



# The Post Serial

Volunteer Newsletter of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

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Fall 2014

## A STITCH IN TIME

*Howard Kurtz, Associate Textile and Costume Curator  
Charlotte Peddicord, Mansion Docent/Visitor Services Volunteer*

Did you know that Hillwood currently has 265 active volunteers? During 2013, volunteers graciously contributed over 20,000 hours working in an assortment of roles such as Floral Design Volunteer, Mansion or Garden Docent, Visitor Services Volunteer, and Library Support. In total, there are now 14 different volunteer positions at Hillwood.

Howard V. Kurtz, Associate Textile and Costume Curator, oversees approximately 5,000 textile items in the Hillwood Collection. In the Fall of 2013, Howard worked with Lisa Leyh, Interpretation Volunteer Manager, to create a new volunteer position which they titled “Collections Volunteer.” Celia Steingold, a skilled “stitcher”, was asked to fill this new role. Celia is no stranger to Hillwood. She has served as a mansion docent since 2000, giving tours in both English and French. Having previously mentioned her love of sewing to Lisa Leyh, Celia was asked if she would be interested in assisting Howard in the textile lab for a few hours each week.



*Howard Kurtz & Celia Steingold in the textile lab*

The original project involved sewing accession numbers into garments. Working four hours each Friday, it took several months to sew numbers into the 182 garments that make up Hillwood's dress collection. Once that task was completed, Celia moved on to labeling dress accessories and linens. Celia recalled, "Both of these exercises were particularly interesting to me because I was able to see and study the extraordinary workmanship of the dressmakers who made all of Marjorie Post's clothes and which now form this extraordinary dress collection. I've been a lifetime sewer and am particularly interested in the fashion of the 1920's and 30's. Being able to examine these garments carefully has been a thrill for me." Howard has enjoyed working with Celia and noted that she is one of only a handful of people who have been allowed to see these textiles inside and out. He stated, "Who but us gets to see the inside of these incredibly detailed, designed and constructed evening gowns from so many different time periods?"

According to Howard, new projects appear for Celia on a weekly basis. Under Howard's instruction, Celia has recreated the 1920's headdresses for the Cartier exhibition, contributed her sewing talents to the new Staff Dining Room, helped build mounts for the Russian Sacred Arts Gallery, and made minor repairs to the fancy dress costumes traveling exhibition *Invitation to the Ball*. She has also worked on incoming gifts of lace, linens, tablecloths and napkins that have been given by outside donors.

Celia's most recent efforts have been in support of the upcoming exhibition, *Ingenu to Icon*, which opens to the public in June, 2015. She assisted Howard in preparing dresses to be photographed for the accompanying book, *Ingenu to Icon, 70 Years of Fashion on the Marjorie Merrimether Post Collection*. This assignment was particularly intense as they

had less than a month to steam the garments and dress the mannequins. Some items required repair and replacement of missing pieces. Celia said of the experience, "It amazes me how long it takes to dress one of the mannequins. It's so time consuming, and actually very physical work as well." Howard agreed stating, "It takes a full day to dress two mannequins."

During this past year, Celia contributed 130 volunteer hours as the new Collections Volunteer. Summing up her new experience Celia said, "I really like the variety of what I get to do. Every Friday has new surprises. I like tedious tasks and I'm very goal-oriented, so completing the sewing tasks I'm given is very satisfying for me. The most exciting aspect of working with Marjorie Post's garments and textiles is channeling her spirit. Volunteering in the lab has added immeasurably to my Hillwood volunteer experience. And Howard is an exceptional teacher who has taught me many tricks of the trade. Who knew I'd ever make rabbit pom-poms to replace those on Marjorie Post's 1920's fancy dress American Indian costume?"

According to Howard, "Hillwood's Costume and Textiles collection has historical value that must be maintained. We are constantly placing pieces on exhibition and that requires upkeep for the objects. I've appreciated the assistance I've received from Celia this past year and look forward to working with her on future exhibitions. Thank you, Celia, for your assistance this past year, and Happy One Year Anniversary!"

