

# NEW HAMPSHIRE Arts Journal

VOLUME I NUMBER 1 – SUMMER 2009



## Inside this issue

Celebrating 30 years of New Hampshire's Percent for Art program

Poets laureate: Welcoming the incoming and honoring the outgoing

Dudley Laufman is state's third National Heritage Fellow

New Hampshire  
State Council on the  
*Arts*

# On the Cover



New Horizons, a mobile by Jonathan and Evelyn Clowes of Clowes Sculpture, Walpole, N.H., was funded through the state's Percent for Art program. It hangs in the John H. Sununu Youth Services Center in Manchester.

Photo by Tim Gaudreau

## N.H. Arts Journal

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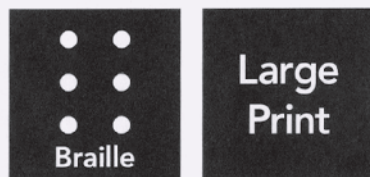
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This new publication, *New Hampshire Arts Journal*, gives me the chance to reflect on broader themes than the old, time specific “From the Director” format did. And, as I wind up my 22 years at the State Arts Council, this is a good time for me to be reflective.

# Musings

By Rebecca L. Lawrence

My musing of the moment is: Why are the arts always targeted when government wants to demonstrate how it is cutting “wasteful spending”? During the height of the culture wars, the federal government targeted the arts for cuts on “moral” grounds. At the local level, the arts often are seen as extras by many school budget writers, not necessary to education. At the state level, over the past 20 plus years, I have heard elected officials give reasons for not funding the State Arts Council that range from “artists and arts organizations should make it in the marketplace or get out of the business” to “the arts are just something for hobbyists” and “the arts are not an essential.”

Over the years, I have seen countless attempts to counteract the reasons given for reducing or eliminating funding for the arts. Many of these arguments are evidence based, citing statistics for improved learning among children who are educated in the arts, economic growth for communities that invest in the arts, and increased receipts from tourism that includes

cultural components. Others are anecdotal, such as a teenager turned from delinquency to productivity after getting involved in an art program or the patient whose health improved through art therapy. But none of the arguments seem to persuade elected budget makers when tough choices have to be made.

Of course, I am biased. From my perspective, the arts are essential, integral to nearly every aspect of one’s well being. Maybe that is the problem, though. The arts are taken for granted. After all, the arts have been with us since before recorded time, found in caves and burial grounds, passed along from nameless ancestors through drum beats and dance circles, and stories told and retold until they could be captured in carved, inked, or printed codes. Perhaps since the arts have always been with us, we expect them to always be with us. Artists will always make art even if they have to hold several unrelated jobs to eat, shoving the art-making into tiny pockets of time. The wealthy will always be able to experience or collect art if they want to. Even

without the income to buy other people’s art, people everywhere find ways to make art in their own environments. So, whether governments support the arts or not, the arts will not die.

Yet, for me, that is not good enough. I think the arts should be supported at every level of government, because I think that would be good governance. I think good governance means taking the long-range view, not just the politically expedient view. Investing in arts education, for example, means helping children channel their innate creativity into disciplined artistic skills that will help them find creative solutions throughout their lives. And, when are creative solutions needed more than when times are tough?

Government needs the arts even more than the arts need government. The arts provide hope and purpose to individuals, communities, and whole civilizations facing social and economic challenges. What is wasteful about that?

*Rebecca L. Lawrence is director of the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts. ■*





By Jane Eklund

# From the Editor

## Arts Online

▲ 2009 Artist Fellow Clark Knowles blogs about his fellowship year, the writing process, and his “messy, first draft of a novel” that begins with two people adrift on a raft after an apocalyptic flood.

[www.clarkknowles.wordpress.com](http://www.clarkknowles.wordpress.com)

▲ The State Arts Council is on Facebook! Visit the group page regularly to keep up with news and events. You’ll find a link to it from the Arts Council’s home page.

[www.nh.gov/nharts](http://www.nh.gov/nharts)

▲ A national organization based in Vermont, the Craft Emergency Relief Fund offers programs, emergency support, and advocacy for craft artists.

[www.craftemergency.org](http://www.craftemergency.org)

▲ Looking for a venue for your performance or reading? Or maybe you have a venue and you’re looking for a performer. In either case, check out Matchbook.org, New England’s online cultural marketplace.

[www.matchbook.org](http://www.matchbook.org)

No, this isn’t your same old Arts Council newsletter.

With this issue, we introduce a new publication: *New Hampshire Arts Journal*. Unlike the newsletter, which was designed to keep readers abreast of Arts Council programming, artist opportunities, and the comings and goings of the state’s artists and arts organizations, the *Arts Journal* will serve a broader purpose.

The aim of *New Hampshire Arts Journal* is to delight, inspire, challenge, and inform the state’s arts-savvy public on topics that relate to the State Arts Council and its mission. Its contents will include profiles, historical pieces, behind-the-scenes sketches, reflections, guides, and a look at the larger implications of our programming – to impart not just what artists and nonprofits are doing with Arts Council funding, but to show how what they are doing matters in the grand scheme. We’ll also be including original work by writers and visual artists who are affiliated with the council, to provide another venue for New Hampshire artists and to bring those artists to the attention of the art-loving public.

In short, it’s an entirely new publication, one designed to enrich artists, arts organizations, and art lovers, to provide a venue for literary and visual arts, and to help forge and nurture a cohesive arts community in the state.

This is a timely launch for a couple of reasons.

First, there’s the economy. With a tightened budget, and

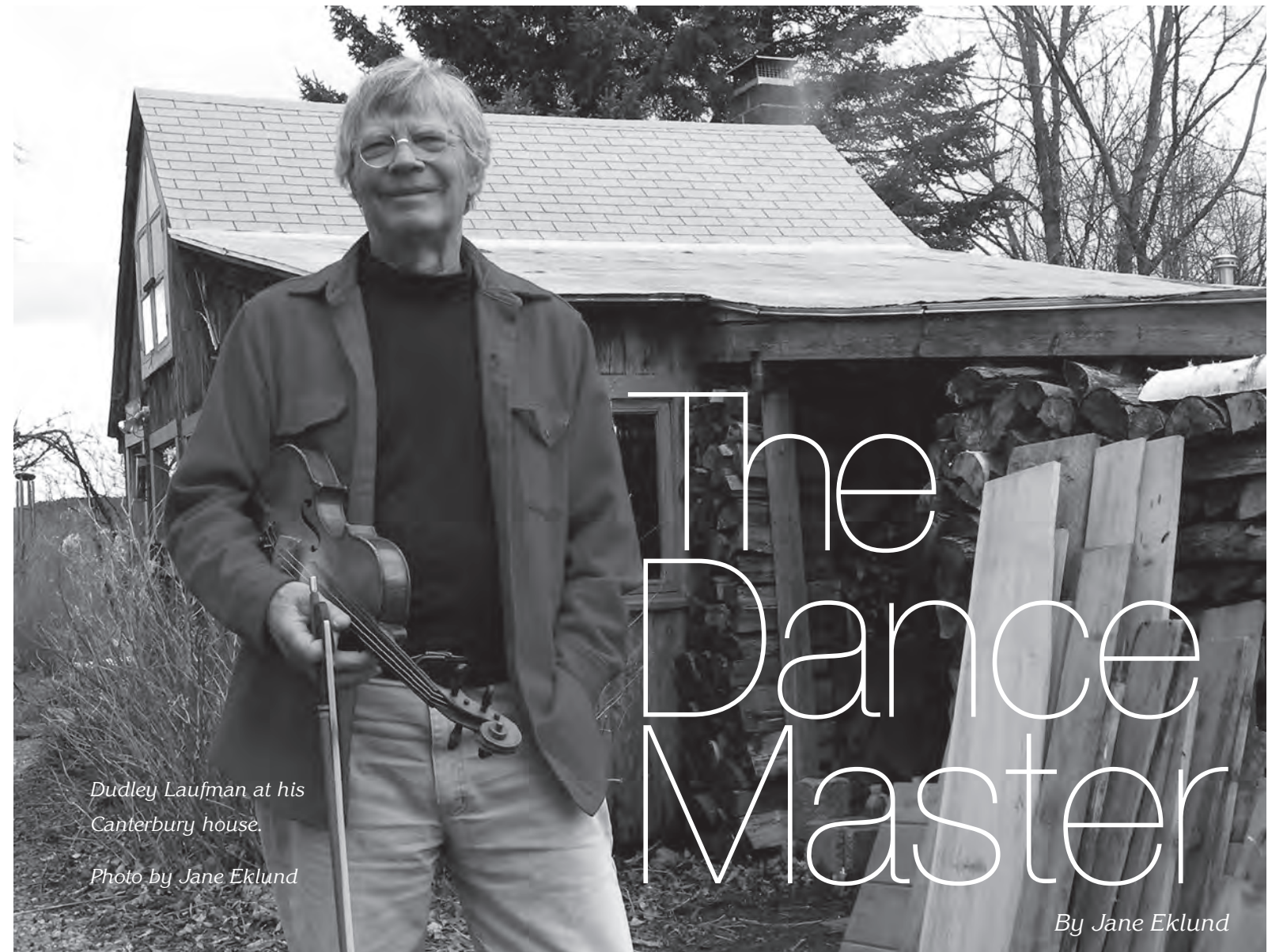
with fewer grant funds to distribute, we’re looking for new, cost-effective ways to promote the arts in New Hampshire and to serve arts and cultural organizations and artists.

Second, there’s the news-on-demand culture created by the Internet and other electronic forms of communication. With the need for getting news about the Arts Council to our constituents quickly, this is an appropriate time to make the shift from a print newsletter to regular e-newsletters and e-bulletins. Much of the information that’s appeared in the past in the print newsletter, including notices of events, new staff at arts organizations, grant deadlines and the like, is now being sent directly to our constituents’ e-mail inboxes via e-news.

So it’s an ideal time to reinvent the Arts Council’s quarterly print publication into a journal for the kind of lively, conversational, and usable features that readers will want to keep on their shelves for future reference and enjoyment.

Not your same old Arts Council newsletter, indeed. With the inaugural issue of the *New Hampshire Arts Journal*, we launch not just a new publication, but a new way to serve the artists, cultural organizations and residents of New Hampshire.

*Jane Eklund is programs information officer for the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts. ■*



Dudley Laufman at his Canterbury house.

Photo by Jane Eklund

By Jane Eklund

His friends in the country dance community already knew it, but now it’s official: Dudley Laufman is a national treasure. To be more precise, Laufman is a National Heritage Fellow, a distinction granted by the National Endowment for the Arts. The designation was announced publicly May 14, and will be celebrated at a September ceremony in Washington, D.C.

“I really didn’t believe it at first,” says Laufman of the call he received from Barry Bergey at the NEA. He was aware that he’d been nominated for the honor, but that was some five years ago, so the fellowship was at the back of

his mind. The award goes to 10 master folk and traditional artists each year; Laufman is the third from New Hampshire. Contra dance musician Bob McQuillen of Peterborough earned a National Heritage Fellowship in 2002, and Littleton basketmaker Newt Washburn was selected in 1987.

