President’s Report:

Hello everyone—As you may have noticed in the October Eolian, the Board of Directors has voted to cancel our Annual Meeting and replace it with an Annual Report of our activities due to COVID-19 restrictions at the Park. The increase in COVID cases in New London County, has resulted in restricted access to all the park buildings for us and members of the general public The Board hopes this is only a temporary measure.

This year has proved to be a challenge for us. COVID-19 restrictions have curtailed many of our membership meetings and fund raising efforts, as it has for many non-profit organizations. Nevertheless, we have forged ahead, resorting to the internet to proceed with our annual plant sale. Our web site was also instrumental in selling tickets for our number restricted July membership meeting and picnic—all held outside on the Mansion terrace—social distancing observed!

All outdoor volunteer activities proceeded as in past years, Garden volunteers made progress in the daylily beds, Building and Grounds volunteers are working on the grapevine enclosure and helped with establishment of the new archive room and the Gift shop opened for the season. While we didn’t get as much accomplished as we had hoped, the COVID restrictions did give us a chance to develop a five year plan for projects that we would like to undertake at the park. A generous donor has established an endowment for FOH projects at the park to be known as The Friends of Harkness Capital Projects Fund.

As we move into 2021, twenty-eight years since our incorporation in 1993, Friends of Harkness can be proud of our past accomplishments at the park and can look forward to many years of public-private partnership improvements to the park that we all hold dear.

Jeanne
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: Joan Prentice  A full report is attached.

Sixteen thank you letters were sent to people who made memorial donations to the Park. Four sympathy cards were sent to families of deceased members.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Frances Steffian  A full report is attached.

Financial controls have been implemented. Doherty, Banks and Beals and the Treasurer are handling bill payment and accounting. Merrill Lynch is acting as fiduciary for our savings accounts, which are in interest bearing accounts. There is $400,800 invested in short term CDs at Merrill Lynch; interest to date is approximately $4,700. The CDs are short term and liquid. At the time of this report income was $5,300 more than expected and expenses were $3,600 less than projected. Overall the budget remained within the projected parameters.

The Plant Sale, Docent tours and interest income from short term CD's contributed significantly to the annual income although dues collected were below expected levels. Memorial donations were less than 2018.

For 2020 procurement and payment reimbursement forms will be refined. The 2020 budget is being developed with more accurate input from 2019 actuals. A strong financial foundation has been established for future growth.

October 31, 2019          October 31, 2018
Total Assets: $465,655      $447,782
Total Income:  45,071        45,196
Total Expenses: 26,017       19,470
Net Income:       17,206      25,726

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Jeanne Shelburne

The President reported that there were many small-scale projects versus large capital ones. The Mansion and Carriage House are being evaluated for necessary repairs. The Parking Lot has new fencing. There is a new FOH message kiosk near the Parking lot. A portable gift shed/information station was purchased and became operational. Investment accounts for non-profit were set up at Merrill Lynch to replace non-interest bearing accounts at local banks. Member events were held monthly from April to October and were well received, and generated income with a $5 per non-member fee. An Easter Egg Hunt was a huge success with 500 in attendance. Unfortunately the planned Halloween event was cancelled because the weekend was already taken by a wedding. Kites flown by John Rose remain a popular monthly event. Historic Garden Day had lines waiting for tours outside the mansion and gardens and necessitated the park be closed for parking. An Ad Hoc committee revised the Bylaws. Minutes of the monthly meeting are now being sent to the membership.

For 2020 FOH will continue to work with DEEP and the Park Supervisor on improvements to the Park. Some of the items include: restoration work, concession contracts, Enders House, glass in phase 3 of the greenhouse with the state supplying the mechanical work; evaluation of the yellow farmhouse for Park events or rentals; continue with the monthly membership meetings including Judith Tankard, landscape designer and Miles Sax heirloom apple expert; redesign of the Park entrance and landscaping.

