



MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



SUMMER UPDATE 2006

Society Officers

President
John Lonergan
Vice-President
Sharon Guzik
Vice-President
Richard Leary

Recording Secretary
Susan Gerould

Corresponding Secretary
Fred Schlicher

Treasurer
Penny Ontlaw

Auditor
John Anderson

Board Members

Lorna Wilkerson
Tony Giglio
Robert White
Jim Owens
Betty Owens
Petri Pugliese
Barbara Pugliese

President's Overview

John Lonergan



It is hard for me to believe that just 76 days have passed since our slate of officers

was elected at the Annual Meeting. It has been a busy couple of months.

During this transitional period our management team has taken possession of the access codes, keys, safe combinations, bank statements, signature cards, membership records, administrative files, collection records and treasurer files and has conducted initial inspections of Society facilities located at 10 Governors Ave. and 350 Riverside Ave. I have personally: met with Jay Griffin several times, interviewed a majority of the former active Society Officers and Board members, met with all of the key current Society volunteers and

contacted a majority of the Society's service contractors. I have also held three Board meetings.

Already, the newly elected Society Officers have spent several hundred hours of volunteer work reviewing, researching, organizing and cleaning up Society records, files and facilities. In addition to our officers, a host of Society member volunteers have come forward to help and I want to thank some of the most active: Barbara Kerr, Ryan Hayward and Michael Bradford from the Collections Committee, Heather Anderson, Will Tenney, Susan Gerould, Jim Owens and Betty Owens from the Clean-Up Committee and Leslie Spieth Schlicher from the Membership Committee.

Although these initial efforts have just scratched the surface of fully evaluating the current condition of the Society, I believe it is important for me to report to you what we have found so far:

Security/Safety Issues:

- A. Fire and burglar alarm protection to 10 Governors Ave. facility was inoperative.
- B. Telephone line to 10 Governors Ave. facility was found to be inoperative and the building has developed a serious mold condition due to lack of proper ventilation.



Society Officers join Ann Moran for tour of Peter Tufts House

- C. Articles stored in basement, second floor and attic of the Peter Tufts House located at 350 Riverside Ave. prevent access for regular inspections.

Financial Condition:*

- A. Current cash checking account balances total \$478 as of May 31st.
- B. Current unpaid bills awaiting payment total \$5101 as of May 31st
- C. In comparison, checking account balances in 9/1/05 totaled \$31,495.**
- D. Unrestricted CDs, Savings & Checking accounts in 9/1/02 totaled \$110,675. Unrestricted CDs, Savings & Checking accounts as of May 31st total \$64,000, a 42% reduction.
- E. The following earning assets are currently in a non-performance or under-performance status: Bank CDs fail to keep pace with inflation. Monthly rental 350 Riverside Ave. house of \$600 is less than maintenance costs. Membership fees collected for the years of 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 were negligible.
- F. Immediate need to upgrade fire and liability insurance on 10 Governors Ave. facility which houses the majority of Society collection items and artifacts.

**These figures are unaudited but are based on information provided to us which we believe is substantially correct.*

***A majority of this reduction is due to the following 2005-6 discretionary expenses: Exhibits \$9010, Peter Tufts Open House \$2922, publicity & educational materials \$2025, plaques & flagpoles \$7475, Brooks Estate and other contributions \$884, Annual Banquet subsidy \$578, painting 10 Governors Ave. facility \$7480 and transfers to restricted fund accounts \$1700.*

Since June 1st Society Volunteers have been able to address the following:

- A.** Fire and burglar alarm protection along with phone service have been restored to 10 Governors Ave. facility.
- B.** Clean up programs for both 10 Governors Ave. and 350 Riverside Ave. properties have commenced.
- C.** Insurance quotes for 10 Governors Ave. property have been solicited and the entire Society collection located in the building has been video taped for insurance records.
- D.** Incomplete and outdated membership files have been updated and entered into a Microsoft Excel file. Membership confirmation notices have been mailed to all current members.
- E.** Off site artifacts and collection items owned by the Society are being inventoried in an effort to develop a comprehensive collection management plan.
- F.** All Society financial records are being collected and organized in preparation for a complete professional audit.
- G.** Communication backlog of inquiries to Society has been eliminated and Society phone messages, email communication and mail are being answered promptly.
- H.** Society voice mail system and website have been updated with current operational information.
- I.** The following individuals have agreed to serve as Society Board Members: Dr. Lorna Wilkerson, Robert White, Jim & Betty Owens, Petri and Barbara Pugliese and former Massachusetts State Representative Tony Giglio (*see bios and photos on last page*). Kurt Hasselbach and Wallace Kountze have agreed to serve on the Society's Advisory Committee.

Third load of trash from initial clean up activities ready for pick up.



- J.** Members of the Society's membership and marketing committees are currently developing an outreach and fundraising plan to address the Society's current cash shortage situation. This Newsletter is one of the first steps in this effort!

I have asked our Treasurer, Librarian and the Membership committee to provide additional updates on current plans and activities.

Putting the House in Order

Librarian – Barbara Kerr

During the last two years, Ryan Hayward and I (mostly Ryan) have been organizing, filing, and packaging the items in the MHS collection. So far, we have achieved a very basic level of organization of these collections. Ryan has entered some information into a database, and is in the process of scanning the photograph and postcard collections. The next step is to catalog the collection and reorganize the physical space of the research area. We hope to acquire museum software and start inputting sometime this year. We hope to accomplish the physical reorganization sooner than that.

We also have spent some time looking at the building and moving things around. On Sunday, July 16, Ryan and I walked through the building with Kurt Hasselbach, who is curator of the MIT museum. He had previously walked around with John Lonergan. Kurt's opinions agreed with what Ryan and I had suspected. The building is not great but it is not a disaster either. We need to monitor the temperature fluctuations during the year but at the moment nothing is imminently dangerous for the collection.

