



November



2013

The 2014 Holiday House Tour

The theme for this year's holiday celebration on Saturday, December 7 is Wishing You Peace for the Holiday Season! Bill McSheehy and the House Tour Committee have once again put together an exciting collection of homes and public buildings for you to visit. Six private residences, Christ Church, the Phoenix Building, the Fay Club, Gerry Martel's Classic Carriages, the Boulder Art Gallery, and the Rollstone Gallery will all be part of this year's tour which celebrates Main Street, Fitchburg and the architects and builders who created beautiful Fitchburg homes.

The private homes on this year's tour include the residence of Anne Shields Proctor and Mark Proctor at 21 Mechanic Street. This Vernacular Federal home with a Greek Revival Porch has been meticulously renovated and decorated. There are painted wide pine floors original to the home, an efficient Rumford fireplace, chair rails, and double staircases. The kitchen and bathrooms have been renovated to maintain their historical integrity. A stone courtyard welcomes visitors to this historic residence.

At 448 Mechanic Street is the private home and business of Ernie Maguy. This colonial was built in the 1700's for Jeremiah Kinsman, a veteran of the American Revolution who was also a skilled "Cooper" who made wooden containers and baskets. The eleven room private residence attached to the Windmill Florist shop is filled with glamour, whimsy, and hidden alcoves. Visitors will be treated to an extensive array of unique collections and interior design surprises throughout this intriguing home.

Oscar Thayer was the architect who designed the En-



glish stucco cottage at 81 Ross Street for the Thomas Howarth family in 1911. It has been lovingly restored by Brian and Linda Belliveau as a private residence and an inviting inn, known as the Howarth House Bed and Breakfast. A glass corridor leads to an exquisite outer building with a lovely fireplace. Beautiful interiors invite guests to a formal living room, dining room and sun porch. Herbert J. Kellaway, landscape architect, originally laid out the grounds in an English style and they remain beautiful today.

At 124 Etonian Park, exceptional views of the New Hampshire mountain range are visible from the terrace of this magnificently landscaped colonial home owned by Ken and Jennifer Jones. A fieldstone fireplace, hand hewn beams, Georgian center hall, and fan entrance window are a few of the architectural highlights. A collection of spectacular artwork, a Parisian style salon and a relaxing sunroom add to the unique qualities of this home.

(continued on page 2...)

The 2014 Holiday House Tour (cont...)

Kathleen Walsh owns the private residence at 41 Atlantic Avenue. A fine example of Victorian architecture designed by the famous H.M. Francis, this home was once the residence of J.R. Wright, an agent of the Parkhill Manufacturing Company. Built in the early 1890's, interiors include natural woodwork, wainscoting, built-ins and elaborate crown molding. The beautiful front porch welcomes guests to this ornate residence.

The 87 Prospect Street home owned by Rick Bosgardin was built in the mid-1800s and was a smaller Victorian home. Alterations were designed by the H.M. Francis firm in 1910 and added Dutch Colonial architectural details to the original structure. Features include an inviting center staircase and an Italian marble fireplace in the living room. French doors in the formal dining room lead to a lovely wrap-around porch. Renovations include the addition of chair rails and restoration of woodwork in the library/office.

Three public buildings located on Main Street are also a major part of the House tour. The Phoenix Building, home of the Fitchburg Historical Society at 781 Main Street, was designed by H.M. Francis and built for the Fitchburg Mutual Fire Insurance Company. It opened its doors in 1893. A spectacular example of commercial architecture, the Phoenix has been historically renovated by Historical Society donors and features an exhibit hall with original wood floors, wainscoting and cast iron columns. Christmas storefront windows, a Christmas tree display, and Christmas exhibit cases will welcome visitors. At 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., the Lillie Ladies will play seasonal music at this location.

Christ Church, located at 569 Main Street, is a Gothic Revival church designed by architect Richard Upjohn that received consecration in 1868 from the Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts. The church was built on land donated by Alvah Crocker who also chaired the building committee. The church has magnificent stained glass windows, donated by parishioners and designed by the Tiffany Studio, White Friars Studios of London, and Connick Studios in Boston. You will enjoy this beautiful church which celebrated its 150th anniversary on October 7, 2013.

