

Old Westbury Gardens News



Clippings from the Garden, Late Fall/Holiday 2008



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As the end of the year approaches, we have entered a time of giving thanks, of family celebrations, and religious holidays. We reflect on the past, and plan for the future. It is an especially enjoyable time here at the Gardens. With concerts, teas, children's crafts, Nanny Night, and so many other events to experience at exquisitely decorated Westbury House, we are privileged to partake in a Holiday Celebration that is truly unique.

This is also when we plan new programs and evaluate those held in the prior year. Our goal is to create, refine, and fine-tune every event offered at the Gardens. Picnic Pops, antique auto shows, Gardeners' Fair, the Scottish Games, and other perennial favorites will be returning. Some relative newcomers from the past few years – tai chi and yoga classes, the Long Island Mozart Festival, and the Fall Dog Festival – will be back as well. We are also taking steps to increase the use of the Orchard Hill property as an environmental education facility and as a center for conferences and meetings.

WINTER DINNER PARTY

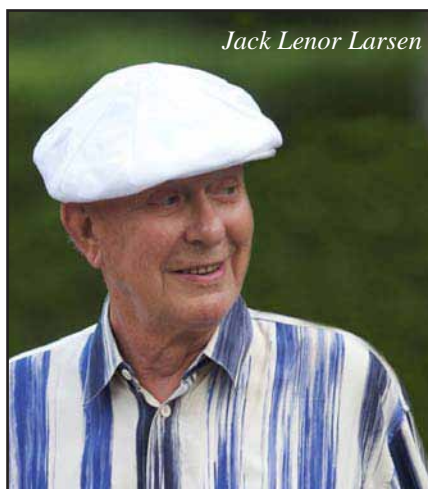
The annual Winter Dinner party to benefit Preservation Projects will take place on Friday, December 5, in the Red Ballroom of Westbury House. The projects chosen for the coming year will include the restoration of the Collyweston slate roof. (See Preservation Director Lorraine Gilligan's article in this issue). The Dinner Chairs are Mr. and Mrs. Paul J. Napoli. The Honorary Chairman is Jack Lenor Larsen.

Jack Lenor Larsen is an internationally known textile designer, author, and collector. His fabric firm has won countless awards and accolades, including being one of only two design houses ever to be honored with an exhibition at the Palais du Louvre.

But perhaps Mr. Larsen's greatest creation was the founding of the LongHouse Reserve, a beautiful, 16-acre arboretum/sculpture garden in East Hampton. Since established in 1991, LongHouse has been fulfilling its mission to "exemplify living with art in all its forms...bringing together art and nature, aesthetics and spirit, with a strong conviction that the arts are central to living wholly and creatively."

The gates of the Gardens first opened to the public in the spring of 1959. The purpose of Old Westbury Gardens, as stated fifty years ago in the Certificate of Incorporation, was to "acquire, develop, maintain, preserve and manage real and personal property of historical, botanical, or horticultural value for charitable and scientific purposes, all for the benefit and welfare of persons desiring to avail themselves of the facility...." With that purpose in mind, we are making plans for many special presentations next year.

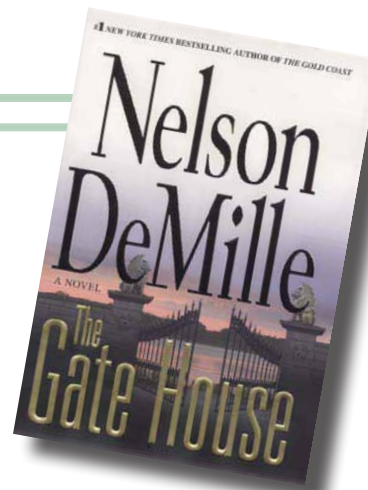
In these times of political and economic uncertainty, Old Westbury Gardens will surely face its share of as-yet-unknown difficulties. However, with the help of our trustees, staff, volunteers, and you, our members, we can meet those challenges and make 2009 a memorable Golden Anniversary year.



