

## Charitably



## Speaking

353 Southern Artery

Quincy, MA 02169

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**A PUBLICATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARITABLE MECHANIC ASSOCIATION**

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### President's Message

I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful summer weather. First and foremost I want to thank Paul Lohnes and his family for opening their Gloucester home for a wonderful July Quarterly Meeting. Perfect weather and perfect company. I would also like to thank Paul and the Planning Committee for their hard work and dedication in continuing our association's mission. Also my thanks go out to Tony Scalse and the function committee for their efforts in planning our quarterly meetings. I must admit that when I was asked if I would consider becoming president of MCMA, three years sounded like a long time. Now I only have a few months remaining, but it has been one of the best experiences in my life. Thank you all for the opportunity. – **Be Just and Fear Not, Rich Adams**

### Recent Happenings

Our July Quarterly Meeting was held once again at the Gloucester home of Paul Lohnes, who chairs our Planning Committee, and this time, perfect weather allowed us to fully appreciate this exceptionally scenic location. Sadly, President Adams reported that longtime member and former trustee Robert Howatt passed away in June, and a moment of silence was observed in his memory. Copies of our 2014 Annual Report were distributed at the abbreviated business meeting, and members were then free to enjoy the meal, the weather, the scenery, each other's company and the hospitality of our hosts.

Our Planning Committee completed its work through May and June, meeting on June 17 to finalize their decisions for 2015 grants. In all, MCMA will be distributing about \$170,000 this year to many very deserving organizations, and the work of disbursing those funds is currently under way. Also in June, our Finance Committee and Board of Government met with our financial advisers, SSGA, to review asset allocation, year-to-date performance, and outlook for the year ahead.



At the July Quarterly Meeting, in addition to the opportunity to gather with fellow members, attendees enjoyed the expansive vistas from the Gloucester home of our host, Paul Lohnes. In the background at left is the view of the Atlantic Ocean off of Bass Rocks on the southeast shore of Cape Ann. At right, in the distance looking northeast, are the sands of Good Harbor Beach.

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## Helping Others

It has been several years since we highlighted the work of an organization with which MCMA has been associated since 1972, but this is a story that merits retelling and an organization that continues to earn our attention, admiration, and support. **National Braille Press** (NBP) was founded in 1927 with a mission to bring the gift of literacy to blind children through braille, and to provide access to information that empowers blind people, both young and old, to function more independently and actively engage in work, family, and community affairs.



Today, NBP's publishing program includes original books by blind authors plus braille editions of popular titles, periodicals, and self-help books on topics ranging from cooking and child care to computer and smartphone use. Miscellaneous items include braille restaurant menus and braille airline safety guides. NBP's highly regarded Children's Braille Book Club takes popular children's books, transcribes the text into braille, and embosses it onto transparent plastic sheets. The plastic braille sheets are interwoven with the print pages so blind children and sighted parents or teachers can read together.



Braille production is a complex process that begins with an electronic text file of printed material. The text is imported into software for transcription into the appropriate braille code such as literary braille or math braille. Braille transcribers – experts in formatting braille and braille code usage – review and edit the translation for printing on a braille page. The braille version is then proofread for formatting and accuracy by a blind proofreader, who reads using either a paper copy or an electronic braille device.

Once the braille text is finalized, an electronic version of the document is sent to a braille printer, called an embosser, or to a plate embossing device (PED) to emboss braille onto zinc plates. Zinc plates are used to produce braille in high volume. NBP uses three Heidelberg sheet-fed presses that have been modified for braille production. Tactile graphics (raised-line representations of print images) introduce even more specialized processes and equipment requirements. After the paper and tactile graphic pages are produced, they are collated into a complete volume and bound with stitches, combs, wire loops, or covers. The books and tactile graphics produced at NBP are shipped to braille readers around the world.



MCMA has helped over the years to provide, upgrade or repair equipment in virtually every stage of these processes. Our most recent grants have enabled NBP to replace a 1946-built riveting machine that had finally become impossible to maintain, and to purchase a high-resolution scanner to minimize the risk of error in the initial scanning of documents to be converted to braille text. Overall, our assistance has helped NBP both to keep up with demand for their own publications, and to compete successfully for contract braille transcription and pressing projects that have long been a major source of income for them.

And, lest we forget, one third of NBP's staff has a disability, predominantly blindness, and they fill positions at all levels of the organization. MCMA has supported these employees in particular through grants for equipment such as screen readers, braille notebooks, and computers that accommodate adaptive devices. As to the significance of our overall support, in NBP's own words: "Every braille book that we emboss, collate, and bind is marked by the generosity of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association."



### MCMA Past ...

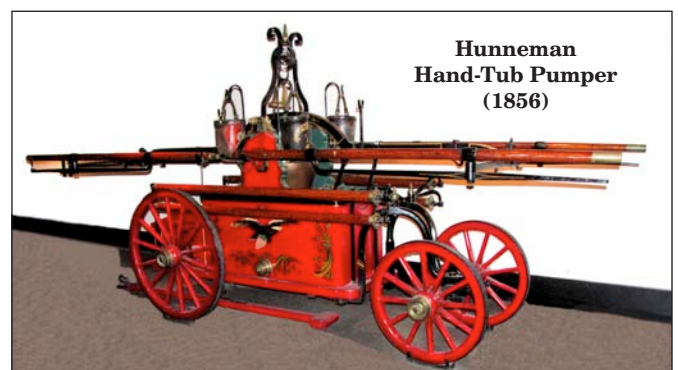
We have in past newsletters mentioned our first president, **Paul Revere**, in various contexts, but one area we have yet to explore is the fact that several of the apprentices who trained under Revere went on to very successful careers of their own. Two of these men are of particular interest because they, separately, became instrumental in the development and manufacture of firefighting apparatus.

