



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the Westport Historical Society continues to expand its activities and role within the community, two issues remain a constant priority and motivational challenge for the Board:

### THE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SOCIETY

The Society has a dramatically redefined responsibility to preserve, protect and interpret two historic properties. Our operating budget which has doubled during the last four years is a constant challenge, however the generosity that we witness every day from members of our community, is also a constant reminder of the intrinsic value of history to Westport.

We are sustained by memberships, annual appeal, grants, special fundraisers, such as our Farmstead Feast in September 2015, and income from our endowment. Despite our expanded role and increased activity, we remain a streamlined, mission-driven organization with one full-time employee, our executive director and one part time education manager.

We are tremendously grateful to our members and local businesses for their ongoing support. We thank the following for generous contributions this year: the Howard Bayne Fund, the Guild Family Foundation, Stearns Charitable Trust and the Van Slouns for the Sylvan Endowment.

The greatest challenge for the Westport Historical Society is the long-term care in perpetuity of the Handy House. The Historical Society is in a strong position to tackle these ongoing needs with careful planning and utilization of remaining funds earmarked for the Handy House.

### MAINTAINING A SUFFICIENT AND EFFICIENT STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER BASE

Who are the people who keep the Historical Society running? You probably have encountered Jenny O'Neill, our Executive Director who runs day-to-day operations, and maybe Kathleen McAreevey, our Education Manager, but what about the enthusiastic volunteers who provide so much of the expertise and work?

While the Board sets policy, makes financial decisions, and plans for the future, much of the work is done by volunteer committees. These committees provide a wide array of skills that are absolutely essential to our operation. Just to mention a few: the Finance committee members have the special skills to understand budgets and investments; the Facilities committee members know about historic building construction and materials; the Education committee forges links with Westport schools and creates programs to stimulate the curiosity of children. Major programs like the Artisan Fair, Summer Passport, and Pop Up Museum have focused committees to plan and manage events that will appeal to a wide range of interests. Plus there are dozens of volunteers who work outside of committees—acting as docents at the Handy House, or cataloguing our collection or transcribing historical documents. It takes a tremendous amount of work and a wide range of expertise to keep us running, and it would be impossible without the contributions of all these talented and enthusiastic volunteers.

Thank you!  
Tony Connors, President





## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



With your support we continue to safeguard a collection of 10,000 items relating to Westport's history and to share our collections through Pop Up Museums, exhibitions and our website.



“Creativity”, “innovative thinking”, “fun”—words perhaps not often associated with a small historical society—have become signatures of the Westport Historical Society’s activities. The events of the past year demonstrate the unique strengths of the Historical Society as it navigates the inspiring challenges of making local history relevant to our community.

The Westport Historical Society has experienced dramatic changes during the last five years as it has worked first to stabilize the Handy House and then to open the property to the public, and to create a place with meaning and relevance to our community. Throughout this process we have remained a streamlined, mission-driven organization, with the exceptional service of a full-time executive director and a part-time Manager of Education who are strongly supported by a team of skilled and dedicated volunteers.

During the past year two significant themes have influenced our organization:

- In our increasingly complex world, creating opportunities to encounter the past remains surprisingly simple. These moments might be a third grader pulling a bucket full of water from the Handy House well, a first grader learning the art of hand sewing, or an eight year old stepping into a child’s scale model inspired by Westport’s oldest house, the Waite-Potter house.
- Our mission is not only to preserve the physical structure of buildings and artifacts, but to interpret the local lore, memories and stories that abound within these places. Increasingly, our role has become one of strengthening a sense of place through exceptional educational programs for all of our members with a special focus on creative experiences for younger audiences and local school children.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

#### INSPIRING YOUNGER GENERATIONS

One of the most dramatic change over the past few years, has been our expansion of programming for younger audiences, especially strengthening our connections to the local schools. We now have 50 contact hours with multiple grades compared to a statistic of three years ago of five contact hours with one grade. Thanks to the dedication and persistence of Kathleen McAreavey, our manager of education, we have developed rich and memorable experiences for local school children. A special highlight was to welcome all classes of the first grade and third grade to the Handy House this year.

#### CREATING MEANINGFUL WAYS TO UTILIZE OUR COLLECTIONS

The Westport Historical Society is the steward of tens of thousands of objects, photos and documents. Although the internet has opened up new ways to provide access to our collection, there is still a unique value in the “real thing” and enabling our community to encounter documents, photos, and objects in person. We recognized the importance of finding new ways to use our collection and to make it accessible to the community. Towards this goal we introduced a new concept, the Pop Up Museum, a temporary display of materials relating to a theme created by those who show up to share their own personal stories and collections. We were thrilled by the success of our hurricane pop up museum at the Horseneck Life-saving Station and look forward to many more community pop-up museums in the future.



