



# The Courier

DECEMBER 2007

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A quarterly publication of the Manchester Historical Society, Inc. / 106 Hartford Road / Manchester, Connecticut 06040 / (860) 647-9983

## *Society New Home of Olympian Runner Joe McCluskey's Artifacts*

*by Susan Barlow*

The Society is pleased to announce a generous donation by the family of Manchester native and Olympian Joe McCluskey (1911-2002). The collection includes records of Joe's successes, medals, photos, and diaries that document the story of the youngster from Manchester who made his way to the Track and Field Hall of Fame. Athlete, coach, family man, and Navy veteran, Joe was famous for his drive, his good nature, his smile, and his love of his hometown.

The collection is in the process of being catalogued, and will eventually be on display. Copies will be made of the newspaper clippings and other documents, and these archives will eventually be available for researchers. Some of the photos have been digitized, and a book about Joe is in the works.

Joe trained with Coach Pete Wigren at Manchester High School, ran for Fordham University in the Bronx, won a bronze medal in the 1932 Olympics, and coached at the N.Y. Athletic Club. He won 25 national titles in distance events, capturing the

steeplechase title a record nine times between 1930 and 1943.

It was Joe's older brother, John, who won the very first Manchester Road Race, a Thanksgiving Day event that began in 1927, before Joe was old enough to run. Joe went on to set records in the race in 1930, 1931, and 1932, and 15 years later made a stunning comeback, winning the race at age of 36 – the oldest man ever to win. According to the late Earl Yost, Manchester Herald sports editor, "McCluskey valued the win as much as his national championships and three selections on the United States Olympic team." Other sportswriters called Joe "the all-time track great," "the distance sensation," and "the outstanding runner of the East." Joe was instrumental in reviving the Road Race after its hiatus from 1935 to 1944; by bringing his world-class running to the race, he attracted other track stars.

The Town of Manchester and the Society are grateful to the McCluskey family for this important collection. Questions may be directed to Society Curator Dave Smith, at 860-647-9742.

## **Wreath Event a Winner**

The History Center sparkled with red and silver decorations last month for the Wreath and Gift Festival. Those attending enjoyed shopping, bidding at the auction, buying tea-cup raffle tickets, socializing, winning door prizes, and, of course, eating. There was also a slide show about the Charm of Manchester. Many businesses and individuals donated gift baskets, wreaths, gift certificates, theater tickets, and many other items. Standing in picture are auctioneer Marshall Lamenzo, Carole Walden, and Jill Mack.



# NewsNotes

## *Old Manchester Museum Closed until April*

Because volunteers are preparing for a major new exhibit, the Old Manchester Museum, located at 26 Cedar Street, will be closed to the public from January 1 until April 1. Research facilities will still be available, but by appointment, by calling Curator Dave Smith at 860-647-9742. Stay tuned for more details about the new exhibit!

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## *Road Race Memories*

Last month photographer John Long presented a show of pictures and stories about the Manchester Road Race. John has attended the Road Race since childhood, and photographed it for 35 years while working at the Hartford Courant. An audience of about 50 people enjoyed his presentation, which included a tour of the Road Race exhibit, featuring photos and artifacts, as well as hand-outs of interest to Road Race historians. John also donated a signed copy of his color photo of the 1989 race for the Society's collection.

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## *We Will Miss...*

The Society regrets the passing of **Lillian (Burgess) Hunter**, a Life Member and resident of Manchester for more than 40 years; and **Gordon Wilson**, a Manchester native and World War II veteran, who also was a member.

### *The Courier*

*A newsletter of the  
Manchester Historical Society*

Web page: manchesterhistory.org  
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## **History On Your Television**

*by Susan Barlow*

Did you know that your Historical Society has had its own TV show for six years? It airs at 8 p.m. on Saturdays on public access television in the Manchester area. Kathryn Wilson, Robert Laughlin, Dan and Dawn Thomacos, and Malcolm Barlow volunteer as our camera-persons and video-editors.

In December, tune in to see a fascinating program about geology in Connecticut, including information about the dinosaur bones found at the Buckland quarry in the 19th century. Brendan Hanrahan, noted author, publisher, and paleontologist, of Georgetown, Connecticut, originally presented the program to an enthusiastic crowd at the History Center in October 2007. The program was filmed live.

