Avery-Copp House

One family, an American story

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

1/31/2014
154 Thames St., Groton, CT 06340
www.averycopphouse.org
Avery-Copp House

One family, an American story

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President’s Message

I’m excited to report that we started the year with an ambitious strategic plan that included 110 action items, and we completed 61 of those projects! Only 3 were not done, 41 were postponed and five were deleted. No wonder the Board and other volunteers clocked over 1,000 hours in 2013. The diversification of our income is an indication of how successful we were in achieving the most important of our goals. Only with the hard work of the entire Board of Directors could this have been accomplished.

I have been constantly impressed by the dedication of board members who have stood up to the challenge of making a small neighborhood house museum into the gem of Thames Street in Groton.

As we look forward to collaborating with other historic sites in the area and implementing the vision we are striving to achieve, I can say that it has been my honor to work with everyone to make this museum the success it is. The positive attitude brought to every board meeting, the staff and volunteers who contribute an unimaginable amount of time, the talent of our Special Projects Consultant, the great contribution of those who have labored on our property, the urban planners who have helped us to better conceptualize our vision, our state and local officials who have worked tirelessly on our behalf, and last but certainly not least, our contributors, supporters and visitors, combined now numbering over 1,000, played a huge part in this success story.

It is no easy task in these difficult economic times to transform a neighborhood-centered historic house into a catalyst for regional change, but with continued hard work, drive, a clear vision and yes, even a bit of gumption, I believe we can be the change we want to see on Thames Street and in the area. Although it is my last year as President, I look forward to being an ongoing part of that change.

Very sincerely,

Priscilla B. Wells, President
Mission Statement

The Avery-Copp House celebrates, preserves, and documents the historic home, its collection, and the grounds belonging to the Avery and Copp families in Groton, CT. Our purpose is to engage the public in learning about the history of Groton through the study of domestic life as it was experienced in this house and the surrounding community.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Avery-Copp House is to be an integral part of the historic fabric of the region through the preservation, documentation and curation of the Avery-Copp family collection, the development and operation of a living history museum, and by serving as a community resource for education, events and research. The Avery-Copp House endeavors to be recognized as a prominent historic destination through its work and through a successful collaboration with regional historical and cultural organizations.

Birdseye map hand drawn by intern at Yale Urban Design Workshop
Strategic Goals and Accomplishments

In March, after a series of sessions with a Peer Advisor from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, the Board of Directors completed and approved the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan. In addition to updating the Mission Statement, the Board created a Vision Statement to articulate what it envisioned for the future of the institution. (See previous page.)

The Plan identified six goals to advance the Mission and Vision of the Avery-Copp House.

1. **Enhance the governance of the organization**
   - The Governance Committee developed a recruitment plan for new Board members and created an orientation packet, identified prospects and successfully filled Board seats.
   - The Committee updated and clarified the Bylaws and brought them before the Board for approval in May.

2. **Develop connections and partnerships in the region, primarily in the Thames River Valley**

   The Board of Directors entered into a contract with the Yale Urban Design Workshop to develop a conceptual plan for the future role of the Avery-Copp House as part of a network of cultural and heritage sites and institutions around the Thames River Estuary and eastern Long Island Sound.

   **Phase I** began in February with the formation of a Steering Committee, research on other successful similar networks, meetings with regional stakeholders and preparation of a project/vision statement.

   **Phase II** began in September and continued through the end of the year. The concept for a Thames River Heritage Park was updated, incorporating new developments since the first park was proposed. A meeting of all stakeholders was held in November.

   Water taxis would link points of interest along the Thames River.

   In December, Steering Committee leadership, state legislators Andrew Maynard and Elissa Wright and the Yale Urban Design Workshop met with state officials in Hartford. Attendees at the meeting in the DEEP Commissioner’s office were given a slide show and a handout of what had been done to date and what Yale would deliver as part of its contract. A final report, including an implementation plan, is due in the spring of 2014. Officials expressed a desire to proceed with the project.
3. **Develop and refine programs and activities. Identify goals and evaluate success**

Successful programs were continued in 2013 and new ones added and planned. The house set regular hours to be open to the public for tours and hired additional staff to maintain the schedule. The House was open to the public from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday through Sunday, from the end of May to mid-October. Themed teas and dramatic readings were sold out, and 53 people visited the house during Connecticut Open House Day in June.

Living History/the Immigration Story was piloted for Groton Fifth Grades to great success. Fifty-three students and their teachers took part in the program, interacting with museum role players, exploring the historic house, learning the reasons why immigrants made the journey from Ireland to America, as well as discussing the challenges that immigrants faced when adjusting to a new culture.

Groton Town Historian Jim Streeter gave his audience a glimpse of Thames Street’s bustling past in the first of a series of planned lectures. Quilts will be the topic in the spring of 2014. Planning began for History Day, a 2014 fall event featuring artisans, soldiers and servants in conjunction with Connecticut at Work, a statewide CT Humanities initiative highlighting the past, present and future of work in Connecticut.

