



# ALMANAC

THE WETHERSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ■ VOLUME 40 ■ NUMBER 3 ■ FALL 2014

## TWO PRISON EXHIBITS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

*Castle on the Cove: Connecticut State Prison and Wethersfield Opens September 17*

Do you want to step inside an inmate's cell? Examine what it would have been like to be a guard or have lived near the prison? Come visit the newest exhibit in the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center, Castle on the Cove: Connecticut State Prison and Wethersfield. This exhibit will open to the public on September 17.

The opening reception will be held at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center on Wednesday, September 17, from 7:00 - 8:30 pm with light refreshments. The Connecticut State Prison was active in Wethersfield from 1827 to 1963. For 136 years the prison housed criminal offenders while employing local residents, bringing opportunities to town and changing the landscape of Wethersfield. Come view the prison history through material culture! This exhibition is dedicated to past, present and future correctional officers and Department of Corrections employees. Support provided by the William & Alice Mortensen Foundation, Robert Allan Keeney Memorial Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and Farmington Bank Community Foundation.



### *A Brief History of the CPA Prison Arts Program*

Wethersfield Historical Society is proudly partnering with the CPA Prison Arts Program to present *A Brief History of the CPA Prison Arts Program*, a comprehensive view of the extraordinary program. through drawings, paintings, sculpture and letters from prison. This exhibition will be open in the Watson Gallery of the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center through March 10, 2015. Community Partners in Action is a nonprofit agency created in Hartford as the "Connecticut Prison Association" in 1875. The Prison Arts Program was initiated in 1978 as a collaboration between the Connecticut Department of Corrections and Community Partners in Action to build and maintain a constructive and positive environment in Connecticut's prisons.

## SOCIETY'S NEW HAPPY HOUR

Wethersfield Historical Society welcomes everyone to our new "Historical Society Happy Hour", a casual event that will provide opportunities to meet and chat with local and regional figures who have interesting perspectives on Connecticut history. Enjoy a relaxed, laid back happy hour with your friends and learn something fascinating about the Connecticut State Prison while you sip a cocktail or small batch brew and snack on Lucky Lou's farm to table bar bites. There is no cover charge, and all bar tabs and bills will be provided separately.

*Tuesday, Sept. 30  
from 4:30-6:30 pm  
Lucky Lou's Bar & Grill  
222 Main Street*



### LANTERN LIGHT TOURS

Friday, October 17  
and Saturday, October 18  
*See page 3 inside.*



### ANTIQUES SHOW IS BACK WITH A NEW TWIST

Friday, November 21st – Preview Party  
Saturday, November 22nd – Antiques Show  
*See page 7 inside.*

## FORECAST... Our Community's Future

In my last Forecast I wrote about our community's past and the role that Wethersfield Historical Society has played in making our town the wonderful place it is today. This time, I am writing about our community's future, and what role the historical society will play in years to come. Just as the world was changing back in the 1920s when historic preservation began in Wethersfield, so it is changing today. We are facing new challenges and must be ready to meet them in order to keep our society strong.

Our society today is a busy, vital organization, with about 1,000 members and 200 volunteers. We present over 40 programs and events each year, along with at least three special exhibits, free school tours and adult tours. The Keeney Memorial Cultural Center is open free of charge six days a week year round. Our Hurlbut-Dunham House and Cove Warehouse Museums are open and free of charge every weekend day from the end of May until the beginning of October. We also welcome researchers in our library at the Old Academy four days a week, and answer many inquiries via phone and email.

In addition to the public face of what we do, there is far more going on behind the scenes every day to keep the society running. Grants are written, the collections are catalogued, researched and cared for, exhibits and educational programs are researched and planned, our internal policies and administrative procedures are carried out and our office infrastructure is being upgraded and maintained. Our buildings are being cared for – both the Hurlbut-Dunham and the Francis House which we own, and the Keeney Center, Old Academy and Cove Warehouse which we administer in partnership with the Town of Wethersfield.

