

WEBSTER'S WAR OF THE WORDS RETURNS

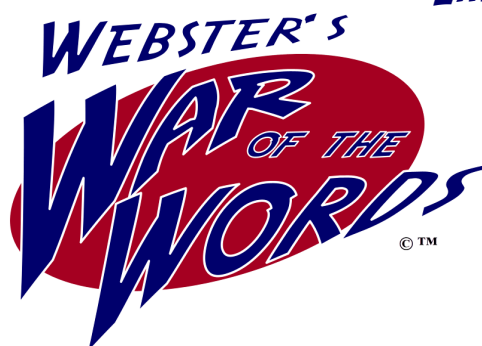
RED TEAM

ROB KYFF
PRUDENCE SLOANE
RAND COOPER
NANCY DEPALMA

BLUE TEAM

DIANE SMITH
PETER SOKOLOWSKI
HUMPHREY TONKIN
SUSAN CAMPBELL

EMCEE: ANITA FORD SAUNDERS



In the style of National Public Radio's *Says You!* and *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me*, the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society brings you Webster's **WAR OF THE WORDS**. Our second annual charity event will be an evening not to miss – full of fine food, entertainment, and a spirited game show with some of the region's most noted personalities. The program will take place on Thursday, April 28 from 6-9:30 p.m.

The featured event for the evening will be the War of the Words Game Show. The Red Team, featuring Rob Kyff ("The Word Guy"), Prudence Sloane (celebrity chef), Rand Cooper (author and blogger), and Nancy DePalma (elementary school

principal), faces off against The Blue Team- Peter Sokolowski (Associate Editor at Merriam-Webster), Humphrey Tonkin (University Professor and President Emeritus at the University of Hartford.), Susan Campbell (author and *Courant* columnist), and Diane Smith (TV journalist and radio talk show host). The teams will battle each other in a test of their knowledge. The winning team's points will be transferred into dollars and will go directly towards supporting at-risk school programs at the museum. Anita Ford Saunders, communication and public relations professional, will emcee the event.

In addition to the game show, enjoy live music by Hall High School's Acafella, a dinner buffet, and fine wine and beer provided by Wine Cellars 4. Bring some friends and win incredible items, including:

Florida Getaway – Week-long garden condo accommodations on award-winning Crescent Beach in Siesta Key, FL for up to six people

Baseball Country Escape – Weekend stay for four in the all-American town of Cooperstown, New York

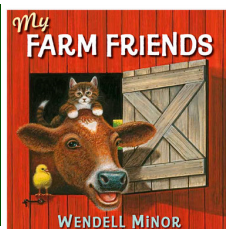
Hearth Dinner for 8 – Enjoy a scrumptious private dinner in front of the Noah Webster House's hearth

Get more information and explore other auction items on the museums website at www.noahwebsterhouse.org

(Continued on page 5)



Contestants Scot Haney and Linda Belt chat in the green room at last year's War of the Words.



Illustrator/Author

Wendell Minor
is coming to the museum!



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Members,

After a long and arduous winter, it appears that spring is finally around the corner. This was a difficult few months for the museum. School programs and events such as the January Tavern Night needed to be canceled due to inclement weather, the historic house and some of the modern spaces which had recently been restored/remodeled received water damage as the result of ice dams, and our parking lot has been horrendously abused by frost heaves. . . It is no wonder then that the Noah Webster House staff (and I am sure you too), are ecstatic to see the piles of white melt away into sprouting shades of green.

Now that winter is passing, there are all kinds of exciting programs and opportunities coming up at the museum. Please read this issue of the Spectator and plot your path to fun and cultural exploration. Some of these opportunities include a remembrance of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War through music, a book signing and discussion by Joshua Kendall, author of *The Forgotten Founding Father: Noah Webster's Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture*, and the grand opening of the semi-permanent exhibit, *West Hartford A-Z*.

While I would like our members and friends to join us for every program, there are two events coming up that I specifically hope you will put on your calendar. These are:

- Thursday, April 28: Second Annual **Webster's War of the Words**. Our gala event will be bigger and better than its premier (please see article).
- Saturday, May 14: **Members and Friends Work Day**. After the long winter, the museum's grounds need some help. . . So, come and bring a rake and a paint brush (please see article).