## HILLWOOD HAPPENINGS

**Special Note:** In an effort to keep you informed on the latest workshops, lectures, trips and other educational activities, a monthly email will be sent to all active Hillwood volunteers from either Bill Johnson or Lisa Leyh with details on the month's educational offerings.

All Hillwood volunteers are invited to take advantage of the educational offerings listed below. 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.

### **Volunteer Wreath-Making Workshops November 28 through December 19**

Join Horticulturist Bill Johnson to create a handmade wreath for your home, suitable for hanging outdoors. A \$25 fee covers all materials; contact Bill at [bjohnson@hillwoodmuseum.org](mailto:bjohnson@hillwoodmuseum.org) or (202) 243-3927 to schedule a day and time. He will schedule small groups on days that volunteers are already volunteering.

### **Greens Workshop**

**December 12 (Friday), 10:30 a.m.**

Just in time for the holidays! Bill Johnson will help participants create a swag or a table top tree (choose one). We will be using fragrant ever greens and other seasonal materials. The \$10 fee will cover materials. The workshop is limited to 12 persons and will be held in the Horticulture break room.

### **Holiday Centerpiece Workshop**

**December 17 (Wednesday), 10:30 a.m.**

Bill Johnson will help participants create a long centerpiece for their mantel or a round centerpiece for their dining room table, using evergreens and other seasonal materials, including holiday picks, ribbons, ornaments and fresh

flowers. If you want to bring other materials that match your home décor, Bill will help you incorporate them into your design. There is a \$20 materials fee. The workshop is limited to 12 participants. Meet in the Horticulture break room.

### **Open Sundays in December 2014**

December is a traditional busy time of the year at Hillwood due to the increased attendance and holiday visitors. In an effort to provide more opportunity for visitors to experience the Cartier exhibition and the corresponding holiday decorations throughout the estate, Hillwood will be open every Sunday next month (Sundays, December 7, 14, 21 and 28). Additional Mansion Docents and VSVs will be needed for these open Sundays. If you're available for an extra shift or two, please contact Lisa Leyh at [L.Leyh@HillwoodMuseum.org](mailto:L.Leyh@HillwoodMuseum.org) or (202) 243-3938. Any help you can offer will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

### **Operating Hours in January 2015**

To meet the ever-increasing demand from audiences, Hillwood will be open from Thursday, January 1 to Sunday, January 11 (including Sunday January 11). Volunteer assistance will be needed in the Visitor Center and Mansion. We'll close to the public from Monday, January 12 to Saturday, January 31 to clean and keep the Mansion maintained to the pristine standards for which it is known. Hillwood will reopen to the public on Tuesday, February 3.

### **Volunteer Business Meeting January 22, 2015**

Hillwood will host our annual Volunteer Business Meeting on **Thursday, January 22 at 10 a.m., 1:00 & 6:30 p.m.** in the Visitor Center Theater. Several staff members including Kate Markert, Executive Director, will discuss Hillwood's agenda for 2015. This meeting is a wonderful opportunity to learn about important updates for Hillwood next year, receive your 2014 hours report and 2015 volunteer passes, and much more! Stay tuned for more details...

## A CARTIER CHRISTMAS

*Jason Gedeik, Head of Greenhouse & Design Operations*

The Holidays this year at Hillwood will glitter brightly with the glamour and elegance of Marjorie Post. The special exhibition *Cartier: Marjorie Merrinweather Post's Dazzling Gems* serves as the unique inspiration for various Christmas trees throughout the estate.



