





Board Members (from left): Maureen Tucker, Joel Third, Sara Champion, Rhonda Hill, Elise Haas, Connie Fenton, Margo McEachern, Karen McChesney, Hilary Micalizzi, Patty Linnon, Patricia Stephens, Barbara Cmiel, M. Shen-Zhuang Chien. Not pictured: Christine Boris, Cheryl Crowl, Teri Fischer, Jenn Hansen, Dave Perkins, Phyllis Robertson

Vision

To be the region's preferred historic site for interpreting three centuries of lived experience and its larger meaning in the history of New England and the nation.

Mission

Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center (KTM&HC) is dedicated to assisting visitors, students, and scholars in understanding significant lives and events during the site's 300-year history, including their meaning for citizenship and culture, now and in the future. We pursue this mission by preserving and protecting the museum's physical and intellectual assets and sharing them with the widest possible audience, whether on our campus or through programs of outreach.



(left to right): Hildi Grob, Catherine Prescott, Mary Ann Connors, Angela Liptack, Erika Askin, Melissa Houston.

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Angela Liptack	<i>Associate Director</i>
Catherine Prescott	<i>Assistant Museum Director</i>
Melissa Houston	<i>Education Director</i>
Erika Askin	<i>Curator of Collections</i>

Cover: Three centuries of lives and events at KTM&HC are transformed as they are viewed through the lens of their relevance for contemporary citizenship and civic culture.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

At Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center, we not only preserve history, we make history!

The purchase of 152 Main Street in 2016 has provided much-needed space to accommodate our very active staff, to increase the number of student programs we can offer, to provide adequate space for the large scale community events we create, and to properly care for our extensive collection of artifacts. This physical transformation has prompted the staff and Board of Directors to explore opportunities to expand and enhance the visitor experience by in-



creasing tour hours, adding state-of-the-art technology to the exceptional experience provided by our docents, and what I believe is our greatest strength, the opportunity to relate history to our present lives through thought-provoking lectures and programs.

With the support of many generous donors, we are rapidly approaching our Capital Campaign goal. On behalf of our Capital Campaign Committee and the Board, I extend a sincere thank you to every one of our donors for their belief in our mission and their willingness to

support us in realizing it. I would also like to thank our loyal, dedicated, selfless volunteers whose hard work makes this place not only a venerable landmark, but very much a living—and lively—treasure.

We are more than a museum; we are a History Center where learning about our past allows us to be better citizens of our community, our country, and our world.

Respectfully,

Hilary Micalizzi
President, Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Transformation is at once exciting and intimidating because it means entering uncharted territory while leaving behind the familiar and safe. At KTM&HC, we have firmly embarked on the path of transforming an historic house museum to a regional history center, passing many a milestone and relying on many a helping hand to guide us.

Most visible is the ongoing transformation of the red brick building at 152 Main Street from private residence to a welcoming public space. With its new sign out front and the doors flung open, this new Visitor Center commands the attention of passersby. Without fail,



people comment on the aesthetics of the spacious main lobby with its coffered ceilings and original wood floor. Upstairs, the staff has moved into the new office space where everyone has a dedicated desk and there's no danger of hitting one's head.

We're pursuing a state grant to transform the basement to a new archival collection storage area. If approved, the project will get underway early next year, with a completion date of late 2019. Another grant at the federal level brought experts in historic preservation to the site to make recommendations for how best to care for our many campus physical structures as well as our valuable collections of artifacts and documents.

Just as important as physical changes are those we anticipate making to the

visitor experience and our programming to respond to an updated interpretation of this site's history and its relevance to today's citizenship. This long-range project has major implications for how we guide visitors through the Museum and engage students in meaningful discourse about current topics.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the generous support of our Capital Campaign donors! Many wonderful people have stepped forward and agreed that "It's Our Turn to Make History!" They appreciate, as we do, that our transformation is a process, not a destination.

Hildegard M. Grob
Executive Director

A Transformed Campus

The addition of the adjacent property at 152 Main Street is a pivotal element in the transformation of KTM&HC's physical campus. When it opens as a Visitor Center, the classic red brick building will be the most tangible

evidence of a more expansive campus, welcoming visitors, introducing our three centuries of history, and leading guests to the many points of interest on our 4.2-acre site. These include tours of the landmark Keeler Tavern, and stops at the Cass

Gilbert-designed sunken garden and multi-purpose Garden House, as well as at the Carriage Barn for interactive exhibitions such as Hands On History, an art show, or other event.

