

The Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum

Spring 2013

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Shirley Bell to be Honorary Chair of August Gala

Artist Shirley Bell, sister of Gilbert Stuart Museum President Dan Bell, has agreed to serve as the Honorary Chair of the Museum's "Paint the Town Red!" August 9, 2013 gala. Needless to say, the Museum is delighted to welcome Shirley and we thank her profoundly for her participation.

Shirley has been painting for 30 years. When she was 16, she was in an automobile accident, suffering serious, life-altering injuries that limited her mobility. As a result, Shirley had to reinvent herself and choose new goals in life; in fulfilling one of those goals, she became a successful artist. Shirley's artwork is representational with a vibrant sense of color and can be found in galleries and gift shops throughout New England. Those interested in learning more about Shirley and her artwork can visit www.shirleybelldesigns.com.



Beavertail Park by Shirley Bell

Shirley is delighted to be serving as the Honorary Chair of the "Paint the Town Red!" gala. She is especially pleased that the Museum's Capital Campaign will include a new handicapped accessible Welcome Center that she will soon have access to.



Poppy by Shirley Bell

The "Paint the Town Red!" gala will be held on August 9, 2013 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm in the buildings and on the grounds of the Museum. Highlights will include an exhibit of Shirley's artwork, an Artist-in-Residence art exhibit and sale entitled "Paint the Town...", music, a 50/50 raffle, wine, other libations, hors d'oeuvres, and more!

Tickets are \$40.00/per person and reservations are requested. Proceeds will benefit the handicapped accessibility improvements as well as the "Paint the House (Birthplace) Red" fund. For additional information please visit www.gilbertstuartmuseum.org. For questions please call Executive Director Peg O'Connor, at 294-3001.

Harriet Powell



Snowy Egret by Shirley Bell

President's Message Spring 2013



Dear Friends,

We're on our way to a new season! Committees are busy with plans to make this a year to remember. We'll open the season on Sunday, April 28th from 1:00 - 4:00pm with our Spring Fair / Fish on

the Run! We hope you can come and celebrate the Opening Day of our 82nd year as a Museum! Save the date: our gala fundraiser "Paint the Town Red!" will be on August 9th at the Museum. Finally, Gilbert's Birthday Party will be held on December 3rd (his actual birthday) to celebrate the day and to end the year with a bang. Watch for details for these events. Please join us at any or all of these special times.

We hope to begin construction on the Welcome Center repairs and addition in September, after our busy summer season. The new center and varying exhibits will bring us more revenue and at the same time add to your membership benefits. We sincerely hope we can bring more clarity to the history of the site and generate excitement with every visit for both young and old.

Please help us by sharing the museum with a friend, perhaps exposing someone to this wonderful treasure for the first time. As we continue to strive to build our membership, as always, many hands make light work. Again, thank you for your continued support, and thanks to the many volunteers and our director, who make the hard work and tireless effort look easy. It is because of your continued support that we are able to preserve and protect this historic gem!

Sincerely,

Dan Bell

President of the Board of Trustees

2013 Save the Date:

Sunday, April 28 1:00-4:00pm **Spring Fair

Friday, August 9th 5:00-7:00pm *"Paint the Town Red!" Gala**

(date & location to be announced)Gilbert's Birthday Party**

SPRING FAIR / FISH ON THE RUN AT THE BIRTHPLACE

Sunday, April 28, 2013 ~ 1:00 – 4:00pm

*Come and join us for our
exciting opening day event!*

- * View the river herring migration up the fish ladder
 - * "Fish on the Run" presentation by DEM
 - * Underwater camera to view river herring
 - * Corn grinding in the Hammond Mill
 - * Jonnycakes by Bob and Diane Smith
- * Meet Gilbert Stuart! A first-person, living history presentation by David Ely
 - * RI Spinners Guild spinning and weaving
 - * Nature Trail self-guided tours
 - * Birthplace Open House
 - * Fish printing activity
 - * Scavenger Hunt
 - * Rhody Warm Exhibit

**Adults \$5 Children (ages 6-12) \$2
2013 Members Free**

Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum

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Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum Mission Statement

The Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum preserves the birthplace of Gilbert Stuart and its surrounding acreage. Focused on history, art, and nature, the Museum is charged with directing and supporting its operation as a National Historic Landmark and with the conservation of its natural setting

BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE

Best Friends for life were Gilbert Stuart and Benjamin Waterhouse. They met when they were schoolboys in Newport. The boys were drawn together by a shared talent for drawing but Waterhouse gave up his art when he saw Gilbert's painting of Dr. Hunter's dogs. (Done in 1769 when Stuart was 13.)

