HANDMADE HOLIDAY
The Academy’s Craft as Gift Show opens November 24-26

It’s time to get your holiday shopping list in shape: Handmade Holiday: Craft as Gift Show opens on Friday, November 24 at the Spencer-town Academy.

This beloved regional event will continue on Saturday and Sunday, November 25 and 26 from 10am to 4pm and again on Saturday and Sunday, December 2 and 3.

Going local
“Handmade Holiday is a wonderful opportunity for holiday gift shoppers and art lovers to ‘go local’ at a high-quality sale that features an amazing selection of items,” says Vivian Wachsberger, chair of the Handmade Holiday Committee.

Items, all made by Columbia, Ulster, and Berkshire area craftspersons, include jewelry, apparel, quilts, children’s toys, cutting boards, baskets, ceramics, tin sconces, paper crafts, birdhouses, soaps and lotions, holiday ornaments and evergreen swags, plus edibles such as jellies, toffees, fudge and sugarplums. “We even have homemade dog biscuits and catnip pillows,” Vivian says.

New faces and old
Shoppers can choose from crafts and artwork by more than 40 regional artists and artisans, about a third of whom are new. This year’s participants include Sue Anderson, Andrea Angerame, Martha Belardo, Lisa Bouchard, Michael Boyer, Mike Brenner, Diane and Bill Brynda, Kay Castelle, Annette Chambers, Maria Crespo, Frances Culley, Pamela Dalton, MaryAnne Davis, Bina Evans, John Fiorillo, Sandy Flavin, Walter Fleming, Joyce Flower, Lisa Goodman, Ulrike Grannis, Patricia Gravett, Sarah Haze, Ali Hermann, Betsy Howard, Sharon Koomler, Agnes Larcenaire, Susan Levine, Eryln Madonia, Marley Mills, Bill Morency, Clarke Olsen, Alicia Peck, Fritz Platt, Elizabeth Post, Barbara Rosenthal, Melissa Shinsato, Alexis Silver, Leni Singerman, Frank Spina, Sabrina Tranchita, Vivian Wachsberger, Fahari Wambura, Barbara Willner, and Betsy Winters-Russell.

what’s coming up

HANDMADE HOLIDAY
Curated craft and gift show sale featuring items by 40+ local artisans and artists.
Friday-Sunday, November 24-26 and December 2-3, 10am-4pm
See article, this page.

Holiday Crafts
Beginning Needle Felting Workshop
With Martha Belardo of Hudson Valley Fiber Arts
Saturday, December 9, noon-4pm
Ages 13 and up - $65 per person -- includes materials and refreshments
pre-register at spencertownacademy.org

Revels
Annual Winter Revels party and dinners
Support the Academy while enjoying a festive evening of great food and friends
Saturday January 27, 2018
Watch for details.

Austerlitz Bicentennial
Celebrating our community’s history
Saturday, June 9, 2018
Watch for details.

Hidden Gardens 2018
Saturday, June 16, 2018
Lecture & breakfast: 8:30-10am
Garden market: 9am-3pm
Self-guided tour: 10am-4pm
Watch for details.

Lend a hand! If you’d like to volunteer at Handmade Holiday, please email volunteer@spencertownacademy.org.

Crowning Achievement

The first stage of an extensive and long-needed restoration of the Academy’s 1847 building began in September. Working from the top down, workers began replacing the roof and reconstructing the bell tower, cornice and chimney. As work continues in the new year, the Academy will launch the public phase of its building campaign. Details will be announced in January.
Taking Stock
The pleasures of looking back—and ahead

Is it my imagination or do the seasons fly by faster these days? Not that I’m complaining. Summer’s gone, and with it the light-filled evenings of Daylight Savings. But these crisp pre-winter days are also a time to treasure in Spencertown. Handmade Holiday returns soon, and then it’s on to Thanksgiving, the holidays, and the joys of sharing good times with those we love.

Here at the Academy, this is also a season for taking stock—and pride—in all we’ve accomplished since the beginning of the year. Our signature events—Revels, Hidden Gardens, and the Festival of Books—were profitable and well-attended and once again drew enthusiastic reviews. We produced a full schedule of outstanding concerts and gallery shows. And we began a much-needed restoration of our historic 1847 building.

But what I especially marvel at each year at this time is the commitment, energy and talent of our volunteers. At the risk of repeating myself, none of our successes would have been possible without them.

But it also bears re-emphasizing that our amazing volunteers couldn’t have achieved as much as they did without the support of Academy members and friends. And that is where you come in.

As we look ahead to a new year, your help will be more crucial than ever as we continue to revitalize and expand our programming and serve our community. It is November as I write this and we will soon be reaching out to you for your support as we launch our year-end appeal. I hope you’ll give as generously as you are able.

Meanwhile, my warmest wishes to you and yours for a happy, healthy and peaceful Thanksgiving and holiday season.

Nick Van Alstine, President
Madaline Sparks, Vice President
Jo-Anne Bilotti, Treasurer
Judith Choate, Secretary

Warming Trend
If Revels comes, can spring be far behind?

