Madison Historical Society

Fall 2017

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

UPCOMING EVENTS

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, November 25
11-4
Light Refreshments

MHS MEMBERS' HOLIDAY PARTY
December 9
Allis-Bushnell House
853 Boston Post Road
4-7

FREDERICK LEE LECTURES
Celebrating Remarkable Women from Madison's Past
January 21, February 18 and March 18
First Congregational Church
4-5

A new way to help us! page 2

When you shop with amazon.com Smile they'll donate to THE MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 71 years

Centennial Gala: A Smashing Success

Photo by Bob Gundersen

The centennial gala held on October 19, 2017, capped off a yearlong celebration marking the Society's milestone birthday. Just over two hundred people filled the ballroom at the Madison Beach Hotel for this festive occasion. The event honored Jack and Laurie Heflin, Joe Oslander, and Don Rankin—four remarkable individuals who have each contributed significantly to the betterment of the town.

The gala featured music by Eight to the Bar, an eight-person band known for its outstanding instrumentals and vocal arrangements. More than fifty live and silent auction items were another highlight of the night. These included two hearth-cooked meals at the Allis-Bushnell House, an oyster-harvesting adventure in the historic Blakeman beds off Madison's coast, an oyster dinner with Jacques Pepin, and an astronautical weekend for two at Cape Canaveral.

Special thanks is owed to the many volunteers and board trustees who helped to make the gala a tremendous success. The MHS wants to particularly recognize interior designer and local realtor Diana Hartman for creating nautical-themed centerpieces that featured orchids, shore grasses, and seashells. Lisa Edmiston, chair of the New York-based Cancer Support Team and wife of trustee Mark Edmiston, also brought her considerable talents to organizing and executing the event seamlessly, along with Gala chair Nancy Smith, executive director Jennifer Simpson, and office manager Astrid Bernard.

The MHS is equally grateful to all those who supported the gala by attending the event or by graciously donating to the centennial campaign fund in lieu of participating. Our centennial celebration brought enhanced visibility to the MHS and brought to light the important role we play in protecting the town's treasures for future generations.

RECENT COLLECTION ACQUISITION

The newest item in the collection at the Allis-Bushnell House is an untitled, signed landscape in a carved and gilded period frame. Donated by Michael D. Schroeder of Cupertino, California, the painting, by Madison native Gilbert Munger (1837- 1903), is an oil painting on a wood panel. It measures 15" x 18" and is a typical Gilbert Munger scene of tall trees near still water. At its center is a small, undefined figure, presumably a woman, in a blue dress. It is assumed that the painting is one of the many scenes that Munger painted in France in the late 1880s, in or near Barbizon or in the nearby forest of Fontainebleau.

The painting was bought at auction by Schroeder and was recently cleaned by Tom Yost of Yost Conservators in Oxford, Connecticut. The painting was previously owned by an unknown Belgian collector. Mr. Yost discovered upon examination of the painting that its sky has been overpainted—evidenced by the yellowing of the varnish and the composition of the paints. It is not impossible to imagine that Munger himself may have repainted his entire sky, but there's no clear evidence or documentation that supports that theory.

Our collections team, headed by Bob Gundersen, purchased a museum-recommended LED light to illuminate the treasured work, and it now has a place of pride in the front parlor. We hope you will stop by to enjoy the view at the upcoming open house on Saturday, November 25, or at our annual Members' Holiday Party on December 9.

MHS: AN AMAZONSMILE ORGANIZATION

This summer the MHS was officially designated as an AmazonSmile charitable organization. The AmazonSmile program is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop. The smile.amazon.com programs offers you the same selection available on Amazon.com, with the added bonus that the company donates 0.5% of eligible purchases to your favorite charity.

To participate in this program and have the MHS be the beneficiary of your shopping expenditures, follow these instructions: First visit the Amazon Smile website at www.smile.amazon.com. There you will be prompted to search for the Madison Historical Society in the bar located below the spotlighted charities. A list of organizations will appear. Please be sure to select the MHS in Madison, CT, as there are several nonprofits with the same name in towns across the country. Once you've made your selection, a confirmation page will appear and prompt you to begin shopping. A report will detail how much has been donated to the Society through this program.

TARGETED GIVING PROGRAM LAUNCHED

This year trustee Laura Becker, with input from the board chairpersons, created a new giving program that lists our most pressing needs in a variety of areas including collections care, programs and events, personnel, building maintenance, and office equipment. This new targeted giving program allows you to choose where your donations go and provides the "big picture" in one place.

You are undoubtedly aware that the MHS relies entirely on gifts and grants to meet its operating expenses, offer its exhibitions and education programs, and support its preservation projects. Unrestricted gifts to the general operating fund are greatly appreciated and help ensure that the MHS achieves its mission. If, however, you prefer to fund a specific need, the new MHS Gift Guide provides an easy way to choose the perfect gift.

You can link to the Gift Guide from the Donate page on the Historical Society website at www.madisonhistory.org.

