



HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WHEELER HOUSE
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Winter Newsletter, 2013

Dear Members,

Since it's a new year we thought we might do something a little differently in this newsletter. As we no longer have business meetings at our speaker meetings, members don't always have the opportunity to find out what's been happening at their two museums, The Wheeler House and The Always Ready Engine House, nor what topics are discussed at board meetings. So we felt it was high time we give everyone an **Overview of 2012 at the Hollis Historical Society**. So, as your Curator, here goes.....

VISITORS:

- Approx **195 PEOPLE** visited The Always Ready Engine House, June through October in 2012
- Approx **94 PEOPLE** visited the Wheeler House during 2012

Considering that not everyone signs the guest books, and that the Engine House is only open two Sunday afternoons a month for five months, and the Wheeler House is only open two weekday afternoons a week during the year plus the same Sunday afternoons as the Engine House, that's pretty good!

EXHIBITS:

We've had a lot of wonderful exhibits at both museums this year, including:

- **VETERANS WALL** - This new and on-going display upstairs in the Always Ready Engine House was the brainchild of Martha Davis, and was created in part by Martha, members of the Hollis VFW, some Hollis-Brookline High School art students, Avalon Printing, Becky Crowther, volunteers of the Hollis Historical Society, and other wonderful folks, all of whom we thank from the bottom of our hearts. The exhibit is a work in progress and begins with the Revolutionary War and continues through our conflict in Afghanistan. This is one exhibit I certainly hope will stop with Afghanistan. If you haven't yet seen this display, please stop by and take a look, and, if you know of any names that might be missing, please let us know.

- **GRANGE CORNER** - A new, permanent area displayed on the first floor of the Always Ready Engine House. This is also the brainchild of Martha Davis, and was created by Martha and other volunteers at the Historical Society.

- **HISTORY OF THE ALWAYS READY ENGINE HOUSE** - This is a new permanent display on the first floor of the Always Ready Engine House, and is comprised of posters featuring photos and facts covering the history of the Always Ready Engine House. The posters were created by Debbe Shipman with assistance by Martha Davis and Phyllis Houle.

- **STEPHEN HOWE TOY COLLECTION** - This was a 2012 exhibit, upstairs at the Engine House, showing the lifetime toy collection of Stephen Howe, and was arranged by his sister, Sharon Howe. Sharon also was on hand each Sunday that the exhibit was open to greet guests and explain the collection.



Steven Howe's Car Display

Exhibits

(continued from page 1)

• **JANE STRATTON ART EXHIBIT** - This was a 2012 autumn exhibit at the Wheeler House, created and compiled by Jeanne Smith-Cripps, an artist, teacher, Hollis resident, and Hollis Historical Society member. This exhibit showcased the work of Hollis resident, teacher, and artist, Jane Stratton. We had paintings, journals, cards, prints, lesson plans, and even Miss Stratton's paint box and diaries on display.



Beaded Purses Display

• **BEADED PURSE DISPLAY** - This is a 2012 display, which at this writing is still on view, at the Wheeler House. This is a small exhibit of beaded purses from our collection arranged by Phyllis Houle and Martha Davis.

• **KIT HARDY MEMORABILIA UPDATE** - In the Kit Hardy Reference Room at the Wheeler House, Dotty Hackett and Fred-di Olson brought out some additional Kit Hardy items and arranged them with existing items. Does anyone remember Kit's license plate? If not, stop by and refresh your memory. Phyllis Houle has also photocopied many of Kit's newspaper articles. Newspaper print doesn't hold up well, so photocopying onto archival paper ensures we'll have these gems for a long time to come.

• **SEWING NOTIONS** - A fascinating 2012

spring and summer display at the Wheeler House of small sewing items from our collection, put together by the volunteers at the Wheeler House.

• **KITCHEN ARTIFACTS** - This current display in the Wheeler House kitchen was arranged by Martha Davis and Phyllis Houle. We have some wonderful kitchen items in our collection and every so often some artifacts are put away so new ones can be put on view.

MEMBER EXHIBITS:

Do any of our members have a small, portable collection of historical items that they'd like to put on display either at a meeting.... or for a short term exhibit at the Wheeler House? IF SO, WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! Half the fun of a collection is sharing it and showing it off! And we love those "what is its?" too.

GROUP TOURS IN 2012:

- **Hollis Cub Scout Troop**....toured the Wheeler House
- **1962 Class Reunion**.....toured the Wheeler House and The Always Ready Engine House
- **Merrimack Historical Society**.....toured the Wheeler House and the Always Ready Engine House

HOLLIS /BROOKLINE NEWSPAPER COLUMNS:

Late in the summer of 2012, the Hollis Historical Society started publishing monthly columns in the Hollis/Brookline Journal. Different folks write the columns of 400 to 800 words. Pick a topic, pick an artifact, pick an historical event.... pick almost anything to do with Hollis history....and write about it. It's fun! If you would like to get involved with this on-going endeavor, please contact Freddi Olson, Curator, with your thoughts. It's part of our mission to educate and inform folks about Hollis History....so please join us.

- **OLD HOME DAYS** - Martha Davis, Debbie Shipman, and Phyllis Houle put together a wonderful display for Old Home Days.



Old Home Day Table Display

LUCIE BEEBE GARDEN:

We have a garden sign now, put out on the lawn on days that the Wheeler House is open (and in gardening weather). The donated sign points to the back of the Wheeler House where you will find the beautiful Lucie Beebe Garden that is tended primarily by member Diane Rizzo, with occasional help from other Wheeler House volunteers and Colonial Garden Club members. Honi Glover made another sign that's at the top of the steps leading down to the garden, proclaiming the area the Lucie Beebe Garden. Of course, the lawns are always kept in tidy order thanks to Joe Harlin. Diane Rizzo also creates the lovely planters on the porch of the Wheeler House. And she enhances the plantings for each season. They always look spectacular!

