A Green Thought in a Green Shade

That’s a line from a famous poem by Andrew Marvell, “The Garden.” I’ve been having green thoughts of my own lately—longings, actually. The Longfellow Garden has been out of commission for almost two years. It was the staging area for all the new library construction, and it was bulldozed, dug up, re-filled, strewn with debris, and driven over by huge trucks. At the moment there’s not a plant in sight. Now that the library is nearly done, I’m beginning to realize how much I’ve missed the garden—that cool, quiet, meditative place that seemed like a green reflection of the library and the experience of thoughtful reading.

But the Longfellow Garden’s time has come. Though we continue to raise money for the project, the work is going forward. The old wall has been completely rebuilt, exactly as designed; the paths and beds and features first sketched in 1926 are being reset; the cated irrigation system will soon be in place; rich loam is on the way; and plants—flowers, shrubs, and stately trees—are even now waking up. It will all come together by the 27th of June—the library’s grand opening celebration. I hope to see you then, or perhaps another time, in the garden, eating lunch, having green thoughts in the green shade.

Richard D’Abate
Executive Director

ABOUT THE COVER
Three of the Thirteen Mountains which Surround Katahdin
DETAIL, JOHN MARTIN JOURNAL AND SCRAPBOOKS, CA 1864-1890

Working as an accountant at the Katahdin Iron Works near Brownville, John Martin documented his surroundings in August of 1889. He included the factory and dam but it was the glorious landscape that he found most compelling. His diary noted the many greens of spring and the blaze of autumn color. For this drawing, he “took the most pains with the trees bordering on the head of the Lake.”

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The renewed and expanded Maine Historical Society library has reopened and every day the Reading Room is full of people pursuing a wide range of historical subjects, for pleasure or business. The very sources that enable their quest are the focus of this year’s exhibition, Re/Collected: Great Works and New Discoveries from the Brown Library. This overview will reveal the breadth and depth of this unparalleled collection, arguably the State’s most comprehensive source for the study of Maine history.

The exhibition offers the opportunity to consider the many and varied materials found within the library: books, manuscripts, maps, broadsides, photographs, ephemera, periodicals and architectural and engineering drawings. One such document is the Dunlap Broadside of the Declaration of Independence, printed in Philadelphia on July 4th 1776. Perhaps the most valued printed document in the world—there are only 25 copies in existence—the Dunlap broadside announced independence almost two weeks before the handwritten, “unanimous declaration”, which now rests at the National Archives. Other selected objects are regularly used in historical study, such as genealogies, photographs and microfilm. In addition, groups of objects across media will focus on special topics, such as the Society’s early history, the Civil War, and Portland’s Abyssinian Meeting House.

The exhibition, curated by Laura Fecych Sprague, opens June 26 and will run through December 31, 2009. Support for this exhibit is provided by the BHA Foundation and the Phineas W. Sprague Memorial Foundation.

* Depicting a happy summer camp scene, this photograph is one of 21,000 glass plate negatives from the Portland Press Herald archive, taken between 1920 and 1940. Donated to the library by the newspaper, then owned by Guy P. Gannett Company, this collection helps document 20th century life in Maine. Collections of Blethen Maine Newspaper/MHS.

* John Martin Journals
   Between 1864 and 1899 John Martin (1823-1902) of Bangor and Ellsworth wrote, illustrated, and compiled four volumes (comprising 1,000 pages) that document his 19th century life in Maine. Many illustrations are his original watercolor sketches, but others he cut from newspapers or periodicals, pasting them into his books. This one of acrobats is but one amusing example.

* Elvis Presley was scheduled to perform at the Cumberland County Civic Center in 1977, the year the facility opened. When Presley died and the concert was cancelled, these tickets, rather than being tossed in the wastebasket, were preserved. They survive as wonderful examples of 20th century ephemera.

