

# A MESSAGE FROM THE MEADOWS

Newsletter of the Emily Dickinson Museum

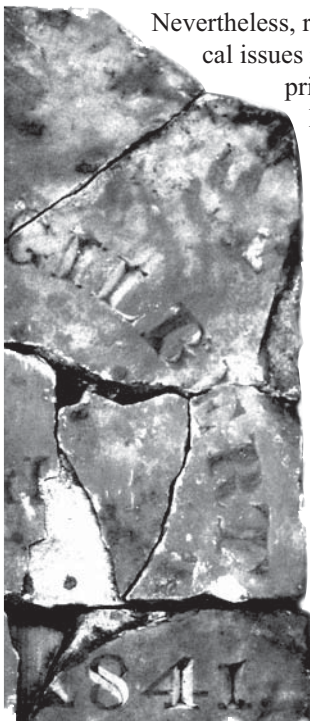
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Spring 2007

## Workers Unearth Tombstone of Dickinson Relative During Improvements

When the Emily Dickinson Museum adopted its Master Plan in 2006, years of careful study and planning resulted in a 250-page document that reads like a how-to-guide on developing the Museum's buildings and grounds as New England's premier historic literary site.

The architects handed the plan over to Museum board members and staff, knowing that some recommended projects would seem more tempting than others. Correcting water drainage issues in and around both the Homestead and The Evergreens, for instance, would not be nearly as sensational as a full-scale restoration of the houses and gardens.



Nevertheless, rectifying drainage and electrical issues ranked at the very top of a long prioritized to-do list, so the Museum plunged into the slightly unglamorous job of ensuring a dry foundation for both homes.

The museum staff was clearly surprised when out of this relatively unexciting job came a thrilling discovery. On Halloween, contractors digging a trench alongside the Homestead hit gold, or rather marble - many pieces of marble that they immediately recognized were unusual enough to warrant special care.

*(Workers Unearth Tombstone continues on page 4)*

## Museum Launches New Landscape Audio Tour This Spring



Marta McDowell, author of the landscape audio tour script, gives a few last-minute tips to the tour readers. From left, Richard Wilbur, John Martin, McDowell, Jane Wald and Mary Jo Salter at the studios of WFCR.

"I was reared in the garden, you know," Emily Dickinson reminded a cousin in 1859. Visitors to the Emily Dickinson Museum will have a more intimate connection to the poet's love of flowers, plants and the natural world beginning this spring when the Museum introduces its new audio tour of the Dickinson landscape.

"Visitors have long expressed a desire to know more about the landscape, the gardens and nature of Emily Dickinson's time," said Jane Wald, executive director of the Emily Dickinson Museum. "Our new audio tour gives them an opportunity to discover a multitude of perspectives on nature within her three private acres."

The audio tour traces the Dickinson family's relationship to the land on which they lived for more than three generations. The eighteen stops, which can be visited in any order, include the flower garden at the Homestead, the enormous white oak tree that survives on the Homestead lawn, the site of the poet's conserva-

*(New Landscape Audio Tour continues on page 8)*

## From the Executive Director



“Experiment to me / Is every one I meet . . .” (Fr1081). Would you have expected this thought from Emily Dickinson? Such a stance might make sense for someone who became known to her friends—and to us today—as “Queen Recluse.” To someone who gradually withdrew

from larger society, meeting anyone would have been quite an experiment. On the other hand, these two brief lines might suggest the welcome variety and vitality of broad acquaintance. As with most of Emily Dickinson’s poetry, her spare vivid language offers many possibilities for meaning and interpretation.

Dickinson’s range and genius as a poet are astounding. Her work celebrates friendship and lays bare its disappointments, plunges from love to grief, inspects both the natural world and human intervention in it, shares amusement and is wracked with despair, and, of course, struggles urgently with the divine and the mortal. It’s this very range that sometimes makes us wonder if we’ll be able to crack the nut and understand the “kernel” of her meaning.

Through our tours, programs and preservation efforts, the Emily Dickinson Museum offers fresh perspectives on the various dimensions of the poet’s life and the many moods of her work. We hope that, this year, you will take advantage of the numerous opportunities in a broad-ranging schedule of programs and tours to join our own “experiment” with Emily Dickinson.

One of the best “trials” of Dickinson is a direct encounter with her words. Our poetry discussion group meets monthly to unravel the lines of Dickinson poems. In May, our Poetry Walk, commemorating the anniversary of the poet’s death, pairs particularly meaningful poems with sites of significance in her Amherst. The summer Poetry in the Garden series, featuring guest speakers who share their own perspectives on Dickinson’s work, plants us unequivocally in the center of her landscape, surrounded by the “news that Nature told.” This year, our chance for immersion in Dickinson’s work culminates in a marathon reading of all 1,789 poems in September.

And, if that were not enough, other new ventures for the Museum abound in 2007. We’ve introduced an e-mail news update to bring you the most current Museum news and event announcements (see page 11 for sign-up information). Our annual April celebration of National Poetry Month, “A little

Madness in the Spring,” brings with it the debut of an audio tour of the three-acre Dickinson landscape. Also to be unveiled in the spring is a new architectural tour of the Homestead and The Evergreens which offers a glimpse of the Dickinsons as nineteenth-century home improvers (and of the poet as highly conversant with building trades).

In addition, the Museum just completed a furnishings plan which, over time, will employ a larger proportion of the extensive collection of family artifacts at The Evergreens to recreate a more authentic portrayal of the Dickinsons’ daily life within both houses.

This fall, the Museum offers its first thematic exhibit installation in the Tour Center of the Homestead, tracing the intriguing posthumous publication of Dickinson’s poetry. Documents, family artifacts and the two family homes that became Dickinson’s circumscribed world will trace the creation of her literary reputation in the first fifty years after her death.

