

FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

Huge Success Labor Day Weekend



A young shopper peruses a potential purchase in the Kid's Book Room at the 2013 Festival of Books. CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

what's coming up



THE GALLERY

VETS:
Portraits of Veterans of War
Photographs by William Wright
Open Hours: 1:00-4:00pm
November 9, 10, 16, 17, 23
December 7, 8, 14, 15
Admission free
SEE PAGE 7 FOR MORE INFO

conversations with neighbors

**Zak Pelaccio In
Conversation with Ruth Reichl**
December 14—4:00-6:00pm
Reception following
Admission \$20
SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE INFO

DECK the HALLS

**Good Globe Singing School
Community Sing**
Join Sheri Bauer Mayorga and students
in a program of fall and winter songs
December 7—1:00-2:30pm
Admission free
SEE PAGE 4 FOR MORE INFO

Revels

**Annual Winter Revels Party
and Dinners**
Support the Academy while enjoying a
festive evening of great food and friends
February 22, 2014
Cocktail party—5:30pm Dinners—8:00pm
SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE INFO

HANDMADE HOLIDAY

Handmade Holiday is taking a
"Christmas vacation" for 2013
Look for a big comeback in the 2014
season

volunteers

Volunteers Shine at Academy Events



Keith Galluzzo and Wayne Greene pitch in at the Garden Market on the Green in June.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have always been the backbone of the Academy. Today, with the organization once again operating on an all-volunteer basis, their role has never been more crucial.

Every program and event at the Academy must be broken out into a multitude of jobs, functions and services that begin long in advance of the event itself. Organizing committees meet for months, brainstorming ideas, handling publicity and marketing, selling advertising, and producing our signature annual fundraisers—Revels, Hidden Gardens and the Festival of Books—as well as dozens of other events, shows and programs throughout the year. CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Welcome!

It's my pleasure to present the first edition of the Spencertown Academy Newsletter.

Between programs, gallery shows and other events, as well as building upgrades and our transition to an all-volunteer organization, this has been a busy and productive year. At a series of community conversations, we talked about the Academy's future directions and, more importantly, listened to what you had to say. Our newsletter, which we hope to publish on a regular basis, provides an effective way to keep the conversation going.



care and upkeep of our treasured historic structure. The boiler has been rebuilt, the elevator and A/C system cleaned and serviced, and the fire alarms, smoke detectors and emergency monitoring system tested and upgraded. (Our apologies if you were startled one Tuesday evening in October when we conducted a fire drill with five local fire companies.)

One question that comes up time and again is "How is the Academy doing?" Our first year on an all-volunteer footing has been challenging but rewarding. To borrow a phrase from an old friend, "We're in good shape – for the shape we're in."

Our ability to achieve as much as we did this year on our own is due in large part to the remarkable job Mary Anne Lee has done as executive director over the past seven years. Her creativity and resourcefulness in developing the templates for each of these events and generously providing guidance and assistance throughout the transition have made all the difference. We owe Mary Anne a major debt of gratitude for her tireless efforts on the Academy's behalf.

In 2013, all three of our signature fundraising events – the Revels, Hidden Gardens Tour and Festival of Books – have been successful, bringing in more money than in previous years.

Much has been accomplished this year, but we're still working through a long to-do list. We will be launching our year-end appeal soon and we need your financial support. But we also need **you**. Please consider volunteering on one of our committees or lending a hand at one of our events. We couldn't have achieved a fraction of our success this year without the talent and hard work of our volunteers.

Membership has grown and building rentals are up, with classes in singing, ballet and yoga as well as a rich schedule of readings and concerts. We held our two most successful gallery shows ever this year; our latest, "VETS: A Portrait of Veterans of War," will be up through December 15. The Academy's popular Conversations with Neighbors series has featured two great programs so far this season; the third, with Ruth Reichl and Zak Pelaccio, is set for December 14.

Thank you for your support. And my warmest wishes to you and those you love for a happy Thanksgiving and holiday season.

We've been busy making physical improvements as well. A building committee has been re-established to oversee the

building committee report

Preservation Architect Studying Academy Building

Built in 1847, the Spencertown Academy is showing its age. The good news is that the Academy's Building Committee has been re-established, with responsibility for overseeing the preservation and maintenance of this treasured resource.

Chuck Weinlein, who has performed much of the repair work on the building in recent years, as well as several other members of the community who care about the building.

accomplished and highly-regarded preservation architects.

Marilyn has an extensive resume, locally and across the country. She has worked with the Academy in the past and was involved in the recent restoration of St. Peter's Church across the green in Spencertown. She has begun working on her report and the committee continues to meet as we get her feedback. Her full report is scheduled for completion by year-end.



