



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2009

Contact: Jane Wald

Executive Director

t. 413/542-2154

f. 413/542-2152

jhwald@emilydickinsonmuseum.org

Creatures of Bliss and Mystery: A 19th-Century Circus Comes to the Emily Dickinson Museum July 11

Amherst, Mass.—On Saturday, July 11, from 1 to 4 p.m., the Emily Dickinson Museum will present its annual *Creatures of Bliss and Mystery: 19th-Century Circus*, featuring folksinger and storyteller Tim Van Egmond. The event is free and open to the public; the rain date is Sunday, July 12.

The circus' activities will include tightrope-walking; a ring-toss; hat-, flag- and music-making; and a parade. Children can march in the latter on the museum grounds, led by the ringmaster and Emily's beloved dog, Carlo, at 2:30 p.m. or listen to Van Egmond perform at 1:30 and 3 p.m. Strawberry shortcake will be served courtesy of Whole Foods Market in Hadley.

Throughout the afternoon, the museum will also offer a special tour titled "Home Talk" at The Evergreens. "Home Talk" will enable visitors to learn about the lives and events of Austin and Susan Dickinson's family in their own words.

A resident of Montague, folksinger and storyteller Van Egmond has been delighting and enchanting audiences all over the country, weaving together tales and tunes. Music flows in and around his stories and through his singing and performing on the wide variety of traditional instruments he plays, including the hammered dulcimer, conga drum, guitar and limberjack (a dancing wooden rhythm puppet). His dynamic style of voice and movement makes stories come alive, and his gift for encouraging participation makes for high-spirited and engaging programs. "Tim is a triple treat. He can sing, play a variety of instruments and tell whopping good tales!" says Uncle Emily author Jane Yolen.

The title of the circus comes from *The Reflections of a Country Girl* by Martha Dickinson Bianchi, Emily's cousin: "It never occurred to us that we were not creatures of bliss and mystery—that the Ringmaster was really Ned with trousers tucked into rubber boots, cracking his whip and making jokes with the clown, Will Mather in private life, stuffed out with a pillow, red spots painted on his face, —or that the performance was a bit less dazzling than the one we had seen the day before, —especially if Ned sang his circus song picked up from the real ring."

ABOUT THE EMILY DICKINSON MUSEUM

The Emily Dickinson Museum, comprising the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. Both properties are owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. The museum is overseen by a separate Board of Governors charged with raising its operating and capital funds. The Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886). The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet's brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson.

The Emily Dickinson Museum is located at 280 Main St. in Amherst, Mass. The official museum Web site is www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org. Hours are Wednesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., June through August; 11 a.m. until 4 p.m., March through May and September through December. The museum is closed on major holidays, including July 4.

###