

# Welcome to the Westerly Historical Society 2026 Annual Meeting



# Agenda For This Evening



**5:30** – Social



**6:00** – Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Dinner



**6:30** – Annual Business Meeting



**7:00** – Award Presentations

# Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance



# Vote to Approve Minutes from 2025 Meeting



**Thomas J. Gulluscio** – President;  
Liaison to the Babcock-Smith House

**Zachary J. Garceau** –Vice President;  
Archivist

**Robert Boucher** – Treasurer

**Robert A. Peacock** – Programs;  
Newsletter Editor

**Becky Jacoinski** – Programs; Secretary

**Cory Jacobson** – Membership

**Jane C. Perkins** – Social Media

**Maria Bernier** – Webmaster

**Gregory Pettys** – Videographer

**Mary Jo Girard and Paul Gingerella** –  
At Large Members

# 2025 - 2026 Westerly Historical Society Executive Board

# **Vote to Approve the Executive Board Officers**

**President** – Thomas J. Gulluscio Jr.

**Vice President** – Zachary J. Garceau

**Secretary** – Rebecca Jacoinski

**Treasurer** – Robert Boucher

# Thank You!

The President would like to thank all the members of the Executive Board for their continued service.

Maria Bernier - Seventeen years

Thomas Gulluscio - Fifteen years

Zachary Garceau – Nine years

Robert Boucher, Robert Peacock, Becky Jacoinski, Jane Perkins, Cory Jacobson – Five years

For anyone interested in joining the Executive Board, please see a board member for details.

# Cemetery Cleanups

- Last fall, The Society received a \$500.00 grant from “Litter Free Rhode Island” to fund cleanups throughout Westerly.
- The funds were used to purchase trash bags, gloves, tools, and related items as well as to pay for garbage disposal costs and refreshments for the participants.
- Volunteers from the Westerly Historical Society visited **37** of the small historical cemeteries in Westerly and cleared them of trash and debris while also exploring the cemeteries and learning about the people buried in each one.
- Over the course of several weeks, **23** bags totaling over **78** pounds of trash were collected over **44** volunteer hours!

*We sincerely appreciate the support of our members as well as their families and friends who assisted with this project.*





# 2025 Programs

- “Watering Places: The Fashionable Seaside Hotels of New London, Groton, Noank, Fishers Island, Stonington & Watch Hill, Part 1, 1800-1885” by Captain Jack Spratt, co-sponsored by the Watch Hill Conservancy, 2 July 2025
- “The roles of Samuel Ward and the Town of Westerly in Rhode Island’s independence prior to the Declaration of Independence” by Jean Gagnier, 10 September 2025
- Regional History Fair at the Westerly Armory, co-sponsored by the Westerly Armory, 25 October 2025
- *Made in Westerly* Book Launch with Ellen L. Madison PhD and Maria Bernier, 12 November 2025

# 2026 Programs

- “Westerly’s Italian Family Tree” by Bill Mitchell, 21 January 2026
- “Larchmont Remembered” by Daniel Harrington, co-sponsored by the Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association, 11 February 2026
- “Restoring Our Elm Street Home” by Carly Callahan, 11 March 2026
- “Westerly Time Capsule Project for America 250” by Jim Wolfe 11 March 2026
- “Wreck of the Onondaga” by Jane Perkins and Bob Peacock, co-sponsored by the Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association, April 8 2026
- “Watch Hill Lighthouse and Life Saving Station” by Jane Perkins and Bob Peacock, co-sponsored by the Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association, May 13 2026

# Upcoming 2026-2027 Programs

- **June 10, 2026** – 6 PM at the United Theatre, a Premiere of the *Reflections* Series by Greg Pettys [SOLD OUT]
- **July 1, 2026** – 6 PM at One Bay Street Center, “A Lifeline of Liberty - Local Privateering” by Jack Spratt
- **September 13, 2026** – 10 AM to 2 PM at Cimalore Field, an antique vehicle display co-sponsored by the Westerly Pawcatuck Antique Automobile Club of America

We are proud to report that our programs are becoming quite popular and we have been averaging 40 guests each month”

*We are always seeking speakers to present programs for the society. If you know anyone who is familiar with a particular local history topic and enjoys talking about their passion, please let us know.*

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Regional History Fair.

