



# NSCDA-CT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2

NOVEMBER 2010

## Message from the President

*Torrey Cooke*

The 58<sup>th</sup> Biennial Council of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America was held in Arlington, Virginia on October 14-18. I wish each of our Connecticut Dames could one day have the experience of attending one of these meetings! To meet and get to know the Presidents and Delegates from other State Societies across America has been the greatest pleasure for me. The meeting was lively and spirited with discussion on the importance of a Strategic Plan for National to focus on membership, governance, fundraising and communication. Presidents had the opportunity to share ways the Societies overcome the distance between members by way of websites and conference calls.



The CT representatives at the 58<sup>th</sup> Biennial Council of the NSCDA. From left to right: Anne Schenck, Ann Parkinson, Karen Stetler, Torrey Cooke, Nancy MacColl.

Our meeting this year was enhanced by a yearbook with short biographies of each President. You can see mine on page 2.

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## Message from the Director

*Charles T. Lyle*

The holidays are here, and the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum is a bustle with activity. The three houses will be decked out in their holiday finery starting the week after Thanksgiving. There will be a festive preview party of the decorations on Friday, December 10 from 5 to 8 p.m. The three houses will then reopen to the public from December 11 through January 3.

New this year will be a children's holiday party set up in the Dames Tea Room. Marylou Davis will return for the preview party to discuss the newly completed upholstery and bed hangings in the Washington bed chamber. A panel will also be installed displaying an accurate reproduction of the flocked wallpaper in its original colors. The wallpaper was exclusively completed for us by Adelphi Paper Hangings of Sharon Springs, N.Y. The Merry Company from Greenfield, Mass. is also returning for the preview party with live music to be performed in the dining room of the Deane House. Former Interim Director Don Peterson and his wife Pam will host the party again this year with the help of a number of volunteers.

The year 2010 has been very busy and productive with the continued success of our educational programs and the completion of the restorations of the exterior of the Webb House and the Washington bed chamber. We are now beginning to focus on the Silas Deane House and have submitted a grant request to the State of Connecticut for matching funds to restore and repaint the exterior. We are also researching the missing piazza that originally was on the front of the house and hope

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## My biography from the Regional yearbook: Connecticut – 260 Members



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I am a third generation Dame and from Virginia originally. I attended Mt. Vernon Junior College and also attended George Washington University.

Education major, became a pre-school teacher. Active for years in Garden Club of America. Served as Zone II Chairman, Annual Meeting Co-Chairman, Director and Hospitality Chairman. Became NSCDA-CT Dame and served as Recording Secretary, Areas Chairman, Vice-President before taking time off in 2005 when my husband died.

Two grants, Save America's Treasures and CT Commission on Culture and Tourism, allowed the exterior restoration of the Webb House and the interior Washington Bedchamber. Programs at the museum in October, December and May have gained notice from the public. Biennial event, "Tags and Treasures," brought in \$13,500. House Tour in Farmington followed by gala dinner added inspiration to expanding our membership. We have fifteen new Dames this year. Tours of Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington, Stanton-Davis House, Stonington and Phillip Johnson Glass House in New Canaan have covered the state and had great response from our members. Challenges in the future are to prepare for the 2013 Regional Meeting and to balance the desire to establish a walking trail on the Museum's back woodland by that time with the pressing need for continuing maintenance of our existing buildings. Financing, grants, fundraising all are important pieces to oversee.

### Looking ahead:

- The December 13 Board Meeting at Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum will be followed by the annual Board/Staff Holiday Lunch, hosted by the members of the Board of Managers.
- In January we have been invited by Dorothy Venter to meet at the Lawn Club.
- On April 14 we are planning a joint meeting with the Rhode Island Society at Mystic Seaport.

## Calling all Patriots! Patriotic Service Essay

We are again hoping for a winner of this year's Patriotic Service Essay Contest, but we need your help in getting the word out to local high school history teachers about this exciting opportunity for a free week at the Washington workshops.

Applicants this year must write a 750 word essay on this topic: "In his Farewell Address in Philadelphia in 1796, George Washington warned against the advent of Political Parties in nations with populace-elected governments. Do you believe our nation's history supports his views?"

