



MATTATUCK MUSEUM ARTS & HISTORY CENTER

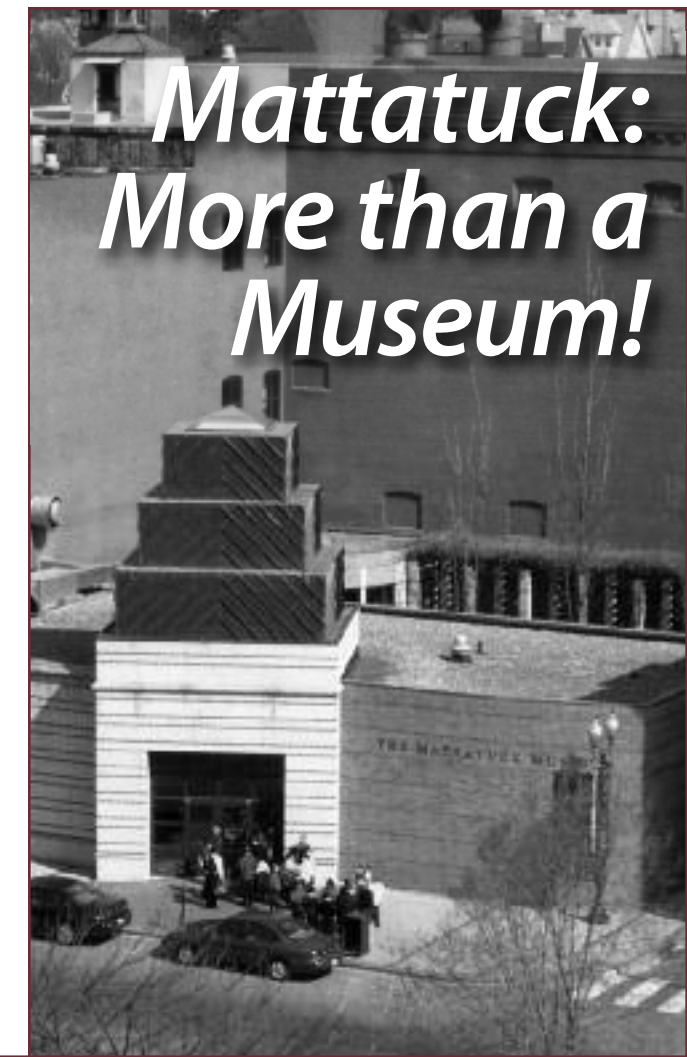
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MATTATUCK MUSEUM ARTS & HISTORY CENTER

June 2009 – January 2010 Newsletter Vol. 20 No. 2



At the Mattatuck Museum's 2009 Annual Meeting, Museum Council President, Cathy Smith, coined the phrase "Mattatuck: More Than a Museum." Immediately listeners were struck by how very special that phrase is—a phrase that perfectly captures the museum and its mission. As you read this newsletter you'll see exactly what Cathy means. You'll see a museum protecting its neighborhoods, educating and advancing the dreams of its children, publishing a book, conducting research, honoring individuals who make great contributions to the city, entertaining its audience with music and films, and telling the great stories of our region's heritage.

GRANTS

awarded January 1–December 31, 2009

- American Savings Foundation
- City of Waterbury Mayor's Commission on Arts & Tourism
- Community Development Block Grant/City of Waterbury
- Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism
 - General Operating Support
 - Arts Endowment Fund
- Connecticut Community Foundation
- Connecticut Humanities Council
 - Heritage Revitalization
 - Federal Arts Project
- Connecticut State Library
- Elisha Leavenworth Foundation
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- Naugatuck Savings Bank Foundation
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Cathy Smith—The Waterbury Neighborhood Council's Person of the Year Outlines Her Vision of the City

The Waterbury Neighborhood Council selected Cathy Smith as its Person of the Year this fall. The award comes as no surprise to our museum community who has long recognized Cathy as our hard-working, forward-thinking president. In fact, throughout the Waterbury region Cathy is known as a courageous leader committed to the greater good of her community by helping to revitalize the city she loves.

Cathy envisions a city built on its heritage as a world economic power, designed by renowned architects, with magnificent and historic churches, along the splendor of the Naugatuck River with a beautiful Greenway that attracts visitors and provides a public recreation area. Her vision includes a vibrant downtown cultural center, which nourishes the minds of city and suburban children and adults, strong public education and after-school programs, and a prosperous downtown commercial district. Cathy believes in empowerment and that nothing can stop residents who come together on issues of common concern—across demographic, socioeconomic and political lines in a positive, productive and civil manner.

As Cathy says, "The challenges are before us," and she is willing to work tirelessly with an empowered community to accomplish its vision. Congratulations, Cathy, on your well-deserved recognition!