* Jewett Farm Workers, 1915, Norridgewock
   This commonplace rural Maine scene – workers on a farm – is made remarkable by the fact that everyone, both human and equine, has been identified. Clarence Gowes is holding Dolly and Mollie (presumably on the right); Kit and Fred are with Webster Bennett. Working on the Jewett Farm in Norridgewock in 1915, they contributed to the success of this large agricultural and canning enterprise. This photograph, among many the company took that documented their business, was made into a postcard, an effective means for marketing. [Jewett Family Papers, Collection 1532]
A Windmill Model

Maine Historical Society recently purchased from a local antique collector a fascinating technical model of a windmill made in 1865 by John A. Hubbard, who lived in West Houlton at that time. The model illustrates Hubbard’s patent to improve the design of windmills and more efficiently convert wind power into mechanical energy, and is now part of the museum collection.

Unfortunately the model has little documentation, but staff research has uncovered some information about Hubbard as well as background about wind power.

Given the current interest in sources for alternative energy, it is interesting how history repeats itself – nearly 150 years ago at least one Maine resident was looking to convert wind into useful energy.

John Allen Hubbard was born November 3, 1820 in Hiram. His father and grandfather were farmers and millers and the young John would have been raised in a home where machines and mechanical systems were part of his everyday experience. The Hubbard mill was probably powered by water -- how John became interested in wind power is unknown.

Census and genealogical records show John settled in Houlton by the early 1850s where he raised a family and set up a cabinet making shop. He worked with an apprentice and must have been actively engaged in the region’s booming lumber industry.

This model is a vertical mill – and is equipped with a reciprocating arm that powers a small frame saw. A larger, full-size machine of this type would be attractive to the many owners of lumbering operations in the eastern forests of Maine. Beautifully made from walnut, the model illustrates Hubbard’s skill as a cabinet maker, and his interest in harnessing the abundant energy available from the wind.

John Mayer
Museum Curator

Mallett Letters Tell Good Stories

MHS has received more than 40 letters written by the late Farmington historian Richard Mallett (1908-2005), Bowdoin(1930), and author: University of Maine at Farmington (1974); The Last 100 Years: A Glimpse of Farmington We Have Known (1991); Two Centuries of Farmington Schools (1992); and The Early Years of Farmington (1994).

The letters discuss the joys and pitfalls encountered by a local historical writer in the late 20th century, recollections that are both substantive and charming. Specific memories include an early job as a local sports writer, visits with historians Elizabeth Ring, Paul Frederic, and Bill Bunting.

Mallett’s description of a Red-path Chautauqua gathering at Sandy River in 1918 (letter of August 12, 1999) recalls how he walked to the river with a man who asked such questions “as you get from half-interested adults: what do you want to be when you are an adult? what do you do for kicks?” Later Richard’s father brought him to hear the evening lecturer, his walking companion from earlier in the day: Warren G. Harding. The letter continues: “So you see I spent most of the day with an attractive and pleasant man who was perhaps the worst president we ever had.”

MHS collections are presently in need of such late 20th century correspondence, which provide insight into the life and motives of Mainers from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations. A proud Mainer, Richard served for two decades as an analyst and editor of intelligence reports for the CIA before teaching at UMF from 1968 to 1973. Indeed it was the death of his beloved wife Helena (1914-1992) that propelled him into his later writing career (letter September 7, 1994).

These letters dovetail beautifully with the Maine Community Heritage Project (see page 10) currently at work with a variety of entities in Farmington. It brings together widely scattered historical information in new ways. Richard Mallett would undoubtedly be pleased.

Bill Barry
Research Librarian
Making History

It was the end of March, March 24th to be exact. A group of researchers stood patiently on the steps, waiting for the doors to open—the “soft” debut of the newly renovated and expanded MHS Brown Library. The staff was breathless, exhausted, and a bit apprehensive. So many details! And the building—at least the final punch list—was still in progress. Double anxiety! But we needn’t have worried. The congratulations were heartfelt and immediate: for the blending of old and new architectural styles, for the handsome furniture, for the new colors, for the fabulous storage systems, for the fact that Maine Historical Society had recommitted itself to the highest standards of stewardship. It was a moment of great pride.

One part of the project, however, was conspicuously incomplete the day we opened. Work on the Longfellow Garden had been caught in a winter postponement. The garden, we believe, is the library’s essential companion—its green reflection. The one must have the other. That, in fact, is the focus of all our efforts now: to restore the garden to its former beauty and historic charm in time for the grand celebration in June. Plants and paths, walls and fountain, a quiet place to think. We can hardly wait.

