Shoes – The History We Stand In

Since its conception, Museum L-A has been dedicated to representing and honoring the industries and workers that are a part of Lewiston-Auburn’s story. With an impressive history in the shoe industry often rivaling the textile production over the river, Auburn has proven to embody a strong community based on creativity, ingenuity, and hard work. Coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the city of Auburn, 1869-2019, Museum L-A filled its gallery to the brim with shoes to celebrate the city’s illustrious industrial history.

Inspired by the success of its most recent Bates bedspread exhibit, Museum L-A began the process of curating their newest gallery exhibit featuring shoes over one year ago. The plan for the exhibit was three-fold: highlight Auburn’s historic shoe industry, explore the techniques and terms that accompany shoes, and acknowledge the aesthetic beauty of shoe designs.

The exhibit’s curator, Christine McDowell, is an associate professor of theater at Bates College and has been collecting shoes as fascinating objects of material culture since the 1980s. The bulk of the shoes (over 100 pairs!) on display are from her personal collection, combined with some loans from the Androscoggin Historical Society and the Bates College Museum of Art.

“The goal was to create an experience that will allow visitors to learn a little something about how shoes are made and fashion trends that have changed shoes over time, all while reflecting on the rich shoe heritage we have here in our local community,” explains Emma Sieh, Museum L-A’s Collections and Exhibits Coordinator.

Over 100 people attended the exhibit opening on March 29. This exhibit will be on display through the end of 2019 and there will be programs and events throughout the year to celebrate shoes — both in function and fashion. Grab your shoe lover friends and stop on by!

In response to a call for donations of shoes that the museum sent to local news outlets, Marilynn G. Barr, an artist from North Carolina, contacted the museum’s Collections and Exhibits coordinator to see if the museum would be interested in showcasing her astounding collection of ceramic shoes. One year later, Museum L-A is thrilled to announce that her shoes will be on display in the gallery for three months this summer.

Barr’s collection, “The First Shoe Collection,” is made up of 60 ceramic shoes fashioned using vintage shoe lasts from the 1940s and ‘50s. All of the shoes are singles (reminiscent of Cinderella’s abandoned shoe), are vastly different in design and color, and were recently part of an exhibition in New York City. The collection begs the question: Can shoes be artful objects?

“At the beginning of this curation process, we had always flirted with ideas of how to infuse this exhibit about an everyday object with art and design, so when Marilynn reached out to us we jumped at the chance to include her collection at some point during this exhibition,” explained Emma Sieh, Collections and Exhibits coordinator.

The public is invited to attend a free event from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, June 14, to view these beautiful shoes and meet their ingenious creator. Travelling from Greensboro, North Carolina, Barr will lead the evening in an artist’s talk and answer questions about the process of crafting these works of art. Light refreshments will be served and the public will have a chance to tour the rest of the “Footwear: From Function to Fashion” exhibition.

Ceramic shoe collection added

Opening reception & artist talk, free, open to the public 6-8pm Friday, June 14
Dear friends,

Because you have been a long-term friend and supporter, I am writing to share with you some exciting news about Museum L-A.

When I joined the Museum, it was to help out for six months, two days a week. This spring, I completed 15 years of nearly non-stop work which was a whirlwind of truly amazing experiences. People ask me, why did you stay so long? It is because early on, I saw what it meant to our elders needing legacy of their work, the children’s thirst to learn about their community and visitors leaving in awe of who we were as a people.

We have been through two major economic downturns while enhancing our reputation, creating momentum, and taking on leadership roles while getting the L-A name known throughout the country. It wasn’t easy and through it all, we bought a mill on the riverfront in Lewiston in which we have already invested $1,600,000. We are temporarily housed in the Bates Mill and it was only a matter of time before the rapid development of the mill would cause us to leave — that time has come.

