From the President...

During 2014, the first year of my tenure as President of the Westport Historical Society, our organization continued to succeed in opening the eyes of Westporters and non-Westporters to the creative history of our town.

Our three exhibits,

*Cover Story: The New Yorker in Westport and Can't Tell A Book by Its Cover....*
*Larry Silver / Westport Visions and Faces in the Crowd*
*Saugatuck @Work: Haven of Community, Industry, Innovation and Framing Saugatuck*

attracted crowds of interested exhibit visitors who left with a better understanding of Westport’s importance, whether artistic, cultural, or historic. We were flexible in extending the *Cover Story* exhibit and opening our doors seven days a week to accommodate popular interest during its stay.

We were fortunate to have Larry Silver himself as curator of his exhibit, *Westport Visions*. His insightful lectures and tours were very well attended. And in the Donovan Gallery, who can forget the excitement of visitors looking at *Faces in the Crowd* as they recognized themselves in school photos from many years ago?

The *Saugatuck* exhibit, which opened in late-2014, offered untold opportunities for telling Westport’s fascinating history either in the gallery or on walking tours. We were indeed fortunate to receive a Connecticut Humanities grant for this exhibit.

The popularity of the exhibits led to increased sales in our Remarkable Gift Shop. The expanded inventory of Westport-related items and a timely segment in Dan Woog’s blog “06880” added significantly to these increased sales.

Being relatively new to the WHS and Westport, I spent part of the year learning about activities at WHS that were new to me. As an example, I volunteered to be an interviewer in our Oral History program. I was given training in how to keep the interview focused and photogenic. I had the good fortune to interview Westport’s Woody Klein, an easy subject with many fascinating anecdotes, which are now on record for all to see in our Oral History Collection in the Archives.

Our Hidden Garden Tour and Holiday House Tour were very successful, attracting new garden and interior design enthusiasts, including a large group from the Victorian Society of New York. The quality of the venues continued to improve, as did the number of tour-goers. Our post-tour soirees were both fun and suc-
cessful, in two different types of venue: in a pavilion on Veterans Green and in the Lillian August showroom.

In June, WHS published *Frazier Forman Peters: Westport's Legacy in Stone* by Laura A. Blau and Robert A. Weingarten, an informative account of the life and work of this town's innovative designer/builder of homes.

Our Archives Committee continued to handle a wide variety of questions from the public and Board members.

In September, I hosted a luncheon for major donors at my home, which enabled them to meet one another, and to hear about WHS initiatives in an historic house setting. They also heard Kathie Bennewitz, WHS Exhibits Consultant, describe the Saugatuck exhibit.

A reflection of how much our fund-raising efforts have improved is the success of our Year End Appeal, both in the amount of money raised and the number of contributors.

On a very sad note, we marked the passing of three former WHS presidents: Roy Dickinson, Allen Raymond, and my immediate predecessor and good friend, Susan Wynkoop. They are all greatly missed.

Submitted by Edward F. Gerber, President
Executive Director’s Report
Susan Gold, Executive Director

One of Westport’s most well-known and beloved residents Paul Newman summed it up best when he said “Living in Westport is a privilege. I love it here.” And we agree with him whole heartedly. Whether you are old or young, Westport native or newcomer, we’ve got what it takes to make Westport proud of its rich heritage and its bright future. The Westport Historical Society, a member-supported, nonprofit educational organization, is a treasured resource for the community we serve. The year 2014 is a testament to the variety of ways we have connected people to their town and celebrated our strengths and rich cultural heritage.

