



ANNUAL REPORT

2015

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

During 2015, the second year of my tenure as President of the Westport Historical Society, our organization continued its emphasis on history with exhibits and unique activities.

Below, I have highlight some but certainly not all of the exciting activities of the WHS. Our exhibits included:

***Howard Munce at 100: A Centennial Celebration and Howard's World.***

***Talk of the Town***, which compared past *New Yorker* covers that featured Westport scenes, with photos of those same locations today.

***Window to Westport's Past and Present***, featuring WPA images of local historic houses juxtaposed with photos of these properties today.

### Some of the special activities were:

A members-only tour of four pre-1900 homes, utilizing the owners themselves as tour guides, followed by a luncheon and lecture at WHS.

Popular walking tours of: 1) Old Saugatuck; 2) the King's Highway Historic District; 3) National Hall Historic District; 4) The Minute Man Monument / Compo Invasion route.

Our Holiday House Tour, of five pre-1900 homes which all demonstrated the adaptability of historic properties to contemporary family life.

Of singular importance in 2015 was our publication of ***The New Yorker in Westport*** by Eve Potts and Andrew Bentley. This marvelous book brings to life the history and charm of Westport as portrayed over the years in *New Yorker* covers that were created by local artists. The book has proved to be a best seller, attracting hundreds of purchasers to our Remarkable Gift Shop, many for the first time. Heartfelt thanks to Eve and Andrew!

As a result of the commercial success of the book, we were able to accomplish long-overdue upgrades to our physical plant, including conversion of the heating system from oil burning to natural gas, replacing the cumbersome boilers and storage tanks with a more efficient and economical system.

As part of our active participation in the StEPs-CT program, WHS initiated an annual review of our Constitution and By-laws, in an effort to ensure that our operations follow the best practices of our peer historical organizations.

Our Hidden Garden Tour and Holiday House Tour were very successful, attracting many new-to-WHS landscaping, interior design, and history enthusiasts. The post-tour soirees were both fun and successful, in summer and winter venues: the patio at Gilbertie's Herb Gardens and the Lillian August showroom. It is important to remember that these tours each attracted more than 300 participants, many of whom had not previously visited the WHS.

In September, I hosted a luncheon for major donors at my home, which enabled the guests to meet one another, and to hear about WHS initiatives in an historic house setting. Eve Potts and Andrew Bentley discussed *The New Yorker in Westport* from its inception to its publication.

Also on the fundraising front, our Year End Appeal exceeded both its monetary goal and the new-donor target number.

On a very sad note, we marked the passing of our friend Katie Chase, who served as WHS President, Archives Vice President, Nominating Committee Chair and Mentor-in-Residence.

Submitted by Edward F. Gerber, President

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Westport Historical Society (WHS) has had a very prosperous and busy year. This is due to people who care about Westport and felt motivated to be involved in presenting, preserving and celebrating our local history, which is the mission of our organization. WHS is about connecting people; to one another and to the rich, cultural heritage of their town. The diversity of programs helped cultivate new audiences in 2015. Below are the programs and exhibits that made this year one of the most exciting and promising for the future of our organization.

### *Here are highlights of 2015:*

- 2800 people attended special events and programs.
- Over 500 students learned about local history through our third grade Wheeler House tour.
- Four exhibitions attracted audiences young and old:
  - Saugatuck @ Work
  - Howard Munce at 100: A Centennial Celebration
  - Talk of the Town
  - Window to Westport's Past and Present  
WPA Images of Historic Houses
- Our coffee table book -- New Yorker in Westport- was a smash hit with nearly 2000 sold- our initial printing.
- Our Guided Walking Tours in Saugatuck, Kong's Highway, and National Hall, and our Cockenoe Island kayak tour attracted 25-50 people for each tour.
- Coffee House at the Wheelers- three concerts that rocked the gallery and overall attended by 200 people.
- We installed a new gas-burning heating system that is energy efficient and cost-saving.
- We put smiles on people's faces when they discovered our community treasure- priceless!