We are entering an exciting new chapter in our history — undertaking a major building project to locate a state-of-the-art museum on the banks of the Androscoggin River. We are ready to move to the next phase of our landmark museum and therefore I feel it is a most opportune time for me to be stepping down and start enjoying some retirement. Our board of directors begins a search for a new executive director for the future.

Because I am totally committed to the success of the project, although I step down as executive director, it is to allow me to devote time to the museum’s vision as consultant. I will help the building and capital campaign effort for the new museum, so you will be hearing from me again. That new museum will be a monument to the history of Lewiston-Auburn, its businesses and workers who are amazing people.

I stand extremely proud of all we have accomplished and as to where we are today. Recently someone said: “You are an institution of great importance in this community.” Music to our ears because it has not been an easy road, but through it all, we have never once not paid a bill we owed and have worked within our means. That in itself is good to leave behind. We have brought amazing exhibits and programs and partnerships to the area that certainly enhanced the respect and stature of our communities.

Working at Museum L-A is a privilege, nothing less. I am forever grateful for your trust, your warmth, your support, you believing in us, and for so much laughter through good and not so good times and look forward to continuing our friendship in the future.

Sincerely, in our great ancestors,

Rachel Desgrosseilliers
Founding Executive Director

Board shares Desgrosseilliers’ accomplishments during her tenure

- The worker reunions and major oral history project that now counts over 260 histories completed.
- The saving of three major collections that have become national treasures for the area.
- The many successful exhibits of textiles, shoes, brick, music, immigration and who we are as a people.
- Having brought people in from 44 states and 12 countries, instilling tourism in the heart of the community.
- The Kids as Curators education program established to help students K-12 gain hands-on experiences in life issues and teaching their findings to the community.
- Finding the site of our future new museum along the riverfront.
- Gaining the reputation of being fully engaged while asked to lead major efforts in our community.
- Working with local businesses to increase economic development and entrepreneurial spirit for all.
- Managing the organization through two major economic downturns making sure a bill never went unpaid.
- Most of all, the many beautiful relationships and friendships established through connecting history to today’s generations and honoring the great generations of our past.
Dear Friends,

The board of directors of Museum L-A announces the retirement of Founding Executive Director Rachel Desgrosseillers who will be stepping down at the end of 2019. This announcement marks the end of an era for Museum L-A.

We are indebted to her visionary leadership and commitment for propelling us to our present position in the industry. The date we have feared for many years is upon us, but her retirement is well-deserved and her infectious energy and positive attitude brought much respect for and enthusiasm at the museum.

We are extremely proud of what Museum L-A has achieved under Rachel’s leadership. She has served on several boards and committees, both local and regional and has received several awards local and regional.

We have just completed a five-year master plan, updated our interpretive plan and hired a great architectural and museum team to start work on the new museum with a leadership gift. Her visionary capability and innovative spirit kept us ahead in thinking through the changing museum scene both locally and nationwide while her knowledge of the community is unprecedented.

Rachel brought an energy that the board called a force of nature or as Elliott Epstein once said: “We thought we had brought on a hurricane in Rachel but discovered that we were actually dealing with a tornado.”

Rachel brought a curiosity and daring to try new things, a warmth and passion to whomever passed through the museum as she became a friend to all with a sense of vision to advancing our essential mission.

She is leaving the organization at a time it is ready to move into its next phase as an organization from which to continue its important work. She will work with the museum board through the planned transition and remain a very active force for the vision of the new museum.

The Museum L-A board will be accepting applications during the next few months for a new executive director. In the meantime, we hope you will reach out to Rachel to share your thoughts and appreciation for her many contributions to Museum L-A’s success.

Sincerely,

Margaret Craven,
Chair, Board of Directors

LETTER FROM MUSEUM L-A BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In March, Museum L-A hosted Maine’s first regional contest for National History Day! National History Day is an annual nationwide contest for students in grades 6-12 to celebrate their love of history, promote critical thinking skills, and allow them to participate in a fun, educational contest.

