In March, I attended a virtual symposium titled “Deaccessioning After 2020.” Syracuse University was the organizer, and luminaries of the museum world, such as Kaywin Feldman (National Gallery of Art) and Glenn Lowry (MoMA), were on the three-day docket. For those unfamiliar with the term, “deaccessioning” refers to the process by which an object that has once been “accessioned” into the museum’s collection is now released from that classification and free to be sold or disposed of. It’s a process guided by a museum’s own mission and internal policy, field-wide ethics, and the law. Sessions ranged from specific legal guidance to multi-million dollar deaccessionings with a values-based goal of supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

It was refreshing to dive deep into the theories and motivations behind what we practice as museums. While attending a session related specifically to historic houses, I was struck by this statement from Christy S. Coleman, Executive Director of Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation: “History is never for the dead; it’s for the living.”

Think on those words. I found it a more profound way of pointing out a simple premise: History may be about the dead. But in museums and other public history programs, the imperative is to reach new generations of people through interpretation of history. Interpreting history is about finding meaning from that past that is relevant to the present. For the most part, a historical object is a fixed, unchanging thing. In fact, the Historic Commission cares very much about the mansion built by Richard Upjohn in 1834 remaining true to its original size, shape, materials, and appearance.

Yet the present is not fixed—culture and society evolve. When Mark Duff purchased the house, he saw himself as steward to a past golden era. It became his and Beatrice’s home, as well as a symbol of grandeur. Generations today may see grandeur. They may relate to Amelia Jones’ cook, Mathilde, whose special version of Johnny Cakes used white cornmeal rather than yellow. What about the gentleman I met who used to deliver milk to the Duffs? Our neighbor Paul takes an interest in the heritage trees on property: the Copper Beech and White Ash. Ian, our younger neighbor, likes to run around in the garden—the same site where, in previous centuries, William Rotch would perambulate and the Jones women would play lawn games.

The Museum is committed to telling all these stories—about the architecture, the domestic help, the lifestyles of the residents, and the historic grounds. We’re also committed to finding new information, new stories, and new perspectives on our 187-year-old historic property. History is indeed for the living. The RJD is making it every day.

Stay well and stay strong, my friends.

Dawn E. Salerno
Executive Director
The RJD Welcomes New Staff and a New Name for a Familiar Face

This past April, the RJD welcomed Jill Conley to the staff. Jill will serve as the Manager of Collections and Interpretation, working part time. She is a Massachusetts native and has worked in museums around the state for 15 years, including the Edward Kennedy Institute, Heritage Museums & Gardens, Harvard Art Museum, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Boston MFA. She graduated from Franklin & Marshall College where she studied History, Anthropology and Art History, and received her Masters in Library Science, Archives Concentration, from Simmons College (now University) in 2018. In her free time, Jill loves to read, watch TV, hang out with friends and walk her dog Rosie, a chihuahua mix.

“I am thrilled to be joining the team at RJD and look forward to getting to know the staff, the history, and collections,” said Jill.

We are also excited to announce the hiring of Lauren Helley and Rachael Lawrence. Both will staff the visitor’s desk in the museum shop as well as assisting with functions on the museum’s grounds.

While we’d love to clone her, we have only one Jessica working at the RJD, and her last name is now “Serpa.” Jessica Brodeur was married in 2020 and took her spouse’s name this year. Congratulations to the happy couple.

Speak Up for Museums! Museums Advocacy Day, February 23, 2021

Dawn Salerno, RJD’s Executive Director, was one of several hundred museum advocates in attendance at the American Alliance of Museum’s Virtual Museum Advocacy Day. The pandemic prevented visits to the Capitol, but the structure of the event was much the same: advocates from all over the U.S. attended seminars about the main legislative and funding issues impacting museums. The following day, delegates for each state and district met with their actual legislators to deliver their elevator speeches. Salerno attended meetings with the aids for Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey, and with Representative Bill Keating himself. Conversations focused mainly on funding for the Office of Museum Services, which offers grants to help museums build capacity, engage their communities and preserve their collections; and pandemic relief programs, such as the Shuttered Venue Operators grant, the CARES Act and PPP loans. Tax policy where it impacts charitable deductions was also a topic for discussion.

You too can be an advocate! Check out your legislators’ support of funding and legislation that impacts non-profits and museums like the RJD. A personal letter (and email) is still the best way to reach your legislator to let them know how you feel on a matter. Speak up for Museums!