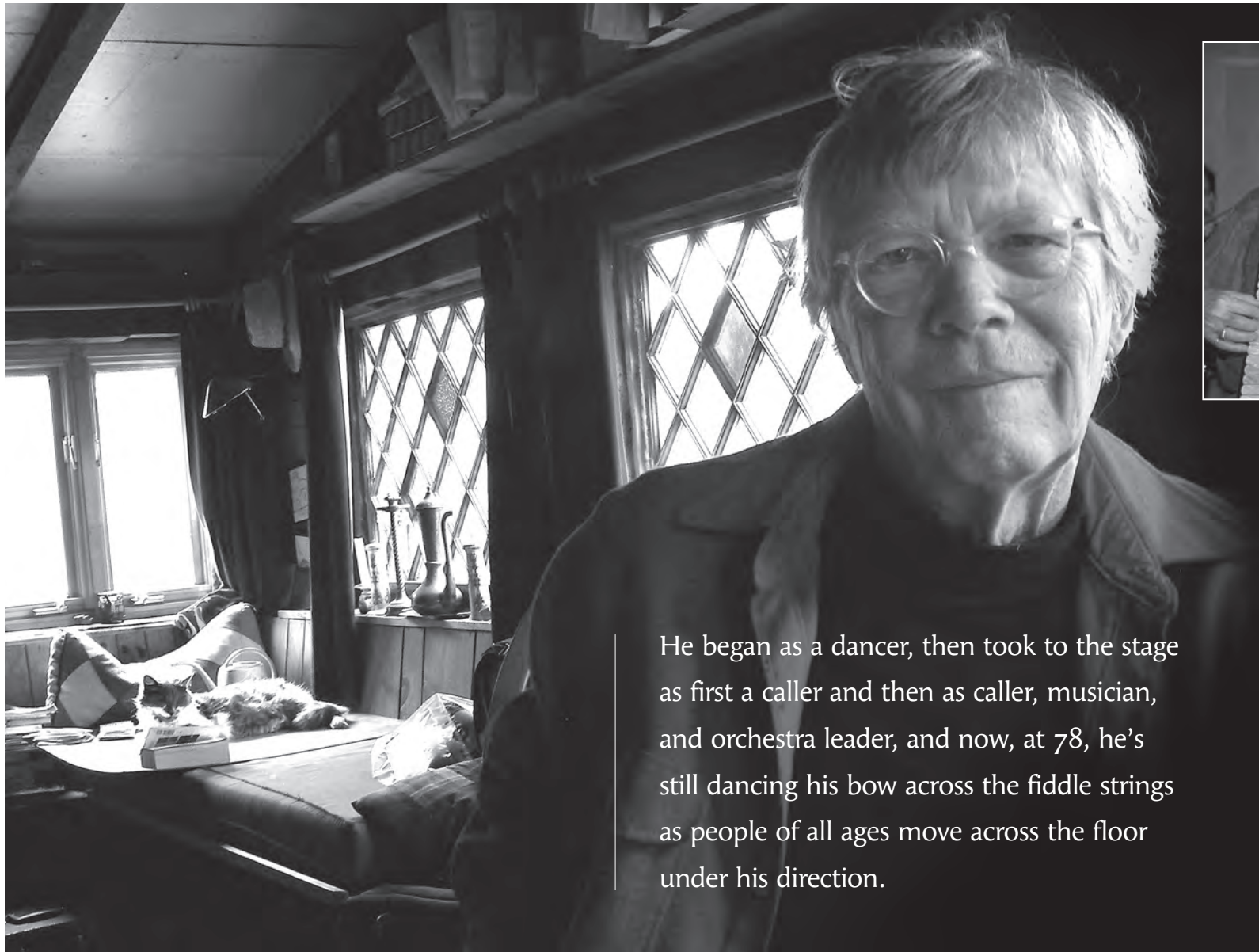
If a country barn dance could be embodied in one person, that person would be Dudley Laufman. He began as a dancer, then took to the stage as first a caller and then as caller, musician, and orchestra leader, and now, at 78, he’s still dancing his bow across the fiddle strings

as people of all ages move across the floor under his direction. He’s also taught generations of New Hampshire school kids to do simple barn dances, including square and contra dances.

It started when he was a teenager, working on a dairy farm in Fremont, N.H. The farmer was a fiddler and his wife a dance caller. Sundays featured chores, followed by a corn roast, a hymn sing, and a dance attended by neighbors. “I was hooked,” he says.

Laufman grew up in Arlington, Mass., spending summers on an island on Lake Winnepesaukee. He attended an agricultural high school





He began as a dancer, then took to the stage as first a caller and then as caller, musician, and orchestra leader, and now, at 78, he's still dancing his bow across the fiddle strings as people of all ages move across the floor under his direction.



Left: Laufman, right, with fellow National Heritage Fellow Bob McQuillen.

Photo by Lynn Martin Graton

Left: Dudley Laufman inside the house he built in Canterbury.

Photo by Jane Eklund



Left and above: Dudley and Jacqueline Laufman perform as Two Fiddles.

Photos by Lynn Martin Graton



in Walpole, Mass., and the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at UMass-Amherst, and along the way began calling dances – the first being “The Crooked Stove Pipe,” which he learned using a record. He pulled a band together and soon began earning money at dances.

After college, he worked for Farm and Wilderness camp in Vermont for a summer, and then for a dairy farmer in Walpole, N.H. – but by then his interest in farming was being overshadowed by his interest in music. He'd met Bob McQuillen and Newt Tolman, both major figures in the New Hampshire contra dance scene.

He'd also become enamored with the kind of folks who “lived in the woods, smelled of wood smoke, and were their own bosses.”

The New England music and way of life called to him, and when he was drafted, he put in for alternative service, as a Quaker, at the Brattleboro (V.T.) Retreat, primarily because of its proximity to Nelson, the town in the Monadnock Region that was contra dance central. After his service, he continued calling for dances, and took on jobs that involved camp work and landscaping, eventually landing in Concord, where he found work as a recreation therapist at New

Hampshire Hospital.

In 1957, he purchased just under two acres of land down the road from Canterbury Shaker Village for \$25. With lumber salvaged from a Lutheran vestry that had been torn down, he built a one-room house. That same year, he got his first fiddle.

Fifty-two years later, he's still living in that house, which is only moderately larger. And he's still playing the fiddle, now with Jacqueline Laufman, his partner in life and music, in a group called Two Fiddles that performs for dances and events and at conferences and workshops.

Over the years, he's supported himself and his family with music, augmented, when necessary, by more conventional jobs. He's also a poet, with publications in many journals and anthologies in addition to a handful of books, including some published by his own Wind in the Timothy Press.

Music has brought many pleasures, some small and simple, and others more extravagant in scope. In 1965, Laufman was asked to bring his group of musicians to perform at the Newport (R.I.) Folk Festival. They were billed as New England

Contra Dancers, but became known as the Canterbury Country Dance Orchestra. Recordings followed, beginning with the eponymous *Canterbury Country Dance Orchestra with Dudley Laufman*.

“That was a roaring success,” says Laufman of the 1972 LP that features musicians including McQuillen, Pete Colby, Allan Block, Larry DeLorier, Dave Fuller, Ted Levin, Jack Sloanaker, Jerry Weene, and more.

Next came *Swinging on a Gate*, followed by two more recordings, after which the band

went on hiatus and Laufman set off on his own. In 1985, he was invited to go to Turkey as a musician and chaperone for a group of Vermont students. In 1987, he hooked up with Jacqueline; the two were among the contingent of traditional artists from New Hampshire who appeared at the 1999 Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

Now, as longtime members of the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts' Artist Roster and Traditional Arts & Folklife Listing, the Laufmans are sought after to conduct barn dance residencies in schools and at community centers and the like.





"In schools we work best if we can zero in on one community, like the second grade or the third grade," Laufman says.

Their first book to be published for a national audience, *Traditional Barn Dances with Calls & Fiddling*, just came out from Human Kinetics, an Illinois-based publisher with a focus on recreation.

Laufman's career has been highlighted in films including *The Other Way Back: Dancing with Dudley* by David Millstone and

*Country Corners* by Robert Fiore and Richard Nevell.

And now, with the National Heritage Fellowship, he has a national honor to hold up beside the N.H. Governors Arts Award in Folk Heritage that he received in 2001. After the recognition ceremonies in D.C., he'll have a few new stories to add to his large collection. And he'll go back to his life of living in the woods, smelling of wood smoke, and being his own boss. ■



# Two Davids, one Rebecca, and Much Passion

By Jane Eklund

## A Barn Dance Primer

Here's a terrific two-fer: you can get a great workout and connect to the folk heritage of New England all at once. A new book by Dudley and Jacqueline Laufman is designed to help phys ed, music, and dance teachers, recreation directors, outing coordinators and the like lead groups of children and adults in barn dancing.

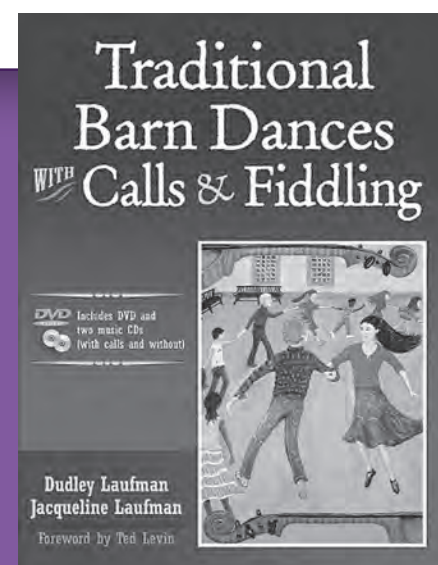
*Traditional Barn Dances with Calls and Fiddling* was released in February by Human Kinetics, an Illinois-based publisher that specializes in sports and recreation. It combines history, instruction and helpful hints on leading others through traditional country dances with photos, charts, sheet music, an instructional DVD and two music CDs.

The Laufmans, who perform together under the name Two Fiddles, are rostered artists on the

State Arts Council's Traditional Arts and Folklife Listing. Dudley is credited with reviving the tradition of contra dances in the 1950s; he and his wife, Jacqueline, have been devoting their energy in recent years to making simple barn dances accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

"What Dudley and Jacqueline so masterfully transmit through their teaching is not only a lively form of social recreation but also a sense of rootedness in place and tradition," writes Dartmouth humanities professor Theodore Levin in his foreword to *Traditional Barn Dances*.

That sense comes through in the book, where you'll find — mixed in with user friendly instructions for a number of dances, music, and demonstration photos — some of Dudley's trademark yarns and



poems. There's also historical background on barn dances and musical instruments, advice on working with groups that include people with disabilities, and a guide to planning, marketing, and hosting a community barn dance.

