



Spring, Summer 2024



Marek Sarba  
A Painter of History



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# President's Message

The past months brought many different events to the Society. We were thrilled to present the President's Award to a packed audience in the Choo Choo Lounge at the Saybrook Point Resort which has the outstanding murals of a past era in Old Saybrook. We had a special reception for the opening of our stellar exhibit and everyone enjoyed meeting the artist Marek Sarba and his wife Barbara. The visitors raved about the magnificent paintings. Recently we had the friends and family of the remarkable women, Sally D'Aquila and Elisabeth Petry, come together to see the Memorial Tree planted in their honor courtesy of the Sally and Sal D'Aquila Fund at the Community Foundation of Middlesex County.

The events on Campus highlighted

our extraordinary and lush Heritage Gardens as well as the huge project, just finished, on the south side of the Gallery.

Lamar LeMonte, Edward Armstrong, Cathy Loguidice and Teddi Kopcha are to be commended for the success of these undertakings. Our talented and dedicated gardeners never cease to amaze!

I thank all our members who gave to the Annual Fund which is our primary source of income. We are so appreciative of each and every donation especially since we are facing the replacement of the Archives Building air conditioners, part of our never-ending stewardship!

*With best wishes, Marie*

# Exhibit: Marek Sarba, A Painter of History

The exhibit of our devoted and talented member and resident of Old Saybrook continues to bring enthusiastic reviews. It is exciting to have this exceptional artist tell the history of each painting as well as his personal adventures.

Born in Poland he went to sea as a teenager and was in the Polish Navy. He has had many experiences throughout his life including working in local shipyards, salvage tugs and cargo ships and for 30 years he traveled the world. In the late 1980s he, his wife and 2 daughters escaped to the United States.

There was never a period of time during all these years that he did not paint. His maritime paintings reflect his understanding and love of the sea and knowledge of history. We, who have seen his paintings, have experienced how teaching history through art is

inspirational and breathtaking.

"The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever".

*Jacques Cousteau*





# The Lafayette Trail in Connecticut

## Lecture at The Kate, Sunday, August 18, 1-2 pm



Julien Icher is a 31-year-old French national, founder, and president of The Lafayette Trail, Inc. Over the past few years he has given over 74 lectures about Lafayette's 1824-25 Farewell Tour of the United States. Julien brings Lafayette's

tour of the Connecticut shoreline to life with stories, slides and video. His lectures promote a broader understanding of Lafayette's numerous contributions to American independence.

General Lafayette was a French military officer who volunteered to join the Continental Army, led by General George Washington, in the American Revolutionary War. 43 years later in 1824, President James Monroe invited him to the United States as the nation's guest, where he visited all 24 states in the union, including Connecticut and an overnight stay in Saybrook. Lafayette visited 30 CT towns in 1824, including Branford, Guilford, Madison, Clinton, Westbrook, Old Saybrook, Old Lyme, East Lyme, New London and Norwich.

Tickets are \$12 purchased at The Kate or use this link: [www.thekate.org/event/the-lafayette-trail-in-ct/](http://www.thekate.org/event/the-lafayette-trail-in-ct/) Sponsored by the Old Saybrook Historical Society and Brodeur & Company, CPAs, PC

## Marie McFarlin and Steven Gernhardt in the Memorial Day Parade

The truck is a 1925 Ford Model TT C-Cab Dump truck. The Ford Model TT trucks are Ford's first commercial truck and production started in 1917. The "TT" stands for "ton truck", the truck can haul 1-ton of material. Customers would purchase these trucks, use/abuse them and when they broke down, the trucks were pushed into a field to rot. I was very lucky to find this one in its current condition, most of the old trucks you find online are just rusted shells. The original owner took care of it and the truck has been stored indoors all its life. I've been told by many Model T enthusiasts that the Ford Model TT C-Cab trucks are very rare, so rare you seldom see them at car shows and never on the road. I was looking for a truck like this for a long time (20+ years) and while searching one night I saw this truck being auctioned off in an on-line auction. My wife Diana saw how excited I was when I found it. She placed the first and last bids guaranteeing I was the highest bidder. Technically, she's the owner of the truck! The truck was originally purchased by a farmer in 1925 living in northern Massachusetts and



it remained on the farm until his death in the early 1970's. After the farmer's death, his grandson found the truck stored in one of the farmer's barns and traded the truck as a deposit for a hot rod at a custom car shop in New Hampshire. The owner of the custom car shop in New Hampshire had the truck stored in the back of his shop since the 1970's and in 2016 realized he wasn't going to do anything with it and decided to auction it off.

