



# GUILFORD PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

## Letter From the President

The mission of GPA is to preserve the built and natural environment of our beautiful town. I would like to share with you some of our accomplishments over the past year.

- Visitors leaving I-95 will now be greeted by well-crafted **Welcome to Guilford** signs at all three exits. In 2013, the GPA commissioned a study which identified the need for signs to promote Heritage Tourism. The signs direct people to the Green and harbor, house museums and visitor information. GPA is proud to have taken a leadership role in this project.
- On June 1st eighth-graders and Guilford residents gathered at the North Guilford Cemetery to commemorate three men, Shem, Tombo and Peter Gardner, who had been enslaved nearby. The installation was the culmination of a month-long social studies unit, during which the students studied primary documents and wrote narratives about these three enslaved individuals. The ceremony was organized by Witness Stones Inc. and **GPA's Witness to History: Slavery in Guilford** provided the stones and helped write the text.
- **The Sustainable Guilford Task Force** has begun new initiatives to engage the community in composting to reduce waste, using clean energy sources, and creating safe habitats for essential pollinators. Guilford was awarded Silver Certification by Sustainable CT, one of the few towns in CT to achieve that status.
- **GPA's Jones Trust Fund for Historic Preservation** provided a low interest loan to the owners of a house on Whitfield St. that was damaged by fire this past summer. The loan will help the homeowners restore their 1829 Greek Revival house on the Green.



Please read more about GPA's efforts elsewhere in this newsletter. We ask for your support so that we may continue the important work of preserving Guilford for future generations. To continue your support or to become a member, please use the enclosed remittance envelope or use your credit card by visiting [www.guilfordpreservation.org](http://www.guilfordpreservation.org)

Sincerely,  
Shirley Girioni,  
President

# Welcome to Guilford

Visitors leaving I-95 will now be greeted by beautifully crafted **Welcome to Guilford** signs at all three exits. Standing in prominent locations, these signs announce that Guilford was founded in 1639 and that the community is recognized on the National Register of Historical Places. The signs also point the travelers in the direction of the town Green, the harbor, house museums and the information kiosk.



Pictured from left to right: First Selectman Matt Hoey, Sue Robbins, David Egan (EDC), Roberta Flannery (GPA), Mike Meisel (EDC), Shirley Girioni (GPA), Mary Repetti (GPA), Wendy Dockray (GPA, EDC).

The signs have been a long time coming. In 2013, a study commissioned by the GPA identified the need for such signage as a tool to promote heritage tourism. Since then, the design was completed with the help of graphic artist Mary Repetti and sign maker John Miller of Autographics in Branford. Late in 2019, the Guilford signs committee Chair Mike Meisel, a member of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), worked with former Economic Development Coordinator

Brian McGlone to jumpstart the project and reassemble the project committee. Members of the committee (pictured above) include representatives from three organizations: Shirley Girioni, Roberta Flannery and Mary Reppeti from the GPA; Wendy Dockray, David Egan and Mike Meisel from the EDC; Kim Spanier from the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce, and Sue Robbins and the late Paula Baraket from the community at large. Sheri Cote, Interim Economic Development Coordinator, is also available to assist.

With the design and required DOT approvals in place, the biggest hurdle became securing the necessary funds. Facing a budget of approximately \$45,000, the GPA generously contributed \$12,500 to the cause. Donations were also received from the Guilford Foundation, the Guilford Rotary, the Stoddard and Uncas Foundations and many other Guilford businesses and individuals, raising the total to \$30,500. Not being able to hold galas or in-person events made fundraising difficult. Relief recently came, however, as Mike Meisel informed Matt Hoey of the need and the Board of Selectman allocated \$20,000 from American Rescue funds to support the project. Accordingly, all planned Welcome to Guilford signs will be installed. Any extra dollars will be used to provide coordinated interior wayfinding signs, which were recommended in the 2013 study and will benefit Guilford residents, businesses and visitors alike.