With your support, kids explore basic construction techniques and learn how to use tools as part of our Discovery House project.

#### BROADENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Local history extends well beyond the walls of the Bell School and the boundaries of the Handy House property. However, individuals often need some encouragement to explore the resources of their own town, a goal that inspired a new program, Westport Summer Passport. Launched in collaboration with the Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Westport Education Foundation, this activity provides a structured experience for families to experience places of historical significance and natural beauty. Over 400 families found their way to some very special places in Westport that they probably would not have visited or even known about otherwise. This project was funded by the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust, Westport Cultural Council.

#### EVOLVING EXPERIENCES OF THE HANDY HOUSE

Over 1000 visitors passed through the Handy House last year, each visitor experiencing the Handy House in different ways. As an unfurnished historic house, the Handy House has provided us with the exciting challenge to create, from scratch, a place that has meaning and relevance to this community. Our approach is guided by the knowledge that each visitor has unique interests, and by the need to create multiple and changing points of engagement in order to appeal to different age groups and to encourage repeat visitation. Unique community programs such as the second annual Artisan Fair attracting 400 plus people and our annual Halloween event attracting 200 people combined with smaller workshops, and temporary displays, are key ingredients of this approach. Our child's scale "Discovery House" gave kids a chance to participate in hands-on construction. This past year we introduced QR codes (quick response) to allow visitors to view 60 second videos about significant features in the house. We were very pleased to have a summer-long exhibition of paintings by Westport artist Blanche Paull that provided a look back at Westport during the 1950s.

#### STRENGTHENING A SENSE OF PLACE THROUGH EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

This year, for the first time, we were able to offer a year-round schedule of public programs, including evening lectures in the summer months, and our new winter history forum, a series that encourages individuals to present research and to take on new research projects. We are pleased to report that the WHS suffers from problem, rare for historical societies, of overwhelming attendance to many of our programs. Topics varied widely from slavery to pre-hurricane East Beach. Many of our programs can be viewed on our website. Now in its third year, Westport History 101, presented by Tony Connors, provided an in depth introduction of the story of Westport from the ice age to the Second World War.



With your support over 400 families explored some of the most beautiful and historically significant places in Westport as part of our Summer Passport activity.



With your support we have welcomed over 1000 people to the Handy House. Your generosity has enabled the entire Westport first grade and third grade to explore the Handy House.



#### CREATING A VIRTUAL WORLD OF LOCAL HISTORY

In many ways local history is well suited to the virtual world of the internet, Facebook and blogs. Our website, now two years old, offers a deep experience of Westport history through stories of objects in our collection and evolving research such as our shipbuilding heritage blog. With nearly 1300 “likes” Facebook provides a vibrant forum and significant tool for sharing our collection and encouraging interactions with a wider community beyond Westport.



With your support the first grade and second grade created a beautiful hand sewn quilt.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

We are very grateful for your support and to be part of a community that so clearly values its heritage and recognizes the importance of passing this along to future generations.

In the year to come you can expect to hear more about a refined vision for the Handy House informed by the experiences of the last three years. We are well on the way to developing exciting approaches to use this property as a gateway to explore our community heritage and we hope that you will join us in this effort!

Jenny O’Neill, Executive Director

#### EDUCATION



This year, the Children’s Heritage Education Program interacted with the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, & 8th grades in the Westport Community Schools. We reached a total of 398 students and collaborated with the Westport Education Foundation, the Westport River Watershed Alliance, and played a dual role in Superintendent Ann Dargon’s newly launched “By Land & By Sea” community curricula; Teaching STEAM at the Handy House with select 7th graders and the 8th grade Boat Building course.

The Macomber Primary School Hand Sewing Project concluded this year with a second quilt made by the 2nd graders. This year included a design component spearheaded by docent Marilyn Packard Luther which was included in an exhibit about the quilt project held in April at the Westport Library.

The mini pilot STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Architecture, Math) Project at the Handy House was funded by the Westport Cultural Council, which is part of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Colleen Brady Kearney, a middle school math teacher, served as our point person for this project.

In total, this year, the Westport Historical Society Children’s Heritage Education Program interacted with Westport students more than fifty times through teaching local history and introducing students to hands-on learning.

Kathleen McAreavey, Manager of Education

# thank you!

ALL DONATIONS RECEIVED APRIL 1 2015 – MARCH 31 2016

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With your support 400 plus people celebrated the vibrant local culture of traditional craftsmanship showcased at our annual Artisan Fair.