For information and to purchase the book, visit [www.humankinetics.com](http://www.humankinetics.com). ■

Noted New Hampshire writer and humorist Rebecca Rule set the stage nicely when she asked the audience, "Aren't you happy to be here?" It was a rhetorical question, as there was no question that the students and teachers gathered in the auditorium at Bow High School April 3 were quite delighted to be spending the day with Rule and two renowned author illustrators, David Carroll and David Macaulay.

The occasion was "Follow the Passion," a professional development day for educators. It included presentations by both Carroll and Macaulay, who share the distinction of being winners of the MacArthur "Genius Grant," an interview of the two men conducted by Rule, workshops for Bow students, and free passes for the adults to an exhibit of Macaulay's work at the Currier Museum in Manchester.

"You never know where ideas are going to come from," said Macaulay, who led the students and teachers on a fast-paced,

illustrated journey through his career and his book projects, including his most recent, *The Way We Work*.

Known for his books of detailed drawings that explain engineering and architectural principles of buildings, machines, the human body and more, Macaulay talked about being inspired to put together his book *Mosque* when, four days after September 11, 2001, he realized he didn't know anything about Muslim culture.

The project took him to Istanbul, where he wandered the streets, examining small neighborhood mosques. He took photographs, made sketches and built models of the mosques, he explained as he showed images from the book that resulted.

After a jaunt through more of his books, including a children's book with a circular ending and *The Way We Work*, Macaulay turned the floor over to David Carroll, who has combined his work as a naturalist with art and writing.

Above: Rebecca Rule, left, interviews David Carroll, center, and David Macaulay onstage at the Bow High School auditorium.

Below: Writer and humorist Rebecca Rule offers a workshop for students.

Photos by Wendy Cahill





Carroll, a resident of Warner, N.H., has written three natural histories and a memoir. (Rule called them, collectively, “the Wet Sneaker Quartet” in her introduction.) He showed slides he’d taken a week earlier, on March 25 – his first sighting this year of a spotted turtle.

“She had literally just come up from hibernation,” he said.

Spotted turtles, a major subject of Carroll’s observations and field research, can live to the age of 110. He’s been studying them for almost half that long. “It’s my 50-somethingth year of the spotted turtle,” he said. “What’s not to love about an animal that is this stunning and has an incredible ecology and natural history?”

Carroll focused his talk on the turtles that have held his attention for half a century and also on their habitat and the habitat of other wildlife. It’s important for people to move beyond conservation to preservation, he said. While conservation easements save land from development, they often see increased recreational use, which means the land is being trampled.

Don’t confuse wildlife

sanctuaries with human playgrounds, he told the group.

He concluded by addressing the young people in the audience. “A lot of you high school students now are getting the best ideas you’re going to get in your life,” he said, adding that their job is to follow those ideas. “It’s important that you keep that passion, that you really respect the ideas, the dreams.”

The theme of the day, “Follow the Passion,” came up again in a Q&A session with both MacArthur winners, conducted by Rule.

Carroll told the story of seeing his first spotted turtle, at age 8, shortly after his family moved from a Pennsylvania railroad town to rural Connecticut. “Seeing that was an opening into a world that I knew I had to go with, and it was a ticket out of that human-centric world that I knew I had to leave,” he said.

Macaulay told his own story of an important move in his childhood. As a boy, he moved, with his family, from England to the U.S., traveling on a ship called the SS United States. Macaulay had with him *The Big Book of Science*, which included

a picture of the Empire State Building, then the tallest building in the world, with the SS United States sailing below it.

Macaulay thought the building was so huge he’d be able to see it just beyond Ireland. As it turned out, it took four more days.

“It’s all about scale,” Rule said, connecting the story to Macaulay’s illustrations. (*The Way We Work*, for instance, features a human body that’s big enough to serve as a museum for tourists to wander through.)

After the presentations and lunch, Carroll, Macaulay, and Rule each led a workshop session for Bow High School students, and the educators in the audience traveled to the Currier Museum to see the exhibit on Macaulay’s work.

The teachers who attended, in their post-conference day comments, reported being inspired by the program. One promised “to continue to encourage the passion, promise and curiosity for my students – to not give up on supporting the arts and convincing others to support this.”

“Right on!!” wrote another. “Loved getting my mind re-fueled.” ■

# 30 Years of Percent for Art

By Jane Eklund

It’s the story of artwork, certainly, but the history of New Hampshire’s Percent for Art program is also the story of people. People like Elaine Krasker, the state legislator who was a prime sponsor of House Bill 430, which codified the program. People like Susan Taylor of the New Hampshire Commission on the Arts, as the State Arts Council was then known, who marshaled the bill through the House and Senate. People like the employees of the state Health and Welfare Department who served on the very first Site Advisory Committee. People like sculptor Cabot Lyford, studio potter Teresa

Taylor, and painter Dustan Knight, to name just a few of the dozens of artists commissioned to create artwork for New Hampshire buildings over the last three decades.

Public art isn’t just art that’s available for viewing by the general public; it’s art that’s funded with public dollars and, as such, springs not from the vision of a particular artist but from a collective vision. In the 30 years since the Percent for Art legislation was enacted in the state, many voices have gone into defining, selecting, negotiating, and refining pieces to delight, enlighten, and inspire New Hampshire residents and visitors.

Left: David Macaulay talks with Bow High School students about life as an artist and writer.

Right: David Carroll works with students in the Bow High School library.

Photos by Wendy Cahill



“It was quite an amazing beginning,” remembers Audrey Sylvester, who joined the Arts Commission in 1981, just in time to oversee the pilot project of the state’s new public art program. Krasker’s bill, with bipartisan support, was approved in 1979 – though the amount of money to be set aside for artwork when certain state buildings were



*Audrey Sylvester*

*Photo by Lynn Martin Graton*

constructed or renovated was amended from 1 percent of the bid contract price to one-half of 1 percent.

The first Percent for Art project in New Hampshire was the new Health and Welfare (now Health and Human Services) building in Concord. Some



*River Drivers by Robert Hughes, located at the Coos County Courthouse.*

*Photo by Carey Johnson*



*Mt. Meru by Mary Boone Wellington, located at the Rockingham County Courthouse.*

*Photo by Carey Johnson*

\$25,000 was available for purchasing and commissioning artwork for the site.

Sylvester’s predecessor, Susan Taylor, had developed guidelines for soliciting proposals from artists, and a task force had

hammered out the specifics for selecting artwork: a Site Advisory Committee, made up primarily of people who work in the building at issue, and an Art Selection Committee, made up of arts professionals, would be convened for each new public art project.

“It was quite a unique experience at the beginning,” Sylvester says, noting that choosing artwork collaboratively was a new concept for some members of the committees. There were gallery directors, for instance, who weren’t used to consulting with others on matters of art. And there were some Health and Welfare staffers who were knowledgeable about art and had their own thoughts about

the sorts of works that would best enhance their environment.

Luckily, everyone was ready and willing to grapple with the task at hand. “The first meetings went on for hours,” Sylvester says. “Everybody had time; everybody took the time; everybody had long conversations.” While Health and Welfare staffers were initially concerned that the Arts Commission would dictate the kind of art that would be placed in the building, that was not the case, she says, and it was never the intent of the program. “It was a collaboration, ... and it was wonderful; it was amazing.”

With its high ceilings, lofts and atriums, the brick Health and Welfare building was ideal for

## Percent for Art Fact:

New Hampshire’s legislation requires that one-half of 1 percent of the bid contract price of construction of state buildings and facilities be used for the inclusion of art/craft work. New buildings may use up to 80 percent of the half-percent funds generated. Up to 8 percent of the total funds available may be set aside for existing state buildings to participate in the Percent for Art program. (Buildings that are exempted from contributing to Percent for Art funds include: self-liquidating projects, those funded by Federal money, or that portion of a building that exceeds a \$15 million bid contract price.)

artwork, despite the fluorescent strip lighting. “We kind of had a feast,” Sylvester says.

The \$25,000 went a long way. “We stretched the budget amazingly,” she remembers. The committee commissioned a large wall hanging, a sculpture, and enough small pieces to cover a large wall. The idea was to come up with a broad representation of New Hampshire artists.

“People really responded to the artwork,” Sylvester says. “That was the first project, and we got such a good, positive response.”

The Health and Welfare project set the tone for the next three decades of Percent for Art in New Hampshire, with art experts, state workers, and artists finding common ground. Since then, the State Arts Council has overseen the installation of public art in 31 buildings – courthouses, state offices, community colleges, rest areas, and more – with more projects now under way.

During that time, there have been some glitches and some changes in the process. The construction of a new



*Pollard’s Falls by Byron Carr, located at Rockingham County Courthouse.*

*Photo by Carey Johnson*





*Above: Passage by Gary Haven Smith, located at the Northern NH Correctional Facility.*

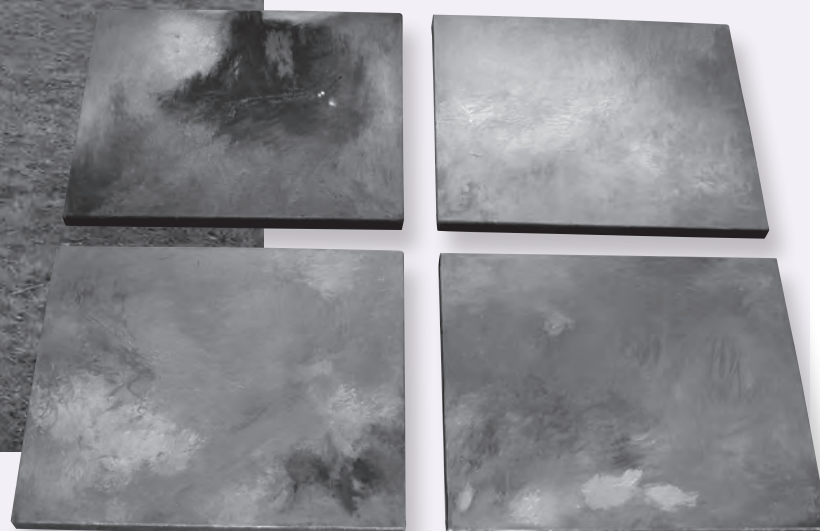
prison caused quite a stir when policymakers learned that convicts would be the beneficiaries of about \$100,000 worth of public art, under the Percent for Art law. That prompted a change in the law limiting the amount of money that can be spent on artwork for prisons, and using the remaining funds to purchase works for an Arts Bank – initially a traveling exhibit that moved around the

state, and now a “library” of portable art – paintings and drawings and the like – from which work can be borrowed for state buildings.

Since Sylvester’s retirement in 2002, the Percent for Art program has been coordinated by Visual Arts Associate Julie Mento. One of the changes she has overseen came as a result of a national shift in the way proposals for artwork are sought. Artists now

*Below: From Octet — The Seasons by Barbara Bragg, located at Lebanon District Court.*

*Photos by Carey Johnson*



go through a qualifying round before being invited to submit proposals or offer their work for purchase for a public art project in New Hampshire.

