



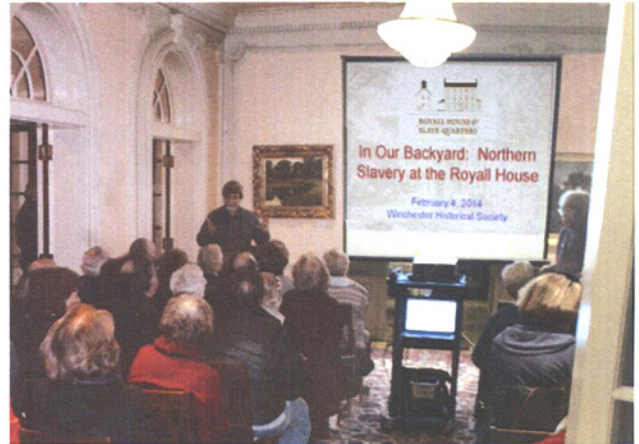
Black Horse Bulletin

Newsletter of the Winchester Historical Society / Vol 39, Number I / September 2013 - July 2014

Varied Presentations Highlight Society's 2013-14 Programs Season

The Winchester Historical Society's 2013-14 program and event season featured engaging speakers and topics, a number of which celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, and filled Sanborn House to overflowing.

In conjunction with the Friends of the Winchester Library, WHS began its offerings with an intoxicatingly fun presentation on the history of drinking in Boston. This was followed by the Society's Annual Meeting in November and both the Holiday and New Year's Eve parties in December. The February program featured the presentation "In Our Own Backyard," a look at slavery in New England. The presenter was Tom Lincoln, Executive Director of the Royall House and Slave Quarters in neighboring Medford. In the eighteenth century the Royall House was home to the largest slaveholding family in Massachusetts and the enslaved Africans who made their lavish way of life possible. Lincoln gave the overflow audience an in-depth look at this little-known facet of Massachusetts history.



Tom Lincoln, Executive Director of the Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford, begins his lecture on slavery in colonial Massachusetts.

Photo by Tom Seigny

March saw the WHS Potluck Dinner, which was an opportunity to view the newly re-installed stained glass window (see page 5.) April brought a presentation on preserving old photographs (see below,) followed, finally, by a visit to Sanborn House by our 16th president, Abraham Lincoln (see below.)

Laurie Minniti



Lincoln enactor Steve Wood brought the 16th president to Sanborn House in May.

Abraham Lincoln Visits Sanborn House

by Ellen Knight

Abraham Lincoln was welcomed to the Sanborn House on May 20th for an Evening with Lincoln. As portrayed by Steve Wood (who has appeared as Lincoln since 1995,) he told those present, "I share your interests in preserving our country's history," and repeated what he told congress a month before signing the Emancipation Proclamation:

"Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation."

Lincoln recounted stories from his visits to New England towns. He first visited Massachusetts, he said, in 1848 while campaigning for Zachary Taylor, the Whig Party candidate for president. As South Woburn was strongly (next page, please)

Lincoln at Sanborn

(continued from page 1)

Whig, Taylor was likely the choice among residents of the area.

He returned to New England on account of his son Robert's being at Phillips Academy, Exeter. Wishing to visit Robert but not able to afford it, Lincoln accepted an invitation to lecture in Brooklyn, covering his travel expenses. After his address at the Cooper Union, folks from Connecticut, New Hampshire and Rhode Island invited him to speak there as well. In Concord NH he told people that, like it or not, slavery was the greatest political question. He compared slavery to finding a snake in bed with innocent children, and the risk of trying to kill it. Though they might not be able to get rid of it where it already existed, he advocated stopping its spread into the territories.

In Manchester he was surprised to be introduced as "the next President of the United States." He spoke of being happy to shake hands with a working man despite the man's desire to wash first. He always worked, but recalled, "Some said I was lazy because I always had a book in my hand." In Dover he met a deputy sheriff who, at two inches taller, liked to boast of being "a greater man than Lincoln." Lincoln invited people in the Sanborn audience to see how they compared. (He was barely bested in height by Norman Doucette!)

Lincoln shared several humorous stories. He said he met a woman who told him, "You are the homeliest man I ever saw!" Upon his reply that he couldn't help that, she responded, "No, I suppose not, but you might stay at home."