In photo: The Massachusetts delegation meets with Congresswoman Warren’s aids.
In Memory of Gertrude Trumbull Burr

BY DAWN SALERNO

This past February, long-time RJD supporter Gertrude Burr passed away. Reading the obituary, I had to chuckle reading this line: “She attended Meadowbrook School, and in a harbinger of things to come, was the quarterback of the boys’ football team.”

As I read on, I imagined the author was alluding to achievements like this one: Gertrude worked at M.I.T. in 1944 on the aerospace effort, calculating rocket trajectories. She was the only woman amongst 600 other mathematicians, engineers, and physicists. I continued to read: in the 1970s, she became the first female Board Member of the American Boat Builders and Repairers Association. And she co-founded a non-profit community home, which became LifeStream, Inc. Today Lifestream is an organization with a staff of over 500, and it has served thousands of people with disabilities and facing personal challenges.

Gertrude was most recently involved with The RJD as a member, donor, and through the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay. She was instrumental in establishing the then-named “Wildflower Walk,” a school program which taught New Bedford students about plants that grow in the wild.

I spoke with some GCBB members about Gertrude. Ruth Jolliffe claims, “She was instrumental in introducing me to The Garden Club of Buzzard’s Bay,” taking her to her first meeting.

Former Director of the RJD, Kate Corkum, said this: “I had the very good fortune to meet Gertrude Burr in the 1970’s in Mattapoisett. She carried an effortless style, laser focus and pursuit of excellence into every aspect of her life. Her support and guidance of the RJD from its inception until the present have made a lasting impact on the museum. She will be sorely missed.”

Gertrude’s kind, generous nature lives on in all of these memories. She also chose to leave a final gift to the RJD through a bequest, as well as naming the Museum to receive donations in her memory. As of the writing of this article, those donations had reached $7,486. We thank all who chose to give a gift in her name and we are honored to be associated with such a wonderful human being.

Ornamental Naturalistic Woodland Garden to be Restored

The RJD is pleased to be working with the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay to renovate the woodland garden in the southeast corner of the property. This two-year project will bring a restored ornamental naturalistic woodland garden with four-season interest. The new garden will be rooted in the history of the Jones family, yet environmentally sensitive and mindful of the current maintenance needs of the Museum. When completed, the garden will provide a lovely green space for education and enjoyment of Museum visitors.

Renovation of the woodland garden represents another important step in the Museum’s implementation of the Olmsted Center’s Cultural Landscape Report. Issued in 2012, the Report makes recommendations for sound stewardship of the historic landscape around the mansion. This Report has inspired other RJD garden initiatives, including the renovation of the Rose Parterre in the northwest garden quadrant and installation of the orchard in the southwest quadrant.

The Garden Club of Buzzards Bay will contribute the design work, horticultural advice and management for the project, along with some of the plants. Founded in 1930, the Garden Club is a long-time partner to the Museum and is resident in the greenhouse in the northeast corner of the property. Through a new partnership with the Massachusetts Master Gardeners Association, certified and aspiring master gardeners will assist in the installation of the new garden while earning educational credit for their work.
ALL-REQUEST ALFRESCO
Thursday, July 8, 4pm – 6pm
Bring a picnic, relax on our lawn, and request your fave music from DJ Jessikerrr.
Inside the mansion, enjoy twenty-minute “express” tours by RJD docents. This event is free as part of AHA Night.

YOGA IN THE GARDEN
WITH YMCA INSTRUCTOR, NICOLE WINNING
Fridays, through August 27, 8am – 9am
See June listing.

JULY

YOGA IN THE GARDEN
WITH YMCA INSTRUCTOR, NICOLE WINNING
Fridays, through August 27, 8am – 9am
See June listing.

SUMMER READING KICKOFF PARTY
WITH NEW BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Saturday, June 26, 11am – 12pm
Stop by the grounds of the Museum for some family fun while your child signs up for the Summer Reading Program through New Bedford Free Public Library. Enjoy magician, Scott Jameson, and free admission to the Mansion. Children of all ages are welcome to attend with their adult caregivers. Free.

DOODLES CREATIVE SESSION, AT RJD (AGES 5–7)
STORY TIME TEA PARTY & KINDNESS ROCK PAINTING
Wednesday July 21, 10am – 11am
Children are invited to explore, play, and create with instructor Samia Walker in the garden of the RJD. Caregivers must stay on site during this class and advance registration is recommended due to limited space. Fee: $10 per class / $25 per series. Additional classes in this series:
August 4: Colorful Yoga: Chalk art and yoga games.

