



WINTER 2024 - NEWSLETTER

## President's Letter

Greetings!

As your newly elected President, I am honored and humbled to serve our fine organization. I look forward to working with you all to advance our presence and mission through our fine properties and in the community.

Our Annual Meeting was held in November with the election of officers and new board members. We are pleased to have Gus Kellogg, Meghan Mills, Lisa Wohlert and Tracy Tomaselli join the Board. If you have an interest in joining the Board, please feel free to contact me.

We held our annual New Year's Day Open House at the Tavern. It was a fine day, and we welcomed many community and GKS members for an afternoon of food and great conversation. The Board felt it was a great success.

Our January Board meeting was a time to outline our goals, events and projects for 2024. We have a full event schedule and look forward to the participation of our members and the community. Please see our website – [guilfordkeepingsociety.com](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.com) - for details and updates.

We intend to have work parties at both properties this spring and will send out notices once scheduled. We hope that you can join us to help maintain our grounds and buildings. The Board cannot do everything alone, so your participation is needed and welcome.

As a newer member of the Board, I am relying on the entire membership for their support and guidance. The Board is always thankful for all the financial support and volunteerism that we receive.

Our success is due to you!

Best,

Stephen B. Dudley

## New Year's Day Reception

Happy 2024!! GKS held its annual New Year's Day reception at the Tavern on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The weather cooperated and made for a wonderful day to get out and mingle with the membership. The GKS board supplied the food and beverages. It was the first event of the year, and we look forward to having all our regular events this year. The next big event will be the Wine Tasting, and this will be held on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. More details will follow about this event and ticket sales.



*Dessert Anyone?*

**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 2023 Annual Meeting

GKS held the 2023 annual meeting on Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at the Medad Stone Tavern. Members approved four new board members. The outgoing President, Robert Hartmann, Jr., introduced Stephen Dudley as the new GKS president to the members in attendance.

Tracy Tomaselli, one of the new board members, and a Historical Room Specialist from the Guilford Free Library provided a fascinating talk on the “Scandals in Guilford” during the 17<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The board and the membership enjoyed learning about what went on in town during this period.

The evening ended with some refreshments and some time to socialize with the membership.



*Tracy Tomaselli - Scandals in Guilford*

## GKS Membership

To be sure we are forever grateful to our current members listed on page 3 who comprise our '23-24 GKS roster! We also thank so many of you who have supported us in the past. We like to think that the eighteenth-century Thomas Griswold House that sits atop a knoll at the corner of Boston Street and Lovers Lane with all its historic buildings and acreage brings joy to those who pass by. A century ago, traveling Boston

## GKS Membership (continued)

Street, visitors were welcomed by the great elm tree that once stood in front of the house, its long limbs and canopy stretching across the road, referred to as the Gateway to Guilford.

The Guilford Keeping Society is more than 75 years young and we are so proud to be an organization that collects, preserves, and shares its history of Guilford. Our remarkable collection of images, letters, and documents are quite extraordinary. Our Frederick Davis and Charles Arthur Heidtman collections of Native American artifacts are sensational with some pieces dating almost ten thousand year ago. Shifts, petticoats, aprons, gowns of many styles and other finery make up our costume department. Our blacksmith shop is rare because of the winch driven oxen sling for hoisting and shoeing the ox. These are just a few of the highlights of our beloved museums.



*The Thomas Griswold House*

We are hard at work repairing windows and preparing for bridge restoration at the tavern and so many building maintenance projects at both museums. Your membership and generous donations make a huge difference in allowing us to steward our museums. Thank you for your vote of confidence, and for your generous support of the Guilford Keeping Society.

