

THE NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM AT STOCKBRIDGE, STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Vol.6, No. 1

#### Museum Exhibition Focuses on Rockwell Images of Blacks

One Nation Indivisible? Images of Black Americans: 1934-1967 By Norman Rockwell, an exhibition of Rockwell paintings, studies, tear sheets, and photographs that focus on the black American experience, dispels a commonly-held belief that Norman Rockwell was an illustrator of white middle-class life and nothing more.

A significant body of work, presented as a group for the first time in this exhibition, reveals Rockwell as a chronicler of the important events and tenor of his time, including the civil rights movement and the changing roles of blacks in this country. The exhibition will be on view at the museum through January 1990. A members' lecture and exhibition opening, as well as several gallery talks, augmented the show.

Works in the exhibition reflect the viewpoint of a majority white audience towards blacks and the actual position of blacks in American society between 1934 and 1967. The development of these attitudes and roles is traced through Rockwell's illustrations, which were commissioned by and appeared in the popular press.

Boy in a Dining Car (1946) features a black steward waiting on a white boy (the model is Rockwell's son, Peter) in a train's dining car, depicting continued on page 2



Norman Rockwell and bis financial adviser, Doug McGregor, at the opening of The Old Corner House, June 1969.

## **Rockwell Museum Turns Twenty!**

June 1, 1989 marks the twentieth year of operation of The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge. The story of the museum's growth and development is intertwined with the artist it represents.

Rockwell lived and worked in Stockbridge for the last 25 years of his life. His love of the town and its citizens, many of whom served as his models, led the artist to place the bulk of his private art collection and his studio in trust to The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge. Through purchase, gift, and bequest, this core collection of 200 paintings, drawings, and sketches has grown to more than 400 original works.

In keeping with the widespread appeal of Norman Rockwell's art, the museum emerged from a popular show of support when a few Rockwell works were displayed at The Old Corner House, Stockbridge Historical Society. The society was formed in 1967 after a group of concerned Stockbridge residents, among them Rockwell and his wife, Molly, saved an eighteenth century house from demolition. The house was the home of Stockbridge citizen, James F. Dwight, a descendant of Joseph Dwight, who served as a general in the French and Indian War.

The Old Corner House was restored and converted into an historical museum for the town. Rockwell decided to exhibit some of his work as an added attraction. Soon, people began to visit the house for the express purpose of seeing original Rockwell paintings. Gradually, the focus of the museum changed to accommodate this interest.

The first year, approximately 5,000 people visited The Norman Rockwell Museum at The Old Corner House (as the society had come to be known), and by 1987, visitorship was up to more than 123,000. During the summer of 1985, the one-millionth person crossed the threshold. As of December 30, 1988, 1,500,000 visitors had passed through the doors.

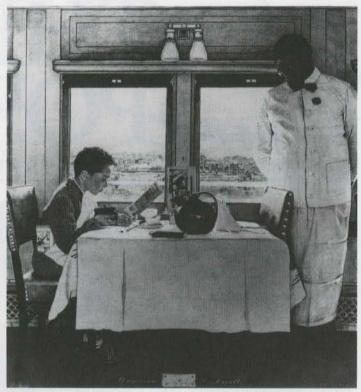
#### Museum Exhibition Focuses on Rockwell Images of Blacks

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the black man in a role of subservience held to be appropriate in the printed media in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

By the 1960s, pieces such as *The Problem We All* Live With (1964) provide a glimpse at the beginnings of the civil rights movement, as blacks and sympathetic whites rebelled against a segregated society. Southern Justice (Murder in Mississippi, 1965), a staggering portrayal of the murder of three civil rights workers, was so powerful that Look, which had commissioned the work, chose to publish a study rather than the more graphic final painting. Both the study and unpublished "final" painting are on view in the exhibition. Finally, Rockwell's Golden Rule (1961), presents the artist's vision of an ideal world united in international brotherly love.