Mento enjoys watching Percent for Art projects develop from the conception stage to the installation of artwork. “The greatest joy,” she says, “is seeing the evolution from proposal to product.” ■

# The Long History of Public Art

*By Jane Eklund*

In celebrating 30 years of Percent for Art, New Hampshire is also acknowledging and honoring a concept that dates back much further than three decades.

Public art has been around since the days of ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt, where artists worked with the expectation that their art would become common property as part of temples and government buildings. The tradition of artwork being supported by wealthy patrons, by the state, and by the church goes back thousands of years as well.

In New Hampshire, the notion of public art shows up as early as 1784, when the framers of the state’s constitution called on judges and legislators to promote and encourage art, along with agriculture and the sciences, in both the public and private sectors. The state’s first piece of public art was dedicated in 1818. The wooden eagle that was installed atop the gold dome of the State House in Concord is now in the collection of the New Hampshire Historical Society; a metal replica has perched in its place since 1957.

On a national level, the idea of art being integrated into the construction of public buildings is manifest in the Federal Triangle in Washington, D.C., which dates to 1927. Two percent of the Department of Post Office buildings total budget was spent on sculpture;

4 percent of the National Archives construction budget went to art; 2.7 percent of the Department of Justice construction budget also paid for artwork.

The next decade brought the New Deal with its Works Progress Administration arts commissions, as well as a special program of

in 1964. San Francisco joined the group in 1967, followed by a number of other cities. The chairman of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Michael von Moschzisker, was quoted in a July 13, 1962 story in *Time* magazine titled “One Percent for Art.” “The psychologists and



*Artwork made up 2.7 percent of the budget for the Department of Justice building in Washington D.C.’s Federal Triangle.*

the Treasury Department, the Section of Painting and Sculpture, which offered competitions for artists to create realistic works on local themes to help stimulate appreciation of the arts by the American people. The section disbanded in 1943, leaving most post-war governmental building sadly deficient in the area of artwork.

Philadelphia was the first city in the United States to pass a 1 percent for art clause, in 1959, followed by Baltimore

efficiency experts now find that beauty increases productivity,” he said. “It necessarily follows that true functionalism in man-made edifices must include artistic expression. Sterility and her handmaiden monotony, must be banished.”

Hawaii was the first state to enact percent for art legislation, in 1967. Washington State adopted the legislation in 1974.

Five years later, it was New Hampshire’s turn. ■





Feathers by Joseph DeRobertis.

# A Capital Art Tour

By Jane Eklund

Public art in New Hampshire got its start in Concord, which is presided over by a replica of the eagle sculpture installed atop the State House in 1817. The capital city, then, is the perfect place to kick off a series of tours of the work purchased and commissioned through the Percent for Art program over the last 30 years. It also has the advantage of being accessible from just about every corner of the state, and it offers plenty of

other activities – from shopping to dining to museum-going – to mix in with the art sightseeing for people who want to make a full day of it.

After researching the program, thumbing through photographs of Percent for Art paintings, sculptures, mobiles, and the like, and speaking with some of the people who’ve been involved, I was eager to get out and see the original artwork in its “natural habitat,” i.e., inside and

outside public buildings. I enlisted the tour guide services of Carey Johnson, the State Arts Council’s arts research specialist who has, in the course of her work, visited just about every Percent for Art piece in the state. We set out on a warm spring Friday morning with the goal of visiting all of the Percent for Art artworks that are readily accessible by the general public.

## Health and Human Services

Our first stop, fittingly, was at the state Health and Human Services building off Hazen Drive. HHS, formerly known as Health and Welfare, was Percent for Art’s pilot project. We were greeted in the entryway by three connected sculptures, two bas relief profiles and a bust, by Katrena A. Earnest. The 1983 triptych speaks to the range of human emotions, with the central figure of an open-armed woman both welcoming and comforting visitors to the building.

A large lobby just inside the doors hosts artwork in a multitude of media. *Concord #44*, a steel sculpture by Michael P. McConnell, is tucked into a nook. Its smooth edges and sheen are

counterpoint to two large textile wall hangings by Brenda Caswell. And a long gallery wall combines a diverse sampling of paintings, photographs, and drawings that range from realistic to whimsical to abstract. It’s all an interesting overview of what was going on in the arts in New Hampshire in the early to mid 1980s.

## Fish and Game

We hopped back into the car for a quick trip to N.H. Fish and Game, also located in the Hazen Drive state office complex. We were rewarded immediately upon opening the main door with *Cascading Woodland Stream*, a large 1988 oil painting by Carol Aronson Shore. It’s the sort of painting that invites you

to walk right into it – or, in this case, hike right into it – and the autumn forest scene sets the stage well for the agency it represents. Aronson Shore’s is the only Percent for Art piece in the building, but Carey and I took a detour to the basement Discovery Center, a small outdoor history museum, while we were on site. It was a delightful side trip as we discovered an enormous mural by Gordon Carlisle, a Seacoast artist who has been commissioned for many public art projects. The Discovery Center, which is geared to children, also features a tank holding a variety of freshwater fish found in the state, a replica of a beaver dam, and a couple of mounted moose.

## Administrative Office of the Courts

Just down the road, a very different sort of state agency is home to a handful of Percent for Art works, which decorate its lobby. We had a pleasant chat with the woman staffing the reception area – she was pleased to have within view a number of windows that let in the sun and the newly green grounds, as well as four artworks, each in a different medium, on each of the area’s four walls.

Over our heads, above the entry door, is her favorite: a three-piece stained glass window by Victoria Babbin with the Old Man of the Mountain as its centerpiece. It is complemented by a ceramic piece in earth and pastel tones, *Wall Platter* by Ken Pick, that’s mounted high along the back wall. To the right is a watercolor field of wildflowers by Catherine Chin, and to the left an impressionistic landscape in oil by Louise Link Rath.

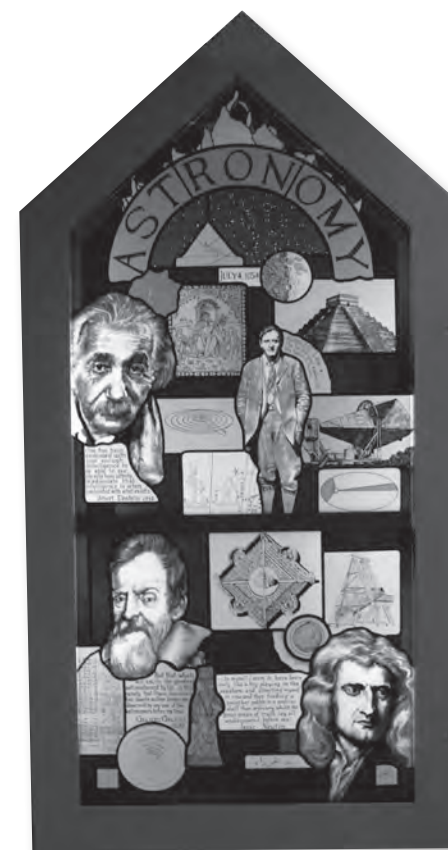
What a happy collection of works, all rooted in the state’s natural environment! For our next stop, we looked to the stratosphere.

## McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center

It’s a great time to visit or revisit the former Christa McAuliffe Planetarium. With a new addition and a new name that honors both McAuliffe and New Hampshire native and astronaut Alan Shepard, the Discovery Center has more to offer than ever. It also boasts two Percent for Art pieces, with two more scheduled to be installed in the addition in coming months. This is the only stop on our

Concord art tour that comes with an admission price (see [www.starhop.com](http://www.starhop.com) for details), so you’ll want to leave plenty of time to explore.

Carey and I were greeted at the reception desk by astronomer Kate Michener, who led us past a plan-your-expedition-to-Mars exhibit and a lifesize replica of the Mercury capsule that carried Alan Shepard through space. The artworks are located at the confluence of two hallways and, like many of the state’s Percent



The History of Astronomy by Elizabeth Butterfield

for Art pieces, are themed to match the host organization’s mission.

The first is *Pyramid Bench*, which feels simultaneously ancient and space age. Created by sculptor James Coates, it’s part of a memorial for McAuliffe, the New Hampshire teacher who

perished in the Challenger space shuttle explosion. From here you can sit and gaze upon a portrait of McAuliffe in her astronaut gear and perhaps contemplate your own soaring dreams – transported by Coates’s stylized granite.

Around the corner you’ll find a stained glass window on the stars, as it were, lit from within. *The History of Astronomy*, Elizabeth Butterfield’s 1989 piece, is an homage to the heavens and the scientists that help us understand them. It includes portraits of Einstein, Galileo, Newton and Hubble, along with images of early sky-gazing devices and the like.

## New Hampshire Technical Institute

Coming back to Earth, we left our car in the parking lot of the Discovery Center, which is located on the campus of New Hampshire Technical Institute, and wandered over to the institute’s MacRury Hall, which houses the dental hygienistry program. A Percent for Art series inside a hallway made us laugh – as it was meant to do. Laura Morrison’s 2006 *Laugh, Giggle, Grin*, a mixed media painting, reminds students and visitors (including patients at the school’s dental clinic) of the reason for keeping our teeth clean and healthy.

A stroll to Sweeney Hall took us past Gary Haven Smith’s stone sculpture, *The Crossing*, which evokes New Hampshire’s granite underpinnings as well as water and air. Inside the building, we found Judith Wilbour Nelson’s *Stonewall Tapestry*, a woven textile image of a stone wall that’s partly obscured by a



# Capital Art Tour

## 1. Health and Human Services

29 Hazen Drive  
603-271-5557  
[www.dhhs.state.nh.us/](http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/)

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- "Triptych" by Katrena A. Earnest\*
- "Concord #44" by Michael P. McConnell
- Several two-dimensional pieces

## 2. N.H. Fish and Game

11 Hazen Drive  
603-271-5823  
[www.wildlife.state.nh.us/](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/)

Monday - Friday, 8:15 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

- "Cascading Woodland Stream" by Carol Aronson Shore\*

## 3. Administrative Office of the Courts

2 Charles Doe Drive  
603-271-2521  
[www.courts.state.nh.us/](http://www.courts.state.nh.us/)

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- "Flowers" by Catherine Chin
- "Wall Platter" by Kenneth Pick\*
- Stained glass windows by Victoria Babbitt
- "Landing" by Louise Link Rath

## 4. McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center

2 Institute Drive  
603-271-7827  
[www.starhop.com](http://www.starhop.com)

Monday - Thursday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

NOTE: Admission charged. See web site for details

- "Pyramid Bench" by James Coates\*
- "The History of Astronomy" by Elizabeth Butterfield

## 5. New Hampshire Technical Institute

31 College Drive  
1-800-247-0179  
[www.nhti.edu](http://www.nhti.edu)

- "Laugh, Giggle, Grin" by Laura Morrison\*
- "The Crossing" by Gary Haven Smith
- "Stonewall Tapestry" by Judith Wilbourn Nelson
- "Feathers" by Joseph DeRobertis