Many thanks for all your support. I look forward to seeing you at Noah's house,

Chris Dobbs
Executive Director

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WORK DAY

Saturday, May 14
8 a.m. – 12 noon

After a long and trying winter, the grounds of the Noah Webster House need some TLC. We ask that members of the museum and our friends come out to lend a hand (or a hammer). We will kick the morning off at 8 a.m. with coffee and tea before moving ahead with the manual labor of getting fences back in shape, painting, raking, and general landscaping maintenance. After a productive morning, kick-back with the crew as we enjoy a spring BBQ. To sign up, please call 860-521-5362 x10 by Thursday, May 12.



SPRING EVENTS

Sylvie Dahl Fashion Show Saturday, April 9, 11 a.m.

A prom-goers dream! Dresses, make-up, and much more for springtime fashion.

“The Greatest Hits of the Civil War: America’s First Professional Songwriters” with Rick Spencer Tuesday, April 12, 7 p.m.

Hear some of the early greats in this commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

Scout Sleepovers Fridays, April 15, May 20, and June 17

Bring your scouts for a night at the museum.

Super Spring Break Workshops Monday-Friday, April 18-22, 2-4 p.m.

A week of fun workshops for kids.

Josh Kendall Book Talk Wednesday, April 20, 5:30 p.m.

Kendall will discuss his new book about Noah Webster at the Connecticut Historical Society

2nd Annual Webster’s War of the Words Thursday, April 28, 6 p.m.

Watch your favorite local celebrities duke it out for the win!

Poetry Reading Friday, May 6, 7 p.m.

Bring your favorite poems to share.

Mother’s Day Tea Sunday, May 8, 2 p.m.

Enjoy a relaxing afternoon tea and a presentation by Dorothy Keller.

Members and Friends Work Day Saturday, May 14, 8 a.m. -12 noon

Help us clean up after a tough winter, then enjoy a barbecue.

Wendell Minor Reading and Book Signing Sunday, May 15, 2 p.m.

Meet one of America’s most popular illustrator/authors.

The Practical Past: Dairying Sunday, June 5, 1-3 p.m.

Make ice cream, butter, and a simple cheese.



THE GREATEST HITS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Join us on Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at 7 p.m. to commemorate the first shots of the Civil War with Rick Spencer.

Presented in conjunction with the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.



Her words changed the world.



To commemorate the first shots of the Civil War, the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society will host folk musician Rick Spencer for “The Greatest Hits of the Civil War: America’s Earliest Professional Songwriters.”

On Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at 7 p.m. (the 150th anniversary of the first shots fired at Fort Sumter), Spencer will share some of his favorite Civil War tunes. He will focus on several American songwriters, including Stephen Foster, Daniel Emmett, George F. Root and Henry Clay Work.

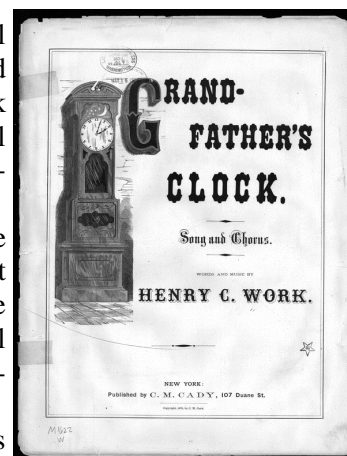
Each songwriter had multiple successes, including Foster’s “Oh! Susanna”, Emmett’s “Blue Tail Fly (Jimmy Crack Corn)”, and Root’s “Battle Cry of Freedom”. Henry Clay Work spent his early life in Middletown, Connecticut and wrote songs like “Come Home, Father,” and “The Ship that Never Returned” (later became “Charlie and the MTA). He later wrote 1876’s hit, “Grandfather’s Clock”.

“These songs, these melodies, are in the collective consciousness of people today,” says Spencer, Executive Director of the Dr. Ashbel Woodward Museum in Franklin. “You would recognize many of them.” In fact, “Grandfather’s Clock” was recorded by Boyz 2 Men in 2002, and “Blue Tail Fly” is still a popular children’s song.

Spencer says, “During the Civil War, the men who were fighting and their loved ones at home were connected by the songs they shared. On any given evening, popular songs which were being sung around campfires were also being sung in the parlors at home.” That was about as close as families could feel during an era before cell phones and email.

Spencer has been a folk musician since the mid-1970s and has been a staff musician at Mystic Seaport for over 20 years. His discography includes over a dozen CDs, several featuring his own works.