PARK SUPERVISOR'S REPORT – Vincent Messino

Collier Corporation has finished an assessment of the Mansion. A plan for maintenance and improvements, both interior and exterior is in process. Nelson and Edwards have finished securing the Carriage House and Water Tower. There is wish for an interpretive state of the art center in the Park. Lead, mold and asbestos has been abated in the Carriage House.

Passport to Parks program has allowed more seasonal and permanent staff to be hired. Fourteen trees were planted on the grounds. Brush was cleared on the ellipse in front of the Mansion and around the stonewalls. There was a controlled burn at Goshen Cove, which successfully returned native grasses to the area and improved habitat for wildlife. Permanent staff and FOH volunteers worked well together on projects this past year. A full time maintainer has been added to the Park staff.
MEMBERSHIP – Louis B Clark  

A full report is attached.

There are 305 Memberships with 436 members. This includes 46 new members in 2019.

DOCENT – Mary Maynard  

A full report is attached.

2,237 tours were given of the Harkness mansion
$6,119 collected in donations
29 docents gave tours over the season
498 Volunteer hours worked

PROGRAM – Mary Beth Baker  

A full report is attached.

Five monthly member programs were held. A LCD projector, screen, pedestal table, and podium were purchased instead of renting them for the programs. Over 300 members and guests attended the programs.

HORTICULTURE – John Suhr  

A full report is attached.

The plant sale grossed $11,300 a 28% increase over 2019. Two hundred-seventy lily bulbs were planted and 25 long spurred yellow columbine and 1,000 heliotrope were propagated. The DNA of the grapevines was tested by UCal-Davis. The West garden bird-house is being replicated.

FACEBOOK – Gail Brookover  

A full report is attached.

Facebook was used effectively to boost attendance at many FOH events. Fifteen events were posted; 232,400 Facebook members viewed the events and 18,300 responded. Historic Garden Day’s record-breaking attendance is related to 191,900 viewings and 13,100 responses.

PUBLICITY – Chris Bates

Northrop, a video production company, created a promotional video for FOH featuring drone video of the grounds and video of the Mansion and gardens. Video clips will be used on the website, in social media and at promotional events. The local newspapers were used for posting calendar of events. Upgrades were made to the video available on the website. The FOH kiosk was regularly updated with upcoming events.

GIFT SHOP – Deanna Bosdorff  

A full report is attached.

A new gift shed was purchased for $6,000 but could not open until August because of electricity issues. In one month of operation, the new location grossed $2,538.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS – Phil Tankard  

A full report is attached.

A power point presentation accompanied the report. The FOH information kiosk was designed and built by volunteers. The interior of the new gift shed was outfitted. Heavy timber guardrails were installed on the east side of the public parking area.

BYLAWS – Deborah Donovan

This committee using the original Bylaws as a template undertook a complete revision of the existing Bylaws. Standing committees were added, terms of office for board members were set, as were term limits, the Trustees were merged into the Budget and Finance Committee and language was cleaned up and made consistent across all Articles.

MOTION: For the Secretary to cast one vote for the Bylaws as presented.

Motion: Deborah Donovan  Second: John Steffian  Motion passed
The Secretary to cast one vote to approve the following At Large Members:

- Gail Brookover
- Lou Clark
- Paul Goulekas
- Joan Prentice
- John Suhr
- Phil Tankard
- Renee Vogt
- Kristen Widham

**MOTION:** For the Secretary to cast one vote for the At Large Board Members as presented.

*Motion: John Steffian  Second: Deborah Donovan  Motion passed*

Chelsey and Chris Manning of Northrup videos presented their promotional video including drone video and a montage of the Mansion and Garden settings.

**Motion to adjourn at 8:23 PM passed.**

Respectfully submitted, Vonice Carr, Secretary

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**Corresponding Secretary’s report**

October 26, 2020

Since January 1st, five thank you letters have been sent for donations received. One of the donations was in memory of Gladys Stadnick and another was a book was that had an inscription to Mary Harkness dated October 1930 in it.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Prentice

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**Treasurer’s Report 2020—Frances Steffian**

The Annual Treasurer’s report runs from , from Oct 1, 2019 to Sept 30 2020.

