



# The Post Serial

Volunteer Newsletter of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

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Spring 2014

## AN ANNOUNCEMENT

*Ellen Charles, President of Hillwood's Board of Trustees*

I have been in this office since 1989. It has been a challenging and exciting 25 years! It has been a great honor to lead Hillwood's board. I have felt for several years that the time for me to retire from the leadership role was fast approaching. Kate is fully settled in as executive director and the board is strong. Especially now that we have declared ourselves to be a public charity, it is also the moment to have a non-family member step into that role.

Let me say right off that I will continue to be significantly involved – after all, I can move on from the presidency, but I will always be Marjorie Merriweather Post's granddaughter! I love Hillwood and will always see myself in a coaching and counseling role, always willing to give my perspective on what Grandmother might have thought or wanted, always available to the new president for advice.

We elected Nancy Appleby to be the first vice president in December. In many organizations, that is the office that the next president occupies. Nancy has agreed to take on the role of president in December, 2014. The governance committee will recommend her formal election at that time. She is wonderfully equipped for the job. She has been on the board since 2009 and knows Hillwood very well now. She was Treasurer and led us through the transition of the endowment management to Vanguard; she worked closely with Kate on the strategic plan; and she has been governance committee chair, working with Amy Bondurant on the changes to the by-laws that were instituted in 2012. She has a wonderful collegial manner that will serve us all well. She has agreed to take on the role for the next two years – 2015 and 2016. By that time, we will have identified the next president, and the rhythm of leadership rotation, which could take a number of different forms (two or three year terms, a one or two term limit, for example).

Hillwood is in a very strong position now and I am confident that we will perpetuate the effective, collegial culture of the board for years to come. Grandmother would be proud and pleased by this graceful transition to a bright future for Hillwood.



*Ellen Charles & Nancy Appleby*

## 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

Most Hillwood lectures will be available online through Hillwood's volunteer website. 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, "2014 Lectures"). To access a video, select a link and enter "volunteer" for the password.

### Field Trip

**April 29 (Tuesday) 10 a.m.**

#### The Private Garden of Philip McClain

Garden designer Philip McClain will host a garden tour of his upper Northwest Washington, D.C. garden. This is a well-designed, all season garden that is full of interesting plants and stone work. Use the sign up sheet for car pool or directions.

### Volunteer Appreciation Reception

**May 5 (Monday), 5 – 7 p.m.**

Attend a garden party in your honor! Please join Hillwood staff for the Annual Spring Volunteer Appreciation Reception. Invitations were mailed in early April. To RSVP, please call (202) 243-3942.

**Rescheduled Date: May 6 (Tuesday), 6 p.m.**

#### Interpreting the Gardens and Estate on Mansion Tours

This 30-minute session, presented by Lisa Leyh, interpretation volunteer manager, and Brian Barr, director of horticulture, is part of the Mansion Docent Training Program. (Visitor Center Theater)

### Plant ID Walk

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

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

flowering plants. Meet in the horticulture break room.

### Hanging-Basket Workshop

**May 15 (Thursday), 1:30 p.m.**

Join Drew Asbury, head grower, in the Greenhouse workroom to create your own summer-flowering hanging basket. There will be a selection of trailing foliage and flowering plants. A \$15 fee covers the cost of materials. The session is limited to 10 participants; please meet in the Greenhouse workroom.

### Mixed Container Workshop

**May 20 (Tuesday), 1:30 p.m.**

Head gardener, Jessica Bonilla, will provide inspiration to help you create your own patio container of summer-flowering plants. A \$10 fee covers the cost of materials. The session is limited to 10 participants; please meet in the horticulture break room.

### Plant ID Walk

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

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

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS UPDATES

*Erin Lourie, Adult Audiences Manager*

For more information about each of these programs, and to learn about newly added events, be sure to check out Hillwood's Calendar of Events at [hillwoodmuseum.org/whats/calendar](http://hillwoodmuseum.org/whats/calendar)

### Preschooler Series

Preschooler Series: Garden Sculpture Safari  
Thursdays, April 10, 17 & 24

Preschooler Series: Gardens Alive!  
Thursdays, May 15, 22 & 29

Preschooler Series: Kings & Queens  
Thursdays, June 5, 12, & 19

Hands-on Workshop: Hanging Baskets  
Saturday, May 10

Hands-on Workshop: Container Gardens

Saturday, May 17

### Lectures

William Randolph Hearst and His Life With Art,  
presented by Mary Levkoff  
Thursday, April 24

Going For Gold: Snuff Taking, Fashion and  
Accessories by Tessa Murdoch  
Tuesday, May 6

The Nationalities of Russia Porcelain Figures,  
presented by Tina Khmelnitskaya  
Thursday, May 8

Catherine the Great as Portrayed by British  
Artists During Her Reign, by Professor Anthony  
Cross  
Tuesday, May 14

### MUSEUM SHOP

*Lauren Salazar, Head of Merchandising*

Spring at the Museum Shop is always a time to  
introduce fresh merchandise, and this year is no  
exception. A small sampling of new items  
includes:

Winding River Spring Jackets – Stop by to see the  
latest batch of Winding River Jackets in new styles  
and cuts for spring.