## 6. N.H. State Archives

71 South Fruit Street  
603-271-2236  
[www.sos.nh.gov/archives](http://www.sos.nh.gov/archives)

Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

- Portrait of William Plumer by Judy Dibble\*
- "Celebration of Life" by Deborah Skinner-Perez and Jennifer Swett
- "Duly Recorded" by Gail Smuda

## 7. Concord District Court

32 Clinton Street  
603-271-6400  
[www.courts.state.nh.us/courtlocations/merrdistdir.htm#Concord](http://www.courts.state.nh.us/courtlocations/merrdistdir.htm#Concord)

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

- "Clock" by Fred Puksta\*
- "Pen" by Jonathan Clowes

## 8. N.H. State Library

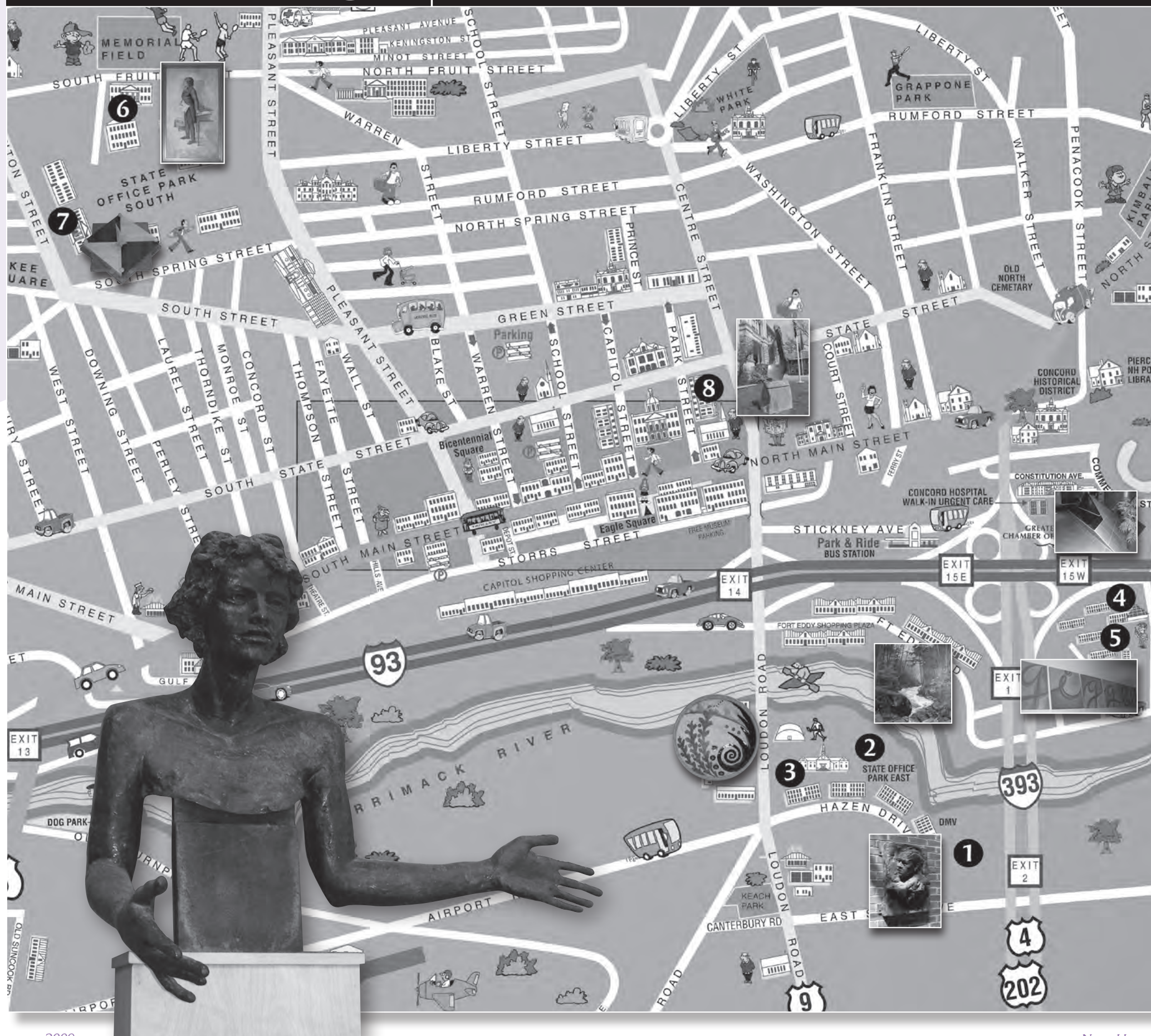
20 Park Street  
603-271-2144  
[www.nh.gov/nhsl](http://www.nh.gov/nhsl)

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- "Diora" by Gary Haven Smith\*
- "The Berry Elm" by Winslow Eaves

Map courtesy Cantin Design and the Concord Chamber of Commerce; additional elements by Carey Johnson and Dharma Creative.

\* Shown on map



Triptych by Katrena A. Earnest



receptionist's desk. Nonetheless, its colors and texture bring the state's landscapes into the room.

While Nelson's tapestry represents a weighty object using lightweight materials, the final Percent for Art piece on our tour of NHTI does just the opposite. Joseph DeRobertis's *Feathers*, a mobile that hangs inside the library, recreates three light and airy feathers using stainless steel.

### New Hampshire State Archives

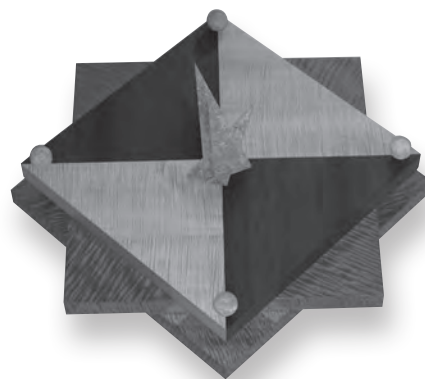
The next stop took us across the river to the state hospital grounds, where the New Hampshire State Archives building has three new pieces that are readily accessible to the public. All three, quite appropriately, evoke the history and mission of the archives. Judy Dibble's nearly lifesize portrait of an early governor, William Plumer, hangs in a place of prominence in the public reading room. Plumer was responsible for collecting many of the state's earliest documents (and, incidentally, for commissioning the eagle that sits atop the State House). Gail Smuda's triptych, *Duly Recorded*, is a collage of transparent reproductions of material archived in the building. You'll find it in the corridor inside the side entrance to the building. We took a close look and found a 1953 license plate, an early map of the state, and an old election ballot – plus documents pertaining to some of the state's famous residents.

On a wall beside the main reception window is another collage – this one made of

photographs and drawings by Deborah Skinner-Perez and Jennifer Swett. *Celebration of Life* features a newborn baby and the faces of dozens of New Hampshire residents.

### Concord District Court

Next stop: Concord District Court, just a short drive from the Archives. We passed through a metal detector and made our way upstairs. On the wall at the top of the staircase, Carey pointed out a piece of public art with a practical purpose: a wooden clock made by Fred Puksta. Its medium was echoed in the hallway outside of



Clock by Fred Puksta

the courtrooms, where a wooden spiral mobile by Jonathan Clowes hangs from the ceiling, suggesting both the delicacy and balance inherent in the justice system.

### New Hampshire State Library

The state library is host to two sculptures, one inside and one out. We parked on North State Street and crossed the grass to take a look at the outside piece, Gary Haven Smith's *Diora*, which was installed last fall. The abstract sculpture, made of granite, curves gracefully on

the lawn, its gold-leafed, cut-out center referring upward to the gold dome on the nearby capitol building.

Inside the library we found the main staircase cordoned off and scaffolding erected while windows are being replaced. But Winslow Eaves' sculpture, which usually sits on the landing, was visible from its temporary home on a special platform on the stairs themselves. *The Berry Elm* was carved from a famous tree taken down in Northwood in the 1980s. The polished wood retains the shape and feel of the elm that it honors.

Back outside, I took a final look at the eagle atop the dome (you can visit the original just down the street at the New Hampshire Historical Society), and thought about William Plumer, the man who started it all, and who is so aptly memorialized in Judy Dibble's portrait.

That's the end of the Percent for Art tour, but there are several more pieces of outdoor public art you can stroll past while you're in the vicinity of the State House. Cross North State Street and head one block south and you'll find, on the southeastern lawn of the Legislative Office Building, Emile Birch's *The Eternal Shield*, a moving memorial for N.H. law enforcement personnel lost in the line of duty. Also, if you wander the State House grounds, you'll find statues of Commodore George Hamilton Perkins, General John Stark, Daniel Webster, Franklin Pierce, and John Parker Hale, in addition to a replica of the Liberty Bell. ■



Nature's Laws

Photos by Carey Johnson

## My Favorite Courthouse Artwork By Carey Johnson

As arts research specialist and a member of the Arts Council's Collections Management Team, I have had the pleasure of being able to travel all over the state, visiting the sites where Percent for Art funded works are on display. The goal of this art tour has been to update the Collections Management database with current information and images on all the artwork, perform general care of the artwork, making sure it is in good condition and noting

any needed repairs, as well as adding attractive metal labels so visitors can learn more about each individual artwork and the Percent for Art program in general.

So here's my personal Top 5 list of artwork in a wide variety of mediums found in courthouses across New Hampshire (feel free to explore and come up with your own list!).

(In alphabetical order by building) ■

### Concord District Court

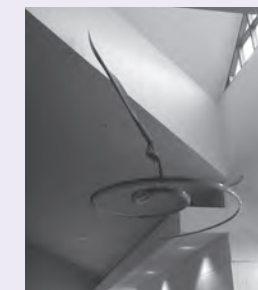
Jonathan Clowes  
*Pen*  
1991/ Wooden (ash) mobile / 9' x 6'

### Coos County Superior Court – Lancaster

Dawn Bechtold  
*Coos Communities*  
1997 / Stained glass window panels / 15" x 15"

### Dover District Court

Dustan Knight  
*Coheco Falls*  
2003-04 / Watercolor / 8' x 6'



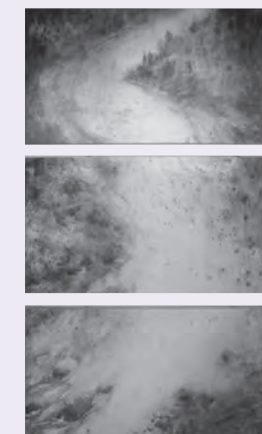
Left to right: Pen, Coos Communities, Coheco Falls, Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge

### Lebanon District Court

E. Thor Carlson  
*Formal Garden & View of Ascutney - Aspet, Saint Gaudens; Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge, Weathersfield Bow - From Claremont Side of Connecticut River*  
1987 / Pastel drawings / 25" x 31"

### Rockingham Superior Court – Brentwood

Carol Aronson-Shore  
*Nature's Laws*  
1995 / Oil painting / 40"x 60"







*Robert Hughes in his studio.*

*Photo by Julie Mento*

winner, and longtime teacher in the Berlin public schools. As she approached his home, she was surprised – and delighted – to find large-scale, monolithic sculptures on his lawn. “The visit with Robert Hughes was great,” she remembers. “We spent hours together. He was infectious.” Hughes was, she says, “The epitome of the New Hampshire guy”: a little rough around the edges, gruff, hilarious, and the creator of unexpected artwork. Mento was particularly charmed

## Studios: No Two are Alike

*By Jane Eklund*



Julie Mento, visual arts associate at the State Arts Council, who efficiently shepherds Percent for Art projects through the proposal, selection, approval, and installation stages, is particularly fond of one step in the process: the studio visit.