Students work individually or in groups to create either a documentary, website, exhibit, performance, or paper around a historical subject of their choice within that year’s theme. In Maine, there has always been one contest to decide the finalists from our state who then continue to the national level of competition, but this year there were two regional contests added.

Museum L-A, alongside community partners the Lewiston Public Library and LA Arts, showcased these projects in a day-long event on March 9. Students came early to set up their projects and prepare themselves for the judging process. Over the course of the day, almost 400 people, including the students, teachers, judges, and family members got to enjoy the thrill of competition at the three Lewiston sites.

At the end of the day, everyone gathered in the museum’s downstairs gallery to cheer on their peer’s research projects as the results of the judging were revealed.

The winners of this regional contest will be continuing on to the state competition in Orono and, hopefully, the national level of National History Day held in Washington D.C. in June. By hosting this southern regional contest, Museum L-A was able to offer a new and exciting opportunity for students in our local area who have never been able to participate in the national contest to create projects that help them explore their love of history and community.

The museum has already been asked if we are going to host the contest again next year and we are hoping to make this an annual tradition for our local community.

National History Day Regionals held at the museum
Excitement builds as architect chosen for new Museum L-A building

The board of directors of Museum L-A is proud to announce that a local firm, Platz Associates of Auburn, Maine has been chosen as the architectural firm that will work with Museum L-A to bring a state-of-the-art museum to the community. "I am thrilled that this project is moving forward and we have chosen the best architects for the job," said Margaret Craven, museum board chair. "With Tom Platz’s experience and commitment to the LA community, I know we will have the very best outcome. Having our very own Museum L-A will put us on the cultural arts map."

Several architectural firms responded to a request for proposals for the new museum. Three finalists were chosen for actual interviews after being rated through a matrix of qualifications. Following the interviews, the Building Committee once again rated each firm according to a strict matrix of qualifications and interview ratings.

"Platz Associates is thrilled to have been chosen as the architect of the new home for Museum L-A," said co-founder Tom Platz. "This project is exciting on many fronts. It is an honor to be part of a project that will be so transforming to both the people and the city. We look forward to creating space that speaks to our past while pointing both citizens and guests to the future of LA," Platz continued.

In recognition of the importance of this project, Platz Associates has put together a design team that possesses the talents to execute every detail with the utmost experience and expertise to produce a project that reflects the heartbeat of the community. Beside his talented staff, Platz has brought in Experience Design boasting a team of educators, museum planners and writers who create immersive, multi-sensory exhibit design that engages visitors at a multitude of learning levels. It was important that the buildings speak to where we have been but also to where we can go. In that light the new Museum must be a moving, active space and it must be a space for all ages.

Key requirements of the chosen firm were they would have to hold community gatherings that would allow Museum L-A to again listen closely to what the community wants its future museum to be. “We constantly listen to our community and it has proven invaluable to our planning efforts and we want more input as we move forward,” says Rachel Desgrosseilliers, the museum’s executive director. “We want to hear more from our younger generations because their input already has helped guide some decisions,” she said. Another requirement was the firm needed to work with both cities of Lewiston and Auburn to make sure whatever was planned as a cultural celebration center fit into the future plans of both cities and their immediate surrounding areas.

History museums are no longer just community amenities; they are community anchors. The project will begin with the review of all studies done so far by the museum including its five-year master plan, its interpretive and exhibit plan along with projected space needs. Everyone is invited to join Museum L-A in their journey of honor, celebration and inspiration.
Weavings from 1894 of Lewiston mill find their way to Museum L-A

Lewiston Deputy City Administrator Denis D’Auteuil received a phone call from Ronald Cunha, of Acushnet, Massachusetts, about weavings Cunha found while cleaning out an old estate. D’Auteuil called Rachel Desgroseilliers at Museum L-A and wanted to know if they would be interested in connecting with Cunha. The answer from Desgroseilliers was a definite “yes.”