Returning to Illinois, he engaged in debates with Stephen Douglas, and won the presidential race. Soon after he moved to the "Presidential Mansion" the Civil War began. The Lincolns also suffered a personal loss when their young son Willie died. As Winchester suffered during the war as well, Lincoln asked for a moment to remember those who never returned.

A reading of the Gettysburg Address and a question and answer session concluded the evening. [The other (much more long-winded) speaker at Gettysburg, Edward Everett, eponym of Everett Avenue, owned a home in Winchester next to Mystic Lake.]

Saving Personal Photos

by Nancy Schrock

So many of our family and personal photographs, videos and papers exist only on our computers. How vulnerable are they to loss and deterioration?

We received answers from an expert at the Society's April 10th program. Helen Bailey, MIT Library Fellow for Digital Curation & Preservation, guided us through the challenges of managing the increasing number of digital files in our family archives.

If you were not fortunate enough to attend, you have a second chance: Helen placed her entire talk, with slides, on the web. You can simply browse to:

<https://bitsandpages.wordpress.com/2014/04/24>

Her handout, with links to websites with more information, can be found at:

slideshare.net/hakbailey/whs-talk-201404handoutweb

We will also post these links on the WHS's website, but you might want to print out the information to be sure you have it!

Planning a fall function or holiday celebration?

Sanborn House is the perfect place to host an intimate and elegant affair!



**We are booking through the New Year.
Check our Events Calendar
for date availability.**

**Contact us to begin planning an occasion
everyone will enjoy and remember!**

manager@winchesterhistoricalsociety.org



Graduation 1951. Officers (from left) Martha Smith (secretary,) Jean Toomey (V.P.,) Audry McKenna Lynch (Pres.,) Cardinal Richard J. Cushing, Constance Dowd (Prefect of Sodality,) Helen Blanchard (Treasurer)

I Lived in Sanborn House, 1949-50 as a Marycliff Academy Student

by Audry Lynch

On my recent visit to Boston my niece, Michelle Dickson, a member of the Winchester Historical Society, invited me to take a tour of the old Sanborn mansion. She was so excited about the house that she said, in her best Gatsby voice, "How wonderful it must have been to live here. I would have loved it."

To her amazement, I replied, "I actually spent a year living here during my junior year (1949-50) at Marycliff Academy." That started a whole chain of memories that began when I was thirteen years old. Now I am 80, so that meant looking back 67 years in time.

How did it all start? I had won a 4-year full scholarship to Marycliff. My freshman and sophomore years had been full of wonderful experiences, but my parents noticed a change in me the next summer when I turned 16 on Cape Cod, where we spent our summers. Suddenly I bloomed physically and the socially. I discovered boys, and they started appearing at our cottage every day and when we arrived at the West Harwich Beach. Looking back, I realize my parents must have been surprised by all this constant activity in their usually peaceful summer. It reached somewhat of a peak on my 16th birthday, when three different boys gave me pearls as a gift.

My mother's best friend found the situation hugely funny and referred to our vacation as "the summer of great pearls." My parents started having a lot of private conversations. I discovered the gist of these when they announced just before Labor Day, "We've decided to let you live at Marycliff this year because we think all that commuting (Cambridge to Winchester) is too tiring for you." "Tired" was a euphemism for "bad behavior," which my parents often used.

They didn't make it sound like a punishment, so I looked forward to my year at Sanborn Estate as an exciting adventure. The nuns always had a few live-in students every year, some from South America, ostensibly to improve their English. In my class there was one --- Merille Burlie --- beautiful dark-haired girl. Privately, I wondered if she, too, was "tired."

If my parents' goal was to isolate me from the male sex, they had picked the right place. The only male in sight was the dear old Father Garrahan, a retired priest of advanced years who occupied a loft with the science teacher's specimens over the garage, the former carriage house. He often said Mass for us. There was one additional discordant male presence. It was a large print of "The Laughing Cavalier" on one of the stairway walls. He was a handsome and leering gentleman, one of the first subjects to smile in the portraits of the Flemish School of painting. In his case, it was more of a smirk than a smile. It was a daily reminder that there was a big world out there that probably differed from Marycliff Academy and the Sanborn Estate.

