A Day in the Life of the Norman Rockwell Museum

Rockwell in the 1930s

A Move to the Country
Members' Preview

ONE OF THE MANY BENEFITS OF BEING A member of the Norman Rockwell Museum is receiving an invitation to the opening of our exhibitions. Here are scenes from the members' preview opening of J.C. Leyendecker: A Retrospective and The Art of Robert Weaver.

Right, Roger Reed the president of Illustration House Inc. in New York City and curator of the J.C. Leyendecker retrospective discusses the exhibition. Far right, Mr. and Mrs. Mort Kunstler of Oyster Bay, NY graciously loaned their original artwork to the J.C. Leyendecker exhibit.

Museum Director Laurie Norton Moffatt introduces Marshall Arisman, award winning illustrator, Chairman of the Master of Fine Arts Illustration Program at the School of Visual Arts and Co-curator of the Robert Weaver exhibit.

Stephanie Plunkett, Manager of Adult Services and Co-curator of the Robert Weaver exhibit is seen here with Fritz Weaver, Tony Award winning actor and brother of Robert Weaver.

Overflow crowds gather in the museum's Fitzpatrick Gallery to hear the opening remarks that preceded the reception for museum members.
Above, Home for Christmas, a 1955 Schaeffer pen-pencil advertisement is one of the paintings that promoted the exhibition with posters on billboards and subways. Above right, among the guests at the Isetan Museum enjoying the original Rockwell paintings, are two young ladies who seem to be studying the American rite of marriage as depicted in the 1955 Saturday Evening Post cover, The Marriage License.

Right, Linda Szekely, NRM Assistant Curator; Tomomi Tanikawa of Brain Trust, Inc.; Josephine Nieuwenhuis, NRM Project Registrar; and Yuko Toyota, also of Brain Trust, Inc., enjoy the successful opening. Linda and Josephine couriered the artwork to Japan where they were graciously assisted by Ms. Tanikawa and Ms. Toyota.

Below, Norman Rockwell Museum Board President, David Klausmeyer and Director Laurie Norton Moffatt attend the opening reception with Takeshi Matsumoto, Director of the Chihiro Iwasaki Museum of Picture Books; Josephine Nieuwenhuis, NRM Project Registrar; Linda Szekely, NRM Assistant Curator; and Masahiko Shibata, President of Brain Trust, Inc., the sponsor of the exhibition.

Museum Director Laurie Norton Moffatt is seen here at the opening with Peter J. Kovach, Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the Embassy of the United States.

DECEMBER 4, 1997, HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION of the Norman Rockwell Museum opened in Tokyo. Here are photographs from the opening at the Isetan Museum, and one of the posters used to advertise the exhibition. After Tokyo, the exhibit traveled to Nagoya, Chiba, Niigata, Osaka and Hiroshima.
I would like to take you through a day in the life of the Norman Rockwell Museum to show you some of what occurs behind the scene before we open the doors to welcome you, to the time we turn out the lights. Come with me now as we start the day.

It is early in the morning, and members of our facility staff arrive. A team of four, headed by Bill Boyer, takes care of our buildings, grounds, and security. Each day brings new adventures. At this quiet hour, the crew expect to find deer munching on our shrubs and wild turkeys scratching about, but today the unexpected has happened. Snapping turtles are determinedly moving over the grounds! They are being rounded up in the tractor bucket and returned to the Housatonic River that surrounds our museum grounds.

Inside the museum, pre-opening activities are underway. The cleaning crew is polishing the final touches before they leave by 10:00 o’clock. We won’t have time to meet all of our staff, so let’s peek in on a few who rarely are seen by the public.

Let’s start in the curatorial department, under the direction of curator Maureen Hart Hennessey. The curators are responsible for every step of exhibition planning, from choice and installation of the exhibit, to all the related written materials—identification labels, posters, and brochures. Once an exhibition opening date has been publicized, it is inflexible, and the entire exhibit team is totally focused on opening day. If you peer in a ground floor office and see someone working at her computer screen, with phone to her ear and pencil in hand, you may have just glimpsed our curator Maureen.

Gary Eveland, our preparator, is in charge of the physical installation of an exhibition. Gary’s area is where framing is done, rental slides and photos are filed, and art that is not currently on exhibit in our galleries is stored. Yesterday Gary returned from transporting artwork from New York City for a new exhibit, and today he will start framing some of the 100 pieces. When he finishes, he will design the lighting and begin hanging the works with the curators and facility crew. Gary also takes care of our art collection. If you catch sight of someone with a hammer and measuring tape, and a light fixture under his arm, you’ve undoubtedly met our preparator.

While we are still on the museum’s lower level, I’ll take you into the archives and reference center. The assistant curator, Linda Szekely, is in charge of this section. The archives area is the repository for all of Norman Rockwell’s personal papers, photographs, negatives, magazine tear sheets, and items far too numerous to mention. Volunteers Margery Hall and Robert Kuhner assist Linda with many donated hours in cataloguing the archives, along with Cris Raymond who also is editor of The Portfolio.

The reference center is the museum library, open to the public three afternoons a week. Authors, researchers, and grandchildren in search of a painting that they “know” grandpa once

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In 1952, Norman Rockwell painted two Saturday Evening Post covers showing the life of a little boy and the life of a little girl from their wake-up moments until their bedtime. Each painting depicted over twenty scenes from their day.
posed for, and anyone who thinks he has an original Rockwell painting might be calling Linda today. Every item in Norman Rockwell’s studio is under the care of this department; in addition, museum archival exhibits, which are very popular with the public, are organized from here. If you should happen to meet someone with a magnifying glass in one hand examining a vintage photograph while referencing the *Definitive Catalogue*, you probably have just seen Linda.

