

NOTES ON ORGANIZATION

By Mrs. Merriweather Post

1965
from Hillwood
archives

The operation of my household is the result of careful planning over the many years. In addition, I am blessed with a remarkably good staff who believe in working together as a team. Each individual has their own appointed job for which they are responsible and they take pride in seeing that it is well done. In operation, every detail is worked out in advance to ensure smooth running. There are too many things which can come up unexpectedly to run the risk of not arranging beforehand everything that can be foreseen.

Each house is an entity, with its own equipment for that particular spot, and environment. The operation is in charge of the Steward, who is responsible for staff, etc. Naturally, I am always aware of everything that goes on and periodically I go over the house very carefully and with attention to every detail. All orders come from me and are handed to the Steward, who in turn passes them on to the Butler, Head Chambermaid, Head Parlormaid, and so on and so forth, and the Steward is responsible for seeing to it that my wishes are carried out.

MENUS: These are planned by the Steward and cook and presented to me for approval each day. For a party, this is always done well in advance and well ahead of time each detail for the table setting - Cloth, China, Silver, Flowers, etc., is decided on.

SILVER: The Silver is in charge of one man who continually keeps it in perfect order.

CHINA AND GLASS: These are the responsibility of the Butler, who makes the selection usually for the various family meals. Of course there are times when I have my own ideas as to what I would like to use and this is followed. For Dinner Parties, etc., the selection of China and Glass is my decision and on most occasions the Butler and I work it out together.

LINENS AND LACES: Table Linens and Laces are all carefully inventoried in a book, complete with sizes and seating capacity and descriptions and photographs, so that it is a simple matter to select exactly what is wanted, without opening a cloth. The Head Parlormaid is responsible for this and for keeping it in good condition. She also makes the selection of what is to be used for family meals and follows my instructions for parties, etc.

LINENS: All bed linen, etc., is the responsibility of the Head Chambermaid.

GENERAL MANAGER: The General Manager is in overall charge of the entire operation and organization, excepting for the Financial Manager who is also directly responsible to me.

The General Manager operates in close liaison with all the heads of the various departments and in the different houses, and the HERRIVEATHER. He is responsible for any construction or maintenance problems that may arise and overall for the many and varied activities of this organization. His office is in Washington, D.C.

STEWARD: The Steward has the overall responsibility for all houses and staff, and including food purchases and general maintenance of houses.

BUTLER: The Butler is responsible for the setting of tables and serving of meals and is in charge of the Pantry in General. The footmen, parlor maids, housemen are under his direction. The Butler also is responsible for the care of all China and Glass, and Silver.

FOOTMEN: One Footman is solely responsible for the care and maintenance of the Silver. One, when necessary, acts as Guest Valet. Generally, the Footmen's duties consist of serving at the table, serving meals to guests in their rooms, if desired, answering the door and telephones, relaying messages, etc

PARLOR MAIDS: There is a First Parlor Maid and a Second Parlor Maid. They are responsible for linens and laces, flower arrangements for the family dining room table, also - general cleaning and care of the downstairs front rooms.

CHAMBER MAIDS: The Head Chambermaid is responsible for the overall care of bed linens, etc., and the supervision of the other chambermaids.

KITCHEN: The Kitchen is the responsibility of the Head Cook who works closely with the Steward in the planning of meals, purchasing of foods, etc.

LAUNDRESSES: They take care of the fine table linens and bed linens, etc.

HOUSEMEN: Vacuuming, window cleaning, floors. Washing dishes, glass and silver after meals, and general cleaning work.

CHAUFFEURS: There are two chauffeurs and they are responsible for all the driving of Family and Guests, etc. For errands, we have a special driver, when a house is open, and he comes under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent and the Steward.

WATCHMEN: We have a large Security Staff for both inside and outside and they come under the jurisdiction of the Head Watchman, who is responsible directly to the General Manager.

MAINTENANCE MAN: Responsible for all machinery, furnaces, house equipment, small "maintenance jobs", etc.

ELECTRICIAN: Responsible for all electrical problems, wiring, etc.

CARPENTER: Attends to all necessary repairs, etc.

PAINTER: There is a tremendous amount of continuous work to keep HILLWOOD in first-class condition, including the iron fencing. In addition, painted furniture from the other houses is brought here to be re-done - for example, this winter - all the dining room chairs from Camp Topridge.

SUPERINTENDENT OF GARDENS AND GROUNDS: The Superintendent is in full charge of the gardening staff, and the gardens, grounds, and greenhouses. Responsibility for the care and work to be done in certain areas is delegated to his assistants and their crews, and when a major operation has to be undertaken they all join forces. The greenhouses are the responsibility of the Head Greenhouse Man and his assistant, and they also have the overseeing of cutting the garden. The Superintendent has the responsibility of all outside work.

SECRETARIAT: Responsibility for all correspondence, liaison with the different departments, appointments, social activities, travel arrangements, etc.

FINANCIAL OFFICE: The Financial Manager handles all my business matters and the various financial problems. His office is in New York City. The Financial Secretary is directly responsible to him. Her office here in Washington handles all the accounts, insurance, various financial records, etc.

MAR-A-LAGO, PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

SUPERINTENDENT: The Superintendent operates directly under the supervision of the General Manager and is responsible for the house and grounds, the outside staff, etc.

CAMP TOPRIDGE, UPPER ST. REGIS, NEW YORK

HEAD GUIDE: The Head Guide operates directly under the supervision of the General Manager and is responsible for the Camp Buildings and Camp Grounds, and his staff.

MERRIWEATHER; The: The Chief Pilot has the overall responsibility of the maintenance and operation of the plane, under the Supervision of the General Manager. He has under him the Second Pilot, a Co-Pilot, Engineer, and Steward.

