

Charitably



Speaking

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President's Message

Can it be that summer has flown by so quickly? It seems as if we were just announcing our July Quarterly meeting and now that is but a great memory.

I would be grossly remiss if I did not also relay that from the comments I heard from several members, this was the best summer clambake we have ever had. Of course, our special thanks and deep appreciation needs to go out to Paul and Jessica Lohnes for the use of their beautiful house in Gloucester and for Jessica's culinary skills with the different appetizer items she provided as an added special as well. This is always an incredibly wonderful event, and this year was no exception with our final attendance count being in the 110 to 120 range. Additionally, Amanda Lohnes jumped in as the hands-on coordinator who worked with Functions Committee members Tom Crowdis, Steve Anderson, Greg Davidian, and Glen Tocci making the whole event perfect; a fantastic occasion with great food, views, and company.

Now, as we work to squeeze out our few last days of summer, it is also time to get refocused on the work and mission of MCMA. I look forward to working with our committees as we ramp up a few items I hope will be of added benefit and interest for our members. And to our members, please give yourself a gift of commitment as we begin this post-Covid era anew; get back involved at MCMA and re-join with us at our meetings. Names and faces may not be known or remembered. That will change once you get reacquainted, and that will happen by attending our Quarterly meetings. We will do our part to make them interesting and worthwhile, but you need to do your part as well by showing up to give us feedback.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our October meeting. Until then, enjoy the remaining days of what has been a great summer as we head into an even better year ahead. – **Chuck**

Helping Others

We had drifted apart from the **Cotting School** for a few years, but last year, and again this year, we revived that acquaintance with support for their Industrial Arts program. This school, originally known as The Industrial School for Crippled and Deformed Children, was founded in 1893 in Boston by two orthopedic surgeons from Children's Hospital in Boston who saw the need to educate children whose physical challenges prevented them from attending school. Modeled after 19th-century European institutions, the school was America's first for children with physical disabilities. Later renamed Cotting School, it is currently located in Lexington, Massachusetts, and now serves children with a broad spectrum of learning and communication disabilities, physical challenges, and complex medical conditions.

Cotting meets the unique needs of its students by providing an array of integrated services. Students benefit from individual and small group instruction, therapy services are integrated into their school day, and they are challenged to reach the highest level of academic achievement and independence that all of their skills allow. An IT Center provides students with the opportunity to improve their computer literacy while enhancing classroom learning through



COTTING SCHOOL
A tradition of innovation and excellence since 1893

computer-based activities. And the school fosters social-emotional maturity, vocational, and skill development training programs to enable students to realize their highest potential both during and after their enrollment. It is that “vocational and skill development” component that is of particular interest to MCMA of course.

All Middle and Upper School students receive pre-vocational services, in areas such as food service, clerical, maintenance, retail, packaging, and assembly tasks. And the aim is to help students develop their identities as workers, communicate with coworkers and supervisors, have a good attitude, make good decisions, ask for help when needed, solve work-related problems and learn skills specific to the job or task at hand. At the Middle School level, students begin to attend classes weekly in the Work Skills Center, which provides an opportunity for students to try a variety of work experiences within the school community. In the Upper School, students add a more individualized in-house job experience designed to meet their specific vocational goals and interests, with added electives such as woodworking, jewelry making, horticulture, and others.

The school’s Industrial Arts (woodworking) Program that has received our support is designed to give students a basic knowledge of the properties of wood, to safely use the tools necessary to cut and shape it into useful products, and to develop good work habits and attitudes. Based upon their capabilities, students start with the most basic hand tools and progress to more complex hand and power tools. And Bill Phelan, who runs this program, notes that enhanced technology is giving students with developmental and physical challenges the opportunity to access more tools, learn and become efficient with a broader array of skills and knowledge than ever before, and further build their confidence and independence. This is a program we are happy to be able to support.



MCMA ... past and present

Throughout the nineteenth century the Boston area was home to the builders and manufacturers of many of the best known and best made products of their time. From clipper ships and steam locomotives to pianos, rattan ware, clocks, and watches, those industries involved talented, industrious, and inventive men, many of whom were members of MCMA, and we have featured a number of them in past issues. But in a lesser known field Boston was also well represented in the manufacture of billiard tables, and several MCMA members were key in that industry as well. Until the middle of the century, billiard tables had largely been imported from England or France, but that began to change, and three MCMA members played a part in that change.

Perhaps the most notable was **James E. Came**, who was born in Buxton, Maine in 1822 and was educated in the Maine public schools. He left Buxton for Bangor in 1843, where he entered the lumber trade on the Penobscot River. After three years he came to Boston, where he remained until 1849 when he went to California

to join the gold seekers. While there he engaged himself in steamboat work and the carpentry trade as well as mining, but he soon returned to Boston. He commenced the manufacture of billiard tables, and in 1855 with his brother John founded the very successful J. E. Came & Co., and served as its president until his death at his home in Malden in 1908 at the age of 86. He had been a member of MCMA since 1866.

