

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



2010 ANNUAL REPORT

A New Organization is Formed

Before the close of 2009, the New York State Board of Regents approved a charter establishing a new independent non-profit organization to own and operate the home of Thomas Cole. For the previous ten years, the historic site was owned by the Greene County Historical Society, which owns several other important historic properties. Thomas Cole's home and studio will now be run by an independent non-profit organization.

Although the ownership structure is new, the people that are involved remain the same. The new organization's Board of Trustees consists of the same twelve people who were on the "Cole Committee" of the Greene County Historical Society, with the same officers including Lisa Fox Martin as Chairman. The three paid staff were retained by the Trustees to work for the new organization.

The trustees and staff of Thomas Cole National Historic Site are grateful to the many people who have worked tirelessly to bring this important historic site to this milestone.

Thomas Cole Historic House

218 Spring Street, PO Box 426
Catskill, NY 12414
518-943-7465
www.thomascole.org

Vision Statement

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site will be the leading source for education and scholarship that inspires cultural and environmental awareness of the American landscape and the continuing impact of Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School.

Mission Statement

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site preserves and interprets the home and studios of Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School of painting, the nation's first art movement. Cole's profound influence on America's cultural landscape inspires us to engage broad audiences through educational programs that are relevant today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of Activities

Programs and Education
Public Relations and Marketing
Buildings and Grounds
Collections
Institutional Development

Program Schedule

Financial Statements

Statement of Activities
Balance Sheet



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Programs and Education

In June 2010, we welcomed the first class of the Thomas Cole Fellows, a new program that welcomes graduating college seniors or recent graduates to spend five months at the Thomas Cole site starting June 1, perform research, and become a central part of our seasonal staff. In past years, August meant farewell to summer interns. In 2010, fortunately for us, the new Fellows program meant that our seasonal help would be staying on through November 1st. Fellows receive free housing, training, trips to other museums, hands-on career development assistance, and inside knowledge of the workings of a non-profit organization.

The “NEH on the Road” has begun developing a traveling exhibition about Thomas Cole that is based on the project funded by the NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) that we completed last year, including our film, the online Learning Portal, the booklet we published entitled “Thomas Cole’s Creative Process”, and a variety of educational materials we developed such as our docent tour and school programs. The exhibition will be focused on the story of Thomas Cole and his contribution to American landscape painting, but it will not include any original artworks or other irreplaceable artifacts. The exhibitions that this group organizes are humanities rather than art exhibitions, and they travel to low security places such as libraries and historical societies rather than museums. The NEH will purchase and/or create whatever objects and materials are required for the exhibition, and at the end of the five years we can have all of the material at no cost. We also receive \$15,000 to compensate us for the time we put into helping organize the show. The NEH budget for the exhibition is approximately \$200,000 in total.

In August we received word that our application to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has met with success: \$103,000 over two years for interpretive planning. This grant enables us to dig through the original Cole papers to find out specific stories and details about what happened in this house during Cole's residence here, complete the research of the original furnishings and finishes of the Main House and studios, and design a visitor experience that is informed by all of this new information.

One of this grant’s first tasks was benchmarking: a team of staff and board members set off to observe and learn from other museums and historic sites in November and December, resulting in visits to over twenty sites in four states and the District of Columbia. Team members wrote and distributed trip reports and brought back lots of ideas for use at our own site. For example, we learned that the average historic site visitor prefers a tour of 35-40 minutes in length. Ours is currently 55-60. We learned that we have a lot more original authentic objects than many of the places we visited, and we just need to take better advantage of the things we have. We noted that several sites used primary source documents such as historic letters or death certificates to show visitors to make a point, to powerful effect. We saw how audio can be incorporated into a tour experience and really enhance learning. We learned that most sites require 8-10 full days of

docent training, while we offer only 3-4 half days. Finally, we learned the absolute importance of the docent in shaping a visitor's entire impression of your site.

