

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Albany Institute of History & Art

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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIHA HOSTS THE GIFT FAIR & FAMILY FESTIVAL THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

ALBANY, NY— The Albany Institute of History & Art will be hosting the 2011 Gift Fair and Family Festival, an event attended by more than 3,000 visitors last year. The museum will offer **FREE admission over the three day weekend**, November 25, 26, and 27, during regular museum hours. Each day will include great shopping, LEGO®-themed family activities, book signings, and a chance to see the Institute's new exhibitions.

Gift Fair

The work of more than 35 vendors will be on display throughout the museum, showcasing beautiful and distinctive gifts by local jewelers, craftspeople, and artists. From jewelry and pottery, to quilts and woodwork, visitors are sure to find the perfect gifts for everyone on their gift list. There will also be food vendors, including Lark Street Ben & Jerry's.

LEGO® Family Festival

Visitors can take part in the LEGO® Building Challenge. The event is open to individuals, partners, and teams of all ages (up to four people per team). The theme will be Albany Architecture, which can range from downtown skyscrapers to a neighborhood doghouse. Basic LEGO®s will be provided, or contestants may bring their own. Awards will be distributed for a number of categories such as effort, creativity, and design by guest judges, including: Jim Kambrich and Jason Gough from WNYT News Channel 13, the Times Union's Tracy Ormsbee, Steve Leon of Metroland, All Over Albany's Mary Darcy, Rebecca Angel Maxwell of GeekMom, and David Brickman from Get Visual. Teams must register online prior to the event, and spaces are limited.

To inspire the contestants, expert LEGO® builder William Leue will be on-site to recreate a model of Albany's former Trinity Church over the three days. He will also host a small exhibition of Albany buildings he has recreated in LEGO®

Book Signings

Each day will feature a local author signing copies of their book beginning at 2 PM. Copies of all the authors' books will be available for sale at the Museum Shop

Friday, November 25, local children's book author Linda Elovitz Marshall will read and sign copies of her recently published book, *Talia and the Rude Vegetables*. The book, written for children ages 3 to 8, is a delightful tale of a city girl who visits her grandmother in the country and mistakes "rude" vegetables for "root" vegetables as they prepare a traditional Rosh Hashanah stew.

On Saturday, November 26, Jan Marin Tromantano will read excerpts of her new novel, *Standing on the Corner of Lost and Found*. Set in Albany in the 1960s and 70s, this book is Tromantano's first novel. A well-known area writer, her poetry, stories, book reviews, and interviews have been published in numerous regional literary journals, magazines and newspapers. The author will sign books following the reading.

Author Robert M. Toole will be signing copies of his book, *Landscape Gardens on the Hudson*, on Sunday, November 27. This work is the first comprehensive study of the development of Hudson River landscapes and the important role they played in the cultural underpinnings of the young United States, a legacy that continues today with the design of America's urban parks and nearly every rural or suburban home.

Exhibitions

Visitors can make the most of the free admission by viewing the Albany Institute's newest exhibitions. Spanning the main gallery is *Kid Stuff: Great Toys from Our Childhood*, a highly interactive exhibition showcasing the great vintage toys of the 1950's and 1960's. For the history buffs, *First in the Hearts of His Countrymen: George Washington* provides an in-depth look at the memorialization of our nation's first president. This serves as a great complement to *Albany and the Civil War: Medicine on the Home and Battle Fronts*, an exhibition examining the key roles Albany residents played in providing medical care for the sick and wounded in the Civil War. The newest show is *Temple of Fancy: Pease's Great Variety Store*, presenting the famous Albany variety store which created the first Christmas card in the United States.

Schedule of Events

Friday, November 25, 2011

9-10 AM	Member Preview
10 AM-5 PM	Gift Fair & Family Festival
10 AM-5 PM	LEGO® Demonstrations by William Leue
11 AM- 1 PM	LEGO® Building Challenge, Session 1
2 PM	Linda Elovitz Marshall book reading and signing
2-4 PM	LEGO® Building Challenge, Session 2

Saturday, November 26, 2011

10 AM-5 PM	Gift Fair & Family Festival
10 AM-5 PM	LEGO® Demonstrations by William Leue
11 AM- 1 PM	LEGO® Building Challenge, Session 3

2 PM Jan Marin Tramontano book signing
2–4 PM LEGO® Building Challenge, Session 4

Sunday, November 27, 2011

NOON – 5 PM Gift Fair & Family Festival
NOON – 5 PM LEGO® Demonstrations by William Leue
1–3 PM LEGO® Building Challenge
2 PM Robert M. Toole book signing
2–4 PM Member Champagne Reception

The 2011 Gift Fair & Family Festival will take place at the Albany Institute of History & Art, located at 125 Washington Avenue, Albany. For more information about this event, visit albanyinstitute.org/2011gfff.htm. Sponsorship for this event has been generously provided by M&T Bank.

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The Albany Institute's distinguished collections and acclaimed exhibitions comprise the definitive expression of the cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of Albany and the upper Hudson Valley. From its world-renowned Hudson River School collection, to the famous Albany Mummies, to the wide range of performances, lectures, and festivals, to its outstanding educational and family programming, this distinctive and engaging institution provides visitors of all ages and interests with a splendid museum experience. One of America's oldest museums, the Albany Institute of History & Art was founded in 1791, during the presidency of George Washington, making it older than the Louvre, the Smithsonian, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Visit www.albanyinstitute.org for more information, and be sure to follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/albanyinstitute).

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