We’ll go out the library door, but please be careful not to bump into the rolling carts in the hallway. The warehouse, staffed by Allen Bell and Ed McHugh, is a busy center that replenishes the stocks in the store, receives shipments, circulates the inter-office mail and processes the many print requests received through the post and via e-mail. Right now they are loading new items to take upstairs to the museum store and stacking packages to take to the post office. They have to be out of the way before opening time, as visitors have been known to want to buy items right off the carts!

Before we proceed up the stairs, have a quick look into the classrooms. On weekends and holidays, these rooms are the most exciting place to be. Create a drawing, make a puppet, build with clay, fold paper animals, and above all learn and have fun with Melinda Georgeson, manager of youth services. If you see an artist going down the hall carrying pots of paint who looks like she is having the best time, it’s Melinda.

Maud Ayson, associate director for education and program, oversees the museum’s public and education programs, and, with her staff, plans the seminars attended by teachers from all over the country. Also, Maud is in charge of the team that meets daily with our public. She scoots between her downstairs office and the upstairs galleries checking to make certain that everything is running smoothly. If you think you have seen Maud, you are probably mistaken, unless you are moving very quickly!

We are upstairs at the museum now and still have time to pop into the museum store before it opens. Jo Ann Losinger, director of marketing, is examining some new items selected to appeal to our visitors, and is looking over the collection of signed prints that Norman Rockwell left for us to raise funds for art acquisition.

The store windows have just been artfully decorated for the season. The entire area is so beautifully arranged that it is no wonder that this is one of the most popular areas of the museum for visitors who want to take a memory home. You will find Rockwell prints, books, T-shirts, children’s art supplies, and even NR’s favorite oatmeal cookies.

Sara Andenmatten, Josie Ellis and the store staff advise and care for our visitors. But, please do not peek behind the counter because you just might find a row of shoes on the bottom shelf! At the end of a hectic day, our sales staff still have smiling faces but often very tired toes as they close up for the day.

We have to hurry because I hear the buses coming into the parking lot. We expect 20 bus tours to arrive today, in addition to our individual guests. Our visitor services assistants, front desk personnel and guides may be greeting over 1,500 people today. Bus tours are arranged and coordinated with Joseph Aubert, Jane Salvatore, Abigail Diamant and Kim Conley, but occasionally an unexpected tour arrives and everyone has to be on the alert. At such times, extra gallery tours are added to the regular hourly ones, and to keep the flow of visitors moving smoothly, some groups are asked to visit the studio first. Flexibility is the rule of the day.

The grandfather clock in the hall is ringing ten o’clock and the museum is ready to open. Let’s slip out the terrace door and stroll over the beautiful grounds to Linwood House, where the administration offices are located.
On the ground floor of Linwood we find Jean Drees, our personnel manager, who not only takes care of our museum staff, but also writes the in-house newsletter *The Gossips*, which keeps us informed on the comings and goings of the staff. Jean is an example of the spirit of the entire museum family in that her duties go beyond the human resource area to lending a hand to many other departments.

Phil Deely, associate director of external relations, wears many hats. Today, in addition to polishing a grant that he is writing, he has an appointment to discuss planned giving with a prospective donor and is finalizing the annual fun and fund raising event. His assistant Suzy Sheridan is overseeing menu, seating arrangements, and invitations for a benefit dinner. Everyone with extra time will be helping out.

Martin Terrien, associate director for finance and administration, keeps the black ink flowing as he oversees the budget, while Sherida Lincoln, our bookkeeper, monitors myriad and minute accounting details. Priscilla Ethredge, who takes care of our museum members, drops off her membership receipts to Sherida for deposit in the bank.

I now want to introduce you to Bea Snyder, manager of public affairs and membership. Ahh, she's not there—well, she is probably at a Berkshire Visitors Bureau meeting, or maybe she is in Boston today with the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. Perhaps her assistant Sally Underwood-Miller has a moment, if she is not on the phone with ABC or touring the grounds with two international reporters.

The third floor is home to our telephone receptionist Laura Tota and customer service staff, Mary Dawson, Ellen Mazzer, and Stephanie Leach. A beehive of activity continues apace here in this center of telephone communication with our world-wide audience.

Dash back down the stairs with me to the second floor. I'm delighted to invite you into my office, where my secretary Ann Sterlin is setting up a light lunch for a few trustees. Awaiting my follow-up are e-mail messages, faxes, phone calls and today's post. A quick review of the calendar shows a variety of upcoming board, staff and community meetings, with travel plans in the works for the international exhibit in Japan.

Oh yes, did I mention the paper due tomorrow for my MBA class? And so, although the scene outside my window beckons for a brisk stroll along the Lila Berle River Walk, perhaps I should leave you and get back to work.

Please stay and visit the galleries, Norman Rockwell's studio, and watch the video N.R. narrated. We close at five o'clock, at least for the daily activities. But do come back at 6:00 because Stephanie Plunkett, manager of adult services, has planned a storytelling hour for this evening. It will be a patchwork of Irish folk tales lyrically told to a background of harp music. You will be delightfully entertained with cider, song and stories. Introduce yourself to Stephanie as she has great knowledge of Rockwell's work and the field of illustration that she would love to share with you.