Our exhibits are our greatest assets and they continue to draw local visitors as well as many from the tri-state area and from places far away. This past year we had nearly 3000 visitors to our exhibits. Our exhibits tell a compelling story of our town and in 2014 we presented three of our most exciting shows:

- **Cover Story: The New Yorker in Westport**
- **Larry Silver/Westport Visions,**
- **Saugatuck @ Work**

The Westport Historical Society partners with many other organizations in town to offer a beautiful place for a meeting or to create an event that will bring people together for a fun and educational purposes. Local partners included: Westport Cinema Initiative, Westport Schools Permanent Art Collection Committee, Westport Arts Advisory, CLASP Homes, Westport Public Library, Westport Country Playhouse, Westport Garden Club, Westport Arts Center, Downtown Merchants Association, Westport-Weston Chamber of Commerce, and Westport Town Hall.

Our gallery curators have hosted some wonderful docent tours of our exhibits to local groups; among them are the Westport Center for Senior Activities, Green’s Farms Congregational Church, Maplewood Senior Living, and the Connecticut Chapter of Colonial Dames.

A highlight of this year’s collaboration was with area historical societies in putting together a family adventure called **The Great Letterboxing History Hunt.** It was a huge success in how it invited people from throughout Fairfield County to visit our respective sites and experience an activity that was engaging and educational. This project included historical societies from New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Wilton, Easton, Fairfield, and the Keeler Tavern Museum. We held a folk concert at the Wilton Historical Society with prizes for families who visited the most sites.

The **Coffee House at the Wheelers**, held in June, August and October, are concerts on Friday evenings in the Sheffer Gallery featuring singer/songwriter Suzanne Sheridan who brings local musicians together for an evening of music, wine and hand-clapping. The concerts have drawn over 200 people and are a wonderful way for us to attract a new audience. Our annual holiday concert in December with **Mary Ann Hall’s Music**
for Children is a tradition that brought 50 people to the gallery for an afternoon of singing holiday songs and celebrating the season.

Our Destination Westport Walking Tours are another way we celebrate our local history. Guided tours of areas of town that tell a great story of our town’s evolution continues to be a very popular draw. We had two very successful walking tours of the Saugatuck area with Bob Mitchell, a Board member, whose love of the town came through in his compelling tour of this much beloved area of town. Nearly 100 people joined us and after the walking tour, the Black Duck Café generously donated drinks on the house for everyone.

In June, we are part of the jUNe Day program where United Nations staff spend the day in Westport. We host the walking tour of Main Street for 50 guests and escort them to the Westport Arts Center for a tour of their gallery exhibit. Our volunteer guides speak passionately about our town, its well known landmarks, and its character and charm.

We also take to the Long Island Sound with our annual Kayak Trip to Cockenoe Island. This year’s trip had twenty boaters. We headed to the island with naturalist David Parks for an enlightening talk about the local environment. This is a great water adventure of one of Westport’s off-shore treasures.

One of the benefits of sponsorship is use of the Sheffer Gallery for seminars, receptions, and meetings from our Annual Sponsors and other groups that request our space for their individual programs. These groups utilizing the gallery included: BNY Mellon Wealth Management, HTG Investment Advisors, Business Network International (BNI) group, CLASP Homes, Anderson Wealth Management, Berchem, Moses & Devlin (law firm), Greens Farms Garden Club, Mediation Stress Reduction Program, Suzuki Music School of Westport, and the Westport Schools PTA Council.

A weekly outdoor mediation class is held during the spring, summer and fall called Qi Gong – a Chinese form of moving meditation that attracted new audiences to WHS. The classes are free and introduce the community to a mind body practice that helps reduce stress and promote health and well-being.

In sum, the Westport Historical Society continues to participate in town events with enthusiasm and dedication. We take part in the annual Halloween Parade and give out treats to all the children; serve hot cocoa at the tree lighting in front of the Westport Town Hall; provide lemonade and pretzels after the Memorial Day Parade; and put up a wartime uniforms display in celebration of Veterans Day at Town Hall. We conclude the year by decorating the Christmas tree every year in Town Hall with hand-made ornaments from local artists.

The treasurer of the Westport Garden Club says it best “Thank you for all you do to keep our residents mindful of the importance of remembering the history of our town.”

