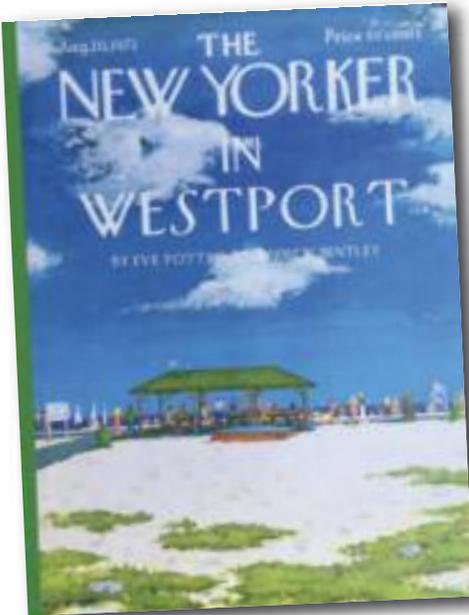


Talk of the Town: New Exhibit



The Westport Historical Society is excited to present the exhibition: TALK OF THE TOWN featuring New Yorker magazine covers depicting iconic Westport scenes alongside photographs of the same taken in 2015 by Mike Goss.

"In many respects, the landmarks and lifestyles painted by The New Yorker artists have changed surprisingly little in the past 100 years. We still cherish our beaches, much of our architectural heritage is still in place, and for many of us, our lives still revolve around the comings and goings of our train stations that connect us to New York City." comments Mike Goss, Westporter and photographer.

This exhibition is the third and final installment of a trilogy that began with last year's Cover Story exhibit which brought out huge crowds to the WHS. This in turn led to the production of the book, *The New Yorker in Westport* by Eve Potts and Andrew Bentley which combines New Yorker covers and the stories of Westport that they evoke. The authors of the book will be available to sign copies.

TALK OF THE TOWN, opens Friday, September 25 and runs through October 26. Mon-Fri, 10 am – 4 pm, Saturday Noon to 4pm. The opening reception will be held Friday, October 2 at WHS from 6-8 pm. Donations Accepted.

This limited edition hardcover coffee table book, featuring 50 full-size New Yorker covers of Westport scenes has been selling like hotcakes (600 sold from end of July to end of August)! Each cover

is accompanied by fascinating facts and stories from Westport's history. The first 1,000 copies are inscribed with a special numbered and signed label. Stop in to purchase this beautiful keepsake.

Trees Tell Story of a Remarkable Westport Couple

Westport is fortunate to have among its public spaces a nature preserve that is notable for both the beauty of its park-like setting and for the diversity of its native and non-native trees.

Named for the late Caryl and Edna Haskins, the couple who gave the property to the Aspetuck Land Trust, the preserve sits behind a stone wall with iron gates on Green Acre Lane off Compo Road South. Its 16 acres of sloping lawns and winding trails are popular with dog walkers and nature buffs alike.

The Haskins – she died in 2000 at age 88, he in 2001 at 93 – were prominent ant biologists who traveled the

world and returned with numerous specimen trees. When they bequeathed their property to the Land Trust, it totaled 22 acres, six of which sat across Green Acre Lane from their home. The bequest stipulated that the home and greenhouses be demolished, the six acres sold and the proceeds placed in a fund to maintain the preserve.



All that remains today are two ponds, a large enclosure that served as a parking area for the house, a lovely stone well and a canal-way feeding one of the ponds. The front half of the property is lawn scattered with trees, the rear half woodland with a looping nature trail.

Stein, a landscaper
continued on next page

who restored the property after it was turned over to the Land Trust, said the couple raised koi in one of the ponds. He said a neighbor told him all the bright red and gold variety of the Japanese fish were eaten by wading birds and only the darker, difficult-to-see type survived.

Just inside the gates is an ample parking area. A large sign asks visitors with dogs to pick up after their animals. The day I visited the preserve there were lots of dogs. One woman drove up in a SUV, opened the door and a half dozen dogs of all sizes and shapes came running out. But the preserve has lots of room for both people and pets.

