



June 2008

President's Remarks

We had reported late last year that long-time member Mr. Arthur Southall had fully recovered from a very serious health condition, so we were surprised as well as greatly saddened by the news of his death in March. Arthur had been an active and very loyal member of MCMA, and had lived an interesting and accomplished life. He had on two different occasions, at our request, recounted his career for us at Quarterly Meetings, and we will long remember his not-quite-politically-correct telling of his experiences, particularly those involving his WWII service. Arthur was extremely well liked in this Association, and he will be sorely missed by all of us.

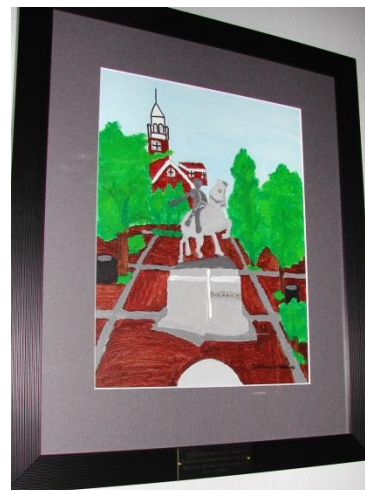
Marty Joyce

Recent Happenings

Our April Quarterly was held at the Old Colony House in Dorchester, where we enjoyed a fine meal and a brisk business meeting, followed by an overview on charitable giving by our guest speaker Mr. David Ely of State Street Global Advisers (SSGA). The focus of Mr. Ely's talk was Planned Giving, and he outlined various types of Planned Gifts (bequests, annuities, and different types of trusts) and explained the tax and other benefits of these vehicles. SSGA manages such "giving programs" from the charities' end, but does not handle individual plans, so the session was intentionally informational rather than a sales effort. We were very appreciative that SSGA, which manages our investment portfolio, agreed to prepare this session for us and present it to our membership. Our long-term goal is to convince members to include MCMA in their charitable giving, and we are hopeful that this session, by explaining the benefits attainable to the donor, might encourage some to begin that planning process. (Please contact Rick Purdy at the office if you would like a copy of Mr. Ely's presentation.)

Planning Committee

In April we were pleased to accept from The Arc of East Middlesex their 2008 Lucie Cripps Award, in recognition of the continued support MCMA has shown for their programs and clients. This is EMARC's highest award, and with this honor they presented us a painting entitled *Paul Revere* by Jeff Caturano, who participates in EMARC's *Center for Emerging Artists*. In truth, our support for this organization has been relatively modest, but it has been consistent for many



years, and it is gratifying to see that our interest and support are so genuinely appreciated.

Originally known as the East Middlesex Association for Retarded Citizens, EMARC is a non-profit organization that has been supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families since 1954, and annually serves about 500 people from thirteen communities. It provides a variety of services that include job training and paid employment at their sheltered workshop in Reading, employment opportunities in the community, support for families caring for their sons and daughters with developmental disabilities at home, plus many other training, recreation and support services. It operates the *Center for Emerging Artists* to encourage creativity within, and promote the talents of, artists with disabilities, and it is involved in marketing completed artworks through art exhibitions and in local gift shops. It currently provides supported housing to 60 adults with developmental disabilities in 9 homes, and it recently opened *Life Choices*, a day habilitation program.

MCMA support for EMARC has been quite diverse, providing fixed equipment (such as the shrink-wrap machine in the photo to the right) for their in-house workshop, mobile equipment for several of their Service initiatives, and cutting and copying equipment for their Arts Center. Our more recent grants have been for vacuums, industrial shredders, and lawn/yard maintenance equipment that have helped EMARC to launch or expand three different enterprises that enable them to provide employment opportunities for the individuals they serve. Our Planning Committee consistently finds that EMARC is an organization that earns and deserves our support.



MCMA History

This being the season during which Tall Ships are often on display in New England waters, we should be reminded that Massachusetts played a key role during the “glory years” of wooden shipbuilding in this country, and that MCMA members were very much a part of it. In this issue we will try to broaden your awareness of those facts, with our focus on the Boston area and the mid-1800s.

By the early 1800s, shipbuilding was established in Boston (e.g., the U.S.S. Constitution, built at the yard of Edmund Hartt _ an Original Member of MCMA _ and launched in 1797), but Boston was not yet one of the major shipbuilding centers in New England. That began to change as the Charlestown Navy Yard was opened in 1801, yards grew up on the banks of the Mystic River in Medford, and shipbuilders like Samuel Hall (in 1836) and Donald McKay (in 1844) relocated their operations to Boston. The Medford area became particularly desirable for shipbuilding with the opening of the Merrimac Canal, which linked it to the lumber resources of the Merrimac River Valley. A ship type that

evolved there during the 1830s was known as the Medford-built (or Merrimac-built) East Indiaman. At about 450 tons, and manned by 18 officers and men, it could handle one-half the cargo of a 1500-ton British East Indiaman crewed by 125, and sail half-again as fast. As one might expect, these ships became quite successful, but their popularity was eclipsed by what next emerged on the scene _ the Clipper Ship.

