

TOOLING AROUND

Winter 2005

“What Needs to Be Retrieved” Puts Davistown On the Map

It was a full and exciting summer for the Davistown Museum. The special show [“What Needs to Be Retrieved: The Marriage of Tools, Art, and History”](#) was an unqualified success, as evidenced by the greatly increased number of visitors to the museum and positive publicity in major Maine newspapers. Articles about the show summed up the museum’s missions beautifully. The [Waterville Sentinel/Kennebec Journal](#) called the museum collection “an eclectic, thought-provoking visual feast that offers history lessons, a science playground, and an alternative approach to art.” [Bangor Daily News](#) art critic Alicia Anstead wrote that the exhibit “celebrates a blurred line between implements of work and works of art.”

The opening was well attended and successful, highlighted by a panel discussion featuring 8 participating artists and moderated by Curator Skip Brack, followed by great food and conversation on the porch adjoining the 2nd floor gallery. Videogra-

pher Leo Kohyama made a beautifully edited **video of the panel discussion**, interspersed with stills of the show and participating artists, **available for viewing at the museum or for loan or purchase in DVD format.**

Outdoor sculpture appeared in Liberty with the installation of work by David McLaughlin, Eric Ziner, and Pete Borelli.



McLaughlin “Spheres,” Ziner “Jack of All Trades” & Borelli “Horseless Carriage” next to Liberty Tool Company.

The opening marked the **introduction of the museum gallery and the Maine Artists Guild**, via which we are

offering works by museum artists for sale at the museum and online. New member Suzie King made the first major purchase on opening night when she bought Margo Klass’ “Rock, Paper, Scissors,” a very popular piece in the show. We hated to part with when Suzi claimed it in October. Thank you, Suzi, and to Margo, who donated a percentage of the sale to the museum.



Artist Margo Klass (L) and member Suzi King during the opening gala.

Sales of the show catalog continue even after the show closed. In August, the **Maine Humanities Council** recognized the value of the show with a **grant** to help pay for the costs of publishing the catalogue. Skip, Hulls Cove manager Keith Goodrich, and museum assistant Karen Southworth, are working on developing the gallery operation, offerings and online presence over the winter. ✨



Participating artists panel discussion at opening of “What Needs to Be Retrieved: The Marriage of Tools, Art, and History”

Left to right: Curator, Skip Brack, Margo Klass, John Whalley, Roger Majorowicz, David McLaughlin, Alan Magee, Melita

From The Curator



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Now that we've retooled, so to speak, after our 2005 show closed, we are working on a number of projects.

We have been **working on the expansion of the museum to the second floor**, started this summer when we needed space for pieces from the permanent collection that were not involved in the show. We hung and displayed them throughout what used to be two apartments - the museum apartment that houses the library and a second, larger one adjacent to it that was vacant. Master finish carpenter Thom McKee, who has done most of the museum construction, has been building new tables and displays to fill spaces left vacant when the appliances and sink from the first apartment were removed and making changes elsewhere. Projects now under final construction/organization include track lights in all three 2nd floor galleries, a cafe in the rear, food prep areas and seating in the kitchen, a new tool cataloguing area in the former kitchen, and additional seating for private dinners for museum staff, board, and Maine Artists Guild members in the front reading/living room. Included in the new tool cataloguing area will be a display of edge tools representative of the vari-

ous steel making technologies used prior to the Civil War (natural steel, crucible steel, etc.). We hope to **open the cafe on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoon/evenings beginning in March**, serving coffee, tea, and desserts initially and hopefully expanding to soups. Local residents have expressed interest in having such a gathering place and others have suggested or offered to provide entertainment. If you are interested in participating in any way, please contact me.

