



Middleborough Historical Association
P.O. Box 304, Middleboro, MA 02346
www.middleboroughhistoricalassociation.org
Nancy J. Thomas, Newsletter Editor

M.H.A. Annual Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting will be held on **Saturday, November 2, 2013 at 1:30 PM** at Lorenzo's on West Grove Street. Lunch is "Lorenzo's Famous Hot & Cold Buffet." This includes Italian Antipasto with House Dressing, Rosemary Herb Roasted Chicken, Homemade Meatballs, Italian Sausage Cacciatore, Baked Shells Parmigiana, Homemade Frapola, Assorted Breads and Butter and Beverage. Tax and gratuity are included in the price.

Cost for the buffet lunch is \$20.00. Please make your reservation by October 26th by mailing a check to M.H.A., P.O. Box 304, Middleboro, MA 02346. If you wish to attend just the program, please plan to arrive by 2:30 PM. The program is open to the public, however non-members who wish to attend are asked for a \$5.00 donation. For any questions, please call President Cynthia McNair at 508-947-3394.

Following lunch there will be a business meeting which will include annual elections. The program will feature **Eric D. Lehman**. Mr. Lehman is an historian, travel writer and the Director of Creative Writing at the University of Bridgeport, CT. His essays, stories, and reviews have been published in dozens of journals, newspapers and magazines, from *Antique Trader* to *The International Henry Miller Journal*. He is the

author of numerous books about the Nutmeg State. His new book, **Becoming Tom Thumb: Charles Stratton, P.T. Barnum and the Dawn of American Celebrity** is the first academic biography of this iconic American entertainer and will be available for purchase at the program. Mr. Lehman's talk will include the three-year world tour of Tom and Lavinia which started just a few weeks after the Golden Spike was driven uniting rail service west to east. From San Francisco, the famous couple and troupe performed in Japan, China, Australia, India, Egypt, Italy and England and met many emperors and dignitaries including Queen Victoria. Many artifacts from this tour are on display at the Middleborough Historical Museum. This program is partially funded by a grant from the Middleborough Cultural Council.

Elections are Here!!

November is election time for the Association. You are encouraged to think about filling one of the open positions. Though the **vice-president** position is a two-year term, there is currently a vacancy due to a resignation, thus a candidate is needed to serve for one year. **Secretary** and **treasurer** are elected annually, and **two directors** are needed for three-year positions.

The secretary keeps records of all board and membership meetings as well as accurate records of membership so good computer skills are necessary. The duties of the treasurer are to keep all financial records, pay bills, report to the board monthly and to the association meetings, as well as a yearly summary for the annual report. To hold a position on the board, one must be a member in good standing with paid dues and must be willing to attend the monthly board meetings. Directors are actively involved in making decisions to manage both the Association's business and the historical museum complex. This might mean chairing a subcommittee when necessary. You would play a very important role for the future success of the Middleborough Historical Association.

If you are thinking about one of these positions or would like more information, you may contact Caroline LaCroix of the Nominating Committee at purchademeadows@yahoo.com or call President Cynthia McNair at 508-947-3394.

The Association is currently also in need of a **Museum Curator**. This person would be in charge of the museum collections and displays. The position is appointed by the Board. If this is an opportunity in which you may be interested, please contact President Cynthia McNair.

Museum News

The Middleborough Historical Museum's season began on June 15th and concluded on September 14th. The major attraction this summer was Lavinia Warren's restored black dress. This project was partially funded by Mayflower Bank and was featured in articles in the Middleboro Gazette, Brockton Enterprise, and the Boston Globe. The museum was also listed in the Big Y Event booklet bringing folks from the western part of the state. It is always interesting to note what other states are represented on our guest log which this summer included Florida, Michigan, New York, Texas and

Wisconsin, plus the country of Germany. In all, we had 150 visitors plus 142 third graders from the Mary K Goode School along with their teachers and chaperones and 21 children from the park department program.

Museum volunteers receiving visitors and giving tours on Wednesdays were Gladys Beals, Jeannette Bricknell, Dorothy Thayer, Daniel Thompson and Bette Washburn. Guides on Saturdays were Edward and Diane Dentch and Cynthia McNair. Mary Cook entered data into the inventory program while Dick Cook did special projects at the museum. Bob Reimels continued work on restoring the Sproat Tavern's outhouse assisted by Doug Vantran. Doug also secured blocks for the entrance to the Peirce Store making it easier to enter. Museum board members volunteered to represent the Association and inform the public about the museum at **Krazy Days** and the **Soule Farm Fall Festival**. Daniel Thompson and Dorothy Thayer repeated their Lavinia and Tom Thumb 150th anniversary program at **Oak Point**.

There are major roofing repairs to be done this fall on three museum buildings: the Blacksmith Shop, Wood Law Office and the Whistle House. This should stop our leaks and help protect the historic collections within these buildings.



THIS JUST IN.....

At Special Town Meeting held on Monday, October 7th at Middleborough High School, town meeting members voted overwhelmingly in favor of this motion:

*I move that the Town vote to appropriate **\$29,811** from the Historic Resources Reserve of the Community Preservation Fund to fund climate control measures at the Middleborough Historical Museum for preservation of two museum buildings, historic town records and artifacts contained in the two buildings; said funds to be expended under the direction of the Community Preservation Committee.*

One person rose to speak against the motion, but when the standing vote was counted, the motion passed with 225 in favor and 18 against.

Croquet, Cookout and Conversation

On a warm sunny Saturday in August, MHA members enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon playing croquet, eating grilled foods and chatting.

Bob and Cherri Reimels set up two croquet areas where both serious and fun-loving games took place. Spectators cheered on their favorite players. Winners, who each received a "Golden Mallet Award," were John Kinnealy and Dorothy Thayer.