Overall we can report financial fortitude to the Board and the Membership. Our investment assets at Merrill Lynch retained all value during the financial downturn of the pandemic. With the lowering of interest rates we adjusted down our expected interest income. Our usual operations of the Gift Shop and Plant Sale were affected by CV19, but were still very profitable, particularly the Plant Sale which quickly shifted to online. Because of cancelled events, our expenses were down for the year. Membership, Donations and Fundraising income were all more than anticipated. Overall, our net income was 17,283.43, which, for the year, increased our total for Liabilities and Equity from 465,479.40 to 482,756.67.
Park Manager’s Report

This 2020 recreational season has been a challenge unlike anything that I have experience in my 40 plus year career with DEP/DEEP. We started the season and are ending it with working around a pandemic.

In early spring we were asked to shut down Seaside State Park which is part of the Harkness management unit. That came with its own set of challenges. Then as we all saw throughout the state many doors were closing and different recreational opportunities were temporarily taken away. This led to a huge increase in park attendance state wide which instantly became a management challenge for all park staff. Measures were put in place immediately. All of the picnic tables were removed from the picnic areas, parking capacity was reduced, signs were installed regarding the pandemic, the beach area was temporarily closed and every weekend throughout the entire summer staff had to shut the park down because of the increase in usage.

As we all know everything related to the pandemic was changing on a daily basis and still is, which continues to create more challenges for the parks employees and the Friends volunteers working alongside them. At this point I would like to thank all of my staff both full time and seasonal as well as my great Friends group including all volunteers for doing more than a fantastic job this season with all of the challenges that we were faced with and that constantly kept changing. Truly a TEAM effort! I greatly appreciated that.

This past Labor Day weekend the Harkness staff were finally able to get set up in the new temporary office trailer located just across from the original office. This will be the new hub of the operation until an alternative office space can be determined onsite.

The Harkness wedding venue took a direct hit this season. All but a hand full of events have been postponed until next season.

I have had many meetings this year regarding the study of future projects concerning the Harkness Mansion, Carriage House, Water Tower and grounds. All of which are very exciting and will do nothing but improve the park going into the future.

Earlier in the spring, parks staff, forestry staff and wildlife staff conducted a controlled burn in different areas of the park including a large part of the Niering preserve in an effort to promote certain grasses and plant life. All of which will directly benefit many different types of wildlife that presently live and or migrate along our coastline.

Removal of the old broken parking lot barriers continued and the installation of new wood post and rail barriers has been carried out and completed.

All of the broken tiles on the carriage house roof were replaced and a second project has been submitted and approved to repair the chimneys on that same building. A safety fence will be installed around the water tower to provide a safety buffer until the water tower can be restored properly.

Many other projects were completed this season as the parks staff and Friends group broke out into smaller groups and went to work. I’m very excited about the 2021 season regarding projects that the Friends and park staff are planning and prioritizing together.

Vin
Garden Volunteers

The Garden Volunteers began the year on February 5 working in the greenhouse propagating the heliotrope. Over the next few weeks, over 700 heliotrope were propagated. In the state hothouse, cuttings of santolina, catmint, coleus, scented geranium and various other plants were started from plants that were overwintered. Then the restrictions of the corona virus quarantine hit in March. The volunteers did not work in the greenhouses or gardens from mid March until the end of April. Harkness staff watered and cared for the plants. At the end of April, two gardeners were permitted to work per day in the gardens if they kept a 20 foot distance between them. The ideal place to do this due to increased number of walkers in the Park was in the Daylily beds on the north side of the Carriage House. At the end of May the number of garden volunteers permitted to work together in the gardens increased. Ten volunteers spent from May until the end of August weeding the 5 Daylily beds. As quickly as we weeded, the weeds returned since these gardens have not been tended in several years. Finally at the beginning of September four of the five Daylily beds were sufficiently weed free to mulch the area. Bed 5 was cleared of vines and brush and is looking greatly improved despite lacking mulch.

