Spring/Early Summer 2016

Madison Historical Society

Historical Happenings

UPCOMING EVENTS

EXHIBIT OPENING
OVER HERE, OVER THERE: MADISON IN WWI
Lee's Academy
Late July (date TBA)

HISTORY BOOK GROUP
Allis-Bushnell House
June 21
7 pm

45th ANNUAL ANTIQUES FAIR
On the Green in Madison
August 27
9-4 pm

MEMBERS ONLY END-OF-YEAR PICNIC
Deacon John Grave House
August 28
5:30-7:30 pm

Tour of Remarkable Homes — June 26th from 11 to 4

The fourth annual Tour of Remarkable Homes will be held on Sunday, June 26, from 11am to 4pm. The Tour, one of the largest fundraisers hosted by the MHS, draws hundreds of attendees, raising funds for the maintenance of the historic properties we own, the conservation of our collection, and educational programming.

Ann Nyberg, the longest-serving full-time female news anchor in Connecticut television history, is the event's honorary chairperson. A proud Madison native, Ms. Nyberg will greet visitors at Lee's Academy the morning of the tour and sign copies of her book, *Slices of Life: A Storyteller's Diary*, on the morning of the event.

The five featured homes reflect Madison's diverse architectural heritage and are remarkable for their age, location, size, interiors, and gardens. The one-day tour offers visitors the chance to explore these properties unhurriedly. Five local real estate agencies sponsor the tour; they provide docents who assist visitors and answer questions about the homes.

With three large fieldstone fireplaces on the first floor, exposed beam ceilings, and wide plank floors, the circa 1690 Jonathan Murray House is one of the oldest homes in Madison. The two-story brick-red cape on Scotland Road underwent a top-to-bottom renovation in 2003 by Gulick & Spradlin, LLC. Many original elements remain in this antique home from the built-in corner cabinet to the impressive fieldstone hearth and beehive oven that greet visitors entering the house. The current owners, who split their time between Manhattan and Madison, envision their weekend home as a retreat for family and friends. To accommodate their many guests, they commissioned a Pennsylvania post-and-beam loft-style barn with sleeping quarters on the property. The barn is a place to kick back and relax with comfy sofas, a full-size ping-pong table, and a kitchen with barn-wood cabinets and copper countertops.

The contemporary shingle-style home on Island Avenue was built in 2001 on part of the original Oakledge Estate. The estate originally encompassed the Princess Pignatelli home and all of the land down to the beach.

Photo: Bob Gundersen

Tour of Remarkable Homes *(continued from page 1)*

Photos: Bob Gundersen

Conceived by interior designer Rosalyn Cama, the home reflects the evidence-based design principles that she incorporates into all her design projects. The house is positioned to take full advantage of the sun at all times of the day. The furnishings offer a richness and depth to the home with an eclectic mix of periods and styles. Peppered throughout are interesting works of art from artists with whom the designer has worked, as well as found objects she discovered during her many travels.

Circa 1843, the Federal Greek Revival home known as the Jonathan Chittenden House is eponymously named for a Killingworth native and shipbuilder. The current owners, who have lived in the house since 1979, say their home is a constant work in progress. A labor of love, the home has a French provincial style with warm tones, comfortable furnishings, fruitwood armoires, and floral patterned fabrics. The playfulness in the owner's design scheme is evidenced by the cheetah-print wallpaper in the first-floor bathroom. The real surprise in this property are the gardens maintained and cultivated by the owners. Their land extends to the fifth hole of the golf course and has been the scene of many July Fourth parties and celebrations.

Originally known as "Treetops," the 1930s Middle Beach Road cottage was once the site of Camp Netab, a Girl Scouts retreat. Scenic views of Long Island Sound abound from this home elevated above the rocks and boulders incorporated into the design. The home experienced a massive renovation in the 1970s when a bedroom and detached studio/garage were added. The pagoda-style trim embellishing the front door, the wall of windows displaying blue-and-white Chinese vases, and the Asian-inspired dining room enhance the home's unique style.

Rounding out the Tour is an 1860s farmhouse on Liberty Street. The current owners are only the second in the home's long history. The stately Federal was rented for many years until it was purchased in 1985 by the current owners. Shortly thereafter, renovations began to convert the garage into a spacious family room with French doors opening onto a bluestone patio. A master bedroom with a walkout balcony extends the living space, and an updated kitchen includes all the modern amenities and conveniences.

The Madison Historical Society is deeply grateful for the corporate sponsorship of the following realty agencies: Berkshire Hathaway, Coldwell Banker, Page Taft/Christie's, William Pitt Sotheby's, and William Raveis. Without their support and guidance the tour would not be possible.

New this year, tour participants are encouraged to stop at the MHS's Allis-Bushnell House for light refreshments and a tour of the property. Complimentary tea sandwiches, sweets, and homemade lemonade will be served. Owned and protected by the MHS for nearly 100 years, the house museum's lower level has recently been renovated and made accessible to all town residents. It is located at 853 Boston Post Road and will be open throughout the tour.