Mento visits each commissioned artist in his or her studio while the artwork is being created. That way, she can address any issues that may arise and also keep the site committees apprised of the artists’ progress. She also photographs the art.

No two studios, of course, are alike. Some stand as chaotic counterparts to the precise artwork they house; others are models of organization. Some are specially constructed outbuildings, others are in basements or spare bedrooms. Regardless, Mento says, just about every artist greets her by saying, “I’m sorry I didn’t clean up.”

One favorite memory is of traveling to the studio of the late Robert Hughes, a sculptor, N.H. Living Treasure Award

when he directed her to a pit in his yard that was filled with bits and pieces of his art that hadn’t made it into finished form – a “sort of sculpture compost pile,” she says.

Other memories include a gray basement studio that came alive with brightly colored paintings and a pottery studio so covered in clay vessels that she was afraid she’d knock one over and send the rest of them toppling like dominoes. A quilter kept her perfectly folded pieces of fabric organized into a spectrum of color, from red to purple.

When it comes to the studios, “you never know what to expect,” Mento says. ■



*Judy Dibble and her husband, Charles, unload the portrait of early N.H. governor William Plumer.*

*Photo by Jane Eklund*

## Presiding over the Archives

*By Jane Eklund*

In 1818, N.H. Governor William Plumer presided over ceremonies at the installation of the state’s first public art commission, a gold-plated wooden eagle that was raised to the top of the dome of the State House in Concord. One hundred and ninety-one years later, the early governor himself was honored in ceremonies to unveil one of the state’s most recent public art commissions: a portrait of Plumer that hangs in the new addition at the State Archives building.

The portrait, by Hopkinton artist Judy Dibble, was hung in the Archives building on the state hospital grounds in Concord last fall. It had been covered by a drape until February 18, when archives staffers snipped

a cord to reveal an almost life-size painting of the 5-foot, 7-inch Plumer, standing in profile. In attendance were Governor John Lynch, the members of the Executive Council, Secretary of State William Gardner, State Archivist Frank Mevers, representatives from the N.H. Historical Society and the Epping Historical Society, and Rebecca Lawrence, director of the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, which oversaw the commissioning of the painting through the state’s Percent for Art program.

“This was really an amazing collaborative effort,” said Dibble, who had proposed painting a portrait of a historical figure appropriate to the Archives building, which houses

documents ranging from the state constitution to the birth certificates of New Hampshire natives.

The selection of Plumer (pronounced “Plummer”) for the painting was an intriguing one – staff at the State Arts Council had been expecting the Secretary of State and other site advisory committee members to choose the more familiar N.H. notable, Daniel Webster.

As the remarks at the unveiling ceremony made clear, however, Plumer’s is exactly the right likeness to preside over the research room at the Archives building.

“It’s pretty fitting that he’s here,” said Gardner, who noted that Plumer, in his role as governor, selected the location for the State House. (The addition



to the Archives building, which can be seen when driving north on South Fruit Street, is a replica of the State House in its earliest incarnation, and granite for its facade came from the same North Concord quarry that supplied the stone for the original State House.)

Plumer, continued Gardner, was responsible not only for preserving many of the state documents of his time, but can also be credited with, during his time as a U.S. senator, collecting the federal documents that became the basis for the National Archives.

Madeline Williamson, curator of the Epping Historical Society, was on hand with a verbal portrait of the man who moved to her town from Newburyport, Mass., in 1768 at the age of 9, and died there at 91.

“Few men understood better than he that the value of thoughtfully preserved archived materials can never be overestimated,” Williamson said of Plumer. A farmer’s son, Plumer found himself drawn to scholarly pursuits, and was mostly self-taught. “He was seldom without a book by his side,” she said.

At 20, Plumer abandoned his Congregational roots to become a Baptist and a minister, though he later rejected Baptist doctrine in favor of a more free-thinking philosophy of religion. He studied law, serving as a state representative, state senator and U.S. senator before becoming governor.

“His was a long and illustrious career,” Williamson said of the man she described as “tenderhearted” and a “free thinker.”

Plumer kept copious records during his lifetime, leaving behind documents including a log of all

the people who died in Epping. The log included commentary on the characters of the decedents, including their quirks and foibles, noted William Veillette, executive director of the New Hampshire Historical Society – an organization of which Plumer was a founder and the first president.

In Plumer’s portrait, based on a likeness of him as a young man, the 19th-century governor rests one hand on a desk – the only piece of furniture currently in the State House that was there during Plumer’s time. It’s the desk that presidential candidates use to sign up for office. He’s wearing clothing particular to his time.

The artwork is one of three selected for the building through the Percent for Art

Plumer was responsible not only for preserving many of the state documents of his time, but can also be credited with, during his time as a U.S. senator, collecting the federal documents that became the basis for the National Archives.

program, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary in New Hampshire this year. Enacted by the legislature, Percent for Art mandates that one-half of 1 percent of the bid costs of certain state construction projects be put toward art for the building at hand. A committee of New Hampshire artists and people who work in the Archives building reviewed proposed work and commissioned the portrait from Dibble, as well as a triptych by Gail Smuda and a collage by Debbie Skinner-Perez and Jennifer Swett.

N.H. State Council on the Arts Director Lawrence

commented on the symbolism the unveiling held for her agency, as Plumer himself commissioned the State House Eagle (the original is now, fittingly, in the collection of the N.H. Historical Society; a replica still perches atop the dome). That eagle now serves as the symbol for the Governors Arts Awards, which honor noted New Hampshire artists and supporters of the arts.

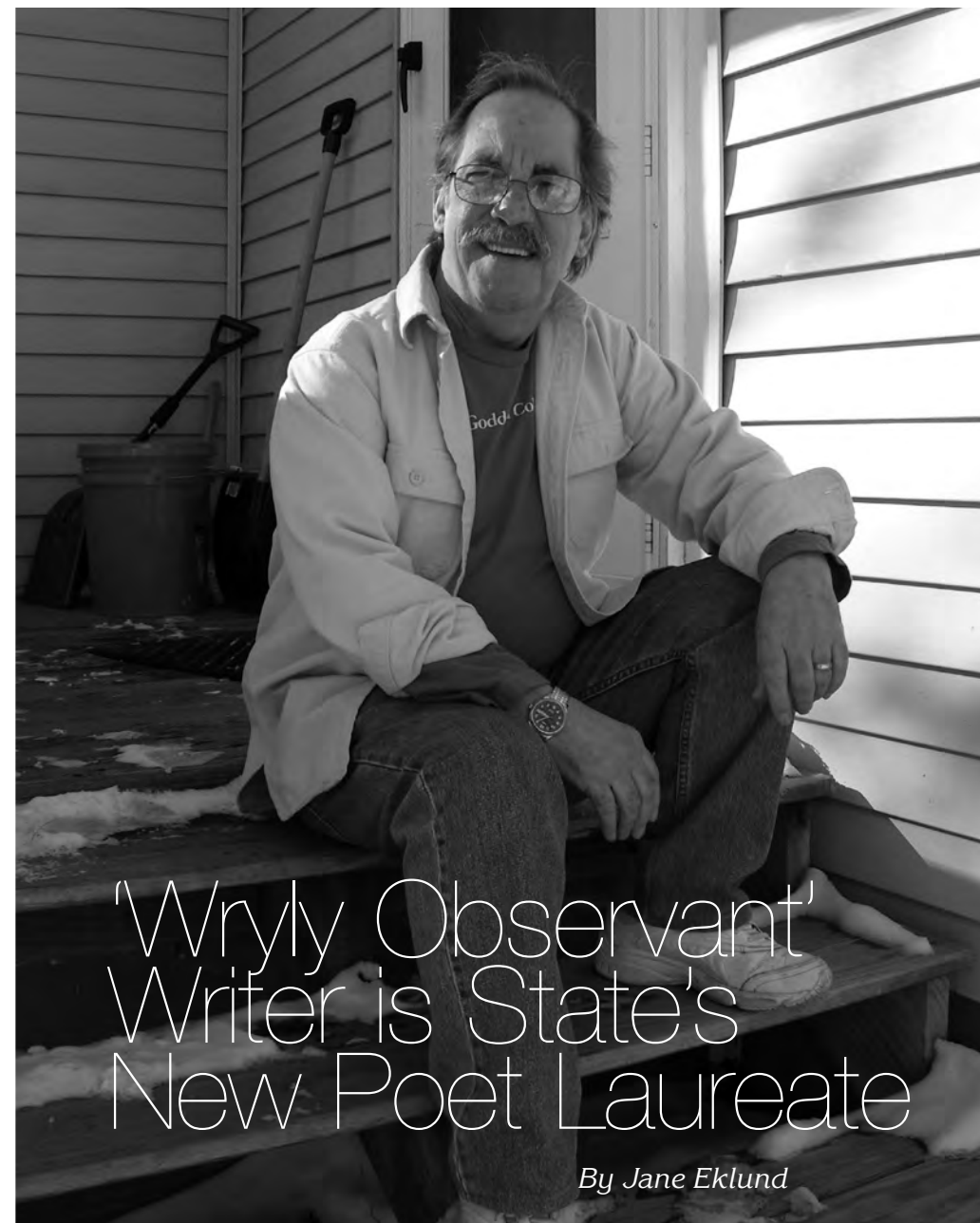
“I’m very pleased that we were in the position to facilitate the process that led to this commission happening,” Lawrence said. “This is a wonderful marriage of art and government.”

The portrait is a fitting legacy for the first governor to expend public dollars on the arts. It’s

also fitting that he be celebrated through the arts nearly 200 years later. Dibble’s likeness of Plumer will be used as a frontispiece in future Archives publications, in addition to presiding over the research room at the State Archives. Next to the portrait, she has painted some of the early governor’s own words:

“I have rescued so many useful papers from inevitable ruin ... to preserve facts the knowledge of which were daily passing from us.”

*This story originally appeared in the Portsmouth Herald. ■*



## ‘Wryly Observant’ Writer is State’s New Poet Laureate

By Jane Eklund

Early on, it was music that captured Walter Butts’ imagination – songs by folkies who were as known for their lyrics as their tunes, like Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, and Tim Hardin. From there it was an easy leap to such poets as the visionary Rimbaud, and then a quick step to the Beats, to Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg, Michael McClure and Diane di Prima.

Born in Le Roy, N.Y., Butts landed in nearby Rochester as the 1960s turned into the 1970s. The city had an active poetry scene

that, he remembers, “took hold of me.”

After honing his craft there and in other poetry-friendly cities including Boston, New York, and Albany, Butts moved in 1992 to New Hampshire, where he has just been named to a five-year term as the state’s poet laureate.

