

# Avery-Copp House

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*One family, an American story*



## **2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

1/31/2014

154 Thames St., Groton, CT 06340

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



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*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.

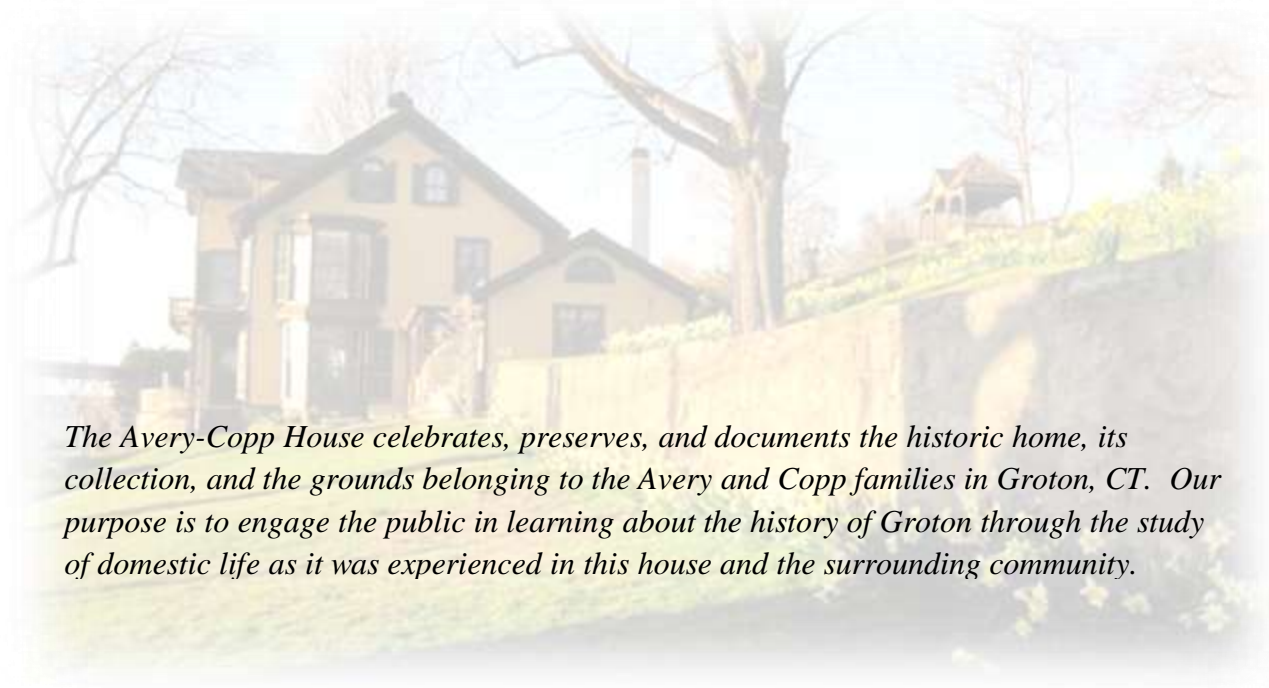
It is no easy task in these difficult economic times to transform a neighborhood-centered historic house into a catalyst for regional change, but with continued hard work, drive, a clear vision and yes, even a bit of gumption, I believe we can be the change we want to see on Thames Street and in the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