WHS was honored to be part of StEPs-CT – a 26 month integrated program of professional development, facilitated conversation and mentorship. This program assists history organizations to institute best practices for positive change. It is offered by the CT Humanities and the CT League of History Organizations. We completed the first year in the areas of Mission, Vision and Governance, Audience, and Management. The benefits will be a more informed Board and an efficient organizational structure.

2015 has proven to be a year of growth for WHS. We are open to the invitations of other non-profit groups that have found an ideal venue for their events and we co-hosted events with the Westport Public Library, Westport Writers Workshop, Westport Schools Permanent Art Collection Committee, to name a few. We look ahead to innovative programming, increased membership support and financial growth and stability in 2016.

Submitted by Susan Gold, Executive Director

## **YEAR-END-APPEAL – 2015**

We had a very successful YEA this year exceeding our goal of \$18,000 by \$5,966.00 or \$ 23,966.00

How did we do this? Five factors played a large role:

- 1) We mailed our letter in early November so we were one of the first non-profits to request a contribution;
- 2) We continued to send our letter by e-blast two additional times which while some might find annoying, is a successful technique. The e-blast went out to our entire list of potential donors, roughly 3,000.
- 3) The letter was a very positive one noting the successes of the WHS, while emphasizing that to continue this success, we need their support.
- 4) Each letter included a personal note from the Executive Director or me.
- 5) We had strong support from our Board and Advisory Council.

Thank you!

Submitted by Edward F. Gerber, President

## **SPONSORSHIP**

The Westport Historical Society (WHS) is honored to be supported by a distinguished group of businesses and financial institutions that continue to provide substantial contributions. The Annual Sponsorship category is the level of support that covers all aspects of the organization. These sponsors donate a minimum of \$5000 and include: BNY Mellon Wealth Management, Berchem, Moses, & Devlin, PC, Sachs Walsh Insurance, Brown's Monument Works, and Maplewood Senior Living.

Additional significant personal and family foundation support included: Sheffer Foundation, Adolph & Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy, Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation, Grace Salmon Trust, GE Foundation, Barbara and Paul Van Orden, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Westport Rotary Club and the Stephanie and Michael Ferdman Fund of the Community Foundation.

Our two major fundraisers this year included The Hidden Garden Tour and The Holiday House Tour. Sponsor support from local businesses is essential to the success of these events as well as our silent and live auctions. These two community celebrations raise a large part of our budget, approximately \$100,000 in 2015. The in-kind donation of food from *A Dash of Salt* made each post tour party a huge success. In sum, both the monetary and in-kind support we receive over the year are what make the Westport Historical Society prosper and thrive.

WHS believes strongly that the alliance with our sponsors is two-fold. It helps with our economic stability while creating wonderful opportunities for people in the business and financial arena to build personal relationships in their community through the events hosted at WHS. The sponsors feel empowered because they have initiated a closer tie with the community they do business in and this, in turn, nurtures growth and prosperity.

Sponsorship development will continue to be an important goal of WHS. As an organization we will create opportunities for increased participation of individuals and businesses to have a stronger local presence.

Submitted by Susan Gold, Executive Director

## **MEMBERSHIP**

We all would like for WHS to have more members, people who are loyal to the mission of WHS, celebrating the history and community of Westport. Increasing membership numbers is possible but will take planning and will involve attracting new members as well as retaining longstanding members. Having a professionally designed brochure to showcase what WHS represents will help with this effort. Once we have a brochure, we can distribute it to the many real estate offices in town, with a member envelope tucked inside for newcomers to Westport.

Ideally, membership revenue would cover most of WHS's overhead expenses so that we would not have to rely so heavily on the two main fundraisers of the year. With current overhead expenses, this would take increasing our membership numbers approximately six fold. The member numbers fluctuate currently from 425 to 470 members. In January 2013 we had 513 members so a reasonable short term goal is to get back to this level. We currently have seven benefactor level members (\$1,000 or above).

We are looking at (with the help of Paul Davis) adding a function to the database that would create a mail merge each week of members whose membership has expired. It would improve on the current system which sends out a reminder about a month in advance of expiration and a second reminder letter that goes out on a quarterly basis. The quarterly basis can leave some people without a second reminder for four months. For example, someone whose membership expires in October gets a reminder in September, and then at the end of the quarter, in January, another reminder is sent. This is creating a revenue loss when someone has a three or four month gap in their membership.

