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## President's Report

by: Kathy Priddle

I saw the first bit of red in a sugar maple today . . . fall will soon be upon us. It seems too soon to be writing about fall, but really it's just around the corner, and that brings some of the most exciting events at the museum!

But first, let me tell you what the museum has accomplished over the summer! With Maureen McVey at the helm, the MVTM has video-taped, thanks to Robert Newton, over 35 interviews with former mill workers who would have worked at one of the mills in the area. The stories are fascinating and sometime next year we are hoping to make these interviews into a DVD for your enjoyment.

This fall brings not only our beautiful array of colour in the trees, but also two exciting events we would like to invite you and your friends and family to enjoy.

First, on September 7 and 8 our annual Fibrefest will be a festival like never before, spreading across two locations in Almonte: the MVTM and the Almonte Arena. Visitors will find much, much more – a full two day festival of textiles and fibre art including eighty vendors, demonstrations, quilt shows, exhibits, and a tea room and BBQ. This year Fibrefest will be hosting the ever popular Ottawa Valley Button Club ("Button Mania") and for the very first time there will be a Vintage Fashion Show and Sale.



Jill McCubbin's painting of cones of thread.

Second, we are hosting once again, a Mill Workers' Reunion on September 21. Our first one was such a success that we have to do it again! If you worked in a textile mill or know someone who did please join us between 2 and 4 PM for a delightful afternoon of snacks, reminiscing, live music and more.

I would also like to encourage anyone who

would be interested in helping to make these two events a continued success by volunteering your time in any way possible. Contact Barbara Dickson, our Volunteer Coordinator, at [laubar@sympatico.ca](mailto:laubar@sympatico.ca) and enjoy an exciting day with us at the museum.

## 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Fibrefest

by: Michael Rikley-Lancaster

The Mississippi Valley Textile Museum's highly anticipated Fibrefest is returning for its 18<sup>th</sup> annual event on September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and it will be bigger and better than ever! At two locations, the MVTM, the Almonte Community Center (Almonte Arena), visitors will find more than eighty vendors, coupled with demonstrations, exhibits, the Friends Tea Room and BBQ, and much more – a full two-day festival of textiles and fibre arts!

Throughout Fibrefest, local guilds will be on hand to demonstrate the arts of knitting, lace making, smocking, weaving, spinning, quilting, penny rugs and more. The Friends of the MVTM will again be providing tea room services, featuring homemade goodies, carrot ginger soup, beverages and sandwiches as well as BBQ sausage and hamburgers, all at reasonable prices.

The Ottawa Valley Button Club is again hosting the popular "Button Mania". Vendors will be selling a huge variety of buttons and button-related items as well as mounting displays of beautiful glass and historic uniform buttons. Bring your treasured old buttons to the ID Clinic to find out the history of your special items.

New this year is the Vintage Clothing Show and Sale, "That's My Style". We are very excited about this new addition to Fibrefest! Upstairs at the Almonte Community Center will be the site of a vintage clothing event, which will include a museum-quality display, "The History of Fashion", designed to raise appreciation of the beauty, workmanship and creative potential of vintage and collectible clothing. Thirty juried vintage clothing dealers will be offering quality fashions for viewing and purchase. This is a unique opportunity to enjoy a huge variety of vintage fashions all in one location.

The featured textile artist this year is Noelle Hamlyn. Noelle graduated from the Sheridan Institute's Crafts and Design Program (Textiles)

and from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has represented Canada at the *International Craft Biennale* in South Korea and the *Love Lace International Lace Competition* in Australia. Noelle showed at the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad and has work in the permanent collections of the Cambridge Art Gallery, the Peel Board of Education and the Cleveland University Hospitals. In March, she mounted a small show at the Art Gallery of Mississauga and participated in the *Biennale Internationale Du Lin de Portneuf* in June.



Almonte Community Center the site for 2013 Fibrefest, September 7 & 8.