A very special thanks to our co-hosts at the Westerly Armory.

The collaborative event was well attended with approximately 300 people sharing and learning about the many historical societies, groups, and museums in the area.

The participants represented forty-two organizations.

We appreciate the hundreds of visitors who dropped in to visit and learn about history.

The event was a fascinating, educational, informative, and interesting experience!

# Regional History Fair



**Thank you to  
our sponsors!**

 **Chelsea Groton Bank**

**Rhode Island  
Foundation**

**Westerly  
Community**  

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**Credit Union**

**Reflections**

# In Memory of



Barbara Unkuri



Mary Stellitano

# Membership Report

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Individual Members- **62**

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Family Members- **42**

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Patron Members- **22**

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Benefactor- **10**

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Corporate- **6**

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Recurring- **30**

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1-Year Comps- **30**

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Honorary - **3**

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Total Members- **205**

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Please help spread the word about our great Society as we push toward 250 members in 2027!



***Westerly's  
Witness  
Newsletter***

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Published 9 newsletters plus a special digital only Holiday edition with numerous full-page photos and an in-depth story on the formation and history of the Bradford Volunteer Fire Company.

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We enjoy the summer and do not publish in July or August and publish a digital-only version in December.

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The newsletter is twelve pages and includes several photos in each issue and extensive use of color.

# ***Westerly's Witness*** **Newsletter**

In addition to the many articles written by our editor, Robert Peacock, including our very popular “Discovering Westerly Cemeteries” series and our “From the Archives” series, the newsletters also contained several guest articles including:

- “History of David Stenhouse” by Zack Garceau
- “Cemetery Field Trip” by Mary Jo Girard
- “The Year Without a Summer” by Anngie Stanfield
- “Letters Home from War” by Jean Gagnier
- “Presidential Signatures” by Zack Garceau
- “Exploring Westerly Cemeteries” by Mary Jo Girard
- Made in Westerly by Maria Bernier and Ellen Madison

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- “An Armed Vessel Off Watch Hill 1665” by Jack Spratt
- “Shipwrecks on the Shores of Westerly” by Jane Perkins
- “Historic Cemetery Etiquette” by Larry Hunter
- “Reports of the United States Life Saving Station” by Jane Perkins
- “Remembering Osceola Kile” by Tom O'Connell
- “Wreck and Salvage of the Clio Chilcott” by Jane Perkins
- “Westerly Time Capsule” by James Wolfe
- “Letters from Captain Fullerton” by Jane Perkins

# ***Westerly's Witness*** **Newsletter**

In addition to the many articles written by our editor, Robert Peacock, including our very popular “Discovering Westerly Cemeteries” series and our “From the Archives” series, the newsletters also contained:

- From the President's Desk
- Editors Notes
- Sponsor Recognition
- Special Announcements
- Discovering Westerly Cemeteries
- From the Archives
- Historical Articles
- Guest Articles

# Calendar Year 2025 Financial Highlights

Total Income: **\$56,527.45\***

Total Expense: **\$27,348.75**

Net Income: **\$29,178.50**

Treasury Balance as of 12/31/2025: **\$159,330.04**

Consisting of:

Operating Funds **\$20,024.56**

Town Historian **\$27,626.96**

Investments **\$111,678.52**

**\* Income reflects grant money to establish a Town Historian Account.**

# Archivist's Report

- Over the last year, we made several facilities and storage improvements including upgrades to the archival materials storing our most sensitive items and reorganization of our vault to maximize our space.
- We have continued our work to make records of all items in our collection available on our website.
- We spent a great deal of time scanning, labeling, uploading, and tagging slides from the “Week in the Life of Westerly” project from October 1987. In total, we scanned, photographed and uploaded approximately 3,100 images to PastPerfect.
- We also attached approximately 1,500-2,000 images of objects in our collections to their records in PastPerfect. This allows people to see the objects we have, including photographs, from home.

# Archivist's Report

- We also processed several major collections including the Bradford Fire District Collection which is approximately 10 boxes, and a collection of items related to Watch Hill which spans several boxes.
- We also created records for photographs in our collection to make them easier to access. We uploaded portraits to PastPerfect including adding hundreds of portraits of people connected to Westerly which are accessible to anyone from anywhere.
- Since June 1, 2025, we have cataloged **609** new items in our system. We have also received many more new items which have not yet been cataloged and processed and will be added to our collections in the near future.