At an IMLS team meeting on December 9th, we discussed some of the most important "take-aways" from the benchmarking trips, and also heard a report from consultant Catherine Harris on our visitor surveys, both on-site and on-line. We received a good response rate for both surveys, and learned the following about our audiences: The most dominant demographic for our tour visitors, lecture attendees and website visitors is age 51-64 white females. A great many more people came specifically to see our special exhibition in 2010 (50% of tour visitors) compared to in 2008 (25%). This confirms that the "Ladies" exhibition greatly contributed to increasing our attendance in 2010. What they liked best about their visit: seeing progress made in the restoration, the special exhibition, guided tour, studio, docents and friendly staff. What could be improved? More spaces to view in the house and more time in the special exhibition (which were both expressed in 2008); parking confusion, insufficient road signage at the entrance; and less residual noise while watching the orientation film (a sign was installed later in the season asking for a quiet environment).

Public Relations and Marketing

With the official formation of a new independent non-profit organization to run the Cole site, the organization launched a new graphic identity and logo. The name, "Thomas Cole National Historic Site," was assigned to the site in 1999 by an act of the U.S. Congress, when they made it an affiliate of the National Park Service. In addition, New York State has given the site the name "Thomas Cole Historic House". The graphic identity was designed as a pro-bono project by Abbott Miller of the world-renowned design firm, Pentagram, of New York and London. The words "Thomas Cole" are in a bold and vibrant 19th-century font, combined with a shade of yellow that recalls the color of the Main House. The black graphic motif is Thomas Cole's original unique easel, rendered in the historic style of silhouette.

Our press coverage increased dramatically in 2010. Here is a partial listing of the publications that have featured our 2010 exhibition: *Antiques & Fine Art*, *American Art Review*, *Vogue online*, *Roll Magazine*, *Hudson Valley Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar-Spain*, *Chronogram*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, front page coverage in Hudson-Catskill Newspapers and the cover feature of the "Scene" insert. High-traffic blogs included "The Smart Set", Traditional Fine Arts, The Feminist Art Project, New York History, and ArtFixDaily. New York City's PBS station, Channel 13 WNET featured the exhibition on "Sunday Arts" with Philippe de Montebello. This and many other "hits" are thanks to Marcia Clark of the company "Shameless Promotions" who was hired and paid for by Jennifer Krieger of Hawthorne Fine Art.

During the summer of 2010 we took a booth at the Catskill Main Street Farmers' Market. Hudson Talbott secured for us a front-and-center position, right next to the "Welcome to Catskill" booth, on the central open area of the market. The Saturday morning shifts were staffed by our interns and fellows.

Buildings and Grounds

There are many breakthroughs to report in this category. Most recently, the utility wires that have marred the view for decades were finally buried underground. The view now strikes your eye with even greater force, and the feeling of being transported back in time is uninterrupted.

The greatly enlarged and completely renovated parking lot was completed in the nick of time before we opened on May 1st. Over 250 new trees and shrubs were planted all around the site, in accordance with Bob Toole's carefully researched Landscape Restoration Plan from 2005 and his Cultural Landscape Report from 2003. The project also included historically correct gravel paths all around the site, outdoor lighting for the paths and parking lot, and an extensive underground labyrinth of drainage pipes and basins. These drainage systems will be fed by gutters and leaders that will be fixed as part of the next big construction project, paid for by the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act" (ARRA), commonly called the Stimulus bill, via the National Park Service. That project includes "deferred maintenance" and repairs on the Main House and porch, and the stone wall and picket fence along Spring Street, for a total of \$350,000.

One of the new paths we installed this April is now adorned with two new outdoor signs: one gives the overview of the entire property as it was in Cole's time, and the other marks the spot where the New Studio once stood. The official docent tour now begins by following this path to the Main House.

Possibly the nicest news of all is that we now own 32 Hudson Avenue, the property in between our caretaker's house and the New Studio site, which we are currently calling the Knoll House, named for the Knoll family that built it in 1950 and lived there ever since. We purchased the property using a mortgage and a \$30,000 gift from the Marion O. Naumberg Estate, and a renter is moving in on January 15th. This is a major step forward for the site, opening up numerous possibilities for the future, as we now own the entire stretch along Hudson Avenue except the corner house on Spring Street.