(See **HISTORY**, page 3)

## **Mark Sutcliffe Remembered**

Colleague, friend, and long-time volunteer Mark Sutcliffe left us in October, in his 45th year, after a long battle with multiple myeloma. Mark became part of the Society's Cheney Homestead Committee in 1996 and its chairman in 1999. During that time he guided the Homestead through some major repairs and oversaw preservation of many of its important artifacts. Mark also planned for the future of the Homestead by preparing long-range plans for improvements and interpretation.

Mark's dedicated interest in the Society and the Homestead was manifested by the amount of time and effort he put into his work there and the passion he displayed when discussing history, especially the history of Manchester and the Cheney family. Mark's significant influence will be felt at the Homestead for years to come. His exceptional dedication to preserving the building, artifacts, and grounds is evident to all of the new Homestead Committee members. The committee is especially appreciative of the meticulous records he maintained and it will preserve his legacy by continuing to implement his work plans for the continued maintenance and preservation of the Homestead. He retired from the position of Committee Chair last year.

We will miss Mark for his knowledge and devotion to the Society. Our prayers and sympathies are with his mother, Carol.

# Long Forgotten Turkey Day Race Rediscovered!

by Dave Smith

Records of the history of Manchester's Thanksgiving Day Road Race indicate that the first race was held in 1927 and continued every year through 1934. There was a 10-year hiatus until 1945, when the Thanksgiving Day tradition was revived with eight runners, including hometown favorite Charlie Robbins, who later became well known for running barefoot. The race has been run every year since then without interruption.

A few weeks ago Diane Owens donated her father's scrapbook to the museum. Her father, John Pasek, was a cross-country runner for Manchester High School, Class of 1939. The scrapbook contains clippings from the Manchester Evening Herald, including one from Friday, November 25, 1938. That clipping reported on the previous day's cross-country race, stating that it was "revived as a Thanksgiving Day sports feature after a lapse of three years."

Reportedly, this race has been dismissed as not part of the traditional series of races because it was run on a shorter course than previous and subsequent Turkey Day races. The officially recognized races have all been run on a course measuring nearly 5 miles, while the 1938 race was only 3.1 miles long. The course was south on Main St., east on Charter Oak, north on Autumn, west on Oak, north on Spruce, west on Pearl and south on Main to the finish line.

For this race there were 16 runners, all of whom finished the race. The winner was David Heatley, of Manchester High School who finished the race in 16:38. There were 10 other entrants from the high school and five entrants from the East Side Boys' Club. The second-place finisher was Bob Daggart, also of the high school team, who stayed with Heatley throughout the whole course and provided a very exciting finish by crossing the line only one foot behind the winner!

Third place went to Wes Robbins, younger brother of Charlie Robbins. Wes was a high school sophomore, originally from Manchester, but had recently moved to Providence, RI. He ran as a member of the East Side Boys' Club, finishing first on that team. Wes now lives in Bolton.

David Heatley served in France during World War II and was stationed in Texas for a while. He remained there after the war, raising a family who are still there. Dave died in 1999. Bob Daggart also served in WWII and attended UConn after the war, graduating as a mechanical engineer. He lived in Coventry for many years and now lives in Glastonbury.

We do not have any photographs of that race, and there were none in the Manchester Evening Herald. If anyone has a picture of the 1938 Road Race (or any of the races before WWII) we would like to make copies of them. Please contact us.



*Cross-Country team pictured in 1937 Somanhis: Bob Daggart, David Heatley (back row, second and third from left) and future Road Race star Charlie Robbins (front row, far left)*

# We Give Thanks to Our Donors

The Historical Society has literally hundreds of reasons to be thankful: during our last fiscal year, October 2006 to September 2007, hundreds of donations were made to the Society's various causes. Without this help, we would not be in existence to preserve and showcase Manchester's rich history. As but one of the many ways in which we can show our gratitude to our donors, we are delighted to honor them all by listing their names below. These donations were made through our Annual Fund, membership applications or renewals, and individually throughout the year. Please continue—or consider increasing—your generosity!

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**"Bridge Bunch"**  
(Suzanne Shorts' 90th birthday)

**Welcome,  
New Members!**

*The Society welcomes the  
following new members,  
who joined between May 10  
and December 1.*

**FROM MANCHESTER**

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## It's Not Too Late to Shop for the Holidays!