# Archivist's Report

## Since May 2025, the Society has added:

Diaries

Receipts and Cash Books

Books

Bottles

Deeds

Coins

Maps

Tickets

Scrapbooks

Newspapers

Correspondence

Photographs

...and much more

# To Our Donors...

Due to the significant number of donations we received during the 2025-2026 year, we are not able to thank each donor individually this evening, however, we would like to extend our gratitude to all those who offered artifacts to the Society. Your gracious contributions have allowed our collections to grow exponentially. Many items that were donated over the last year have already been used by researchers or were written about in our monthly newsletter, allowing us to share the history of our town with our members. For this, we thank you all.

Over the last year, our Webmaster has:

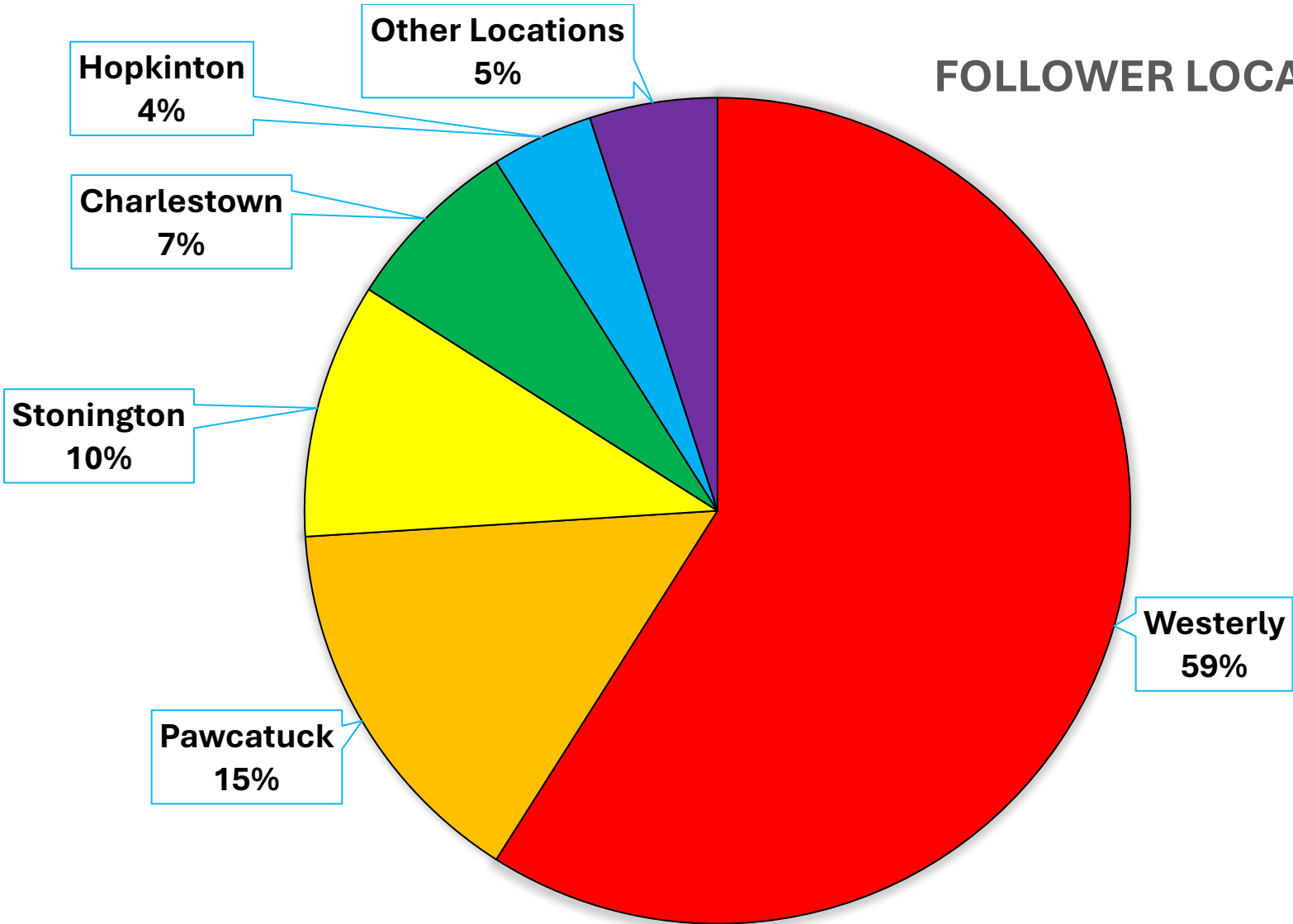
- Uploaded new recordings from the *Reflections* oral history project to YouTube with corrected captions and added those links to the Reflections page on the WHS website.
- Submitted a grant report to the Rhode Island Foundation for their funding to support the *Reflections* project.
- Updated the Current Newsletter page each month as the new issue was released.
- Sent Constant Contact emails to members with information about upcoming programs and the online version of the newsletter.
- Updated the Events page to contain the most current information and moved past events to the Events Archive page.