"Illustration, like all aspects of popular culture, reflects, rather than creates, the mood and prevailing sentiments of its time and audience, noted museum Curator Maureen Hart Hennessey, who organized the exhibition. "Magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Look*, as well as advertisements, were geared to the majority white audience, and illustrators of the time, including Norman Rockwell, created pictures designed to attract that audience. By the mid 1960s, as the civil rights movement brought black Americans and their struggle for equality into the consciousness and conscience of white America, Rockwell began



Boy in a Dining Car. The Saturday Evening Post: 7 December 1946, cover by Norman Rockwell. © Copyright 1946, Curtis Publishing Company

capturing the people and the movement in his paintings. Rockwell has left us a clear and compelling picture of the changing attitudes of the American majority."

Hennessey appeared on Boston Public Television's (WGBH) evening news in conjunction with the exhibit.



by Laurie Norton Moffatt

On March 27, 1989 Lila W. Berle, president of the Norman Rockwell Museum, announced that the board of trustees has dedicated the education classroom in the new gallery building to John and Margaret Batty. John and Margaret served as codirectors of the museum from 1972 to 1973, and Margaret will end her 17 years as assistant director this spring. Her dream has been to introduce America's school children to art through the eyes of Norman Rockwell—a program which was started during her tenure and will be actively continued in the new gallery building.

In preparation for moving the museum to the new gallery, which is several years away from opening, the board and staff have begun to plan the program of operation for the new building. The larger facility will enable us to expand exhibits and greatly enhance educational programming

The Education and Program Committee of the board and members of the museum staff are meeting regularly to plan and implement new programs. The board Collections Committee and the curatorial staff are developing collections management policies which will govern the use of the museum's collections. At the same time, the design team for the new gallery building continues to be hard at work.

Margaret Batty paved the way for a vital and active Norman Rockwell Museum. May all who follow in her footsteps carry on her vision.

## Author Burns: Rockwell Ideals Worth Fighting For

#### By Susanna Cooper Berksbire Eagle Staff

Using Norman Rockwell's *The Four Freedoms* as a springboard, Pulitzer Prizewinning historian and author James MacGregor Burns made an inspiring plea last night [March 30, 1989] for the alignment of national politics with American ideals.

His lecture at the Red Lion Inn, attended by a crowd of 60, was sponsored by the Norman Rockwell Museum.

"Somehow the goodness, the compassion that we know exist in American people do not get reflected at the level of national politics," said Burns, adding that Rockwell was an expert at highlighting that compassion and goodness through his art.

Rockwell's The Four Freedoms — Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want, Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Worship —translate ideals that often seem lofty and intangible into everyday terms. The painting series appeared during World War II on an inside spread in the Saturday Evening Post.

*Freedom from Fear* shows a couple putting their son safely to bed, while a newspaper under the father's arm tells of war.

*Freedom of Speech* shows a workingman, clad in slightly rumpled clothing, rising to speak his mind at a New England town meeting.

The original paintings, which occupy one room of the Norman Rockwell Museum at the Old Corner House, were completed by Rockwell to illustrate freedoms that President Franklin D. Roosevelt said should be enjoyed by all Americans.

The ideals Rockwell understood and portrayed so well, Burns said, will become realities only if Americans are

Freedom of Speech (1943) by Norman Rockwell © Copyright 1943, Curtis Publishing Company

willing to fight for them. Paraphrasing the late Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., he said that the people have to seize their ideals. Principles have to be fought for."

"I think we are still fighting for the four freedoms,"Burns said.

In order to fight for principles and a nation that represents those principles, he suggested, Americans need leaders who champion "our enduring ideals" —leaders like King and Roosevelt.

This review was reprinted with the permission of the Berkshire Eagle from an issue dated Friday, March 31, 1989.

The James MacGregor Burns lecture was one of a continuing series of events sponsored by The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge.

## **CURATOR'S CORNER**

by Maureen Hart Hennessey

In the fall of 1912, Norman Rockwell received his first commission from the Boy Scouts of America. He was asked to illustrate a story appearing in Boys' Life, the Scouts' official magazine, which had been in national circulation for about six months. Within a year, Rockwell had become Boys' Life's regular artist, providing cover and story illustrations for each issue. By 1915, when he was only 21years old, Rockwell was named art director of the magazine. He held the art director's position only until March of 1916, but his association with the Boy Scouts of America continued for the rest of his life.

The first Rockwell-illustrated Boy Scout calendar appeared in 1925. With the exception of two years (1928 and 1930), he produced a calendar illustration for the Boy Scouts every year thereafter through 1976. These calendar illustrations were also used as February Boys' Life covers.

