**The Colonial Society of Massachusetts**

Minutes of the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Membership

Held at the Society’s House

87 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston

19 November 2015

President Donald R. Friary called the meeting to order at 6.00 P.M.

The reading of the minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting was waived.

**1. Report of the Membership Committee.** Celeste Walker, chair of the committee, reported membership of the Society now stands at 325 members: 187 resident members, 126 non-resident members, and 12 honorary members.

During the past year, the changes in membership are as follows:

Robert Rothschild, of New York, a non-resident member since 1984, died October 7

Donald Wing, of Marion, Massachusetts, a resident member since 1986, died November 14

Members stood for a moment of silence.

Celeste reported three resignations:

Christopher Bickford, of Providence, a resident member since 1992

Norman Fiering, of Providence, a resident member since 1984

Michael Zuckerman, of Philadelphia, a non-resident member since 1998

The following new members were welcomed:

***Resident Members***

Joseph M. Bagley, of Boston

Robert Severy, of Weymouth

***Non-resident Members***

Jennifer Anderson, of Stony Brook, New York

Evan Haefeli, of College Station, Texas

Michael Hill, of Fredericksburg, Virginia

Peter C. Mancall, of Los Angeles, California

Micah Pawling, of Orono, Maine

The following nominations, approved at the June and September Council meetings will be voted upon at the Society’s December Stated Meeting.

Edward A. Andrews, of Providence

John Bell, of Boston

Paul J. Erickson, of Worcester

Sally Hadden, of Kalamazoo, Michigan

Kemble Widmer, of Newburyport

**2. Report of the Treasurer.**

President Friary then yielded the chair to Michael Yogg for the election of officers. Michael invited Karen Nipps to take the podium.

**3. Report of the Nominating Committee.** Karen Nipps, chair of the Nominating Committee, thanked the other members of the committee, Claire W. Dempsey and Robert Martello, and read the slate of nominees:

President Donald R. Friary

Vice Presidents Robert Allison, Dan Coquillette, Celeste Walker

Recording Secretary Leslie A. Morris

Corresponding Secretary Martha J. McNamara

Treasurer Thomas R. Appleton

Member of Council,

3-year term Beth Anne Bower (2018)

Continuing members of

Council Lorna Condon (2016), Thomas Paine (2017)

There were no nominations from the floor. Michael Yogg moved the slate of officers and councilor.

**VOTED:** To approve the slate as read. Approved unanimously.

President Friary resumed the chair, and thanked the membership.

**4. Report of the Curator.** Elton Hall’s report is appended.

**5. Report of the Editor of Publications.** John Tyler’s report is appended.

**6. Report of the President.** Don Friary’s report is appended.

The meeting adjourned at 6.50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie A. Morris

Recording Secretary *in absentia*

**Report of the Curator, Elton W. Hall**

By the end of last year we finally had the inventory of the contents of this house in sufficiently advanced condition so that we could take the next important step in the care and management of our possessions. That next step was to arrange for Skinner Appraisals to come in and make a detailed appraisal of about everything in the house except for office equipment, kitchen and dining wares, and maintenance equipment. After a preliminary reconnaissance to determine the magnitude of the task and the areas of expertise that would be required, Stephen Fletcher returned, and with the aid of the inventory arranged room by room, inspected the furniture and furnishings. His visit was followed by those of Robin Starr for paintings and prints, and Devon Eastland, for books. They supplemented our photographs with a few of their own then returned to their offices for some research and editing before producing the final document, which will be of great value to us in determining the appropriate levels of insurance, prioritizing the conservation program, considering loan requests, and anything else for which market value would be a consideration. There were a few surprises in both directions, but we feel that taken as a whole it is a good document.

The next stage in management of the collections is to generate surveys of the various kinds of objects in the collection. Through the generosity of our fellow member and House Committee member Robert Mussey, a major portion of that project is near to completion. Of the slightly more than 300 items in our inventory, almost half are furniture. Robert has contributed a substantial amount of time and expertise to the preparation of the survey of all of the furniture in the house. He has now provided the House Committee with a preliminary draft in two parts. The first is an introductory essay in which he describes the purpose, scope, and methods of the work. He goes on to describe the three major gifts that constitute a large portion of our inventory: the Parkman, Channing, and Endicott collections, with notes on their history and certain considerations specific to each. He also mentions some of the highlights from other sources. Among all of the above is a notable collection of looking glasses. You are all aware of those on the first two floors, but there are more on the third. His report also includes recommendations on a number of issues including collections management, storage, damage control, upholstery, housekeeping, and the matter of deaccessioning certain things that for different reasons serve no useful purpose in the house or ought to be in a more appropriate institution.