And when the evening is over, our caring facilities staff, Duke Shufelt, Dean Foster and Mark Carey, will turn out the lights and let the paintings rest for the night.
THE 1930S WERE A TIME of crisis and uncertainty in America. The collapse of the U.S. Stock Exchange on October 28, 1929 created a world economic crisis that reverberated through most of the coming decade. Tensions in Europe would explode into war by September 1939. In the U.S., economic burdens were worsened by a series of natural disasters, including the Johnstown flood, the Hurricane of 1938, and, most importantly, the drought that turned the fertile plains into a huge dust bowl.

It is interesting to note that times of great difficulty are often the periods of great creativity. Sometimes, a writer, artist, composer or film maker responds directly to the crisis, such as Guernica (1937) Picasso's moving tribute to the bombing of that town during the Spanish Civil War or The Grapes of Wrath (1939) John Steinbeck's portrayal of the effect of the drought on farm workers. For others, the chaos of an era inspires the individual to lift the human spirit by providing an escape from the harsh realities of daily life and to reinforce faith in a world that, at the moment, seems uncertain. Many American movies from the 1930s, from crises seem to have had very little direct impact on either the illustrator or his work. Rockwell's dilemmas were more personal and professional. The beginning of the decade found Rockwell ending a marriage, living alone in New York City and questioning his future in the field of illustration. By 1940, Rockwell was remarried and a father, living in a small New England town and about to embark upon the period of his
autobiography that he was never entirely comfortable in that role. He wrote that the European trip was the culmination of his career as a pseudo playboy. On his arrival home, his world collapsed. Irene told Norman that she had fallen in love with someone else and wanted a divorce. A few weeks later, Irene went to Reno to obtain the divorce and Norman moved out of the house in New Rochelle and into a studio apartment in the Hotel des Artistes on the Upper West Side of New York City.

For Rockwell, the move signaled the beginning of a new life. "I was a bachelor again, and still young and I was going to be fashionable, carefree, sophisticated and gay. I had no illusion; I'd work and keep free of entanglements." Riding lessons in Central Park, dining out with friends and the theater filled his days and nights. Within a very short time, however, the realities of life alone began to sink in. The quiet of the empty studio apartment and the solitude of the many meals eaten alone affected Norman deeply. Most importantly, his loneliness and unhappiness began to affect his work. "Nothing seemed to go right. I'd put the paint on the canvas and it would look alright, I couldn't see anything wrong with it, but still it wasn't good, it didn't seem to make a picture." After reworking and procrastination, "I'd finally say 'Oh, the hell with it!' and finish it up the best I could and send it off."

Years later, Rockwell discovered that one of the Post covers done during those months contained a major mistake. The aproned figure in the January 18, 1930 cover appears to have three legs. Two legs appear to be straight from behind, but his hand rests on the bent knee of his right leg under his apron! For Norman Rockwell, always so meticulous and anxious to get every detail in a picture right, to make such a mistake indicates the state of mind he was in during this period.

In early 1930, in order to avoid a legal entanglement over a commission he did not want to accept, Rockwell was advised by the Post's lawyer to get out of town for a while. Rockwell's old friend, cartoonist Clyde Forsythe, invited Norman to California. Hollywood and its plethora of actors and character types available as models helped reinvigorate Norman's attitude toward his work.

Clyde and his wife Cotta told Norman about a young schoolteacher they wanted him to meet. Norman met Mary Barstow at the Forsythe's on his second or third night in California. He called the next day to ask her out, but she declined, saying she had a prior engagement. Norman took this as outright rejection and decided not to call again. Mary did, in fact, have a PTA meeting that she had to attend and when, at Clyde's urging, Norman called again, Mary accepted his invitation to dinner. Two weeks later, the couple were engaged. Norman and Mary were married on April 17, 1930 and left the next day for New York City.

Mary was the companion and confidant Rockwell had always wanted. "Mary and I were really very happy," he wrote in his autobiography. "For, really, the first time in my life I had come to know what marriage is, what it means when two people love each other." Serving as both an inspiration and as a steadying influence on her famous husband, Mary would listen to him talk about his work and read to him while he was in his studio. This support helped Norman through the coming difficulties in his career.

Three months after their marriage, Norman and Mary moved to New Rochelle. This time, however, the Rockwells were not part of the country-club set. The subject matter for many of the Post covers during this period reflects a sense of personal contentment brought by this profound change in the
illustrator's life. While boisterous children and cagey grandpas still appear, it is romance and family that are seen more often in Rockwell's covers. In 1932, their son Jarvis was born and he was joined, in 1933, by Tom and, three years later, by Peter.

At the time that his personal life stabilized, Rockwell's professional life collapsed. He identified the first sign of trouble as "when I took up dynamic symmetry," which used algebraic formulas to determine the composition of a work. During the next few months, Rockwell's self-confidence rapidly deteriorated. Indecision and procrastination overwhelmed him. Rockwell was unable to identify what was different in how he worked, and, yet, he was sure that nothing he created was any good.

In 1932, after seeing a play in which the hero, having trouble with his work, took all his savings and went abroad, Rockwell decided that this, perhaps, was the answer for him. Mary and Norman put baby Jarvis in a wicker clothes basket and took the boat for France. However, it didn't seem to do any good. "I finished two pictures—wretched illustrations—during the eight months we lived in Paris." He arrived home in a worse state than before. Yet, Rockwell's sketchbook from his time in Paris and the wonderful painting Paris Bridge show that his abilities were still strong, even though he was consumed by self-doubt.

Despite his misgivings, Rockwell continued to work. He experimented with new brushes and glazes; he changed subject matter and attempted to paint the sordid side of life, although he was never able to paint ugliness successfully. Unable to identify what was wrong with his work, Rockwell struggled on and stopped trying to understand why he was confused and dissatisfied. Eventually, Rockwell painted his way out of his crisis. "My self-confidence returned; I came up with several good ideas; I saw them as coherent pictures all the time I was painting them."