Another option which would decrease the number of members who do not renew is an automatic renewal feature. Other nonprofits do this for monthly donations but it is more complicated for membership renewals because of the different levels of membership. Also, our renewals are done through snail mail so switching them over to online could prove difficult.

Approximately 115 people did not renew their membership this year. A reminder letter will go out in the spring to ask them to come back to WHS. If we had an enticement, such as a free item from the gift shop, it would help with the results. Please continue to ask your friends if they would like to join WHS. It is the personal touch that works.

Submitted by Leigh Gage, VP - Membership

## **ARCHIVES**

The Archives Committee lost our beloved Vice President and Chair, Katie Chase, in 2015. She was our rock and will be missed greatly by all who knew her. In the wake of her passing, the Archives Committee was the recipient of close to \$5,000 in donations given in her memory. This money will be put to use to help in the efforts to digitize our many records. Digitization is the #1 goal of the Archives for the next few years.

In 2015, the Archives Committee volunteers replied to about 60 requests for information from people in Westport and the surrounding communities, as well as from all over the country and one from England. These requests were for photo research, family history, house history, town events, Westport and Connecticut history/research, businesses (old and new), and research for WHS exhibits.

Our research fee increased from \$12 to \$15 dollars for non-members to do research for them (WHS members receive a discount for photocopies and free use of the library and archival materials). We raised a few hundred dollars and received open donations of a few hundred dollars as well. Several organizations contributed funds in exchange for the storage of their archives, as well as the Town of Westport for the storage of some Town materials. One of our long time volunteers, Hope Hickok, donated funds for the purchase of a new laptop computer which will be vital in our upcoming efforts to digitize collections.

Members of the Archives Committee are: Sven-Eric Selander, Sara Krasne, Hope Hickok and Alice Lamberson. We meet on Tuesday mornings and by appointment when requested; we are always looking for new volunteers and will train those wanting to help.

Submitted by Sven Selander and Sara Krasne, Directors, Archives

## **COLLECTIONS**

Chair: Barbara Van Orden

Registrar: Don Draves

In 2015 our major effort was reconciling our physical inventory of objects on display in the Victorian Kitchen, Victorian Parlor and the Barn to our computer database for Historical Collections. This process is important because items on display in one location may be moved to another location. This happens when we have school tours or other events that take place at Wheeler House. The above task was completed in early December.

An addition to the Society's historic collections in 2015 was one gift of two Bristol glass bowls left by an unidentified donor.

The Collections Department is grateful to our donors for their wonderful gifts to the society.

Submitted by Barbara Van Orden, Director – Collections and Don Draves

## **COSTUMES**

We received a donation of a paperless humidity and temperature chart recorder from Omega Company of Stamford.

Cheryl Bliss did a presentation on "Old Westport" to the third graders at Kings Highway School using garments from the collection.

Technology enhancements were made to the computer by Paul Davis. There is now Internet access. The database can now handle more information fields, photos, and has improved sorting capabilities to more easily retrieve information.

A comprehensive inventory project was implemented during the summer which includes the following:

- Examining each item of every box, rack, and shelf
- Reviewing descriptions in both the written catalogue records and computer database records; correcting misinformation and updating gaps
- Adding photos to database
- Ensuring proper care and storage methods

Committee – Cheryl Bliss, Stacey Danielson, Maggie Parkhurst

Submitted by Cheryl Bliss, Director - Costumes and Stacey Danielson

# EDUCATION

Education director: Elizabeth DeVoll

In 2015 the Education Department had a fulfilling and successful year of youth programming. These included the following special holiday activities:

