

Museum of Rhinebeck History
Celebrating Rhinebeck's Rich Heritage
Spring 2019 Issue

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Museum has started the year with a number of project goals in site.

I want to thank everyone for their support and donations, also many thanks to the hard work of our Board members for their input and help with the projects planned for this year.

The Museum remembers fondly Kay Verrilli, who was an important part of the Museum from its beginning in 1992. She was a great contributor; by her knowledge of Rhinebeck history, her many hours of work at the Museum, and her mentoring of new members (like myself). Her participation, in its many forms, will be missed.

The Museum will open this year on June 1st with the opportunity for the public to visit the museum as well as purchasing items from our "yard sale" vendors. Don't miss out, be a part of the opening day.

Once again our biggest project will be the **Second Annual Golf Tournament**, to be held on June 24, 2019. We felt last year it was a successful fundraiser and we hope, if you were not involved in some way, you will be this year. Not a golfer? You can participate in a variety of ways, so keep us in mind.

The exhibit "**Women of Rhinebeck**" will continue this year with a few additions. Our exhibits are free to the public, please come and enjoy some history. The Museum is open on Saturdays from 1pm to 4pm (or by special arrangement).

The Museum plans on holding "**History Revealed**" at the Starr Library, date and time to be announced. Those that attend can use their senses as they see, hear, and touch the items that are "taken out of the box" as history is revealed. Come and experience items usually not on display at the Museum.

Here's hoping the rest of the year is productive and goes well.

Remember the Museum of Rhinebeck History is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization and donations are always welcome! It's never too late become a supporter.

Cordially,

Lida Traver-Landy, President

REMEMBERING KAY VERRILLI

This past January, Kay Verrilli, former Museum Board member and longtime supporter passed away. Kay was a tireless volunteer in Rhinebeck organizations and campaigns.

In the 1970s and 1980s, she worked on the "Save the Dock" campaign to save the Rhinecliff ferry dock. Her work for this campaign is highlighted in our "Women of Rhinebeck" exhibit



Ferry approaching the Rhinecliff Dock c.1929-1962

There may never have been a museum without Kay Verrilli. Her many years of accessioning, setting up and maintaining research files, serving as president and exhibit chair provided solid leadership.



Kay during the "Save the Dock" campaign

We will miss Kay's expertise and knowledge, which were instrumental in the Museum's creation and continued operation.

Over the years, Kay was honored not only by the Museum, but by the Dutchess County Historical Society, Starr Library, Rhinebeck Historical Society and many more for all her work. She will be missed.

2ND ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Please join us on June 24, 2019, for our 2nd Annual Golf Tournament at Red Hook Golf Club.

Last year's weather was perfect for a round of golf, players couldn't wait to start the game.



Golfers are still talking about the event. There were contests, prizes, and cash for the top team. This is an exciting fundraiser for you, your friends and family, you don't want to miss out!



Be a sponsor or join us for a round on this beautiful course!

For more information call Mara at 845-797-5070 or email us: museumofrhinebeckhistory@gmail.com.

“WOMEN OF RHINEBECK” EXHIBIT

We will reprise our exhibit on the women from Rhinebeck's past and present this year along with the display on WWI as 2019 marks the anniversary of the end of war celebrations in Rhinebeck. We have updated the display on women, which will include a profile on a local female artist, **Uta Von Bern**, who lived here in Rhinebeck. Her son, Tom McCullough has kindly shared his recollections of his mother and her art in this newsletter.

GROWING UP WITH UTA...A GIFT IN OUR MIDST By Tom McCullough, with introduction by Frank Gaglio

It is rare that we get to know someone through the things they leave behind. An odd statement perhaps from someone that has built a life-long career appraising, buying, and selling other people's possessions. But like any other job, things can become routine and we become less passionate and somewhat insulated by the task at hand until one day, a door opens and we are privileged to an intensely spiritual and private world...the world of Uta Von Bern.

Though the words you are about to read are exceedingly personal and shared with us by Uta's son, Tom McCullough, MD, extreme skier, dedicated father, and husband to Trudy, Tom opens a window to the life of his amazing Mother, whom I wish I had known in this lifetime.