Our rooms on the top floor of the house were small and spare in my memory. Two items of old grandeur, however, remained seared into my memory forever. One was the wide, sweeping front hall staircase where I used to imagine myself descending to attend elegant balls in the future. The other was the beautiful stained glass window. I had only seen such windows in churches until I moved there.

Of course, the rolling green lawns --- white in winter --- were perfect for sledding. They reminded me of one unforgettable evening we had with Reverend Mother Cloonan. As the head of school, she ruled with an iron hand both the nuns and the students. She was efficient and formidable, and everyone admired her but no one dared approach her. Imagine our surprise one night when she suggested we make fudge. It was a night filled with laughter and the delicious smell of warm fudge. It also taught us that, just maybe, Reverend Mother just might be human after all.

Without any boys in sight, we spent a lot of time thinking and talking about them. The closest we came to sex education, a staple of modern public education, was a yearly lecture on menstruation by our science teacher, Mère Haché. It was embarrassing and rather overdue. Instead, we existed in an underground of myth and misinformation. Any sort of makeup, even the palest of pink lipsticks, was totally forbidden. The underlying message was that the use of makeup to attract boys must be some sort of sin. The minute we left the school grounds the first thing we did was put on makeup. We didn't have mirrors, so I mastered the art of putting on lipstick without one, while running for a bus down High Street. It's a rare talent that I still retain much to the amazement of my current women friends.

(continued, next page)

Marycliff Memories *(continued from previous page)*

by Audry Lynch

Patent leather shoes were used as another example of the occasion of sin. Supposedly a boy could stand close to you, look down at your shoes and see the reflection of your panties. This has never been verified, to my knowledge, but women of my generation avoided these shoes — just in case.

Our social life, if you could call it that, consisted of two yearly dances with St. John's Prep School. It was run by Brothers, and one of its charms was, I suppose, that it was located in Danvers, a good safe distance from Winchester. The boys were eager, but always gentlemanly. We girls attributed the latter fact to the story that we heard that the Brothers put saltpeter in the boys' food just before the dance to calm them down. In addition to that, there was another deterrent to fraternization: the dances were sharply patrolled by the Brothers, who kept an eye on all potential danger spots. Towards the end of the evening, as the dancers grew closer together, they would be startled by a rap on the boy's shoulder and an admonition to "leave room for the Holy Ghost."

If the sex education was rather non-existent, the rest of the curriculum was way above average. The nuns, the Sisters of Religious Education, a small congregation whose Mother House was in France, were totally devoted to us. They watched over us, taught us, and were totally involved in our overall welfare. I've worked in the field of education all my life and have never witnessed this type of devotion anywhere else.

Two experiences stand out in my memory. Mère Haché, our science teacher, invited me to participate in a science fair at the school, city and state levels. She drove us and helped us, and always turned out winners. In my senior year she apprenticed me to a biologist at Harvard University to oversee my project. As a result, I was exposed to that wide academic arena when I applied for college. In French Level 4 there were just me and Mère Janin. We worked on my French, she required a senior thesis, and gently guided me to the subject of Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*. Can you imagine the rich, provocative discussions we had? I was very well prepared for the Ivy League by these intelligent, dedicated women. Since the Order came from France, there were some other emphases in the curriculum. They worked on our French and we were expected to use it (e.g., "Bonjour, ma Mère") when we ran into them in or out of the corridors. I learned to love the language so much that I took it in college, too.

The nuns tried to turn us into little ladies. They demanded courtesy at all times. I've heard that in their Ashville NC academy, the girls even had to learn to play a good hand of bridge before graduation. I had a little trouble with some of the "lady" requirements. The nuns spoke of the virtue of a well-modulated voice, but I had a loud voice and was of the opinion that "the louder the better." In addition, I liked to run rather than walk anywhere. The nuns suggested gently that, as a boarder, I should emulate the fine example of two sisters who lived in the house with me. They spoke softly and walked with dignity. In fact, they seemed to glide rather than walk. Of course, I hated them.

