

# friends OF THE SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL

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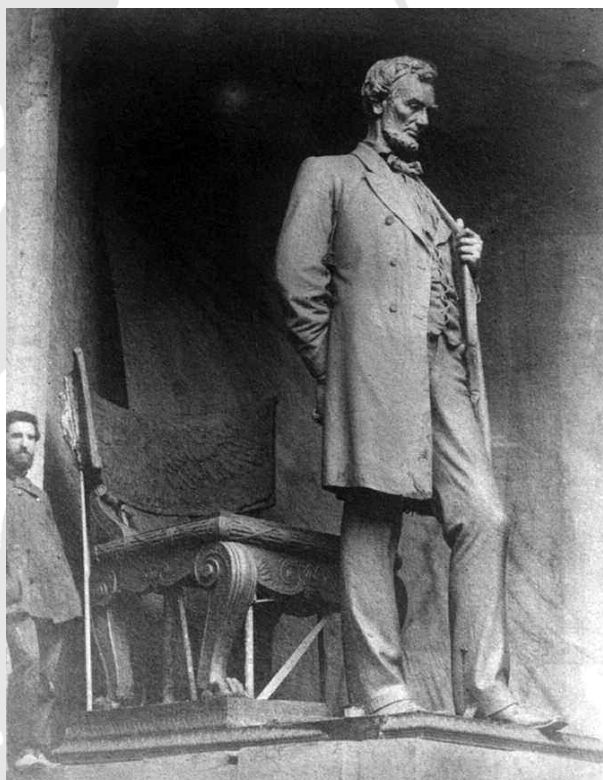
## FROM THE MEMORIAL AND THE SITE

### DEAR FRIENDS,

As we approach the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 2009, we join others around the country in celebrating the life of one of America's most respected and beloved leaders.

And we at the Memorial and the Site particularly celebrate the great work done by Augustus Saint-Gaudens to memorialize our 12th President.

Recollections from Saint-Gaudens' early years in New York — of Union troops massing and marching, and Lincoln himself, both as President-elect and laying in state — undoubtedly enriched this work, as did reading of Lincoln's speeches and other writings. The *Standing Lincoln* not only portrays a physical likeness, but also embodies the character of the man in the context of his times. Sculptor Laredo Taft said, a few years after its unveiling,



Augustus Saint-Gaudens stands next to the full-scale clay version of his homage to Abraham Lincoln. ca. 1885-86. (SGNHS Archival Photo)

***It does not seem like bronze; there is something human, or — shall I say? —superhuman about it. One stands before it and feels himself in the very presence of America's soul.\****

In this issue, teacher and author James Percoco discusses some aspects of the *Standing Lincoln*; and there is information about upcoming events related to the Lincoln bicentennial at the Saint-Gaudens Site and other NPS parks. We invite you to join us at the Site this season (and next), to celebrate Lincoln, the legacy of Saint-Gaudens, and the work of contemporary artists — sculptors, photographers, authors and musicians — that enriches our lives today.

Byron Bell  
PRESIDENT  
SG Memorial

BJ Dunn  
SUPERINTENDENT  
SGNHS

## THE STANDING LINCOLN

The *Standing Lincoln* in Chicago is one of two statues of President Lincoln completed by Saint-Gaudens and one of a multitude of such public monuments around the country.

*Summers with Lincoln: Looking for the Man in the Monuments*, by teacher and author James Percoco, looks at seven of the best of these, including the *Standing Lincoln*, for clues about how Lincoln has been perceived and portrayed over the years.

The following is adapted from an interview of Mr. Percoco by Sam Weller, aired on Chicago Public Radio.

**SW:** There are around 200 different sculptures of Abraham Lincoln tucked away on street corners and town squares throughout America. History teacher James Percoco spent four summers tracking down those statues to find out what they said about the American icon. *Summers with Lincoln* chronicles his journey and shares the seven that he believes have the richest and deepest impact on Lincoln's legacy. Percoco joined me recently from Washington, D.C. He says his curiosity for monuments started with his mother.

**JP:** I used to ask as a two-year-old for her to take me in the stroller down to see the "monument," which was a Spanish-American war memorial in the town's park.

\*Burke Wilkinson, *The Life and Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Dover, 1985)



The dedication of the bronze sculpture *Lincoln: The Man* (commonly called the *Standing Lincoln*) in Chicago, October 22, 1887. (SGNHS Archival Photo)

So I think there's been this innate, inner thing that I've had ever since I was a kid.

