

2019: Year in Review

For years, the Ruth Stone Foundation has focused almost primarily on one front: renovating the Ruth Stone House. While this continued in earnest in 2018, new and exciting programs were launched and others that were once informal gatherings have taken on a new and more substantial life.

Programming

Free Writing Workshop Celebrates One-Year Anniversary, First Workshop in Goshen, Chapbook

Starting on October 9th, Ben Pease and Bianca Stone conducted a free, two-hour workshop at the Brandon Public Library, open to the public. With a few exceptions, the workshop has taken place every week. Packets of poems are made and printed for students each week.



Workshop members discuss a poem.



The Next Galaxy Poetry Initiative

The main block nears completion! See below for a more detailed report!



Pease installs fire stop between living room and kitchen



Pease and Ben Fama install flooring by front entrance



Bianca and Odette paint the master bedroom.



New Wood and a tin backsplash behind the fireplace



Two dumpsters worth of goods removed from the house



Walter and Ben spent a big chunk of the summer on lead abatement of windows

The Ruth Stone House Podcast and Newsletter

This year we were able to feature more which features an episodic podcast hosted by Bianca Stone and Ben Pease, the publication of a single poem, and a letter from Bianca Stone herself. Ben Pease built a new website dedicated solely to the podcast, which can be found at podcast.ruthstonefoundation.org. Besides the new site, the podcast is available on iTunes and Google Play Music.



Ruth Stone House Reading Series

We hosted over seventeen public event poetry readings this past year in multiple locations in Vermont. Most of the readings took place in an artist studio, Wishbone Collective, in Winookski. At the Ruth Stone Readings four featured poets presented original work to eager audiences. Published author's book were provided by independent VT bookstore, Antidote Books. After the event readers and audience shared in drinks and conversation. Some of our amazing readers included Lee Bricetti, Alison Prine, Janaka Stunky and Chen Chen.



Ruth Stone House Annual Potluck and Silent Auction

Our annual potluck in Goshen, VT at the Blueberry Hill Inn Ski Center, was another wild success, with featured readers Abigail Stone, Ana Bozicevic, and Dorothea Lasky. Local and national businesses donated items such as signed book, handmade goods, and gift certificates. Guests brought potluck items and the theme was Halloween. With this event we brought our full year of readings, classes and podcasts to a close, celebrating all our success in 2019 with the community that made it all possible.



Renovations on the Ruth Stone House 2019

Finishing Wall between kitchen and big living room.

What we initially thought would be a one-day project turned into a multi-weekend affair, as this part of the house had shifted significantly over the years and required shimming before drywall installation.



Walter demonstrates proper safety and the scribe piece used to make sure the fire-blocking would fit around existing studs.



Additional plywood installed to close off the living room from the attic.



Pease installs fire blocking.



Pease inspecting the wall prior to installing another piece of drywall. This particular wall required substantial shimming before the drywall could be installed and inspired the crew to install the wood wall paneling by the fireplace.

Big Living Room and entrance Flooring

Using both the reclaimed floorboards donated by David Ferm and salvaged, existing old-growth boards, we completed flooring the “Big Living Room” in June of 2020.



There wasn't a floor in the big living room for much of summer 2016.



This photo shows the seamless transition between the 1" thick old growth pine and 3/4" thick wood donated by David Ferm. The transition piece was shimmed to eliminate any bump.



Pease and Ben Fama install wood donated by David Ferm to the the edge of the fireplace.



Walter inspects the newly-installed floor.

SEVEN DAYS

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MONDAY, JULY 22, 2019

WORDS / CRIME

Historic Ruth Stone House Burglarized

POSTED BY MARGARET GRAYSON ON MON, JUL 22, 2019 AT 3:31 PM

- In the middle of July a bunch of antique wood and most of Pease's power tools were stolen from the Ruth Stone House.
- Less than a week after David Ferm had dropped off a truckload of reclaimed barnwood, it disappeared off the porch.
- The blow was softened if not outright healed by many generous donors and a replacement load of wood from David.
- It also inspired Walter and Ben to make sure that even if they came back "to steal everything that wasn't nailed down," there wouldn't be anything

Fireplace wall and backsplash

Knowing this wall was out of plumb and seeing that we had a bit of extra wood from David Ferm, we decided to install floorboards on the wall on the fireplace wall. The material was more forgiving than drywall and allowed us to put available material to use in an interesting way.



Luon installed prior to floorboards.



Chris Tonelli not only read at our reading series but volunteered his time for this part of renovations as well.



Once the wood was installed, we tested full panel tin sheets as a backsplash.



We ultimately cut the tin sheets in half and installed a trim border around the metal.

Lead abatement

We do not have many photos of this process as both Walter and Pease were in full gear and did much of this work after their day jobs.



