



The Friends of the Vermont State House

PROCEEDINGS

Fall 2004

Gaslight!

To say that Frank Boesel is fascinated by 19th century gaslighting is a serious understatement. For nearly 25 years, the Milwaukee entrepreneur has pursued the study of a mode of illumination that was in use for little more than 50 years during the last half of the 1800's. His love for old buildings and lighting systems began as a boy and was nurtured by his study of history at Amherst College. Coupled with his strong interest in science -- particularly chemistry -- these passions combined to create Experi-metals, Inc. on Greenfield Avenue in Milwaukee. The result was very lucky for the restoration of the Vermont State House.

"Frank Boesel is the only gaslight restorer in the country who truly understands the unique chemical recipes that Cornelius and Baker employed in their finishes," proclaims curator David Schütz. "His work is all about authenticity -- the bedrock of our restoration."

Boesel first visited the State House in the late 1980's as plans were being developed by architect John Mesick to restore



Greek Slave Desk Lamp

all the major public rooms in the State House. Boesel met with Mesick and Schütz to discuss the original chandeliers, sconces and lamps that had been installed in 1859. Boesel studied old photos of



Frank Boesel in his workshop.

State House interiors and suggested how to restore the extant fixtures. The State of Vermont has worked with Experi-metals, Inc. ever since, restoring the period lighting fixtures that are also works of art.

Important projects included the two Renaissance gasoliers in the Hall of Flags that Frank recognized as identical to those of a Nashville plantation house. He took molds from the Nashville fixture to cast new pieces for Vermont. Frank later supervised the restoration of our magnificent House chandelier, which was dismantled (and paid for by the State of Ohio) to take molds for Ohio's replication of their smaller fixtures. The happy result was the complete cleaning, relacquering, and re-electrification of our House chandelier in 1995.

Frank also acquired five original 1850's Cornelius and Baker gasoliers to refurbish for us. He says he is most proud of the two-arm sconces that illuminate the grand staircases. "I just love the way those turned out," he says.

Freedom and Unity

Now that the Vermont Historical Society has opened its new exhibit "Freedom and Unity: One Ideal, Many Stories," visitors to the State House may enjoy a double-header. Just a short walk from the Golden Dome, it is the largest exhibit the VHS has ever created and is well worth the visit. Jackie Calder, curator of the exhibition (pictured right), was the speaker at our spring Volunteer luncheon.

State House guides, who signed up for special tours last spring, may still have free entry. They find it broadens their knowledge on many Vermont topics, thereby enhancing their own tours.



Thanks to the cooperative efforts of Alice Merrill, School Tours Coordinator for the State House and Geraldine Brown, Museum Programs Coordinator at VHS, students will have the same opportunity to encounter this full range of Vermont's unique history.

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Judy Livingston joins Board



Judith M. Livingston was born in Melrose, Massachusetts and grew up in Connecticut, Hawaii and Washington, D.C. She moved to Vermont in 1974 with her husband and two children. Educated in both fine and commercial art at the University of Connecticut, Corcoran School of Art and the National Academy of Art, both in Washington, D.C., she pursued a career in graphic design. Since then, she has continued her education with courses in architectural preservation and restoration at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Boston Architectural Center.

Ms. Livingston became active in many cultural organizations in Manchester, serving on several boards and raising funds by organizing social events that have, over years, become annual traditions. Perhaps her most visible project is Hildene, the summer home of Robert Todd Lincoln, where she directed the 20-year restoration of the 1902 Georgian mansion, eventually serving as the President of the Board. She currently plays an interested, but less active, role as a Trustee Emerita. Other

current board seats include: Bank of Bennington; Dorset Theatre Festival; Northshire Civic Center; Ballet Manchester; and Burr and Burton Academy.

Since 1995 Ms. Livingston has represented Manchester in the Vermont, now about to enter her 6th term. She has been a member of the following standing House Committees: Judiciary, Vice-Chair of Ways and Means, and Appropriations. She also serves on House Rules, Information Technology, Vermont Film Commission, Committee for Higher Education Funding, and the Statehouse Technical Advisory Committee where she was active in the design process for a new State House addition.