“Sweetness of the Work” is a collection of pieces created in homage to hand work, usually completed by women, that seeks to showcase the accumulated stitches, labour and hours invested in traditional women’s hand work. Many pieces have been washed and treated to encourage the formation of salt crystals that are like the sweat and salt tears of the seamstress, a gentle meditation on the loss of these traditional skills, the repetitive nature of hand work, and the social roles of women. Sewing machines, spinning wheels, scissors, buttons, bobbins and pins are cast with Japanese gampi paper to create ghost-like references to the hands that used and abandoned these “old fashioned” methods and tools.

At the museum, two world class exhibitions are featured in the Norah Rosamond Hughes Gallery: “Inner Vision” and “Naked COPTIC Dancers”. Prize-winning artist/weaver Maximo Laura from Peru brings us his vibrant modern tapestries. And from Egypt we will see Coptic Christian tapestries from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. “Biografika” is on display in the BASF Room.

“I Say, Don’t Miss the Tweed Ride”! Local cycling enthusiasts will again be donning their posh period biking costumes to create the spirit of a bygone era in Almonte’s Tweed Ride. Riders will meet at the Fairgrounds on Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM and will take a merry jaunt around town to the various Fibrefest locations. While any bike is acceptable, classic models are naturally encourages. And we do hope that it will NOT be pouring rain on Saturday morning this year!

Tweed Rides are a worldwide phenomenon that began in London in 2009 to celebrate the bike and raise money for a good cause. Proceeds from the Almonte Tweed Ride are

directed toward education in Haiti.

Whether you are interested in art, history, clothing, textile crafts, or just a great day out and about, Fibrefest has something of interest to everyone. Admission to Fibrefest is \$5 per day, which includes access to all sites. Fibrefest runs on Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 5 PM and on Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 4 PM. Venues are the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum located at the end of Mary Street at 3 Rosamond Street East, in Almonte, and the Almonte Community Center, located at 182 Bridge Street in Almonte. For more information contact the Museum at 613-256-3754 ext. 7 or [info@mvtm.ca](mailto:info@mvtm.ca).

### Summer Hours for Summer Fun

Are you looking for things to do on hot or rainy summer days? There is always something exciting to see at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum. The museum has extended its hours for the summer season and will be open on Sunday afternoons from 1-4 PM during July and August in addition to its regular hours from 10 AM – 4 PM Tuesday to Saturday.

Visit the permanent exhibit “Fabric of a Small Town” and learn about the production of textiles in Almonte’s historic woolen mills. See unique machines and displays, as well as audiovisual descriptions of all the steps from sheep to suiting.

Downstairs, the museum’s Norah Rosamond Hughes Gallery offers displays of art that change throughout the seasons. The current exhibits include “Biografika” by Martha Moenig, “Inner Vision” by Maximo Laura of Peru, and “Naked COPTIC Dancers” woven by Christian Egyptians between 300 and 1200 AD. Maximo Laura is considered a living national treasure in Peru, as an award winning tapestry weaver. His radiantly colourful works depict Peruvian legends and explore his personal inner vision of the ancient mysticism of his people. The COPTIC textiles were woven by Christian Egyptians between 300 AD and 1200 AD. Most of the tapestry-woven textiles are fragments cut from tunics. The weaving quality is extremely fine, and the woven images are filled with exuberant fantasy.

The Gift Shop offers unique textile inspired gifts, accessories and books. The cost of admission is still just \$5 for adults, with children under twelve free. Enjoy air-conditioned comfort and wonderful exhibits this summer at the museum!



A colorful woven image by Maximo Laura, textile artist from Peru, featured in “Inner Visions”, from August 13 to October 12, 2013

## “Biografika”, a Life and Legacy in Textiles

In September, 2011, a beloved mother and grandmother passed away in Almonte at the age of 93. She left her family not only a legacy of love and caring, but also a rich body of work that will be shared with the public at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to October 19<sup>th</sup>.



Joachim and Wendy Moenig stand in front of the portrait of “Biografika” artist Martha Moenig.

