



Theodate's Dreamhouse



Dear Friends.

Among the group of women showcased in Hill-Stead's recent exhibition, Born in 1867: Theodate's Generation, was the founder of Barnard College, Annie Nathan Meyer. And one of the school's graduates, Greta Gerwig (Class of 2006), who clearly shares Meyer's daring creative spirit, rose to prominence in 2023 as the director and co-author of the hit film, Barbie. Following both the natural and the relevant link between then and now, we are adapting Gerwig's cinematic celebration of strong women and using this annual report to profile some of the people at Hill-Stead – past and present - who contributed greatly to the successful, incredible year of 2023.

On the following pages you will learn more about these remarkable women:

Tribute Barbie Mary Tennant Sargent

Founding Barbie Theodate Pope Riddle

Curator Barbie Melanie Bourbeau

Historian Barbie Caroline (Cary) Campbell Edwards

Farm-Stead Barbies Bobbie Emery and Anne Foss

Hostess Barbie Ada Brooks Pope

The museum has had another extraordinary year: from being selected as the Best Small-Town Art Museum in America by Travel + Leisure magazine to literally making hay. First, we cut the grasses to sustainably feed the sheep; then we built stacks in the fields, transforming the grounds into an artistic muse for contemporary artists, who would in turn exhibit their work in our gallery. All the while, the barbies we profile led our way. Together we joyfully pursue the mission Theodate set for Hill-Stead - to serve, educate and benefit local citizens and the general public. Long may it continue to do so.

Yours faithfully,

lavel

Dr. Anna Swinbourne Executive Director and CEO

Lavell M.L. Thompson Hill-Stead Board President



Hill-Stead proudly dedicates the 2023 Annual Report to Mary Tennant Sargent. Mary is our past, present and future, as the longest serving Board President (1991-1995) and founder of Hill-Stead's Legacy Society. Her service and leadership brought Hill-Stead from a small organization whose fundraising and governance activities were handled separately to the professional museum that it is today.

A lifelong resident of the Hartford area, Mary attended Smith College, leaving at age 19 to marry Joseph Denny Sargent, her devoted fellow adventurer and partner of 57 years. They settled in West Hartford and raised their four children between there and Vermont, where Mary and Joe had founded Killington Ski Resort in 1956 with another couple, literally felling trees and building ski lifts on weekends. In the ensuing years, Mary became a director of SKI LTD, a public company that owned and operated Killington, Mt. Snow, Sugarloaf, Waterville Valley and Bear Mountain until it was sold in 1996. Along with her family, Mary treasured the outdoor life at Killington and wilderness trips to Wyoming where fishing, hiking and family gatherings at Trail Creek and Red Rock Ranch were summer activities.

In the Hartford area, Mary was a dedicated volunteer, serving on the boards of the Junior League of Hartford, Planned Parenthood, YWCA of the Hartford Region and as President of the Garden Club of Hartford, Garden Club of America's Zone 1 Chair and PR Chair of the Garden Club of America. Her willingness to take on difficult tasks and leadership positions lifted these organizations up and left an indelible mark in our community.

Mary's four-decade relationship with Hill-Stead started in the mid-1980's, when she participated in the Garden Club of Hartford's initiative to restore the Sunken Garden using Beatrix Farrand's 1920's design. Overwhelmed and amazed by Hill-Stead's grounds and artwork, Mary soon joined the Board and rose to become its President in 1991. Her 4 years in that role were pivotal to Hill-Stead's survival and set it on a path to accreditation by the American Association of Museums.

In 1991, the Historic House was designated a National Landmark; in 1994, the first comprehensive strategic plan for the museum was begun and in 1995, new by-laws were adopted, heralding the successful outcome of a many years struggle between the Friends of Hill-Stead and the Hill-Stead Board of Governors and Trustees. During Mary's tenure, the Friends of Hill-Stead re-directed their efforts so that the Trustees and Board of Governors could successfully manage the operations and financial position of the Museum with a professional Executive Director and staff. Although the work was difficult and at times stressful, Mary steered Hill-Stead to a position of stability and professionalism during her time as its Board President. It is no exaggeration to say that we would not be here without the dedication and hard work of Mary Sargent.