*Pearl tree in French Drawing Room*

Beginning on Tuesday, November 25, you'll be greeted in the Visitor Center by a 12' tall tree decorated in silver and sapphire blue colored ornaments paying homage to Marjorie's iconic sapphire and diamond necklace. The Mansion Entry Hall will glow with a Christmas tree glittering in rich emerald tones inspired by Post's famous Cartier pendant brooch. A grand tree dripping with strands of pearls and diamond

pendants sits in splendor in the period French Drawing Room, mimicking the glamorous clasp created by Cartier for Marjorie to wear with her sophisticated sets of pearls. In the Pavilion, turquoise and amethyst gemstones complement the lush lilac velvet wall coverings of the room. The tree in Post's personal dressing room takes on hues of aquamarine, inspired by a 1950's brooch. And of course Hillwood's festive traditions will still be kept with the famous kissing ball hanging in the Mansion Entry Hall.

In addition to the trees, colorful dining services also inspired by Cartier will be featured on the Dining and Breakfast Room tables. In the Dining Room, a table set with Sèvres porcelain in the famous *bleu celeste* (heavenly blue) takes its inspiration from turquoise jewelry seen in the Cartier exhibition. The deep blue sapphire of special glassware and intense cobalt blue of Russian plates saturate the Breakfast Room table with the splendid jewel tones on display. Christmas inspired floral arrangements will be displayed in the mirrored alcoves of the Breakfast Room and set in two ornate silver vases from Marjorie's collection. Poinsettias and orchids will cap off the Holiday displays throughout the Mansion.

Make sure to stop by the Museum Shop where you'll be able to purchase a selection of Christmas ornaments featured in Hillwood's Holiday displays.

## MUSEUM SHOP

*Lauren Salazar, Head of Merchandising*

The Museum Shop has been preparing for the busy fall and holiday season and we are stocked up with exciting new items for you to keep or to gift.

Hillwood Banner bags are now available! Exhibit banners have been upcycled into two styles of totes. Each banner bag is one of a kind, as each

has been cut from a portion of a banner from such exhibitions as *Wedding Belles*, *Invitation to the Ball*, *Living Artfully*, or *The Style that Ruled the Empire*.



*Hillwood Banner Bags*

Fashion and accessories are always good sellers so shop early to get the best selection with these items:

- Echo Touch gloves in a variety of styles and colors. Each glove comes with touch pads to use with any devices.
- Velvet burnout Peacock Scarves in lovely fall shades.
- Ruffle Collar Jackets for holiday parties.

We have a large selection of items perfect for stocking stuffers or hostess gifts including eyeglass bottle openers, purse holders that double as a bracelet, golf club pens, Hammond's confections and many more.

As we head into the busy holiday season, the Museum Shop is sure to be filled with lots of holiday shoppers and groups. Please shop early for best selection.

We are excited to welcome Emily DeGaglia as our new Sales Associate. Emily comes to us with boutique retail experience, and has a long familiarity with Hillwood, having visited many times through the years. Please stop by the store and introduce yourself to Emily.

### **Upcoming events:**

Mark your calendars for these exciting events and sales in the Museum Shop:

### **Staff and Volunteer Holiday Discounts**

**December 2 – 31**

Hillwood staff and volunteers receive an additional 10% on regularly priced items.

### **Holiday Toy & Gift Market**

**December 4 – 7**

Stop by the second floor of the Visitor Center and find exciting new gifts and accessories to complete your holiday gift list. Also offered will be a selection of toys and stocking stuffers from Parisian toy company Djeco.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

The best way to keep up-to-date on upcoming programs is to visit the [Calendar page](#) on Hillwood's website.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

*Kara Hershorin, Membership Manager*

Give the gift of a Hillwood membership this holiday season. Membership is the perfect gift for family, friends, or colleagues. Share the beauty of Marjorie Merriweather Post's estate, gardens, and collections. Memberships start at just \$50 and offer a year of great benefits, including:

- Free unlimited admission to the Estate.
- A 10% discount in the Museum Shop, plus additional discounts on the first Saturday of every month.
- Complimentary guest passes.
- Reduced pricing on public programs.
- Invitations to Member-only events

**SPECIAL OFFER:** All gift memberships purchased come with a FREE ornament book featuring Faberge eggs. Purchase [online](#) or call Kara Hershorin, Membership Manager, at (202) 243-3939.