“I’m humbled and honored by it,” he says of his appointment.

The first thing on his poetry agenda will be to set some short-term goals and a couple of long-term goals. Those, he says, could involve “looking at poetry within

*A resident of Manchester, Walter Butts hopes to connect people all over the state with poetry.*

*Photo by Jane Eklund*

the context of educational and social interest activities.” He’s looking at bringing poets into schools, community centers, and retirement housing, for instance, and he also hopes to partner with independent bookshops to present readings and talks by poets.

“There are writers all over this state,” Butts notes, saying he’d like to do “anything to make the community at large aware of the poetry of this state, in terms of poetry appreciation, but also bringing to more public awareness the really excellent writers that are here.”

He also hopes to provide networking and other opportunities for poets, perhaps by hosting a conference for writers and small press publishers from the state – something he did when he lived in Boston for a year and co-owned a bookstore on Newbury Street. “It was a question of bringing the community together with available resources,” he says.

Butts will be consulting with organizations that already have established reading series and such, so he doesn’t duplicate any efforts. He may also want to take some successful ideas and see if they can work in other regions of the state. Portsmouth has its own poet laureate, he notes, and that program has worked very well. “If that can exist in one community, why not another?” he says.



Butts has been an active part of New Hampshire's writing community since coming to the state 17 years ago (a move that came after meeting his now-wife, S Stephanie, a poet who lived in Portsmouth at the time). For much of his career, his day job had been with various human services agencies, working primarily with adolescents in crisis. He'd been in and out of college, including a stint at Vermont's Goddard College. When he landed in Portsmouth, he worked with developmentally disabled adults and also taught poetry through the University of New Hampshire's continuing education program.

He also entered a low-residency MFA program at Vermont College, earning his degree in 1995. That led to a teaching job at Hesser College in Manchester, where he became an associate professor. He and his wife moved to the Queen City in 2002. These days, he's also teaching creative writing in Goddard College's new low-residency BFA program.

Butts' new position as poet laureate may bring new prominence to writing in the Manchester area. He's found a vibrant visual arts community in the city, and it's the base for Southern New Hampshire University's low-residency MFA program in fiction and nonfiction and for the New Hampshire Writers' Project. But Manchester does not have a lot of literary offerings, Butts notes. Literary activity thrives on the Seacoast, however, and he hopes to take a look at disparities among

communities when it comes to writing-related events and activities.

"I'd like to find a way to make communities in New Hampshire more aware of the great wealth there is of poetry throughout this state," he says.

Butts hopes the poet laureateship will enrich his own writing as well. His work is influenced by poets including Stanley Plumley, Jon Anderson, and William Matthews. After he read a copy of Richard Hugo's collection, *What Thou Lovest Well, Remains American*, he found his way to the work of William Stafford and James Wright, also poets whose work is accessible and direct, but also contains great art in its language. "I became really interested in a poetry that looked, in a personal way, at what it meant to be human – and also in a larger context."

Butts' work has been described as "wryly observant" and "quietly powerful." He has published three books of poetry, *Sunday Evening at the Stardust Cafe*, *Movies in a Small Town*, and *The Required Dance*, in addition to several chapbooks. His poems and critical essays have appeared in numerous anthologies and literary journals.

"This is a really wonderful opportunity," he says of his new post, "to really continue the involvement in poetry and activity around poetry that has been part of my life for many decades. It's sort of a blessing." ■



*'I felt an enormous responsibility,' says former poet laureate Patricia Fagnoli.*

## A 'Whole Life of Poetry' for Laureate Emeritus

*By Jane Eklund*

When Patricia Fagnoli was asked to be poet laureate of New Hampshire back in 2005, she wasn't crazy about the idea.

"I said no," she remembers.

She was thrilled to be asked, and she was cognizant of the honor. But she didn't want to take on the job unless she could do it justice. She has some health issues that limit her energy level, and she can't drive at night. And while the position is an honorary one that comes with no stipend and no specified duties, Fagnoli felt strongly that the poet laureate should work to enhance the visibility of poetry in the state.

In the end, of course, Fagnoli agreed to don the poetry laurels after a bit of persuasion from Marie Harris, who served as New Hampshire poet laureate from 1999 to 2004. Then she started thinking about the kinds of programs she might like to offer.

She'd talked with all the members of the Executive Council before they voted to approve her nomination, and, she recalls, "Several of them said, 'I hope you do something with kids.'"

She took the idea of working with children and dropped it into a venue that's close to her heart – public libraries. Thus was born N.H. Children's Poetry Day.

With encouragement and support from staff at the State Library in Concord,

Fagnoli recruited poets to volunteer on that day. Others offered their services as well, including Kyle Potvin of Splash Communications. Libraries signed up to bring a poet to their facility for a 90-minute program. Gov. John Lynch issued a proclamation in honor of Children's Poetry Day. Word of the event got out through announcements and feature stories in New Hampshire newspapers and regional magazines.

"I worked 60-hour weeks for about a year to keep it all together," says Fagnoli.

When April 14, 2007, rolled around, 43 volunteer poets spent time at 42 libraries, reading, giving workshops, and talking with students in grades two to five. Fagnoli left the specifics for each program up to the poets, so each could use his or her own strengths in working with the children.

Some 200 young people took advantage of Poetry Day, as did many parents. Attendance varied, with some libraries drawing a dozen or more youngsters and others only a handful. Fagnoli spent the day visiting a few of the libraries hosting the event, including town libraries in Hancock, Peterborough, Keene, and her current hometown of Walpole.

Fagnoli's next initiative involved not just introducing people to poetry but also introducing them to poets – New Hampshire poets, to be specific. After determining that she wanted to establish an online exhibit of work by poets who live in the state, she contacted the State Arts Council, which dedicated a section of its web site to her Poet Showcase.

The showcase features a different N.H. poet every other week, with a poem, a few words from the poet about the poem, and a photo and brief bio of the poet. The showcase is linked from the Arts Council home page, and Fagnoli also sent out a message to her e-mail list when a new poet's work was posted. (Walter Butts is continuing the Showcase.)

In addition to coordinating Children's Poetry Day and the Poet Showcase, Fagnoli did numerous poetry readings and talks during her stint as poet laureate – she read over 43 times in over 20 towns in New Hampshire, plus three times in Connecticut, three in Vermont and one or two in Massachusetts. She also did some "stealth" poetry advocacy – like the time she met a friend at the Littleton Diner, and brought along a poem she'd written earlier, in which she

imagines that diner is heaven. The owner was thrilled and said he planned to frame the copy and hang it on the wall.

Fagnoli's poet laureate stint brought her into contact with a number of New Hampshire residents and poetry lovers. A reading in the North Country attracted a large, very appreciative audience. Another at the New Hampshire State Library prompted an elderly man to tell her that her poems were helpful in his struggle with his spirituality. She's received a lot of fan mail and positive comments from readers.

"That's why I write," she says, "to have that kind of connection with people."

Now that her term as New Hampshire's first poet is up, Fagnoli, who retired from a career as a social worker and psychotherapist, will continue with her writing and teaching (she has private students and leads classes at Keene State College's Lifelong Learning Program). She has a new collection of poetry, *Then, Something*, coming out in the fall.

"My whole life is poetry. This gave me a job," she says of her term as poet laureate. "It's been life-enriching for me." ■



## **The Garden**

*By Walter Butts*

In his garden, my friend  
has become adept  
at mimicking the birds  
as now, through the night's  
wet veil, he repeats  
their many songs,  
until even the prolific  
mockingbird must listen.  
A curious gecko hangs,  
for a moment, over the top  
of the porch screen,  
then scurries into the shadows.

We've been sitting for hours  
with drink and conversation.  
I've just traveled  
the Atlantic coast to be here,  
and am thinking now  
of that wise poet, Po Chu-i,  
how he believed in seclusion  
and clarity, yet sometimes  
welcomed visitors, and once wrote:  
*Who says the moon is heartless?*  
*It's followed me a thousand miles.*

Tomorrow, we'll wake  
as the red-eyed Cooper's hawk  
rises above the blossoming  
purple bougainvillea,  
waving banana leaves,  
that extravagant bird  
of paradise, and the mango  
trees heavy with fruit  
nearly touching the ground.

Reprinted from *What to Say if the Birds Ask*  
(Pudding House, 2007)

## **The Lake**

*By Walter Butts*

I don't know how Father managed  
that summer I was five,  
on his factory pay,  
to bring us to the glistening lake  
and white clapboard cottage  
for a week, its small rooms  
filled with early July light,  
and what seemed to me a thousand birds  
singing through the open windows,  
past the waving flowered curtains.

Perhaps he borrowed the money  
from my uncle, who would  
be dead a few years later,  
at fifty-four, the only time  
I ever saw my father weep.  
But we were happy those days,  
my parents and I,  
by that lake called "Silver,"  
and in its bright water  
that returned us,  
redeemed and shivering,  
back to our currency of air.

Each afternoon, I walked  
along the shoreline,  
gathering shells and stones  
from where the wet sand  
touched a mysterious silence  
that somehow  
echoed through me,  
even on that final morning  
of clouds and rain,  
when we left for home.

Reprinted from *What to Say if the Birds Ask*  
(Pudding House, 2007)

## **Two Skeletons Found in a Barn Wall**

*By Patricia Fargnoli*

Incisor teeth small as sesame seeds  
say you were kittens,  
skeletons pulled from between  
the boards where you must have fallen.  
Two bodies gnarled spoon-fashion together,  
a sculpture like brown driftwood,  
flaking now with age, with dryness.

One's arms around the other's middle,  
delicate bones of the toes, the feet,  
heads with their outsized eye sockets  
in which I glimpse only shadow.  
It must have been terrible, those last hours  
in that darkest of places,  
thirst setting in. Then hunger.  
Only each other for companion.

Small inhabitants of this earth,  
I don't know what I believe  
or don't believe, but I wish for you  
what I'd wish my own:  
may you have found whatever solace  
you needed from each other,  
may you have found whatever heaven  
is possible and awaits your kind.

First published in *The Connecticut Review*;  
forthcoming in *Then, Something*  
(Tupelo Press, September 2009)



# New Hampshire Originals

## Then Something

By Patricia Fargnoli

The moose and his mate  
stood in the roadside marsh at dawn.  
They moved the shallow sheet of water,  
the smallest rustle,  
as if ghosts were passing.

Together they broke the surface,  
such precision in their knobby bodies—  
Were they only figments in the unestablished light?  
But something held them  
bound them to the earth.

On a rise, above them, just at the edge of the road  
in a kind of trance,  
I stood, leaning toward them, and for a long time  
we stood in each other's company.  
It was as if we were appearing

and disappearing in the dim light.  
The weight of shadow,  
laden with gravity, shiftings, myths, a wild surrender.  
We didn't move,  
but might have been moving together

through the shallow satin of water,  
losing ourselves, it seemed, in truth and beauty.  
Or am I only making something of them they were not?  
Weren't they only two moose in a swale,  
pulling up water plants, chewing them

just before full day fell over the earth?

