

The Old Saybrook



Historical Society

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING, PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE HISTORY OF OLD SAYBROOK

Summer 2019



Historic Herbs at the Hart House

Elaine Yang



Photograph by Elaine Yang, student volunteer, for her senior project which is a book entitled *Historic Herbs at the Hart House*. It is a tribute to the Old Saybrook Historical Society's commitment to the colonial gardens and her mentor Bonnie Penders, who is devoted not only to producing and maintaining the three herb gardens but also showing the importance of them over the centuries. See article on page 3.

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President's Message

Since April our volunteers have participated in many activities and events; all of which were successful, exciting and fun in spite of the amount of work.

We are also grateful to our supporters:

- Lorensen Auto Group, Saybrook Recycled Furniture and Matt Rubin for the successful Antiques and Treasures Auction. The Campus looked great especially our gardens
- The Edgertons for providing the Antique Car in the Memorial Day Parade
- AC Proctor for her patience and understanding in many last minute changes to our printing
- Guilford Savings Bank, Matthew and Hadass Rubin, Harbor News and Paradise Wine and Spirits for their sponsorship of our "Taste of the Town" benefit and all the wonderful support from the restaurants and specialty food stores
- Wendy Mill, Youth and Family Services and Bob Labriola, Social Studies Teacher, for promoting our Student Volunteer Program
- Pamela Vittorio for her excellent presentation and gift of the Rufus Grider print of the painting of our Oliver Graham Revolutionary War powder horn
- Our First Selectman Carl Fortuna, State Senator Norman Needleman, State Representative Devin Carney, Jane Montanaro, Executive Director of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Larry Bonin Public Works Dept. and Ray Allen, Parks and Recreation for their participation and help for Barbara Maynard's award dedication.

We are grateful, also, for those who contributed to the Annual Appeal. Our membership pays for our insurance. Therefore, the Annual Appeal is crucial for the maintenance of our Campus and the continued work of our mission.

Marie



On June 11, at a special recognition ceremony, the Board of Education highlighted the Society by awarding Certificates of Achievement for ongoing support and contributions to historical education to Tedd Levy and Marie McFarlin.



On September 22 from 2 to 4 on our Campus the Old Saybrook Historical Society and the Westbrook Historical Society will honor their dedicated volunteer, Margaret Buckridge Bock, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday.

OSHS Herb Garden Mentor and Student

It was a lucky day for the Historical Society when in October 2018 Elaine Yang, Class of 2019 OSHS Salutatorian, said she would join the volunteers at the herb gardens. Elaine needed to earn community service hour requirements and she understood from a neighbor, a longtime resident of Old Saybrook, Mary Beth Unkrich, that the Hart House gardens could always use an extra hand. When Elaine first heard of this opportunity, she was cautious and curious and thought "I have never been exposed to anything like this before, maybe I should give it a try." The following is a journey between a mentor and a student during a nine month experience of giving and receiving.

With not many days left in the fall gardening season Elaine Yang and I quickly went to work putting the herb gardens to bed for the winter. We harvested the last of the annual herbs for the Congregational Church's food pantry chefs and clients, applied lime to the soil to overwinter, and planted garlic cloves for next year's crop. The garlic not only serves as a deterrent to voles the next spring, but also adds a structural element to the overall visual impression of an herb garden bed.

Although shy by nature, Elaine was forthright in that she didn't know much about the process of gardening, the science behind it, and the extended benefits that gardens quietly give to homes and communities. However, it was clear from the start that she was willing to learn and give it her best. I explained to Elaine that just like other disciplines many gardening practices are fairly mundane, repetitive and definitely not glamorous, but these certain tedious and systematic steps form the backbone of a beautiful, productive and successful garden.

Springtime 2019 was quickly upon us with more garden challenges to deal with due to a very wet and cold beginning which prevented us from getting into the gardens until early May. These delays proved to be challenging as school visits had already been scheduled and we wanted our gardens



Photo: Linda Kinsella

to look their best and tell the stories only they could tell. Little did I appreciate at the time when I was handing out 'to-do's' to Elaine how very busy this young woman was with her senior year studies (which led her to her Salutatorian achievement), varsity math team meetings, 2nd Degree Black Belt Karate commitments, and flute and piano practice. It was a reminder to me that if you need a job completed, give it to a busy person. I learned very quickly that Elaine's natural abilities allow her to learn new concepts quickly. She is a keen listener, follows instructions with precision, and asks very few but important questions. I'm not sure if Elaine studied Latin at OSHS, but ultimately I think she had fun learning a bit about plant classification and taxonomy based on the Linnaeus hierarchical system. Good stuff.