Jack Lenor Larsen

The Reserve features a charming house, inspired by a 7th Century Shinto shrine, designed by architect Charles Forberg. The grounds include a wide variety of gardens, sweeping lawns, strolling paths through allées of hornbeam, cryptomeria, and white pine, and an eclectic collection of sculptures from artists including Willem de Kooning, Sol Le Witt, and Yoko Ono.

For tickets or more information about the Winter Dinner, please contact Kristen Bradley at 516-333-0048, ext. 308, kbradley@oldwestburygardens.org



FRIENDS NEWS

On December 10, from 6 to 9pm, the Friends of Old Westbury will be hosting our final Books in the Ballroom event of the year. New York Times bestselling author and Long Island resident Nelson DeMille has written *The Gate House*, the long-awaited follow-up to his classic novel, *The Gold Coast*. The evening, which will include hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, will feature a talk by Mr. DeMille, and a question and answer session, followed by a book signing.

Hardcover copies of *The Gate House* (\$25, including tax) and trade paperback editions (\$10 including tax) of *The Gold Coast* will be available for purchase.

Admission is \$35 for Old Westbury Gardens members (\$45 for non-members). Pre-registration is required. Please contact Kristen Bradley at 516-333-0048, ext. 308, kbradley@oldwestburygardens.org.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHARITY®

On Thursday, December 4, through Saturday, December 6, participating stores in the Americana Manhasset and Wheatley shopping centers are hosting this year's Champions for Charity®. Through this holiday shopping benefit program, upon presentation of a Champion Card, 25% of your pre-tax purchases will be donated to Old Westbury Gardens, or another charity of your choice.

To register for your complimentary Champion Card or for more information, visit championsforcharity.org, call 516-627-2277, or visit Americana Manhasset's Concierge Store.

PLANNED GIVING

Two of our long time members from Manhattan decided to make a \$100,000 bequest to the Gardens. We asked them to share their reasons with us.

Why We Love Old Westbury Gardens

We were introduced to Old Westbury Gardens almost twenty years ago, and have been in love with it ever since. Over the years, we have returned countless times: to tour the gardens, attend events, dance the night away at lawn parties, and share it with tourists from around the country who were visiting New York. It has always given us a sense of peace and serenity to enter through those glorious gates and slowly meander through the allée of Linden trees.

Several years ago, we sponsored a bench in the gardens, and it now bears our names. But even then, we wanted to make more of a contribution...to make Old Westbury Gardens more of our own haven. It was important to us that this beautiful place continues to exist and flourish. We have visited gardens and manor houses in many countries; but this has remained our favorite, and we think, the most beautiful. So as we fine tuned our estate plans several months ago, we decided to support the gardens with a bequest of \$100,000.



Carmen and Lew Haber

It is our way of securing the future of this peaceful retreat for many years to come. And it gives us great satisfaction to know that we will have contributed some of our savings to protect the environment, the arts, and a trusted non-profit institution with one simple gift.

Now when we receive newsletters or see Old Westbury Gardens in the press, we have a great feeling of security knowing that we will be part of its growth & stability. Right here in our midst, we have such a treasure, one that should continue to delight and mystify generations to come.



CARMEN AND LEW were encouraged by our recent steps to acquire Orchard Hill, and to use this property to promote responsible stewardship of the environment. Their interest fostered our commitment to the intern/education concept.

Old Westbury Gardens has a tremendous wealth of loyal donors, both local, and from all across the country. Some donors support us through bequests, which are significant resources for the Gardens. Also, the benefit of a bequest is that it can always be altered if your circumstances change. Some people arrange to leave a percentage of the estate; it doesn't have to be a specific dollar amount.

For more information about making a bequest, contact Doreen Banks, Director of Development at 516-333-0048, ext. 335, or dbanks@oldwestburygardens.org.

