In this issue of the Shelburne Museum newsletter we turn the spotlight back on you, our Members and donors. We enumerate your stalwart support and generosity in our annual list of gifts. We highlight a remarkable donation of an Alfred Jacob Miller painting from Member Teri Perry, and we thank three exemplary Members whose uplifting expressions of creativity and kindness gave us a reason to smile in a difficult year like no other.

Two of the Members we highlight announced themselves with an air of mystery. Last fall post cards began showing up in our mailbox. These were charming hand-drawn cards with notes written by children expressing their gratitude for the Museum. It was truly a mystery, until the instigator was revealed, longtime friend of the Museum and educator Beth Coleman, who was having her students write to us after their virtual classroom visits to our website!

Mystery becomes him, might be a way to describe the second Member in the spotlight, Alex Nalbach. Alex penned *Thrilled to Death*, a delightfully thrilling and perfectly produced murder mystery theater adapted for Zoom for Members of our Barnstormers. And then he did it twice more—for our staff and guides and as an auction item in our holiday online auction.

There was no mystery involved in Margaret Chicchetti’s many acts of kindness on the Museum’s behalf this summer. When the Museum opened under COVID-19 restrictions, Margaret was right there “front of house” with what could have been an onerous task—asking visitors if they met quarantine guidelines and getting them to complete contact tracing forms. Margaret’s combination of calm, cheerfulness, and orderliness put our visitors at ease and welcomed them in unprecedented circumstances. I will forever be grateful to Margaret for her good-natured poise last summer.

Museum Member Teri Perry surprised us with a lovely gift at the end of 2020, an Alfred Jacob Miller (American, 1810–74) painting, *Departure of the Caravan at Sunrise*. Best known for his depictions of the American West and the trappers, fur traders, and Native Americans who populated the western frontier, this painting complements works in the Museum collection by Edward Hicks, Charles Deas, Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, Carl Rungius, and Ogden Pleissner.

It goes without saying that this past year with the challenges of a global pandemic has been difficult for each of us individually and for the institution as a whole. It has also reminded us of the deep roots the Museum has in the community that were evident in a multitude of ways this past year, as illustrated by the examples set by our Members in these and so many other ways. Thank you for supporting Shelburne Museum. We look forward to seeing you here soon.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas Denenberg, PhD
Director

Dear Electra,
I am sending you the post card as part of your online art show. I enjoyed my digital art museum experience of Shelburne Museum. I have a cat and kittens reminded me of me. Thank you.

- Lily

Dear Electra,
I visited Shelburne Museum last summer. I got inspired by the images of local animals. I made a postcard that I sent to Shelburne Museum.

- Angela

I loved seeing the cat mug in the digital exhibit. It made me happy. I think the old images and the descriptions I drew this because I have 3 cats.

- Anthony

(cover and right) Postcards sent by Beth Coleman’s students from the Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School after visiting Shelburne Museum’s virtual exhibitions.
Recently donated by friend of Shelburne Museum Teri Perry, Alfred Jacob Miller’s painting *Departure of the Caravan at Sunrise* provides a peek into a rough and tumble life of adventure on the plains of North America.

Born in Baltimore at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Alfred Jacob Miller’s name would eventually become synonymous with depictions of the trappers, fur traders, and Native Americans who populated America’s western frontier.

In the spring of 1837 Miller met William Drummond Stewart (1795–1871), a Scottish adventurer and former British military officer fascinated by North America’s western frontier. Stewart hired Miller to accompany him to the American Fur Company’s annual gathering in the Rocky Mountains known as “the rendezvous” with the aim of recording scenes from the journey through present-day Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, and Wyoming. The sketches that Miller created over the roughly five-week journey west provided valuable fodder for the artist once he returned to his studio in New Orleans, fueling a series of monumentally-scaled pictures for Murthly Castle, Stewart’s estate in Scotland, in addition to hundreds of additional works in watercolor and oil.