A Scout Is Helpful, this museum's recent acquisition,

appeared on the 1941 calendar. The illustration, which was painted a year or so in advance, was inspired by the hurricane which struck New England with deadly force in 1938.

to According William Hillcourt, author of Norman Rockwell's World of Scouting (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1978), Rockwell had originally intended to show the scout in the hurricane's fury. However, the first chief scout executive of the Boy Scouts of America, a stickler for details who expected absolute perfection, decreed that not only must the Scout be 'portrayed as a paragon of American boyhood, but even his uniform had to be immaculate no matter where the boy was or what he was doing! Since it would not make sense to depict the Scout's uniform as perfectly clean and dry at the height of the storm, Rockwell's subject became a helpful Scout performing a good deed in the hurricane's aftermath.

This painting is an important addition to our collections, because



A Scout is Helpful by Norman Rockwell. © Copyright 1941, Brown & Bigelow, Inc. and by permission of the Boy Scouts of America.

Norman Rockwell is so closely identified with the Boy Scouts. The museum owns no other completed or published Boy Scout illustrations. This painting, which will be exhibited at the Old Corner House through January 1990, is a wonderful illustration that fills a significant gap in our collection.

#### A Message to Our Members

by David Staples, director of membership

Members are vital to all museums, and we are pleased that a record number of you have joined the Friends of The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge. Your support enables us to implement and expand programs and creates a strong base for the future.

The more members we have, the better able we are to offer innovative and exciting activities. Nineteen hundred and eighty-nine marks the first time in the museum's history that a special event has been scheduled for each month of the year. They range from bus tours, lectures, and exhibition openings (there are four this year) to an historic bike tour and picnics. We encourage you to take full advantage of these programs, which are listed in a special calendar in this newsletter.

Our membership program depends on renewals. We hope you will respond to the reminders that we send four to six weeks prior to the expiration of your membership. As we end the first quarter of the year, our renewal rate is 65%, but we would like it to be higher as the year progresses. Cheryl Brown, our membership assistant, and I are always ready to answer questions. Don't hesitate to call or write.

Some of you have informed us that you are moving to another part of the country. We want you to know that 40% of our members live outside this region. There are many membership benefits for those who live too far away to attend museum functions. The museum store discount is just one. You can even shop through the mail through our mail-order program. We always look forward to the visits of outof-town members who journey to the Berkshires for a vacation. Let us know if you're coming. We are in the process of compiling information on Norman Rockwell exhibitions on view across the country. This will be a wonderful resource for Rockwell buffs from far and wide.

Finally, we are looking for members who would like to become membership leaders in their areas. Leaders will help us to find new members to join our museum family. Please write or call the Membership Office (413-298-4239) for further information.

All of us at the museum thank you for your support and look forward to serving you in the years to come.

#### From the Director

by Laurie Norton Moffatt

On March 27, 1989 Margaret Batty celebrated her eightieth birthday. As she approached this milestone, Margaret made the decision to retire from her position as assistant director of the museum, after seventeen years of devoted service. What began in 1972 as a post-retirement diversion for Margaret and her husband John, burgeoned into a more-than-full-time job that has become Margaret's life.

As the museum celebrates its twentieth anniversary of public operation this June, we realize that for seventeen of those years, Margaret Batty nurtured and led us through tremendous growth and change. She has been an inspiration to all of us and a good friend to me. I am happy to announce that we will continue to reap the benefits of Margaret's talents and energy, as she begins her new career as a volunteer.

More than 200 people came to a celebration held at The Old Corner House in honor of Margaret's birthday and retirement. A dinner that followed at The Red Lion Inn was attended by more than 100. All of these friends and family join me in saluting Margaret Batty.

Margaret has allowed me to share with you the letter she sent to me to announce her retirement.



Margaret Batty with ber son Jack at the reception beld in bonor of ber birtbday and retirement.

Stockbridge, MA January 24, 1989:

Dear Laurie,

The year was 1909, William Howard Taft was president, the twentieth century was in its infancy, when another infant appeared in London, Ohio, just up the pike from Cincinnati, Ohio, President Taft's home town.

