

Charitably



Speaking

353 Southern Artery

Quincy, MA 02169

A PUBLICATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARITABLE MECHANIC ASSOCIATION

President's Message

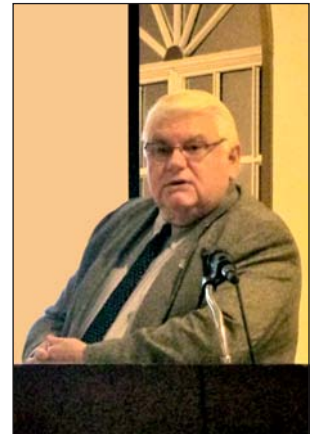
It's hard to believe that my first year as president of MCMA is nearly at an end. As my term has progressed I feel a deep pride in the fact that I have the privilege to work with this group of dedicated individuals. Though the year seems to have flown by, I know we have accomplished a lot, and for that I need to credit those responsible ... our officers, trustees, past presidents, and all who serve on our various committees. Thank you all for making my job easy. Also, it's the time of year when we must make our annual appeal for your donations to help keep this unique, 218-year-old association strong. Please ... give what you can. Thanks again. – **Rich Adams**

Recent Happenings

We met for our October Quarterly at Montvale Plaza in Stoneham, where we enjoyed a half-hour to renew acquaintances before getting down to business.

The invocation was given by Past President Anderson, and the normal business items were addressed. President Adams then informed everyone that trustee Richard Trethewey had withdrawn from the Board of Government due to a change in his schedule that made it impossible for him to attend meetings, and Russ Johnson was asked, and has agreed, to fill out the remainder of Richard's term. The president also updated members on Paul Lohnes' progress following an operation, and was very pleased to welcome back Harry Larkin after his recovery from a serious health situation. President Adams then thanked Marty Joyce for the latest edition of *Charitably Speaking* and Tony Scalese for making all the arrangements for the meeting.

We next enjoyed an excellent turkey dinner, following which our guest speaker, member (and trustee) Chuck Sulkala, presented an overview of safety systems, features, and materials found in today's cars vs. those we grew up with. In addition to owning and running Acme Body and Paint Co., Inc. in Jamaica Plain, Chuck is executive director of the National Auto Body Council. His presentation was informed, very interesting, and much appreciated by all present.



Helping Others

By far the most unusual grant we made last year was to an organization new to MCMA, but for a purpose very familiar to us. The **Lovelane Special Needs Horseback Riding Program** in Lincoln, Massachusetts was founded in 1988 to provide children with disabilities the opportunity to ride horses as a form of therapy. From its early days, with a single instructor serving five students per week in a borrowed barn on Love Lane in Weston (hence the name), the organization has developed into a well-established non-profit, with a purpose-built facility featuring a heated indoor riding arena where lessons can be held year-round. Each week its 18 instructors and multiple (at least 80 per week) volunteers now serve over 100 children from 36 communities in the Boston Metro West area. An additional 20-30 children are served each year in adjunct programs.

Lovelane 

Special Needs Horseback Riding Program

Believe with us!

Lovelane serves children with many disabilities, including learning and/or developmental delays, autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome. As we have seen with our support of other organizations using this approach (such as Challenge Unlimited and The Bridge Center), therapeutic horseback riding has proven to be successful in many ways. In addition to improved balance, mobility and even speech, riding improves the children's overall confidence, and helps them cope with and adapt to their disabilities. **Lovelane** strives to provide this high-quality therapy in a fun and supportive environment, and succeeds in doing so. In a recent survey of the parents of **Lovelane** students, respondents reported improvement in physical, cognitive, emotional, social, balance/mobility, and other specific rating areas in percentages ranging from 96 to 100.



Lovelane's original request to MCMA was for riding equipment, and that request was investigated and approved by our Planning Committee. But soon after, they were forced to "retire" two of their riding horses

(one for age/health issues, the other due to a temperament change), and that made a replacement horse their overriding priority. With our OK, they re-allocated our \$10,000 grant and were able, after considerable effort, to purchase a Connemara pony (named Trevor) which has proven to be both completely suitable for their therapeutic riding needs and *extremely* popular with the children. We are confident that in the coming years Trevor will do his part to help improve the lives of a great many great kids.



MCMA History

Much has been written about the architects responsible for the many historical landmarks in the New England area (and beyond, of course), so it has not been difficult to compile the several profiles that we have completed to date for those architects who were also members of MCMA. The contractors involved got much less "ink," however, making the researching of them a tougher undertaking, and that is especially so if they were involved in a subcontractor role. One exception to that norm is the modeler and stone carver **John Evans**, whose reputation as the finest carver of his time was widespread, and whose services were in demand by the most prominent architectural firms of the day.

Born in Caernarvon, Wales in 1847, Evans trained as a carver, probably in England, before arriving in New York in 1872, spending a year in Chicago, and settling in Boston in 1873. Evans worked initially out of his house and studio near Copley Square, but in 1880 moved to a studio/shop on Huntington Avenue and joined in business with carpenter and carver **Richard J. Tombs**. (*The names of all MCMA members are shown in boldface.*) The company was known initially as Evans & Tombs, and after 1890 as John Evans & Company. The shop was divided into three departments (wood-carving, stone-carving, and modeling), and the company advertised itself as "architectural sculptors in wood, stone, brick, and plaster." Approximately 100 workers were employed in the shop, producing (by hand) ornamental works for buildings and elegant residences throughout New England. (*Cemeteries were another destination, as with the Celtic crosses mentioned in our 2012 article on Forest Hills Cemetery.*) But much of the firm's work, rather than being completed in the shop, was done *in situ* on the worksite, where the architectural carving would be undertaken after rough cut stonework had already been set in place. (The accompanying photo shows the Evans & Tombs crew, which

traveled widely, on location at the James J. Hill House in St. Paul, Minnesota *circa* 1889. Evans can be seen in the background, apparently seated at a small table.)