We hope that all of our experiments will inspire you to investigate Dickinson’s poetry - some of the greatest literature the world has seen - and to probe its origins at her family homes. Your experiment might reveal some unexpected results and rewards!

- Jane Wald

### EMILY DICKINSON MUSEUM: THE HOMESTEAD AND THE EVERGREENS

#### Board of Governors

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#### Museum Staff

Jane Wald	<i>Executive Director</i>
Cindy Dickinson	<i>Director of Interpretation and Programming</i>
Rachel Beanland	<i>Development and Marketing Manager</i>
Nan Fischlein	<i>Coordinator of Programming</i>

#### Mission

The Emily Dickinson Museum is dedicated to educating diverse audiences about Emily Dickinson’s life, family, creative work, times, and enduring relevance, and to preserving and interpreting the Homestead and The Evergreens as historical resources for the benefit of scholars and the general public.

*A Message From the Meadows* is published semi-annually by the Emily Dickinson Museum and is distributed free of charge. Call 413-542-8161 or e-mail [info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org) to subscribe or unsubscribe.

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## 2007 Programs\*

### **“Wider than the Sky”:**

#### **The Healing Power of Emily Dickinson**

**Wednesday, March 28 at 7 p.m.**

Emily Dickinson’s poetry has served as a source of inspiration and healing for countless readers, especially those who have experienced loss. Cindy MacKenzie and Barbara Dana, co-editors of a forthcoming volume, *“Wider than the Sky”: Essays and Meditations on the Healing Power of Emily Dickinson*, will read selections from the book and share several Dickinson poems that have had particular resonance for them. Audience members will be encouraged to participate in the discussion that follows. No charge, but advanced registration is requested. To register, call 413-542-2034 or e-mail [nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org).

### **Poetry Discussion Group**

**Friday, March 30 at noon**

Want a monthly outing that’s pure poetry? Literature scholar Margaret Freeman leads the Emily Dickinson Museum’s Poetry Discussion Group on Friday, March 30, from noon to 2 p.m. Membership in the group is limited to 12 people and the fee to join the series is \$50. The group meets monthly from September through May. To join, call 413-542-8429 or e-mail [csdickinson@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:csdickinson@emilydickinsonmuseum.org).

### **“A little Madness in the Spring”**

**Saturday, April 28 - Sunday, April 29**

The Museum’s fourth annual celebration of National Poetry Month includes the official launch of the Museum’s new landscape audio tour, a panel discussion moderated by the Juniper Literary Festival and a fun day devoted to the colorful history of man’s best friend in honor of the poet’s dog Carlo. See page 7 or visit [www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org) for more details.

### **Kinsmen of the Shelf**

**Sunday, April 15 at 2 p.m.**

Join us for the second installment in a two-part reading discussion of Charles Dickens’ work. Victorianist scholar Suzanne Daly will lead the discussion on *Bleak House*. “Kinsmen of the Shelf” is a book club with a twist – at each meeting the group focuses on books, poetry or essays read by the Dickinson family. To register, please call 413-542-2034 or e-mail [nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org).

### **Emily Dickinson Poetry Walk**

**Saturday, May 12 at 1 p.m.**

Put on your walking shoes and join Emily Dickinson enthusiasts for a moving (literally) poetry reading that visits historic spots in Amherst significant to the poet’s life and work. Feeling particularly energetic? Volunteer to read a poem or two at the walk’s conclusion. Afterwards, relax with a stopover at the Emily Dickinson Museum for a free self-guided open house from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.

### **“Creatures of Bliss and Mystery”:**

#### **A Nineteenth-Century Children’s Circus**

**Saturday, July 7 at 1 p.m.**

In conjunction with Amherst Day, come enjoy the child’s amusements Ned, Mattie and Gib Dickinson would have loved at the Evergreens. A summer circus was just what Austin and Susan Dickinson’s children organized for themselves and their friends. Featuring magician Robert Olson. Rain date is Sunday, July 8.

### **Poetry in the Garden**

**Sundays, July 15, 22 and 29 at 2 p.m.**

Dickinson loved her garden. And on a summer’s day there’s no better place to hear her poetry come alive. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket and relax as poets and Dickinson lovers read her poetry. Scheduled readers (in order of appearance) include Cleopatra Mathis, Nancy Eckholm Burkert and Dara Wier. Book signings and meet-and-greets follow each reading. Make it a regular occasion throughout the month of July.

### **“My Verse is alive” Exhibit Opens**

**Saturday, September 15 at Noon**

A special exhibit at the Homestead’s Tour Center examines the early years of Dickinson’s posthumous publishing history. The exhibit, which is part of Museums10’s fall collaborative BookMarks, is open through December 8 during regular Museum hours and admission is free. To learn about other BookMarks programs and exhibits taking place throughout the Pioneer Valley this fall, visit [www.museums10.org](http://www.museums10.org).

### **Emily Dickinson Poetry Marathon**

**Saturday, September 29 from 6 a.m. until**

Running 26.2 miles seems easy after you’ve read Dickinson’s 1,789 poems. Stay for all 20+ hours or drop by day or night to read a few of your favorites.

### **Preserving Your Family Papers**

**Saturday, November 10 at 2 p.m.**

Daria D’Arienzo, Head of Archives and Special Collections at Amherst College, shares tips on the best ways to preserve your family’s historical papers.

### **Emily Dickinson Birthday Lecture**

**Thursday, December 6 at 4 p.m.**

Join independent scholar and Dickinson biographer Polly Longworth at the Amherst College Alumni House for a lecture, “Nothing but a Sword”: Austin and Mabel and the Publication of Emily Dickinson’s Poems.”