Inside the Main House, huge changes have taken place thanks to the efforts of our board member, Carrie Feder, and the research of our consultant, Jean Dunbar. Jean Dunbar is a historic interiors specialist who has been working towards a "Furnishings and Finishes Plan" for the Thomas Cole house. Her preliminary report, delivered in January 2010, contained astonishing revelations. The west-facing main room on the 2nd floor that we thought was Thomas Cole's bedroom was, instead, a sitting room. Cole and his wife Maria slept in the small room down the hall in the north-east corner of the house. The large east room on the first floor that we thought was Mr. Thomson's bedroom was, instead, the family's dining room. Mr. Thomson slept in the small room to the north. And this was just the beginning of Ms. Dunbar's invaluable discoveries. During the early months of 2010, the rooms were completely reevaluated top to bottom, and reinstalled using the best and latest research available. Carrie Feder made a plan of what was to be moved around (almost everything) and organized a "moving day", recruited friends, tagged all the objects, made lists and signage, and physically moved a huge amount of furniture to new locations. She recruited her friends to help her and painted whole rooms. She arranged and re-arranged and re-arranged again the new Cole Parlour until it looked fantastic. She studied Jean

Dunbar's report and obtained a donation of a wallpaper sample to become a "fire screen" in the Cole parlour and then recruited a volunteer who made the screen. She created and accessorized the whole new Cole bedroom, including objects from her own house. She has gone through our storage room to find more fabulous objects to display. On April 20th, the "cherry on top of the sundae" was the arrival of Thomas Cole's original desk that is now on long-term loan from the New York State Archives.

Collections

An excellent turn of events this past fall has resulted in Thomas Cole's own guitar making its way back to Cedar Grove. Rick Sharp, the new chair of the Olana board, learned that the guitar might be sold to another party, so he acted quickly to buy it for the Cole House. The dealer, Alex Acevedo, then turned around and donated part of the purchase price back to us as well. The guitar was sold at the 1964 auction, and Edith Cole Silberstein's recollection is that the guitar had never previously left the house. We believe it is the same instrument that Cole is playing in his painting "The Pic-Nic", and it appears in a photograph of the interior of the New Studio from the late 19th century, lying on a bench next to Emily Cole. This object will significantly enhance our collection of authentic Cole material, and we look forward to incorporating it into our 2011 tour. The IMLS interpretive planning team will be working on this and other revisions to the tour in the coming months.

Also this past fall, we learned that the NEH awarded us a grant to improve our ability to preserve and care for our collections. Grant activities will consist of:

- Assessing current environmental conditions and fire protection equipment and practices;
- Developing plans for improving environmental conditions and fire protection for collections;
- Studying light levels in exhibition and storage spaces and recommending appropriate methods for controlling light and reducing damage to collections;
- Obtaining cost estimates for each recommendation as well as a matrix of the pros and cons of different options.

The goal of the project is to gain an understanding of current environmental risks to the collection, to learn what practices and purchases can be implemented immediately to better care for the objects, and to obtain detailed descriptions of larger initiatives and their costs so that additional funds can be raised to accomplish them.

Institutional Development

In April we hired the new seasonal employee Marie Spano, the Visitor Center Manager, with funds from the National Park Service. Marie ran the gift shop at the Columbia County Historical Society and is an enthusiastic, highly informed and wonderful face for the organization when people first arrive.

Also this spring we hired Melissa Gavilanes, who had been our graduate-level intern since September 2009. She received a Masters in Museum Studies at the City College of New York with a concentration in Museum Education, and has completed internships and fellowships at the

Children’s Museum of Manhattan and the Museum of the City of New York. In addition, she was a contracted educator at the Albany Institute of History and Art and has volunteered at the Guggenheim Museum in New York as well as the North Carolina Museum of Art.

In September we hired Sheri Dejan. Sheri’s responsibilities include administering our membership database and all incoming donations and acknowledgement letters; processing all of our invoices and weekly deposits; managing the office; and providing me with administrative support.