When the weather began to clear in mid-late May, we first amended our soil (based on the results of our soil test, a must for any successful garden). Elaine commented "You were always stressing the importance of a good soil, and that made an impression on me." Then we had to apply a very important gardening skill - patience. It seems like last year's perennials took an additional two to three weeks to rear their heads above ground level this spring due to the unusually cold spring weather. Since the Historical Society provides a guide to our herb gardens which is available to the public when touring the gardens, it is critical each year to evaluate our plant material and update our inventory to produce this guide. Simultaneously, we are informed of what plants didn't make it through the winter - which happens, and then these plants are deleted from the inventory. Fortunately our overall head count was in good shape.

Despite her very busy spring schedule Elaine stayed abreast of all of these twists and turns which nature delivers. Our next steps were to divide perennials that were creating an over-crowded environment (plants like air circulation), purchase

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Student Volunteer High School Graduates



Maddie Bradley

Throughout my four years at Old Saybrook High School, I have been heavily involved in the music department through band, chorus and select ensembles as well as within the drama department. I was a lead character in four musical productions and became the

secretary of the drama club my junior year. I am happily involved with the Class of 2022 as a link leader and was a senior counselor at their freshmen retreat at Camp Hazen. I spent my summers giving tours at the lovely Hart House and was happy to volunteer at the fall dinner they have held for the last two years. I feel greatly rewarded in my participation within the Old Saybrook Historical Society because it allowed me to become better aware of our town history and it made me feel more connected to our community. As I move forward, I plan on attending Emmanuel College in Boston, MA as an honors student majoring in psychology with a concentration in counseling and health. I am planning to work towards attending graduate school following my BA and obtaining my Master's and/or PhD in the field of positive psychology, which I am incredibly interested in.

I am extremely grateful for everything that the Historical Society has provided me in the last four years and being involved with them was an experience I will remember forever.



John Gabelmann

Throughout my time in High School, I learned that the way to achieve the most meaningful experience was to participate in as many activities as possible, as they are what enrich life beyond academic knowledge. I did not, however, always have this mindset, and entering high school, I was a far more reserved

individual who was content to attend school and not much beyond that. My experience with volunteering at The Historical Society had a significant impact on shaping the person I feel I have become today.

I will never forget my first time volunteering at the Hart House, going into my freshman year of high school I was uncertain of what the future would bring, but the volunteer network of students at the Hart House helped to strengthen my resolve and give me confidence for the future. The Historical Society was one of the first places I began to feel true confidence, a feeling that would help me to become a person that I am proud to be today.

During my time at Old Saybrook High School I have participated in eight shows in the theatre department, as well as multiple choirs, and band where I play the flute. Outside of music and theatre, I have earned four varsity letters in both indoor and outdoor track. My main academic interest lies in the field of Science, which lead me to apply and to be chosen for Yale's Discovery to Cure internship program during the summer of 2018. Next year I plan on attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where I hope to further my learning in the field of science by double majoring in Biochemistry and Biomedical Engineering.

Volunteering with The Historical Society has truly been a life changing experience for me, creating a network of people around me who I am proud to call friends, as well as helping improve my soft skills and poise. The knowledge I hold of the history of my childhood town will be something I cherish deeply, and I hope the memories I have made at the Hart House will continue to serve me for the rest of my life.

Olivia Gaidry

As a performing artist, writer, and activist I strive to make my community a better place through artistic expression, community service and civic engagement.

At Old Saybrook High School I welcomed new students as an orientation leader and helped girls cultivate the confidence to succeed as a Girls-to-Girls peer leader. I served as a member of the National Honor Society, International Thespian Society, Principal and Superintendent Advisory Committee and the Old Saybrook Public Schools Public Relations Committee. I had the time of my life performing



in select choirs and many roles in drama club productions, receiving the All-Connecticut Cast Award from the Connecticut Drama Association, and the Connecticut Association of Schools Outstanding Arts Award for excellence in the performing arts. My senior year, I accepted the additional roles of Co-Editor-In-Chief of the school newspaper and President of the OSHS Drama Club, helping my fellow students discover, develop and share their voices through writing and the performing arts.

In the larger community I served on the Governor's Prevention Partnership Youth Council, encouraging young people across Connecticut make positive choices and avoid violence, smoking, drugs and alcohol. As part of the original cast of "Her Song", an anti-bullying PSA musical, I helped audiences learn how to recognize, prevent and heal the harm done by bullying. I volunteered with Old Saybrook Youth and Family Services for several years as the assistant choreographer for the youth summer stock program, helping children cultivate the confidence to express themselves on stage and in life. In my spare time, I also write and publish a cruelty-free, good-karma lifestyle blog for teens called Liv's Life, (HowToLiv.com).