Born in Westmoreland, N.H. in 1833, **Oliver L. Briggs** received his early education there and at a commercial school in Boston, where he moved in 1850. In 1854 he became a bookkeeper for the publisher **James B. Dow** (also a member of MCMA) and in 1861 entered the book business himself, opening a store at the corner of Washington and Essex Streets. He later began the manufacture of billiard tables with which his name became prominently identified. For more than half a century Oliver L. Briggs & Son engaged in the manufacture of billiard and pool tables on Essex Street.

Mr. Briggs was a Mason, a member of the Boston Art Club, one of the first members of the Algonquin Club, and an ardent worker in Trinity Church. He died in 1917 at his home on Beacon Street. Despite his advanced age of 84 years he continued to conduct his business affairs until a short time before his death. (Oliver L. Briggs joined our Association in 1872, and his son **Frederick H. Briggs** joined in 1896.)

Amasa W. Bailey was a Boston boy, born in 1820. He was educated in the public schools and learned the trade of a type-founder. He afterwards engaged in the business of manufacturing billiard tables, which he continued through his life, and his business was quite successful. He was a man of strong social instincts, and was connected with numerous organizations. He was one of the highest degree Masons, and for a long time held official position in the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. He also served in the Massachusetts Legislature. Mr. Bailey, who joined our

Association in 1867, died in 1893 at the age of 73 years.

The “golden age” of billiards extended from the 1860s until the great depression in 1929. The Came, Briggs, and Bailey tables and accessories (like racks for cues and balls)



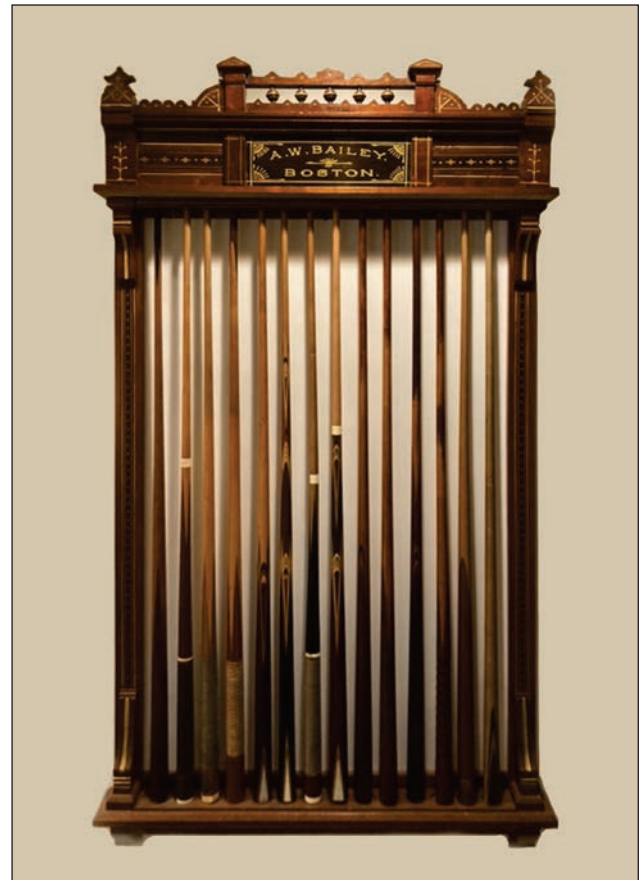
Amasa W. Bailey

made during that period were well made, and often beautifully made, and as a consequence many of them are today both highly valued and still in use. Which brings us to the second part of our story.

Boston Billiards was founded in 1972, focused primarily on pool table service and repairs. It later opened a showroom in Somerville and sold new pool tables.

Stephen Kelly joined Boston Billiards in 1975, and in 1979 he was able to buy the company from its original owners. Steve's interest in antiques led him to give increased attention to finding and restoring antique billiard tables. Since most of these tables are more than 100 years old, extensive repairs are generally required, but the company has a complete wood shop and can repair or make most anything that is damaged or missing from the table. And painstaking work is often required to remove layers of dirt, grime, and old shellac to reveal original finish as well as inlay and paint details. Some of these restored tables are at least 150 years old, but they look as good (and are as playable) as when they were originally built ... a testament to the builders as well as the restorer.

Steve Kelly was born and raised in Somerville and is a product of the St. Clement school system. He learned his trade through on-the-job training and experience, though he got his basic knowledge of working with hand and power tools from his father. He and his wife Kathy live in Medford and they have two children. (Their daughter Nikki is the assistant director of the John Winthrop School in Back Bay, Boston; and their son Stephen installs and repairs elevators.) Outside of work, Steve's main interests are checkers (he has won the American Checker



Federation's New England District Championship three times!), sports, and politics.

Steve's business, now named Boston Billiard Emporium, offers an extensive line of services (such as cloth and cushion replacements, leveling, and table moving) in addition to sales of new and restored tables and accessories, and it keeps him very busy. Thankfully, though, he always makes time for MCMA, and he has been a key member of our Planning Committee. It is also nice to know that his work is in effect bringing the work of some of our past members into the present day so it can be appreciated all over again.