The garden, along with other unfinished work, is also the focus of our ongoing fundraising activity. As noted in the spring issue, we are on the last leg of the campaign: about $800,000 to go to meet our $9.5 million goal. The campaign committee has regrouped, a new strategy is in place, and we will be working diligently throughout the year to raise these funds and more. More? Yes, there is important work ahead and we must begin it on the soundest financial footing. Your help is still needed. If you have given, please consider giving again; if you haven’t given yet, we welcome your participation. Just call Bonnie Vance in the development office: 207-774-1822, ext. 231.

To all who’ve seen the library it is clear that both Maine history and the Maine Historical Society are entering a new future. That is why we are so eager for the grand public celebration and rededication of both library and garden, scheduled for June 27th. The entire Society will be open and free to tour: Brown Library, Longfellow House and Garden, and the Museum, including the new exhibit, Re/Collected: Great Works and New Discoveries from the Brown Library, which opens June 26th. Please plan to join us: members, friends, supporters, and all who love the state of Maine.

The Walter F. Whittier Reading Room at the Brown Library.

Nick Noyes, Brown Library Director, shelving books during the move.

Longfellow Garden, Spring, 2009

The Children’s Gate

A SPECIAL PROJECT

One of the Longfellow Garden’s most unique features is the Children’s Gate, which once tied the library and Longfellow House together. The gate was designed by the architect Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow to honor his uncle Henry’s famous affection for children. It was installed soon after the original library opened in 1907 but was removed in the 1960s in dilapidated condition. We would like to bring the Children’s Gate back, and have created a separate fundraising effort to do so. The goal is $100,000. We’re extremely pleased to say that the project has been kicked off by a very generous gift of $25,000 from the members of the Longfellow Garden Club. If you would like to help, or might consider a naming gift, please let us know: call Richard D’Abate, or Bonnie Vance, 207-774-1822 ext 231.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AND SUPPORT THE MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: WWW.MAINEHISTORY.ORG/Membership.
Bicyclists at Checkley Hotel, Scarborough, ca. 1895. Contributed by Maine Historical Society.


Even Portland has cast aside her usual slowness and helped to prove that 1895 may be here, as it has been called elsewhere, the wheeling year,” Gwen Mason of Portland wrote in Maine Outing magazine in August 1895.

She added, “Indeed, it must be when a little city, handicapped as it is by bad roads and its lothfulness to adopt any new sport or fad, in six months brings forth over three hundred devotees among the feminine population.”

The bicycling craze had hit Maine, the nation, and many other countries as well.

In May 1895, the magazine noted, “There is a great boom in bicycling at South Portland this spring, there being at least forty new wheels. Old and young are learning to ride, and there are some amusing spectacles afforded by the novices.”

The next year, 1896 has been called the height of the popularity of the “wheel.” Portland had a reported 40 businesses that sold more than 80 makes of bicycles.

Throughout Maine in the 1880s until the early 1900s, bicycles were everywhere. About 50 communities had bicycle clubs affiliated with the League of American Wheelman, a group that promoted cycling, lobbied for better roads for cyclists, and published newsletters and maps of cycling routes. Many other clubs existed, too.

The Maine Outing in June 1895 quoted another publication, noting, “A ladies’ wheel club is reported from Gardiner, Me., rejoicing in the euphonious name, “Six of One and Half Dozen of the Other Club. The name, though lengthy, is appropriate, as six of its members are maidens and six are matrons.”

Bicycling enthusiasts praised the many benefits of cycling: exercise, fresh air, health, improved family relationships, diversion for men from drinking, and women’s dress reform. Much discussion filled magazines, newspapers, and, no doubt, private conversations about the appropriateness of women riding bicycles and, especially, of what they wore while riding.

It was clear that Victorian clothing – long and heavy – would be inappropriate. Many women opted for bloomers.

Gwen Mason wrote, “The first lady who rode a diamond frame machine in Portland is Mrs. William Haggett, who rode a Monarch on a stationary rest, at the New York Cycle Show, making 100 miles in four hours and fifty-three minutes. She looks very trim upon her eighteen-pound racer in a light brown suit, consisting of red sweater, brown bloomers, cap, leggings, and jacket.”