### **Birthday Open House**

**Saturday, December 8 from 1 to 4 p.m.**

Join us for our 12th annual “At Home” celebration of Emily Dickinson’s birthday. Take self-guided tours of the Homestead and The Evergreens, enjoy Dickinsonian refreshments and visit our shop to stock up on great holiday gifts. According to tradition and in honor of Dickinson’s 177th birthday, the first 177 visitors will receive a rose, courtesy of an anonymous donor.

*\*All programs are at the Museum unless otherwise noted. Unless an admission price is noted, events are free and open to the general public.*

“When the work crew called us outside to show us what they had found, we were certainly surprised,” said Jane Wald, executive director of the Emily Dickinson Museum. “We’ve found ceramics and coins and other small objects on the site before, but never anything as unusual as this.”

What the crew had uncovered was a mysterious tombstone, fractured but still completely legible. When the pieces were assembled, it read “Gen. Tho. Gilbert. Died Dec. 23, 1841.” At the bottom of the grave marker was the number 48, the General’s age at the time of his death.

General Gilbert was the father of Susan Dickinson, Emily Dickinson’s sister-in-law, and lived in Greenfield at the time of his death. Gilbert had been an innkeeper, merchant, lawmaker and member of the Massachusetts militia; however, he died penniless. Upon his death in 1841, Susan came to live in Amherst with an older sister.


In Amherst, Susan met Emily Dickinson and her older brother Austin. In 1856, Susan married Austin and moved into the newly built Evergreens next door to the Homestead and now a part of the Emily Dickinson Museum.


“It’s peculiar,” said Wald, “particularly because we know that Gen. Thomas Gilbert’s remains are resting in West Cemetery under another grave marker.”

The best theory regarding the tombstone found at the Homestead is that when Susan and her brother Thomas Dwight Gilbert moved their parents’ and sister Sophia’s graves from Greenfield to Amherst in 1882, they erected a more substantial monument to honor their loved ones and simply placed the earlier grave markers in storage.

How General Gilbert’s headstone came to be buried in front of the Homestead is still puzzling. According to the Association for Gravestone Studies, it was not uncommon for discarded gravestones to be re-used as structural elements.

“Further examination of the site may reveal a particular reason for its relocation underground—or we may never know who buried the headstone and why, but unexpected finds like this one make the prospect of learning more about the houses and grounds an exciting possibility. The Homestead and The Evergreens have more to tell us,” said Wald.

The Thomas Gilbert tombstone will become part of the Emily Dickinson Museum’s permanent collection. 



CONGRATULATIONS TO  
BOARD MEMBER POLLY LONGSWORTH,  
RECIPIENT OF THE  
AMHERST HISTORY MUSEUM’S  
CONCH SHELL AWARD

## **Kent W. Faerber Elected to Lead Emily Dickinson Museum Board**

Kent W. Faerber, who has served on the Emily Dickinson Museum Board of Governors since its founding in 2003, has been elected as the board’s chair.

Faerber, the president of the Springfield-based Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, takes over leadership of the board from Dickinson biographer Polly Longworth, who has served as chair since the museum’s formation. Longworth, who will remain on the board, stepped down as chair to finish her much-anticipated biography of Emily Dickinson.


Prior to Faerber’s appointment to the Museum’s board in 2003, he served as a trustee of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust, which owned The Evergreens. In his role there, he was instrumental in the transfer of the trust’s assets to Amherst College, resulting in the establishment of the Emily Dickinson Museum.

A 1963 graduate of Amherst College, Faerber attended Harvard Law School. From 1977 through 1994, he served as Amherst College’s first alumni secretary and then as the College’s chief development officer. After spending five years as a consultant for Amherst College from 1995 to 1999, Faerber became the president of the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. The organization has grant-making responsibilities for \$114 million in assets which support the Connecticut River Valley.

During his tenure as a consultant for Amherst College, Faerber prepared a report on the potential benefits of merging The Evergreens and the Dickinson Homestead, sparking his own interest in the possibility of a combined museum. His report served as a basis for the subsequent consideration of such a merger. He has also been active in a number of other professional, civic and charitable organizations, both locally and nationally.

In addition to Faerber’s appointment, the museum announced the election of two new members to the board of governors, Dr. William P. Gorth and Kenneth Rosenthal.

Gorth is co-founder and president of National Evaluation Systems, an Amherst-based educational testing company. He is active in several civic and professional organizations and serves on the boards of Cooley Dickinson Hospital, the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts and The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. Gorth and his wife Janet live in South Amherst.

Rosenthal is a 1960 graduate of Amherst College and attended Yale Law School. From 1966 through 1976, he was active in the founding of Hampshire College in Amherst and served as the college’s treasurer and secretary. Until his retirement to Amherst this year, he was president of The Seeing Eye, Inc. of Morristown, N.J., an organization that breeds, trains and provides guide dogs for the visually impaired. 

## An Interview with Angela Potter Brassley

Museum board member and Dickinson scholar Polly Longworth chats transatlantically with the author of *Shared Histories*, a narrative that documents 40 years of letters exchanged between Emily Dickinson's relative, Virginia Dickinson Reynolds, and her daughter "Ginnie."



Angela Potter, left, as a child, with her mother Virginia "Ginnie" Potter at Greenmarch, ca. 1950.