Martha Moenig came to Canada in the early 1950s with her husband and son, bringing with her the education and skills that she had acquired growing up in Germany. She settled in Toronto, where she began to work on a freelance basis, designing and producing garments and specialty items. She was soon creating sweaters and cardigans for Toronto’s well-known Ada MacKenzie Ltd., one of the first stores in Canada to offer sportswear for women designed to be functional as well as fashionable. The quality of Martha’s work became widely recognized and she was soon also designing and embellishing sweaters, handkerchiefs, tablecloths, pillows and other items for the fashion leaders of Toronto society.



Martha Moenig’s sewing machine and textile creations on display in the BASF Room at the MVTM

The exhibit “*Biografika*” is a celebration of her life and the extraordinary and beautiful work that she created. It features drawings, artifacts, and photographs that shed light on the life of a talented young woman making her way in her newly adopted country.

“*Biografika*” will be on display at the MVTM from Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> through Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. The museum is located at 3 Rosamond Street East in Almonte. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM to 4 PM.



Can you find the poodle button that is part of “Biografika”?

## Fundraising at the Museum

by: John Hannigan

Many of you will already be aware of the fundraising activities of the museum because of your direct involvement in events such as Fibrefest and Soup for Thought, or through our efforts to keep all of you up to date on our many goings-on. You will also be aware that the overall financial situation of the museum has been improving, thanks to the generosity of our regular donors and volunteers.

In the first half of the year, everything was proceeding as planned. Our expenses were being held in check, the Soup for Thought event was successful, Fibrefest is going to be bigger than ever this year, we are getting more sponsorships, and we have some first-time corporate donors helping us fund our education programming. Admissions, memberships, gift shop sales and rentals are all up over last year, in some cases significantly. At the time of our mid-year review, we had not dipped into our line of credit once. Amazing!

Well, yes, but all good things can come to an end, sometimes quickly. At our Board meeting of mid-July, I had to report that one of our regular and major donors had changed its policy (unannounced to us) for disbursing grants and we did not qualify for funding this year. A couple of other initiatives did not bear fruit. And a fundraising appeal in late May did not meet our expectations . . . by a long shot. My initial forecast for revenue for this year had to be cut by \$12,000.

That was only half of it. Some of our necessary expenses were unexpectedly increased. For example, a provincial granting agency said as of this year (of course, no advance warning) that to continue receiving an annual operating grant, we would need to have a full audit prepared, rather than a “review engagement”. The extra cost - \$1,600. We also had some other unexpected increases in expenditures and are carrying an unplanned, outstanding account receivable.

All of this is pretty much normal operating procedure for running a not-for-profit corporation, and usually we find ways of coping. But we hadn’t, in my two years of

being Treasurer, run into a period when we went from okay to not-okay so quickly. So we came up with some new ideas for raising funds, and cut out some expenditures that can wait until next year. The result? We got our potential deficit down from as much as \$20,000 to \$6,000. (In each of our past two years, we had net income.)

As Treasurer, I do not want to see red ink at the end of the year. Believe me, we are doing all we can to make sure it doesn't happen this year. Wish us luck, and help us if you can.

## **“Combinations, Crinolines and Clotheslines”**

Over the past two years, artist Jill McCubbin drew inspiration from Mississippi Valley Textile Museum artifacts. Her exhibition of paintings inspired by our artifacts filled the Norah Rosamond Hughes Gallery from June 4 through August 4, 2013. Dress forms, sheep, quilts, Rosamond family homes, and Almonte Knitting Company underwear, all became the objects of her paintings. The paintings revealed unfamiliar artifacts and re-imagined the stories of our textile mill town. The vernissage on June 6<sup>th</sup> saw well over 100 friends of the artist and members of the Museum come together to celebrate a truly memorable exhibition.



Painter Jill McCubbin at the opening reception for “Combinations, Crinolines & Clotheslines” June 6, 2013.