**SW:** Before we delve into the specifics of your book, I'm curious what is it about Lincoln that particularly fascinates you and what is it about Lincoln that has fascinated our collective imaginations for so long?

**JP:** Well, I think a lot of us really try to identify — those of us who think about Lincoln and think about history — try to identify with the things about his life that we find ultimately redeeming: his compassion, his sense of humanity, his even-handedness, the fact that Lincoln was the smartest man in the room and everybody in the room knew it, and he knew it, but he really didn't act on it in a way that would be somewhat aggrandizing. I think the fact that he's a man who had very, very little formal education and became President of the United States and led the country through its greatest crisis, draws people young and old. And Lincoln is not just an American anymore, he really belongs to the International stage. You can read that in writings of people from Tolstoy to British

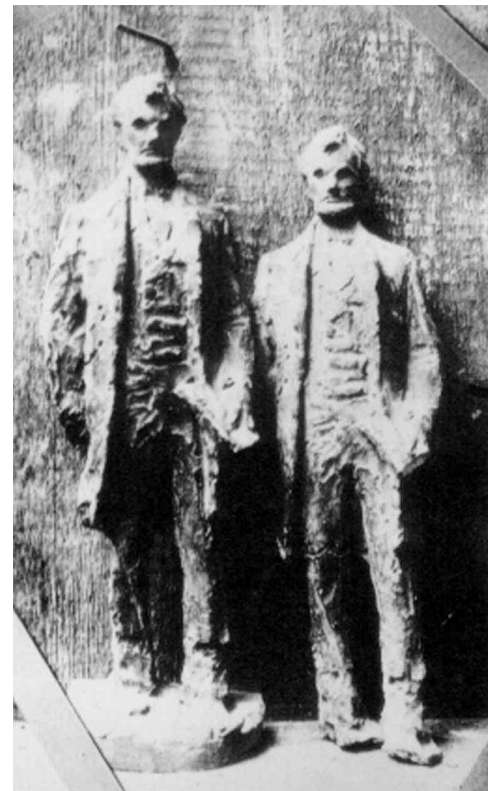
politicians and British statesmen who absolutely adore Lincoln. The Chinese revere Lincoln and I think they revere Lincoln primarily because he embodied two Confucian values: number one, harmony and the other one is unity, and he did that by keeping the country together during the Civil War.

**SW:** In your book you say that the dean of 19th century American sculpture, John Quincy Adams Ward claimed that trying to capture the essence of Lincoln was too daunting...why is that?

**JP:** I think Ward understood that Lincoln as a man was really hard to pin down...not only because of his physical features, which were difficult to sculpt primarily because of his large legs and his large arms. I think that's part of it. I also think it has to do with the fact that the country was still reeling from the Civil War and certainly as we moved, in the late 19th century, to honor Civil War heroes, Lincoln was going to be one of them but he's at the apex, and how do you capture this in bronze or stone? A sculptor gets one shot;

a biographer gets hundreds of pages but a sculptor gets one shot to make the mark. I think that Ward understood that and I think he was willing to let other people pick up the baton, so to speak, people like Saint-Gaudens, people like Daniel Chester French, to move in the direction of Lincoln monuments.

**SW:** Let's talk a little about the 1887 work *Standing Lincoln* by the renowned sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. The statue stands in Lincoln Park right on the shoreline of Lake Michigan. It's been called one of the artist's greatest achievements. What is it about this particular statue that...you put it in the top three...that makes it such an important part of the Lincoln history?



Two early studies for the *Standing Lincoln* ca. 1885. (Photo by D.C.Ward)

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**The *Standing Lincoln* touches  
the soul of America and  
what it means to be American.**

LAREDO TAFT

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**JP:** Well I think, number one, in a way that statue brings a shift in Lincoln memory. Prior to that statue, Lincoln statues that had been created in the United States from the late 1860's up through 1887 almost invariably showed Abraham Lincoln in the motif of great emancipator. That changes with the Saint-Gaudens statue where we begin to look at Lincoln as a great statesman. Artistically, though, the Saint-Gaudens statue is sublime, I mean it really is. There you see Lincoln in the act of getting ready to speak, and when you stand, particularly at a distance, you really get that sense that you are watching Lincoln in a really pivotal moment.

