



## President's Letter

Greetings to All,

Fall in Guilford is such a beautiful time of the year. It feels like things are finally getting back to normal. The kids are back at school, the leaves are turning and we as a community are getting back out there to gather and enjoy all the town has to offer, after a long hiatus due to the pandemic. We are winding down the year and are looking forward to our annual meeting that will be held on November 15<sup>th</sup>. Keith Bishop will be our guest speaker and will give a talk on Guilford agriculture. Please join us, details are included in this Newsletter.

The Guilford Fair and parade were well attended this year. It was a gorgeous weekend. Thank you to Joel Helander for submitting an historical perspective on the Guilford Fair, which is included in this Newsletter. The GKS board and some lively volunteers provided parking at the Thomas Griswold House for the three days that the fair was running. The GKS board would like to thank all who helped collect money and guide people safely into parking spaces. We were able to raise funds to help us in our various projects to maintain both the Thomas Griswold House and the Medad Stone Tavern. We are always looking for volunteers to help us with events, clean-up projects, and other endeavors.

It is that time of year for membership renewal for 2023. You will find included in this newsletter, an envelope that you can submit your dues for renewal, as well as more information about the various levels of the membership (which make great gifts, by the way!). We will be raising funds to repair the 32 windows at the Medad Stone Tavern, so please consider us for donations towards this initiative.

As we head into the Holiday Season, we wish you all a safe and happy Holiday, and hope to see you at our New Year's Day reception at the Medad Stone Tavern. This is always an enjoyable way to start of the New Year with our membership.

Best,

Robert Hartmann, Jr.



*Autumn Colors on the Guilford Green*

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Guilford Keeping Society collects, preserves, and shares the history and heritage of Guilford, Connecticut for present and future generations.

Box 363, Guilford, CT 06437 (203)-453-2263. [www.guilfordkeepingsociety.com](http://www.guilfordkeepingsociety.com)

**GKS Annual Meeting Tuesday,  
November 15, 2022**

Keith Bishop, CEO, President and Winemaker, Bishop Orchards, will be the Guilford Keeping Society’s speaker at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, November 15, 2022, 7pm at the Guilford Free Library Meeting Room. He will be discussing agriculture in Guilford with emphasis on the Bishop family’s involvement over the last six generations. Using historical photographs and maps, Keith will show some of the changes that have occurred since the late 1800’s.

Prior to Keith’s presentation the Society will hold a short business meeting that will include the election of a GKS Board of Directors approve slate of prospective members. They are Jeffry Beatty, Sarah Cooper, Jeffry Hutchins, and Brendan Smith. Each brings a wealth of volunteer experience and expertise.



Keith Bishop at the 2022 Guilford Parade

**GKS Membership Update**

**It is the time of year to renew your membership for 2023.** Please return the enclosed envelope with your membership dues. Also, if you have not paid your dues for 2022, please do so at this time in order to keep your membership current. If you have any questions about your membership, please contact us at (203)-453-2263.

**Membership Benefits include:**

- Free admission to Thomas Griswold House and Medad Stone Tavern museums
- Ten percent discount on items purchased in the Griswold House Museum Shop
- GKS Newsletter (Quarterly publication)
- Membership Meetings
- Special exhibit openings, lectures, receptions, and workshops
- Holiday and other special events

**Membership Categories**

Student (grades 6-12)	\$10
Senior	\$25
Individual	\$35
Family/Household	\$50
Friend	\$100
Patron	\$250
Benefactor	\$500
President's Circle	\$1,000

The Guilford Keeping Society is a non-profit 501 (C)(3) corporation. Your contribution is tax-deductible

according to law. If you have any questions about your membership, please contact GKS at (203)-453-2263.

**GKS Board of Directors**

**Officers**

- Robert Hartmann, Jr.
- Fran Swietlicki
- Tom Black
- Sue Stoddard
- Hope Ryan

**Board Members**

- Gail Buxton
- Stephen Dudley
- Dan Fisher
- Kat Genera
- Joshua Leete
- Carol McGrath
- Peter Mousch
- Dana Nelson
- Tony Piscatelli
- Winnie Seibert
- Susan Smith
- Steven VanDerMaelen

**Museum Director/Curator**

Pat Lovelace



Autumn at the GKS Museums

## GKS Summer Camps

The Guilford Keeping Society Summer Camps were enjoyed by many campers this summer. The Historical American Girl Camp in July was at the Medad Stone Tavern Museum. The campers enjoyed learning about five dolls (one each day). We learned about the time period of each doll, did a craft related to each doll, and had a snack that went along with the doll. For example, we did Kit, the doll from 1934. We talked about life during the Depression, we made felt checkerboards, visited the Community Garden, cut out Kit paper dolls and made ice cream sandwiches for our snack.



*Camp Project wins Award at the Fair*

At the Colonial Camp at the Thomas Griswold House Museum the campers learned about farming, chores, transportation, mills, and life in the kitchen during colonial times. They made barnyards and horse carts from popsicle sticks, made butter, and they made water wheels. For snacks they had cornbread, applesauce, and strawberry shortcake. They learned about life in a colonial kitchen right in a colonial kitchen. Our Barnyards and Horse Carts were in our exhibit in the Barnyard Building at the Guilford Fair. Each camper received a blue ribbon and a Best in Barnyard ribbon.

