

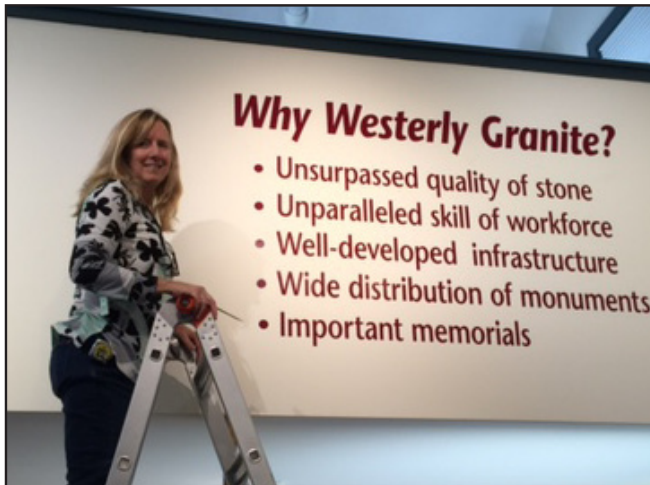


# The Babcock-Smith House Museum Newsletter

Volume 11 Number 2

Fall 2015

## Better and Better



Although tour guides reported that summer visitors seemed captivated by the granite exhibit, improvements and additions are making this exhibit worth returning to.

With the help of Arleen Andersen, graphic designer who helped with the introductory exhibit in the Gertrude Smith Room, we now have professional touches to our exhibit. Arleen designed a large panel featuring the quarrying of the stone for the Hall Obelisk and mounted large maroon vinyl letters identifying the quarry, the cutting shed, and the introduction to the overall exhibit. She also designed the graphics for the stories below the photographs of finished work. We continue to rely on our partners at Printing Plus for executing our ideas.

Electrician Tim Robar continues to make house calls to tweak the lighting.

Linda Chaffee created a computer program allowing visitors to view Westerly granite monuments in River Bend Cemetery. She also developed a notebook to help identify tools as well as a brochure for a self-guided tour.

This winter Ed Fazio and Bruce Brawley will begin construction of a "quarry," using cement, coloring, imagination, and skill.

Following several events which required additional space, we are pleased that the collapsible and movable nature of parts of the exhibit have worked well.

The Westerly Historical Society shares space at the welcoming table with publications for sale from both organizations displayed behind the table. Our next goal will be to refine the exhibit by identifying more objects, finding better display techniques, and by designing special topics for the display panels.

## Swan Point Cemetery Research

Swan Point Cemetery in Providence has given our granite researchers permission to document and photograph Westerly granite monuments in the cemetery. There are more than two hundred monuments produced by Smith Granite Company alone. Many days of preparation and on-site photography lie ahead, but this project promises to document an outstanding collection of memorial art.

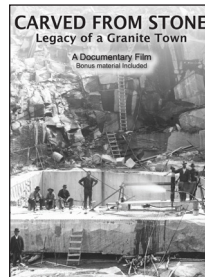


*The Young statue was sculpted by Robert Barr and cut by James Pollette.*

Researchers have worked on photographing monuments in Elm Grove Cemetery in Mystic, CT; Evergreen Cemetery in Stonington, CT; and Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville, KY. Friends around the country have submitted photos from Watertown, NY and Norristown, PA.

We are looking for volunteers to photograph cemeteries in Philadelphia, PA, Washington, DC, Baltimore, MD and several towns in New Jersey. If you can help with this treasure hunt, email [Lchaffee@cox.net](mailto:Lchaffee@cox.net) for more information.

## Documentary Goes National



*Carved from Stone: Legacy of a Granite Town* has been accepted by NETA (National Educational Telecommunications Association), the professional association which links all the American public television stations with individual programs. Simply put, this means that states across the country can now opt to show our documentary. If you are outside of Rhode Island, you might contact your

local PBS station, indicating that you would like them to show the film.

And

Betty-Jo Cugini Greene, who was responsible for producing the granite documentary, is currently working on a film about Joshua Babcock, the original owner of the museum house. When this film is completed, we will have two wonderful documentaries about our two different histories.



## Docent Field Trip—2015

On June 25 ten docents and a guest visited the General William Hart House in Old Saybrook, CT for their annual outing. The house was built in 1767, 43 years after the Babcock-Smith House.

From the exterior the two houses are similar; however, the Hart House contains many Georgian features and architectural influences more common to Williamsburg, VA and even to Dutch Pennsylvania. The house features eight corner fireplaces, leaving wall space for windows which provide good air circulation in the summer.

The destination was chosen so that docents and Hart House members could compare notes on maintenance of an antique house museum. Whether it be gardens, event planning or upkeep in general, there was something for everyone to share.

After the tour in Old Saybrook, the docents drove to Essex and had a delicious lunch at the Black Seal Seafood Grille. And to top it off, a few docents enjoyed visiting the antique shops between Essex and Route 95 on the way home.

### In Memoriam

Anna Brown  
Docent Emerita

Isaac Gallup Smith, Jr.  
Docent and Trustee Emeritus

## Kudos

Deb sent an email thanking tour guide Tony Smith for “the best tour we have ever had at any historical house.” Thanks to all our tour guides for making a visit to the museum memorable.