Many dream of writing books based on attic caches of family letters. Angela Potter Brassley of Devon, England did so after finding a four-decade horde exchanged by her mother and grandmother from opposite sides of the Atlantic through years that encompassed World War II. Brassley's dream is now realized in a newly published volume, *Shared Histories: Transatlantic Letters Between Virginia Dickinson Reynolds and her Daughter, Virginia Potter, 1929-1966*. That Angela's grandmother was Virginia Dickinson Reynolds, the granddaughter of Samuel Fowler Dickinson, Jr., (Emily Dickinson's uncle) brings to these selected letters fresh news about a little-known branch of the Dickinson family.

Virginia D. Reynolds, a politically astute southerner, writes from Richmond, Va., while her daughter Virginia Stuart Potter, who married an Englishman in 1936, writes from the environs of war-torn London, and from a different generation. The two women bridged their separation with strong affection and a wealth of personal and political detail. Skillfully weaving world-shaking events, private issues, and prevailing social attitudes into her revelation of the lives and personalities of the two closely bonded women, author Angela Brassley (who writes under her maiden name) has brought to life a significant era. She also provides Dickinson devotees some intriguing new information.

**Q:** *The book includes less than a tenth of the existing correspondence. How did you decide what to leave out and what to include in your book?*

**APB:** It wasn't easy to whittle 1.6 million words down to what eventually was published. Given that their letters covered three distinct and interesting eras, I decided on an overview of the two women's thoughts and activities, rather than a themed approach. I selected the best, most interesting examples of everything they did and thought, excising pas-

sages that didn't add to their characters or to the narrative. I made a point of including anything on Emily and the Dickinsons and other well-known people, as I thought those would provide points of recognition to the reader. There are a greater proportion of letters from 1939-1945 because of the particular circumstances of the time. After I thought I was done, a lot more had to come out because there simply wasn't space.

**Q:** *It is known that Emily Dickinson had relatives with northern sympathies in Knoxville, Tenn. during the Civil War. But until now, nothing has emerged about the family of Samuel Fowler Dickinson, Jr. who spent his life in Macon, Ga. and Richmond, Va. He and his sons were secessionists; your great grandfather, Loren Dickinson, fought in the Confederate army and married the heiress of a plantation destroyed by the Union army. How conscious were you of contributing to Dickinson scholarship as you worked?*

**APB:** I was definitely aware that probably no other relations so close to Emily fought for the Confederate side in the Civil War and that this would be news. It struck me as remarkable that strong political convictions could have shifted so swiftly in a relatively newly adopted way of life. Here was the family of a son of Samuel Fowler Dickinson, Sr., adapting to slaveholding views within a generation of moving south. According to my grandmother, Virginia Dickinson Reynolds, writing in an anthology of tributes to Martha Dickinson Bianchi, "the passionate strain in the Dickinsons which produced the white heat of Puritanical virtues in New England" made of her father, Loren, "an enthusiastic and unreconstructed 'rebel' in the Confederate States." The nineteenth century was nothing if not opportunistic, and in order to fit in with a newly adopted way of life, such switches were politically expedient.

(An Interview with Angela Potter Brassley continues on page 6)



Virginia Dickinson Reynolds, mother of Virginia Potter, and cousin-once-removed of the poet Emily Dickinson. Virginia D. Reynolds' great-grandfather Samuel Fowler Dickinson was Emily's grandfather. The photo was taken in 1935, the year before her daughter married and moved to England.



Black Potts near Windsor, England, the wartime home of the Potter family and where Ginnie Potter wrote many of her letters to her mother, Virginia Dickinson Reynolds, in the United States.

(An Interview with Angela Potter Brassley continued from page 5)

**Q:** *Virginia Dickinson Reynolds was plainly proud of being a Dickinson – of being related to Emily and especially to Samuel Fowler Dickinson, one of the founders of Amherst College. Did your mother, Virginia Stuart Potter, inherit and pass on to you this sense of family distinction that the Amherst Dickinsons themselves felt during the poet’s lifetime?*

**APB:** I think overt admiration for Emily jumped a generation. My mother recognized Emily Dickinson’s importance and was proud to be related, but wasn’t herself a poetry enthusiast, and I certainly never saw her with a book of Emily’s poems in her hands. My grandmother on the other hand, was active in the Poetry Society of Virginia and a great admirer of Emily’s work. Her sister, Florence Dickinson Stearns, was a published poet and Chair of the Poetry Society of Virginia in the 1940s, so the sisters were conscious of trying not to let the Dickinson side down when composing their own poetry. I initially approached Dickinson with a sense of family duty, but when I discovered the originality and intensity of her poems, I was entranced. I only wish some of her poetic ability had filtered through.

**Q:** *Virginia Dickinson Reynolds was fond of her cousin Martha Dickinson Bianchi; she provides a view of the problems left by Bianchi to Alfred Leete Hampson regarding Emily Dickinson’s manuscripts. Did she reveal her thoughts concerning their final disposition to Harvard?*


**APB:** Not that I discovered. She was relieved the onus didn’t fall on her to organize such an extended, distinguished literary inheritance. As she said in a letter of December 25, 1943, “I pray that she didn’t include me as one of the Trustees of the Emily Collection as she once said she wished to do.” She must have been delighted that such a distinguished institution as Harvard took on the responsibility.

**Q:** *You point to the strong matriarchal bond within your family, apparent from your great-grandmother down to*

*yourself. This differs from the patriarchal ties usually emphasized in Dickinson scholarship. Was this female bond an outgrowth of the Southern defeat?*

**APB:** It’s tempting to say that it was, but I don’t know. Certainly both my mother and grandmother considered women to be stronger than men. This could have been born of the independence forced upon my great grandmother [Virginia Fendley Dickinson], who was orphaned by the age of sixteen in 1865. She married Emily Dickinson’s cousin Loren that same year, but must have grown disillusioned, as allegedly he took to his bed with crates of bourbon, such was his disappointment at the defeat of the Confederacy. In turn, my grandmother came to perceive her husband as weak, though genial, while my mother was attracted to Gerald Potter’s vitality and “terrific energy,” yet came to find her husband aggressive, writing of his “difficult disposition.” So I think, given the shortfalls perceived in their men, they found women to be more reliable and better company.