Rep. Livingston has always loved the Vermont State House. She says, "Our State House is a beautifully restored example of Vermont's rich architectural inheritance and a true living museum to those of us who work here." We know she will bring a passionate knowledge and high level of productive energy to our board.

Director's Note

We have been struck by the incredible loyalty of our members and volunteers. This issue of the Proceedings is intended to honor both their loyalty and their hard work, without which the Friends could not have accomplished so many of our restoration or education goals

Our board has one new member this year: Representative Judy Livingston – and we are delighted to welcome her. Rep. Warren Kitzmiller returns to the board after a working hiatus as an honorary trustee. The officers are equally familiar. Jane Dale continues as chair; Charlotte MacLeay will be our new vice-chair; Charlene Rinker becomes secretary, and Teresa Randall will continue as treasurer. All of those who have served their two full terms have agreed to continue working as Honorary trustees.

During our first year on the web, at vtstatehouse.org, we were astonished that visitors read an average of over 4,000

pages each day. We also held a second successful reunion for former legislators. With the help of Volunteer Rosemary Fiddock we continue to work with House Clerk Donald Milne to find and keep track of former legislators. Our office has moved to the 2nd floor of 10 Baldwin – same space, but an easier climb!

Much of our time has been spent developing the Audio Tour script for recording and working to develop needed auxiliary materials that will be used in conjunction with the wand. Little did we realize how difficult it would be to settle on the exact wording for everything we feel ought to be said. We are all grateful for the patience and close cooperation of VPR and Tourmate, provider of our technology. It has taken longer than we initially planned, but we hope the result will justify the efforts of so many.

Pieces of restoration have been equally time-consuming. Our gift of a Cornelius

& Baker desk lamp for the Governor's Office has had to wait for the refurbishing and installation of the chandelier (see p.1). The valances commissioned by the Friends have also been more difficult to manufacture than anticipated. They, too, should be in place before the new legislative session.

We will participate in the orientation days for new legislators on November 18, 19, and 20. We are planning Farmers' Night for March 23, 2005 and – of course – our apparently indefatigable Tour Guides will be working with school groups all during the session. In the farther future, we are preparing to update *The Vermont State House: A History and Guide* to incorporate the restoration, and we hope to publish an affordable "souvenir" book of updated pictures.

Arthur joins us all in thanking you for your continued support.

Genie Robbins, director

Volunteer Trip to Historic Deerfield



Volunteers and the sun return from Old Deerfield tour.

On September 18, tour guides and gift shop volunteers boarded a bus for a trip to the historic village in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Although the weather was rainy, the intrepid volunteers thoroughly enjoyed seeing the early American homes. The interesting Deerfield guides provided information about the people who lived in the homes and their lives.

The lovely antique furniture was of special interest to the group. One special highlight was a visit to the Flynt Center exhibit about the Deerfield Raid of 1704. Free to stroll through at leisure, each volunteer was able to learn much about the

people involved and how the event changed their lives. It was especially interesting to encounter sometimes contradictory explanations from opposite points of view: French, Native Americans, and English. Upstairs, we found a fascinating storage display of yet more furniture, with computer access to all that was known about each piece – including forgeries! We all had our lunches in the ballroom of the visitors' center before splitting up to visit the museum store, the handsome Deerfield Inn, or re-visit the exhibition. Each fall's outing is the board's thank you for volunteer efforts.



Ballroom lunch!

Winter Schedule

Life does continue after the leaf-peepers depart. Already training has been scheduled for the school tours – which don't wait for the legislators to come back. That program will again be managed by Alice Merrill, with the help of David's new assistant Nicole. We are also planning to open the Gift Cart again and will need to schedule two volunteers – possibly only one day a week from February through the session from 11am to 2pm. There is still time, but if you already know that you are interested, call the Friends office at 828-0386 – especially if you live nearby and would be willing to be a last-minute substitute or a regular.

CURATORIAL RIGHT HAND



Nicole Wimble is pleased by new curatorial tasks

Although Nicole Wimble is new to the State Curator's office, she is a veteran of Vermont state government having served as Executive Assistant to both the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Information and Innovation. Fortunately for us, when Pauline Grossman left her new position as David Schütz's assistant, Nicole was delighted to accept David's offer to step in as his assistant. The rest is history in the making.