KUDOS OWG

BEST OF LI

Best on Long Island

Old Westbury Gardens has been nominated in the Best Public Garden category for the "Best of Long Island 2009" program in the Long Island Press. Anyone interested in voting for OWG may do so, through Dec. 15, by visiting www.votebestofli.com. Click on Family, scroll to number 12, Best Public Garden. Click your vote for Old Westbury Gardens, then click "Done" at the bottom of the page. The winner (a.k.a. Old Westbury Gardens) will be announced in a January issue of the paper.



Best in the World

Old Westbury Gardens was recently named by ForbesTraveler.com as one of the **World's Most Beautiful Gardens**. In an article released to their website in September, gardening writer Ken Druse described Old Westbury Gardens as:

"one of the best gardens that was a private estate...incredibly beautifully maintained and impeccably manicured."

In addition to Mr. Druse, the Forbes Traveler expert panel was comprised of Elizabeth Scholtz, Director Emeritus of Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Rick Los, the Director of Horticulture at Butchart Gardens in Vancouver, Canada, and Harry Landers, Curator of the International Rose Test Garden in Portland, Oregon. The other gardens on the list are the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in Brooklyn, NY, Boerner Botanical Garden in Milwaukee, WI, Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto, Japan, Chanticleer Garden in Philadelphia, PA, the NY Botanical Garden in the Bronx, NY, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden in Cape Town, South Africa, Filoli in San Francisco, CA, Sissinghurst Castle Garden in Kent, England, and Allerton Garden in Kauai, HI.

IRA Note: The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act recently passed in congress. It reinstated a part of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 which permits people over the age of 70 ½ to contribute to non-profit organizations directly from their IRA's until the end of 2009.

STAFF ADDITIONS

John Norbeck, President and CEO of Old Westbury Gardens, recently announced the appointment of two new staff members, both of whom will be working with Public Programs Director, Paul Hunchak. Ariana Rickard has been hired as Environmental Educator, and Lisa Thornell has joined us as an Associate in Visitor Services and Special Events.

Ariana will be creating educational programs for students utilizing the formal gardens and surrounding natural areas. Prior to accepting the position at Old Westbury Gardens, Ariana served as a Natural Resources Volunteer in the Peace Corps in Ecuador. Her projects included starting a school garden, teaching computer classes, creating an ecology club for kids, and conducting biological surveys for reptiles and amphibians at a nearby forest preserve.

Upon completing her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and Public Policy at Harvard University, Ariana spent two years working for the federal government in Washington, D.C. While mainly based at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, she rotated through several federal agencies, including the Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Mammal Division, and the Chicago Regional EPA office. While earning a graduate degree in Resource Ecology and Management from the University of Michigan, Ariana worked as a student instructor, assisting with two behavioral ecology courses.

Ariana is excited about designing and implementing educational programs at Old Westbury Gardens to share the joy of nature with visitors, and to encourage stewardship of our natural resources.



Ariana

Lisa will be assisting in the planning and operations of Visitor Services events and activities, as well as the promotion of Orchard Hill. She joins the Gardens after working on the grand opening of the Museum of Arts and Design on Columbus Circle.

Lisa received her Bachelor's Degree in both Art History and Studio Art from Marist College in Poughkeepsie in May, 2008. Her art history coursework was rooted in Museum Studies, which gave her the opportunity to study abroad. A studio concentration in graphic design will lend to Lisa's new role in promoting public programs and events.

Other non-profit organizations that Lisa has worked at include the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum, Barrett Art Center, the Nassau County Museum of Art and the Cradle of Aviation Museum.

As Lisa puts it, "I have always been in awe of historic houses, the way people feel so passionately about preserving and sharing their history, and the way the community becomes involved. I have grown up attending events here and it is really an honor to be a part of the force that sustains the mission and beauty of Old Westbury Gardens."



Lisa



IN THE GIFT SHOP

The Holiday Celebration presents a great opportunity to browse for unique ornaments, stocking stuffers, and other hard to find gifts, while taking advantage of a ten percent discount for Old Westbury Gardens' members.



