



# The Hourglass

CCXXIII Northborough Historical Society September 2013

[www.Northboroughhistsoc.org](http://www.Northboroughhistsoc.org)

[NHS1906@verizon.net](mailto:NHS1906@verizon.net)

## **September 27, 2013, 6:30 PM Pot Luck Supper, 7:30 Meeting.**

Program: September 27, 2013 - Peddling Your Wares: A Look at the Itinerant Merchant in Early 19th Century New England - Tom Kelleher, Curator at Old Sturbridge Village, explores how thousands of traveling salesmen in the 1800's brought goods from around the world to the homes of farm families, as part of the growing consumer revolution. His discussion also explores the fascinating news, stories and conversation the peddler's shared with the isolated farm families.

*Hosted by Hospitality Committee and Trustees*

### **Ellsworth-McAfee Park**

"In December 1982, a group of residents got together and began a drive to collect money to transform 40 acres of wilderness off South Street into a multi-sport complex." Thus begins a 1984 news article about an unfulfilled effort. The town had turned this land over to the Parks and Recreation Commission "in the early 1970s." Your historian was not able to find a record of this transaction, but another source can fill in some of the details: an interview that this Society conducted with former selectman Warren LaBaire in 1999, one of dozens of interviews with people whom the Historical Society selected as practitioners or observers of Northborough's ways and activities during their years in this town. LaBaire was both. The South Street project began, he told us, with a conversation between Paula Moore

Membership  
Northborough Historical  
Society

### **Renewal Time**

**Membership Dues:**

**Regular \$15.00; Student  
and Seniors (65 and over)  
\$10.00; Family \$35.00; and  
Life \$250.00.**

Dues should be sent to  
Judy Bissett  
300 Ball St.

Northborough, MA 01532  
Checks should be made out  
to the Northborough  
Historical Society

### **Curator News**

The restoration of our Pipe  
Organ is complete and we  
are very excited to put it to

and himself. They were musing about uses for this neglected area, which he called a "swampland." The town had been storing junk and materials from the recent sewer construction there. LaBaire was not sure of the date, but it must have been earlier in 1982. He recalled the site having been left to the town by a developer, but after a decade of availability, it was still being called a "wilderness."

In the 1980s it was much less obvious that parcels of land suitable for the development of projects that would serve the common needs of townspeople for years to come would dwindle as the town grew. Back in the 1970s an initiative for a town swimming pool received much attention, but when a proposal for a pool and "appurtenant structures and facilities" faced the voters in 1978, they rejected it 190-22. Soccer was becoming popular, however, a sport suitable even for quite young children, and it became the bellwether of the movement for a sports complex. Fortunately an agreement with Westborough allowed Northborough people the use of Chauncey Pond as a swimming area, at least in the summer.

One member of this group determined to carry out the new project was Mrs. Moore, who happened to chair the conservation commission of the Northborough Junior Woman's Club. Under her leadership the club collected \$5,000 to match a sum which had been voted as seed money at a town meeting. Such organizations as the Northborough National Bank, the Youth Soccer Association, Raytheon, and Kiwanis Club, the Northborough Police Association, the Trinity Church Fellowship, and of course the Junior Woman's Club itself contributed. More, of course, was needed.

A campaign called Sports Drive '85 raised

good use. We have four concerts lined up and a "Pay to Play" fund raiser on Applefest Saturday for those who have always wanted to try playing the organ. See the attached poster for more information. My thanks to all the technicians at Andover Organ Company in Waltham and the Community Preservation Act Committee for funding this project. Also thanks to Lorraine Lee whose artwork is on the poster and member, Llanda Richardson for co-chairing this event with me. We look forward to enjoying these performances.

Our yard sale back in June was great fun and a wonderful way to earn money and recycle treasures. Thanks to all those who donated and those who worked. We earned approximately \$550.

Three of our four elementary schools visited the museum this spring. My thanks to George Hamilton for educating and entertaining the children about the Militiamen's service to the cause of freedom. Also my thanks to all the tour guides: Linda Corbin, Janice Ferenchick, Bob Ellis, Arlene Marshall, Diane Guldner, Jane Fletcher and JoAnn Sullivan. Without your help, the children would not have

\$25,000 and led to a prediction that in a year or two soccer would be played. By 1987 children were indeed kicking the ball up and down a new field, and the following year, some other uses of the area began to be identified. In 1988, as the Parks and Recreation Commission put it, "A life course was developed encircling the soccer field to enable people of all ages to improve cardiovascular fitness." In that year the facility was named for two Northborough men who had lost their lives in the Vietnam Conflict and became the Ellsworth-McAfee Park.

It took most of the 1980s for the "swampland" or "wilderness" or storage place for junk to become one of the townspeople's favorite recreational destinations. Over the years many other activities sprang into use-picnics, concerts, skateboarding--some only mildly or not at all athletic.

The creation of such an asset is difficult in itself; the maintenance is just as important. Northborough keeps its parks attractive and available for use, sometimes throughout the year. Those of us who walk the one-third-of-a-mile track around the main soccer field now find pavement where there used to be mud and a ploughed path through the snow in winter.

Considering what we have gained, we owe thanks to the people and institutions mentioned above and any others whose efforts helped in bringing about the Ellsworth-McAfee Park--for there are always helpers whose names somehow get lost sight of. For many younger Northborough residents the park has always been there, but it could not have happened without the sustained efforts of some determined people and organizations thirty years ago.

Bob Ellis, Historian

this unique opportunity to learn of our town's past.

Recent accessions:  
School slates and slate pencils from Louise French.  
Greeting card collection from Diane Guldner.  
Recent book on Mark Fidrych donated by JoAnn Sullivan.

Ellen Racine, Curator

### **Applefest Activities at Historical**

#### **Society Building**

There will be the Old Fashioned Luncheon on Saturday, September 21, from 12:00 to 3:00 and Ice Cream Social on Sunday, September 22, from 12:00 to 2:00. Farm implements and machinery will be on display during these activities. Also, the Society will host a booth at the street fair in the Algonquin parking lot from 10:00 until 3:00.

**Director's Meeting**  
**Historical Society Building**  
**September 10, 2013**  
**7:30 PM**