### Current Offerings at the Old Manchester Museum Gift Shop

| ITEM  | PRICE          | P/H            |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| <b>OLD MANCHESTER...A Picture Book</b><br>by M. K. Adams & A. J. Thibeau 1994 (Reprinted 1999)  | \$25.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>OLD MANCHESTER II...The Storytellers</b><br>by M. K. Adams & A. J. Thibeau 1995  | \$15.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>OLD MANCHESTER III...Manchester Green</b><br>by M. K. Adams & A. J. Thibeau (Revised 2003)   | \$28.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>EAST CEMETERY HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR</b><br>by John & Elizabeth Spaulding 1999  | \$3.00         | \$3.00 P/H     |
| <b>HISTORY OF BUCKLAND SECTION OF MANCHESTER</b><br>by Gladys Adams 1995 (facsimile reprint)  | \$25.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>LOOKING BACK, HISTORIC IMAGES OF NORTH CENTRAL CONN.</b><br>(Including images of Manchester, Andover, Bolton Coventry East Hartford and Hebron)<br>by Richard Tambling and Journal Inquirer 2002 (Limited quantity)                  | \$39.95        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>MANCHESTER REMEMBERS</b> The Homefront at War 1941-1945<br>by Patricia Thorstenson 1995  | \$25.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>HISTORY OF MANCHESTER, CONN.</b> (facsimile reprint)<br>by Mathias Spiess & Percy Bidwell 1924<br>(if not currently available, can take order for later delivery)<br>Originals also sometimes available. Please ask at Museum Store. | \$39.95        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>A NEW ENGLAND PATTERN</b> (sometimes available)<br>by William E. Buckley 1973  | Special Prices | Special Prices |
| <b>THE TOWN WITH THE HEART OF GOLD</b><br>A history of Manchester's Thanksgiving Day Road Race from 1927 to 1985<br>by Eamonn Flanagan 1986   | \$ 5.00        | \$3.00 P/H     |
| <b>SILK ALONG STEEL</b> <i>The Story of the South Manchester Railroad</i><br>by Thomas R. Lewis, Jr. 1976   | \$15.00        | \$3.00 P/H     |
| <b>GROWING UP WITH GRAMP KEENEY</b><br>by Herbert Keeney Seymour 1992   | \$15.00        | \$3.00 P/H     |
| <b>TALES MY STETHOSCOPE TOLD ME</b><br>Former Manchester doctor tells about his experiences and the daily life of a busy doctor.<br>by Martin Duke, M.D 1998  | \$10.00        | \$3.00 P/H     |
| <b>FROM THE OLD COUNTRY</b><br>An Oral History of European Migration to America, with many Manchester references<br>by Bruce M. Stave and John F. Sutherland 1994 (281 pages)   | \$23.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>WE WILL NOT BE STRANGERS</b><br>Korean War letters between local doctor Mel Horwitz, a M.A.S.H. surgeon and his wife<br>by Dorothy G. Horwitz 1997 (277 pages)   | \$20.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>BROTHERS IN BATTLE</b> <i>One Marine's Account of War in the Pacific</i><br>by R. Bruce Watkins, Capt. USMCR Ret. (78 pages)   | \$12.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>A COMBAT ENGINEER REMEMBERS</b><br>WW2 experiences of the 150th Engineer Combat Battalion<br>by Norman C. Southergill 2002 (104 pages)   | \$15.00        | \$3.00 P/H     |
| <b>FROM WARSAW to MANCHESTER</b><br>Talking with Helen Kopman who lived in the Warsaw ghetto and Nazi concentration camps. 2005   | \$4.00         | \$3.00 P/H     |
| <b>BEN AUSTRIAN, ARTIST</b><br>Ben Austrian was the creator of the Bon Ami chick, the world famous trademark.<br>by Geoffrey D. Austrian 1997 (120 pages)   | \$45.00        | \$5.00 P/H     |
| <b>MUGS</b> (for coffee or collecting)<br>a.) North Manchester & Depot Square; or b.) 4 historic buildings in Manchester plus Dancing Bears fountain  | \$10.00        | \$5.00P/H      |

**OTHER ITEMS INCLUDE: Framed Color Prints, Prints, Notecards, Postcards, Cookbooks, T-Shirts, Canvas Tote Bags, Videos and more. For more information about merchandise, shipping options and gift shop hours, call 860-647-9983.**

## “One-Time Only” Law Allows You to Contribute to the Society Using IRA Distributions

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 permits donors age 70 or older to make charitable gifts of up to \$100,000 in 2007 directly from a traditional or Roth IRA to 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. This is a one-time allowance that ends 12/31/07—just in time for you to make a 2007 gift to the Society.

