



# The Engager

SPRING 2008

The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation • [www.MatildaJoslynGage.org](http://www.MatildaJoslynGage.org)

## JOIN THE OZ FANS IN FAYETTEVILLE THIS OCTOBER

Presenters, exhibits, and movies, oh my! This October, follow the Yellow Brick Road to Fayetteville, N.Y., the birthplace of Oz.

Author L. Frank Baum was first encouraged to write his fanciful children's stories by his mother-in-law, the prominent woman's rights leader Matilda Joslyn Gage. Her home will be the centerpiece of activity during the Gage Foundation's third annual Wonderful Weekend of Oz Oct. 10-12.

"It will be a pilgrimage for Oz fans to visit the area and tour this gracious old home," explains Angelica Carpenter, president of



The International Wizard of Oz Club. The Club will hold its 2008 convention as part of the Wonderful Weekend, in partnership with the Gage Foundation.

Pulitzer Prize winning author and Oz fan Alison Lurie will be a featured presenter. She will join authors Michael Patrick Hearn, the world's leading authority on Baum, and John Fricke, the pre-eminent scholar of all things related to the classic 1939 Wizard of Oz film.

Fricke will host a screening of the film at the Palace Theatre in Syracuse Oct. 11. The Last Egyptian, a long-lost silent film written and produced by Baum also has been secured for the event.

A display of photographs by Baum is among the planned exhibits. Several of Baum's 1887 photos now guide the extensive rehabilitation of the Gage Home.

Scheduled live performances include a Musical Oz Review and a script-in-hand performance of Baum's first stage success, The Maid of Arran.

Gage/Baum descendants Bob Baum, with his wife Clare, Gita Dorothy Morena, and Meagan Mantele will represent the family.

The weekend will culminate in the 7th annual Gage Foundation Benefit Auction at the elegant Wellington House in Fayetteville.

The Greater Manlius Chamber of Commerce has also been collaborating with the Gage Foundation and plans to hold its annual Business Expo in conjunction with Gage activities the same weekend.

## Community Leaders Celebrate Gage's Birthday

On March 24, Matilda Joslyn Gage's birthday, the Gage Foundation hosted a celebration to update community leaders about its work. Elected officials, business people, representatives from social service agencies, and a variety of supporters gathered at the Stickley Museum in Fayetteville, N.Y., to hear about the Foundation's progress and future plans.

Guests were treated to an address by Los Angeles

actress Mimi Kennedy, best known for her role as the hippie mom in the TV comedy series Dharma and Greg and soon to appear in a BBC feature film costarring Sopranos' star James Gandolfini. Kennedy is a longtime Gage supporter. Harry Gage Carpenter of Peapack, N.J., shared an important message as a Gage descendant.

Fayetteville Mayor Mark Olson read a proclamation declaring March 24 to be Matilda Joslyn Gage

Day in Fayetteville.

The evening closed with the premiere of a 10-minute documentary short about Gage and the Foundation's work.

Thanks go to Fortino's Florist for a lovely flower arrangement and to Café Milan for developing the Matilda Joslyn Gage Sandwich.

A special thank you to Greg Vadney, director of the Stickley Museum, for working with us so generously.



Actress Mimi Kennedy (left) and Aminy Audi, president of the Stickley, Audi & Co. furniture company, were among the Gage Foundation's guests at The Stickley Museum.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



**There are more slaves in the world today than at any other point in history.** I would have been skeptical a year ago of

anyone even claiming it was much of a problem; today I know there are about 20,000 slaves in the United States alone. Six of us from the Gage Foundation are headed to New York City this week to meet with The International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, tour the East Side Tenement Museum, and work with their consultant to develop a “tea and talk” on modern-day slavery at the Gage Home. We have joined the Coalition, received a grant from them to develop this program, and hope our home will soon become an official “site of conscience” along with the 17 currently accredited museums worldwide where past struggles for justice are remembered and their contemporary legacies are addressed.

In keeping with our “Conscience in Community” theme, we have decided to name the five principal rooms in the Gage Home for our five interpretive areas.

### ***The Vision***

Imagine when we finish the restoration and you are standing in the Woman’s Rights room where Susan B. Anthony and Matilda wrote the History of Woman Suffrage. Here you learn about Gage’s 1876 Declaration of Rights of Women along with the 1979 international bill of rights for women, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which

has been ratified by over 90 percent of the United Nations members, but not the United States.

Or imagine you are in the Haudenosaunee room, where we tell the First Nations First Story, about the native influence on democracy, the woman’s rights movement, and Matilda. Over tea, you are asked to think about the current issues of treaty rights and native sovereignty, which Gage supported 130 years ago.