## ORGANIZATION CHANGES

*Kate Markert, Executive Director*

Our strategic plan calls for increasing awareness of Hillwood and an emphasis on our exhibition program. Record attendance, membership and visitor satisfaction scores are testaments to our success. Growing even further will require us to challenge the status quo with fresh ideas and contemporary methods to drive and facilitate change. In support of this we will be making the following organizational moves:

**Angie Dodson** becomes Director of Learning and Engagement. In this role she will continue to focus on the creation, development, execution and management of all educational and public programs, visitor engagement initiatives and amenities, accessibility and strategic community partnerships. Angie will continue to manage **Audra Kelly**, Head of Interpretation, **Lauren Salazar**, Head of Merchandising, and **Hillwood Café Operations**. In addition Angie will partner with **Liana Parades**, Chief Curator and Director of Collections, co-chairing the exhibitions program. **Ren Waung** will report jointly to both Angie and Liana in his capacity as Exhibition Designer and Angie will work closely with curators on exhibition development.

Visitor Services will be merged with Marketing and Communications under the direction of **Lynn Rossotti**. **Katy Albertson**, Head of Visitor Services, will report to Lynn along with **Amy Knox**, Group Sales and Tourism Manager. As Hillwood works toward broadening our strategic goal beyond increasing attendance to deepening and cultivating relationships with current visitors and members, combining these areas under one umbrella provides greater synergy in building visitor loyalty and cultivating audiences through consistent customer relationship management.

Responsibility for Security will now fall under the auspices of Human Resources. **Jim Sellevaag**, Head of Security, will report to **Michael Dudich**. Technical/operational expertise and effective

people management practices are the hallmark of security force excellence. Bringing these functions closer together will serve to further elevate security services at Hillwood in our new normal of growing attendance, increased programming and expanded operating hours.

## ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS NEWS

*Jaime McCurry, Digital Assets Librarian*

*Marge Huang, Archives and Special Collections Assistant*

Over the last few years, the Archives & Special Collections Department has been working to digitize a series of home movies from the Marjorie Merriweather Post Collection. The home movies span many decades, from the 1930s to the 1960s, and help bring to life the different facets of Post and her family. The films depict travel footage from various overseas trips and voyages on the *Sea Cloud*. Personal moments such as Adelaide Brevoort Hutton's wedding in 1927 are also captured. The home movies are rich in footage of Post's various residences, including exterior, interior, and garden scenes of Hillwood. It is hoped that the digitization of the films will make them more accessible and easily disseminated. A web exhibition is being created using tools provided by the Google Art Project to highlight some of the films. *There & Back: Travel Films from the Hillwood Archives & Special Collections* features travel footage of Post and her family to locales such as the Caribbean, Austria, Russia, England, France, Texas, & Camp Topridge. A direct link will be distributed when completed, so be sure to keep an eye out! In addition to making these films accessible in the web exhibition, eligible films will be uploaded to the Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens official YouTube channel over the coming months.

And while visiting the new web exhibition, check out Hillwood on the Google Art Project! Hillwood has been a contributing Google Art Project partner since 2012. Google Art Project, a

service of Google Cultural Institute, provides a space on Google's platform for Hillwood and other cultural heritage institutions to showcase items from their digital collections. The Hillwood Google Art Project profile currently hosts over 50 images, each representative of an item in the Hillwood collections, including the Twelve Monogram Egg, the Catherine the Great Easter Egg, and the Nuptial Crown. In addition to hosting Hillwood digital images and Hillwood-created web exhibitions, Hillwood has worked with Google to create an ultra-high resolution gigapixel image (consisting of about 7 billion pixels) of Konstantin Makovsky's *A Boyar Wedding Feast*, in addition to an interactive virtual "Museum-View" tour of the Hillwood Mansion. Those resources can be accessed and shared using the links below.