In my sophomore year the school moved from Arlington to Winchester. The nuns oversaw the building of a brick high school next to the recently-purchased Sanborn House. I saw the new school building as a challenge, and it prompted my first big prank. I brought a flashlight to school and told my classmates that we needed to explore our new school. I led them down to the basement and we went in to explore the underpinnings. Perhaps the custodians complained; the nuns met us on the way out. They were angry, and looked ready to punish us. Of course, there was no specific rule which we had broken, so we weren't ever punished. I now think they might have been amused by our boldness.

There were some activities outside of classes. We had a newspaper and a yearbook, my favorite activities. There were sodality and sports — I played basketball, even though I was terrible. The class Vice-President, on the other hand, was the star of the team. Everything was open to all, and we were encouraged to participate.

For the parents, there was the annual Dessert and Fashion Show. A fund-raiser, it kept the mothers busy all year. Sometimes fathers were called upon to provide special skills for fixing things or helping with finances. Some of the girls came from wealthy families — two little blonde girls arrived every day in a limousine with liveried chauffeur, a show-stopping daily occurrence for most of us.

Despite the disparity in wealth, there was no overt snobbery. A great equalizer was mandatory uniforms, eliminating all clothing competition. The uniforms consisted of blue jumpers, white blouses with Peter Pan collars and navy-blue blazers. I now see in our class picture that we looked very neat and nice. As teenagers we

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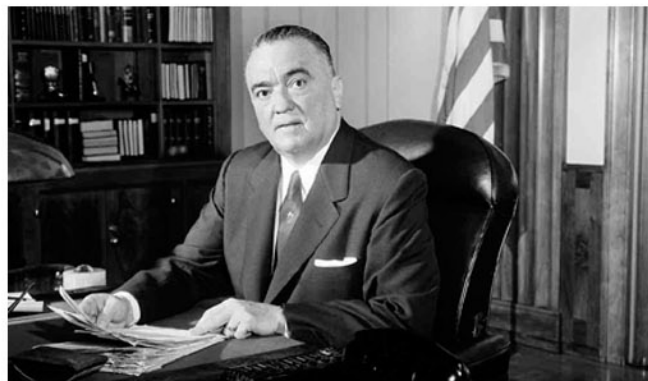
Treasurer's Report

by Kevin Drum, Treasurer

As the new Treasurer of the Winchester Historical Society the past six months have been a very positive experience. I would like to take this opportunity to thank past Treasurer Nancy Schrock and our bookkeeper Paula Swartz for all their assistance in making for a smooth transition.

We now have a Fidelity Investments account that is set up to receive donated long-term securities. (This is not an endowment account.) A charitable contribution of long-term appreciated securities, i.e., stocks, bonds or mutual funds that have appreciated over time, is one of the most efficient ways to donate to the WHS. Any long-term appreciated security with unrealized gains (purchased over a year ago and currently valued greater than their original cost) may be donated to the WHS and a tax deduction taken for the full market value of the securities, up to 30% of the donor's adjusted gross income. In addition, since the securities are donated rather than sold, capital gains taxes do not apply.

As with all tax-related matters, you should consult your tax professional if you have any questions. Please contact me through the Historical Society if I can be of any assistance.



J Edgar Hoover, FBI Director 1924 - 1972

Upcoming Featured Program

"The Burglary and J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI"

Winchester Historical Society will be one of the sponsors of an exciting presentation about the ramifications of a break-in at the FBI offices in Media, Pennsylvania, on 8 March 1971.

"The Burglary: The Discovery of J Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI" will be presented by Betty Medsger, author of a new book of the same title. It is the never-before-told full story of the history-changing break-in at the FBI offices by a group of unlikely activists --- quiet, ordinary, hardworking Americans --- that made clear the shocking truth and confirmed what some had long suspected, that Hoover had created and was operating, in clear violation of the US Constitution, his own shadow Bureau of Investigation.

Betty Medsger, then a reporter at the Washington Post, received from anonymous sources copies of the files stolen that night. From her stories, Americans learned for the first time about Hoover's massive political spying and dirty tricks operations that suppressed dissent and damaged individuals and organizations.