As a member of the Honorary Board of Governors, Mary has continued to serve Hill-Stead, founding its Legacy Society and championing the Bringing Art to Life Capital Campaign that provided funding to renovate the Carriage Barn Complex and build the Museum's endowment. We thank Mary for her extraordinary leadership, foresight and tenacity. She embodies the fearlessness and generosity of our Founder, Theodate Pope Riddle and we are most grateful for her extraordinary work in paving Hill-Stead's modern path.



Tribute Barbie

Mary Tennant Sargent

Founding Barbie

Theodate Pope Riddle

During the Pope Family's Grand Tour of Europe in 1889 our Founding Barbie, Theodate, decided that her path would be that of an architect. Like Barbie, she did not resign herself to being just <u>one</u> thing. Theodate's legacy lives in the house, gardens, and farm of Hill-Stead. The schools she built, the archives full of ledgers, photos and letters, and the spirit of community and outreach remain an integral part of the museum she left for us all.

Carrying on Theodate's legacy, we repaired a section of the iconic stone walls which wind throughout the 152 acres (thanks to our Honorary Governors and supporters), began the restoration of the Barns, continued her tradition of music and dance performances in the Makeshift Theater and on the West Lawn and screened a new documentary about her dear friend Mary Cassatt. Our programs and events welcomed 47,000 to Hill-Stead's grounds in 2023, surely making Theodate proud!





Curator Barbie

Melanie Bourbeau

In 2022, we marked Hill-Stead's 75th anniversary with the opening of *Alfred Pope, An Evolution of Ingenuity Exhibition* in the renovated Carriage Barn Gallery. In 2023 our Curator Barbie, Melanie Bourbeau, brought the exhibition into the historic house, having meticulously researched the locations of the artwork based on archival materials and a 1910 inventory of the house's contents. Hill-Stead's story took on new depth as Alfred's larger collection was celebrated by our visitors. Using inventories and records from 1947, Melanie and leadership at the Museum re-hung the paintings in June to accurately reflect Theodate's wishes and dictates.

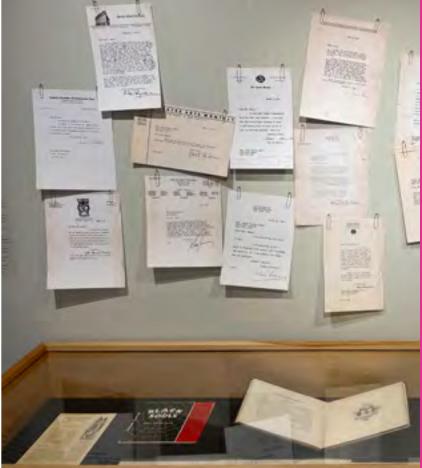
Melanie joined the Hill-Stead team initially as a docent. Her role evolved over time through different departments, until she moved to the archives and became Curator in 2016. Our Curator Barbie brings her talent, knowledge and passion to new and exciting projects which help us enhance our visitors' experience, and bring new insight into Hill-Stead's history and mission. 2023 was a wonderful year to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Melanie joining the Hill-Stead Team!













Farm-Stead Barbies

Clatter Ridge Farm **Bobbie Emery & Anne Foss**

Farming and sustainability were essential components of Theodate's vision for Hill-Stead. Our Farm-Stead Barbies, Bobbie Emery & Anne Foss of Clatter Ridge Farm bring the passion, knowledge (and sheep) which help to keep these aspects of Hill-Stead's mission flourishing.

In 2023 we held our 2nd annual Art of Shearing Festival, celebrating the first lambs of Spring and all the talented fiber artists, vendors and demonstrators who shared their knowledge and talent with the community. Visitors returned for Knitting in the Company of Sheep, and the ever-popular Smashing Pumpkins event which features a custom-made pumpkin catapult that sends the pumpkins into the meadow to feed the sheep.