The organization also welcomed two new members of our Board of Trustees: Robin E. Redford and Anne J. Miller. Ms. Redford is a Director in the Public Finance Group, Housing Finance, at Raymond James & Associates, New York. She resides in Athens, New York with her husband and two-year-old son. Ms. Miller is a hand surgeon with Englewood Orthopedic Associates in Englewood NJ and is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Medical School. She resides with her husband both in Catskill, New York, and in New York City.

A significant grant win is our 3-year operating support from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), currently at \$18,900 per year but subject to change depending on the state budget. This funding can be used to support hard-to-fund items like salaries, overhead, and other essential core functions of our organization.

The July 4th “Independence” party broke all our previous records, bringing in \$86,000 gross, compared to \$66,000 last year. Our expenses were approximately \$33,000, netting us \$53,000. There are two main reasons for the increase: we raised the ticket price while maintaining almost the same number of ticket-buyers (approximately 333 versus 345), and we added a new higher sponsorship level that several people bought. Lisa Fox Martin made incredibly generous contributions to the event by hosting it at her home, sponsoring at \$2500, and then contributing \$5000 more in cash. A second fundraiser event in September helped to increase our events income to record levels.

In March, 2010, we began the important process of crafting a new strategic plan for the organization. The project included two focus groups, a board retreat in April, a list of major goals for the organization’s future, and drafts of a new mission statement and vision statement for the Thomas Cole Historic House. The final plan was adopted by unanimous approval at the August 2010 board meeting.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Sunday Salons

Sunday Salons are gatherings at the home of Thomas Cole with guest speakers leading discussions on topics relating to the Hudson River School, America's first major art movement.

January 10, 2010

Patricia Junker

Sacred to the Memory of Thomas Cole: Charles Herbert Moore and his Views of Cedar Grove

Patricia Junker, Curator of American Art at the Seattle Art Museum, explores Charles Herbert Moore's affection for Thomas Cole, evident in his captivating paintings of Cole's house and studio. Moore rented Cole's studio in the early 1860s, making picturesque Catskill a meeting place for a new generation of landscape painters. While much has been made of the Pre-Raphaelites' dismissal of Cole's visionary tendencies, Moore, rather than turning away from Cole, warmly embraced his memory. The artist who worked in Cole's studio could not help but evoke the late artist's spirit—enlisting the language of Cole's art to create richly symbolic landscape compositions that while adhering to John Ruskin's realist principles are also sacred to Cole's memory.

February 7, 2010

Katherine Manthorne

Eliza Pratt Greatorix: "First Artist of Her Sex in America"

Katherine Manthorne, Professor of Modern Art of the Americas (1750-1950) at City University of New York, reveals highlights from her upcoming biography of one of the most fascinating, least-known Hudson River School painters: Eliza Pratt Greatorix. Focusing on her extraordinary life – the first female to be admitted to the National Academy of Design, one of the first artists to capture images of New York City's historic sites before they were destroyed, and a world traveler who made her living as an artist/teacher while raising her children by herself – this talk is a wonderful prelude to our 2010 exhibition, "Remember the Ladies: Women of the Hudson River School." The talk's title is taken from comments by a 19th century critic.

March 14, 2010

Linda S. Ferber

The Hudson River School: Nature and the American Vision

Linda S. Ferber, Senior Art Historian and Museum Director Emerita of the New-York Historical Society, and former Chair of the Department of American Art at the Brooklyn Museum, returns to the Cole House with her new book, *The Hudson River School: Nature and the American Vision*. Capturing the New-York Historical Society's world-renowned Hudson River School collection in book form for the first time, Dr. Ferber's book features all the greatest artists of the group including Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Church, Thomas Cole, Jasper Cropsey, Asher B.

Durand, Sanford Gifford, and John F. Kensett. One of our most popular speakers, Dr. Ferber will sign copies of her book after her talk.