Submitted by Susan Gold
The year 2014 has been a good financial year for the Westport Historical Society and our financial position is as strong as it has been in several years. It has come from the continuing strong support by a solid group of sponsors, members, and the general public who provided financing for WHS activities, and our debt for borrowed money was paid down to $15,000 at year end. Our employees and volunteers did an outstanding job with two major Fund-Raising activities; the Hidden Garden Tour and the Holiday House Tour together generated over $100,000 net of expenses. Memberships and responses to the Year End Appeal together brought in over $60,000. Our many local businesses and foundations contributed over $85,000 as Annual and Event Sponsors.

Our usual expenses approximate $270,000 to $280,000 a year so the aforementioned receipts are very important to keep the lights on and to also provide for the many exhibits and education events, research and other activities at WHS. Our Endowment Fund at $422,000 at year-end isn’t huge for an organization our size but it does provide $12-15,000 a year in income. Looking forward to 2015, there are several maintenance needs at Wheeler House and we are looking at alternatives to see how we can finance them.

Our financial results are audited by an accounting firm annually and the audit reports are available after mid-year for review by foundations, trusts, and other groups or individuals considering grant awards to the Society. Anyone having questions about our financial operations is invited to contact us for a prompt response.


Submitted by Phillip Johnson and Sarah Menchaca
# Statement of Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets

**Year Ended December 31, 2014**

(Amounts in dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operating Fund</th>
<th>Capital Fund</th>
<th>Endowment Fund</th>
<th>Total All Funds</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</strong></td>
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<td>1,376,230</td>
<td>439,217</td>
<td>1,864,760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Amounts shown for 2014 are unaudited*
# Statement of Financial Position

**December 31, 2014**

(Amounts in dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OPERATING FUND</th>
<th>CAPITAL FUND</th>
<th>ENDOWMENT FUND</th>
<th>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>17,314</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments, at market value</td>
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<td>422,192</td>
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<td>[Cost 2013:330634.26;2012:354,473]</td>
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<td>Contributions Receivable</td>
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<td>Due from/(to) Other Funds</td>
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<td>750</td>
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<td>32,851</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land, Buildings &amp; Equipment, net</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>439,217</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,880,755</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OPERATING FUND</th>
<th>CAPITAL FUND</th>
<th>ENDOWMENT FUND</th>
<th>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</th>
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</thead>
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<td><strong>LIABILITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Loan Payable</td>
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<td><strong>15,000</strong></td>
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<td><strong>15,995</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OPERATING FUND</th>
<th>CAPITAL FUND</th>
<th>ENDOWMENT FUND</th>
<th>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>26,052</td>
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<td>1,699,028</td>
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<tr>
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<td>40,200</td>
<td>40,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>49,313</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,376,230</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1,864,761</strong></td>
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<th>CAPITAL FUND</th>
<th>ENDOWMENT FUND</th>
<th>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,308</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,391,230</strong></td>
<td><strong>439,217</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,880,756</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Amounts shown for 2014 are unaudited*
Year End Appeal
Edward F. Gerber, President

We had a very successful Year End Appeal this year, receiving $23,000, exceeding our goal of $16,000 by $7,000.

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 three 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
Sponsorship
Susan Gold, Executive Director

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 Wealth Management, Berchem, Moses, & Devlin, PC, Sachs Walsh Insurance, Brown’s Monument Works, Abbey Tent & Party Rentals, and Maplewood Senior Living.


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, over $100,000 in 2014. In-kind donations of food from local caterers and restaurants donate delicious food to our exhibit receptions and programs throughout the year. In sum, both the monetary and in-kind support we receive over the year are what make the Westport Historical Society prosper and thrive.

