

HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Volume 15, Number 6

November/December 2009



Photographer and graphic designer Jean-Paul Picard portrays the many faces of Hoboken.

Meet “Picard’s Posse” in *Visage Hoboken: Portraits by Jean-Paul Picard*

Inspired by major museum retrospectives of the work of two important European photographers, 19th century Gaspard-Félix Tournachon Nadar and 20th century August Sander, Hoboken photographer and graphic designer Jean-Paul Picard rented a studio space in 2006 in the Neumann Leathers complex that offered the perfect setting for a portrait series. Though he considers himself primarily a street photographer, who has documented Hoboken’s changing physical landscape over the 25 years he’s lived here, Picard set himself the challenge of combining traditional portrait techniques with the latest digital photography tools. He rounded up “Picard’s Posse,” friends and acquaintances, mostly members of Hoboken’s creative community, and experimented with traditional portrait styles using natural light and modern technology.

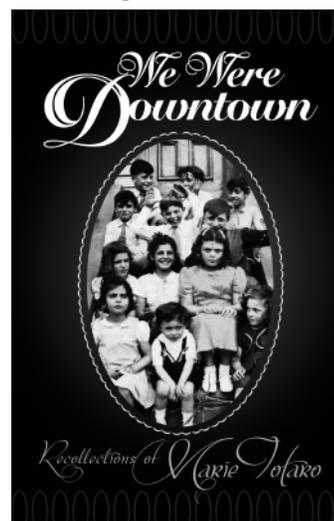
Picard helped his subjects relax and open up by asking them to talk about Hoboken—Why did (*continued on page 2*)

“Downtown” Hoboken Tales Preserved in New Oral History Chapbook

Marie Totaro, legendary Hoboken baker and past (and perhaps future) chairwoman of the Feast of St. Ann, spoke with Hoboken Oral History Project volunteer interviewer Pat Samperi at length last year. As could be expected, Marie offered detailed histories of her former dessert café, Le Jardin, and the development of the Feast. But the interviews also yielded lovingly evoked memories of downtown Hoboken that begged to be put into print. With humor and an eye toward detail, Marie offered a rich portrait of a way of life that has almost entirely disappeared from her old neighborhood.

Hoboken Oral History Project editor Holly Metz and designer Ann Marie Manca have shaped Marie’s stories to produce a new chapbook, *We Were Downtown, Recollections of Marie Totaro*. On Sunday, November 15, at 4 p.m., the Museum and the Friends of the Hoboken Public Library will celebrate the release of this booklet at the Hoboken Historical Museum.

If you lived downtown (or still do!), have fond memories of Marie’s fabulous cheesecakes at Le Jardin, or have stories about St. Ann’s Feast, please stop by the Museum at 1301 Hudson Street on the 15th to tell your own stories (*continued on page 2*)



Marie Totaro tells stories of St. Ann’s Feast and her neighborhood.

At the Hoboken Historical Museum

Main Gallery, through December 23

Up and Down the River: A History of the Hudson, 1609 – 2009

In the Upper Gallery

November 8 – December 23

Visage Hoboken: Portraits by Jean-Paul Picard

Meet Picards "Posse"... (continued from cover)

you move here? What did you find here? And, What are your proudest accomplishments? Some had never sat for a formal portrait session. Others came prepared with multiple outfits. Using a digital camera with a black background and consistent lighting, the differences from one photograph to the next depend on the subjects themselves, as well as on Picard's use of different distances and framing techniques. Most sessions lasted about an hour and a half and generated about 400 shots each.

He selected 20 distinctive portraits for an exhibit titled *Visage Hoboken: Portraits by Jean-Paul Picard*, which will be on display in the Upper Gallery of the Hoboken Historical Museum starting **November 8, with a reception from 2 – 5 p.m.** The portraits are as varied as the subjects themselves, some formal and serious, some playful and joyous, but all expressive of a group of people united by the shared experience of living in Hoboken. Because it was difficult for him to choose the 20 portraits for the show, many others are on view on his own website, www.jean-paulpicard.com.