“It’s amazing the history we are able to connect with and salvage with a simple phone call,” said Desgroseilliers. “It happens often and we usually uncover treasures. In this instance, a Lewiston city employee enabled us to connect with Mr. Cunha who was holding a piece of Lewiston history that could be significant. We love that people trust us enough to make those calls.”

After a series of calls and sharing photographs between Desgroseilliers and Cunha, more information about the weavings was not in the museum. Museum, he would pay for the weavings. After receiving the larger weaving first, there was no question the smaller piece with a set of three millworker photos should not be separated to keep the story intact.

“The pictorial weavings seem to have been commissioned, as was done in those days, separated to keep the story intact. There was no question the smaller piece with a set of three millworker photos should not be separated to keep the story intact.”

Field offered her thoughts on the weavings. Basically, these skilled weavings for the 1894 French International Expo, said Desgroseilliers.

The Expo was held in the city of Lyon, France and was visited by 3.8 million people. The Continental Mill was built during the Civil War. It is located near the Androscoggin River and the “Little Canada” section of Lewiston, and attracted French-Canadians to its labor force.

A textile historian and author, Jacqueline Field offered her thoughts on the weavings. Field explained that a Jacquard loom is a “punch-card controlled loom, a precursor to computers in which pixels are either on or off.”

The larger of the two weavings has the Continental Mill dominantly displayed in the center. The lower corners are filled with vignettes popular at that time: the American minuteman and a farmer. It was a salute to the American spirit of independence. The smaller weaving shows a commemorative motif with a banner stating, “Ecole Municipale to tissue, 1884” (Municipal School of Fabric, 1884).

Jacqueline Field, Rachel Desgroseilliers, and Emma Sieh examine the weavings made specifically for the 1894 French Expo, recently acquired by the museum.

### Educational tours given in the first quarter of 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>School/Tour Group</th>
<th>Purpose/Needs</th>
<th># Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-Jan</td>
<td>1:30-2:30</td>
<td>Bates College French Class</td>
<td>Tour the Beau-Frog exhibit</td>
<td>15 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Jan</td>
<td>2:30-4:00</td>
<td>State - Educate Maine</td>
<td>Learn about area and Museum</td>
<td>26 teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-Jan</td>
<td>1:00-4:00</td>
<td>Edward Little High School</td>
<td>Kids As Curators Exhibit installation</td>
<td>35 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-Jan</td>
<td>5:00-8:00</td>
<td>Edward Little High School</td>
<td>Kids As Curators Exhibit Opening</td>
<td>65 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-Jan</td>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Gray/New Gloucester</td>
<td>Visit/Tour (1 hour)</td>
<td>40 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Feb</td>
<td>9:15-10:00</td>
<td>McMahon Elementary School</td>
<td>Kids as Curators, tour exhibits, and immigration activity</td>
<td>40 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Feb</td>
<td>11:15 -noon</td>
<td>McMahon Elementary School</td>
<td>Kids as Curators, tour exhibits, and immigration activity</td>
<td>60 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Feb</td>
<td>9:40-10:30; 10:35-11:30 Baxter</td>
<td>Longley Pilot School</td>
<td>Repurpose of mills, future of organization, revitalization of downtowns</td>
<td>11 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Feb</td>
<td>1:25-2:15</td>
<td>Bates College</td>
<td>Museum Tour</td>
<td>13 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-Feb</td>
<td>noon-1:00</td>
<td>Bates College</td>
<td>People &amp; Place and How They Identify with Place</td>
<td>15 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Feb</td>
<td>9:00-noon</td>
<td>Lewiston Middle School Olympic Team</td>
<td>1/2 at Islamic Center, 1/2 at Museum then switch groups</td>
<td>130 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-Feb</td>
<td>noon-1:30</td>
<td>Acadia Academy</td>
<td>3rd graders - Tour</td>
<td>34 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Feb</td>
<td>8:30-noon</td>
<td>Lewiston Middle School Olympic Team</td>
<td>Tour &amp; activity. Immigration.</td>
<td>134 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Feb</td>
<td>9:00-11:00</td>
<td>McMahon Elementary</td>
<td>Kids as Curators Installation</td>
<td>100 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Feb</td>
<td>9:15-11:00</td>
<td>Martel School</td>
<td>3rd graders</td>
<td>38 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Feb</td>
<td>9:30-7:30</td>
<td>McMahon Elementary</td>
<td>Exhibit Opening</td>
<td>80+ attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Mar</td>
<td>9:00-3:00</td>
<td>National History Day-Regional Competition</td>
<td>Hosted student exhibits &amp; documentaries</td>
<td>400 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-Mar</td>
<td>9:30-noon</td>
<td>Longley Pilot School</td>
<td>Repurpose of mills, future of organization, revitalization of downtowns</td>
<td>12 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Mar</td>
<td>10:00-noon</td>
<td>Colby College</td>
<td>History tour</td>
<td>10 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Apr</td>
<td>9:00-11:00</td>
<td>Lincoln Academy-Newcastle</td>
<td>History tour-learning about Lewiston/Auburn</td>
<td>20 students - international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Apr</td>
<td>1:00-3:00</td>
<td>Osher Library-Portland</td>
<td>Speak about L/A &amp; Museum</td>
<td>32 Senior Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Apr</td>
<td>11:00-12:30</td>
<td>USM/UA - Museum Course</td>
<td>Tour &amp; Behind the Scenes of Collections/Curation</td>
<td>16 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-Apr</td>
<td>7:00-8:00</td>
<td>Amer. Asso. of University Women</td>
<td>Brunswick Library-About L/A &amp; Museum L-A</td>
<td>32 Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Apr</td>
<td>8:30-9:30</td>
<td>AARP Meeting</td>
<td>Lewiston-About L-A &amp; Museum</td>
<td>31 Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13 - June 1, 8 sessions weekly</td>
<td>10:30-12:30</td>
<td>Senior Poetry Workshop</td>
<td>Teach seniors to write and recite poetry with artist Martin Steingesser</td>
<td>10 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students take over the galleries at Museum L-A!