Jackie Kennedy reproduction jewelry – Featuring  
classic styles faithfully reproduced from the  
collection of this style icon.

Silicone Baby Bibs – Soft and washable bibs in  
designs of pearls or bowties.

Clutches – embroidered and beaded clutches in  
saturated colors for spring and summer.

Hammond's Candies – In continuous operation  
since 1920, Hammond's is known for using  
quality ingredients to create its classic candies in  
Denver, CO.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Fresh Pop Up Shop – April 29 to May 2**  
For a limited time only, a selection of gifts,  
housewares and wearables to refresh your life.

- **Cartier** – Debuting in mid-May, look for  
products and books related to this glorious  
exhibit.

### 2014: THE YEAR AHEAD

*Kate Markert, Executive Director*

*At the annual business meetings for volunteers on January 16, Executive Director Kate Markert outlined what the year 2014 at Hillwood will look like. Here is a summary of her presentation, followed by updates by three other staff members about topics especially relevant for volunteers.*

Those of you who have been volunteers at Hillwood for a while will be familiar with the strategic planning process and the kind of material I'm going to present today. But for others, let me give a little background.

In September 2011 the Board of Trustees approved a strategic plan for Hillwood for the next three to five years. The year 2012 was year one of the plan, and 2014 will be year three. Once you've set out strategic directions, you wind up being able to see a little more clearly every year, and each year you can become a little more refined in your objectives.

Over the summer the staff updates the objectives of the plan, as obviously you achieve things that you set out to do. The budget that is created for the next year is aligned with those updated objectives. We're now really used to working in this way, we have a good, solid framework, and the process works fairly well.

At the beginning of every year I give the exact same presentation to the staff, to all the volunteers, and to our new board members. It's very important that we're all looking at the same objectives and we're all agreed on what we're going to do. We're definitely all on the same page. Now let's go to the goals, which should be familiar by now.

**Goal 1. Expand attendance.** We've made lots of very positive strides. In 2010 we had 52,000 visitors; in 2011 we had 64,000-plus; in 2012, with the Isabelle de Borchgrave exhibition, we had 74,000; and last year we had 69,000-plus. We've

significantly increased general attendance at Hillwood.

We're projecting between 70,000 and 75,000 visitors in 2014, and we have two very strong exhibitions that will be cornerstone drivers of that attendance. *Passion of the Empress: Catherine the Great's Art Patronage* opens February 15 in the Dacha, and *Cartier: Marjorie Merriweather Post's Dazzling Gems* opens June 8 in the Adirondack Building.

We will also open two new exhibition spaces in the Mansion, at whatever we consider the right moments to generate publicity about something new at Hillwood. During the *Living Artfully* exhibition, the staff story was so compelling that we decided to reinstall the staff dining room and lounge in its original location near the kitchen. That meant moving the Russian Liturgical Gallery, which in the fall we will open as the Russian Sacred Arts Gallery. It will be located upstairs in the underutilized Resource Room across from the English Bedroom.

Of course, you don't want to do all this and not tell anybody about it, so we will continue a fairly significant amount of advertising to support the exhibitions and programs. We have honed the advertising to know what is successful. The ads on the sides of buses have worked very well, and we're doing banner ads on the web. We will also continue to try to place stories in the media, and are very active with social media—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so forth.

In addition to exhibitions, we have wonderful programming for next year. We are following the fabulous success of last fall's lectures on *Managing Great Estates* with a series of evening lectures on *Great Homes and Gardens* in February, when all of us gardeners are starved to see green things. For the fall we're developing a compelling series on jewelry, related to the Cartier exhibition.

Of course we will continue to do the family days of Chandeleur (a French celebration of crepes), the Fabergé Egg Family Festival, the French Festival, and the Russian Winter Festival—and those programs are continually refreshed. Divas Outdoors, Orchid Month, and Gay Day are other attendance drivers. We will continue to enhance

our Christmas décor, which is a great reason for visitors to return to Hillwood during the holidays.

So that's goal 1, which, in a nutshell, is developing all sorts of compelling programs and making sure people know about them.

**Goal 2. Use the Marjorie Merriweather Post story to connect with contemporary audiences.** You've already heard about the reinstalled staff dining room and lounge that will continue to tell a story that has such resonance with visitors, and the Cartier exhibition, which will highlight Marjorie's acumen as a jewelry collector and connoisseur.

What you may not know is that we are rewriting *Hillwood Museum and Gardens*, what we're calling the Hillwood souvenir book, originally published for the reopening of the estate in 2000. A lot of things have changed since then. The book will have updated photos and text and will be the kind of book visitors want to buy to remember their visit to Hillwood.

**Goal 3. Strengthen strategic partnerships.** The whole idea is to strengthen our strategic partnerships in a way that will make Hillwood more global, more visible, and more relevant. Those standards have been fairly well incorporated in our relationships with our partners. The plan is that this goal will be subsumed under the other goals as it becomes part of our normal operating procedure.

One of our greatest achievements with this goal was our first Museum Fellow, Wilfried Zeisler. In fact, he has joined the staff—his areas of expertise are sort of made for Hillwood. And we will likely continue with fellowship programs.