Born and raised in Morristown, N.J., Picard earned his Bachelors in Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design, where he studied graphic design and where his interest in photography took off after he enrolled in some required courses in photography and printmaking. He's spent most of his professional career as a freelance graphic design and production director, for local and national businesses and for advertising and packaging studios, often using his photography skills in the process. Along the way, he earned a certificate in web design and now designs and manages websites such as the Museum's own.

When he moved to Hoboken in 1981, he noticed posters around town with an old photo of a baseball team with the slogan, "Join the Team." It was an invitation to participate in the three-month-long "Celebration '82" arts event, organized by the Hoboken Cultural Council at venues around the city, culminating in a two-day River City Fair on the original Piers A, B and C. His photos of the March against Arson were included in the group show, "50 Artists on the Waterfront." He was also fascinated with the prevalence of family-owned stores that dotted the city, and earned another exhibit during Celebration '82 with his series, "Mom and Pop Stores," at the Unicorn, a bookstore/café/gallery in Hoboken. The show was reviewed in the *New York Times* and he secured an advertising design job from one of the local retailers featured in his series.

Since then, his work has been exhibited many times in solo and juried shows, including the annual Hoboken Artists Studio Tour, and group shows such as "Life of the City," at New York's Museum of Modern Art, and "Here is New York: Remembering 9/11," at the New York Historical Society. He has also taught photography and darkroom techniques to college-bound high school students through the Stevens Technical Enrichment Program, as well as classes in photography and web design at the Hoboken Board of Education's Adult Evening Program and at the Museum.

Picard returns to the Museum for an artist's talk on **Sunday, Nov. 22, at 4 p.m.**, and the exhibit will be on view through Wednesday, December 23.

"Downtown" Hoboken Tales... (continued from cover)

and to receive a copy of *We Were Downtown*. The event is free and copies of the chapbook will be distributed to all who attend. Refreshments will be served!

Our oral history chapbooks are produced as part of the Hoboken Oral History Project, sponsored by the Museum and the Friends. *We Were Downtown* was printed with support from John Wiley & Sons.  **WILEY**
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In Memoriam

John DePalma, a founding member of the Hoboken Historical Museum and its second president of the Board of Trustees, died on July 12, 2009, after a long battle with an inoperable brain tumor, at the age of 59. He worked for the City since 1992, most recently as Deputy City Clerk. An avid collector of Hoboken memorabilia, he was also a member of the editorial committee of the Hoboken History Magazine and an active member of the Hoboken Historic Preservation Commission.

His commitment to the civic life of the community knew no bounds. Perhaps the role in which John touched the lives of most residents of the City was as president of the 6th Ward Block Association. In that role, he founded the Church Square Summer Concert Series, which he ran and organized for 22 years, as a volunteer. A gentleman and a gentle man, his many friends will miss him.



Joy Sikorski was a graphic designer, author, and illustrator whose career as a production editor with John Wiley & Sons brought her to Hoboken. There could not be a more aptly named person, as she shared an infectious joy in drawing with countless children and adults through her "How to Draw" series of books, and in many personal appearances with the Museum and other community workshops.

Joy donated many hours and copies of her books to local schools, the Jubilee Center, and the Museum. She lifted everyone's spirits with her cheerful outlook, easy laugh, love of bright colors, and her gift for demystifying the craft of illustration with simple-to-follow instructions. As a member of the Hoboken Garden Club, she shared her love of plants and hospitality with the Club.

Behind the scenes, she contributed to the Museum's overall graphic excellence, designing several of our most popular maps, calendars, and books, including "100 Hoboken Firsts," "Kids Map of Hoboken," and "Kids with Cameras" 2008 calendar. Although they moved to Ridgewood, Joy and her husband Nick Sunday were frequent volunteers at Museum events. This summer, she lost her battle with cancer, but her creativity and generous nature will be remembered by all who had the good fortune to know her.

Museum Earns Special Funding for Three New Programs

In the current climate of significantly reduced state funding for organizations like ours, Education Curator Sherrard Bostwick is pleased to announce that three special projects the Museum is planning have received funding from new sources. This funding will enable the Museum to undertake new research and broaden its outreach to the community.