REFURBISHED DINING ROOM:

Please stop by and see the beautiful refurbished dining room at the Wheeler House. Board Member Joe Harlin has scraped, filled, patched, sanded and painted the dining room ceiling, walls, and woodwork. Doors were removed and stored to allow for more display space. A massive undertaking.....and a fabulous job! It looks terrific. I don't know what our Society would do without Joe. A rug has been donated. Dotty, Freddi, Phyllis, and Martha changed and re-arranged wall hangings and artifacts. It's all coming together. Please stop by and see it....we'd love to show it off.

2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS DISCUSSIONS:

- The Board voted to update our computer system, create a new website along with new hosting, and join the modern world by becoming internet accessible. This is all in the works. Bette Finnern is our go-to person for all of this. She's a wonderful new volunteer and we're so fortunate to have her onboard.
- The Board is in the process of tweaking the by-laws for your consideration. Primarily we want to allow our Society to keep Dick Lates on as our President. The way the laws are currently written Dick wouldn't be able to continue on because of term limits (nor would any future President). We're also proposing some other small changes that we will ask the membership to vote on this year. Vice President and board member, Bruce Hardy, has been a terrific help in this process. (Dick is a tireless worker, always organized, patient, good humored, and we could go on and on. Basically, we have a good thing and we know it...and we don't want to lose it).
- Sharon Howe asked the Board of Directors for permission to deed, in her Will, her restored Pine Hill schoolhouse on Ranger Road and the two-acre parcel on which it sits to the Hollis Historical Society. The Board gratefully accepted Sharon's generous gift on behalf of the Society with heartfelt thanks. What a wonderful example of Hollis heritage stewardship!
- We always need more space for storage and display, so the Board voted to have the fixtures removed from the upstairs bathroom, at the Wheeler House, and shelving installed. This is now our new Genealogy Storage Room.
- Capital Improvements have been discussed and prioritized. As of right now, repair of KITCHEN PLUMBING is number one on the list, followed by ROOF REPAIR on the Wheeler House. And lastly, the construction of a SUMMER KITCHEN in the garage area (basement) of the Wheeler House. Of course, money is key to all of this, which brings us to.....

FUND RAISING:

Without sufficient funds, we can't do the projects we want and need to do. So we've formed a FUND RAISING COMMITTEE. Would you like to be on it? Our first fund raising event will be an OPEN HOUSE GALA at Dotty Hackett's house, the old Poole Place, Main St., on October 19, 2013, complete with musicians and refreshments. And we're going to need YOUR HELP. We need people to make finger foods, serve refreshments, act as room docents for nine rooms plus a barn, help with set-up and clean-up, and all of us will need to sell tickets.

NEW HAPPENINGS:

- John Butler of Hollis brought all of his nifty photography equipment to the Wheeler House and has digitized over 1,200 items in our collection, consisting primarily of old photos, letters, and documents,, and many of the items are now also formally accessioned into our system. Once we are online, you will be able to access these images. There is also the possibility we may be able to sell some of the images as an on-going fundraiser. John worked for months on this project and we owe him a HUGE THANK YOU. Dotty Hackett headed up the process of having these items accessioned. Bob Cushman, who enters our accession worksheets into the computer, was burning up the keys. It was a busy time and the Wheeler House was jumpin'!
- Mary Ann Wesoly had to resign as Secretary due to her Mother's failing health. We thank her very much for her years of wonderful service. We also thank Julie Tyska for filling in as interim secretary. We welcome Becky Crowther as our newly elected Secretary. Not only is Becky doing a great job as secretary, she's also a keen researcher. In fact, she helped Martha Davis on re-searching names for the Veterans Wall.
- Sharon Howe is a new member of the Board. Plus you'll find her most Wednesdays at the Wheeler House doing research and helping out. She is now also co-Historian with Joan Tinklepaugh.
- Dotty Hackett and Freddi Olson have been going through old files and re-organizing. It's amazing the information that one comes across in the process. And what one learns!
- Quite a few people have come in looking for genealogy information from Massachusetts, Arizona, Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio, to mention but a few states. And we receive telephone calls, too.
- Ed Walker gave us a wonderful metal map cabinet, which he totally refurbished. The majority of our maps now have a new home in this cabinet.
- We thank Norma Woods for her all her hard work as our Treasurer and now welcome Debbe Shipman as our new Treasurer.
- Please note the new name and design for our website: <http://www.hollishistoricalsociety.org>. The old name is no longer valid.

DOCENTS:

Thank you to Julie Tyska and Martha Davis for lining up docents for our two museums. And thank you to all the docents for your help in keeping our museums open and visitors informed. If YOU would like to help out as a DOCENT, please let us know.

WISH LIST:

In the last newsletter, we had a **WISH LIST** for items and services the Historical Society needs. Thank you to everyone who donated items. We still could use some help with housekeeping (light vacuuming and dusting), if anyone feels so inclined.

We look forward to your visits and input in 2013. This is your Society, so please let us hear your thoughts on what you'd like to see for displays, topics for speakers, fund raising ideas, newspaper column and newsletter subjects, whatever you think might help build our Society, inform, educate, entertain, and help carry out our mission.

Wishing you the best of health and happiness in this New Year!

Sincerely,



Fredricka Olson, Curator

P.S. Please don't forget all the great books we have for sale. They make wonderful housewarming, birthday, and anniversary gifts.

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