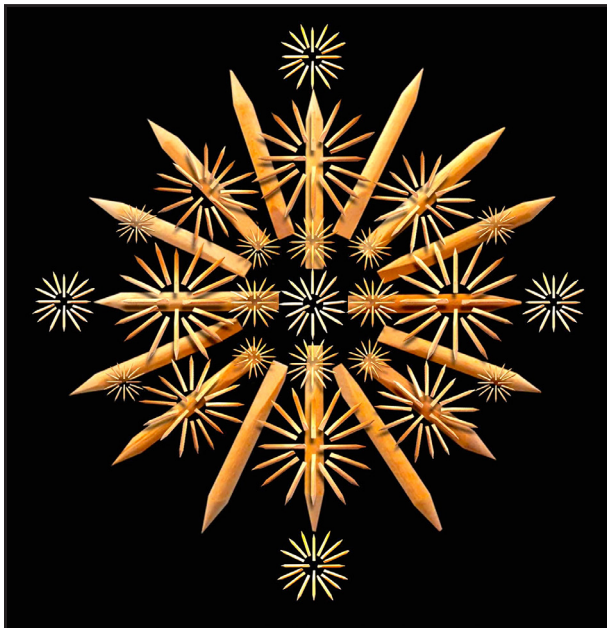




# Chester Historical Society



Annual Report 2015 - 2016

# President's Message

It was yet another successful 12 months as we closed the Society year on May 31, 2016. Our Society was 46 years old in April and in November we closed our sixth season welcoming visitors to Chester Museum at The Mill. Our museum is now creating a history of its own!

Members, visitors and guests continue to be attracted to our museum, programs and events. In the 12 months since June 2015, we welcomed 2,050 people to Society-sponsored activities. Almost 900 visited our museum during the season, including scout troops and school groups.

Our non-museum event schedule was full, varied and attractive. In September we held vintage baseball games played at Devitt Field in Deep River using 1857 rules. The round-robin, three-game event was co-hosted with the historical societies of Essex and Deep River. Many of the 350 attendees should be fans again when the three town teams meet again this fall.

Other free public offerings included programs featuring: music and prose from the State Historian, memories during the *It Happened to Jane* filming and recollections of the Yenowich sisters on growing up in Chester. Two fundraisers, our annual November Antiques & Jewelry Appraisal Day and most recent Creative Challenge, a silent auction of art created from wooden manicure sticks manufactured by the former Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works, provided significant income to our annual operating budget.

A new first-floor exhibit debuted last May. *Pastimes in Past Times: Chester at Play* featured the toys, games and dolls of yesteryear.

In addition to superb media publicity, we continue to find success with low-cost, person-to-person marketing initiatives. We had a

booth presence four times at the Chester Sunday Market, selling Society products and pointing people to our museum around the corner. Each August nearly 600 visitors pass through our building at the annual Chester Fair.

With an updated Strategic Plan in place, we were able to focus on a number of fronts.

This past year the Society established a Development Committee, chaired by Jenny Kitsen and including members from the Chester community and board members. The task of the committee is to identify potential sources of income from individuals or corporations, increase annual giving to CHS, seek grants or foundations and identify investment opportunities to increase financial stability and expansion of resources.

We placed inactive reserve funds with a local investment firm. Thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, we were able to replace aging computer equipment for our archiving operations.

Trustee Joel Severance completed an Emergency Response Plan and we installed new exterior signage to improve our roadside visibility. New initiatives to increase membership began with special inserts in our June 2016 community-wide newsletter.

In conclusion, we ask all current members to participate in attracting new memberships... to visit the museum and to share our vision of preserving and sharing the history of Chester. Tell your friends, invite them to stop by the museum. Your word-of-mouth is our most credible form of marketing.

*Skip Hubbard*



## Chester Historical Society

2015 - 2016

### Officers

Skip Hubbard	<i>President</i>
Sandy Senior-Dauer	<i>Vice President</i>
Cary Hull	<i>Vice President</i>
Jo Anne Park	<i>Treasurer</i>
Jo Anne Park	<i>Secretary</i>
Diane Lindsay	<i>Curator</i>
Robert Miceli	<i>Historian</i>
Martin Nadel	<i>Robbie Collomore Music Series</i>

### Trustees

<u>May 2016</u>	<u>May 2017</u>	<u>May 2018</u>
Ed Castelli	Marta Daniels	Christopher Moore
Pam Graham	Pam Larson	Bettie Perreault
Jenny Kitsen	Bette Radicchi	Nancy Watkins
Joel Severance	Rick Schreiber	
Anne Winslow	Anna Shubik Sweeney	
Peter Zanardi		