*Departure of the Caravan at Sunrise* was inspired by these travels with Stewart. With a bright sun rising in the east, the landscape is filled with opportunity and optimism as trappers and traders prepare to break camp. A long line of covered wagons known as “prairie schooners” extends across the canvas and draws attention to Stewart and his white horse at the center of the composition. (This horse appears numerous times in Miller’s pictures of the rendezvous, a nod toward Stewart’s important patronage.) Several groups of indigenous men, women, and children appear in the picture's foreground as they cook, load gear, and prepare for the day ahead. While the term Manifest Destiny would not be coined until 1845, burgeoning ideas about the potential of North America’s western frontier certainly fueled enthusiasm for the creation of works like this one. Given events like the Louisiana Purchase (1803) and the War of 1812 (1812–1815), artists like Miller may have perceived events like the rendezvous as part of a progression of Anglo-American expansion across the North American continent.

MARCH

VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS FOR SCHOOLS AND HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10–10:45 a.m. and 1:30–2:15 p.m., or by special appointment
March–April, 2021
Join Museum educator Mollie Davis for a virtual visit to the Museum’s General Store. Geared to 3rd grade and up; can be modified for younger learners. Email Mollie Davis to learn more at mdavis@shelburnemuseum.org

March 3, 6 p.m.
CURATORS IN CONVERSATION
Isabel Bishop: The Working Woman
Join Carolyn Bauer, Associate Curator, for Isabel Bishop: The Working Woman, exploring the incredible life and work of this extraordinary artist.

March 17, 6 p.m.
@SHELURNEMUSEUM
A Close Look at Alfred Jacob Miller’s Departure of the Caravan at Sunrise
Join Shelburne Museum Associate Curator Katie Wood Kirchhoff with Miller scholar Lisa Strong, Director of the Art and Museum Studies M.A. Program and Professor of the Practice at Georgetown University for a close look at an exciting new acquisition to Shelburne Museum’s collection—Departure of the Caravan at Sunrise by Alfred Jacob Miller.

March 23
TECHNIQUE
This installation of a new Museum virtual program, Technique, explores the methods and materials of quilt artists. Quilter Hope Johnson will demonstrate piecing a hexagon flower—the pattern building block used in the Jane Morton Cook quilt, a textile featured in the current online exhibition Pattern & Purpose.

APRIL

VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS FOR SCHOOLS AND HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10–10:45 a.m. and 1:30–2:15 p.m., or by special appointment
March–April, 2021
Join Museum educator Mollie Davis for a virtual visit to the Museum’s General Store. Geared to 3rd grade and up; can be modified for younger learners. Email Mollie Davis to learn more at mdavis@shelburnemuseum.org

April 7, 6 p.m.
CURATORS IN CONVERSATION
Outdoor Sculpture
Join Director Tom Denenberg for a rich discussion on the impact and importance of outdoor art with noted scholars and practitioners.

April 13
IN THE GARDENS
Join Museum Landscape and Gardens Manager Jess Gallas for prepping and planting updates as she readies the grounds for 2021.

Isabel Bishop (American, 1902–1988)
Subway Reading (detail), c. 1950
Ink and paper
Collection of Shelburne Museum, Bequest of Edith C. Blum, 1977-6.11
April 22
WEBBY’S ART STUDIO
Webby’s Art Studio celebrates Earth Day by welcoming the birds back. Create a bird feeder, bring coloring pages to life, and more.

April 29, 6 p.m.
ONLINE EXHIBITION OPENING
Mary Cassatt’s Impressions: Assembling the Havemeyer Art Collection
Join Associate Curator Carolyn Bauer and renowned art historian Nancy Mowll Mathews to explore the life and work of American Impressionist Mary Cassatt and examine the close and creative relationship between Cassatt and the Havemeyer Family.

MAY

May 5, 6 p.m.
CURATORS IN CONVERSATION
Circus Photography
Senior Curator Kory Rogers talks with circus photographer Elliot Fenander about his career and work.

May 7
WEBBY’S ART STUDIO
Create a forever paper bouquet for someone special in this edition of Webby’s Art Studio.

May 11
IN THE GARDENS
Museum Landscape and Gardens Manager Jess Gallas provides updates on lilacs, apple blossoms, and spring garden plans.

May 20, 6 p.m.
ONLINE EXHIBITION OPENING
Revisiting America: The Prints of Currier & Ives
Join us for an exhibition opening preview with Associate Curator Katie Wood Kirchhoff to explore how the largest printmaking company in nineteenth-century America visualized the nation’s social, political, and industrial fabric.
Delivering the Museum through digital programming

The Museum’s commitment to digital programming means consistent new content refreshing the pages of ShelburneMuseum.org. Twenty-two webinars, ranging from conversations with the curators to online exhibition previews, are now available to view anytime, anywhere. Hear from the curators, learn from artists, and get in depth context on objects from the permanent collection.