Now, whether that moment is Lincoln delivering the Gettysburg address or the second inaugural, that's subject to debate, but it gets, I think, to what Laredo Taft also says of Lincoln statues, that that statue touches the soul of America and what it means to be American. And people from Jane Adams to Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of the Interior the Canadian ex-patriot Franklin Lane, they would go to that statue and draw solace from it. They would go to that statue and they would feel the power of Lincoln come out of that statue. And that's what Saint-Gaudens' genius was, he was able to translate bronze into flesh and blood.

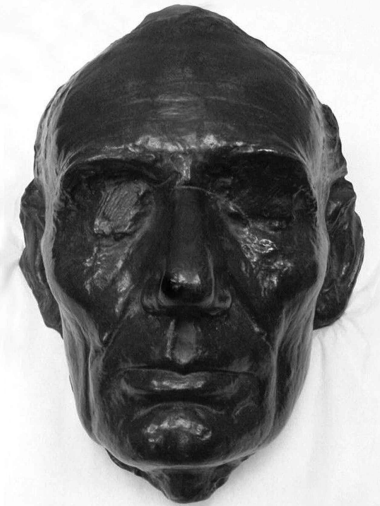
**SW:** You write about the use of a mask, an actual life mask that was taken of Lincoln's face that Saint-Gaudens used during the three-year making of this statue, and you also talk about the use of a cast of his hands. Can you tell me the story, briefly, behind that?

**JP:** The Lincoln life mask was actually cast in Chicago in March of 1860 by the Chicago sculptor Leonard Volk. And Volk

convinced Lincoln to come to his studio at a time that would be propitious for Lincoln, when he was in Chicago dealing with legal cases. And Volk lays him back in his chair and he proceeds to cover his face with plaster. He puts two reeds up Lincoln's nostrils and puts grease and a little bit of clay on his forehead and on his eyebrows, and Lincoln has to sit with this hot wet plaster on his face for at least an hour. And it's a very, very difficult, uncomfortable, process. And after an hour they pop it off and then you have a negative mold. Then what Volk does is he makes a positive out of that negative mold. Several days later Lincoln goes back to the studio and Volk reports that when Lincoln saw the positive Lincoln said, "There's the animal himself."

Several months later, shortly after Lincoln gets the nod for the Presidency in 1860, Volk goes to Springfield, Illinois and in Lincoln's house on 8th and Jackson Street he casts Lincoln's hands. And you can actually see in the cast that the right hand is somewhat larger than the left hand because the night before Volk made the cast, Lincoln had been up shaking hands for at least three or four hours so that the right hand is perceptibly larger than the left hand.

The great Lincoln sculptors used those masks to get at Lincoln's essence, whether it was Saint-Gaudens, whether it was Borglum, whether it was Barnard, they all studied the mask. And clearly the best place, where the hands were used, is Daniel Chester French's use of the hands here in Washington because you get the right hand... being open, showing his compassion and flexibility; but Lincoln's left hand is closed, showing his resolve and his willingness to see the job through and be firm about not letting the Union be



Life Mask of Abraham Lincoln. Leonard Wells Volk, (1828 - 1895); cast by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, (1848 - 1907) American, 1860; this cast, 1886, Bronze L. 8 in. (20.3 cm) Purchase, Jonathan L. Cohen and Allison B. Morrow Gift and Friends of the American Wing Fund, 2007. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY)

torn apart. So I think anybody looking at sculpture, really needs to look, particularly at Lincoln, at the face and at the hands and trace where the sculptor got the ideas for that because they clearly come from, as Lincoln said, "the animal himself."

**Mr. Percoco adds:** For the last two decades I have enjoyed an exceptional working relationship with the staff at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. I look back fondly over the years to the many times I have traveled from Virginia up to New Hampshire to participate in programs, talk-teaching Saint-Gaudens and public sculpture with a wide range of folk, and just plain enjoyed the bucolic atmosphere. In part, I have been able to reinvent myself as a teacher by connecting my role as an educator with that of a sculptor; in my case I get to mold young people, students and new colleagues. There is much inspiration to be drawn from the work of Saint-Gaudens and I take very much to heart the words he wrote to a young James Earle Fraser, "You can do anything you please; it's the way a thing is done that makes a difference." One hundred years after his passing those words still resonate in my classroom.