**Goal 4. Right-sized solutions.** This was our very big goal in terms of right-sized solutions for the board, the staff, the facilities, the gardens, and so on. We are adding three new positions in 2014. The first is in curatorial, with Wilfried Zeisler.

The second is in development. As of January 1, Hillwood, which had been a private operating foundation, became a public charity under the IRS code. That means that we should be constantly increasing the amount of our budget

that is raised outside of our endowment. We have always been a 501(c)(3) organization, which means that your charitable contributions to us are always tax-deductible. But being a public charity means that we can apply for funds anywhere, and it means that we are more attractive to foundations.

The third position is in the library, where we will hire a digital asset librarian. We already have a lot of digital assets, and are continuing to produce them, and we need someone with the expertise to manage that material.

Another very important initiative for this year is phase 2 of the garden renovation. You remember that we have a five-year plan for refreshing the gardens—especially what we call the interstitial gardens, the beds between the major parts of the gardens. Last year we renovated the beds around the Lunar Lawn, starting with correcting major problems with the drainage. This year we will redo the gardens around the Rose Garden—not the Rose Garden itself, which looks terrific—but the areas to the sides and, especially, the area that’s immediately behind the Rose Garden.

Another big project is the renovation of the Dacha after the Catherine the Great show closes in June. Now that it’s regularly used for exhibitions, we need to upgrade the climate-control and security systems. It’s an expensive project, well over \$100,000, but we’re grateful that we’ve raised \$75,000 of that from outside sources.

Now, the Big Dig, the C.W. Post Courtyard. According to our architects, it should have taken six or eight weeks to get the permits to remove the asphalt and replace the hardscape in the courtyard, but we are at 16 weeks and counting. Clearly the pavement won’t be completed by April 1, as planned. But it *will* happen this year. Happily, we raised \$800,000 for the project from a large group of donors, and I thank all of you who participated. (*update: we now have permit for work to begin in mid June*)

**Goal 5. Leverage technology.** This goal also may wind up getting subsumed into other goals, because it is not an end, but a means of achieving the other goals. We needed to focus on technology, but we’ve come very far in the last

two years, including with Wi-Fi hotspots and cellular receivers to improve cellphone performance. We’re adding additional stops to the audiotour to incorporate some of the *Living Artfully* material. We’re continuing to work on the website’s collections module, which should be much more robust by this spring. In the world of social media, we’re Instagram-ing now, and we continue to be very active on other platforms, including Facebook and Twitter.

By being aware of what is happening at Hillwood, you can help us spread the word about upcoming exhibitions and programs. You are part of our growing community of “Fabulous Hillwood Fanatics”! Please know that I very much appreciate everything that you do.

## OTHER UPDATES FROM THE BUSINESS MEETINGS FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Liana Parades, director of collections and chief curator,** gave an overview of upcoming exhibitions, starting with the *Passion of the Empress*, the exhibition of decorative arts pieces opening to the public on February 15. It was organized by the Georgia Museum of Art, but most of the objects are from Hillwood’s collection. Scott Ruby is the managing curator. It is a highly academic exhibition from a university environment, adapted at Hillwood for the general public, Liana said.

The exhibition is a fascinating message of how the Empress adopted elements from medieval times and from Byzantium to elaborate her public persona as an enlightened person, Liana continued. It also explores Catherine’s relationships with the church and the military. Liana noted that the catalog’s introductory essay by the organizing curator at the University of Georgia draws some academically sound parallels between Catherine the Great and Marjorie Post, validating our collection in a novel way.

Opening June 7 in the Adirondack Building is the Cartier exhibition, of which Liana is curator. The recent large Cartier exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris put Marjorie Post on the map as a connoisseur of jewelry, a collector of Cartier, and

the most important client of the firm in New York, Liana said. Hillwood's exhibition will align some of the high points of Marjorie's official and social life with her choice of jewelry for those milestones, beginning in the 1920s and including her presentation at the Court of St James's. It will weave together the styles and practices of the firm and Marjorie's interests, including her commissioning of frames and other decorative objects.

Commenting on the two new installations in the Mansion this year, Liana said the staff dining room and lounge will tell the story of the staff and what it took to manage three residences over the course of each year. Its design will evoke mid-1950s aesthetics with period furniture, original linoleum tiled floors, and the like. The reinstallation of the Liturgical Gallery as the Russian Sacred Arts Gallery, under Scott Ruby's direction, will show not only liturgical objects of the Russian Church but also objects associated with private devotion.

In the pipeline for 2015 is an exhibition titled *Ingenue to Icon: Seventy Years of Fashion from the Collection of Marjorie Merrivether Post*. Curated by Howard Kurtz, it will open with a showing of Marjorie Post's spring-summer clothing and accessories and then switch to fall-winter choices, Liana said. Also in the works is an exhibition built around Konstantin Makovsky's *A Boyar Wedding Feast* and called *Makovsky in America*.

**Michael Dudich, director of human resources,** highlighted some changes in the new *Volunteer Handbook*. The handbook now consists of a general handbook applicable to all volunteers, and two supplements—one supplement for docents and visitor services volunteers, and the other for horticultural and administrative volunteers. The complete handbook will be on the volunteer website, <http://volunteer.HillwoodMuseum.org> Michael said; you can read it there, download it, or print it out. A few hard copies will be available.