# Webmaster's Report

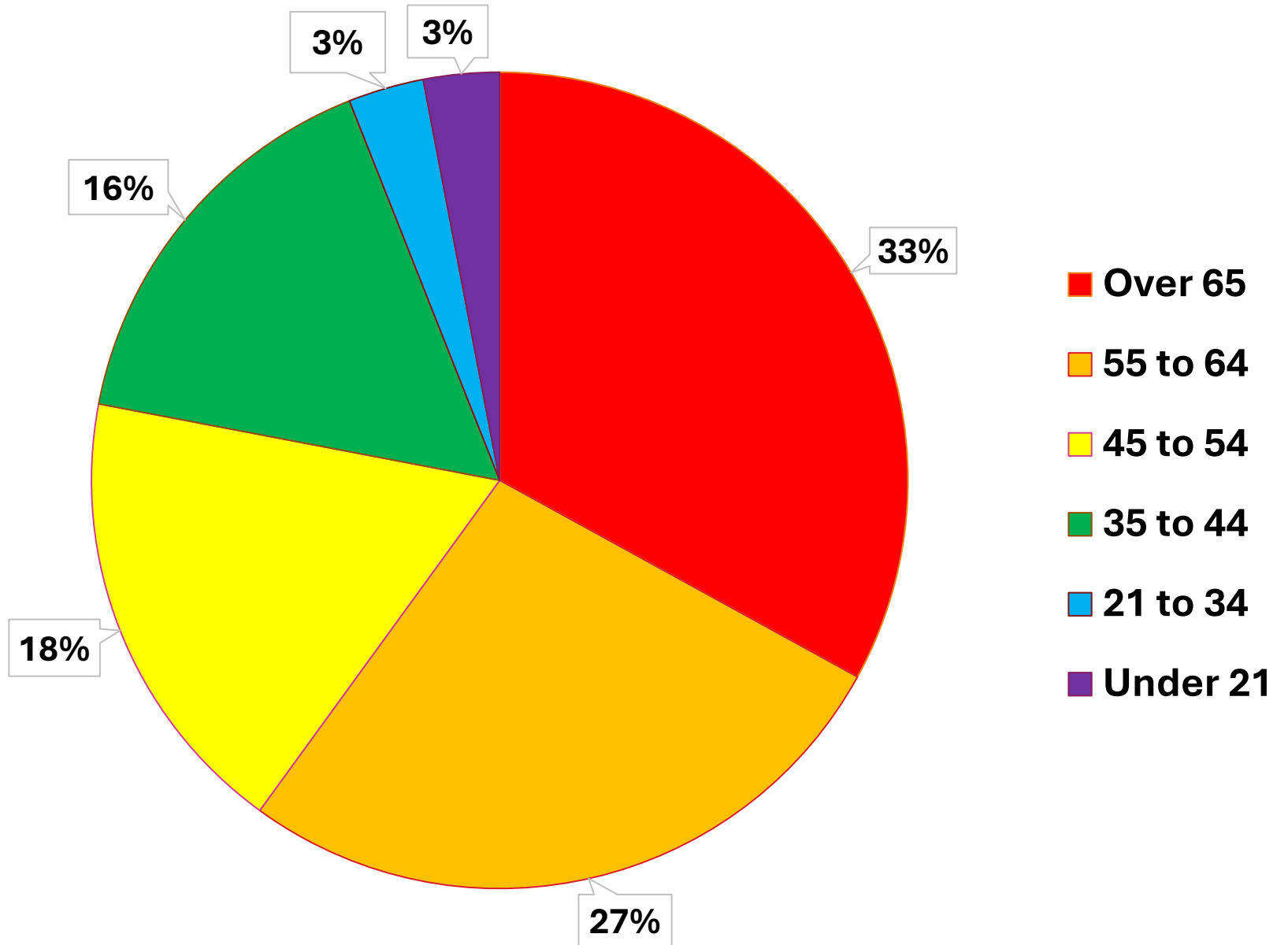
# Social Media Report

- Jane Perkins is a member of the Board and has volunteered to maintain and update the Society's Facebook page.
- The goal continues to be to post at least once a week and to post on the weekends, usually Sundays, when more people appear to be likely to engage with the posts.
- We currently have 3,141 regular followers, of which:
  - Approximately **64%** identify as female
  - Approximately **36%** identify as male
  - This is an increase of **981** followers from last year.

# FOLLOWER LOCATIONS



# AGE OF FOLLOWERS



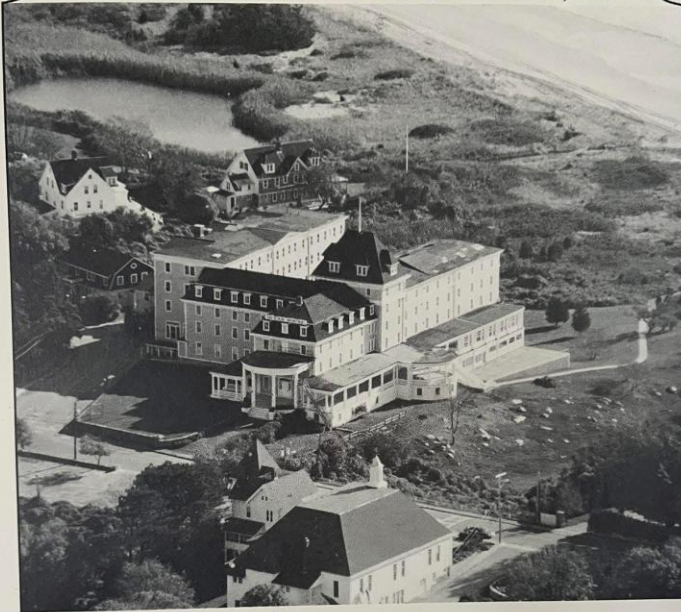
# Social Media Report

Some of our most notable posts:

- A 1997 issue of *Tidings* magazine from the April/May 1997. It was an advertisement for the sale of the Ocean House. At the time, almost 30 years ago, the asking price was \$7.5 million for the 9.33-acre ocean front parcel with 610 feet of beach frontage, a seven-story building operation as a 59-room hotel, and an adjacent two-story home. That post reached 41,900 people, with almost 4,000 viewers engaging in the post.
- A 1912 photo that showed the temporary pontoon bridge that allowed workers to cross the Pawcatuck River from the Margin Street area in Westerly to the CB Cottrell Company factor on Mechanic Street in Pawcatuck. The pedestrian bridge was designed to be easily removable to allow boat traffic up and down the river. The post received nearly 13,000 views and engaged 879 people.
- A 1918 postcard with a view of the wooden boardwalk on Watch Hill Beach. The postcard showed younger people in shorts and short sleeve shirts while the majority of beach visitors were well-dressed in long sleeve shirts, suit jackets, and long ankle length dresses with long sleeves. This post reached almost 10,000 people. The post received 125 reactions.

*Please continue to encourage your friends and families to follow our page, and to like, share and comment on the posts.*

## OCEAN HOUSE • WATCH HILL, RI



9.33 acre ocean front parcel with 610 feet of frontage on East Beach. Seven story building, currently operated seasonally as a 59 room hotel, with dining room, lounge and deck. Also on site is a 5-6 bedroom 4013 sq. ft. two story home, with a lower level apartment. Adjacent to site is a 1.78 acre parking lot. This landmark hotel is offered at \$7,500,000.