The second part of his report is a spreadsheet. I cannot tell you how big it is, but I suspect that if I printed it out and taped all the sheets together I would have a document that would pretty well cover Admiral Morison’s banquet table downstairs. There are twelve columns, A through L. They are a photograph, type of object, accession number, location, description, materials, previous repairs, condition, recommended treatments, estimated cost of treatment, appraised value, and priority on a scale of 1-5. Each piece of furniture has a line (or as many lines as necessary) to record the results of Robert’s examination. It is a remarkably informative document, which will be of immense value in maintaining records of the collection and informing our decisions as we proceed to carry out our responsibility for the things we have been given.

There are less laborious ways in which members with expertise in various areas may help the Society. A few weeks ago Ted Stebbins—who’s recent and impressive volume on American Art at Harvard is on the desk in the library for you to view—walked through the house with Don Friary, John Tyler, and me commenting on the twenty-three oil paintings owned by the Society. He offered both his professional and personal opinions on them, along with comments, suggestions for further research, which are most worthy of conservation, and so forth. It was a very pleasant and informative morning and a valuable contribution to the Society.

Amid the excitement of the Vose sofa, our painting conservation program had drifted to the back burner. Our four most important paintings had been conserved, and we had not put our minds back on that matter. On a visit to the house for another purpose, Robert Severy observed a painting in the dining room that as he might say, “had not been cleaned since it was painted.” He offered to underwrite the work, and it was done. You may see the result in the dining room over the marble topped sideboard. So happy was everyone with it that during a recent event here, Robert offered to provide for another conservation and chose the painting here over the fireplace. Despite the fact that we don’t yet know who the artist was, that’s an important painting because it’s what you have to look at when someone like me is speaking. It came from the estate of William Crowninshield Endicott, who was Treasurer of the Museum of Fine Arts so he must have known something. It will soon look better. At that same event, David Burnham offered to provide for the restoration of a picture. We agreed on the pastel portrait of Stephen Higginson, Jr. that normally hangs in the library. It is of particular importance to us as he was the first occupant of this house. It also has a wider interest, for Higginson was important in a number of areas in the community, and as far as we know it is the only contemporary likeness of him. There is a lesson in these anecdotes. The Society sometimes moves slowly on things as we apply our funds to the various parts of our operations in an orderly fashion. If you are irritated by the shabby appearance of anything you see in this house, there is a simple and direct way of getting very quick action on its restoration. Don or I would be happy to talk to you about it at any time.

A significant area of our interest in this house concerns those who inhabited it, who they were, and what they did. In talking with Tom Paine about Charles Jackson Paine’s yachting activities, we discovered that between us, we could provide the house with a set of vintage photographs of the three yachts with which the General successfully defended the America’s Cup while living here. We did, and you may see from top to bottom the *Puritan*, *Mayflower*, and *Volunteer* hanging in the library. In due course, I’ll get up a label.

Several years ago Fred Ballou promoted the idea of a member’s library comprising the published work of Colonial Society Members. Books have been coming in ever since and are filling shelves in the library. To date we have received gifts of 140 volumes, and they continue to come in. While many of them contribute to the specific area of our mission, others to not. I find it wonderfully interesting to see how many other areas of expertise are included in our membership. Our thanks to all of you scholars who have shared your work with the Society.

