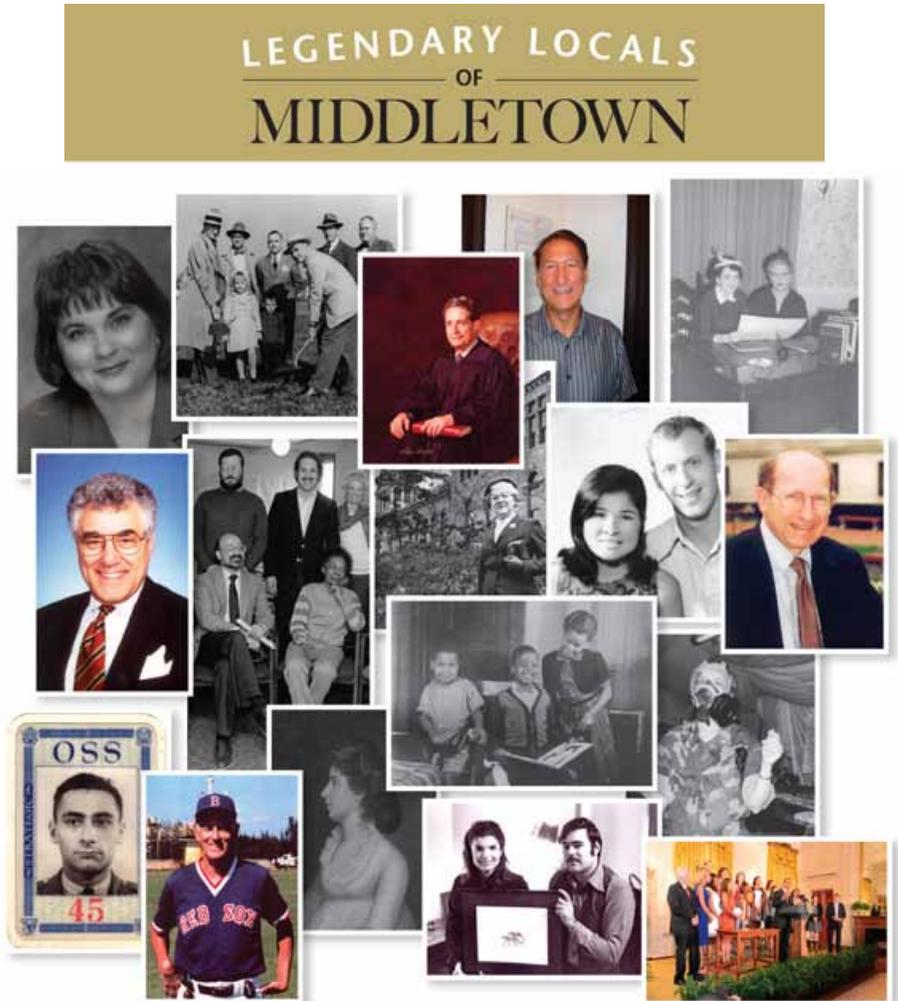


Historical Society to Launch *Legendary Locals of Middletown*

The historic names of Middletown residents Commodore Thomas Macdonough, General Joseph Mansfield, and Secretary of State Dean Acheson are familiar to many of today's citizens. But did you know that world-famous organic photochemist Nicholas Turro, popular band leader Tony Pastor, top boxer Willie Pep, and Academy Award-winning composer Allie Wrubel also hailed from Middletown? Or that Phillies and Red Sox scout Bob Fralick, and Vietnam veteran and Mr. New England title-holder Jerry Augustine still call Middletown home? These and dozens of other Middletonians are featured in the new book, *Legendary Locals of Middletown*, to be launched at the annual meeting of the Society on Wednesday, April 30.