In September, the garden volunteers seriously weeded the perennial beds in the cutting garden while the seasonal employees pulled down the porcelain berry vine in the shrub border. Some weeding was also done this summer in the Rock Garden. Seasonal employees primarily tended the areas of the East and West Gardens. The heliotrope standards took a beating from hurricane force winds in August as did much of the gardens and Park.
PLANT SALE

After a great deal of angst about having the Annual Plant Sale open to the public, with permission granted from DEEP, it was decided to go ahead with the plant sale on June 10, 11 and 12 from 10 am to 1 pm in the Carriage House yard. The organization took 4 days and many hours of time from the volunteers. Heliotrope, plants propagated in the state hot house, plants from the Camp Harkness greenhouse and perennials from The Plant Group were offered for sale online via harkness.org website. It was well publicized via the Facebook page and using the Google groups mailing list. The online sale was well received. Once the plants were all delivered, garden volunteers grouped the orders. The purchaser drove their car to the area of the Carriage House and volunteers placed their plant order in the trunk of their car. Seventeen volunteers worked at the Plant and more than 800 plants were sold. Approximately $6800 was grossed in the sale. The cost of perennials was approximately $2400, so the sale netted $4400.

THE GRAPERY

The grapevines in the grapery are Muscat of Alexandria, Muscat of Hamburg and Schiava Grossa; all unusual varieties in the United States. Twelve cuttings, 4 from each, were sent to Amberg Grapevines, an upstate New York grower, to be grafted onto American rootstock and be returned in 2021 for planting in the grapery and also on the Park grounds. John Smigiel, a garden volunteer, offered in 2019 to make wine from the 2019 crop. Despite the somewhat poor quality of the grapes because of bird damage and mold, he was able to make some wine. He delivered three bottles of wine to FOH in September. He reported that the wine was good. The grape crop in 2020 was beset with mold and mildew, and it was decided not to ask John to make wine with this year’s crop. Also, there were large holes in the netting enclosure permitting marauding birds to enjoy the crop. Plans are in-hand for rebuilding the grapery enclosure using a translucent building product. The wood from the DEEP lumber mill was recently received and the project is being planned.

THE HERITAGE APPLE ORCHARD

A team of garden volunteers pruned the Apple Orchard in February and early March until the corona virus quarantine restrictions halted work. Based on the apple crop, the pruning was very successful.

BIRDHOUSE

The west garden birdhouse was restored by Kathy and Steve Kensel. They also donated a replica to the park.

JOHN SUHR

FOH received the resignation of John Suhr, head garden volunteer, on June 12. John, a Connecticut Master Gardener, brought a high level of expertise and research to the gardens, apple orchard and grapery at Harkness. His accomplishments in the gardens for the past six years are noteworthy and his friendly demeanor is missed.

Vonice Carr, garden volunteer
Camp Harkness Handicapped Garden Committee

The volunteers at Camp Harkness are a very dedicated group of people. The Program was started by Julia Griswold in the late 1990’s. Our greenhouse was built in 1999. It was a gift from Mary Smeraldi, one of the original volunteers.

Our main goal is to provide a meaningful gardening experience for the very special campers that come to camp each year. We have gotten to know many of them quite well over the years. The campers are always delighted with their gardening experience. They plant annuals in pots which they then take back to their cabins and then home. They arrange cut flowers in containers that are put on their tables in the dining hall. We have two raised herb beds. We gather around the tables and the campers rub the leaves between their fingers to experience the feel and smell of the herb. This part is especially beneficial to the sight impaired.

Our year starts off in the fall when we bring plants into the greenhouse to be used as cuttings for the Harkness Plant Sale in the spring. They are also used in our own gardens at camp and in our program with the campers. Later in the late winter we start our seeds. In the spring we get our gardens cleaned and planted and get ready for the first campers to arrive the end of June. Our program with the campers lasts until mid to late August.

We are at Camp every Wednesday morning, year round from about 9:30 to 12:00. We are also on a rotating schedule for watering on the weekends.

This past year, however, with Covid was not a normal year. We had plants growing in the greenhouse for the Harkness plant sale that we were not allowed to access and care for. We all took some of the plants home to care for them as best we could so that we would have something to donate to the sale.