Mason praised the new costume that “discards the long trailing skirt and adopts that which clothes each leg separately.”

Another bicycle craze had hit the country in 1869 following the introduction of the velocipede, often dubbed the “boneshaker,” to the U.S. With pedals attached to the front wheel and a high-mount seat, the vehicle was not for everyone. But velocipede tracks where patrons could rent the cycles and learn to ride sprouted up around Maine and the nation, and disappeared as quickly.

The “ordinary,” as the improved high-wheel cycle was known, was still popular in Maine in the late 1880s.

By the 1890s, however, most riders had switched to the safety bike that looked much more like contemporary bicycles. It was chain driven, had a low-mount seat, a more comfortable ride, and was safer for men and women.

Riders in the mid 1890s used cyclometers to record their mileage, bragging about a season’s total that topped 1,000 miles. Clarence Rice of Woodfords reported in September 1895 that he had ridden 4,480 miles that season – and hoped to reach 5,000.

Clubs and individual entrepreneurs sponsored bicycle tours. The Skowhegan Wheel Club had annual tours to Quebec, for instance.

Racing was popular, too, both on tracks – some built especially for bicycles – and on the road.

The popularity of bicycles reportedly hurt businesses like stables and carriage companies. But the bicycle craze faded some after 1896 and then, a new form of transportation, the automobile, supplanted the “wheel.”

Candace Kanes, Maine Memory Network Curator
SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE MEMORY NETWORK
CONTRIBUTING PARTNER

Sanford Historical Committee

Fred Philpot’s View of Sanford and Springvale

Photography has the potential to democratize history. Many of the sources of history are government or business records that tend to favor officials and official events. A camera might capture images of those same “important” persons, but also might provide images of ordinary people, daily life, family and community and other events and occasions that escape official notice.

Between 1887 and 1917, Fred Clarence Philpot, a professional photographer and merchant, pointed his camera at people, homes, businesses, factories, churches, parades, carnivals and special events in Sanford, Springvale and other locations in York County.

Making and selling postcards of his images drove much of Philpot’s activity. When business was slack, for instance, he photographed every house on a street in hopes of selling postcard views to the homeowners.

Philpot, a native of Limerick, set up his first photo business in Springvale in 1875 with his brother George. When George died soon afterwards, 20-year-old Fred went elsewhere to gain more experience, first to Somersworth, then to Portland where he worked for noted photographer Charles W. Hearn.

Besides his photographic business, he had a separate store on Main Street in Springvale where he sold pianos, organs, bicycles and sewing machines. He sometimes photographed his own store and took many pictures of shops in Sanford and Springvale. He sold his business in 1917 and returned to Limerick, where he died in 1925.

In the early 1920s, amateur photographer Lloyd Batchelder bought some 1,500 of Philpot’s glass negatives. Batchelder’s widow donated them to the Sanford Historical Committee in 1963.

Paul Auger, Vice President of the Society and a history and social studies teacher at Sanford High School, working with his students, has contributed more than 500 Philpot images to Maine Memory Network.

The Philpot Collection presents a remarkable record of many details of life in Sanford, Springvale, and surrounding areas.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNER PROFILE: SANFORD-SPRINGVALE HISTORICAL MUSEUM WWW.SANFORDHISTORY.ORG

FACILITIES:
The Sanford-Springvale Historical Museum, Home of the Sanford Historical Committee & The Sanford-Springvale Historical Society
505 Main Street, Springvale.

The Museum was built in 1873 and served as Sanford’s Town Hall from then until 1908. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.

CONTACT:
Harland Eastman, President, Sanford-Springvale Historical Society
P. O. Box 276, Springvale, ME 04083
Museum (207) 490-1028
Home (207) 324-2797

HOURS:
Year Round – Thursday 2-8 p.m.; Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to noon.

ADMISSION: Free

FOUNDED:
Sanford Historical Committee 1927; Sanford-Springvale Historical Society 2005.

MISSION:
To acquire, preserve and display items of historical significance to the Town of Sanford and Village of Springvale.

