

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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Northeast Woodlands Indian basketry will be the focus of our May 28 program

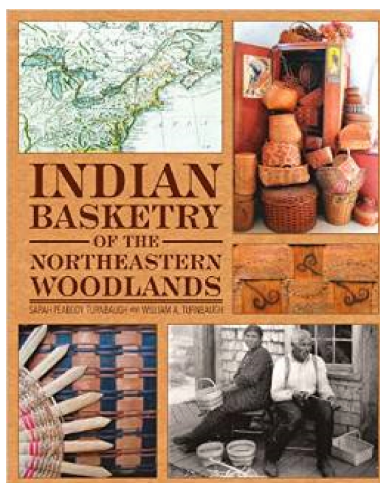
For the past thirty years, Bill Turnbaugh and Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh have devoted much of their professional energy--- and much of their personal time--- to the study of Native American crafts, principally basketry.

Their books, beginning with the classic *Indian Baskets*, published in 1986, have become essential texts for weavers, curators, researchers, students, and collectors.

Bill, an anthropology professor at the University of Rhode Island until his retirement, and Sarah, director and curator for the Museum of Primitive Art and Culture during the same period, have become nationally-recognized experts in this area of Native American studies.

Their latest book, *Indian*

Basketry of the Northeastern Woodlands, was released on January 15.



On Thursday, May 28, as the third program in our Spring Lecture Series, Sarah will talk about this centuries-old craft that has played a key role in supporting many Native peoples through generations of turmoil and change.

Sarah will discuss Indian

woodsplint and sweetgrass baskets from the northeastern United States and eastern Canada, from practical "work" baskets made for domestic purposes to whimsical "fancy" baskets that appealed to Victorian tourists.

Sarah will point out some stylistic differences in examples from four distinct regions of the Northeast: Southern New England and Long Island; Northern New England and the Canadian Maritimes; Upper New York State; and the Great Lakes.

After the program, signed copies of the Turnbaughs' new book will be available for purchase in the museum shop. Museum members can buy the book at a discounted price.

The program will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 28 in the museum gallery.

Our Spring Lecture Series begins on Thursday, April 16

Thursday, April 16th

Immersed in Sound

Join us for a delightful and inspiring evening as Ruth Shilling continues to share with us the marvels and tremendous potential of sound. Last time Ruth visited, we learned about overtones and sound timbres. This time, you will be invited to participate in a series of experiences using both voice and various musical instruments. (No pressure—you can just listen, too!)

You are welcome to bring any instruments you may have, but you don't need to bring anything— just your ears and a sense of adventure. Be prepared to come away with a whole new appreciation for the power of sound and how you can use it.



Ruth Shilling, M.M., a professional musician as well as an experienced Egypt tour guide, has been a popular presenter in our previous lecture series. She has spoken on "Adventures in Sound," "Egyptian Temples & Pyramids," and "Egyptian Gods & Goddesses."

Thursday, May 7th

Nantucket Baskets

Any study of Nantucket baskets will lead you to the island off the coast of Cape Cod that gives these baskets their name. Besides being a special place to spend long, sunny, summer days, Nantucket Island has a rich history tied to literature, whaling and arts and crafts. Nantucket baskets also have a long history, one that begins with the island's first inhabitants, the Native Americans, and was influenced by the practical uses to which they were put.



Joe Gallichio and his wife Kathy were already collectors of Pueblo baskets when their curiosity about this maritime craft started. Over time, as they engaged with shopkeepers, scrimshaw artists and basket makers, their interest in the craft and its place in island history grew.

On May 7, Joe will cover the key periods of Nantucket basket making history and talk about several of the historically significant basket weavers, as well as the importance of whaling and lightships to the history of the craft.

Each program in our Spring Lecture Series begins at 7:00 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 appreciated.

The Museum of Primitive Art and Culture

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

www.primitiveartmuseum.org

Beth Hogan, Museum Administrator

Louise Weaver, Administrative Assistant

Mary Brown, Educator

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

From the Curator's Desk

By Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh

Spring will arrive soon, and we all will be able to be outdoors more often. Perhaps some of us may even throw around a plastic Frisbee disc a few times as the season arrives and the weather grows warmer. Those of us who toss Frisbees around know that a special flick of the wrist will send the disc flying away, with a trajectory that returns it to the sender's hand shortly thereafter.



Our Frisbees developed directly from an old tin pie plate, produced by the Frisbie Pie Company in

Bridgeport, Connecticut, from the 1870s to the 1950s. Neighborhood children tossed the empty pie plates around and yelled "Frisbie" so their playmates wouldn't get hit. The activity spread to Yale and other nearby college campuses, and the game was born. Wham-O, a California-based firm, began to market the flying disc commercially and changed the spelling to Frisbee to avoid trademark infringement.

But truly "nothing is new under the sun." Aboriginal people in Australia and other areas around the world have been using Frisbee-like wooden boomerangs for fun and for more serious purposes, like hunting, for many generations.

Our gallery exhibits two such boomerangs from Australia, plus a painted "abbot stick" of the boomerang type from southern Arizona. These objects served mostly as hunting tools. They were thrown with the inside curve toward the small game animal or bird. Upon contact, they effectively stunned or dispatched the little animal or bird, which was then prepared for dinner.

Perhaps in a lighter moment, Native children, while learning to use the boomerang sticks for hunting, reversed the tools and flicked their wrists just so, to enjoy their version of the game of "frisbee," too.

Volunteer needed for children's program

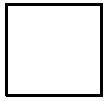
Mary Brown, who supervises our popular children's programs, is in need of a volunteer to lead the historic Peace Dale walk for third graders this spring. The tours are about an hour long, and teachers and chaperones come along to help out. If it rains, a virtual tour takes place indoors. This is tremendous fun for someone who enjoys working with children. If you're interested, please call Mary at (401) 338-4740.

Can you donate a vacuum cleaner (preferably new, with a HEPA filter) to the museum?

Our current one is quite old and worn out. If you can help out, please call Beth at 783-5711.



Museum of Primitive Art and Culture
1058 Kingstown Road, Room 5
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Return Service Requested

Sparky's Puppets

SPRING VACATION PROGRAM

Wednesday, April 22 at 10:30 A.M.

Celebrate Earth Day as Sparky's Puppets perform "Nature Tales" at the Museum of Primitive Art and Culture on Wednesday, April 22 at 10:30. Watch the grasshopper and the ant prepare for winter. Find out who's stronger, the sun or the wind. And see some "how and why" stories that people created long ago to explain some of nature's mysteries— why the spider is bald, why the turtle has a hard shell and why the sea is salty. This show is a lively medley of tales celebrating the world of nature.

Sparky's Puppets bring favorite children's stories to life with colorful hand puppets, lively humor and plenty of audience participation.