



# The Post Serial

Volunteer Newsletter of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

Volume 21, Issue 2

Spring 2015

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

*Lisa Leyb, Interpretation Volunteer Manager*

It was lovely seeing so many of you at the Volunteer Appreciation Reception on Monday, May 18 honoring your many contributions to Hillwood. The reception was one of Hillwood's first events under the tent in the new C.W. Post Courtyard. The much needed cover kept spirits of the 200 volunteers and guests in attendance high during a thunderstorm that evening. The program included a scrumptious buffet, a cellist, and exclusive curatorial talks in the Dacha and Mansion.



Curator Howard Kurtz leading a gallery talk on dress construction in the Mansion Staff Dining Room



Reception under the new C.W. Post Courtyard Tent

With over 300 active volunteers donating 20,000 hours annually, Hillwood is the envy of many museums! In addition to honoring the collective work of all of our volunteers, we also took time to acknowledge those in the volunteer cohort who are celebrating a major milestone with Hillwood this year. Listed on page 2 you'll find the names of the 78 recipients who either achieved 5, 10 or 15 years of volunteer service in 2015. In fact, 48 people received their 15 years of service certificate – that in itself says a lot about this volunteer corps!

## Volunteers Celebrating 5, 10 or 15 Years of Service with Hillwood in 2015

<b>5 Year</b>		
Jo Anne Jelling Teri Manolio Stephanie Partridge Jeffrey Sandmann	Buzz Seltzer Kay Smith Nermine Tadros Cheryl Fields	Nina Gradia Linda Greensfelder Anne Hardman Gary Stevens
<b>10 Year</b>		
Paul Brown Gretchen Bukowski Sally Burns Paula Christie Mollie Ann Church	Len Coburn Rosemary Coskey Maggie Fitzgerald Minna Kahn Susann Kollmar Natasha Morse	Cecile O'Connor Susan Raetzman Harold Schafke Anna Maria Taylor Carolyn McHale
<b>15 Year</b>		
Charlotte Baer Electra Beahler John Bowers Doris Burton Kris Clark Carol Cramer Gale Dugan Sherrell Goggin Gloria Grant Annette Heaps Sally Herren Ilse Higgins Mary Lou Jacobs Natasha Jadan Sharon Lee Juergens Candy Kessel	Kathy Lacey Polly Lawrence Sally Lilley Sheila Lindveit Diane Manning Philip McClain Marina Meehan Angela Meyer Carol Moravsky Julie Perlman Deb Pietras Delia Riso Ann Scott Martha Solodky Ilse Stauffer Bill Steffek	Celia Steingold Kathryn Thoreson Lois Topping Joy Vige Maggi Walker Josephine Wiacek Virginia Barreto Joan Bennett Sarah Taylor Cutler Margarita Egan Linda Goldman Johanna Kramer Jeanette Levin Joan Piper Pat Winston

Without a doubt, we've couldn't have achieved all we have accomplished together this year without the talent and time of our volunteers. Thank you for all you do – we are so fortunate to have such a devoted team to Hillwood!

## 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.

### Rose Garden Tour

**June 3, 4 & 5, 12 noon**

Meet Jessica Bonilla, head gardener, in the Rose Garden for a short tour and lecture. The tour will start at noon on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. All volunteers are welcome to join and share the beauty of the roses.

### *Ingenué to Icon*

**June 15 (Monday), 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.**

Join exhibition curator Howard Kurtz for a lecture on Hillwood's upcoming exhibition, *Ingenué to Icon*, which will open the public on June 6. The exhibition in the Adirondack Building will be open following each presentation. This lecture will also be recorded and made available on the volunteer website. (Visitor Center Theater)

### Plant ID Walk

**June 16 (Tuesday), 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.

### Cutting Garden Tours!

**July 7, 8 & 9, 12 noon**

Join Drew Asbury, head grower, in the garden this July for a guided tour of the cutting

garden. The tours will take place in the Cutting Garden at 12 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. All Hillwood volunteers are welcome to join the tour and share in the fun.