Enriching the Lives of Our Community's Children

Summer Program Continues to Provide New Options for 7-13 Year-Olds

Children of the Walnut Orange Wall neighborhood now have a great after-school program to attend, thanks to the Mattatuck Museum and grants from the Connecticut Community Foundation, the Leavenworth Foundation, and the Naugatuck Savings Bank Foundation. *Raise the Roots*, a program for 7-13 year-olds, started as a summer program meeting two

days each week in the WOW/NRZ Community Learning Center on Walnut Street and the New Deliverance Church on Crown Street. The program is so popular that it has continued in the WOW neighborhood and a new program at the Hopkins Street Center will begin this Spring. Enrolled children not only have the opportunity to learn how to grow a garden, but the museum is weaving in strands of Waterbury neighborhood history, living a healthy lifestyle, cultural diversity, and teamwork. This program is coordinated with the help of Brass City Harvest, a local initiative to feed those in need using community container gardening throughout the city.



Waterbury Teens Learn the Performing Arts and Academics at the Mattatuck Museum

Every afternoon the Mattatuck Museum is filled with eighty 9th through 12th graders, singing in three-part harmony, dancing with great vigor, or emoting in dramatic style—all part of *Dare to Dream*, an afterschool program hosted by the museum. Here students are building their skills in the performing arts and improving their proficiency in math and English; taught by certified teachers from the Waterbury Public Schools and distinguished

members of the city's theater community.

Dare to Dream is made possible by a 5-year \$200,000 per year 21st Century Learning Center federal grant awarded to the Waterbury Public Schools in partnership

with the museum and managed by Phyllis Connors, Ph.D. It is designed to support student development into self-reliant adults and build a bridge to the next step in their lives, higher education. Now student faces glow with the excitement and joy of learning a new dance step, song or dramatic technique, and it is certain that *Dare to Dream* ranks will

continue to grow as enthusiastic participants encourage their friends to sign-on.

"Dare to Dream" students jump for joy in dance class!

Photos by Edwin Luna, La Luna Video & Media



On the piano, Thomas Perez, Kennedy High School

Publishing New Books

Whittemore Family Philanthropy Shaped the Region

Start by picturing the Harris Whittemore Gallery in the Mattatuck Museum, move on to the beautiful landscape and roadways of Middlebury, and then to the public schools and library in Naugatuck. Let your mind's eye wander and remember Buckingham Hall and its center of arts and culture, given to Waterbury Hospital to raise needed funds for healthcare. None of these would exist without the vision and generosity of John Howard Whittemore and his son Harris. They defined great philanthropy, and it is with respect, reverence and gratitude that the museum remembers them in a new book, *Hidden in Plain Sight: The Whittemore Collection and the French Impressionists*.

Written by Ann Y. Smith this lavishly illustrated book tells, for the first time, the story behind John Howard and Harris Whittemore's community- shaping philanthropy and their legendary collection of Impressionist paintings now in museums throughout the world. The book is the result of a 15-year collaboration between Ms. Smith, Robert N. Whittemore and Thryza Whittemore, exploring the family's rich archives of materials that document a story that was largely unknown to the public for more than a century.

Over 140 attended a celebration of the Whittemores' philanthropy and the new book—a lecture by author Ann Smith, tours of the neighborhoods, the unveiling of Whittemore family portraits, and a reception attended by Whittemore descendants.



Ann Y. Smith, author of "Hidden in Plain Sight: The Whittemore Collection and the French Impressionists," left, talks with Thyrza Whittemore, great-great-granddaughter of John H. Whittemore, at the reception following a day-long event focusing on the legendary Whittemore collection of Impressionist paintings.



Dr. Robert L. Rafford, Middlebury Town Historian, left, talks with Cathy Smith, President of the Museum Council, and Hiram Upson, Vice President of the Museum Council.



Anne Larkin of Middlebury, Beverly Mosch of Bethlebelem and Diane Ulbrich of Middlebury



Woody Mosch of Bethlebelem, Pam Whittemore of Leeds, Maine and museum council member Phil Rowley of Middlebury



Maggie Smith, Aline Rossiter of Chase Collegiate School, Bobbie Munger of Southbury and Judy Kellogg-Rowley of Middlebury



Judge Francis McDonald of Middlebury, Fielding Secor of Southbury and Joel Finn of Roxbury



Thyrza Whittemore and Morgan Whittemore Delois

“Our City, Our Town” Connects to New Constituents



The 1991 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Brookside Community, a Limited Equity Co-operative providing affordable home ownership.