April 11, 2010

Stephen Hannock

Thomas Cole with a Power Sander

One of the most exciting artists of our time – called “the consummate landscape painter” – Stephen Hannock began his artistic career near the site of Thomas Cole’s famous 1836 painting, “the Oxbow.” Cole has been a reference point for Hannock, whose virtuosic use of light makes him an heir to Cole and the artists of the Hudson River School. Art historian Jason Rosenfeld describes Hannock's work as "both distinctively modern as well as reflective of landscape traditions....Hannock, in his radical technique is a true American luminist. His paintings, multi-layered in both surface and meaning, radiate in a manner that connects past and present." After his talk, Stephen signs copies of his brand new monograph.

2010 Exhibition:

“Remember the Ladies: Women Artists of the Hudson River School”

May 1, 2010

Opening Day

Featured speakers: Co-curators of the new exhibition, “Remember the Ladies”: Nancy Siegel, associate professor of art history at Towson University and Jennifer Krieger, Owner and Director of Hawthorne Fine Art, New York. Siegel specializes in American landscape studies and culinary history of the 18th and 19th centuries and serves as a curatorial advisor for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. Her recent books include: *Within the Landscape: Essays on Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (2005); *Along the Juniata- Thomas Cole and the Dissemination of American Landscape Imagery* (2003); and *The Morans: the Artistry of a Nineteenth-Century Family of Painter-Etchers* (2001).

June 5, 2010

National Trails Day Event

This year we launched three new outdoor exhibits at sites along the Hudson River School Art Trail, a project to map the painting locations of Thomas Cole and his fellow painters. The event consisted of a ribbon-cutting at one of the new outdoor exhibits and a guided hike along the trail.

July 4, 2010

Summer Party

A celebratory fundraiser on Independence Day, featuring music, dancing, poolside cocktails, a seated dinner, and fireworks over the Hudson River.

Guided Hikes 2010

The Thomas Cole Historic Site presented a series of guided hikes on the Hudson River School Art Trail, which brings you into the magnificent landscapes that inspired Thomas Cole and other luminaries of 19th-century landscape painting. The hikes are made possible through the Carol T. Savage Art Trail Docent Program, named in honor of our late friend and former Board Chairman.

June 5: Sunset Rock and Catskill Mountain House (Hike #3)

July 10: Kaaterskill Falls and Catskill Mountain House (Hike #2)

July 31: Catskill Mountain House and North-South Lake (Hike #1)

August 14: Sunset Rock and Catskill Mountain House (Hike #3)

August 21: Kaaterskill Falls and Catskill Mountain House (Hike #2)

September 4: Catskill Mountain House and North-South Lake (Hike #1)

September 18: Sunset Rock and Catskill Mountain House (Hike #3)

October 2: Kaaterskill Falls and Catskill Mountain House (Hike #2)

September 11, 2010

A September Celebration for Thomas Cole's New Studio

A cocktail party at the home of Thomas Cole, followed by dinners at one of 5 river-front homes. At the cocktail party, the architectural drawings for the New Studio were unveiled.

October 10, 2010

Fifth Annual "Raymond Beecher Lecture"

Outdoor Men: Manliness, Masculinity, and the Antebellum Landscape Painter

Speaker: Sarah Burns

From the 1830s on, landscape representation held pride of place in the realm of American painting, coming to the fore as a truly national art. With this emerging genre came questions about the identity of the new American artist. As one who hobnobbed in elite cultural circles but also worked with his hands and roughed it in the woods and mountains, was the antebellum American landscape painter to be a gentleman or an undomesticated wild man, a James Fenimore Cooper or a Davy Crockett, romantic dreamer or man of action? Dr. Sarah Burns, Ruth N. Halls Professor of Fine Arts at Indiana University, examined the ways in which Hudson River School painters attempted to reckon with the problematic aura of femininity that clung to the image of the artist at that time. The lecture event is named the Raymond Beecher Lecture for the Greene County Historian, Raymond Beecher, whose lifetime of service to scholarship and historic preservation is recognized by the naming of this annual event in his honor. Made possible with support from the New York Council for the Humanities.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