“The Greatest Hits” program is \$6 per person, and free for members of the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society. It takes place at the museum at 227 South Main St, West Hartford.



Free for Veterans!



Bands like this one kept up morale with songs like “Blue Tail Fly”.

A Lyrical Fact:

Some Civil War era songs have two versions— one from the North, and one from the South. George F. Root’s “Battle Cry of Freedom” is famous for its dueling lyrics.

The Northern Lyrics:

*The Union forever, Hurrah! boys, hurrah!
Down with the traitors,
Up with the stars;
While we rally round the flag, boys,
Rally once again, Shouting the battle cry of Freedom.*

The Southern Lyrics:

*Our Dixie forever! She's never at a loss!
Down with the eagle and up with the cross!
We'll rally 'round the bonny flag, we'll rally once again,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!*

Sponsored by a grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council.

THE ELM THEATER

By: Matthew Sosnowski, Spring Intern

Walgreen's just doesn't seem to fit the idea of a historic landmark, but for the residents of West Hartford there was no other choice. The historic Elm Theater opened on November 10, 1948 and attracted both young and old to the beautiful building and its interior. Many people commented on its cleanliness, while others its timeless construction. However, the grand movie theater was sold to the Walgreen's chain and it was converted into a drug store.



The Elm shows "The Sound of Music" in this 1965 photograph.

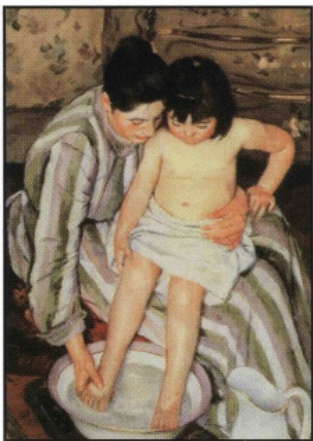


The "Elm", now a Walgreen's drug store.

It was quite a unique theater having both orchestra and balcony seating. Beth Sweeney, an employee of the Noah Webster House Museum states, "I used to go there as a child and they always kept it spotless."

But why should such a well kept and historic building be transformed into an everyday drug store? The simple answer is money. There were many protests to the conversion of the theater but it just wasn't competing well enough with the other theaters in the nearby towns. It closed in 2002 and was converted into a Walgreen's Pharmacy in 2005. It was supported by the Elmwood Renaissance, which is an organization that took donations in order to try and preserve the theater but to no avail. Luckily it was not demolished which was the original intent, and the exterior still looks much as it did with a few minor changes.

MOTHER'S DAY TEA



1. The Bath, 1891-92, OIL ON CANVAS

This Mother's Day, enjoy a relaxing afternoon at the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society's Sixth Annual Mother's Day Tea. The tea will take place on Sunday, May 8 at 2 p.m. in the Hamilton Gallery.

A light lunch of delicious tea sandwiches and desserts will accompany a variety of teas and fresh lemonade.

After tea, Saint Joseph College Professor Dorothy Keller will present a slide lecture on Mary Cassatt's works of art featuring motherhood, children, and friendship.

Reservations are required. Call (860) 521-5362 for information and reservations. The cost for adults is \$22 and children 17 and under are \$18. Members pay \$18 and \$16 respectively. This program is suggested for those ages 12 and older. Call 860-521-5362 x21 for further information or visit noahwebsterhouse.org.

(War of the Words Continued from page 1)

The event will take place from 6-9 p.m. at West Hartford's Town Hall, located at 50 South Main Street. General Public Tickets are \$50 per person. General Public Tickets PLUS the Champions of Noah Webster Reception, an opportunity to enjoy champagne with celebrities, are \$75 per person.

Reservations are required. Call 860-521-5362 ext. 10 to make your reservations and pay via credit card. You may also visit www.NoahWebsterHouse.org. If paying via check, please stop by the museum during open hours or mail to: Noah Webster House, Attn: War of the Words, 227 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107. Payment and registration must be received by April 26.

All funds raised during the evening will benefit the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society and are deductible to the extent allowed by law. The museum reaches over 10,000 students each year and offers programs and events for the public.

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SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

COLONIAL KIDS' ADVENTURE CAMP

July 11-15, July 25-29, August 8-12

(Ages 8-11)

Kids explore life in the 1700s by spending a week as a colonial child. By doing activities at both the historic Noah Webster House and the farm at Westmoor Park, children experience first hand the chores, games and fun of colonial times.

