENSEN
July 23, 2020 – January 3, 2021

THE PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS OF THE ROTCH, JONES AND DUFF FAMILIES
Ongoing
Calendar

JANUARY

PIANO CONCERT: THE GILDED AGE
AUSTIN BURNS
Sunday, January 19, 2pm
The Gilded Age was a time of unparalleled wealth where the newly emerged millionaire class owned all the means of production at the expense of the free market. This is a musical program for voice, guitar, piano, and melodica that draws striking parallels to today’s economic and political climate. Musical sets from the program reflect not only the struggle of the 99% but also the forgotten voices of women, African Americans, and refugees.
$25 RJD Members / $30 Public / $10 Students with I.D.

FEBRUARY

HOUSE TOUR
Sunday, February 9, 2pm
Enjoy a one-hour guided tour of the Rotch-Jones-Duff mansion. Tours are conducted by various RJD Docents and staff. Free with the price of admission.

ABOLITION ROW PARK DEVELOPMENTS
LEE BLAKE, PRESIDENT,
NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Thursday, February 13, 5:30pm
The New Bedford Historical Society is developing Abolition Row Park on a blighted corner lot in the city’s downtown. The lot sits at the opposite end of the street that connects to the RJD. Hear about the latest park development plans. Part of AHA Night. Free.

MARCH

OPEN HOUSE AT THE RJD AND JAMI
Sunday, March 8, 1pm – 4pm
The two mansions connected by marriage (James Arnold married Sarah Rotch, daughter of William Rotch, Jr.) offer free admission and guided tours of their interiors. RJD’s tour starts at 2pm. Refreshments served. Free.

APRIL

TALK: PLANTING TREES FOR SUSTAINABILITY
JUSTIN OHLSON,
NEW BEDFORD CITY ARBORIST
Thursday April 9, 5:30pm
“People who will not sustain trees will soon live in a world that will not sustain people”, so says writer and journalism professor, Bryce Nelson. In consideration of Arbor Day, we present the city’s expert arborist and his advice on the process for planting trees. Part of AHA Night. Free.
**LECTURE: HISTORIC HOUSE WINDOW TREATMENT**  
MICHAEL CHELLEL, THE STUDIO: PERIOD 19TH CENTURY INTERIORS  
Sunday, April 19, 2pm  
Hear from the speaker about appropriate historic window treatment based on his 40 years of experience and case studies at various museums and private homes.  
$8 Members / $10 Public.

**SCHOOL VACATION WEEK ACTIVITY**  
Tuesday, April 21 through Friday, April 24  
Children ages 7 and up with their adult companion can drop in any time during public hours to play "Where's William?", a game of riddles that lead to treasures hidden around the house.  
Free.

**CONCERT: SPRINGTIME IN NEW BEDFORD**  
JESSE HOLSTEIN AND JEFF LOUIE  
Sunday, April 26, 2pm  
Join NBSO Concertmaster Jesse Holstein and pianist Jeff Louie for an early springtime recital at the RJD. Come early to walk the gardens before coming inside for three works that are a nice pairing with the thawing of snow and the budding of snowdrops. J.S Bach’s warm and gracious A-major Sonata will open the program followed by Beethoven’s playful and capricious Sonata in G-major. To close the program will be Igor Stravinsky’s homage to the Baroque with his Suite Italienne based on his ballet “Pulcinella” which premiered in Paris in 1920.  
$25 RJD Members / $30 Public.

**MAY**

**HISTORY HAPPY HOUR**  
Wednesday, May 6, 5:30pm  
Belly up to the bar for a shot of history with a chaser of networking. RJD’s newest program offers a brief talk on a historical topic, along with tasty bites and local beer and wine.  
$15 (includes refreshment).

**TALK: DANIEL DRAYTON & PHOTIUS FISK**  
GEORGE KONTANIS, RJD DOCENT  
Thursday, May 14, 5:30pm  
Daniel Drayton became known for helping enslaved individuals escape to northern ports in the early to mid 1800s. He is now buried in New Bedford’s Rural Cemetery where his monument has been recently restored. Photius Fisk had a role in Drayton’s honoring. Hear more about the life of Drayton and Fisk’s efforts to remember him. Part of AHA Night. Free.

**HOUSE TOUR**  
Sunday, May 17, 2pm  
Enjoy a one-hour guided tour of the Rotch-Jones-Duff mansion. Tours are conducted by various RJD Docents and staff.  
Free with the price of admission.

**ANNUAL STUDENT JAZZ CONCERT**  
TIM MASON, DONALD RICHARD, MUSIC DIRECTORS  
Tuesday, May 26, 7pm  
The New Bedford High School Whaler Jazz Band is an auditioned musical that plays different styles of improvised music such as swing, funk, rock, Latin, and vocal jazz in traditional “big band” settings. The New Bedford High School Whaler Jazz combo is an advanced musical group that plays swing, funk, rock, Latin, and vocal jazz in small ensemble settings using advanced improvisation techniques. The GLCPS Jazz Ensemble performs an eclectic mix of jazz, Latin, and modern band musical styles. This concert is held under the tent, rain or shine.  
Free.

**JUNE**

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
SEWFUL WORK  
Thursday, June 11, 5:30pm  

**ANNUAL PARTY IN THE GARDEN**  
Saturday June 20, 6pm

**POETRY READING**  
Friday, June 26, 7pm  
Celebrate the release of Domesticated Primate’s summer poetry anthology, Rituals, with a curated reading featuring local poets.  
Free.
Save the Date for RJD’s Annual Party in the Garden Saturday, June 20, 2020