Sign up for the Museum e-newsletter to be the first to know about 2021 digital programs, virtual field trips, and Member benefits!
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SHELBURNE MUSEUM!

Each year we share with you our list of contributors as a way to highlight the generosity of the many individuals and organizations without which Shelburne Museum would not continue to thrive and serve the community.

Gifts to the Museum positively impact all facets of our operations, from thought-provoking exhibitions and lifelong learning for all ages to care of our renowned collection and ongoing maintenance of our bucolic grounds and gardens.

Thank you to all of our donors for their generosity and commitment to keeping Shelburne Museum a vibrant and relevant cultural resource for Vermont and beyond.

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whom she clearly instilled her passion for engaging with art.

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This past fall, the Museum received illustrated postcards inspired by

Building. As a University of Vermont student, she was an intern here. Always

green room among the paintings in the Electra Havemeyer Webb Memorial

Vermont, the Museum has consistently been a meaningful part of her life.

evolved with each new milestone. A curious learner growing up in Alburg Springs,

Beth Coleman's lifelong relationship with Shelburne Museum has grown and

MEMBER PROFILE | BETH COLEMAN

Beth Coleman's lifelong relationship with Shelburne Museum has grown and evolved with each new milestone. A curious learner growing up in Alburg Springs, Vermont, the Museum has consistently been a meaningful part of her life. She recalls painting her childhood room green after imagining lounging in the green room among the paintings in the Electra Havemeyer Webb Memorial Building. As a University of Vermont student, she was an intern here. Always discovering new ways to connect, she now shares her devotion to Shelburne with her middle school art students.

This past fall, the Museum received illustrated postcards inspired by online exhibitions on the Museum website. At first the source of the cards was a mystery, but it turned out to be Beth's students, in whom she clearly instilled her passion for engaging with art.
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MEMBER PROFILE | ALEX NALBACH

You might say Alex Nalbach was “thrilled to death” to share his love for a good mystery mixed with live theater. When in-person events were not possible this past year, Nalbach came up with an idea for a virtual murder mystery, Thrilled to Death featured professional actors who led participants (on Zoom) through a virtual version of the Museum’s Brick House to solve a fictional mystery.

Nalbach’s production was first offered as an exclusive Barnstormers membership event. It proved so popular he graciously hosted two more including a version sold to six teams at the holiday auction that drew bidders from across the country. He and his husband Marc Vincent, both retired university professors, are active in the Museum and recognize the special place it holds in the community.

“Supporters of the Museum are interested in that kind of intersection of history and the arts and an interesting location. Once you get people who are that creative in both supporting and running an institution like this, then you get open-mindedness about new kinds of ways to use a museum space, including as a dramatic background,” Nalbach said.
Margaret Cicchetti has been a Museum Member for a decade. She got involved with the Museum five years ago first as a volunteer greeter and then on the staff of the Museum Store. You’d be hard pressed to find a more cheerful presence at “front of house.”

Her skill set was fully employed this summer when the Museum opened to the public under health and safety restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic. She was stationed outside the store in a tent greeting visitors, asking them where they had travelled from and having them fill out contact tracing forms. In some cases visitors were turned away if they hadn’t met state requirements.

It wasn’t always easy, but Margaret said she felt that a cheerful greeting was the best way to get people to share their information. With few exceptions, people were gracious and appreciative of the chance to get outdoors and enjoy the grounds, gardens, and galleries at the Museum.
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Mary Cassatt’s Impressions: Assembling the Havemeyer Art Collection

Mary Cassatt’s Impressions: Assembling the Havemeyer Art Collection explores the longstanding friendship between celebrated Impressionist artist Mary Cassatt and H.O. and Louisine Havemeyer, parents of Shelburne Museum founder Electra Havemeyer Webb and influential collectors who brought the first Impressionist works to America. Cassatt was instrumental in guiding them to amass one of the world’s greatest art collections that became integral to The Metropolitan Museum of Art collection in New York City. This online exhibition highlights archival anecdotes surrounding the Impressionist paintings, drawings, and sculptures the Havemeyers collected based on Cassatt’s advice that are now part of Shelburne Museum’s collection. Online April 29.