Very sincerely,



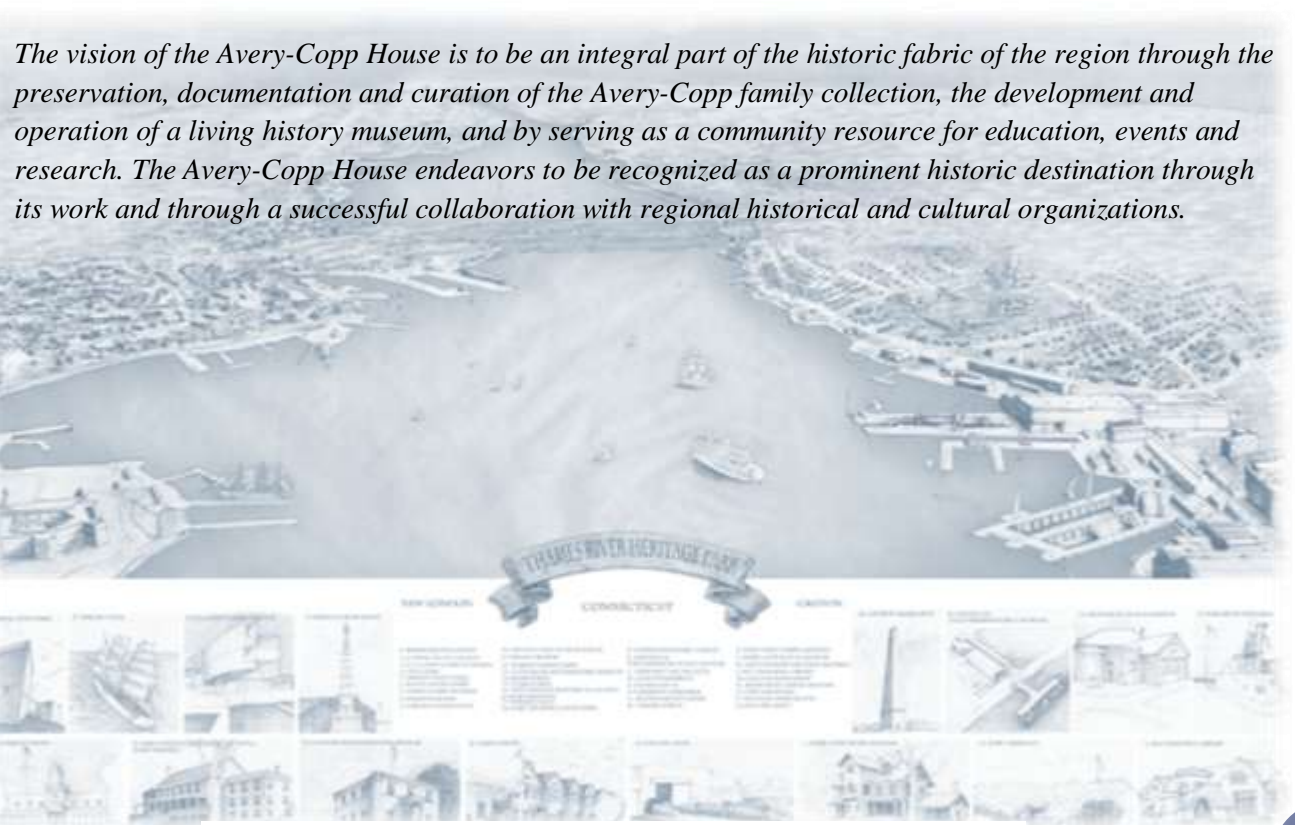
Priscilla B. Wells, President

## 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 stake holders 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.

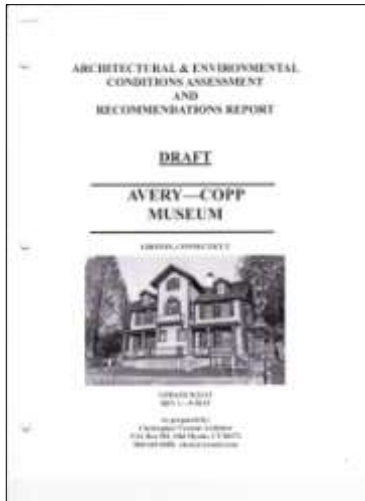
The Board also appointed a Board member to lead a new Marketing Committee, resulting in eblasts for events, good coverage in the media and a planned regional distribution of Avery-Copp House brochures.

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 Betsey 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 Avery 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 Bartinik	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 Steinfeld
Jane M. Akins	Andrew & Donna Goldman	Patricia McHenry	Margil Steinfeld
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 Bresnyan	Myles Halliwell	Jane Moriarty	Heather Sukes
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	

## 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

## Avery-Copp House 2013 Budget/Actual

<b>Income</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Donations	\$205,000	\$209,268
Program Income, Facility Rental, Royalties	1,190	2,534
Fundraising Events Income	10,000	20,481
Annual Appeal	0	10,620
Visitation Income, Tours, Speaking Fees	950	560
Interest Income	35	2
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>217,175</b>	<b>243,465</b>
<b>Museum Expenses</b>		
Archival Supplies	250	109
Building Maintenance/Repairs	5,000	2,854
Cleaning Supplies	180	276
Educational Programs	100	38
Fundraising Expenses	5,000	8,193
Insurance-Buildings & Collections	5,500	5,960
Intern Stipends	1,000	0
Landscaping & Grounds Maintenance	8,500	10,210
Marketing & Promotion	1,000	905
Museum Security	850	586
Museum Staffing	2,280	2,593
Oil	7,000	8,383
Payroll	52,364	50,888
Payroll Taxes	4,000	4,791
Payroll Processing Fees	840	783
Postage & Shipping	250	316
Professional Development, Conferences, Training	100	168
Professional Services - CPA	800	750
Program Supplies	900	780
Restoration - Building	2,500	2,189
Seasonal Decorations	100	313
Special Event Expenses	400	335
Contingency	<u>35,000</u>	<u>35,000</u>
Subtotal	133,914	136,419
<b>Carriage House Expenses</b>		
Bank Service Charges	120	378
Board of Directors Insurance	750	0
Books & Information Services	100	-11
Special Projects Consultant	25,000	25,831
Gas - (Propane)	1,800	3,016
Legal Fees & Security Services	405	1,031
Accrued Liability	20,000	20,000
Membership Dues & Subscription	250	208
Office Supplies	3,000	3,630
Building Maintenance	405	918
Telephone & Internet Services	<u>1,650</u>	<u>1,791</u>
Subtotal	53,075	56,792
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>186,989</b>	<b>196,211</b>



*Photograph of the Avery-Copp House in the 1880s with pipe fence, to be replicated when chain link is removed.*

*Avery-Copp House 2013 Annual Report*

*154 Thames Street  
Groton, CT 06340*

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