

GPA Welcomes New Board Members

Tracy Tomaselli, the author of "Brother vs. Brother" in this newsletter, is descended from 13 of the 25 founders of Guilford, and has been a genealogist for over 25 years. She researched Guilford's Civil War Day (a part of the 375th anniversary celebration), and was responsible for the signs marking Civil War soldiers' houses all over Guilford. She is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and organized a local chapter of the Children of the American Revolution. Tracy is also co-owner with her husband Ron of Guilford Glass.

Veronica Soell moved to Guilford from Hamden with her husband, Dieter, in 2005. She became active on the Hyland House board shortly afterward. Veronica has worked on the website and publications, and is now the Hyland House garden curator and liaison with the Museums Group, which evolved out of the GPA's Heritage Tourism Initiative. (The Museum Group initiates and coordinates activities and cooperation among Guilford's five house museums.) Veronica's professional background included publications and websites, and she currently serves on the Kiosk Information System Planning subcommittee.

Marcia Safirstein moved to Guilford in 2012 from Little Rock, Arkansas. A longtime volunteer, she sat on the Board of the National Kidney Foundation, Houston branch, chaired many fundraisers and served in outreach programs. Marcia was on the Board of the Little Rock Symphony, and served on its Advisory and Development Boards. She worked with the Jewish Federation of Arkansas and a local community theater, bringing a Czech opera BRUNDIBAR, which was smuggled out of the concentration camp Terezin to Little Rock. Marcia also worked with the Arkansas Children's Hospital as an infant rocker.

GPA Board of Directors 2014-2015

Shirley Girioni, President
Annis Homer, Secretary
Heidi Samuelson, Treasurer

Howard Brown
Walter Corbiere
Denmis Culliton
Ellen Ebert
Katherine Frydenborg
Ellie Green
Pat Lovelace
Jan Maiale
Joe Nugent
Sharon Olson
Marcia Safirstein
Veronica Soell
Tracy Tomaselli



GUILFORD PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2014

Letter From The President



*CT State Bond Commission approves grant for
GPA's Heritage Tourism Kiosk*

I am very proud of what GPA has accomplished this past year. We facilitated cooperation among twenty-six non-profit organizations in Guilford to enhance both preservation and economically responsible development initiatives.

These groups include the historic house museums, which are extending their own programs and cooperation, the Guilford Library, Town and State agencies, The 375th Anniversary Celebration Committee, The Guilford Land Trust, and the Chamber of Commerce, to name a few.

In addition to the many exciting programs described elsewhere in this newsletter, I want to mention a few other new initiatives we have been pursuing.

Community Development and Heritage Tourism Initiative

In addition to the walking tours, bus tours, and the plaques for non-residential buildings, we are now developing a tourism Kiosk and new Guilford website for visitors and residents. The attractive Kiosk will be located on the Community Center property on Church Street.

The software backbone of the Kiosk will be a sophisticated information system that will be accessible on any computer, smart phone or tablet and that we hope will develop into a central depository and connection to the dozens of separate Guilford data resources and websites. It will include an interactive community calendar, Guilford history stories, and access to the many websites of organizations in the community as well as a listing of historic, cultural, recreational resources and information about shops, restaurants, lodging and other businesses.

Funds for this Kiosk/web-based information system project come exclusively from outside grants and from The Marjorie Schmitt Fund, which was designated by the donors for projects to further ideals of preservation in our community. No GPA membership fees or undesignated donations go into this project.

To support these programs and others, we received five important grants this year:

- A \$30,000 grant from the Connecticut Historic Preservation Office to update and expand GPA's inventory of architecturally significant structures in Guilford. The inventory will be used by the Town of Guilford to enforce its Delay of Demolition Ordinance for such structures.

- A \$60,000 grant from The Connecticut State Bonding Commission for the construction of the heritage tourism Kiosk.

- A \$25,000 grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council to engage the public in identifying unique Guilford stories. This resulted in the publication of the booklet, "Telling Guilford Stories," which will be incorporated into the Kiosk information system. A \$2500 matching grant from the Guilford Foundation was received for the same project. The matching \$2500 to the Guilford Foundation grant was contributed by four individuals interested in heritage tourism.

