



NOW & THEN
 at the
PROCTER MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
 (Downstairs at the STOCKBRIDGE LIBRARY)
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simanl@roadrunner.com

Maria L. Carr, Editor

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FAREWELL TO KATIE

Director, Katie O'Neil, has left the Stockbridge Library Museum & Archives to take on the duties of Director at the Lenox Library this month. During Katie's tenure with the Stockbridge Library a lot has taken place including a major renovation of the whole Library and Museum & Archives area downstairs in 2014-16. Here's a few highlights captured on film.

Pictured from upper left clockwise – 2016 production of Readings Around the Hearth, 2018 Berkshire Chamber Players' Concert, 2 pictures of 2014 ground breaking ceremony for the renovation project, 2016 Library reopening ceremony after renovations, 2016 Museum & Archives ribbon cutting after renovations, 2015 Carriage Tour at Orleton Farm, 2018 at the "All This And Barbara Too" gathering, 2014 presentation on the planned renovation, Pumpkin Walk at the Library, and 2016 Readings Around the Hearth presentation.



A STROLL THROUGH THE STOCKBRIDGE CEMETERY

On October 5th about 18-20 participants joined Barbara with volunteer readers at the Stockbridge Cemetery for a stroll through some of the graves listed in the newly published multifold cemetery brochure. The brochures are available for free at the Library desk.



HOW TO DISPOSE OF A COLLECTION

By Anne Oppermann

Years ago, when I was around two or three years old, I frequently admired a pair of cat figurines on our coffee table, probably increasing my vocabulary to saying “Kitty” at my parent’s pleasure. In years to come, the belief that my excitement in saying “Kitty,” encouraged everyone to start me off collecting cat figurines. Every shopping excursion, vacation, travel, of course birthdays, and Christmas resulted in gifts of cat figurines. My collection started to grow! Well what seven or eight-year-old wouldn’t be excited receiving a cat figurine? Not to seem ungrateful, but not necessarily me!

My cat collection included stuffed cats, imitation fur cats to place on my bed, etc. My room certainly became the home for a never-ending collection. As my father was a wonderful cabinet maker, he had made shelving that hung on my walls, including corner shelving too!

My mother always had a gift shop in which I sometimes helped out by attaching price labels to items (or following questionable customers). As she was very clever at giving me projects, she suggested I attach number labels to my cats and maintain a notebook listing from whom or where they came. (My basis for love of bookkeeping!)

Well this collection grew to the point of numbers close to 300! ...and was still growing. It got to the point that in searching for a souvenir in our travels it was difficult to find a figurine that I didn’t already have! By the time I entered the working world as a bookkeeper, I often had the duty to shop for a coworker’s gift. Normally a gift of jewelry or clothing for a female was the custom. After a couple of years in my position I had a chance to move on to a secretarial position in another company. It was now my chance to be given a parting gift. Upon returning from lunch I found a beautifully wrapped package on my desk. “Oh Boy!” ...but upon opening it up I discovered a family of ceramic cats! The word was out that I collected cats! How difficult to smile and say thank you, but down deep...” This has to stop”!!



Years go by and my three children received five cents a shelf for dusting them. The shelves were taking over any and all wall space! By now my kids needed a more profitable job and after a move to Stockbridge as a single parent, the collection didn’t have the charm it used to. One three-tiered shelf contained only glass blown cats (maybe 30) but in dusting the baseboard I came up quickly and down went the shelf into a pile of shards of broken glass. Also, all of the stuffed cats from my childhood that were stored in the attic...the mice had taken care of them! The collection was self-destructing by itself!

At Christmas time I always took down the living room shelving to put up our Christmas tree creating an uncluttered background for the holiday photos. My dear friend and neighbor suggested that after Christmas I should abstain from returning the shelves... “Anne, if you ever want to meet someone—don’t put the cats back up!” Well thirteen years later I met a wonderful man at a high school reunion and got married again! Upon moving from our little house in Stockbridge to an eleven-room home in Great Barrington we packed up and moved, including the cat collection which had been in storage in the attic for over ten years. Then after thirty-eight years of our new life, we found ourselves downsizing to a retirement condo in Lenox. “What are these two large boxes labeled cat collection?” my better half questioned. “I want to see them.” So, I laid them all out on two beds and photographed the collection and proceeded to take my photos to antique dealers, etc. where I was told “Collections are the hardest thing to dispose of!”

Then one day when driving past the Humane Society in Pittsfield I turned in and asked if they could find a home for about 200 cats! They loved the opportunity and although I don’t know what they had in mind – “Adopt a cat and take your pick of a figurine or simply place them up for sale?” (They gave me a donation receipt for \$100 for tax purposes.) A couple of years later I stopped by and they remembered me...wondering if I had any more!!

My advice to all future collectors...**Don’t Start!!** Word gets out and family and friends are so glad to know what to give you, but a childhood through adulthood of receiving figurines is not a dream come true! Thank you to the Humane Society for helping me to dispose of my collection!



Anne’s collection was disposed of by accidentally hitting the shelf and demolishing some of it, with help from mice in the attic, and from the kindness of the Humane Society. There are other ways to dispose of a collection. One would be to donate it to the M&A if it has a Stockbridge connection. Contact Barbara at the M&A to discuss such matters. Also, if you have a collection and have no interest in disposing of it, but would be willing to loan it to the M&A for a short period to use as a display in the Procter Gallery so that others may enjoy it, also contact Barbara at the M&A.

READINGS AROUND THE HEARTH

**December 6 at 5 p.m.
Bement Room**

Join us again this holiday season to listen to the library volunteers in period costume put you in the spirit of the season with readings ranging from 1840s to the present and from Charles Dickens to Dr. Seuss.

BERKSHIRE CHAMBER PLAYERS CONCERT

**Friday, January 31, 2020 at 6 p.m.
Bement Room**

The program for the third concert by the Berkshire Chamber Players will include:

- Copland Elegies for violin and viola
- Mozart Oboe quartet
- Stravinsky 3 pieces for string quartet
- Britten Fantasy for oboe and string trio
- Beethoven String quartet, op 18 no 4

Tickets, available at the Library's circulation desk, are \$20.

TUESDAY CLUB

**Tuesday, December 17 at 2 p.m.
Jonathan Edwards Room at the Congregational Church**

Barbara and the library volunteers will speak about how Christmas was portrayed in early television, particularly in the popular TV series *I Remember Mama (1949-1957)*, based on the play and movie. They will present a reading of the December 1949 episode in which the Norwegian family, living in San Francisco, believe they hear the animals talking on Christmas Eve.

The program, which is open to the public, will be followed by a tea with light refreshments.



SANTA IN DISGUISE

This year's Christmas exhibit in the Procter Gallery entitled *Santa in Disguise* celebrates the season with over 150 Santa Claus figures from private collections. Whether dressed in his red robe and flowing white beard or hidden behind a ninja mask, the traditional and non-traditional St. Nicks bring a smile to visitors' faces. The exhibit also includes examples of postcards, Santa plates, and figurines from a dozen other countries.

The exhibit will be up through the holidays. Please take a break from the rush and bustle of the season and stop by for a look at this wonderful exhibit.

Scott Marshall's **nutcracker exhibit** will also be on display throughout the library starting December 3.



PROCTER MUSEUM & ARCHIVES HOURS

Tuesday 9-8, Wednesday and Friday 9-5, Thursdays 9-1 and Saturdays 9-2

If you plan to spend time researching, it is always a good idea to call (298-8190) to check for availability.