

Charitably



Speaking

353 Southern Artery

Quincy, MA 02169

A PUBLICATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARITABLE MECHANIC ASSOCIATION

President's Message

Can it possibly be that summer is over? As I write this over Labor Day weekend, I reflect to see where all the time went. I recall the rain in June, and cooler humid weather in July. Then there was the spectacular summer Clambake Social under the tent in July at the home of Paul and Jessica Lohnes, our spectacular hosts once again. It simply could not have been a better day, in a better location with better friends.

August provided occasional rain, which allowed the time needed to keep up with emails and phone calls concerning *The Wounded Indian*. And now, here we are, looking ahead to the colors of fall and getting ourselves back on track into our more regular routines, both at home and work and, of course, MCMA.

As we announced, the pending return of *The Wounded Indian* sculpture to Boston may have been completed by the time you read this. Very special thanks and appreciation need to go to the taskforce, which has also been hard at work trying to find the proper home for this magnificent sculpture. To date, we have sent out inquiries to some 12 organizations to see if they may be interested in hosting this on either a short-term or long-term basis. Two replies indicate they do not have room for such an exhibit, so unfortunately, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Worcester Art Museum have been removed from that list since they were highly regarded.

There is no question that the expense to achieve the result has been one that we would have preferred to avoid, but the input we got from the board and comments from various individual members indicated that we needed to live by our motto. "Be Just and Fear Not" was the guiding focus, ultimately proving very appropriate. While the work has not been finalized yet, we all look forward to the report on where our sculpture will be displayed.

Until then, I look forward to seeing everyone at our October meeting, with a notice to be sent shortly. In the meantime, reflect on the joys of summer and anticipate the pleasures of the fall. – **Chuck**

Helping Others

We admire all of the organizations we support, and we value the work they do, but, as we have admitted before, there can be no denying that **North Bennet Street School** (NBSS) ranks among our favorites. Partly this is due to the fact that their interests so closely resemble our own, but partly it is because they do their job so well. That job is to help students achieve meaningful livelihoods by offering intense, hands-on training in traditional trades and fine craftsmanship. The school has a reputation for excellence and value that attracts students from around the world. And from its founding in 1881 as a settlement house in Boston for immigrants, NBSS has embraced people of all cultures and backgrounds. Over 70% of current students receive financial aid, and nearly 20% have served in the military.

While NBSS does offer community education workshops and "short" courses, our interest has always favored their career training programs which include specialty professions such as preservation carpentry, cabinet and furniture making,



piano technology, violin making & repair, bookbinding, and jewelry making & repair. All are taught in a small class, structured framework, and teaching methods encourage the systematic development of hand skills along with an understanding of tools, materials, and processes, plus a commitment to excellence.

Our grant to the school this year is directed to their Locksmithing & Security Technology program, in which students study with an experienced locksmith to give them a firm grasp of the fundamentals.



They learn through a combination of classroom theory, lectures, demonstrations, hands-on benchwork, surveying and installation, and part-time work, and they graduate with the ability to service and repair all types of residential and commercial door-locking devices. NBSS

must, though, keep its curriculum current as the locksmithing industry continues its move toward “electronic access control.” For example, students currently learn master keying on graph paper by filling in squares with numbers. And they will continue to learn this method as it is an important step in understanding the mechanical systems and process. But they must also build more advanced technological skills to learn and work with digital master key systems, institutional locksmithing, key control, facility management, and item tracking widely used in the profession today.

NBSS recently received an in-kind donation of Simple K Software, a software predominantly used within the locksmithing industry for master key systems and facility management in hospitals, universities, government agencies, hotels, airports, and corporations, among others. To support the Simple K software and



integrate it into their curriculum, NBSS was in need of additional hardware and software (card readers, card software, control box, security cameras, server, laptops, etc.) to enable all its students to gain this expertise. We are pleased that MCMA was able to meet their request, and that we are able to continue our longtime support of this outstanding organization.



MCMA History

The following article is drawn from *MCMA Annals*, and a version of it was included by Ray Purdy in the very first edition of *Charitably Speaking* back in 1990.