**Claus F. Rossin GRI, Listing Broker**

**Buffum & Rossin Realty, Inc.**

**86 Beach Street, Westerly**

Tel. (401) 596-0400 • Fax (401) 596-2856

93B Watch Hill Road  
Avondale, RI 02891  
401-348-0400

62 Greenmanville Avenue  
Mystic, CT 06355  
860-536-2634



114 Bay Street  
Watch Hill, RI 02891  
401-348-0500

152 Water Street  
Stonington, CT 06378  
860-535-1882



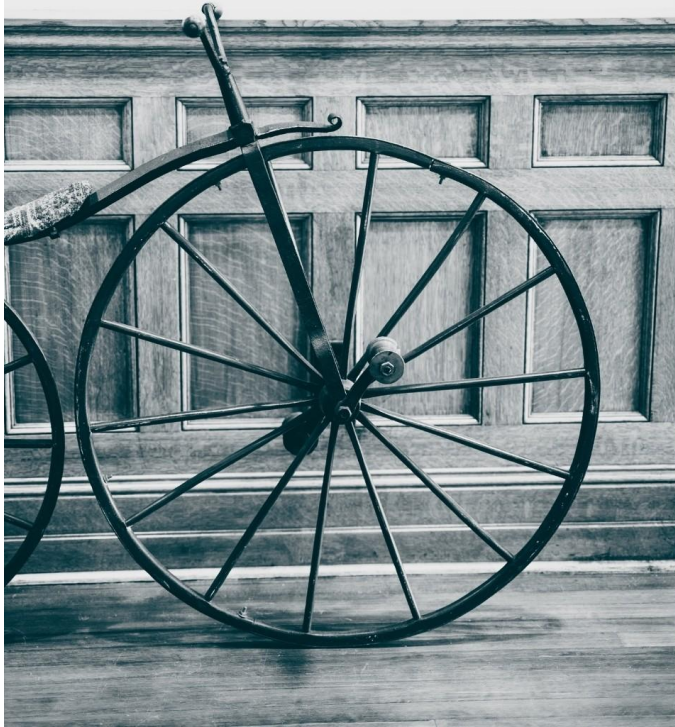
# Publications

The Westerly Historical Society has the following publications available for purchase:

- *Made in Westerly* by Ellen L. Madison PhD and Maria Bernier
- *A History of Fire Protection and Fire Suppression Services Provided to the Village of Bradford* by Bob Peacock
- *A History of Fire Protection and Fire Suppression Services of The Bradford Dyeing Association* by Bob Peacock
- *Great Stories from Westerly's Past* by Zachary J. Garceau
- *Leaves of My Journal* by Dwight C. Brown Jr.
- *Pawcatuck River Navy* by Dwight C. Brown Jr.
- *In and About Westerly* by Thomas A. O'Connell
- *Westerly's Gold...Her People* by Thomas A. O'Connell
- *Fair Westerly* by Thomas A. O'Connell
- *Westerly Memories*
- *Veteran's War Stories*
- *Along the Shore*

# MADE IN WESTERLY

Maria Bernier & Ellen L. Madison, PhD



Publication of the book "Made in Westerly" by Maria Bernier and Ellen L. Madison, PhD.

Copies available for purchase tonight, online from our website, and at Martin House Books.

# The Westerly Historical Society's Youtube Channel

- This channel includes recordings of the monthly programs as well as **20** episodes of Reflections.
- We currently have **55** subscribers.
- The most watched video, with **320** views, is Byron Brown's interview in the Reflections series.
- Our website has links to the YouTube channel, Facebook page, and the Reflections series.

# The Julia Award

The Westerly Historical Society presents the *Julia Award* to recognize outstanding contributions to local history.

- 2013** John Tedeschi, Chuck Royce,  
and Lang Wheeler
- 2014** John Coduri, Linda Chaffee,  
and Ellen Madison
- 2015** Tom O'Connell
- 2016** Gloria Russell
- 2017** Dwight C. Brown Jr.
- 2018** Roberta Mudge Humble
- 2019** Westerly 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee
- 2020** Betty-Jo Cugini Greene  
and Jim Karpeichik
- 2021** Zachary J. Garceau
- 2022** Nina Wright
- 2023** Ann L. Smith
- 2024** Joseph Fusaro Jr.
- 2025** Thomas J. Gulluscio Jr.