We thank Angel and Luci Brechlin for all their help in planning the camps! We also thank the helpers who helped at the camps. Many were former campers who

enjoyed attending the camps so much that they volunteered to help!



*Happy Camper at Medad Stone Tavern*

## House Plaques from GKS

If your home in Guilford is at least 100 years old, please consider purchasing a house plaque to adorn your home. As you drive around town, you probably see the old houses that have the house plaques from the Guilford Keeping Society, proudly displayed somewhere on the front of the house. If you are interested, and your house is at least 100 years old, please contact us to learn more about the house plaques and the other qualifications required to obtain one.





## 163 Years of Guilford Fair



*GKS Library Collection*

*The Guilford Keeping Society's fair day float was pulled by tractor on Frederic G. Davis's hay wagon for many years in the 1950s and 1960s. Shown here is the 1967 GKS float.*

It's part of the spirit of Old New England; it's harvest celebration; it's homecoming; it's fun and merriment; and it's a venerable institution of its own: the Guilford Fair. After 163 years, today's fair has paced with modern times, yet retains a powerful theme of Guilford's agricultural past.

Guilford Fair had its founding on the eve of the American Civil War. In a world of agriculture, most of the town's 3,000 inhabitants practiced subsistence farming. Happily—and at times, wearily—they lived off the land in the manner of their forebears.

Four Guilford farmers were the pioneers of the first Guilford Fair. Historian Mary H. Griswold traces the fair's origins to one conversation around the woodstove in the Hale and Munger Store on the west side of the Green. It was early fall, 1858. John Benton of Sachem's Head district, Henry Griswold of Upper State Street, and George Hull & Henry Davis of West Side District exchanged pleasantries about a fair recently held in a neighboring town.

John Hubbard joined the group and catalyzed the conversation. "Why not hold a fair in Guilford?" he asked. Hubbard's remark aroused serious attention. Shortly afterwards, Hubbard hosted an organizational meeting in his home at what is now 51 Broad Street. The

new group was called The Farmers and Mechanics Association, a name that was incorporated as the Guilford Agricultural Society in 1874. Objectives of the society were the improvement of agriculture, floriculture, and the "household arts."

It was too late in 1858 to hold a Guilford Fair, but the year was spent in preparation for the first fair in the fall of 1859. It was a grand success, featuring 426 yoke of oxen that came from Guilford, Madison, and North Branford. William Fowler of Moose Hill District led the procession as marshal, moving to the inspiring music of fife and drum. Forty young men rode on horseback. Decorated carts and wagons carried an array of agricultural products.

The early agricultural fairs on the Guilford Green also became famous for their cattle shows, when the village was jammed with strings of cattle. There were a total of 59 yoke of cattle in the 1903 fair—16 yoke represented by the Nut Plains District alone!

By every account, every road led to Guilford on Fair Day, including the Shoreline Railroad, which imported hundreds of out-of-town fairgoers from east and west. The advent of the trolley car in 1910, which was the golden jubilee for the Fair, contributed to a crowd of nearly 10,000 people, which was unprecedented. One newspaper called it the most famous fair in New Haven County.

Only nine times in its 163-year history has Guilford Fair been cancelled, mainly due to war and weather: in 1862 due to the Civil War; in 1889 due to the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the town; in 1938 due to the Great New England Hurricane; in 1939 due to the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the town; during 1942–1945 due to the dark World War Two years, and in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic.

Guilford Fair outgrew the confines of the 8-acre Guilford Green—its home since 1859. In its design to carry on Fair Day tradition, the Guilford Agricultural Society purchased and relocated to the 30-acre Hunter Farm off Lover's Lane in 1969. In change there is growth and in growth there is survival, which is a remarkable characteristic of celebrated Guilford Fair.

— J.E. Helander

### Holiday Shopping Ideas from GKS



The gift shop at the Thomas Griswold House will be open on Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please stop by to peruse the items for sale. Our popular pewter ornaments will be available for \$20 each, or the complete set of seven for \$130. The 2022 pewter ornament will make a great Holiday gift. The ornament depicts the **Soldiers' Monument** that is positioned on the Guilford Green. It is one of Guilford's most popular landmarks.



*2022 GKS Ornament*

The complete set is shown below:



### 2023 GKS Calendars for Sale

Here are a couple of previews from the GKS 2023 Calendar. The calendars always make great gifts for the Holidays for people who know and love Guilford. The calendar is full of historical pictures of Guilford from the GKS archives. Calendars sell for \$15.



*2023 Calendar Cover*



*Calendar Preview - Barn at TGH*

### GKS Membership

GKS Memberships also make unique gifts, please consider purchasing one for family or friends who enjoy Guilford and its history.

**Guilford Keeping Society**  
P.O. Box 363  
Guilford, CT 06437

*Return Receipt Requested*

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Guilford, CT 06437  
Permit No. 142



## Guilford Keeping Society Newsletter • Fall 2022

### **Join us for New Year's Day**

We will be having our New Year's Day Open House reception at the Medad Stone Tavern, on Sunday, January 1, 2023 from 3 to 6 p.m. Please join us to celebrate. We will have libations and a variety of appetizers and treats. This has been one of our favorite traditions over the years, and we have missed it the past few years due to the pandemic. We are excited to resume this event!



*Holiday Season at the Tavern*