



# The Post Serial

Volunteer Newsletter of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

Volume 19, Issue 2

Spring 2013

## LIVING *at home with Marjorie Merriweather Post* ARTFULLY

*Lynn Rossotti, Director of Marketing and Communications*

**Special exhibition explores personal stories of family, guests, and staff to reveal the inner workings of Post's grand homes and perfectly coordinated way of life**

From Palm Beach, to the Adirondacks, to Washington, D.C., Marjorie Merriweather Post brought to her multiple residences a flawless style of living and entertaining that was made possible only through the gracious management of loyal staff. For the first time, personal stories of family, staff, and former guests will echo throughout transformed spaces at Hillwood to bring to life the formal dinners, charity events, garden parties, and weekend retreats that made an invitation from Marjorie Post the most sought after in her time, for the special exhibition *Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post* from June 8, 2013 to January 12, 2014 at Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens.

When she purchased her grand estate in northwest Washington, D.C., Marjorie Post intended for Hillwood to serve not only as a museum for sharing her decorative arts collections, but also as evidence of, in her own words, “the best way of life that is fast disappearing.” By the time she moved into the 1920s neo-Georgian mansion set upon 25 acres in 1957, Post was in her seventies and highly experienced in managing multiple residences. *Living Artfully* will employ the detailed documentation that Post left about the management of her homes; interviews with family members, guests, and former staff; archival materials; and the wealth of

furnishings and decorative art objects that Post collected and incorporated into her everyday life, to reveal the inner workings of her perfectly coordinated way of living.

“Marjorie Post brought an incredible acumen for organization and planning to her every effort, from overseeing a business, to furnishing and managing her homes, to entertaining, to charitable giving, to collecting the most prominent collection of Russian imperial art in the United States,” explained Hillwood executive director Kate Markert. “And the gracious style in which she managed it all was perceptible, especially to her staff and inner circle. This exhibition will explore their perspective for the first time.”

As the only child of Post Cereal founder C.W. Post, Marjorie Post was taught from an early age how to manage her affairs with efficiency. Fifty years before Hillwood was her home, Post was initiated into estate management with her first grand residence, *The Boulders*, in Greenwich, Connecticut. A wedding gift from C.W. in 1905, *The Boulders* had a house staff of 14, plus 60 more keeping the grounds, and Post was mentored by C.W. in the practicalities of properly administering the estate. By the 1930s, she was concurrently managing a triplex apartment in New York, a Long Island estate, a Palm Beach mansion, a camp in the Adirondacks, and a surprisingly well-appointed four-masted sailing yacht. And an invitation to join Marjorie Post at any of these residences for one of her legendary dinners or house party weekends was most fashionable.

“People often ask who most closely compares to Marjorie Merriweather Post today,” said Estella Chung, exhibition curator and author of the forthcoming book *Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post*. “The answer is, she’s incomparable. She was at once a businesswoman—one of only a small handful of women to serve on the board of a public company—a philanthropist, an art collector, and a legendary hostess who entertained at the level of

heads of state. It’s hard to identify any woman today who so effortlessly combines the skills, political stature, impeccable taste, and farsighted practicality in the manner of Marjorie Post.”

### **The Exhibition**

Visitors to Hillwood for the special exhibition *Living Artfully* will experience the seasonal rotations of a year in the life of Marjorie Post during the late 1950s and 1960s, when she moved from residence to residence—winter in Palm Beach, spring at Hillwood, summer in the Adirondacks, and a return to Hillwood in the fall—with perfectly managed planning and precision.

Every year for Post began with the social season in Palm Beach. In the 1920s, Post and then-husband E.F. Hutton built *Mar-A-Lago*, their grand estate, which served as the venue for many glamorous events. Later, Post began the International Red Cross Ball, which established Post as a legendary Palm Beach hostess. Currently home to the original centerpiece of Post’s Mar-A-Lago dining room—the remarkable Florentine hard-stone mosaic table—the Dining Room at Hillwood will be transformed with special installations to reflect both the Hispano-Moresque design and the lively spirit of Post’s Mar-A-Lago for this special exhibition. When Post was in residence, Mar-A-Lago employed over 70 staff members and weekly arrivals of Post’s private plane, the *Merriveather*, brought to her Palm Beach residence family, guests, and even flowers and plants from Hillwood’s greenhouse. Multimedia displays, archival images, and table settings in the Dining and Breakfast Rooms will reveal not just the splendor of life at Mar-A-Lago, but also the behind-the-scenes efforts necessary to make it all happen.

In the spring, Post’s routine brought her to Hillwood, where her carefully planned garden design, timed to her seasons in residence there, welcomed her with thousands of flowers and shrubs blooming across the estate. During this season, she famously hosted formal dinner

parties, luncheons both large and intimate, and delightful garden parties. From the first impression made at the Motor Court, *Living Artfully* will resonate with all the fine details that characterized a guest's experience at Post's Hillwood in the 1950s and 60s. The perfectly orchestrated welcome that met visitors is revealed through archival images and special tour stops in the social spaces at Hillwood, as visitors move from the Entry Hall to the French Drawing Room to glimpse the era of the 1960s against the backdrop of 18<sup>th</sup>-century French décor. On their way to the Pavilion, the grand room in which Post famously hosted receptions and presented first-run movies to her dinner guests, visitors will pass by the newly refurbished wet bar. While Post had dinner served on her remarkable French and Russian porcelain, a set of vintage highballs, cocktail glasses, and martini glasses like the ones used for after dinner drinks at Hillwood are on view in this classic mid-century space.