THE GARDEN TOURIST: LECTURE AND BOOK SIGNING WITH AUTHOR JANA MILBOCKER
Wednesday, June 30, 5pm
Do you enjoy touring beautiful gardens? We will show you the best public gardens, nursery display gardens, and private gardens open to the public in the Northeast to visit for inspiration! Learn about each garden’s highlights, ideal times to visit, and enjoy a visual tour of each amazing destination. Arrive at 5pm for refreshments in the garden. Lecture begins at 5:30pm under the tent. $10 Members / $15 Public.

PLEIN AIR PAINTING IN THE GARDEN
WITH INSTRUCTOR, DEVIN MCLAUGHLIN
Mondays July 12, 26, August 9, 23, & Sunday September 12, 9:30am – noon
Paint in the beautiful gardens of the Rotch-Jones-Duff estate. “En plein air,” meaning in the open air, allows you to paint from direct observation. Students with no experience, as well as those with some experience, are welcome. The instructor will concentrate on working individually with students in order to maximize individual learning. Join any day for a single class experience, or register for the series. Single class fee: $70 (includes supplies) / $35 (bring your own). Five-class series fee: $275 (includes supplies) / $150 (bring your own supplies). Registration required at least one week in advance of class date.

Please call the museum in advance or visit our web site to register for programs with a fee:
508-997-1401 / www.rjdmuseum.org
Virtual program info can be accessed from our website.

APPRaisal DAY
Saturday, July 17, 9am – Noon
Do you have a family heirloom? Paintings passed down to you by a relative? Or a great flea market find? Discover their potential worth with the help of an expert appraiser. Appraisals will be done on a first-come, first-served basis. Appraisers: Frank McNamee, Alfred J. Walker, Paula Dean. Fee at the door: $10 per item / $25 for three items.

192021 – A VAUDEVILLE REDUX
Thursday, July 22 & Friday, July 23, 7pm
The Collective rings in the return of the roaring 20’s by reviving one of the decade’s most popular theatrical forms: Vaudeville! Enjoy old favorites with a modern twist.
and original sketches and acts that pay homage to the performers of old. And break out the pinstripes and flapper dresses because not only is this a show, it’s a 1920’s-themed shindig. Contact The Collective with questions and for tickets. TheCollectiveNB@gmail.com / TheCollectiveNB.org.

DANCES OF FREEDOM & NATURE: REVISITING FLORENCE FLEMING NOYES 1871 – 1928
PERFORMANCE, WITH OPENING REMARKS BY NOYES SCHOOL OF RHYTHM
Sunday, July 25, 6:30pm
In the 1910s, Florence Fleming Noyes created dances inspired by music, myth, and nature. A visible women’s suffrage performer, she performed as part of the National American Woman Suffrage Association march on Washington, and the 1914 Dance of Freedom, performed for suffrage leader Anna Howard Shaw at New York’s Biltmore Hotel. Dance artist Meg Brooker reconstructs Noyes’s iconic dances inspired by freedom and nature for performance on the RJD grounds by a group of Noyes Rhythm dancers. General seating; rain or shine. $8 Members / $12 Public / Students with ID Free.

AUGUST

DOODLES CREATIVE SESSION AT RJD (AGES 5–7)
COLORFUL YOGA
Wednesday August 4, 10am – 11am
Children are invited to explore, play, and create with instructor Samia Walker in the garden of the RJD. Caregivers must stay on site during this class and advance registration is recommended due to limited space. Fee: $10.

YOGA IN THE GARDEN
WITH YMCA INSTRUCTOR, NICOLE WINNING
Fridays through August 27, 8am – 9am
See June listing.

PLEIN AIR PAINTING IN THE GARDEN
WITH INSTRUCTOR, DEVIN MCLAUGHLIN
Mondays August 9 & 23, 9:30am – Noon
See July listing.

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SHAKESPEARE IN NB PRESENTS: AS YOU LIKE IT
THE GLASS HORSE PROJECT
August 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 7pm
Join us for a frolic in the forest this summer: William Shakespeare’s romantic, pastoral comedy As You Like It! In a tale of mistaken identities, melancholic lords, and a multitude of laughs, As You Like It follows its heroine Rosalind as she flees persecution in her uncle’s court, accompanied by her cousin Celia, to find safety and, eventually, love, in the Forest of Arden. Performances will take place on the RJD’s covered patio. Donations accepted in lieu of a fee. This program is supported in part by grants from the Dartmouth, Mattapoisett, Fairhaven, and New Bedford Cultural Councils, local agencies, which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

DOODLES CREATIVE SESSION AT RJD (AGES 5–7)
CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED: DIY ESSENTIAL OIL ROLLERS & MANDALA ART
Wednesday, August 25, 10am – 11am
Children are invited to explore, play, and create with instructor Samia Walker in the garden of the RJD. Caregivers must stay on site during this class and advance registration is recommended due to limited space. Fee: $10.