Front cover, clockwise from top left: (1) Chester native and former Society trustee Nate Jacobson organized a June tour of the remains of the Waterhouse grist mill site located off Goose Hill. Nate has done extensive research on the site and its matching millstones, which are now on display at the entrance to our museum; (2) The hands of Garry Craig as he appraised a gold watch at the Annual Antiques & Jewelry Appraisal Day in November; (3) Historical games, toys and dolls were featured in our 2015 exhibit *Pastimes in Past Times: Chester at Play*; (4) Bill Vollers' creation of *Starry Night* was one of the always unique items donated for auction at this year's Creative Challenge Auction & Reception. Contributing artists were asked to use wooden manicure sticks manufactured by the former Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works as their source material this year.

# History Preservation

The History Preservation Committee is responsible for the Society's collections, for accessioning new items, as well as cataloging and preserving the collection. We accepted many donations this year, including tickets from the Princess Theatre; a bowling pin from the Casino; old photos of the Silliman family from at least two different descendants; items from Maple Shade, Elmwood and Oakwood Dairies; Drum Corps images; old Chester street signs and more.

The core group consisting of Ruth Thayer, Pat Kosky, Janice Benda and me continue to work most Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings in the Meeting House Archive Room.

We were very fortunate to receive a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County to upgrade our computers and add a good printer. I look forward to be able to answer more questions at the Mill, or at other programs, with the laptop. We also anticipate transcribing oral histories with new equipment arriving soon.

We have researched questions from Society members and others as they find us on the internet.

We have also been scanning photographs and documents, as donors wish to retain the originals but would like the Society to have a copy. We work with the Exhibit Committee, researching records and searching for relevant artifacts in our collection.

The transfer of objects and archives from the Meeting House storage areas to the vaults at the Mill has continued. With our new laptop computer, we will also be working in the vaults to be sure everything is properly catalogued.

*Diane Lindsay, Curator*



The major Main Street construction in the winter required removal of the water trough on the west side of the bridge. The sandstone trough, which dates back more than 100 years, was preserved and moved to a safe location next to Chester Museum at The Mill.



Artists used short manicure sticks made of orangewood and manufactured at Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works, in this year's Creative Challenge Auction & Reception.

## Fundraising

While raising much-needed funds for the Historical Society, our fundraisers generally have a valuable historical component, whether it's providing information about the history and value of a person's "antiques" or repurposing items with a Chester background.

Our 12th Antiques & Jewelry Appraisal event, held Nov. 7 at St. Joseph's Parish Center, raised a profit of \$1,630. Our 11 appraisers saw just under 200 items from attendees from all over the county and beyond. Although this event did not bring in as many attendees as in prior years, our appraisers – all of whom generously donate their time to us – encouraged us to schedule our 13th Appraisal for this fall because they have high regard for our event and always see interesting items. Please save the date of Saturday, Nov. 12 to learn about your treasures!

Our spring fundraiser was the "Sticks Creative Challenge." More than 30 artists created one-of-a-kind items using short wooden manicure sticks made at Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works, which we found in a Chester barn. The Challenge culminated in a Reception and Silent Auction at the Meeting House on April 9. This very successful event, our sixth Creative Challenge since 2004, was once again chaired by Sosse Baker and raised a profit of \$4,630.

Ideas of fundraisers for the Society and event volunteers are always welcome.

### **A New High for Annual Appeal**

We would especially like to thank our membership for its outstanding response to our 2015-2016 Annual Appeal. For the fifth consecutive year the campaign set new highs in participants (96) and dollars (nearly \$10,500). While our appeal campaign begins in November, donations can be made at any time.

## Programs and Exhibits

In May 2015, CHS opened a new first-floor exhibit, *Pastimes in Past Times: Chester at Play*. The exhibit focused on many of the games and activities that took place in the home and featured historical dolls, erector sets, trains and toys from multiple generations. Among the first to interact with the exhibit were all the second graders from Chester Elementary School. While they enjoyed playing old-fashioned games, a highlight was spotting two baby fawns living by the waterfall off our back deck.

In August we exhibited many of the new items in our collection in our annual exhibit at the Society building at the Chester Fair. More than 600 visitors passed through our exhibit.

In September we held our Second Annual Tri-Town Vintage Baseball Game, played by 1857 rules, at Devitt Field in Deep River. The event, sponsored by the tri-town historical societies, attracted 350 fans of all ages. This year, the weather cooperated and Keith Dauer, general manager, and Tom Miceli, coach, fielded an enthusiastic and talented Chester Squirrels team. They won against the ICE (Ivoryton, Centerbrook, Essex) Elephants, only to be dealt a razor-thin loss to the Deep River Has Beens in the final matchup. The three historical societies look forward to another round-robin match-up this September.