**Membership Roster on Page 3 - The asterisk denotes lifetime membership**

Tony & Deborah Abbott	Susan Froshauer *	Dr. Paul & Estelle B. Nussbaum
Allen County Public Library	Barbara Fussell *	Richard W & Louise Odermatt
Joan K. Ames *	Michelle Gilbert	Lesley & Gary Orłowski
Linda Anderson	Allan Gill	Karen A. Owen *
Stephanie Anestis	Joe & Cindy Goldberg *	Michael P. & Gail O. Pappas
Barbara & Chip Angle	Robert B. Gordon	Deborah S. & Charles Peluse
Irene N. Ayres *	June-Ann Greeley *	Anthony F. Piscitelli Jr
Linda Balestracci *	Barry & Eleanor Green	Bernie & Ricky Pitterman
Suzie Balestracci & Gary Parrington	Robert & Jerrilynn Guadagno	John Plant
Josh Becker	Jay Gustafson & Mary Cosgrove	Cove Dwellers Services C/O Joseph Rostock
Lisa Beckwith & C.Wettemann	Arlene Hackbarth	Diane Popolizio
Yves & Marcus Bergvind	Robert & Laura Hartmann	Mary Potter
Barbara J.Bishop *	Henry Haskell & Ellen Cordes	Maurice Reichman *
Keith B. & Debbie G. Bishop	Suellen Heinrich	Ginny Reinhard *
Jonathan & Nancy Bishop *	Joel E. Helander	Susan Renner
Thomas Black *	Kathleen Helmrich	Grant Rensis
Kent & Nona Bloomer	Kathleen & Paul Hermes	Mark Reveaux
Bill & Katy Bloss	Caroline Herrick & Ted Sands	Joan & Barry Richter *
Jack Bonner	Alex & Marie Hetherington	Janet Riesman
Robert & Louise Bown	Margaret B. Homans *	Ray & Mary Rosa *
MaryAnn Bracken	Kandra Houston	Ron & Shelley Rosa *
Scott & Amelie Brewster	Richard Howard *	Harriet & Ken Rosen
Maryanne Brinigar	Sally & David Howe	Pamela Rottier
Lee Brockman *	Jeffrey V & Kathryn H. Hutchins	Sandra Ruoff
Deborah & James Bussman	Robert & Stephanie Hutchison	Sandra L.Rux & Alan P. Haesche *
Chris & Sue Breton	Dee Jacob	Hope Ryan
Susie & Eric Burnett	Barbara K. Johnson *	Sharon Schaffer
Georgeanne Campaigne	Roger Joyce	Philip Schaeffer & Irene Auerbach *
Lisa Carlucci	Barry Kaplan	Ida F. S. Schmertz *
Charlene & Russ Carson	Janet Kazdan	Ralph & Joan Schoemann
Joseph P. Cavanagh	Augustus Kellogg	William G. Seekamp
Bill Cavanaugh & Ellen Tillotson	Barbara Ann Kiesel	Edward P. & Winifred R. Seibert
Timothy & Sharon Chaucer	Joan King	Will Shain
Laura A. Collins	Leigh Knuttel	Charles Shelley *
Sarah Cooper	Lawrence & Carlyne Leete	Harvey Smith
Walter Corbiere III	Susan Leete	Nancy Smith
Georgia Cosgrove	Leete's Island Garden Club	Susan & Brendan Smith
Elizabeth Cummiskey	Bill and Elaine Lincoln	Virginia Scott Sterling *
David B. & Cynthia H. Damer	Pamela Lincoln	Cathy Stewart
Joan Della Pietra	Christine Linsenmeyer	Pamela & Sandy Stoddard
Peter & Connie Dickinson	Ralph & Carol Linsley	Susan Stoddard
John T. Dillon	Michael & Linda Loomis	John & Judy Sullivan
Robert J Dolan	Jane McKenny Lowk	Tim & Melissa Sullivan *
Rose Dostert	Patricia Lovelace	Frances Y. Swietlicki
Louis Drago	W.B. & Delaney Lundberg	Ben & Lee Sylvester *
Barbara Dudley *	Jared, John & Kristin Lynch	Amelia Tarantino
Raymond Dudley	Diane S. & Michael Macris	Tracy Tomaselli
Mimi & Stephen Dudley	Karen MacVeigh	Carol Usher *
Anna J. Dwyer	Geri Mancini	Robert Valley, Jr.
Sharon N. Eaton	Catherine Marganski	Steven & Libby Van der Malen
Dr. Michael Ebert & Ellen Levine	Fred W Markham	Dorothy Volosin *
Andrew & Eileen Eder	Carolyn Coffin Marlowe	Rex & Wendy Walden
David Egan	Marybeth Marx	Russell & Alma Waldo
Stephanie Erb	Paula McCarthy	Cynthia & Jonathan Wallace
Ann D. Erda	Amy & John McCauley	Gregory & Dorothy Walwer
Elizabeth Evarts	Charlie & Janet McClure	Emily Walzer
Paul Evoskevich	Valerie McElligott	Nancy Signa Wardell
Linda Ficano	Carol McGrath	Charlene Whiteman
Dan & Ann Fisher	Courtney & Dan McGowan	Leigh Whiteman *
Andrew Fisher	Steven McGuire *	Pat Widlitz *
Sandra E. Flatow *	Jean Meiselman	Allan Wilcox
Margaret Flesher	Cyrus Miller	Jan & Sally Williams
Gwen B. Fletcher *	Meghan Mills	Thomas R. & Bonnie A. Williams *
Richard Forselius	George Mitchell & Stephanie Hodge *	Lisa & Eric Wohlert
Scott Francis	George W. & Susan Morris	Jane Woolford *
Landa & Jefferson Freeman	Peter Mousch	Dr. & Mrs. Frederic Wright
Alida & Michael Frey	Dana Nelson & Frank Ferro	Susan & Bob Yaro
Julius & Virginia Friese	Dr. Kendrick Norris *	

## Elbridge E. Hoff – Master Cabinet Maker

One of the most influential and skilled woodworkers ever to live in Connecticut was Elbridge E. Hoff. He was one of Guilford's true gems. His contributions to the woodworking world were extraordinary.

