

"I have no idea what readership is of written editorials, but it doesn't come anywhere close to the readership of editorial cartoons." ~Paul Conrad, American political cartoonist

October, 2010

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THE
NEEDHAM  **GAZETTE**

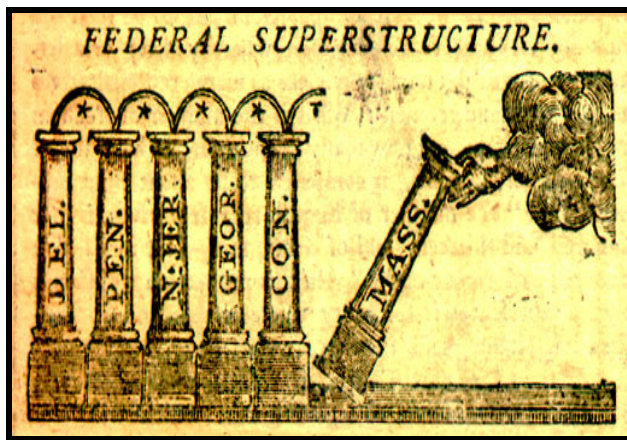
~~~~ With the Lateft Occurrences and Advices, Both Foreign and Domeftick ~~~~

Member: Needham Business Association, Needham Community Council, Metrowest Regional Library Network

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*"Hiftorically fpeaking"*

**IN NEEDHAM, SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE!**



## Newspaper Cartooning in "TIMES" Present – and past!

THIS PAST SPRING, THE WALLS OF THE NEEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY' were covered with an extensive display of works by the Needham *Times* artist and cartoonist, Robert Y. Larsen.

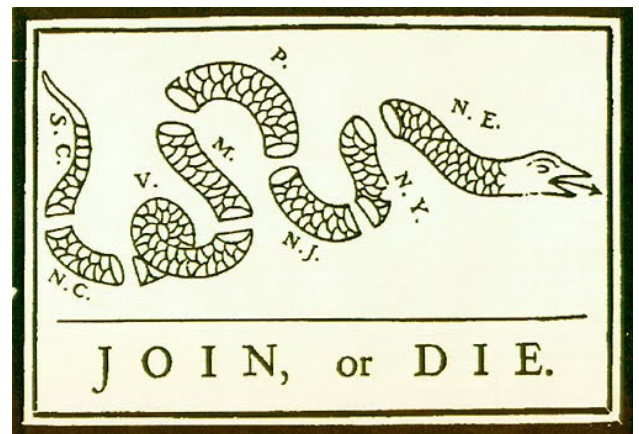
The Society was privileged to display a collection of Bob's works ranging from editorial cartoons to pastel portraits and delicate pen-and-ink line drawings.

If you missed it, you lost a rare chance to glimpse the extent of Bob's talented hands and creative mind – and especially the way his weekly iconoclastic cartoon in the *Times* lampoons some Needham pomposity and frequently says far more about local government than any written editorial might do. In Bob's case,

the old saying is true: one of his pictures is worth a thousand words.

Bob Larsen's exhibit provided the inspiration for this month's *Gazette* feature, in which I've taken a look back at America's first political cartoons.

The first cartoon appeared on May 9, 1754 in another newspaper with a similar name to ours: Ben Franklin's The Pennsylvania Gazette. It was associated with an editorial by Franklin commenting on the disunited state of the British Colonies:



Franklin's woodcut drawing, entitled *Join or Die* pictures a snake divided into eight pieces, representing the American colonies at that time. The drawing was based on the popular superstition that a snake that had been cut in two would come to life if the pieces were joined together before sunset. The drawing immediately

caught the public's fancy and was reproduced in other newspapers.