Town Tree Warden Bruce Lindsay says the Haskins Preserve is one of several Westport properties that are noteworthy for their trees. The others are the Bedford estate on Beachside Avenue, the Baron's property on Compo Road South and the 9-acre Hilla von Rebay Arboretum on Morningside Drive, which also belongs to the Land Trust. But none has quite the diversity of native and non-native trees as the Haskins Preserve, he added. Lindsay said it has "the feel of an arboretum."

Former Tree Warden Donald Snook labeled 50 trees on the Haskins property, and it's quite a collection, starting with the cluster of towering dawn redwoods along the canal-way. One stands 108 feet tall and is listed as a "notable Connecticut

tree" by the Connecticut Botanical Society. The preserve's other "notable tree" is a 24-foot Southern magnolia.

Other unusual non-native specimens to look for are a willow leaf oak, a Chinese catalpa, a hinoki cypress and a cryptomeria, the latter two native to Japan. The largest tree is an ash that Stein said is in irreversible "decline."

On a recent late-summer day, Alex Anderson, a resident of Naples, Fla., who was visiting his son's family in Westport, walked his "Wonder Dog, Bo" through the preserve and wondered about the couple who had owned the property. The 16 acres were hardly enough to contain Bo, who was racing about and exploring nearby yards. Anderson was impressed by the accomplishments of Haskins and his English-born wife and seemed to have done some reading about their lives.

In addition to the couple's pioneering work in the field of ant biology, Caryl Haskins was a former president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, a board member of the Smithsonian and a trustee of the National Geographic Society. He wrote scientific books about ants and about the Amazon River and founded the Haskins Laboratories, which is now affiliated with Yale University, from which he graduated in 1930. He earned a doctorate from Harvard University in 1935.

– by Jeff Craig

From the Executive Director's Desk...



One of many wonderful gifts I received as Executive Director is a book titled *Hearts in Nature* by Sally Fine. Sally's book is

filled with beautiful photographs from nature and poetry that inspires and celebrates nature's beauty. One of the poignant sentences was written by William Wordsworth, "Come forth into the light of things, let nature be your teacher." I reflect often on my role as Executive Director and the many teachers and mentors I have had that have shared their knowledge, talents and spirits. What a blessing to have so many wonderful people who are involved in this organization and who continue to always answer a request for help with a smile and a hand gesture that says, "I'm here for you".

The result of many hands on deck is that we fill the Wheeler House and the Sheffer Gallery with artwork and programs and conversations that bring people in Westport together to discover a part of their community that they never knew about. Their eyes are wide open to the possibilities of this new information and where it might take them. The myriad of requests include questions about family and homes and these will be referred to our able Archives Directors- Sven and Sara. A request for plaque for a historic home will be sent to Bob Weingarten. Bob is now busy working on his exhibit opening on Sunday, November 8th titled *Window to Westport's Past and Present- WPA Images of Historic Houses. WPA stands for Works Progress Administration- a Federal program that put people to work. Photographers, artists, writers and actors were employed at this time. Photos of homes in the 1930's that are*

displayed in this exhibit were at least 100 years old.

The fall is the ideal time to enjoy nature's beauty and three walking tours are planned in September and October. If you are curious about our town's colorful history then come and explore three lively walking tours from 3pm -4pm; these include: , Saturday, October 3 Kings Highway Historic District , Saturday, October 10, the Business District of Westport and Saturday, October 17, Old Saugatuck.

We are excited to host a series of author talks with Catamount Wealth Management, Sachs Walsh Insurance and Darien Rowayton Bank as our sponsors that will enlighten and spark lively conversations. Visit our website for details on this exciting series with local authors. The time of these events is 6:30pm -8pm. Reception follows these talks catered by A Dash of Salt.