**Q:** *What, in all the letters and events you dealt with in the course of editing, was most revelatory to you? And did you include it?*

**APB:** In the course of this labor of love (it took ten years) what stood out was the closeness between my grandmother and mother. It was so strong I sometimes felt overwhelmed by it. Some envelopes had resealed themselves, so that in opening them I felt I was trespassing on an intensely close relationship. It shone through, in spite of their enormous differences. My grandmother was intellectually and culturally motivated, extremely well read and a feminist. My mother was a hedonist, a social animal and not intellectual. Nevertheless, they adored each other and I found myself intrigued by their love and respect for each other. And, yes, I certainly included it! 

*SHARED HISTORIES: Transatlantic Letters between Virginia Dickinson Reynolds and her Daughter, Virginia Potter, 1929-1966, edited by Angela Potter, was published in 2006 by The University of Georgia Press. Angela Potter Brassley is an independent scholar and librarian in Devon, England.*

Virginia “Ginnie” Stuart Reynolds married Gerald Potter in March 1936 at the Guards Chapel, London with Grenadier soldiers forming a guard of honor. The marriage meant she and her mother would communicate transatlantically for the rest of their lives.





“A little Madness in the Spring” returns on Saturday, April 28, and Sunday, April 29. This year “Madness,” the Museum’s recognition of National Poetry Month, includes a little poetry, a little gardening, a few dogs and a lot of fun.

The debut of “Grounds of Memory,” a new audio tour about the Dickinsons’ landscape, heralds the arrival of spring at the Homestead and The Evergreens (see page 1 for details). The tour will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at no charge during the Museum’s open hours.

On Saturday at 11 a.m., the Museum will honor Dickinson’s poetic legacy with a celebration of the newly published *The Light within the Light: Portraits of Donald Hall, Richard Wilbur, Maxine Kumin, & Stanley Kunitz*. Written by Jeanne Braham, with engravings by Barry Moser, the book honors the work of four pre-eminent poets of the twentieth century. Braham and Moser will share perspectives on the nature of portraiture, whether with words or with engraver’s tools. A reception and booksigning will follow.

On Saturday afternoon, two workshops will focus on practical aspects of Dickinson’s interactions with the soil. “A Gardener’s Guide to Emily Dickinson’s Herbarium” will focus on about two dozen plants found in the poet’s herbarium (recently published by Harvard University Press) that can be cultivated in a garden today. Marta McDowell, landscape consultant and author of *Emily Dickinson’s Gardens*, will lead this hands-on program. Participants will be able to take home their own herbarium garden. Registration is limited to 20 people.


“A Container Conservatory” will create a container version of the Dickinsons’ conservatory, “the garden off the dining room,” as the poet called it. Participants will pot a plant mentioned in the herbarium to start their own “herbarium garden.”

For more information about both programs, including pre-registration and fee requirements, please call 413/542-2034 or e-mail [nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org).

Also on Saturday afternoon, the Museum will host several roundtable discussions as part of the Juniper Literary Festival, a yearly gathering of poets, writers, editors, publishers, scholars and readers sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Masters in Fine Arts Program for Writers and Artists. The Festival, now in its seventh year, is dedicated to celebrating important new work and exploring issues vital to the literary arts and independent publishing. This year the Festival’s theme is “Strange Courage: A Celebration of First Books,” focusing on the efforts of first-time published writers.

On Sunday afternoon, we turn our attention from poetry to another constant companion in Emily Dickinson’s life, her dog Carlo (1850-1866). “The Dog is the noblest work of Art” will begin at noon with “Is that Carlo in the garden?” Visitors are invited to bring their dogs to the Museum grounds for favorite nineteenth-century dog amusements and a dog parade in honor of the poet’s walks with Carlo. Children are invited to bring their favorite stuffed animal—dog, bear, giraffe . . . , and all are invited to meet “Carlo” at the Homestead Gardens! Cameras, questions, and a sense of humor are encouraged.

At 2 p.m., Katherine C. Grier, Professor in the Office of Academic Programs at the Winterthur Museum and author of the recently-published *Pets in America*, will give a talk on the history of the domesticated dog in the United States. The talk will take place at the Amherst Woman’s Club.

Except where noted, all events are free and open to the public. For more information about all of these activities, visit the Museum’s web site at [www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org). 

## A Farewell and A Hello

Tony Maroulis, the Emily Dickinson Museum’s marketing and development coordinator since 2005, left his position in December to be the project coordinator for Museums10, a partnership of 10 Pioneer Valley arts organizations (including the Emily Dickinson Museum) designed to promote the area as a great place to experience art, both literary and otherwise. Tony and his wife Nora are also opening a contemporary art gallery, Wunderarts, at 381 Main Street in Amherst ([www.wunderarts.com](http://www.wunderarts.com)). Thanks for everything and best wishes, Tony!

Rachel Beanland has been appointed the Museum’s first full-time marketing and development manager. Rachel comes to us by way of South Carolina where she was the public relations manager at Riverbanks Zoo and Garden. She holds bachelors degrees in art history and public relations from the University of South Carolina Honors College and will receive a masters degree in arts administration this coming spring from Winthrop University. While Rachel makes the transition from penguins to poems, she’ll welcome hearing from you.


tory, the path between the Homestead and The Evergreens, The Evergreens' piazza and the family barn. In addition to historical narration, each stop features a carefully-selected Dickinson poem. Visitors may opt to tour the landscape only through the poet's own verse, or to listen to both the narration and the poems. With details about the sights and sounds of the Dickinson property, often in the poet's own words, the tour helps visitors to see "New Englandly."