In October, our State Historian and musician, Walter Woodward, brought his Band of Steady Habits to the Meeting House. They played and told stories about New England, related to Robert Frost poems and Fall.

In January we revisited *It Happened to Jane* by presenting a video of Sally Bibbiani, who, with her small son, played as movie extras and entertained the stars in their home during the 1958 filming in Chester. Audience members shared their recollections of the filming and society members led tours in downtown Chester before the program, pointing out where various scenes were filmed.

In April, the Yenowich sisters came to the town hall to recall their memories of growing up in Chester in a remarkable Russian immigrant household. An appreciative audience shared its stories of the family and Chester in the 1930s-1950s as well.

During the late spring we were busy pulling together histories and artifacts of Chester clubs and organizations, some past, some still active, for a new exhibit titled *Pastimes in Past Times: Community Groups*. We encourage all members and their friends to stop by and reflect on how these groups have shaped Chester's character and brought pleasure, education, and good works to our town.

As always, please continue to share your ideas with us for future programs and exhibits.

*Keith Dauer and Sandy Senior-Dauer*  
*Exhibits and Programs co-chairs*



Paul Radicchi, Keith Dauer and Tom Miceli are all smiles in the 'nice game' line following Chester's one-run win over Essex in September's Tri-town Vintage Baseball Game.



Chester Museum at The Mill is occasionally available for outside use also as we provided the site for two library-sponsored events in the winter. Above, members of the Chester Merchants Group assembled for their monthly meeting on the first floor.



Sandy Senior-Dauer and Keith Dauer, Exhibits & Programs co-chairs, arrange a Chester Fife & Drum Corps uniform in preparation for the 2016 exhibit, *Pastimes in Past Times: Community Groups*.

## Finances

Revenues for the annual operations of the Society are generated from three primary sources: membership dues, donations (Annual Appeal, museum visitor box, other) and fundraising events. Principal expenses for general operations include servicing our loan obligation, utilities, insurance and accounting, general maintenance, preservation and cataloging of archives, and exhibit expenses.

Successful fundraising events and a very positive Annual Appeal response enabled us to exceed the revenue side of our budget. A mild winter and a drop in energy costs helped the expense side. Combining these operating results with our working funds, we were able to fund our Maintenance Reserve, plus retire \$7,500 in member notes that replaced a prior mortgage.

Our *Kate Silliman's Chester Scrapbook* and *Ferryboat* books, together with *It Happened to Jane* DVDs continue to appeal with sales replenishing a reserve account for future publications.

The Society applies for and receives grants to be used for specific purposes. This year the Community Foundation of Middlesex County awarded us a \$3962 grant to replace and upgrade the technology associated with our archiving operation. We also received a \$250 corporate grant from the Essex Savings Bank to offset some of the postage costs of newsletters and annual reports.

*Jo Anne Park, Treasurer*

### Operations Summary Fiscal YTD 6/1/15 - 5/31/16

The unaudited summary below reflects the YTD Operations Budget of the Society, which is apart from the Robbie Collomore Music Series. At press time, the fiscal year had not yet been closed. Final financials will be available when completed. By the end of June, our sole liability will be \$40,000 in interest-bearing notes.

<b>Working Balance 6/1/15</b>	<b>\$7,751</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Membership Dues	6,568
Annual Appeal / Donations	13,581
Museum Visitor Donations	742
Fundraising Events	6,770
Grants & Funds	750
Museum Sales	608
Other	106
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>29,125</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Building Utilities	6,674
Maintenance & Operations	11,273
Fundraising Costs	604
Communications	723
Programs & Exhibits	521
Staff Training	-
Museum Store Purchases	54
Interest on Notes	2,257
Transfer to Notes Retirement	2,500
Transfer to Maintenance Reserve	1,500
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>26,106</b>
<b>Operating Profit / Loss</b>	<b>3,019</b>
<b>Working Balance 5/31/16</b>	<b>10,770</b>
<b>Working Balance transfer to Notes Retire</b>	<b>(5,000)</b>
<b>Working Balance 6/1/16</b>	<b>\$5,770</b>

## Membership

As of May 2016 the Society has 206 current memberships, representing approximately 320 members (see back page). We added seven new memberships to our rolls and processed a membership upgrade to Life. By level, we currently have 74 Life memberships, 20 Benefactors, 73 Families and 39 Individuals.

