Museum L-A is pleased to announce we have been awarded a $10,000 grant from the Maine Bicentennial Commission in support of “Our Working Waterway,” the newest exhibit celebrating the Androscoggin River and its effects on the industrial development of Maine. The Commission is honoring the state’s 200th anniversary by funding projects that explore Maine’s history; celebrate Maine’s people, places, institutions and economy; and envision public and private actions that will enhance Maine’s future prosperity.

This exhibit dives into the history of the Androscoggin River throughout Maine. From the generation of water power to the passage of the Clean Water Act, visitors can learn how people have used this important waterway to develop manufacturing centers, pollute the river’s waters, and clean and maintain the river throughout history.

While the history of the Lewiston-Auburn area and its development was guided by the water power potential of the Great Falls, the river had a profound effect on the growth and settlement of numerous cities within the Androscoggin Valley. Photographs and archival collections from 10 historical organizations throughout the state are featured in the exhibit to tell the story of the river from its headwaters to the sea. The natural beauty of many areas along the river are showcased through the 10 winning photographs selected from the museum’s Androscoggin River photo contest, as well as the four original murals, hand-painted by local artists.

As part of this exhibit, Museum L-A hosted “Keeping the Androscoggin Healthy,” a virtual program that featured Lisa Pohlmann, CEO of the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

River exhibit
Continued on page 2
From where I sit

Since March, life has drastically changed around the world and around our community. While COVID-19 has brought with it a flood of negative outcomes, we have also learned some essential life lessons: We should all be washing our hands more, we should be willing to sacrifice some freedoms for the greater good, and we should make telling our friends and family that we love them a priority.

I have now been the executive director at Museum L-A for over a year, and more than half of that time has elapsed since the onset of COVID-19. Like so many other nonprofits, these are challenging times for our organization, despite our best efforts. But I am surrounded by good people – staff who are professional and enthusiastic, board members who are dedicated, volunteers who offer their time and talents, and a community that implores us to tell the stories of Lewiston-Auburn and is rooting for us to be successful.

In addition to the photos of my husband and children adorning my office, I have posted Christopher Robin’s wise words to Winnie the Pooh, “You’re braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.” May it be so.

Audrey Thomson
Executive Director

History Weaver:
New digital resources for everyone

Museum L-A is pleased to announce the launch of History Weaver, our new suite of online resources, including virtual tours, mini-exhibits, and lesson plans at the elementary, middle, and high school level.

Start your visit at
www.historyweaver.net

River exhibit
From the cover

Pohlmann expanded on the history of the river, described the current conditions and issues facing the river’s rehabilitation and reclassification, and explained the importance of the Clean Water Act for keeping the waterways in Maine healthy.

Our goal in building this exhibit during the Bicentennial year was to inform and inspire our visitors to learn more about the river’s history and its impact on Maine. Museum L-A has been extraordinarily successful in helping people to appreciate their own history while recognizing the achievements of those who came before them. Honoring us with this award enables us to celebrate the great state of Maine and “the way life is supposed to be.”

“Our Working Waterway” is also available online. Visit our homepage and click on the picture of the Androscoggin River or click on Exhibits in the top menu bar and choose Gallery Exhibit.

Also, watch for the announcement of another upcoming river-related lecture.

Lisa Pohlmann, CEO of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, was the speaker of the “Keeping the Androscoggin Healthy” program held via Zoom in October.
VOICES: The Newsletter of Museum L-A

DEPARTURES

Both Camden Martin and Emma Sieh brought talent and progress to Museum L-A; they will be greatly missed by staff and visitors as they move on to new career opportunities.

Many of you will remember Camden as the first face you encountered at the museum, and as the guy who was multilingual. He could often be found giving guided tours in the permanent exhibit, sharing information in French about the artifacts and machines. He was full of knowledge and enthusiasm!

Emma was the shining star behind the scenes in the Collections and Exhibits departments, giving life to the stories that connect generations in Lewiston-Auburn. As curator, she shared her innovation and creativity, while collaborating with historians and artists across the state. Camden remains nearby, teaching French to middle and high school students at Saint Dominic Academy in Auburn. Emma, on the other hand, has relocated across the country to Montana and is now serving as the curator of collections at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula. Thank you, Camden and Emma, for all you have done for Museum L-A. We wish you the best in all your endeavors!

Now more than ever, museums are offering digital resources and content for audiences around the world to enjoy. Just in the last year, we have seen virtual programming in the form of online webinars and workshops, many iterations of virtual reality gallery tours, and thousands of objects being digitized and shared online.

Museum L-A has been working towards digitizing our collections so that one day we can offer access to a new online collections database. This would allow visitors, scholars, and researchers to access important materials related to the community and industrial history of Lewiston and Auburn, as well as to give the hidden objects in our collections the opportunity to be seen by a much wider audience. With a generous donation from one of our collections department volunteers, we are happy to announce that we are one step closer to achieving our goal!

Dwight Burkard has been working with our curator for almost two years and has shown great enthusiasm and ingenuity in helping us solve problems facing our collections storage. As volunteering opportunities were limited during COVID to maintain the health and safety of our volunteers and staff, Dwight sought ways to support the museum. After discussing the idea with our curator, he decided to purchase photography equipment that will allow us to take high-quality photographs of our artifacts to be shared in an online database. While photography of the collection has been accomplished sporadically over the years, the donation of a new LED lightbox, additional portable LED lights, lazy susan, and color checker, Museum L-A’s collections staff and volunteers can now update our current database with brand new high-quality photos. Until a formal online database can be created, photographs taken using this new equipment will be featured on the museum’s website and social media as a way to connect our audiences with our fascinating pieces of history.

Retired systems consultant and long-time museum volunteer, Dwight Burkard, donated a light box recently, stating, “Since the pandemic, my usual tasks aren’t required at the museum. I strongly support the museum and the way it celebrates the past and present culture in Lewiston-Auburn. Digitizing the collections will help make them more accessible.”
The Story of Work and Community in Lewiston-Auburn
35 Canal Street, Box A7
(enter from Chestnut Street)
Lewiston, ME 04240
www.museumla.org

NEW MUSEUM HOURS
Fridays
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
and by appointment.
Call 207-333-3881 for more information.

Your gift matters.

Museum L-A relies on the donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations to further its mission.

Your contribution helps us to continue providing outstanding educational programs for people of all ages. Our exhibits are second to none and your donation enables us to create truly unique experiences for everyone.

Your gift is an investment in preserving history and keeping the stories accessible for generations to come.

Visit www.museumla.org to make your secure online donation. We also encourage you to take advantage of recurring giving: an easy payment plan that fits your philanthropic schedule.

For more information, contact Audrey Thomson, executive director, at athomson@museumla.org or 207-333-3881.

OUR MISSION
Museum L-A connects generations and cultures, fosters a spirit of discovery and human ingenuity, and helps people experience the rich history of work, the arts, and community.

Be the first to know about what’s happening at Museum L-A!
Sign up for our mailing list at www.museumla.org.

VOLUNTEER WITH US!
There are many ways to get involved and volunteer at Museum L-A, both in the galleries and behind the scenes. To learn more about our volunteer opportunities and the application process, contact our volunteer coordinator at info@museumla.org or 207-333-3881.