The handbook has a new look and some updated content, but not a lot of changes, he said. In the general handbook, the sections on discrimination, persons with disabilities, and harassment have been updated. A section on workplace violence has been added—an unfortunate sign of the

times, Michael said, but included in the handbook for reference. Also new is a section on protocol for searches of handbags, totes, and so on, a security procedure that has never been used at Hillwood.

The section on political solicitation and lobbying indicates that many of the restrictions are removed now that, under the IRS code, Hillwood is a public charity. Michael mentioned the section on "gift of right of publicity," which indicates that if you are photographed while volunteering, you don't need to sign a specific release in order for Hillwood to use that photo. However, you can tell Hillwood not to use the photo if you wish, through a quick note.

There's also now a section on wasps and bee stings, the most common injury at Hillwood, Michael said. It includes information about how to avoid stings, and what to do if one happens.

Each of the two supplements contains general information such as visitor amenities, hours, and volunteer benefits, which makes it a handy reference. Each supplement also covers information specific to that group of volunteers, such as the roles of specific kinds of volunteers, ID badges, building entry and signing in, and dress code.

At the end is an acknowledgment page that volunteers are asked to print out and sign, noting that they have read and understood the new handbook, Michael said. The signed pages should be given to Lisa Leyh or Bill Johnson.

**Lisa Leyh, interpretation volunteer manager,** listed the dates of the 2014 garden tours: April 1 to June 28 for the spring tours, and September 2 to November 15 for the fall tours. Tours will be offered at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. from Tuesdays through Saturdays, and at 2:30 p.m. on Select Sundays when the estate is open.

The annual volunteer appreciation reception will be held on May 5, from 5 to 7 p.m., Lisa said. Invitations will be mailed in early spring.

The volunteers' packet includes a listing of Mansion docent training lectures that are open to active volunteers and staff, usually held from 6 to

7 p.m. on Mondays. All sessions will also be available in video on the volunteers' website. As continuing education, they are a great way to learn about other aspects of Hillwood, Lisa said, or to refresh and enrich what you already know.

*Reported by Betty Cochran, Newsletter Volunteer*

*A video of the business meeting is available on the volunteer website, at <http://volunteer.hillwoodmuseum.org>. Click on Education, then Lecture Video Archives, then 2014 Lecture Videos.*

## **NEWS FROM ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

*Kristen Regina, Head of Archives & Special Collections*

Hillwood is now LIVE in the *Art Project*, a part of the Google Cultural Institute which is dedicated to creating technology that helps the cultural community bring their art, archives, heritage sites, and other material online. The aim is to increase the range and volume of material from the cultural world that is available for people to explore online and in doing so, democratize access to it and preserve it for future generations.

For Hillwood's project there is a Street View of the mansion which allows you to move through the house virtually, get closer to objects (even go behind the dining room table) and zoom-in to see the collections in a new light. A specially designed Street View 'trolley' took 360 degree images of each room which were then stitched together, enabling smooth navigation. The rooms can also be explored directly from within Street View in Google Maps.

Fifty-three highlights from the collection including the Nuptial Crown, the two imperial Faberge Eggs, and the Roentgen desk are featured with a custom built zoom viewer. This viewer allows users to discover minute aspects of the works they may have missed.

Hillwood selected *A Boyar Wedding Feast* to be photographed in extraordinary detail using super high resolution or 'gigapixel' photo capturing technology. Each image contains around 7 billion pixels, enabling the viewer to study details of the

brushwork beyond that possible with the naked eye, bringing to life hard to see details.

You can browse the project at:

[http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/collecti  
on/hillwood-estate-museum-gardens](http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/collecti<br/>on/hillwood-estate-museum-gardens)

## **DEPARTMENT PROFILE: MARJORIE SETS THE TONE FOR HILLWOOD'S HR DEPARTMENT**

*Candy Kessel, Garden Volunteer*

The Human Resources function at Hillwood doesn't differ drastically from HR in other organizations. The two-person staff has responsibility for staffing, compensation and benefits, performance management, regulatory compliance, employee and organization development and employee services, among other areas. "The focus and people you support may be different from one organization to another," says Michael Dudich, director of human resources. "But in the end, it's about how you engage and manage people and that's fundamental wherever you are."

Nevertheless, some HR functions are carried out in an exceptional way because of the uniqueness of Hillwood. One of Executive Director Kate Markert's priorities is to hire nice people. That's because Marjorie Merriweather Post always treated her guests graciously, and so today's Hillwood guests must be treated equally graciously. That's the environment Hillwood strives to create and maintain. So Michael seeks to identify gracious people when he's filling a position.

"Are you gracious?" is not a question one can directly ask a candidate and get a useful answer. "I try to bring out this quality during the interview by asking candidates to describe themselves and major incidents in their professional life," he said. "I listen to how they talk about former bosses, colleagues and customers. Those stories will tell you a lot about how gracious a person is." Hiring is the easy part of the employment process, Michael said. It's helping employees assimilate into an organization that's far more difficult. "There are things which we may train people to

do and things they must bring to the organization," he noted. "Being gracious and courteous is something that you bring with you." In that same vein, sustaining the atmosphere exemplified by Mrs. Post, Michael or HR operations manager Monica Tucker respond to every single inquiry they receive. That's what Marjorie Post would have done, so if a job gets 200 applicants, they have 200 letters to generate, thanking the candidate and explaining the hiring process and timetable for follow-up interviews and decision. If you've applied for a job anywhere recently, you know that quality sets Hillwood apart.