Wethersfield Historical Society's mission is "to preserve and promote Wethersfield's history and culture to inspire people today and tomorrow." Our staff, volunteers and Governing Board work very hard to fulfill our mission every day, and they need your help. Your financial support is needed, but also your time and your influence. Bringing new members, new volunteers and new supporters to the society is every bit as vital as your financial support and your volunteer hours. Time and again, we have learned that our best marketing tool is word of mouth – so please, learn as much as you can about our society, and use your influence to spread the word help us gain more members and supporters so we can grow and change to meet the challenges that we face and will be facing in the future.

As I wrote last time, the more involvement we have from our community members, the stronger we are, and the better our community will be.

With many thanks for your support,



Amy Northrop Wittorff *Executive Director*



## WETHERSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The *ALMANAC* is a publication of  
Wethersfield Historical Society,  
a 501(c)3, non-profit organization chartered in 1932.

**Wethersfield Historical Society:**  
**Preserving Wethersfield's history and culture  
to inspire people today and tomorrow.**

### Governing Board

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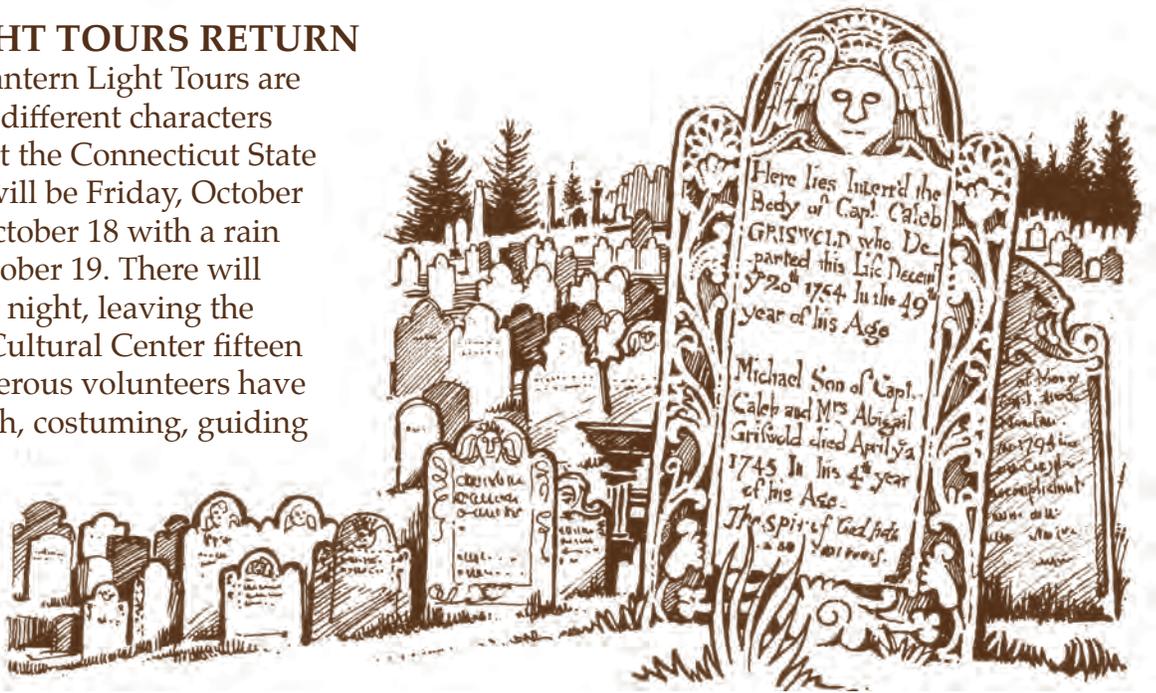
## CRAFT FAIR REMINDER

The 33rd annual Fall Craft Fair will be here in no time! Join us for a special day of shopping and fun on Saturday, October 4 from 10am-4pm at Cove Park next to the Solomon Welles House at the corner of State Street and Hartford Avenue. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 with coupon and free for children under 12 when accompanied by an adult.