Post's grand yacht, the *Sea Cloud*, was run with very much the same precision as her residences and a display of the décor that furnished it is on view in the First Floor Library at Hillwood for the exhibition. Alongside an intricately-detailed model of the ship itself, on loan from Post's youngest daughter Dina Merrill, these surprising details will convey the enduring fondness that Post had for the *Sea Cloud*, even years after she sold it.

When the busy spring social season in Washington, D.C. came to an end, the *Merrweather* turned its flight schedule to the Adirondacks, taking Post, her staff, and guests to Post's Camp Topridge on Upper St. Regis Lake in upstate New York, for a summer of weekend house parties and retreats, featuring formal dinners, luncheons, picnics, games, and movies. For *Living Artfully*, the Adirondack Building at Hillwood will be transformed to reflect the rustic whimsy of life at Camp Topridge. Archival photography will document the perfectly-choreographed arrival of staff and guests, from the landing of *Merrweather*, to the boat ride across the lake, to the funicular that transported guests

and luggage from the water to the main camp. Now a private residence, Topridge still houses many of the original furnishings and items that Post chose for her distinctive camp, and many of these are on loan for the special exhibition.

Additional transformed spaces at Hillwood, some offering exclusive opportunities to see areas never before open to the public, will reveal the efforts that happened behind-the-scenes to achieve Post's flawless style of living and entertaining during the fall season at Hillwood. Downstairs, the mid-century modern Kitchen and Butler's Pantry will shed light on the work of preparing Washington's most memorable meals. Hillwood's staff of 30 to 35 people, including three cooks, had at their disposal a kitchen and pantry that were fully equipped with what were once described as "up-to-the-minute" appliances, including multiple Hobart standing mixers, a Globe Gravity Feed meat slicer, an Oster Touch-a-Matic combination can opener and juicer, and a 55-cup capacity West Bend coffee percolator, which still line the heavy-duty stainless steel counters of this once working kitchen. The large state-of-the-art appliances include a nine-burner Magic Chef stove and an enormous Sta-Kold freezer—a nod to Post's frozen foods heritage.

The Butler's Pantry and other areas will focus on the people and the roles they played in carrying out Post's meticulously managed affairs. Archival images of staff and their private spaces, including the staff dining room and lounge, organizational charts, and personal recollections reveal the important part that her staff played in every aspect of Post's life.

Moving upstairs, visitors will experience the hub of Post's private life, where she spent the mornings coordinating every detail. Post began the day in her Dressing Room, which was set up for light exercising and stretching, grooming, and meetings with staff and consultants. Here, photos, guest lists, menus, and correspondence will be on view as evidence of the important work that

occurred in this intimate space. A peek into her closets uncovers the coordination that took place between Post and her staff to outfit her for the variety of business meetings, luncheons, and dinner parties that she attended. Visitors will learn that these roomy closets were designed to hold just one week's worth of ensembles, brought down from the larger third-floor closets at the beginning of each week.

### Special Access Tours

In conjunction with *Living Artfully*, even more of the Mansion's most fascinating spaces will be available to visitors looking for more insight into the intriguing life of Marjorie Merriweather Post. In addition to the rooms featured on standard *Living Artfully* tours of the Mansion, small groups of visitors can accompany their behind-the-scenes guides to three areas normally off-view. Visitors will be able to explore Marjorie's personal "massage" room, as well as the Pavilion's balcony and fully-equipped film projection booth, and finally head to the basement for an exclusive look at the newly restored fallout shelter. Starting on June 8, tours will run Tuesdays-Fridays, and select Saturdays & Sundays, from 1:30-3:00 pm. For more information, inquire with the Visitor Information Office at (202) 686-5807.

### Publication

*Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post* is being presented in time with a publication of the same title by Hillwood curator Estella Chung. Fully illustrated with an abundance of photographs, hand-written and typed notes, menus, invitation cards, and other ephemera, much being published for the first time, the book follows Post's yearly calendar and offers a vibrant and intimate picture of life in each residence – for Post, her guests, and her staff.

### Programs and Events

Through an audio tour, visitors will hear the voices of Post's family, former guests, and staff to hear firsthand about Post's long-lost art of living and entertaining with precision and grace. Programs, lectures, and other events will bring in

experts from across a host of disciplines, such as interior design, entertaining, art collecting, and etiquette, to explore what can be learned from the social mores of Marjorie Post's 1950s and 1960s and how Post's tastes, habits, style, and standards can inspire a gracious way of living in today's world.

An [opening night celebration](#) will be held on Tuesday, June 4. Inspired by Post's grand affairs, the evening will feature cocktails and dinner on the [Lunar Lawn](#) at Hillwood, cloaked in the mid-century flair of the 1950s and 1960s.

Visit [www.HillwoodMuseum.org/living-artfully-gala](http://www.HillwoodMuseum.org/living-artfully-gala) or call (202) 243-3974 for tickets and more information.

To learn more about *Living Artfully*, join exhibition curator Estella Chung on **Monday, April 29 at 1 pm and repeated at 6:30 pm** in the Visitor Center Theater for an overview of the *Living Artfully* project, which includes the exhibition and accompanying book. See "Hillwood Happenings" section for more details.

## HILLWOOD HAPPENINGS

All Hillwood volunteers are invited to take advantage of these tours, workshops and other activities. Please register in advance on the sign-up sheets on the clipboard in the Horticulture Building hallway or contact Bill Johnson at (202) 243-3927 or [bjohnson@HillwoodMuseum.org](mailto:bjohnson@HillwoodMuseum.org). Advance registration is not necessary for continuing education events in the Visitor Center Theater unless otherwise noted.

### How to Watch Videos Online

To view the videos of past lectures, visit <http://volunteer.HillwoodMuseum.org> and click on the Education tab at the top of the website. Select "Lecture Video Archive" followed by the year (for example, "2013 Lectures"). To access a video, select a link and enter "volunteer" for the password.

