



# News from the Stow Historical Society

*A newsletter for all friends of Stow history.  
Please feel free to pass it along to others who might be interested!*

October 2012

## “Stow Skills” to be on Display at West School on Sunday, Oct. 14

Stow artists and artisans will demonstrate talents as varied as beekeeping, photography, painting, weaving, ceramics-making and the crafting of fine jewelry during the “Skills in Our Town” program at Stow’s West School Museum on Sunday, October 14.

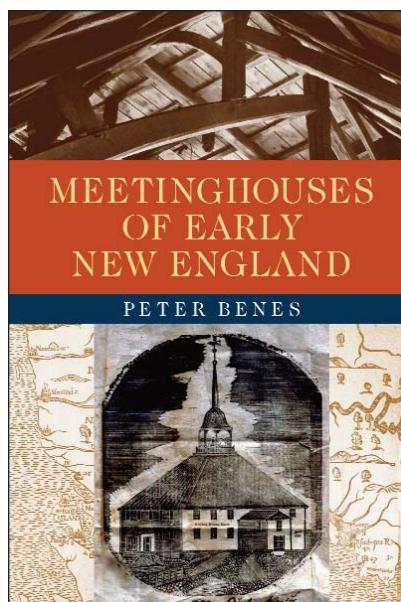
“Skills in Our Town” is a family-oriented event in which residents both show off their abilities and, often, offer hands-on experiences in their avocations.

The Skills program, running from 3 pm to 5:30 pm, is free and open to all interested persons. The program is jointly presented by the Stow Historical Society and the Stow Historical Commission.

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*Ted Carvalho will again be on hand for pottery-making lessons.*



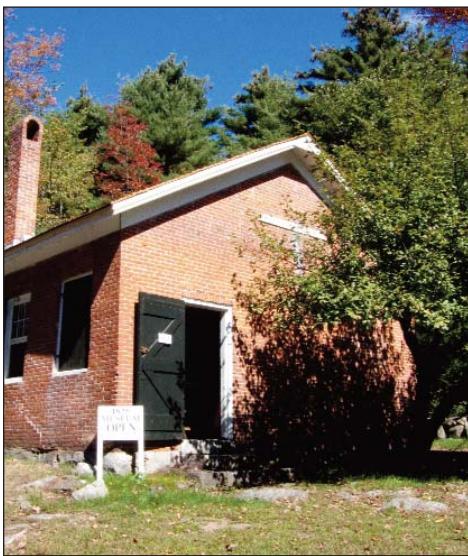
## New England Meetinghouses to be Focus of SHS Annual Meeting on Saturday, Nov. 3

Mark your calendars for the Stow Historical Society’s 2012 annual meeting on Saturday evening, November 3. The 7 pm event at Town Hall will begin with a potluck supper. Everyone interested in Stow or New England history is invited to attend (and to please bring a dish for the potluck).

The program will feature historian Peter Benes discussing New England meetinghouses. Mr. Benes, whose book *Meetinghouses of Early New England*, was published earlier this year by the University of Massachusetts Press, is editor and director of the Concord-based Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife.

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## “Stow Skills” on Sunday, Oct. 14 (*Continued*)



Stowites participating in this year's program include:

- **Honey Pot Hill Orchard's Richard Martin**, demonstrating beekeeping (with the hives used to harvest honey but, for this event, without the bees).
- **Judith Jaffe**, exhibiting paintings and discussing her artistic avocation.
- **Jonathan Daisy**, exhibiting photographs and talking about photographic skills.
- **Gail Thomas**, demonstrating her own jewelry-making skills and offering a hands-on craft activity for kids.
- **Karen Gray**, with two looms on hand, discussing weaving and offering a weaving activity for children.
- **Ted Carvalho**, demonstrating pottery-making and offering kids a chance to try their hand at creating their own ceramic work.



The Stow West School Museum is located at the intersection of **Harvard Road** and **Hiley Brook Road**. West School programs are supported in part by a grant from the Stow Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

## SHS Annual Meeting on Saturday, Nov. 3 (*Continued*)

**The common image of meetinghouses often focuses on spare, rectangular white structures with high steeples**, exemplified by Stow's First Parish Church. But while First Parish is a successor to four earlier meetinghouses, it's actually a 19th-Century church, not a meetinghouse.

**And early meetinghouses often weren't white, rectangular or adorned with steeples.** In the early 17th Century, they frequently weren't even stained. By the last half of the 18th Century, some *were* being painted white but records provide evidence of many painted in yellows, grays, greens, reds, oranges, browns and other colors. Some early meetinghouses *were* rectangular, but often without any steeple at all. And many were square, with hipped roofs and central spires.



Historian Peter Benes

**Stow's first four meetinghouses do reflect a common pattern of New England meetinghouses:** They were often rebuilt or replaced with larger structures, sometimes even before they were completed. And Stow apparently did escape the sectarian conflicts that afflicted some meetinghouses. In his book, Mr. Benes notes that records indicate at least 13 cases in which factions stole or burned meetinghouse timbers the night before the structures were to be erected to try to alter their locations. And he cites the case of the 1790s Rehobeth, Mass. meetinghouse in which Baptists staged an around-the-clock, two-week-long service in order to keep a Congregationalist minister from speaking.

**If you plan to attend the November 3 SHS program at Town Hall, please call Linda Stokes at 978-897-4322 to RSVP and indicate your potluck contribution.**