For the first time, the Fay Club at 658 Main Street will be included on the House Tour. A beautiful example of Victorian Gothic architecture, this home was designed by architect Richard Upjohn for George Flagg Fay. Mr. Fay established the Park Club, a business and social club for men. In 1910, Lucy Fay, George's only child, married and donated the home to the Park Club with the agreement that it be re-named for her father. The Fay Club has ornate maple, oak, cherry and mahogany paneling, beautiful fireplaces, stained glass windows, gargoyles, and antiques donated by Fitchburg families. The Fay Club is also the site where guests can sit and have tea and baked goodies provided by Historical Society members.

Also participating in this year's tour are two art galleries, both located on Main Street. Boulder Art Gallery is located at 960 Main Street and features original art, vintage art, photography, prints and sculpture. At 633 Main Street, Rollstone Studios, located in the former Rome Furniture Building is an artists' cooperative featuring art and fine handcrafts. At 914 Main Street is Gerry Martel's Classic Carriages museum which contains 50 years of car memorabilia on display for your enjoyment.

Tickets for the House Tour are \$15 for members, \$18 for advanced sales, and \$20 on the day of the House Tour. They can be purchased beginning November 4th at the Fitchburg Historical Society, Debonis and Davin Florist Shop, the Windmill Florist Shop, Mill No. 3, Elliotts, Shacks, Slattery's, Homestead Primitives, and the Mayor's Office. The Fitchburg Historical Society will be open from 10 to 4 on the day of the House Tour, December 7, to sell tickets on the day of the event. We will also be selling 2014 calendars that include images from the Fitchburg Art Museum and the Fitchburg Historical Society.

❧ *Written by :*
Bill Mcsheehy and Shirley Wagner

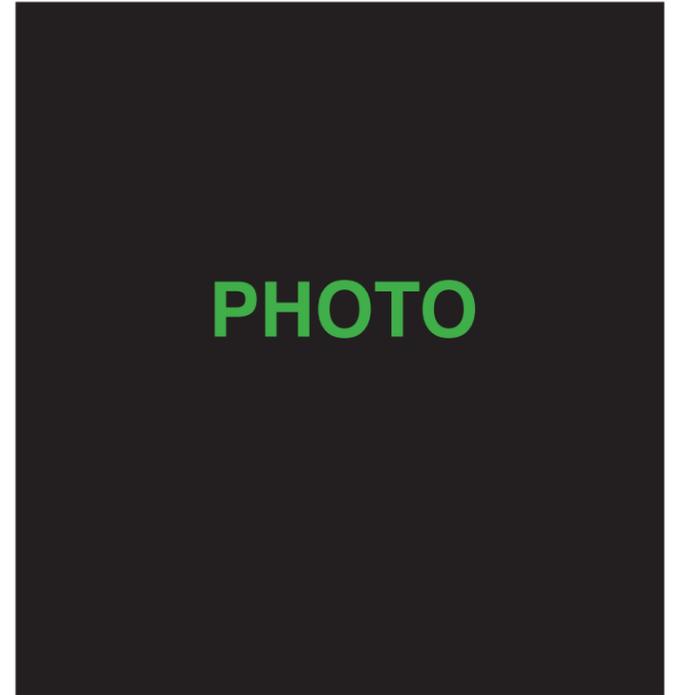
Christmas Shopping Memories

Long before the Malls were even a glimmer in the eyes of the large department stores and developers, Fitchburg families went shopping uptown or downtown depending on where you lived in the city. Whether going uptown or downtown, shopping was often a weekly event for some families, but it was especially fun during the Christmas season because stores would be open every night until 9 usually beginning in mid-December. But if you were a last minute shopper, you had to plan carefully because the stores closed at 5:30 on Christmas Eve.