If you make your gift by mail, simply note the program or project you would like to support. If you make your gift online, please send a corresponding email to our office to direct your gift to the area of your choice. Please note that donations of $100 or more can be applied to a specific need. Smaller donations will be applied to the general fund. Your support to strengthen our organization and fulfill our vision for the future is sincerely appreciated. Thank you for your generosity!

The Gift that Keeps on Giving!

If you love to champion a cause, you're sure to find one with your name on it in the new MHS Gift Guide! Any gift of $100 or more can be put toward a specific project or area of our work. Below is a categorical sampling of our wish list; for details, go to https://madisonhistory.org/gift-guide/ Thank you, and Happy Holidays!

PERSONNEL
Collections Registrar and Manager / Staff Photographer / Summer Internships / Exhibition Staff

PROGRAMS
Collections Manager / Tour of Remarkable Homes Antiques Fair / Staff Photographer / MHS Website / Frederick Lee Lectures / Plaque Program / National Historic District Tour / Oral History Project / Fourth of July Parade

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
Commemorative Book / Historic Preservation Fund / General Support

BUILDINGS
Allis-Bushnell House Historic Stone Relocation / Refurbish the Annex / Lighting / Custom Shelving / HVAC Improvements / Docent Program / Lawn & Garden / Outdoor Tent

COLLECTION CARE
Archival Materials / Signage / Costume Management / Internet Access Collections Management and Work Space Upgrades / Custom Bookshelves

Madison's Treasures and Madison A-Z

To recognize our centennial, the MHS is pleased to announce the release of an illustrated commemorative book and poster celebrating all that is unique to Madison. *Madison's Treasures* is a visual exploration of the most interesting objects preserved in the Society's collection of nearly 5000 artifacts. This book beautifully illuminates the ways Madison's citizens lived as the land between the East and Hammonasset Rivers transformed, from its Native American beginnings through the arrival of European settlers and the development of farming and shipbuilding hubs, then onward to a holiday mecca, and finally to the diversified community of today.

Launched in March, the Madison A- Z poster project was a collaboration between the MHS and the Madison Art Society. Residents were asked to respond to the question, "What makes Madison special?" Using the letters of the alphabet, respondents offered ideas for features, events, people, places, and objects that best represent Madison. We received nearly 500 entries, including a rhyming poem with suggestions for every letter. After the responses were gathered, members of the centennial committee chose the "winning" entries and coordinated with local artists who created original paintings that illustrate this full-color poster.

Available just in time for the holidays, these wonderful, celebratory, centennial gifts can be purchased via our website, at our office in Lee's Academy, or through local retailers.

MHS Welcomes New Trustees

In August the Society welcomed three new trustees to the its board of directors:

Jean Fitzgerald has served as chairwoman of the Board of Education since 2010, is now serving on the Board of Finance, and is an adjunct professor in English for writing and literature at Quinnipiac University and Southern Connecticut State University. She will fill the education chair position vacated by longtime board trustees Connie Piccione and Mary Ouimet, and plans to continue the outstanding programs they offered to the town's second and fifth graders, as well as grow adult learning opportunities.

Dennis Flynn is a Connecticut native and a history buff who obtained a master's degree in history and economics from the University of Connecticut. After short stints in the U.S. Army and as an educator in Hartford, Dennis had a successful career in commercial real estate and property management. He brings considerable talents to the properties committee.

Ginny Triola relocated to Madison from New York nine years ago. She worked as an educator with a special focus on engaging girls in math and science. She served as coordinator of the Duchess County STOP-DWI—a nationally recognized program developed to encourage sobriety. Ginny currently serves on the board of directors of Neighbor to Neighbor, AAUW, and the Garden Club of Madison.

MHS MONTHLY HISTORY BOOK GROUP

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Books are often available at the Scranton Library: call 203-245-7365 to inquire.

To register, please call 203-245-4567 or e-mail contact@madisonhistory.org. Walk-ins are always welcome!

Meetings occur every third Tuesday at 7:00 PM at the Allis-Bushnell House and are led by Lyle Cubberly, Ph.D. (1lachawk@att.net)

For more information about the books, please go to the Adult Education page at www.madisonhistorical.org

DECEMBER 19
The Hero of the Empire: The Boer War, a Daring Escape and the Making of Winston Churchill
by Candice Millard

JANUARY 15
The Man Who Found Time: James Hutton and the Discovery of Earth's Antiquity
by Jack Repcheck

FEBRUARY 19
The Passing of the Armies
by Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain

MARCH 19
Lords of the Atlas
by Garvin Maxwell

APRIL 16
1066: The Year of the Conquest
by David Howarth

MAY 21
A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir
by Donald Worster

Allis-Bushnell House ◆ Saturday, December 9

the MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1 years

Madison Historical Society
Founded in 1917
P.O. Box 17
Madison, CT 06443
203-245-4567
www.madisoncthistory.org

MHS offices are open in the c. 1821 Lee's Academy at 14 Meetinghouse Lane on Wednesday, Thursday & Friday from 9 AM to 1 PM.

For a tour of the MHS c. 1785 National Historic Register property, the Allis-Bushnell House, call 203-245-4567.

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