Authors Robert and Kathleen Hubbard, assisted by Historical Society Director Deborah Shapiro, have spent months uncovering the stories of Middletown residents who have excelled as entrepreneurs, athletes, artists, writers, government leaders, educators, military heroes, and all-around unforgettable people. One of the more poignant stories featured in the book is that of two cousins, both named Sebastian Milardo. The older cousin was the first Middletown man to die in World War I; the local American Legion Post is named in his honor. His namesake, born four years after his death, was the first Middletown man reported lost in World War II. Many will remember Bill Pomfret, Middletown's "Mr. Baseball"; Bob Lapidus, the founder of Bob's Stores; Vivian McRae Wesley, beloved teacher; and Katchen Coley, ardent environmentalist and advocate for people



with disabilities, all featured in the book.

Robert and Kathleen Hubbard were both born in Middletown and attended local schools. Kathleen taught in the Middletown Public School system for 30 years. Robert is an associate professor at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven and the director of the college's Computer Information Systems program. He also teaches the courses in the college's MFA in Writing program. Previously, Robert and Kathleen wrote Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America: Middletown*, and Robert authored *Images of America: Glastonbury*. Following their presentation, held in memory of Arthur M. Schultz, *Legendary Locals of Middletown* will be available for purchase and inscription.

The annual meeting will be held in the Hubbard Room at Russell Library, 123 Broad Street. The business portion of the meeting will begin at 6:30 pm with the lecture to follow at 7:00 pm. The library is handicap accessible. ♿

President's Message

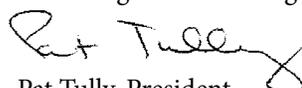
After four years I have reached the end of my term as President of the Board of Directors, and Erik Hesselberg is slated to become President at the Society's annual membership meeting on April 30. During my term we have worked hard to put the Society on a sound financial footing, to increase our visibility and to celebrate the history of Middletown and Middlesex County. And while the work is not complete, with your help the Society has made great strides in all these areas.

The Board of Directors is composed of a good mix of long-term, experienced directors and new directors with exciting new ideas. This can be an explosive mix, and the Board has had its share of controversial discussions. But we are one in our dedication to the mission of the Society and the preservation of Middletown and Middlesex County history. These common threads bind us together even when we most disagree about how to fulfill the Society's mission. Thank you to each Director who has served over the past four years—it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with you!

Our Executive Director, Debby Shapiro, has a profound knowledge and love of Middletown history, is tireless in her efforts to bring this history to the community, and skilled at coordinating the activities of our many volunteers and interns. It is indeed rare to have someone of Debby's talents and commitment in any organization. Thank you, Debby, for your support, guidance and enthusiasm—it is a joy to work with you!

And, of course, thanks to our members—now over 300 strong. Your continuing support of the Society through membership, attendance at events and programs, donation of family artifacts, and financial contributions, is critical to our ability to fulfill our mission. You know the significance and importance of Middletown and Middlesex County history, and how it enriches our understanding of the present. Thank you for supporting our efforts to preserve this history!

I look forward to participating in this year's events as a Board member. My heartfelt thanks to all of you for an exciting and rewarding four years!



Pat Tully, President

Director's Message

Dear Members,

Four years can drag on forever (if it's the course of the Civil War, perhaps) or feel like it's flown by, if it's Pat Tully's wonderful tenure as Society president. In those four years, she has overseen the expansion of our fundraising efforts to put the Society and our stewardship of the Mansfield House on a more solid footing and made us more visible in the community through her outreach to civic groups. She has shared her expertise with computers (something of a rarity among historians!) by fixing all the problems that arise. Her weekly blog about events from 150 years ago is enjoyed by many throughout the country. I will miss her weekly visits to the Mansfield House when we discussed news about the latest researchers and discoveries in our collection. I'm sure all of our members join me in thanking her for a job well done.

We also say thank you to three retiring board members: Richard Kagan, Quentin Phipps, and Bill Ryczek. Richard contributed thoughtful insight to our board discussions and Quentin shared his fundraising expertise, teaching us effective approaches. Bill first became involved with the Society in 1996 when he organized our vintage *base ball* team, the "Middletown Mansfields." They played against the "Swamp Frogs" of

Sylvania, Ohio in front of a world audience, thanks to coverage by CNN. Soon after, he joined the board, became President for four years, led the Finance and Fundraising Committees, and faithfully marched in the Memorial Day parade, to name only a few of his many contributions. And to think he just had hoped to play ball! It goes to show how truly engaging involvement here can be.