For the year ended December 31, 2010

| | Unrestricted | Temp Restricted | Perm Restricted | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Revenue | | | | |
| Federal Grants | \$ 211,421 | | | \$ 211,421 |
| State Grants | \$ 12,225 | \$ 18,692 | | \$ 30,917 |
| Other Grants | \$ 22,515 | \$ 167,500 | | \$ 190,015 |
| Membership | \$ 49,177 | | | \$ 49,177 |
| Admission | \$ 35,617 | | | \$ 35,617 |
| Private Support | \$ 16,067 | | | \$ 16,067 |
| Events | \$ 104,320 | | | \$ 104,320 |
| Shop Sales | \$ 28,003 | | | \$ 28,003 |
| Other Income | \$ 6,315 | \$ 1,295 | | \$ 7,610 |
| Released from Restrictions | \$ 81,281 | \$ (81,281) | | \$ - |
| Total Revenue | \$ 566,941 | \$ 106,206 | \$ - | \$ 673,147 |
| Expense | | | | |
| Compensation and related | \$ 181,245 | | | \$ 181,245 |
| Consultants Fees | \$ 115,329 | | | \$ 115,329 |
| Collection/Exhibition | \$ 9,677 | | | \$ 9,677 |
| Computer Equip | \$ 4,597 | | | \$ 4,597 |
| Insurance | \$ 19,796 | | | \$ 19,796 |
| Maintenance | \$ 24,318 | | | \$ 24,318 |
| Office Supplies | \$ 7,471 | | | \$ 7,471 |
| Postage | \$ 8,551 | | | \$ 8,551 |
| Printing | \$ 26,044 | | | \$ 26,044 |
| Adver/Public Relations | \$ 1,603 | | | \$ 1,603 |
| Purchases Museum Shop | \$ 12,965 | | | \$ 12,965 |
| Catering & Decorating | \$ 34,163 | | | \$ 34,163 |
| Travel | \$ 3,770 | | | \$ 3,770 |
| Utilities | \$ 17,515 | | | \$ 17,515 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ 34,651 | | | \$ 34,651 |
| Total Expense | \$ 501,694 | | | \$ 501,694 |
| Operating Income | \$ 65,247 | | | \$ 65,247 |
| Capital Transactions | | | | |
| Gifts of or for Capital | \$ 90,000 | -90000 | | 0 |
| Depreciation | \$ (46,714) | | | -46714 |
| Total Capital transactions | \$ 43,286 | | | 43286 |
| Excess(Deficit) | \$ 108,533 | \$16,206 | \$0 | \$124,739 |

Balance Sheet
For the year ended December 31, 2010

| | <u>Unrestricted</u> | <u>Temporarily Restricted</u> | <u>Permanently Restricted</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Assets | | | |
| Current Assets: | | | |
| Cash | \$ 171,270 | | |
| Grants Receivable | 147,649 | | |
| Prepaid expenses | <u>500</u> | | |
| Total Current Assets | <u>319,419</u> | | |
| Other Assets: | | | |
| Investments | <u>1,001,283</u> | | |
| Fixed assets | 1,597,540 | | |
| Accumulated depreciation | <u>- 376,178</u> | | |
| Fixed assets, net | <u>1,221,362</u> | | |
| Total Assets | <u>\$2,542,064</u> | | |
| Liabilities and Net Assets | | | |
| Accounts Payable | \$ 10,032 | | |
| Accrued expenses | 4,801 | | |
| Mortgage Payable | <u>100,000</u> | | |
| Total Liabilities | <u>114,833</u> | | |
| Due To/From Funds | <u>\$ 1,073,037</u> | \$ <u>-422,905</u> | \$ <u>-650,132</u> |
| Net Assets: | | | |
| Unrestricted: | | | |
| Unrestricted | 232,831 | | |
| Fixed Assets | 1,121,362 | | |
| Temporality Restricted | | 422,905 | |
| Permanently Restricted | | | <u>650,132</u> |
| Total Net Assets | <u>\$ 1,354,193</u> | <u>\$ 422,905</u> | <u>\$650,132</u> |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | <u>\$ 2,542,064</u> | | |