THE GLEAM OF AN HEROIC ACT
SUCH STRANGE ILLUMINATION
THE POSSIBLE’S SLOW FUSE IS LIT
BY THE IMAGINATION  FR1686
THE EMILY DICKINSON MUSEUM’S MISSION IS TO **SPARK THE IMAGINATION** BY AMPLIFYING EMILY DICKINSON’S **REVOLUTIONARY POETIC VOICE** FROM **THE PLACE SHE CALLED HOME**.

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When Emily Dickinson wrote her letter to the world, she committed her “Message” to “Hands” she would never “see.”

Now, in the Museum’s sixteenth year, Emily Dickinson’s “Letter” is being answered in unprecedented fashion.

Bill Vickery, a founding member of the Emily Dickinson Museum’s Board of Governors and a pivotal figure in the Museum’s advancement, left to the Museum a tremendous gift of $22 million. With this transformational gift, the Museum stands poised to grow in ways previously unimagined. His bequest, which is designated for the maintenance and improvement of the Museum’s buildings, grounds, and collection, provides funding for much-needed restoration projects. Already benefiting from his bequest is the Museum’s new Triangle Street property, which creates new classroom space, a lighted walkway through Emily Dickinson’s gardens, relocates the administrative offices, and frees up critical space for restoration of the Homestead’s parlors, hallways, and bedchambers.

The past year’s programming has also demonstrated the abundance of history and contemporary creativity flourishing in the Connecticut River Valley. The 2018 Amherst Poetry Festival featured poetry readings, panels, discussion groups, art exhibits, a screening of the film Wild Nights with Emily, and the Emily Dickinson Poetry Marathon, an all-day reading of her 1,789 poems. This summer, the Homestead hosted its first ever conservatory art installation. The site-specific and mixed-media installation transformed the diminutive space where Emily tended flowers and herbs into a visually and audibly stunning art experience. Renowned author and gardener, Marta McDowell, was named as our first Gardener-in-Residence, and her work included an enhancement of Emily Dickinson’s gardens, hosting our Annual Garden Days, and several hands-on workshops. And perhaps most significantly of all, the spring Archaeological Field School, now in its fifth year, discovered pivotal findings that will shape the Museum’s restoration and planning efforts for years to come.

In addition to these exciting programmatic developments, the Museum has received a series of noteworthy grant awards. The Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund will support planning for further restoration of the Homestead. The National Endowment for the Humanities will fund a year of interpretive planning, and an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant will allow us to begin the important work of documenting our 8,000-object collection. With these significant grants and Bill’s bequest, the Museum can more effectively employ its historic spaces and collections to better serve its growing and diverse audience.

As the Museum moves into this exciting new phase, your help makes even more of a difference. In the following pages, you’ll see how your continued support, and that of hundreds of others, has worked over the last year to expand our programs and interpretation, sparking the imagination and amplifying Emily Dickinson’s revolutionary poetic voice. It is because of your generosity that Emily Dickinson’s “Message” can be shared from the place she called home.

With our sincerest thanks,

Jane Wald
Executive Director
SPARK THE IMAGINATION

Educational Engagement is a vital part of the Museum’s work.

Working in collaboration with local and regional educators, the Museum hosted 400 ADULT LEARNERS, 356 K–12 STUDENTS, and 522 COLLEGE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS for private visits.

More than 20 ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS produced innovative public and educational programs.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:
- sponsorship of the Amherst College LitFest
- an oral history project by UMass Amherst Public History students documented the Museum’s origins
- multiple visits from the Hampshire College Creative Writing Class “Emily Dickinson’s Radical Poetics,” culminated in a public reading.

AMHERST COLLEGE STUDENTS in Professor Sánchez-Eppler’s “Emily Dickinson” course met weekly at the Museum and conducted original research contextualizing Dickinson’s poetry in Amherst’s labor and social history.

A LITTLE BREAD, A CRUST - A CRUMB, A LITTLE TRUST, A DEMIJOHN - CAN KEEP THE SOUL ALIVE - FR135

Inspired by Dickinson’s love of baking, one student made fresh bread for program participants to enjoy.
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM CROSSROADS ACADEMY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE visited the Museum on Dickinson’s Birthday to celebrate the culmination of a four-week Dickinson unit created by teacher Steven Glazer. In the classroom, students learned about Dickinson, poetry, scholarship, and literary criticism as they constructed a “Letter to the World” portfolio. Their visit to Amherst emphasized the power of direct engagement with place: they visited the cemetery, archives, Museum, and offered a recitation in the Homestead parlor.

HAMPshire College students read original poetry during the May Arts Night Plus.