Then you step into the Baum/family room, where the Oz author L. Frank Baum married Matilda’s youngest daughter, Maud. You view a photo Frank took of the parlor in 1887 that looks identical to the room in which you’re standing. Frank’s 14 Oz books, you learn, carry Matilda’s message of peace and social justice. “Does Gage have descendants?” you ask, and get a virtual introduction to her family members today telling how they are connected to the work of their ancestor.

Imagine a room dedicated to religious freedom, where the ongoing struggle to maintain the wall of separation between church and state is enshrined and discussed.

And finally, you reach the Underground Railroad room, where you compare the risk Matilda took in welcoming freedom seekers (six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine) with the risk you face if you help fugitive slaves escape in the United States today.

### ***Looking Further***

Other people have taken this interpretive concept further: how about a South Dakota section in the to-be-added Welcome Center, where the story of how all four of Gage’s children moved to Dakota (as did most of the young people of Fayetteville) can help us tell the

larger story of migration within the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and today.

That’s the vision, to create a home for the stories. This idea lends itself to another, which is just emerging: a special home for the people whose stories we are telling.

### ***Reaching Out***

We want to reach out to those who have a stake in creating the story to meet with us in facilitated community groups to help us design the room where their story will be told.

We are looking for a grant, for example, to bring together Native women and Foundation members to hammer out what the Haudenosaunee room will look and feel like.

We want to create five “homes,” if you will, within the Gage Home, each one a safe place, a familiar place where you can speak your mind, where people might not always agree but where ideas will be respected, a place of active dialogue and engagement. We want to create a personal home for those who have a passionate interest in each of our five stories.

It is going to take all our efforts to make it happen. While our capital campaign is still in the silent stage, several people have heard rumors and come forth with generous initial gifts.

We’re not completely silent! If you are interested in being an early part of the creation of this legacy and would like to visit with me or Loretta Zolkowski, our capital campaign committee chair, we’d be delighted to talk with you. Call me on my direct line at (315) 727-8816 or Loretta at (315) 432-9171 ext. 4343. We want to hear your ideas. Together we will dare to seek justice!

—Sally Roesch Wagner, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



International students visit the Gage Home in February.

## OZ: THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

A group of Indonesian students from Syracuse University's English Language Institute came to the Gage Home on a cold day in February for tea and a tour with Senior Docent Sue Boland.

"I struggled to explain the Underground Railroad, the Haudenosaunee, the woman suffrage movement, and Gage's criticism of religion in terms that they could understand," reports Boland. "But when I said, 'Do you know 'The Wizard of Oz'?' their eyes lit up and they said, 'Dorothy!' Because of the movie,

they were well versed in the language of Oz, and were excited to have their picture taken in front of the only home where Baum lived and told his stories that is open to the public.

"But I think some of my talk did get through. On the last photo, as the girls gathered around the 1888 photo of Gage with her co-workers, they told the boys to stay out of the picture; this one was just for the girls!"

## DIG RESUMES THIS SUMMER!



fourth summer in a row.

Beginning in late July/early August (exact dates TBA), Kim will continue exploring the yard area of the house in order to learn more about the Gages' daily lives and provide information helpful to the house resto-

Kim Christensen will return to the Gage Home to conduct archaeological excavations for the

ration project.

The work will focus on the stone foundation uncovered behind the house during last summer's excavations, as well as examining yard areas exposed when 20th-century house additions were removed.

Volunteers are needed both for the excavations and lab work. If you are interested, in participating, email Kim at [kchristensen@berkeley.edu](mailto:kchristensen@berkeley.edu) to be added to an email announcements list.

## Visit the Gage Home for the View of a Lifetime

The Gage Home will be open for rehabilitation tours Saturdays 10-2 during June, July, and August. Walk on the original floors where Gage walked. See the wallpaper from her time that has been uncovered. You will never again be able to see the house in this form, so take advantage of the opportunity!

During your visit, you can view the display of the household items uncovered in the archaeological dig of the yard.

Tours are also available by appointment.

## Walk Where Matilda Walked

Senior Docent Sue Boland will conduct walking tours this summer. Join her for a fascinating look at Gage's Fayetteville and the historic Fayetteville cemetery on:

- ◆ July 5 (Sat.) 9 a.m. — Gage's Fayetteville
- ◆ July 6 (Sun.) 4 p.m. — Fayetteville cemetery
- ◆ July 26 (Sat.) 9 a.m. — Fayetteville cemetery
- ◆ July 27 (Sun.) 4 p.m. — Gage's Fayetteville

Contact the Gage Foundation for details and to register.

