

Bergren Forum speaker will relate why Friendship 'grateful' for AU art students

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Alfred University's (AU) longstanding lunchtime series, the Bergren Forum, opens for the spring 2015 semester at 12:10 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 29, in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. The program is free and open to the public.

Guest for the first forum of the new year will be Tom Cannon, a member of the Friendship Fire Department (FFD), who will describe how "Daisy was GRATE for Alfred University," when a group of AU art students assisted in repairing Friendship's antique, horse-drawn, steam-fired pumper "Miss Daisy."

Cannon, professor in the Agriculture and Veterinary Technology Department at Alfred State College, explains "the FFD's 1881 Silsby steamer had a warped set of grates (more than 125 years old) that needed to be replaced. The AU students using the facilities of the National Casting Lab in the College of Ceramics - poured the new set of grates" for the pumper and "bailed me out!"

"Miss Daisy" is the only horse-drawn steam-powered pumper in New York State and one of only two steam-powered rotary pumpers still in operation in the United States. She was preserved via

the Silsby Restoration Project (SRP), a multi-phase, multi-curriculum history preservation project, said Cannon. "The SRP is a community involvement project that was started as a celebration of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Friendship Fire Department," explained Cannon. The success of the project included old and young people, residents and non-residents of Friendship, artists, machinists, engineers, horse people, non-horse people, and many more."

AU's Bergren Forum is sponsored by the Division of Human Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Guests are encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided.

The long-time series began when Rick Bergren, who taught at the University in the &70s, started the forums after being inspired by learning of the gatherings that (AU) students in the 19th century were known to conduct in Alumni Hall to discuss community issues. After Bergren's death in 1974, the University decided to continue the tradition in his name. Various faculty members have taken on the coordinator duties since that time. William S. Dibrell, professor of philosophy, is the current coordinator.