More than **50 GIRL SCOUTS** worked with Museum staff to earn their Junior Scribe Badges. Scouts sewed fascicles, composed letters in the Homestead library, and penned original poems at a replica of Dickinson’s desk.

5 interns spent more than 750 hours at the Museum assisting with projects.

Our thanks to Grace Grieve-Carlson (Mount Holyoke College), Esther Song (Amherst College), Noah Zobel (Oberlin College), Isabel Meyers (Amherst College), and Emily Bernhard (UMass Amherst).

Grace and Esther made great strides in the Museum’s Replenishing the Shelves project, completing an updated list of acquisitions and curating two original exhibits.

Noah, Isabel, and Emily contributed to the Museum’s website redesign by migrating content, editing essays, updating bibliographies, and contributing original essays and a new digital timeline of the poet’s life.
Scholars of Dickinson’s life and legacy generated new work in collaboration with the Museum.

Lectures and authors’ talks were regularly hosted by the Museum and featured new ideas in Dickinson scholarship.
100+
DICKINSON SCHOLARS AND ENTHUSIASTS

from all over the world gathered in Amherst in August 2018 for the Emily Dickinson International Society’s meeting “Dickinson: In the Company of Others (Otherness as Company).” The conference was co-sponsored by the Emily Dickinson Museum. Program Director Brooke Steinhauser participated in a panel on Pedagogical Approaches to Dickinson. Executive Director Jane Wald led behind-the-scenes tours at the Museum.

THE RED SKIES MUSIC ENSEMBLE, CO-CREATED BY GEORGE BOZIWICK AND TRUDY WILLIAMS, performed “Emily and Lavinia: Music Making and Dickinson’s Eden.” The concert illuminated the confluence of the Dickinson sisters’ experiments with music and a lifetime botanical passion. Costumed musicians shared rarely-performed vocal and piano music from Dickinson’s own collection of sheet music, and selections of popular songs of the era.

MacArthur-winning poet and translator PETER COLE LED A MASTER CLASS on the translation of poetry and the poetry of translation. Cole illustrated the central place translation holds in our lives and the ways in which it can come to inform both our experience of the world and the making of poems. Literary critic Harold Bloom has likened Cole’s poetry to Dickinson’s.

THE EMILY DICKINSON MUSEUM’S POETRY DISCUSSION GROUP met September through May for lively conversation about Emily Dickinson’s poetry and letters. Featured facilitators offered fresh perspectives on Dickinson’s poetry each month. Topics this year included:

“Tropic Hints” with Christopher Benfey
“Deep Cuts from the Middle Fascicles” with David Garnes
“Planetary Poetics” with Renee Bergland
“‘White’: An Exploration of Dickinson’s Iconic Color” with Ivy Schweitzer
“To a Discerning Eye: Emily Dickinson’s Artistic Milieu” with Keely Sarr
“Thank you for the surgery: Dickinson Revising/Revising Dickinson” with Joy Ladin
“Emily Dickinson’s Varmints” with Susan Snively
“On uses of nature, subjectivity, and observation in Dickinson” with Polina Barskova

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Dickinson’s garden and landscape enhanced the sense of place for Museum visitors.

**Pollinator Fair**
In celebration of Dickinson’s more than 100 poems about bees, butterflies, and other pollinators, the Museum threw a free pollinator fair, complete with pollinator-friendly crafts, games, and a live observation hive.

**Buccaneers of Buzz - Ride Abroad in Ostentation**

The **GARDENER-IN-RESIDENCE SERIES** led by garden historian Marta McDowell continued through the summer of 2018. Participants were delighted by volunteer opportunities, lectures, and workshops, including making seasonal wreaths and swags and propagating figs from cuttings (in homage to Emily Norcross Dickinson’s famed fig trees). The series concluded with a festive potluck and heirloom apple tasting.

**Visitors potted milkweed to take home and welcome monarch butterflies into their own gardens.**

The **2019 ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL AT UMASS-AMHERST** discovered a barn post predating Dickinson tenure, a barnyard area midden containing well-preserved mid-nineteenth-century artifacts, and a stone believed to be the southeastern cornerstone of the barn. These findings help the Museum to better understand the Dickinson barn placement, its use while the Dickersons lived at the Homestead, and the barn’s history.
A BIG THANK YOU to our volunteers who contributed more than 180 hours of service, tending the garden and helping to welcome guests and run activities during signature programs.