### **Links of Interest**

Hillwood Collections on the Google Art Project:

<http://bit.ly/1Frox5J>

A Boyar Wedding Feast (Gigapixel Image):

<http://bit.ly/1ybfuBc>

Hillwood's "Museum-View" Virtual Mansion

Tour: <http://bit.ly/1yScooR>

## **CW POST COURTYARD UPDATE**

*Kate Markert, Executive Director*

The courtyard renovation project is moving along; although there have been several unexpected complications that have put the completion date in question. We discovered a buried tank that required special permitting and oversight for removal; and some of the new storm water lines were not installed properly and will have to be dug up and reinstalled. We needed to install a new storm water pipe across the main road near the Greenhouse, because a pipe that was on drawings turned out not to be where it was expected. A multitude of hidden utilities have been discovered under the asphalt. We are documenting everything that is found and all of the new pipes that are

being laid so that future projects will have accurate records of what is under the ground.



*CW Post Courtyard*

The framework of the tent will go up as part of the project, and the skin will be installed sometime in the spring, depending on the weather. The next phase of the project will be installing the foundations and reinstalling the storm water drains in the courtyard. This will result in routing visitors and staff on different pathways leading into the Café, CW Post, Merriweather conference rooms and the Administration building. Staff in Facilities, Visitor Services, and Security and the contractor will work to make sure that the paths into the affected buildings are safe and easily navigated. Once the foundation work is completed, the final push to install the paving and tent frame will begin.

This is an exciting but difficult time as we move through the phases of the project. Many thanks to one and all for their patience and help!

## **HEAVILY BERRIED VIBURNUMS BRIGHTEN LUNAR LAWN BEDS**

*Betty Cochran, Newsletter Volunteer*

Clusters of bright red berries hanging from shrubs on both sides of the Lunar Lawn signal the locations of *Viburnum setigerum*, the tea viburnum. This lesser known viburnum is one of the most

desirable viburnums for berry display. And although it is deciduous, at this season it retains most of its leaves; they may turn a muted red, making an even more rewarding sight. Look for the two groups of tea viburnums within the Lunar Lawn shrub beds on either side of the Japanese-Style Garden overlook.



*Viburnum setigerum*

In spring and summer, the veined leaves are bluish-green, looking slightly lighter on the undersides. They are three to six inches long and up to two and a half inches wide, with a rounded lance shape (ovate-lanceolate). As on all viburnums, the leaves are opposite. In the spring, white, flat-topped clusters of flowers, or cymes, about two inches wide, open as the leaves emerge.

The shrub is multi-stemmed, with an upright, open shape, and grows 8 to 12 feet tall. When the branches are weighted with berries, they may arch downward, giving the shrub a graceful, nodding appearance. However, the berries will not last forever, as birds feed on them.

The tea viburnum is native to central and western China and was introduced into this country in 1901. As the name suggests, it has been used to brew tea, but there seems to be little information on where or why. Some references suggest that monks of the ancient Buddhist center on Mount Emei in China's Sichuan Province used it to make tea for pilgrims to their site.

*Viburnum setigerum* will grow in full sun to moderate shade, in well-drained soil. The tea viburnums in the Lunar Lawn shrub borders were planted during the lawn's renovation in the spring of 2013 and are now about six feet tall. However, the shrub is not new to Hillwood—one planted in Mrs. Post's time is located just beyond the east Armillary Sphere.

## JAPANESE-STYLE GARDEN WATER

*Jessica Bonilla, Head Gardener*



*Japanese style Garden lower pond*

When strolling through the Japanese-Style Garden, you may notice that the water sparkles just a little more than it used to. That's no illusion. That's our new filtration system. Our old system was comprised of two tanks filled with clay beads that collected debris. When they were full, the system would perform a series of backwashes to rinse it all out of the tanks.