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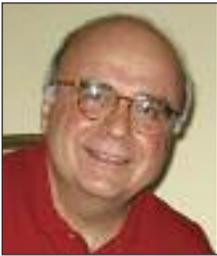
I'm reminded by our visitors with their kind sentiments of what a treasure we have in Westport. I'd like to share a comment in our sign-in book after viewing the show *Howard Munce at 100: A Centennial Celebration* - "You are

always my role model." How lucky are we all to live in a town where we have so many amazing role models. We can re-invent and fine tune the Westport Historical Society as we need to and the result is a more vibrant, exciting des-

ination. I hope you'll continue to be part of our journey.

With peace and gratitude, Susan Gold

President's Message



The Wheeler House - always a center of activity - has been busier than ever this August. Why? Because of the long awaited

arrival of our latest book "*The New Yorker in Westport*", written by Eve Potts and Andrew Bentley. Even before having the book in hand, WHS sold 425 copies. Since its arrival, we've had a steady stream of both new customers and those who had pre-ordered. Such activity has an ancillary benefit in that book customers have often never been to the WHS. They spend time in our current exhibit on the work of Howard Munce, browse our Remarkable Gift Shop, and join WHS at all levels.

Thanks again to our longtime supporter Eve Potts and our new supporter Andrew Bentley for coming up with the idea for the book, writing, editing and designing it, and much more.

Who is buying the book? Realtors,

bankers, longtime Westporters, newcomers and gift donors. I personally have shipped copies all over the country, and it has received much acclaim.

On a personal note my 1764 saltbox home was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The two-year process was complicated and slow but ultimately fulfilling upon the realization that my

house now is listed with some of the nation's most significant landmarks. Such a designation does not protect my home from any future owner's desire to have it join the numerous teardowns of Westport. To prevent that, I worked with the Historic District Commission in 2011 to have it declared a Local Historic Landmark.



Please let me know if I can answer any questions about either the National Register of Historic Places or the local Historic Landmark process. Remember if

you love historic houses you should have yours protected!

On a very sad note, I am certain that you have noted the passing of our former President and dear friend, Katie Chase. Any success I have had as President is due to her advice and guidance. She will be sorely missed.

Edward F. Gerber

Walking Tours

Kings Highway North Walking Tour

Saturday, October 3
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Business District Walking Tour

National Hall & Post Rd East
Saturday, October 10
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Old Saugatuck Walking Tour

Saturday, October 17
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm



In Honor of Phil Johnson.

We want to thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his four years of service as Director of Finance at WHS. His shoes will be hard to fill - we welcome Joseph Herbert who is joining the board to handle our finances.

Meet the Greeter, WHS Volunteer June Lurie

This is the latest in an occasional series of profiles of the people who generously give of their time to the Westport Historical Society.

If you're a regular visitor to the Westport Historical Society, you probably know June Lurie. June *mans*, or should we say sits at, the reception desk at the front door, greeting visitors and answering the phone. A longtime Westport resident with a vibrant, talkative personality, June is emphatic that it is "June," not "Mrs. David Lurie." Though married for many years – and now a widow – and the mother of two grown children, her identity is her own, she says, not that of this man's wife, or that person's mother. Now that we've gotten that out of the way, we can get on to some of the highlights of June's life, which, she insists, has been quite ordinary. "I really haven't done anything," she says.

Born in Mount Vernon, N.Y., June says hers was one of the first Jewish families in town. Her father served in World War I and took advantage of a government program to teach veterans the watchmaking trade. He owned a jewelry store in Mount Vernon. Her mother, June says, was a proud woman who tried always to put the best spin on circumstances. If she was low on eggs, she made a cake with just one, June says, and she gave her hats a fresh look by putting a new ribbon around the crown.

June studied merchandising at Beaver College (now Arcadia University) outside Philadelphia, and went to work in the made-to-order fashions department of Bergdorf Goodman. She later left Bergdorf's to work at Lord & Taylor. When she was 24, June married David Lurie, a salesman for the Allied Chemical Corporation, and lived the life of suburban housewife in North



Carolina, Wilton, Conn., Massachusetts, and then Westport, where the family settled around 1960.