Living only a few blocks from my home, I had never heard of Uta, which is surprising since antiques and art are my daily diet. Then, a dear friend and neighbor, Lindy Wright mentioned she knew someone who might need my services and I was introduced to Tom and Trudy, who had come east to settle Uta's estate. Not only did we become instant friends, but when I was invited into Uta's home, a sea of calm emotion and familiarity washed over me followed by a comforting embrace which touched my soul and slowed my breath.... I knew this was a special place and bowed to its owner.

The story of Uta is what books are written about and movies are made of, but it is also a story still being written as she was a brilliant, creative and spirited artist who painted a world all around her from flights of fantasy to life's reality and insightful mystery for us to determine the meaning. In today's art vernacular, she would be considered an "outsider" since her subjects and stylistic approach defy the norm of trained and tutored artists possessing a naivety, which memorialized the world she believed in and interpreted on canvas.

I was deeply honored when Tom asked me to handle the 100 plus pieces of Uta's art work and share it with the world and like-minded connoisseurs, which is where my voice softens and Tom's story begins.

Growing up with Uta.

My Mom died on April Fools Day 2018. It also happened to be Easter...I missed her departure by three days having decided to return for a visit and evaluate the increasing level of skilled care she required. She lived alone in her home and had been

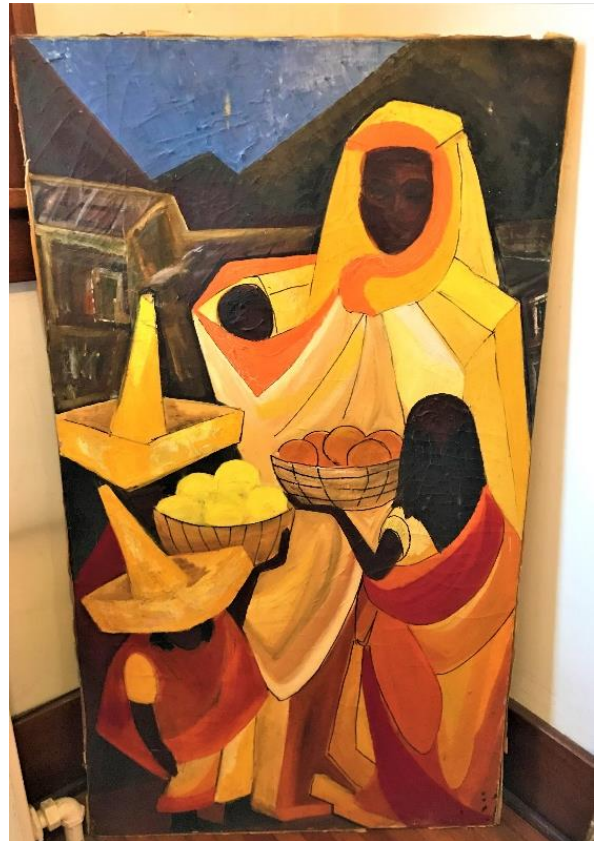
blind for about five years. I say about because she never came out and told me her vision was failing. It became subtly obvious when after returning the yogurt to the refrigerator, she was upset that I hadn't put it back in the same place. The fridge light never worked and she no longer needed it anyway. She had structured her life around her evolving blindness. Everything was in its ordained place and I had disrupted that order. She was 91 years old and timing her exit on the Resurrection and a prankster's holiday seemed fitting. My last conversation before I left in mid-March was about her fears. Not out of character she responded that "it's taking too long." What? I said. "Dying!" she mustered in her weakened voice. "I'll be back soon," I said. She was totally present in the now, clear headed, savvy on current events and a remarkable raconteur of her long history. But she had other plans and although the death certificate spoke of codeable maladies, she had none. She willed herself gone, stopped eating and left her mark. A parent's passing requires a summing up, an embracing of all parts that made her life unique. As her son, she left me with an incalculable legacy. I always called her Uta. I don't remember if she told me to or if Mom didn't naturally work with her. I felt loved but not coddled. It's surprising since her childhood nestled between the turmoil of the Weimar Republic and the ascendancy of NAZI Germany was remarkable for the instability of her family and friends. She had no peers or relatives to model parenting skills. That as well as her artistic talent she picked up along the way, a journey out of the post war ruin of Essen, to Dallas, Texas, in the late 40's as a war bride, and then moving to New York in the early 50's as a single mother.