A native Vermonter who now lives in Waterbury with her husband and two children, Nicole's wealth of administrative and organizational skills complements David's vast knowledge of the State House. Her next step is to keep track of David as his

list of responsibilities continues to grow. In spite of her awesome assignment, Nicole insists, "I'm very happy for the opportunity to be working with David Schütz. It is a fascinating experience to learn more about the history of the Statehouse and be part of its continued restoration and care."

Nicole will also be working with Alice Merrill to coordinate tours and schools prior to State House field trips - which proliferate once the legislature's in session. Her technical skills, a.k.a. computer wizardry, will also enable Alice to track school tour schedules and tour contact information. Welcome aboard, Nicole!

Volunteers: Who? What? and Why?



A school tour with Ann Valiere.



The 'modest' Guide David Book.



At the spring luncheon for volunteers.

Who are our volunteers, those who lead tours for thousands of tourists and school children every year? Those who buy, stock, and sell in our Under-the-Dome gift shop? All of whom introduce Vermont, its history and products to so many visitors? They are as different as our state, but all share a love of history and an interest in people.

Talk to almost any of them, and you'll find that they were spotted – and recruited – by friends who could “see” them working in our State House, too. Or that they took a tour themselves and just knew that to be a guide or a gift shop worker would be fun and interesting. Both happened to Rose and Mario Lorenzini, who used to own the Country House restaurant in Barre. George Aiken sometimes ate there, and Anne Lovell, a Tour Guide, was another frequent patron.

When they decided to sell their restaurant, Anne suggested that they take a tour. They brought two young grandchildren, Jenna and Jessie. Jessie briefly went missing, only to be found happily luxuriating on a Cedar Creek settee, and they all met Speaker Obuchowski's assistant, who added “inside” tidbits to the visit. Once was not enough, and they promptly signed up for training. As Mario put it, “It was so

interesting and looked as though it would be fun to learn more.”

Once begun, it gets better and better. More than 15 years ago Mike Butler (officially Mary Alice) joined us, and now not only guides tours but also works in the gift shop. One of her favorite “people” incidents was the young lad whose parents left him alone in the shop while they took a tour. As he roamed around, fingering everything, Mike watched him with an eagle eye. She had noticed that one of the Champlaine chocolates had a nick in the foil and offered it to the bored child, explaining that it was free. “That's O.K.” replied the boy, whipping out two dollars. “I'm happy to pay for it.” Astonished, Mike refused the money and thanked him for his unnecessary generosity.

This is only David Book's second summer as a State House tour guide, but he has volunteered more hours than any other guide. He works during both the tourist season and leading school groups. Students come naturally to David, a retired school principal; so does volunteering. He regrets having to miss our annual meeting this year, but had signed up to “help clean up” after Florida's hurricanes even before our date was set. It was a tour taken as

well as a tour guide friend, Leslie Haines, that brought him to the State House. What keeps him is the fact that he loves people. He says “I'm astonished at the variety of different kinds of people who come here! I even ran into some people who knew my relatives back in Kentucky!” He is also gratified at sometimes being able to connect visitors with specific information that they hope to find: “One fellow on a tour was looking for an ancestor who fought at Cedar Creek. We discovered that he was actually identifiable in the painting.”

Just a couple of weeks ago, Irene Stotts found herself about to give a tour to a Vietnamese couple. Afraid that they might not understand her, she suggested a tour in French. The gentleman said “No, I would like an English tour.” As the couple was visiting the gift shop afterward, he proudly showed his brand new citizenship papers, and both described how they had immigrated and were effusive about the wonderful help they had received, and the job their new mastery of English led to on the UVM campus. They expressed great admiration for their State House, but most of all were thrilled by the freedom they have found here. It's all in a shift's work – but every day and every group is different.

Gaslight

Continued from page 1

Most recently, Frank has completely restored the Governor's Office chandelier, a piece that was replicated in 1984 but lacked many of the authentic details of the original. Frank discovered many of the missing details on a surviving fixture in the Governor's Office at the Boston State House. Last September, the State of Massachusetts

allowed Frank to make new castings of four pieces from their gasolier. The result, along with a Greek Slave gas lamp for the Governor's desk, will be installed in the Governor's Office before the legislative session begins. The Friends of the State House donated the desk lamp, which is connected to the chandelier as it would have been in the 19th century by means of the gas hose that now carries its electricity.

