



## President's Remarks

It is with great pride and joy that I accept the position of MCMA President as voted at our Annual Meeting in January. I am also proud to welcome Rich Adams as Vice President, John Lordan to the Finance Committee and Joseph Valante to the Board of Government. We all look forward to working with them. Also thank you Marty for your 3 years of dedication and for continuing with *Charitably Speaking!*

Our Triennial Celebration on February 6 was a huge success. The visits to Old North Church and the North Bennet Street School were both educational and informative, as each linked to MCMA. The dinner, entertainment and decorations were spectacular, and some members commented that it was the best Triennial they had yet attended. Many thanks to the Committee! I do hope, though, that more of those who attended will begin to take a more active role in the Association. With God's help and yours we will continue to succeed.

Finally, let me say thank you to all who responded to our December request for donations, and remind those who did not that it's never too late.

Bill Anderson

## Recent Happenings

Our Annual Meeting was held in January at the Neighborhood Club in Quincy, where we heard the reports from each of our Committees, and elected Vice President William Anderson and former Trustee Richard Adams to three year terms as President and Vice President respectively. Outgoing President Martin Joyce gave his final address, and took the occasion to thank our Executive Director, Trustees, Committee Chairmen and all the members who serve on our various committees and enable MCMA to function as well as we do. He also thanked our Past Presidents for their wholehearted support, and gave particular thanks for the counsel and support of his immediate predecessor, Past President William Jutila.

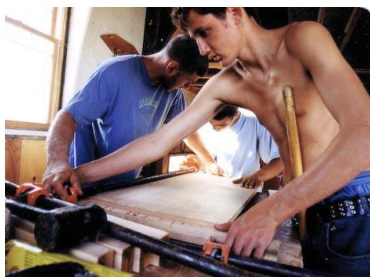
We held our 71st Triennial celebration in early February at the Seaport Hotel in Boston, and it was an unqualified success. Members and guests were treated in the afternoon to private tours of Old North Church and the North Bennet Street School. At the former we were able to visit both the bell tower (where we learned that our first President, Paul Revere, had been a bell ringer as a teenager) and the normally off-limits basement crypts. At the school, we were able to see first-hand much of the equipment donated by MCMA over many years, and to hear directly from students how well this school fulfills its role in teaching very skilled crafts to very determined students. In the evening we enjoyed a comfortable reception hour, a fine meal and great entertainment, sandwiched around our traditional "changing of the guard" ceremony, wherein the Paul Revere snuffbox was passed from each of the Past Presidents in attendance (Hanson, Bridges, McLaughlin, Stickney, Jutila and Joyce) to President Anderson. Outgoing President Joyce expressed his appreciation to the members for having given him the opportunity to serve, and recognized Richard O'Meara and all members of the Triennial Committee

for the great work they put into planning and coordinating the event, but noted how much the recent loss of Past Executive Director and Past President Ray Purdy had hurt our morale, and announced that this 71st Triennial had been dedicated to his memory. President Anderson spoke also of how much Ray meant to us, and how much we missed his presence, and he presented a flower arrangement to Ray's widow Elaine, who was in attendance. President Anderson then thanked everyone for the challenge that awaits him, and committed to do his best to meet their expectations.

### Helping Others

One of our larger grants last year was to the Penikese Island School, continuing our support for a facility with which our Planning Committee has long been impressed. Serving troubled youths since 1973, the school was founded as an alternative to juvenile jails, and functions as a family-sized, self-sufficient, independent community. It occupies 11 of the island's 75 acres, on a site that housed a leper colony in the early 20th century. The remainder of the island is a protected wildlife sanctuary. (The island is located 12 miles SW of Woods Hole in Buzzards Bay.)

The mission at Penikese is to prepare struggling boys ages 15-18 to be productive and positive members of their families and communities. It dedicates its resources to helping these adolescents "get better at what they are not good at". And students are not "sent to" Penikese. They may be referred by parents, teachers, administrators, case workers or others, but Penikese thoroughly interviews all applicants, and will enroll only those who commit to treatment and individual goals. Students work and attend school 6 days per week, for both academic instruction and a vocational program that provides them with applicable job skills training and strengthened work ethic. The flexible program structure is tailored to the needs and expectations of individual students, and behavioral goals include improved self control, accountability, mature judgement and respect for parental authority.



MCMA has for many years donated tools and equipment to support the vocational training at the school, but our support extends even to the particular needs that arise because of the remoteness of the island. Last year, for example, our grant allowed for the purchase of a new battery bank for the photovoltaic that operates the refrigeration system, a new photovoltaic refrigerator and a small generator. In past years, we have provided fire safety equipment, farming and gardening tools, shop equipment, and even fishing and shell fishing equipment. In an environment where the students work to maintain the facility, pitch in with housecleaning, wash dishes, and help to prepare meals, virtually everything is a learning experience. These kids need and benefit from that experience, and we're pleased that MCMA has been able to help.

Penikese does not succeed with every student, unfortunately, but it is *over 100% more successful* than alternative programs such as boot camps or juvenile jails. And Penikese goes a step further, by dedicating a full-time Aftercare Director to keep in touch with students to support their stability and success long after they have left the island. Penikese Island School is yet another example of a worthy program that continues to earn our support and our respect.