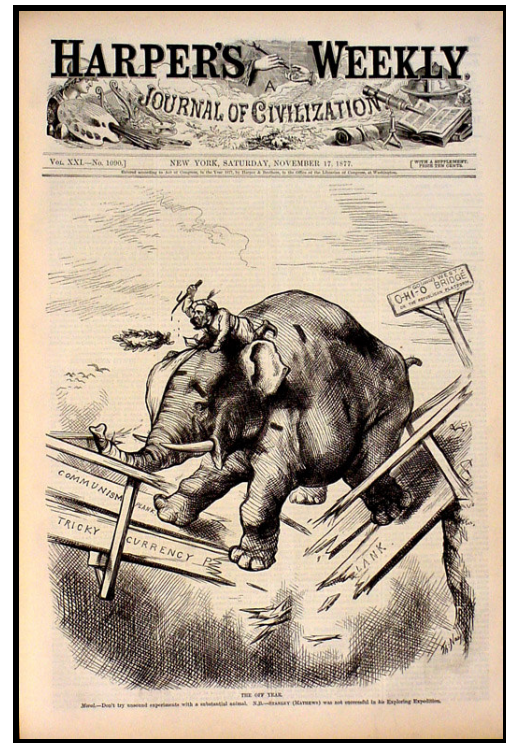
Another early cartoon from the 1700's appeared on January 30, 1788 in the "Massachusetts *Centinel*." Titled *'The Federal Superstructure,'* the drawing shows a hand helping to raise and align the Massachusetts pillar to an upright position with the other states. The *Centinel*, a supporter of the new Constitution, observed that *'The Pillar of the Great Federal Edifice rises daily.'* Shown in position as *'having already ratified the new document'* are pillars representing the states of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia and Connecticut. A story below the drawing notes that the New York Assembly planned to call a convention to ratify the Constitution.

The style of America's early political cartoons differed substantially in appearance from those of today, being limited to the time-consuming creation and carving out (engraving) on a wooden block. But central to all was a subject that was *political* ...as exemplified by Thomas Nast.

Following Benjamin Franklin and preceding Bob Larsen was America's most famous and effective political cartoonist, Thomas Nast. *Harper's Weekly*, a newspaper that flourished in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, presented a mixture of news stories and engraved illustrations. Amongst the most famous of the illustrators who worked for the magazine was Thomas Nast, "*father of American political cartooning.*" Early in 1862, during the Civil War, he became a war correspondent for *Harper's Weekly* and his patriotic themes for the Union created such attention that President Lincoln cited Nast as his "*best recruiting sergeant*".

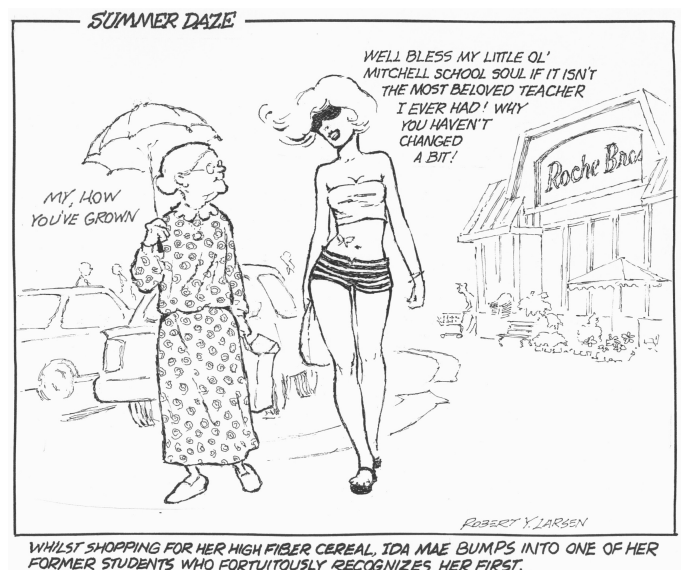
Following the war, Nast became America's most significant illustrator of American political and social issues. His pointed cartoons exerted a great impact on public opinion and created extreme public controversy. Every presidential candidate who gained his support won. His "campaign by cartoon" in 1870-71 actually brought down "Boss" Tweed and New York's corrupt Tammany Hall.

More than being a cartoonist, Nast was an innovator of political images. He created and popularized many now familiar subjects such as the Republican elephant, the Democratic donkey, John Bull, Uncle Sam, and Columbia.



Like Nast, Bob Larsen has also run into occasional public controversy, as when he had the effrontery to treat by cartoon two Needham Fourth of July favorites: Miss Needham, and Fred Muzi in his persona as an American Indian.

~ *Ye Olde Editor*



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Briarwood Rehabilitation and Healthcare  
Petrini Corporation  
Muzi Ford



***PRESIDENT'S PODIUM***  
by Mark Gluesing

The members of the Board of Directors all serve on various sub-committees whose activities keep the Society operating successfully. There are opportunities for members to also serve on many of these committees. The **House Committee** is responsible for the general care and operation of the facility. In addition to managing the physical care of the building and site, the committee is responsible for coordinating and organizing the setup for the various events that occur at the Society. We manage the setup for our programs and fundraising events, various meetings at the facility, the 1850s school day, as well as other events. There are several Board members and members who have staffed this committee for the past few years. **The House Committee now has vacancies that need filling.** We could use 2 or 3 people who to assist in the work of managing the facility. This is a key committee and an opportunity help with important work at the Society. Please call Gloria or me to volunteer. Thank you!