Museum L-A’s Kids as Curators program is a long-standing educational opportunity in which classes of students from Lewiston and Auburn are invited to research, design, curate, and install an exhibit in a real museum gallery! This year, the Museum has pushed the limits of this program further than we ever have before. Typically, only one group of students is chosen to do a project each year. Because of increased demand in the first few months of 2019, Museum L-A has installed three student-curated exhibits – each with their own twist!

Here are some of the highlights:

• “Nights at the PAL Hop: How Music Can Change History” January 2019 – In the fall of 2018, Museum L-A was approached by a teacher from Edward Little High School to have her students participate in the Kids as Curators program. She wanted to combine her social studies class with one of the music classes to create an exhibit with a live musical performance – something that had not yet been done with this program. Her students researched the PAL Hop, a local music hall tradition in Lewiston, to create the exhibit elements and the student musicians were tasked to learn popular songs from that era of history to perform during the opening reception. The opening was attended by the public and many former musicians were able to meet with these aspiring high school players and give them tips and tricks on making this a career.

• “Mapping our Personal Histories” February 2019 – Typically, Museum L-A works with students in middle and high school to create exhibits for this program. This time, fourth graders from McMahon Elementary took the exhibit gallery by storm to create an exhibit about immigration and their family’s migration history. These young students were asked to interview a family member to learn about where they came from and create a likeness of them using wooden spoons that would be placed on a continental map. This was the youngest group of students that have ever been involved in our Kids as Curators program and they were thrilled to be able to share their experience and their project with their friends and family. When this project was taken out of the museum gallery, the exhibit was recreated in the halls of McMahon Elementary.