The **new Maine Artists Guild Gallery** on the second floor is slowly filling with art for sale by artists in the museum collection. A number of artists not previously shown have also expressed interest in joining the museum family. We now offer art for sale in all the galleries, interspersed with the permanent collection. In the MAG gallery, located next to the cafe kitchen, all works are for sale. The museum receives 20 per cent for onsite sales of artwork, books, cards, and videos. We are also setting up a website, which will highlight each artist in the museum collection, list work for sale through the museum, contact information, location and schedules of shows, and photos/links to works for sale, other than those onsite at the museum in Liberty. The museum receives 10 per cent of sales that result from the museum website listing.

With the help of Beth Sundberg, Keith Goodrich,

Judith Bradshaw Brown, and a grant from MBNA for publications costs, I continue work on the **revised editions of two museum publications**. I reorganized **Norumbega Reconsidered: The Wawenoc Diasporas**. I also plan to include an extensive list of annotated bibliographic citations and hope to publish a final draft edition in late December. I am also revising, **Hand Tools in History**, expanding it and republishing it in early winter. I also hope to publish, **A Glossary of Ferrous Metallurgy**, an excerpt from **Hand Tools in History**, as a separate publication with its own introduction. Those of you who are members who have not yet taken advantage of your membership bonus of free Davistown Museum publications, please take note, and let me know if you would like to receive any of the new books when they are printed.

I look forward to **collaborating with the Arts Center at Kingdom Falls on a show of Native American pottery and baskets in June**. I am also working on a **second show for summer 2006**, called **"Accidental Durable Remnants."** The title comes from the term that British archaeologist Stewart Piggot coined to describe articles that a culture throws away or simply leaves behind, archaeological clues to understanding the past. This show will highlight selected tools and art works in the museum collection.

Preliminary plans are also underway for a **2007 show** tentatively named "Phenomenology of Tools II: **What Have you Made with Your Tools?**" This show will feature pieces constructed by Liberty Tool customers, e.g. boats, models, industrial equipment, pattern models, landscaped environments, buildings, and art. We welcome ideas and suggestions. For work not transportable to the museum, we will include other documentation, e.g. photos, written descriptions, models, and architectural plans. Please contact me if you would like to submit your work, have suggestions for the show, or are interested in photographing the work off-site.

We are currently exploring the idea of **building a small bloomery forge**. At this point, we are not sure where it would be located, but it would be outside on the Liberty campus. This forge would be very small (approx. 30" H by 24" W) and similar to those recently constructed at Cooperstown, NY, for converting bog iron to a bloom of iron by the direct process. We foresee the bloom then being used to fashion a few hand-forged iron tools in the same manner as early settlers without access to fine wrought iron bar stock might have done. We would be grateful for your comments, suggestions, and offers of help with this project. ✖

What's New at the Davistown Museum?



This fall, Skip salvaged a **cobbler's bench** and all the tools, leather, and even shoes that went with it. It was used by a shoemaker in Newton, MA, from 1835 to the Civil War. Skip put everything together in one of the second floor galleries so that it looks as if the cobbler just stopped work for a cup of coffee. He purchased the tools and other components of the cobbler's bench from the estate of a senior manager of The Great Northern Paper Company in Millinocket, ME. ✖

From the Education and Fundraising Director



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We have enhanced the museum's offerings to students and teachers. Visitors are now encouraged to find tools and learn about their roles in 19th century maritime Maine via a **scavenger hunt** and related materials. Since our assistant, Karen, lives in the museum complex, we can now offer tours and visits to groups during the winter on days that the museum is closed.

Karen hosted a **visit from a Liberty Cub Scout troop** and is contacting schools to invite them to visit. Curator Skip Brack hosted a **high school group from the Liberty School in Camden**; they were studying pre-European contact Maine history and were interested in Skip's information and resources. **If readers know of a group that would enjoy and benefit from a visit to the museum, please encourage them to contact me by e-mail or 207 288-5126 and/or visit the [Tools Teach](#) section of the web site.** Tools Teach: Learning the World through the Study of Tools is a book available online and in print for sale through the museum. I am working on an updated edition, hopefully available in the spring.