A turning point in Rockwell's career came in 1935 when he returned to work on more story and book illustrations. In a cover illustration, an artist has to create his own story line, whereas story and book illustrations are drawn from an author's words. As such, they had always been easier for Rockwell. Illustrating a fine story or classic book meant a great deal to Rockwell who always was an avid reader. With these commissions, Norman Rockwell was drawn out of his crisis of confidence and began to turn out some of the finest work he had ever done.

In 1935, Rockwell received the commission to illustrate The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and called it the chance of a lifetime. Determining to do the best job possible, he went where no other Mark Twain illustrator had ever been—to visit Hannibal, Missouri, Mark
Twain’s hometown, to sketch the town and the mighty river that were the settings for both books. With a strong sense of place and the authentic details gathered on the trip, Rockwell was able to create the memorable illustrations that, for so many people, are the definitive portraits of Tom and Huck.

Two years later, a commission to illustrate a biography of Louisa May Alcott, author of Little Women, took Rockwell to Alcott’s home in Concord, Massachusetts, now a museum. “Sitting in her bedroom, where everything was just as it had been when she was alive, I had a real sense of the period...And I think I did better illustrations because of it.”

As a result of these important series of story and book illustrations, Rockwell was again able to tell his own stories through cover illustration. The Post covers done between 1936 and 1939 include some of his most humorous and memorable ones. He continued as an important cover artist, even though his great friend and supporter, Post editor George Horace Lorimer, left the magazine in 1936. The hard realities of life depicting economic difficulties still did not appear on the magazine’s cover. Like many movies of the time, Rockwell’s humorous images focused on happier and perhaps simpler times.

By the late 1930s, Rockwell’s wanderlust again began to surface. “When I’ve lived in one place for too long, ideas begin to come harder. Things go dead for me because I’m too familiar with them. They become a pattern. I need a change.” A family vacation trip to England in 1938, which included a memorable meeting with the illustrator Arthur Rackham, was not enough to stem the tide. The English countryside reminded Rockwell of his youthful summers spent on upstate New York farms.

On their return, Mary and Norman drove to Vermont to look at farms, with the intention of finding a summer retreat. Their first idyllic summer in Arlington, Vermont, however, convinced them that a better life could be found there for their family. New models and new story lines presented themselves to the illustrator daily. In 1939, the Rockwell family moved to Arlington full-time.

Although the United States was not yet involved, the end of the 1930s found a world war raging. All of the influences and factors of the 1930s—marriage and family, Lorimer’s retirement from the Post, and the move to Arlington—had brought Norman Rockwell through a time of personal and professional challenges but still left him singularly unaffected by the crises of the outside world. In the 1940s, this would change. The Second World War would present Norman Rockwell with his greatest professional opportunities and challenges and establish him as not only the leading illustrator but perhaps the most popular artist of the time.

The quotations in this article are from Norman Rockwell, My Adventures as an Illustrator, published in 1988 by Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, New York.

Southwest Sojourn

ON SEPTEMBER 8-19, THE NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM, the Berkshire Museum and the Bennington Museum are co-sponsoring a trip to the Southwest. Join this three-museum excursion to Phoenix, Sedona, the Grand Canyon, Lake Powell, Zion and Bryce National Parks and the Acoma Indian Reservation.

This tour to the important museums of the Southwest, native American Indian sites and National Parks has been organized by Maureen Johnson Hickey, Ed.D., Director, Berkshire Art Gallery.

The Southwest trip with a tour leader features first-class accommodations, fine restaurants, a private coach, and tours to the museums and the most interesting sites of the area. Departure will be on Northwest Airlines from Hartford to Phoenix with the return out of Albuquerque.

For a detailed itinerary, please call Maureen Johnson Hickey at 413-528-2690.

Saturday June 6th
SAVE THE DATE

Do we have a New Deal for You!
Come to The Blue Skies Club at the Norman Rockwell Museum

Relive (or discover for the first time!) the Big Band sound of the 1930’s. Dance the Lindy Hop and dine under a tent on the museum terrace. Happy Days are here again at The Blue Skies Club! Invitation to follow.

For advance reservations call 413-298-4120
Museum Reference Center Donations

Due to our desire to bring you coverage of a very busy schedule of museum activities in the past year and a half, we have not had the opportunity to announce the donations to the museum reference center since our fall 1996 Portfolio. Listed here, in the order in which they were received, are the many thoughtful and generous gifts received between June 1996 and December 1997.


Mr. Walter Hawver of Cohoes, NY: Two photos, one of Linda Darnell with NR and one of Linda Darnell in NR's studio.

Mr. Norman Gautreau of Revere, MA: Photo of NR with Norman Gautreau.

Mr. Philip N. Linde of Arlington, VT: Norman Rockwell Artist and Illustrator by Thomas Buechner, Phil the Fiddler by Horatio Alger, and memorabilia relating to Linde's work with NR on the painting Norman Rockwell Visits a Family Doctor.

Mr. Joel Holt of Christiansdale, St. Croix: Official Program of the 43rd presidential inauguration, illustrated by NR.

Mr. Shane McCormack of Wicklow, Ireland: Five tear sheets of advertisements illustrated by NR.


Ms. Kathleen M. Raber Johnson of Albion, IN: A 1952 typewritten letter to Miss Raber from NR.

Mr. Wendell Minor of Washington, CT: Seven children's books illustrated by the donor.

