

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

for August 5 - 11

Apothecary – Last Saturday for our ‘Behind the Scenes Tour’, we did something totally different. Dr. Bob Jaffee, one of our Volunteers, really enjoys studying 18th-century theory of medicine. He gave a short presentation on the subject. Ed Kaczinski, our pharmacy student, did a short presentation on 18th-century public health issues. His school required him to write two papers and do three oral presentations. Theory of contagion and its effect on treating public health issues was one of his topics. It has been wonderful working with Ed. The six weeks that he has been here with us have gone by really fast. Wednesday, he did two oral presentations at the shop for a small audience. We wish him the best as he has four more rotations to complete before he graduates next year from Western New England Pharmacy School.

Colonial Garden – The Garden has seen nearly three inches of rain since the last ‘Mechanick's Adviser’, and we have gone almost two weeks without lifting a single watering can to water the plants. The Gardeners spent time improving our grape arbor and shell pathways over the weekend, as well as taking cuttings of several vines and shrubs. This week, we are looking forward to planning our fall Garden. Our castor beans are loving the tropical weather and will soon be as tall as the corn and sunflowers. We continue to harvest tomatoes, beans, melons, and herbs for the Kitchens. This week, we say goodbye and a heartfelt thank you to our summer Intern Kendall as she returns to her studies at William and Mary. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Megan Cantwell, our newest Apprentice in the Garden. Some of you may know Megan from the time she spent as an Intern at both the Foundry and Silversmith Shops, but for those that don't please stop by the Garden and introduce yourselves.

Foundry – The Foundry has been finishing cloak pins and bass drum parts, in addition to casting Coke candlestick stems and bases. (The JI pictured below is sooting the moulds for those pieces.) We are also pursuing brass work jobs for the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Carter's Grove. Taper candlesticks continue.



Gunsmith – At the Gunsmith, we are busy reaming barrels, breaking bits, and making new ones. The boring gin, also known as a torture device, is used to clean up and make the rough forged bore perfectly cylindrical. We use at least a dozen bits to bring the bore to finish dimension. Eric’s barrel has a few bits to go before we start final polishing and then head to rifling. Darrin has finished assembling his lock, which needs to be case hardened before mounting to a stock. Richard’s pistol locks are also now complete and await final engraving and hardening. Eric spent last weekend demonstrating smithing and talking about the CW Gunshop at Dixon’s Gunmakers’ Fair.

Joinery – This week in the Joinery, the Apprentices will be drawing up plans for their hanging cupboards. None of them guessed that drafting would be a skill that they would need for their apprenticeship, but here they are: carefully measuring and illustrating their chosen projects on paper! Once they have drawings complete, they can make a material list based on their measurements.”

Military Programs – Military Programs continues to conduct musket training, as well as further researching projects on the 80th British Light Infantry and the 4th British Royal Artillery. All of this is in addition to the usual daily programming and covering the Musket and Ax Ranges.

Music – The Musicians continue ‘An Afternoon with Governor’s Musick’ at the Hennage on Thursday afternoons. Last week’s theme was on the Overture. This week and next will be about Pleasure Gardens and the types of music that would have been played in them. We end the summer with our ‘Byrd Fancier’s Delight’ program, showing how birds and music influenced each other in the 18th century. Capitol Concerts on Friday nights continue with Kaylan Stevenson joining us to help fill out the ensemble. ‘Jefferson in Paris’ is the theme for these concerts, featuring French composers and music that Jefferson would have heard during his visit to Paris in 1784-1789. Plans continue for the first Palace series in the fall, to begin September 4, in which we pull some of our antique stringed instruments out of the vault to play. We are indebted to the Curatorial staff for the use of their facilities for rehearsals and the use of the instruments for the duration of the series. Three violins, a viola, and a cello will be featured on this series. We continue to provide music in the Geddy House, the Wythe House, and the Governor’s Palace Ballroom. Our volunteer, Bill Owen, has been performing at the Geddy and Wythe Houses and at the Cabinetmaker Shop on spinet.

Silversmith – George has been demonstrating hammering ingots into sheet silver, in addition to working on spoons and spending time at the Foundry. Chris continues working on her last two trays, while Bobbie is working on stoning a tray. Preston is working on several small fluted bowls while waiting for the next tray to polish. Lynn is setting up the engraving for the fourth tray, as well as engraving trade silver and the fan plate. Parker is working on several seamed cups. William has been working on the base for his silver gurney bowl, as well as practicing handwriting for engraving.

Wigmaker – We’ve got hair! Okay, so we always have hair lying around here at the Wig Shop. However, this week is exciting because we just received a new shipment of hair, so we will be able to start moving forward on some projects that were on hold. Betty will soon be blending the hair for the Young Jefferson wig and the Boston wig so that progress can continue on both. Sara has picked up once more the judicial wig she started earlier in the year and should have all three sections of the base done within the next few weeks. In other news, Regina is still working on hairpieces, and Debbie is working on her archival projects. In addition, all four members of the shop are pitching in to help with maintenance of wigs.