

# THE GUILFORD KEEPING SOCIETY



*Preserving and Sharing Guilford's Treasures*

SPRING 2025 - NEWSLETTER

GUILFORDKEEPINGSOCIETY.ORG

## President's Letter

Greetings!

As we move into spring, the Guilford Keeping Society is moving forward with our many events for the coming year. Please see the calendar in this issue for our schedule of events.

Our first event is the Wine Tasting to be held at the Medad Stone Tavern on Saturday, April 26, from 4 to 7 pm. This event is one of our fundraisers and is an opportunity to taste the fine wines our vendors will bring. We hope you will join us for this enjoyable time!

Our next event is our house tour on Saturday, May 31. Our planning committee has secured a number of fine and distinctive homes for this tour. We are excited to once again be sponsoring a house tour and appreciate the homeowners opening up their homes to the public for this one day.

Our tag/plant/bake sale on June 14 and our annual picnic on July 5 are our following two events, and the others noted in our schedule close out the year. We hope that you will support all our events!

Last year, we received a grant through the American Rescue Plan Act administered by the Guilford Foundation for the Town of Guilford. The \$26,000 grant is allowing us to proceed with long-awaited re-glazing, repair, and repainting of the many windows at the Medad Stone Tavern, preserving them from weather damage. We are slowly accomplishing this undertaking and appreciate the work Guilford Glass is providing to preserve the Tavern.

Since our last newsletter, we held our Annual Meeting in November, conducting regular business followed by a presentation, "Trolleys Along the Shoreline". This presentation, along with past presentations, is available on our website, [guilfordkeepingsociety.org](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.org), under the video tab. We also held our annual New Year's Day Open House at the Tavern and were happy to host many members and friends for the afternoon.

We have vacancies on the Board and are looking for new members to join the Board. If you have an interest in the GKS and want to help us by joining the Board, please feel free to contact me.

We have had a generous donation which will be used as a match for fundraising. Please watch for future announcements on how you can help us match those funds.

Work parties at both properties are scheduled and noted on the calendar. 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 member of the Board, we rely 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

President

MISSION STATEMENT: THE GUILFORD KEEPING SOCIETY COLLECTS, PRESERVES AND SHARES THE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

P.O. BOX 363, GUILFORD, CT 06437 • 203-453-2263 • REGISTERED 501C3 NON-PROFIT

**Matching Grant received**

One of our members has made a generous donation to the Society. It is their wish that this be used for a matching grant for fundraising. The Board appreciates this donation and is preparing information for this capital campaign.

**You can help us match this generous gift by donating at: [guilfordkeepingsociety.org/donate](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.org/donate)**



**Nothing Was General  
About General Tom Thumb**

*An Early American Celebrity from Connecticut*  
by John Plant, GKS Library Committee, Jan. 2025



*Pictured here: P. T. Barnum (top)  
Mr. & Mrs. General Tom Thumb (center couple),  
Commodore Nutt (left), Minnie Warren (right).  
Carte de visite photo on cardstock, c. mid-1870s.  
GKS Collection (P-3000-237 colorized).*

To read about carte de visite photos in the Guilford Keeping Society Collection, more on these individuals and other articles, please go to: [guilfordkeepingsociety.org/items](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.org/items).

**Access Improvements at our museums**

As part of our ongoing maintenance and improvements to our properties, work was needed on the access to our woodworking barn at the Thomas Griswold House and the erosion that kept occurring at the Medad Stone Tavern driveway.

Through the generosity of the Stony Creek Granite Quarry and Arthur J. Offredi Excavating, LLC., last year, material was obtained, brought to the drive to the Woodworking Barn, spread and graded for better access to the barn.

This spring, the drive at the Tavern was reworked to control the erosion by Arthur J. Offredi Excavating, LLC., at a reduced fee.

Thanks to both companies for their generosity and assistance in making these improvements.

— THE GUILFORD —  
KEEPING SOCIETY



# Wine

# Tasting

## 26

## April 2025

**Join us for a fun night of  
great wines and hors  
d'oeuvres.**

**4pm - 7pm**

**Medad Stone Tavern**  
171 Three Mile Course, Guilford

Advanced Tickets \$35  
General Admission \$40

Purchase tickets online, at Franks  
Package Store, & The Hartmann Group





More Information:  
[guilfordkeepingsociety.org](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.org)

THE GUILFORD  
KEEPING SOCIETY

# HOUSE TOUR



SHOWCASING  
THE CHARM AND  
CHARACTER OF  
GUILFORD, CT  
HOMES

SATURDAY  
MAY 31  
2025  
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Tickets available March 1, 2025  
at the following locations:  
Breakwater Books, Sachem Card and Party Shop  
or online at [guilfordkeepingsociety.org](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.org)  
Ticket price: \$40 pre-purchase/\$45 day of tour



## Step Inside Guilford's History: The 2025 Guilford House Tour Returns This Spring

The Guilford Keeping Society is delighted to announce the long-awaited return of the **Guilford House Tour**, a vital fundraiser for GKS. Mark your calendars—this year's tour will take place on **Saturday, May 31, 2025**, from **10:00 AM to 4:00 PM**, offering a rare and inspiring look inside some of Guilford's most fascinating homes.