Oliver Johonnet was born at Middletown, Connecticut in 1760. He lost his father when he was quite young, and was taken to Boston to reside with his grandmother, and when of a suitable age he was placed at one of the public schools. In 1775, after the battle of Bunker Hill, he attempted to leave Boston, but was stopped on the Neck by an old tory, ordered back and told that he would make a good fifer for his majesty. He succeeded, however, in making his escape to stay with friends in Connecticut. He returned to Boston in 1776 following the British evacuation, and in September of that year entered the naval service on board a brig of 16 guns called the *Rising Sun*. In April of 1777 the brig was captured by a British warship, the crew were declared rebels, and they were sent to a prison near Portsmouth, England. After months of imprisonment, Johonnet and others of the crew managed to escape. Traveling by night and secreting themselves by day they managed to reach London, but Oliver was soon taken by a press-gang from a British ship-of-war. To prevent being placed onboard it, he confessed that he was an American and had escaped from prison. He was returned to prison, and with 29 others was confined in a dungeon. In July 1779, more than two years after their capture, they were included in a prisoner exchange and sent to France. Johonnet was able to return to Boston on board the *Mifflin*, a ship-of-war of 20 guns.

Johonnet was detained on shore by sickness for more than six months, but following his recovery he again sailed in the *Mifflin*, which was soon taken by a British frigate. The crew were sent to Charleston, South Carolina and put on board a prison-ship, where they were kept until exchanged for British prisoners in January 1781 and sent to Wilmington, North Carolina. There Johonnet shipped on board a merchant vessel bound for the West Indies, but it was captured by one of Admiral Rodney's squadron. So Johonnet was next kept in prison at St. Johns, Antigua, until exchanged once again, arriving back in Boston in December 1781. In March he sailed in the *General Scammell*, 18 guns, and after various adventures, some of which were successful, *Scammell* was taken by a British 50-gun ship, and carried to New York. The crew were placed on board the infamous prison-ship *Jersey*, and detained there till the news of peace was received, when they were discharged and arrived in Boston in January 1783. Mr. Johonnet had thus endured about seven years of suffering and privation on land and sea. He later joined an artillery company in Boston as a private, and over time attained the rank of major. Oliver Johonnet was one of the Original Members of this Association at its founding in 1795, joining as a tailor. He was highly respected, and for three years served as one of the trustees. His death was caused by a fall in his house, which fractured a bone. Paralysis followed, and he expired in 1847 at the age of 87. Johonnet's war experiences were at least somewhat unique, but many others of our early



The British prison ship *Jersey*
in a 1906 engraving by Philip Meeder
for a book illustration.
(U.S. Library of Congress collection)

members also were veterans of the war and probably had some interesting stories of their own. Hopefully, none were as unfortunate as those of Mr. Johonnet.

[The Department of Veterans Affairs lists Revolutionary War battle deaths at 4,435. It is estimated that an additional 20,000 deaths were caused by disease and other causes, and of those the majority occurred aboard the British prison-ships, which were notorious for their appalling conditions.]

The British prison ship Jersey (interior)
in an 1855 drawing by Felix O. C. Darley
for a book illustration.
(U.S. Library of Congress collection.)



... and MCMA Miscellany

Sculptor Cyrus Dallin was born in 1861 and raised in Utah. He came to Boston in 1880 to train with a local sculptor, and later spent several years in Paris for additional training before returning to America and settling in Massachusetts. He went on to a very successful career, and examples of his work can be found across the country. Two well-known local examples are the statue of **Paul Revere** on horseback that stands near Old North Church, and the *Appeal to the Great Spirit* that stands in front of the Museum of Fine Arts. But Dallin's very first paid commission, for which he received the grand sum of two dollars, was the seal of this Association (a raised arm and hammer with the words "BE JUST and FEAR NOT") that he sculpted over the 99 Huntington Avenue entrance to the then-new Mechanics Hall. Despite the meager reward, Dallin always appreciated that first commission, and following the dedication of the Revere statue nearly sixty years later he presented us with a photograph of the statue with his hand-written and signed inscription "To the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association in recognition of my first commission." That photograph hangs in our boardroom today.



Appeal to the Great Spirit, a 1909 sculpture by Cyrus Dallin, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

A photo of Cyrus Dallin's statue of Paul Revere ... presented by the artist ... at the MCMA boardroom in Quincy.