### **Field Trip to Mitchellville Woods**

**May 3 (Friday), 10 a.m.**

We will visit a garden created by a passionate gardener with a Master's degree in horticulture. Chuck Mewshaw bought a five-acre property with a farm house and tobacco barn near Mitchellville, MD more than 30 years ago, and now enjoys the botanical garden that surrounds the home. There are several highlights (such as the peacocks and other fowl) but for the volunteers that enjoy the plant ID walks, it will be seeing so many of the wonderful plants that we study at Hillwood. Please sign-up to receive directions or carpool information.

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

Attend a garden party in your honor!  
Please join Hillwood staff for the annual  
**Spring Volunteer Appreciation Reception**  
on **Monday, May 6 (5–7 p.m.)**.  
To RSVP, please call (202) 243-3942.

### **Dr. Wilfried Zeisler, Hillwood's Fellow** **May 16 (Thursday), 6:30 p.m.**

This lecture is open to volunteers, the public and members. Please call the **Visitor Information Office at (202) 686-5807 to reserve a space** for this session.

Join Hillwood's first fellow, Dr. Wilfried Zeisler, for a session about his research at Hillwood. Dr. Zeisler, a recent graduate from the Sorbonne University, Paris, France, is a scholar in French and Russian art whose dissertation was titled "The purchases of French "objets d'art" by the Russian Court, 1881-1917." (Visitor Center Theater)

### **Plant ID Walk**

**May 15 (Wednesday), 9 a.m.**

The May plant walk will have an emphasis on the flowering shrubs in the garden as well as other flowering plants.

### **Field Trip to the** **National Cathedral Gardens**

**June 11 (Tuesday), 10:00 a.m.**

Joe Luebke, Director of Horticulture and Grounds for the National Cathedral, will lead us on a tour of the ongoing restoration of formal gardens near the Bishop's House. Meet Joe at the arch entrance to the Bishop's garden at 10:00 a.m. or in the Horticulture break at 9:45 a.m. to car pool.

### **Plant ID Walk**

**June 13 (Thursday), 9 a.m.**

In this session, we will focus on the plants in and around the Adirondack Building, including many native plants.

## **THE YEAR AHEAD** **AT HILLWOOD**

*Kate Markert, Executive Director*

*At the annual business meetings for volunteers on February 4, Executive Director Kate Markert outlined areas that Hillwood will focus on in 2013. Below is a summary of her presentation. Following this account are highlights of updates presented by other staff members about topics especially relevant for volunteers.*

*To view the videos of the business meeting, visit <http://volunteer.HillwoodMuseum.org> and follow the instructions at the top of the "Lecture Video Archive" page under "Education".*

As you know, in September 2011 Hillwood approved a five-year strategic plan, and 2012 was the first year that all of Hillwood's work was guided by it. In 2013 we will continue to follow the directions that were set by the plan and its goals.

### ***Goal 1: Expand attendance by growing core audiences and reaching out to new audiences.***

In 2010 we received about 52,000 visitors, and our numbers show a very nice growth curve to 64,199 visitors in 2011, and to **74,624 visitors in**



**2012.** Back in the fall of 2010, we thought a big, audacious goal would be to reach 75,000 visitors in five years, and we're just about there in three years. But a continuing major increase wouldn't be realistic, and it wouldn't be good for Hillwood. If around 70,000 visitors a year becomes our new normal attendance, I think that would be a good thing for us.

We're building our audiences in three ways. The first is **exhibitions**. This year we're starting with *Pageant of the Tsars: The Coronation Albums of the Romanovs*—a fabulous show that opens to the public on February 16. On June 8 we'll inaugurate *Living Artfully: At Home With Marjorie Merriweather Post*.

We also build audiences through exciting **programs**, which are expanding as more people know us and come to us, both as visitors and to offer programs. We have an amazing lineup this season. For instance, this month we've scheduled an evening with New York designer Charlotte Moss, and later we'll host Douglas Smith, the author of *Former People*, which describes the final days of the Russian aristocracy.

And obviously if you're having wonderful exhibitions and rich programs, you need **communications** to let people know about them. So we're really invested in marketing, and you'll continue to see our advertising on bus signs, in the *Washington Post*, and elsewhere. We also work hard on other kinds of communications; for instance, the article in this morning's *Post*, about Hillwood's upcoming auction of articles from storage, couldn't have been better for us. We also had three segments this morning on Fox 5 television. And of course we're doing all the social media.

**Goal 2: Use the Marjorie Merriweather Post life story to connect with contemporary audiences—especially in design, diplomacy, healthy living, and social responsibility.** During the *Living Artfully* exhibition, we will focus attention on Marjorie Post in every aspect of our

work. New areas of the Mansion will be open, such as the bomb shelter and wet bar. In addition, the gardens will receive new emphasis. The website is always being updated, and we will have a lot of programming related to the Marjorie Merriweather Post story while the exhibition is open.



*Historic photograph of the Mansion Dining Room from Mrs. Post's residence at Hillwood*

**Goal 3: Strengthen strategic partnerships to make Hillwood more global, more visible, and more relevant.** As we become better known, more opportunities for **partnerships** are opening for us. And we are continually assessing and reassessing the ones we're already involved with. For instance, we just offered a program with Alliance Francaise, which is a wonderful partner. Clearly they make us more global, and they also bring their own audience, which makes us more visible.

Also making us more global is that for the first time we will have a **Fellow in residence**, in the Curatorial Division, starting in March. Liana Paredes has identified a specialist in French and Russian decorative arts who lives in Paris and speaks Russian, French, German, and English. It's an exciting development for us.