## SUGGESTED DONATION INCREASE (JUNE 1)

Effective June 1, Hillwood will increase our suggested donation for adult and senior tickets. Our last increase occurred in February 2011. Hillwood conducted targeted research in 2014 to explore visitor reactions to pricing strategies and we feel that our visitors will be accepting of the new pricing levels based on the value of the Hillwood experience. The new pricing structure is below:

Adults	\$18
Senior	\$15
Student	\$10
Child (6-18)	\$5
Child (under 6)	Free
Hillwood Member	Free

## MUSEUM SHOP

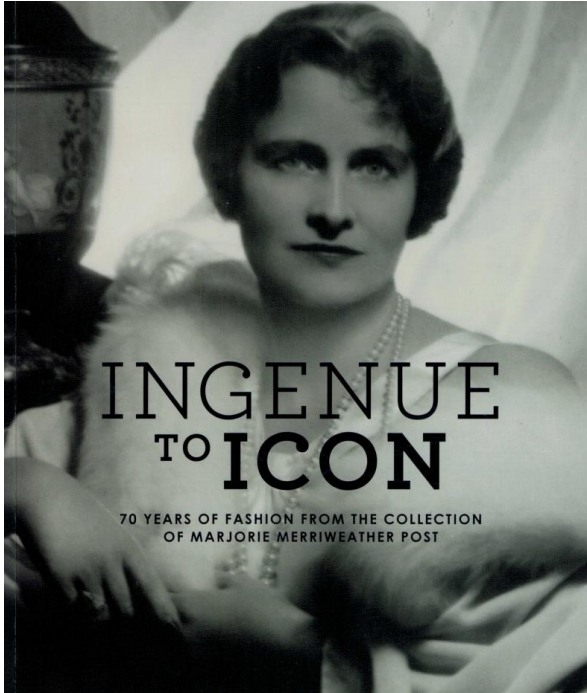
*Lauren Salazar, Head of Merchandising*

The opening of a new exhibition is always a time to debut new merchandise. I am particularly excited about the merchandise selected for the *Ingenué to Icon* exhibition. The Museum Shop will feature four displays of merchandise and books related to the exhibition: Gibson Girl, Suffragette, 1920s and 1950s. Some of the merchandise I'm most excited about:

- Battenburg Lace parasols and fans
- Votes for Women mugs, teapots, pillows and more
- Beaded 1920s style purses
- Art Deco inspired jewelry
- Feather Headbands and fans
- Hats, hats and more hats

And, the most exciting of all...

*Ingenue to Icon, 70 Years of Fashion From the Collection of Marjorie Merriveather Post* – Curator Howard V. Kurtz chronicles the progression of Post's development into an icon of elegance during a century that witnessed vast changes in fashion. Featuring fascinating histories and stunning photography, this book is sure to be a bestseller. Available in hardcover \$45.00, and paper \$29.95.



*"Ingenue to Icon" publication cover*

Books are always one of our top selling categories in the Shop. We have several new titles for you to check out:

*100 Unforgettable Dresses* – filled with stories, secrets and insights behind some of the most iconic dresses of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

*A Year in Rock Creek Park: The Wild, Wooded Heart of Washington, DC* – with luscious photographs and a fascinating history of the wild and wooded heart of the city.

*Paper Blossoms, Butterflies & Birds, A Book of Beautiful Bouquets for the Table* – the creator of the bestselling Paper Blossoms delivers even more

beautiful pop-up bouquets for your table, from a butterfly garden to a branch of orchids.

### **Upcoming Events:**

#### **French Market | July 7-12, 2015**

We're showcasing a selection of French foods, books and gifts for this week-long event. (Visitor Center Second Floor)

### **DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT NEWS: SPRING GALA**

*Adrienne Starr,*

*Donor Relations & Special Events Manager*

Hillwood will hold the annual gala the evening of June 2. Over 350 guests in "Fabulous Black Tie" are expected to attend ICON, the opening celebration of the new exhibition *Ingenue to Icon: 70 Years of Fashion from the Collection of Marjorie Merriveather Post*. Named one of the top ten galas in Washington by Washingtonian Magazine, the evening features cocktails on the Motor Court, followed by a formal seated dinner on the Lunar Lawn.