This **self-guided tour** will feature **nine unique properties**, each located within one mile of the historic Guilford Green, which will serve as the starting point for the event. From colonial charm to mid-century elegance to a must-see contemporary landmark. Each stop on the tour reflects the town's deep architectural roots and vibrant history. Whether you're a lover of history, architecture, or simply curious about the beautiful homes that grace our community, this is a day not to be missed.

### Tickets are on sale now!

- **Advance tickets:** \$40
- **Day-of tickets:** \$45

Tickets can be purchased at **Sachem Card and Party, Breakwater Books**, or online at [guilfordkeepingsociety.org](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.org).

We are seeking volunteers to help make the day a success. If you'd like to be a part of this special event, please consider signing up at:

[HOUSE TOUR VOLUNTEER SIGN UP](#)

Join us as we open the doors to Guilford's past, present, and future—one home at a time!

### We can use your help

The Guilford Keeping Society is looking for volunteers to work on specific needs at our two museums.

- **Docents** to share the history of the museums.
- **Volunteering at Early Guilford Days (May 15, 16, 19, 20).**
- **Volunteering at other events.**
- **Tavern Crew:** to clean the Medad Stone Tavern to make it shine.
- **Tavern Garden Crew:** to maintain the flower beds.
- **Griswold House Crew:** to clean and make the interior glow.
- **Gris Gardeners:** to maintain the front garden & herb garden at the Griswold House.
- **Experience/interest in grant writing.**

Email [info@guilfordkeepingsociety.org](mailto:info@guilfordkeepingsociety.org) if you're interested in helping us in any of these areas.



**\$26,000**  
**American Rescue**  
**Plan Act (ARPA)**  
**money received.**

*photo: courtesy of  
the Guilford  
Foundation*

GKS board members received \$26,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), administered by the Guilford Foundation for the Town of Guilford. This grant is being used to reglaze, repair and repaint many windows at the Medad Stone Tavern to preserve them from weather damage.



### ***Trolleys Along the Shoreline***

Guilford Keeping Society President Stephen B. Dudley described the brief but fascinating history of the “Trolleys along the shoreline” at the GKS Annual Meeting on Nov. 20, 2024.

With photographs and personal recollections from some of his own relatives, Dudley explained that, after initial construction was halted due to lack of funds, Groton railroad magnate Morton Plant provided a substantial investment to allow the line to be built extending from New Haven to Old Saybrook in an effort to build up the economy in this part of the state.

*Guilford Keeping Society Library Archives*

Working in teams of 100, laborers completed the first phase of the line by 1910 and expanded it to New Haven, Ivoryton and Chester by 1914. But the ambitious project, bankrolled almost entirely by Plant himself, never turned a profit and was shut down in 1919, one year after Plant’s death. The trolley resumed operations in 1923 with reduced limits of the service - however ridership diminished and the entire system was shut down by 1930. Plant, who made a vast fortune building railroads and hotels in Florida, couldn’t have predicted the arrival of the gasoline-powered bus that decimated the urban trolley business.

Dudley recalled how some of his relatives remembered the trolley well, including the practice of engineers attaching “a big gum band” on the rheostat to control the speed for the downhill run on Long Hill Road toward the center of town. He also related some dark moments, including a crash that killed 19 in North Branford.

The memory of the trolley lives on in stretches of the former grade, especially extending through Sachems Head, down Trolley Road to the former crossing at the back of Joshua Cove.



*Board member - Steve VanDerMaelen*

The New Year’s Day open house party, held at the Medad Stone Tavern, was enjoyed by all who attended. Pat Lovelace was honored on that day. Pat began her involvement with the GKS in 1994 when, as a fourth-grade teacher at Melissa Jones School, she and her students participated in Early Guilford Days. After her retirement in 2002, she became a GKS volunteer, leading workshops during Early Guilford Days. Soon after, Pat became a board member and eventually became Recording Secretary. In 2008, she took over coordinating EGD jointly with the Hyland House.



*GKS President Stephen B. Dudley  
& Pat Lovelace*

That same year, she became the Museum Director, and in 2012, she became the Curator. She continued as both until her retirement in September 2024. Pat will continue with Early Guilford Days activities and the American Girl Doll and Colonial Camps. The GKS greatly appreciates Pat for her decades of dedication and service.

**Unique Gift from Jane & Doctor Thomas Hanson**

Last summer, a unique discovery at #135 Goose Lane in Guilford prompted an equally unique gift to the Guilford Keeping Society by Jane and Tom Hanson.