The essay with an application form must be submitted by January 15, 2011. Posters and information are available at [www.NSCDA.org](http://www.NSCDA.org)

The Patriotic Service Committee would also love to hear from you about how we can serve veterans.

Please call Penny Chittenden, Chairman, at 860-669-7144, with any questions, suggestions or for more information or an application for the essay contest.

### From the Assistant Treasurer

Ladies: Please remember to pay your Annual Dues in a timely manner! The Connecticut Society pays \$40 for each Dame registered in the state, and this year, we had an unusually high number of Dames (38) who had not paid their dues by the third notice. If you wish to resign in good standing you must, nevertheless, pay this year's dues **and** submit a letter of resignation. If your dues have not been paid by November or if you have not resigned in good standing then you will be dropped from membership. Please send letters of resignation to the Registrar: Mrs. N. Alexander MacColl, 75 Avonwood Road, Apt. C10, Avon, CT 06001-2034

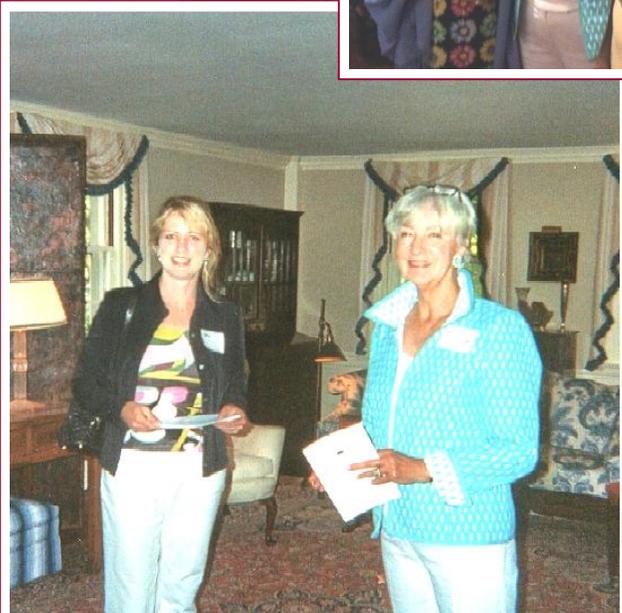
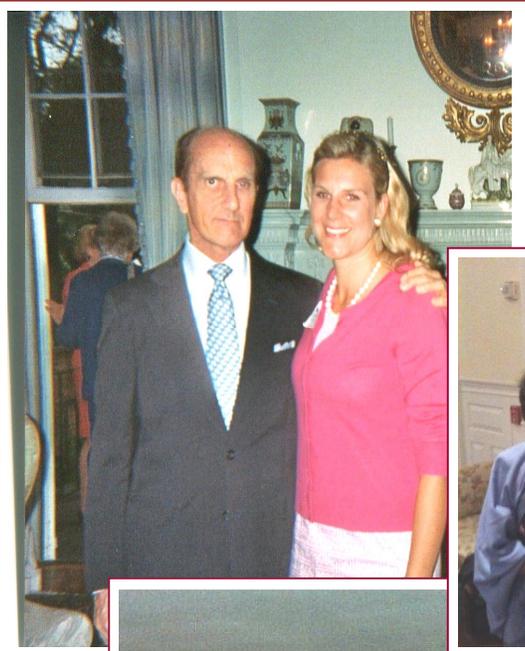
Respectfully submitted, Torrey Cooke

## Farmington Spring House Tour

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, from 5-7:30 pm, fifty-three CT Dames toured four of Farmington's finer houses, all built by members of the Cowles family, one of Farmington's seven founding families. Dames visited these stunning houses at their own pace and learned about each house from the homeowners, as well as from expert guides. We were fortunate and grateful to have as docents several of our own members: Claire and Jared Edwards, Mary and David Dangremond, Tita and Douglas Hyland, Gay Ayers, and our very own Charles Lyle.

Their knowledge and enthusiasm for historical architecture were inspiring to all the guests. From 6:30 until 8:30 Dames enjoyed a catered dinner with wine in the Sarah Porter Memorial building at 75 Main Street.

