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Loom and Spindle

The Mill Museum Newsletter

March 2025

Sad News

This past month we experienced a great loss to the Mill Museum community, our board member Ed Silverstein. Ed was an active and well liked member of the board -- he was responsible for our monthly museum correspondence and was our local media agent at the Chronicle. Ed died suddenly at age 65. A private memorial was led by Rabbi Hecht of the Beth Israel Synagogue in Westport/Norwalk.

Ed served on Fundraising, Membership and CEE Committees. Shortly after joining the board he stepped up to write and edit the monthly newsletter. He was instrumental bringing Dr Challa Kumar, UCONN, who

exhibit featuring three respected local artists.

He was actively engaged as a professional journalist focusing on gaming law for [Casino.org](https://www.casino.org). Ed received multiple awards from the New England Press Association.

Ed graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He later earned master's degrees from Yale University and Harvard Kennedy School.

A gentle man, Ed's passing leaves a void. We offer condolences to his family and friends. We look forward in the coming months to honoring his memory and the time he gave to help our community.

Gail Hitchcock

We also were sad to learn of the passing of Gail Hitchcock, a friend of the museum. Gail, born in Willimantic, passed away at the end of last year. As a lover of history, Gail bequeathed a generous gift to the museum. We similarly offer condolences to her family and friends.

Strategic Planning

The Mill Museum Board of Directors has embarked on a much needed new Strategic Planning process. The Museum is poised for wonderful things. We have emerged from COVID isolation. We have begun renovation of the museum main floor. New faces greet visitors; Aaron, Emma, Isabel, Jamie. Volunteers are stepping up to complete many tasks.

past, present and future. We urge you to respond to the survey. The respondents will be helping us determine the path forward.

- Data about past visitors is essential when applying for grants - your response is worth **money** to us.
- Comments on our current performance are essential understanding your needs - your feedback is worth **insight**
- New ideas are essential to keeping the museum vital - your response is worth **innovation**.

We will be scheduling a stake holders' work day in the near future. Working as a team, participants will inform Mission, Vision and Priorities. The museum is housed in the community, the strategic plan will make us part of the community.

Museum History in the News

Pete Ziska, long time friend of the museum and ardent researcher, published an article recently that details our role in the history of our town. The full breadth of Pete's work is found at <https://threadcity.us/>. It is worth a visit.

"Windham Historian Allen B. Lincoln wrote that, '(the) Dunham Hall Library was founded in February, 1878, by The Willimantic Linen Company, and so named in honor of Austin Dunham, a former president of the company. It comprised 800 volumes of poetry, biography, travel and adventure, science and fiction. While this library was primarily intended for the employees of The Willimantic Linen Company, the towns-people have been allowed full privileges which have merited much appreciation. Dunham Hall Library was supported entirely by the Willimantic Linen Company until this company was merged with the American Thread Company in 1898, from which date until the present time, it has been one of the many features of Welfare Work conducted by this company.' The library was located in the building occupied by the Thread Mill Museum. At its opening, 'it contained 2,000 volumes, upon the tables, an amply equipped art school, taught by a New Haven professor, a singing school, in charge of a clever musician, a clerk in the company's service, and an evening school,

1919, the library contained nearly 7,000 volumes, in addition to which it provided about twenty-five of the leading magazines and four daily papers for the reading tables. Sadly, the library closed in 1920 and it was then used for offices."

The library has seen renewed life as part of the Mill Museum exhibits, and is available to researchers, by appointment.

Around the Museum

The Museum awoke from the winter to participate in Willimantic's 19th Annual Chocolate Festival. Just in time to prepare for Valentine's day. We were especially pleased that Jamie and Kit Eves were crowned "Romantic Willimantic Cupid."

The new carpeting and new paint in the Bev York room greeted visitors to view two temporary exhibits.



Megan Starbird curated *Stitched Through Stages* explores the intersection of childhood play and domestic life, showcasing mid-century toys alongside homemaking tools to reveal how gender roles have been instilled from an early age. This collection invites visitors to examine how material culture has shaped perceptions of labor, femininity,

and societal expectations placed on women. Once everyday objects, these artifacts now serve as historical touchstones, sparking conversations on craftsmanship, family traditions, and the evolving dynamics of gender roles.

Also relevant to the domestic role of workers, Jamie Eves displayed a portion of the museum collection of "Sad Irons." Restored (and cold) examples are available for visitors to try their hands at smoothing away wrinkles.

Around the Town

Partners and Neighbors

March 14 & 15, 2025 at 7:30 PM, Windham Theater Guild. [Marchtime Stories](#). A nostalgic and slightly disturbing reimagining of your favorite childhood fairytales

Wednesday, March 26, 2025, Jillson House. Join us for a fun night with a famous person, learning about their life story, and enjoying their favorite food and beverage. [Tavern Night](#) with Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna of Russia.

Tuesday, April 15, 2025 the Center for Community Engagement at Eastern Connecticut State University will hold its Annual Service Expo and Awards Ceremony in the Fine Arts Instructional Center Lobby from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Student volunteers who have been engaged with more than 20 sites in the Windham area will present posters describing the impact of their work.

Get Woven into the Fabric of Our Museum

You don't have to live in Willimantic or Windham to support the Mill Museum. We're a REGIONAL museum, so folks throughout eastern Connecticut and beyond can learn about the vital role the mills and the people who worked in them played in shaping the area's history. If you've already become a member, THANK YOU! If not, please consider joining our ranks.

Student, \$15

- Membership newsletter access
- Member pricing for events

Individual, \$30

shop

- Membership newsletter access
- Early event registration
- Member pricing for events

Family, \$60

- Covers a household of 4 people
- 2 guest passes
- 10% discount at the gift shop
- Membership newsletter access
- Early event registration
- Member pricing for events

Premium, \$100

- 4 guest passes
- 20% discount at the gift shop
- 10% discount on up to 2 rentals
- Membership newsletter access
- Early event registration
- Member pricing for events



Membership

All memberships include free admission to regular tours.

Membership fee paid annually. **Is it time to renew?**

You can become a Mill Museum member either the “modern” paperless way, or you can go the “historic” route by mailing us a paper membership form and check.



Note: Admission is normally \$10, seniors and students \$7.
We do not share any of your information.



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