

## **Experiencing Freeport – Knowing our Town through Art**

The Town of Freeport is pleased to announce that in conjunction with The Freeport Creative Arts and in partnership with Freeport Square Gallery, LL Bean, Freeport Community Improvement Association, Berenson Associates and Key Bank that it has received a 2009 Artists in Maine Communities grant from the Maine Arts Commission, an independent state agency supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Experiencing Freeport – Knowing our Town through Art showcases artwork by members of the Freeport Creative Arts in downtown store windows through the end of the year. The artwork depicts, in some way, the environs or history of Freeport. This effort will highlight area interests and show that Freeport has much to offer outside the retail sector. The artwork focuses on a variety of local interests from the coastline and downtown to Freeport's idyllic cottages and area parks. Information with each artwork will point viewers to area interests as well as give enough background so that viewer interest is peaked and the viewer is encouraged to know more about Freeport behind Main Street.

Beyond Main Street, Freeport also has an arts community that is becoming more evident through the efforts of Freeport Creative Arts. Freeport Creative Arts is a member organization that nurtures and supports the sustainability of the arts while offering the community and visitors diverse creative opportunities in Freeport, Pownal, and Durham. David Webster (quote?), legislator, has been a prime force in Maine's recognition of the creative economy movement. Freeport Creative Arts has developed through efforts to encourage the recognition of the creative side of life in the Freeport area. Members are of all disciplines and include artists, performers, writers and crafters from the Freeport, Pownal and Durham area as well as having associate members from all over the state.

During Freeport's long history from masts for the queen's navy and ship building, the Casco Castle Hotel resort days, through shoe factory and the current retail sector, the arts have quietly existed in small studios, at kitchen tables and in back rooms. Artists have supported charities and school efforts. Artists have taught out of their studios. Maine Arts Workshop, a downtown studio on School Street opened six years ago to teach artists of all ages about the arts of Maine – how to make art as well as informing students of the historical context of art in Maine. There have been several small home galleries in the area. Freeport Square Gallery opened a year ago to assist Maine artists to have access to Freeport's Main Street. It joined the craft galleries that have been active in Freeport for years to highlight fine art and crafts from artists all over the state. Other galleries have opened this summer.

In applying for this grant the town has gone further in recognizing the importance of the arts in the town. In recognizing the new arts group, the partnership of support for the grant activity is helping to energize the arts even further, as again, the arts serve the community. Town Planner Donna Larson noted in the grant request, "This will help enliven and encourage the art scene in Freeport by literally putting art on the street to be seen." What better way than to recognize and encourage artists than by paying them to make art that will be seen? Among the artists are James Chute, retired lawyer, now a full time practicing artist, Becca Case, illustrator and Master's candidate at Maine College of Art and Will Larkins, the youngest member of the group who applied and painted a scene of the Wolfe Neck mudflats. Other artists include Karen Pettengill, Kathi Peters, Jenny Moore, Sebastian Meade, Natalie Nye, Petrea Noyes, Alice Kirkpatrick and Kathleen Meade.

A reception will be held on Friday, September 4, from 5-6:30pm at Freeport Village Station. There will be food, entertainment and some of the artwork will be in the vicinity. Directions to the rest of the featured artwork will be available.