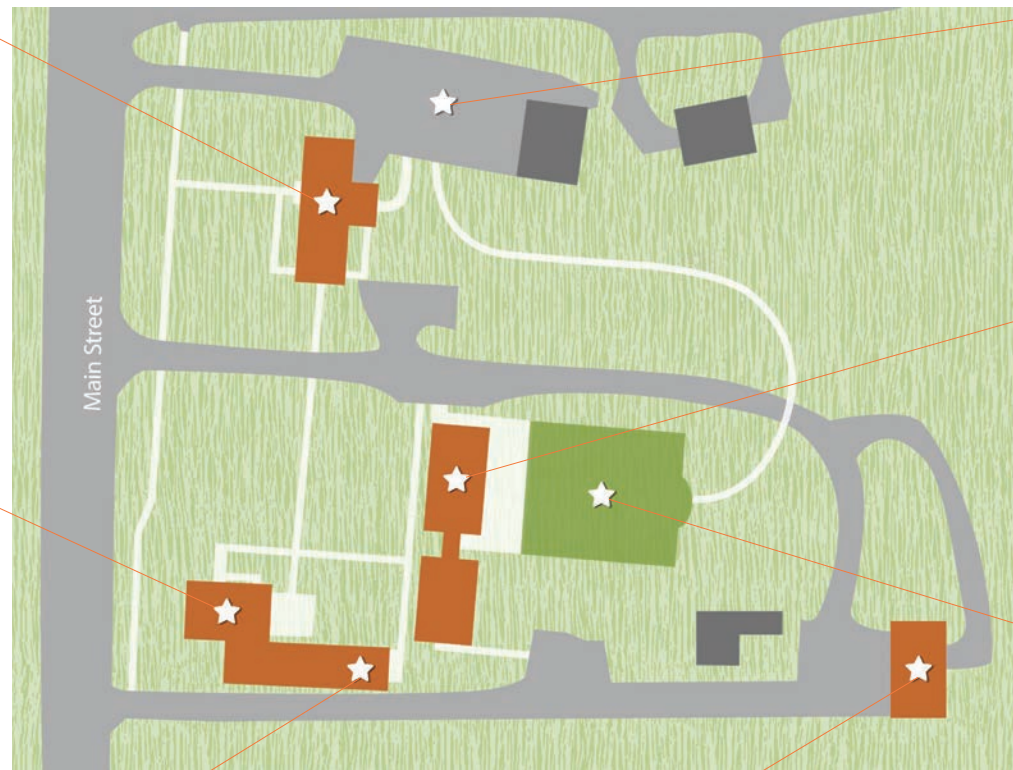
A Gracious Welcome

The new Visitor Center welcomes visitors with expanded options for orientation, admission, tours, refreshments and restrooms.



Reinterpreting the Historic Keeler Tavern

Digital storytelling will complement docent-led tours so visitors can more fully explore key moments and movements in our national experience.



Expanded Site Parking

The new Visitor Center provides generous parking at the site's new entry point.



Elegance Preserved

The 100-year-old Garden House designed by Cass Gilbert continues to provide a multipurpose space for programs and events.



Rose Garden Oasis

New signs and pathways will lead visitors to Julia Gilbert's secluded brick-walled rose garden.



Expanded Museum Store

Doubling in size, the Museum Store's selection aims to please shoppers looking for unique high-quality, Museum-inspired items.



Carriage Barn Renovations

Creative solutions for second-floor access will enable more varied use of this Cass Gilbert structure, which already hosts art shows, school programs and exhibitions.



A Re-imagined Visitor Experience

In addition to serving as stewards of a treasured landmark, we are using its curated life stories, events, and collections to open a window onto national events. And more than presenting history as long ago personalities and period furniture, we are interpreting our stories through the lens of contemporary relevance, especially because they introduce the roles of individual actions and first-hand experiences in exploring challenging topics such as the important place of opportunity and privilege, race and gender in our history.