IHM Awarded Prestigious Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services

Thanks to a generous grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Hoboken Historical Museum and Cultural Center is developing a new educational



program that uses the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway as an interpretive tool to understand and explore Hoboken's physical and cultural heritage. The Open River

Program includes: a cell phone tour, outdoor didactic plaques, public event programming, and a strategic plan for Sybil's Cave. Through the Open River Program, the Museum will share local heritage with new audiences, furthering the Museum's mission of promoting, studying, and preserving Hoboken heritage. The Open River Program is a waterfront programming extension of the 2009 Hudson-Stevens-Fulton anniversary celebration and will continue to complement future Museum exhibitions.

The Hoboken Historical Museum is honored to be one of the 167 museums in 46 states and Puerto Rico selected to receive an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museums for America (MFA) grant. The grants support high-priority activities that advance the Museums' missions and strategic goals, helping them to serve the public more effectively. The Hoboken Museum is pleased to be one of the 433 applicants across the United States competing for the award to be selected, and the only applicant from New Jersey to receive this recognition.

"By making it their mission to provide the public with top-notch programming and knowledgeable staff, the 2009 MFA grantees have demonstrated that they know what is important to their communities," said Anne-Imelda Radice, Director of IMLS. Referencing IMLS's report, *InterConnections*, Radice

added, "In 2006, 156 million U.S. adults visited museums 1.2 billion times, in person and remotely. These numbers prove that museums, like this year's MFA recipients, are vital institutions that play a significant role in people's lives."

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute and this grant, please visit www.imls.gov or email: education@hobokenmuseum.org.

Centro Puertorriqueños Funds Hoboken Puerto Rican Community Research Project

The Hoboken Museum is pleased to announce the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños (Center for Puerto Rican Studies) Historical Preservation and Research Committee has selected our project, "The Role of the Roman Catholic Church and the Development of the Puerto Rican Community in Hoboken, 1945-1975," for funding support.

The Centro is located at Hunter College, the City University of New York, and is seeking oral histories and research related to Puerto Rican communities in the greater New York area. Although Hoboken is only a few miles from New York City, Puerto Rican communities in New Jersey have unique features that have yet to be examined and understood. Hoboken experienced a large Puerto Rican migration in the 1950s and 1960s, becoming *the* Puerto Rican town of northern New Jersey. By 1970, approximately one-quarter of Hoboken's population, 10,000 people, were either Puerto Rico-born or first-generation mainland-born.

Dr. Christina Ziegler-McPherson, a local Hoboken independent scholar, author, and expert on immigration histories, will be conducting interviews, reviewing church records, and collecting materials through the end of this year. The project is part of the Centro's "The Barrio Series" and Dr. Ziegler-McPherson's results will be published in the Centro's *Voices* web magazine.

The Museum invites anyone who would like to contribute to the study of the relationship of the *(continued on page 4)*



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...Three New Programs *(continued from page 3)*

Catholic Church to the Hoboken Puerto Rican community in the 1950s and 1960s to email education@hobokenmuseum.org or call the Museum for further information. Act quickly, as Dr. Ziegler-McPherson would like to conduct these interviews in November and December. We wish to thank the Center for Puerto Rican Studies and particularly Dr. Alberto Hernández, the Center's Associate Director and Chief Librarian and Archivist, for this wonderful opportunity to add to the Museum's understanding of this important part of our local history.

Local History Program for Hoboken Public Schools—4th and 5th grades

The Hoboken Board of Education and the Hoboken Historical Museum are collaborating to provide every fourth and fifth grade student attending the Hoboken Public Schools with an opportunity to learn about the world beginning with an understanding of local history. The collaboration is part of a new social studies curriculum the Public Schools have initiated that utilizes a local perspective to help students comprehend state, federal, and even international histories.

Education Curator Sherrard Bostwick explains, "We are lucky in Hoboken as so many local historical events reflect larger issues, for example: the role Hoboken played as a major port welcoming new immigrants and as the port of embarkation for the troops in World War I, and our city's rich history of technological innovation in transportation and manufacturing. We have objects and places to study here that are keys to understanding the world."