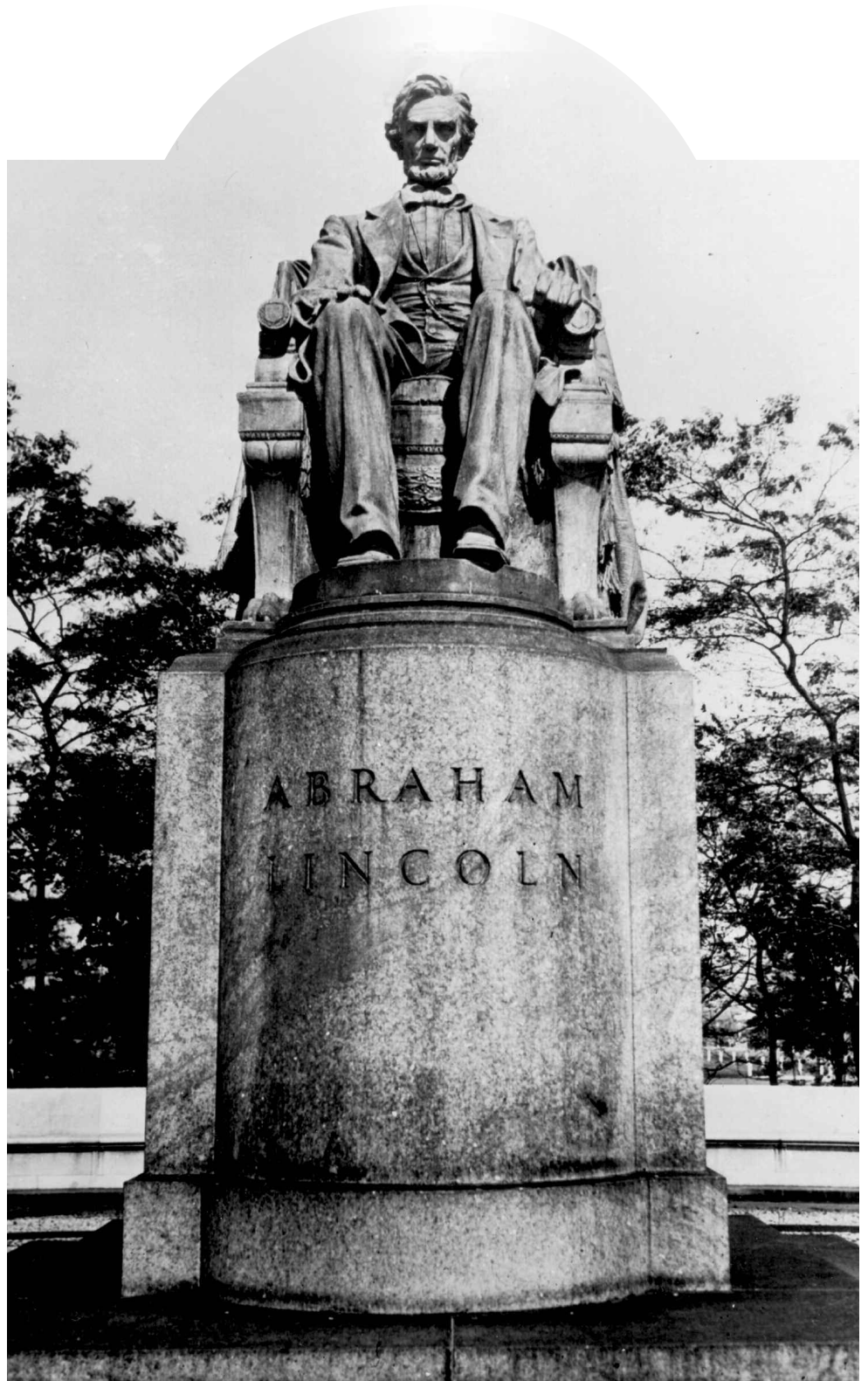
## **2009 THE *Bicentennial* OF THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

In Public Law 106-173, Congress established the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln on February 12, 2009.

It will be a year of many activities (the best source of information is the Commission's web site at [www.abrahamlincoln200.org](http://www.abrahamlincoln200.org)). With 390 units in the National Park Service, amazingly over 100 of these sites have primary and secondary themes that relate to events or topics with links to Lincoln's presidency. The National Park Service is partnering with the Bicentennial Commission to provide interpretive and educational activities, publications, public programs and events.