Staffing is one activity that takes a lot of time because growth and change requires it. Entry level positions particularly, such as for the museum shop and security, attract a lot of candidates. "Most anyone would say, 'Oh I can do that job,' " said Michael, not understanding that we are very discerning, so there are many resumes to sift through. The more technical jobs, such as collections positions, are more difficult to fill and require more recruiting effort. Monica devotes much of her time to ensuring employees are paid properly and on time. "Nothing much matters to employees if they don't get paid as they should, so the time invested in that activity is essential."

A new merit pay program is being implemented this year, with the requisite training and goal-setting, so the HR team will devote a lot of time to that effort this year. Michael and Monica generally divide the work based on their skill sets and join together with the Senior Management team on developing HR strategy and policy.

Michael moved to the DC area from Savannah, GA for family reasons. His entire career has been in HR, most recently managing HR for a for-profit university system prior to landing in Georgia, he spent a vast majority of his career with General Electric with assignments in the U.S. and Europe. Michael joined Hillwood in 2011 and was already a Hillwood member before joining the staff. Having been born and raised into the Russian Orthodox faith, he came for a visit on a July Serene Sunday, attracted by the Russian artifact collection. He was so impressed, he

became a member that day. So when he learned of the job opening, it was a natural fit.

Monica Tucker has been at Hillwood as HR operations manager since April 2011. She was born in DC and raised in Maryland. She went to school at the University of Maryland then transferred to New York and graduated from FIT. Her most recent job was at CQ/Roll Call where her tenure lasted 20 years! She began as a receptionist and advanced to become Office Manager/HR Assistant. She loves to travel, and has a wicked sweet tooth!

## **PLANT PROFILE: UNUSUAL FOUR-SEASON SHRUB SETTLES IN NEAR LUNAR LAWN**

*Betty Cochran, Newsletter Volunteer*

A four-season shrub that's new to many gardeners is settling in within the west Lunar Lawn bed. It's *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, whose large, silvery buds nodding from bare, cinnamon-colored branch tips turn into clusters of fragrant, creamy yellow flowers, still on bare branches, in late winter. The long, narrow leaves in a bluish-green shade come after the flowers finish, making a full, rounded plant. By the time fall arrives, and its leaves drop, *Edgeworthia* has started to develop its distinctive hanging buds.

Look for the plant well inside the west Lunar bed that was replanted last spring; it's located between the saucer magnolia, with its three light-gray trunks, and the huge American elm at the sidewalk that curves to the south part of the lawn. This *Edgeworthia* is still small—less than two feet tall and wide. When the plant blooms, you'll see that each blossom is made of multiple small white tubules with a yellow interior—thus the creamy yellow color. The whole blossom is one or two inches across. To some, the fragrance is clove-like.

*Edgeworthia* is uncommon enough that there's not full agreement about its culture—how tall it will get (three to eight feet?), and whether it should be sited in sun, partial shade, or shade. Woody plants authority Michael Dirr suggests light to moderate shade, in deep, moist, high-



organic soils. He considers it a “nifty woodland plant.”

The plant’s most used common name is paperbush; sometimes it’s called Chinese paperbush or yellow daphne, to which it’s related. It’s a native of China, where it’s used for high-quality paper and medicines. It was introduced into the U.S. in 1845. But it’s new enough to current gardeners that it’s almost always called by its botanical name, *Edgeworthia*.

## HILLWOOD’S UPCOMING EXHIBITION



One of Cartier’s most important and enduring clients, Marjorie Merriweather Post commissioned some of the most exquisite jewelry sets, fashionable accessories, and finely-crafted jeweled frames of any American collector. Following their return from the Grand Palais where they dazzled in the exhibition [Cartier: Le Style et L’Histoire](#), jewelry and objects from Hillwood’s Cartier collection will offer a notable perspective on the important role that Cartier played in the life and style of this American icon.

The jewelry, including an exotic brooch made of seven carved Indian emeralds and considered to be one Cartier’s finest creations, a glittering diamond and sapphire necklace, and other impressive pieces, is just the beginning of the collaboration between these icons. Post’s deeply personal collection of art deco jeweled frames, designed specifically to match miniatures and photo portraits of her family and her, and other personal luxury items, including a silver and enamel dressing table set and a beaded and platinum evening bag as well as glamorous portraits, paintings, and historic photos and correspondence, illustrate Post’s enduring use of

Cartier to contribute to her style and persona. The exhibition will be on view in the Adirondack Building from June 7, 2014 to December 31, 2014. Additional forthcoming information on the exhibition will be available to the volunteers.

**Be Dazzled: The Opening Night Celebration for Cartier, Marjorie Merriweather Post's Dazzling Gems**

Join us on Tuesday, June 3 2014 at 6:30 pm for an exclusive preview of Hillwood’s remarkable collection of Cartier jewels and an elegant formal dinner on the estate’s Lunar Lawn. Individual tickets \$350, Sponsorships \$1,000 to \$10,000. For more information, please visit the [Events and Programs](#) page on Hillwood’s website.