Businesses and Foundations who support WHS are proudly recognized on our website, email notices and on prominent signs and banners. We applaud the sponsors in many ways for helping us in our mission and our efforts to build a strong community. 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 a strong 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
Membership
Leigh Gage, VP - Membership

The membership numbers hover a little over 400 – from 410 to 420 depending on the week. As Membership Chair, I'd like to bring that number up, as well as the levels of membership which is just as important for the bottom line. One reason membership numbers are not increasing is due to nonrenewal. In 2014, 139 people dropped their membership (one-third of members). The reasons are many – some people just forget to renew and WHS does not send out enough reminders to make sure that they don't forget. We also need to update our marketing material to demonstrate to potential members our professionalism and commitment to celebrating the history of Westport.

I have increased the number of mailings to potential members and believe that WHS needs to continue to increase personalized letters to people who have had contact with the WHS. These warm leads are key to increasing membership and we would like to deepen the relationship so that they stay engaged with us and sign on as members. The New Yorker exhibit was one of our most successful and well attended exhibits ever, and to that effect, a membership offer letter was sent to around 300 attendees (the people who signed in the guest book). We received about $320 in membership revenues from this mailing.

Another source of membership comprises the ticket buyers for our House Tour and Garden Tour, as well as the multitude of programs we run throughout the year. For example, the 2014 Holiday House Tour had around 250 people attending who are not members. My goal is to:

- Increase Membership mailings, to go to ticket buyers, as well as the guest book listing.
- Add one or two mailings to recently non-renewed members, to remind them that their memberships are up for renewal
- Try and regain some former members, (139 in last year and 490 over the past several years) with up-to-date marketing materials, showing them what great progress WHS is making and how much we have to offer them.

Memberships are currently on a rolling basis – we have looked at the possibility of going towards a simpler single date for all renewals. This will be discussed as part of the StEPs-CT program we are participating in in 2015. We need to look closely at how to increase mailings from an administrative viewpoint.

Submitted by Leigh Gage
Archives Committee
Katie Chase, Vice President - Archives, Chair

During 2014, the Archives Committee volunteers replied to about 60 requests for information from people all over the country. Inquiries ranged from family history, house history, photo research, town events, Westport and Connecticut history, businesses (old and new), use of the library, and research for WHS exhibits.

We charge $12 to non-members to do the research for them (WHS members receive a discount for photocopies). We raised about $288.00 and received open donations of a few hundred dollars. In addition, the Town of Westport contributes funds for the storage of some Town materials. The Y’s Women, Westport Garden Club, and the Longshore Women’s Golf Association made monetary donations to the Archives in return for storage of their archives.

An example of the good work of the Archives Committee concerns the cataloguing of the contents of the Dorothea Malm Collection, which consists of 38 boxes of materials. The project was completed in 2014. The main focus of this collection is house survey materials with ownership lists. Also included are research materials about Connecticut and Westport history. In addition, there is a box containing Dorothea Malm’s personal correspondence, manuscripts, and notes concerning her activities within the WHS. A complete index has been filed recently.

Members of the Archives Committee are: Katie Chase, Robert Didomenico (January-June), Hope Hickok, Sara Held Krasne, Alice Lamberson and Sven Seland-er. We meet on Tuesday mornings; we always welcome new volunteers and will train you.

Submitted by Katie Chase
Costume Department
Cheryl Bliss, Director – Costumes and Tours

This past year the Costume Department focused on the clothing component of its collection. An inventory of each item’s paperwork was conducted.

The mannequins in the parlor and the dining room were dressed in attire appropriate for the spring and winter. Both occasions were an opportunity to display a sample of the Historical Society’s costume collection.

A group of items from the costume collection was presented to four classes of first graders at Kings Highway Elementary School. The students could not believe how clothing has changed in the past hundred years.

Three mannequins were lent to Hadassah of Westport for its Red Dress Luncheon.

Eight vintage military and Red Cross nurse uniforms from the Costume Department were on display in the Westport Town Hall on Veteran’s Day.

Ed Verbell, a renowned artist from Westport, donated a dozen costumes from his iconic collection.

Many thanks to Maggie Parkhurst who has volunteered many hours to the Costume Department.