Ms. Pauline D. Pierce of Stockbridge, MA: Photo of NR with Frank Sinatra.

Mr. Henry H. Williams, Jr. of Stockbridge, MA: Various NR stamps and first issue cover envelopes, one issue of Look magazine, Norman Rockwell's World of Scouting by William Hillcourt, Spirit of Scouting medals, porcelain plaque of Spirit of America.

Mr. Eric Corbett Williams of Lenox, MA: Boy Scouts of America certificate and data card illustrated by NR.

Harriet and Robert Jedekin of Eastchester, NY: Two issues of Country Gentleman magazine with covers by NR.

Reverend John R. Kenny, Jr. of Goshen, CT: One copy of Over There sheet music with cover by NR.

Estate of Henry W. Scovill 2nd, Stockbridge, MA: Negatives, photographic prints, and ephemera relating to the life and work of NR.


Anne and David Braman of Stockbridge, MA: Berkshire: Two Hundred Years in Pictures and 29 magazines containing articles about or illustrations by NR.


Mr. Eric Wilska of The Book Loft of Great Barrington, MA: The Book of Common Prayer, inscribed to NR by the rector of St. Paul's Church, Stockbridge and This is My Country (NR's Atlas).


Mrs. Ruth Schaaff Russell of Sarasota, FL: Two Saturday Evening Post covers by NR, two copies of the Saturday Evening Post insert A Norman Rockwell Album, various prints, photos and tear sheets relating to NR's work for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.

Mr. Irwin Steinberg of Spring Valley, NY: 63 Saturday Evening Post cover tear sheets, 20 tear sheets of advertisements illustrated by NR, eight Boys' Life magazine covers, one Literary Digest magazine and one St. Nicholas magazine.

Ms. Laurie Norton Moffatt of Stockbridge, MA: My Adventures as an Illustrator by Norman Rockwell, first edition copy inscribed by NR.

Mr. Richard Ross of Norwalk, CT: Two Boys' Life magazines with covers by NR.

Ms. Betsy Holtzinger and Mr. Richard Herrick of Stockbridge, MA: Three graduation hoods (probably worn by NR upon receiving honorary college diplomas), watercolor landscape by Grace Barstow, gouache portrait of Gwilym Price by Jarvis Rockwell, a man's white cotton suit and a white apron (possibly used as costumes).
ALTHOUGH HIS IMAGES often betray a heartfelt appreciation for rural life, it gave Norman Rockwell considerable pleasure to let people know that he actually had been born in New York City, where he and his family lived in a fifth floor walk-up on 103rd Street and Amsterdam Avenue. As a boy, his earliest remembrances of green spaces were of those in Central Park, where he far from sumptuous. “It was a pretty rough neighborhood where I grew up,” Rockwell recalled. “There were gang fights around there sometimes, though not with knives and guns like today.” The streets were not without mystery, and there always was plenty to do. The boys spent hours at the firehouse watching the men wash and polish the gleaming red wagons and waited for the clanging of the fire bell. Also, the corner saloon was a favorite off-limits curiosity, where Norman and Jarvis would squat down on either side of the doorway, trying to get a look inside. In the city, Rockwell discovered his love of drawing, and spent many evenings with his father at the dining room table sketching scenes from the magazines Leslie’s or Harper’s Weekly.

For a few weeks each summer, the Rockwells escaped from New York to board at rural farms that provided lodging for city vacationers. In 1907, when Rockwell was thirteen, the family moved to 121 Prospect Avenue in Mamaroneck, a town along Long Island Sound just beyond the Bronx and New Rochelle. A crowded suburb today, Mamaroneck then seemed bucolic, in contrast to the cold world of the city. In Mamaroneck, Rockwell sang in the choir at St. Thomas Episcopal Church. He enjoyed the experience, but was ranked by the fact that his mother made him return the dollar and a half he was paid every Sunday. A point of interest for him and his friends was St. Michael’s home for girls, which was perched on a hill just beside the church. “After services on Sunday, four or five of us would climb up into the belfry in our black cassocks and surplices and yell across at the ... girls, teasing them. One day the sexton locked us in by mistake. For two hours we shouted and waved ... at the passers-by in the street below. They glanced up and waved back. Finally someone understood and let us out so we could go home for dinner.”

Rockwell was a somewhat less than average student at Mamaroneck High School and, surprisingly, his grades in art were not outstanding. The lowest passing grade was a 70, and in advanced drawing he got just that—a 70. A favorite memory of those days was of his eighth-grade teacher, Miss Julia Smith, who encouraged drawing and asked him to create pictures in colored chalks on the board. “That meant a lot to me; it was sort of a public recognition of my ability. ... I know she saw where I was headed, and because she was a fine teacher, she helped me along.”

During his first year of high school, Rockwell went every Saturday to study art at the Chase School in New York City. Eventually, the school principal allowed him to take Wednesdays and his brother Jarvis spent many hours wandering and exploring.

