



The Acorn

The Newsletter of The National Society of The Colonial Dames
of America in the State of Connecticut

SUMMER 2023

Message from the President

By Tita Hyland

We have much to celebrate as we move forward in our 130th year! Much of the winter was spent searching for a new Executive Director of our Webb Deane Stevens Museum. Ann Burton and Sara Champion served as Co-Chairs of the Search Committee. We interviewed a number of candidates and invited two finalists to each give a presentation to the Board of Managers, the Museum Board and Museum Council. We reached a consensus, offered the position and hired Brenton Grom to lead our important Museum.

You should have received the detailed announcement. He comes to us from the George Read II House & Gardens in New Castle, DE. His respect for history and creativity promises a bright future.



We look forward to welcoming Brenton to Wethersfield July 17th.

President's Report continues on page 2

Message from the Interim Director

By Linn G. McGlade

It has been a pleasure to serve as Interim Executive Director for these past several months. I've thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to know more about NSCDA-CT and work with the talented and accomplished staff of the Webb Deane Stevens Museum. Our small but mighty team has been very productive with a variety of projects and programs.

To name just a few:

- Our new website, launched February 2023, has garnered rave reviews about its vibrancy and ease of navigation. This is part of the rebranding of the museum, which also includes brochures updated with our new logo and other marketing material to catch the eye of visitors to Historic Wethersfield.
- Collection items once stored in the former Tea Room of the Webb House were safely moved to the new collection storage room on the lower level of the Holcombe Education Center. The emptied room now holds an informative self-guided exhibit about Wallace Nutting.

Interim Director's Report continues on page 2

President's Report continued from page 1

At our Annual Meeting May 17th, we voted in a new Board of Managers. I am honored to serve as your President.

As Sally stepped down, we gave her a framed calligraphy written by Gay Ayers with a painting by Frances Bergquist. We are indeed fortunate to have such talented Dames! Once our Cultural Landscape Report is completed and we implement their suggestions on how to best use our 8 acres, there will be a section of our garden with a plaque which reads:

**"Sally's Garden - Honoring our Mothers"
Sally W. Kernan, President NSCDA-CT
with Gratitude for Her Inspired Leadership
2020-2023**

As of June 6th, 34 Dames have contributed \$5,305 to the Mother's Day Fund.



*Incoming and outgoing Presidents:
Tita Hyland & Sally Kernan*

We have much to be proud of here in Connecticut as we focus on our mission of historic preservation, education and patriotic service. With your help, I hope to increase our 252 membership and reduce our \$1.6 million debt.

With my best wishes, Tita Hyland
President, NSCDA-CT

Interim Director's Report continued from page 1

- A special textile exhibit was installed in time for the museum to open for week-end tours in April. Rare, stitched samplers from the collection have been on view as part of *Threaded Voices*, which is complemented by an exhibit of the tools used by women and girls in the late 18th and early 19th centuries to create intimate works of art.
- *Serving Up History*, a series of webinars assembled by Associate Director Cynthia Riccio, kept us connected virtually while the museum was closed to the public during the winter months. In addition, Cindy's on-site programming was consistently sold out. We hope you enjoyed Speakeasy with Mama Train, Tammy Denease as *Sarah Margu*, fiber/quilt artist Ed Johnetta Miller, or John Mills' update on Prince Mortimer.
- A *Digging Deeper* program focused on textiles was the first to provide participants with a behind-the-scenes experience as they inspected items from the collection that are not on public display prior to seeing textiles on view in the houses.