Revels is just around the corner. The Academy’s longest-running signature event is set for Saturday, January 27, 2018.

Premiering nearly 30 years ago, this moveable feast is an opportunity to escape the winter blahs, enjoy a great dinner, meet new friends and support the Academy. The festive evening begins at the Academy with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres. Then it’s off to one of the many elegant dinner parties hosted by friends of the Academy.

Revels is made possible by the generosity of many people, including friends of the Academy who open their homes, benefactors and patrons who underwrite the cost of the event, and committee members and volunteers whose creativity and hard work bring it all together.

If you would like to host a dinner or have any questions about the event, email the Academy at info@spencertownacademy.org or call 518.392.3693. Tickets will go on sale soon.

Meanwhile, mark your calendar for January 27—and come in from the cold!
Like fine wines and weekend jeans, the Festival of Books, the Academy’s annual literary lovefest, gets better and better over time. “This year’s Festival may have been the best ever in its 12-year history,” says Academy board member Jill Kalotay, who once again co-chaired the Labor Day weekend event with board member David Highfill.

While geared toward readers, the Festival is also a way to feature and support writers, providing a stage for authors and poets to read from and discuss their work, and for high school students to read their prizewinning short stories and essays. “The audiences for all the events were consistently engaged and energetic, even despite some atrocious weather,” says David.

**No rainchecks requested**

Presentation highlights this year included a joint reading and discussion by Wesley Brown (*Dance of the Infidels*) and Jonathan Gould (*Otis Redding*), focused on the worlds of jazz and soul and R&B. And undeterred by an incessant downpour pounding on the presentation tent, Elinor Lipman (*On Turpentine Lane*) and Louie Cronin (*Everyone Loves You Back*) shared the stage for “If These Walls Could Talk,” a discussion of their romantic comedies. The rain similarly failed to dampen audience enthusiasm for Greg Mitchell’s talk about his book *The Tunnels: Escapes Under the Berlin Wall and the Historic Films the JFK White House Tried to Kill.*

The Festival is a major fund-raiser for the Academy, with book sales accounting for most of the weekend’s proceeds. “But there are always a lot of books left unsold, and this year, with the help of energetic volunteers, many of the ‘leftovers’ were delivered to local charities,” says Jill. “They include St. Catherine’s Center for Children, the Claverack Library, Second Show, and the Pittsfield Adult Learning Center, among several other worthy organizations.” Adds David, “It was satisfying to be able to share the wealth with other non-profits.”

**With a little help from our friends**

Planning and producing the Festival require a huge investment of time and effort beginning months in advance and continuing through Labor Day weekend—all of it the work of volunteers. Funding was provided this year by major donors including Kinderhook Bank and Herrington’s, as well as numerous individual sponsors. In addition, five fiction writers featured at the Festival were generously supported by grants from the Poets & Writers’ Readings & Workshops program.

Stay tuned for updates about Festival of Books 2018 in the new year. “And, of course, if you’d like to be involved,” says Jill, “please let us know.”

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**Musical October**

**The Academy was home to outstanding musical performances on three consecutive weekends in October**

At an October 8 benefit for Kids Need Music, Bard College’s The Orchestra Now (TÖN) played works by Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schuman. Kids Need Music is a nonprofit initiative dedicated to ensuring that schools in the Hudson City School District have instruments for their music program.

On the 13th, the local violin-guitar duo Quiet in the Head performed as part of the Natural Mic music series, hosted by the folk/Americana band Living Roots.

And on October 21, Violinist Mitsuko Suzuki and Bend the Knotted Oak pianist Uel Wade offered a program of dance-inspired works by Tchaikovsky, Ravel and others.
The Jury Is In  Winners of Juried Art Show are announced

Artists Lizbeth Shelley and Diane Fader were the first and second-place winners, respectively, of the Academy’s 2017 Regional Juried Art Show. Honorable Mentions went to Valerie Hoffman, Suzanne Ouellette and John Kelly.

Meanwhile, the Gallery Committee is busy working on next year’s shows, beginning with the Annual Members’ Show in April. All current Academy members may submit up to two pieces for inclusion. In addition to a full schedule of openings, works by Chatham elementary school students taking part in the Academy’s Arts Voyage arts-in-education program will be featured at a Gallery show in May.

Pitch in! Volunteer at the Academy

The Academy’s acclaimed signature programs like Handmade Holiday, Revels, Hidden Gardens and Festival of Books, are the work of Academy members and friends who help out at events and gallery shows, behind the scenes and in many other ways. 
They’ll tell you that volunteering is rewarding and fun, not to mention a great way to connect with friends and neighbors and give back to the community.

There are many ways to be involved—so how would you like to help? Assist at an event or program? Join a committee? Develop an idea of your own? We’re already looking ahead to 2018 and there will be many opportunities to participate. So please let us hear from you.

For information on upcoming volunteer opportunities, email Ann Vartanian at volunteer@spencertownacademy.org.