Evans first came into contact with architect H.H. Richardson in 1873 during construction of the tower for the Brattle Street Church, where Evans and others under his direction carved the four great friezes *in situ* from sketches and small models prepared in France by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, better known for his design of the Statue of Liberty. *[Now called the Brattle Square Church, this was Richardson's first use of the Romanesque style with which he would become identified.]* Their professional partnership continued until Richardson's death in 1886, during which time Evans contributed his talents to (among others, in this area alone) Trinity Church, the Woburn Library, the Quincy Library, the Malden Library, the **Oliver Ames** Memorial Library in North Easton, and Harvard's Sever Hall and Austin Hall. *[Not coincidentally, for he was also a favorite of Richardson, the firm of **O.W. Norcross** was general contractor for all of these buildings.]* Following Richardson's death, his successor firm Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge continued the relationship with Evans, engaging him on works such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Ames Building in Boston, and the Montreal Board of Trade Building.

A small sampling of Evans' "other" work (and architect clients) includes: the (New) Old South Church for Charles Cummings and **Willard T. Sears**; the Exchange Building in Boston and the Art Museum in St. Louis for Peabody & Sterns; Vanderbilt Hall at Yale University for Charles C. Haight; the Boston Public Library and the Algonquin Club of Boston for McKim Meade & White; for George W. Post the granite carving in the Bank of Pittsburgh Building (*Post pronounced it the finest piece of granite carving ever executed to his order.*); and for Richard Morris Hunt the (original, since replaced) Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University.

Evans' works in stone are numerous (the granite arches of the Ames Building, the marble entry to Bates Hall at the Boston Public Library, the limestone screen in Old South Church, and sandstone carvings on the Nathaniel Thayer House are just a few). But Evans worked also in wood (as in the pulpit in Trinity Church and the fireplace mantle in Quincy's Crane Public Library), and was one of the very few names associated with carved brick (such as his work on Harvard's Sever Hall). By the mid-1880s, though, his time was spent primarily in modeling works that would be executed by others in his employ or under contract to him.



The Evans & Tombs crew at the J.J. Hill House, St. Paul, Minn.



Trinity Church, Boston, Mass.



Brattle Sq. Church, Boston



Austin Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.



Ames Building, Boston, Mass.



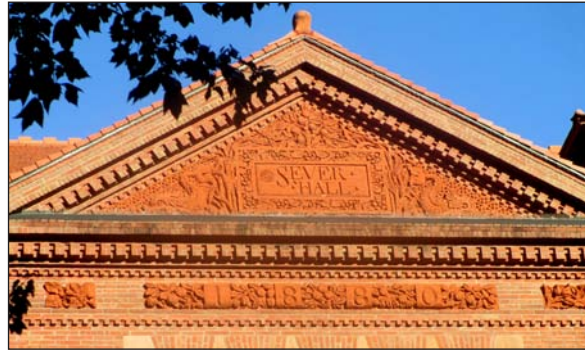
Nathaniel Thayer House, Boston, Mass.



Trinity Church, Boston, Mass.



Crane Public Library, Quincy, Mass.



Sever Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

Over his career Evans employed a large number of young craftsmen in his studio, and was a strong supporter of the apprenticeship system. He worked to spread his craft outside the studio as well, becoming in 1877 director of the School of Modeling and Sculpture at Boston's Museum of Fine Art, teaching both men and women. Twenty years later he would go on to oversee a system of workshops for the first Society of Arts and Crafts in America and become its vice president. *(Those workshops, held mornings, evenings, and weekends, were intended for craftsmen employed by manufacturers during business hours, and were held in the **Mechanics Building** which was adjacent to Evans' studio on Huntington Avenue.)* John Evans joined MCMA in 1884, as did his partner Richard J. Tombs, and he served as a trustee from 1897 through 1899. Evans died in 1923, but over his nearly five-decade career an extraordinary number of the finest buildings constructed both in this area and beyond "bore evidence of his taste and skill" *(as was stated in his obituary).*

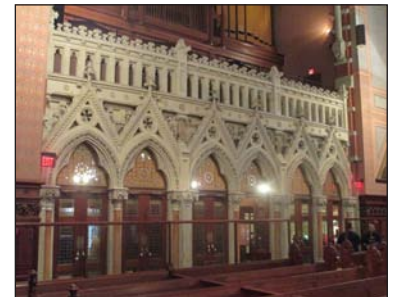
Credits: We thank History Committee member John Moriarty for the idea, and much of the research, for this article; the Minnesota Historical Society for permission to use the photo of Evans' crew at the Hill House; and researcher Sara Wermiel for her information on Evans and carved brick. The main sources are "John Evans (1847-1923) and Architectural Sculpture in Boston" by Ann Clifford (1992), and *The Architectural Record*, July 1896.

... and MCMA Miscellany:

In our extensive article on architect and illustrator **Hammatt Billings**, and his seemingly "workaholic" nature, we failed to note a pertinent factor. One of Billings' early commissions was for the Church of the Savior on Bedford Street, and (in a "first" for him) he agreed to take on the construction as well as the design. But the project wound up costing \$70,000, or over twice his bid price, and Billings worked tirelessly for many years thereafter in paying off the debt he incurred.



Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.



Old South Church, Boston, Mass.



Woburn Public Library, Woburn, Mass. (above & below)

