View this email in your browser



Loom and Spindle

The Mill Museum Newsletter

November 2024

Mill Museum Annual Fundraising Campaign Launched

Several hundred supporters and friends of the Mill Museum soon will receive the organization's annual fundraising brochure through the mail.

It requests donations for the museum's annual fundraising campaign. It also highlights accomplishments over the past year and goals for the future.

Checks can be mailed to the museum or donations can be made online though the museum's website.

" All donations are gratefully accepted

People who donate at the following levels will receive a Mill Museum membership that lasts through March 31, 2026:

and will be acknowledged."

- $250 Velvet
- $500 Satin: In addition to the membership, donors at this level will receive two guest passes.
- $1,000 Charmeuse: In addition to the membership and guest passes, donors at this level will receive a personal tour of two exhibits during 2025.

Donations are tax deductible. The museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

This past year at the Mill Museum was marked by many achievements. *Footprints in the Changing Sand*, a special exhibit featuring three respected local artists, opened at the Mill Museum on March 9. A central focus of the art show was a look into human relationships with the changing environment. The exhibit featured the collected works of Connecticut artists Annie Wandell, Colin McNamee, and Holly Popielarz, and was curated by board member Joanne Sailor.

Starting on June 29, the museum presented a ground-breaking exhibit: *Liberty's Daughters in Northeastern Connecticut: Women, Textiles, and the Nonimportation Movement in the Revolutionary Era*.

The museum presented live demonstrations of preindustrial textile technology and other women's homekeeping skills, as well as sponsored related programs and exhibits in the museum's main exhibition room, and even on the Windham Green. The presentations brought to life the critical role played by women in the birth of the United States. It explored how women, as makers of textiles, often out of cotton, wool, or flax, contributed vitally to the success of American boycotts against English manufactured goods in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War. The exhibit, funded in part by Connecticut Humanities, was co-curated by museum Interim Executive Director Jamie Eves, who's also Windham Town Historian, and experienced weaver Peggy Church, who teaches at the museum.

Among other events during the year was a lecture on textiles and the environment. Challa Kumar, an emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of Connecticut, spoke on May 15 on his ground-breaking discoveries related to recycled textiles. He explained how recycled fabrics and proteins can

he used to produce an alternative to plastic. Also, American Revolutionary War hero Israel Putnam was the focus of a presentation on April 6. Local Putnam biographer Michael Westerfield spoke about Putnam, and Windham Theatre Guild actor Kenneth Noll presented scenes portraying the one-time Pomfret resident. Over Labor Day weekend, a special program of song and recollection took place to observe Labor Day and honor America's workers. It included workers' songs performed by Sean Mahony, a popular New York-based tenor and pianist, as well as talks by board members Michael Mahony and Robert Asher.

> *"Colleagues at the Connecticut League of Museums named an annual award in honor of Jamie Eves."*

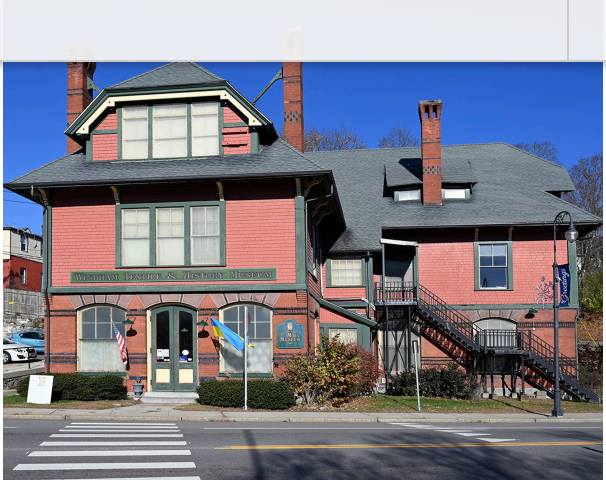
Jamie Eves was the museum's interim director for much of the year. He has returned to being senior curator. To honor his contributions to the museum and community, he had two major honors over the year. Colleagues at the Connecticut League of Museums named an award in his honor. Jamie was the award's first recipient. Museum professionals statewide will be given the award in the years ahead. Also, the museum recognized Jamie this past summer in a standing-room-only program.

The museum was also the subject of several recent articles in the *Chronicle* and *Neighbors*, two local newspapers, the *Hartford Business Journal*, and an extended segment on Connecticut Public Television.

In October, Aaron Skarzenski was named the Mill Museum's new executive director. Much of his prior professional museum experience took place at Philadelphia's American Swedish Historical Museum. While at that museum, he was a curatorial assistant where he assisted the curator in such tasks as installing and de-installing exhibits, as well as the planning and research of exhibits. He also was an interim curatorial liaison and a visitor services manager where he oversaw daily museum operations. In addition, Skarzenski received a master's degree in curatorial studies at the University of Chicago.

Under our new executive director, the museum is undertaking much-needed upgrades to the main exhibit room. That includes installing a new carpet and painting key areas. In addition, the museum is planning to expand the permanent exhibit. Also, the museum will continue to offer access to the expansive archive, as well as provide special exhibits, lectures, and other

engaging programs during 2025. Soon, a new museum educator will be hired to organize and lead tours from schools and varied organizations.