Jill McCubbin and guests at the opening of “Combinations, Crinolines & Clotheslines”.

## **Friends of the MVTM Report**

by: Nancy Giardino

The Friends took a summer break in July, in that we didn't have our usual first Wednesday meeting. But that hasn't meant that we haven't been busy at the Museum. Some of us work regular shifts in reception, others volunteered as demonstrators at the Almonte Fair on July 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. And of course, we attended the play “Star

Spangled Girl” at the Perth Classic Theatre Festival on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

August has arrived and we are ready to kick into high gear again! We'll start the month by catering an opening reception for “Biografika” on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our regular monthly meeting will be held on August 7<sup>th</sup>, where we will plan for a ribbon cutting ceremony on August 16<sup>th</sup>, a vernissage on August 27<sup>th</sup>, a Genealogy Society luncheon on September 4<sup>th</sup>, and our exciting fund raising Tea Room and BBQ at Fibrefest on September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

Dear members of the MVTM: If you would like to spend a little bit more time at the Museum helping out in any capacity, the Friends of the MVTM may be the ideal way to contribute your time and talents. We need volunteers to staff the Fibrefest Tea Room, bakers to contribute cakes or muffins, sandwich makers to prepare fresh sandwiches both days, and a few people to pack and deliver lunches to vendors at Fibrefest. Please call Nancy at 613-256-3061 if you can help.

## **Education Team Strategy Session**

by: Nancy Giardino

On June 24, 2013, the Education Team held a team building and strategy session under the guidance of Alan Elder of the Museum of History (formerly the Museum of Civilization). The team, consisting of Greta Bradley (retired teacher), Irene Emig (artist), Matthew Moxley (Administrative Assistant), Linda Hamilton (artist, education assistant), Uta Riccius (artist and teacher), Paddy Mann (fashion designer), Roberta Murrant (weaver), Kathy Priddle (business person, teacher and MVTM President), Nancy Giardino (retired teacher), and Michael Rikley-Lancaster (MVTM Executive Director/Curator), met in the multi-purpose room for an all day planning session.

Mr. Elder presented a recent “S.W.O.T.” assessment about the museum. He discussed what we feel are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We brainstormed many aspects of our current education policy, and targeted areas that could become priorities as we develop a five-year plan for moving forward.

The MVTM has offered March break and summer children's camps, workshops with local and area artists, school tours, teddy bear workshops, family days, fashion camp, lectures, demonstrations and brochures, booklets and books about our local history. But we need to do more, and we need to reach other groups who would enjoy and learn from our museum. At present, the MVTM is partnering with the Diefenbunker to generate a science and industrial program that meets the required outcomes for several grades in Ontario schools. Linda Hamilton and Matthew Moxley are the leads for the project. Another goal is to greatly expand the use of our very special textile library, one of the most complete and specialized textile libraries in Canada. The library is searchable online, and we are

partnering with the Almonte Library to make materials available to researchers and universities.

There is much work to be done, but we are off to an exciting and solid start with the help of a truly professional facilitator, Alan Elder.



Education Team - L to R front: Greta Bradley, Kathy Priddle, Linda Hamilton, Alan Elder, Michael Rikley-Lancaster, Roberta Murrant and Irene Emig. back: Matthew Moxley and Uta Riccius. Not in the photo: Paddy Mann and Nancy Giardino.

## Creative Summer Camp for Kids

by: Linda Hamilton

Are the kids bored?! Sign them up for our fun and creative summer camp for kids. Five full days of pottery and textile art presented by the Almonte Potter's Guild and the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum are on tap from Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup> through Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup>.