On February 28, I attended the launch of the new book, *Inside Connecticut and the Civil War*, at Central Connecticut State University. Edited by Professor Matthew Warshauer, this series of essays on Connecticut's participation in the war efforts and the war's aftermath contains an essay titled, "From Decoration Day to the Centennial Commission: Civil War Commemoration in Connecticut, 1868-1965." Its author, Emily Gifford, did quite a bit of her research in the Society's archives. You can find it on Amazon or at area bookstores.

I hope to see many of you at our annual meeting on April 30 as we elect new officers and introduce our new book, *Legendary Locals of Middletown*. Wishing all our members the best for this long-awaited start to spring.



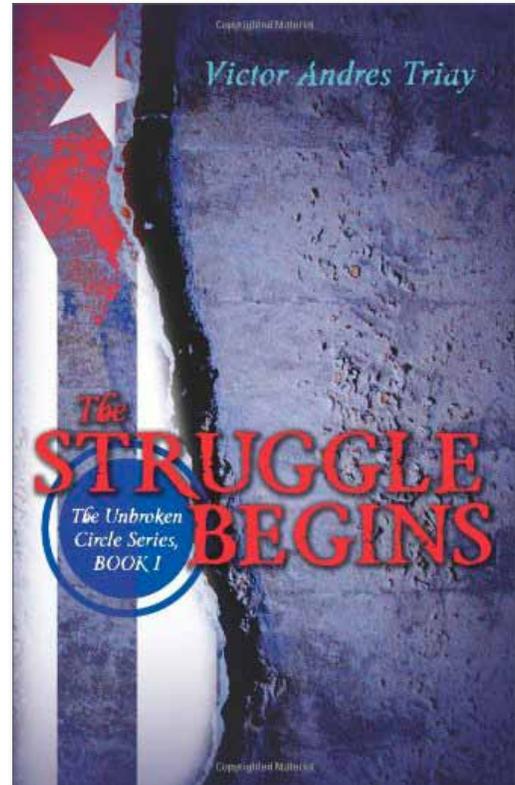
Debby Shapiro

Story of Cuban Freedom Fighters Rescheduled for Wednesday, May 14

The unpredictable winter weather forced the postponement of Victor Triay's talk about his trilogy of historical fiction, the *Unbroken Circle* series. The story centers on the middle class Leon family who is caught up in warfare, betrayal, and separation during the early years of the Cuban Revolution. It has been rescheduled for Wednesday, May 14 at 7 pm in the Periodical Room of the Jean Burr Smith Library in Chapman Hall at Middlesex Community College, 100 Training Hill Road, Middletown. Please note the change of location.

Victor Triay, Historical Society member and the author of these spellbinding books, will speak about how he came to write the series, about the characters, and about the history behind the fiction. He will also recount his experiences researching the many events depicted in the books.

Triay, the son of Cuban exiles, was raised in Miami, a center of the Cuban exile community. He received his PhD. in History from Florida State University in 1995 and has been a professor in history at Middlesex Community College since 1992. His first book, *Fleeing Castro: Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children's Program*, was followed by *Bay of Pigs: An Oral History of Brigade 2506*, which received the 2001 Samuel Proctor Oral History Prize of the Florida Historical Association. Copies of Books I and II in the *Unbroken Circle* series will be available for purchase and inscription. If you need directions, please call the Society at 860-346-0746. 🐼



Bylaw Change Proposed by the Board of Directors

At the September 26, 2013 meeting of the Society's Board of Directors, the following bylaw change was proposed: That Section 5.3 be amended to read: ..."No Officer shall hold the same office for more than two successive terms, except the secretary AND THAT WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD, THE TREASURER." Capital letters indicate the proposed change. The change will be discussed and voted upon at the annual meeting.

Battle of Lake Champlain 200th Anniversary Commemoration

On September 11, 1814, local hero Commodore Thomas Macdonough led the American fleet on Lake Champlain to victory over the British fleet commanded by Captain George Downie. This victory forced the British fleet and army to retreat back into Canada. The British goal of expanding the Canadian border southward was thwarted and the British soon entered into peace talks that culminated in the Treaty of Ghent.