**Goal 4: Plan right-sized solutions for sustainable, long-term growth—board, staff, operations, facilities, finances, fundraising, programs, and exhibitions.** This is the big

workhorse goal for us. The key words are being *right-sized* for activities that are *sustainable*.

For instance, in 2012 the **Board of Trustees** increased its maximum size to 30 members. But we will reach that number by adding only two or three board members a year, as it takes time to identify really superb candidates. We also want to be sure our **staff members** are aligned with the strategic plan and know what is expected of them; we are improving our performance management with that aim. We always want to be sure that **programs** are aligned with the targeted audiences, and with the expected returns and available resources.

A lot of work has been done in the **finance** area this year so we can provide good information to the board and staff in a timely way. Also, Hillwood has changed endowment managers; after looking at options for about a year, the board decided, on February 1, to go with Vanguard.

Our **budget** has stayed flat at about \$9.6 million since 2010, when we cut about a million dollars from it. Making it work has been a matter of allocating resources where they are needed the most and doing **increased fundraising** to support operations and new programs like exhibitions. We are adding a staff member to enhance our grant-writing abilities. We have a **capital campaign** under way, with a goal of \$750,000 to be pledged by this October 1; gifts will be payable over three years. Currently we have more than 2,000 **members**, but because the renewal rate is about 60 percent, we are continually working to increase membership.

One of the most exciting things we're doing is working with the architectural firm of EwingCole on a plan to repave the **C.W. Post Courtyard** and put a frame tent over it. We need more space, and more flexible space. All utilities underneath the courtyard will be replaced. Paving likely will be brick and bluestone, to coordinate with our existing paths and buildings. A frame tent, unlike

a pole tent, can be left up for months—to provide shade in summer, be usable in somewhat rainy weather, and seat perhaps 250 for lectures or other event. My hope is to raise the money for this project through the middle part of this year so we can start work in the fall and have the project ready for next spring. Stay tuned.



*Proposed architectural drawing for the  
C.W. Post Courtyard Project*

Also as part of goal 4, we are continuously honing our **security operations**, providing additional staff training and conducting more emergency and fire drills. Those of you who were in the Mansion during the earthquake last August know about emergency evacuation. Volunteers will receive more emergency training also.

We are also working to **maintain our buildings** to industry standards. We just added a full-time painter, who has already painted the café, and has a long list of job requests from staff. In order to maintain the **gardens and grounds** to Marjorie Merriweather Post's standards, we are working with Rodney Robinson, a well-known landscape architect who has been involved with historic gardens like Nemours and Longwood.

Over time, plantings get too tall or unruly, or crowd walkways, or lose some of their vibrancy. Rodney will collaborate with the Horticulture Department to edit and update the gardens and restore some of that vibrancy. Already we have started digging up and improving a large bed at the west side of the Lunar Lawn that is not draining properly. Among other steps, cherry trees will be planted there to provide the dappled

shade lost when a big horse chestnut tree went down, and they will look wonderful. It will be exciting to watch what happens with the gardens.

**Goal 5: Leverage technology to enhance the visitor experience and engage global audiences.**

Our website is a very important way to do that. We hope that by end of 2013 the collections module on the website will be complete. We will continue to experiment with the use of technology throughout the campus. We are also constantly improving wireless and cellphone reception.

Communication is the key to everyone being aligned with the strategic plan, to all of us going in the same direction. You are hearing the same information I gave to the board and the staff. At the same time, **two-way communication** is really important—I want to hear from you, and I want to be sure that we're listening to our visitors, and finding out what they want.

**You are critical in helping us achieve all these goals.** It's important to capture e-mail addresses, to like us on Facebook, and to promote the benefits of membership. Be sure that you always forward-sell, that you know what is the next exhibition, the next program—always give visitors a reason to come back.

And now we'll hear from some other staff members.

**OTHER UPDATES FROM STAFF MEMBERS AT THE BUSINESS MEETINGS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**Liana Paredes, director of collections and chief curator,** reviewed the exhibition calendar through 2015. *Pageant of the Tsars: The Coronation Albums of the Romanovs* opens in mid-February. Hillwood owns five of the seven coronation albums that were produced, Liana said, and their display is supplemented with material loaned by the Morgan Library and other institutions and by

private collections. The exhibition incorporates iPads that will let visitors, in effect, turn the pages of the albums.

Following in June is *Living Artfully: At Home With Marjorie Merrinweather Post*, about Marjorie Post's style of living and entertaining. It will focus on life at her three estates—Hillwood, Camp Topridge, and Mar-a-Lago—including what it took to run the estates, the staff involved, and the different kinds of entertaining that she did at each. It will be set up in various areas of Hillwood, including some not now open to the public. A book on the exhibition will be available this spring.

In the first half of 2014, Hillwood will offer *Exuberance of Meaning*, about the art patronage of Catherine the Great. It will open at the Georgia Museum of Art before coming here, but almost all the objects will be from Hillwood.

For 2015, staff are considering ideas for an exhibition on *Boxes, Coffers, and Other Containers*, Liana said. The collection has an amazing variety of boxes—matchboxes, snuffboxes, toothpick holders, tea boxes, sewing kits, strongboxes, and so on. In the second half of 2015, Hillwood will offer an exhibition on Marjorie Post's fashions, which should be very popular.

**Judith Paska, director of development** at Hillwood since last fall, described some major fundraising initiatives for 2013. They include the campaign to renovate the C.W. Post Courtyard, which she believes will enhance every area of Hillwood's work with visitors. Another major push is to increase funding from private foundations and government agencies; the new, full-time grant-writer will have a major role here. Currently the Development Office is heavily involved with the pre-opening benefit and other fundraising activities for *Pageant of the Tsars*, as it will be for *Living Artfully*.