Destinations might include the 5 and 10 Cent stores (Woolworth's, Kresge's) or the clothing stores (Nichols & Frost, Miller's, Rome's, Barney Rosen's), the candy shops (Ye House of John L. Bailey, Fannie Farmer's), shoe stores (W.C. Goodwin, Student Brothers, Edson) grocery stores (Brockelman's, A & P), or many more specialty shops, just like in the mall. But the difference is they were not arranged along indoor walkways, but along both sides of Main Street. However, like the mall, it was where you met your friends and neighbors.

At Christmas time. Main Street was bustling with shoppers beginning in late November, and it seemed as though everyone knew everyone else. Even the store clerks greeted customers by name. Christmas music provided by Radio Station WEIM filled the air as customers moved from store to store. The broadcasters, who could see shoppers from their studio windows above Main Street, would call out to people they knew--usually startling the shoppers when they heard their names over the loud speakers. People stopped to enjoy the Christmas scenes in Monument Park provided by the Chamber of Commerce, and oh those Christmas goodies at the Penny Bryn, Clover Hill and Cottage Garden bakeries!

Main Street light poles were decorated with small trees and wreaths, lights were strung from buildings to utility poles, and store windows were decorated and inviting. Each store was warm and bright with plenty of clerks to provide assistance. Clerks were dressed formally and usually stood behind the counters ready to help. Although there might be racks of clothing, most evident were the counters where you could purchase shirts and



ties, purses, gloves, blouses, stockings, jewelry, cosmetics and more. Instead of plastic bags, purchases were put into boxes embossed with the store's name and many stores offered free gift wrapping.

Parke Snow's had a manually operated elevator as well as a lovely wide staircase as did Nichols & Frost. In most stores you could hear the sound of the pneumatic cash carriers as they whistled overhead and disappeared to an unknown destination and soon returned as mysteriously with your change and receipt.

In pre-mall decades, Main Street was the happening, shopping place and each store and memory mentioned here, will surely elicit at least a dozen more from each reader because Main Street was also a personal place. Everyone had favorite places to shop, to eat, and to meet.

The Main street stores (except Ritter for Flowers, Shacks Clothing and DeBonis the Florist-- bless 'em) may have closed or left for the malls, but nothing can replace the lingering and fond memories of shopping on Main Street, especially in December.

❧ *Written by: Simone Blake*

Racism in the 54th Massachusetts

Each year the Boston Duck Boat Tours and the Bostonian Society sponsor an essay contest about an important event in Massachusetts' history. This year's topic is the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. Rather than assigning a topic, students were encouraged to formulate their own as they conducted research. At Memorial Middle School, eighth grade students were struck by the amount of racism present in interactions with the members of the 54th, whose existence had broken so many barriers.

Racism was chosen as the topic, and below is one student essay from Enrique Marquez Jr.

African-American soldiers faced racism while serving in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment in 1863. The 54th was the first black regiment; earlier General John Fremont had enlisted black soldiers, but he was fired for doing so. Even the Northern states and their citizens were racist. Free blacks could not go to all the public places that whites could, and only low-paying jobs were open to them. Getting an education was difficult. Slaves who ran away to the Union Army were called contraband, which means illegal goods or things. In 1863 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves, and many enlisted at least.

Some dignitaries at the time were not racist, however. President Abraham Lincoln at first said that slavery was not allowed in new states but was allowed in states where it already existed. Frederick Douglass said, "Liberty won by white men would lack its luster (shine)", acted as a recruiter. His two sons, Lewis and Charles, signed up. Lastly, Governor Andrew of Massachusetts was a famous abolitionist. He did not like the fact that blacks could only be laborers like ditch diggers or wagon drivers. The governor wanted all African-Americans to form a regiment, but he had to wait for Lincoln to give him permission.

When a thousand African American men enlisted, they were faced with racism. African American people got paid less than what white people got paid. In the army black people got paid seven dollars because they had to spend three dollars on clothes. That equaled seven dollars. The African-Americans refused their pay and put it up for a protest to get paid extra. Many soldiers wrote to President Lincoln saying that they needed better pay to get extra materials. The African-Americans had to wait eighteen months to be paid equally what to the white people had gotten paid. In conclusion, the African-American people were not paid equally to the whites.