Two goofs gearing up.



Double windows after scraping, painting and retrimming.



The curved wall

A job that always got pushed back for other jobs considered higher priority, nonetheless, a majority of the drywall has been “taped” or had drywall tape and joint compound applied.



2018 installing the curved drywall.



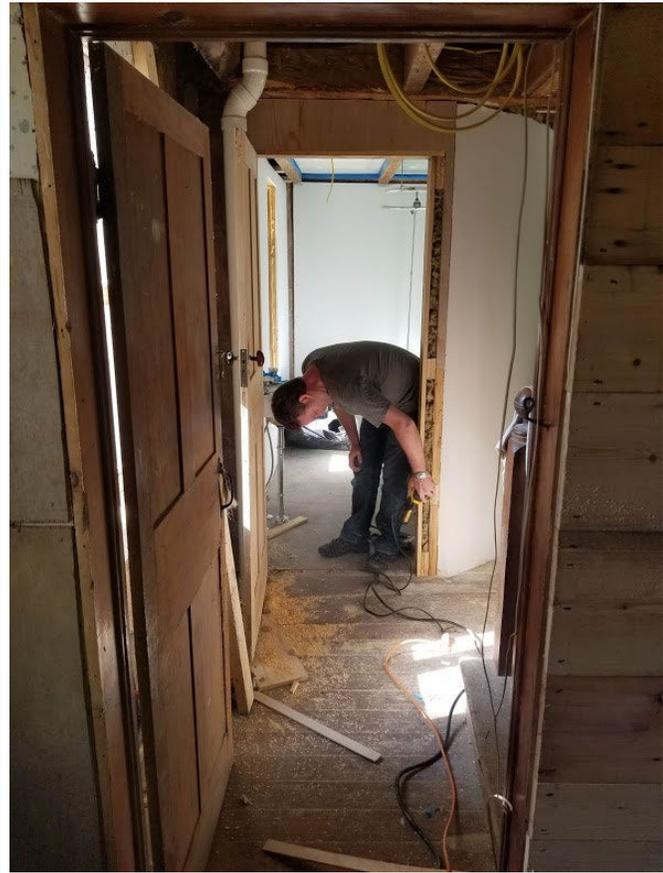
At the end of 2018, the curved wall looked almost done. Between the part you can't see on the left (the most extreme part of the curve), and the bucket of mud we spread over this thing, it about 100 more hours to get this thing finished.



The various materials used to cover up an unusual bit of the curved wall, indicative of the intricate work the curved wall required .



After the first of several muddings.



Walter and Ben went to Goshen after their day jobs to move renovations forward as much as they could.



Walter painting the curved wall



Ben standing eerily next to the curved wall

Mudding, scraping, and painting

It's not hard, it's not fun, but it does change the space to a construction zone to something more livable.



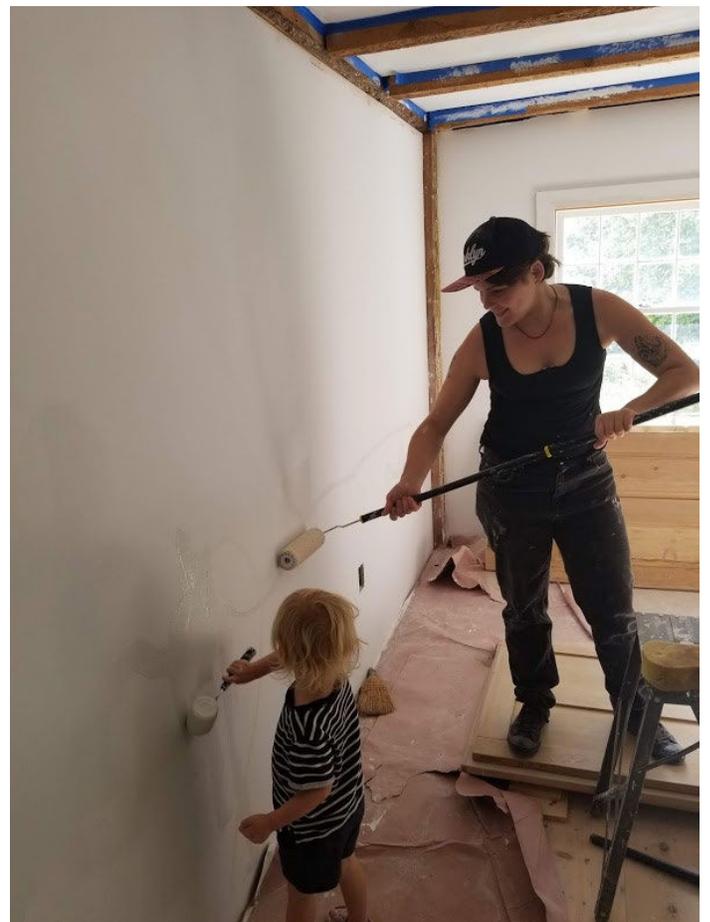
RSH Workshop member Kirsten volunteered her time to sand the drywall and paint!