This year we got to a point where it just wouldn't rinse clean anymore or remove the debris from the water, so we upgraded. In August, our plumbing contractors, Harry Hottel, installed a system that has removable, cleanable filters with 840sqft of filtration area (up from 10sqft in the old system) and can filter particles down to 20 microns. The unknown factor was how often they would have to be cleaned. So far, we've only had



to clean the filters once in 3 months. When you get a chance, come on down and enjoy the water.



*The underground vault with new filtration tanks*

## **SPLENDOR AND SURPRISE: ELEGANT CONTAINERS, ANTIQUA TO MODERN**

*Lynn Rossotti, Director of Marketing & Communications*

Starting next February 2015, explore the beauty and myriad functions of vessels. Discover the rich history of the box, from the enshrinement of sacred relics to receptacles for tobacco or makeup. Offered as gifts and received as honored presents, containers have long remained important, collectable works of art that were appreciated for their practical use as well as their cultural meaning and beauty.

As a noted collector of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art, [Marjorie Merriweather Post](#) amassed hundreds of boxes and containers for her private homes. In celebration of this collection, Hillwood will showcase [Splendor and Surprise](#), an exhibition dedicated to all manner of containers featuring everything from contemporary *objets d'art* to resplendent antique vessels in silver and gold. The exhibition will explore the beauty and myriad functions of vessels created for containment and will be on display in the [Dacha](#) from February 15 through June 7, 2015.



*Catalog number: 15.182*

*Étui -- known in various forms from the 14th century and were used as traveling beauty cases, sewing cases and eating utensils.*

*The etui is photographed open to show the implements inside: tweezers, emery board, scissors, etc.*

## **NEW STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

We are delighted to welcome 11 new volunteers and 4 new staff members! Please join us in welcoming our newest members to Hillwood.

### **Joining the Hillwood staff:**

- Emily Conforto, Visitor Services Associate
- Lisa Wheeler, Visitor Services Associate
- Derek Jones, Security Officer
- Emelsi Fuentes Turcios, Facilities + Events Technician

### **Joining the Interpretation volunteer corps:**

- William Busker
- Kathleen Jackson
- Vee Smith

- Paul Hildebrand
- Ilene Heller

**Joining the Horticulture volunteer corps:**

- Tina Byrd
- Michael Dunham
- David Maxfield
- Stuart Schmerzler
- Ronnie Abrams
- Paula McMartin

- Marilyn Fuchs
- Peter Fuchs
- Joanne Gillespie
- T.J. Hitaffer
- Patricia Jamison
- B.L. Johnston
- Sheila Marin
- David Maxfield
- Judith Morrill

- Mary Reyner
- Suzanne Richardson
- Jeffrey Sandmann
- Katherine Schinasi
- Buzz Seltzer
- Maureen Valcour
- Michael Weaver
- John Wheeler

**KUDOS & CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

*Lisa Leyh, Interpretation Volunteer Manager*

**Bulb Planting**

A dedicated team of volunteers assisted the Horticulture department to plant 20,000 bulbs throughout the estate in mid-November.



*Volunteers and staff planting bulbs in front of the Greenhouse*

We couldn't have accomplished such an undertaking without the support from our volunteers. A heart-felt thank you to those of you who made the planting a success:

- John Bowers
- Michael Dunham
- Debbie DuSault
- Carol Edwards

- Wendy Nyre
- Elaine Papazian
- Jim Peterson
- Emma Refuerzo

**Russian Winter Festival**

This year's Russian Winter Festival will be held on Saturday, December 13 (the estate will be open from 10 am – 7 pm while programming will be offered from 10 am – 5 pm) and Sunday, December 14 (1 – 5 pm). Mansion Docents and Visitor Services Volunteers will be needed in the Visitor Center, Mansion, and with special programming and activities. If you are interested in helping, please contact Lisa Leyh at (202) 243-3938 or [LLeyh@HillwoodMuseum.org](mailto:LLeyh@HillwoodMuseum.org).

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