## GARDEN TOURS

*Lisa Leyb, Interpretation Volunteer Manager*

Hillwood is delighted to welcome back our knowledgeable garden docents for the spring garden touring season on Tuesday, April 1. Spring tours will be offered Tuesday through Saturday at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm, and at 2:30 pm on Sundays, April 13 & 27, May 11 & 25, and June 8 & 22. The spring season will conclude on Saturday, June 28.

## BOXWOOD (BUXUS)

*Ann Stevens Kelly, Garden Volunteer*

The evergreen shrub commonly known as boxwood (*Buxus*) in America and as “box” in other English-speaking countries is a key landscape element in Hillwood’s French Parterre garden.

These time-tested shrubs with their attractive green or variegated leaves are deer resistant, a big plus for any garden. Boxwood is considered a top shrub choice for gardens by many landscape professionals, who can choose from 148 different cultivars and species now available commercially. Boxwood are perfect for hedges, edging gardens and terraces, and for bonsai.

Boxwood are also the perfect choice for sculpting and shearing into topiaries and smaller shapes, which is why they were chosen for the French Parterre garden design. Boxwood were introduced into America in the mid-1600s when they became an essential part of colonial gardens where they grew well in sun and part-shade.

The slow-growing English boxwood, *B. sempervirens* ‘Suffruticosa’, that came to colonial America were originally in Mrs. Post’s French Parterre garden. They were replanted in that garden (replacing a Korean boxwood cultivar) as part of the extensive restoration work at Hillwood in 2000. Maintaining those English boxwood as they aged was not easy because they became susceptible to diseases, possibly due to climate change, especially to what is known as boxwood decline—a slow decline attributed to the fungus *Paecilomyces* and other pathogens. After 13 years in the ground, Hillwood decided it was time to replace them with a different cultivar. “We tried to find something that looked like English boxwood, would shear well, and would like the growing conditions in the Parterre,” said Jessica Bonilla, head gardener at Hillwood. “We did a lot of research, looking at different cultivars. Disease resistance was the main consideration in the current selection.”



*Hillwood's French Parterre*

That research included working with Robert Saunders of Saunders Brothers, a nursery near Richmond which specializes in boxwood, because he had started national boxwood trials which are being conducted locally, including at the White House and Mt. Vernon.

Bonilla says they talked with Dean Norton, director of horticulture at Mt. Vernon, who redid the knot garden there 13 years ago with the boxwood *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* ‘Morris Dwarf’. Norton said they hadn’t lost one of them, so that cultivar seemed a promising choice since Mt. Vernon has experienced boxwood problems similar to those in the parterre. The horticulture staff also considered another cultivar, the Korean boxwood, *B. sinica* var. *insularis* ‘Justin Brouwers’, growing on the outside of the Mt. Vernon knot garden, but decided against it because it grew faster than the ‘Morris Dwarf’ and maybe was susceptible to some of the same diseases as the English boxwood.

About 440 three-gallon containers of the chosen ‘Morris Dwarf’ boxwood were planted last October in the French Parterre garden. Bonilla says they dug out soil to a depth of 15 inches in each boxwood bed, double checked the drainage, and fixed some of it. They amended some of the removed soil, adding Leaf Gro and top soil, 50/50, and layered the soil back into the beds. They also mixed in Stalite, a porous slate material which allows for drainage, yet holds some water for the plants to draw upon. The final layer they mixed in fertilizer, lime, and pine bark mulch and planted the ‘Morris Dwarf’ boxwood. The red decorative stones were put back on top but not the metal edging on the sides of the boxwood so their roots could go sideways instead of being forced down.

These shrubs were planted in the French Parterre in the design of a 16th century English ironworks scroll pattern. Bonilla says they made a template of the design, out of tarp along the metal edging that surrounded the boxwood, to position the new boxwood in the four beds, flipping it around as needed at each end of the garden. A small band of variegated boxwood are part of the design in each bed, and 32 one gallon containers of the new cultivar ‘Golden Dream’ were also planted in the garden. “We picked a more subtle, variegated boxwood with a creamier look,” said Bonilla. “We also wanted a very disease resistant one.” This cultivar is a Japanese boxwood also. The complete restoration of the boxwood beds in the French Parterre took a week to do but stretched into three due to heavy rains.

There are several other boxwood at Hillwood as well. The Japanese-style garden has the interesting Japanese cultivar ‘Kingsville Dwarf’. The motor court is home to the variegated cultivar ‘Aureo-Variegata’ planted around the 19th century Greek goddess Eros sculpture. Planted at the entrance to the horticulture building is, the cultivar B. microphylla var. koreana ‘Winter Gem’.

English boxwood are along the Friendship Walk, and American boxwood edge each side of the Rose Garden. The boxwood in the Rose Garden once edged the walkway across the lawn from the 18th century stone lion, Leo, to the vista terrace.

Fortunately boxwood are quite drought tolerant, a good feature in Washington’s hot summers, and prefer well-drained soil. Fall is the best time for planting, and late winter is the best for pruning. They have fragrant little white flowers in the spring, and their attractive foliage is often used for Christmas decorations. Types of boxwood available in the commercial markets include Common, Japanese, Korean, and their hybrids. Some of the widely used cultivars in addition to those at Hillwood include ‘Green Beauty’, ‘Vardar Valley’, ‘Green Velvet’, ‘Green Gem’. and ‘Wintergreen’.