AND ADDITIONS TO STAFF

Two new members were recently welcomed into the families of Old Westbury employees. Jack Dylan Ryan (7 lbs., 7 oz., 20"), the son of Director of Individual Giving Jana Ryan and husband Rick, arrived at 10:36pm on Sept. 26. Violet Darling Brush (6 lbs., 7 oz, 20"), the daughter of Horticulture Director Maura Brush and husband Jack, clocked in a few weeks later at 10:18am on October. 24.



Maura and Jana at their baby shower

FALL AT THE GARDENS



News 55 tapes a promo in the Walled Garden



Masons rebuild the northeast section of the Westbury House courtyard wall



Furry Murray and the Bow Wow Band perform for strollers at the Dog Festival

The Horticulture Club at SUNY Farmingdale takes a tour with Walled Garden Supervisor, Kim Johnson



Gals and dolls in Orchard Hill for afternoon tea



Environmental Educator Ariana Rickard, leads pre-schoolers on a nature hike



Group Tours Coordinator Angela Savino stirs things up at the volunteer party at Orchard Hill



Maintenance Director,
Pete DeBlasi working on the roof.

PRESERVATION NEWS: THE SEARCH FOR SLATE

One of the most distinctive features of Westbury House is the pale golden slate roof composed of limestone slates from the village of Collyweston in England's East Midlands. It's an uncommon building material for the northeast, where sturdy, easily accessible Vermont slate was the norm for late 19th and early 20th century buildings. British architect George Crawley was insistent in his choice of Collyweston slate, perhaps as a nod to the late 17th century Charles II house style that Westbury House is based on. This material was popular with prominent late 19th century British architects, and the soft yellow color blends well with the surrounding landscape that Crawley also designed.

In England, where the climate is gentler but pollution is just as problematic, a Collyweston slate roof can last several hundred years, depending on the quality of slate, installation method, and roof pitch allowing for quick drainage. At the turn of the twentieth century there were numerous quarries in Collyweston. But the process of extracting the unusual limestone "logs" was considered more dangerous than coal mining. Once the logs are brought to the surface they are exposed to several nights of hard freeze-thaw cycles which naturally split the logs into slates of very uniform thickness.

With increased safety measures, development pressures, and climate warming, the mining of Collyweston slate has declined. Many quarries have closed and become nature centers or farmland, and petitions to reopen closed quarries can take years of legal paperwork and overcoming community opposition. Without the necessary freezing temperatures the unique process of splitting the slate logs can't be completed. Even with the reopening of small quarries for special restoration projects there is little economic incentive to do so.

Westbury House's supply of replacement Collyweston slate is quickly diminishing. The existing slates have suffered from previous winters, a hard mortar bed that inhibits the slates' ability to expand and contract with extreme temperatures, and the pollution that results from being situated between two major commuting arteries. The greatest slate deterioration appears at the eaves, the lowest point of the roof with the largest slates, some measuring 30" in length. We are in distinguished company. Thousands of Level 1 Historic Houses (the highest rating) in England are scrambling to find sources of slate, not only for spot repairs, but for entire roofing systems. The solutions are highly controversial. Lesser historic buildings, usually farm structures or modest dwellings, are being stripped of slates, negatively impacting the integrity and appearance of these indigenous buildings.

Artificial slates made of composite concrete material are being employed with mixed results. There is also a movement afoot to prevent local materials such as Collyweston slate from being exported. The Gardens is working with the English Stone Trust, English Heritage, and other architectural conservators in the UK and the US to see if a source of slate can be identified and shipped to our area. Precious samples from the roof have been forwarded to British stone conservators to help them identify the specific type of Collyweston slate through analyzing the weathering and the types of bio-growths found.

It is to our advantage that Westbury House continues to be internationally admired for its pleasing revival design, important decorative arts collection, and integration into the landscape. We are hoping that small, appropriate supplies of slate of the correct size, color, and density can be found and purchased over a number of years. Pending further investigation of the roof condition, larger sections may have to be replaced over a ten to twenty year period. We have also located another historic country house, the Edsel and Eleanor Ford Estate in Grosse Point, Michigan, that underwent a similar replacement with slate from a neighboring Midlands area, the Cotswolds. They have shared their story and resources with the Gardens. Armed with significant information resources, the Preservation Committee hopes to move forward with a long-range plan for the preservation and restoration of this distinctive feature.