Judith focused on the membership program, which, unlike general government funds, provides a regular and stable source of income for the



museum's work, she pointed out. And membership dollars are unrestricted dollars that can be used to support virtually any area.

Hillwood has already exceeded the goal of 2,000 members set for 2015, but we'd like to increase their numbers and their loyalty. One new aspect of the membership program is gift memberships, designed and packaged to be appropriate to each season or gift occasion.

Twenty-eight percent of Hillwood's volunteers are also members, and Judith would love to have more volunteers on board. People with such a double commitment to Hillwood make excellent ambassadors for Hillwood with a variety of constituencies.

**Jim Sellevaag, head of security,** reviewed the role of volunteers in the event of an emergency. Hillwood's security procedures are being revamped, he said, but one thing you need to know now is what you should do if the fire alarm goes off. The answer is, Evacuate the building immediately. Do not wait to turn off your computer or gather your belongings. Go to the evacuation point, which is the upper parking deck of the Visitor Center. (Material in the volunteer packet describes the best way to reach the evacuation point from each building.) Watch out for emergency vehicles on the way. It's vital to remember what the evacuation point is.

If you are leading a tour in the Mansion, guide your group to the Motor Court and to the evacuation point, making sure no one goes to another building or to the gardens instead. If you are on the second floor and someone in your group needs help to reach the first floor (elevators are shut off in an emergency), tell the security officer at the building's entrance, and he or she will arrange to evacuate that person. Continue to the evacuation point with the rest of your group.

Once you arrive at the evacuation point, do not leave for any reason. It is the location for determining if everyone is accounted for—note if anyone you know was in your building has not

arrived at the evacuation point—and for receiving further instructions.

Jim also reviewed the procedure to follow in case of an injury or other incident. Notify Security immediately, he said, by calling 8524/8525, or by hitting a panic button, or by using radio channel 1. Do not attempt to administer first aid.

Some emergency drills have been held and more will be conducted in the future.

**Michael Dudich, director of human resources,** who has been at Hillwood since May, talked about revised policies, which were included in the volunteers' packets. Because the Ethics Policy has some slightly revised wording, volunteers are asked to recertify, by signing the acknowledgment form, that they've read and understood the policy. As for the Social Media Policy, Michael said that because Hillwood is a private operating foundation, not a public charity like most museums, we have certain restrictions on what we can do. The key for staying in line with this policy, Michael explained, is that whenever you're tweeting or blogging or otherwise using social media, remember to do so as a private individual, not as a representative of Hillwood. Don't give people the impression that you're speaking for Hillwood.

The same situation applies for the Political Solicitation and Lobbying Policy. It is illegal for Hillwood to lobby. If you're involved in such activities, you should act only as a private individual, not as a Hillwood representative.

Finally, Michael said that our insurance company asks that we conduct background checks on volunteers. However, we will do background checks only on new volunteers, he said, and on any volunteers who work with children. If you fall in that category, Lisa Leyh will contact you. Michael asked volunteers to sign and return the acknowledgments accompanying each policy to Lisa or Bill Johnson. If you have any questions, he

said, refer them to Lisa or Bill, who will find the answers for you.

**Lisa Leyh, interpretation volunteer manager,** concluded the presentations with some general updates. She noted that the Roentgen roll-top desk has been returned to Hillwood after being on loan for an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The desk had been thought to be associated with Marie Antoinette, but recent research has determined that the most likely owner was Maria Antonia, princess of Bavaria and electress of Saxony, an interesting person in her own right. More information about the desk and Maria Antonia is available in the Volunteers' Lounge, along with the exhibition catalog.

Lisa announced that this spring's garden tour season runs from April 2 to June 29. The fall season is set for September 3 to November 16. Garden tours will be at 10:30 and 12:30 on Tuesdays through Saturdays, and at 2:30 on Open Sundays.

For two years the continuing education lectures for volunteers have been recorded on Vimeo and are posted on the volunteers' website. This format has proved to be increasing in popularity, with rising viewing rates and thus we are experimenting with presenting each lecture only once, rather than offering it in the afternoon and again in the evening. We welcome your feedback on this arrangement.

Lisa said that because catering costs are rising while Hillwood's budget remains flat, we will now hold only one reception for volunteers annually, the spring garden party. The holiday party will no longer be held, but the garden party will continue to be a grand event. Holding a single appreciation event each year is in line with the volunteer-recognition practices of other organizations, she pointed out.

In 2014 Hillwood will offer a program to train new Mansion docents, partly because of the increased number of visitors. Recruitment will

begin this summer, candidates will be interviewed, and the class roster will be finalized by the end of this year. Training sessions will be held on Monday evenings. All current volunteers are invited to attend the first part of the sessions, the curators' talks from 6 to 7 p.m. That will be a great opportunity to refresh your information or to learn more about Hillwood. Curators' talks will also be on Vimeo.

Lisa reminded listeners to pick up their packets, and she told volunteers that everyone is looking forward to "another amazing year" with them.

—*Reported by Betty Cochran, Newsletter Volunteer*

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS UPDATE**

*Erin Lourie, Adult Audiences Manager*

As spring begins at Hillwood, we turn our attention to the magnificent gardens and our final chance to celebrate *Pageant of the Tsars*, which will close on Saturday, June 8. On Thursday, April 18, we welcomed scholar Rosamund Bartlett, who discussed the imperial culture of Russia. Bartlett is a prolific author, and her most recent book is a biography of Tolstoy.

Of course we all think of Hillwood's glorious flowers in April and May, and this spring, we are very excited to re-introduce floral design workshops. Jason Gedeik, head of greenhouse and design operations, will teach participants how to create fabulous spring centerpieces on Saturday, April 13 and Saturday, May 18. Floral design classes have been historically popular at Hillwood, and we're pleased to resume them with a new teacher and fresh designs.