The Needham Tercentennial  
kicks off in November!

[www.needham300.org](http://www.needham300.org)



***In the EXECUTIVE CHAIR***  
by Gloria Greis

**ANNUAL FUND ~ Thank You!**

The Annual Fund is drawing to a close for this year – please consider a donation if you have not done so! Many, many thanks to those of you who have contributed to this year's Fund: Joan Alden, Jeanette Anderson, Carroll & Laura Arbogast, Connie & Joe Barr, George Belzer, Jane Bielski, Seymour Bigman, Arthur Bloom, Marianna Borrelli, Carol Boulris, John & Gwen Buehrens, Edwin Cameron, Margot Carleton, Dorothy Caulfield, Maureen & Nassib Chamoun, Robert & Gratia Chase, Jack & Pat Cogswell, Helen & Mel Colman, Frank & Louise Condon, Janet Costanzo, Roberta Crocker, Daniel & Julie Dain, Laura Damon, Richard Davis, Carolin Davis, Marie & David Devine, Michael Diener, Joan Dimond, Janet & David Drake, Susan Duncan, Skilky & Tedi Eaton, Janis Soma & Bruce Eisenhut, Shirl E Fay, Claire Fusaro, Adrienne Smith & Mark Gluesing, Sharyn & Gary Greenstein, Bob Hall, Moe & Elizabeth Handel, Bob Heald, Gail & Tom Hedges, Michael & Betty Heffernan, Jeff & Deborah Heller, George & Christine Hoffmeister, Jane Howard, Mary Lou Edman Hughes, Dr. & Mrs. Adolph Hutter, Bruce & Helen Johnstone, Florence & Bob Kelley, Elsie Kent, Elaine Kile, John & Marion Lebourveau, Jeanne & Robert Leeber, Theresa Lemaire, Carl & Jean Lindblad, Ann MacFate, Ruth MacIntosh, David & Ann MacQueen, George Macrina, Susan Anderson & Joseph McCabe, Gina McClellan, Ted & Mary McIntosh, Carolyn McIver, Jeanne & Stephen McKnight, Mr & Mrs John McQuillan, the Richard P. Melick Foundation, Claire & Daniel Messing, Stuart & Diane Myers, Needham Bank, Marcia Nizzari, George Noyes, Mindy Pasco-Anderson, Maryruth & Richard Perras, James Hugh Powers, Bob & Shirley Pratt, Les Kalish & Karen Price, Jim & Lynn Reulbach, Eleanor & Jay Rosellini, Miles & Eleanor Shore, Char Sidell, Stanley & Avis Simon, Nancy Simpson-Banker, Richard & Roseanne Smith, Cathy Stetson, James & Roberta Swenson, Ann & John Teachout, Bill & Betsy Tedoldi, Steve & Jane Theall, Richard & Sally Toran, Alice Ungethuen, Paula Vanderhorst, Diana Kleiner & Sam Warner, Susan Welby, Warren Wells, Mark Whalen, Kathy Whitney, Patricia Wiggin, Suzanne Wilcox, David & Debbie Winnick, Cary & Terry Young.

## Get Yer PROGRAMS!

The new program calendars are on the way, with a mix of lectures, parties, and workshops. We are starting with a look back at **The American Home Front** during the First World War, illustrated by Nan Morrow's large collection of original WWI posters. We will join with the **First Parish** for a discussion of the role of the Parish in the town in the early days of settlement, a start to the many Tercentennial events that will happen this year. Our friend Mike Rosenberg will be back to tell us about **Francis Cabot Lowell**, the man who bought the Industrial Revolution to America, and for whom the city of Lowell is named. Conservator **Melissa Carr** will help us keep our heirlooms in good condition. We also have some parties – join your fellow members (and invite a few new ones!) to indulge at the **Holiday Open House**, or *really* indulge at the yummy **Chocolate and Champagne** party.



**HURRY!**  
Time is  
running out!

As our new Program Year gets off to a fresh start, we close the books our old year of activities and fundraising.

The 2010 Annual Fund Appeal is almost done (Whew!) ~ Please consider a donation.

This year, we added a new community event – Needham's Walk through History – and a new Schoolhouse program for the Fifth Grades.

It is YOUR generosity that enables us to keep bringing new programs for you.

**THANK YOU!**

**Needham Historical Society**  
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## COMING ATTRACTIONS!

### **The AMERICAN HOME FRONT**

Nan Morrow and John Dirlam,  
Wellesley Historical Society

**Sunday, October 17 at 2:00 pm**

*The Home Front during World War I,  
illustrated with original posters*