About a year ago I was approached by Nancy Holcomb, a colleague of Bob Allison’s in the Suffolk University History Department. She teaches a course called Boston’s Historic Houses, in which she uses historic houses as a vehicle for teaching Boston history. She wanted to know if 87 Mount Vernon Street could be one of the houses for the coming year’s project. Always interested in finding ways to make this house of service to the field, we readily agreed. There were to be two class meetings here, the first of which was cancelled due to a snowstorm. The second did take place. I gave the students a tour of the house and spoke briefly about its history and occupants including the Colonial Society. The requirements for the course included a research paper related to one of the houses studied. One student, Chris Brown, chose Charles Jackson Paine. He did a nice job, and had we not had Tom Paine’s family history on the shelves here, it probably would have made a useful contribution to our knowledge. Nancy was very grateful for our participation and paid us the compliment of asking to do it again this year. We will.

The other contribution to the field we made was admitting a team of interns under the leadership of Brock Jobe and Sarah Parks from Winterthur, to examine our Boston furniture for inclusion in the Boston Furniture Archive. As I have written about that project in the newsletter, I don’t need to repeat myself here.

As always, I thank all of you who are interested in the house, who participate in its continuing life in so many ways by coming here and doing things in it, with it, and for it.

**Report of the Editor of Publications, John W. Tyler**

I am sure many of you have been lying awake at night wondering which essay in the Colonial Society’s 123-year history has been the most popular. Any guesses before I put your sleepless nights to rest? If you were thinking, Bernard Bailyn’s “Apologia of Robert Keayne,” you would be close. But actually by a substantial margin the most reprinted article is David Hall’s “More Wonders of the Invisible World,” an essay that was first delivered in this room in June, 1982, at our conference on “Seventeenth Century New England.” Of course, David eventually expanded on his insights in a full-length book, but many professors choose this shorter version for inclusion in anthologies they prepare for their students. Without meaning to slight in any way David’s success in rendering pre-Newtonian thought more comprehensible for the modern reader, I’ve always thought part of the article’s enduring popularity attributable to a really great title. Therefore, in homage to our most reprinted essay, I am entitling my remarks this evening: “More Wonders of the Digital World.”

Many of you are aware of, but have perhaps not yet had a chance to see online, our first digital publication: the ebook version of *The Papers of Francis Bernard, Royal Governor of Massachusetts,* volumes 4 and 5. They are readily downloadable for free at our website: [www.colonialsociety.org](http://www.colonialsociety.org). At the moment, all we have is a PDF, but they are soon to be joined by epub and mobi files that do all sorts of tricks a normal PDF file can’t do, such as linking to other letters mentioned in the footnotes or taking you back and forth from the index with a click of the mouse. Why did we go digital? It may surprise you to learn that there are libraries west of the Hudson River, even quite reputable ones, that don’t subscribe to our publications despite the fact that we offer our books for sale at far below their market cost. We often receive plaintive requests from scholars in South Dakota or Germany asking us to photocopy or scan parts of our books. And whether we approve of it or not, a younger generation of researchers automatically assumes that all that is worth knowing is available on the web, and they would never think of stirring from the comfort of their dorm rooms to go to a library. If our goal is to bring the hard work of our editors and authors to as broad an audience as possible, we had to go digital.

Now let me hasten to reassure you that we have no intention of ceasing to bring out books in gold-stamped blue bindings, tastefully designed and printed on the best archival paper. (I hope to be well on my way in my next reincarnation before that happens.) But it did seem to make sense now to publish in both formats. It’s fair to say that we have been a long time coming to this point, but for many years, concern about the inaccuracy of optical scanning had been our chief reservation. Although many overseas services advertised rates of 97 per cent accuracy or better, Colonial Society readers well know from their experiences reading on a Kindle or Ipad that even three misspelled words in a hundred can be very annoying. Certainly, the manuscripts could have been born digitally, but working as we do with volunteer editors, imposing the additional requirement of learning XML seemed a heavy burden. A year ago we were able to work out a process with Scribe, Inc. of Philadelphia, whereby we could submit the Microsoft Word documents coming from our editors to them for initial coding *before* the manuscript went to our designers to be broken into pages and have illustrations added. Working in this way, we are able to insure that the text of the digital edition is every bit as accurate as our printed text editions have always been and that they benefit from our traditional standards of fine book design as well.