Even after the war, racism continued. First of all, Colonel Robert Shaw was buried in a mass grave, a big pit where all the African-Americans were buried after they had died. When Colonel Shaw died, the Southerners dishonored him because he fought with the African-Americans. After he was buried, his father had the choice to bring him home, but he said that his son should stay in his grave with his men that had also died in the war. Sergeant William Carney had earned the Medal of Honor because he picked up the flag during the Battle of Fort Wagner. It took thirty-seven years for Sergeant William Carney to get his medal, and the medal came in the mail instead of having a ceremony. Some soldiers didn't want William Carney to get the medal. Twenty-seven years later, a sculpture was made for Shaw. On the side of the monument were the white people's names who had fought at Fort Wagner. It wasn't until 1981 that the black names were put on the monument. In Leominster, Massachusetts, they put a monument dedicated to Oliver Hazard, one hundred and thirty-five years after he fought in the war. In conclusion, you can see that racism against the 54th has stopped.

Finally, it is clear that the 54th Massachusetts Regiment faced racism. Some celebrities helped African-Americans enlist in the army, so they were not racist. However, in the army blacks were paid less than what whites were for eighteen months.

❧ *Written by: Enrique Marquez Jr.*

Burned Books, Banned Books

On Wednesday, September 25th, Professor Daniel Sarefield gave a PowerPoint lecture on the history of book burning. This event was part of the Fahrenheit 251 Collaborative Project with Cultural Alliance partners, the Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg Public Library, Rollstone Gallery, FATV and WPKZ. Mayor Lisa Wong gave the welcome. Professor Sarefield split his 75 minute speech into three parts, the Contemporary, Personal and Historical.

Starting with the contemporary view of book burnings, Dan spoke about Pastor Terry Jones, who in 2010 ignited controversy by marking September 11th as "Burn a Qu'ran" day. He initially backed down due to the pressure of media attention but on March 2011 he put a copy of the book on trial and burned it. Other modern references of book burning that were brought up was the burning of Gaddafi's 1957 manifesto. According to Sarefield, book burning and banning became heavily driven by political motives. The ability to maintain what the people read and see in the news and in books can keep people in line and make for much less hassle.

Once he covered the contemporary view of book burning, Dan moved on to his personal experience with censorship by the government. Over the summer Daniel, his wife Tracy and their daughter Stella traveled to Istanbul. During their time there, the riots revolving around Giza Park erupted and were quickly silenced by the government. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were blocked while protestors flooded the streets. Television was also controlled as the news said nothing about the conflict as if pretending it was not happening right outside. It was not until the Sarefields were out of the country that they were able to see how bad things really

were for the protestors in Istanbul. The government was using their power to control the flow of information in order to gain a political foothold.

Having covered his first two points, Dan then moved on to the historical background of book burnings. When the first book burning took place is a question that can be answered several times with different answers. The first rumored book burning took place in 500 BCE when Diogenes Laertius, a Greek philosopher, wrote a piece about the possibility of the Gods not existing. His writings were quickly gathered up and burned after they expelled him from Athens. However outside of a reference to this event there is no solid proof that it actually occurred. It was not until 181 BCE in Rome that a record appears of a book burning occurring regarding a text that supposedly "pertained to the dissolution of religion." This is our first look at recorded politically motivated censorship.

The country North Korea burns books with a sense of patriotic duty. Burning books that promote immorality within the people or in most cases books that would cause a deviation from certain ideas. Sarefield ended the presentation by answering questions and having two Fitchburg State students to take people's opinions regarding what book would save if a book burning took place today.

❧ *Written by: Dan Fish*

Thanks To All Of The People Who Contributed Time And Effort To This Newsletter:
Simone Blake, Katrina Brown, Dan Fish, Cindy Jones, Enrique Marquez, Lisa McLaughlin, Susan Naravre, Charles Sternaimolo, William McSheehy and Shirley Wagner.

