

**Broadside** is published by the Friends of the Maine State Museum as a benefit of museum membership.

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**Friends of the Maine State Museum**

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The Maine State Museum seeks to share what is meaningful about Maine and its place in the world, in order to inspire people to discover Maine's past, understand its present, and imagine its future. Visit [mainestatemuseum.org](http://mainestatemuseum.org).

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## Moving On

**L**ike dancers in elegant ballets, Maine State Museum staff and contractors have been all about movement, control, grace, space, and safety in the museum galleries these past many months.

The galleries will soon be the site of a major renovation that will result in a new heating and cooling system throughout the entire Cultural Building. The galleries must be largely emptied for this work, which has meant major space concerns for museum staff, such as collections manager Natalie Liberace, who

has had to make room in collections storage for large objects that have been on display for over 40 years. For contractors, such as PRO Moving and Cote Crane and Rigging, movement, control, grace, and safety have ruled the day, as crews have shifted, lifted, and pushed heavy, unwieldy objects.

Any observer of Cote Crane and Rigging's work would see that the lifting and moving also provided wonderful lessons in ingenuity and physics. The crew used pry bars, cribbing, and dollies, along with a beefy electric pallet jack, to move a tractor, three sawmills, horse treadmill, threshing machine, granite wagon, cider press, retort (a cast iron "box" used during the sardine canning process), and hay press. Once out of the building, these pieces were loaded on large trucks and taken to *(continued on page 2)*



Cote Crane and Rigging crew members ease a ca. 1885 threshing machine up a temporary ramp from the former "barn" in the agriculture exhibit to the gallery's main floor.



## The Maine Labor Mural Goes Online

**T**he museum building may be closed, but you can discover the many stories behind the Maine Labor Mural online!

The Maine State Museum has just released an interactive web exhibit that delves deep into the varied scenes and topics depicted in the Labor Mural. The web exhibit invites visitors to explore Maine's rich labor history, as depicted by artist Judy Taylor in the Labor Mural's eleven panels. Visitors to [mainestatemuseum.org/maine-labor-mural/](http://mainestatemuseum.org/maine-labor-mural/) can click on an icon of any of the panels to discover richly illustrated and layered historical narratives about Maine's labor history, including more than 160 interpreted images of related objects, photographs, and documents.

Artist Judy Taylor also reflects on the development and meaning of her work in a series of video interviews. The web exhibit was funded in part by a grant from the Maine Arts Commission, an independent state agency supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Maine Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

*Rosie the Riveter panel of the Maine Labor Mural*

## Getting to the New

**W**e've stated frequently that the Maine State Museum is working on new exhibits for our reopening in 2025, exhibits that will be profoundly different from anything we've done before. But how will we actually do that? Our past exhibits have generally been oriented toward single topics: *Mainers in World War I* is an example. Topics have built-in boundaries and thus are fairly easy to pursue, and for the past decade each exhibit has been developed by one curator, though with outside input.

But for our evolving new core exhibit, *Meet Maine Here*, we have a different structure, using several staff development groups, each working with a different theme, like 'Maine as Vacationland.' Each theme will be a mini exhibit, an appetizer rather than a meal. In addition, stories of actual Mainers will anchor the themes, using personal histories to open the topics and the times to be explored; thus, the life of late 19th century Maine booster and sportswoman Cornelia 'Flyrod' Crosby might introduce the 'Vacationland' theme. This approach will recall the human drama of our history and highlight the diversity of Maine's people and their experiences; a kind of teaching history by example.

Will our public like this new approach? To help us find out, we asked you, our visitors, our supporters, and also some who don't know us well, what you think. Assisted by the Friends of the Maine State Museum and the Maine Arts Commission, we sent an e-mail summarizing some of these stories to a representative group of you and asked your opinions about them. If you received one, I hope you responded to it or will respond if you receive one in the future. And forgive us if you didn't get one of these inquiring e-mails; it's a small survey, but I think it will tell us what we need to learn. We know a lot about our school audiences, but less about our adult audiences; your interest and support can make a real difference in how the Maine State Museum meets its future.

**“Our approach will recall the human drama of our history and highlight the diversity of Maine's people and their experiences.”**

## You Have Made a Difference

**T**he Friends of the Maine State Museum is a constituent nonprofit organization that provides financial support and advocacy for the Maine State Museum. Our members support the museum in myriad ways – through financial contributions, making the Friends a benefactor of an estate plan, donating goods and services, providing feedback on museum programs, serving on the Board of Directors, and sharing information about museum programs with friends and family.

**To find out more about the many ways you can support the museum,** please contact Director of Membership and Development Ellen Dyer at [ellen.dyer@maine.gov](mailto:ellen.dyer@maine.gov) or (207) 287-2304.

**Thank you for all that you do to help the Maine State Museum share what is meaningful about Maine and its place in the world.**

## Moving On (continued from page 1)

a new facility outfitted for museum collections storage.

The removal of these heavy machines and pieces of equipment has paved the way for more work within the museum galleries. The few large items remaining (the Lombard log hauler, Lion steam locomotive, and section of the hull of the *St. Mary*) are now protected within massive plywood enclosures that will keep these pieces safe during the upcoming removal of spray-on fireproofing in advance of the new heating and cooling system installation.