The family left that apartment when Rockwell was two, and additional moves uptown—first to 147th Street and then to 153rd and St. Nicholas Avenue—were considered improvements to the family situation, although these railroad apartments were
The Rockwell House on Lord Kitchener Road in New Rochelle, New York

off so that he could attend classes twice a week. He boarded the trolley at Palmer Avenue in Mamaroneck at seven in the morning and rode to 188th Street and Bronx Park where he took the subway to Manhattan. The trip took two hours each way. After his sophomore year, he left high school to study art full-time. Seeking an art school with a broader curriculum, Rockwell first attended the National Academy of Design in New York, and eventually transferred to the Art Students League, an innovative and exciting school where he developed his "Hot as hell in the summer and cold as something in the winter." In the early days of his career, Rockwell became more and more dissatisfied with the inconvenience of working at home in cramped quarters. By 1913, his mother's increasing illness made it difficult for her to maintain the household, so the Rockwell family left their home in Mamaroneck and moved into a New York City boardinghouse. In the small room that he shared with Jarvis, Rockwell's desk doubled as a drawing board and supplies cabinet. Some two years later they returned to Westchester County and set up residence in a comfortable establishment called Brown Lodge in New Rochelle. At the time, the attractive suburb was home to such prominent artists and illustrators as Frederic Remington, Coles Phillips, Charles Dana Gibson and J.C. Leyendecker, with whom Rockwell eventually developed a close friendship. Rockwell rented his first studio in Westchester in the Clovelly Building at 360 North Avenue, where there were stores on the first floor and offices on the second. The rear office was occupied by a dentist, and on Saturdays, he remembered crowds of children milling about the hall, and the succession of screams emanating from the room all day long.

An emerging artist, Rockwell began illustrating regularly for such children's publications as St. Nicholas, American Boy, Boy's Life and Youth's Companion. He developed the strong technique for depicting boys and girls that would eventually win him more favorable assignments. He and his friend, cartoonist Clyde Forsythe, rented Frederic Remington's former studio on Remington Place off Webster Avenue, which he described as a huge barn made of corrugated iron designed for the purpose of making life-size sculpture. "Hot as hell in the summer and cold as something in the winter," it had beautiful light and a pot-bellied stove that toasted everything within ten feet of it, leaving all else to freeze. There, in New Rochelle, he set himself to the task of becoming a professional.

In 1916, the year he sold his first cover to the Saturday Evening Post, Rockwell proposed to school teacher Irene O'Connor, whom he met at Edgewood Hall, a boardinghouse where his family had recently moved. The couple was not married long before Rockwell enlisted in the Navy. Although he was eager to see action during World War I, he was stationed in Charleston, South Carolina, where he painted officers' portraits and served as the art editor for the base publication, Afloat and Ashore. He was even able to continue his covers for the Post during his enlistment. "When I arrived in New Rochelle after my discharge ... I walked straight home, slung my sea bag in the closet, kissed Irene and rushed out to look at my studio. It was a cold November day ... but when I saw the window of my studio behind the row of houses, I went all warm inside."

For a short time, Rockwell set up shop in their small apartment in a two-family house, but there were so many interruptions that he couldn't get any work done. It didn't help that now and then Irene's mother, two brothers and sister came to live with them. In 1921, he rented the top of a garage at 40 Prospect Street from George Lischke and worked there until 1926.

During the 1920s, Rockwell became the leading cover artist of the Saturday Evening Post. His success was so remarkable to
other young artists who lived in New Rochelle that they watched his every move. Illustrator John Falter recalled how he and his friends would follow Rockwell as he left his Prospect Street studio. “We’d follow him down the main avenue at a respectable distance, of course, noting everything he did. If he paused to look in a gallery or store window, we’d have a look also after he moved on, trying to figure out what had interested him ... I guess mostly we just wished that some of the magic would rub off on us.”

The first home that Rockwell purchased in New Rochelle was an imitation English cottage situated on Premium Point. “All through the night the house creaked and groaned as it settled into the swampy ground. ... And one day as I was eating breakfast I heard a queer noise and, looking out, discovered that I had no front lawn. The lawn had fallen into the septic tank.”

Rockwell wanted desperately to sell the house, but no one would buy it. Then Irving Hansen, who owned a fine house on the other side of town at Lord Kitchener Road, offered to trade with him. “My mother lives in the next house,” Hansen explained, “and I’d like a good neighbor for her.” Flabbergasted, Rockwell objected halfheartedly, accepted the offer and immediately made plans to build a studio next to the garage beside the house. Architect and friend Dean Parmalee worked with him to design a comfortable space, complete with fieldstone walls, pegged floor and a fireplace with a faux balcony above it. It was a costly project, “but it was a good place to work.”

A successful artist and colorful storyteller, Rockwell was a favorite guest at the area’s many functions. During these years, he and Irene Rockwell tended to go their separate ways. He went to Europe without her and worked at illustration seven days a week, and she acquired her own circle of friends. Of their 1930 divorce, he said, “We got along well together; never quarreled or made a nuisance of ourselves. We gave parties, belonged to a bridge club. Everybody used to like us together. We just didn’t love each other, sort of went our own ways.”

For a year he rattled around New York City trying to make the best of things. On a trip to California with fellow artist Clyde Forsythe, he met Mary Barstow, a schoolteacher from Alhambra. They married in 1930 and, after a short stay at the Hotel des Artistes where he had previously resided, they took up residence in the house on Lord Kitchener Road, where sons Jarvis, Tom and Peter were born. In Mary, Rockwell had found a real friend. “I guess it saved me,” he said, “because a few months after our marriage I began to have trouble with my work. Now that I was settled again and happy, the frenzied life I’d been leading ... fell in on me like a ton of bricks.” A younger breed of illustrator was creating work that forced Rockwell to question his own pictures. Feelings of indecision and low self-confidence nagged at him and he also was troubled by the demanding social pressures that were distracting and unsatisfying. He felt that a change was in order, and that a fresh environment would provide the material and tranquility he needed to work.

Friend and model Fred Hildebrand urged him to explore the Batten Kill River in Vermont, and he was taken with its scenic beauty. He purchased a white clapboard house and 60 acres of land along the banks of the river, and over the winter of 1938 had one of their two barns converted to a studio. In 1939, they took up permanent residence there.