Submitted by Cheryl Bliss
Education Department
Elizabeth DeVoll, Education Director

The Education Department isn’t just about creating and inspiring apprentice historians; its goal is to create lifelong ambassadors of history. We want Westport kids to look forward to looking back.

This is a summary of our department’s offerings from the past year.

School and summer programs constitute one of our largest initiatives. Many school and scout groups visited “Dorothy Adams” (a.k.a. me) at the Adams Academy, our one-room schoolhouse. Children and chaperones alike were astounded to learn that the school only taught privileged Westporters not that long ago. Using maps, antique flash cards, slates with chalk, a dunce cap, and the 48-starred flag, we journey back 100 years.

School holidays offer an opportunity to teach Westport children about the history of their town. Our Martin Luther King Day program was sold out, and we learned about Dr. King’s non-violent methods for change. We created peace globes, love beads, and protest signs. We heard from our state senator, Toni Bouche, about her experience with prejudice as a child immigrant, and studied Westport’s own Tracy Sugarman’s courageous Civil Rights drawings. Together, we created a big, beautiful peace and love quilt that now hangs in the Newman Room. The Westport News and WestportNow.com both covered the event.

Over a dozen energetic elementary school children packed the February vacation program. Leonard Everett Fisher spent two hours showing the kids his amazing artwork, and even taught them some of his illustration techniques.

While learning of Westport’s rich farming history, 15 youngsters attended the “Save the Planet, I just got here” workshop. The children constructed endangered animals from recycled and repurposed materials in celebration of Earth Day. They loved making and playing with rain sticks, which offered the perfect vehicle for learning about Westport’s rich history of conservation.

Our summer Junior Detectives program asked kids to interview veteran Westporters and keep a journal. We heard from Don Draves about his Westport childhood antics. We studied antique photos of Downtown, took history walks around the area, and noted the changes between history and today. As a Westport institution, Max’s Fine Arts, closed, we got a bittersweet final tour from owner Shirley Mellor. Jeff Craig was a visiting sea captain, and told stories of Westport’s legendary escapades on the sea.

Another week of camp focused on the circus of a century ago. We learned about P.T. Barnum and used Connecticut’s own Alexander Calder’s brilliant circus for inspiration as the kids created their own personal circuses. The scope of their
individuality and imagination made me realize why I enjoy working with kids so much. We also received great press from The Daily Voice.

Another important program is giving guided tours of our exhibits; we also incorporate our shows into the Education Department’s workshops. The kids loved The New Yorker magazine cover show, and enjoyed creating their own Westport-inspired covers. Many of the children had no idea that Westport was (and is) home to so many glorious and celebrated illustrators.

I found it both challenging and rewarding to work on the Molly Donovan Gallery shows this past year. I enjoy creating graphic, hands-on exhibits, which draw you in and get you inspired; the viewer always walks always saying, “I didn’t know that!”

We offered a unique event this October: the “ghost hunter” NPIS (Northeast Paranormal Investigation Society) presentation. It was a sold-out, standing-room-only audience as the group presented their paranormal findings from historical homes throughout Connecticut. Our beloved Wheeler House is quite peaceful and tame compared to their findings from other buildings around the state. Dozens of people stopped me after the presentation to say that they had never been to the Wheeler House before, but looked forward to returning.

In sum, 2015 promises to hold even more interesting opportunities for our education programs to grow, and new ones to emerge.

Submitted by Elizabeth DeVoll
Exhibits

Brian O'Leary, VP - Exhibits

What do The New Yorker Magazine, Larry Silver and Robert Lambdin have in common? Answer: Exceptional art meaningful to Westport history. To prove that point the Westport Historical Society hosted three exhibits to remind all Westporters, (and for that matter the rest of the world) about the significance and impact of our artistic past.

