



THE PEPPERCORN

Newsletter #67 Spring 2008

Local People Preserving Historic Wilbraham

Wilbraham's Old Meetinghouse sits majestically at 450 Main Street where it began as a Methodist Meeting house in 1793. As the town's single local history museum, its presence heralds a time gone by in Wilbraham and evokes memories of open hearth cooking and warming rosy cheeks and winter wet mittens by a pot-bellied stove, quilting with friends and taking lovely walks in the garden.

It has been lovingly restored and memories of a bygone era beckon passersby. The historic Hearse House © 1830 joins the Meetinghouse on the property and is one of only 13 such structures surviving in New England. Both buildings are in themselves, local artifacts.

Having spent the last decade on a \$380,000 historic restoration and renovation initiative on the Old Meetinghouse and the Hearse House, we purchased a period town hearse for display and completed the museum complex last year. The restoration on both houses was made possible by the town's Community Preservation Fund, the commonwealth's Historic Projects Preservation Fund, The Town of Wilbraham's Capital Planning funds, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, the Wilbraham Community Association, our local Arts Lottery Council, Earl Harris III, Springfield Steel Erectors and through the generous contributions of hundreds of members and community friends.

We have elected new officers and recently reorganized our Board of Trustees at the museum to involve children, students and families in a routine way. Through our work, we plan to build a strong membership community with well-articulated benefits and rewards. We have begun a renewal of our purpose and will showcase the grounds, the

meetinghouse and the Hearse House museum in educational and inventive ways. We will continue to display our traditional collections: Indian artifacts, soapstone quarry materials, locally made and historic quilts, turn of the century election artifacts, winter holiday tree display, sharing of vintage pictures and maps, making Oriental rugs and our 'Salute to Veterans' activities.

We are extremely fortunate to have a multi generational, master blend of skill, knowledge and ability and we *always welcome* new and contributing talent as it finds its way to our door. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to engage with all of you as we *look to the future to rekindle our past*.

The operation of our organization is funded entirely by the dues, gifts and activities of our membership, which is open to all interested persons living in Wilbraham and other communities. The Old Meeting House is open to the public on the first Sunday of the month from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., May through December. Our colorful Open House flag hung at the front door will signal these events and special exhibits, scheduled throughout the year. We also advertise and are featured in the Wilbraham Hampden TIMES.

We sincerely appreciate all of the generosity and friendships enjoyed throughout the years, most especially those friends, neighbors and contributors who have made our restoration work possible and all whose continued support allows our local history work to flourish.

On behalf of the Society,
Joan D. Paris, President

Mission Statement of the Atheneum Society

The Atheneum Society of Wilbraham exists to preserve local history and culture within the context of the town's historic Old Meeting House and Hearse House museums to share knowledge, educate and involve our local community.

Value Statement of the Atheneum Society

We value the camaraderie of community spirit and our accomplishments as preservationists and historic property caretakers by interpreting historic collections and artifacts through meaningful exhibits and maintaining our historic structures. We engage in educational, social and interactive programs to preserve the organization and ensure that local history is conserved for future generations.

The Atheneum Society of Wilbraham



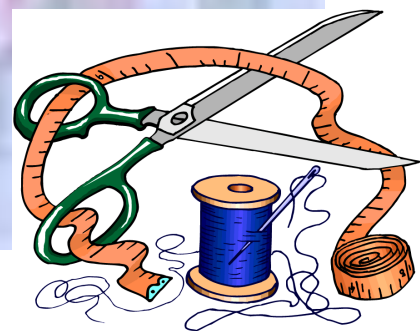
Announces...
**Our Third
Annual**

Spring Quilt Show

Where: The Old Meeting House
450 Main St., Wilbraham

When: Sunday, May 4 2:00-4:00 PM
Tuesday, May 6 2:00-4:00 PM

Free admission to a beautiful collection
of quilts from local artists



Annual Meeting Notice



Atheneum Society of
Wilbraham
Annual Meeting
Thursday, May 8, 2008
7 PM

Regular monthly Trustees meeting following the Annual Meeting.

Bench Donation Received



The next time you visit the Old Meeting House please be sure to notice the bench in the backyard. It was built by former Trustee Bob Swallow and donated to the Atheneum Society by his family in his memory.



Look for the new Atheneum Society website soon!
www.wilbrahamatheneum.org

CPA Approves 2nd Grant



The Society has applied for and received a second grant from the town's Community Preservation Account for preservation work to be done at the OMH. The grant was approved for \$4,600 and will be used to put the second coat of paint on the exterior. Look for the work to be done this summer.



Save These Dates!

2008 Open House Schedule

May 4th
June 1st
July 13th
August 3rd
September 14th
October 5th
November 2nd
December 7th

Open House is held from 2—4 P.M.

Wilbraham History Books Available

Three Wilbraham history books are available through the Old Meeting House:

1963 Charles Merrick History of Wilbraham
1913 Chauncey Peck History of Wilbraham
1863 Rufus Stebbins History of Wilbraham

Each is \$49.95, tax included. They can be obtained by writing the Old Meeting House, 450 Main St., Wilbraham, MA 01095 or by phone with Morrie Hayn at 596-4795. Checks should be made payable to The Atheneum Society of Wilbraham.



Just a reminder that annual membership dues are now being collected. Look for your membership payment envelop in the mail.

Current Officers and Trustees

PRESIDENT: Joan Paris

VICE PRESIDENT: Nancy Nieske

TREASURER: Wendy O'Rourke

SECRETARY: Peter Ablondi

CORRESPONDING
SECRETARY: Lucy Peltier

TRUSTEE: Morrie Hayn

TRUSTEE: Marcie Hayn

TRUSTEE: Frederic Rothery

TRUSTEE: Terry Axtmann

TRUSTEE: Sandy Sanders

TRUSTEE: Anna Salls

TRUSTEE: Glenn LaCapelle

TRUSTEE: Caroline Cunningham

TRUSTEE: Glen Clark

Join Us!



Local People Preserving

Historic Wilbraham

Contact us at 413-596-4097

Visit us at our monthly open house.

**Open the first Sunday of each month (May-Dec)
except July and Sept 2-4PM**



450 Main St.
Wilbraham, MA