• “Auburn Students: Problem Solvers of Tomorrow” May 2019 – Diana Carson, a veteran of our Kids as Curators program, is back with 90 seventh graders from Auburn Middle School to install an exhibit at Museum L-A. Inspired by Robert Shetterly from Americans Who Tell the Truth, Diana asked her students to study problems that they can identify in their lives, their communities, and the larger world. Students were tasked to research tough topics such as suicide, global warming, vandalism, and over fishing and then create a work of art based on that topic. These pieces of art are installed on the exterior walls of the museum’s permanent exhibit space and can be seen until mid-June. The exhibit is part of Auburn’s 150th Sesquicentennial Celebration. The evening was a huge success as 132 people learned from student curators as they enjoyed snacks prepared by the students.

What happens when teachers use the museum as a classroom?

Unique learning opportunities are built into our education programs! Call us at 207-333-3881 for more information!
Franco-American Day at the State House was held May 16, 2019 in Augusta, Maine. The first Franco-American Day was observed in the State Capitol on Wednesday, May 6, 2002. On Franco-American Day, legislative proceedings are conducted in both French and English and inductees to the Franco-American Hall of Fame are recognized during ceremonies in celebration of Franco-American cuisine, music, history and culture.

The Hall of Flags color guard ceremony was performed by the Franco-American Veterans, Post 31 of Lewiston. These veterans, ages from 87 to 93, as seen in the photo, displayed a dignity to the ceremony worthy of praise. Color Guard members honor those who serve currently and those veterans who helped keep the United States and its people free and protected.

Various dignitaries from France, Canada and the Province of Quebec were present. The recognition of inductees to the Franco-American Hall of Fame included friends of Museum L-A: Dolard Gendron; and inducted posthumously were Armand E. Cote and Priscilla Gendron. Dolard Gendron accepted the award for his late wife Priscilla, and Dan Cote accepted the award for his late father Armand.

State Rep. Margaret Craven, D-Lewiston, welcomed the family of Armand E. Cote to the State House May 16 for Franco-American Day. The family was greeted by the entire Legislature, and Cote, of Lisbon Falls, who died in January at age 89, was inducted posthumously into the Franco-American Hall of Fame. Cote was founder of Cote Crane.

Dolard Gendron and son George walking as Dolard gives the "thumbs up" sign. State Rep. Margaret Craven, D-Lewiston, adjusting the image of Priscilla Gendron on Dolard’s lapel with his son George looking on.

Veterans from Franco Post 31 of Lewiston perform the color guard ceremony. From left, Cecile Burgoyne, 93, Bert Dutil, 87, Normand Berube, 79, and Maurice Fournier, 87.
Quebec intern provides great service to L-A community and beyond with trail project

Catherine Picard, from Quebec, is an intern at Museum L-A who took on the Franco Trail L-A project with the support of Lojiq, an organization that promotes partnerships between Quebec and other countries.

Franco Trail L-A includes a paper map, a website, and a smartphone app that can be used for taking self-guided walking tours with at least 18 attractions featuring French heritage and local history.

At a press conference to launch Franco Trail L-A, Picard explained that the trail celebrates the French heritage of Lewiston and Auburn. “Franco Trail L-A is a tourist tool to plan your schedule,” said Picard. “All attractions and businesses are grouped in one convenient tool: Franco Trail L-A. There are multiple ways of using this tool.”

Picard orchestrated a successful bus tour touted as a “test run” in which 27 people participated. The trolley bus traveling on Lisbon Street brought curious people to come onto the sidewalks to take pictures as the tourist-filled bus drove to Main Street. Other organizations and businesses working with Museum L-A on their tourism tool include Sts. Peter and Paul Basilica, Gendron Franco Center, Franco-American Collection at USM-LA, the cities of Auburn and Lewiston, the LA Metro Chamber, NorthEast Charter & Tour, and many local hotels and restaurants.

The tour began at the Franco-American Collection at USM-LA, with an introduction of the major themes of the tour. One of the highlights of the tour was the Saints Peter and Paul Basilica on Ash Street. According to tour participants, seeing behind the scenes inside the sacristy and learning more about the life of the Dominicans felt like being on a VIP tour.

