



# The Post Serial

Volunteer Newsletter of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

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Winter 2015

## A LETTER TO THE VOLUNTEERS

*Nancy Appleby, Hillwood's New Board President*

Dear Hillwood Volunteers ~

I am honored and thrilled to have the opportunity to be the President of the Board of Hillwood for the next several years. One of my priorities is to meet as many of you as possible, although I must admit that I feel like I know you already. In my six years on the Board, I have heard over and over, from visitors, staff and management alike, that Hillwood's volunteers are incredibly knowledgeable, welcoming, capable and professional. Truly, you are the backbone of where fabulous lives.

Let me tell you a bit about me. A lawyer by training, I retired from AOL over ten years ago to focus on volunteer work, most of which involved educational organizations. As my daughter got older, I decided to add organizations that matched my passions, and Hillwood was perfect. In college, I spent a semester in the then-Soviet Union, which sparked a life-long interest in all things Russian. I was lucky enough to join Hillwood's Advisory Committee in 2008, which started an exciting and fulfilling relationship with Hillwood, which I hope never ends.

As one volunteer to another, I look forward to partnering with you to better understand your many contributions to Hillwood. I also encourage you to contact me with your ideas and thoughts – we share a common goal of making Hillwood the best it can be.

Finally, on a personal note, I split my time between Arlington, Virginia and the Eastern Shore of Maryland with my husband of 22 years, CG Appleby. Our daughter is a junior at Kenyon College in Ohio.

Warmly,  
Nancy Appleby



*Nancy Appleby, Hillwood's New Board President*

## 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.

### A Day of Horticulture

**March 23 (Monday), 10:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**Visitor Center Theater**

- **Rock Creek Park – Our Wild Wooded Neighbor**

This inspirational talk about the natural history of Rock Creek Park, one of the oldest and largest urban national parks in the country, is based upon the newly published book, *A Year in Rock Creek Park – the Wild, Wooded Heart of Washington DC* by Melanie Choukas-Bradley with photographs by Susan Austin Roth. The presentation takes us on a journey through the seasons in the park, with a focus on the trees and wildflowers of the Rock Creek Park woodlands. Melanie has traveled the 33-mile length of the creek, on foot and cross-country skis, by bicycle and by canoe, and she will describe her adventures. The talk will be illustrated by Susan Austin Roth's evocative photographs, many of which appear in the book. Celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rock Creek Park, which was created in 1890, the same year Yosemite was established.

*Melanie Choukas-Bradley is a naturalist, natural history teacher and author. Melanie lectures widely and leads field trips and tree tours for the US Botanic Garden, the Audubon Naturalist Society, Casey Trees, the Maryland and Virginia Native Plant Societies, and other organizations in and around Washington, DC. She also has taught native plant identification courses for 8 years through the Natural History Field Studies Program co-sponsored by the Graduate School USDA and the Audubon Naturalist Society. Melanie has appeared as an author and guest expert on the Diane Rehm Show, the Kojo Nnamdi Show (most recently on Thanksgiving Day 2014) and All Things Considered. Her website is: [www.melaniechoukas-bradley.com](http://www.melaniechoukas-bradley.com).*

- **Boxwood Culture and Pruning**

Hillwood head gardener, Jessica Bonilla will present an overview of boxwood culture including reliable cultivars and pruning tips. Find out how to protect yourself from Boxwood Blight and other pesky diseases and insects.

- **Seed Propagation**

If you have never grown a plant from seed then you are missing out on one of the joys of gardening. When we grow a plant from seed it is like making a new friend for life. There is a lot of information that is very helpful when starting seed. Drew Asbury, head grower, will share many of the details such as which media to use, germination rates, timing and much more.

- **Winter Weeds**

What's that growing in my garden at this time of year? Hillwood's Head Gardener, Jessica Bonilla will identify and give advice on controlling winter weeds and invasive species. She will also touch on how to identify poison ivy and what weeds to look for when it starts to warm up.