The months of planning and coordination by staff, as well as the engagement of expert movers paid off. Altogether, the move included 6,000 museum objects, as well as an extensive archive of books, manuscripts, and photographs. There were moments of stress, but all pieces emerged unscathed and safe from their dramatic transition. They are now protected in collections storage, where they await their next lives of study and exhibit for the people of Maine in their state museum.

**See videos of the collections moves on the Maine State Museum's YouTube channel:** <https://tinyurl.com/yc33ucxk>



**Fun Had by All at MaineFest:** Chief Educator Joanna Torow assists a child with fish printing at this year's MaineFest. This was the second year of the event, held in Capitol Park. Maine State Museum hosted in partnership with the Children's Discovery Museum of Central Maine. Eight organizations set up tables offering hands-on activities, from painting to seed planting, for kids of all ages.



## Rare Daguerreotype Added to Collections

The museum recently acquired a rare daguerreotype of a fascinating figure in Maine history: editor, writer, and lecturer Elizabeth Oakes (Prince) Smith. Elizabeth was born in 1806 near North Yarmouth, Maine and grew up in Portland. At seventeen, she married Seba Smith, a writer, humorist, and newspaper editor, with whom she had six children (interestingly, the children were given the family name “Oaksmith” to honor her family). Anonymously, or under the byline “E.”, she contributed pieces to her husband’s *Daily Courier and Family Reader* and filled in as editor of the *Eastern Argus* in 1833.

After losing their fortune during the Panic of 1837, the Smiths left Maine in late 1838, eventually settling in New York City. To help support her family, Elizabeth embarked on a national literary career, publishing poems, novels, stories, and plays throughout the 1840s. In 1849, she climbed Katahdin to Pamola Peak and wrote an account of it that was published in newspapers, possibly the first such account by a woman. After attending the 1850 Women’s Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts she began writing about women’s rights and joined the national lyceum circuit. She entered semi-retirement during the 1860s and, after the death of two sons and her husband in the late 1860s, focused on religion for the remainder of her life. She died in 1893.



*This daguerreotype of Elizabeth Oakes Smith was taken by George M. Howe of Portland, Maine. Based on the photographer’s working dates and the decorative features of the casing, it likely dates to 1854-1858.*

## Welcome Aboard!

**Gay Grant** is a newly appointed member of the Maine State Museum Commission. She is the author of three books, including her most recent, *Around the Kennebec Valley: The Herman Bryant Collection* (Arcadia Publishers, 2022). For seventeen years she owned the Write Way, a writing, grant writing, and editing consulting firm, and served in the Maine House of Representatives from 2012-2018. She is a past member of the Friends of the Maine State Museum Board of Directors and is currently chair of the Maine Governmental Facilities Authority. She lives in South Gardiner with her husband Ron Grant.

**Roseann Marlett** was recently elected to the Friends of the Maine State Museum Board of Directors. Born and raised in Richmond, Roseann and her husband Jeff recently returned to Maine after three decades. Her love of history, interest in environmentalism, and professional background in education, most recently as Curriculum Library Coordinator for the School of Education at the College of St. Rose, will be welcome additions to the board. She lives in Yarmouth.



**Gay Grant**

**Roseann Marlett**

## We’re Listening

The museum’s unexpected closure presented an opportunity for growth, and for getting to know its audience better. In partnership with the Maine Humanities Council, Maine State Museum education and curatorial staff conducted seventeen Listening Tour sessions around the state in 2021 and 2022.

Each session had five to fifteen participants who were asked about their relationship to the landscape and environment, topics that are important to their community, how they see Maine and how they think others see Maine, how their region has changed over the years, and what things happening in Maine today will be remembered by future generations. The goal was to find the stories and broader themes that resonate with and reflect the many voices, interests, and identities of the people of Maine. An advisory board helped ensure that the museum spoke to a diverse range of Mainers: veterans, representatives from Wabanaki communities, commercial fishermen, people of color, Franco-Americans, naturalists, members of the transgender community, and others.

This project was an investment in the museum’s future that is expected to impact its work in many ways for years to come. For example, the Listening Tour introduced the museum to Richard Silliboy, the vice chief of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs. He shared some fascinating stories and history that resulted in the museum adding one of his handmade potato baskets to the permanent collection for future generations to see and learn from (you can see the full story under What’s New on the museum’s website, [mainestatemuseum.org](http://mainestatemuseum.org)). Other stories may become exhibits a few years down the road. Someday a Listening Tour participant may collaborate on a new public program. The many voices heard in the process will inform the museum’s educational work with teachers and students.

**Thank you to all the Listening Tour participants for helping to shape the future of the Maine State Museum!**

## An Acquisition from Out of this World

**D**r. Jessica Meir of Caribou, Maine, brought a Maine state flag to the International Space Station (ISS) in September 2019. It belonged to NASA Extravehicular Activity Flight Operations Specialist Derrick Porter, of Cutler, Maine. He was Dr. Meir's spacewalk instructor.

Dr. Meir's 2019 expedition included a historic first. With astronaut Christina Koch, Dr. Meir took part in the first spacewalk carried out only by women. Before Dr. Meir left the ISS, Chris Cassidy of York, Maine joined the crew on the space station, and he brought the flag back to Earth in October 2020.

In May 2022, Derrick Porter and Jessica Meir presented the flag to Governor Mills, and she transferred it to the Maine State Museum so that it could be preserved for the people of Maine.

*Astronauts Jessica Meir (on the left, upside-down) and Chris Cassidy (on the right) aboard the ISS*