The American Boxwood Society is a good source for more information on these widely used evergreen shrubs which have added structural design and beauty to many English and American gardens for centuries. Incidentally, you may be interested to know that the dense wood of larger boxwood was historically used for making parts for musical instruments, including woodwinds and bagpipes.

## RE-DATING THE *TWELVE MONOGRAM EGG*

Lynn Rossotti, Director of Marketing & Communications

When Dr. Wilfried Zeisler, associate curator of 19<sup>th</sup> century art, began at Hillwood, one of the last missing Fabergé imperial Easter Eggs was re-discovered. This prompted him and colleague Dr. Scott Ruby, Hillwood’s associate curator of Russian and Eastern European art, to explore

further the notion that Hillwood’s *Twelve Monogram Egg*, long believed to have been made in 1895, was actually one of the two eggs fabricated in 1896, as some scholars had put forth. The re-discovered egg, purchased several years ago by an anonymous scrap metal dealer in the mid-West for its intrinsic gold value, is believed to be the third of the finely-crafted Easter eggs made by Carl Fabergé’s jewelry workshop for the Russian royal family from 1885 to 1917. Alexander III began the tradition when he gave his wife, Empress Maria Feodorovna the *Hen Egg* for Easter in 1885. Nicholas continued the tradition until he was overthrown in 1917. Known as the *Third Egg*, this egg fits the description found in the invoice for the 1887 egg: “Egg with clock decorated with rose-cut diamonds and sapphires.” This date had been previously associated with the *Blue Serpent Clock Egg* (Monaco), which in actuality did not fit that description, primarily for its lack of sapphires and also because neither the price nor design correspond to such early egg fabrication, as noted by Fabergé scholars Marina Lopato and Geza van Habsburg. Rather, the *Blue Serpent Egg* does fit the description of an 1895 egg: “Blue enamel egg, Louis XVI style...,” which was associated with Hillwood’s *Twelve Monogram Egg*.



*Twelve Monogram Egg*

Marjorie Merriweather Post acquired the *Twelve Monogram Egg* from a private collector in Italy in 1949. This imperial egg, a masterwork of Michael

Perkhin (1860-1903) for Fabergé, was originally a gift of Nicholas II to his mother dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna. Since Post bought it, the egg's date has changed several times between the years 1892 to 1895. The 1895 date was proposed in 1997 by Tatiana Fabergé, Lynette G. Proler and Valentin V. Skurlov on their seminal book on the history of the imperial Easter eggs, in which the authors published new archival material, including Fabergé invoices. The *Twelve Monogram Egg* features blue enamel but does not fit with the Louis XVI style description, a style particularly well-mastered by the Fabergé firm.

Following up on scholars' suggestion that the *Twelve Monogram Egg* more accurately fits the description in the Fabergé invoice: "Blue enamel egg, 6 portraits of HIM Alexander III, with 10 sapphires and rose-cut diamonds and setting" of 1896, Zeisler connected additional dots to establish the new date for Hillwood. The mention of portraits, which are not apparent on the *Twelve Monogram Egg*, had made the association with the 1896 invoice inconclusive. However, in reviewing personal letters between the Emperor Nicholas II and his mother the dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, first published in an article by Preben Ulstrup in 2002 then quoted in Geza von Habsburg's 2004 *Fabergé: Treasures of Imperial Russia*, Zeisler concluded that the portraits mentioned were the now missing "surprise" that was a part of every imperial Easter egg. In a letter dated 22 March 1896, the dowager Empress wrote to Nicholas: "...I can't find words to express to you, my dear Nicky, how touched and moved I was on receiving your ideal egg with the charming portraits of your dear, adored Papa. It is all such a beautiful idea, with your monograms above it all..." This correspondence places together the monograms with the portraits, corroborating the new proposed date of 1896.

Shortly after arriving at Hillwood, Zeisler seized on the opportunity to acquire a tablecloth commemorating the military and commercial alliance between the Russian and French nations that began in 1891, when the French navy was welcomed in Russia. Dating ca. 1893-97, the superbly-crafted ceremonial tablecloth features iconography of both nations: the double-headed Russian imperial eagle and the crossed French and imperial flags, all connected with garlands of

pansies. It will be on view in the Breakfast Room at Hillwood, alongside French and Russian objects from the collection that are examples of those featured in the tablecloth, from May 5 to June 2, 2014.

## NEW STAFF

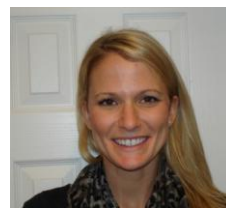
Join us in welcoming our newest members to Hillwood's staff! Read on for more details.



*Margaret Haung*

**Margaret Haung**, began in March as the archives & special collections assistant. Margaret received her Master of Library and Information Science in the Archives, Preservation, and Records Management track from the University of Pittsburgh. While in graduate school, she worked on the Time Capsules Project at The Andy Warhol Museum as well as in Special Collections at the University of Pittsburgh. She hopes to put her archival education towards making Hillwood's primary sources more easily accessible, usable, and discoverable.