We honor Marjorie Post's love of music with two additional concerts this spring. On Wednesday, April 17, we once again welcomed the Friday Morning Music Club. FMCC is proud to be the largest provider of free classical music in Washington. Last year's performance was not

only beautiful, but very popular. On Wednesday, May 15 we will host the American University Chamber Singers as they prepare for a two week tour of Russia. They will be performing a wide variety of songs from both American and Russian jazz, folk, and standard traditions.

Our monthly preschool series continues through June, and after a short summer break, will resume in September.

And finally, we are pleased to once again present two annual favorites. Divas Outdoors will take place in early June (stay tuned for details), and we will celebrate Marjorie Post's first collecting passion—French decorative arts—and Bastille Day with our annual French Festival on Saturday, July 13.

As always, the best way to stay up to date on public programs is by visiting our website at [hillwoodmuseum.org/whats/calendar](http://hillwoodmuseum.org/whats/calendar). You can reserve space in programs by calling the Information Office at (202) 686-5807. In many cases you may also purchase tickets online.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER: IMAGES OF THE LUNAR LAWN PLANTING BED**

*Brian Barr, Director of Horticulture*

These two images on the right demonstrate how most of Hillwood's planting beds have evolved over the years. The one thing that has stayed the same is the Mansion in the background. This bed felt the effects of the storm-damaged Horse Chestnut that fell in a severe thunderstorm just three years ago and damaged many plants in its path. The current plants are mix of existing plants (star magnolia and azaleas) and newly planted trees (cherry tree), shrubs (hydrangea) and groundcovers (lily turf). In addition, this section of the planting bed was newly renovated with pine fines, composted into the existing soil which raised the crown (of the bed) to almost 20 inches

above the previous grade. New drain pipes were installed to move water through the bed to prevent excessive ponding. Please follow the progress of this planting bed as it grows and matures in the coming years.



*Before and after images of the Lunar Lawn bed*

## **MUSEUM SHOP UPDATES**

*Lauren Salazar, Head of Merchandising*

I am pleased to announce the return of Fabergé products to the Museum Shop! For the first time Tatiana Fabergé has collaborated with a jewelry company, Tzarina, of St. Petersburg, to produce egg pendants, earrings and necklaces worthy of the name Fabergé. Each piece of jewelry is handmade in Russia, and decorated with 18k gold over solid sterling silver, with enamel and zircons. We are introducing this collection with eight styles of egg pendants. Purchase a little piece of history.

Spring merchandise is arriving daily. Some of my favorites include...

- Enameled owl cuff bracelets in a variety of colors
- Handbags of classic shapes in contemporary colors
- Tapestry bags and pouches in a Fabergé design
- Decorative arts with reverse-painting-on-glass
- Galina Korneva's book will soon be back in stock!

*Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriveather Post* will be here soon! Just as the exhibition will highlight Mrs. Post, her estates and way of life, the Museum Shop will feature products tied to those key stories. Look for gifts, books, housewares and accessories related to Palm Beach, the Adirondacks, Yachting & Luxury Travel and Mrs. Post's style.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- Spring Fashion Boutique – May 7 to 12
- New fashions for spring, summer and the upcoming *Living Artfully* exhibition!

## **HILLWOD ACQUIRES RARE PIECE OF TULA STEEL IN MEMORY OF CURATOR ANNE CURTIS ODOM**

*Lynn Rossotti,  
Director of Marketing and Communications*

Hillwood recently purchased an 18<sup>th</sup>-century candlestick by the Armament Factory in Tula, Russia, in memory of longtime chief curator Anne C. Odom (1935-1911). Dating from 1780 to 1790, this cut steel and gilt bronze candlestick is an outstanding example of the decorative faceting, pierced lattice work, and encrustation that made late 18<sup>th</sup>-century decorative steel from Tula a favorite of Catherine the Great and the imperial court. Very few pieces of Tula steel exist in the United States and this superlative addition to the

collection places Hillwood among a small group of museums who own examples of this rare craftsmanship.



“Hillwood houses what is considered to be the most significant collection of Russian imperial art outside of Russia, and Anne Odom contributed immeasurably to its understanding and appreciation,” said executive director Kate Markert. “This acquisition allows us both to honor Anne and her desire to fill this gap in Hillwood’s collection and to maintain our standard of expanding the cultural and historic significance of the collection with meaningful additions that allow for new perspectives, research, and interpretation.” The museum’s last major acquisition was in 2011, with the purchase of an immaculate jeweled silver and enamel box from the House of Bolin, one of the most important jewelers to work for the last Russian Imperial Court in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The candlestick went on display to the public on March 19, 2013.

#### **Tula Steel**

The city of Tula, 120 miles southwest of Moscow, became the center of arms production in Russia when Peter the Great established the first arms factory there in 1712. Tula was already populated by master smiths who were producing arquebuses (an early firearm) and other weapons of high quality, intricate design, and beautiful finish. By the second half of the century, the factory



extended its products to objects of everyday use, including furniture, mirror frames, chess sets, and candlesticks, concurrent with weapons, yielding a distinctive reputation for Tula. From the 1740s on, the factory received frequent commissions to produce pieces for the imperial court including, in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many orders for richly-decorated hunting weapons—some as gifts to foreign dignitaries. For several years, Catherine the Great visited the town of Sophia, near Tsarskoe Selo (the Romanov summer residence), to see an exhibition of new creations by the Tula craftsmen.

By the late 1700s, decorative faceting was implemented to replicate, with variously-shaped intricate steel beads, the quality of precious stones. The Hillwood candlestick is a fine example of this faceting, with rows of diamond-like beading lending it an elegance and jewel-like quality. Tula's original method of encrustation in low relief with gold and silver is evidenced in this piece as well, with garlands of flowers and ribbons characteristic of Tula pieces from this time.