A vital membership is the foundation of any successful non-profit organization. A goal set in our Strategic Plan is to identify ways to bring more people into our annual membership program as well as increase interest in volunteer opportunities. The trustees have set a minimum goal of 25 new memberships for the Society year ending June 1, 2017.

We are identifying opportunities to increase membership, beginning with an appeal in our June 2016 newsletter to the community.

We encourage all members as well as non-members to stay current by signing up for our informative monthly e-newsletter. Other than the Society-associated Robbie Collomore Music Series, we do not share any email lists with other organizations. We also now have a Facebook presence ([Facebook.com/chesterthistoricalsociety](https://www.facebook.com/chesterthistoricalsociety)). Our website is [chesterhistoricalsociety.org](http://chesterhistoricalsociety.org).

## Robbie Collomore Music Series

The 42nd season of the Robbie Collomore Music Series was both an artistic and financial success. A major change was the consolidating of all four concerts into a single "All in the Fall Series." The audience response to this change was very positive with three sold out and a fourth almost sold out concerts.

The first concert of the season was our annual Barbara and Edmund Delaney Young Artist Concert featuring cellist Julia Bruskin and pianist Aaron Wunsch. This performance also represented our annual concert in conjunction with The Juilliard School. The second concert of the fall season presented Blind Boy Paxton who represents the finest of the new generation of Blues players.

The third concert featured the gypsy jazz Hot Club of Detroit carrying on the tradition of Django Rheinhardt. We ended with classical guitarist Jorge Caballero, whose appearance attracted professional guitarists from all over New England.

Our fully implemented website was a tremendous success with many customers taking advantage of the ability to order tickets on-line using PayPal. Our financial position remains strong.

**Collomore Music Committee:** *Randy Allinson, Ray Archambault, Karin Badger, James Baker, Anne Easton, Andrea Eby, Karli Gilbertson, Donald Hanson, Rick Holloway, Martin Nadel (chairperson), Bettie Perreault, Sue Saltus, James Paisley and John Williams*

# Chester Historical Society

Membership as of May 2016

## Life

Randy & Chris Allinson  
Frank W. Appleton, Jr.  
Ray & Liz Archambault  
Thomas & Kathleen Archambault  
Albert Armington  
Phyllis Bevington  
Thomas & Marianne Bladek  
Robert & Mildred Blair  
Lary Bloom  
Bill Bonfanti & Madeleine Winans  
David Brooks  
Shirley Feldmann Bush  
Gregory Cook  
Michael & Felise Cressman  
John W. Dalton  
Keith Dauer & Sandy Senior-Dauer  
Barbara Delaney  
Deb Dembo  
Elise Piquet-Doll  
Gerry & Cynthia Dubey  
Henry & Britt Flanagan  
Jill Gladding  
Peter & Jan Good  
Robert & Lynda Gorman  
Alva G. Greenberg  
Mark & Cheri Ferrari Habersang  
Donald & Monique Hanson \*\*  
Karen & Jamie Hart \*  
Leni Herschman  
Skip & Karen Hubbard  
Cary Schuler Hull & Al Malpa  
Mrs. Edward C. Hull  
Nathan & Geraldine Jacobson  
Kathryn Watrous Jones  
Jon & Doreen Joslow  
Pauline Kaplan  
Mrs. Jenny Kitsen  
Steve & Ann Kitteredge  
Robert P. Klomp  
Pat Kotchen  
Pam Larson  
Robert & Stacey Lewis  
Carol LeWitt  
D. Leonard Lieberman  
Lorraine Lieberman  
Margaret Lieberman  
Donald MacDermid  
Jess Maghan & Peter Walker  
Robert Miceli  
Christopher Moore  
Deborah Morrow  
Joel Motley III  
Martin & Lois Nadel  
Jil Nelson

Charles G. Nessler, Jr  
Sandra Davis Owen  
Jo-Ann & Michael Price  
Robert Radicchi  
Harvey Redak & Justine Tobis  
Glenn & Peg Reyer  
Jeff & Holly Ridgway  
Michael & Sally Sanders  
Arthur & Judith Schaller  
Evelyn Schneider  
Rick & Terry Schreiber  
Dr. Kim Senay  
Joel & Adrienne Severance  
Bruce & Beverly Watrous  
Lynn Weymer  
Whitelaw & Margaret Wilson  
Virginia Winans  
William & Victoria Winterer  
James Zanardi  
Richard & Joan Ziemann