2018/2019 VOLUNTEERS Jim Arnold, Janet Bunce, Jackie Burkett, Margaret Carsley, Tulip Chowdhury, Everett Decker, Victoria Dickson, Julie Dupre, Maddy Dye, Clare Green, Carol Hawrlyciw, Jan Hoffman, Ken Hoffman, Judith Hudson, Lois Kackley, Betsy Krogh, Bethany Letendre, Catherine Linberg, Francis Martin, Alberta Martin, Sarah McGillam, Carol Mentos, Elizabeth Miller, Burleigh Muten, Nora Moraulis, Rebecca Morgan, Sarah Razor, BZ Reilly, Linda Smith, Ann Steinhauser, Ella Stocker
REvolutionary Poetic Voice

Free Public Programs at the Museum

We were pleased to offer a range of FREE PROGRAMMING. 6,500 VISITORS of all ages attended free programs and tours, including Arts Nights, workshops, lectures, readings, and open houses.

Free Fun Friday sponsored by the Highland Street Foundation, brought nearly 500 people to experience a summer day at the Museum.

Emily Dickinson Birthday Celebration featured coconut cake, readings from Dickinson’s favorite books, and two student string quartets that drew over 200 friends for the poet’s 188th birthday.
On frosty evenings in early 2019, visitors flocked to the Museum to enjoy a quiet winter-themed tour of the Homestead by candlelight followed by a warm cup of hot cocoa.

**THE ANNUAL POETRY WALK** is a beloved event commemorating Dickinson’s death in May 1886. This year’s stops along the walk explored the hobbies, places, and people who inspired the poet.
Contemporary Poetry and Creativity

TO SEE THE SUMMER SKY IS POETRY, THOUGH NEVER IN A BOOK IT LIE − TRUE POEMS FLEE.

HEADLINERS INCLUDED THE ASTROPOETS, SHAYLA LAWSON (TOP RIGHT), AND OCEAN VUONG (ABOVE).

2018 AMHERST POETRY FESTIVAL

The 2018 AMHERST POETRY FESTIVAL drew over 1,000 participants and featured 25 poets from near and far who came to Amherst to inspire and be inspired. Program highlights included “Donuts & Death: A Baker’s Dozen of Dickinson’s Most Depressing Poems,” a marathon reading of all 1,789 Dickinson poems, and a gallery reading by poets responding to artwork inspired by Dickinson.
The Museum participated in the **BOCH CENTER’S MASSACHUSETTS ARTWEEK** for the first time this year with “The Art of Rain Poetry”—an installation of contemporary poems on Amherst’s sidewalks written in invisible paint that was revealed when it rained. Over 80 poets, as young as five and from near and far, submitted their work for possible inclusion in the project. Thank you to all who participated!

The **INAUGURAL ART INSTALLATION IN THE HOMESTEAD CONSERVATORY** featured a site-specific mixed media installation by artists Tereza Swanda, Ingrid Pichler, and Fletcher Boote. The installation transformed the Dickinson Conservatory with samples of colors from Emily Dickinson’s landscape in painted paper and colored gels that refracted light through the space. A soundscape by Fletcher Boote wordlessly referenced Emily Dickinson’s poetry. Thanks to the 70 artists who submitted proposals.

“**BEFORE YOU BECAME IMPROBABLE**” delighted audiences with performances in fall 2018. This innovative immersive theater experience, created by John Bechtold and produced by the Emily Dickinson Museum, drew participants into the correspondence between Dickinson and her literary mentor Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Over 470 visitors joined us for our **FREE AMHERST ARTS NIGHT PLUS** offerings on the first Thursday of the month. Programs included contemporary poetry readings, musical performances, pop-up art exhibits, and an open mic.

41 creatives from all regions of the country generated original poetry, artwork, and scholarship during their hours in Dickinson’s “mighty room.” These Studio Sessions, which allowed the participant a quiet hour or two in Dickinson’s bedroom, were available by reservation throughout the year.
THE PLACE SHE CALLED HOME

The Emily Dickinson Museum is dedicated to protecting and restoring the Dickinson family homes and gardens.

THE MUSEUM RECEIVED A $300,000 GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT OF HUMANITIES: SUSTAINING CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS to help preserve the Evergreens. The project includes replacing and expanding the building’s heating, ventilation and air conditioning system to better protect art and historical objects.

The collection of approximately 8,000 objects at The Evergreens includes Hudson River School oil paintings, engravings, lithographs, and furnishings, such as lace curtains, drapes, and upholstery; and a large assortment of household wares, toys, and personal items. Matching grant funds are provided by Amherst College.

PLANNING FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE HOMESTEAD is underway thanks to a $30,000 planning grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund. The award will be used to plan the restoration of the hallways, parlors, and bedrooms in Emily Dickinson’s home, tripling the amount of restored interpretive space in the Homestead.