But the invisibly digital world has also cast its spell over the transcription of documents as well. On this occasion in 2013, I announced that the Publications Committee had approved a proposal to publish the Samuel Phillips Diary written by the pastor in the First Church in Rowley from 1651 through 1696. Our Fellow Member Jeff Cooper of the Congregational Library, who regards this volume as the Holy Grail of Puritan Church records, had been searching for it since 1990. In the spring of 2007, the diary resurfaced. A bank near Rowley was closing its doors and cleaning out its vaults, when inside a bag marked “Dimes” they found a small leather-bound book with mysteriously illegible hand-writing. No it wasn’t hieroglyphics or Joseph Smith’s Neo-Egyptian, just seventeenth century script. Fortunately, someone made the connection to the missing records from Rowley, and Jeff and our Publications Chair Ken Minkema were summoned to authenticate the diary.

The detail with which the diary describes the religious controversies of the second generation of New Englanders is unique. It also retells in sometimes salacious detail the transgressions of wayward church members and their disputes with one another, reminding us that good Puritans first sought to resolve disagreements (even those over property) within the church before turning to the courts. At 620 tightly-written pages, transcribing the Phillips Diary was an enormous under-taking, and Cooper and Minkema proposed an untraditional means of attack: crowd-sourcing, whereby volunteers would transcribe short excerpts online under the supervision of highly trained specialists. As well you might imagine, the Publications Committee was nervous when the process was first described to us, and only the promise that Ken Minkema would check the entire manuscript letter-by-letter engaged our support. But now, less than two years later, I’m pleased to announce that the entire manuscript has been transcribed. We had as many as thirty volunteers helping us with the project, including several pastors, a number of professors, a few genealogists, university librarians, several grad students and a number of history- loving retired people. They hailed from all over the US and Canada, and from as far away as Switzerland; Cambridge, England; and St. Andrew’s, Scotland. According to Jeff Cooper, “All were very respectful of the importance of the project, and eager to do a good and accurate job.”But lest I raise your expectations about imminent publication too high, let me remind you that transcription is only about a third of the work in preparing a historical document for publication. Editors Cooper and Minkema still need to do the other two-thirds of the job: annotation. But it is a bold start on an important project.

I hope some of you already have had a chance to dip into Volumes 4 and 5 of *The Papers of Francis Bernard.* If you have you will have discovered that political methods in the late 1760s were not so different from our own day. It’s all about a fight to gain control of the narrative. Bernard and his patriot opponents jostled one another to transmit to London as swiftly as possible their contrasting accounts of news in Boston. Bernard won the first round by persuading Lord Hillsborough and other ministers that since the days of the Stamp Act the town had grown so disordered that only stationing regular troops there would restore the status quo. The patriots suspected that Bernard’s claims extended beyond exaggeration to outright misrepresentation and believed they had discovered sufficient proof of that when they finally succeeded in obtaining and publishing copies of some of Bernard’s highly-slanted letters. At that point, Bernard’s political effectiveness in Massachusetts was over. But fortunately, for his sake, his friends attempted to cover the embarrassment by seeing that he was awarded a baronetcy. And Bernard, the disgraced governor, transformed himself into London’s resident expert on imperial reform and colonial affairs. But that’s the subject of Volume Six in Colin Nicolson’s excellent series. Stay tuned.

Many of you, I know are anxiously awaiting *Boston Furniture, 1700 – 1900,* the proceedings of the conference jointly sponsored by the Colonial Society and the Winterthur Museum in Wilmington, Delaware in March, 2013. Bringing to publication any volume of proceedings with multiple authors is a bit like herding very independent-minded and recalcitrant sheep. Each author has his or her own pressing commitments and family emergencies, but that does not mean that Gerry Ward, the Good Shepherd, has not been diligently trying to round them up, as well as render their essays grammatical and lucid. We now have copy-edited versions of all 19 of the essays, and as soon as we can get co-editor and Fellow Member Brock Jobe to sit still long enough to write an introduction, we can begin production on the manuscript. I can assure you, however, that it will be a book well worth waiting for with over 400 full-color illustrations, beautifully designed by our friend Paul Hoffman, formerly of the Stinehour Press. With a trim-size of 8 ½ by 11, it will be physically the largest book we have published, and --- dare I say? --- might even be suitable for display on your coffee table or for Christmas gifts next year.