1. Our Annual Martin Luther King Day Program for children ages 5-11  
Twenty children learned about civil rights through playacting, games and cooperative crafts.
2. The February Vacation Day Program titled "***Journey into the Past***" workshop involved the children taking an imaginary trip in a sailing sloop carrying Westport goods to distant ports. Tied into the ***Saugatuck at Work*** exhibit the children created captain logs and made navigational charts.
3. There were school trips to the Adams Academy which is Westport's quaint one room schoolhouse. Using slates, chalk and antique flash cards, the children created their own short stories and learned of the raid of 1777 on Compo Beach.
4. A large group of international Au pairs and their sponsors visited our exhibits and historical rooms. Representing countries all over the world, the girls got a taste of life during the Post Civil War era.
5. The popular Wheeler House Tour for the third grade students in the Westport School system was re-instated. Staples High school seniors served as docents and the children were immersed in active hands-on experience at WHS. They learned the importance of protecting our local history, as each child created and took home their own archival collection of documents, antique photocopies of period ephemera.
6. A dozen curious Middle school age children from Bridgeport, training to become docents at the Housatonic Community College gallery, visited WHS for an insider's tour of the Wheeler house and to learn about collections in a museum setting.
7. Summer Programs at WHS consisted of two weeks in August. One focusing on Archeology and one on Inventions.
8. The annual Election Day Program taught the children about the origins of our local and national flags.

Submitted by Elizabeth DeVoll, Education Director

## EXHIBITS

***Saugatuck@Work*** and ***Framing Saugatuck*** were taken down on June 14, 2015 after having been up since November, 23, 2014.

***The Final Portrait*** took place on May 30, with key help from Dave Matlow. A WHS orchestrated photograph memorialized the taking down of the store-front sign from “Max’s Art Supplies” downtown on Post Road East. This photograph continued and finalized a tradition of group photos of artists and supporters of Max’s. The first was in 1981 on Max’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and again on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006. This final 2015 photo-op attracted a large coming together of friends and longtime supporters. The art supply store started by Max Kaplan in 1957 and then carried on with his wife Shirley Mellor was the go-to spot for artists to meet and greet for nearly 60 years. The portrait can be seen on Westport Now by searching for Max’s Art Supplies The Final Portrait and on DanWoog06880 on May 30.

***Howard Munce at 100: A Centennial Celebration*** in the Sheffer Gallery and ***Howard’s World*** in the Donovan Gallery opened on June 29, 2015 and ran through September 14, 2015 honoring Westport’s current Dean of Artists in his centenary year. Past WHS President Wally Woods spearheaded this exhibit.

***Howard at 100*** in the Sheffer Gallery, the first ever exhibition devoted to Howard’s fine-art paintings and sculpture, was carefully curated by Howard’s long-time friend and fellow artist Leonard Everett Fisher and was dedicated to Howard’s late wife Geraldine.

***Howard’s World***, under the artistic direction of Elizabeth DeVoll, chronicled Howard’s Westport connection beginning in the 1930s when he was a young artist and artist’s model, continuing through his military service as a Marine in WWII, his Pulitzer nomination for his essay on the folly of war (published in Westport’s Town Crier) in 1947, his legendary Foote, Cone & Belding campaign for Rheingold Beer, his Madison Avenue career at Young and Rubicam, and his generous lifetime Westport community spirit.

The opening reception on July 12 was one of the most heavily attended openings ever. Over 350 people, many arriving 2 hours early, were there to pay their respects. Howard was present and held forth until the very end of the event.

***Talk Of The Town***, September 25 to October 26 with an opening reception on October 2 was a reprise of the WHS’s New Yorker Exhibit in 2014. This exhibit included enlargements of some of the New Yorker covers depicted in the book, “The New Yorker in Westport” by Andrew Bentley and Eve Potts, alongside contemporary photographs of the same scenes by Westport photographer Michael Goss.

***Window to Westport’s Past and Present, WPA Images of Historic Houses*** opened November 8.

Curator Robert Weingarten un-earthed 131 WPA photos of houses which were 100 years old when photographed by Thomas O’Connor Sloane in 1935 during the height of

the Great Depression and are displayed, paired with contemporary shots (taken by Bob Weingarten) of the same house. Each pairing is accompanied by human interest articles about the houses through the years.

***Artists at Home***, in the Donovan Gallery under the artistic direction of Elizabeth DeVoll, concentrates on the WPA houses which have been lived in by artists over the years. This entire exhibit endeavors to show the effect of FDR's Works Progress Administration in Westport Connecticut.