The Society will have a program in the fall to commemorate this momentous victory, but some of you may want to travel to Plattsburgh, New York (the battle was fought in Plattsburgh harbor) to take part in the major celebration taking place there, September 11-14. Society member, Thomas Macdonough Russell III, will be representing the Macdonough family at the festivities. For more information, visit the web site, www.champlain1812.com. 🐼

2014 Community Survey — Preliminary Results

The mission of the Middlesex County Historical Society is to preserve and celebrate the history of Middletown and Middlesex County. In January 2014 the Society began a survey of the community to measure our success in accomplishing our mission, and how we might develop activities to meet the community's interests and needs. We elicited responses in a variety of ways, including paper forms distributed to members via the newsletter, in person at Russell Library, and online with links on our webpage, Twitter feed, and Facebook page. The result was very encouraging, with 161 responses to the survey between January 15 – March 15. Although we have not yet fully analyzed these results, here are some preliminary findings:

The section on attending Society programs had the added benefit of demonstrating the number and variety of activities the Society sponsors each year. In 2013 we held 17 events, ranging from the Sheedy third grade essay contest to Civil War Day to the annual Car Show to a program about the history of witchcraft accusations in Connecticut. About 2/3 of the respondents had not attended a Society event or program in the past year, most either because they did not know about an event until it was too late, or it was held at a time that was inconvenient for them. Our Executive Director has done a wonderful job advertising Society events, but our respondents demonstrated that there is always room to improve our outreach to the local community.

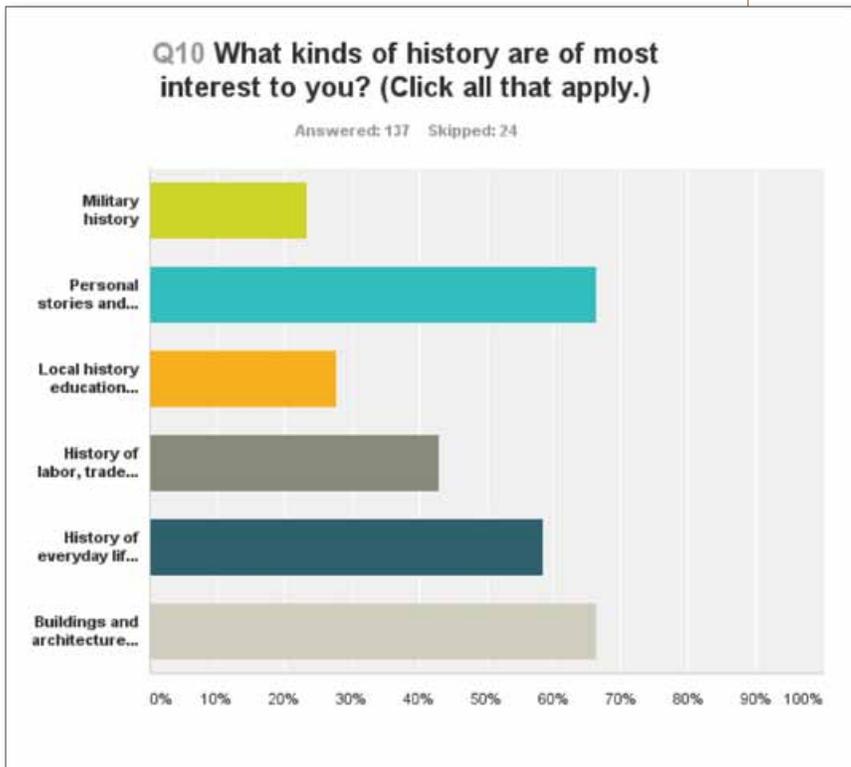
Equal number of respondents (about 2/3) replied that they are very interested in personal histories and biographies, and the history and preservation of local buildings and architecture. A significant number of respondents were also interested in the history of everyday life, such as cooking, fashion, tools, etc. Most periods of history were of equal interest to our respondents, but—and this was surprising—fewer were interested in recent history from 1950 on. We had assumed that people would be significantly more interested in history they or their parents lived through, but this did not turn out to be the case.