They locked Pease in the bathroom until he finished mudding it.



Walter should have been using the device Bianca was using to the right, and visa versa.



The little helper (and Bianca)



There she goes.



"Sweeping."

Where We Left Everything



2016 Big Living Room



2019 Big Living Room



2016 Master Bedroom



2019 Master Bedroom



2017 Bathroom and Little Living Room



2019 Bathroom



2017, little living room



2019, little living room



RSF Annual Report 2019

Cash on hand 01/01/19		\$5,846.65
Income 2019	Donations	\$20,114.07
	Total Income 2019	\$25,960.72
Expenses	Total Expenses 2019	\$23,794.35
Cash on hand 12/31/2019		\$2,166.37

2019 Operational Plan

New Programming

RSF Reading Series

RSF seeks to host a reading series that will feature both nationally- and locally-acclaimed poets and writers. The series will be free and open to the public and allow guests to print their own broadsides on our new, clamshell press. We are considering finding a space where we can sell our own food and drink. If held at a bookstore, library, museum, or art gallery, we can get a one-day permit to serve alcohol ([link here to permit application](#)). We will also need a 1st Class Trainer certification in order to gain said permit ([found here](#)), \$25 a year per person.

To be established:

Location

Nature of on-site

Frequency of series

Number of readers

Open mic?

We held over a dozen events across Vermont. This was our flagship programming for 2019 and quite a success thanks to Bianca!

~~Broadside Retreat~~

~~RSF seeks to offer a intensive weekend retreat where poets will bring a collection of poems to be workshopped with the intention of choosing one that the resident will then typeset and print on one of our letterpress machines. To start we will offer one residency for free and one at half price.~~

Ruth Stone Books

RSF seeks to publish two chapbooks a year with appropriate promotion and readings to follow. A collection of Ruth Stone seasonal poems is already in the works, which will feature both standard and cloth-bound editions. The second chapbook will be from a living poet and will include not only promotion and a reading but also some kind of residency in Vermont. Ben Pease will layout the books and Bianca will design and print letterpress covers. Sale will be primarily through our website but also speciality bookstores like Berl's in Brooklyn.

To be determined

Print-run

Distribution

Reading and residency details

We published a small run of chapbooks featuring our workshop members' poetry, but nothing else for 2019.

Book of the Month Club

As a part of the RSF Newsletter and podcast, RSF will add an interactive segment where an under-appreciated book will be selected and discussed. Listeners will have an opportunity to send in questions or comments before the podcast is recorded. If possible, the author will be interviewed.

To be determined

Sale of books through our site?

Authors to be featured

Our Newsletters featured a book of poetry, and we often worked out a discount for the book in question.

Improved Renovation Plan

RSF seeks to work with a general contractor to formalize the “Big House Renovation Plan,” which Pease created last year. Looking to add Jon Jesup to the board so he can help generate a list of priority renovations, estimates for each, and what renovations need to take place before the Ruth Stone House can open its doors and those that can happen afterwards. After this, will look to acquire bids from multiple GC’s in the area.

The improved renovation plan is complete with estimates provided by Jesup and will be a vital part of our campaign for big donations.

~~Ruth Stone Symposium~~

~~Schedule a symposium about Ruth to coincide with the release of the essential Ruth Stone reader. Bianca and Aiki will be the point people on this effort.~~

We decided to hold off on this until the Ruth Stone Essential comes out.

Redesign Website

Convert homepage to a “one-page format.” Redesign to focus on current programming.

The redesign is complete!

The plan for 2020

Free Writing Workshop at Brandon Public Library/Pease-Stone Household

The workshop continues into its second straight year!

RSH Reading Series

The reading series continues, slightly redesigned: not as many readings in either Addison or Rutland counties.

The Next Galaxy Poetry Initiative

Renovations with anyone who will help continue, lead by Ben and Walter.

The Ruth Stone Foundation Podcast and Newsletter

We will look to publish this every month this year!

The Ruth Stone House Silent Auction and Potluck

The tradition continues, with great local fare, poets and awesome items to bid on!

Campground: Weeklong Writing Retreat at Camp Thorpe

An ambitious new piece of programming where we host up to 100 writers at the camp down the street from Ruth's house.

Ruth Stone Symposium Planning for 2021

Capital Campaign

We are working with Christine Graham to seek major contributions. Big Brochure is ready to go (see below), getting the 15 names is next

How to Help

Thank you for considering to support the Ruth Stone House.