*Detail of Tula Steel Candlestick*

The purchase of the Tula candlestick was made possible with Hillwood acquisition funds and the support of the Hillwood Collector's Circle.

On March 20, 2013, curator of Russian and Eastern European art Scott Ruby and Chief Curator Liana Paredes presented a lecture about the history of the Tula factory and its ornamental steel craftsmanship. To view the videos of the

*Steel Diamond: In Memory of Anne Odom*, visit <http://volunteer.HillwoodMuseum.org> and follow the instructions at the top of the "Lecture Video Archive" page under "Education".

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

*Kara Hershorin, Membership Manager*

### New Staff

Corinne Topper joined the Development Department in February where she will focus on grant and foundation funding opportunities. Topper's love of house museums started when she was an intern at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, NC. Relocating from Central Pennsylvania in January, Topper last served as Executive Director of the Susquehanna Art Museum in Harrisburg, PA. Prior to the Susquehanna Art Museum, she was the Executive Director of the Demuth Foundation (Home, Museum and Gardens of artist Charles Demuth) in Lancaster, PA. She's excited to be at Hillwood after spending the last three and half years at home with her daughter.

### Record setting Membership!

Hillwood currently has 2,352 memberships. This record setting number is a 50% increase from last year. We appreciate everything you do as volunteers to encourage membership. Whether you are giving a tour, welcoming visitors, keeping the gardens gorgeous, or answering questions, your enthusiastic participation has helped Hillwood become the warm and unique institution it is today.

If you have questions about membership, are interested in joining the Friends of Hillwood, or would like to give the gift of membership, please call Kara Hershorin, Membership Manager at (202) 243-3939.

## VISITOR SERVICES NEWS

*Katy Albertson, Head of Visitor Services*

Visitor Services is pleased to announce the promotion of Jan Jensen to the full-time position of Visitor Services Coordinator. Jan has been with Hillwood in a part-time capacity since July 2012 where she spent valuable time getting to know our fabulous volunteers and visitors. Starting April 1, Jan's schedule transitioned to Tuesday through Saturday. We are excited to provide Jan with this opportunity for professional growth and delighted to be able to bring her talents to the fore. Visitor Services is now in the process of interviewing candidates to fill Jan's now-vacant VS Associate position and look forward to welcoming a new staff member in time for the busy spring season to come.

### Café

Keep your eyes peeled in June for a new Café menu. Taking inspiration from *Living Artfully*, our next exhibition opening June 8, Hillwood's Café will roll out dishes inspired by Marjorie Post.

## ART RESEARCH LIBRARY

*Pat Lynagh, Assistance Librarian*

The Art Research Library is happy to welcome our newest volunteer Charlotte DonVito. Charlotte is currently volunteering at the National Gallery of Art in their Art Research Library. Born in London, England, she has a Master of Arts (Russian) from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and a Master of Science in Library and Information Science from The Catholic University of America. She has worked and studied in Moscow. She also worked in Paris for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty as Assistant Editor/Translator where she selected, translated and edited written comments by Soviet citizens and recent emigrants concerning Western radio broadcasts to the Soviet Union and issues affecting life in the USSR.



*Library Volunteer Charlotte DonVito*

We look forward to working with Charlotte on many library tasks, such as book processing, space management, creating online auction catalog records, and organizing our post card collection.

### Pat Lynagh

“Shy, retiring librarian?” Well maybe not so shy, but after seven years at the Hillwood Art Research Library, I am now retiring as Assistant Librarian in May. This is not my first retirement, as I worked for twenty years at the Smithsonian American Art Museum/National Portrait Gallery Library as Reference Librarian before coming to Hillwood in 2005. So this has been a wonderful opportunity to work part-time in a beautiful place with a talented staff and group of volunteers. But the time has come to make it official and to take a turn at some volunteer activities myself. I already usher at Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre Company, and the Music Center at Strathmore; I am now adding a day a week at the information desks at the National Gallery of Art. It has been a pleasure to have been a part of Hillwood, and I look forward to visiting with all my friends here in the future. “So long, farewell . . . Auf Wiedersehen, goodnight . . . I hate to leave this pretty sight” (Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein, “Edelweiss”, from “The Sound of Music”, 1959 – always cite your source!).

## STAFF UPDATE

*Don Rogers, Director of Facilities*

We are delighted to welcome Oscar Regaldo as Hillwood's new painter. Oscar brings 30 years of experience to this position. Prior to Hillwood, Oscar worked on the facilities team at the University Specialty Hospital. He hit the ground running since starting at Hillwood in December 2012 assisting with the installation of the *Pageant of the Tsars* exhibition and most recently finishing the fallout shelter in the Mansion in preparation of the upcoming exhibition *Living Artfully*, which opens to the public on June 8.

## PLANT PROFILE: DOUBLEFILE VIBURNUM

*Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum*

*Ann Stevens Kelly, Garden Volunteer*



*Doublefile Viburnum*

The term double file brings to my mind a column of marching soldiers or a class of small children moving down a street two abreast holding onto a line between them.

In the horticulture world, what comes to mind is the doublefile viburnum, the common name for a deciduous shrub noted for its lovely double rows of flattened sterile white flower heads (similar to the lace-cap hydrangea), which grace the tiered horizontal branches of this shrub.

Two cultivars of the doublefile viburnum, botanically known as *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum* (Doublefile viburnum) from the Genus *Viburnum*, are nicely situated at Hillwood and bloom for several weeks in May.