What is a problem is dirt and disorganization. Kurt recommended what Ryan and I had already been talking about - the research area upstairs needs to be cleared of everything that isn't a research tool. That means all the extra furniture and artifacts (dolls, statues, hats, clothing etc.) needs to come out. Then new shelving needs to be put in, and the existing shelving, desks and file cabinets moved around to make better use of the space. The room could hold much more than it does if the appropriate storage shelves and cabinets were used. The basement can also be used for archival storage once it is cleaned out and cleaned up.

For those who want to know what is in the MHS collection here is a brief summary.

A. Artwork:

- Boat and ship models
- Oil paintings of ships built in Medford
- Portraits of several historic Medford personages

B. Books:

- Books related to Medford history and people
- Books related to New England and Massachusetts history



These pictures show the research area before recent organization (LEFT) and after (RIGHT).

C. Civil War era memorabilia:

- Uniforms, guns, swords, books, letters, photos
- Lots of items from the Lawrence Light Guard
- 5400 photos of Civil War operations 1862–1867 (the entire 5400 Civil War collection can be viewed on line at www.corbis.com under Medford Historical Society section).

D. Displays:

- Rum industry
- Ship industry
- Lydia Maria Child
- Diorama of Medford Square circa 1855 (golden age of shipbuilding in Medford)

E. Primary Documents:

- Colonial era letters of ship owner/slave trader Timothy Fitch
- Original rum ledger
- Collections of letters from various people and families

F. Directories:

- City directories 1870 to 1960's (not complete)
- Sanborn Insurance Co. map books
- Medford Historical House Inventory (1976)

G. Photographs:

- Medford photos 1850 through 1950's (several thousand organized by place, person and event)
- Medford and surrounding area post card collection (organized)

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer – Penny Outlaw & Auditor – John Anderson

It's been a busy couple of months for the Treasurer (Penny) and Auditor (John). The Treasurer is focused on developing future financial plans, while the auditor is focused on understanding our current situation.

Over the years, the Society has made a number of business arrangements with partners. These include the sale of certain rights concerning the Civil War photographs, a long-term lease arrangement on our property at 350 Riverside Avenue, a partnership with the Middlesex Canal Association to publish a book, and the establishment of a fund to support an annual scholarship for a Medford High School graduate. We are working to understand these commitments and strengthen these relationships in a way that also promotes the best interests of the Society and the community.

Looking forward, we are focused on managing the Society's bills with the limited funds in our checking account and protecting our assets. We are establishing a budget to support cataloging and preserving the collection. This will be the first written budget we are aware of in many years and we believe this is fundamental in managing the Society's finances.

Membership Committee Report

Membership Committee – Fred Schlicher

A comprehensive list of 303 members has been compiled from a variety of sources which includes: a hard copy listing from Rob Dilman, actual application forms found in Society files and Noah Dennen's records. All membership information was entered into an Excel database file and is being updated daily. Types of memberships break down as follows: Life 38 (12.5%), Benefactors 12 (4%), Family 129 (42.5%), Individual 97 (32%) and Senior 27 (9%).

A letter of confirmation was sent to all 303 members notifying them of their "good standing" status in the Society, their level of membership and that renewals will occur, as provided in the Society by-laws, in January 2007. Thank you for all of the kind responses and updated contact information provided by several current members.



These pictures show the basement area before recent clean-out (TOP) and after (ABOVE). We discovered artifacts and papers which are part of the collection as well as lots of trash.

How You Can Help

Plans are underway to double or even triple the membership within the next couple of years. You can help! If you have a friend, relative, or colleague who you think might be interested in being a member of the MHS, please have them go to our website at www.medfordhistorical.org, to download a membership form, or call me, Fred Schlicher, at (781) 395-7766 and I will promptly mail out a membership form. All applications are welcome and there is no need to be sponsored by another Society member.

Upcoming Fall Program

On Thursday, September 28 at 7:00 p.m., at the Medford Public Library, the Medford Historical Society and the Medford Library will present "From Medford to World Fame: Fred Stark Pearson, Engineer-Entrepreneur (1861-1915)", a lecture by Gil Cooke. Learn about 19th century Fred Pearson who created a business empire of electrification and engineering projects around the world.

New Board Members



Dr. Lorna Wilkerson – Medford resident, obstetrician and with her husband Michael Mushlitz, researcher for WGBH, have restored and researched the history of their 1872 home. Some of their other interests include architecture, travel and gardening.

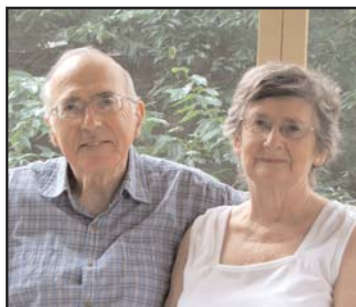


Tony Giglio – Medford resident and businessman, former City Councilor, Massachusetts State Representative and Medford Arts Council Chairman.



Robert White – Construction manager and owner's representative for Boston construction management firm. He is a Tufts University grad with a BS in civil-structural engineering and has been involved in the exterior restoration of the Massachusetts State House and Old Suffolk County House.

Robert is married to Cheryl White, Executive Director of the Medford Chamber of Commerce, who is a member of the Society's marketing committee.



Jim & Betty Owens – He is a retired national archivist and she is a retired educator, librarian and former Medford School Committee member.

Patri & Barbara Pugliese - *(picture not available)*

Patri & Barbara have been researching, reviving and teaching a variety of historical activities including social dance, early fencing, games, cooking and dress of various periods. They have lectured and performed at Museums and Historical Societies throughout New England.