## MCMA History...



Joseph M. Wightman

We have seen in past articles that some of our accomplished earlier members, without doubt very talented and creative in their own right, nevertheless benefited from their early association with other talented mechanics who themselves were or were to become members of MCMA. The subject of this article, **Joseph Milner Wightman** is another example of just such an association. *[Once again, the names of MCMA members are **bolded**.]*

Wightman was born in Boston in 1812, the son of an immigrant tailor. When he was age 10 his father died, and at age 14 Wightman became a machinist apprentice to a firm of mathematical and philosophical instrument makers owned by **John Codman** and **Timothy Claxton**. When age 16, and still an apprentice, he made extensive use of the Mechanic Apprentices' Library, borrowing books on mathematics and other subjects so he could study at night. Wightman benefited in his educational pursuits in that one of his employers (Claxton) was an early innovator and supporter in providing educational opportunities for the working class. The firm lasted only three years, however, after which Claxton went into business for himself for three years, following which he went into business with Wightman. Claxton returned to his native England in 1837, and Wightman took over the company. (Claxton & Wightman became the firm of Joseph M. Wightman.) His firm began to supply educational institutions with a large amount of educational scientific instruments, and Wightman became quite renowned in his field, winning a silver medal at the MCMA Exhibition of 1837, and a gold medal at the MCMA exhibition of 1841. Wightman in fact, along with Nathaniel Chamberlain, developed the device used by William T.G. Morton in his highly publicized demonstration of the use of ether at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1846.

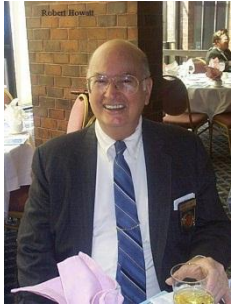
Wightman was very civic-minded as well, and in 1845 became chairman of a citizens committee that worked to improve the public water supply to the city of Boston, which resulted in the development of the Cochituate Water Works. He was elected Mayor of Boston in 1860, defeating **Frederic W. Lincoln Jr.** Wightman had become chairman of the special committee on a Free City Hospital in 1857, and during his term as mayor was no doubt gratified to see ground broken for construction of the City Hospital in 1861. He was also instrumental in pushing for a new city hall, and laid the cornerstone for it in 1862. His administration was defined by neither of these accomplishments, however. In October 1861 Fort Warren in Boston Harbor began to house both Confederate and political prisoners. (Some are shown in the photo.) Initially told to prepare for a population of 100 prisoners in total, the *first ship to arrive* had on board 155 political prisoners plus over 600 military prisoners. Wightman toured the facility in November, determined that immediate steps were needed to prevent an absolute disaster, and arranged for delivery of stores that had been donated to assist Union servicemen. For this humanitarian act he was supported by some but vilified by most, and he was defeated for re-election in 1862 (by Frederic W. Lincoln Jr.).



Joseph Wightman joined MCMA in 1842, and served as a Trustee, Vice-President and our 16<sup>th</sup> President. *[Lincoln, coincidentally, was also a maker of mathematical instruments, and served as the 17<sup>th</sup> President of MCMA.]*

### ...and MCMA Present

Wightman, Lincoln, Codman, Claxton and many other makers of precision instruments were active members of MCMA in the 19th century, and if we fast-forward to the present day, we will find another accomplished representative of that particular field of endeavor in **Robert Atherton Howatt**, who was



born in Winthrop in 1929 and raised in both Winthrop and Natick. Like Wightman, Bob lost his father at an early age and worked hard to further his education, earning a diploma from Burdett Business College and a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from Clark University, and later an MBA in Business Management and Accounting from Northeastern University. Following four years of military service (USAF), he worked as a supervisor of inventory control for the American Machine & Foundry Company before joining the Raytheon Company in 1958. Bob's responsibilities with Raytheon were focussed in the areas of materials handling and purchasing, and his experience there would later serve him well.

Bob had founded a precision instrument company called the Baystead Corporation, but in 1972 he had an opportunity to purchase the Waltham Watch Company. He and a partner did so, and immediately changed the name to the Waltham Precision Instrument Company. The mainstay of the company was the manufacture of 8-day mechanical aircraft clocks, which had to keep accurate time while withstanding shock and vibration, plus exposure to extremely high and low temperatures. Waltham was the only U.S. manufacturer of these instruments, and as such the U.S. military was their primary customer, though they sold also to commercial clients such as Boeing, and other government agencies such as NASA. Waltham also produced miniature precision gearheads, inertia dampers, ordinance fuse components, precision differentials and other miniature and sub-miniature devices, most with aircraft and/or military applications. *[To give you some idea as to the size of these devices, the accompanying **enlarged** photo shows some machine screws used in their manufacture. Such screws required exacting and precise quality control, and 100x magnification was used for inspecting them.]* Bob bought out his partner in 1979, and in 1987 he sold the company, somewhat coinciding with the then-growing acceptance of digital clocks.



But Bob's career includes far more than his success in the precision instrument area. Along the way, he has been a licensed financial planner, an insurance agent, a real estate broker, a Notary Public, and a registered representative for the NASD, and has been an elected Assessor for the Town of Natick. Both Bob and his wife (of 57 years) Nancy have long been active in the Order of the Eastern Star, where each has attained high positions, and for which Bob and Nancy travel extensively. Bob has served in the position of Worthy Patron and is a Past Grand Tall Cedar of the Tall Cedars of Lebanon (which is primarily concerned with the fight against Muscular Dystrophy). Nancy has been both Worthy Matron and Worthy Grand Matron (Massachusetts), and has received appointments from the General Grand Chapter. In his overall Masonic activities Bob is Past Master of Meridian Lodge in Natick, Past High Priest of Royal Arch Chapter, and has been Past Commander of three different Commanderies of Knights Templar.

Bob joined MCMA in 1977, served on our Board of Government from 1986 – 1994, and is another of the many interesting and accomplished men who have made and continue to make MCMA the unique organization that we are.