**Ephraim Thayer** was an original member of MCMA, listing his occupation in our Signature Book as “fire engine builder.” A hand-towed, hand-operated “Ephraim Thayer Pumper,” reputed to be the first he constructed, was placed in service in 1793 in Boston, and it is currently displayed proudly in the Boston Fire Museum on Congress Street. These early machines were called hand tubs, and the tub was kept filled by a bucket brigade. *[Engines with suction hoses capable of drawing from a water source did not come along until the early 1820s.]* The pump was hand-operated by men on both sides, delivering water under pressure into a hose that could be directed at the fire. Ephraim built about 30 of these engines until his death in 1811, but the business was carried on until 1864 by his son, **Stephen** (who himself joined MCMA in 1818). Locally, Old Sturbridge Village owns a Stephen Thayer engine built in 1845, and an 1828 Stephen Thayer suction pumper is displayed in Plymouth’s 1749 Court House and Museum.

But Thayer was outdone by **William Cooper Hunneman**, the other Revere apprentice who went on to a career in fire engines. He too was an original member of MCMA, signing as a “coppersmith.” *[The hand tubs were fabricated from sheets of copper; which may account for the transition from coppersmith to fire engine builder.]* Hunneman founded a company that manufactured what were considered the finest hand-pumped fire engines of the time. An 1821 newspaper advertisement for his Patent Fire Engine lists 97 engines sold to that time. Many were located in New England, but others were located in cities as far afield as Cincinnati, Savannah, and New Orleans, and five were in use aboard U.S. Navy warships. (The same advertisement notes that, in a demonstration conducted by the Boston Fire Department, pitting this engine against one already owned by the town, “... the Patent Engine, with two five-inch chambers, threw 70 gallons of water 133 feet in 28 seconds; the one belonging to the town ... was 43 seconds throwing the same quantity of water 110 feet.”) Hunneman died in 1856 (he’s buried at Forest Hills Cemetery), but the business was carried on by his two sons (one of whom, **Samuel H. Hunneman**, joined MCMA in 1826) and his grandsons. Overall, the company manufactured about 750 fire engines, far more than any other maker, sending them throughout the United States and beyond (to Canada, Japan, China, and The Philippines). The company, which also made ladder trucks and hose reels, ceased operations in 1885, but Hunneman items are highly prized today by collectors.

Finally, to bring Revere back into the picture ... following the first of Boston’s “great fires” in 1760 (which destroyed 349 buildings and nine ships), citizens of Boston were particularly attentive to fire safety, and were honored to serve as volunteer firemen ... Revere shared that interest, and served as Fire Warden in the year 1775.

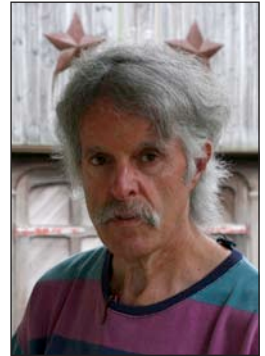
Below is the exhibit hall at the Boston Fire Museum, with the 1792 Thayer pumper front-and-center. Inset is a painting that shows men drawing a hand-tub to a fire.



**Hunneman  
Hand-Tub Pumper  
(1856)**

### ... and MCMA Present

It was not at all uncommon for early members of this association to grow up on farms, then move away to serve apprenticeships and go on to careers in various occupations. That scenario is rare these days, but current member **John P. Moriarty** comes close ... sort of. John was born and raised in Cambridge, graduated from Cambridge High and Latin School, attended college for awhile, and began his working career in the high-tech industry (in precision, non-contact gauging). But, since helping his father build an addition on their house at age eleven, he retained an interest in construction work and felt he had some aptitude for it, so in 1971 he formed J. P. Moriarty & Co., taking on remodeling projects concurrent with his “primary” high-tech job.



Within two years John was wholly engaged with his construction company, and soon began to focus on the remodeling of older, architecturally-distinctive buildings and structures. Much of his work was concentrated in Boston’s South End and Back Bay, but he also completed two major projects for the “This Old House” television program, and managed in the late 1980s to convert Arlington’s Capitol Theater into a five-screen multiplex while maintaining the decorative style of the original (1925) theater. Early on, however, John recognized the difficulty of obtaining moldings and other woodwork to meet his needs on these jobs, so in the late 1970s he established his own shop to supply discontinued millwork patterns for his projects. Within a few years he was supplying other contractors as well, and today J. P. Moriarty Millwork has expanded to the point where it has supplanted the construction company as John’s primary business. The company supplies historically accurate millwork patterns, including doors, windows, straight and curved moldings, balusters, spindles, brackets, gutters and much more. And its website ([www.jp Moriarty.com](http://www.jp Moriarty.com)) displays an incredible variety of interior and exterior millwork for multiple architectural styles spanning 300 years.



But wait, there’s more! John’s other primary interest is farming, so about 20 years ago he began to develop his six-acre property in Lexington, and began to devote serious time to it over the past five years. That interest has now grown into a second business, which John calls an “integrated small farm,” featuring cows, sheep, chickens, turkeys, laying hens, vegetables, and small fruit. (John also built the barn, and has nearly finished building his new house on the property.) He uses no insecticides or chemicals, and sells his farm products directly to customers.

So John’s career path does resemble that of our earliest members in many respects, if not in the same order. As to the fact he has achieved success in a very specialized carpentry field, despite a lack of prior training in that trade, he attributes that success to hiring very talented people from whom he was able and willing to learn (sort of a “reverse apprenticeship”). Fortunately for us, John is still able to make time for MCMA, and he currently serves on both our Board of Government and our History Committee.