In the summer, Clatter Ridge Farm participated in 2023's session of the STEAM camp with a brand-new Nature Drawing & Sustainable Farming activity. Bobbie & Anne's vision, research, and effort brought Hill-Stead's collection of Monet paintings to life as they lead the effort to create multiple haystack vignettes on the grounds. Their vision and hard work preserve the land and farm at Hill-Stead, benefiting us all.

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Hostess Barbie

Ada Brooks Pope

Ada Brooks Pope, our Hostess Barbie, was a guiding force and stalwart support in her daughter's life. She had an eye for design and organization which she dedicated to planning and hosting memorable gatherings at Hill-Stead. We continue to channel her spirit by creating an environment of hospitality and celebration.

We feted Hill-Stead's birthday with tea parties on a Sunday in April, celebrated Spring at our soldout Belle Epoque Gala in May, and welcomed hundreds of visitors in the Summer to our *From The Porch* Series and Juneteenth. As the leaves began to fall we moved indoors for book talks, music in the Drawing Room, and a magical Holiday Dinner in the Historic Dining Room. With weddings, birthdays and reunions throughout the year, Hill-Stead came alive with gatherings of family and friends, new and long-standing.



































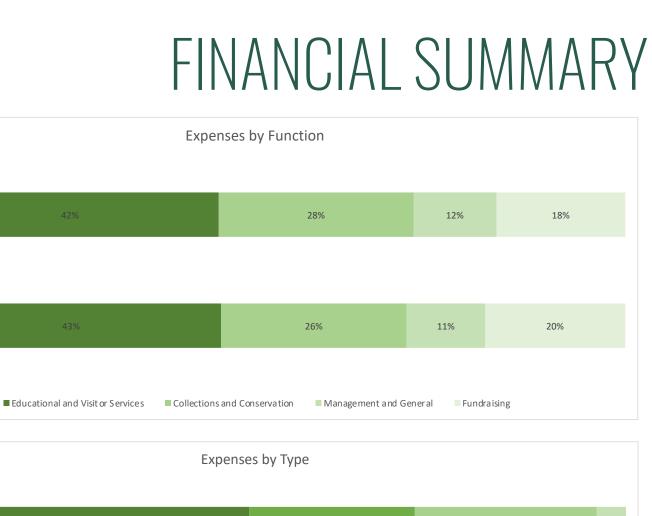










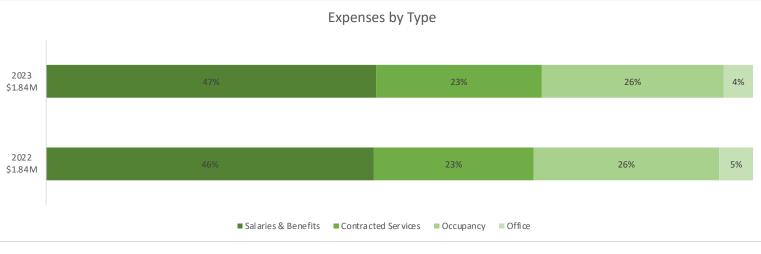


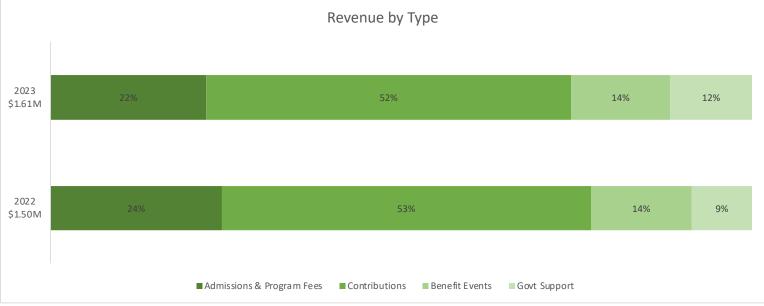
2023

\$1.84M

2022

\$1.84M





We are so grateful to our donors, partners and volunteers for allowing us to have another successful financial year.

