

PRIMITIVE PIECES

The Newsletter of The Museum of Primitive Art and Culture

1058 Kingstown Road, Room 5
Peace Dale, R.I. 02879 ♦ (401) 783-5711
www.primitiveartmuseum.org

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Fall 2010

Lots of “treasures” at Trash or Treasure event

A watercolor by Massachusetts artist John Whorf, appraised at \$15,000 to \$18,000, was one of the highlights of our “Trash or Treasure” fund-raiser at the Dunes Club on Sunday, September 19th.



Stuart appraises Susan McNulty's music box.

Stuart Whitehurst of Skinner, Inc. of Boston, one of the nation's premier auction houses, returned for his third appearance as appraiser. An associate member of the International Society of Appraisers, Stuart is a regular on a popular PBS television show.

As in past years, Stuart found several “treasures” and a few items with more sentimental value than monetary value.

He appraised Judy and Norm



Curator Sarah P. Turnbaugh and husband Bill.

Lagerstrom's Roseville art pottery vase from the 1920s at about \$550. Lisa Fiore's clear pressed glass fruit bowl on a pedestal from the 1920s, a childhood gift from Sallie Stedman Hoyle, was appraised at about \$200—if it had been colored, Stuart said, it would have been worth \$3,000 to \$4,000.



Guests await their appraisals.

Photographs by Marylou Butler

Stuart appraised a Stieff teddy bear made about 1915 or 1920 at \$2,000. Its owner, Mary Broome, said her sister sent the bear from Germany as a gift for her son about sixty years ago.



Becki Donnell's vase is appraised.

Susan McNulty's music box was appraised at \$3,000 to \$4,000, and Jody O'Donnell's in-laws' century-old mirror was appraised at \$450 to \$500.

A Thomas Hart Benton lithograph was worth between \$3,000 to \$4,000. Trish Clode's Tiffany sterling silver powder jar was worth about \$250, and Becki Donnell's 1940s-vintage vase was valued at only \$40 to \$50 (“but I had a great time,” she said).

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Our Fall Lecture Series Begins on Thursday, October 14th

Thursday, October 14th

Chinese Martial Arts



According to legend, Chinese martial arts originated more than four thousand years ago. Also referred to by the Mandarin Chinese term “wushu,” and popularly known in this country as kung fu or gongfu, Chinese martial arts include a variety of combat styles that have developed over centuries.

Gongfu is a compound of two words that literally mean “human achievement” and refers to any individual accomplishment or skill cultivated through hard work. Tai chi chuan, known in this country as tai chi — literally meaning “supreme ultimate fist”— is a Chinese martial art popularly practiced for its health benefits. It dates from at least the 12th century.

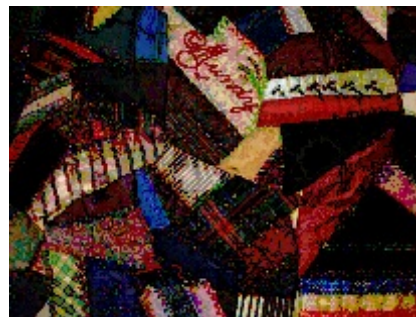
Jim Leach, a former Marine, began his martial arts training twenty years ago. He has won seven gold medals in United States-level competitions and eight gold medals in international-level competitions, including the United World Kung Fu Wushu Championships. Jim owns Imperial Martial Arts in Pawcatuck, where instruction is offered for adults and children in a wide variety of Chinese martial arts, including traditional Yang-style Tai Chi. On Thursday, October 14, Jim will give us a brief history lesson in Chinese martial arts and we'll watch a demonstration.

Thursday, October 28th

Let's Talk About Quilts

What do you think of when you hear the word “quilt”? On Thursday, October 28th, we'll explore the ways in which quilts have become part of American culture.

Using images of antique quilts and quilted objects, Susan J. Jerome, collections manager of URI's historic textile and costume collection, will talk about how the manufacture of cheap printed cotton fabrics and synthetic dyes influenced the production of quilts—and the use of women's time—in the 19th Century. We'll also learn how to care for and store textile heirlooms. You are invited to bring a quilt or a quilted object.



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

AMAZING OWLS

Have you ever met an owl?