Now it is 1989, that infant century is 89 years old and that infant girl is close to 80. What a century that old girl has witnessed—new knowledge of all sorts, discoveries, inventions, progress on so many fronts, in so many areas. She feels very privileged to have lived in all but the first nine years of the twentieth century, and hopes to see it out in just eleven more years, and to help welcome the twenty-first.

In this 80 years, I have had many marvellous experiences, participated in so many worthwhile projects. Being associated with The Old Corner House has been one of them. To see it grow and develop in my seventeen years has been thrilling and very satisfying. After the loss of John [her husband], it, along with my son, Jack, and family have given purpose and meaning to my life.

Now it is time to move on as there are some things I want to do, such as adding a few more countries to the twenty some I have visited. I have been thinking about this for several months. Finally, while at Jack's for Christmas, we talked it over and I decided I would like to retire this spring, whenever a smooth transition can be arranged.

I shall certainly miss the museum and its associations, but be assured I shall keep in touch and be available for volunteer jobs or special projects.

Laurie, it has been a joy to work with you since 1977, and under your capable leadership I feel The Norman Rockwell Museum has a great future.

Best wishes!

Margaret Batty



Margaret Batty enjoys a moment with museum Director Laurie Norton Moffatt at the reception.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL D'AMORE

## Linda Russell: Keeper of the Archive

## A Combination of Librarian and Sleuth

If you wanted to know what kind of sneakers Norman Rockwell wore, what kind of pipe he smoked, what kind of paint brushes he used, or when his first *Saturday Evening Post* cover was published, what would you do? When they have questions like these, many people call or write to us. Last year, the museum's Curatorial Department responded to more than 500 inquiries. A good many of these queries were handled by Linda Russell, our curatorial assistant and archivist.

Most people think of the museum as one of the few places in the world where original Rockwell art is on view. However, exhibiting Rockwell's work is only one of the many important functions of The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge. Education (which includes the museum's school programs, as well as answering the inquiries of everyone from secondgraders to gallery owners), research, and caring for our collections are under the umbrella of our Curatorial Department. Linda Russell is a vital part of the department, which is headed by Curator Maureen Hart Hennessey. A school program coordinator and a part-time archival assistant round out the department.

Linda's duties necessitate that she play many roles — from reference and cataloging librarian to detective, as she organizes and keeps track of the more than 100,000 objects in the museum's archive. Archival materials range from Rockwell's letters, photographs, and negatives, business papers, and articles of the artist's clothing (yes, the museum even has his sneakers) to books, cassettes, and other information focusing on Rockwell.

Somehow, Linda brings order to what would seem to be confusion, always knowing just where to find a particular photograph or object. Systems help to keep the collections in order and accessible, but there is no substitute for Linda's five years of experience with the collections. In the process of organizing and caring for the archive and collections, Linda has developed a broad knowledge of Rockwell and his art. She is able to answer just about any question about the artist, or at least knows where to start looking.

Linda's responsibilities include assisting the curator with the care of the collections; maintaining files (not only on the museum's paintings, drawings, and other objects, but on all 4,000 Rockwell originals); processing new acquisitions; coordinating the insurance of the collection; framing pieces that will be



Linda Russell

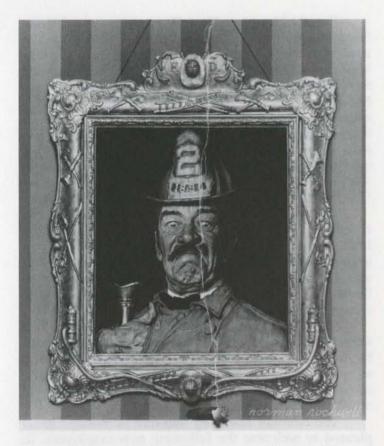
exhibited; and coordinating the museum's photographic rental program.

Many are unaware that this museum, like most others, has a photographic rental program. In fact, the museum has the largest collection of transparencies of Rockwell art in the world. Those wishing to publish Rockwell images in a book or magazine, or to reproduce them in some other way, are directed to Linda. In collaboration with the copyright holder, Linda will supply the transparencies or prints necessary for reproduction.