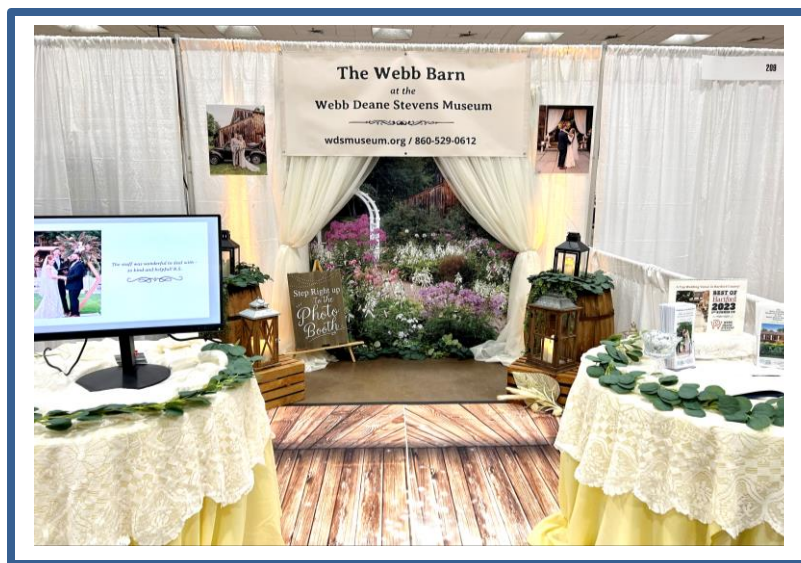
The revamped *Digging Deeper* programs will continue to provide participants with singular access to collection items or special experiences as our knowledgeable guides explore such topics as colonial furniture, ceramics, children's games, Silas Deane, and foods offered during George Washington's visit.

Interim Director's Report continued on page 3



“George Washington” admiring a new banner featuring himself.

- The Annual Revolutionary War Encampment, with its long list of demonstrations and other activities, was particularly well-attended as good weather encouraged families to “roam” our site as well as Main Street.
 - The Summer Concert Series, from June 30 to the end of August, included a wonderful variety of performers in the front courtyard or in the Webb Barn.
 - We were delighted to be voted a top wedding venue in Hartford County – specifically 2nd Runner up in the *Hartford Courant*’s Best of Hartford 2023 – and proudly proclaimed that distinction in our booth at the bridal show held in the XL Center on June 4.
- We also successfully emulated a view through the Webb Barn door, framed by its curtains, to the beautiful gardens beyond, which were also shown to advantage in a PowerPoint presentation.
 - The museum entrance area was rearranged to provide for a welcoming guest services desk and more open and engaging spaces for store merchandise. The red onion ornament is now available, along with other distinctive museum- and Wethersfield-themed items.
 - The Garden Angels, coordinated by Ann Foley, have put in many volunteer hours to make the Colonial Revival Garden a stunning place to visit. CT’s Historic Gardens Day on June 25 provides a perfect opportunity to appreciate and applaud all their hard work.



Our booth at the XL Center Bridal Show

The work to deliver exceptional programs, events and services continues while we prepare to welcome Brenton Grom as the new Executive Director. My warmest thanks to the entire museum staff for maintaining momentum during this period of transition and effectively increasing public awareness of the Webb Deane Stevens Museum.

Annual Meeting of 2023

Our Annual Meeting, held on May 17th, was a well-attended, successful event with a most interesting talk given by William Hosley who spoke about early New England gravestones which he has been documenting for many years. During the Covid-19 pandemic he and his wife spent many hours traveling to many small communities where he visited local cemeteries and photographed the most significant examples of the gravestone masons' and engravers' art.

During the meeting it was announced that Torrey Cooke and Margery Warren have been added to the list of Connecticut Dames on the National Roll of Honor.

The National Roll of Honor, was established in 1941 and keeps the names of those so honored inscribed in the Roll of Honor book kept at National Headquarters Dumbarton House. Sally then asked Torrey and Margery to step forward to be added to the National Roll of Honor, and thanked them for their outstanding service to the Connecticut Society.



Torrey Cooke



Margery Warren



A group of lunching ladies at the Annual Meeting

Welcome Guests at the Annual Meeting

Two sisters, both Dames, with their young babies enriched the Annual Meeting with their adorable presence, and we never heard a cross or cranky word from them.



*Left: Courtney
Becher Ringland
with her beautiful
daughter Marion*



*Right: Kristen
Becher Robertson
with her sweet
son Charlie*

Music of the Night

By Jeanne Goodwin

On a perfect June evening, the Dames celebrated the summer solstice at Music of the Night, a spectacular event in the Webb Barn. Hugh Panaro, the star of Broadway's Phantom of the Opera, performed Broadway tunes, masterfully accompanied by Tim Stella, on piano and Kaila Piscitelli on cello.