New Yorker Cover Story

WHS closed the Cover Story Exhibit in July, 2014. The publication world learned just how creative Westport is, so much so that between 1925 and 1989, 17 New Yorker artists living in and around Westport-Weston produced a remarkable 767 covers for The New Yorker Magazine. Some 44 of the covers actually depict Westport scenes. New Yorker Cartoonist Michael Maslin, applauded our exhibit in his blog, “Ink Spill”, and even the New York Times favorably mentioned our efforts in the Metro Section.

The New Yorker’s cover images mirrored the commuter lifestyle of Westport Connecticut-based artists, including Garrett Price, James Daugherty, Perry Barlow, Alice Harvey, Helen Hokinson, Edna Eicke, Arthur Getz, Charles Addams, Reginald Massie, Whitney Darrow, Jr., Charles Saxon, Albert Hubbell, Donald Reilly, Lee Lorenz, John Norment, Misha Richter and David Preston. Curator Eve Potts drew from artifacts, anecdotes and correspondence provided by the families of Geraghty who also did innumerable drawings for the magazine.

The companion exhibit that ran concurrently in the Mollie Donovan Gallery revealed the well known fact that New Yorker covers offer no clue to the magazine’s content. Never, as visitors will saw in “Can’t Tell a Book by its Cover…” was that more true than the Aug. 31, 1946 New Yorker, a single-story issue. The story? Hiroshima, by writer John Hersey, who shortly thereafter moved to Turkey Hill South (the home later sold to Andy & Martha Stewart) in Westport. Hersey wrote several books while living here, including Marmot Run and The Wall.

A future book will document further the history our contribution to New Yorker culture.

Larry Silver: Westport Visions

WHS opened the Larry Silver exhibit on July 24, 2014. Drawn from hundreds of images of Westport, this exhibition included more than 50 prints, many vintage. Included are icons of Silver’s career, such as the Compo Beach images "Beach Showers" (1980) and "Dancing on the Jetties" (1979), which depict isolated human figures in strongly composed, and graphic environments.
This body of work also featured images never exhibited or published before, including views of Sherwood Island State Park, the Gillespie Center (now Homes for Hope), town celebrations, local farms and neighborhoods, plus additional images of Compo, Longshore and downtown Westport.

"Westport Visions" offered longtime residents, those new to the area, along with summer visitors an opportunity to pause and reflect upon the ever-evolving town, from its roots as an agrarian village to a summer resort and artistic community to a modern metropolitan suburb. Many of the places that Silver captured with his camera have changed or disappeared, yet, others, like views of commuters at the train station and bathers at Compo Beach, remain, at once timeless and familiar.

**Saugatuck @ Work**

Robert L. Lambdin’s meticulously researched mural depicting Saugatuck as a center of manufacturing and river commerce in 19th century Westport anchors the current exhibition “Saugatuck @ Work – Haven of Community, Industry, Innovation”.

The late Westport artist’s large wall painting, “Saugatuck in the 19th Century,” was created for the Westport Bank & Trust Company’s Saugatuck branch when it opened in 1970. It measures 6 by 10 feet and shows the various types of vessels that plied the river over the course of the century, as well as such long-gone landmarks as the Saugatuck Bank, precursor of Westport Bank & Trust, and the Methodist Church, and those that still survive: Saugatuck original firehouse and the village’s historic swing bridge and train depot. Though I-95 did not come into being until the mid 20th century, its bridge over the river appears as a huge arc framing the riverfront scene.

A companion exhibit curated by Elizabeth DeVoll and devoted to the life of those immigrants, “Framing Saugatuck,” will run in the Mollie Donovan Gallery concurrently with “Saugatuck @ Work.” In a recent interview, retired Westport police officers John Anastasia and Ted Giannitti, who grew up in Saugatuck, said the fact that its homes were huddled together contributed to the closeness of the community. Holidays saw food passed from family to family as a form of community sharing, and one of the village’s homes even had a large outdoor stone oven where women from the neighborhood made bread. St. Anthony’s Hall on Franklin Street was a focal point of the community, and on the saint’s day, it hosted fireworks and a parade.

