Celebrate Traditional Crafts Day

Special Hands-on History Event for all ages at Connecticut Historical Society

Hartford, CT (May 22, 2012) – The Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) and the Society of American Period Furniture Makers (SAPFM) present a free day of demonstrations and activities for both families and adults in Celebrate Traditional Crafts Day on June 2 from 10am – 3pm.

Before furniture was molded out of plastic or fiberglass or punched out on an assembly line, skilled craftsmen produced chairs, tables, and chests by hand, out of wood. Celebrate Traditional Crafts Day carries on this tradition of making things by hand and includes blacksmithing, basket-weaving and hand-spinning as well. This is a rare opportunity for kids and adults alike to see demonstrations by craftsmen who still use age-old techniques and hand tools to produce furniture and handmade items.

One of the highlights of this 5-hour event will be demonstrations by woodworkers and craftsmen who have made some of the magnificent furniture featured in the current exhibition A Tradition of Craft: Current Works by the Society of American Period Furniture Makers, on view at the CHS until September 8, 2012. Visitors are invited to try out early hand tools, work benches and examine furniture in process. Wood crafting demonstrators will show and explain techniques such as dovetail joinery and veneer inlay. If you don’t know what a “cabriole leg” or “ball and claw foot” is, you can find out and even see one being made!

Several other traditional crafts, such as blacksmithing, basket-weaving and hand-spinning, will also be on view. You can try your hand at a drop spindle, card some wool, and find out what a “niddy-noddy” is. An area specifically for kids will feature several make-and-take hands-on activities, including punched tin and plastic canvas “needlework”.

Demonstrations will be set up on the museum grounds (weather permitting) or indoors in case of rain. Food will be available for purchase, and museum exhibitions, including A Tradition of Craft and Making Connecticut will be open and FREE to visitors all day. For more information, call (860) 236-5621 x209 or email mary_muller@chs.org.

A Tradition of Craft: Current Works by the Society of American Period Furniture Makers, a major exhibition on view at CHS from March 30 – September 8, 2012. A unique pairing of old and new craftsmanship, the exhibition showcases the work of contemporary woodworkers alongside authentic 18th- and 19th-century tools and furniture from the collection of the CHS.

Compare 34 pieces to the kinds of work that inspired them – furniture from the CHS collection that families once used, treasured, and passed down to future generations. Examine and admire American craftsmanship then and now. Selections created by today’s members of SAPFM include hand tools, tables, chairs, chests, and other household items. These skilled and passionate woodworkers keep traditional craft alive with precise, painstaking work and an appreciation of historical techniques and styles.
A Tradition of Craft: Current Works by the Society of American Period Furniture Makers is made possible by Keno Auctions and the Society of American Period Furniture Makers. CHS is located at 1 Elizabeth Street in Hartford. For more, visit www.chs.org.

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About The Connecticut Historical Society:

Founded in 1825, the Connecticut Historical Society is a non-profit museum, library, research and education center. CHS strives to inspire and foster a life-long interest in history and ignite a passion for learning about history through research assistance, exhibitions, tours and programs for all ages. Visit www.chs.org or call 860.236.5621.