Before coming to Hillwood Margaret was living in Baltimore and volunteered in the Special Collections and Digitization Departments at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the Textiles Department at the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Art Library and Museum Store at the Walters Museum of Art.



*Amy Knox*

**Amy Knox** began last December in the Communications Department as the group sales and tourism manager. She recently relocated to DC from Pensacola Beach, Florida after spending the last 6 years in the hospitality industry.

Previously, Amy worked on the gulf coast as Group Sales Manager at Portofino Island Resort and Director of Sales and Marketing at Tiger Point Golf Club. She graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in Business and Hospitality. Amy said “I have truly enjoyed the last few months here and look forward to bringing more people to experience Hillwood!”



*Eric Martin*

**Eric Martin**, accounting manager joined the Finance Department at the beginning of April. He previously worked at Random Harvest, Inc. a local furniture retailer based in Georgetown. Prior to that position, Eric worked for six years in the hospitality industry for Capital Restaurant Concepts. He has worked as an accounting manager for the past 7.5 years. He was originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, moving to DC in 2006. Eric attended Eastern Michigan University and now lives in Adams Morgan.



*Dr. Wilfried Zeisler*

**Dr. Wilfried Zeisler** joined the curatorial team at Hillwood in February. In his position as associate curator of 19<sup>th</sup> century art, Wilfried will be responsible for the care and presentation of our 19th century collections both French and Russian. Wilfried’s unique knowledge of French and Russian art made him a most suitable candidate for this position.

Prior to this position, Wilfried spent three months in March-June 2013 as a curatorial fellow at Hillwood. During this time we came to appreciate his singular expertise so well suited to Hillwood’s collections. Hillwood offer him an introduction to curatorial work in America. The ultimate result of

this fellowship was his hiring and his preparation to move across the Atlantic. Et Voila!

Dr. Zeisler holds a PhD in Art History from the Sorbonne University. His thesis, “The Purchase of French ‘objets d’art’ by the Russian Court, 1881-1917,” has contributed to his position as a leading scholar in his field and it will be published in the form of a handsome book next fall.

Prior to Hillwood Wilfried was a Research Lecturer at the Ecole du Louvre. As an expert in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian and French “objets d’art” Dr. Zeisler has an extensive resume of publications and lectures on the subject. Among the most recent is his contribution as curator of the Russian section of “Magnificence & Grandeur of the Royal Houses in Europe” and guest curator charged with the “Jewelry and Imperial Commands” section of the “Moscow Splendours of the Romanovs,” both exhibitions at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco. In connection with his role as a curator of the exhibition “*Cadeaux des Tsars, La diplomatie navale dans L’Alliance Franco-russe 1891-1914*” [Presents of the Tsars, Naval diplomacy in the French-Russian Alliance 1891-1914] can be singled out. His network with Russian museum curators is worthy of mention. In this arena, he coauthored a book with Ekaterina Khmel'nitskaya, porcelain curator at the State *Hermitage* Museum of Art in Saint Petersburg on Russia-France political alliance and its ceramic souvenirs. We are thrilled to welcome Wilfried to the team of stellar curators at Hillwood.

*To learn more about Dr. Zeisler and his work use this link:*

<http://artdaily.com/news/69441/Hillwood-appoints-curator-of-19th-century-art--Re-dates-Faberge-imperial-Easter-egg#.U0o6lvldVn8>

## **NEW VOLUNTEERS**

We are delighted to welcome 16 new volunteers to Hillwood. Joining Interpretation are Mark Boultinghouse, Anna Frueh, Pat Kenny, and Megan Ober.

Joining Horticulture are Liz McGuinness, Alison Baitz, Tom O’Dea, Marianne Winglee, Suzanne Richardson, Missy Jamison, Amarachi Utah, Mary Reyner, Janet Risseuw, Leila Wright, Alex Loomis and Bill Wingate.

## IN MEMORIAM: KENNETH EARL GARRISON



*Hillwood Volunteer Ken Garrison*

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Visitor Services Volunteer, Ken Garrison passed away peacefully at home on Saturday, March 29, 2014. The following is an excerpt from the obituary provided to us (a [version](#) of which also ran in the *Washington Post*):

A long-time resident of Montgomery County, Ken's career in education with Montgomery County Public Schools spanned more than 40 years and included service as an upper elementary classroom teacher, curriculum coordinator, and teacher of gifted and talented students, assistant principal, and principal. After retiring, Ken served as an educational consultant for special projects for MCPS, DC Public Schools, and Baltimore City Schools. In addition, Ken began a second career as a professional volunteer, actively supporting the National Zoo's Great Apes House, Montgomery Hospice, Arena Stage, Armed Forces Retirement Home, Hillwood, Estate, Museum and Gardens, Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation, the National Marrow Donor Program, and Pennyworth Thrift Shop at Grace Episcopal Church. In addition to the countless special friends and colleagues who mourn Ken's loss, survivors include three sisters, three brothers, and numerous nieces and nephews. A private memorial service is planned for later this month. Those wishing to honor Ken's memory are encouraged to make contributions to Montgomery Hospice or Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens.

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