



NEWS RELEASE

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Emily Dickinson Museum Celebrates Dickinson's 180th Birthday with Open House and Film Showing

AMHERST, Mass.-The Emily Dickinson Museum will host its annual open house on Saturday, December 11, from 1 to 4 p.m. in honor of the 180th birthday of its namesake, who was born December 10, 1830. The "At Home" celebration, which is free and open to the public, will once again feature self-guided tours of the Homestead (the poet's birthplace and home), and The Evergreens (the home next door of her brother Austin's family). Throughout the afternoon, visitors will be able to sample Dickinsonian refreshments, make holiday crafts, and enjoy traditional 19th-century folk music.

The 15th annual Open House in honor of Dickinson's birthday will be the Museum's last, to make way for new celebrations of her birthday in coming years. This year will also mark the end of a beloved Open House tradition. For the final time, an anonymous donor will provide a rose to the first 180 visitors.

At The Evergreens, visitors can see "Art has a 'Palate,'" a new exhibition of Dickinson family dining and entertaining practices created in conjunction with Museums10's collaboration on the theme "Table for Ten." Visitors can also take part in a mini-marathon reading of *The Single Hound*, an edition of Dickinson's poetry edited by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, in 1914. The 142 poems in *The Single Hound* were among the many that the poet sent to her sister-in-law, Susan Dickinson. The two friends were born just nine days apart (Susan on December 19, 1830), so the reading will honor both the poet and her most admired reader.

The afternoon's musicians are Steven Howland, fiddle, and Tim Van Egmond, hammered dulcimer. Howland has been playing the fiddle since he discovered traditional New England-style music and dance in the early 1980s. Having expanded his style to include Irish, Cape Breton and Appalachian fiddle music, he is a regular caller at dances throughout the region. Van Egmond is a similarly accomplished hammered dulcimer player; as a member of the contradance band Swallowtail, he has performed nationwide, including appearances on National Public Radio's "A Prairie Home Companion" and at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. He is also a member of the folk singing duo Yankee Notions and a solo performer of music and stories. For more information about the Open House, please call 413-542-8429.

In addition, the film "Seeing New Englandly" will be shown at the Amherst Cinema, 28 Amity Street, at 11:30 a.m. Admission is free for members of Amherst Cinema or the Emily Dickinson Museum and \$5 for all others. Tickets are available at the Cinema, 413-253-2547.

A discussion with filmmaker Ernest Urvater and scriptwriter and narrator Susan Snively will follow the screening at the Amherst History Museum, 67 Amity St. "Seeing New Englandly" addresses an impressive range of Dickinson's topics and features sixteen of the poet's poems and passages from her letters. The videography, shot in all four seasons, accompanies rarely seen illustrations from *Harper's Weekly* and other publications of the period. The film debuted in September to a sold-out audience.

The Emily Dickinson Museum: The Homestead and The Evergreens is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. 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 Emily Dickinson Museum is located at 280 Main Street in Amherst, Mass. The official museum website is www.EmilyDickinsonMuseum.org. Hours through Dec. 31 are Wednesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day; open 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Christmas Eve). The museum will be closed in January and February 2011 and will re-open on March 2, 2011.