Those who are eligible and interested in taking advantage of this gift-giving opportunity should speak with their financial advisor immediately. The rules do not allow amounts to be withdrawn by the IRA account owner and then forwarded to the Society. You will need to request a check payable to the Manchester Historical Society.

Upon death, IRA accounts are subject to up to 79% taxes, comprised of income and estate taxes. To whom would you rather give your money?

For additional information, please contact Society President John Dormer, at 860-647-9983.

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### **HISTORY**, from page 2

Future shows will include a picture show and lecture about the Manchester Road Race, presented by John Long at the History Center in November.

Some of our tapes are available at Mary Cheney Library and some are for sale at the museum gift shop. We are always interested in your ideas for television shows, and also in old photos, which we intersperse in the shows to give a then-and-now theme. We can borrow your pictures and return them intact after copying. Call the Society at 860-647-9983, or call me directly at 860-643-9776.

# WINTER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Unless otherwise noted, admission to all lectures and walking tours is \$1 for Manchester Historical Society members and \$3 for non-members. All lectures and events will take place at the Manchester History Center, 175 Pine Street, unless otherwise noted.*

### **December 16**

Sunday  
1 p.m.

### **Slide Lecture on E.L. Bidwell**

Led by Susan Barlow

### **December 29**

Saturday  
10 a.m.

### **Old Cheney Railroad Walk**

Hike hosted by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association. *Free*  
Meet behind Farr's Sporting Goods,  
2 Main St.  
*(See related story.)*

### **January 1**

Tuesday  
1 p.m.

### **Downtown Walking Tour**

Meet at 1151 Main St. (the old high school across from Bennet School)  
Extreme weather cancels  
*(See related story.)*

### **February 9**

Saturday  
1 p.m.

### **Town Center Walking Tour**

Led by Susan Barlow & special guests  
Meet at front of Town Hall, 41 Center St.  
(Snow date: Sunday, Feb. 10, 1 p.m.)  
*(See related story.)*

### **February 17**

Sunday  
1 p.m.

### **Return to Pitkin Glass Works**

With guest speakers; exhibit of special glass

### **March 8**

Saturday  
1 p.m.

### **Midtown Walking Tour**

Led by Joe Camposeo  
Meet at old Hollister School, 57 Hollister St.  
(Snow date: Sunday, Mar. 9, 1 p.m.)  
*(See related story.)*

### **March 16**

Sunday  
1 p.m.

### **Cheney Mills Slide Show**

Led by David Smith



The Manchester Historical Society  
 106 Hartford Road  
 Manchester, Connecticut 06040

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## Lace Up Those Shoes (or Snowboots!)

Undeterred by the onset of winter, the Society has scheduled a number of walking tours to help shake off the chills of the season. See the calendar on page 7 for specific dates and meeting places.

On Saturday, December 29, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association will offer a free hike of interest to Society members, covering a one-mile portion of the South Manchester Railroad, built in 1869. Parking is available in the shopping plaza at 2 Main Street and at the Eighth Utilities office building. Contact Susan Barlow, hike leader at 860-643-9776 for more info.

Celebrate the new year on January 1 with a walking tour of the downtown area. The stroll along Main Street will take a deeper look at often-seen but unnoticed historic buildings, dating from the turn of the last century, with their parapets, cornices, and unusual brickwork.

In early February, a walking tour of the Town Center, kicking off at Town Hall, is planned. We will view and hear commentary on Lincoln School, the old Post Office, Masonic Temple, Orange Hall, and Probate Court.

In early March, Town Clerk Joe Camposeo will lead the Midtown walking tour, starting at the old Hollister School and covering about 1.5 miles.

These are great opportunities to learn about different parts of Manchester—as well as take off some of those extra holiday pounds!

## HELP SUPPORT THE ANNUAL FUND

*Yes, I/We want to be part of the Manchester Historical Society's continued growth and transformation!*

*Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:*

- \$50    \$75    \$100    \$250    \$500    \$1000  
 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/we prefer to pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ months.

Please make check payable to Manchester Historical Society and mail to 106 Hartford Road, Manchester, CT 06040

(To be paid in full by September 30th 2008)

Pay with check or:    Visa    MasterCard

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your support!*