As a member of the board of directors of Maine Archives and Museums, I organized and moderated a museum educators thread at the MAM 2005 fall conference

Making Connections: Your Community, Your Donors, Your Colleagues in Orono. We offered a series of workshops and time to network for museum educators. The response was very positive, and the museum educators in attendance look forward to maintaining and expanding the network established at the conference.

Our **current fundraising** efforts include a **membership drive**, online/onsite **sales of art** through the Maine Artists Guild **gallery**, the creation of a new **museum store** on the third floor offering postcards, refrigerator magnets of tools and art in the collection, books, and children's tool- and art-related books and toys. Proceeds from the museum **café** promise to help with museum expenses. We have also established an **endowment fund**, for which we hope to mount a campaign in the future. ✖

From the MBNA Summer Intern

Thanks to a **grant from MBNA**, our intern, Adam Howard, a graduate student in museum studies at the University of Oregon at Eugene, spent the summer in the studio apartment in the museum complex. He worked hard, helping us to keep the museum open 7 days a week and to make progress on a number of projects.

Adam arrived in June during the frenzied week before the show opened. After catching his breath from the demands of helping to open a show, he settled in to his many tasks. Here are some comments from Adam's summary of his experience, submitted to MBNA for our final grant report:

I took great pride in working at the Museum over the summer, and therefore, felt appreciative for the opportunity to represent it. For example I had the opportunity to work with Museum curator, H.G. (Skip) Brack on a presentation at Montpelier - The General Henry Knox Museum in Thomaston, Maine, in July.

My most memorable experiences include visitors' reactions to the giant map of central coastal Maine that serves as the Museum's floor. Visitors will get down on their hands and knees and

crawl across the map, identifying familiar towns and landmarks. This alone separates the Davistown Museum from its contemporaries. There exists a greater sense of ownership at the Davistown Museum, which is unfortunately lacking at most museums. Visitors are encouraged to relax and feel comfortable; many of the tools are hands-on, and there are chairs to sit in and absorb what is otherwise an all-encompassing atmosphere and environment. The museum encourages visitors to explore and create memorable and meaningful experiences for themselves. The concept that museum should be an institution of discovery, while simultaneously, a place of comfort, distinguishes the Davistown Museum as both exceptional and unique.

In addition to serving as the assistant curator, I worked with Museum Educator, Judith Bradshaw Brown, Ed.D., on educational programming for and with student/teacher visitors to the Museum. Working with Judith, I created implemental educational programs and activities designed to encourage contextual learning and visual thinking among younger visitors. For example, together, Judith and I created the Museum "Scavenger Hunt," in which students are encouraged to locate specific tools and learn about their applicability to early American trades. The Museum is an excellent resource for students of any age, not only providing the opportunity to research tools, but



Curator Skip Brack, Knox Museum curator Ellen Dyer, and Davistown Museum intern Adam Howard after Skip's lecture on the tools, trades, and social milieu of the Henry Knox era at the General Henry Knox Museum in Thomaston, July 2005.

also Maine history (including a large amount of material on Native Americans of Maine), contemporary Maine artists, and environmental history. There truly is something for everyone at the Museum, and it is here where its value is most apparent.

My experience has been the most challenging, yet, rewarding of my life. Therefore, I would like to thank the Davistown Museum and MBNA for this opportunity. ✖

Museum Rescued by New Staff Addition



After the MBNA summer intern left, the museum had no regular staff in Liberty. Enter **Karen Southworth** to save the day. The tenant of the apart-

ment on the third floor of the museum building moved out, Karen rented the apartment, thrilled to live in a museum and excited to work part-time in it.

Karen now runs the museum on weekend days when Skip is not there and has picked up a number of projects, working with Skip, Judith, and web manager Beth Sundberg. She attended a day of the Maine Archives and Museums conference with Judith

and spent a day with Beth In Hulls Cove, learning how to use our museum software, PastPerfect.