The comments we received were almost uniformly thoughtful and carefully considered. Not surprisingly, many comments were in praise of Debby Shapiro, our indefatigable and enthusiastic Executive Director: “You have a great director!” “Debby Shapiro is an excellent speaker — just the right amount of detail. Very engaging. “Debby Shapiro is fantastic!” It is wonderful to know that Debby is as well-thought of and respected in the community

as she is within the Society. We also had a number of helpful suggestions and ideas, particularly concerning our open hours and advertising, which will help us to improve our services and activities in the coming year.

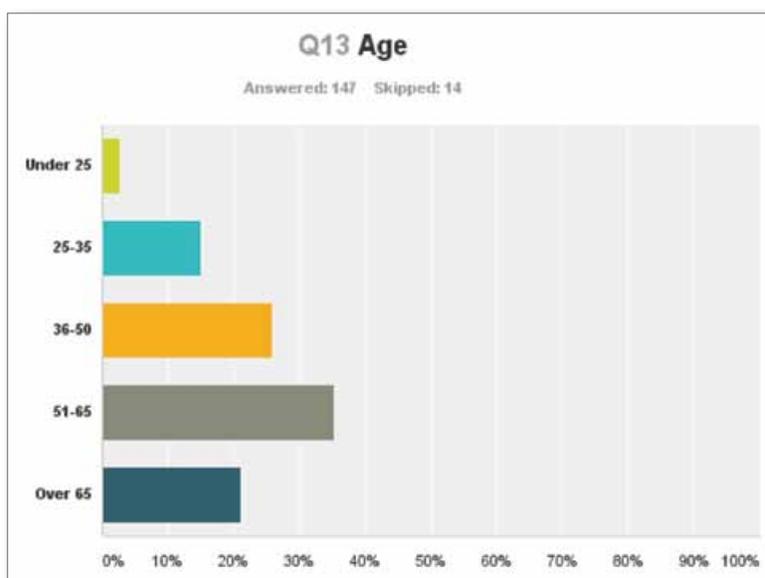
At the annual membership meeting on April 30 we will present a brief summary of the survey's results, and post a more detailed analysis on our website when it becomes available later this spring. For a print copy of the analysis, please contact Debby Shapiro at 860-346-0746, or mchs@wesleyan.edu. Thanks to all who responded!

—Pat Tully



Our respondents tended to be between 36 and 65 years of age, were couples with grown children, and either born and raised in Middletown or moved here 10 or more years ago. About 1/3 of the responses were from you, our members—thank you! We were heartened at the number of non-members who were interested enough to respond—it shows that there is some room to increase our membership base. 58% of the respondents had not visited the Mansfield House in the past year, some no doubt because they do not live in the area. But others might visit if we made some changes in how we advertise events, exhibits and programs, or changed/expanded our open hours.

Middlesex County Historical Society - Community Survey	
Answer Choices	Responses
Jan. 22, 2013: Panic in Connecticut: Accused Witches Have their Say	10.20% 5
Jan. 31, 2013: Quiltmaking 1941-1945	12.24% 6
Mar. 7, 2013: Shock and Awe in 1862: American Writers and the Meaning of the Civil War	12.24% 6
Apr. 4, 2013: Beman Triangle Exhibit Opening	32.65% 16
Apr. 23, 2013: Annual Meeting and Prof. Lois Brown lecture	22.45% 11
Jun. 6, 2013: Sheedy Contest Award Ceremony	14.29% 7
Jun. 8, 2013: CT Open House Day	8.16% 4
Jun. 29, 2013: Reception and Fundraiser at Highlawn	24.49% 12
Jul. 24, 2013: Annual Garden Luncheon	22.45% 11
Jul. 28, 2013: Connecticut Jane Austen Society visit	4.08% 2
Aug. 10, 2013: Summer Jazz at the Mansfield House	20.41% 10
Aug. 25, 2013: Table at the Wadsworth Open Air Market	16.33% 8
Sep. 7, 2013: Civil War Day	28.57% 14
Oct. 13, 2013: Annual Antique & Classic Car & Truck Show	22.45% 11
Oct. 22, 2013: Peter Gedrys, Furniture Finishes Past and Present	20.41% 10
Nov. 19, 2013: For Adam's Sake: A Family Saga in Colonial New England	20.41% 10
Nov. 29, 2013: Holiday on Main at the Mansfield House	10.20% 5
Feb. 18, 2014: Cuban Revolution and the Bay of Pigs	0.00% 0
Mar. 4, 2014: Native Americans and English Settlers	8.16% 4
Total Respondents: 49	