Throughout his Westchester years, Norman Rockwell produced an enormous amount of work including Post covers, calendars, advertising images, and book illustrations for Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, as well as illustrations for such magazines as Life, Literary Digest, Ladies’ Home Journal and American Magazine. His The Land of Enchantment, a double-page story illustration for the Post, has graced the walls of the children’s section of the New Rochelle Public Library since 1935. The entrance sign that he created for the town still can be seen at Eastchester Road and Pelhamdale Avenue. It reads, “New Rochelle, Rich in History,” and New Rochelle is truly richer in its history for having had Norman Rockwell as one of its citizens.
Norman Rockwell painted over 70 Saturday Evening Post covers during the 1930s. The museum carries a variety of these images in print and postcard form from this era.

Saturday Evening Post Prints & Postcards. Unframed prints from $12, matted and framed prints from $60, postcards $.50 – .75.

Visit the Store anytime during museum hours, or place your order by calling: 1-800-742-9454.
Major credit cards accepted.

My Adventures as an Illustrator
Norman Rockwell
As told to Tom Rockwell

My Adventures As An Illustrator. Softcover. 129 illustrations. Members $17.95/$19.95
Lighthearted autobiography filled with Norman Rockwell's anecdotes. Several chapters trace the 1930s.
Cover: Artist Facing Blank Canvas. October 8, 1938 Saturday Evening Post cover.

Norman Rockwell and The Saturday Evening Post—The Middle Years by Dr. Donald R. Stoltz and Marshall L. Stoltz
Hardcover. 108 Saturday Evening Post covers. Members $20.65/$22.95
Cover: Woman at Vanity, October 21, 1933 Saturday Evening Post cover.
Wake-Up Your Collection

Jo Ann Losinger, Director of Marketing

WAKE-UP YOUR collection with Family Home from Vacation, a limited edition print signed by Norman Rockwell. This tableau of the thirties is just one of many prints given to the museum by Norman Rockwell in order to raise funds for art acquisition.

Norman Rockwell’s friend, Fred Hildebrandt, posed for this 1930’s Saturday Evening Post cover. According to Rockwell, this scene almost sold more than magazines.

My friend Fred Hildebrandt, who posed for this September 13th picture, was quite amazed when he received a proposal of marriage from a woman in Australia who had seen the cover and felt that he would make her a good husband. But he said no, and is still single! —NR

Fred Hildebrandt also posed for illustrator Mead Schaeffer. In fact, Rockwell and Schaeffer first met via telephone when they were trying to juggle Fred’s modeling schedule. Years later they became neighbors and best of friends in Arlington, Vermont.

Another friend of Rockwell’s was Muriel Bliss Hallwood, the mother depicted in this painting. According to Muriel’s son and granddaughter, a letter reveals that Hildebrandt was sweet on Muriel. In addition to Family Home from Vacation, she posed with Fred in The Milkmaid, and Hayseed Critic.

This signed print is available for purchase through our museum store. Call 1-800-742-9450 for a list of available prints and prices. You may also purchase other signed prints through our Web Site: www.nrm.org. All major credit cards are accepted. Also, signed prints are on display in our store.

The Norman Rockwell Museum
at Stockbridge

Stockbridge
Massachusetts 01262
Tel. 413-298-4100
The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

For Adults

Saturdays, April 4, 25 and May 16 9:30 to 11:50am

Art History Series
American Story: Three Centuries of Art & Culture
Join Maureen Johnson Hickey, EdD in this fascinating look at the development of the American art tradition. Three illustrated talks will explore the American search for self-image, and the art that became a vital part of the process of growth.

Session 1: The Colonists, the formation of a Republicimage, and The Birth of Liberty
Session 2: The Draw of Europe and its Influence on Late 19th-Century and Early 20th-Century American Art
Session 3: Post War Modern
A related bus trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art is offered for an additional fee. See May 23 listing.

Educator at historian Maureen Johnson Hickey, EdD, is director of the Berkshire Art Gallery and Art Center in Great Barrington, MA. $45, $40 members.

Sunday, April 5, 3pm
GALLERY TALK

In Celebration of Spring
Throughout their careers, Norman Rockwell and his homes, studios and places were a part of the 1920s and 30s, which included his 1939-53, based upon his recent biography of the Whitney Museum of American Art. $55, $50 members.

Saturday, April 25, 2pm and May 9 10am to 1pm
ART WORKSHOP SERIES
Painting 101/102
Explore the painting process from start to finish with Melinda Geoghegan. Students working in oil or other painted media will learn current principles of color harmony and composition, as well as approaches to developing and self-confidence, intended to inform beginners while motivating the more advanced. Individual and group discussions will offer positive perspectives for growth.

Melinda Geoghegan's vibrant still life paintings are included in numerous private collections. An artist and educator for over fifteen years, she is currently the Manager of Youth Services at the Norman Rockwell Museum. $80, $75 members.

Saturday, May 2, 11am to 5pm
SPECIAL EVENT
Berkeley County Day: An Illustration Celebration
Join us for this special festival of talks, discussions, demonstrations, music, and activities that celebrate the work of American illustrators. Free for all who live or work in Berkeley County.

Saturday, May 19, 11am to 3pm
THE BUSINESS OF ART
The Illustrator and the Art Director
Take an in-depth look at the functional demands of visual problem solving and its relationship to expressive content from an art director's perspective. Lucy Bartholomay will discuss her decision-making process when commissioning illustration art for the professional portfolio, effective presentation opportunities in the field of illustration and innovative ways to promote your work or address. Bring your best portfolio and a pen and a pencil! We'll provide beverages and dessert.