### **HILLWOOD CURATOR AWARDED ATTINGHAM SCHOLARSHIP**

*David Maxfield, Garden Volunteer*

Estella Chung, Hillwood's curator of material culture and historian, has been selected to attend the 64<sup>th</sup> Attingham Summer School in Great Britain.

Over 18 days in July, Estella and her classmates will visit numerous country houses in 5 regions, including Arundel Castle, the 700-year-old home of the Dukes of Norfolk, and Chatsworth, the site of magnificent gardens and vast collections, from rare books to priceless furniture and silver service. "I have my umbrella packed, and I'm ready to look under furniture of the finest country homes in England," Estella told the *Post Serial*.



The best-selling author of Hillwood's *Living Artfully*, now in its fifth printing, Estella has been awarded a full scholarship provided mainly by the Hillwood Foundation and an anonymous horticultural volunteer. "I am so honored to be accepted by the program, but also to have the mentorship of Board Member Amy Ballard, Executive Director Kate Markert, Chief Curator Liana Paredes and the volunteer," Estella said. (Liana was an Attingham scholar in 1996.)

Since its founding in 1952, The Attingham program has been highly regarded by museums, universities and historic preservation societies for its careful selection of members and academic standards. "One of my main homework assignments," Estella said, "is to take in the layers of history that these houses present, and think about the examples as they apply to Hillwood."

Certainly Estella will be successful meeting that goal, judging by her exceptional work at Hillwood. As of 2015, *Living Artfully* in Amazon's top 100 popular culture publications has been a Best Seller in five categories, including *Decorative Arts and Design* and *Architectural Buildings*. For the record, the top selling markets have been Washington, DC, New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Dallas—edging out Austin initially a top selling city.

"My favorite moment, for sure," Estella noted, "is signing books in the Hillwood Museum Shop. It's been a favorite gift for Mother's Day."

## SUMMER DISPLAY IN THE GARDENS

*Jessica Bonilla, Head Gardener*

We're really excited about this summer's annual display. We've gone with slightly more complex designs using a wide variety of flowering and foliage plants creating fresh, colorful combinations. Around the Lunar Lawn, we're using rich deep pinks of the Redhead Coleus and Begonia contrasted with the greens of Canna

leaves and Kimberly Ferns. You'll notice the Cutting Garden wall is lush with Cordyline, Zinnia, and Solenia Begonia. The *Lysmachia* echoes the yellow hues of the *Duranta* and Mystic Dahlias in the Greenhouse bed.



*Seasonal display along the Cutting Garden wall*

We also always try to use some unique plants or new cultivars. This year there are *Cardoons* in the Butler's bed and the sweet smelling *Datura* in the pots. On the upper Visitor Center terrace, there are hanging baskets of *Summerwing Vanilla Begonia* and a new *Petunia* called 'Crazytunia Terra Cotta'. The porte-cochere has pots of *Autumnale Fuchsia* mixed into the design.

We are also excited about the addition of the new blue containers at the lower Visitor Center entrance. It will give a great first impression and hint to the importance that Hillwood (and Marjorie Post) have placed on the gardens. Make sure you come and check it all out!

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

There are a number of exciting public programs offered throughout the year at Hillwood. The best way to keep up-to-date on upcoming programs is to visit the [Calendar page](#) on Hillwood's website.

## EXHIBITIONS UPDATE

*Lisa Leyb, Interpretation Volunteer Manager*

Hillwood's current exhibition, ***Splendor and Surprise: Antique Containers – Elegant to Modern***, will close to the public on Sunday, June 7. To date, 13,741 visitors have explored the exhibition in the Dacha. Thank you for helping spread the word about this remarkable show.