**WANTED:** We need your baked goods and homemade jams, jellies, pickles, etc. for our Farmers' Market table under the society tent! You can drop your goodies off at the Old Academy on Friday, October 3 before 4:00pm or at the fair on Saturday, October 4 between 9:00 and 10:00am.

## LANTERN LIGHT TOURS RETURN

The popular Lantern Light Tours are back this year with different characters and stories all about the Connecticut State Prison! The tours will be Friday, October 17 and Saturday, October 18 with a rain date of Sunday, October 19. There will be seven tours each night, leaving the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center fifteen minutes apart. Generous volunteers have aided in the research, costuming, guiding and acting of the tours in order to make this event possible. To purchase tickets, come to the Old Academy at 150



Main Street between 10:00am and 4:00pm Tuesday through Friday or purchase your tickets online at [www.wethhist.org](http://www.wethhist.org). The tickets are first come, first served and tours fill up fast, so be sure not to miss a historic walk through Old Wethersfield's Burying Ground with "encounters"! Tickets will be available for purchase starting September 22. *Not recommended for children under the age of 12.*

## BURYING GROUND TOURS AND WALKING TOURS CONTINUE THROUGH THE FALL

### Burying Ground Tours

Thursday, September 4 at 7 pm  
Saturday, September 6 at 10 am  
Thursday, October 30 at 7 pm  
Saturday, November 1 at 10 am  
Learn about gravestone carvers and customs as well as stories of some of the people buried there. Meet at the red barn in the First Church parking lot.

### Walk Around Old Wethersfield

Thursday,  
September 18 at 7 pm  
Saturday,  
September 20 at 10 am  
Walk around Old Wethersfield learning about the architecture and the people who lived there long ago. Meet in front of the Keeney Center.

### Prison Walking Tour

Saturday,  
September 13 at 10 am  
Learn about the CT State Prison that used to stand on the shores of the Wethersfield Cove. Meet at the Solomon Welles House, 220 Hartford Avenue.

*Tours are \$5; free to members.*

Reservations recommended and can be made by calling 860.529.7656 or email: [society@wethhist.org](mailto:society@wethhist.org)

# WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS!

## SOCIETY ANNOUNCES NEW INDUCTEES TO VOLUNTEER HALL OF FAME

Executive Director Amy Wittorff revealed this year's Volunteer Hall of Fame inductees at the Annual Meeting on May 20. The volunteers honored this year were Carol Bruce, Dorene Ciarcia and Howard A. Willard, Jr. Their names have been engraved on a plaque located in the first floor hall at the Keeney Center to the right of the reception desk. The dedication on the plaque reads "Honoring those dedicated volunteers who most embody our mission to preserve and promote Wethersfield's history and culture to inspire people today and tomorrow." We applaud the long-term dedication and service of these outstanding volunteers.

## VOLUNTEER HOLIDAY PARTY SCHEDULED

Once again, we will salute and thank our wonderful volunteers with a festive and delicious party at the Keeney Center Sunday, December 7 from 4:00-6:00pm. Invitations will be coming to you around Thanksgiving. In the event that you do not receive an invitation and have volunteered for us this past year, we want you to join us. Please let us know by calling the office the week before the party at 860.529.7656 to reserve your spot.



## INTRODUCING OUR 2014-2015 GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

At the Annual Meeting May 20, the following new members were elected to the Governing Board: Steven Zakrzewski, Dorene Ciarcia, Richard Kuzmak and Beverly Lucas. The Governing Board elected the following officers for the coming year: President, Candace Holmes; Vice President, Dorene Ciarcia; Secretary, James Meehan; Treasurer, Susan Skehan. We welcome them all and thank the Governing Board and Advisory Board for their generous service.

## KEENEY KIDS HOLIDAY HISTORY PROGRAMS

**Children will "learn by doing" that history is fun!**

Keeney Kids from grades 1-6 will explore Wethersfield history through historical activities, tours, stories and games at the Wethersfield Museum and the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center and surrounding historic sites.