Owls live all around us, but because they are nocturnal, few of us have ever seen one.

John and Vivian Maxson, wildlife rehabilitators at the Born to be Wild Nature Center in Bradford, have cared for many of Rhode Island's injured and orphaned owls. On Thursday, December 2,

they'll tell us some stories about these amazing birds and introduce us to two educational owls, an impressive Great Horned Owl and a small but fierce Eastern Screech Owl. The program is open to children as well as adults, and cameras are welcome.



Each program begins at 7 p.m. in the Museum Gallery on the second floor of the Peace Dale Office Building, 1058 Kingstown Road, across from the Peace Dale Library. Refreshments will be served. Admission is free for Museum members; a donation by non-members is requested.

The Museum of Primitive Art and Culture

1058 Kingstown Road, Suite 5 • Peace Dale, Rhode Island 02879 • (401) 783-5711

Beth Hogan, Museum Administrator

Louise Weaver, Administrative Assistant

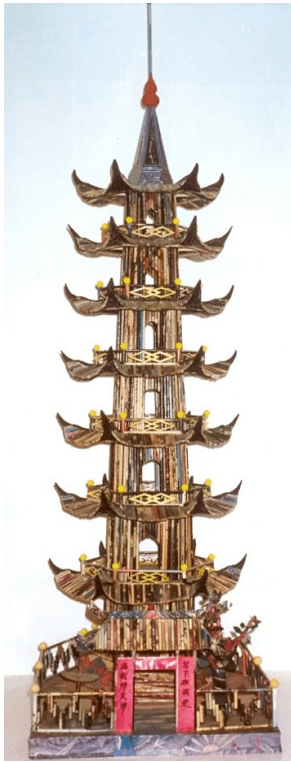
Mary Brown, Educator • Marjorie Burston, Grants Administrator

The Museum Gallery is open Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and by appointment.

Currently on display in the Museum Gallery

The 'Thank You' Pagoda

On June 6, 1993, a freighter called the Golden Venture went aground off the coast of New York. The Golden Venture was carrying about 300 illegal immigrants from China, who were promptly incarcerated. As the Chinese awaited hearings to determine whether they would be deported or granted amnesty, a group of local citizens (who called their initiative the "Golden Venture") tried to help the Chinese in as many ways as they could. One way was to provide some basic supplies for artwork.



To pass the time, the prisoners fashioned objects from scrap paper and glue, including eagles, cranes, dragons, and pagodas. Using blunt-nosed children's scissors, Elmer's glue, and colored magazine pages cut into various lengths, they tightly rolled up the strips and then glued the rolls together to make the pagodas. The support group auctioned the art to raise money for the prisoners to use for personal supplies while in jail and with the hope that it would provide them with something to live on when they were freed. After about four years, some were granted amnesty. The support group helped to place these people. Many in the group, however, were sent back to China. Toward the end of his

term, President Clinton granted amnesty to the remaining several dozen still incarcerated.

This pagoda, which is 52 inches high, is the tallest object they fashioned. In the Buddhist religion, one who experiences good luck may give thanks with a seven-story "thank you" tower. The Chinese artist who created this remarkable piece originally presented it to one of our museum members who had been part of the support group. In turn, he donated it to our museum in 2003.

The lettering on the pagoda gate, loosely translated, reads:

Running towards where, where,

Write down the blood and tears of history,

A migrating person carries full dreams.

— Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh

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More than sixty guests enjoyed cocktails while watching as their treasures were appraised. A buffet supper followed.



Stuart examines the Stieff teddy bear.

The net proceeds from the evening total about \$3,100. All of it will go toward the Museum's operating budget.

National attention!

In a column called "Tidbits," the August 22 issue of *American Profile* magazine included a one-paragraph item from Rhode Island about the Museum. It said:

The Museum of Primitive Art and Culture in Peace Dale, a village in South Kingstown (pop. 27,921), preserves, collects and exhibits objects from pre-industrial societies around the world. The oldest item is a hominid chopping tool from East Africa, believed to be some 2 million years old.

American Profile magazine is distributed as a newspaper insert in Sunday newspapers including the *Westerly Sun*.

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Return Service Requested



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Peace Dale Office Building and Peace Dale Library