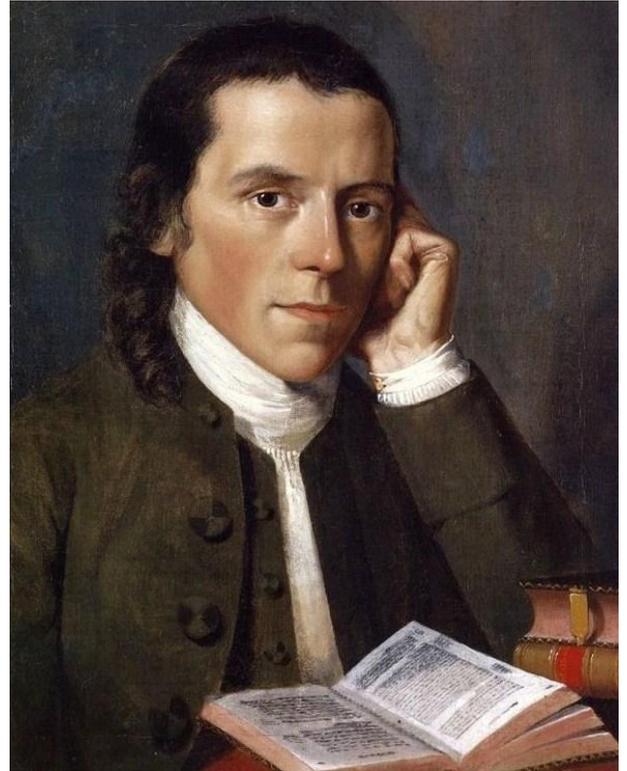
From then on Benjamin, who was born of Quaker parents in 1754, concentrated on becoming a doctor. He was taken on as a student by a Scottish surgeon in Newport, Dr. John Halliburton and supported in his studies by Abraham Redwood.

Meanwhile, Stuart was studying with the Scottish artist, Cosmo Alexander and soon accompanied him to Scotland in 1771. That ill-fated trip left Gilbert under the tutelage of Sir George Chalmers for a while but, left on his own again, Stuart returned to Newport in 1773. There he began to get commissions for portraits and, among others, painted the Malbone brothers and the Bannisters. These early portraits were done in a stiff and wide-eyed style showing the influence of his Scottish tutors.

Benjamin Waterhouse had plans to sail for London by late 1774 to continue his medical studies. But before he left, he sat for a portrait by his dear friend. What resulted was Gilbert's most accomplished portrait to date. It has been suggested that his friend allowed him much time to really study his face. Thus, the artist was able to produce a likeness with subtler modeling of the face resulting in a great variety of flesh tones. The hand on which Benjamin's cheek is resting is structurally detailed and the piercing, brown eyes suggest a vitality that would become an important part of Stuart's future work.

Waterhouse is dressed in a drab jacket and waistcoat with plain buttons and a simple pleated shirt. The only bit of decoration is the small red and gold button at his shirt cuff. He is posed as a student with his books. One of the books at the side has a nice detail - the partial name of the author, a famed Dutch physician.

The Waterhouse portrait shows evidence that Gilbert Stuart had studied the work of John Singleton Copley of Boston, particularly the portrait of Paul Revere. The poses are similar with the subject's faces resting on their hand and the right side of the faces are in shadow. The attention to detail and the treatment of shadow are similar. This is not to say that Stuart was a copyist but was defining his style and searching for the expression seen in his mature portraits.



Benjamin Waterhouse Gilbert Stuart

c. 1775 oil on canvas 22"x 18"

Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, RI

Two months after he had sat for the portrait, Waterhouse set sail for London in March 1775 to study medicine. A year later, Benjamin and Gilbert are reunited in London with Waterhouse helping Stuart with lodgings and commissions. He found that he had to keep the emotional artist focused on his painting for Gilbert often left his work unfinished and debts piled up.

Benjamin Waterhouse continued studies in Edinburgh and Leiden and practiced medicine in London before returning to Newport. He lectured at Brown and went on to help found Harvard Medical School in 1783. Dr. Waterhouse's greatest legacy was the introduction of small pox vaccine to the United States in 1800.

Benjamin kept the early portrait painted by his lifelong friend until he died. His widow presented it to the Redwood Library in Newport where it can be seen today along with the earlier portraits of the Malbones and Bannisters.

Gail Shields

Happy Anniversary Gilbert Stuart Museum ~ 82 years!

The Museum was incorporated on January 31, 1931. This is our **EIGHTY-SECOND YEAR** of operation as a private non-profit organization. We are supported solely by admission fees, yearly membership dues, and donations to cover our daily operating expenses.