# Past Recipients

# **The Recipient of the 2026 Julia Award**

***Robert Peacock***

# The History Award

The Westerly Historical Society and Babcock Smith House jointly present the History Award to “a person or persons, grade 5 through adulthood, who furthers the mission of researching, studying, and/or preserving local history in our community.”

# The History Award Past Recipients

## **2018**

Alex Berardo

Jackie Brennan, Wanda Butler,  
Mary Cool and Jan Tunney

## **2019**

Brandon Perrone

Zachary J. Garceau

## **2020**

Reed Tremblay

## **2021**

Roberta Mudge Humble

Judith Crandall Harbold

## **2022**

Joseph Fusaro, Jr.

Hugh Barton

## **2023**

Donna Celico

## **2024**

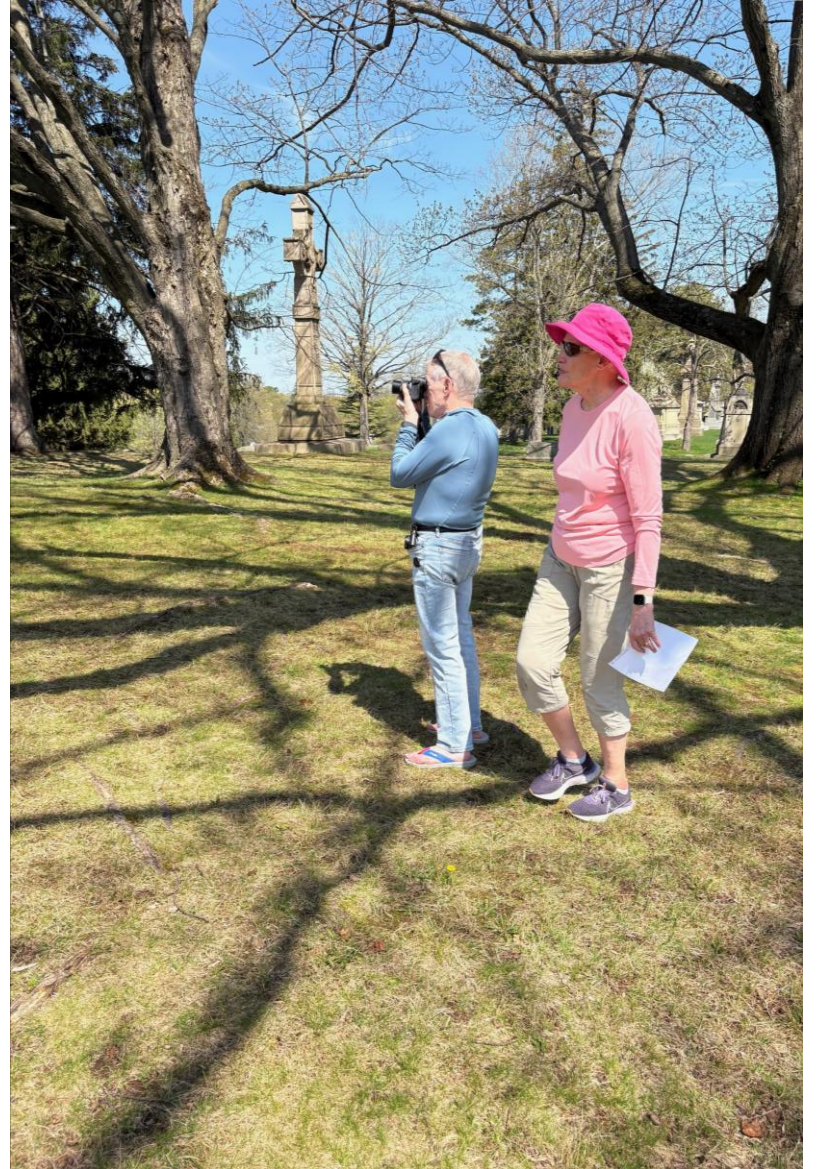
David Smith

## **2025**

Alan Angelo

# **The Recipient of the 2026 History Award**

***Brenda and John Linton***







A drawing for the door prize compliments of

*Broadview Landscaping and Garden  
Center Langworthy Road Dunns Corners*

will conclude this meeting.