It is a three-way race to see which will be the next Colonial Society book to appear in 2016 after *Boston Furniture.* It might be *The Josiah Cotton Jr. Diary* edited by Douglas Winiarski of the University of Richmond. I briefly described the Cotton Diary at the annual meeting in 2011 after the Publications Committee had first approved the project. Josiah Cotton (1680–1756) was the son of John Cotton Jr., whose correspondence constitutes Volume 79 edited by Fellow Members Len Travers and Sheila McIntyre. Cotton spent his life working in Plymouth as a schoolmaster, county court justice, and Indian missionary, while managing a large farm. In 1726, Cotton began compiling a family history for the moral edification of his children. Over time, the manuscript evolved into a sprawling memoir in which the Plymouth magistrate commented on a wide range of notable events, from paper currency debates and imperial warfare to regional religious controversies and local intrigue. From 1727 until his death in 1756, Cotton retreated to his study on his birthday to record the “remarkable occurrences” of the previous year. Each annual narrative moved outward from personal and family business, to local events in Plymouth and the surrounding communities of southeastern Massachusetts, to regional political and religious developments, and, finally, to news spanning the British empire.

Another project racing toward print is *The Correspondence and Selected Writings of George Thacher* edited by William diGiacomantonio. George Thatcher (1754-1824) represented the Maine District of Massachusetts in both the Confederation and First Federal Congresses and continued in that office until Jefferson’s “Revolution of 1800.” He spent the rest of his public life on the state’s Supreme Judicial Court, temporarily moving to Massachusetts in order to retain his seat after Maine’s separation in 1820. In some ways, Thacher was a typical Federalist ultra but his increasingly outspoken challenges to religious orthodoxy as a champion and apologist for Unitarianism broke that mold.

The third horse in the race is *The King’s Chapel Records* edited by James Bell and James Mooney. From the time of its establishment under the Dominion of New England in 1686 for one hundred years following, King’s Chapel was the leading Anglican parish in Boston and, indeed, all New England. This project undertaken with the encouragement of the King’s Chapel Vestry as well as the Massachusetts Historical Society (the current depository of the records) will include not just the usual births, deaths and marriages, but also the Chapel’s financial records, including the construction of the current building in 1747, the masterpiece of America’s first professionally trained architect, Peter Harrison.

As I say, any of these three titles might appear in this year or the next. *The Letter and Account Books of John Hull* edited by David Hancock and Mark Peterson, and *The Diary of the Rev. William Bentley,* edited by Thomas Knoles lie further afield, but let me conclude as I usually do: don’t let this long list of future titles discourage you from suggesting other new collections of documents. It helps if you have an editor in mind, but either way, do please let either Ken Minkema or me know. You are our eyes and ears, and we depend upon you.

**Report of the President, Donald R Friary**

Thank you, John and Toby and Thomas, for reports that are thorough and encouraging and indicative of a year of real accomplishment for the Colonial Society. In publications we have taken a major step in entering the world of digitization with the simultaneous publication, in print and online, of two volumes of the Governor Bernard papers. John Tyler and Kenneth Minkema, Chair of our Committee on Publications, have shepherded this through a long and detailed process of selecting a vendor and guiding our designers and printers to new procedures that will be replicated in all future volumes. These new patterns will enable us also to digitize all past volumes, which will be available online at no charge so that scholars, students and teachers at all levels, and the general public can use them effectively. To me the most remarkable result is that our publications will be searchable and therefore much greater aids to scholarship. This is a breakthrough for the Society and I thank John Tyler and Ken Minkema for effecting it.

Toby Hall and the House Committee have also achieved much in the last twelve months. Toby has completed a new inventory of the furnishings at 87 Mount Vernon Street. He and House Committee member Robert Mussey have photographed most individual objects and all room views from several angles. The new inventory has made possible a new appraisal by Stephen Fletcher and his colleagues at Skinner, Inc. that has brought our fine arts insurance up to date and sets the stage for a conservation survey and prioritized treatment. This is about to begin on two paintings that will be conserved in the coming months, thanks to the generosity of two of our members. David Burnham will support the treatment of the Charles Hayter London 1820 pastel portrait of Stephen Higginson, for whom this house was designed and built in 1806. Robert Severy, who last year supported treatment of the winter landscape in the dining room, has pledged the funds for conservation of the landscape over the fireplace in this room. Thank you, David and Robert. I am grateful as well to member Ted Stebbins who surveyed our paintings to identify them and assess their condition and conservation needs.