Some participating parks include the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site in Hodgenville, KY, Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City, IN, Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, IL, Gettysburg National Military Park in Gettysburg, PA, the National Mall and Memorial Parks (Lincoln Memorial) and Fords Theatre National Historic Site in Washington, DC, and our very own Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site here in Cornish, NH.

As a young boy, Augustus Saint-Gaudens saw President Lincoln twice — once as the President was welcomed in New York City in 1861, and again, in 1865, when the young sculptor went through the viewing line twice to pay respects as Lincoln's body lay in state in New York's City Hall.



Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Lincoln: The Head of State (Seated Lincoln)* Grant Park, Chicago, 1897-1906. (SGNHS Archival Photo)

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**Saint-Gaudens created some of our Nation's most powerful public monuments to civil war heroes including the *Shaw Memorial*, *Admiral David Farragut*, and the *Sherman Monument*.**

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Later in his career, Saint-Gaudens was commissioned for and executed two monuments to this great president — *Lincoln: The Man* (referred to as the *Standing Lincoln*) unveiled in Chicago's Lincoln Park in 1881 and *Lincoln: Head of State* (referred to as the *Seated Lincoln*) that was installed and unveiled in 1926 in Chicago's Grant Park, after the sculptor's death.

It was Saint-Gaudens and architect Charles Follen McKim (part of a team advising on restoration of the Mall in Washington, D.C. that also included architect Daniel Burnham and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.) who selected the location and orientation for the proposed *Lincoln Memorial*, which would be designed by Daniel Chester French and completed in 1922.



The *Standing Lincoln* in Lincoln Park Chicago, 2008.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES TO COMMEMORATE THE 2009 LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL

**The site is currently planning a number of activities to coincide with the 2009 Lincoln bicentennial starting this year.**

— There will be a talk and book signing by author, teacher, and historian James A. Percoco (see feature article page 1 and sidebar, right).

— In the Little Studio, the historic plaster room is used to exhibit a large plaster model of the *Seated Lincoln*, a *Standing Lincoln* reduction, and the actual life casts of Lincoln's face and hand that were used by Saint-Gaudens while he worked on these monuments.

— Next year, updated Lincoln exhibit panels will be installed and a new Saint-Gaudens and Lincoln interpretive brochure will be developed and available.

— An interpretive tour about the sculptor and his two Lincoln monuments will be offered daily during the 2009 season and the site will also be doing a short-term museum loan of a bronze reduction of the *Standing Lincoln* to the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in 2009.

## Volunteers Needed AT THE PARK

For more information, please contact  
Park Volunteer Coordinator,  
Greg Schwarz, Saint-Gaudens NHS,  
139 Saint-Gaudens Road,  
Cornish, NH 03745,  
603 - 675 - 2175 x 107,  
or via e-mail at [Gregory\\_C\\_Schwarz@nps.gov](mailto:Gregory_C_Schwarz@nps.gov).

**Save the Date!**  
**Friday July 19, 2008**  
Cornish, New Hampshire



## Nature Journaling

10:30 - 3:30 pm

A workshop led by **Clare Walker Leslie**, renowned author, wildlife artist, educator, and naturalist, in the art of developing and keeping a nature journal.

Co-Sponsored by the Friends  
of Saint-Gaudens and the park.

Registration Fee \$20  
Call 603-675-2175 x110

## Talk and Book Signing

with author

**James A. Percoco**

***"Summers with Lincoln:  
Looking for the Man  
in the Monuments"***

Little Studio Pergola

3:30 pm

Free with paid admission to the park  
Call 603 - 675 - 2175 x106

"Summers with Lincoln:  
Looking for the Man in the Monuments"  
by James Percoco is available  
for sale at the site's museum shop  
or call 603 - 675 - 2175 x106 to order.

## WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE *SHERMAN*?

By Thayer Tolles

This question has been on the lips of public sculpture buffs over the last several years so a basic explanation is in order.

Whether you liked or loathed the brilliant gilding applied to the statue's surface in 1990, there's no arguing that the monument now is in desperate need of "refreshing." Unsightly black splotches cover the bronze, not to mention the presence of other blemishes that are the result of adverse effects from pollution and acid rain, persistent pigeon infestation, and other urban indignities suffered during the sculpture's 105 years in Grand Army Plaza at Fifty-ninth Street.