Over time, we also will be amplifying the visitor experience by making it more participatory and multi-sensory, and introducing digital storytelling to supplement the memorable person-to-person interaction with our docents that has long been a hallmark of a visit to KTM&HC.



Lantern Light Tours, a traditional crowd pleaser, reenact history in a way that has both meaning and - occasionally - humor.



An evocative presentation, "Sisters" imagines the lived experience of Phillis Dubois, the black woman who lived and worked with the Resseguie family before, during and after the Civil War.



Her brother's and, later, her husband's names may have been on the sign out front, but it was Anna Keeler's domestic and management skills that sustained Ridgefield's leading hotel.



Whether for walk-in visitors or wide-eyed school children, KTM&HC's docents create a memorable learning experience as they portray personalities and events that span three centuries.



Julia Gilbert in the gown she wore for her presentation to the British crown. The Gilberts were the embodiment of privilege during Ridgefield's Gilded Age.

Learners and Citizens

Our strategic plan for KTM&HC has education as its cornerstone. For over 2,300 student visitors last year from Ridgefield, throughout Fairfield County and beyond, we provided learning experiences that are an extension of the classroom, and much more than simply a field trip. This Education Initiative is where our physical and intellectual transformations come together with particular synergy.

The new multi-use Visitor Center, for example, will provide much-needed pop-up classroom space; programs serving 80-90 pupils per day require multiple child-friendly spaces for rotating successive groups through learning stations. And we are especially well

equipped to bring our extensive historical resources to bear on the subjects of citizenship and civic culture, as well as topics, themes, or issues that are prescribed in local or state standards.



A Lantern Light Tour vignette debated the Whiskey Rebellion, the first major test of federal authority after the creation of the new nation.

KTM&HC's education team is developing meaningful discussions around the topics of race, gender and privilege.

A town-wide committee, including KTM&HC, developed the year-long commemoration, "Ridgefield Remembers WWI."



As an Eagle Scout project, Clay Vaughan, standing right, and his fellow scouts from Troop 76, built collections storage units in the Cass Gilbert Carriage Barn.



Fourth graders learn about the lives of enslaved people during Colonial times.

Capital Campaign

As we undertook our first Capital Campaign in 30 years to support our transformation into a regional history center, we asked the community to support a preliminary campaign goal of \$1.5 million. The response was gratifying, and has heartened us in ways that

go well beyond a financial scorecard. The campaign and the transformation both continue with the expectation that they will enable us to deploy our physical and intellectual resources for maximum benefit to our current and future generations.

The individuals and organizations named here made commitments to the Capital Campaign through June 30, 2018. If your employer matched your donation, your name appears in the category that captures the combined total. As the campaign continues through 2020, pledges will be recognized yearly in subsequent Annual Reports.

Capital Campaign Pledges

\$100,000 and Up

Anita and Nick Donofrio
Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation
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Joel Third
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Carol and Richard Vazzana

\$2,500 to \$9,999

Jeffrey and Christine Boris
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\$1,000 to \$2,500

Anonymous
Catherine (Kit) Baker

Patricia and Robertson Bennett
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Kathleen and Douglas Coombs
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The Harvey Hubbell Foundation
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Sources of Funds

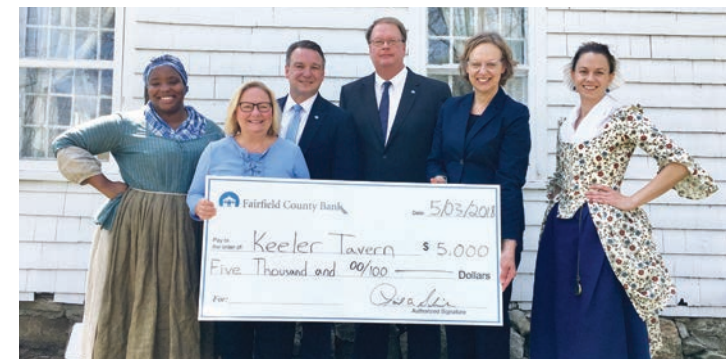
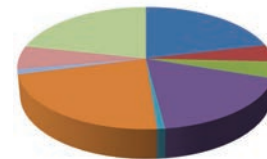
Overall operating revenues for FY 2017-18 declined slightly, while year-to-year changes in individual income sources must take into account an ongoing transition to a profit center approach intended to sharpen our understanding of actual costs and returns. For example, while Garden House Rentals continue to be our most robust source of income from operations, lower reported revenues are a net figure, since they now reflect some related personnel costs. Similarly, revenue from Rentals on the 152 Main Street property, which are now included within the consolidated income statement, also reflect associated personnel costs. For the year, individual income results were within man-

ageable ranges, and we were able to reduce the annual draw of operating funds from our Reserve.

