

# THE children's museum FALL NEWS



## meeting ground

Take a jukebox, fill it with Irish step dance music, Jamaican reggae, Trinidadian steel drum bands, Puerto Rican salsas, and Italian folksongs, and what do you have? A crosscultural music exhibit and one part of the Meeting Ground exhibit now in the Visitor Center through February.

Other parts of the exhibit that have been filled with things West Indian, Irish, Puerto Rican, and Italian include:

**A kitchen** -- collect and donate recipes, try out cooking utensils, help prepare ethnic dishes, and eat.

**A living room** -- look at family albums, read ethnic newspapers, listen to radio programs.

**Storefronts** -- "shop" for goods in the Irish store, Roma Market, and

the Caribbean Supermarket.

**Games corner** -- play crosscultural games like hopscotch and jump rope and special games like "scopa" and "la tombola."

**Migration** -- learn how and why people in the Boston area or their ancestors came here from their native countries.

**Learning about culture** -- try out arts, crafts, music, and dances just as children in the four groups do right here in Boston.

**Language** -- learn to speak a phrase or two in Italian, Spanish, Irish, and Haitian creole French.

**Special people** -- people from the four groups tell you about the people that are special to them.

**People together** -- activities that bring people together.

**Homeland** -- slides and special things.

**Visitor add-ons** -- visitors are encouraged

to add to the exhibit so that many cultural backgrounds will be represented.

Members of the four advisory teams that worked with museum staff Judy Battat and Sylvia Sawin will be arranging special performances and demonstrations.

Meeting Ground is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Eventually, the exhibit will be installed at the Wharf and expanded.

Meanwhile, come to Meeting Ground and participate in Irish, Puerto Rican, Italian, and West Indian culture. You can also help the exhibit staff by saving ethnic food packages and bringing them with you when you visit the exhibit. They're looking for cans (opened from the bottom), boxes, and utensil packages for the "kitchen" and "storefronts."

Fall is here, everyone's back from vacation, and it's a perfect time to celebrate the museum's 64th year of operation. There are new exhibits in the Visitor Center, exciting courses and workshops starting soon in the Resource Center. Join us!

## Visitor Center party -- Saturday, October 1, 2-5pm

After a month of installing, painting, cleaning, and repairing, the Visitor Center reopens with a free grand party on October 1. Explore two new exhibits -- Meeting Ground and Work -- and visit your old favorites. See our new polarized light sculpture. Special entertainment and refreshments.

## Resource Center Open House -- October 6, 7-9pm

Meet the staff; learn about the Resource Center's services for teachers, adults, and community leaders; see new kits; and get a preview of the year's activities. There's a chance to win a free membership in a RECYCLE contest. Refreshments. Free.

## Frightening strikes again

It wasn't until early August that it all started. Faint screams were heard from a top floor window. Muffled footsteps echoed down the gloomy corridors. Strange banging and scratching noises came from behind locked doors.

All the portents were clear. The spirits were returning once again to the Museum's Haunted House.



The future is still hazy but this much has been revealed through clandestine gatherings and furtive whisperings with the Museum Aid and the Resource Center staff: there'll be more than 15 rooms filled with chills and thrills when the Haunted House returns October 20-30. An alligator lurking in the bathroom for the unsuspecting, falling walls, a crooked kitchen filled with ghoully delights, a rumbly sidewalk, and visitors from Star Wars.

For information about tickets, times, and travel information, see the calendar section. Haunted House benefits the Resource Center's educational services to community groups and schools.



If you're feeling energetic this fall and plan to clean out your attic or basement, check with the museum staff before throwing out that old stuff.

We've recently been given these items from attic-cleaning sessions.

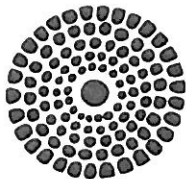
- a turn-of-the-century gas iron which was heated by connecting its long tube to the old gas wall jet.
  - a wooden carpet sweeper, c. 1913, with a bag like a vacuum cleaner.
  - a Florence lamp stove, which is a kerosene burner for heating old flatirons.
  - a small trunk.
  - a late 19th century student kerosene lamp.
  - a no-fire camp food heater, vintage 1920 or so, probably used to take hot lunches on picnics in the early days of the automobile.
  - an embroidered sign, God Bless Our Home, which will be on display in Grandmother's Attic.
- All of these artifacts are now part of our American History collection, and they will be used in Grandmother's Attic. If you have items that you'd like to give to the museum, call Ruth Green, curator of collections, or Sylvia Sawin, developer of Grandmother's Attic, at 522-4800.



## Humanities in the classroom

Why were a group of teachers cooking hot dogs on a solar cooking unit in the museum grounds one bright, sunny day in late July?

The educators were participants in a program to improve the teaching of humanities in the classroom, and



the solar project will help them to teach not only the scientific principles of solar energy but the issues raised by comparative energy uses and their effects on people.