It was a rare and special evening.



## Dumbarton House Annual Meeting

Our Lady of Dumbarton House, Nancy Hicks, attended the Annual Meeting September 22 & 23 at this federal historic house museum (circa 1800), the headquarters of the NSCDA, located in the Georgetown area of Washington, D. C.

Dumbarton House Board Chairman, Jane Grantham introduced Executive Director Karen Daly, who gave a report on the many events held there in the spring and summer, and also about future plans.



Hicks writes, "As a member of the Education Committee, I was pleased to find that all ages have visited the Museum, which emphasizes the early days in Washington, specifically the time of Joseph Nourse, a senior official in the Treasury Department, who purchased the house in 1804. Recently, the staff has considered reinterpretation of the second floor, and has completed one room with portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Carroll, who were occupants of the house during the War of 1812. Dolly Madison, a friend of the Carrolls, had the portrait of George Washington removed from the White House and taken to Dumbarton House when the White House was set afire by the British in 1814. We, the Education Committee, recommended that one or two rooms should emphasize the importance of the NSCDA and suggested that there could be revolving exhibits of pictures and artifacts from each state museum." Please plan to visit this beautiful museum whenever you go to Washington. Also remember that NSCDA members are invited to stay in the west wing of Dumbarton House.

<http://www.dumbartonhouse.org/>

## Donors to the NSCDA-CT over and above their dues for 2010-11

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## REGION IV CONFERENCE

May 16-19, 2013

Every twenty-four years it falls to Connecticut to host the Region IV spring conference; 2013 will be Connecticut's year. We will be hosting Dames from Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia – a daunting prospect!

We have already booked the Marriott hotel in Hartford from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2013, for this event. The planning for this conference will require a tremendous effort on the part of us all in the CT society.

It is still very early in the process, but we hope to have our standing committees in place by next spring. Please consider helping out in some small way for this major event. It is a great opportunity for Connecticut to show its enthusiasm for this organization and to show off our own three museum houses – the first accredited among Dames' properties. Nearly every Dame in the state will be needed in some capacity to help out, so when you receive a call for support, please agree to give us your expertise and time to help make this conference a success.

*Co-chairs: Torrey Cooke and Charbra Adams Jestin*



## News from the Grounds Committee

Please mark April 16, 2011 on your calendars. We will be holding a Native Plant Sale, with advance sales of available plants.

The Grounds Committee co-chair Shirley Talcott reports that the committee is discussing the creation of a butterfly garden and formulating a formal plan for presentation to the Executive Board on December 13, 2010. Watch for more details in our Spring Newsletter.

### *Semi Annual Meeting October 20th*



The Semi-Annual Meeting was well-attended and provided an opportunity to welcome our newest members. Pictured, from left to right, Penny Chittenden (*Patriotic Service*), Torrey Cooke (*President*) and Nancy MacColl (*Registrar*).

### *Director's letter continued from page 1*

to proceed with plans to reconstruct it in the future. It was the intent of the Dames to complete this project in the mid-1960s and a set of drawings were commissioned from Cambridge, MA architect John Bradford Abbot, who completed them in collaboration with the then-Assistant Director of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Abbott Lowell Cummings. I will be meeting with Mr. Cummings in the coming weeks to learn more about this fascinating project.

As we begin the New Year, I look forward to continuing to work with the Board and the Properties Committee on the restoration and reinterpretation of the houses and to develop new programs. Our houses are national treasures, and it has been a privilege to work on them.

## NSCDA-CT WINTER CALENDAR

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>December 2010</b> |   |
| Monday, December 13  | 9:00 a.m. Executive Committee Meeting   |
|                      | 10:30 a.m. Board of Managers meeting    |
|                      | 12:30 p.m. Holiday Board/Staff Luncheon |
| <b>January 2011</b>  |   |
| Monday, January 10   | 9:00 a.m. Executive Committee Meeting   |
|                      | 10:30 a.m. Board of Managers meeting    |
| <b>February 2011</b> |   |
| Monday, February 14  | 9:00 a.m. Executive Committee Meeting   |
|                      | 10:30 a.m. Board of Managers meeting    |