Landscape consultant Marta McDowell, who wrote the script for the audio tour, described her approach to the project: "I tried to imagine a first-time visitor to the Museum walking around the property. I drew myself back to that summer afternoon many years ago when I first drove up from the Mass Pike and discovered that Emily Dickinson had a garden. How could I bring the landscape of the Dickinson family to life for someone in 2007 who might or might not know anything about the period or the people?" McDowell is the author of *Emily Dickinson's Gardens* (2004) and has also completed an interpretive plan for the Museum's landscape.

Richard Wilbur, distinguished poet and translator, narrates the tour. Wilbur, former Poet Laureate of the United States, has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry for *Things of this World* (1957) and *New and Collected Poems* (1988). Wilbur has translated the verse dramas of Molière and Racine as well as numerous other poets from the French, Russian and other languages. His voice is joined by that of Mary Jo Salter, another distinguished poet, who reads the words of Emily Dickinson. Salter, Emily Dickinson Senior Lecturer at Mount Holyoke College, is vice president of the Poetry Society of America and a co-editor of *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. She is the author of several collections of poems, including her most recent, *Open Shutters* (2005).

Visitors will also hear the voices of Jane Wald, the Museum's executive director, who offers insights into Dickinson's life and work, and John Martin, Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts, who shares his expertise on landscape history. Marta McDowell and Walter Carroll, classical music host at WFCR 88.5 radio, have small roles as Mrs. Almira Lincoln, author of a popular botany book, and Frederick Law Olmsted, respectively.

This project was funded in part by a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, an independent Federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. The tour was recorded at the studios of WFCR 88.5FM, which generously donated studio and staff time to this project. Special thanks go to Burt Rantin and Evi Delisle of WFCR.

The landscape tour will debut during "A little Madness in the Spring," April 28-29. A small fee will be charged for use of the audio tour. The Museum has also developed a property map to accompany the audio tour and plans to offer occasional guided tours of the landscape as a supplement to the audio tour. 

## Donor Spotlight

In each issue of *A Message from the Meadows*, the Museum would like to highlight one donor who inspires others. The following letter from donor and friend Steve Boni accompanied his gift.

“... About six months ago I read Richard Sewall's biography of Emily Dickinson, *The Life of Emily Dickinson*. Although I did not agree with all of his interpretations, I found it to be one of the best and most profound biographies I have ever read. The impact of that book and Emily Dickinson's poetry was so overwhelming, I knew I had to visit Amherst, the Homestead and The Evergreens. And on October 23 thru the 27th I was fortunate enough to be able to come to Massachusetts and take the tour of the two homes.

David Garnes gave a wonderful tour [though it] was all too short. I longed to sit awhile and meditate upon all the history that has taken place within those walls. A history that continues with each visitor to the Homestead. I felt an unspoken bond with the other members of the tour and the few members of your staff that I met in the museum. All of us with our private thoughts, and yet sharing a mutual respect and admiration, if not love, for an extraordinary woman, her family and the many other extraordinary individuals in Emily Dickinson's life story.

I wish I lived closer to Amherst. I would love to participate in discussion groups and the many interesting events the museum sponsors. But for now, I'll have to be content with further reading and memories of the Homestead.

I wish you all well and much success with the renovations.

Sincerely,  
Steve Boni

”

## Museum Introduces Two New Giving Societies

This year, the Emily Dickinson Museum introduced two new giving societies, designed to recognize donors who have given generously to support the Museum's annual fund. The Hummingbird Society, which recognizes gifts of \$500 and over, and the Indian Pipe Society, which recognizes gifts of \$1,000 and over, joined the already well-established Cupola Society.

Both societies celebrate their supporters through annual programs and behind-the-scenes tours. The two societies were named for two meaningful Dickinson poems.

The Humming Bird Society refers to "A Route to Evanescence" (Fr1489) in which Dickinson describes a hummingbird. She sent the poem to six different friends, leaving scholars to surmise it might have been one of the poet's particular favorites. The Indian Pipe Society pays tribute to Dickinson's favorite flower, the Indian pipe, one she called, "the preferred flower of life." (L769)

## 2006-2007 Annual Fund Gifts

The Emily Dickinson Museum's fiscal year is far from over (supporters have until June 30, 2007 to make their 2006-2007 Annual Fund contribution), but the successes thus far are well worth celebrating. Donors who gave to the Annual Fund prior to January 30, 2007 are recognized below. Gifts made to the Museum's Restoration Fund are not included. Gifts to

the Annual Fund are unrestricted and support the Museum's operations and programming costs throughout the year. Please let us know if your name has been accidentally omitted or misspelled. We value your contributions and thank you for giving generously and supporting the mission of the Emily Dickinson Museum.