The humanities program, involving five Boston cultural institutions and several school systems, is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

At the Children's Museum, 12 teachers and administrators from the Wheatley School in Boston and the Whittemore School in Waltham learned about such topics as teaching about cultures, creative drama, preparation for field trips, ethnic discovery, and tools and toolmaking. Participants also planned the integration of humanities into their curricula.

During the 1977-78 school year, the museum staff will assist the teachers in integrating ideas from the two-week institute into classroom programs.

## Bubbling book

When Joan Mondale, the wife of the vice president, came to the Children's Museum in May, it didn't take her very long to discover the delights of creating giant bubbles using a piece of string, two straws, and water saturated with dishwashing detergent. Inventing entertaining and educational machines and toys from simple, everyday materials is a hallmark of Developer Bernie Zubrowski's work, and a major publishing house has become just as hooked as the museum's visitors and staff.

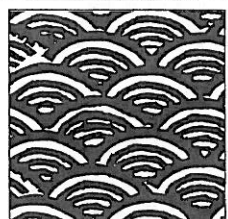
Little, Brown and Co. recently signed a contract with the museum to publish three books by Zubrowski: *Bubbles*, *Milk Cartons*, and *Bic Pens*. Each book will explore ways to use and learn from the objects. Publication date is fall, 1978. The series may eventually include as many as 24 books over the next four years.



## New courses

Thanks to a new series of courses and school programs developed by the Resource Center staff, children and adults are now learning more about such topics as ancient tools and toolmaking, drama, Japanese culture, and America, 100 years ago.

Courses range from 6-16 sessions, and the children's courses are designed to fit into schools' activity, minicourse, or independent study programs. The programs for school



classes are called Explorations and consist of 4 museum sessions.

A brochure describing the programs is available by calling or writing Pat Cornu (522-4800). Development of the programs was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

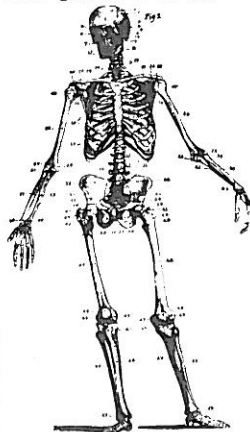
## Matching memberships

If you work for one of the Boston-area corporations that participates in the Metropolitan Cultural Alliance's Matching Membership program, the Museum is eligible for a matching bonus when you become a museum member or renew your membership. All you have to do is fill out a special form available at your company's personnel department. The corporation then gives the museum an amount of mo-

ney that matches your membership fee. Participating corporations are: The Boston Globe, the Boston Herald American, Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Co., Digital Equipment Corporation, Fiduciary Trust Co., Haskins & Sells, Polaroid Corp, and the Shawmut Bank of Boston.

### Bones

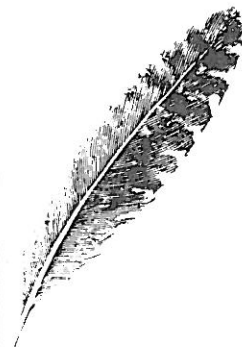
Visitors to the Living Things exhibit in the Visitor Center will soon be learning all about bones: what bones are inside a human being, where they are, what they're made of, and what they look like. Bones from other forms of life will also be studied. The Bones exhibit is part of a plan to experiment with new materials and new ideas, and the information gained from the



experiment will be used in developing Living Things at the Wharf. If you have any bones you'd like to contribute to the project, call Kaki Aldrich or Marion Carey at 522-4800.

### Contemporary crafts

It takes Leonard Bayrd, a Narragansett Indian from Wakefield, Rhode Island, 14 delicate steps to prepare a feather for a bonnet, one of which is now in the museum's Northeast



Native American collection.

Bayrd is one of more than 30 Native American craftsmen and artists from New England whose work has recently been acquired with help from a Folk Arts grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The museum staff hopes the contemporary collection will convince people that Native American traditions are still very much alive in New England.

A special feature of the project was the documentation process. Many craftsmen were interviewed and photographs were taken of their work, their tools, and their materials.

All of the pieces will be incorporated into the Northeast Native American Study-Storage collection.

### Cosmic Sneakers

We're happy to report the Children's Museum Athletic Association (TCMAA) softball team, the Cosmic Sneakers, is having a winning season under coach Andy Merriell. Taking on such formidable opponents as Houghton Mifflin, Gnomon Copy, and Irving's All Stars, the team's record at press time was 9 wins and 5 losses. Ace pitcher and Manager Pat Merriell reports the Cosmic Sneaker's dream is to play in Fenway Park. Don Zimmer, how about it?

### Shop talk

Having a tough time finding gifts for the holidays? Don't forget the Museum Shop is packed with quality books, games, and toys. Popular items now in stock: Macaulay's Castle, fabric crayons, and a real camera for under \$4.



Gears and things at RE-CYCLE. Pick up a bagful for only \$2.50.

### Extra, extra

If you receive more than one copy of the newsletter, please pass on the extra copies to your friends and neighbors.

### Quickly

July 25 edition of Time features photo of TCM's Water exhibit in education section story on children's museums . . . Milk bottle publicity spills over national boundaries with most recent newspaper clip arriving from Paraguay.