Uta's NYC Model Career Photo

Trading on her looks and a charming command of English, she became a model in Manhattan, she married a widowed Wall Street investment advisor with an equally young son. Art became her passion

and she left modeling to focus on oil painting. Growing up in Manhattan, I cannot remember a time that was empty of the calming scents of oils spread on a palate and turpentine washed brushes.



Oil on canvas, "Cubist Family with Fruit"

After my step Dad died in 1962, she moved to a farm in upstate New York and continued painting and doing exhibitions. She converted the horse barn into a bright, airy studio. She co-founded the Catskill Art Society and hosted showings on her farm. From that moment on there was no safe space for an empty space. Every blank surface became her canvas. Where to start? The white 63 Volkswagen Beetle was covered in swirls of oil. The downstairs bathroom sported cubist design on the toilet tank and sink. Move into the kitchen and the wood stove was a pastiche of bold color. The odd screen door or windows found in the hay barn provided the frames for stretched canvas.



Tom and Trudy McCollough with the back of shelves painted by Uta.

She loved convertibles and the redder the better. 1955 Singer Hunter Roadster, 1962 Austin Healey 3000. She had flair and exuberance. She kept her keys harnessed to the end of a flyswatter so she could find them in her purse. To a 13 year old boy she seemed to go out of her way to embarrass. “Hey, why does your Mom have a flyswatter in her purse?” As she settled into rural life in the Catskills she left the glamour of Manhattan behind. She had really detested modeling, but found it paid the bills. In Germany, she had wanted to be a medical doctor, but interrupted by war worked as a teenage Red Cross volunteer. Once she moved from Greenwich Village to Roscoe she started wearing men’s clothes. She was still glamorous. When I was clearing out her home of 45 years, I realized that most of her clothes were menswear and extra large. Amazing that a 69 year old man can wear most of the clothes your 90 year old mother wore! So old they were in style again. It seemed she as leaving the city couture realm she had traded in and was hiding her figure and persona in androgynous cover. By the time she moved with her mother to Rhinebeck in the mid 1970’s, she stopped painting large canvases and focused on pastels and small acrylics.



Uta's Studio in her home, Rhinebeck.

She trained as a yoga instructor and directed time to bringing yoga to local retirement homes. She

immersed herself in the local AA and sponsored many acolytes. Her new home offered more blank spaces. Now nothing escaped the brush. One gallon milk jugs, book shelves, kitchen cabinets, cracker boxes, even light switch covers were part of her oeuvre. As her vision failed and her world narrowed to a path of darkness, she worked her hands to produce clay figurines. These were wild creations of her darkened mind. Robbed of vision and her world of color, she awaited her exit.... **Tom.**

Though Uta is no longer with us, her art and story live on with plans for a one woman gallery show as well as articles and press releases about her life.

In the words of an iconic crooner of her generation, “She did it her way.”

Frank.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Saturday, June 1, 9am-3pm: Museum Opening and Yard Sale, Vendors wanted, email or call us to reserve your spot


Saturdays, 1-4pm: Museum open to the public, there may be some Saturdays when the Museum is not open, check our website for up to date hours.


Monday, June 24, 9am-3pm: 1st Annual Golf Tournament, Red Hook Golf Club

History Revealed—Date coming soon

Saturday, September 28: Museum Closes for the season

More to Come Soon, check our website for up-to-date events information!

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 Look for us on [AmazonSmile](#)

Visit our website: <http://rhinebeckmuseum.com>



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Like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MuseumOfRhinebeck/>

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DUES INVOICE FOR THE PERIOD January 1 through December 31, 2019

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP

Phone _____

Email _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check in the amount of \$ _____

Make checks payable to MUSEUM OF RHINEBECK HISTORY and mail to the Museum at the address above. Thank you!

Please enclose your employer’s form if your employer has a matching grant program (e.g. IBM).

Please apply my payment for the year 2019 as follows:

Lifetime.....\$1,000 _____ Lifetime option \$250 x 4 years _____

Individual.....\$15 _____ Family.....\$25 _____

Sponsor.....\$100 _____ Business/Patron.....\$50 _____

Added Donation.....\$ _____

If you have already paid your supportership dues for the year, please disregard this form. Contact us if you are unsure about whether you have paid.

NOTE: If you have artifacts related to Rhinebeck’s history that you wish to donate to us, please check below and someone from the Museum will be in touch with you. _____