The upcoming exhibition, ***Ingenu to Icon: 70 Years of Fashion from the Collection of Marjorie Merriweather Post***, opens to the public on Saturday, June 6 in the Adirondack Building and Mansion. The first exhibition at Hillwood to present Marjorie Post's full range of style, *Ingenu to Icon* will examine how Post lifelong passion for objects that were exceptionally beautiful and impeccably constructed has extended to her taste for clothing. The exhibition is presented in two segments, featuring spring and summer wear from June through September and fall and winter looks from October through December.



*Graphic from exhibition page on Hillwood's website*

A full-color 150-page companion publication with same title has been published in conjunction with the exhibition. Howard Kurtz, Hillwood's associate curator of costumes and textiles, is the leading author of the book for which he collaborated with Trish Donnally, former fashion editor for the San Francisco Chronicle and award winning journalist. The book has an introduction by biographer Nancy Rubin Stuart, author of *American Empress*.

For more information on the exhibition and opening gala on June 2, visit the [exhibition page](#) on Hillwood's website. **Help us spread the**

**word:** exhibition rack cards are available in the Mansion volunteer lounge and Visitor Center kitchen for volunteers to distribute to friends and family.

## THE YEAR AHEAD AT HILLWOOD: 2015

*Kate Markert, Executive Director*

At the annual business meeting for volunteers, held this year on January 22, Executive Director Kate Markert outlined what the year 2015 will bring at Hillwood. Here is a summary of her presentation.

This is the fourth year of our five-year strategic plan—you remember that we began developing it in 2011 and the first plan year was 2012—and so this year we will be looking ahead to our next planning horizon. You can say you have a five-year plan, but it's actually hard to plan that far out, and so you usually have a plan for about three-plus years.

I don't see us deciding on a completely new strategy, as we have one that's working pretty well. As you know, we capitalize on the high season of the garden, which is spring, letting that be the main driver for attendance, and at the same time we have an exhibition that's wonderful but has a narrower audience. Then, once the garden high season ends, we offer an exhibition with a broader appeal, such as *Living Artfully*.

So we're just fine-tuning our strategy at this point. We'll look at what we've accomplished over these last three years—which has been quite a lot—and at where we see ourselves going in the next three to five years. Creating the new plan won't be the big process we undertook with Lord Cultural Resources in 2011; it will be an internal process, led by the board and staff. But we definitely will gather information, and certainly from the volunteers. For instance, we want to know what you think has worked well, what you think needs

to be tweaked, and what opportunities you see for us.

Here, as related to the plan's five goals, is where we are now, and what will happen in 2015.

**Goal 1: Expand attendance.** The projected attendance for 2014 was 70,000 to 75,000. As I'm sure you know, we welcomed more than 75,000 visitors—75,444, to be exact. (Our total in 2013 was 69,000 visitors.) Thank you very much for helping us deal with all of them. It was quite an exciting year, especially as last winter was so wretched.

We have been able to negotiate a new arrangement with our neighbors that allows us to be open every Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. We can have more evening hours, and we will not have to count cars to make sure we don't exceed a maximum number. It's a really nice agreement, and we have a wonderful working relationship with our neighbors. Sunday openings started in March.

It will be wonderful to advertise that we will be open every Sunday, as everyone expects museums to be open on Sunday. We will work with a baseline of something like 72,000 visitors annually. The idea is not to try to shove as many people through the property as possible, but to allow visitors to experience Hillwood in a civilized way, to experience what makes Hillwood unique.

We have a really exciting exhibition schedule for this year, starting with *Splendor and Surprise: Elegant Container—Antique to Modern*, on view in the Dacha from February 15 to June 7. Following that will be *Ingenu to Icon: 70 Years of Fashion from the Collection of Marjorie Merriweather Post*, in the Adirondack Building from June 6 to next January. We will also have a wonderful catalog of the costume collection.