- We have received notification of a grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council for \$15,000, for development of the interactive website and Kiosk software as well as a brochure for Guilford's special historic house museums.

Community Education and Participation Activities

- GPA continued its co-sponsorship of public preservation lectures with the Guilford Free Library – one on historic barns, one on the musical history of Guilford, and one on Guilford's railroad history.

- At our annual meeting, GPA presented three awards of merit for historic barn preservation: to William and Janet Boughton, Phillip Schaeffer and Irene Auerbach, and the Guilford Keeping Society for the Medad Stone Tavern barn. Awards were also presented to The Guilford Free Library for its initiative to preserve and digitize historic Guilford photos, and to Edith Nettleton for her long, outstanding contributions to preservation in our community. A special Letter of Appreciation was presented to GHS senior Megan Vanacore for her development of a new bus tour of historic Guilford sites. The Charles Hubbard Award was presented to James Powers for his publication, Saving the Farm.

- Other outreach initiatives include updating of our GPA website (guilfordpreservation.org) to include easier access by portable electronic devices, and the distribution of our newsletter online and via mail to over 1000 town residents.

We have accomplished all of the above with a small and committed board and other volunteers while ensuring that our membership dues and contributions yield the most possible benefits for our community. If you would like to help us make a difference, please continue your financial support by renewing your membership at your current level or above, and/or by volunteering your time.

Sincerely,
Shirley Girioni,
President

GPA MISSION STATEMENT

Guilford Preservation Alliance, Inc. is a community advocacy organization constituted to preserve and protect the built and natural heritage of Guilford.

Activities and Achievements

GPA creates educational programs; makes temporary and permanent installations of educational displays; sponsors forums; and surveys and makes drawings of buildings for the historical record.

GPA has joined with several organizations to begin the Heritage Tourism Initiative, to foster economic growth for town merchants and increased visitation to the five house museums and Guilford's wealth of cultural and natural resources. The centerpiece of Heritage Tourism will be the visitors' information/interactive Kiosk.

In cooperation with the town's Delay of Demolition ordinance, GPA maintains a master list of historic properties, and advises owners of alternatives to demolishing houses and other historic buildings.

GPA also provides funding with grants and loans, through its Jones Trust Fund, to private and institutional owners of properties for repair and restoration; accepts easements for monitoring on a long-term basis; and is chartered to buy and sell real property for repair, restoration and resale.

Guilford Preservation Alliance has a citizen Board of Directors, and shares board members with the house museums in Guilford. GPA meets monthly in the Community Center.

Remembering Bill Mack



Over the course of a long and active life, Bill Mack served our community in many capacities. I had the good fortune to work with him on one of the GPA's most challenging projects, the ongoing effort to preserve the elegant brick water tower and engine house that are all that remains of Guilford's nineteenth-century railroad depot complex.

It was thanks to Bill's diplomatic skills and bulldog tenacity that the GPA succeeded in reestablishing contact with Amtrak, which owns the two historic buildings, after a long hiatus in communication. He not only spearheaded the time-consuming process of obtaining permission to enter the property, but donned his hard hat and cheerfully joined the crew of volunteers who

cleared away a small forest of vines and debris at the long-neglected site.

In collaboration with local architect Randy Siress, Bill was instrumental in preparing the first-ever field-measured architectural drawings of the station buildings as they were originally built in the 1870s, thus helping to ensure that they can eventually be restored to a high standard of authenticity. (The drawings can be viewed on the GPA website.) Bill's finest hour may have come when he notified the GPA board that these meticulously detailed drawings had been officially registered with the Historic American Engineering Record in Washington, D.C., a distinction shared by only a handful of buildings in Guilford.

To all of these tasks Bill brought a winning combination of modesty, commonsense, practical experience, and unflinching good humor. In striving to save these irreplaceable pieces of Guilford's heritage for future generations, we honor a cause to which he contributed unstintingly.