The House Committee became especially busy in the spring with an unplanned project. In the severe winter that Boston and New England suffered an ice dam formed on the south, or street side, roof of the house, precipitating damage to the roof, where copper flashing migrated from beneath the slates, and to the façade when the ice dam and heavy snow fell to the ground, taking with it two large window caps, an iron window grill, and twisting beyond recognition the cast iron railing on the porch roof. We are very fortunate that our insurance was fully adequate to the situation. In August we received a check for $98,290 to repair the damage. This afternoon the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission is meeting to review and we anticipate to approve our project. Work will begin next Monday and we hope to conclude before another winter hits us. We are most grateful to member Lynne Spencer and her firm, Spencer & Vogt Group, Architecture Preservation, for contributing sound advice and architectural services for this very challenging project.

This house at 87 Mount Vernon Street is increasingly important to the Society for the income yielded by four residential rental units and the main floor office leased to Boston By Foot, as a meeting place for the Society and several kindred organizations, and as a symbol of the Society’s commitment to fostering the study and appreciation of the history and culture of early Massachusetts. This last is expressed not only in the scholarship manifest in our publications and programs, but in our commitment to historic preservation in maintaining this landmark building, a very fine example of the architecture of Charles Bulfinch.

Aside from use by the Colonial Society for Stated Meetings and special events, the Graduate Student Forum, Council and committee meetings, and this Annual Meeting, the house is used by kindred groups, not-for-profit organizations devoted to early American history, for classes, tours, programs, events, and the occasional film. During the past year Boston By Foot has used it for receptions, meetings, and an annual course for its volunteer guides. Revolution 250, the consortium of Boston history museums convened by Bob Allison and Martha McNamara, has had monthly planning meetings that led to the grand celebration in August of the Liberty Tree anniversary. The Bostonian Society concluded its series of strategic planning meetings here last November. Bob Allison brought a group of Boston teachers in a UMass/Boston-sponsored course on Boston history to discuss Charles Bulfinch. Our Beacon Hill neighbor, Suffolk University, had two classes in “Boston’s Historic Houses” in January with our Curator Toby Hall. Suffolk's annual history awards night was held at 87 Mount Vernon Street on May 7. The final meeting of the Four Centuries of Massachusetts Furniture steering committee was hosted with a reception by the Colonial Society on June 16. In July the New England Historic Genealogical Society arranged for a tour of the house and reception that was filled to capacity at eighty.

The Society’s committees are critical to the success of our operation, not only in planning, setting policy, and overseeing, but in the trenches. Our members serving on these committees do the Society’s work and make possible our programs. This year the Marketing Committee has been especially active under the leadership of its new chair, Susan Goganian. In June the committee presented an authors’ salute to new books by Colonial Society members. This year the focus was on Salem. Both featured books are about Salem and both authors are on the History faculty of Salem State University. Tad Baker spoke about *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience*, while Dane Morrison gave a talk on *True Yankees: The South Seas and the Discovery of American Identity*. Conversation ensued and books were sold and autographed. On October 15 the Marketing Committee offered a book sale with deep discounts on Colonial Society publications, giving members and the general public an opportunity to acquire volumes from our backlist and moving books from basement storage to the shelves and desks of scholars and students.

Scholarship was served when the Walter Muir Whitehill Prize Committee--Douglas Anderson of the University of Colorado, David Hall of the Harvard Divinity School, and Mary Beth Norton of Cornell University--evaluated a wide variety of submissions and awarded the prize to Douglas Winiarski, whose essay, “Lydia Prout’s Dreadfullest Thought,” was published in the September issue of the *New England Quarterly*. Our commitment to scholarship was advanced also by the Graduate Student Forum Committee--Robert Allison, Robert Gross, and Susan Lindsay Lively--when Fred and Virginia Anderson of the University of Colorado moderated a day-long program in which eight students presented documents from their dissertation research for very stimulating discussion. Topics ranged from early American autopsies to United States relations with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The Membership Committee, chaired by Vice President Celeste Walker, was enlarged when Joyce Chaplin and Linford Fisher were appointed to join continuing members Lorna Condon and John Tyler. The committee met in March to take a more proactive approach to the election of members, reviewing lists of Pulitzer and Bancroft Prize winners and discussing scholars and practitioners in history at New England institutions and farther afield. Nevertheless, most proposals for membership come from current members. Once again I encourage you to think of colleagues who will add significantly to our programs and especially to the conversations in history that are central to the Colonial Society and to occasions like this evening’s. The Membership Directory Committee has assumed a lower profile since the publication of the print version, but we should remain alert to changes in member profiles on the website. Consequently, I have asked Bob Mack, who created the membership site several years ago, to chair the committee and, with two other continuing members, Karen Nipps and John Tyler, monitor the membership website and encourage all of us to review our entries and bring them up to date.