Monday, December 29, 2014 **Storm Watch**

Tuesday, December 30, 2014 **Snowbound**

### Program Fee:

1 day: \$20 for non-members, \$15 for society members

2 days: \$40 for non-members, \$30 for society members

For more information, please contact:

Allison Golomb, Education Assistant, at 860.529.7656  
or email [allison.golomb@wethist.org](mailto:allison.golomb@wethist.org)

## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Allegra Anderson

Lt. Col. and  
Mrs. Treasvant Feaster

Patricia A. Gronback

Irene Hendrickson

John and Carol Jamison

Richard Kuzmak

Jacqueline LaPerriere

Marilyn Yandow

Steven Zakrzewski

## WHY BE A MEMBER OF WETHERSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

Wethersfield Historical Society is an organization that was founded, and is funded and governed by our members. We need our membership, not only for their financial support, but for their guidance, and to share the society's responsibility to hold our collections and structures in trust for the benefit of the community. Under our bylaws, all Governing and Advisory Board members must be dues-paying members of the society, and they are elected by a majority vote of our dues-paying membership at our Annual Meeting every May. We receive vital financial support from our membership dues, and from our Annual Fund donations – together this comprises 14% of our operating budget, the same percentage as we receive from grants.

When you make your annual donations to the society, which we so vitally need, please make sure to specifically designate some of those funds for your membership, so we can be sure to count you among those in our larger governing body (we can only do it if you tell us to!) If you are unsure of your current membership status, please contact Lisa Walsh at 860.529.7656 or [Lisa.Walsh@wethhist.org](mailto:Lisa.Walsh@wethhist.org). As always, thank you for your generous support of Wethersfield Historical Society – an organization made possible by its members.

Amy Northrop Wittorff *Executive Director*

## OTHER WAYS TO HELP WETHERSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Here's a way for you to support the society...and it's free! AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Wethersfield Historical Society every time you shop, at no cost to you.

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to us.



How do I shop at AmazonSmile? To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to AmazonSmile to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you will automatically be asked which organization you want to receive donations before you begin shopping. They will walk you through the process of choosing Wethersfield Historical Society as your supported organization.

We are using a new online donor database called Little Green Light, a site that caters to nonprofit organizations just like Wethersfield Historical Society and comes highly recommended from our Technical Grant support team at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. We want to use Little Green Light to know you better and you can help us as we migrate to the new system by letting Lisa Walsh know if you are interested in receiving your newsletters and updates via email. Contact her at [Lisa.Walsh@wethhist.org](mailto:Lisa.Walsh@wethhist.org).



## WHS BOARD SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AND WILLARD BOOK AWARD PRESENTED

Governing Board Member Jim Meehan represented Wethersfield Historical Society at this year's Wethersfield High School Awards Ceremony in June and presented a scholarship funded by the society Governing and Advisory Boards to Kassandrah Banks as well as bestowing the John C. Willard Book Award to David Scales, the Junior who has attained the highest degree of excellence in the study of American History. John Willard, for whom the award is named, was a charter member of the society in 1932 and was known as Town Historian for many years.

Students become eligible for the Governing and Advisory Board scholarship by volunteering at Wethersfield Historical Society and/or taking Wethersfield High School's Wethersfield Studies class. The recipient was then chosen on the basis of a short essay submitted to a committee. This year's topic was "In your opinion, what person, place or event has made a significant contribution to the history of Wethersfield, past or present?" The subject of this year's winning essay, which will be posted on the society's "Articles from the Community" website, is Colonel John Chester.



## HURLBUT-DUNHAM HOUSE DECKED OUT AND OPEN FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The Hurlbut-Dunham House will be open again this year for the holidays decorated for Christmas tidings. This elegant home will be open for tours free of charge the first two weekends in December. Dates and hours are December 6, 7, 13 and 14 from 1:00-4:00 pm. The tours are free to the public, donations appreciated

## KEENEY CULTURAL SERIES FOR 2015

This year is going to be a fun year with the Keeney Cultural Series! Our 2015 concerts will start at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center Sunday afternoon, January 18 at 4:00 pm with the return of the talented, humorous Yale Whiffenpoofs, Yale's oldest collegiate male a cappella group, famously successful on NBC's summer singing competition show "The Sing-Off".