Hamburgers and hot dogs grilled to order for members by Gerry Thayer were served along with the "fixins", as well as desserts and lemonade. Perhaps this will become an annual event!

FUNDRAISERS

7th Annual Ice Cream Social

July 21st marked our 7th "**Sundaes on Sunday.**" The summer had many hot, uncomfortable days but this sunny and dry day was ideal for enjoying what else: ice cream! This year's entertainment, which was partially funded by a grant from the Lakeville Cultural Council, featured the Old Fiddlers' Club of Rhode Island, Inc. with some of their members playing for most of the event. Young children were entertained by Adam Bond with his magic tricks and by Mike and Marilyn McKeon with their balloon figures and games. Local businesses who helped with cost or raffle donations were Hannaford, Market Basket, Dave's Diner, Apazidis, Harry's, Mamma Mia's, the Trading Post, Michelle's Greenhouse, Red Sox Foundation with an autographed picture of Will Middlebrooks and the Middleboro Gazette.

This fundraiser for the museum netted **\$1,083.**

None of this would have been possible without the hard work by MHA volunteers who donated baked goods, ice cream, raffle items and hours of their time running the event. Special thanks goes out to these volunteers: Joshua and Jessica Anzulone, Jeannette Bricknell, Mary Cook, Richard and Judith Gibbs, Wally Glendye, Trish Holloway, Kate Lazarovich, Cynthia and Rick McNair, Keiko Orrall, John and Roberta Stidham, Gerald and Dorothy Thayer, Daniel and Jane Thompson, Doug Vantran and Margaret Washburn. Thanks goes out to all who participated to make this event a success!

Garden Party/Open House

On Sunday, September 15, 2013 the 200th anniversary of the **Ebenezer Pickens House** was celebrated by MHA with a garden party/open house. Mary Anne Mather, dressed in a beautiful black gown of early nineteenth-century style, welcomed guests into her home at 93 South Main Street for a tour and history. Mary Lou (Glidden) Desmond, a descendant of the Pickens family, shared family objects and genealogy. Background music was provided by The Mayflower Camerata.

The afternoon included a display and talk by Daniel Thompson about the straw hat industry and the Bay State Straw Works that was once located on Courtland Street. Both of Ebenezer Pickens's twin sons, James Madison and Andrew Jackson, were involved in the straw hat business. There was a stroll of the Pickens neighborhood led by Dorothy Thayer. She identified and gave a brief history of the other two Pickens homes located across the street. The stroll concluded with a tour of the Andrew J. Pickens House at 100 South Main by homeowners Wayne and Suzanne Burkholder. (The other Pickens house is now the Middleboro Counseling Center at 94 South Main.)

To end the event, guests were seated under a large white tent at tables covered by linen tablecloths. Each table held a vase of flowers and was set with elegant cutlery, plates and wine or cordial glasses. They were served tea sandwiches, tea breads, other sweets and lemonade or iced tea by MHA volunteers Dick and Mary Cook, Kate Lazarovich, Cynthia McNair and Doug Vantran wearing black and white attire. During refreshments, musical selections were provided by The Mayflower Camerata led by Fred Thornton, Camerata Director with Larry J. Carlson, Holly Leach, Ellie Osborne and Sylvia Thornton, who also played the folk harp.

The fundraiser for the museum netted **\$776.74**, including a generous donation by Dorothy and Gerry Thayer. The Middleboro Gazette did a brief article with lots of color photos that took an *entire page* in the September 19th issue of the newspaper. This may be the start of an annual event, perhaps at a different house each year!!

October Membership Meeting

The fall membership meeting was held on Tuesday, October 8, 2013 in the Middleborough Public Library meeting room.

The speaker was **Marie T. Schlag**, owner of The Studio for Textile Conservation in Scituate, MA. Her very detailed and informative power point presentation was entitled: "**Conservation of Lavinia Warren-Bump Thumb's Black Silk and Net Dress.**" Her fifty-minute talk took the audience through the entire process of her work of restoring Lavinia's dress, from researching the approximate date (1890-1900) to placing the restored dress on a customized mannequin. Ms. Schlag also offered information on "Agents of Deterioration," of which light, temperature/humidity and pests, particularly insects, are the major ones. She also gave ideas for proper storage and support of the museum's collection going forward.

From the President's Desk...

It has been my dream of obtaining Community Preservation Act (CPA) local tax dollars for climate control for the two mill houses for two and half years since Allin Frawley and Mark Belanger were our guest speakers at a membership meeting informing us about CPA which the voters of Middleboro had recently approved. Because of our limited funds, this was our big chance to make improvements to the two mill houses using CPA local tax dollars to help save our artifacts and extend the time the buildings can be open. After studying all the printed materials handed out that day, it was clear we met the requirement of historic preservation as well as the purpose of rehabilitation and restoration. We were advised to learn the language needed to state our needs toward a successful application! Having done this, we asked for heating/air conditioning, ceiling insulation and replacement windows. We even had contractors in place for the project. The delay in our initial request was over the concern about the integrity of the two mill houses, thus the request for an engineering study. The result of that study (after favorable town meeting approval this past spring) was learned in late August. The local Historical Commission had previously approved the project, but stated that we needed to find wooden windows because of the museum being located in an historic district and the significance of being Peirce mill houses. The architect's window recommendations were made known on September 15th. Our Board did not like wood because of the maintenance needs that it would require, but was willing to comply.

Unfortunately, appropriate windows were not found and that part of the project was dropped. We are happy that the scaled down project will still add climate control for the first time in the museum's history!

Cynthia McNair, President