Since 8th grade, I have cherished volunteering with the Old Saybrook Historical Society as a tour guide, entertainment coordinator, guest speaker at the 250th anniversary of the Hart House, and as an actress embodying Miss Anna Louise James at the annual cemetery tour. In the process, I have connected with so many incredibly kind and generous people who have mentored and encouraged me throughout my high school career and beyond. I am forever grateful for their love and support which I will take with me to England where I will study musical theatre at The University of London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Amy Young

Throughout high school I have participated in theater, band, chorus, and tennis. I was also an active member of the ecology club, school newspaper, and national honor society. I have been a tour guide for the Old Saybrook Historical society



since my Freshman year. It was not only a great way to learn about my town's rich history, but also helped my transition into high school. I have loved every moment of giving tours in the William Hart House and enjoyed dedicating my time to teach others about Old Saybrook's history. In the fall I will be attending Boston College. I am undecided on my major, but I have always had an interest in social sciences. I would like to thank Mrs. Mcfarlin and all of the Historical Society volunteers for an amazing four years at the OSHS!

New Student Volunteers Training Session



The students met with Marie McFarlin, Kerry Auld and 8th grade social studies teacher Bob Labriola to begin their program. Each student submitted an application and was introduced to the expectations of the program. This year we accepted more than our usual quota of 12 because of the additional help of volunteer, Kerry Auld. *Photo: Tedd Levy*

Facilities Report



Following the recent update of the General William Hart House walls, ceilings, trim and 32 windows; we have switched our focus to repair of exterior features and mechanical equipment.

Early Summer 2019 Completed Repairs

Restorations completed in June and July 2019 included a remodeled basement storage area, upgrade of the Hart House wooden basement-hatchway, and returning an antique doorway barrel-bolt-lock to functionality. Also, in preparation for summer and autumn events, the brick walkway adjacent to the basement-hatchway was (temporarily) reset for safety.

Repair of the Archives Building's 21-year-old air conditioning equipment was completed and is now providing timely cooling for the library and office area. We are hopeful that, with proper maintenance, the air conditioning equipment will last for a few more years.

Near Term Significant Facilities Plans

Facilities plans for this fall include repair of the Hart House Gallery South foundation and exterior wall. This project will include a gallery foundation repair, new brick walkway, new drainage and garden area. Pictured here is the existing Gallery South wall, recently reset brick walk-way, adjacent basement hatchway and antique millstone.

Cedar roof replacement for the Archives building and the North roof of the Hart House kitchen is on our facilities "watch list." To provide both optimum roof-design aesthetics and roof-life duration, the facilities plan is to install pressure-treated cedar roof shingles.

Ed Armstrong, Facilities Manager

OSHS Herb Garden Mentor and Student, continued from page 3

new plants for the garden to reflect our mission of "Herbs with a Purpose" and to invigorate our inventory, to tag our garden plants, to apply an organic fertilizer to get the plants off to a good start, and to mulch. Elaine distinguished herself in every next task she attempted, and I sincerely appreciated that Elaine 'respects the clock, rolls up her sleeves, and gets the job done.'

All the while Elaine was navigating in the Hart House gardens this spring, she continuously asked "What more can I do to help?" I grew so confident in her abilities, trustworthiness and dedication that she occasionally worked alone to earn her hours when it was difficult to schedule times together. Singularly Elaine also made a lot of headway in the general spring garden chores in the woodland garden which I believe she really enjoyed. It was always clear to me that she didn't come to this experience just to 'put in her required hours' for her community service. Elaine came to learn, and learn she did. Elaine says "It's hard to put into words how much you can learn from a garden. Mara Beamish says it best "A garden always gives back more than it receives."

By the end of June, Elaine realized that there is peace and tranquility in our historic Hart House gardens whether you are sitting on a bench overlooking the celebrated trees and shrubs, a notable rose garden, an espalier pear tree, a peaceful woodland/wildflower garden or digging in the healthy organic soil to create new plant life. Elaine gave the Hart House gardens a gift of her time, commitment and energy, and she in return received a gift from the Historical Society of learning lifelong skills and enjoying the memories that she will hold dear forever.

Elaine Yang will be a member of the freshman class at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ this September. We know Elaine will do Old Saybrook proud.