The committee's members bring a variety of talents and expertise to the job. We are lucky to have Cherie Schwartz, a preservation planner and project management consultant who specializes in historical preservation projects and local architect Ben Puccio, who has a history with the Academy and was involved in previous work done on the building. Also on board is local contractor

At its first meeting, held last December, the re-established committee outlined a master plan with these priorities:

1. Identifying and addressing the most urgent needs, notably roof repairs
2. Performing all necessary work, including exterior painting
3. Making additional improvements as needed
4. Maintaining the building on an ongoing basis.

As a first step, the committee agreed to engage an experienced preservation architect to perform an existing conditions study, covering the projected scope of work and time frame. Following an intensive search, the committee retained Marilyn Kaplan, one of the area's most

Not surprisingly, our first priority is the repair of the roof, which is leaking. We will share the findings of the full report with you when it is received.

The Building Committee needs additional members: If you would like to play a role in the physical preservation of the Academy, consider joining the Committee.

We would also appreciate hearing from anyone who can fill in details about past repair and restoration work on the Academy. Please contact us at info@spencertownacademy.org or 518 392 3693.

Get Ready for Winter Gala

Revels, the Academy's longest-running fundraising event, will take place on February 22.



Premiering more than 25 years ago, Revels is among the most eagerly anticipated fixtures of the Columbia County winter calendar. Held annually, this moveable feast is an opportunity to escape the winter doldrums and catch up with neighbors and friends.

Revels

begins at the Academy with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres prepared by our very own

Let's Eat culinary stars. Then it's off to one of the many elegant dinner parties hosted by friends of the Academy.

"For newcomers to Columbia County, the Revels is a wonderful way to meet new friends, sample delicious food, and support the Academy, while enjoying the beauty of our 1847 Greek Revival building," says Barbara Deisroth, board member and chairperson.

The Revels is set for Saturday, February 22, 2014. Mark your calendar—and come in from the cold!

festival of books report

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Huge Success

The reviews are in: This year's Festival of Books Garneres Raves!

The planning and execution of the annual Festival, which takes place over the Labor Day weekend, is the coordinated work of many volunteers putting in long hours starting months earlier.

It's a massive effort that involves sorting, moving and pricing books, recruiting speakers, preparing gallons of home-cooked chili and working at the various events, beginning with the Friday evening wine-and-cheese reception.

At this year's well-attended Saturday morning children's programs, parents and grandparents came with little ones to meet and take a souvenir picture with a super-sized "Llama Llama". They also gathered round to hear volunteer Nellie Rustick read aloud about said llama from books written for preschoolers through kindergarteners. Young volunteers supervised even younger readers in making and decorating handmade books and bookmarks to take home. Visitors could enjoy the charming and creative winning designs of a book-mark competition, which were on display throughout the Academy. The competition took place last spring at Chatham's Mary E. Dardess Middle School.



Llama Llama and friends Elizabeth Bilotti and Luisa Suk.

Large, enthusiastic crowds turned out for appearances by New York Times columnist Verlyn Klinkenborg, poet-teacher Taylor Mali, historian Hugh Howard and a dramatic reading from Peter Biskind's book about Henry Jaglom's lunches with Orson Welles, performed by Robert Zukerman and Bernie Kukoff.



The Cookbook Café was busy serving delicious homemade chili and cornbread made by members of the Board. Academy bakers donated a variety of sweet treats to enjoy with coffee or cider.

The Festival was also a financial success. More than 6,500 books were sold, grossing about \$20,000—comparable to last year's total. And our net income (after expenses) represented an improvement over 2012.

Many people have asked what happens to the books and other media that don't sell by the end of the festival. The thousands of donations the Academy receives each year don't all stay in our neighborhood; the ripple effect can be felt for hundreds of miles. This year, unsold items were donated to two non-profit organizations: Chances for Children in the South Bronx, which accepted most of the children's books for their program; and Big-Hearted Books in Foxboro, Massachusetts, which collected the remaining books, CDs, and DVDs, to be distributed to boys and girls clubs, senior centers, libraries, prisons and other worthy organizations.



Bernie Kukoff and Robert Zukerman reading excerpts from Peter Biskind's book, *My Lunches with Orson*

Meanwhile, preliminary planning has begun for Festival of the Books 2014. We are already in discussions with some exciting authors who may be available to join us. Watch for updates in the new year.

And if you'd like to pitch in on next year's efforts, please let us know. The more hands on deck, the more fun we will have.