The new partnership will fund two Museum visits during the 2009 – 2010 school year for grade 4 and 5 students, as well as Museum workshops for their teachers. Bostwick says, "The

Museum is looking forward to the opportunity to work closely with the Schools to deliver an excellent educational experience for Hoboken students."

Family Hudson River Celebration Launched Open River Program

The Hoboken Historical Museum gathered dozens of kids and families at Sybil's Cave on Saturday, Oct. 3, to celebrate 400 years of life along the Hudson River. The Family Hudson River Celebration event was free, thanks in part to support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Education Curator Sherrard Bostwick led participants on a rare peek into the Cave. She thanks local artist and nautical knot wizard Frank Hanavan for sharing his knot-tying prowess, and Thaddeus MacGregor, the musical bard of the Hudson, for singing traditional river songs. Look for more Open River events next year that use the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway as an extension of the Museum's educational mission.

Uptown Storytime Continues on 1st and 3rd Thursdays

Kids between the ages of two and five are invited to bring a parent or caretaker with them to the Hoboken Historical Museum every first and third Thursday morning to hear stories—old favorites and new ones sure to delight—read by Hoboken librarian Penny Metsch.

No registration is required, but a \$2 donation is encouraged. Museum members are admitted free. **Uptown Storytime** will take place at **10 a.m. on November 5 and 19, and December 3 and 17**. For more information, contact the Museum at 201-656-2240, option 5, or education@hobokenmuseum.org.

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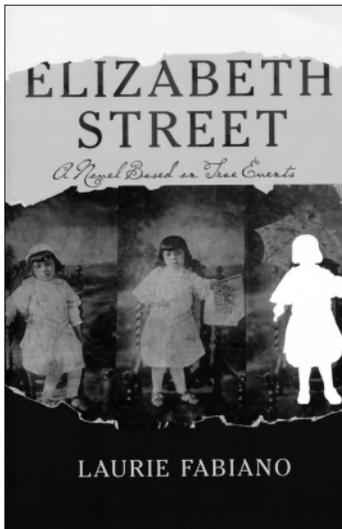
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“Some things you shouldn’t tell...”

Fabiano’s Docu-Novel *Elizabeth Street*



In 1909, New York City threw the country’s largest-ever public celebration to mark the tricentennial of Henry Hudson’s historic voyage and the centennial (plus 2) of the launch of Robert Fulton’s steam-powered ferry. This two-week-long festival provides the backdrop to a frightening and formative episode in the history of Laurie Fabiano’s Italian immigrant family: Her then-four-year-old grandmother, Angelina was kidnapped and held for

ransom by The Black Hand, a precursor to the Mafia.

Probing into a dark family secret that no one discussed, even after nearly a hundred years, Fabiano interviewed her elder family members and researched newspapers from the era to piece together a seldom-told tale of what life in New York’s Little Italy neighborhood was really like for these Italian immigrants from a small Calabrian fishing village across the sea from Sicily. Working nights and weekends for the past 12 years, Fabiano has just published *Elizabeth Street: A Novel Based on True Events*.

All are invited to a reading and book-signing by the Hoboken-based author, on **Wed., November 11 at 7:30 p.m., at the Hoboken Historical Museum**. The event is free, and copies of the book will be available for purchase.

The Black Hand was a constant source of extortion and violence in the community, defying the romanticized depictions of the Mafia. To escape the oppression, the family eventually relocated to the Ironbound section of Newark, N.J., (although in the book, the family moves to Hoboken). The author was born and raised in Cedar Grove. She moved to Hoboken 30 years ago, where her father’s family’s roots were, and where she married Joe Della Fave and raised her own children.

In addition to a career in marketing and event planning for nonprofit organizations that help people in need, Fabiano founded the Hoboken Cultural Council, which produced a three-month series of events and a two-day waterfront arts and cultural festival in 1982. From 1985 to 1988, she worked for Mayor Tom Vezzeetti at City Hall.