The largest of his New Deal programs, WPA provided jobs at a time when 25 percent of the American workforce was unemployed. Over the eight years of its existence, the WPA created some 8 million jobs, mostly in the public works sector.

Today the WPA is best known for its Federal Project Number One, which provided work for people who worked in the arts, including Thomas O'Connor Sloane. The Federal Government put up most of the money, but most of the decisions concerning who would do what, were made by the states and their municipalities.

In Westport, the decision-making body was called the Westport Art Committee. It included the First Selectman, an artist, a writer, and a colorful figure named Henrietta Sturgis Cholmeley-Jones. Rita, as she was known, supervised all of Westport's WPA art projects, a body of work that is today considered one of the most impressive of all local WPA programs.

Home owners of Westport's WPA depicted historic houses are able to purchase and have displayed lenticulars of their houses. So far, 14 of these lenticulars (created by Miggs Burroughs) are displayed in the WHS foyer.

Every house pictured in the exhibit deserves a WHS plaque. Those home owners who don't already have a plaque have the opportunity to purchase one from WHS by contacting Bob Weingarten.

Several people have expressed an interest in buying their displays (mounted on screen or board) of their houses at the end of the exhibit. This exhibit continues to have ongoing, multi-faceted money making opportunities for WHS.

Submitted by Laurence Untermeyer, Director of Exhibits  
Ellen Naftalin, Curator

## FACILITIES

The building and grounds at the Wheeler House and Barn at 25 Avery Place remain in good condition although time is taking its toll and several areas are in need of repair which is reflected in our 2016 Facilities budget request.

With proper funding and/or donation of services we hope to replace the sidewalk in front of the Bradley-Wheeler House, along with roofing (drain) repairs, and flooring replacement in the Newman Room. In addition it is important for document preservation that humidity control be maintained and the installation of a dehumidifying system in the lower level is recommended to maintain proper levels required for document storage.

We were able to keep our facilities budget very lean this past year, thanks again to the continued support of contractors James Izzo Electric Service, and Guinta-Bolduc Masonry Services (snowplowing) who have generously donated their time. Their continued loyalty is appreciated.

Submitted by Peter Jennings, VP Facilities

## REMARKABLE GIFT SHOP

It was one *remarkable* year! Thanks to Eve Potts and Andrew Bentley, the ***New Yorker in Westport*** was a phenomenal hit! People called and ordered the book even before it was printed.

Now we're faced with an unusual dilemma. What do we do for an encore?

The book brought in many new visitors to the Historical Society, and as they had to pay for the book in the gift shop, they just couldn't help but find lots of great things that they didn't know they had to have. Sales were so brisk that we ran out of many items at Christmas such as our very popular "Westport" glass ornaments. We had to re-order long-sleeve T-shirts, coffee mugs, caps and especially the New Yorker puzzles.

Another new addition to our gift shop "art exhibit" is Jim Chillington. He's the guy you see on the Saugatuck Bridge painting scenes of Downtown Westport We have been selling his matted and signed prints and hope to have one of his original paintings as well. My goal is to feature more local artists and artisans. I'm open to suggestions.

***The Remarkable Gift Shop*** remains the premier place to shop for "Westport" inspired maps, books, art and gifts.

Submitted by Mimi Burroughs, Gift Shop Manager

## HISTORIC HOUSE PLAQUE PROGRAM

This year the plaque program started slowly with only two plaques ordered by June. But in the second half of the year, there were an additional 15 plaques ordered. The 17 plaques ordered places this year above the average number of yearly plaque orders for the last 11 years. There was also a milestone this year with the number of plaques placed since the inception of the program in 1978 of over 300, ending the year with 305 plaques. The date of construction for plaques placed this year varied from circa 1764 to 1936, a house built by an artist.