Frank's sole remaining project, the refinishing of the Senate chandelier, will begin this winter. It was the first object restored in 1981 but is missing a few pieces and its original bronze and gilt finish. This time Frank will borrow pieces from a gasolier at the Philadelphia Academy of Music to make molds for the Senate fixture.

Members & Volunteers for 15 years or more!

The fifty-four names (some duos) listed below have supported the Friends for fifteen years or more. That they, some 16% of our membership, have remained devoted to the restoration and our education program for almost 70% of our life is remarkable. Their support includes not only, or even always, funds but uncounted hours of training and work as tour guides, school guides, gift shop managers and staff, committees, and schedulers. The money has aided restoration and program while the labor has contributed immensely to all our education programs. Unfortunately, we don't have infallible pre-computer memories. Even many of those on this list relied on recollections of who recruited them, how long after a move or a retirement, or even the location of an office or decoration of a room. To anybody inadvertently missed, please let us know. To all, we and our thousands of visitors owe our gratitude.

Laura Adams
 The Robert Adsit Family
 Lola P. Aiken
 Hazel J. Anderson
 M/M Frank Babbott
 Polly & Franklin Billings
 Betsy Ann Bouton
 Sara Gear Boyd
 Mike Butler
 The Butsch Family
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 Ellen Tyrell
 Jacqueline C. Walker
 David Washburn
 Mary Wheeler
 Carol Wiley
 Arthur Williams
 Windham Foundation
 Maria Withey
 Barbara Wood
 Florence Jean Young



Some of the almost 90 former legislators who returned for an April reunion in the State House. Speaker Freed and President pro tem Welch led a lively discussion in the House well before a reception, where six former Speakers each delivered a short account of the most memorable moment during his tenure. (Yes! They were all men.)

**Friends of the Vermont
State House**

10 Baldwin St., Montpelier, VT 05633-7101

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Get a Friend to Join the Friends!**

*Yes, I'd like to preserve and protect
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COMING EVENTS



Humorist and Professor Frank Bryan.

Frank Bryan to speak at Annual Meeting

The Friends are delighted to announce that our speaker at this year's annual meeting will be Frank Bryan, a distinguished political scientist whose subject will be "Tolerance and Liberalism in the Vermont Tradition: A View from the State House." The talk is scheduled to begin at 4:15 PM.

Bryan is best known and loved in Vermont as a humorist who has skewered almost all of our politicians except George Aiken – regardless of which political party they represent, or represented. He has even poked fun at himself.

Some of the humorous books he has co-authored are *Out! The Vermont Secession Book*, *Real Vermonters Don't Milk Goats*, and *Out of Order!*, among many others. Even the funniest of these are based on his love for our state and its long tradition of individualism. They are also based on his deep academic understanding of American democracy, and especially of Vermont political history.

His scholarship as a Professor Political Science is, perhaps, better known outside of the state. His most recent book, published this year by the University of Chicago Press, is *Real Democracy: The New England Town Meeting and How It Works*. The title speaks for itself and indicates where he seems to feel much of our virtue should be recognized.

Educated at St. Michael's College, the University of Vermont, and the University of Connecticut, he has taught at all three as well as at Orleans High School, Montana State University, Johnson State College and as a visiting professor at Middlebury College and Mississippi State University. For almost three decades, though, he has been an honored faculty member at UVM. In addition, Bryan is a former Golden Gloves boxer and rodeo bull rider – not a Renaissance man, perhaps, but obviously a smart and rugged individualist.

Annual Meeting Tuesday November 9

Prior to Professor Bryan's talk, the Friends' Annual Meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber at 3:45. The public is invited, but only our membership, which includes the volunteers, may participate in the few votes that will be necessary to elect board members for 2005. The rest of the half hour is devoted to a brief report on program and finances, and recognition of some outstanding and hard-working volunteers who do so much for us, for the State House, and for Vermont.

Farmers' Night 2004

This year our Annual Farmers' Night will be Wednesday, March 23, 2005. Save the date and watch our web page Calendar (linked to vtstatehouse.org) or your mail for a description after the program is decided.

Friends of the Vermont State House

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