ENGLISH ROSES FOR NEW ENGLAND GARDENS
ANGELINA AND MIKE CHUTE, GUEST SPEAKERS
Sunday, September 12, 2pm
David Austin, a nurseryman from Shropshire England, combined the charm and fragrance of old garden roses with the vibrant color and remondancy (repeat bloom) of modern roses. He called these remarkable plants “English Roses” and they are now grown all over the world. This presentation covers the history of English roses as well as the unique David Austin breeding program. Our speakers address old favorites as well as new introductions plus several varieties that are known to grow well in New England gardens. Your ticket fees support the care and maintenance of RJD’s historic garden.
HOUSE TOUR
Saturday, October 2, 2pm
Enjoy a one-hour guided tour of the Rotch-Jones-Duff mansion. Various RJD Docents and staff conduct tours. Free with the price of admission.

ROTCHTOBERFEST
Wednesday, October 13, 5pm – 8pm
Carve and contribute a pumpkin for the Great Pumpkin Parade (please bring your own pumpkin). Enjoy seasonal ales in the RJD garden and nosh from local food trucks. All ages are welcome to this autumnal event. See our web site for more information.

THE GREAT PUMPKIN PARADE
Thursday, October 14, 4pm – 8pm
Visit the grounds to see a display of Jack-O-Lanterns, carved with care by community members. Inside the mansion, children can participate in a scavenger hunt. Refreshments served. Suggested donation: $5 Individuals / $10 Family.

MYSTERY AT THE MANSION
Friday, October 15, 6pm
Save the date for the third annual event!

UPROOTED: A GARDENER REFLECTS ON BEGINNING AGAIN
VIRTUAL LECTURE WITH PAGE DICKEY
Thursday, October 21, 10:30am - 11:30am
In partnership with the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay
Page Dickey is a gardener, garden designer and author of several books about gardening. Hear from the author about her newest book. Uprooted: A Gardener Reflects on Beginning Again, describes leaving a beloved garden of thirty-four years, finding a home in the northwest corner of Connecticut, and falling in love with its land. Fee: $10 Members / $13 Public. The link to participate will be sent to registered individuals.

FRIDAY NIGHT BRIGHTS
Friday, November 26, 5pm – 8pm
Visit the RJD garden for family-friendly fun, music and refreshment. Wear your ugliest holiday sweater and seasonal accessories. The Cookie Challenge returns this year where weekend-warrior bakers bring batches of their favorite cookie recipes for you to sample and judge. The decorated mansion will also be open as space allows for touring. Suggested donation: $5 individual / $10 family.

THERE’S SNOW PLACE LIKE HOME
November 26 through December 23, 2021
The 1834 mansion and historic garden are decked with baubles, boughs and bright lights for the season. Visit the house or garden daily, or during one of our special events throughout the run of the displays.

CHILDREN’S TEA
Sunday, December 5, 3pm
Bring your favorite doll or plushy animal friend for tea in the decorated parlors of the mansion. Dress-up is encouraged, but not at all required. Fee includes tea, desserts, and admission to the Museum. Recommended for ages 5 and up, with adult companion. $25 Member adult / $30 Public adult / $10 per child; advance reservations required.

CHRISTMAS ON COUNTY
Thursday, December 9, 4pm – 6pm
Drop in to see the decked halls of the mansion and hear from docents about some of the holiday customs held by residents of the house. This event is free as a part of AHA night.
SAVE OUR DATES, AND DON’T BE LATE!

English Roses for New England Gardens
Sunday, September 12, 2pm

Don’t lose your head—there’s no need to paint your roses red! Join us for a lecture with guest speakers Angelina and Mike Chute to learn about the David Austin rose breeding program and English Roses for New England Gardens.

Venture down the rabbit hole with us this September and enjoy a variety of Alice in Wonderland-themed fundraising events to support the preservation of our historic site. See our website for tickets and details.

Queen of Hearts Lawn Party
Saturday, September 25, 11am – 2pm

Join us for a family-friendly day of lawn games, food trucks, music and more.

Amelia in Wonderland Cocktail Party
Saturday, September 18, 6pm – 9pm

Step through the looking glass and join us for curious cocktails, maddening riddles and some topsy turvy fun as we channel Amelia Jones’ love for the arts and theatrics.

Mad Hatters Tea Party
Sunday, September 26, 10am – 12pm

We’re all a little mad here! Put on your best fanciful hat and join us for tea in the garden.