In many cases you may find there are tax benefits with certain ways of giving; please discuss these with your financial advisor and call us if you have specific questions. All gifts should be made to the Ruth Stone Foundation.

We welcome gifts of:

- *Cash, Check, or Credit Card, in full or spread over 2-3 years
- *Stocks, mutual funds, or bonds
- *Property or tangible goods (please contact us to discuss)
- *Labor, materials, equipment or services

Whatever you choose to contribute, your gift will make a significant impact in restoring Ruth Stone's property. We are grateful for your participation at this crucial stage of the campaign. Please contact our Executive Director, Ben Pease, at (413) 636-9901 with any questions regarding your giving plans.



**RUTH
STONE
HOUSE**

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CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

Aliki Barnstone Chard deHoard
Major Jackson Ben Pease
Blanca Stone Walter Stone



SAVE

THE
RUTH STONE HOUSE

In 1956, Ruth Stone purchased and transformed a farmhouse in Goshen, VT, attracting colleagues and former students to dedicate themselves to their writing in the peace and quiet of the Green Mountains.

Nearly a decade after her death, the house is in need of extensive renovations. We need your help in order for this historic place to welcome new generations of writers within its doors.

Release, release;
between cold death and a fever,
send what you will, I will listen.
All things come to an end.
No, they go on forever.

—Ruth Stone, "Train Ride"



THE RENOVATION PROJECT

The Ruth Stone House renovation project has been underway in earnest on the Big House since 2016 and seen substantial improvements since then, including a new foundation and complete renovations down to the studs on both living rooms and the master bedroom in the Main Block. Executive Director Ben Pease co-authored a House Renovation Plan with Jonathan Jesup of Jonathan Jesup Restorations, which estimates \$200,000 of further repairs, including:

- *Kitchen addition and back porch rebuild
- *New heating system
- *South Wing stabilization and re-design to include ADA compliant bathroom & bedroom
- *Winterization improvements

Across the street from the Big House, two other structures stand on Ruth Stone's property: The Little House, pictured right, and The Chapel, a three-floor structure made of salvaged materials and typical in Vermont in the 1970s both need substantial work and would provide additional working spaces with even more privacy than could be enjoyed in the Big House.



SUPPORTING A LITERARY COMMUNITY OUTSIDE THE USUAL INSTITUTIONS

Vermont Poet Laureate Ruth Stone (1915-2011) purchased her Goshen, VT property in 1956, and for the next 55 years it provided inspiration for her writing and a haven for the many students and colleagues she welcomed. She published her first book of poetry in 1959, the same year her husband, poet and scholar Walter Stone, died. Stone supported herself and her three daughters by teaching creative writing, publishing books of poetry, and winning literary awards, including two Guggenheim Fellowships, a National Book Award, and the Wallace Stevens Award. Her 13 books of poetry display a vast spirit that battles loss with dry wit and fortitude, revealing in both everyday and cosmic worlds.

After Ruth Stone's death in 2011, an effort to save her house—the heart of her creative process for over 60 years—began. The Ruth Stone House (RSH) nonprofit organization was formed, doing everything it could with a volunteer staff to not only save the estate from further decay, but also promote Ruth Stone's legacy, and fulfill a mission focused on giving writers and artists time and space to create new work.

Recently, RSH has spread its mission into the real world, hosting 15 literary events in 2019, including readings in Winooski, Brandon, Middlebury, and Putney; craft classes and podcasts with established poets, a weekly workshop in Brandon, and a silent auction to cap off the year. Our long-term plans look to invite writers to experience the magic and serenity unique to Ruth Stone's home in the Green Mountains. The following programs are contingent on completed renovations:

- **Writer-in-Residence Program** - In honor of Stone's generosity to artists, the program provides space to a writer/artist in search of a quiet setting to complete a project of literary or academic merit.
- **On-Site Workshops and Retreats** - From one-day programs to multi-day workshop retreats, students will immerse themselves in their writing practice in a room overlooking the iconic babbling brook that inspired so many of Ruth's Stone's poems.
- **Letterpress Printing** - On Ruth Stone's own Vandercook SP15 press. Small press publishing, with classes and workshops provided.
- **Reading Series & Events**, exclusive dinners, reading and lectures in the unique setting and intimate space of the Ruth Stone House.

THE BUDGET

Big House Renovations	\$300,000
Little House Renovations	\$100,000
Chapel Restoration	\$ 30,000
Professional Oversight	\$ 15,000
Contingency	\$ 30,000
Programming	\$100,000
Total	\$575,000
Previous Work Completed	\$100,000
Goal	\$475,000