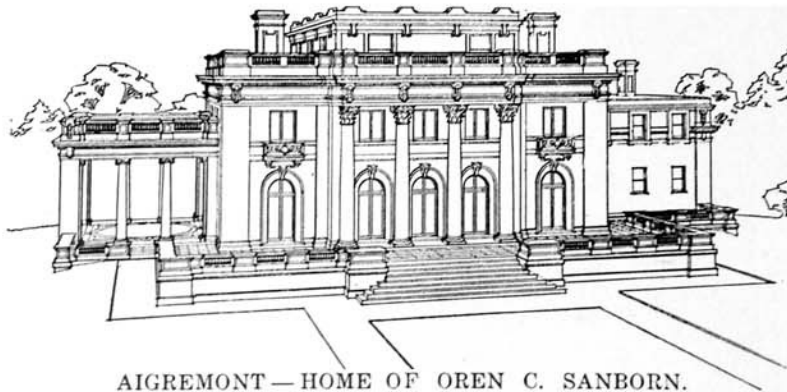
She will speak about her new history of the event at the Winchester Public Library on Tuesday, October 7th, at 7:00 pm. The event is sponsored by Friends of the Winchester Public Library, the Winchester Historical Society and the John & Mary Murphy Educational Foundation. It is free and does not require reservations, but come early for a good seat.



Photographs In and Around Sanborn House



Marycliff Academy Class of 1951 posing on the lawn of Sanborn House. Author Audry McKenna Lynch is second from left in the front row.



Original 1908 rendering of Sanborn House's east façade, showing the grand — and never built — eastern terrace. The house's name "Aigremont" is French for "Sour Mountain."



One of a number of old photos and maps recently put on display throughout the house, from the Historical Society's collection. Looking north on Main Street across the railroad tracks where the trestle rotary is today. The Brown & Stanton Block (Bookends, today) is at the right. Mid 1890s.



Members and guests of Winchester Jumelage Association, which administers Winchester's Twin City relationship with St-Germain-en-Laye, France, hold a "Taste of France" potluck feast in the music room.



Representatives of Serpentino Stained Glass Studios carry the restored stair landing window into the house for re-installation.



Norman Doucette barely bests "Abraham Lincoln" in a height contest.

Sanborn House News

Cummings Foundation Awards WHS Major Grant



State-of-the-art new boilers were installed between October and December 2013 by Cummings Foundation contractors. Photo by John McConnell

The Winchester Historical Society is honored to be one of 100 local organizations selected to receive a grant from the Cummings Foundation in 2013. The funding provided a new energy-efficient gas heating system for the Sanborn Historical and Cultural Center. With reliable heat at lower cost, the WHS has been able to expand its programs and use of the house by the Winchester community and surrounding towns.



The goal of the grant was to upgrade the HVAC system in the Sanborn House, where an antiquated oil-fired heating system was replaced by the new boilers, according to grant proposal specifications. Work was completed between October and December of last year.

Office rents have tripled, with four rooms on the second floor now leased to architects, an artist and a sales-related company. A much larger number of non-profit groups have now rented the house for events, in addition to many more private individuals renting for wedding showers, birthdays, anniversaries, art exhibitions and memorial services. June saw the first wedding and a ninetieth birthday party.



Following demolition, sections of the house's original boilers lie in the service areaway awaiting removal. Photo by Tom Sevigny

Gloriously Restored Stained Glass Window Re-installed

This past May saw the re-installation of Sanborn House's beautiful central staircase window. It had been removed last fall and taken to the studios of Serpentino Stained Glass in Needham for significant cleaning, lead came restoration and, in a number of cases, replacement of missing glass segments. The work was done thanks to a grant from the Griffin Foundation. Upon re-installation, the heavily fogged outer acrylic layer was removed, allowing, for the first time in a century, the fiery and intensely radiant colors of the window to be seen again. Adorning the grand staircase's landing, the window is one of the town's little-known treasures.



Serpentino artisans painstakingly replace the restored window.

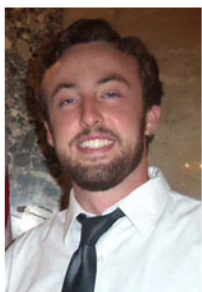
Maureen Willis Appointed Sanborn Site Manager

Maureen Willis has been selected from a field of applicants to be the new Site Manager at the Sanborn House. She is to be responsible for managing the property, its tenants and the host of rental users. (She is even finding herself having to deal with a family of wild turkeys, who wandered in through the front door earlier this month!)