Small Business Saturday Kicks Off Gift Shop Holiday Season

The Mill Museum's gift shop is a great place to find engaging gifts for the winter holiday season.

The shopping season starts with Small Business Saturday, which falls on November 30, and continues through December.

There's a wide variety of items available for individual gifts or even stocking stuffers.

For instance, kitchen items include bibs, aprons and bags.

Knitted hats and sweaters, as well as cards, Windham-themed ornaments, and vintage buttons are in stock.

So too are music CDs, books on art and textiles, cookbooks, and even yarn.

The gift shop is open Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It's located in the museum's main lobby.

"It's a great place to find gifts," Museum Executive Director Aaron Skarzenski said about the gift shop.

Small Business Saturday was started in the US by American Express in 2010. It's promoted each year by the US Small Business Administration.

On Saturday, shoppers can support local small businesses during one of the busiest shopping periods in the year.



Small Business Saturday is … a great opportunity to support our local entrepreneurs, artisans, and small stores that make our community unique and vibrant," State Rep. Susan Johnson recently said to mark the occasion.

In 2023, spending by those who shopped at small businesses on Small Business Saturday was around $17 billion.

Last year, in addition to the Mill Museum, other Willimantic businesses taking part in the national observance included:

- Jewels Verne Jewelers
- Bliss Market Place, which includes Willimantic Records
- Thread City Diner
- Kerri Art Studio and Gallery
- Zok's Homebrewing & Winemaking Supplies
- Lily Pad Art Supplies and Framing
- Willimantic Food Co-Op

News Briefs

Open Studios for Local Artists

The region's yearly Artists Open Studios of Northeastern Connecticut event begins after Thanksgiving and continues into December.

Many artists in the area will open their studios to the public between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on November 29 and 30, continuing on December 1, 7, and 8.

Among those opening their studios is Mill Museum instructor Peggy Church. She is located at 115 Chaplin Street in Chaplin, and features fiber arts, with handwoven textiles, scarves of silk, shawls, baby blankets, kitchen cloths, runners, and new this year are Turkish towels.

Peggy recently was featured on Connecticut Public Television and was co-curator of the *Liberty's Daughters* exhibit at the Mill Museum.

Willimantic Light Parade

Some 20 groups have signed up to participate in the 2024 Willimantic Light Parade, including fire departments from Windham Center, North Windham, Willington, Franklin, Lebanon, and Willimantic.

The Friday, November 29 parade will feature fire trucks, floats, and other vehicles decorated with lights, as well as live music and entertainment.

The parade starts at Memorial Park at 5:45 p.m. and makes its way down Main Street to Jillson Square. The tree lighting will take place near the Jillson House.

There also will be a chance to meet with Mr. & Mrs. Claus in the Windham Community Center. The Salvation Army of Willimantic will serve hot cocoa.

Visit Gov. Lamont's Residence

Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont and First Lady Annie Lamont are inviting Connecticut residents to attend the 34th annual open house at the Governor's Residence.

The historic residence, located at 990 Prospect Avenue in Hartford, will be decorated for the season and open to the public for tours.

The open house will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, December 6 and Saturday, December 7.

Local musicians will perform holiday music.

Every 15 to 20 minutes, a shuttle bus will transport visitors from the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History, where parking is available, to the Governor's Residence.

Museum Open House

On Saturday December 7, the Lebanon Historical Society will have an open house following the town's yearly light parade and Christmas tree lighting which take place at 5 p.m.

The museum will serve complementary hot cider and cookies.

Get Woven into the Fabric of Our Museum

You don't have to live in Willimantic or Windham to support the Mill Museum. We're a REGIONAL museum, so folks throughout eastern Connecticut and beyond can learn about the vital role the mills and the people who worked in them played in shaping the area's history. If you've already become a member, THANK YOU! If not, please consider joining our ranks.

At the $25 COTTON (Individual) level, members receive the newsletter; email notice of the Museum's programs and events; free admission to the Museum, its library and exhibits (special events and fundraisers my be extra); and 1-hour access to staff time for personal research.

At the $50 WOOL (Family) level, membership extends these same benefits to members of a household consisting of up to two adults and any number of children.

At the $100 SILK (Patron) level, membership includes all the above benefits, plus invitations to a private, advance showing of exhibits; free personal tours; and 3-hour access to staff time for personal research.

Membership Levels:

Cotton (individual) membership, $25
Wool (family) membership, $50
Silk (patron) membership, $100

Windham Textile & History Museum
411 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226
Make checks out to: WTHM

Go to https://millmuseum.org/join-membership/ and join today or

increase your level of membership. Your involvement may be one more thread in a growing tapestry of history.



Copyright © 2024 **The Mill Museum**, *All rights reserved.*

Our mailing address is:
860-456-2178 * 411 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226
Open Sat - Sun, 10-4
themillmuseum@gmail.com

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
why did I get this? unsubscribe from this list update subscription preferences
The Mill Museum · 411 Main St · Willimantic, CT 06226-3173 · USA