I acquired the truck in 2016 and had it stored in Carl Fortuna's garage until 2018 while my barn was being restored. In 2021, Diana successfully got the truck registered (not a trivial task) with the help of a custom car shop in Orange CT, and presently I'm the second registered owner of the truck in 99 years. The truck has never been restored, is all original, still retaining the original wooden floorboards which were made from shipping crates at the Ford factory, and the headlight lenses. The only items I've replaced on the truck were the tires, which dated back to 1936 and the seats.

## Edmund H. Mosca

Edmund H. Mosca passed away peacefully on March 23, 2024. He served as chief of the Old Saybrook Police



Department from 1971 until 2009. His achievements are outstanding ranging from the local to the State and then the national level where he was recognized as a leading authority on law enforcement and the needs of local police departments.

He was devoted to his Town and was named the Honorary Fire Chief in Old Saybrook (a title no one else has received) among many other awards. We were so pleased to have him serve as a Trustee of the Society after he retired. Ed was the best cheerleader ever. With his enthusiasm, expertise, and knowledge of the Town, he was great help with our activities,

I will never forget his kindness and advice as a mentor when I started on my journey as president. How lucky I was to have known him!

May he rest in peace.

Marie

## Garden Interns

The OSHS was fortunate this spring to support three Garden Interns as they fulfill their Community Service requirement while seeking certification in the UConn Master Gardener Program. This state-wide program began in 1978 in Connecticut to prepare adults with learning opportunities to expand their knowledge and interest in horticulture, environmentally-sound practices, agriculture and the art and science of gardening.

The program entails sixteen weeks of classroom time, including studies related to botany, entomology, pesticide safety, pruning, invasive plants, water quality, pest management, ornamental gardens, soil, trees, shrubs and vines, plant ID and diagnostic techniques, among other curricula. In addition, thirty hours of hands-on training and research take place at UConn's regional offices where the Interns learn to become a resource for the public, and another thirty volunteer hours of community service take place supporting local community activities



at fairs, markets and public gardens under the guidance of a certified Master Gardener.

Pictured are this year's Interns Kim Heyl Baker of Killingworth, Mary Jane Sullivan of Old Saybrook and Barbara Johnson of Essex, along with Advanced Master Gardener and Mentor Bonnie Penders, second from the left. The Interns joined all our devoted Hart House Gardeners Nancy Dziama, Joanne Goduti, Jim Madden, Jessica May, Susan Murphy, Elizabeth Norman, Jennifer Radnak,

Carin Roaldset (in spirit), and Mary Walter to support our Hart House Garden Market on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. As always Ed Armstrong - Trustee, and Linda Kinsella - veteran Master Gardener, Hart House Garden Keeper, and organizer *extraordinaire* did a wonderful job ensuring the successful Garden Market. Despite the overcast and rainy weather an esprit de corps was blossoming.

Bonnie Penders, May 2024



# Nathaniel Fiennes, Baron Saye and Sele



*Baron and Baroness Saye and Sele greeting Historical Society members at Broughton Castle*

Nathaniel Fiennes, the 21st Baron Saye and Sele, died on January 20 at 103 years old. He was the owner of Broughton Castle which played a part in the settlement in 1635 of the Saybrook Colony.

The unusual compound title of "Saye and Sele" dates from the original creation of the barony in 1447. It is partly personal, from the earlier, "Lords Say" and part territorial through the ownership of land in Kent.

The family name "Fiennes" (pronounced Fines) is that of a village in Artois in northern France from which a certain Giles who went to England in the thirteenth century following in the train of his cousin Queen Eleanor of Castile when she came to marry the future Edward I. In 1300 Sir John Broughton built a manor house. During the 16th century the Broughton Castle, a medieval manor house was turned into a Tudor Mansion because of the years of structural changes by the Fiennes family. It gave way to political activity in the 17th century as the family was part of the effort to work against the reign of Charles the First.

The Baron, at that time, was one of the patentees who hired Lion Gardiner to build a plantation at the mouth of the Ct. River.

The 21st Baron, Nathaniel, was very interested in the past history and in 1980 the Baron and Baroness

visited Old Saybrook for 5 days, It was a festive time and included a parade and dinner dance in their honor. The Society has on display a gift from them. It is a Fiennes family flag that was mounted on the Castle entrance.

Nathaniel Fiennes was a very likeable, genuine person and wonderful owner of Broughton Castle, Banbury, Oxfordshire, England. Linda Kinsella visited the Castle and spent the afternoon there. She wrote: "It is beautifully sited, surrounded by a large moat, amid open pasture complete with grazing sheep and cattle. The gardens are spectacular. It was a memorable time with the Fiennes". We have another example of how the study of history brings so many people together.