What better way to spend a summer's week than by doing a wide variety of exciting crafts and projects at two wonderful locations in Almonte? The Almonte Potter's Guild and the MVTM have teamed up to offer another week-long summer camp. Kids will start their day at the Potter's Guild each morning where they will work with clay to learn techniques from hand-building to mask making and wheel throwing. Led by the Potter's Guild professional potters, each project results in a beautiful take-home piece. After lunch, the group will be led on a short guided walk through town to reach the Textile Museum. The camp will be located in the museum's brand new multi-purpose room! Once at the museum, kids will engage in a wide variety of textile-inspired projects. They will be tie-dyeing a pillow case to take home, learning to knit, and creating wearable textile art. The group will also be making a water wheel and learning about the way that the original textile mills were powered. These camps will inspire your child's creativity while teaching them interesting new techniques and introducing them to our wonderful town.

The camp runs from August 12 to 16 for children 8 – 12 years of age. The hours are 9 AM to 4 PM with drop off at the Potter's Guild and pick up at the Textile Museum.

The cost of the week long camp is \$199 per child with all materials and supplies included. Please call 613-256-5556 to reserve a spot in the camp.

For more information visit the Almonte Potter's Guild website at [www.almontepottersguild.com](http://www.almontepottersguild.com) or call the Textile Museum at 613-256-3754 or the Potter's Guild at 613-256-5556.

## Coming Events

- Sat., Aug. 3 – Sat., Oct. 19, 2013 - “Biografika” by Martha Moenig (nee Buehler). A woman's legacy in textile and design.
- Mon., Aug. 12 – Fri., Aug. 16, 2013 - Summer Camp at the MVTM for children ages 8 – 12. Mornings at the Almonte Potters Guild, afternoons in the multi-purpose room at the museum for a variety of textile-inspired projects.
- Tues., Aug. 13 – Sat., Oct. 12, 2013 - “Inner Vision” by Maximo Laura and “Naked COPTIC Dancers” from the private collection of Dirk Holger-Atelier Jean Lurcat. Vernissage: Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 PM.
- Sat., Aug. 24, 2013 - Almonte and District Horticultural Society display.
- Wed., Sept. 4, 2013 - Lanark County Genealogy Society meeting at the MVTM.
- Sat., Sept. 7 & Sun., Sept. 8, 2013 - **FIBREFEST** at the MVTM and the Almonte Community Centre featuring 80 vendors, a Vintage Clothing Show and Sale, Button Mania, textile artist Noelle Hamlyn, the Tweed Ride, the Friends Tea Room and BBQ, quilt shows, and much, much more.
- Fri., Sept. 13, 2013 - Seniors' Expo at the Almonte Arena. MVTM booth staffed by the Friends.
- Sat., Sept. 21, 2013 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Millworkers' Reunion and Tea - 2 – 4 PM at the Museum.
- Sat., Sept. 21, 2013 - Quilt Raffle Draw: the beautiful bird quilt by the Almonte Crazy Quilters will go home with the lucky winner. Tickets available at the MVTM are \$5 each or three for \$10.

## The Rosamonds: A Family Reunion at the MVTM

One of the most important families in the history of Mississippi Mills held a family reunion at the museum and at St. Paul's Anglican Church the weekend of June 15 – 16, 2013. Over sixty family members converged on Almonte to celebrate, reminisce, and remember their influential family history. Mary Hugessen, Alex Hughes and Barry and Anne Roxburgh organized the weekend, which wrapped up with a luncheon and a tour of the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum. A special exhibition of treasured artifacts was mounted in the BASF Room by MVTM Curator Michael Rikley-Lancaster and his assistant, Matthew Moxley. John Hannigan put together a booklet about the history and contributions of the Rosamond Family in Almonte. Members and Friends of the MVTM were happy to have entertained the family at the museum and to make important connections with several generations of Rosamond relatives.



Rosamond Family artifacts exhibited for the Rosamond Family Reunion.



A glimpse into the Rosamond Woolen Company safe.

## Thirty-Three Years at the Textile Museum

by: Herb Pragnell

(This article was published in the August 2013 edition of *the Humm*. Mr. Pragnell is one of the founding members of the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum.)