At this point, "two very important things happened in my world," June says. She met Barlow Wotton, then president of the Westport League of Women Voters, and

became a member of the League and head of its Voter Services. This meant putting together an information sheet on candidates and going to a local radio station and reading that information over the air. A few days after doing the radio spot she got a call from the station saying she would have to do it again because she had identified herself as June Lurie, not Mrs. David Lurie. Her response: "Either play it as June or don't play it." They played it as it was. "I always knew who I was," she says.

"Important thing No. 2" came when June was offered a volunteer position heading up a local volunteer program. When she told her husband about the offer, he said, "Well, if you were worth anything, they would pay you." Harsh as that comment may sound, June says it was the push she needed.

An opportunity for a paying position came along when June and childhood friend Nikki Untermeyer (the late wife of WHS exhibits director Larry Untermeyer) attended a meeting headlined "Women of the World Unite." The organizers were seeking candidates for elective slots on town boards. Only two were paid, first selectman and head of the Board of Tax Review. "Nikki jumped up and nominated me for the Tax Review job," June says. She ran as a Democrat, and though she didn't win she ran ahead of several other candidates on the ticket. David later served on the RTM, learned a lot about the workings of the town, and ran for the

Board of Finance, though he, too, did not make it.

The Luries' lives here were interrupted by an eight-year stint in the Netherlands when David accepted a job as European manager for a petrochemical company. Again, volunteer work came calling. This time, June says, she was attending a meeting of a support and information group in the Hague for women of different nationalities and was asked to be treasurer after she "walked out of the meeting with my head held high. Image is very important in this world," she says, "and it's important to look like you know what you're doing." June's very proud that the group's membership mushroomed while she was treasurer, as did the return on its investments.

Back in the USA, June worked as a travel agent for a number of years. She has been a widow for more than 20 years and says she volunteers at the Society because, frankly, you "have to do something. I wanted to hold babies in a hospital, but they wouldn't let me do that."

You can say hello to June the next time you come in on a Friday between 10 a.m. and noon.

– by Jeff Craig

In Memory of Katie Chase



She will be sorely missed. For the past 15 years she devoted much of her time to the Westport Historical Society as a board member, secretary, president, vice president of archives and oral history interviewer.



Ellen, Len and Wally – installing **Howard Munce at 100** exhibit

SAVE THE DATE
Friday, December 4
6- 9 pm
Holiday House Tour
“Holiday Soiree”
Sunday, December 6
11 am- 4 pm
Holiday House Tour



Archaeology at the beach- this summer children at a WHS program met at Sherwood Island nature center for their own dig.



Learning about Westport community while building our own town out of boxes



Learning about horseshoe crabs at the nature center



Building a community out of refrigerator boxes at our creative workshop.

Upcoming Events: September to November 2015

Go to www.westporthistory.org for updates and more information on all events.
For reservations, call: 222-1424 • M-F, 10 am – 4:30 pm, Saturday, Noon – 4 pm

Thursday, September 10: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Miss America: Not Just Another Pretty Face with Author
Penny Pearlman

Saturday, September 12: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Musical History Tour with Frank Porto Band

Wednesday, September 30 - 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
The Lost Art of Letter Writing with Author Nina Sankovitch
For Walking Tours see pg 3

Friday, October 2: Opening Reception: 6 - 8 pm

Talk of The Town on view from September 25 – October 26

Saturday, October 17: 10 am – Noon:
Justin Quinn, a talk on *Herman Doyle Landscape Design*

Sunday, November 8: Exhibit, Opening Reception 3-5pm
*Window to Westport's Past and Present WPA Images of
Historic Houses* on view from November 8, 2015 – March
26, 2016



If you are not a member,
we invite you to join.
Please visit our website:
www.westporthistory.org
and go to the
Membership page
or call 203-222-1424.