COLLECTION:
Artifacts, manuscript materials, photographs and printed items representing nearly every facet of the town’s history.

PROGRAMS:
Monthly programs on subjects of general interest, some historical, some not. Also, concerts of classical music about every three months.

MEMBERS: 200

PUBLICATIONS:
A quarterly newsletter with historical articles and news about happenings at the Museum.
Local History, Local Schools

This spring, students from East End Community, Hall, Nathan Clifford, and Riverton schools participating in our partnership program, “Local History/Local Schools” are using Main Street, Maine: Downtown Views From the Eastern Illustrating and Publishing Company as a jumping off point for studying communities of the past, present, and future.

Students’ families were invited to see these projects on display at the museum as part of the “Local History/Local Schools” final celebration on Tuesday, May 5th. At this event, students become the museum experts, introducing their families to the exhibit and the learning they have done.

> Before heading out, students looked at some of the Monument Square postcards on display in the Shettleworth Lecture Hall, and thought about how the square has changed over time. Later, they would go over their sketches with black marker and put them all together to create a panoramic view.

> After a close exploration of the photographs from Main Street, Maine in their classrooms and the gallery, students braved the chilly March air to sketch Portland’s “Main” Street – Congress Street – as seen from Monument Square.

> Back in the classroom, students became community planners, creating three-dimensional Main Street collages of their vision of the future. On these streets, houses, toy stores, schools, and pet shops coexist happily with bubble cars, jet pack stores, and robot crossing guards!
New Funding for Field Trips

A field trip to MHS has been the centerpiece of many teachers’ curriculum for years. The Wadsworth-Longfellow House provides an authentic sense of 19th century life and of Longfellow’s roots as a poet. Students on the Longfellow Trail experience changes in the city of Portland over time, with a special focus on events and places alluded to in Longfellow’s “My Lost Youth.” In the MHS Museum, they participate in hands-on, interactive activities related to a wide variety of Maine history topics.

Limited school budgets and the steep price of transportation have made it difficult recently for teachers to give their students these experiences. MHS has been looking for ways to work with schools to keep their students coming to visit. All of our education programs are designed in conjunction with the Maine State Learning Results. We provide pre- and post-visit lesson plans to expand and make more meaningful the learning done onsite. Our school admission costs are low ($2/student for a one-hour program, $3/student for two-hour programs).

And now, due to the generous support provided by the Edward H. Daveis Benevolent Fund of the Maine Community Foundation and the Elise A. Brown Fund, we are able to subsidize transportation costs. Schools will be reimbursed for bus transportation costs up to $150. One grant is available per bus, with a total grant not to exceed $300 per school. Subsidies will be awarded to eligible schools on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are depleted or December 31, 2009, whichever occurs first.

We have received applications from schools as close as Portland and as far away as Lewiston. An application for the bus subsidy, as well as descriptions of our education programs, can be found at www.mainehistory.org.

Carolin Collins
Director of Education

Bangor Daily News Highlights Maine Community Heritage Projects

The Bangor Daily News featured four communities working in our Maine Community Heritage Project—Thomaston, Lubec, Islesboro, and Presque Isle—in their special “Newspapers in Education” (NIE) section in April. NIE is designed to help teachers and students use newspapers to develop essential academic and life skills. Each of these MCHP teams worked with the Bangor Daily News staff to produce a full-page spread that described their projects and showcased images.

The Maine Community Heritage Project is a partnership between MHS and the Maine State Library, funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum & Library Services. It is currently working with eight communities throughout the state to explore local history and create websites as a means to share that history.

Find something for everyone in our Museum Store!

Dunlap Broadsides
Limited Edition

One of our Brown Library’s treasures, an original Declaration of Independence, has been reproduced in a limited edition and is available in the Museum Store and on line at www.mainehistory.org, $15.00.

And don’t forget: Your members-only discount can be used in the shop and on-line at www.mainehistory.org
Maine Legacies

As early founders of MHS, the Longfellow family was among the first to recognize the importance of gifts made after a donor’s lifetime. In 1895, Anne Longfellow Pierce decided to bequeath the home occupied by three generations of family to the Maine Historical Society as a legacy to the memory of her brother, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

When Anne died, the house passed to MHS along with household items and artifacts original to the Wadsworth and Longfellow families. Because of Anne’s vision, the Longfellow House opened in 1901 as the first historic house museum in Maine – one of the first in the nation—and has welcomed visitors to this National Historic Landmark ever since.