A tempting array of items were offered for bidding including an American river cruise, a Nantucket House rental, theater tickets, genealogical consultations, and garden lunches and tours. Guests took home a canvas 'swag bag' with the WDS logo, filled with goodies including a container of Wethersfield red onions.



Auction Items



Special thanks go to an outstanding committee who put together a perfect event: Mary Bainbridge, Beth Montgelas, Cara Blazier, LeeAnn Schneider, Mary Treadway, Mimi Dickerson, Ann Burton, Sally Kernan and Jeanne Goodwin.

Performers with their spouses

Hume Furniture Study Center Trip

By Mem Morrissey

On April 5th, the Connecticut Dames had a unique opportunity to view the vast collection of the Hume American Furniture Study Center on the West Campus of Yale University. The 17,850 square-foot facility, formerly the Bayer Corporation's manufacturing plant, has been converted into an exceptional center for conservation, photography, display, and education.

The collection encompasses over 1,300 examples of American furniture and wooden decorative pieces dating from 1650 to the present. New England, and, in particular, Connecticut craftsmanship is exhibited in addition to that of many other regions throughout the United States.

Opening in 2019, the gallery features a two-story display space where smaller pieces such as chairs and small tables are stored on the mezzanine level. The main floor allows for two-story open display and provides a home to the larger pieces of the collection. Large pieces are stored on ingenious raised platforms allowing them to be effortlessly moved about for study or further inspection. Throughout, interpretive displays highlight aspects of furniture making such as finishes, dovetail and mortise and tenon joints and tools of the trade.

We numbered twenty Dames and were divided into two groups for intimate tours led by John Stuart Gordon and Patricia E. Kane, curators of American Decorative Arts at the Yale University Art Gallery. This allowed for in-depth discussion and intimate study of the furniture and objects.



*John Stuart Gordon,
Curator*

After our tour, we were treated to a sumptuous luncheon of salmon, asparagus, avocado toast and tossed salad at the beautiful home of Lisa and David Totman.

All in all, it's good to be a Dame!

*Dames on Tour
at the Hume Center*



The Privy Purse

Following the lead of other NSCDA Societies, we are instituting a new form of recurring donations which can be scheduled easily on our website (nscda-ct.org) using PayPal or another credit card. A donation of any amount from \$1 to whatever amount your budget permits, may be scheduled for a monthly donation, which will occur automatically without giving it another thought. Even a small donation received reliably makes a great deal of difference to organizations who employ this system.

Please consider a recurring contribution to the *Privy Purse*, masterfully set up by Kristen Robertson on our website.

Thank you for your generosity!

This is what it will look like when you go to the payment page on our website (nscda-ct.org):



Lord Bloomfield, Keeper of the Privy Purse, carrying the ceremonial purse. 1821


NSCDA
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100% of your contribution helps us to fulfill our mission of Historic Preservation, Historic Education, and Patriotic Service.

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Areas Activities

By Nancy MacColl, Areas Chair

2022-2023 Book groups in Areas 1 & 4 are thriving. Area 4 book group led by Deanna Whittredge has read over 60 books since 2016!

Area 1 took a trip to Historic Huguenot Street in New Paltz, N.Y. on June 2. Historic Huguenot Street was originally founded in 1894 by the descendants of the first settlers to preserve what remained of their French and Dutch heritage. Since then, it has grown into an innovative museum, chartered as an educational corporation by the University of the State of New York, that is dedicated to protecting their historic buildings, conserving an important collection of artifacts and manuscripts, and promoting the stories of the Huguenot Street families, from the 16th century to today. Historic Huguenot Street acknowledges that the land, was originally occupied by the indigenous Munsee Lenape peoples, and they strive to build a more inclusive and equitable space for all.



Other Areas activities included a visit to the Metropolitan Museum arranged by Lee Ann Schneider; and an Area 2 tour of the Colt Church (Church of the Good Shepherd) & Parish House arranged by Courtney MacDonald. Meetings were also held in various venues including the Gunn Library, Roger Sherman Inn, as well as in members' homes.

Areas is hoping when our new Executive Director, Brenton Grom gets settled, that he will come to every Area to introduce himself and bring us up to date on plans for the Webb Deane Stevens Museum.