Annual Meeting 2013

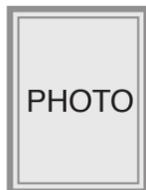
The Fitchburg Historical Society held its annual meeting on Thursday September 24 in the George and Alice G. Wallace Exhibit Hall on the first floor of the Phoenix building. About twenty-five members and guests were in attendance at the event. During the business portion of the meeting the Annual Report for 2012 – 2013 was distributed. The slate of officers for 2013-2014 recommended by the Nominating was accepted: Dan Mylott, President; Bill McSheehy, Vice President; Michelle Shepard, Treasurer and Cindy Jones, Clerk. Dan Mylott, Bill McSheehy, Cindy Jones and Bob Jones were re-elected to the Board of Directors for a second three year term. Kathleen Flynn, Shane Franzen and Nathan LaRose were elected to serve their first three year term.

Susan Navarre, Director of the Historical Society since June, welcomed the twenty-five members who

were present and gave an overview of the exciting year ahead. She also compiled the annual report that was distributed to the attendees and is available at the Society. She noted that the Society had received a \$250,000 grant from the Wallace Foundation which will be paid to the Society in increments of \$50,000 per year for the next five years. She noted that the Honorable Andre Gelinas had been instrumental in supporting our grant application.

Dan Mylott, President, thanked Shirley Wagner for being the Interim Director in 2012-13 and for moving the Society to Main Street and fostering relationships with our Main Street neighbors. Shirley gave Susan some useful hints that she had learned including “Never say no to someone who wants to volunteer.” There are always plenty of tasks that need doing and people who may be willing to step forward to do them.

Board Welcomes New Members



Kathleen Flynn was born and raised in Fitchburg, graduating from St. Bernard's. She earned her undergraduate degree at Fitchburg State and her master's degree from Cambridge. Kathy taught at Reingold Elementary School for 30 years and was Literacy Coordinator at Crocker Elementary School for 6 years. She has served on the House Tour Committee and the Publications and Publicity Committee at the Society. Kathleen is one of the co-authors of *Legendary Locals of Fitchburg*.



Shane Franzen is the Associate director of Student Development at Fitchburg State University. His responsibilities include advising the Greek organizations, the Gay Straight Alliance, the Fitchburg Activities Board, and the Class of 2014 and acting as programming liaison to campus offices and departments. Shane has been a member of the House Tour for a number of years and previously served on the Board for three years. He does the fabulous window displays for the Society.



Nathan LaRose is the Assistant to Mayor Lisa Wong. He graduated from Fitchburg State University with a degree in Political Science and was an intern in the mayor's office in his senior year. Nate is coordinating the 250th Anniversary Celebration for the city which will take place in 2014.

Remembering Doris Kukkula

Doris Kukkula, who volunteered for many years at the Fitchburg Historical Society, passed away in September. Doris came in two or three times weekly to work on entering items into PastPerfect so the objects donated to the Society could be viewed on-line and would be

easy to find. She especially loved organizing our hat collection. Doris helped us get ready for the move from Grove Street to Main Street. We miss her cheerful presence and her positive attitude.