Willis is a professional manager specializing in not-for-profit organizations. She has 15 years experience in marketing, communications and resource development. As Site Manager she will use her experience in promoting and planning events of all sizes. She oversees the many preparations for these events, --- coordinating caterers, bartenders, delivery and party-planning personnel, for example ---as well as dealing with their aftermath.



Maureen Willis, new Site Manager



Christopher Smith

Maureen lives in Woburn, where she has been active in the field of non-profit organizations, including the Woburn Community Educational Foundation, which she also founded. She is past Director of Development at Family & Children's Service of Greater Lynn, Matignon High School in Cambridge and has worked at the Council of Social Concern in Woburn.

Among other duties, Maureen oversees the effort to clean Sanborn House before and after events, and during the week for the building's tenants. To that end, She has brought on board Christopher Smith as chief custodian for the house.

En Ka Grant Enables Expansion of WHS Artifacts Exhibitions

— Nancy Schrock

Thanks to a grant from the En Ka Society in February, the Historical Society will initiate an exhibition program in the Oak Room of the Sanborn House. At last its historic artifacts can come out of storage and be displayed to the public without risk of damage or loss.



Vinson-Owen memorabilia on display in the new user-activated exhibition case. Photo by John McConnell

A new display case has been custom made to museum standards for exhibition, preservation and security. The manufacturer, Small Corp of Greenfield MA, specializes in work for museums. Archival quality materials and techniques guarantee a stable environment for irreplaceable treasures. For example, state-of-the-art LED lighting within the case is activated when viewers come near, eliminating the need for extended exposure to potentially harmful light.

The case currently houses memorabilia of the Vinson and Owen families, Winchester's Olympic skaters, who tragically were killed in a plane crash. Watch for updates on display topics, beginning this summer.



The new display case in place in the Oak Room. Photo J. McConnell

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The Winchester Historical Society relies on the generous financial support of its members and friends to fund Society programs, operations, collection building and preservation, and improvements to its headquarters, the historic Sanborn House.

Marycliff Memories *(continued from page 4.)*

cordially hated these uniforms. As an adult I have never purchased anything colored navy blue. Another classmate told me she has never purchased a blazer in her adult life. The year after we left, the uniform changed to a plaid skirt.

As graduates, we did very well in our college placements. By now we were a class of 12, just half the size of our freshman class. Two of us went to Harvard and the rest to other colleges, and we mostly graduated, with one exception --- plus one who became a nun.

Our senior year ended with a flurry of excitement. There was the Prom, which was preceded by an invitation to dinner at the Winchester Country Club from our classmate Betty McCormick ("Chicken"), whose father sold Willys Jeeps. She was a cute little redhead full of life, very social and, unfortunately, one of our first classmates to die.

Dates had been a problem for most of the girls, so some male teachers at Cambridge High and Latin School had been commandeered to "find dates" for the girls for the Prom. The gym was decorated like a fairyland, and we were one of the few girls' schools to dance to live music by a popular local band leader, who was related to one of the girls.

Then came graduation day, which we thought meant the beginning of real life. I remember particularly the dazzling colors that day, although not one word of Cardinal Richard J. Cushing's speech. Our nuns had come to Boston at his request and he was their protector --- and always the commencement speaker. The weather was gorgeous --- all blue skies and rolling green lawns. Cardinal Cushing was clad in the brilliant red biretta and vestments of his office. We were dressed in floor-length white lace gowns, scoop necks and a blue underskirt, designed by Bianchi, who was famous for her wedding gowns --- and a relative of one of the girls. We each carried a dozen red roses. Looking at our picture, I now know that we didn't suspect on that beautiful day that never again would we look so young, so pretty and so innocent, standing there with the lovely Sanborn House behind us as a backdrop.



Audry Lynch



The Winchester Historical Society

The mission of the Winchester Historical Society is to promote and awareness of Winchester's rich history and share it with the community. The Society achieves its mission by collecting and preserving historic records and artifacts related to Winchester; by its educational programs, exhibitions and publications; and through its stewardship of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center, which serves as the home of the Society and is open to the community for exhibits, meetings and events.

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John McConnell, editor

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