For KTM&HC, as for our non-profit colleagues, the full effect of the new tax law remains to be seen. Donations and Fundraising accounted for nearly 40 percent of the fiscal year's income. A substantial reduction would likely require major, and adverse, changes in our financial model and what we can offer to the community and region, since KTM&HC operations are self-funded, and receive no local, state, or federal operating support.

SOURCES OF FUNDS (net of expenses)

Apartment Rental	\$ 28,154
Donations	\$ 98,343
Education	\$ 4,115
Fundraising	\$ 82,175
Garden House Rental Income	\$101,780
Grants	\$ 20,600
Membership	\$ 20,264
Other Programs and Events	\$ 6,282
Reserve Withdrawal	\$100,000
	<hr/>
	\$461,713



A \$5,000 contribution from Fairfield County Bank supported the participation of Title 1 schools from underserved communities throughout Fairfield County in on-site educational programs. At center are Steve Wooters, Executive Vice President, and Chuck Woerner, Vice President, of Fairfield County Bank.

Thank You to our 2018 Annual Sponsors!

REVOLUTIONARY
Anonymous

GOLD
Fairfield County Bank
Montanari Fuel Service, Inc.

SILVER
Nutmeg Livery Service
Seaman Mechanical Services, Inc.

BRONZE
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Hildi & Reinhold Grob
J. Mulvaney Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
Sean O'Kane AIA Architect, PC

Keeler Tavern Museum and History Center

We are grateful to our annual sponsors, whose support continues to grow as an essential element of our ability to offer a variety of programs and events throughout the year.

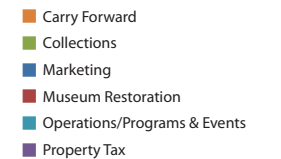
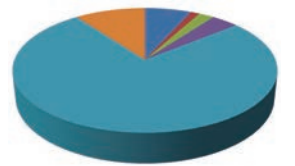
Uses of Funds

Total expenses were lower year-over-year, even as KTM&HC maintained an active schedule of programs and events, conducted a major fundraising campaign, and absorbed additional direct and indirect costs associated with integrating the 152 Main Street property. Some of those increases are reflected in

reported expenses for General Administration, Insurance, and Utilities; as a non-profit, we expect the Property Tax figure to be significantly reduced in the next fiscal year. Restoration and Maintenance was up 15 percent, in part because of essential refreshment of the century-old Garden House.

USES OF FUNDS

Carry Forward	\$ 46,920
Collections	\$ 10,175
Marketing	\$ 31,077
Museum Restoration	\$ 5,770
Operations/Programs & Events	\$349,823
General Administration:	\$ 53,101
Insurance:	\$ 32,005
Personnel:	\$178,667
Repair & Maintenance:	\$ 51,711
Utilities:	\$ 34,339
Property Tax	\$ 17,948
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	\$461,713



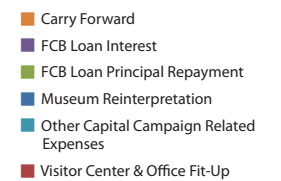
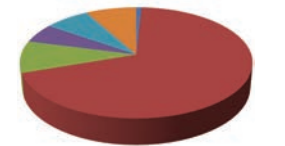
Ted Cleveland, at work on the intricate trellises in the Garden. Volunteer skill and energy help to defray the costs of a continuing cycle of restoration and maintenance.

A Campaign for Transformation

FY 2017-18 was the first full year of a Capital Campaign that is spurring a transformation in KTM&HC's physical campus and increasing its value as a local and regional historical resource. Leadership Gifts have provided \$715,979 since the inception of the campaign, supporting balanced physical, financial, and operating investments, most notably conversion of the 152 Main Street building into a Visitor Center, with opening currently scheduled for Fall 2018. Pledges in hand are expected to provide substantial additional funds, and the Campaign is planned to continue through 2020.