Proposed 2014–2015 Budget

Treasurer Richard Adelstein will present the annual report and proposed budget at the Society's annual meeting.

	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual Actual (1.092 x Feb YTD)	2014-15 proposed proposed budget
INCOME				
Operating Income				
Donations	\$11,851	\$15,000	\$30,854	\$20,000
Events, fundraisers (net)	\$6,751	\$10,000	\$7,208	\$10,000
Gift shop (net)	\$317	\$1,500	\$870	\$1,500
House, grounds rental	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0
Membership dues	\$8,935	\$8,500	\$11,826	\$10,000
Miscellaneous (including royalties)	\$146	\$0	\$186	\$500
Newsletter ads	\$40	\$0	\$66	\$0
Research fees	\$1,830	\$1,500	\$1,952	\$2,000
Total Operating Income	\$29,870	\$41,500	\$52,962	\$44,000
Investment Income				
Merrill Lynch transfer	\$55,490	\$22,765	\$20,748	\$25,800
Collections, capital savings transfers	\$0	\$481	\$546	\$500
Total Investment Income	\$55,490	\$23,246	\$21,294	\$26,300
TOTAL INCOME	\$85,360	\$64,746	\$74,256	\$70,300
EXPENSES				
Office				
Accounting	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Miscellaneous	\$430	\$500	\$748	\$700
Office expenses	\$901	\$1,000	\$2,390	\$2,000
Postage	\$815	\$800	\$1,176	\$1,000
Printing	\$1,341	\$900	\$1,235	\$1,100
Telephone & internet	\$1,220	\$1,500	\$1,058	\$1,200
Total Office	\$7,207	\$7,200	\$9,107	\$8,500
Facilities & Collections				
Collections maintenance	\$0	\$0	\$350	\$500
Electricity	\$3,379	\$4,100	\$3,073	\$4,100
Fuel oil	\$5,723	\$4,500	\$6,592	\$6,500
Insurance, non-employee	\$9,184	\$8,100	\$8,146	\$8,200
Maintenance & capital improvements	\$2,741	\$3,000	\$2,249	\$3,000
Total Facilities & Collections	\$21,027	\$19,700	\$20,410	\$22,300
Personnel				
Total Personnel	\$42,310	\$37,846	\$40,034	\$39,500
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$70,544	\$64,746	\$69,551	\$70,300
(Income) - (Expenses)	\$14,816	\$0	\$4,705	\$0

Memorial Day Parade

The Society will again be marching in the Memorial Day parade to honor those in our community who made the ultimate sacrifice. We will meet at the corner of Stack Street and Pease Avenue on Monday, May 26 at 10:00 am.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Juxtaposing Likeness: Fashion Accessories..... During museum hours
From the Collection of the Middlesex County Historical Society
- Annual Business Meeting of the Society Wednesday, April 30, 6:30 pm
- Arthur M. Schultz Memorial Lecture and Wednesday, April 30, 7:00 pm
launch of *Legendary Locals of Middletown*
Hubbard Room, Russell Library
- Cuban Freedom Fighters Book Series Wednesday, May 14, 7:00 pm
Periodical Room, Burr Library, Chapman Hall
Middlesex Community College
- Memorial Day Parade Monday, May 26, 10:00 am
Meet at corner of Stack St. and Pease Ave.
- Sheedy Contest Reception Thursday, June 5, 6:00 pm
- Connecticut Open House Day..... Saturday, June 14, 11:00 to 3:00

For more information, visit us on the web at www.middlesexhistory.org