-Harry Haskell

Historical Plaques Coming to Buildings on the Guilford Green!



Members of GPA Committee and Andrew Page with Page's plaque.
Photo By Guilford Courier

Ten new historical plaques are coming to commercial and civic buildings on the Green, as a joint project of the Guilford Preservation Alliance and the Guilford Keeping Society. White plaques, resembling a scroll and similar to several on homes on and near the Green, will provide a short history of the building and/or the site.

On each plaque will also be a QR code so viewers will be able to scan the code with a QR reader in their smart

phones, and see additional facts and photographs about the spot. This additional information and the photos will also be found on the GPA website under their own heading of "Historical Plaques."

These first ten plaques are the pilot of a project to put plaques on many of the buildings around the Green. These first plaques are being funded by the Schmitt Fund of the GPA, a fund started by Dede Schmitt in memory of his late wife, Marjorie, a founding member and the first president of the GPA. These ten plaques are an additional gift to the town in celebration of the 375th anniversary, and also are a thank you to the many businesses and organizations who contribute so generously to the well-being of the town.

The texts on the plaques were written by a committee consisting of Carl Balestracci, Joel Helander, Dennis Culliton, Katherine Frydenborg, Ellie Green, and Ellen Ebert.

Watch for them to start to appear around the Green!

For information about obtaining a plaque for your building, please contact Ellen Ebert by email at EllenEbert@aol.com or call 203 453 6353.

-Ellen Ebert

Early Guilford Days 2014

The 21st year of Early Guilford Days took place on May 15, 16, 19 and 20. This program was begun in 1993 by GPA Board members Becky Light and Sarah McCullough to teach students the history of their town. A Teacher's Guide was developed by a committee of museum volunteers and teachers in the summer of 1995. This curriculum was made possible through a grant of the Connecticut Humanities Council and was revised and republished in 2004 through a grant from the GPA.

Over 250 Guilford fourth graders took part this year in this special hands-on event! The Hyland House and the Griswold House stepped back in time to the early days of Guilford's history. Workshops such as weaving, tinsmith, blacksmith, corn husk doll making, games, Colonial Schoolroom, herbs, paper cutting, knot tying, drumming and hearth cooking took place at the two historic museums.

The Early Guilford Days program that culminates in May, with four days of workshops at the Griswold House and the Hyland House, really begins in the fall. Tassy's trunk of colonial artifacts, named for Tassy Walden, former Cox School librarian, begins its yearlong journey through Guilford's four elementary schools. Pat Lovelace, GKS Museum Director and Hope Ryan, GKS Board member (both retired Guilford fourth grade teachers) present the trunk to the students and explain the artifacts and items in the trunk. Each school keeps the trunk for six weeks. During that time the students do hands on activities with the items in

the trunk. Instructions for the items and worksheets that the teachers can use accompany the trunk. Some of the items in the trunk include: quill pens and powdered ink, inkwell, Boot Jack, berry basket, carders for wool, wool, drop spindles (for spinning the wool) small weaving looms, games - such as pick-up sticks, clay marbles, ball and cup, nine pins, dominoes, etc. and various artifacts. The fourth graders also visit the Hyland House, Griswold House or the Medad Stone Tavern for a Scavenger Hunt for items used in the house.

Guilford's five Historic Museums began a new tradition this year. All five museums took part in Early Guilford Days Family Festival the last weekend in June. Each museum had Early Guilford Days activities so that families could participate in hands-on activities. It was so well received that the museums are beginning to plan for next year's event.

Thanks to generous donations to Early Guilford Days made during GPA's membership drive, and donations from Simeon Leete Day at the home of Rob Vavasour and Lewis Burgess, this program continues to benefit Guilford's fourth-graders and their families. Next year's Simeon Leete Day is already being planned. A reenactment of the Battle of Leete's Island will be a part of the day!