Christmas Caroling with St. Dominic’s Women’s Choir, Dec. 15

Last year the Museum welcomed a group of Christmas carolers from the St. Dominic Academy Women’s Choir, who set off on a winding path from the Museum’s entrance at the Shipyard to spread holiday cheer throughout the neighborhood. This year, the Museum welcomes them back **Tuesday evening, December 15, from 7 – 9 p.m.**, and invites Museum

members who live between 11th and 14th Streets, east of Willow, to let us know if they would like the group to pass by their house and stop to sing a carol or two. The choir appreciates offers of cookies and hot beverages along the way, but the event is free.

The St. Dominic Academy Women’s Choir was formed in 2001; most of its members were part of the academy’s award-winning choir during their high school years. Many young women from Hoboken have attended the Jersey City-based all-girls high school. The group has performed at Carnegie Hall three times, and has recorded a CD of Christmas music, which will be available for sale in the Museum for \$15 each. Call the Museum, 201-656-2240, for more information. Anyone who knows the traditional carols is invited to join in the singing. (Rain date: Dec. 16)



Winter Holiday Family Concert with Dave Lambert and Howard Olah-Reiken

In what has become a beloved Hoboken tradition, Dave Lambert and Howard Olah-Reiken will return to the Museum on **Sunday afternoon, December 6, at 3 p.m.**, for a festive, family-friendly concert of holiday and winter-themed music. The singers encourage the audience to sing along and employ various rhythm and noise-making instruments (think jingle bells) to crank up the holiday spirit. All ages welcome. Admission: \$5 per family.

The Theater Company to Read *A Christmas Carol* at the Museum

Hoboken-based The Theater Company continues a holiday tradition with a spirited reading of Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, at the Museum. *A Christmas Carol* is the story of the bitter miser Ebenezer Scrooge, who has a chance for redemption one fateful Christmas Eve. Through the visitation of three ghosts and a partner from the past, who learned his lesson too late, Scrooge travels through time to see how he became the man he is and what his future holds if he continues down that path.

Formerly known as the DeBaun Players, The Theater Company promises a dramatic interpretation to bring the world of Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and 19th century England to life for young and old alike. This version was written and directed by Clara Barton Green.

A holiday treat for the whole family, performances will begin at **7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, Dec. 16, 17, and 18 at the Museum**, 1301 Hudson St. Tickets cost \$15, including refreshments; just \$10 for students and seniors. Tickets will be available for purchase in advance at the Hoboken Historical Museum or at the door. Call 201-656-2240 for more information.



Shoppers at a previous Holiday Crafts Fair examining the unusual “green” jewelry of local artisan, Jennifer Place.

Support Your Local Artists and Craftspeople

For gifts with a personal, hand-crafted touch, drop by the Museum’s Holiday Crafts Fair between noon and 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, December 12, 13, 19, and 20, at 1301 Hudson St. Local artisans and craftspeople will be selling jewelry, candles, handbags, and more.

If there’s anyone on your gift list who’s crazy for Hoboken, stop by the Museum Shop for a book, t-shirt, print, or calendar—we’re open six days a week, until 7 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Our shop is full of one-of-a-kind items celebrating Hoboken and New Jersey history and culture,

plus exclusive t-shirt designs, and other items.

Or consider one of our books, such as our brand-new *Greetings from Hoboken: A Postcard History*, with more than 350 historic photographic and illustrated images from our collections, many showing Hoboken’s first boom in the 1890s – 1920s. Or choose one of our classics, such as *From Another Time, Hoboken in the 1970s*, featuring more than 150 arresting black and white photographs of Hoboken from that turnaround decade; Hoboken’s “brag book,” *100 Hoboken Firsts*, by Jim Hans; or a richly illustrated overview of the history of the various shipping industries in *On the Waterfront*, by William Miller. We also carry many books on Hoboken by other publishers, including children’s books and books on Frank Sinatra.

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Membership News

The museum welcomes the following new members and thanks renewing members for their continued support:

Individual: William Bergin, Patty Bifulco, Lauren Blumenfeld, Jack Brunet, Frances Bryngil, Valerie D'Antonio, Peg Dardenne, Lorraine Davison, William Deile, Bob Delevante, Eric Diaz (Aussie Pet Mobile), Christopher Ender, Brian Friedman (Hoboken Pet Care), Erik Hahn, Stephen Harman, Kristen Jens, Karin Kandur (Red Bank Veterinary Hospital, B. Melvin Kiernan, Eric Lesser, Kathleen McGinley, Jack O'Brien, Kelly O'Brien, Jane O'Rourke Reed, Kim Pamperin (Hounds on the Hudson), Kristen Pierce, Julia Preston, Lisa Quint, Jaqueline Rogerio, Bob Saboski, Michael Sarullo, McKevin Shaughnessy, Jack Silbert, Karen Tuder (Animal Infirmary), Edythe Verdonck, Jean Vitolo, Jane Zeff.