Thank you, Nathaniel.



*My cousin George and I are deeply appreciative of the assistance from the staff at the historical Society as we investigated our Saybrook ancestry.  
Cal Carpenter and George Ingraham*



April 17, 2024

Old Saybrook Historical Society  
350 Main Street  
Old Saybrook, CT



Dear Members of the Old Saybrook Historical Society,

It is with immense gratitude and humility that I want to thank you for presenting me with the President's Award for Historic Preservation. It is an incredible honor to have received this specially created award and for it to have come from my peers and constituents. To be recognized by the esteemed Old Saybrook Historical Society is truly a highlight in my career. Your acknowledgment of my efforts in preserving, restoring, and honoring the rich history of Old Saybrook and Saybrook Point touched my heart and honors my family as well.

The kind words expressed by Carl Fortuna, Norm Needleman, Holly Cheesman, Devin Carney, Erin McBride, Jane Montanero, Marie McFarlin, Wayne Harms, and all those in attendance at the ceremony were greatly appreciated. Their commendations and citations serve as a reminder of the importance of our collective mission to safeguard our heritage for generations to come.

The ceremony was a truly memorable occasion, made even more special by the presence of esteemed community leaders, representatives, and fellow preservation enthusiasts. It was particularly moving to receive the framed 1871 Connecticut Valley Railroad spike, a poignant symbol of our shared commitment to preserving the past while embracing the future. It was also such a pleasure to meet Brett Martin; the young man that researched the book on the history of the Zanni family.

It humbles me to be chosen for the President's Award for Historic Preservation. Please know that my dedication to preserving the history and heritage of Old Saybrook will continue with the same fervor and dedication that you so graciously recognized through this award.

Once again, please accept my heartfelt thanks for this meaningful recognition. It is an honor that I will always cherish.

With warmest regards,

*Stephen Tagliatela*

**Stephen Tagliatela**



# Summer in the Garden

Major repairs and renovations to the exhibit gallery this spring, resulted in a very attractive reconfiguration of the culinary herb garden and a redesign of the original Tinsley Garden, (named for Frank Tinsley, the first president of the society).

The 3000 pound millstone embedded in the exhibit gallery walkway was removed and replaced by a smooth stone patio. The millstone was repurposed as a seat in the Tinsley Garden.

Construction work delayed planting the culinary herbs a bit. But with the new space there will be plenty to give to the Shoreline Soup Kitchen and Pantry come August and September.

A new teak bench can be found near the memorial roses in this area. The bench was given by many friends of Carol Koopman Levy, who passed away last September. The dedication quote on the bench reflects the beautiful person she was.

This past spring was long and cold, then suddenly June came in with heat waves, muggy days and rain storms. The hot wet weather produced rapid flowering of plants.

Blue “mop head” hydrangea were especially prolific and noticeable all over town.

While we don’t grow this very popular hydrangea in the heritage garden, we do grow *Hydrangea quercifolia*. A native variety, with large, oak shaped leaves and big, white, flat, “bee landing pad” flowers that smell like honey. These plants have very few pests and can grow in sun or shade. It’s a great shrub for any garden. The white flowers come early in the summer, then turn pinkish and finally to brown in the fall.

Three young trees were planted on the “campus” this spring. The majestic maple that stood near the road was removed by the Town due to systemic disease. It was replaced by a sturdy native elm tree.

On the north side of the Archive Building we planted a pink-white flowering crab apple.

This tree is in memory of Ed Mosca, our former Chief of Police, and a long time Trustee and valued friend of the historical society.

The third tree was gifted by Sally D’Aquila, to

honor her friend Liz Petry. Liz grew up in Old Saybrook and went on to be an attorney, a journalist and author. She was the daughter of best selling author, Ann Petry and grand niece of Miss James, who owned James Pharmacy (and the first woman licensed pharmacist in Connecticut). Liz was a good friend of the Historical Society. A red maple was planted on the south lawn in sight of the James Pharmacy.



*Petry and D’Aquila family by the Memorial Tree at the reception.*

We’ve received many positive comments on the new email feature “What’s Blooming this Week”. The colorful photos, taken of flowers in the garden is the work of gardener, Elizabeth Normen. Elizabeth selects plants that are at their peak, snaps a picture, writes the name and a brief description and sends it on to our publicity director, Lamar LeMonte to post weekly, along with other notices that go out to historical society members.

Just a simple reminder of nature’s incredible beauty.