## Join Us in Telling the Story

The story of Gage and her work is empowering and fascinating, and we need people to help us tell it. Would you like to give tours of the Gage Home?

Senior docent and local historian Sue Boland will present two initial docent training sessions May 10 and 17 from 10-2 at the Gage Home. Lunch will be served. You may attend one or both, with follow-up sessions to be scheduled in June. Contact the Gage Foundation to sign up.

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DARE TO SEEK JUSTICE

## PRESIDENT MANNO: WHY I'M COMMITTED TO GAGE



*Jack Manno, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Department of Environmental Studies at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and*

*Forestry. Manno serves as board president for the Gage Foundation. Here, he explains the reasons for his commitment to the Foundation.*

"I'm strategic about my goals. I choose my projects. I take on one global project, one regional one, and one local. Each has to be fun, inspire me, and lead me toward my ultimate goal of ending all forms of oppression, all forms of human beings systematically hurting other human beings.

"My local project is the Gage Foundation —because Gage had a clear understanding of the mechanisms of oppression and could imagine and organize a program

to transform society.

"I want the people of this region and the people of the world to know and celebrate this history. I want my colleagues who are planning the future of global ecological cooperation to take sustenance from our stories. I want us to be a museum of conscience and a center for plotting the global celebrations when we succeed.

"There is a familiar saying that those who ignore history are destined to repeat it. It's a wise saying but a bit jaundiced with its notion that history only gives us cautionary tales to avoid repeating. History also gives us models of a life well lived and a project that made the world a better place. I want us to celebrate this history so we become destined not to repeat but to reprise it.

"We need to fully restore Gage's home. We need the library. We need a place for people to visit for the restorative and inspirational effects of being introduced to greatness."

### Collaboration With Girl Scouts Blossoms

Sue Stewart, CEO of the Girl Scout Council of Central New York, and Gage Foundation Executive Director Sally Roesch Wagner will present Katherine Millet and Elizabeth (Beth) Bannar with the Junior Girl Scout Bronze Award on May 20. The two Troop #151 Junior Girl Scouts furthered the identification of the flowers in Gage's garden from an 1887 photo and began finding where to purchase heirloom seeds.

As Gage's collaboration with the Girl Scouts grows, we are applying for funding to hold a summit of girls and women from both our organizations to develop a strategic plan for our projects.



Junior Girl Scouts Katherine Millet (seated left) and Beth Bannar staff a display at a Gage Foundation event in March. Standing is Katherine's mother, Leslie Cameron.

### 'Sites of Conscience' Grant

A recent \$10,000 Project Development Grant from The International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience will allow us to develop a "Tea and Talk Slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogue Program. This interpretive Underground Railroad program will provide an opportunity for visitors to engage in a facilitated dialogue about slavery in the United States and the world today.

### Guidance From Gifford

The Gifford Foundation is leading the Gage Foundation through an evaluation of where we are in the lifecycle of our organization. The staff, board, and committees are working on this snapshot of where we are right now and where we can strengthen our infrastructure.

### Chamber Award

A beautiful Stickley clock now graces the Gage offices. David Holder, president of the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau, presented the Gage Foundation with this Share A 'Cuse Award for bringing The International Wizard of Oz Club to hold its annual convention in conjunction with the Gage Foundation's Wonderful Weekend of Oz.

Board member David Kellogg and Executive Director Sally Roesch Wagner joined 1,000 guests at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Awards on March 6 to accept the award.





Experience Matilda's Rose Revival. See inside!



Pictured from left to right on the front steps of the Gage Home:  
Elizabeth Post, Rhimmon Simchy-Gross, and Rachael Weiter

## ***2008 Essay Contest Winners***

Rachael Weiter, a junior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School, won first prize in this year's Matilda Joslyn Gage Essay Contest for her comparison between the Constitutional work of Gage and the late Patsy Mink, who served 12 terms representing Hawaii in the U.S. House and authored the Title IX Amendment of the Higher Education Act to ensure equal rights for women.

Second prize went to Rhimmon Simchy-Gross, also of F-M, who compared Gage and Hillary Rodham Clinton; third went to Elizabeth Post of East-Syracuse Minoa High School for her comparison of the social justice advocacy of Gage and singer Bono.

**INVITE US TO  
YOUR  
ORGANIZATION  
OR HOME!**

We now have a documentary featuring feminist icon Gloria Steinem, Oz/Baum scholars Michael Patrick Hearn and John Fricke, Former New York State Lt. Gov. Mary Anne Krupsak, Gage descendants, and others weaving the remarkable story of Gage and the Foundation's work to restore her memory. The 10-minute summary of Gage's work is available for organization and house talks given by speakers from the Foundation. Call to arrange a time to see it!