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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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## Lion Leads the Way

*Cote Crane and Rigging lift the boiler off the Lion in preparation for its move. Extensive work being done to the museum's interior is visible in the background.*

Following days of documentation and disassembly by museum staff and many hours of meticulous lifting, bracing, and rolling by Cote Crane and Rigging, the famous *Lion* locomotive and tender – all 9 tons of it – are taking a break from the spotlight and resting in storage.

The *Lion* and its tender have commanded the main floor entrance to the museum since 1986. They will be absent from that spot when the museum reopens, but will reappear soon after in a new, upgraded exhibit gallery on the 1st floor.

The museum's plans for presenting new exhibitions to replace the *Lion* on the main floor are moving forward as carefully and swiftly as

possible. Those exhibitions, featuring fascinating and diverse museum collections and stories of the Maine people behind them, promise to be inviting, informative, and engaging for museum visitors of all ages.

The museum's new exhibitions evolved out of the need for extensive renovations throughout the Cultural Building, which opened 52 years ago in the State House Complex. Essential and necessary work to the aged, well-used building include replacing the failed heating and cooling systems, asbestos abatement, interior and exterior insulation (the Cultural Building had none), new energy-efficient windows, upgraded

*(continued on page 2)*

## Maine State Museum Joins Global Cold War Exhibition

Items from the Maine State Museum's Samantha Smith collection will be included in a touring exhibition examining the Cold War before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Samantha, of Manchester, Maine, was a child peace activist known for her historic letter to Soviet leader Yuri Andropov and visit to the Soviet Union in 1983. Following her tragic death in 1985, her message of peace continued through the work of the Samantha Smith Foundation.

The exhibit, *The Berlin Wall: Living in a Divided World*, was developed by Spanish company Musealia in cooperation with the Berlin Wall Foundation, and will open November 2023 in Madrid, Spain. It



*Samantha Smith in her Artek Soviet Youth Camp outfit, one of the items on loan to The Berlin Wall: Living in a Divided World exhibit.*

features a 65-foot-long section of the Berlin Wall and artifacts, including the Maine State Museum's pieces in the Samantha Smith collection, from museums and institutions all over the world. The exhibition will tour the globe for seven years, visiting fourteen cities in Europe, North America, Asia, South Africa, and Australia.

Jane Smith, Samantha's mother and founder of the Samantha Smith Foundation, has recently enlarged the museum's Samantha Smith collection by generously donating personal items from Samantha's life, gifts and awards presented to Samantha during

and following her trip to the Soviet Union, and the archives of the Samantha Smith Foundation.

## America's 250th Birthday

Perhaps you weren't aware that the museum world is buzzing with interest about the upcoming national semiquincentennial. That awkward term refers to the 250th anniversary of the United States, which will be celebrated in 2026. So far 38 states, including Maine, have authorized commissions to direct state celebrations, and an active federal commission, called America250, is also engaged. Maine's Semiquincentennial Commission was authorized by the legislature and Governor Mills in July, and will have 15 members, including myself. Maine also authorized the two-year position of an America250

**“... the 250th national birthday is an opportunity to give some real thought to what our country is and what we think it should be.”**

director, to be located at the State Archives, to coordinate state efforts. Some might see this as an excellent opportunity to re-do Maine's disappointing Bicentennial celebrations, blasted by the arrival of COVID-19.

The museum is only beginning to think about the 250th amidst the many exciting projects already underway in anticipation of reopening. But, for all of us, the 250th national birthday is an opportunity to give some real thought to what our country is and what we think it should be. We should certainly study the past, celebrate parts of it, and even have some fun with it, but it nevertheless remains the past. It is the future that really counts, and part of what the past should do is to point to the best our future can be.

### LION (continued from page 1)

restroom facilities, improved or new electrical, data, and plumbing systems, as well as new floor and wall finishes.

Once the renovations are finished, the Cultural Building's resident agencies – the Maine State Museum, Maine State Library, and Maine State Archives – face several months' work to move back in, install shelving, re-establish offices, relocate books and boxes of documents, and in the case of the museum, build new exhibits. Tentative plans call for the Cultural Building and its agencies to reopen their doors in late 2025. It will be a grand moment, long delayed by unexpected challenges, but nonetheless, most welcome by all. Some months later, in 2026, the *Lion* will be moved into the museum and be put back together so that it can join the museum's well-loved exhibitions once again and ride the rails of visitors' discovery and imagination.



The Lion in its former spot at the museum's entrance.

## David M. Work (1954 - 2023)

The Maine State Museum notes with sadness the death on August 4th, 2023, of David M. Work, who was from 2003-2020 the curator of geology at the museum. David received his Ph.D. in geology from the University of Iowa and became an internationally-known scholar for his work on fossil ammonoids, important marine mollusks that flourished from about 450 million years ago until their extinction 66 million years ago. David brought to the museum an impressive level of professional and scholarly devotion and will also be remembered for his dry humor and entertaining wit. His survivors include his wife, Paula Work, who continues at the museum as curator of natural science collections, and his daughter, Sarah Work.