Quite frequently we give tours outside of normal visiting hours if we are at the museum on other business. Also Tony, Resident Manager Patricia Hval, Mary Ann McCarty, Meg Barclay or Ed and Carol Fazio often come to the museum in response to an urgent phone call from an out-of-town visitor.

The trustees received the following letter, accompanied by a substantial donation, from Ronna and Tom Whitten from Aurora, CA:

*A year ago my husband and I and another couple were on a vacation to the East Coast and had the pleasure of visiting the Babcock-Smith House.*

*It was particularly interesting to me as I am descended from the Babcock line.*

*We were visiting at a time when the house was closed, but John Coduri just happened to have an appointment at that same time and gave us a private tour.*

*We enjoyed our tour and so appreciated the time John spent with us.*

*We are enclosing a check . . .*

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## Veggie Luncheon Huge Success

Another successful Veggie Luncheon was held in the Carriage House on October 9. Fifty guests dined on a bountiful spread of soups, breads, entrees, sides and desserts, accompanied by mulled cider and coffee. Our docent volunteers outdid themselves with another delicious selection of vegetarian-themed dishes. Does pumpkin praline cheesecake count? Guests had a chance to peek at the granite exhibit installed since last year's luncheon and gave the event rave reviews. Cookbooks with this year's recipes are still available from Joshua's Store. If you missed this year's luncheon, we hope you can join us next year!

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## Businesses Welcomed

In an effort to share our new exhibit, we hosted the monthly Business After Hours of Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce on November 18. Dunn's Corners Market, which has been our supplier of beef for the candlelight dinners, catered the event which was well-attended.

## Snippets

Harry and Maureen Bjorkland refinished a Victorian oak table and donated it for use as a library table. The table complements the chairs donated earlier by Stanton Terranova.

Tim Robar installed more lighting and a dehumidifier in the new vault, making it a much more pleasant place in which to work.

Susan Sullivan Brocato, in addition to her work as Trust Secretary and partner with Brenda Linton organizing the Sullivan Granite Company files and pictures, has assumed the additional responsibilities of archivist, replacing Linda Smith Chaffee.

Friends and admirers of Ike Smith have donated more than \$4,000.00 to the endowment in his memory.

Atty. Fritz Eckel, CPA Steve Greene and Trust President John Coduri have worked together to create the **1734 Society** for remembering the museum in your planned giving. Linda Smith Chaffee and Ellen Madison, the usual suspects in brochure production, have created the brochure to publicize the program.

We were pleased to work in conjunction with the Westerly Armory to showcase both museums on Smithsonian Museum Open House Day.

If you are a member of an organization which notifies your members of local events and would like to list ours, please contact Betty-Jo Cugini Greene at [bjcstonehill@gmail.com](mailto:bjcstonehill@gmail.com).

## Did You Miss Something?

A wide variety of programs have been offered this season:

**Elizabeth Fitzroy** shared her experiences during her two years in China with the Peace Corp. URI Professor **Phil Clark** took the sting out of growing older with health tips and lots of humor. **Linda Chaffee** looked at history as recorded by the Westerly Granite monuments in NYC. **Susan Jerome** connected the fashion changes with social change during the time period of Downton Abbey. Quilter **Barbara Barber** shared her creative quilts that reflected her history. Local historian **Lido Mochetti** illustrated a report published in *Narragansett Weekly* in 1878 with contemporary photos. Professor **Roberta Humble** both entertained and informed the audience with her Rhode Island anecdotes and facts.

Babcock-Smith House Museum  
124 Granite Street  
Westerly, RI 02891



[babcocksmithhouse.org](http://babcocksmithhouse.org)

#### Trustees

*John B. Coduri, Chair*  
*Maureen J. Bjorkland*  
*Jacqueline F. Brennan*  
*Susan Sullivan Brocato*  
*Linda Smith Chaffee*  
*Edward A. Fazio*  
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## Holiday Weekend December 4, 5 & 6

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### Friday, December 4, 7-9 pm

Celebration of Trees\*  
Joshua's Store and Bazaar  
Enjoy our courtyard with its holiday lighting

### Saturday, December 5, 9 am to 1 pm

Bazaar: baked goods and cookies, muffins and coffee, crafty kitchen items, gently-used Christmas items, basket raffle, holiday greens, PBS video, granite book, and Joshua's Store  
Celebration of Trees\*

### Sunday December 6, 2 pm

Holiday Concert featuring ...  
Community Church Ringers Quartet and Tenor Michael Grillo  
Refreshments following the concert  
Celebration of Trees\* from 2:45 to 5 pm.  
Joshua's Store



Begin the New Year with the program on January 10 at 2 pm. featuring Judge Frank Williams, noted Lincoln scholar. The judge will discuss the question "When did the Civil War end?"

Many of our past programs can be streamed from our website.

Most programs offered by the both the museum and the Westerly Historical Society are free for members of either organization and \$5 for not-yet members. Another good reason to join!

Check for upcoming programs on the website  
[babcocksmithhouse.org](http://babcocksmithhouse.org)

\* Celebration of Trees: admission \$10, \$5 for members and free for children under 12. Sunday afternoon includes both the concert and the Celebration of Trees.