**BALANCE SHEET**  
September 30, 2015

**ASSETS**

Current Assets

Checking	\$9,776
Accounts Receivable	\$22,108
Other Current Assets	\$792
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$32,676</b>

Other Assets

Sylvan Endowment	\$51,730
Board Designated Endowment	\$295,815
Temporarily restricted for Handy House	\$203,621
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>\$551,166</b>

**TOTAL ASSETS \$583,842**

**LIABILITIES & EQUITY**

Liabilities	\$4,047
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$579,795</b>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$583,842**

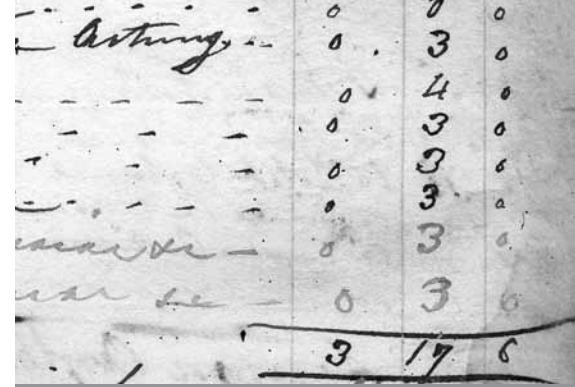
Notes for financial statements  
Financial statements compiled by Meyer, Regan and Wilner CPA can be viewed on our website [www.wpthistory.org](http://www.wpthistory.org)

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## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015

### INCOME

Direct Public Support	\$65,676
Event Revenue	\$35,981
Grant Revenue	\$1,900
Dividend & Interest Income	\$8,398
Other Types of Income	\$37,000
Sales of Merchandise	\$2,299
Program Income	\$1,317
Royalty Revenue	\$83

**TOTAL INCOME \$152,654**

### EXPENSE

Event Expense	\$24,929
Contract Services	\$19,490
Facilities and Equipment	\$2,786
Utilities	\$7,388
Operations	\$10,098
Program Expense	\$5,430
Other Types of Expenses	\$10,394
Payroll Expenses	\$73,301

**TOTAL EXPENSE \$153,816**

With your support Westport AP history classes were able to visit the Handy House.

Neil and Sue Van Sloun  
Douglas and Madeleine Vrona  
Michael and Blair Walker  
Russell and Pam Walters  
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Richard Weeks  
David and Carin Wehrmeister  
Bob Weiss  
Eileen Wheeler Sheehan  
Larry and Gretchen Whipple  
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**FOUNDATIONS**

Guild Family Foundation  
Howard Bayne Fund  
Stearns Charitable Trust

**GRANTS**

Westport Cultural Council  
Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust

**MATCHING DONATIONS**

AIG  
IBM International Foundation  
EMD Millipore Corporation  
Silicon Valley Community Foundation



**DONATIONS IN HONOR**

The Charlene and David Howe  
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**DONATIONS IN MEMORY**

Hilly van Loon in memory of  
Chip Gillespie

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**A VERY SPCECIAL THANK YOU TO**

Tim's Lawn Care for keeping the Handy  
House property looking beautiful!

**DONORS TO OUR COLLECTION**

APRIL 1 2015 – MARCH 31 2016

(details of donations to our collections are  
published in our newsletter)

Anne Burkholder  
Carol Brown  
Paul Cavanaugh  
Tony and Sharon Connors  
George and Patricia Dean  
Cecile Denadel  
Norm Deschamps  
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Dick and Eleanor Phillips  
DeDee Shattuck  
Ray and Susan Shaw  
Henry and Judy Swan  
Brenda Underhill  
Bruce Wild





With your support over 200 intrepid parents and kids enjoyed the historically inspired Dr. Handy's Ghastly Ghost Hunt this Halloween.



## *Support* LOCAL HISTORY!

The Westport Historical Society is supported by donations from individuals, foundations and businesses who care about preserving the special heritage of Westport. In addition to joining the Historical Society as a member, please consider these other ways you can support our mission:

### CONTRIBUTIONS IN HONOR OR MEMORIAL GIFTS

Honor a friend or relative, commemorate a special anniversary or mark the passing of a loved one with a contribution.

### BEQUESTS

Leave a lasting legacy for the future by naming the Historical Society as a beneficiary in your will.

### CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

Please check with your employer to see if they offer a matching gift program.

### BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS

The Historical Society offers local businesses many different levels of sponsorship and recognition.

## *Thank you* TO OUR BUSINESSES MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

- Attorney Dorothy P. Tongue P.C.
- Baycoast Bank
- Bradshaw Insurance
- Country Woolens
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- Potter Funeral Home
- Sisters of Solace
- Slocum Design Studio
- Southcoastal Realty
- Shattuck Gallery
- Tim's Lawn Care
- T.F. Morra Tree Care
- Village Plumbing
- Westport Federal Credit Union



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*Thank you!*

HANDY HOUSE ... OPENING DOORWAYS DONATION FORM

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my/our gift where it is most needed , or for the following project:

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To donate securities or stocks or to make a pledge, please contact Jenny O'Neill at the Westport Historical Society at 508-636-6011.

Please list donation in publications as a gift from:

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