The Hansons have been loving stewards of the historic circa 1815 house at this address for nearly 50 years. Known as the William Dudley House, the small well-proportioned dwelling of the Federal period is part of a large collection of houses at Clapboard Hill built exclusively by members of the Dudley family, 1764–1952. The result is that the buildings of Clapboard Hill are perceived primarily as a group—a group that holds together and gives the area an identity. A large part of the Clapboard Hill neighborhood is on the National Register of Historic Places.

During a cellar-to-attic tour of the William Dudley House, Town Historian Joel Helander discovered a set of folding school benches with an attached desk. They were apparently overlooked, if not forgotten, lying on the dirt floor of the low cellar.

Although circumspect, there are several reasons to believe that these antique furnishings—in very good condition—may have originated in the Clapboard Hill District School House standing further up the hillside. They are small in size for very young students, which agrees with a record that Clapboard Hill School was outfitted with higher, larger seats and desks in 1912. Furthermore, several generations of children living in the Dudley House on Goose Lane attended Clapboard Hill School.

The Hansons gifted the school furniture to the Guilford Keeping Society, realizing that the Society’s future plans are to resurrect the little temple of learning as an educational adjunct to their other museums. Thank you, Jane and Tom, for your unique gift!



*Stephen B. Dudley, former co-owner of Clapboard Hill School House and president of GKS, receives the Hansons’ gift at the doorway of the school.*

[Follow us on Facebook](#)



*Admission to  
Museums is  
Free*

- Keeping Society  
Board of Directors**  
 Stephen Dudley  
*President*  
 Peter Mousch  
*Vice President*  
 Jeff Beatty  
 Sarah Cooper  
 Dan Fisher  
 Liz Goss  
 Robert Hartmann  
 Jeff Hutchins  
 Gus Kellogg  
 Carol McGrath  
 Meghan Mills  
 Tony Piscitelli  
 Winnie Seibert  
 Fran Swietlicki  
 Tracy Tomaselli  
 Steve VanDerMaelen  
 Lisa Wohlert

## *Upcoming Events*

Date	Event	Location
4/19/2025	Clean-up Day	MST (9 am-noon)
4/26/2025	Wine Tasting	MST (4 -7 pm)
5/31/2025	Guilford House Tour	Various Historic Homes (10-4)
6/3/2025	Clean-up Day	TGH (9 am-noon)
6/7/2025	Museum Opening	MST/TGH (11-4)
6/14/2025	Tag, Plant & Bake Sale	TGH (9 am-1pm)
7/5/2025	Summer Picnic	TGH (noon-4pm)
7/7 - 7/11	American Girl Doll Camp	MST (Full)
7/14 - 7/18	American Girl Doll Camp	MST (9:30-12:30)
TBD	Quarry Tour	Quarry
8/4 - 8/8	Colonial Camp	TGH (9:30-12:30)
10/4/2025	Fall Beer Tasting	MST (3-6 pm)
11/19/2025	Annual Meeting	Guilford Free Library (6:30 pm)

Go to [www.guilfordkeepingsociety.org](http://www.guilfordkeepingsociety.org) for more details.

### ***Wine Tasting April 26th***

The Guilford Keeping Society will hold a Wine Tasting on Saturday, April 26, 2025, from 4 to 7pm at the Medad Stone Tavern located at 171 Three Mile Course, Guilford, Connecticut. Tickets for adults, 21 or older, are available at Frank's Package Store, 15 Boston Street; The Hartmann Group, 705 Boston Post Road; online or at the door. Advanced purchase tickets are \$35 and \$40 the day of the Wine Tasting.

Kirsta Ifkovic, owner of Frank's Package Store, is working with area wine distributors to provide a varied selection of the current wine market. Further it will be possible to purchase the wines featured at the Tasting at a lower price. It will be a perfect day to experience a sampling of wines and to make new friends at the "Tavern."

There will be a Silent Auction with a lot of interesting and exciting items ranging from a "Dinner for Ten at the Tavern" to a set of the GKS's ten pewter items. There are also two tickets to a Red Sox weekend game, and the value varies according to the home team's opponent.

## 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. 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.

Due to popular demand, a second American Girl Doll Camp is now open (week of July 14-18).



*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. 4-8. 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.org/summer-camp>.



*Colonial Life Camp*

## *Thank You*

*The Guilford Keeping Society Board of Directors is appreciative of the generous support of its members, volunteers, and sponsors.*

*A Special Thank You to our Corporate Sponsors: Bishops Orchards, Campaigne Kestner Architects, Common Vision, Inc., Connecticut Humanities, The Guilford Foundation, Guilford Preservation Alliance, Guilford Savings Bank, Rotary Club of Guilford, Sound Generational Wealth*

*Since its founding in 1947, contributions from so many over the years have allowed the GKS to continue its mission to collect, preserve, and share the history of Guilford, CT, for present and future generations.*

*With your help every year, we can continue our mission.*

*Memberships can be processed online at [guilfordkeepingsociety.org](http://guilfordkeepingsociety.org).*

*If you prefer to mail in your membership, information can be found on the website and mailed to:  
GKS, P.O. Box 363, Guilford, CT 06437*

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

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