-Pat Lovelace



GPA Historic Tours and Guilford's 375th Anniversary Celebration



It has been a busy year for the Preservation Alliance's Historic Guilford Tours. When the 375th Committee asked us to participate in the town's celebrations, we were happy to join in but wanted to find out more. After some initial planning and goodwill by all parties, we chose to participate in the "Guilford in the Civil War Day," the unveiling of the Guilford Covenant, and the grand opening of the New England National Scenic Trail and

Street. Tours were finished in time for folks to participate in the unveiling. Family members of the 12th generation of Francis Bushnell, one of the 25 signers of the Guilford Covenant, were among those who participated in the walk.

On the following weekend, we were asked to participate in the New England Trail Dedication ceremonies. We started on Friday afternoon, June 6th, giving a hike through the East River Preserve. This property was formerly owned by the Foote family who are the maternal relatives of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher. The jewel of the property is the Foote Cemetery on a sandy hill overlooking the East River. The New England Scenic Trail segment known as the Menunkatuck Trail travels through the preserve and includes a meadow, thick woods, and a little glacial moraine with a natural cave known as the Bearhouse.

On Sunday June 8th, we gave one-way tours from the Historic Guilford Green to the Gateway of the New England National Scenic Trail at Chittenden Park. The tours arrived in time for the walkers to participate in the ribbon cutting of the Gateway and to enjoy the cookout and live music. This tour included the most walkers per tour than any to date. Visitors were impressed by many of the sites in Guilford's historic district and the recently installed GPA historic photo exhibit in the train station.

Finally, the GPA participated in the first annual Simeon Leete Day held at the Pelatiah Leete House, owned and hosted by Rob Vavasour and Lewis Burgess. A hike was planned for the reenactment of the historic escape by the residents of Leetes Island when British troops attacked during the Revolutionary War. Over a dozen people participated in the walk co-sponsored by the Guilford Land Trust and planned by the Early Guilford Days committee, which included board members from GKS and the Hyland House Museum.

Overall, hikes, walks, and bus tours were given this summer as part of Guilford's 375th Celebration. We were happy to be part of such a wonderful series of events and we plan on resting up for the 400th anniversary celebration just a quarter century from now.

-Dennis Culliton

its Gateway at Chittenden Park.

Many folks were impressed by last year's Historic Guilford Bus Tours created by high-school student Megan Vanacore. Edie Brown, the ringmaster of the Civil War Day on May 31st, asked if we could create a bus tour incorporating the great research on Guilford's Civil War soldiers done by Tracy Tomaselli. Tracy created a route of the soldiers' homes and a script that was used by Megan to entertain and educate several busloads of Guilfordites and visitors about the impact of the Civil War on Guilford's soldiers and their families. With the generous help of Director of Guilford Parks and Recreation Rick Maynard, we were able to secure a bus and driver for the tours. The only disappointing part of the day was turning away many guests to our sold-out tours.

The next weekend, Historic Guilford Tours was asked to give a historic walk through downtown Guilford as part of the Guilford Covenant unveiling. We brought two large groups of walkers along the route developed by Connecticut Forest and Parks Association along Boston Street, Lover's Lane, Stonehouse Lane, and Whitfield

GPA Historic Photo Exhibit at Guilford Train Station

On a frigid day last February, CDOT contractors installed the historic photo panels of the Guilford train station complex in the south pavilion of the new station. Researched and compiled by past and present GPA board members, the installation marked a continuing effort by the GPA to call attention to the history of the old complex and to inform the public about the surviving 19th-century buildings.

The first Shoreline Railway train arrived in Guilford on July 1, 1852. By the mid-1870's, the New Haven Railroad had absorbed the Shoreline Railway, and erected several buildings in Guilford to maintain its holdings. In addition to a passenger depot and engine house, the complex included a switching tower, a carpenters' shop, a water tower, a freight express office, and a 50-foot diameter turntable. Of these, the water tower and engine house survive.

Also included in the complex were the Knowles Lombard pumpkin and tomato canning factory, and a large "coal pocket" which stored coal for the factory and the trains. Another exhibit focusing on Guilford's historic industries is planned for the north pavilion.

You are invited to view the permanent photo exhibit, and take a look into Guilford's past!

-Ellie Green