While most "customers" request a specific Rockwell image, many ask Linda to help pick "just the right picture" to illustrate an idea. Often, people remember elements of a picture that they want, and Linda will go through hundreds of images in her mind, before coming up with the one that has the right "small funny-looking dog" or "sad, buck-toothed little boy." With more than 4,000 Rockwell works from which to choose, many with dogs or little boys, this is no easy process.

One might think that Linda would become tired of Rockwell after being so immersed in his art and memorabilia, but the opposite is true. "The more I learn about Rockwell, the more I admire him," she says. "His photographs, letters, and art reveal his incredibly high standards, wonderful sense of humor, his ability to come up with great ideas, and his dedication to his work."

This is high praise coming from one who knows just about all there is to know about Norman Rockwell.



Fireman by Norman Rockwell. Oll on canvas, 33" x 26.5", The Saturday Evening Post: 27 May 1944, cover. © Copyright 1961 Curtis Publishing Company. Photo courtesy of Judy Goffman Fine Art.

## In Case of Disaster:

#### **Being Prepared for the Worst**

by Bill Boyer, facilities manager

Disaster, a word that strikes fear into the hearts of most people, particularly museum professionals who care for the world's most valuable and unique treasures. If a disaster caused by nature or human error destroys a museum object or an entire historic building, an irreplaceable work of art or architecture is lost forever. Such a loss is incalculable.

The best way to prevent and/or handle catastrophic events is to plan for them. The staff of The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge is in the process of doing just that by developing a disaster preparedness plan (DPP). A DPP outlines a general plan of action to follow in the event of an emergency such as a fire, hurricane, snow or ice storm, or other disaster. By having a plan in effect before a disaster happens, the museum would be able to react to the situation in a positive, proactive manner and thus, minimize the damage resulting from the disaster.

In order to prepare the best DPP possible, the museum has been participating in a special program organized by the Smith College Museum of Art in Northampton, MA. With the help of an Institute of Museum Services grant, Smith's museum developed a pilot program for a series of training workshops in disaster preparedness planning for museums located in the Connecticut River Valley and surrounding areas. The program focuses on disaster prevention, response and recovery, and on the formulation of written plans for individual institutions, and for regional cooperation.

Local participants in this program include this museum, Chesterwood, Naumkeag, The Berkshire Museum, and the Williams College Museum of Art, all of which care for works of art and/or historic artifacts. On the regional level, it is hoped that the local museums will be able to pool their resources of supplies and talents in order to provide a unified force and to avoid duplication of effort.

The Smith College workshops have been held one afternoon per month since February and will conclude in June with a two-day workshop that will involve hands-on training in the proper handling of emergency equipment, and correct treatment and preservation techniques for art objects damaged in a disaster. At the monthly workshops, guest speakers have discussed insurance concerns, working with the local fire department, water damage recovery, and recovering historic buildings from disaster.

Using the information gathered from the workshops, the final stage of the DPP project will be the completion of a disaster preparedness plan for The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, to be written by our own staff. With a personalized DPP, the museum will be able to establish a policy to address all disasters. The plan will contain instructions detailed enough to handle a disaster properly, but will be general enough to deal effectively with unforeseen problems.

When it comes to disasters, museums can learn a lot from the old Boy Scout motto—be prepared!

#### Shop Through the Mail at the Museum Store

#### And Help Build Our New Gallery

Did you know that you can shop at our museum store through the mail? Best of all, the proceeds from mail-order sales help pay for the museum's new home.

Our spring mail-order catalogue of Norman Rockwell products is now available. Choose from a wide selection of framed and unframed prints, books, calendars and other Rockwell products.

Please call us as (413) 298-5231 if you would like a catalogue sent to you or a friend. Members receive a 10 % discount on their purchases.



The museum's education program for local school children has been in full swing since February 9, 1989, and groups are booked through June. More than 1,300 students will participate this year. New School Program Coordinator Robyn Kampe has designed the program to actively involve students with Rockwell's art. Thus far, responses from children and teachers have been extremely positive.



Children participate in the museum's school program

Curator Maureen Hart Hennessey attended the following workshops and seminars: Copyright Rights and Reproduction Fees at Mount Holyoke College Museum of Art; a Museum Exhibits Workshop at the New Hampshire Historical Society, sponsored by the National Association for Museum Exhibitions; and an ongoing Disaster Preparedness Workshop Series at Smith College. She also delivered a lecture to the Fine Arts Society of Peoria, Illinois in conjunction with the travelling exhibit Norman Rockwell the Great American Storyteller. The exhibition is on view at the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Science in Peoria through May 21.