We'll continue this lively concert season with special concerts in February and March. Look in your mailbox later in the season for a special Keeney Cultural Series mailing with all the details, artists and ticket prices.

# WETHERSFIELD ANTIQUES SHOW



CHUCK REICH PHOTO

**PREVIEW PARTY**  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 6:30-9 P.M.

**THE SHOW**  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 10 A.M. – 4 P.M.  
PITKIN COMMUNITY CENTER, 30 GREENFIELD STREET

COME CELEBRATE THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL WETHERSFIELD ANTIQUES SHOW WHICH WILL EXPAND ITS OFFERINGS WITH NEW DEALERS, VINTAGE CLOTHING AND ANTIQUE JEWELRY

**Known as one of the best small shows in New England, the Wethersfield Antiques Show offers some of the finest dealers from all over the northeast. On display in room settings will be furniture, decorative accessories, textiles, pewter, jewelry, fine paintings, oriental rugs, glassware, ceramics, vintage clothing and more.**

**FRIDAY'S PREVIEW PARTY** at 6:30 pm November 21 will kick off the celebration and provide an opportunity for attendees to enjoy cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, live music, talk with the dealers and be the first to see this season's most exquisite objects and start their shopping early. General admission for the Preview Party is \$35 and a special drawing will be held for those supporting the event at the Patron level of \$55.

**SATURDAY, THE SHOW** opens to the general public, November 22 at 10:00 am. Admission is \$7 per person, \$6 with show card or ad. The popular Sunflower Café will serve light lunch between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm and will be open for coffee and muffins at 10:00 am.

#### **WANTED-ATTIC TREASURES:**

One of the most popular stops at our annual show is our Attic Treasures booth. We are always in need of fresh merchandise to fill the space. Proceeds will help the Society and you will have a great chance to clean out your basement, garage or attic. We are looking for nice quality small collectibles and small items of furniture. If you have anything to donate, please contact



Lisa Walsh at the Society at 860-529-7656 and we can arrange pickup if needed.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** Can you help decorate the Pitkin Center on Friday or help us at the gate Saturday? Call Lisa Walsh at the society office at 860.529.7656 even if you can give just an hour or two, we would love to have you help!



Wethersfield Historical Society  
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E-mail: [society@wethhist.org](mailto:society@wethhist.org)

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## CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

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- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Sept. 4, 6        | <b>Burying Ground Walking Tours:</b> 250 Main St. (meet in front of red barn)    |
| Sept. 13          | <b>Prison Walking Tour:</b> 10 am, Solomon Welles House, 220 Hartford Ave.       |
| Sept. 17          | <b>Castle on the Cove:</b> CT State Prison and Wethersfield Exhibit Opening      |
| Sept. 18, 20      | <b>Walk Around Old Wethersfield:</b> Keeney Center                               |
| Sept. 30          | <b>Historical Society Happy Hour at Lucky Lou's,</b> 4:30-6:30pm                 |
| Oct. 4            | <b>Craft Fair at Cove Park,</b> 10am-4pm   |
| Oct. 17, 18       | <b>Lantern Light Tours</b> starting at the Keeney Center                         |
| Oct 30, Nov 1     | <b>Burying Ground Walking Tours:</b> 250 Main St. (in front of red barn)         |
| Nov. 21, 22       | <b>Antiques Show,</b> Pitkin Community Center, 30 Greenfield Street              |
| Dec. 4            | <b>Holidays on Main,</b> Keeney Center and Hurlbut-Dunham open, special programs |
| Dec. 6, 7, 13, 14 | <b>Hurlbut-Dunham opens for the holidays</b> 1-4pm                               |
| Dec. 29, 30       | <b>Keeney Kids Holiday Programs</b> at the Keeney Center                         |
| Jan. 18           | <b>Keeney Cultural Series Yale Whiffenpoofs,</b> 4pm at the Keeney Ballroom      |
| Feb. Mar.         | <b>Keeney Cultural Series TBA,</b> at the Keeney Ballroom                        |