When Saint-Gaudens's equestrian monument to Civil War hero General William Tecumseh Sherman was unveiled on Memorial Day 1903, it was finished with two layers of gilding at the artist's own expense. He left little record of the actual appearance of the surface, whether bright or matte, tending toward more reddish or yellow, or applied through gold leaf or colored with acids. Nor can much specific information be gleaned from the grainy black-and-white photographs of the day, although they do suggest the careful attention that Saint-Gaudens paid to modulating light and shadow over the surface of the bronze. Conservators and scholars have been left to more or less intuit the sculptor's preferences, looking at his other gilded works, some of them cast posthumously, as reference points.

The *Sherman* was first conserved and regilded in 1934. By the 1980s, the gilding



Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Sherman Monument*, 1892 - 1903, bronze, Grand Army Plaza, New York City.

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### **The conservation treatment in 1990 on the *Sherman* returned it to a radiant gilded monument.**

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had worn away again and New Yorkers had become accustomed to the black and green-streaked surface that characterizes neglected statuary bronze. The treatment in 1990, carried out by the French firm Les Métalliers Champenois, transformed and returned the *Sherman* to a radiant gilded monument through cleaning of the sculpture and application of gold leaf. Its gleaming surface must be regarded as just one possible interpretation of the sculpture's original appearance. A layer of paste wax was subsequently applied in an effort to further protect and lengthen the lifespan of the gilding, much as Saint-Gaudens had hoped to

achieve with his original effort. All gilding on sculptures has a lifespan; some last up to 25-30 years, others (such as Paul Manship's *Prometheus* in Rockefeller Center) are much more frequently conserved to preserve a consistent appearance. Unfortunately, despite well-meaning intentions and an ongoing program of maintenance, the *Sherman* has not fared well by the 1990 treatment. A primer coat of yellow tinted epoxy applied to the surface has worn away, revealing the bronze beneath. Further, there was no toning (a mixture of oil paint and varnish) applied over the layers of gilding; this layer, when burnished, emphasizes darker and lighter surface passages. In contrast, the surface of the bronze after the 1990 treatment was uniformly bright. The glaringly visible black patches we see now represent areas where the gilding has been penetrated by moisture and failed.

*(continued on back cover)*



## SAINT-GAUDENS 2008 SUMMER CONCERTS, EXHIBITIONS & WORKSHOPS

### SUNDAY CONCERTS

All concerts are on Sundays  
at 2:00pm in the Little Studio on  
the grounds of the Saint-Gaudens  
National Historic Site in Cornish, NH

**JULY 6**

#### THE JENNINGS

Andrew and Gail Jennings, violin and piano,  
perform Beethoven, Debussy and a new  
"Song Without Words" by Kay Rhie

**JULY 13**

at 2pm and 6:30pm

#### CAROL LANGSTAFF'S FLOCKDANCE TROUPE: "LIBERTY!"

A world premiere performance with live  
music inspired by the works and home  
of Augustus Saint-Gaudens

**JULY 20**

#### CECILIANA

Rosamond Edmondson Memorial Concert  
soprano, flute, oboe, cello and piano  
ensemble perform works from the Baroque  
to a premiere performance of songs by  
Gail Jennings

**JULY 27**

#### THE FISCHER DUO

Norman and Jeanne Kierman Fischer  
on cello and piano

**AUGUST 37**

#### HERITAGE BRASS ENSEMBLE

Brass quintet performs classical, rags,  
swing and jazz selections

**AUGUST 10**

#### ROGERS AND MILLICAN

With special guest artists Ray Bauwens,  
tenor and Janet Frank, cello, perform  
a selection of opera arias, the Debussy  
cello sonata and works by Bach

**AUGUST 17**

#### WEBSTER TRIO JAPAN

Leone Buyse, flute; Michael Webster,  
clarinet and Chizuko Sawa, piano  
perform music by Schubert, Mozart,  
Brahms and Bartok

**AUGUST 24**

#### EMERALD STREAM SINGERS

Directed by Mary Kay Brass, music from  
a wide variety of world singing traditions

### GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

**MAY 31 - JULY 6**

#### CHEHALIS HEGNER

Opening Reception: Saturday evening,  
May 31, 4:30-6:30 pm  
Artist talk: 5:00 pm