## Benefactor

John & Janice Benda  
Ms. Spencer Boyd  
& George Bradley  
Gil & Anne Bartlett  
Edward & Debra Calamari  
Arthur & Mabyon Christianson  
Tammy Eustis \*  
Mary & Bryant Frank \*  
Helene & Ned Johnson  
Jules & Kathleen Kranich  
Virgil & Jean Lloyd  
Phyllis M. McDowell  
Jean Mulford  
Charles & Jo Anne Park  
Sandy & Deedee Prisloe  
Paul & Dawn Radicchi  
Janice Carlisle & Joseph Roach  
Hila & Saul Rosen  
John & Kimberly Stack  
Laura Straub  
Paul & Anna Shubik Sweeney

## Family

Eric & Ginny Anderson  
James & Marian Bairstow  
Jack & Sosse Baker  
Paul & Wendie Barbarino \*  
Mary Walsh & Rob Bibbiani \*  
Joyce Birtcher  
Robert Blair & Kris Pollock  
Dr. Geoffrey R.H. Burn  
& Ms. Judy Palmieri \*  
Geraldine Carini-Garcia

Edward & Gail Castelli  
James & Diana Castelli  
Ted & JoAnna Chapin  
Herbert & Sharon Clark III  
Emelia DeMusis  
& Stephen DeBenedet  
Lol & Charlene Fearon  
Richard Fensky & Elaine LaFlair \*  
Mario & Dorothy Gioco  
Roger & Elizabeth Goodnow  
Allen & Pamela Graham  
Edward Grzybowski  
Richard & Mary Harrall  
Carol & Coe Hawkins  
Louis & MarieAnne Heft  
Charley Hnilicka  
Richard & Patricia Holloway  
Geoffrey & Carol Jacobson  
Joel & Susan Jacobson  
Harold & Linda Jones, Jr.  
Randy, Beth & Emily Judd  
Gerald & Mary Kelly  
John & Wendy King  
David & Diane Kukta  
Genevieve M. Laskowski  
Jeff & Lori Lawrie  
Sam & Nikki Lindberg  
Claude & Catrin Martin  
Kenneth Maxwell & Arlene Tunney  
Ed & Peg Meehan  
Allan Mehlberg & Spruce Roden  
Steven & Kathryn Merola  
John & Madaline Meyer  
Ann Monaghan  
Richard & Lorraine Morrow  
Charles & Susan Murphy  
Arthur H. Napier III  
& Barbara-Jan Wilson  
Lance & Dawn Parker  
Donald C. Paulson  
Michael & Susan Peck  
Don & Kristen Perreault  
Kim & Kathy Price  
John & Jennifer Rannestad  
Jim & Marie Ready  
Cookie & Fred Robertson  
John & Lisa Schroeder  
Mel & Kris Seifert  
Richard & Elaine Sevigny  
Bob & MaryJo Sortland  
Suzanne & Steve Spires \*  
Jacqueline Stack & Mark Riggio  
Van & Barbara Standke  
Alex & Mary Ann Stein  
Richard & Leslie Strauss

William Swartzbaugh  
& Joan Sepessy  
Melody & Philip Tierney  
Peter & Sally Tiezzi, Jr.  
Dave & Margo Viggiano  
Wayne Wahala & Lisa Gauthier  
Skip & Margaret Weisenburger  
Ronald & Lois Wickson  
George, Patty & Maggie Winter  
Peter & Jane Zanardi  
Burgi & Leo Zavatore  
Bill & Agneta Ziegler

## Individual

Robert Bandzes  
Dale Bernardoni  
Frances Bertelli  
Sally Bibbiani  
Tom Brelsford  
Margaret Breslin  
Samuel Chorches  
Jewel Christy \*  
Audrey Conrad \*  
Marta Daniels  
Alma Carini Doak  
Robert Dona  
John H. Ford  
Jane Gordon  
Elizabeth Gourlay  
Dorothy Lavezzoli  
Edward Leffingwell Jr.  
Tedd Levy  
Diane Lindsay  
Lillian Manville  
William Myers  
Hazel Negrelli  
Betsy Watrous Pasinella  
Bettie Perreault  
Charles Priest  
Bette Radicchi  
Lewis Clark Robison  
H. Peter Satagaj  
Judith Lynde Schondorf  
Sharon Soja  
Rick Spencer  
Ruth Thayer  
Gregory Thompson  
Elizabeth Tremalgia  
Louise R. VanHaverbeke  
Nancy Watkins  
Daisy Watrous  
Elizabeth Watrous  
Anne Winslow

\*New Members

\*\*New Membership Level