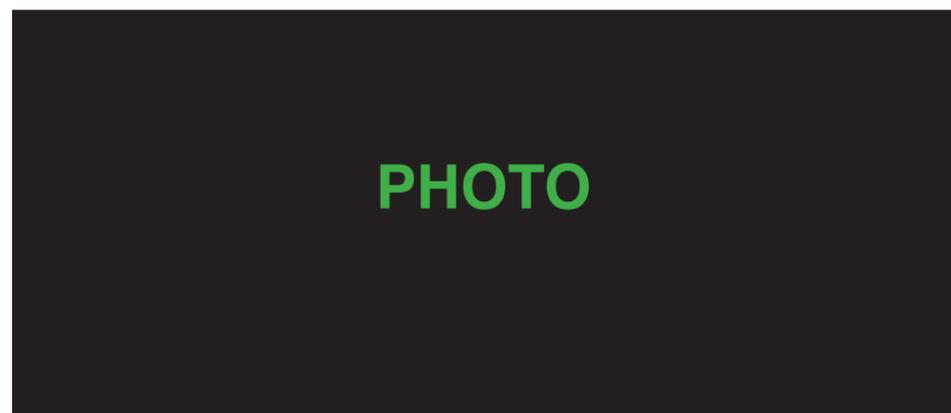
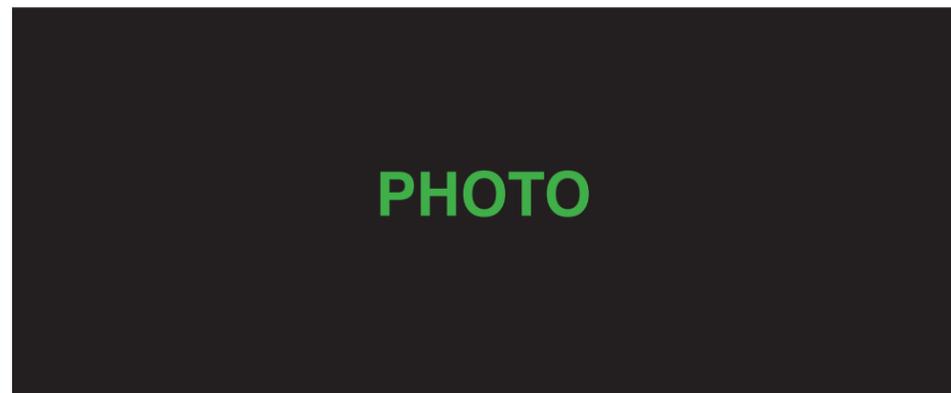
Written by: Shirley Wagner

Celebration of Life for Jeanne LaCroix Crocker September 29, 2013

Anyone attending the celebration of Jeanne LaCroix Crocker's life, who did not know her very well, certainly left knowing a great deal about this fine, friendly, fun-loving woman. Each one who spoke provided some new and some familiar insights and memories, thereby adding items to a near-empty box. Especially moving were one grandson's memories of quotations and anecdotes to live by taken from “the fridge” and a granddaughter's memories of snuggling next to her grandmother being read to about Maine and blueberries, the latter pronounced in Nana's own special way. Jeanne's daughter, Lucy, spoke about earlier memories allowing us to further enjoy the humor, warmth, and strength of this good mom, gram, sis-

ter, and friend, as well as the wife of the late Bigelow Jr. Eventually the box was wrapped with a lovely and loving note written by a caregiver who had been with her to the end, and the full package emerged of a woman we thought we knew. What a perfect tribute to someone who lived a life of love and caring, sprinkled with lots of fun! The Fitchburg Historical Society is extremely grateful to have had Jeanne and her husband as members and benefactors.

Written by: Simone Blake



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Sept. 2013 - Sept. 2014

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Susan Navarre, Director

Fitchburg Historical Society

781 Main Street,

P.O. Box 953

Fitchburg, MA. 01420

978-345-1157

Email:

fitchburghhistoricalsociety@fitchburghhistoricalsociety.com

Website:

fitchburghhistoricalsociety.org

Fitchburg Historical Society
781 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

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❧ *Save The Date* ❧

All events are at 781 Main Street

December 7, The Annual House Tour will be held from 11 to 4. Tickets for the House Tour are \$15 for members, \$18 for advanced sales, and \$20 on the day of the House Tour. They can be purchased beginning November 4th at the Fitchburg Historical Society, Debonis and Davin Florist Shop, the Windmill Florist Shop, Mill No. 3, Elliott's, Shacks, Slattery's, Homestead Primitives, and the Mayor's Office. The Fitchburg Historical Society will be open from 10 to 4 to sell tickets on the day of the event.

Saturday March 8, Shirley Wagner, Cindy Jones, Kathy Flynn, Simone Blake, and Joy Contois will be signing the Society's new book, *Legendary Locals of Fitchburg*, from 1 to 3 in the George R. Wallace, Jr. and Alice G. Wallace Exhibit Hall in the Crocker Center for the History of Fitchburg at 781 Main Street in Fitchburg.

Check our web calendar at fitchburghistoricalsociety.org for our calendar of events!