- Wendy Dockray

# New Witness Stones Installed

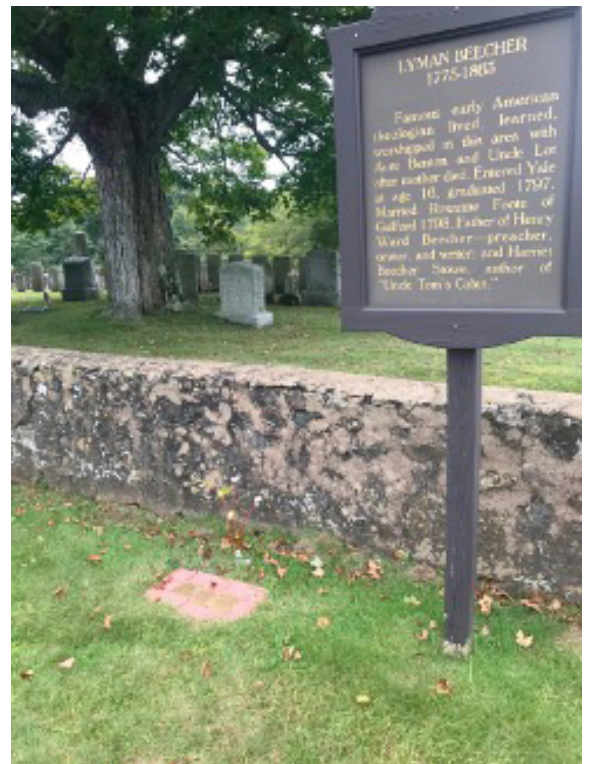
In years past when eighth graders and Guilford residents gathered to install Witness Stones to remember men and women who had been enslaved here, they did so around or near the Green. This year they did not. Instead, they gathered on June 1st in front of the North Guilford Cemetery to commemorate three men who had been enslaved there: Shem, Tombo and Peter Gardner.



The installation was the culmination of a month-long eighth grade social studies unit for the school year 2020-2021, during which the students studied primary documents and then wrote narratives about these three enslaved individuals.

The ceremony was organized by Witness Stones, Inc., which worked with the teachers on the social studies unit. Also assisting was the GPA's Witness to History: Slavery in Guilford, which provided the stones and assisted in writing the text that appears on them.

The three stones (pictured above) were placed next to one another in front of the wall that faces the North Guilford Congregational Church. The stones can be found adjacent to a sign honoring Lyman Beecher (pictured at right). The first of the stones is for Shem. While enslaved, Shem served as a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and elsewhere in the cemetery there is a headstone for him. That is unusual. Of the more than 100 men, women and children who we know were enslaved here, only two have a gravestone in any of the town's cemeteries. Both bear the name Shem and both are in the North Guilford Cemetery.



The middle Witness Stone is for Tombo. He was enslaved by a minister and later emancipated. He was married to Candace, for whom there is a Witness Stone in front of the Hyland House on Boston Street.

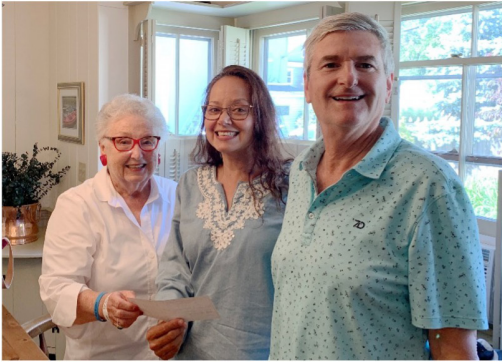
The third stone is for Peter Gardner, a farmer in North Guilford. He, too, was emancipated. He was married to Dinah, for whom there is also a Witness Stone in front of the Hyland House.

- Doug Nygren and Ellen Ebert

Stay informed about the work of ***Witness to History: Slavery in Guilford*** at their website: <https://slaveryinguilford.org/>

# The Jones Trust Fund

The Hugh McK. Jones Trust Fund for Historic Preservation is a revolving loan fund established by the GPA to preserve and protect land or buildings of historical or architectural significance in Guilford.



Another purpose of the Trust is to enforce preservation easements that may be acquired by the GPA. In rare cases it may even own buildings that would otherwise be at risk of loss.

The Trust makes loans or grants to help owners rehabilitate, preserve, or otherwise save significant historical buildings. Such a loan was made this past summer when a house on Whitfield St. was damaged by fire. The loan will help the homeowners, Elizabeth Halvorsen and J.P. Matthews, restore their Greek Revival home on the Guilford Green. Pictured here are the homeowners receiving their check from GPA President Shirley Girioni.

## Sustainable Guilford Task Force

In 2018, the Guilford Energy Task Force became the Sustainable Guilford Task Force (SGTF). Just two years later, Guilford was among only a handful of communities to receive Silver Certification by Sustainable CT. This statewide organization uses rigorous and comprehensive criteria to evaluate and recognize the approaches of each participating town to sustainable economic development, natural resources, transportation, infrastructure, and cultural ecosystems.



This year the Task Force has launched new initiatives to engage the community in composting to reduce waste, using clean energy sources, and creating safe habitats for essential pollinators.

SGTF hopes to help more Guilford homeowners and businesses reduce their energy costs while reducing our community's greenhouse gas emissions. To do this, SGTF has partnered with the Peoples Action for Clean Energy (PACE) to develop our HeatSmart Program. Under the program, homeowners can receive an energy assessment and learn how to take advantage of low-cost financing and tax credits.