The Cogswell Colonial Revival Garden under New Stewardship

By Peter Winne

I've made a few, minor changes to the Amy Cogswell Colonial Revival Garden. Mostly, I've just continued Rose Riley's work of continuing to replace old plants and add some new ones.

This year I reintroduced a few old plants from Amy Cogswell's original design that were no longer in the garden, including Monkshood and Clematis recta. I also supplemented our phlox, peony, and poppy collections. The biggest change I've made is replacing the lagging mock orange hedge on the north side of the garden with a new Sweetspire hedge this spring.



Roses in the Garden
Photo by Nancy MacColl



Plantings in the Courtyard

The biggest addition I've made to the gardens, however, is not in the Amy Cogswell Garden but, rather, in the front courtyard. In the spring of 2022, I designed and planted a new garden in the courtyard.



The Colonial Revival Garden seen from the Holcombe Education Center

The NSCDA Biennial

By Nancy MacColl

The NSCDA Biennial was held in Washington, D.C. Oct. 2022. Delegates from CT were President Sally Kernan, Mary Young, Leslie Greene, and Nancy MacColl.

A Welcome Reception was held at Hillwood Estate with exclusive access to the Mansion, Museum and Gardens. One meeting was held at this beautiful estate, once owned by Marjorie Merriwether Post, followed by a tour of the mansion. The photographs display her foyer and her collections. Post became a pioneer collector of Russian art while living in the Soviet Union with her third husband, Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, in the 1930s. Finding the imperial porcelain, silver, enamels, and glass perfectly suited to her taste for the beautiful and finely crafted, Post laid the foundation for a lifetime of collecting—ultimately assembling the largest collection of Russian imperial art outside of Russia.



Hillwood Foyer



Imperial Crown



Russian Imperial Chalice



The Ivory Collection

Highlights of the meetings: three primary recommendations (to realign the regional Vice-Presidents; to streamline the number of National Board Standing Committees from 15 to 10; and to elevate & reorganize the NSCDA mission), all passed unanimously.

The 44 Societies discussed their activities. New inductees to the National Roll of Honor for 2020-2022 were announced. Education seminars included: finding female ancestors to add to the ROA (Leslie Greene's ancestor is Pocahontas), securing Societies' future, celebrating the 90th anniversary of our National Headquarters - Dumbarton House.

Our visits included the Library of Congress, Arlington National Cemetery, with Arlington House Tours followed by a memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery.



NSCDA-CT Dames honored for length of service at The Annual Meeting ~May 2023

60-year members

MacColl, Nancy H. (CT- 1479)	5/1/1963
Seymour, Frances E. (CT-1198)	4/9/1963

50-year members

Boody, Sallie (CT-1419)	11/1/1973
Brennan, Mary (CT-1407)	6/1/1973
Chittenden, Penelope (CT-1404)	5/1/1973

45-year members

Barhydt, Martha (Muffy) (CT-1486)	6/12/1978
Buchanan, Eleanor (Ellie) (CT-1483)	4/1/1978

40-year members

Dangremond, Mary (CT-1624)	6/1/1983
Greene, Elizabeth (CT-1573)	10/1/1983
Hawthorne, Mary (CT-1565)	3/1/1983
Walker, Susan MacColl (CT-1577)	12/31/1983
White, Zemma (CT-1564)	2/1/1983

35-year members

Lyman, A. Julie (CT-1647)	1/12/1988
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30-year members

Brainerd, Wendy (CT-1731)	5/1/1993
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20-year members

Clark, Ann (CT-1821)	4/1/2003
Cruger, Catherine (CT-1827)	9/1/2003

15-year members

Briggs, Mary Louise (Mary Lou) (CT-1869)	3/1/2008
Everson, Tracy (CT-1872)	5/1/2008
Flood, Sandra (CT-1879)	11/1/2008
Hayes, Nina (CT-1870)	9/1/2008
Holden, Katherine P. (CT-1873)	5/1/2008
Kirkpatrick, Pamela (CT-2040)	3/27/2008
Koladis, Rebecca (Becky) (CT-1881)	11/1/2008
Winthrop, Elizabeth (Libby) (CT-1967)	2/20/2008