Artillery Road in Middlebury, CT

Naugatuck Valley Project First of Three Exhibitions Planned

Securing a \$21,000 grant from The Connecticut Humanities Council, the museum is creating a series of three community-based exhibitions about stories so compelling that they must be told.

The first, *Banded Together: The Story of the Naugatuck Valley Project*, attests to the power of community action to positively impact lives—fighting up-hill battles to save and create jobs, remediate pollution, revitalize neighborhoods and provide affordable housing.

Opening in March, the *Lost Villages of Fluteville and Campville* introduces visitors to a way of life that is now virtually extinct. Told through the eyes of the last generation to live in these communities, you’ll meet endearing, sometimes humorous, characters. Their stories are of simpler times, living without electricity, automobiles or store-bought food, in what might appear to be hardship except for the joy in their tales.

Coming this fall, *From Colonial Village to Country Retreat II* explores the heritage of Middlebury through its built-environment, creating an intense awareness of the need for preservation. Homes, barns, stone walls, religious and educational buildings all tell the tale of town’s people and a farming community that became the seat of some of the finest country homes in the state.



Fluteville School

The Middlebury Architectural and Historic Resources Survey

In a complementary project to *Our City, Our Towns*, the museum was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, to complete the fourth and final phase of the Middlebury Architectural and Historic Resources Survey. The project will culminate in a definitive report of the first-ever authoritative study of Middlebury’s historic resources. With the completion of the survey, the full historic value of the town will come to light, paving the way for future preservation efforts. This project, embraced by the town’s leaders, has created an awareness of the need for preservation and residents are enthusiastically anticipating bus tours and lectures that will further illuminate their history.

Honoring Those Who Give of Themselves

Inaugural Brass Button Award Honors Tom Chute

Radio personality Tom Chute, the inaugural recipient of the museum’s Brass Button Award, was honored at a fun-filled, laugh-a-minute fete. The award recognizes the outstanding contributions of an individual from the greater Waterbury area to their community toward its consistent cultural and social enrichment. Museum board members Lynnette Letsky-Piombo and Mary Rosengrant-Chiappalone co-chaired the museum’s committee to establish the Brass Button Award and select its inaugural recipient. The co-chairs agree, “Tom Chute has shown us all what it means to care about the community where we live and work. The extent of his giving, and the quality of his commitment have inspired us to create this legacy that will remind generations to come what it means to give back.”

For over 25 years, Tom Chute has steadfastly donated his time and talents toward the enrichment of the greater Waterbury community. A radio broadcaster for almost 40 years, he has been Waterbury’s favorite morning host on WATR 1320 AM radio for 24 years and now also serves as the station’s program director and general manager. Mr. Chute’s community service began as a school student, donating his time and efforts to many town organizations and serving as a Southington Red Cross volunteer and board member. As a radio personality, Mr. Chute has continued putting his belief in community service into action both personally and by using his broadcast facility as a way to help others. He helps wherever and in any way he can, as an emcee, performer, board member and advocate. He has contributed to countless organizations that make the community stronger including: The American Cancer Society, Children’s Community School, Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Waterbury OIC Inc., Saint Mary’s Hospital, St. Vincent DePaul Shelter, The United Way, Waterbury Hospital, and Waterbury Public Schools. His annual Christmas Shows featuring WATR staff and annual fall musicals at Seven Angels Theatre have raised thousands of dollars for WATR’s Sunshine Fund Drive for needy children and families.



Photos from top:

- Hundreds came to Villa Rosa in Waterbury to honor **Tom Chute**.
- Brass Button Award recipient **Tom Chute** (center) with Award Co-pilots **Mary Rosengrant-Chiappalone** (left) and **Lynnette Letsky-Piombo** (right).
- **Tom and Mary Beth Chute**.
- **Tom Chute** receives his award from Museum Council President **Cathy Smith**.
- Waterbury Mayor **Michael Jarjura** pokes fun at honoree **Tom Chute**.

F. Luis Mora and the Expression of Beauty Delights Audiences

More than 50 major pieces of F. Luis Mora's art, some from private collections that have never been exhibited before and others from prestigious institutions, graced the Harris Whittemore Gallery. The first comprehensive museum exhibition of the artist's work since 1927 was organized by Mattatuck Museum curator Cynthia Roznoy, Ph.D. and Lynne Pauls Baron, author of *F. Luis Mora: America's First Hispanic Master (1874-1940)* and supported by grants from The Langrock Foundation and The TD Charitable Foundation.

The breathtaking beauty of these works drew audiences to the museum again and again as they enjoyed many programs centering on the exhibit. Large and enthusiastic audiences attended the Opening Reception hosted by Bacardi U.S.A., Inc., Lynne Pauls Baron's gallery talk, an exhibition tour led by Judy Kollias in Spanish, and a performance by preeminent Flamenco guitarist Val Ramos. The exhibition closed with a resplendent celebration event that featured a panel discussion by distinguished art experts including internationally recognized art historian Dr. William Gerdts.