**March 23 (Monday), 6 pm**  
**Cutting Garden and Greenhouse & Orchids, Greenhouse, and Floral Design**

Presented by Drew Asbury, Head Grower, and Jason Gedeik, Head of Design Operations, this is the seventh lecture from Hillwood's Garden Docent Training Program. (Visitor Center Theater)

**Easter Floral Workshop**  
**March 31 (Tuesday), 11 am**

Create a small arrangement for your Easter Sunday table. We will use 5" ceramic containers in spring colors and flowers that should last over a week. Everything is included in the \$10.00 materials fee. Meet in the horticulture break room, to sign-up call or e-mail Bill Johnson at (202) 243-3927 or [bjohnson@HillwoodMuseum.org](mailto:bjohnson@HillwoodMuseum.org)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Attend a garden party in your honor! Please join Hillwood staff for the **Annual Spring Volunteer Appreciation Reception on Monday, May 18 (5 – 7 pm)**. Invitations are forthcoming.

**NEIGHBORHOOD AGREEMENT**

*Angie Dodson, Director of Learning & Engagement / Co-chair of Exhibitions*

As many of you know, Hillwood operates in accord with a neighborhood agreement that defines our public days/hours and other operational details. For the past 10 years we've been working in alignment with an agreement that allowed us to be open only 18 Sundays a year, limited us to 220 cars per day and included a number of other restrictions. With the agreement's end date looming, Kate Markert, executive director, met with neighbors over the fall months, crafting a new agreement to carry us into

the next decade. Our conversation with the neighbors was excellent and they agreed ease our operational constraints so that we could better serve the greater community. With a neighborhood agreement in hand, the next step was to seek approval of the new operating conditions from the District's Board of Zoning adjustment (BZA).

We are pleased to share that, on February 10, 2015, the BZA gave us final approval for the new operating conditions, which include the ability for Hillwood to be open every Sunday! It's something we've been working towards since Kate started here in 2010, and a great boon for our service to the community. Open Sundays began first Sunday in March (March 1). Visitor Services, security, and marketing have been making staffing and awareness-building plans, and the whole campus is ready for the new opportunities. There are many other improvements in the operating conditions, including more evening events and no need for car counts that will both help us serve our visitors better and make our operations more efficient and effective. It's a win-win all around.

**PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

*Erin Lourie, Adult Audiences Manager*

Back by popular demand, the Great Homes and Gardens 4-part lecture series was held in February. Visitors came to escape the cold and immersed themselves in warmer days on gorgeous estates and gardens like Chateau du Grand-Lucé in France, the Huntington in California, Vizcaya in Florida, and Naumkeag in Massachusetts. Attendance was high, with the theater selling out, and overflow visitors being accommodated in a simulcast room. These programs are now posted to the Lecture Video Archives and can be accessed on the volunteer website [here](#).

In March, we'll celebrate *Splendor & Surprise* with a three-part series, including a [lecture and object study](#), a lecture called [Box Beautiful](#) by Danielle Kisluk-Grosheide from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Washington, D.C. premier of a feature length Fabergé documentary, [Fabergé: A Life of It's Own](#). We expect these programs to be very popular, so if you'd like to attend, please purchase tickets online or by calling the Visitor Services Office at (202) 686-5807.



*The Lunar Lawn is the site of the egg rolling game during the Fabergé Egg Family Festival*

An annual favorite [Fabergé Egg Family Festival](#) returns on Saturday, March 28 and Sunday, March 29. With our newly extended Sunday hours, the festival will run from 10 am to 5 pm each day.

We kick off a spring of garden events with [Orchid Month](#) in March, followed by floral and container workshops in April and May. Families will enjoy [Girl Scout Day at Hillwood](#) in April and Family Movie Night in May. As always, the best way to stay up-to-date on our public programs is to check Hillwood's monthly e-blasts and the web calendar.

## **VIRTUE & VICE: CELEBRATING HILLWOOD'S NEW EXHIBITION**

*Adrienne Starr,  
Donor Relations and Special Events Manager*

On Saturday evening, February 14, Hillwood celebrated the opening of the new special

exhibition, *Splendor & Surprise* at our annual Valentine's Day event. Over 250 guests braved the wintry weather to enjoy an evening filled with sweet and savory food, cocktails, and music. New to the programming, "Virtue & Vice" featured a dance floor in the tented Motor Court with the sculpture of Eros reigning over the activities. Hillwood's own Jason Gedeik, Head of Design Operations, lead the Horticulture staff and volunteers in creating beautiful flower arrangements, inspired by both virtue and vice, which brought added enchantment to the surroundings. Our volunteers had a busy night as visitors filled the Mansion and Dacha, many of whom were making their first ever trip to Hillwood.