“Framing Saugatuck” is a celebration of Saugatuck families, their heritage and contributions to the Town of Westport.

Submitted by Brian O’Leary
Facilities Report
Peter Jennings, VP - Facilities

While the building and grounds at the Wheeler House and Barn at 25 Avery Place remain in good condition with no significant problems noted in the past year, time is taking its toll and several areas are in need of repair.

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, flooring replacement in the Newman Room, miscellaneous trim and shutters repairs, and the installation of a dehumidifying system in the lower level to maintain proper humidity levels required for document storage. The boilers may also need upgrade/replacement.

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

Submitted by Peter Jennings
Remarkable Gift Shop
Olivia Yule
Mimi Burroughs

An intensive inventory became essential this year due to the fact that seven months of data were lost in an inexplicable glitch in a very out-of-date QuickBooks program. With a generous gift from an anonymous friend we acquired not only a new computer but a new QuickBooks program. I believe we are finally on track.

This year the gift shop has had great success with many new (and old!) items. It was a fortunate meeting with the folks at Northern Mores who came up with the idea of silk ties with street signs of Westport printed on them. They were a hit from day one. We're planning on keeping them as a staple in the gift shop along with the always popular sweatshirts, t-shirts, 06880 caps, mugs, and kitchen towels. These ties were so popular they needed re-ordering! A new addition to the ball cap family is a Saugatuck cap which coordinates nicely with the Lambda Saugatuck mural exhibit.

Great new exhibits, interesting children's programs and well attended talks, films and book signings have been very successful in bringing new visitors to the Historical Society and The Remarkable Gift Shop, as well. It's very satisfying when people come in and say they've never been here before but they're happy to have discovered this wonderful, local gem. The Frazier Forman Peters book also brought in many first-time guests into the gift shop.

The gift shop got a super boost this Holiday from Dan Woog's excellent 06880 blog. It is always good to have nice things said about you and we do appreciate the plug.

The Remarkable Gift Shop works in conjunction with other non-profit organizations, passing the profits directly to the cause; for example: Project Return and Compo Gold Honey, just to name a few.

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

Submitted by Mimi Burroughs
Historic House Plaque Program
Bob Weingarten, WHS House Historian and Plaque Coordinator

This year we had homeowners order 25 plaques. Since the plaque program began in 1978, this was the year with the largest number of plaques requested. Almost 50% of home owners that were contacted as being eligible for plaques responded with orders. Prior to each homeowner being contacted, a review of the history of the house is conducted to establish a built date and initial owner of the house. This process takes time but the results provide the homeowner with a history of their home and identification of why their house contributes to the heritage of our town. Plaques ordered this year were for houses built between c.1780 and 1931, with the latter being attributed to architect Frazier Forman Peters. As of this year the WHS plaque program has provided 293 plaques to structures, homes, converted barns, and commercial and other buildings in Westport.

Submitted by Bob Weingarten
Hidden Garden Tour
Edward F. Gerber, President, Event Chairman

The 2014 Hidden Garden Tour was a success due to the quality of the five gardens – three in Westport and two in Fairfield - the enthusiasm of the marketplace vendors, and a wonderful garden party soiree and auction. The soiree was held under a tent in Veteran’s Green, which proved to be an ideal venue. The food was all donated, as was the wine and other spirits. Many of the Tour attendees also purchased tickets and attended the soiree. Of course, there were many comp tickets for our annual sponsors and the garden owners as well, probably doubling the number of attendees.

The event was very profitable. It netted $44,932. Our goal was $36,150, so we exceeded our budgeted target by $8,782.

