

Our Mission

The Westport Historical Society is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to preserving, presenting and celebrating the history of Westport, Connecticut.

What We Do

We run programs and camps for school children both during the school year and on holidays and vacations.

We operate a year-round historical house with barn museum and mount seasonal exhibits and related programs.

We put together a Hidden Garden Tour in the summer and a Holiday House Tour in the winter.

We are committed to increasing awareness of the importance of preserving our town's heritage through our Historic House plaque program.

We maintain an extensive collection of Westport historical documents, costumes, and artifacts that are cataloged and open to the public.

We operate The Remarkable Gift Shop selling Westport related books and items.

We offer popular walking tours of Old Saugatuck, King's Highway, National Hall, Main Street, and the Compo invasion route.

We are committed to preserving the living history of the town and its inhabitants through our extensive Oral History program.



Photo by Elizabeth DeVoll

Covers Photos by: Larry Untermeyer and Elizabeth DeVoll

Who We Are

The Staff:

Executive Director: Susan Gold
Assistant Director: Barbara Peck
Education Director: Elizabeth DeVoll
Gift Shop Manager: Mimi Burroughs

Our Volunteers:

Gina Arnold, Mira Auxier, Winnie Balboni, Zita Casey, Donna Cohen, Lois Fox, Stemmie Goldman, Hope Hickok, Alice Lamberson, June Lurie, Jo Fuchs Luscombe, Shirley Mellor, Cindy Mindell, Pat Porio, Alice Siegel, David Soriano, Roseann Spengler, Vonnie Spies, Arlene Yolles, Olivia Yule.

The Officers:

President: Robert W. Mitchell
Immediate Past President: Edward F. Gerber
Vice President – Finance: Joe Herbert
Vice President - Development: Leigh Gage
Vice President – Exhibits: Laurence Untermeyer
Vice President – Facilities: Peter Jennings
Vice President – At Large: Stacey Danielson
Treasurer: Jay Dirnberger
Secretary: Michaela MacColl

The Directors:

Nancy Axthelm, James M. Corgel, Jenifer Gorin, Sara Krasne, Karley Meltzer, Maggie Parkhurst, Sven Selander, Darcy Sledge, Barbara Van Orden, Teri Walsh.

Our Community Partners

We partner with other nonprofits in town like the Westport Public Library, the Westport Community Theatre and the Westport Cinema Initiative. We hold docent-led tours of our exhibits for the Westport Center for Senior Activities. Both the Westport Schools Permanent Art Collection Committee and the Westport Rotary Club hold their monthly board meetings here. We host the Westport Schools Annual PTA Luncheon and every year we decorate the Holiday Heritage Tree in the foyer of the Westport Town Hall.



25 Avery Place Westport, CT 06880
(203) 222-1424 westporthistory.org



ANNUAL REPORT

2015

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY





Photo by Helen Klisser During

2015 Highlights

Our major exhibits this year included: Saugatuck@Work, Howard Munce at 100, Talk of The Town, and Window to Westport's Past and Present. We also published the popular book *The New Yorker in Westport* and sold over 1,500 copies.

Our Hidden Garden and Holiday House Tours, attracted many landscaping, interior design, and history enthusiasts. The post-tour soirees were both fun and successful; the patio at Gilbertie's Herb Gardens in the summer and the Lillian August showroom in the winter.



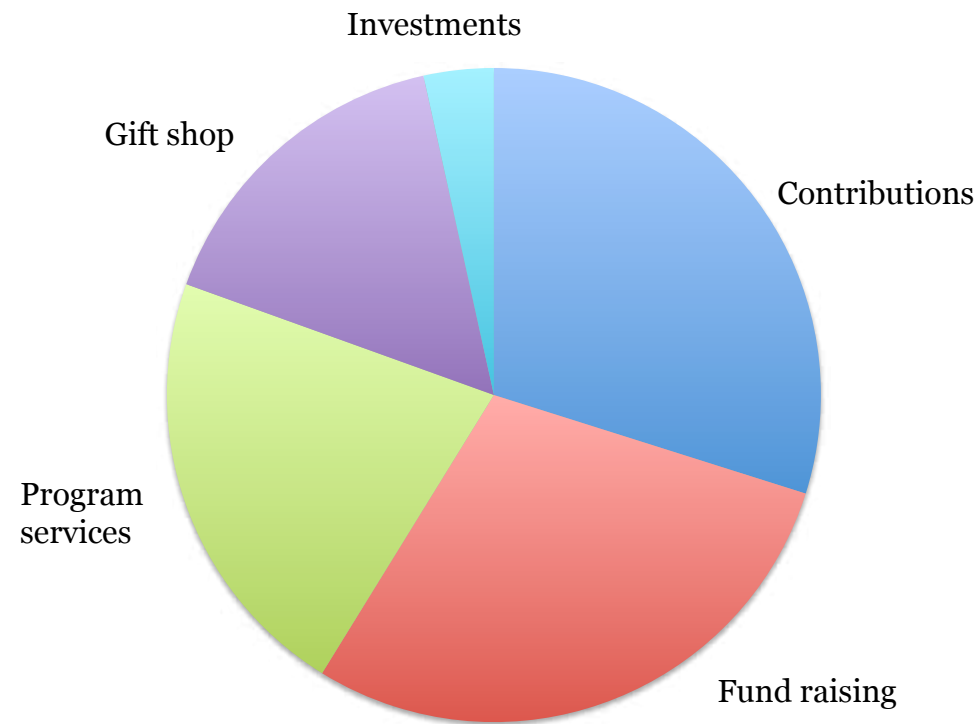
Photo by Ric Kallahaer

How We Pay Our Bills

We are a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, sustained entirely by the generous support of members, donors, grants, program revenues, sponsors and endowment income.

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| Contributions | \$95,000 |
| Fund raising | \$92,000 |
| Program services | \$69,000 |
| Gift shop | \$51,000 |
| Investments | \$11,000 |

Endowment as of 12/31/15: \$398,000



Our Goals For 2016

We are continuing to work with the StEPs CT Program which started last year and meets each month in Hartford. In the first year we studied Mission, Vision and Governance, Audience and Management. This year we will look at Collections, Historic Structures and Landscapes, and Interpretation.

We will continue to work with other Westport not-for-profits, and with historical organizations in neighboring towns. We plan on a Mill Pond exhibit and related Sherwood history this summer and we also plan another Minute Man Day in 2016. And of course we will keep up our concerted action on sponsorships and donations, membership, and grants.

From Our President

During 2015, the second year of my tenure as President of the Westport Historical Society, our organization continued its emphasis on history and education with many exhibits and unique activities. Below, I have highlighted just a few:

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

Both our Hidden Garden and Holiday House Tours each attracted more than 300 participants, many of whom had not previously visited the WHS.

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

*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.*

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.

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.

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.

*Edward F. Gerber
Immediate Past President*

Lead Sponsor



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