Of course, with great programming, you have to let people know you have it. Our advertising has worked extremely well for us. We work with

LaPlaca Cohen, an agency in New York that develops advertising for museums and other cultural groups. We will also continue to place articles in the general media, and to work with social media, which is becoming more and more important, especially for our younger visitors. Building on the success of our Great Homes and Gardens lecture series in February 2014—we've learned that in months when people can't get out into their own gardens, they like to hear about other gardens—we had another series of garden lectures this February, with great speakers. In the fall we will offer a lecture series associated with *Ingenu to Icon*. Of course, there will be much other programming as well, but those are keynote events.

We will continue our signature events, for which we have a great following, such as Chandeleur, the Fabergé Egg Family Festival, the French Festival, and the Russian Winter Festival. It's important to get these events on people's calendars, and we also tweak or reinvigorate them every year. A relatively new offering is our enhanced Christmas décor, which I think you will agree has just been getting better and better. This year it will be related to *Ingenu to Icon*. It gives visitors another reason to return to Hillwood and another way to make memories.

**Goal 2: Use the Marjorie Merriweather Post story to connect with contemporary audiences.** You probably all know that as of last fall we revised our audio tour with information from the *Living Artfully* exhibition, which seems to be resonating nicely with visitors.

Of course *Ingenu to Icon* will highlight Marjorie—not just her fashions per se, but how she developed her identity from an 18-year-old Edwardian bride to an ambassador's wife to a businesswoman, and how she projected that identity through her wardrobe. It will also illustrate the changing roles of American women through those decades. In addition, the new Hillwood “souvenir book,” with updated photos and text, will be available early this year. It's a

gorgeous book that we think will fly off the shelves.

**Goal 3: Strengthen strategic partnerships.** We have folded this goal into the rest of the goals, as it has become standard operating procedure—that is, to look for strategic partnerships and to make sure that our partners are helping us become more global, visible, and relevant.

**Goal 4: Plan right-sized solutions.** This is kind of a workhorse goal that extends across staff, board, facilities, and so forth. We will have two new staff positions in 2015. One is an additional position in development that will support research and stewardship. The other is an archivist, as Marge Huang has moved from half-time to full-time. The Archives provide critical support for everything we do.

We will enter phase 3 of our five-year garden plan, working with our consultant, Rodney Robinson, to reinvigorate the interstitial gardens, those that connect the major gardens. In phases 1 and 2 we renovated the beds around the Lunar Lawn and the beds around the Rose Garden. This year we will rejuvenate the Upper Drive—it was the service drive in Marjorie Post’s time but now of course is the main entrance for most people—and we will be able to see more interesting plants than pachysandra there.

You may know that Hillwood is now a public charity. We received what’s called an advance ruling from the IRS; for five years you must achieve certain goals and meet certain standards to gain this ruling permanently. As a public charity, we can now apply more widely for funds—many foundations will not accept proposals from a private operating foundation, which was our previous tax status. It also means we don’t have to pay excise taxes. We will put considerable emphasis on fundraising, because as a public charity we must generate a certain percentage of our income from philanthropy.

Capital improvements are a large part of the operating budget for 2015. We saw the completion of the C.W. Post Courtyard in May. The two flat roofs of the Mansion have had some leaks and, after 25 years, must be replaced. In the gardens, the asphalt paths must be replaced, which will be challenging because they are surrounded by mature plantings. And the bluestone paths must be repaired. Completing these projects with the least possible disruption of activities will take careful planning.

The other big capital improvement is the renovation of the Adirondack Building, which was built long after Marjorie’s death and for a collection that Hillwood no longer owns. The interior trees and the balcony will be removed to create a larger, more functional exhibition area, resulting in about 35 percent more space.

**Goal 5: Leverage technology.** In the next strategic plan, technology likely will not be a goal, because of course it is a means to an end. However, when we were developing the strategic plan, we felt that Hillwood was so woefully behind in technology that we really needed to focus on it. We’ve made tremendous strides in this area—one of the most important happened last June, when what had been an outside, contracted IT group became Hillwood staff members. Now they are involved right away in the planning for our projects, and are proactive rather than reactive.

This year we will have new visitor ticketing software—the current one will no longer be supported—that will offer new features and improve the visitor experience. Website upgrades will be made based on research to determine where people really want to see changes. We’ve done a great job in creating a new, user-friendly website. And you will continue to see even more of the collection on it.