*Guests enjoying the Virtue & Vice event*

This year's silent auction was a terrific success and featured several fantastic items, including a cruise on the original Sea Cloud for two donated by Academic Arrangements Abroad, a Fabergé kovsh donated by Doyle New York, and a weekend at the glamorous Breakers in Palm Beach. At the end of the evening, guests went home with beautiful nosegays prepared each year by our talented horticulture volunteers.



*Floral arrangements created by Horticulture staff and volunteers*

“Virtue & Vice” Co-Chairs Bridget deSimone, Reid Dunavant and Liza Trey took great pleasure in announcing that the evening raised \$50,000 in revenue to support Hillwood’s exceptional roster of educational and public programs. In closing, they thanked our amazing corps of volunteers who make this annual event possible and, so very, very beautiful. I would also like to echo the co-chairs’ appreciation and thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers who helped make this evening a success:

**Volunteers assisting in the Mansion, Dacha and Visitor Center Check-in:**

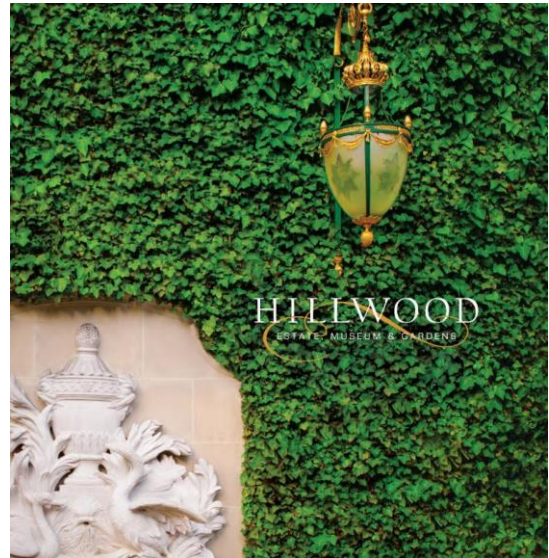
- Janice Brambilla
- Wilhelmina Irshad
- Delia Riso
- Joan Weiss

**Volunteers assisting with the beautiful floral arrangements:**

- Joan Asboth
- BL Johnston
- Ann Kelly
- Luna Levinson
- Diane Pirkey
- Carolyne Starek
- Nancy Weiman

**NEW HILLWOOD PUBLICATION**

*Lynn Rossotti, Director of Marketing, Communications & Visitor Services*



*A new publication -- a stunning reminder of your visit to Hillwood or a great gift for family and friends!*

This 112-page book is fully illustrated with gorgeous new garden photography, stunning interiors, and close-up object images. It provides a history of Hillwood and its fascinating founder Marjorie Merriweather Post, along with walk-throughs of the lush grounds and exquisite interior spaces.

**LIBRARY/ARCHIVES/VISUAL RESOURCES**

*Margaret Huang, Archivist / Librarian*

As mentioned in the fall, the Archives & Special Collections Department has created a web exhibition using tools provided by the Google Art Project to highlight some of the digitized home movies in the Hillwood Archives.

*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. We are proud to announce that the web exhibition has gone live and can be viewed [here](https://hillwood-museum.culturalspot.org/exhibit/there-back/wQ1FBWd6) [https://hillwood-museum.culturalspot.org/exhibit/there-back/wQ1FBWd6].

The films can also be found on the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens official [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/HillwoodMuseum) [https://www.youtube.com/user/HillwoodMuseum], where we hope to upload additional films over the coming months.



*A computer screen shot of the travel videos now available on the online web exhibition*

## **MARCH IS ORCHID MONTH!**

*Jason Gedeik, Head of Greenhouse & Design Operations*

Looking for an escape from the cold winter that seems to be lingering longer than usual? If so, please check out Hillwood's [Orchid Month](#) programming taking place throughout March. Visitors and volunteers alike are invited to explore the greenhouses where you'll enjoy a diverse variety of orchids in bloom. *Orchid Month* will feature workshops and behind-the-scenes greenhouse tours for those who want to learn more about these beautiful blooms and how to successfully grow orchids in their homes.