The idea to establish a textile museum in Almonte originated during the Town of Almonte's Centennial in 1980. The celebrations were organized by a committee appointed by the Town Council. They published a booklet which gave information about the town's past entitled *Faces and Places*, and coordinated many events celebrating the eventful past of the town. The highlight was the fact that there were so many textile mills in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Almonte was known as the "Manchester of Canada".

A Museum Committee was formed, and with financial assistance from the Town and the National Capital Commission, a Visitor Centre was opened in the former Almonte Post Office. It was operated by a Textile Museum Committee consisting of John Dunn (Chair), Herb Pragnell (Council rep.), Gerry Wheatley, Jack Collie, Stan Morton, Jack Boyce and Carl Morgenroth. The Committee appointed Diane Duncan to manage the Visitor Centre, which was very successful. In 1981, the Centre moved to a storefront on Mill Street. Soon after, Diane retired and the position was taken over by Jo Cavellero.

In 1984, the Museum Committee commissioned a study by Commonwealth Heritage Resources to determine the feasibility of establishing a textile museum in Almonte which included representatives of the Museum Committee and the National Capital Commission as well as the consultants. The study included a tour of textile museums in the Atlantic Coastal Area of the USA. Their report recommended establishing a textile museum in Almonte to be located in one of the former textile plants in the town.

The Committee accepted the findings of the study and began an investigation of the various mill buildings to determine their suitability for a museum. Soon after, the committee recommended that the museum be located in the former office/warehouse known as the Annex of the

Rosamond Woolen Mill on Coleman Island. The mill had been purchased by Mr. Burkhart, who has since established condominiums in the six storey mill building. With financial assistance from the Province of Ontario and the Town of Almonte, the Annex was purchased and the Museum opened in the building in 1989.

Unfortunately, the building required emergency repairs to the doors, windows and roof, so occupancy had to be delayed while fund raising events were held. A group of ladies, headed initially by Orchid Thurston and Helen Pragnell, formed the Friends of the Museum organization and started to raise funds and provide catering and other assistance at Museum functions. Gerry Wheatley began a regular column in *The Almonte Gazette*, "Our Heritage", which was very successful. It publicized the history of the textile industry in Almonte, the Mississippi valley and beyond.

A group of volunteers formed work parties and undertook to carry out repairs and fund raising which included a car raffle. With the help of the Almonte Lions Club, the annual toy lamb races were introduced on the Mississippi River in the Town. These activities were also helpful in raising the image of the Museum and the Town, as well as interest in the river. Fund raising continues to be an important activity which is undertaken by the Museum staff, members, volunteers, as well as the Friends organization, which also caters for Museum events.

Jo Cavellero retired in 1990 and Curator Mary Lettner was appointed interim curator in 1991. Under her inspired direction the Museum made contact with textile artists and quilting groups, including the Almonte Crazy Quilters. Many successful shows were held, which raised the profile of the Museum locally and across Canada. Kelly Baatnes succeeded Mary in 2003, and Michael Rikley-Lancaster became curator in 2007. Michael is the first fully qualified curator employed by the Museum. This is now a requirement of the Province of Ontario, a condition which the Museum was able to meet because of the generous financial assistance of the Town of Mississippi Mills and the work of the Board of Directors headed over the years by Sarah Robertson, Alan Jones, Alex Gillis, Martin Ruben, Michael Rikley, and currently Kathy Priddle.

Exhibitions by textile organizations and individual artists were very well received by the public, and soon required additional floor space. Access between the former office building and the warehouse was greatly improved when a group of volunteers led by Gunnar Laatunan created a passage way through the double masonry wall between the former office building and the warehouse. Soon after a contract was let to replace a major portion of the wooden floor and at a later date the balance of the lower floor was replaced with concrete. Two members of the Rosamond family, Mary Hugessen and Alex Hughes, raised funds for the restoration of the lower warehouse, which is named the Norah Rosamond Hughes Gallery dedicated to her memory. It now houses special exhibitions and opening receptions for various events.

..... to be continued in the Fall 2013 Newsletter.