First published in *Watershed*; forthcoming in  
*Then, Something* (Tupelo Press, September 2009)

## The Money Musk

— For Jacqueline

By Dudley Laufman

It is my favorite dance in longways motion  
upon a wooden floor that swings and sways  
when the dance moves forward up and down  
to Money Musk played on the key of A.

The shuffle thumping is what makes this dance,  
done with leather soles upon the feet  
and done with a certain nonchalance  
and just a little hair behind the beat.

Danced in Peterboro and in Rye  
(to Alan Kendall's trumpet, Newt the Flute,  
Ralph Page chanting on his 78)  
or on Star Island ten miles out to sea.

Doesn't matter where the place or weather  
just that we dance The Money Musk together.

# It Takes a Town . . .



Right: Gordon Carlisle

Photo by Gary Langley

With the help of the entire community, Gordon Carlisle transformed a brick wall into a history of Somersworth – past, present and future.



Somersworth N.H. now sports a larger-than-life photo album on the wall of The Village Market, thanks to enthusiastic townspeople, muralist Gordon Carlisle, and funding from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, among other sources.

Somersworth's Main Street program commissioned Carlisle to conduct a residency in

town, during which the painter met with residents and businesspeople to come up with a concept for a mural. A six-part painting that illustrates the town's past and its future, the mural was completed in the fall. Carlisle, a veteran of New Hampshire's Percent for Art program, was new to community art. After the experience, he wrote this:

"This project was a revelation to me. I'd been involved in the realm of Public Art for over 20 years, but I'd never done a Community Arts Residency or community-driven project before. The lack of that experience, plus the fact that Somersworth, with its obviously rich industrial past, was only five miles from home, led me to throw my name enthusiastically into the hat of interviewees.

"Upon getting the commission, I was immediately struck by how different this one felt. The populace seemed poised and ready to help me however it could in making this mural a success. There was community support and enthusiasm for what I was doing, and that extended through the entire creation of the artwork.

"Also beginning early on was what I call the 'living history lab' quality of the experience: many, many people anxious to

share their stories, memories and feelings about Somersworth with me (including people featured in the mural). Their regular input kept reinforcing the idea that the mural needed to be about them, answering their needs, as opposed to me coming up with some clever, conceptual, and perhaps less accessible design. In short, it was a collaboration, and I believe the mural's stronger for it." ■





Michelle Pearson works her mimicking magic.

## New Hampshire State Council on the Arts Arts in Health Care

By Judy Rigmont

Staff at Krempels Brain Injury Foundation in Portsmouth, Havenwood Heritage Heights in Concord, and Crotched Mountain Foundation in Greenfield gave the ultimate compliment to North Carolina dancer/teacher/choreographer Michelle Pearson. After participating in a workshop with her last year, they invited her back in February for a week-long, shared residency. With the help of an Arts in Health Care Project Grant from the State Arts Council, Pearson spent time at each of the three settings leading “Stepping Up: A Dance Collaboration Benefiting Seniors and People with Disabilities.”

### Krempels Foundation

At Krempels’ SteppingStones program for survivors of brain injury, Pearson spent two days conducting training sessions with staff and interns and attended community meetings to introduce the residency to clients, professional caregivers, and family members. She also offered two sessions daily to clients using the theme of “work,” asking “What is hard work for you?” The responses, including such movement as swallowing, getting out of bed and into a wheelchair, and climbing stairs, led to a dance performance by the residents.

This residency encouraged SteppingStones clients to express their feelings nonverbally and to participate in a program that, over time, can strengthen muscles, build stamina, and improve balance and range of motion.

### Havenwood-Heritage Heights

Havenwood-Heritage Heights, a continuing-care retirement center, hosted a two-day artist-in-residence program for seniors that also began with a question or topic that linked an idea to movement. Pearson worked with residents throughout the campus, including those who live independently, those in assisted living, and those receiving long-term care and skilled nursing. She worked with both large and small groups, and offered an experiential and training opportunity for staff as well as a workshop for the resident clown troupe.

Comments from staff and residents described Pearson’s residency as “joy generating, playful, engaging and inclusive,” and noted that “she integrated everyone’s ability and demonstrated with stories how people could adapt the dance to their own comfort level.” Another comment: “Twice I witnessed her skill in coaxing a room full of

stiffs into motion, into play, into joy...both fellow staff members and residents. These are people I love, but they are so ‘not kinetic’; they are staid, still-life portraits, and during these events they were in motion, in proximity, in contact with one another and loving it.”

### Crotched Mountain Foundation

Pearson’s dance workshops brought a lively energy and spirit to the school atop Crotched Mountain, according to Bonnie Arpin, who teaches music to students with developmental disabilities. Staff and students, many who had never danced before, found renewed energy using new creative forms. Arpin notes, “We especially loved finding ways to carry each other emotionally and physically. Creating a new dance from apparently nothing is a special skill that Michelle demonstrates. Each student contributed a move and she wove the moves together so that our dance became a tribute to all of us. ... We have enjoyed repeating this dance in our regular classes and experimenting with our own conglomerate creations. When I use the phrase, ‘Let’s do this with Michelle-energy,’ everyone smiles and joins in the dance.” ■

## THE BUSINESS OF ART



## A Portrait of the Artist as an Entrepreneur

By Jennifer Murphy Aubin

As an artist, do you define yourself as an entrepreneur? For some artists, business might seem like oil and water. And like many entrepreneurs who are passionate about what they create, in an ideal world, artists would have the ability to focus on their strengths and have others do the marketing and make the financial decisions.

Most entrepreneurs have a passion for producing the product or offering the service, but don’t necessarily have the mechanics of running a business, the time management tools, the tracking systems, the financial know-how, and mastery of the marketing plans. A landscaper enjoys cultivating a beautiful outdoor landscape but might loathe the invoicing and bookkeeping. However, if you plan on making a living from selling, like the landscaper, you are a business. The business fundamentals, the strategy and the planning, are essential, whether you’re an artist or a landscaper.

It is helpful to know that you are not alone. In the state of New Hampshire there are many small businesses, including many artists. There are over 124,000 very small businesses, typically

sole-proprietor-companies that have up to five employees including the owner. This is a huge segment of our local economy – it means that as a whole, 60 percent of the profits from these small businesses stay in our communities. However, this is a largely invisible group as these businesses might be flying under the radar, operating out of a studio, kitchen, or basement.

A community is defined by culture – it is what draws travelers into our cities and towns. Artists of all backgrounds and disciplines are a part of the creative economy, a powerful engine that fuels our local economies and makes us unique. Helping to build strong business skills in artist entrepreneurs, then, is critical. As we all know, the arts and culture foster not only beauty and vitality but bring big dollars into our local economy.

If entrepreneurs are ambassadors for our communities, contributing to thriving downtowns and local communities, then artists have a unique voice for capturing the mood of the times. Be it a performance at the local theater, a mural in a parking lot, or an exhibit at a gallery or restaurant

Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.

– Andy Warhol

or hospital, artwork helps us interpret our lives.

Here are a few recommendations that can help you get motivated and gather momentum to continue on doing your vital work:

1. Don’t go it alone! Get out of the studio and connect with other artists you admire; seek out consultation with organizations and colleagues that can help you. Look for others who inspire you, whether in your neighborhood or across the country.
2. Identify challenges and areas where you need help; prioritize and find the resources to help address those challenges.
3. Talk to others, let them know you are creating goals for yourself, and have them check in on you. This accountability will manifest in following through on the most challenging tasks.
4. Foster those relationships by networking, which is a necessary element –conversations can lead to referrals, collaborations, and opportunities to barter services.



5. Gather your support teams – your network of like-minded entrepreneurs who will encourage you but also provide critical feedback. Find a good bookkeeper, accountant, and lawyers. All businesses consult with experts. There are resources through the N.H. Bar Association to provide low- and no-cost consultation. Check out adult education centers in your area for courses on bookkeeping, computer skills, and more.
6. Create a budget, tracking income and expenses. Carve out time each week to enter the information into your system and review it at month's end. A business needs records of its financial activity to know where there are shortfalls and opportunities. Records also help when projecting what will happen in the future.

Another resource is MicroCredit-NH, a program of the nonprofit N.H. Community Loan Fund. MicroCredit-NH helps the smallest of small businesses get business development skills, take part in educational opportunities, access small loans, and receive support from fellow entrepreneurs.

Since 2001, MicroCredit-NH has focused a considerable amount of time on helping artists develop their business skills in order to make a living from their art. Using the resources available to the self-employed through MicroCredit-New Hampshire, the ArtWorks-NH program launched to meet the unique needs of the artist through access to the network of statewide business groups and specifically designed programming.

Business groups include fine artists, musicians, furniture producers, sculptors, singers, and writers, along with landscapers, graphic designers, lawyers, bookkeepers, and other businesses. The diverse groups engage in dynamic conversations

and in-depth strategy sessions to help businesses grow and thrive. Group members have access to MicroCredit-NH's education, loan capital, and expanded market resources.

Our program offers several levels of membership in which participants get connected with support from other artists and businesses in their community, share successes and challenges, access loans and training materials and participate in daylong events, like the biannual Artist Exchanges, happening in the north and south parts of New Hampshire. The Artist Exchange offers sessions delivered by marketing and business experts to help artists succeed and grow.

Visit [www.microcredithn.org](http://www.microcredithn.org) for more information and resources that you can start using today.

*Jennifer Murphy Aubin (pictured at the top of the article) is regional manager for the MicroCredit-NH program. An artist and a great appreciator of arts and culture, she writes, paints, and sculpts. ■*

## New Hampshire State Council on the Arts

Established in 1965, the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the New Hampshire Division of the Arts comprise the state's arts agency. Funding comes from appropriations from the State of New Hampshire and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Volunteer Arts Councilors set policies, approve grants, and advise the Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Resources on all matters concerning the arts.

The State Arts Council's mission is to promote the arts to protect and enrich New Hampshire's unique quality of life. The Director of the New Hampshire Division of the Arts administers the agency, which is part of the Department of Cultural Resources.

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## It's 'Art-Warming': Arts with Heart



It's this simple: In difficult times, the arts bring people together and help illuminate the stuff that really matters. What matters greatly during this economic downturn is helping those in need.

Last fall, with that in mind, State Arts Council Director Rebecca Lawrence established a new initiative. Arts with Heart

calls on artists and arts nonprofits to use their skills and their events to help make life better for the people of New Hampshire. Organizations can, for instance, collect nonperishable items for food banks at arts openings, receptions, and parties; donate time, money, or artwork to worthy causes; or sponsor a Red Cross blood drive. Another way to help is to offer workshops and performances at community centers, senior centers, and nursing homes.

You'll find a quick link on the Arts Council web site's home page to the Arts with Heart page, which offers contact information for organizations that help people in need as well as a high resolution Arts with Heart logo to download and use in conjunction with projects that reach out to people in need of assistance. Artists and nonprofits are also invited to report on their helping activities on the Arts Council's Facebook group page. ■



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