You know that I love for you all to be “Hillwood fanatics,” to be very enthusiastic about Hillwood, to help us spread the word and let people know



what's coming up. At the same time, we want to keep you completely informed about the next program, the next exhibition, and the next season so that you can be great ambassadors for us. Thank you for everything that you do. We absolutely could not run Hillwood without you, and I hope you know that.

A video of the business meeting is available on the volunteer website, <http://volunteer.hillwoodmuseum.org>. Click on Education, then Lecture Video Archives, then 2015 Lecture Videos; scroll down to Volunteer Business Meeting 2015.

Besides Kate Markert's report, the video includes three other presentations made at the meeting. Liana Paredes, director of collections and chief curator, describes the exhibitions scheduled or in planning phases for the next three years, as well as upcoming publications. Judith Paska, director of development, outlines that department's operations in development, membership, and special events. Wrapping up the meeting, Lisa Leyh, interpretation volunteer manager, updates volunteers on training opportunities and other activities.

*Reported by Betty Cochran, Newsletter Volunteer*

## **CASEY TREE PLANTING PROGRAM AT HILLWOOD**

*Brian Barr, Director of Horticulture*

In the summer of 2012 there was a severe storm referred to as a 'Derecho'. The tree canopy at Hillwood was seriously reduced in the woodland as well as some areas of the garden. This year the non-profit organization Casey Trees included Hillwood in their 2015 community tree planting program. Casey Trees is committed to restoring, enhancing and protecting the tree canopy of the nation's capital for the long term.

On April 4, Hillwood welcomed over 40 volunteers and staff from Casey Trees to plant 14 trees in our woods and along our lower entrance drive near Linnean Avenue. Included in the volunteers were 8 volunteers from Hillwood.

The donated trees for the woodland were American beech, and cherry trees were added to the elegant streetscape of the estate. The project was well organized with opening remarks and safety training. With winds gusting to almost 30 mph, it was important to think about safety. Protective gear was issued and the group was divided into 4 teams that planted and watered 14 trees. The group was treated to lunch and an opportunity to tour the gardens. Beyond the fabulous trees, Casey Trees brought incredible enthusiasm and volunteer education to this special day. We hope this is the beginning of an extended partnership to enhance our existing tree canopy for years to come.



*Volunteers planting cherry tree*

## **KUDOS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

*Bill Johnson, Horticulturist/ Volunteer Coordinator*

We want to give a shout out to everyone who helped plant our summer annual display the week of May 4. Thanks to your help we installed over 9,000 plants across the property. Accept this heart-felt thank you for all the volunteers who made this planting such a success!

## **NEW STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

We are delighted to welcome 15 new volunteers and 12 new staff members! Please join us in welcoming our newest members to Hillwood:

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

- Victor Braschnewitz, Head of Security (started January 5)
- Tenaya Burden, Security Officer (started January 11)
- Meaghan White, Marketing & Communications Manager (started February 27)
- Elizabeth West, Museum Teacher (started March 28)
- Arina Okorokova, Museum Teacher (started March 29)
- Lauren Schick, Visitor Services Associate (started April 5)
- Elizabeth Stevens, Visitor Services Associate (started April 10)
- Sydney Rhodes, Museum Teacher (started April 18)
- Joseph "Maxwell" Joyner, Security Officer (started April 23)
- Enrique Mendez, Gardener (started April 27)
- Jennifer Levy, Curatorial Assistant (started April 27)
- Olivia Applewhite, Visitor Services Associate (started April 28)

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

- Rachel Allen
- Susan Berkow
- Alicia Brown
- Joan Butler
- Natalia Jagannathan
- Stephanie Kinney
- Helen Ramsey
- Bridget Young

### **Joining the Horticulture volunteer corps:**

- Noel Bakhtian
- Beryl Hagenburg
- Tom Henry
- John Kelly
- Laurie Nardinelli
- Marcie Rickun
- Leo Sanchez

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