Milling Around at the Museum



Bird Walk Don't miss this wonderful opportunity! On Saturday, May 4th, Walter Berry, Wayne Munns, and Barbara Sherman will lead a birdwalk through the Gilbert Stuart nature trails and stream beds to view the remarkable birds on the property. Pack your binoculars and join us at 7:00am at the Museum's Welcome Center. All are welcome. Please reserve a spot. 294-3001 or email at info@gilbertstuartmuseum.org

Rhody Ramble = Family Adventure

What to do with your family? Check out Rhody Ramble (www.rhodyramble.org), a listing of opportunities for family adventure at historic sites in RI. Twenty-Five members of the Historic Sites Coalition of Rhode Island, a program of Preserve Rhode Island, will participate in this year's Rhody Ramble program. With funding through a grant from the RI Foundation, Rhody Ramble family events at historic sites will be professionally marketed through the Rhody Ramble web site, Facebook page, blog, and Twitter.

Gilbert Stuart Museum will participate in The Rhody Ramble program this year by offering the following family events:

***SPRING FAIR AT THE BIRTHPLACE / FISH ON THE RUN**

April 28, 2013 (Sunday) 1:00 – 4:00 (Admission charged)

Visitors may view the river herring migration up the fish ladder, corn grinding in the gristmill, jonnycakes, demonstrations of spinning, weaving, and rug hooking, open house in the Birthplace, fish printing activity, nature trail activities, and games. Meet Gilbert Stuart" a first-person, living history presentation by David Ely.

*** ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM FOR YOUTHS:**

June 28, 29, 30, 2013

Grounds open for painting and photography Friday – Sunday during Museum hours or by special arrangement. *All youth artists must be accompanied by an adult. Artists may participate in our youth exhibit: "Gibby's Gallery: Children's Art Exhibit". Please contact the office for guidelines.

***FRIDAY AT THE MUSEUM! 11:00am Family Tour**

July 14, 21, 28, August 2, 16, 23, 30, 2013

(* note: there will be NO Family Tour on August 9th)

Our experienced Museum docents will lead a family-friendly tour through the Museum. Self-guided Nature Trail walks and Scavenger Hunt. Picnic area.

*** "GIBBY'S GALLERY" : Children's Art Exhibit**

July 21 – 29, 2013

Art exhibit open during Museum hours, featuring children's artwork inspired by Museum architecture, mills, grounds, flora and fauna. Opening reception Sunday, July 21, 2013 at 2:00pm.

Gilbert Stuart Sightings:



Pam Mead (left) finds John Adams, a Gibby original, at the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.!

Deb Doolittle (right) visits Sturbridge Village to see an original Stuart painting that had been owned by her family. The painting of clockmaker Simon Willard was donated to Sturbridge Village.

GRANTS

We greatly appreciate the generosity of the following grantors for their support of the Museum.

- * Society of the Cincinnati: \$1000 (2012) for several projects including an interpretive exhibit for the gristmill
- * Society of the Cincinnati: \$1000 (2013) for reproduction portraits for museum interpretation and museum display signage
- * The Champlin Foundations: \$95,000 for restoration, handicapped accessibility and improvements for the Welcome Center
- * President's Challenge: Museum President Dan Bell matched donations to date in the amount of \$23,061. The Challenge is ongoing until the end of the year.

We wish to thank the many private donors for their generous donations and support of the Museum.

Thank you!

Thank you to our friends: Thank you to all who support the Museum with your yearly membership, donations, and your valuable time and spirit! As a private non-profit organization, we rely on our friends who keep the Museum vital. You help to preserve this National Historic Landmark for future generations.

Don't forget to renew your membership!

Gilbert Stuart Museum Calendar of Events and Art Schedule 2013

For more information (401) 294-3001
 Web site: www.gilbertstuartmuseum.org
 Email: info@gilbertstuartmuseum.org

April 1 – April 27, 2013 Grounds open 11:00 am – 4:00 pm only by
 DONATION for viewing of Herring Run.
 Museum buildings are closed.

April 28, 2013 (Sunday) SPRING FAIR AT THE BIRTHPLACE / FISH ON
 THE RUN 1:00 – 4:00

April 29, 2013 Museum and Gallery open for the season:

May 4, 2013 (Saturday) Bird walk 7:00 am. Rain or shine.
 Call for reservations.

May - October Junior Docent Tours:
Saturday and Sunday 1:00, 2:00, 3:00pm
 Museum Junior Docents (ages 8-18) lead guided tours
 through the Museum.

May 23 – 27, 2013 Artists-in-Residence Program

June 28, 29, 30, 2013 Artists-in-Residence Program for Youths:

July 14, 21, 28, 2013 Friday at the Museum: 11:00am Family Tour .

July 21 – 29, 2013 "GIBBY'S GALLERY" : Children's Art Exhibit

August 2, 16, 23, 30, 2013 Friday at the Museum:
11:00am Family Tour .