# oct/nov/dec at the children's museum

Dates, hours, and fees listed in this calendar are subject to change. For recorded information about special events, exhibits, and hours, call the What's Up line at 522-5454.

## New exhibits

**Meeting Ground** focuses on four different ethnic groups in Boston. Visitor Center through mid-February.

**Work** gives visitors a chance to find out what it's like to work at several different occupations. Exhibit includes uniforms and equipment. Visitor Center.

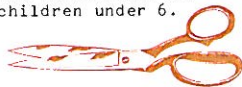
## Specials

**Visitor Center Opening Party**, October 1, 2-5pm. Free admission.

**Resource Center Open House**, October 6, 7-9pm. Free admission.

**Haunted House** at the museum, October 20-30, Monday-Thursday, 3-6pm; Friday, 3-9pm; Saturday & Sunday, 10am-6pm.

Admission is \$1. To save waiting time, order tickets by mail. Send stamped, self-addressed envelope to Haunted House, The Children's Museum, Jamaicaaway, Boston, MA 02130. Make checks payable to the Children's Museum Aid. Not recommended for children under 6.



**Gift making** activities for children will be featured in the Visitor Center every Saturday and Sunday in December.

## Courses

**Teaching about China**, an in-service course for teachers, begins October 20. Instructors are Leslie Swartz and Karen Weisel. Thursdays, 7-9pm, October 20, 27, November 3, 10, 17. Information and registration: 522-4800, ext. 53.

## Workshops

**Kits for kids** teaches you how to make inexpensive, personal gifts for children. Adults: Thursday, November 3, 7-9pm. Families/adults: Saturday, November 12, 1-3pm. Registration: 522-4800, ext. 49.



**Celebrations**, holiday activities from many cultures. Adults: Thursday, December 1, 7-9pm. Families/adults: Saturday, December 10, 1-3pm. Registration: 522-4800, ext. 49.

## Friday night series

Entertainment for children every Friday night at 7:30. Admission is 50¢ for adults and children. October 7: Tom Smith tells stories and sings children's folk songs. For future performances, call the What's Up Line (522-5454) the week of the performance.

## Visitor Center hours

Tuesday-Thursday, 2-5pm; Friday, 2-5 & 6-9pm; Saturday, Sunday, Boston school holidays and vacations, 10-5pm. Closed Monday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, January 1, July 4, and month of September.

## Visitor Center admission

Children (3-15) and senior citizens, \$1.50; adults, \$2.50; children under 3 and members free. Reduced rate on Friday 6-9pm, 50¢. All nonprofit school and community groups from Massachusetts are admitted free under sponsorship of the Mass Council on the Arts and Humanities. All groups must make advance reservations by calling 522-4800.

## Resource Center hours

Museum Shop and RECYCLE: Tuesday-Sunday, 10-5; Resource Library: Tuesday-Saturday, 10-5; Kit Rental Department: Monday-Saturday, 9-5. All Resource Center activities closed Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, January 1, and July 4.

## Memberships

Memberships are available in the Visitor Center and the Resource Center.

## Travel information

The Museum is on the Jamaicaaway, Route 1, by Jamaica Pond. By public transportation, take the Arborway-Huntington trolley car on the Green Line to Burroughs Street in Jamaica Plain. The Museum is at the end of Burroughs Street.



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## wharf update

The opening of the Wharf Park, a sample exhibit area, and our downtown offices on two sunny summer weekends couldn't have gone more splendidly.

Despite soaring temperatures, visitors flocked to the July Summer Wharf festival to learn all about the Fort Point Channel area, make telephone calls by satellite, and try out favorite exhibits such as Grandmother's Attic. Outside, the waterfront festival included the Boston Children's Theatre, the Empire Brass Quintet, and a concert by folk singer Livingston Taylor. Keynote

speakers at the dedication of the interior spaces were two strong supporters of the museum -- Rep. Barney Frank from the Back Bay and Betty Cook, former director of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs.

The warm, comfortable park and the Hood frozen yogurt stand are already attracting a steady stream of visitors, especially at lunch time.

The handsomely renovated interior spaces are now being used as a laboratory to solve many tricky design issues before we begin major construction work this winter.

The attractive and workable quality of the park, exhibits, and offices reassures us that

we made a fine choice in selecting the Congress Street Wharf as the new home for the Children's Museum and the Museum of Transportation. It really will be smashing!

In the meantime, planning and fund raising are going ahead full speed. With a tremendous \$250,000 grant to both museums from the Kresge Foundation, the Children's Museum has passed the \$2 million mark on our way to our \$3.5 million goal. We'll need everyone's help to reach the third million -- perhaps by the end of December -- so that our board can move ahead confidently with all the work that will be needed to keep us on schedule for a spring, 1979 opening.

*Walter Spach*

Director

### Wharf welcome

If you didn't get down to the Congress Street Wharf on July 16 & 17, you can still arrange to see the newly-completed exhibit and office areas by calling the Wharf Office at 426-6500.