When you visit the garden, please say hello and thank you to our volunteers who work many, many hours each season to keep the garden a place that’s beautiful and pollinator inviting.

*Linda Kinsella, Keeper*

# Facilities Report

Preservation work for the Hart House Gallery and South Garden was completed this past June.

This significant project was started in November 2023 with the excavation of the circa 1662 millstone from its door-stoop position, removal of the South Garden brick walkway and shrubs, repair of the existing granite foundation and installation of a new granite patio.

Significant carpentry work in May 2024 included both the exterior walls and the interior exhibit area.

Our contractor applied his experience in historic preservation to retain the distinguishing features of the Hart House and gallery. The South Garden and lawn were lowered to return the soil-level back to its original construction condition, and both the existing gallery foundation and basement bulkhead were repaired rather than being replaced. The project replaced forty feet of the deteriorated Hart House Gallery South-wall vertical siding to match the original siding, along with replacement of the two Gallery doors (the existing siding and doors had deteriorated due to improper drainage and high soil level.) To replicate the original Gallery construction, a Dutch-door was selected for one of the two new doors.

Concurrent with this work, the South Garden was redesigned to utilize the antique-millstone as a butterfly-garden feature. In addition, the herb garden soil level was lowered and the garden design modified to enhance the existing sundial and facilitate planting and harvesting of herbs for the local food pantry.

The top priority on our facilities watch-list is now the Archives building cedar roof and HVAC. We completed minor repair of the Archives roof required by our insurance company. The Archives Building was constructed in 1998 and although we have been fortunate that the roof and HVAC have lasted 26 years, we will now plan for appropriate replacement.

*Ed Armstrong*

BEFORE

Hart House Gallery South Siding and Garden Project, 2023 Photo



DURING

Hart House Gallery South Siding and Garden Project, May 2024 Photo



AFTER

Hart House Gallery South Siding and Garden Project, June 2024





# Return to Normandy



*Brett Martin leaves a rose at the grave site of Claude Zanni, who lived in Old Saybrook and was killed in action in the War.*

Today the guns are silent. The hedgerows have regrown, the fields are replowed, and the grandchildren of those who witnessed that monumental struggle are all grown up. But this year, 80 years later, over a million people flocked to Normandy, France to bear witness to the ceremonies celebrating the liberation from the Nazis beginning on June 6, 1944. I was lucky enough to be one of them.

So many of us returned to Normandy with the same thought: that this would be the last major anniversary to honor the living veterans who were really there, at least in substantial numbers. And it's true: of all of the veterans honored at the Normandy American cemetery on June 6th this year, the youngest was 96 and the oldest 107. In only so many years the stories from D-Day will exist solely in the pages of history books and no longer in living memory.

Historical reenactors, WWII-era vehicles, and the flyover of military planes let those of us visiting Normandy unencumbered by the trauma of war to reimagine the world that those veterans inhabited.

The returning soldiers, some of whom hadn't been back since the war, were treated like celebrities, and rightfully so. I had the privilege of meeting a few of them, and I'll never forget singing "God Bless America" in a crowd of Americans, led by a 100 year old Iwo Jima veteran. It was the most moving experience of my life, being there for the 80th, and one day I will take my children and my grandchildren back to Normandy to remind them that freedom requires sacrifice.

In a bitterly divided, increasingly pessimistic America, it was a helpful dose of perspective. Phrases painted on store windows like "Welcome to our liberators!" and "Thank you for our freedom!" rang home how, for the French, with the scars of war and occupation continuing to pockmark the physical and psychological landscape, freedom is not taken for granted, nor is it something abstract. Remembering the stories of those who fought is not enough, in my view; we must hold ourselves to a higher standard as citizens, ensuring that we take care of this sacred republic of ours that so many men and women fought and died to preserve. 80 years later and beyond, America remembers the sacrifice at Normandy.

*Brett Martin*



*Alan Cantor, trustee, spent the day at the CELEBRATE OLD SAYBROOK STREET PARTY to share information about the Society. He had an interesting and busy time greeting hundreds of people.*



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## Save the Dates

**Julien Icher Lecture** at The Kate, Sunday, August 18, 1 to 2 Lafayette Trail in Connecticut

**Music in the Heritage Garden** by Bootleg Harmony, Sunday, August 25, 4 to 5:30 Free

**Cypress Cemetery Tour** Sunday, October 27 4:00, \$5 to benefit the Society

**Holiday House Tour** Saturday,  
December 7, 10 to 3

**Wassail Party** at Hart House, Sunday  
December 8, 3:30 to 5



[www.saybrookhistory.org](http://www.saybrookhistory.org)