

# The Salem Magazine

SPRING 2018

## WHAT'S IN A GAME?

CASHING IN AS THE  
BIRTHPLACE OF  
MONOPOLY

### INSIDE

HISTORY EXPLORED:  
THE HOUSE OF THE  
SEVEN GABLES

CREATIVE SPIRIT:  
SALEM ARTS  
ASSOCIATION

PLUS: SPECIAL  
WEDDINGS 2018  
SECTION

\$4.95





Jim Bostick, above and below right, president of the Salem Arts Association, looks over the group's gallery space in the former First Universalist Society at 211 Bridge St. in Salem, below left.

# Inspiring

Creative visionaries bridge a collaborative cultural community

**I**t's dead midwinter. A gray Saturday. Biting cold. The day invites lounging at home with snacks and yawn-fueled naps.

But a lively crew of painters, photographers and people who mix media and transform found objects have come to 211 Bridge St. with purpose: in the service of art under high ceilings in a warm, well-lit building on sloping ground.

They belong to the Salem Arts Association, whose growing ranks approach 225 artists and artisans.

A core group of a dozen or so of them have hung works today for an impromptu and abbreviated exhibit – showing only this afternoon. The framed art includes Salem photos, abstract paintings, drawings and collages.

Spring beckons, and so does a future ripe for creative expression in a building and city poised for cultural growth spurts.

The Salem Arts Association found a fortuitous home here on Bridge Street, where members feel invigorated in their community space, says the SAA's president, Jim Bostick.

"We have enjoyed a full year here, hosted 10 shows," Bostick says. "It has been a great collaboration."

For the last year of the organization's 11-year history, their home has been the Bolles Hall wing at 211 Bridge St. The building is owned by a nonprofit, The Bridge at 211, formed to preserve the historic property and strengthen community and arts by housing social and cultural groups.

Formerly home to the First Universalist Society of Salem, the stately historic meetinghouse was built in 1808. The wing that the arts association occupies was added in 1898. It has tall windows and oodles of natural



**Salem Arts Association member artists visit in the group's headquarters and gallery space at The Bridge at 211, a hub for cultural, social and artistic engagement. They are, from left, Mike Cherry, Brian Best, Stanley Slys, Exhibitions Committee co-chairwoman Heather Stewart and Sara Ashodian.**

light, and holds two galleries, a gift shop and workshop space.

"It is a landmark building," Bostick says. "It feels like you are walking into an art gallery."

It was designed by Federal-period architect William Perley Putnam, whose signature works in Salem include the Custom House, says Dale Yale, co-chairwoman of the Bridge at 211 board of directors.

The First Universalist cornerstone, placed Aug. 17, 1808, had to be set at low tide, because in those days, the North River came all the way up to Bridge Street, she says. The riverbank's presence explains why the meetinghouse was built on an incline.

# *the arts*

By TERRY DATE • Photos by MIKE SPRINGER



Salem Arts Association President Jim Bostick, left, and Exhibitions Committee co-chairwoman Heather Stewart hang a photograph in the association's gallery space at The Bridge at 211.

Yale says the Salem Arts Association nicely complements the building's other community arts-oriented tenants – Neverland Theater Company and the Salem Scottish Dancers.

"They are a wonderful addition to the city and the arts," Yale says of the association.

Yale, Bostick and SAA Vice President Judith Coughlin look forward to the arts group hosting performance art upstairs in the Bolles Hall ballroom and in the original building's Murray Hall, a sanctuary with box pews, balcony and pipe organ.

## Cultural momentum

The arts association has grown from humble beginnings, starting informally with a dozen or so members meeting in a clubhouse shanty on Artists' Row before moving to an old jewelry store on Essex Street.

When the Peabody Essex Museum expansion claimed the SAA space, the association landed a new location at the Bridge at 211.

Coughlin, who has lived in Salem for 40 years, says the city enjoys a rich arts heritage, going back to author Nathaniel Hawthorne, architect Samuel McIntire and artists Frank Benson and Philip Little. Duke Ellington and other 20th-century jazz greats from the big-band era played at the Salem Willows.

In recent years, the city has been celebrating this heritage with festivals and through the continued growth of programming at Peabody Essex Museum.

"The Peabody Essex Museum has done a great job of bringing people in for the arts, and there's the Salem Film Fest, Salem Literary Festival and the Salem Jazz and Soul Festival," Coughlin says.

Bostick says the stage for a burgeoning arts presence has been in the making for years.

The Salem Arts Festival, the Salem Arts Association, the Salem Film Fest, and the Salem Jazz and Soul Festival all have either recently celebrated their 10-year anniversaries or will do so this

year.

The groups routinely collaborate on their festivals and celebrations, feeding off the synergy.

The SAA, for instance, joins the city's three-day Salem Arts Festival in June, participates in The House of the Seven Gables plein-air residency, hosts an annual exhibit of works inspired by a Peabody Essex Museum show, and brings in musicians to accompany exhibit opening nights.

Its latest show, a teen art exhibit running through the end of April, showcases artwork by students from the city's schools.

This arts-centric energy perhaps explains why SAA members have ventured forth this Saturday to share their work with The Salem Magazine during the group's winter hiatus – a time for painting walls and preparing for the 14 shows and events that line the days ahead in 2018.