Dual/Family: Jeanne & Robert Becker, Jane & Randy Bostwick,

Adam & Michelle Cox (Metro Dogs), Joan & Ray Devine, Pauline & Patrick Doran, Cathy Ferrone & David George, Thomas & Mary Gillen, Barbara Gombach & Richard Weinstein, Faith & Joerg Guenther, Eileen Montoto, John & Tina Novogratz, Kyle & Jay Rattigan, Ann Marie & Ed Reilly, Susan Sterman-Jones & family, Beth & Christopher Welsh, Drs. Karen Zelinski & William Freedman (Animal General Veterinary Hospital & River Pet Resort and Rehab).

Questions about membership? New address? E-mail us at membership@hobokenmuseum.org.

The Hoboken Historical Museum received a general operating grant for 2008 – 2009 from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of State.

NJHC

Membership Application

As a member of the Hoboken Historical Museum you will receive special invitations to members-only openings, our bimonthly newsletter, and discounts on selected Museum merchandise and events.

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To become a Museum member, send completed form with payment to the Hoboken Historical Museum, P.O. Box 3296, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

One-Year Individual Membership: \$40.

One-Year Dual/Family Membership: \$65.
(includes children under 18)

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Enjoy holiday shopping at the Museum Gift Shop through Wed., Dec. 23

Tues., Wed., & Thurs., till 7 p.m.

MUSEUM DATES TO REMEMBER – NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

Thurs., Nov. 5, 10 a.m., Uptown Storytime at the Museum for children ages 2 to 5 years and their caregivers. \$2 donation; HHM members free.

Sun., Nov. 8, 2 – 5 p.m., Opening reception for *Visage Hoboken: Portraits by Jean-Paul Picard* in the Upper Gallery of the Museum. Free.

Wed., Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m., Reading and book signing for *Elizabeth Street, A Novel Based on True Events*, with author Laurie Fabiano, at the Museum. Free.

Thurs., Nov. 19, 10 a.m., Uptown Storytime. See Nov. 5.

Sun., Nov. 22, 4 p.m., “Visage Hoboken,” illustrated talk by Jean-Paul Picard, on his Upper Gallery exhibit. Free.

Thurs., Dec. 3, 10 a.m., Uptown Storytime. See Nov. 5.

Sun., Dec. 6, 3 p.m., 5th Annual Winter Holiday Family Concert with Dave Lambert and Howard Olah-Reiken. Admission: \$5 per family.

Sat. – Sun., Dec. 12 – 13 and 19 – 20, from 12 – 5 p.m., Holiday Crafts Fair, at the Museum. Meet local artisans and craftspeople selling jewelry, candles, home decorations and more.

Tues., Dec. 15, 7 – 9 p.m., Christmas Caroling with St. Dominic’s Women’s Choir, starting from the breezeway outside the Museum, and winding through the nearby neighborhood (rain date, Dec. 16). Free.

Wed. – Fri., Dec. 16, 17, 18, 7:30 p.m., Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, a dramatic reading by The Theater Company, at the Museum, cost \$15, refreshments included; \$10 for students, seniors.

Thurs., Dec. 17, 10 a.m., Uptown Storytime. See Nov. 5.



Remember the Museum Gift Shop for holiday gifts.

Hours: Tues., Wed., & Thurs., 2 – 7 p.m.
Fri.: 1 – 5 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 12 – 5 p.m.

Parking! Littleman Parking-Independence Garage, located at 12th Street and Shipyard Lane, offers three hours of free parking seven days a week for Museum visitors in the covered lot across from the former Hollywood Video. Remember to bring your ticket into the Museum for validation.