Tour tickets can be purchased at Lee's Academy at 14 Meetinghouse Lane, where the Society has its administrative offices and exhibit space. Tickets are $40 on the day or $35 if purchased in advance via the Society's website at www.madisoncthistorical.org. Tickets are also available at Walker Loden locations in Madison, Essex, and New Haven.

ORAL HISTORIES PROJECT

Photo: Paula Shonewald

Students receiving training at the Madison Cable Access Channel

The MHS is seeking long-time Madison residents to take part in an exciting new oral history project that is the brainchild of board member Nancy Smith. The MHS will partner with Brown Middle School to preserve the life stories and rich personal histories of those who have lived in Madison for generations. The project seeks to help students realize that older citizens are walking history books whose personal experiences have shaped the fabric of our community in ways large and small.

In collaboration with the Madison Cable Access Channel, the students—ages ten and eleven—will be responsible for developing the questions, running the interviews, filming the sessions, editing the footage, and publishing the resulting videos. This project provides a unique opportunity for students to develop a stronger sense of self and a greater appreciation for the past by discovering the common experiences of senior citizens.

The pilot project launches this summer. We are actively seeking town residents who would like to share their stories. Please contact the office at (203) 245-4567 if you would like to take part in this program. One of the many fringe benefits, in addition to preserving the town's rich cultural past through the spoken word, will be free technology tutoring sessions with the youngsters and perhaps someone to call upon to walk your dog, shovel your snow, or weed your garden.

World War I Exhibition Opening in Late July 2016

The Madison Historical Society and the Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archive were recently awarded a $15,000 grant from CT Humanities for their joint exhibition on World War I. The exhibit, titled *Over Here, Over There: Madison in World War I,* will feature the men and women from Madison who served both at home and on the Front. The exhibit will have two main venues: the exhibition hall at the MHS's Lee's Academy and a companion exhibit at the Memorial Town Hall, which houses CLEMA's offices and collection. The joint exhibition will open in late July.

The uniforms, memorabilia, and letters of those who served will be central to telling the story of the war experience. Through artifacts culled from both organizations' collections, the exhibit will also explore key themes such as attitudes to the war and neutrality, political censorship, the rise of the media, the propaganda machine, the art and music that flourished during this era, and the post-war experience. The project will partner with the Scranton Memorial Library and other town organizations to feature musical performances, lectures, book talks, and movie screenings throughout the year. These elements will enhance the visitors' experience and deepen their understanding of the impact of WWI on Madison.

Among the many vivid first-person narratives are the stories of Philip Platt (who was involved in humanitarian responses before, during, and after the war), Morgan Redfield (who ran away to join the Canadian forces at age 15), and Charlotte Dowd, a teenage girl whose diary reflects her concerns for her peers and her older brother. Listening Centers at the Lee's Academy exhibit will feature recordings of high school students who will read from some of these letters and memoirs. Multimedia viewing stations will feature a selection of the photos from the Front as well as photos of other items that could not be displayed.

More information on the opening date of the exhibition will be forthcoming soon.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Vendors from across the region will converge on the Madison Green on August 27 for the Society's **forty-fifth annual antiques fair**. Many familiar faces will be among the exibitors selling their wares on the green at this highly anticipated outdoor fair—one of the largest on the shoreline. This event is one of the Society's largest and most important fundraising events. We hope you will come out and support the MHS.

The **Members Only end-of-summer picnic** held in conjunction with our friends at the Deacon John Grave Foundation, CLEMA, and the Garden Club of Madison will be on Sunday, August 28, from 5:30 to 7:30. The big-band music of the sixteen-piece George Manstan Band will entertain guests with their swinging songs on the grounds of the Grave House. Bring a lawn chair, a picnic dinner, and your dancing shoes. Refreshments will be served.

MHS MONTHLY HISTORY BOOK GROUP

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Books are available at the Scranton Library.

To register, please call 203-245-4567 or e-mail contact@madisonhistory.org

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

JUNE 21
Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time
by Dava Sobel

JULY 19
The Professor and the Madman
by Simon Winchester

AUGUST 16
Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World
by Mark Kurlansky

SEPTEMBER 20
The Wright Brothers
by David McCullough

OCTOBER 18
A Short History of Reconstruction, Updated Edition
by Eric Foner

NOVEMBER 15
The War that Made America: A Short HIstory of the French and Indian War
by Fred Anderson

DECEMBER 20
The Printer and the Preacher
by Randy Peterson

THE MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S 4TH ANNUAL

TOUR OF REMARKABLE HOMES

1700 1800 1900 2000

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF FIVE UNIQUE MADISON PROPERTIES ON SUNDAY, JUNE 26TH FROM 11 TO 4

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the MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

The MHS newsletter is published quarterly.

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