During the week, children become colonial "characters" and help to cook their lunches over an open hearth. They explore Noah Webster's house, garden, work on crafts, and play games. At Westmoor Park, children encounter life on a farm by caring for the barnyard animals, tending the vegetable garden and creating food and crafts from the bountiful natural resources of the park.

Camp is held in two different locations. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday sessions will be held at the Noah Webster House, 227 South Main Street. Tuesday and Thursday sessions will be held at Westmoor Park, 119 Flagg Road.

Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sessions: July 11-15, July 25-29, August 8-12, 2011 (Extended hours until 5 p.m. - \$35 per week) \$265/ Non-members; \$239/ Members



COLONIAL CRAFTS & TRADES WORKSHOPS August 15-19

(Ages 9-12) For one week only, the museum will offer two half-day, week-long, hands-on workshops where students will actively learn about and try out different types of colonial crafts and trades.

Session A runs from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and Session B runs from 1-4 p.m. Both sessions include a variety of fun and challenging activities suited for both boys and girls! These workshops give kids the opportunity to play colonial games, dress in period costumes, hear stories, tour Noah's house, work with a blacksmith, a carpenter and includes colonial crafting! Workshop sessions can be taken together or separately. Prices include all materials. Session A: M-F 9 a.m. to noon

Session B: M-F 1-4 p.m.

Session A or B: \$150/Non-members, \$130/Members.

Session A and B: \$250/Non-members, \$230/Members.

Save! Sign up two or more siblings to receive \$15 off the price of each child for workshops only.

Min. number: 7 Max. number: 20 (Participants will be contacted one week before workshops)



BOOKWORM ADVENTURES FOR TIKES

It's never too early to share "Noah Webster's fondness for books!" In this week long workshop, children ages 4-6 will explore language and literacy through this interdisciplinary program. Each day will feature a new storybook, the use of a felt board to illustrate what they have learned, and activities that will make the story come to life!

This is a teacher-led program using Noah Webster's house, the museum, and our hands-on discovery space to inspire children to love to read!

Meet the author...On the last day of the workshop, award winning writer, Pegi Deitz Shea, author of "Noah Webster Weaver of Words" will read one of her published children's books. Your child will go home with an autographed book of their own. Parents are invited to attend this book signing!



Summer Session: August 1- 5, 2011 from 9 a.m.- 12 noon. \$150/Non-members, \$130/Members. A snack is included.

**To sign up for any of these programs
Education Department at 860-521-5362 ext. 14.
or email education@noahwebsterhouse.org**

SUPER SPRING BREAK WORKSHOPS

Looking for something fun to do during April School Vacation? Check out our fun 2-hour activities for kids ages 7 and up! The cost is \$15 per child per workshop (\$12 for museum members) and registration is required.

Monday, April 18: 2-4 p.m.: Terrarium

Grow your own herbs by creating a garden in a jar! Take your terrarium home and watch your garden grow.

Tuesday, April 19: 2-4 p.m.: Stencil a trunk

Kids get creative by painting and stenciling a treasure trunk. After they paint the basecoat, they stencil the trunk with a traditional colonial design.

Wednesday, April 20: 2-4 p.m.: Old-Time Photos

Get your picture taken while dressed up in clothes from the "olden" times in an old-time setting. Then decorate your own picture frame to go along with it.

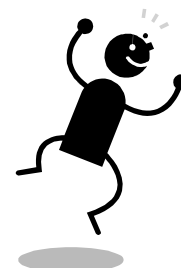


Thursday, April 21: 2-4 p.m.: Bead Weaving
Girls and boys will create a bracelet or keychain by learning how to weave on a bead loom, an art perfected by Native Americans in the New England area.

Friday, April 22, 2-4 p.m.: Colonial Toys and Games

In this creative and fun session, kids will learn a variety of Colonial games and toys and make the game of Graces and/or a Cup and Ball.

To register for any or all of these exciting workshops call the Education Department at 860-521-5362 ext. 14.



Spring has Sprung at the Museum Shop!

NEW! West Hartford A-Z Note cards:

26 beautiful full-color cards featuring the artwork of Pamela R. Levy from the West Hartford A-Z exhibit.



Great outdoor Toys and Games like **Graces and Hoop & Stick!**

Unique gifts for showers and weddings!