Camp was closed for the season. No campers allowed. We are all hoping for a normal camp season this coming summer.

Committee Members : Joanne Malahias, Catriona MacAuslan, Ruth Riggs, Christine Stuetzel, Charles Teft, Judy Bombaci

Building & Grounds Committee Report

Despite the challenges of 2020, the Building & Grounds Committee nonetheless forged ahead and made significant headway on multiple fronts. Noteworthy projects include:

The relocation of Archives from the Boarding House to Eolia: This entailed cleaning a selected room on the third floor, and carefully moving documents, along with filing cabinets, shelving, and furnishings to their new location. Door locks, air conditioning, lighting, and additional shelving were installed to complete the project.

A new sign for the Gift Shop was designed and installed. Many thanks go out to Yankee Remodeler, Inc. for supplying and fabricating the sign free of charge. A Plexiglas shield for Covid protection was also installed at the Gift Shop.

With the assistance of Vice President John Steffian, ‘as-built’ drawings were prepared of the Farm House. They provided the basis for a concept rendering that was later developed to illustrate a possible reuse of the structure.
Along with several board members, a walk-through inspection of the Enders House was made to assess its viability for possible Friends of Harkness office use. Days later, this committee was back on site during an inspection that was conducted by Sound Home Inspection LLC who we thank for providing their services free of charge.

A new table saw and air compressor was purchased, delivered, and given to the Park. This equipment was donated by the Friends of Harkness to meet our annual obligation as a 501(c) organization.

Drawings and a cost estimate were prepared for the replacement of polycarbonate panels on the Grapevine Enclosure. Construction, which will also involve carpentry work, is scheduled to begin in October. Completion is anticipated by the end of the year.

The Building & Grounds Committee extends much appreciation, again this year, to members Russ Carr, and Mike Cameron for their continued dedication and assistance. Also, we welcome our newest member Jim Sheehan who recently joined our crew. So now, with a work force of four, we are eager to wrap up our 2020 projects, and look forward to new assignments in 2021.

Philip W. Tankard
Committee Chairman
Programs-Membership Meetings

My term on the Board began January 2020. I had a full roster of events and speakers scheduled for the upcoming season as follows:

Monday, April 11, 2020 – Ivy Mellow and Renee Vogt ENTERTAINING HARKNESS STYLE

Monday, May 11, 2020 – Kimberly Stone. PLANTING FOR THE BEES’ NEEDS

Monday, June 8, 2020 – Judith Tankard. ELLEN BIDDLE SHIPMAN-LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Monday, July 11, 2020 – Revised presentation of ENTERTAINING HARKNESS STYLE

Monday, August 10, 2020 – MEMBERS PICNIC

Monday, Sept 14, 2020 – John Suhr, MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

Monday, October 12, 2020 – Miles Schwartz – ARBORETUM APPLES

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Connecticut State restrictions all meetings, with the exception of July 11 and August 10, had to be cancelled.

Renee Vogt
Programs/Member Meetings Chairman

July Meeting
Entertaining Harkness Style

Members Picnic Check-in

Members Picnic

Members Picnic

Members Picnic

Members Picnic

Members Picnic

Members Picnic
2020 Membership Committee

Members: Lou Clark (chair), Frances Steffian, Vonice Carr

The committee participated in the annual mailing to everyone on the FoH membership spreadsheet (now at 449 members, 294 of whom are current in 2020 (and a dozen or so 2021 dues).

The committee has met recently (virtually) a few times and communicated by email. The topics of these meetings have been a) ideas to promote the Friends and to increase membership, b) addressing the current donation levels, and associated benefits c) planning to meet with Janet Collandrea, the webmaster, to see how we can merge all the data we have on membership, with the goal of automating membership renewal notices, etc, and also using the information for specific outreach to the membership. The committee proposed an increase in Individual and Family membership levels from $20 to $35 and from $35 to $50 respectively. Accommodations for volunteer membership will be taken into consideration.