4. **Develop a marketing effort to increase visibility and attendance**

The Board formed a Marketing Planning Committee in the spring, which met with a Peer Advisor from the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism during August and September to create a marketing plan that was approved by the Board in October. The plan includes a new name and a tagline, used on the cover of this report, and identifies a set of priority audiences to reach using targeted marketing material.

The Board also appointed a Board member to lead a new Marketing Committee, resulting in eblasts for events, good coverage in the media and a planned regional distribution of Avery-Copp House brochures.

The Avery-Copp House joined the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce and took advantage of the chamber’s marketing opportunities. These efforts resulted in increased attendance at publicized events.

An electronic spreadsheet was created to track attendance by program or event, day of the week, adults and children. The data will provide a baseline for future years. In total, 670 adults and children visited the museum over the year, and an additional 435 participated in ACH off-site events and activities for a grand total of 1,065.
5. Create a property master plan and written conditions assessment for the development and maintenance of the museum, associated buildings and grounds to explore possibilities for generating income and to ensure proper care of this historic resource

Board Member and architect Chris Vernott conducted a conditions assessment, which included a maintenance priority list, and submitted it to the staff and Property Committee for review in the fall.

In conjunction with this effort, an electrical upgrade to the house was completed, repairs to entryways and stairs were made and the glass in the front door to the Carriage House was reset.

Funding to replace the chain link fence in front of the house was approved by the Board in August. A new “pipe fence” similar to one that lined the front of property in the 1880s (see photo on back page) will be installed, thanks to a gift from Dan Copp and expertise from Jack Evans, our Museum Director’s brother, who has volunteered his labor and will use the opportunity to apprentice his son in the craft of metalworking.

6. Increase financial stability through funding diversification and align annual budget with initiatives

The Board conducted its first year-end Annual Appeal, raising over $10,000. Fundraising event income doubled with the addition of a second fundraising event, a spring gala held at the Mystic Art Center.

For the first time, the ACH applied for a grant from the Community Foundation. If awarded, the grant will allow the museum to expand its successful program on immigration to all Groton Fifth grades and provide funds for administrative expenses.

A template to solicit sponsorships in 2014 was created in the fall. Committees submitted budget requests to the Finance Committee, which then drafted the 2014 budget for approval in November.
A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Supporters!

Foundations & Granting Agencies

Panoram Foundation  Pfizer Foundation  Groton Utilities
Chester Kitchings Family Foundation  Katherine Forest Crafts Foundation

Benefactors ($2,000+)

Eugenie Copp  Daniel Copp Jr.  Elizabeth Copp Evans  Daniel Copp Sr.
Mary Lee Copp  Betsy Copp Halsey  Luther King Capital Management

Special gift to honor Betsy Copp Halsey

Eugenie Copp

Patrons ($400-$1,999)

Dennis & Karen Popp  Thomas Halsey  Nicholas & Noreen Kepple  Bruce Avery

Donors ($200-$399)

Patricia Avery Engleberg  Doherty, Beals & Banks, CPA  Cynthia Palmer  Carlton Smith & Trudy Flanery
Charlotte Barnum  Paul C. Harper  Bruce Pfund  James & Irma Streeter
Neil & Patty Brown, Jr.  Hali & Gerry Keeler  Michael Prior  Archie Swindell
Betsey Copp  Rebekah Kepple & Morgan King  Shirley & David Rose  Timothy & Priscilla Wells
Eugenie C. T. Copp  Harold Gray Osborn  James & Penny Sherrard  Ralph & Sally Whitney

Contributors ($100-$199)

Arleen Andersen  Spencer & Avery Dickinson  Rona Heyl  Joseph Prior
Anderson Family  Janet Downs  Kenneth Jones  David Rau
Mary & Chip Anderson  Paul & Liz Duarte  Mary Elaine Kelly  Denise Shafner
Anonymous  Brian Dumas  Kent & Frost  Roger & Karen Sherman
Harry Apicelli  Jackwyn & Frank Durrschmidt  Gerard Laffargue  Bruce Shipman
Dana & Melissa Avery  Brent Eugenides & Robyn Hoffmann  Phyllis & Fred Meyer  Mary-Jo & Dean Shultis
Marianne & Peter Bartnik  Marian Galbraith  Claire & Glen Miller  John & Robin Silsby
Ellen Brown  Marie-Christine Greiner & Luc Verdet  Penny Parsekian  Mark & Heather Somers
Guido & Anne Calabresi  Andrew Halsey  Paul’s Pasta Shop  Laura Vandyke & Shawn Heard

Friends (Under $100)