The most prominently displayed cultivar here is 'Shasta'. Visitors see three of them alongside the Visitor's Center as they drive into the parking lot. The 'Shasta' is the first doublefile viburnum cultivar to be created by crossing a select *V. tomentosum* plant with *V. tomentosum* 'Mariesii' in a breeding program at the US National Arboretum in the early '50s.

'Shasta', a second generation of that breeding program, was released by the Arboretum to the public in 1979. It has an abundance of extra large white flowers with a shorter, more horizontal growth habit, reaching 6 feet tall and 10 to 12 feet wide. 'Shasta' is a Gold Medal Winner in The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's plant award program.

The other cultivar at Hillwood is the 'Mariesii', located between the Administration Building and the walkway leading to the Adirondack Building. Introduced from Japan in 1879, this taller cultivar grows 6 to 10 feet high and 8 to 10 feet wide. Its profusely blooming flowers sit erect above its glossier foliage, as if they are floating.

Doublefile viburnum grows best in full sun to part shade with moderate moisture and well drained soil. It is susceptible to the usual nuisance bugs and occasionally to powdery mildew if too crowded, but Hillwood has no real maintenance problem with theirs. It is easily propagated from rooting greenwood cuttings in the summer.

This shrub works well in the landscape as a specimen, screen, and massed group. However it is used, the doublefile viburnum needs room to spread so its branches don't have to be pruned which would spoil its lovely shape.



Native to China and Japan, the doublefile viburnum is from the family *Caprifoliaceae*. The Genus *Viburnum* consists of about 150 species of evergreen, semi-evergreen, and deciduous shrubs. This particular viburnum has an elegance which makes it fit nicely into Hillwood's landscape.

Other varieties of doublefile viburnum are available for smaller gardens, including 'Dart's Red Robin', 5 feet tall by 5 feet wide; 'Newport' – 6 feet tall by 6 feet wide; 'Shoshoni' – 5 feet tall by 8 feet wide; and 'Summer Snowflake' – a reblooming variety, 5 feet tall by 5 feet wide.

After the lovely show of flowers in May, the doublefile viburnum has more to offer before winter sets in. Ornamental oval red fruit appears in late summer, attracting birds, and turns black as it ripens. In autumn, its leaves add red and reddish purple color to the fall palette.

It is especially nice for Hillwood and gardens in the east coast that the doublefile viburnum is resistant to deer.

### 2014 MANSION DOCENT TRAINING

Mark your calendars! A Mansion Docent Training Program will take place in 2014 from January – June. Applications will be available early summer. Stay tuned for more details...

## KUDOS AND CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS

*Lisa Leyh, Interpretation Volunteer Manager*

### Kudos for Volunteers

This year's Fabergé Egg Family Festival on Saturday, March 23 and Sunday, March 24 was a wonderful success! Over 1,500 guests enjoyed Hillwood and the weekend's activities. Volunteer presence was seen throughout the estate from

greeting guests in the Visitor Center to answering questions in the Mansion.

A heartfelt thank you to all who helped with the Fabergé Egg Family Festival:

Janice Brambilla	Wilhelmina Irshad
Mollie Ann Church	Oksana Klebs
Rosemary Coskey	Susan Lund
Raisa Dubensky	Irene Malbin
Gale Dugan	Helene Meyers
Louise Eaton	Betsy Muri
Ken Garrison	Chris Ritthaler
Irene Gersh	Ann Scott
Phyllis Gerstell	Ilse Stauffer
Lana Geyfman	Erica Stern
Nina Gradia	Lois Topping
Kissa Guilsher	Maggi Walker
Carolee Heileman	Josephine Wiacek
Ilse Higgins	Kiska Williams

### Calls for Volunteers

Mark your calendars for some summer fun! Volunteer help is needed with **French Festival on Saturday, July 13 (10 a.m. – 7 p.m.)**. Assistance is needed in the Visitor Center, Mansion, and with the special programming and activities. If you are available, please contact Lisa Leyh at (202) 243-3938 or [LLeyh@HillwoodMuseum.org](mailto:LLeyh@HillwoodMuseum.org).

### Garden Tours

This April Hillwood is delighted to welcome back our knowledgeable garden docents for the spring garden touring season. Spring tours will be offered Tuesday through Saturday at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm, and at 2:30 pm on Sundays, April 14 & 28, May 12 & 26 and June 9 & 23. Hillwood is once again interested in offering garden tours during the summer and will extend the spring touring season to Saturday, June 29.

### NEW VOLUNTEERS

We are delighted to welcome sixteen new volunteers to Hillwood. Joining Interpretation are



Kevin Davis, Morgan Flaherty, and Joan Weiss. Charlotte DonVito volunteers with the Library and joining Horticulture are Nora Dean, Stephanie Fouch, Darin McAnelly, Deirdre Nicholson, Reza Hedayati, Elizabeth Evans, Nedra Basile, Sherrell Lewis, Susan Ruth, Judy Mansfield, Jennifer Baxter and Beth Pieper.

## **NEW VOLUNTEER BENEFIT**

*Bill Johnson, Horticulturist/Volunteer Coordinator*

Former Hillwood volunteer, Linda Neumann, and co-owner of Teasm, is extending a new benefit for all Hillwood volunteers. To receive a 10% discount on food, beverage, loose leaf tea, gift and grocery merchandise all you need to do is mention that you are an active volunteer at Hillwood. The discount is good at all four Teasm locations – Dupont Circle, Lafayette Park, Penn Quarter and Old Town. For location details visit [www.teasm.com](http://www.teasm.com).

The *Post Serial* is published quarterly for Hillwood volunteers by Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, 4155 Linnean Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. It is edited under the direction of the volunteer management team of Bill Johnson and Lisa Leyh and other Hillwood staff members. Copyright 2013 by Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Publication dates:  
February, April, July and October