A crowd listened raptly to a panel discussion by (from left to right) Jeffrey Cooley, Peter Hastings Falk, Dr. William Gerdts, and Lynne Pauls Baron.



Christian and Carolina Crews, Liam Pessino-Rothwell, and Maria Pessino



Dr. Phyllis Connors, Cathy Smith, and Dr. Paul Sequeira



Guest Curator Lynne Pauls Baron conducts Gallery Talk



Sean and Pat Egan



Susan and John Hainsworth



Sheila and Christopher Mersbod and Richard Roznoy



Leonore Templeton with Jim and Cathy Smith



Above from left: Andrew Hadro, Dianne Mower (top), Matt DeChamplain (bottom), Jerrod Cattey, The Performing Arts Center at the Mattatuck Museum (top), and Rachel Z

Jazz Series Draws New Crowds

Building on the success of last year's extremely popular jazz series, the museum in collaboration with the Litchfield Jazz Festival introduced All-Jazz First Thursdays this October. Boasting stellar performers such as national recording star Rachel Z, baritone sax player Andrew Hadro, and vocalist Dianne Mower, the series has been attracting large audiences and new members to the museum. The museum is grateful to Mayor Jarjura's Commission on Arts & Tourism, TD Bank, and the Connecticut Community Foundation for their support.

Celebrating Spanish Heritage with Flamenco Guitar



Celebrating F. Luis Mora's Spanish heritage, renowned Flamenco guitarist Val Ramos provided a concert in the art galleries this January. The combination couldn't be more perfect; Flamenco became a beloved style of Spanish music at the same time that Mora, whose work

was so deeply influenced by his Spanish heritage, was gaining a reputation as a master.

Over 175 people crowded the galleries to hear Mr. Ramos, considered to be one of the best Flamenco guitarists in the United States. Mr. Ramos started playing Flamenco at age 14, studying with the Spanish Flamenco master Adonis Puerta, graduated from the Ezra Stiles College at Yale University, and made his profession debut on the Disney Channel in 1985. Since then the Val Ramos Flamenco Ensemble has released three albums. Mr. Ramos was the first non-Spanish guitarist to perform at the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, and continues to perform in major international music festivals.

Finding the Art of the Great Depression



George Marinko, "Vanity Fair," 1941. Collection of the Mattatuck Museum

This strange, "regionalist" landscape, on display in the 20th Century Art Gallery, is filled with classical and religious structures and figures, animals, clowns and everyday artifacts. Many of Marinko's works, as this here, had allusions to the temptations of Adam and Eve and other suggestions of male/female conflict.

Where is the art of the Great Depression? The Depression era Federal Works Project Administration (WPA) hired more than 160 Connecticut artists to create art for public buildings, providing paychecks for the artists and beautifying the state at the same time. But the location of the majority of the 5,000 works produced is unknown and with the passage of time may be permanently lost. Taking the lead, the Mattatuck Museum secured grants from the Connecticut State Library and the Connecticut Humanities Council, retained an art researcher, and is in the process of locating and documenting this art.

When the WPA project ended in 1942 artwork that was allocated to public buildings, such as hospitals and schools, remained in those locations. Many magnificent works of art are still in public view, like the mural "Early Clock Making" by sisters Suzanne and Lucerne McCullough in the Thomaston post office or the wood relief wall sculpture "The Picnickers" by Theodore C. Barbarozza in the Oakville post office. However, over the years many of these institutions have closed and the art works were discarded, given to employees, or returned to the artists' families.

Some of Connecticut's WPA artists are well-known painters such as Waterbury's George Marinko. Born in Derby, Marinko attended the Waterbury Art School from 1925 to 1929 and then studied at the Yale School of Art. For the early part of his career he painted traditional landscapes but began experimenting with surrealism, shifting to that style by 1934. He is known as a founder of American surrealism and was included in a 1936 exhibition of surrealist art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Marinko chose to continue living in Waterbury where he became a prominent artist and teacher at the Waterbury Art School. He completed 17 works for the Connecticut WPA from 1938 to 1940, most in a traditional style. His painting "Vanity Fair" is part of the Mattatuck Museum's collection, and one of his murals is still on view in the Waterbury City Hall, which is currently under renovation.

The museum is also looking to find and document WPA art that people may have in their homes. Those who own or know the location of any WPA art are asked to e-mail museum curator Cynthia Roznoy at croznoy@mattatuckmuseum.org so that it can be added to the WPA database.

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January 1 – December 31, 2009

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