Virginia Ager  Carol Galiszuski  Bruce & Carol McDermott  Joan & Hank Steinford
Jane M. Akins  Andrew & Donna Goldman  Patricia McHenry  Margil Steinford
Thomas Althuis  Marilyn Goodman  Meiklem Studios  Donald & Lois Steinman
Mary Beth Baker  Noel Haight  Constance Miller  Elizabeth & Duncan Stoddard
Mara Beckwith  Diane Haines  Helen Moore  Suisman Shapiro
Nicki Bresnayan  Myles Halliwel  Jane Moriarty  Heather Sues
Briarpatch Enterprises, Inc.  Grace & Peter Halsey  Elizabeth & Thomas Moukawsher  Thames Valley Communications
Carol Brown  William Hart  Mystic River Foundry  Paul & Anthony Timpany
Donald Byles  Edward Hart  Barbara Nagy  Nancy Trostler
Joanna Case  Keith & Joyce Hedrick  Karen & Robert Neild  Josephine Tuttle
CCI Alpha Laser Copy  Jackie Hemond  Lian Obrey  Thomas Valliere
Betty Ann & W. Chapman  Rhona Hoyt  Duncan Olding  Abigail Van Slyck
Sarah Clinton  Brian Jacobs  E. Marion Orkeny  Jean & Richard Vosberg
David & Jak Cruthers  Susan Jerome  Naomi Otterness  Lori Watrous
S. Davis  Cathy & Lance Johnson  Bill & Kris Pearson  Kathy Weinberger
Nancy Dimarinis  John & Jessica Kam  Stacy Popp  Mary Wetzel
Debra Dickey  Joelle Kentfield  Bonnie & Bob Reemsnyder  Minda Wetzel
Joan DiMartino  Charles Kepner  Ernest Romano  David & Judith Winer
Mike Fitzgerald  Donna Labranche  Johonor Santos  Elissa Wright
John Freedman  Andrew Maynard  Michael Scanlon  James & Karen Young
Barbara Frucht  Kenneth & Kathleen McBride  Lila Schellens

Avery-Copp House 1/31/2014
Board of Directors

**Officers**

Priscilla B. Wells, President  
Hali Keeler, Vice President  
Brent Eugenides, Treasurer  
Charlotte Barnum, Secretary

**Directors**

Bruce Avery  
Ellen Brown  
Janet Downs  
Andrew Halsey  
Susan Jerome  
Rebekah Kepple  
Senator Andrew Maynard  
Dennis Popp  
James Streeter  
Christopher Vernott

**Board Committees**

**Elected Committees**

**Finance**  
Brent Eugenides, Chair  
Bruce Avery  
Dennis Popp  
Priscilla Wells, ex officio

**Governance**  
Janet Downs, Chair  
Charlotte Barnum  
Andy Halsey

**Appointed Committees**

**Development & Fundraising**  
Hali Keeler, Chair  
Andy Halsey

**Community Outreach & Education**  
Dennis Popp, Chair  
Andy Maynard  
Jim Streeter

**Staff**

**Museum Director**  
Leslie Evans

**Museum Assistant & Archivist**  
Kathleen Leuze

**Special Projects Consultant**  
Penny Parsekian

**Museum Interns**  
Diane Dunlop & Natalie Beckwith

**Collections & Acquisitions**  
Susan Jerome, Chair  
Charlotte Barnum  
Jim Streeter

**Property**  
Bruce Avery, Chair  
Dennis Popp
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Actual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
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<td>Program Income, Facility Rental, Royalties</td>
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<td>Fundraising Events Income</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<td>Annual Appeal</td>
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<td>Visitation Income, Tours, Speaking Fees</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>217,175</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Museum Expenses</th>
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<td>Archival Supplies</td>
<td>250</td>
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<td>Building Maintenance/Repairs</td>
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<td>Cleaning Supplies</td>
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<td>Educational Programs</td>
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<td>Fundraising Expenses</td>
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<td>Insurance-Buildings &amp; Collections</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>5,960</td>
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<td>Intern Stipends</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>Landscaping &amp; Grounds Maintenance</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>10,210</td>
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<td>Marketing &amp; Promotion</td>
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<td>Museum Security</td>
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<td>Museum Staffing</td>
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<td>Payroll Processing Fees</td>
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<td>Postage &amp; Shipping</td>
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<td>Professional Development, Conferences, Training</td>
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<td>Professional Services - CPA</td>
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<td>750</td>
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<td>Program Supplies</td>
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<td>Restoration - Building</td>
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<td>Seasonal Decorations</td>
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<td>313</td>
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<td>Special Event Expenses</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>335</td>
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<td>Contingency</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>133,914</strong></td>
<td><strong>136,419</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Carriage House Expenses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bank Service Charges</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>Board of Directors Insurance</td>
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<td>Books &amp; Information Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Projects Consultant</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,831</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas - (Propane)</td>
<td>1,800</td>
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<td>Legal Fees &amp; Security Services</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>1,031</td>
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<td>Accrued Liability</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<td>Membership Dues &amp; Subscription</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>208</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,630</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Maintenance</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>918</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone &amp; Internet Services</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>1,791</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>53,075</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,792</strong></td>
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| Total Expenses                              | **186,989**| **196,211**|
Photograph of the Avery-Copp House in the 1880s with pipe fence, to be replicated when chain link is removed.