**JULY 12 - AUGUST 31**

#### ALYSON SHOTZ

2007 Saint-Gaudens Memorial Fellow  
Opening Reception: Saturday evening,  
July 12, 4:30-6:30 pm  
Artist talk: 5:00 pm

**SEPTEMBER 6 - OCTOBER 31**

#### JOHN BISBEE

Opening Reception: Saturday evening,  
September 6, 4:30-6:30 pm  
Artist talk: 5:00 pm

### SCULPTURE WORKSHOPS

**MAY 31 - OCTOBER 11**

Discover your hidden artistic talents!  
Learn to sculpt at the home and studios  
of one of America's greatest artists —  
Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907).

Enroll in the workshops taught by the  
2008 Sculptor-in-Residence Leesa  
Haapapuro. Work with clay to create  
a portrait relief, a design for a new coin,  
or a sculpture in the round. In following  
classes, learn how to make molds,  
cast your sculpture, and then finish  
the surface to look like bronze. Classes  
are cosponsored by Saint-Gaudens  
National Historic Site and the Friends of  
Saint-Gaudens.

For a full schedule of 2008 workshops,  
registration and fee information,  
call the Site at 603-675-2175 ext.106  
or visit [www.nps.gov/saga](http://www.nps.gov/saga).



Sculpture class, modeling life-size portrait heads, 2007.

These concerts and exhibitions are  
sponsored by the Trustees of the  
Saint-Gaudens Memorial and are free  
with paid admission to the Site.

**Become a *friend***  
OF THE  
SAINT-GAUDENS  
MEMORIAL

All members receive a twice-yearly newsletter and announcements of exhibits, lectures, concerts & other programs.

- ☐ Individual Membership \$ 35
- ☐ Family Membership \$ 60
- ☐ Sponsoring Membership \$ 250
- ☐ Patron/Institutional Membership \$ 500
- ☐ Benefactor/Business Membership \$ 1,000

- ☐ I would like a FREE annual park pass to the Saint-Gaudens Site.

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- ☐ Please send me more information

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**Saint-Gaudens Memorial**  
**34 South Highland Avenue**  
**Ossining, NY 10562**

(*What's Going on with the Sherman* continued from page 6)

What's next for the *Sherman*? The Central Park Conservancy, under contract with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, is responsible for the care of the park's many monuments. The Conservancy recognizes the imminent need to preserve the *Sherman* and has been seeking input from conservators and other professionals to determine the most sensitive course of treatment. Fundraising efforts are also underway through the Conservancy; for further information on its programs, see [www.centralparknyc.org](http://www.centralparknyc.org). Certainly all who recognize the significance of the *Sherman* in Saint-Gaudens's oeuvre and its premier position in America's greatest urban park should applaud this initiative.

Thanks to Mark Rabinowitz, Conservation Solutions, Inc., who kindly offered insight on the *Sherman*'s treatment history.

*Thayer Tolles is Associate Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.*

The Saint-Gaudens Memorial is a private, non-profit corporation chartered to advise the Department of the Interior, support the National Historic Site and sponsor programs and activities that promote public awareness of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, his work and sculpture in general.

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Saint-Gaudens Memorial  
914-944-1608 tel & fax  
SGMemorial@aol.com  
[www.sgnhs.org](http://www.sgnhs.org)

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Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site  
The site is administered by the  
U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service  
139 Saint-Gaudens Road  
Cornish, NH 03745

603-675-2175 phone  
603-675-2701 fax  
[www.nps.gov/saga](http://www.nps.gov/saga)

**Save the Date!**  
**Saturday,**  
**September 27th**  
Cornish, New Hampshire



Antoinette Jacobson playing her Fire Organ sculpture during Sculptural Visions 2007.

**Sculptural Visions**

**CLAY, WOOD, STONE, METAL**

11:00 am – 4:30 pm  
Saturday, September 27, 2008

**Artists' Demonstrations**  
**Bronze Casting**  
**Fire Organ Performances**  
**Children's Sculpture Activities**

**FREE ADMISSION TO THE EVENT**  
**AND THE PARK THAT DAY**

For more information call 603-675-2175  
or visit: [www.nps.gov/saga](http://www.nps.gov/saga)

Saint-Gaudens NHS, Cornish, NH

Co-sponsored by the Friends of the  
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