He was born in Pennsylvania in 1915. He was orphaned at the age of five. He attended Stephen Girard school in the Philadelphia area. This school was unique, as it not only provided elementary and secondary education, but the school also specialized in teaching trades. It was common for orphan males to attend this type of school as the expectation was that these students would not have the financial means to pursue a university education. Elbridge did, however, manage to further education himself, and studied at the Philadelphia Museum of Design. His childhood dream was to have a career in woodworking. He excelled in his woodworking.



*Hoff furniture at the Medad Stone Tavern*

During World War II, Elbridge worked in a New Jersey shipyard doing woodwork on the interior of boats. After the war he moved to Massachusetts where he worked for large furniture companies. He was developing so much expertise in the craft during this time and started to think about opening his own shop. He wanted to find the perfect location to set up shop and he searched areas from New Jersey to New Hampshire. He ended up choosing Guilford, Connecticut and opened his shop in 1953. His shop was called "Hoff in Guilford." He was remarkably successful and took orders from all around the country. He specialized in cabinetry and furniture. He created 18<sup>th</sup> Century reproductions. He enjoyed making period pieces and his replications displayed the greatest quality and skill. Elbridge died in 1980 at the age of 65.

Some of Elbridge's tools were donated to the Guilford Keeping Society and they will be displayed in the Woodworking Shop on the Thomas Griswold House property. The shop itself (when completed) will be dedicated to Elbridge and Carl Balestracci, who was also a talented woodworker and great contributor to GKS over the years. Both Elbridge and Carl had a talent for carving birds out of wood. Some of these wood carvings have also been donated to GKS and are in the Thomas Griswold House available for purchase.



*Bird Carving at Thomas Griswold House*



*Elbridge Hoff (right) – Carl Balestracci (left)  
(Photo from Guilford Free Library Digital Archives)*

## Summer Camps at GKS Museums

The Guilford Keeping Society will sponsor two camps this summer where campers can have fun while learning about history.

**Historical American Girl Dolls** – This camp, for ages 7-12, will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Medad Stone Tavern Museum from July 8-12. Campers will travel through American history with historical American Girl Dolls. They will learn about the everyday lives in the dolls' time periods by reading their stories and hearing about when they lived. The campers will write in their own journals, make crafts, play games from the doll's era and cook food from recipes they would have used. The week will end with a tea party in the parlor of the Tavern Museum.



*American Girl Dolls*

**Colonial Life Camp** – This camp, also for ages 7-12, will be held from 9:30-12:30 at the Thomas Griswold House Museum from Aug. 5-12. The camp will focus on life in a New England town in colonial times. We will learn about life in early Guilford and do crafts, cook and play games from that period. We will have a Native American Day and a Revolutionary War times day. Our blacksmith will show the campers how iron items were made at that time.

The cost for each camp per person is \$125 and includes project materials. You can pay by sending a check to Guilford Keeping Society P. O. Box 363 Guilford, CT 06437 or on our website at:

<https://www.guilfordkeepingsociety.com/summer-camp>.



*Colonial Life Camp*

### GKS Board of Directors

#### *Officers*

President - Stephen Dudley  
 Vice President - Peter Mousch  
 Treasurer - Brendan Smith  
 Recording Secretary - Sarah Cooper  
 Corresponding Secretary - Lisa Wohlert

#### *Board Members at Large*

Jeff Beatty  
 Dan Fisher  
 Robert Hartmann, Jr. Past President  
 Jeff Hutchins  
 Gus Kellogg  
 Carol McGrath  
 Meghan Mills  
 Dana Nelson  
 Tony Piscatelli  
 Winnie Seibert  
 Susan Smith  
 Tracy Tomaselli  
 Steven VanDerMaelen

#### *Staff*

Museum Director/Curator - Pat Lovelace

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

*Return Receipt Requested*

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## Guilford Keeping Society Newsletter • Winter 2024

**GKS 2024 Calendar**

Date	Event	Location
1/1/2024	New Year's Day Reception	MST
4/27/2024	Wine Tasting	MST
May - TBD	Stony Creek Quarry Tour	Quarry
5/27/2024	Memorial Day Picnic	TGH
6/1/2024	Museum Opening	MST/TGH
6/8/2024	Tag Sale	TGH
7/8 - 7/12	American Girl Doll Camp	MST
8/5 - 8/9	Colonial Camp	MST
9/28/2024	Fall Beer Tasting	MST
Oct - TBD	Stony Creek Quarry Tour	Quarry
11/20/2024	Annual Meeting	TBD