August 9, 2013 (Friday) PAINT THE TOWN RED!
 A GALA FUNDRAISER 5:00 – 7:00 pm at the Museum
 Reservations requested

August 10 – September 2, 2013 "PAINT THE TOWN..."
Artists-In-Residence Art Exhibit and Sale

October 14, 2013 (Monday) Museum closes for the 2013 season

December 3, 2013 (Tuesday) Happy Birthday Gilbert Stuart!
 Watch for details for a birthday celebration!



Spring sights at the Birthplace: Black-crowned Night Heron and Buckies

From the Desk of the Executive Director

There is no end to the surprises and interesting stories that present themselves daily at the Museum. These surprises come in phone calls, from emails, and from daily visitors to the Museum. Some callers want to know if they have a true portrait by Gilbert Stuart, some visitors relate visits to the museum over 50 years ago, and occasionally a visitor will stop in to see if we sell snuff. It is not surprising how many are delighted to discover the Museum and are enthralled by its beauty and diverse offerings.

One such interesting story arrived last September in an email from Susan Heng. In subsequent emails, Susan told the story of a special doorknocker that had been in her family for many years. She believed the doorknocker was originally from the Birthplace! (Her story follows.)

In this, my eighteenth year of involvement with the Museum and my eighth year as the Executive Director, I am still enlivened to see the changes brought by the arrival of spring here at the Museum. Each year it is exciting to see the first buckies, hear the waterwheels turn and the rumble of the millstones as they grind corn on our opening day. It is always exciting to meet the many guests who visit the Museum, some with interesting stories of their own to tell. There is never an end to the surprises and there is always something new to learn!

We are ready for our 82nd season. Come and visit!

Peggy O'Connor



Some of our very talented and enthusiastic Junior Docents

River Herring: On March 12th the first of the river herring arrived at the museum's fish ladder. The herring run will continue until mid-May.

The Gilbert Stuart Doorknocker

I will tell you the story of the doorknocker as it was told to me by my father, but first a bit of background.

My mother Ruth Leighton Froeberg grew up in Kingston, RI. She was born in 1911. Her father, Virgil Louis Leighton, was a professor at the college and later the head of the Chemistry Dept. In his spare time, he had planted an apple orchard and had "hundred of hens" for egg production. My mother graduated from the college in 1933 with a BS degree in Biology.

My father, Theodore Carl Peter Froeberg, born 1910, grew up in Brockton, MA. He was the oldest son in a family of ten children. His father was a Lutheran minister. My father came to Kingston to get an Engineering degree in about 1928 or 1929. He earned most of the money to get himself thru college working many different jobs...butcher, bottled gas deliveryman and farm laborer at the apple orchard/chicken farm mentioned above. My dad was also in a fraternity, sang in the Glee Club, the choir at the Congregational Church in Kingston and acted in many plays at the college.

A man that my father knew, Johnny Nye, worked part time at the Leighton Orchard. Mr. Nye owned a truck and did odd jobs hauling, etc. Johnny was contracted to "clean out the Gilbert Stuart House" as it was being prepared for renovation. As my father would tell many years later, Johnny described the place as "full of all kinds of junk, the front door was mostly rotted and falling off its hinges." Johnny loaded up his truck with all the "junk" and threw the door on the top of the pile. This junk was then carted away. At some point Johnny noticed that the doorknocker was still attached to the door and he tore it off. I have no idea when it was actually given to my dad. But he told me that Johnny said when he gave it to my dad....."You and Ruth like old things, you can have it." My parents were married in Aug. 1935. My mother's father and mother died a few months apart in 1936. My father continued to run the orchard until it was destroyed by the hurricane in 1938.

In 1940 my parents moved to Chicago. My father got a job as a manufacturer's representative using his Engineering degree. In 1949, they moved to Cedar Rapids, IA to be more centrally located in his sales territory.

The knocker is wrought iron, quite heavy, six inches tall and about five inches wide. The top piece that rotates around the horseshoe shaped piece originally was a cotter pin made of wrought iron. My dad had a friend



Many thanks to Susan for generously sending the doorknocker back home to the Birthplace.

weld on a bolt and nut so that it could be hung on the front door of our house in Cedar Rapids. And that is where it hung for over thirty-six years, 1952 - 1999. My father died in 1998 and when my mother moved to a care center the next year the house was sold to friends who lived just up the street. We, of course, reserved the doorknocker from the sale. My mother passed away in 2007.

I have been the "keeper" of the knocker since then. My brother, sister and I have many family heirlooms, but I have always had a special interest in the doorknocker. I believe that the time has come to return it to its rightful place... perhaps it is because Gilbert Stuart and I share a birthday, December 3. Would the museum like to have the doorknocker?

Susan Froeberg Heng

The Eagle has landed!



Bald eagles have been sighted across the street from the Museum along the Upper Pond of Narrow River. Photo by Museum President Dan Bell.