Income: HGT sponsors $7,750
Annual sponsor allocation $6,875
Marketplace $2,850
Garden ticket sales $16,140
Soiree tickets and auction $20,890
   (Tickets $2,570)
   (Silent auction $6,520)
   (Live auction $11,800)
Total $54,505
Expenses $9,573
   ($4850 live auction)
Net $44,932

I would like to thank the chairs of the individual components of the HGT:

Darcy Sledge and Stacey Danielson – Garden Tour
Sara Krasne – Marketplace
Jeffrey Ruden – Soiree/Auction
As well as Susan Gold and her staff and the numerous volunteers.

The incredible hard work and dedication to the WHS displayed by everyone involved made this a wonderful event.

Submitted by Edward F. Gerber
Holiday House Tour
Cate Tiefenthaler, Director, Co-Chair
Stacey Danielson, Director, Co-Chair

On Dec 7, Westport Historical Society celebrated another successful Holiday House Tour with a Twilight Soiree hosted by Lillian August’s flagship store following the tour of five houses located in Westport and Weston. Several of this year’s homes were either owned or designed by well-known local interior designers and architects, which added some “star appeal” to the tour.

Homes included a stone house by legendary Westport architect Frazier Forman Peters, a Nantucket-style beach house by architect Peter Cadoux, decorated by Lillian August, a Saugatuck Shores home exquisitely designed and decorated by Olga Adler, a Weston Colonial owned by local artist Kerri Rosenthal and decorated by her company, D2 Interieurs, and finally a hilltop French Chateau designed by Judith Larson and decorated by Donna Gordon. The houses were decorated by each homeowner with festive Hanukkah and Christmas decorations; holiday music was played by pianist, Mark Naftalin, and the Windflower Flutes; and David’s Teas provided a spicy blend of hot tea by an outdoor fireplace on a deck overlooking Long Island Sound.

Everyone got involved with getting the word out about the event, including placing lawn signs and postcards around town, e-mail campaigns, and blogs and social media feeds from both the designers and the sponsors of the tour (including the day of and during the tour), resulting in a record number of over 400 Holiday House Tour attendees!

The Twilight Soiree, attended by an also record number of over 200 guests, featured savory hors d’oeuvres donated by Garelick & Herbs, champagne, specialty gin drinks, wine supplied by WHS Board members, holiday music, and both a live and silent auction with over 50 packages that generated record auction sales for WHS from 48 bidders. New this year were swag bags for all attendees filled with goodies from sponsors, designers and auction donors.

Thank you to all of our sponsors, homeowners, docents, and friends for making the 2014 Holiday House Tour and Twilight Soiree a HUGE success, raising over $59,000 which was 23% over prior year, and $11,000 over the $48,000 goal/budget.

Submitted by Cate Tiefenthaler
Oral History Committee
Karley Meltzer, Chair

Since 1972, the Westport Historical Society Oral History committee has interviewed over 300 notable, well known (from famous to idiosyncratic) local residents who have contributed to our community...in the Arts, Politics, Education, its History, and Culture.

These interviews range from oral tapes (early) to audio visual tapes. We have folks who are converting these existing gems to digitalization.

Our concern is how to make our public aware of our work in making the richness of Westport appreciated by all.

Please call 203 227 1564 or email me with questions or ideas that might contribute to our efforts.

Submitted by Karley Meltzer
Collections/Barn Committee
Barbara Van Orden, Director, Chair
Don Draves, Registrar

During 2014, we completed a reconciliation of the inventory of objects on display in the Victorian Kitchen to our computer database for Historic Collections. This is an important task because the Kitchen is the only exhibit space in Wheeler House that is accessible to visitors without supervision.

In November, we started a similar reconciliation of objects on display in the Cobblestone Barn. Again, we do this for the reason stated above. The project at this time is a work-in-progress going into the new year.

One of the gifts received by the Society in 2014 is a quilt holder, a gift from Elizabeth Northrup of Bridgeport. It is on display in the Victorian Bedroom and is draped with a quilt from our collection.

As always, the Society is grateful to its many donors, who support our efforts to preserve objects of Westport history and other historical importance.

Submitted by Barbara Van Orden