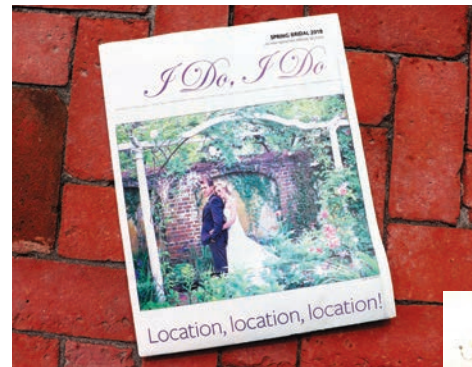
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN USES OF FUNDS (since inception)

Carry Forward	\$ 57,913
FCB Loan Interest	\$ 40,232
FCB Loan Principal Repayment	\$ 66,896
Museum Reinterpretation	\$ 5,969
Other Capital Campaign Related Expenses	\$ 51,839
Visitor Center Renovations	\$ 493,130
	<hr/>
	\$ 715,979



Garden House

When he added a gracious party pavilion to his picturesque brick-walled garden, architect Cass Gilbert didn't build it to last for anything approaching 100 years (which it has, thanks to careful preservation). Nor could he have anticipated that the glittering soirees of a century ago would become today's weddings and receptions, festive celebrations and anniversaries, meetings of civic and service organizations, and pop-up classroom space for more than 2,300 student visitors each year.



Our picturesque brick-walled garden was a featured venue on the cover of a recent newspaper wedding supplement. Even more couples discover its charms on internet sites including *The Knot*.



As part of their Gilded Age curriculum, East Ridge Middle School students attend one of Julia Gilbert's Doughboy send-offs in the Garden House, just like it would have happened during WWI.



Above, the Garden House makes a versatile performance space; here, an engaged audience watches a performance of "Sisters"; left, long-time supporters and gala attendees, Amy and Eric Freidenrich; below, John Robertson at the Spring Cannonball Gala, who, with his wife Phyllis was honored for extensive contributions to KTM&HC over the decades.



History a la Carte



At KTM&HC, history can take many forms. It might be classic: a Family Day commemoration of World War I. Or an interactive Hands On History exploration of Main Street businesses Then and Now, our annual History Trivia contest, or a week of historical immersion for Keeler Kids. And it can be simply the fun of a July 4 Watermelon Fest. Not to mention Christmas Luncheons, art shows, and other programs and events through the year.



Show Your History Chops

If you paid attention in class, that's a good start. But if you were born between 1946 and 1964, you're ahead of the game. Because this year's Boomer Edition contest features history you learned—and history you lived!

Friday, March 23 at 7 PM - The Garden House at Keeler Tavern Museum
Who Can Enter: Teams of up to six. Call our office or email info@keelertavernmuseum.org
How Much: \$10 per contestant
You Win By: Knowing your history—all kinds of history!



DONORS • MEMBERS • VOLUNTEERS



DONORS • MEMBERS • VOLUNTEERS

This list recognizes the many people whose contributions are the heartbeat of KTM&HC, and which might take the form of finances, in-kind donations, volunteer energy—or all three. All gifts acknowledged here were received between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018. If your employer matched your donation, and/or you paid for membership, your name appears in the category that captures the combined total. Please direct corrections to the Museum office. Pledges and payments to the capital campaign are not included in these totals. Acknowledgements of our capital campaign donors through June 30, 2018 are on page 5.

\$20,000 and Up

Elizabeth Beresford 
Joan A. Payden 









\$10,000 to \$19,999

Anonymous 
Kimberly and Christopher
Bishop
Fairfield County Bank 
Ridgefield Thrift Shop, Inc.



















\$5,000 to \$9,999

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\$1,000 to \$4,999

Sarah and Mark Blandford 
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Kathleen and Don Daughters 


























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






\$100 to \$499















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



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We note with sadness the passing of the following friends: Julia Post Bastedo, Gloria Biagiotti, Gene Ellis, Al Hall, Maureen Kiernan, Mary Rindfleisch, and Kitty Trench.



Cheryl Crowl drives her rolling cannonball in the Memorial Day parade.

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