*Orchid Month* continues the 50-year tradition of growing orchids at Hillwood started by Marjorie Post's captivation with the exotic flower. When she purchased Hillwood in 1955, she had four

additional greenhouses built adjacent to the existing one to cultivate this passion.



*Orchids featured in the Greenhouse*

Today, Hillwood's collection contains over 2,000 orchids consisting of hundreds of different species and hybrids. A greater number and variety are in bloom during March than any other season at Hillwood, and improved cultivation methods have made the greenhouses more lush and vibrant than ever. Visitors will be able to enjoy many of the original cultivars of orchids grown by Marjorie in the 50's, 60's and 70's that are hard to find on the market today.

We'll be offering four different workshops throughout March that provide the public with hands-on learning opportunities to ensure their orchids stay healthy and rebloom for years. Participants should bring in orchids from their home collection and get specific pointers on everything from watering and pruning to the proper light and fertilizer. For those of you who appreciate orchids but are tired of growing the same type again and again, we offer a workshop focused on dendrobiums, oncidiums and paphiopedalums (Lady Slippers). These orchids are guaranteed to be easy to grow in a home environment while providing you with long-lasting beautiful flowers. Finally, a new workshop offering focuses on ten tropical plants that will spice up

your average houseplant collection. For more information and to purchase tickets online please visit:

<http://www.hillwoodmuseum.org/whats/annual-events-and-festivals/orchid-month>

## HELP US SPREAD THE WORD: ***SPLendor & SURPRISE***

*Lisa Leyb, Interpretation Volunteer Manager*

Hillwood's new exhibition *Splendor & Surprise* is now open to the public in the Dacha. The exhibition features more than 80 remarkable boxes, coffers, chests, and other containers that reveal the beautiful and unexpected ways cultures have contained their most treasured items and everyday objects



*Étui featured in the exhibition*

from the 17<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition label text is available on the [volunteer website](#) under "Education". 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.

## RECORDING-BREAKING GROUPS SALES IN 2014

*Amy Luna Knox, Groups Sales and Special Events Coordinator*

Last year was another successful year for groups at Hillwood. We had higher group visitation and group revenue than any previous year. As many of you know, one of Hillwood's primary goals is

expanding attendance by growing core audiences and reaching out to new audiences. Thank you to all volunteers who helped us achieve these goals, either by encouraging a group to visit Hillwood or by extending a warm welcome and gracious tour during their visit.



*A group touring the gardens*

We welcomed over 8500 group visitors; many of these individuals were first time visitors. Group visitors travelled from all over the U.S. and worldwide to join us this year including the Royal Horticulture Society, The National Tropical Botanical Gardens, many national and international associations, and several embassies. May was a record breaking month, drawing in over 2100 group visitors alone. Again, a huge thank you to all of our volunteers who helped treat our group visitors to an exceptional day at Hillwood! Many of the groups are already planning another visit this coming year.

If any of you participate in a local club or organization, please consider inviting your group to enjoy Hillwood this coming year. Please contact our Group Sales Manager, Amy Knox, at (202) 243-3914 for more information or to make a reservation. It is a great representation of how we are continually developing our groups department. We look forward to another successful year.

## **CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

*Lisa Leyh, Interpretation Volunteer Manager*

Celebrate spring's arrival in Russian style with the Fabergé Egg Family Festival on Saturday, March 28 (10 am – 5 pm) and Sunday, March 29 (10 am – 5 pm). Volunteer assistance is needed in the Visitor Center, Mansion, and with special programming and activities. If you are available to help, please contact me at (202) 243-3938 or [LLeyh@HillwoodMuseum.org](mailto:LLeyh@HillwoodMuseum.org).

## **NEW VOLUNTEERS**

We are delighted to welcome 5 new volunteers to Hillwood! Please join us in welcoming our newest members to Hillwood.

Joining the Interpretation volunteer corps:

- Jo-Anne Barnard
- Natalia Batova
- Mariula Garvin

Joining the Horticulture volunteer corps:

- Catherine Leape
- Joyce Zoldak

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