Pictured from left to right (standing) are Darrell Newell, Passamaquoddy, Motahkomikuk; Paula Work, curator of archaeological collections; Donna Augustine, Mi'kmaw, Elsipogtog First Nation; and Bernard Fishman, museum director. At right (front) is Roger Paul, Passamaquoddy/Wolastoquy.

## Repatriation of Native American Remains Concludes with Ceremony

Members of the Wabanaki Repatriation Committee met with museum staff on September 9, 2023 to receive the last elements of Native ancestral remains that had been in the museum's archaeological collections. The museum has now honored all its commitments to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The transfer concluded with a ceremony of restoration and respect which emotionally moved all present and will be remembered by the museum as the beginning of a new era of cooperation and engagement with Maine's tribes.



## A Chance Message Brings Aroostook Photograph Collection to Museum

A large collection of negatives and home movies recently acquired by the Maine State Museum combines an intimate look at family life with a view of early aviation in northern Maine. The photos and films were taken by Irvin Cumming of Houlton between the 1920s and 1950s and were donated by his son Thomas Cumming of Standish.

A simple thank-you note helped bring this collection to the museum. In 2017, the museum received a donation of photographs taken by Irvin's parents Alexander and Maud Cumming. A family history website was helpful for researching that donation, so curator Ben Stickney sent his appreciation to the webmaster. Word of the photos in the museum's collection then spread among the extended family. The museum has since fielded inquiries from family members about the collection, most recently from Thomas Cumming. Mr. Cumming mentioned that he had saved Irvin's photographs and wondered if the museum might be interested in them.



Irvin Cumming at flight school in Dallas, 1931 or 1932

Irvin was an avid photographer and pilot. He first picked up a camera as a teenager and snapped his parents, friends, co-workers, and classmates. After marrying Anna Fitzpatrick of Littleton, he captured the activities of their growing family. He kept his camera handy as he attended aviation school, gave flying lessons, managed airports, and piloted airliners for Northeast Airlines.

Thanks to the Cumming family's interest in their history, Thomas Cumming's careful stewardship of the collection, and a little courtesy, these unique images will now be preserved for posterity.

## Maine State Museum Receives Major Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services

The Maine State Museum is thrilled to have been recently awarded \$244,375 through the Museums for America program of the Institute for Museum and Library Services, a federal agency that is a major source for funding museum projects across the nation. This competitive grant was awarded to only about one-third of the applicants and the Maine State Museum is one of only two grant recipients in Maine. The funds will assist the museum in developing, installing, and evaluating a new history exhibit, *Meet Maine Here*, one of the stellar presentations the museum will offer when it

reopens in 2025.

*Meet Maine Here* is a new direction for the museum in the way it presents Maine history. It will replace many of the old industrial machines (though the beloved *Lion* locomotive will be relocated, the *Lombard* and the ship *St. Mary* will remain) with stories about the lives of Maine history-makers, some well-known and some obscure. Those lives will illuminate such Maine topics as environmental conservation, recreation, business and industry, innovation, and the state's richly varied communities and culture.

## Bill & Joan Alfond Foundation Awards Grant for Lombard Log Hauler Exhibit

The Maine State Museum has been awarded a grant from the Bill & Joan Alfond Foundation to develop and install a new exhibit about the museum's Lombard Log Hauler. Part of the museum's new history exhibit, *Meet Maine Here*, it will be on display when the museum reopens in 2025. As part of its commitment to the project, the museum will assist the Waterville Historical Society in the interpretation and display of its own Lombard Log Hauler, located on the historical society's grounds.



Laurie LaBar shows correspondent Mo Rocca a troika from the Samantha Smith collection as he prepares for a CBS Sunday Morning segment about Smith.

## The Museum Bids a Fond Farewell to Laurie LaBar

In many ways, the Maine State Museum saw the end of an era when long-time curator Laurie LaBar entered the world of retirement in September.

Laurie first came to the museum as an archaeological collections consultant in 1995. From there, she worked in museum education and visitor services before leaving Maine to earn a masters' degree at the prestigious Winterthur Program in Early American Culture. She was then hired to fill a curatorial job back at the museum and launched her 23-year career in that role.

In her first major curatorial success, Laurie coordinated the nationally recognized project to conserve, research, and exhibit Maine's collection of Civil War flags. From there, she curated or co-curated many well-received exhibitions, from *At Home in Maine* to *Uncommon Threads: Wabanaki Textiles, Clothing, and Costume*. Laurie also authored or co-authored several published papers and three books, and gave lectures throughout the state.

Laurie's deep knowledge, warmth, and sense of humor will be missed. But happily, she will be back to put the finishing touches on her ground-breaking exhibition, *Maine Quilts: 250 Years of Comfort and Community*, slated to open when the museum reopens in late 2025.

## Fun Had by All at Augusta Family Fun Night



Museum educators Mandy Browne and David Hunt assist a family with navigating the museum's hands-on touch table at Augusta Family Fun Night. Sponsored by the Augusta Police Department and held at Augusta's Mill Park, this free event welcomed approximately 1,500 people. Visitors to the museum's booth learned about Maine wildlife and minerals, and took part in various hand-on activities. They also got a souvenir history and postcard of the Edwards Mill, a cotton mill which functioned on the site from 1845 - 1984 and burned in 1989.