SGTF is also promoting public participation to create more Pollinator Pathways. Two-thirds of our food production is dependent on threatened pollinators such as bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinating wildlife. This program encourages property owners to create contiguous pollinator-friendly habitats.

SGTF is always looking for new volunteers and welcomes your involvement. You can learn more about the programs and volunteer via the links below, or visit one of the monthly task force meetings, which are open to the public and posted on the town website:

<http://www.ci.guilford.ct.us/boards/energy-task-force>

You can learn how to save money and reduce climate impacts with HeatSmart, how to help keep the pollinators we depend on for the production of our food, and help reduce waste through composting, by visiting the SGTC website at: <https://www.sustainableguilford.org>

You can review all of the great work that earned Guilford Silver Certification here:

<http://www.ci.guilford.ct.us/wp-content/uploads/sustainable-ct-community-certificationreport.pdf>

- Howard Brown, GPA and SGTF

## Board News

Our sincere thanks to **Joe Nugent** who has retired after serving on the GPA board for 15 years. Many thanks also to **Pat Kral**, who is leaving the board to build a home in the Litchfield area, and also to **Allison Akire**, who is retiring after four years of service.

### Recent Additions to the Board:

**Wendy Dockray** moved to Guilford from Ridgewood, New Jersey in 2016 where she served on the community's Planning Board and worked for several years as Managing Director of the Water Works Conservancy in nearby Oradell. Her career cut across a variety of professional responsibilities and volunteer jobs, including grant writing, ADA and long-range planning, fundraising campaigns, budget preparation/analysis and two ill-fated independent campaigns for local public office. Wendy currently serves on Guilford's Economic Development Commission and lives at Long Hill Farm with her husband Bob Trobe and her Havanese named Teddy Roosevelt.

**Douglas Nygren** is a retired child, adolescent and family therapist. He lives in Guilford with his wife, Susan Nichols, who is a retired psychiatrist. They have three children, all of whom were graduated from Guilford High School. The first ten years of his career were spent treating suicidal, psychotic and out of control teenagers; the last twenty he specialized in helping both traumatized and high-functioning children with autism. His 50-year history observing how the Germans come to terms with the Holocaust coupled with his experiences treating traumatized youth influenced his decision to help co-found the group Witness to History: Slavery in Guilford.

**Brendan Six** has lived in Guilford since the age of four and attended Guilford Public Schools from kindergarten through high school. He loves Guilford and moved back after attending Colby College and receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Geology. It is the study of Geology and interest in the outdoors that leads Brendan to his involvement with the Guilford Preservation Alliance. Before finding his current role as Assistant Branch Manager at Guilford Savings Bank, he worked at Foodworks and has an interest in healthy eating and trying different foods. Brendan looks forward to serving on the GPA board and becoming involved with sustainable projects while preserving the beautiful town that is Guilford.

GPA treasurer **Tim Sperry** was born in Guilford and moved away after finishing college. Forty years later he and his wife have returned home and are living in the family house on Broad St., the tenth generation of Stone family members to do so. Tim works as a consultant for food companies in the Specialty and Organic food world. He has wasted no time in getting involved with local organizations as well as serving on the newly formed Safe Streets Task Force of Guilford. He and his wife, Lynne Tirrell, are enjoying living downtown and having animals in their back pasture on River St., including a flock of sheep.



## GUILFORD PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 199

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### GPA Board of Directors 2021-2022

Shirley Girioni, President  
Marcia Safirstein, Secretary  
Tim Sperry, Treasurer

Howard Brown  
Wendy Dockray  
Ellen Ebert  
Deb George  
Ellie Green  
Joe Hellman  
Doug Nygren  
Brendan Six  
Veronica Soell  
Tracy Tomaselli

**Be sure to visit us at:  
[www.guilfordpreservation.org](http://www.guilfordpreservation.org)  
[www.visitguilfordct.com](http://www.visitguilfordct.com)**

# A New Map of Guilford Recreational Areas

All of the outdoor recreational areas in Guilford can now be viewed on one map.

Displayed on the outside back wall of the Information Kiosk, the new map includes the Land Conservation Trust properties, the Parks and Recreation properties, and the Guilford schools and their outdoor recreation spaces.

Guilford Preservation Alliance wishes to thank Kevin McGee of the Inland Wetlands/Natural Resources Department for formatting this map, and both Rick Maynard of Parks and Recreation and Sarah Williams of the Land Conservation Trust for supporting the creation of this resource for townspeople and visitors alike. GPA is also very grateful to Tracy Tomaselli, Marcia Saferstein and Veronica Soell for their hours spent gathering data for the new map.

Maps can be purchased for \$2 at Bishop's Orchards or Page Hardware.