### CUPOLA SOCIETY

*Gifts of \$2,500 and More*

John and Elizabeth Armstrong  
Lucy Wilson Benson  
Alan and Jayusia Bernstein  
Brian and Karen Conway  
James and Diana Fraser  
Robert and Ann Kline  
Margaret Lindem  
Charles and Polly Longworth  
Tony Marx and Karen Barkey  
Cullen and Anna Marie Murphy  
Edward and Dorothy Oberhaus  
H. Axel and Sara Schupf  
Ethan and Robin Tarasov  
William McC. Vickery  
Patricia Walker  
Philip and Tricia Winterer

### INDIAN PIPE SOCIETY

*Gifts of \$1,000 and More*

Emily Dickinson International Society  
Evergreen Foundation  
Kent and Scottie Faerber  
Robert and Jane Keiter  
Martha Nell Smith  
Elizabeth York  
Jide Zeitlin

### HUMMING BIRD SOCIETY

*Gifts of \$500 and More*

Howell Chickering and Sara Jane Moss  
Michael and Carol Solomon Keifer  
Reiko Nagumo  
Elizabeth Phillips  
David Sheldon  
James and Jane Wald

### ALL OTHER GIFTS

Doris Abramson and Dorothy Johnson  
Martha Ackmann and Ann Romberger  
Elizabeth Aidicon  
Adelaide Aitken  
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David Garnes  
Stephen and Katie George  
Bill and Connie Gillen  
Steven and Miriam Glassman  
George and Ellen Goodwin  
Shelley Gotterer  
Elizabeth Guest  
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Norbert Hirschhorn and Cynthia Myntti  
Dorothy Hmieleski  
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Joyce Horan  
Frances Horowitz  
Lisa Horowitz and Adriana Alter  
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James Hughes  
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Trevor Winkfield  
Dianna Winsor  
Jonathan and Elizabeth Wolpaw  
Jane Yolen  
Roger and Mary Zimmerman

And many thanks to our program sponsor,

*The  
Lord Jeffrey  
Inn*

Nan Wolverton, who recently conducted a furnishings study of both the Homestead and The Evergreens, gave a talk on The Evergreens' collection of Mediterranean and Turkish furnishings and decorative objects as part of the "Pleasant and Perfect" series.



## "Pleasant & Perfect" Series Was Just That

In 2006 the Museum celebrated the 150th anniversary of The Evergreens with a series of special events, including a fall lecture series, "Pleasant and Perfect." Susan Gilbert and Austin Dickinson married in July 1856 and moved shortly thereafter into their new house, The Evergreens, just next door to Austin's family home in Amherst. In anticipation of the new house, Susan wrote excitedly to a friend:

*As soon as Austin's house plan is regularly drawn, I will send it to you. It will not be a great castle, but when we get it all fixed, if you don't say it is pleasant and perfect, then I am mistaken. Won't I be proud to get you an oyster supper some cold night?*

Quoted in *Austin and Mabel: The Amherst Affair and Love Letters of Austin Dickinson and Mabel Loomis Todd*  
By Polly Longworth (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984) p. 108

The lecture series examined Susan's phrase, "pleasant and perfect," by focusing on three essential aspects of the nineteenth-century American home - furnishings, decorating and dining. Participants had the opportunity to study several objects from The Evergreens' collections at each program. Nan Wolverton, independent museum consultant and furnishings historian, began the series by looking at furnishings and other decorative objects in The Evergreens collection that evoked America's fascination with things Turkish and Mediterranean in the late nineteenth century. Audience members were particularly fascinated by a Turkish lantern that now brings an exotic element into the dining room.

During the next program, John Burrows, a design historian and owner of J.R. Burrows & Company, shared a hundred years of wallpaper history through slides and led participants on a "wallpaper walk" through The Evergreens to study the family's wallpaper selections in situ.

Finally, Amanda Lange, curator of historic interiors at Historic Deerfield, reviewed dining customs and accoutrements of the nineteenth-century table and shared excerpts from family menus and recipes.

In honoring The Evergreens' anniversary, the series illuminated the family's efforts to achieve a "pleasant and perfect" household and provided a wonderful introduction to the lives of Emily Dickinson's extraordinary family.

## The Museum in the News

Adam Gorlick with the Associated Press wrote an article on the mysterious tombstone of General Thomas Gilbert that was uncovered at the Homestead in November.

Cindy Dickinson, director of interpretation and programming at the Emily Dickinson Museum, was interviewed by Robert Knox of the *Boston Globe* for his February 1, 2007 piece "A life as poetic as her words: Dickinson's path intrigues to this day." The article was written in connection with a workshop on the poet at the Plymouth (Mass.) Public Library. Cindy Dickinson was an invited lecturer. The article asks a series of questions about Emily Dickinson's personal life and why readers continue to be so fascinated with it today.

## "The Props assist the House": New Tour Focuses on Architecture and the Dickinson Family

The Emily Dickinson Museum is creating a new tour about the architecture of the Dickinson houses, the Homestead and The Evergreens. The tour will concentrate primarily on the exteriors of both buildings, with a short visit inside each house.

By focusing on the Dickinsons' houses, the Museum hopes that visitors will gain a better understanding of the family's ambitions and their actual status in the social and cultural context of the nineteenth century. The hour-long tour will make its first appearance in May and will be offered several times a month. More information about the tour schedule and prices will be available on the Museum's web site.

Emily  
E-mails.

Well, not really. But we do.

E-mail [info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org)  
to sign up for monthly museum e-updates.

## Poet's December Birthday Celebrated With Lecture and Open House



The 2006 Birthday Lecture, presented by Stephen Nissenbaum, was an exceptionally fine presentation about the Dickinsons' attitudes toward and experiences of Christmas. Author of *The Battle for Christmas* (1996), Nissenbaum summarized the history of Christmas as it has been celebrated in America since the seventeenth century. He then turned his attention to Edward Dickinson's private and public commemorations of the holiday and

to Emily Dickinson's exposure to the holiday at home and at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary—decidedly different experiences.