Thomas Myers, chief of the Construction Division of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., visited the museum in March and offered his impressions of the new gallery project. Myers brought with him fourteen years of experience working at the Smithsonian, where he oversees restoration and construction projects.

Long-time museum guide Claire Williams was selected as one of "one hundred interesting women" by Boston Woman magazine. Her photograph and story appear in the March 1989 issue of the magazine as part of the publication's third annual celebration of remarkable achievers.

The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge is pleased to welcome the following new employees. In the Marketing Department, Karen Lindstrom is our new marketing assistant and Edward McHugh is a mail-order packer.

## The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

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### **Exhibitions**

## **CALENDAR** Spring & Summer

The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

### **Special Events**

#### JUNE 1

Members' Opening Reception From Settlement to Main Street USA: Stockbridge 1739-1989. The Old Corner House, 5:30 - 7 P.M.



Norman Rockwell pedals down the streets of Stockbridge, circa 1964. Norman Rockwell Studio Archive Collection. © Copyright 1971, Estate of Norman Rockwell.

#### JUNE 17 (RAIN DATE: JUNE 18)

#### Tour de Rockwell & Picnic

Pedal your way through the Berkshires on Norman and Molly Rockwell's favorite bike route, then relax at Linwood with a picnic. Bring your own bike and picnic goodies. Members: free. Nonmembers: \$3.00 for adults, \$1.00 for children. Linwood, time to be announced. Barbecue at Linwood: \$5.00 for adults, \$2.00 for children, and \$10.00 for families.

#### JULY 1 AND JULY 2

#### Art in the Yard

More than 15 artists will display and sell their original art in the yard of The Old Corner House. The Old Corner House yard, 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.

#### **THROUGH JANUARY 1990**

#### One Nation Indivisible? Images of Black Americans: 1934-1967 By Norman Rockwell

This exhibition of Rockwell paintings, studies, tear sheets, and photographs that focus on the black American experience dispels a commonly-held belief that Norman Rockwell was an illustrator of white middle-class life and nothing more. The Old Corner House.

#### **THROUGH MAY 20, 1989**

#### Berksbire County High School Art Show

Co-sponsored by this museum and the Pittsfield Art League, this exhibition has become an annual event. On view will be original artwork in a wide variety of media created by local high school students. Linwood House.

#### JUNE 1 - AUGUST 31, 1989

#### From Settlement to Main Street USA: Stockbridge 1739-1989

Co-sponsored by the Historical Room of the Stockbridge Library and this museum, this exhibition salutes Stockbridge on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the town's founding. Highlights include objects from the library's historical collections which focus on important personages and events relating to the town's history and Norman Rockwell's *John Sergeant and Chief Konkapot*, the painting on Rockwell's easel at the time of his death. The Old Corner House.



John Sergeant and Chief Konkapot. Oil on paper mounted on board, 36" x 57". Unsigned, 1972-1976. Norman Rockwell Paintings Trust, Studio Collection at The Old Corner House. © Copyright 1986, Estate of Norman Rockwell.

**The Old Corner House** is located on Main Street in Stockbridge. **Linwood House** is located on Route 183 in Stockbridge. **Call (413) 298-4239** for further information on these events and exhibitions.

# Norman Rockwell: The Great American Storyteller

60 original paintings and drawings by Norman Rockwell

> June 8 - July 29, 1989 The World Financial Center New York City

This exhibition, which has been delighting audiences throughout the country, is coming to New York for the first time.

Norman Rockwell: Great American Storyteller is presented in association with The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge Stockbridge, Massachusetts

> Curated by Judy Goffman, Judy Goffman Fine Art, New York Sponsored by Olympia & York Companies (U.S.A.)

The exhibition will be on view in the upper-level courtyard of The World Financial Center weekdays from 11 A.M. -7 P.M.; weekends, noon - 6 P.M. Admission is free. The World Financial Center is located in Battery Park City across from the World Trade Center. The entrance to the courtyard is on Vesey Street between the Hudson River and West Street. Call (212) 945-0505 for further information.