Camden Martin, visitor services coordinator at the museum, guided the group through a downtown visit of Lewiston-Auburn touching upon major Franco-American heritage landmarks, such as Dr. Louis Martel’s house, Le Messager, Wallace school, Healy Asylum, Little Canada, Garcelon House, and other important locations.

Other stops on the bus tour included lunch at The Village Inn in Auburn, a walk across the Androscoggin River on a footbridge, a tour of local brewer Baxter Beer, and a tour of the museum. The evening finished with a tour, dinner and musical show at Gendron Franco Center.

“The test run having been a success is great since we will be looking to use it as a tourism tool in the future,” said Rachel Desgrossielliers, executive director at the museum. “Museum L-A has received visitors from 44 states and 12 countries so now our community will have a product to offer bus tour operators and other businesses in the area can benefit from all the people interested in coming to learn about our community.”

Franco Trail L-A is a foundation on which to build and add other features. Already the museum has received inquiries about scheduling future tours.

For more information see www.francotrailla.com.
Last fall, Museum L-A was chosen as one of 20 museums across the country to be awarded grant funding to produce arts workshops for seniors through a program called Seeding Vitality Arts in Museums. The sponsoring organization feels that there is an urgent need to create programming for older adults that will promote a healthy change in societal attitudes toward aging, thus “Creative Aging.”

Museum staff spent the winter months preparing their first program and were excited to announce the start of “Seeing with the Heart’s Ear” in April. This free, 8-week poetry workshop for people over the age of 50 was led by guest teaching artist Martin Steingesser. Martin was Portland, Maine’s first Poet Laureate from 2007-09 and is an author of three books of poems, a celebrated performance poet, and talented teacher of poetry workshops for learners of all ages.

Eleven lucky participants spent two hours every Saturday morning at the museum with Martin and were encouraged to learn new writing tools to nurture stronger, clearer, and more expressive writing and poetry. At the end of the program, Museum L-A will host a public poetry reading event from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Saturday, June 8, to celebrate the creative work that these poets were able to accomplish over their eight weeks in the program.

Museum staff have begun planning the next free session for this fall, an eight-week paper sculpture workshop for participants over the age of 50. Karen Brooks, a local teaching artist, will guide a group of new artists to create 3-D masterpieces using paper, glue, and a blade. The museum will be hosting a free workshop in the spring of 2020, too.

Many people are familiar with Bates bedspreads, but few know about all the other textiles Bates Manufacturing Company produced. From research in company records and promotional materials, author Jacqueline Field tells the story of an amazing variety of Bates fabrics, how they were used, and how they were marketed. Her book being written with and for Museum L-A, is titled, “Textiles and Designs 1930-1990 from the Bates Mills.”

Field is a textile and dress historian. After a long college career teaching textile subjects, she now devotes most of her time to researching and writing about textiles.

Field, for the first time, showcases the all-encompassing world of colorful jacquard and screen-printed designs found in Bates famous bedspreads, drapery, household goods, and fashion fabrics, placing them within the mid-century ethos of marketing, modernity, consumerism, and fashion’s growing influence on interior décor.

Without revealing too much ahead of the book’s publication, Field shares a teaser about a story she unearthed in the Bates Company records “A Bates bedspread and the battleship U.S.S. Missouri.” The story tells of the “Bates Cabin in the Pines” design spread, the only “civilian” bedspread onboard the Missouri. In 1944, the bedspread sailed with the ship into the thick of battle in the Pacific and, eventually, in 1946 found its way back to Bates mill. How did this come about? How did it survive? What adventures did it have in the Pacific? Who was the purchaser? The answers are all in her new book.

Many museum walls talk.
Walls smell.
Walls even hear.

These museum walls hear voices
and the stories behind the stories.

These museum walls speak of
creativity pride fatigue friendship community pain oppression and tears.

These museum walls hold the spirits of thousands of women and men who walked in that door every day - every day at dawn.