We also propose making renewal of membership a optional subscription. Members who opt-in would allow the Friends of Harkness to deduct future years’ membership donations automatically. An analysis showed that if the donation-level change resulted in no attrition, total membership donations would increase from $14,623 to $17,233, an increase of 18%.

The committee proposes a car magnet and/or decal as an incentive to members at the $100+ level. Frances Steffian has drafted an initial design. This magnet/decal would also serve as advertising for the Friends. Another possible incentive: discount at the gift shop. Since perks of membership may appear to be an insufficient incentive, membership recruitment efforts appeal to the public’s appreciation of the park and willingness to contribute money and effort to its improvement.

A summary of membership, by membership levels is presented in the following table. Notes: membership has dropped by 16 from 2019-2020, or 5%. There has been an increase in memberships at the highest levels (Benefactor and Supporter) from 38 to 50 members or 30%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Level</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefactor ($250+)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter ($100)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Patron ($50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Paid Membership</strong></td>
<td><strong>314</strong></td>
<td><strong>298</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some other membership statistics:

The average (mean) donation is $49.71. 85% of members have provided email addresses so using email as the sole membership renewal solicitation in lieu of a mailing in the future may not be a 100% substitute method. Therefore a mailing will be necessary to the 15% without email. Also, likely a follow-up mailing to members who do not respond or whose email is unreachable. Of the 294 paid up members, 121 have volunteered for one committee or another.
Gift Shop

The Gift Shop had a delayed opening this year, due to the need to “Suit-Up” for COVID-19 protection. After plexi-glass was installed above the display counter to protect our volunteers, we were able to open in time for Fourth of July weekend. While the park was filled to capacity most weekends, we didn’t see as many sales as hoped—water and ice cream were particularly popular. Sales increased toward the fall and we were able to stay open until Columbus Day weekend. Thanks to all our volunteers, especially our two teen volunteers, Charlotte and Sydney, who are Williams School students. Volunteers spent a total of 48 hours at the shop. Total sales of $1665.00 were realized. Due to COVID restrictions and shortages no new stock was purchased this year except for ice cream, water and soda.

Events / FaceBook

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our Easter Egg hunt hosted by the Harkness Hare, had to be canceled, as well as a number of other events that were in the works. The only event that remained was the monthly appearance of the John Rose Kite flying family with their wonderful huge kites.

The facebook page now has 3,051 page likes and followers. Although there were no public events (all canceled due to Covid-19 restrictions) the facebook page served to announce 4 "Kite Days" at Harkness with John Rose, The Online Plant Sale and corresponding Last Call Plant Sale, along with keeping the public informed of Covid Restrictions and news. The page also was used as a resource by the public to ask questions about the park in general.

2020 Budget & Finance Chair Activities - Paul Goulekas

1) Monitor Merrill Lynch accounts, CD maturities and CD purchases.

2) Report to the Board of Directors (BOD) on Budget & Finance developments, monthly P&Ls, balance sheets and other related matters.

3) Produce a mid-year revised budget reflecting declining CD interest rates, limited mansion activities and reduced gift shop and plant sale revenues. Present revised budget to the Budget & Finance committee
4) Contribute to a 5-year FOH planning process and specific goals and investments. Provide the Executive Committee with a draft of a 5-year plan. Present highlights of the 5-year plan to the BOD.

5) Produce a 2021 budget and subsequent drafts drawing upon the input of all BOD members. Present the 2021 draft budget to the Budget & Finance committee for their input. Present the finalized 2021 budget to the BOD.

6) Participate in a Fund Raising sub-committee to focus on fund raising activities that include donations and grant opportunities - ongoing.

Nominating Committee – Vonice Carr

The following list of members have volunteered to serve on our Board of Directors. Staggered term limits are shown in parentheses noting the number of years for each on the Board. They will be voted on at our next “In Person” membership meeting.

- Gail Brookover (3)
- Lou Clark (2)
- Paul Goulekas (3)
- Joan Prentice (2)
- Phil Tankard (3)
- Renee Vogt (1)
- Kristen Widham (1)