Open Thursday-Monday from 1-4 p.m. Call 860-521-5362 ext. 11.

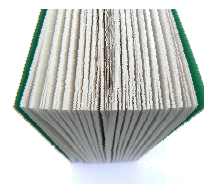
Scout Sleepovers!

Cook a colonial dinner over the fire, do a craft & activities in our lantern-lit historic house, then snuggle in your sleeping bag and watch a movie on our big screen. In the morning, have a light breakfast before heading home.

Open enrollment dates (will be booked Boy OR Girl Scouts by first reservations): **Fridays, June 17 and July 22 or book your own any time!**

**Call 860-521-5362 ext. 14.
for more information or to make
your reservation.**

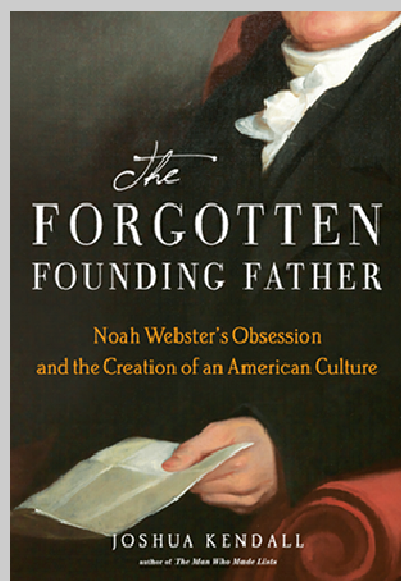




THE FORGOTTEN FOUNDING FATHER

Noah Webster's Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture

BY JOSHUA KENDALL



Noah Webster (1758-1843) was more than just America's greatest lexicographer. He was also a Founding Father who helped define American culture. In 1783, he published the first edition of his legendary spelling book, which would teach five genera-

tions of Americans how to read. A leading Federalist, who was a confidant of both George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, Webster was in Philadelphia during the Constitutional Convention where he wrote a highly influential essay on behalf of the nation's founding document. During the greater part of the 1790s, he edited *American Minerva*, New York City's first daily newspaper. A dedicated public servant, he served as a state rep in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. "America's pedagogue" was also a founder of Amherst College — he was an early president of the college's Board of Trustees.

In 1798, the 1778 Yale grad moved back to New Haven with his family — he and his wife Rebecca Greenleaf would raise seven children — to begin his dictionary. Having made a fortune from his publishing ventures, Webster could afford to follow his heart. The first edition of his *American Dictionary*

of the English Language was published in 1828. He would continue working on revisions until the day he died. In contrast to his predecessor, the renowned British wordsmith, Samuel Johnson, who famously opined, "No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money," Webster loved compiling and defining words more than just about anything else. This obsession, which was instrumental in helping a high-strung genius live an amazingly vibrant life, ended up giving America a language of its own.

The biography will be published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, a member of Penguin Group (USA), on April 14, 2011 (on this date in 1828, Noah Webster copyrighted the first dictionary of American English).

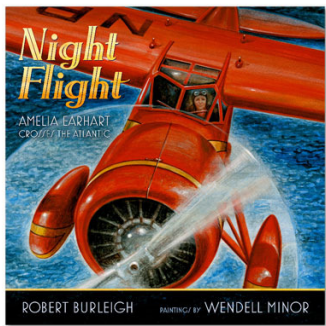
BOOK SIGNING AND DISCUSSION

**Held at the Connecticut Historical Society
Wednesday, April 20**

Meet Joshua Kendall, author of *The Forgotten Founding Father, Noah Webster's Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture* at the Connecticut Historical Society (1 Elizabeth St. Hartford, CT). Kendall will discuss his new book at 6 p.m., and sign copies afterward. Come by at 5:30 p.m. for a wine and cheese reception with the author. The event is free for members of the NWH/WHHS and CHS, and \$8 for non-members.

For more information call 860-521-5362 ext. 21.

WENDELL MINOR BOOK SIGNING



Children's author and illustrator Wendell Minor will read from several of his books, and sign books at the museum on Sunday, May 15 at 2 p.m.

Minor is well-known for his detailed images and cover art for children's and adult books. Recently, he wrote and illustrated "My

Farm Friends", a book inspired by his childhood visits to farms in Illinois. His other works include illustrating several sequels to "Julie of the Wolves," by Jean Craighead George, the famous cover of "To Kill a Mockingbird" (Harper Lee), and the covers of David McCullough's *Truman*, *John Adams* and *1776*. In 2005, Minor worked with Buzz Aldren on his book, "Look at the Stars".