Submitted by Bob Weingarten, House Historian and Plaque Coordinator

## HIDDEN GARDEN TOUR AND GARDEN PARTY

**Event Chair** – Edward F. Gerber

**Garden Tour Chairs** – Darcy Sledge and Stacey Danielson

**Garden Market Chairs** – Sue Gold and Sara Krasne

**Garden Party Chairs** – Edward F. Gerber and Jeff Kaufman

**HGT Committee** – Eva Chiamulera, Jeff Craig, Michaela MacColl, Terri Mason, Sarah Menchaca, Bob Mitchell, Maggie Parkhurst, Kelle Ruden, Jeffrey Ruden

### GARDEN TOUR

This year we were fortunate enough to have seven gardens on the Tour, offering a wide variety of garden types, from rose garden to shade garden, and everything in between. The public gave rave reviews to the tour! A few said that this was the best one they have ever seen.

Six were located in Westport, one in Southport.

#### ***Gardens featured:***

- 9 Fraser Road, Westport: lovingly created by the owner over many years, much of it by seed
- 195 North Avenue, Westport: owned by WHS Advisory Council member, with gorgeous specimen trees and flowering plants
- 35 Arlen Road, Westport: featuring a pool surrounded by a lovely rose garden
- 54 Butternut Lane, Southport: one of CT's largest cutting gardens
- 9 Old Hill Road, Westport: stately Old Hill property professionally landscaped by Sheri Forster, landscape architect
- 18 Sylvan Road South, Westport: "micro" garden combining elements from Asia and Europe
- 6 Brookside Park, Westport: a full "lifestyle" display with dining area under a pergola and a potting shed

The weather was beautiful that day! Many of the gardens had some type of activity or refreshment, from David's Teas to croquet, Windflower Flutes, Qi Gong, granola snacks, protein shakes, lemonade, and more. One owner had a vintage Good Humor

ice cream truck. Another generously provided an awning for shade, with table & chairs, lemonade and iced tea. While this was certainly not a requirement, the guests certainly appreciated it!



### **GARDEN MARKET**

Specialty homegrown and homemade items from local cottage businesses were available for sale on the WHS lawn. There was also a Drawing for two prizes: a bicycle donated by Cycleology, and a flower delivery subscription from Butternut Gardens.

### **GARDEN PARTY**

Following the tour, a wonderful celebration was enjoyed in the newly restored terraced gardens of Gilbertie's Herb Gardens. The festive evening included:

- Delectable hors d'oeuvres and desserts provided by *A Dash of Salt*
- Signature cocktails, wine, and Leigh Richardson on the guitar
- A private tour of a neighboring Zen garden (photo below)
- Bidding on unique items offered in the silent and live auctions (photo below)
- A Hat Competition: awards were given for Best Lady's and Gentleman's, Most Creative, Best Use of Flowers, and Judges' Favorite
- Scrumptious frozen custard from The Shake Shack

<u>Income:</u>	
HGT Sponsors	\$ 7,356.34
Annual Sponsors	8,125.00 (allocation)
Tour Tickets	13,580.00
Garden Party Tickets	3,420.00
Garden Market	720.00
Auctions	14,395.00
Drawing	500.00
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Total Income	\$48,096.34
Expenses	6,973.26
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<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$41,123.08</b>



Submitted by Darcy Sledge and Stacey Danielson, Chairs

# **HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR AND HOLIDAY SOIRÉE**

**Event Chair:** Edward F. Gerber, WHS President

**Co-Chairs:**

**House Tour** - Stacey Danielson

**Holiday Soiree** - Betsy Pollak

## **HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR**

WHS celebrated the 29<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday House Tour on Sunday, December 6. Over 300 visitors toured six houses – five in Westport and one in Fairfield – and were enchanted with nostalgic holiday cheer and inspiring decorating ideas.

Houses included: a Kings Highway Historic District home designed by Charles Cutler, the architect of Greens Farms Elementary School and Westport Bank & Trust; a Carpenter Gothic Victorian in the center of town; a custom residence filled with antique charm; an enlarged 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmhouse renovated by the architect homeowner; an 1883 Queen Anne-style house that the Westport Historic District Commission selected as one of the recipients of the 2015 Historic Preservation Awards; and a Fairfield property that rose from the ashes of the Revolutionary War.

