

## TOMORROW'S HISTORY GALA



We are throwing a bash for the Westport community, with a creative view toward our future," says Bob Mitchell, WHS Board president. "This first annual gala celebrates where we've been and envisions where we want to go."

The forward-looking event coincides with 06880+50, a new exhibit of local architects' creative imaginings of Westport 50 years in the future, which opened at WHS on September 22.

At **Tomorrow's History Gala**, enjoy offerings from local chefs and mixologists – including a Prosecco bar and specialty drinks past, present,

and future – as well as live music and "future-tellers" like Tarot- and palm-readers. Bid on treasures ranging from local gourmet restaurant feasts to exclusive private tours and experiences such as Philip Johnson's Glass House, a catered sunset yacht cruise, a long weekend on Cape Cod, and a wine tasting. Own an original Larry Silver photograph, our Gala honoree, or a unique Westport lenticular artwork by Miggs Burroughs.

Meet special celebrity guest, Westporter Melissa Joan Hart, best known as a multi-award-winning actress and film director. Be entertained by the rock stars of our future from Fairfield School of Rock.

Please visit our website to buy tickets.

## 31ST ANNUAL HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR, DEC 10, 2017



The Westport Historical Society's 31st Annual Holiday House Tour will be on Sunday, December 10, 2017, from 11am to 4pm. This event is a holiday tradition in Westport that brings families and friends together to enjoy visiting local historic homes that have been dressed for the holidays. We expect the tour to draw nearly 400 guests. This year's tour features seven 18th and 19th Century homes in which tour-goers can see creative designs embodying the spirit of the season. The Holiday House Tour is always a much anticipated event

that demonstrates two of the WHS's major goals: community engagement and support for efforts to preserve historic Westport properties. It will also feature a pop-up holiday store, hot cider and cookies, and festive music to set the tone for a memorable holiday experience.

The Westport Historical Society is about connecting people to their town. We are honored to host the Holiday House Tour each year to highlight homes that exemplify how modern families can adapt historic properties for 21st Century living.

# Otherworldly October Offerings



Autumn officially begins on September 22nd but many don't feel in the swing of things until the month following labor day. October is a time of

changing seasons, falling leaves and the traditional harvest. It's also known for the chill in the air and we don't just mean the weather! WHS is gearing up for a month full of spooky programs being offered for the celebration of Halloween.

Starting off the season is the delightfully eerie "Art from the Beyond" Cemetery tour. This tour, led by WHS Education and Programs Director, Nicole Carpenter, will explore the Greens Farms Lower cemetery to discuss superstitions and tombstone artwork.

On the ever fearful evening of Friday the 13th, our 1st Annual "Tomorrow's History" Gala will be the talk of the town. The evening is sure to be filled with excitement and fun. One of our most popular offerings during the season "Historic Business District Walking Tour/National Hall" will fall on the 14th.

National Hall and the former Westport Bank and Trust company building will be visited, both of which are listed in the national register of historic places.

The evening of the 19th brings emeritus state archaeologist, Nick Bellantoni, to WHS to enchant his audience with his lecture "New England Vampire Folk Belief". Mr. Bellantoni will discuss the accidental discovery of an early New England family cemetery and how one of its dearly departed may have had more life in him than expected.

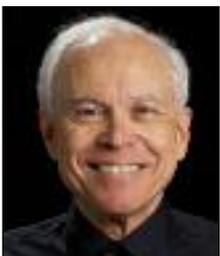
Are you brave enough to join WHS on its newly revived cemetery lantern tour "Illuminating the Past"? Willowbrook Cemetery residents are back from the dead to share their stories by the light of your guides lantern.

Finally, journey through one of Westport's oldest settled areas on the "Kings Highway North Historic District Walking Tour" on the 28th. Tour one of the houses in the district, keep an eye out for ghosts as we pass the cemeteries on Old Hill and hear about a battle which left Danbury a smouldering pile of ash.



For more information about any of these frightful programs, please visit westporthistory.org or give us a call at (203) 222-1424; we're dying to hear from you.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Lots happening this Fall! As you see elsewhere in this newsletter, on our website, and in the email bulletins, Westport Historical Society is in full

swing. In addition to our first annual Fall Gala (not to be missed), we have the third grade tour, the current 06880+50 exhibit with attendant programs and lectures, three walking tours and two cemetery tours, and much more to help you celebrate the history of this wonderful town.

Meanwhile, the Board and Advisory Council members have been working

tirelessly on our new direction. Starting with the StEPs-CT program in 2015-2017, we initiated our formal Strategic Planning effort last fall. The first edition of the 2017-2020 Plan was approved by the Board this month, and copies will be available for your viewing shortly. Many thanks to all the folks inside and outside WHS that contributed to this work. Now comes the fun part – implementing all the ambitious strategies designed to make WHS even better than it has been over the past 128 years. New committees have been established and tasks have been assigned, to ensure that the Plan does not 'sit on the shelf'.

And, in addition to everything else, we

are now celebrating Sue Gold's wonderful 10-year tenure as WHS Executive Director. As you may know, Sue has decided to move on (and to move away) as she launches the next chapter in her life. While we are very sorry to see her go, we wish her all the best. For many of you, Sue is the Westport Historical Society, and she will be missed. Please join us in saying Goodbye and Good Luck to our dear friend!