Designed to meet the needs of the China tea trade in the 1840s and the fast delivery of cargoes during the California and Australia gold rushes, Clippers were built for speed. Long, narrow and a sharp-bowed, these ships were extremely heavily sparred so as to carry a great deal of canvas. The first “extreme clipper” was built in New York in 1845, but the type was brought to its ultimate perfection in Boston, once the merchants here became convinced that speed (over carrying capacity) would pay. The legendary McKay, who built *Flying Cloud* (1851), *Sovereign of the Seas* (1852), *Great Republic* (1853) and so many other famous Clippers at his East Boston yard, rightfully receives much of the credit. But many other shipbuilders and shipyards were very much involved and in demand. And there was no single design _ the Clipper Ship was a composite creation as keen minds continually learned from each other but constantly strove to make further improvements in the quest for speed.

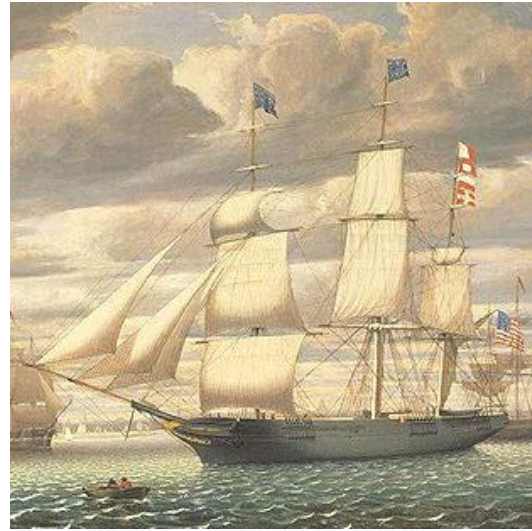
Samuel Hall was one of the first to adopt the speedier design influences with the building of *Surprise* at his East Boston yard in 1850, though his *Akbar* (1839) was considered a forerunner to Clippers in its design. *Surprise* was in fact the first large Clipper Ship built outside of New York, and was one of the most profitable Clippers ever built. Hall went on to build *Game Cock*, *John Gilpin*, and at least eleven other Clippers. Also quick to incorporate the new speed influences was James O. Curtis, who built *Shooting Star*, first of the Medford Clippers, in 1850, and others such as *Antelope*, *Telegraph*, *Star of the Union*, and the largest ship constructed in Medford, the 2000-ton *Ocean Express* in 1854. Nearby in Medford, Joshua T. Foster’s Clippers included *Caroline* (1851), *Ellen Foster*, *National Eagle*, *Morning Star*, *West Wind* and *Templar*.



Surprise

The highly respected Harrison O. Briggs operated shipyards with his brother in both South Boston and East Boston. Among the twenty or more Clippers built by Briggs were *Northern Light* (1851), *Southern Cross*, *Meteor*, and *Bonita*. Other East Boston builders included G.T.Sampson, who built *Fearless*, *Peerless* and *Fanny McHenry*, and Jairus Pratt who built *Lady Franklin* in 1852. John Taylor’s Medford yard built *Syren* in 1851, and his Chelsea yard added, among others, *Malay*, *Storm King*, *Nabob*, and *Derby*.

The stories of these ships are remarkably varied. The careers of some were quite brief (like *Golden Light*, a Briggs ship, that was struck by lightning and destroyed 10 days into her first voyage), while others earned their keep for four decades or more, and Taylor's *Syren*, the longest lived of the clipper fleet, was still working in 1920. Some just "wore out" over time, while others (like *Nabob*, wrecked in a typhoon on the shore of Luzon, or *John Gilpin*, which was done-in by an iceberg off Cape Horn) met violent ends, and several (like Curtis' *Eagle Wing* and Hall's *Lantao*) were simply "never heard from again". A few were captured and burned by Confederate ships during the Civil War, and many ended their careers in the service of foreign owners.



Southern Cross in Boston Harbor

The Clipper Ship frenzy peaked in 1855 as supply began overtaking demand, and the end of the California gold rush further contributed to loss of demand. Freight rates dropped steeply, and the building boom crashed. And in the coming decades, wooden ships would give way to steam-powered iron vessels (and a railroad would connect the two coasts _ #### those Ames brothers!).



In all, the Boston area produced about twice as many American Clippers as New York, the other major builder of these world-renowned ships, and the majority of speed records belong to Boston ships. **Of the eight Clipper-builders named above, all save McKay were members of MCMA.** And even in McKay's ships, MCMA men undoubtedly had significant roles in their construction. Many of our members (like Thomas J. Shelton, who was the "Pump and Blockmaker" for McKay's *Great Republic*) were the sailmakers, mastmakers, sparmakers, riggers, wood-carvers and the many other marine-trade subcontractors who served *all* the shipbuilders. Moreover, many clippers built in the above yards as well as those of other noted shipbuilders were designed by naval architect Samuel H. Pook, another MCMA member, who was recognized as one of the most influential designers in the country, and whose Maine-built *Red Jacket* ranks high among the Clipper immortals.

Clipper Ships built in and around Boston were known around the world in their day, not just for their speed and beauty, but also for the quality of their construction. It's probably no *Surprise*, then, to know that MCMA men were involved.