Karen grew up in Connecticut. During high school she became what she calls a "museum/ gallery junkie" and continued her ongoing interest in the arts after she moved to Nantucket and then Maine in 1977. She has held a variety of jobs, most recently establishing a stained glass and stone en-

graving businesses. She continues to create in stained glass and also paints, sculpts, engraves stone, and does photography. She loves being surrounded by art and is excited to be living and working in a museum. She was also called into service to help run Liberty Tool Company across the street. We are grateful to have Karen and welcome her to the museum family. ✨

2006 Shows: Native American Crafts and "Accidental Durable Remnants"

We are pleased to announce that next summer will open with a **special show in collaboration with the Arts Center at Kingdom Falls**, a nearby arts program that offers classes, in Montville (adjacent to Liberty, the other half of the original Davistown) and Belfast. The Davistown Museum is looking forward to displaying **the work of Native American artists** during the Arts Center at Kingdom Falls Native American Arts week to take place in June, 2006. We will mount a show of the work of **basketmakers Gail and Jeremy Frey and potters Dolores and Emma Lewis**, the artists in residence during the Arts Center program. We are also offering the opportunity for students to exhibit



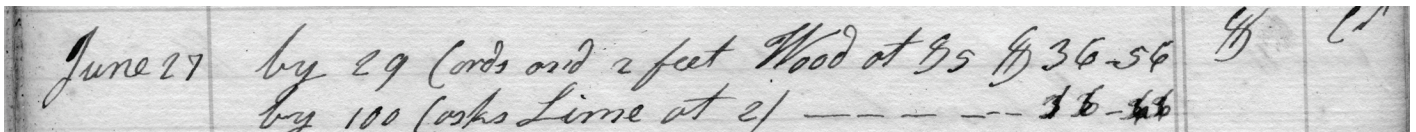
Alan Crighton, Director of the Arts Centre at Kingdom Falls, artists Melita Westerlund and David McLaughlin at 2005 opening gala.

work that results from the residencies.

We are pleased to join forces with the Arts Center at Kingdom Falls to create an exciting presence for art and history in the Liberty/Montville area that will be greater than either of our parts in doing so thus far. We appreciate the opportunity to draw attention to and expand our offerings of Native American art and artifacts, since the Davistown Museum's mission includes contributing to visitors' understanding and appreciation of Native American history, tools, and art. ✨

What's New at the Davistown Museum?

In another recent tool buy, Skip recovered a number of account books that belonged to Edward Robinson, a prominent merchant from Thomaston, ME, who operated and supplied coasting vessels from 1817-1841. The logs record what was being shipped in and out of mid-coastal Maine during that period, both in terms of goods shipped and supplies for the crew. Skip plans to publish a small volume, separate from the current series of major publications, about the information in the books once he has had time to read, research, and digest the contents. They will then be available at the museum for display and research. ✨



Entry from log for Sloop Betsy out of Warren, ME 1817.

INTERESTED IN HELPING THE MUSEUM?

What can you do to become involved and help see that the Davistown Museum continues to thrive as a center for preserving, exhibiting and researching hand tools and their part in the history of maritime Maine and for exhibiting important contemporary Maine art?

- Join the museum at any of the levels listed on the enclosed form.
- Contribute to the endowment fund (See enclosed form).
- Serve as a director. We have a number of vacancies on our board of directors and would welcome new members.
- Volunteer. We welcome volunteers willing to:
 - host and guide museum visitors, especially during the summer.
 - catalog and shelve books in the library.
 - help run and staff the cafe (e.g. planning, cooking, serving, cleaning up, publicizing, performing, coordinating).
 - Submit, loan, donate your art, tools, and/or artifacts for special shows or the permanent collection.
 - Share this newsletter with others and introduce friends to the museum and website.

Please contact us at the museum for more information or to make arrangements for volunteering or participating in museum events: judith@davistownmuseum.org