Great times lie ahead for Sue, and for WHS, and we are so happy that you will be able to experience them with us. Stay tuned, and see you soon.

– Bob Mitchell

## Meet WHS Volunteer Zita Casey



Next time you visit Wheeler House on a Friday afternoon, you'll most likely be greeted by WHS volunteer Zita Casey.

Zita (more about her name later) has been a volunteer at Wheeler House for three years, helping visitors, answering the phone and assisting other volunteers.

The longtime resident enjoys giving back to her adopted hometown; as she describes it, it was love at first sight when she and her family moved here from Queens 48 years ago.

From the very beginning, Zita has been a huge booster of Westport, especially its schools, library, entertainment and shopping. "Westport has whatever a family needs," Zita says, and she's taken advantage of it all, browsing the books and exhibits at the library, walking at Compo Beach, and seeing plays at the Westport Country Playhouse, where she also volunteered as an usher.

In addition to helping the Country Playhouse, Zita was a volunteer at the Community Theater and a member of the Westport Women's Club, serving as chair of its popular Yankee Doodle Fair one summer. At the WHS she also does mailings, stamping and stuffing envelopes. "I like it when it's busy," she says.

Getting back to the name, when Zita was born her mother wanted a name to go with the family's name, Zolin; unable to find one among lists of American baby names, she turned for advice to a cousin in Europe, who came up with Zita – full name Zita of Bourbon-Parma, last empress of Austria, whose ruling family was deposed after World War I.

Westport's Zita was born in Manhattan, where her father owned a hardware store, and raised just off the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. The WHS's "Empress for a Day" can be found behind the front desk at Wheeler every Friday from 11 to 2.

– Jeff Craig

## From the Executive Director's Desk...



Where is your happy place? The place that instantly brings a smile to your face and you feel calm, accepted and relaxed. I feel

we're very fortunate in Westport to have many destinations to feel happy and at peace. I think for many the shores of the Long Island Sound are probably high on everyone's list. However, aside from a water view, there are places in our community that are very welcoming and stimulating. Let's start with the Westport Historical Society as a place that invites you to enter and be pleasantly surprised at what you find. Remember the line in a movie, "You got me at 'hello'", well we try to get you as soon as you enter the front door. The inlaid wooden floor might be the first thing that catches your eye but if you look up, there is so much more to enjoy. The room of great displays is the *Sheffer Gallery*, which hosts on average three exhibitions each year. Our fall exhibit is something that is a bit

extraordinary because it's not about our past, but what architects envision Westport to look like fifty years from now. That may not seem too long a time but it's half of someone's expected lifetime and a lot can happen. We hope you'll stop in to see "06880+50" and be captivated by what you see.

The visit to WHS gets better as you meander down the hallway to the *Mollie Donovan Gallery* our charming little gallery as it is affectionately called. Local artists' works are often displayed there or we expand the theme of the main gallery display in the Mollie Gallery.

The lower level is where the behind-the-scenes research is done and records are safely kept for research and personal investigation. Volunteers help in the research and filing of our records. We take pride in now housing records from the Westport Public Library while they



are under construction.

The kids who participate in our vacation programs and school holiday programs can enjoy hands-on fun in the Newman Room for

Educational Activities in the lower level and getting messy is always part of the agenda.

WHS is a happy place for many people. We invite you to make it yours and to stop by with friends and family. Our year-long calendar touches the hearts and memories of so many local people and if you are new to Westport, it's a great place to get initiated into the groove of this historically famous artist haven. We relish our past, celebrate our present and look to the future with anticipation of many more wonderful experiences. **Remember to get tickets to Tomorrow's History on Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>! A Gala to celebrate our new direction!**



Westport Historical Society  
Get Connected.

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Westport, CT 06880

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## Upcoming Events

Go to [westporthistory.org](http://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

**Walk through Saugatuck History**

Saturday, September 30 - 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

**Art from the Beyond Walking Tour**

Saturday, October 7 - 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

**Tomorrow's History WHS Gala**

Friday, October 13 - 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Historic Business District Walking Tour/National Hall**

Saturday, October 14 - 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

**New England Vampire Folk Belief:**

**The Archaeological Evidence**

Thursday, October 19 - 6:00 pm- 7:00 pm

**Illuminating the Past Cemetery Lantern Tour**

Saturday, October 21 - 3:00 pm- 4:00 pm

**Kings Highway North Historic District Walking Tour**

Saturday, October 28 - 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**Philip Johnson House Lecture**

Thursday, November 2 - 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**Election Day Program**

Tuesday, November 7 - 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Merritt Parkway Conservancy**

Thursday, November 9 - 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**Suburban Dystopia Film Series**

Sunday, November 12 - 4:00 pm-6:00 pm

**Coffeehouse at the Wheeler's**

**Music of Leonard Cohen**

Friday, November 17 - 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Holiday House Tour and Market**

Sunday, December 10 - 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

**06880 +50 Talk of the Future**

Luncheon Speaker Series: Meet The Architects

October 10 -December 19, Tuesdays - 12:30 – 1:30 pm



To become a member, please  
visit our website: [westporthistory.org](http://westporthistory.org)  
or call 203-222-1424