Our total revenue grew by 7%. The generosity and enthusiasm of our individual, corporate and foundational partners were responsible for the growth in our Contributions (up 6%) and Special Events (up 9%). Further, through a successful outreach campaign, our Grants increased by 45%. It truly takes a community to sustain and grow Hill-Stead and we are honored and humbled our community partners invested in us.

On the expense side, we carefully and responsibly maintained prior year's spending levels. Not an easy task in a time of inflationary pressures, but this austerity was achieved by instituting comprehensive internal and external reviews of vendors and processes. Senior management prioritized quality and fair costs. Lastly, savings were identified on overhead related expenses and used to increase programmatic depth and reach.

We are proud to be on a fiscally sound footing and thankful for all those who made this possible!

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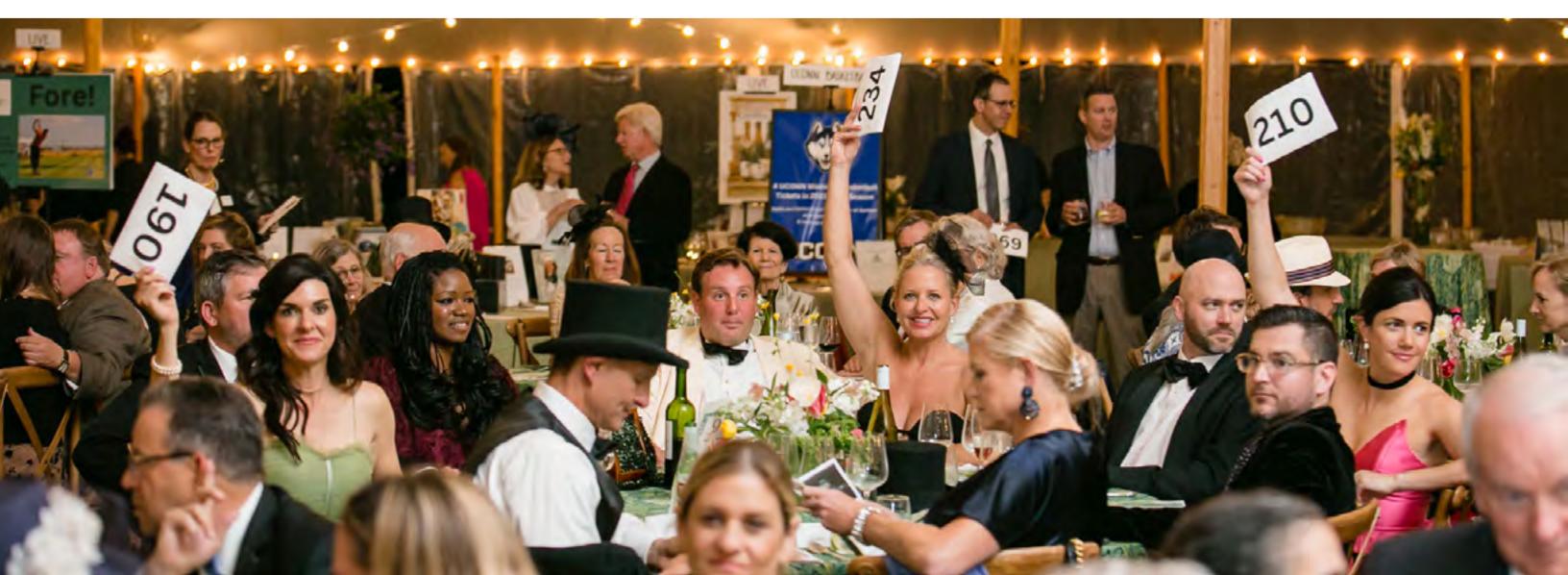
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*deceased

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