*Bonnie Penders
OSHS Herb Gardener
Advanced Master Gardener and
FGCCT Landscape Design Consultant*



The Historical Society hosted a reception and early preview of the new exhibit, "Struggle for Survival: Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War." Some 50 members of the Chamber socialized and were treated to comments about the exhibit by David Naumec, Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center.



2019 Memorial Day Parade. Trustees JH Torrance Downes, Ed Armstrong and car owners Mr and Mrs. Bruce Edgerton.



Pamela Vittorio presents the copy of Rufus Grider's painting of our Revolutionary War Oliver Graham powder horn to the Historical Society at her excellent presentation at the Hart House of her research on the life of Oliver Graham, her ancestor.



Judy Liddington and Tammi Williamson, hailing from Tennessee, are descendants of Robert Chapman, a founder of the Saybrook Colony. They only knew of the previous four generations that had gone west through New York to Wisconsin. Mrs. Liddington soon discovered the Saybrook connection and traveled here to do in-depth research including visiting the sites of Chapman's land holdings and Saybrook Fort.

Photo: Diane Hoyt

Dedicated to Preserving, Protecting and Promoting the History of Old Saybrook

OLD SAYBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S
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Honoring Barbara Maynard

To recognize individuals who have made a difference, the Old Saybrook Historical Society presented its "Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation" to former eight-time First Selectwoman Barbara J. Maynard for her many achievements in historic preservation.

She becomes the third recipient of the Preservation Award and the first to receive it for her Lifetime Achievements.

In her honor the Historical Society planted a Valley Forge Elm and placed a bench with a marker at Saybrook Fort Monument Park. Ceremonies were held honoring Ms. Maynard on July 12 with comments by First Selectman Carl Fortuna, State Senator Norman Needleman, State Representative Devin Carney, CT Trust for Historic Preservation Executive Director Jane Montanaro, Edward Mosca, former Chief of Police and Historical Society President Marie McFarlin.

Ms. Maynard served as First Selectwoman from 1973 until 1989 and her love for the town and its history, plus a touch of political savvy, found expression in her signature campaign materials which were large size postcards of long-gone views of Old Saybrook.

More notably, she led efforts to obtain the town's mini-golf course and the nearby Sandbar Restaurant, today's Vicki Duffy Pavilion and arranged with the State of Connecticut for the purchase at \$1 of what is today the Saybrook Fort Memorial Park. She also arranged for the purchase of Harvey's Beach.

Long a lover of local history, she worked with Elaine Staplins to conceptualize the history of Old Saybrook for the tile wall in Acton Library.

She was a major contributor to the publication



Seated on the newly dedicated bench are Barbara and George Maynard. Standing: Carl Fortuna, First Selectman; Norman Needleman, State Senator; Marie McFarlin, OSHS President; Jane Montanaro, Exec. Director of CT Trust for Historic Preservation and Devin Carney, State Representative.

of "Faces and Places," co-author of "Old Saybrook: Postcard History," and instrumental in publishing "Glimpses of Saybrook in Colonial Days" by Harriet Chapman Chesebrough.

Her efforts have also extended to natural history and she has nurtured and planted seedlings from to town's 1876 Centennial Elms. She almost single handedly saved the Centennial Elm in front of McDonald's Restaurant when the Department of Transportation wanted to remove it to widen the Post Road.

"Planting an elm in her honor is most appropriate," according to Historical Society president Marie McFarlin. "She has been a visionary for practical preservation and her lifetime achievements have defined our community and made it a unique and better place to live, work and play."

Tedd Levy

Antiques & Treasures Auction - a Huge Success



Photos by Ed Armstrong and JH Torrance Downes

Historic Marker Sites



Archaeologist Kevin McBride with State Historic Preservation Office representatives Cathy Labadia and Jenny Scofield visit Saybrook Fort sites as part of info gathering procedures related to listing sites on National Register of Historic Places. They visited Cromwell Court and Cromwell Place sites where archaeologists believe the 1635 Fort was located. After extensive information gathering, the SHPO Board will consider our application for listing; hopefully before the end of the year.

The group, along with Historical Society member Tedd Levy, also stopped at other significant sites, many marked by historic markers designed and developed as part of the Historical Society's "Siege and Battles of Saybrook Fort" project funded by the National Park Service, American Battlefield Protection Program. Funding for the purchase of six historic markers has been provided by the Historic District Commission and installed by the Department of Public Works. *Tedd Levy*

Texas Visitors

Among the many individuals to preview the new exhibit on "The Struggle for Survival: Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War" was this group of women from Houston, Texas. They spent time in Old Saybrook as house guests of Barbara Harms, on right in back row. Barbara is a member of the local Historic District Commission. Her husband Wayne serves on the Historical Society Board of Trustees.