THANKS TO OUR DONORS AND A GENEROUS BEQUEST FROM WILLIAM VICKERY, renovation of the Museum’s Triangle Street property is complete! The Museum’s administrative staff will be transitioning into this new building, freeing up critical space for future restoration of the Homestead. The building is located just steps from the Homestead and includes classroom and study space for programming.
A tribute to William McC. Vickery

He could have done anything after concluding a successful career in advertising in New York. With his Harvard MBA, unusual breadth of proven skills, capacity for warm friendships and, above all, an entertainingly droll appreciation for the ridiculous, he could have continued to prosper enjoying the finer things in his urbane Manhattan life.

Instead, he threw it all over to pursue his enduring passion for Amherst College, moving to Amherst and working for it wherever he was needed – in fundraising, the treasury, even food service management, taking more pleasure in giving than in receiving anything in return. And giving he did, leaving his legacy all over the campus.

Rather more a lover of music than poetry, his agreement to join the first Board of the Emily Dickinson Museum was a bit of an anomaly; often Dickinson’s work mystified him as it does us. But he knew when he was in the presence of greatness, and, over the years, nothing pleased him more than to make a difference to the Museum’s progress with both his time and treasure – and to be appreciated for doing so.

And what a finale he has composed. With his customary precision, his bequest helps his College (which is the Museum’s owner), must be used with restraint (as an endowed fund), and, above all, utterly transforms the young Emily Dickinson Museum, guaranteeing its work for the ages.

Except for Emily, herself, no others will be able to claim as much.

This Tribute was prepared by Kent W. Faerber with the assistance of Polly Longsworth, co-founders of the Museum and, successively, the first two Chairs of its Governing Board. Kent had worked with Bill Vickery for over 40 years.
EMILY DICKINSON IN THE WORLD

Dickinson’s revolutionary voice continues to be heard by poets, writers, artists, film-makers, and scholars who name her as the inspiration for their work.

“EMILY DICKINSON IS THE SINGLE GREATEST AMERICAN POET.”
— PAUL MULDOON
THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, 2019

“In Emily’s Room,” a BBC Radio special that aired in November 2018. CHERYL STRAYED, OCEAN VUONG and SHARON OLDS visited Dickinson’s room, wrote, and examined their writing through their own personal connections to her life and work.

29 TWEETS ABOUT EMILY DICKINSON PER HOUR ON TWITTER

141,000 POSTS ON INSTAGRAM USING THE HASHTAG #EMILYDICKINSON

21 MILLION VIEWS OF THE DICKINSON TRAILER ON YOUTUBE. Producers and actors from the show visited the Museum in 2018.
WE HAD VISITORS FROM

48 states,
Puerto Rico, and the
District of Columbia and
36 countries

VISITORS BY THE NUMBERS

14,097 TOTAL AUDIENCE PARTICIPANTS
10,989 ADULTS
3,108 CHILDREN
3,458 ATTENDED PROGRAMS & EVENTS
10,639 TOOK TOURS

“No institution in America, I think, does better than the Emily Dickinson Museum in making profound and enjoyable uses of its resources…”
—HOWARD, SOUTH CAROLINA

“My husband and I had a wonderful tour of your museum (We were the couple from Ireland and our guide had Irish ancestry!). We have been telling all our friends in Dublin about our visit to the museum, which was the highlight of our trip to Massachusetts. Keep up your wonderful work.”
—COLETTE, IRELAND

“Thank you so much for helping make our trip so special! Deb and I (we had been looking forward to that weekend for months, and rather than not live up to such high high expectations (which btw would be a very Emily Dickinson thing for a weekend to do), it totally exceeded them, mainly because of how nice you guys are and what great events you put on.”
—CHRIS, NYC
“THE WAY HOPE BUILDS HIS HOUSE”

With the receipt of an extraordinarily generous bequest from William McC. Vickery, the Emily Dickinson Museum ended fiscal year 2019 in an unprecedented financial position. The majority of the bequest was designated for an endowed fund to support the future maintenance and improvement of buildings, grounds, and collections. The Museum remains a careful steward of its operating resources, which are unaffected by the bequest, and ended the fiscal year with a balanced operating budget.
FY19 BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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Former Assistant Treasurer, Amherst College

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Founder and Senior Advisor, Wright Builders, Inc.

Laura Yerkovich
Riverside, Connecticut

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Riverside, Connecticut
FAME IS A BEE
FR1763

EmilyDickinsonMuseum.org

EVENING REFLECTIONS: A PORTRAIT OF EMILY DICKINSON BY ARTIST ROBERT SWEENEY HANGING IN JOHNSON CHAPEL AT AMHERST