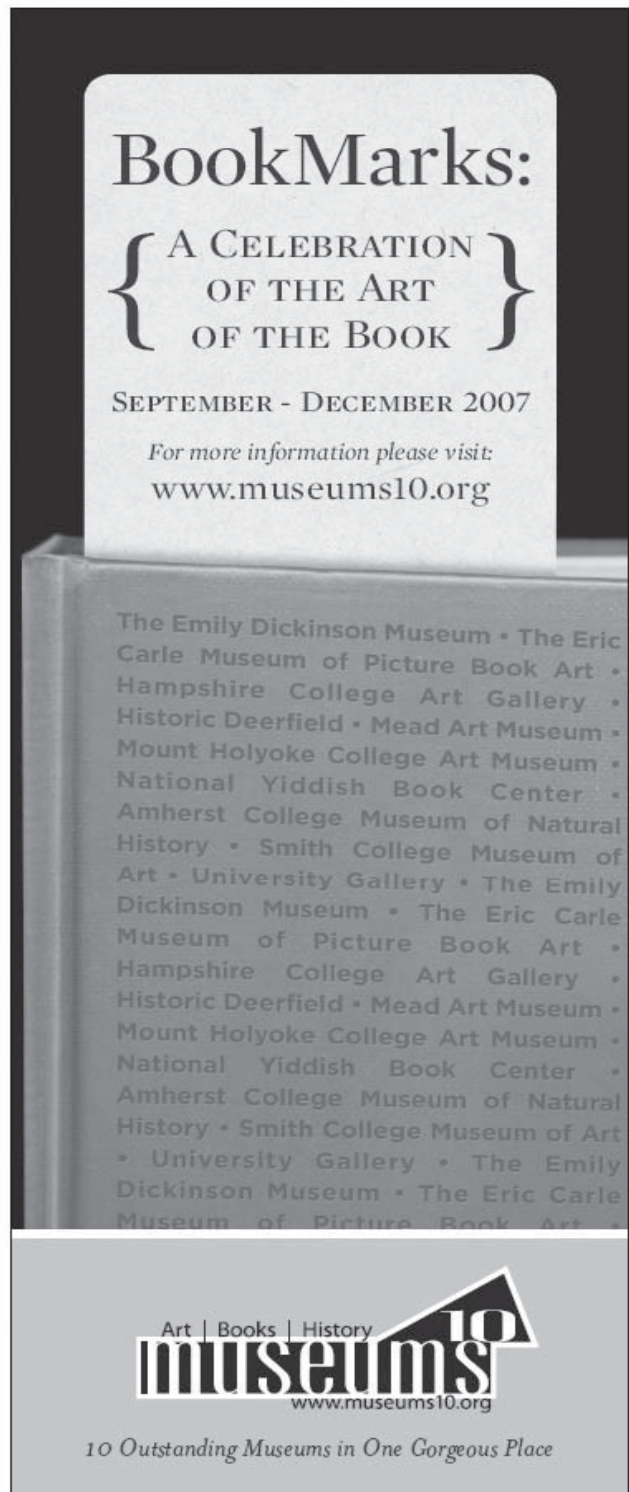
The annual birthday Open House on December 9, celebrating Dickinson's 176th birthday, had people literally lined up outside the door to receive one of the 176 birthday roses given once again by an anonymous donor. Music by Steve Howland and Tim Van Egmond, readings of Emily Dickinson's poetry by Museum guides Elizabeth Aidicon and Joni Denn and the opportunity to make an ornament for The Evergreens' Christmas tree made the day especially festive.

### Museum Launches E-Updates

In an effort to keep Emily Dickinson Museum supporters up-to-date throughout the year, the Museum launched *Emily's E-Update* in January 2007. The electronic update is distributed to donors and friends of the Museum who have submitted their e-mail address at some point in the last few years. The e-update goes out ten times a year, in months that *A Message from the Meadows* is not issued.

"As more and more people conduct day-to-day tasks electronically, we felt that it made sense for us to stay connected to our friends via e-mail as well as by newsletter," said Jane Wald, executive director of the Museum.

For people who are not receiving e-updates, be sure the Museum has an e-mail address on file for you. E-mail [info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org) to submit your current e-mail address. If you are receiving e-mails but would prefer not to, there's a simple way to opt out at the bottom of the e-update. Each message gives detailed information about upcoming events and programs at the Emily Dickinson Museum.



### Emily Dickinson Museum Makes Its Mark on BookMarks

Don't make plans to travel far from the Pioneer Valley this fall since the Museum will be joining its nine counterpart museums, all members of the Pioneer Valley's Museums10, for a celebration of the book. On Saturday, September 15, the Museum launches its fall exhibit on the early years of Dickinson's posthumous publishing history. The exhibit will be in the Museum's Tour Center and will run through December.



**Emily  
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Museum**  
THE HOMESTEAD &  
THE EVERGREENS

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**MUSEUM HOURS '07**

**March**

Wednesday and Saturday,  
12:30-5:30 p.m.

**April - May**

Wednesday through Sunday,  
12:30-5:30 p.m.

**June - August**

Wednesday through Saturday,  
9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
Sunday, 12:30-5:30 p.m.  
(Closed July 4)

**September - October**

Wednesday through Sunday,  
12:30-5:30 p.m.

**November - Mid-December**

Wednesday and Saturday,  
12:30-5:30 p.m.  
(Closed Wednesday before Thanksgiving)

**ADMISSION INFORMATION**

Admission to the Museum is by guided tour. Admission fee charged; tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. The last tour begins at 4:30 p.m. All tours start at the Tour Center, located in the Homestead. The Tour Center has a museum shop and an orientation exhibit.

For information about directions, parking, accessibility and special programs, please call 413-542-8161 or visit our web site at [www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org).

The Emily Dickinson Museum: The Homestead and The Evergreens consists of two historic houses in the center of Amherst, Massachusetts, closely associated with the poet Emily Dickinson. The Homestead was the birthplace and home of the poet. The Evergreens, next door, was home to her brother Austin, his wife Susan, and their three children.