As part of her bequest, Anne stipulated in her will that a library be built on her property behind the Longfellow House as the permanent home for MHS. Designed by Alexander Longfellow, Henry and Anne’s nephew and a prominent Maine architect of the time, the library was opened in 1907 and is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

Newly named for Alida Carroll and John Marshall Brown, the recently renovated and expanded library contains one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of materials related to Maine history in the state. We believe that Anne Longfellow Pierce, like many others who have followed her example, would be proud that such a state-of-the-art facility will protect and preserve the extensive collections of MHS for generations to come.

Please consider talking to your attorney or financial advisor about making a bequest to the Maine Historical Society. Your foresight will help make a promise to future generations that the stories and artifacts of Maine history will always be there.

To make your own gift for the future, contact Bonnie Vance at (207) 774-1822, ext. 231 or at bvance@mainehistory.org.

Bonnie Vance
Development Officer

Merrill Industries Focus of Major Archival Project

Even before his untimely death in 2007, Paul D. Merrill, known familiarly as P.D., had begun to talk to MHS about the history of Merrill Industries and how its papers could be saved, organized, and prepared for posterity. It’s a topic not many businesses and corporations think about (unfortunately so, since business is integral to our society and history at every point), but P.D. was a thoughtful and far-sighted man.

The Merrill companies played an important role in Maine. P.D.’s father, Paul E. Merrill, purchased his first truck in 1929, the start of Merrill Transportation Co., which became the leading hauler in northern New England for petroleum products, chemicals, and heavy equipment. Its crane service installed industrial equipment and eventually erected the Telstar antenna that relayed the first television signals between North America and Europe. After the WWII, Merrill Industries operated lumber mills and engaged in many other businesses—furniture manufacturing, laundry, cement and coal distribution among them. In 1982 Merrill’s Marine Terminal opened for business and helped reestablish Portland as a significant national and international port for dry cargo.

As might be imagined, the records of Merrill Industries (not to mention the family’s civic and cultural activities) constitute a major historical resource. Now, in the second year of a two year contract, MHS is helping P.D.’s estate preserve that legacy. Sophie Mendoza, an MHS professional archivist, is carefully turning a massive aggregation of materials into a fully processed archival collection: weeded, arranged, indexed, cross referenced, and properly re-housed. When the project is done, the Merrill Industry Collection will open new windows on the economy, politics and community life of Maine in the 20th century. If you would like more information about the project, or would like to know more about our archival services, please call Nick Noyes, at 207-774-1822.
SUMMER HOURS
MHS RESEARCH LIBRARY
Tues-Sat 10-4
Closed Holiday Weekends

LONGFELLOW HOUSE
Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5
[Last tour at 4]
Open July 4, 10-2
Closed Mon Sept. 7

MUSEUM
Exhibit opens June 26
Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5
Open July 4, 10-2
Closed Mon Sept. 7

MUSEUM SHOP
Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5
Open July 4, 10-2
Closed Mon Sept. 7

MHS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
Mon-Fri 9-5 Closed Holidays
Tel: (207) 774-1822
Fax: (207) 775-4301
E-mail sarchbald@mainehistory.org

CALL AHEAD FOR
HOLIDAY HOURS

MAILING ADDRESS:
Maine Historical Society
489 Congress St.
Portland, ME 04101

WEBSITES:
www.mainehistory.org
www.mainememory.net
www.vintagemaineimages.com
www.hwlongfellow.org

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION
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RE/COLLECTED:
GREAT WORKS AND NEW DISCOVERIES
FROM THE BROWN LIBRARY

EXHIBIT OPENING - FRIDAY, JUNE 26TH
5:00-7:00 P.M.

MHS ANNUAL MEETING
(RESERVATIONS REQUIRED)

SATURDAY, JUNE 27TH
10:00 -11:30 A.M.

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ALL EVENTS