Many of Minor's books and illustrations stem from his great love of nature and the outdoors. He has traveled throughout the country to find inspiration for his art. Minor and his wife, Florence, live in Connecticut and

continue to write and travel the country.

Minor's work was the recent subject of an exhibit entitled "Reaching for the Moon" at The New Britain Museum of American Art. Visit www.MinorArt.com to find out more about current exhibitions and upcoming events.

A picture invites the viewer into it and offers a sense of mystery. It lets the viewer become part of the process.

A good picture, like a good story, is timeless.

~Wendell Minor

Don't miss this great afternoon of literary fun: hear Minor tell some of his stories, have him sign a copy of your favorite book, and have a light snack.

This event is free to museum members and \$6 per person for non-members and is made possible by a grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council. Special thanks to the West Hartford Public Library. Reservations are required—call 860-521-5362 ext 21.

Poetry Read-In

Friday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Well-known poets Gray Jacobik and Pit Pinegar lead off this evening of poetry and prose.

Bring your own works to share during the open-mic portion of the evening.



From "Rachel, the Story of Rachel Carson";
from "Into the Woods";
Minor with his wife
Florence



Coming Soon.... New Art Exhibit



The Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society will soon be featuring the works of local artist, Dolores Howard, an intuitive painter of abstracts, figures and landscapes. Her creativity is influenced by her love of color; using it to soothe or excite, calm or energize. Her work includes many beautiful pieces of familiar West Hartford scenes.

Howard graduated from Pratt Institute, New York and worked as a fashion designer. When she returned to Connecticut, she recycled her art and design skills into interiors, working in her husband's architectural firm. Eighteen years ago she developed her skills as a fine artist, painting and studying with artists Alan Tompkins, Bob Norieko, Frank Federicko and John LoPresti, instructors at the West Hartford Art League. She has won Best of Show and several National Arts awards.

This exhibit is scheduled to open in early May 2011. For more information, please call 860-521-5362 ext. 17.

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 Elizabeth L. Spencer
 Anne P. Streeter
 Joan L. Suski
 Ann E. Thomas and
 Michael B. Bonzagni
 Mr. and Mrs. David Thomas
 Thomas Fahy
 Insurance Associates
 Humphrey Tonkin
 Tom and Dougie Trumble
 Ann and Dean Uphoff
 Lynn and John Wadhams
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 Tracey Wilson and Beth Bye
 Nancy and Richard Woodworth

**The following corporations
 matched contributions made
 by individuals:**

Aetna Foundation, Inc.
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**Memorial/Honor
 Contributions**
In memory of:

Gordon Bennett
 Charlotte Pinsky
 James Shelton

In Honor of:

Gordon Bennett

**Long-term support through
 charitable gift annuities:**

Gordon Bennett

Please see 2010 Annual Report
 for granting organizations.

Many others contributed in
 amounts ranging from \$5 to
 \$99, and we are equally grate-
 ful to those generous folks.

If we inadvertently omitted
 your name or spelled it wrong,
 please alert us by calling
 860-521-5362 ext. 10. Thank
 you for your support.





Noah Webster House &
West Hartford Historical Society

227 South Main St.
West Hartford, CT 06107

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8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Donations accepted
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Basic Membership Benefits

- ◆ Free unlimited admission to the museum
- ◆ Membership is good for one full year
- ◆ Free or reduced admission to many museum programs and events
- ◆ Preferred ticketing to certain museum programs and events
- ◆ 10% discount on purchases at the Museum Shop
- ◆ Subscription to *The Spectator* newsletter

Please check one:

___ \$25 **Senior/Student**

___ \$30 **Individual**

___ \$40 **Family/Household**

(2 adults and children under 18)

___ \$40 **Grandparent**

(2 adults and grandchildren
under 18)

___ \$100 **Contributor**

Basic membership benefits plus
four guest passes to the museum

___ \$250 **Sponsor**

All of the above plus 10% off of
facility rental

___ \$500 **Sustainer**

All of the above plus (1) free
admission to a designated event

___ \$1,000 **Benefactor**

All of the above plus invitation to
special benefactor event



MAIL TO: The Noah Webster House &
West Hartford Historical Society

227 South Main Street West Hartford, CT 06107