By Marguerite Stapleton 4/13/2019
Welcome to new hires at the museum

Camden Martin is the new guest services and volunteer coordinator. He is originally from the Lewiston-Auburn area. Having spent most of his life in the area he is excited to be working at the museum as a way to honor his past ancestors and to learn more about and to give back to his community.

Camden has had a unique educational and career background; he finished his last two years of high school in the south of France where he became fluent in French. Since then he has worked for several years in customer service in both French and English. Afterward, he continued with his higher education in Quebec, where he got his degree in environmental protection. Camden has acquired a few other languages that he hopes to practice with visitors at the museum, such as Spanish and Arabic. “Camden’s enthusiasm for the community makes him a perfect fit to develop a new approach to visitor services and guidance for our great group of volunteers. He will also continue work on developing tourism for the museum and community,” said Jenny Martin.

She has volunteered as historian, grant writer, fundraiser and publicist for the Woman’s Literary Union of Androscoggin and also as tour guide at the historic Foss Mansion. Other boards she volunteered at include University of Southern Maine Alumni and L/A Arts. She has a bachelor’s degree in the Arts & Humanities from USM LAC. “With her education in the arts and humanities, and her extensive volunteering in history organizations, Denise will be able to lead us in the development of new programs and education activities for all age levels,” said Rachel.

Museum’s internship program sees growth

Through grant funding, private donations, and partnerships with the Harward Center, Museum L-A was able to offer four paid internships to Bates College students in the spring semester of 2019. Student internships are an opportunity for the museum to work closely with talented students on specific projects and teach them how museums and other non-profit organizations function.

The work produced during the course of these internships is always astounding and the museum benefits greatly from these partnerships. Many of these students are hoping to pursue a career in the museum and archives field after they graduate from Bates College and this internship is their first step in earning some real-world experience in their chosen field or they use it to realize other professional interests.

It is not always easy to get funding to compensate student internships, but Museum L-A is hoping to continue a paid internship program with grant funding and private donor support.

Meet our Bates College spring interns:

- **Samuel Melcher** was chosen as an education intern and put in 100 hours of work developing new lesson plans and programs for Museum L-A’s Education Department for the Oral History Honor / Memory Cards of former workers. Following up on previous work done by Bates students, he is developing a program to utilize a beginning sample of the card so while visiting each visitor will choose a card and honor/remember the person they have chosen with information about each worker.

- **Cameron Huftalen** spent 100 hours inventorying over 200 documents in the museum’s Archival Collection. She was specifically focused on creating a catalog of all of the publications that the Bates Manufacturing Company produced over its 150 years and reorganizing the collection so that staff and researchers would be better able to use this collection. Cameron was also able to choose one of Museum L-A’s Objects of the Month for the month of April!

- **Allison Cormier** originally started her work with the museum collections as an intern in May 2018 when she produced a project outline for the digital preservation of our archival materials. Once her first internship was over, she continued working with the Collections Department as a volunteer. With funding from a private donor, we were able to offer her another paid internship to continue her projects organizing and inventorying our historic photograph collections and Museum L-A business archives.

- **Jenny Martin** came to the museum in May to work in the Collections Department as part of the START program through Bates College’s Harward Center. She was tasked to create a program and procedural manual to help the museum formally restart its active collection of oral histories in our local community with a focus toward business histories and developing an Oral History Repository in the new museum.
DONATE NOW  ... No gift is too small!
We make every penny count

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.

Your gift matters.
Museum L-A relies on the donations from individuals and businesses to continue its mission.

A gift of any size will help us to continue providing outstanding educational programs for people of all ages. Our exhibits are second to none—and your donation helps us create truly unique experiences for everyone. We are all about fun, learning and inspiring others.

Consider making a tax-deductible gift at any time throughout the year to support our mission as we instill pride in who we are—strong, proud, hard working, and like our ancestors, ready to say “yes, we can!”

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.