Holiday spirit was abundant. The halls were decked at each house with festive Christmas and Hanukkah decorations beautifully displayed by homeowners, Connie Cooper Designs, and Indulge by Mercene. Several owners offered hot cider and treats, and David's Teas generously provided a spicy blend of hot tea by an outdoor fireplace. Seasonal music was played by Windflower Flutes and pianist Mark Naftalin, Rock and Roll Hall of Famer.

A special feature this year was the WHS Pop-up Shop. Located in a charming cottage at one of the houses in the Old Kings Highway Historic District, tour-goers were able to purchase holiday gifts from a selection of WHS Shop items. Thank you to Darcy Sledge, House Captain, for managing this.

In addition to all the excellent publicity, News Channel 12 did a promotional spot that highlighted two houses. Ed Gerber, as WHS President and Event Chair, was the spokesperson along with the homeowners.

Visitors who have been going on this tour for years said this HHT was “extremely good...the best in years...and having the owners there makes a real difference.”

## HOLIDAY SOIREË

Friday, December 4, was the kick-off to the celebratory weekend of the WHS Winter Holiday Festivities. Following the rave reviews of last year, the party was held again at the stunning Lillian August Design Center in Norwalk.

It was a magical evening filled with festivity, mystery, and revelry. Guests enjoyed such merriment as a roaming magician, a tarot card reader, a henna tattoo artist, a balloon swap, silent and live auctions, a Mionetto Prosecco bar, a wine and beverage bar, a delectable supper buffet provided by *A Dash of Salt Catering*, and silent and live auctions.

Thanks to the generosity of all the sponsors, homeowners, docents, tour-goers, party guests, and friends, over \$49,000 was raised exceeding the \$48,000 goal.

### Income:

HHT Sponsors	\$12,106.34
Annual Sponsors	8,125.00 (allocation)
Tour Tickets	15,325.00
Soiree Tickets	7,285.00
Balloon Sales	985.00
Live Auction	4,400.00
Silent Auction	8,465.00

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Total Income	\$56,691.34
Expenses	7,330.00

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**Net Income**            **\$ 49,361.34**

GOAL NET                \$ 48,000.00

### **Sincere appreciation to the HHT Committee:**

Joni Andrews, Miggs Burroughs, Angela Capone, Debbie Dibella, Jay Dirnberger, Ric Kallaher, Jeff Kaufman, Pat Kery, Sue Kirby, Michaela MacColl, Terri Mason, Jason Mudd, Darcy Sledge, Amy Swanson, Amy van Arsdale, Kathy Winter

Submitted by Stacey Danielson, Chair

# ORAL HISTORY

## Completed Projects

1. Purchased new Canon Camera to improve image and sound quality of videos.
2. Recorded first Oral History with new camera of Maxine Bleiwies (former director of Westport Library).
3. Edited and posted video of **Maxine Bleiweis** to WHS Web Site.
4. Edited and posted video of **Nate Gibbons** (Westport Fire Inspector) to WHS Web Site.
5. Edited and posted video of **Esta Burroughs** (resident of Westport from 1950 to 2015) to WHS Web Site.

## Projects In Process

1. Completed edit of video of **Sal Gilbertie** (Gilbertie Herb Gardens) and waiting to place photos within video before posting to WHS Web Site.
2. Started to gather film clips and photos of **Katie Chase** that will be used in a video to honor her contributions to WHS.

Submitted by Dave Soriano, Oral History, Advisory Council

# VOLUNTEERS

As a voluntary organization, our success is in the involvement of our volunteers. They are the pulse of this organization. They grace our front foyer with their smiles and welcoming voices. As greeters, they are the first contact with the public and are a very vital part of how we are perceived by the community. Our volunteers make up all the committees that work effortlessly to conserve and preserve our town's history. They are in the library doing research, out in the field videotaping; or they are up in the Costume Room, making sure our over collection is properly stored and preserved.

The Westport Historical Society welcomes volunteers at our special events including speaking engagements, walking tours and fundraisers. We have over 100 volunteers a year who make us strong and vibrant and we hope in the future to continue to grow with the talent and passion of our kind and generous volunteer staff.

Submitted by Susan Gold, Executive Director

