



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 are committed to awareness of the importance of preserving Westport's heritage through our Historic House plaque program.
- 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- We operate a year-round historical house with barn museum and we maintain an extensive collection of Westport historical documents, costumes, and artifacts that are cataloged and open to the public.
- We 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 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.
- We perform archival research for a wide range of projects: house histories, family-related inquires, film and literary projects.
- We maintain oral histories of people who made a mark on Westport.
- We offer the Sheffer Gallery as a unique setting for private events and receptions.

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



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



photos by Ric Kallaher and Larry Untermeyer

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

2016 was a very busy year for all of us at WHS. We were proud to present our ever-growing schedule of exhibits and programs for our adult and school-age audiences. And, we hosted a growing number of history visitors, availing themselves of our research materials and assistance. In all, we calculate that over 4,000 people participated in our offerings. This could not have been done without the tireless support of our dedicated volunteers – thanks to you all!

At the same time, we have been busy in our ongoing quest to improve our performance and to raise our level of professionalism as a premier history organization. 2016 saw us complete the second year of the state-wide StEPs-CT program for historical societies, concentrating this time on our collections, our buildings, and how we present our treasures to our members and visitors.

In the summer, the Board met to begin a process of self examination and get feedback on our core competencies. Then, in the fall we reconvened a larger gathering including participants from fellow town organizations and key target audience groups, to review our thinking and ensure we are responding to the needs of the community.

Based on these meetings, we have embarked on a formal Strategic Planning program to guide our efforts over the next three to five years. Our target for 2017 is to produce a formal Strategic Plan document by June 30, ratified by the whole group that met in the summer and fall of 2016. Our Plan goals include specific improvements in funding, organizational excellence, community engagement, and stewardship of our various resources. We shall then proceed with the implementation of this plan, the first year of the three to five year effort, and evidence of change should be apparent as the year progresses.

Meanwhile, we will continue our programming and community involvement activities, one highlight of which will be the month-long celebration of the American Revolution in April, commemorating the 240th Anniversary of the Danbury Raid and the Battle of Compo. Our Education Department will welcome the Westport 1st grade classes for the first time in recent years. And we are planning a family-oriented fall festival in October. Stay tuned for these and all the exciting news that will be coming your way. Our key goal is to ensure that Westport Historical Society remains a vibrant, attractive resource, dedicated to ensuring that the history of this wonderful town remains alive.

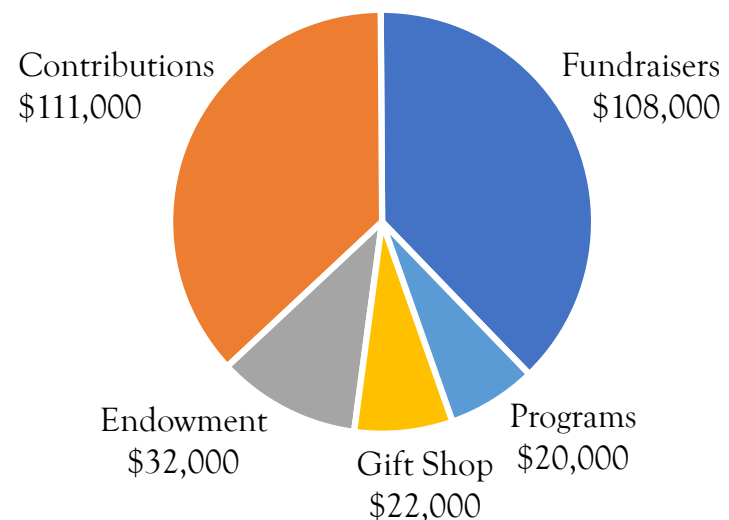
Robert W. Mitchell
WHS President

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- We launched a Brick Walk campaign that is still being enthusiastically received by residents and businesses.
- Our annual 3rd grade tour, Exploring Westport History at the Wheeler House, given in conjunction with the Westport Schools Social Studies curriculum, was again very popular with the students. We were then very pleased when the tour program received an Award of Merit from the CT League of History Organizations.
- Coffee House at the Wheelers; three concerts in the Sheffer Gallery that drew nearly 200 people.
- Three Exhibits that celebrated our local history included:
 - 1) Window to Westport's Past and Present featuring WPA images of historic homes.
 - 2) The Beautiful Pond about the old Mill Pond at Compo Cove.
 - 3) Art to the Max which was a loving tribute and celebration of Max's Art Supplies.
- Staff members of the United Nations were taken on a guided tour of Westport as part of jUNe Day by WHS volunteers.
- Cockenoe Island guided tour for 30 people received rave reviews!
- Nicole Carpenter joined our staff as the new Director of Education & Programs and launched weekend programs for families.

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. In 2016, our total revenues were \$293,000.



WHO WE ARE

STAFF:

Executive Director: Susan Gold
Assistant Director: Barbara Peck
Education: Nicole Carpenter
Gift Shop: Mimi Burroughs

OFFICERS:

President: Robert W. Mitchell
Immediate Past President: Ed Gerber
Treasurer: Patricia Wentworth
Secretary: Michaela MacColl

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Nancy Axthelm, Cheryl Bliss, James Corgel, Stacey Danielson, Jay Dirnberger, Leigh Gage, Ed Hynes, Peter Jennings, Jeff Kaufman, Sara Krasne, Maggie Parkhurst, Sven Selander, Darcy Sledge, Laurence Untermeyer, and Teri Walsh.

ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Joni Andrews, Kathie Bennowitz, Andrew Bentley, Ken Bernhard, Miggs Burroughs, Dorothy E. Curran, Julie Droller, Eileen L. Flug, Jenifer Gorin, Bill Harmer (Honorary), Amanda Innes, Gordon Joseloff, Jennifer Keller, Woody Klein, Margaret LeBedis, Brenda Liistro, Jo Fuchs Luscombe, Jim Marpe (Honorary), Dave Matlow, Shirley Mellor (Honorary), Sarah Menchaca, Jason Mudd, Betsy Pollak, Eve Potts, Kelle Ruden, Ann Sheffer, Jo Shields, Dave Soriano, Bob Weingarten, Denise & Wally Woods, and Dan Woog.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We partner with other nonprofits in town, such as The Westport Library, Westport Arts Center, the Westport Garden Club and the YMCA. We hold docent led tours of our exhibits for the Westport Center for Senior Activities. Both the Westport Public Art Collections 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.

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ANNUAL

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