Tedd Levy



From the Archives

As always, we are grateful to both the past and present donors who have entrusted us to protect and preserve the history of Old Saybrook.

NEWEST CONTRIBUTIONS

Various commemorative coins from Old Saybrook and Connecticut; in memory of Reinhold & Betty Ann Koch. **Donated by R. Koch**

Sea Chest donated by Marie McFarlin

Hand-crafted Oars, created by Earl Brockway
Donated by Craig Whittlesey

Child and woman's shoes, doll with leather body and limbs, Adult summer-weight dress and hat. **Donated by Martha Brown**

Rocking Chair that was in the office of Miss Anna James, Old Saybrook pharmacist. **Donated by Barry & Dorothy O'Neill**

Painting of Oliver Graham's Powder Horn.
Photographic copy (original in New York Historical Society)on white canvas. Original powder horn is in the Hart House. **Donated by Pamela Vittoria**

Poster/Storyboards "Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort ". 1. Location; 2. Building the Fort; 3. Native American Settlement at Pashbeshauk; 4. Pequot Ambush at Saybrook Neck; 5. Saybrook and Pequot War; 6. Defending Saybrook Fort and Food.

Handbag Collection, re-discovered in Hart House attic. 14 in all (one had belonged to Jeanette Hart, 1812).

Material pertaining to pre-fab home, Nehantic Trail, built in 1935. One of only 11 built in Connecticut and Florida. **Donated by Bonnie Robinson Cook**

Katharine Hepburn movies on DVD including "The Corn is Green". **Donated by Tedd Levy**

Mounted photos (20th century) of Fenwick houses and residents from Connecticut River Museum exhibit of 2005. **Donated by Brenda Milkofsky**

Drawings of old tools from adz to Cooper's Hatchet to planes by George Maynard. **Donated by George Maynard**

LIBRARY

"The Signs of Connecticut", by Thomas Fantone (1977). **Donated by Christine Nelson**

Family Bible, New Testament, by Thomas Scott. Includes Welles/Merrill family birth and death dates. **Donated by Karen Emack-Dolson**

"The Pequot War", by Edward Ludi

"Religious Justification for Pequot War, 1636-37", by William Adler

"Old Ironsides", by Col. David Fitz

"English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett", by Lee Hanchett. **Donated by author.**

"Sam's Walk", by Lila & Ray DiZefalo. A scrapbook of wild flowers and other points of interest along Maple Avenue in Knollwood. **Donated by author.**

"The Hills of Home: Embracing the History of Arthur Nelson Hill, 1881-1947", by Lloyd Stevens. **Donated by author.**

"Connecticut's Post Offices and Postmarks ,by Arthur Warmsley. **Donated by Kerry Auld.**

"Thomas Leffingwell". **Donated by Russell Mahan.**

"For Adam's Sake", by Alegra diBonaventure. Intertwined lives of several New London families and their slaves in 17th and 18th century.

"Constitution vs Guerrier", by Mark Landos. Frigates during War of 1812. **Donated by Marie McFarlin**

"Passport & Guide to Exploring Connecticut", by Martin Podskoch. **Donated by author.**

"The Shoreline Electric Railway Company", by O.R. Cumming and Charles F. Munger, Jr.

"The Chapman Family Descendants of Robert Chapman" by Rev. Frederick Chapman (1854).

"Public Records State of CT, Vol.#22, 1823-24". **Donated by Tedd Levy.**

"Crossings: 3 centuries from ferry boat to the new Baldwin Bridge", by Ian Hubbard (1993). **Donated by Richard Bourne, Jr.**

"Historic Herbs at the Hart House", by Elaine Yang. Senior project of student volunteer as tribute to her work in the Herb Gardens.

Diane Hoyt



The Old Saybrook Historical Society

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Upcoming Events

August 25 – US Coast Guard Dixieland Jazz Band, 4 to 5:30 pm on Campus

September 7 - "Taste of the Town" 5 to 8 pm Our fabulous fundraiser under the tent featuring wonderful local restaurants, specialty food stores and wine tasting

September 22 - Celebrate OSHS and Westbrook Historical Society volunteer Margaret Buckridge Bock's 100th Birthday from 2 to 4 on Campus



www.saybrookhistory.org

**The Old Saybrook Historical Society
proudly presents**



**THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
DIXIELAND / JAZZ BAND**
Sunday, August 25, 2019
4 - 5:30 pm
at the Hart House Campus

Public Welcome
Bring a chair