The members are an eclectic group, men and women, professionals and working class as well as retirees, each of them eager to show their



Salem Arts Association members Susan Schrader, left, of Marblehead, and Kirsten Fischler, of Salem, catch up in a corner of the gallery. Hanging behind them is their artwork — Fischler's "Mirus IV," right, and Schrader's "Self Portrait," top left.

latest creations, share trade secrets with each other and extol their evolving association.

## Mutually inspiring

Sara Ashodian, a Salem artist who does mixed-media work and paints on wood, has belonged to the association for 10 years.

She traces her interest in art to her early years in Springfield playing with dough and icing in her family's bakery. The Massachusetts College of Art and Design graduate likes to see what other artists at SAA are doing, and talk shop about projects.

Ashodian is interested in colleague Brian Best's works with vintage and found objects, including yardsticks, crutches, forks, a colander and fireplace tools. Best has fashioned fish from crutches and flags from yardsticks.

"It puts ideas in your mind, so that when I look at some of my collections, I think about how to work with them in a different way," Ashodian says.

Best grew up in the area and now lives in Salem. He has long-standing experience in woodworking and antiques and has parlayed those skills into his art, pursuing it in his retirement. He calls it modern folk art.

He's witnessed growth in his work and that of his fellow SAA artists,

including sculptor Dianne McAllister.

"When I joined, she was doing sculpted heads; now she is doing full-blown sculptures," Best says.

## PROMOTING YOUNG ARTISTS

The Salem Arts Association awards two annual scholarships to young people for furthering the arts.

### ELLEN HARDY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Ellen Gibson Hardy (1952-2017) was a profound influence on the Salem artistic scene through her involvement with the Salem Public Arts Commission, the annual Salem Arts Festival and Salem Arts Association, which she strongly advocated for. A prolific artist and performer, she served for several years as a member and president of Salem Arts Association. The association awards one or more \$500 scholarship to a high school senior attending any school in Salem who will be pursuing a visual arts education following graduation.

### PAULA BEAULIEU ART SCHOLARSHIP

Paula Frances Beaulieu (1947-2014) spent her career as a school teacher as well as an author of children's educational books, counselor and educational toy developer. Most notably, she was an art educator, running her own business teaching people of all ages to "Connect with Their Creativity." After growing up in Methuen and living in Florida as well as Reading, she spent the latter part of her life in Salem. The annual scholarship awards \$1,000 to a Salem High School senior who will be pursuing visual arts education after graduation.

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Artist Brian Best of Salem poses at the Salem Arts Association with his sculpture, "Fish 84661," created from Nabisco cracker tins and other found metal objects, including a fireplace shovel for the tail. The number in the title refers to an industrial serial number stamped on the base.

Kirsten Fischler moved to Salem from Pennsylvania two years. She likes being part of an organization still in its formative stage. She looks forward to having a role in the SAA's growth, presenting workshops for members on topics including marketing artwork at outdoor festivals.

All the artists here enjoy being part of a group. Sharing ideas encourages progress and curbs the loneliness that comes with studio work, says Stanley Slys, a Salem photographer, and Susan Schrader, a mixed-media painter from Marblehead.

David LaChapelle, who does photography and paints maritime scenes, grew up in Salem.

He has witnessed its many changes and rebirth over the years. The city has history, architecture and tourism, but has lacked a way for the arts and artists to grow. He sees the Salem Art Association filling that void.

The SAA helps the city, people who appreciate art and artists.

"It helps us all," he says. 🌟

## 2018 EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

- ▶ **"Muse,"** through April 29; Salem Arts Association members reveal what inspires them.
- ▶ **"Young at Art,"** through April; showcase of local teenagers' artwork.
- ▶ **"Trains, Planes, and Automobiles,"** April 6 to May 27; images inspired by transportation and travel.
- ▶ **"Exhibition Exhibition,"** May 4 to 27; an artistic exploration of personal expression through fashion and presentation; acts as accompaniment to the Salem Arts Festival's Spring Fashion Show.
- ▶ **"Game On!"** June 1 to July 29; in conjunction with the Salem Arts Festival, exploring the meaning of play in celebration of the 130th anniversary of Salem's own Parker Brothers Toy and Game Company.
- ▶ **"En Plein Air at The House of The Seven Gables,"** June 1 to 24; exhibit of work created during this year's plein-air residency at The House of the Seven Gables.
- ▶ **Solo Exhibit,** July 6 to 29; SAA member solo exhibition.
- ▶ **"Land and Sea,"** Aug. 3 to 26; spotlight on Salem's maritime history and coastline.
- ▶ **Solo Exhibit II,** Aug. 3 to 26; SAA member solo exhibition.
- ▶ **"Untold Stories,"** 12th annual Peabody Essex Museum Inspirational Exhibition, Sept. 1 to Nov. 4; inspired by two museum exhibitions, "The Last Empresses of China: The Forbidden City's Untold Story" and "Sally Mann: A Thousand Crossings."
- ▶ **"Making Macabre,"** Oct. 5 to Nov. 4; exhibition highlighting Salem's history with witchcraft, religion and Halloween.
- ▶ **"Member Showcase,"** Nov. 8 to Dec. 16; closing exhibit spotlighting SAA members' artwork.

## SALEM ARTS ASSOCIATION

- ▶ **Where:** The Bridge at 211, 211 Bridge St., Salem (enter on Ash Street)
- ▶ **Hours:** Open Saturdays, Sundays and Monday holidays, noon to 6 p.m.; and by appointment
- ▶ **More information:** 978-745-4850, [salemartsassociation.org](http://salemartsassociation.org)