Lucy Bartholomay is the deputy manager of design at the Boston Globe, where she has been an art director for 18 years. $55, $50 members.

Sunday, May 17, 3pm
GALLERY TALK

Tough Choices: The Artist and the Decision-Making Process
Norman Rockwell was a "gifted" director who carefully manipulated the narrative and aesthetic elements in each illustration until a sense of believability had been achieved. Explore the artist's rigorous creative and technical process with museum guide Robert Lesley, and examine some of the critical choices he made to enhance the impact of his imagery.

Free with museum admission.

Tuesday, May 20, 7am to 4pm
SPECIAL BUS TRIP: New York Excursion
The American Experience
Immerse yourself in the American art experience! The special event will include highlights that have described and defined our national experience. Art historian/educator Maureen Johnson Hickey, EdD will offer tours of the 18th and 19th century American collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and, after lunch, the early 20th century collection at the Whitney Museum of American Art. $65, $60 members.

Saturday, June 6, 11am
MEMBERS OPENING BRUNCH
Changes and Challenges: Rockwell in the 1930s
Join us for a members' brunch in celebration of the opening of an exciting exhibition featuring original Rockwell works from the 1930s. Museum curator Maureen Hart Hennessy will offer insights about the transitional decade in Rockwell's life. Free for members. $15 guests.

Saturday, June 12, 12pm to 5pm
OPENING FESTIVAL
The 1930s: An American Celebration
This exciting new exhibition of the works of America's most celebrated artist, Rockwell, will explore the art, history, music and dance of the decade through discussions, presentations, performances and art activities. At 2pm, journalist Stuart Murray will present a talk on Norman Rockwell's Home of Honor in Vermont, his Andy Squared and based upon his recent book of the same name. Free with museum admission.

Saturday, June 6, 7pm
THE BLUE SKIES CLUB DANCE
Save the Date!
Religious Event for the first time! The Big Island sound of the 1930s. Dance the Lindy Hop and drive under a tent on the museum terrace, Happy Days here again! The Blue Skies Club looks for your invitation in this mail, or call 413-298-4120.

Sunday, June 7, 3pm
GALLERY TALK
Berkeley Vistas
Stroll the museum's scenic landscape with Assistant Manager of Visitor Services Abigail Provisions and admire illustrators of the 20th century works at the Whitney Museum of American Art, our very own Berkeley view, and learn more about the outdoor sculpture of Peter Rockwell. Free with museum admission.

Exhibitions

Through May 25, 1998
C.L. LEYENDERECK: A RETROSPECTIVE
The retrospective exhibition of original artwork C.L. Leyendecker (1871-1951), one of the most well-known and admired illustrators of American national experience. Free with museum admission.

Through June 21, 1998
MAKING PICTURES
An interactive exhibition that encourages visitors of all ages to increase their observation and perceptual skills through the study of Norman Rockwell imagery.

June 6 through October 25, 1998
CHANGES AND CHALLENGES: ROCKWELL IN THE 1930S
An exhibition of original paintings, drawings, and magazine covers that highlight an important and transitional decade in Norman Rockwell's professional life.

Permanent Exhibits

My Adventures as an Illustrator
MIRROR ON AMERICA
My Best Studio Yet
Saturday, April 18, 1-5pm
FAMILY TIME
Celebrating the Earth
1-2:30 Above The Picture Plane — paper sculpture with illustrator Robin Brickman.
2:30-3:30 Booksigning with Robin Brickman, illustrator of "A Log's Life."
2:45-3:45 Tour of museum's vernal pond with guest educator Judy Isacoff of Berkshire Botanical Garden.
3-5 Collage with natural objects.
* Children free thanks to KB Toys! Half-price for adults with children.

Wednesday, April 22, 2-4pm
TECHNIQUES
Living Large
Experience painting a large-scale portrait with artist Caroline Kelley. Working in tempera paint on oversized paper, participants will mix and build a palette of colors to use in creating the piece. Please dress for an active art class. For ages 5 and up. $10, $8 members.

Friday, April 24, 2-4pm
TECHNIQUES
Don't Burst My Bubble
Watercolor is the medium for this class exploring imaginary landscapes. Dreams, vacations, imaginizations and more provide inspiration for colorful expressions of fantasy worlds. For ages 7 and up. $10, $8 members.

Saturday, April 25, 2-4pm
TECHNIQUES
Self-Portraits
Bring a mirror to this special class on interpreting your self-portrait. Participants will learn color mixing techniques, and work on canvas panel with acrylic paint. All materials provided. Do plan to wear clothing appropriate for an active art class. Acrylic paint is permanent on cloth. For ages 7 and up. $10, $8 members.

Saturday, May 16, 1-5pm
FAMILY TIME
Puttin' On My Top Hat
1-2:30 The Prosperity of Jazz: Jazz for Children. Musicians explain what jazz is, the various styles of jazz and the contribution jazz has made to our society. Children are encouraged to participate by playing the instruments.
2:30 Family tour of J.C. Leyendecker: A Retrospective.
3-5 Drawing using the sculptures as models.
* Children free thanks to KB Toys! Half-price for adults with children.

Saturday, June 20, 1-5pm
FAMILY TIME
Carved in Stone
1-2:30 Stone carving workshop with internationally renowned sculptor Bob Sindorf. Mr. Sindorf explains and demonstrates the process of stone carving in this participatory workshop for all ages.
2:30 Family tour of sculptures and landscape.
3-5 Drawing using the sculptures as models.
* Children free thanks to KB Toys! Half-price for adults with children.