Then there are the money committees. The Finance Committee chaired by our Treasurer Thomas Appleton meets twice annually to review investments, income and expenditures, and to prepare a budget each summer for the fiscal year beginning October 1. The Auditing Committee has an annual meeting with the firm that conducts our outside audit. This year the Auditing Committee and the Council exercised due diligence in reviewing the Society’s relationship with Loring, Wolcott and Coolidge, the firm that manages our investment portfolio and serves as our fiscal agent. The Council found that relationship entirely satisfactory and directed that it be reviewed every three years.

Our Development Committee, formed in 2007, saw change this year when its original chair, Fred Ballou, decided to step aside. Susan Lindsay Lively has graciously agreed to chair the committee and new members Anne Grimes Rand and Alan Rogers were appointed to join Toby Hall and Henry Lee. This group is very helpful in reviewing and critiquing drafts of Annual Fund letters each fall. This year it will address the need for bequests and other instruments of planned giving to add to the endowment that has long been so critical to the financing of our publications and other endeavors.

In addition to these committees several individuals serve the Society in key roles. Susan Lindsey Lively represents us on the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium, reviewing proposals for fellowships that enable scholars, including graduate students, to conduct research at three or more participating libraries and museums. The Colonial Society fellowship that is awarded each year for research in New England colonial history was given to Cynthia Bouton, Professor of History at Texas A&M University, for her project “Subsistence, Society, Commerce, and Culture in the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolution.”

Bob Allison and Martha McNamara have been most effective in bringing together under the aegis of the Colonial Society a group of history museums in downtown Boston to coordinate and integrate interpretation of Boston’s early history to school classes and tens of thousands of families and individuals who come to Boston each year to explore and understand the history of the city and the nation. Now known as Revolution 250, the consortium staged events in August that celebrated the site of the Liberty Tree at Washington and Essex Streets and included a lecture by John Tyler at the Old North Church on the Stamp Act riots that destroyed the house and possessions of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson in the North End.

Our website has for years been ably managed by Jim Baker, adding new and subtracting dated material, forging links to related sites, and in creative problem-solving in areas that are mysterious to many of us.

We soon hope to appoint another individual to undertake a very important responsibility, serving as liaison to the scholarly journal, *New England Quarterly, A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters*, that the Society has supported from shortly after its establishment in 1928. As you know, the *NEQ* has experienced a major transition in recent months with the retirement of Bill Fowler as board president and Linda Smith Rhoads as editor, each after thirty-four years at the *NEQ*. Richard D. Brown, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus at the University of Connecticut, has been elected President of the *New England Quarterly*’s Board of Directors and Jonathan M. Chu,Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts/Boston, has been appointed Editor. Both Dick Brown and Jonathan Chu are members of the Colonial Society and are with us this evening. The journal’s offices have moved from Northeastern University to UMass/Boston. I have had meetings recently with both Dick and Jonathan and we are all confident and enthusiastic about the new arrangements and the future of the *NEQ*.

In addition to managing such a significant part of the Society’s operations, these committee’s members provide a leadership pool for the Society that the Nominating Committee reviews each year.

Now I invite you to participate in the most stimulating part of our Annual Meeting evening, interaction in conversation with old friends and colleagues, discussion of mutual scholarly and programmatic interests, and meeting those who serve us well on the Council and on these committees and enable the Colonial Society to accomplish so much in fostering interest and scholarship in the early history of Massachusetts and New England.