WINTER STRATEGIES FOR POND-DWELLING REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

We all know that birds and some other animals migrate to escape the extreme temperatures and food shortages of winter. But what do turtles, frogs, and other pond-dwellers at Old Westbury Gardens do to survive the harsh, cold climate?

Terrestrial turtles spend the winter in underground burrows. They dig the burrows themselves or use abandoned dens created by other animals. These burrows protect the turtles from extreme temperatures and desiccation. Burrows range in size from long tunnels to shallow holes, or some turtles might merely bury themselves into the ground to a safe depth. Most freshwater aquatic turtles pass the winter underwater, although some species, like the eastern mud turtle, winter on land in underground burrows.

Some frog species hibernate under the water (bullfrogs, northern leopard frogs, green frogs), while others (terrestrial toads, spring peepers, chorus frogs) spend the winter in dirt outside the pond. Frogs that pass the winter under water will often burrow themselves in the dirt and muck at the bottom of a pond. They will not dig as deeply as aquatic turtles because frogs will suffocate if they bury themselves too deeply for long periods. However some species, like green frogs and bullfrogs, will not



An OWG frog hangs out by his pad

burrow at all and, will sit on the bottom of the pond among the leaves. Hibernating frogs become dark-colored, thus matching the rotting leaves on the bottom of the pond. They might move around a little on the bottom on warmer winter days, but usually will not respond to stimulation.

Toads survive the winter by burrowing below the frost line. Terrestrial frog species like spring peepers and wood frogs hibernate in rock crevices, logs, or leaf litter. These frog species have natural antifreeze in their bodies to deal with the freezing conditions they are subjected to in these locations.

You can still see some frogs and turtles in the ponds at Old Westbury Gardens; but they will soon be disappearing to hunker down for the winter. Check the calendar next spring for evening frog hikes when we'll walk around the grounds to listen to frog mating calls and identify the different species living here.

INTERN FOCUS



MY NAME IS JEAN-LUC BLAES. I am twenty- three years old. I am the third of a family of four children. I live in Nîmes, an old Roman city in Provence, in the south of France. I am enrolled in an agricultural college because my main interests are animals and the natural world. I intend to work in the environmental field in the safeguarding of species or in research in animal reproduction.

I attend the college of higher education training in Agricultural Techniques (ENITA) of Clermont-Ferrand (a city in the center of France). This college specializes in agronomy, food industry and environment. I chose this college for its focus on the environment and sustainable development.

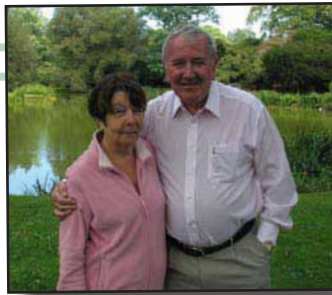


My college offered me the opportunity to take a sabbatical year to specify my professional project carrying out several long training periods in the field I want to engage in. Moreover, I really wanted to go to the USA to discover this country and its culture and to improve my knowledge of English. This is why I contacted Ohio State University to find a training period. They gave me the opportunity to go to Old Westbury Gardens initially and take the classes at the OSU for the winter quarter for academic training.

I've really enjoyed the six months I've spent at Old Westbury Gardens. This was a unique opportunity to learn the management of gardens that are bigger and more beautiful than so many others I've experienced. I've also been taught how to use some new equipment. All of the staff have been very friendly, and were always available to answer my questions about the gardens.



Anyone who is interested in sponsoring an intern like Jean-Luc for next season, please contact Doreen Banks, our Director of Development, at 516-333-0048, ext. 335, dbanks@oldwestburygardens.org.



OWG ON THE BBC

On July 31, Old Westbury Gardens was featured on a BBC Radio broadcast. Host Trevor Fry interviewed our Publicity Director (by phone) for a ten minute segment on his Late Show program about visiting the Old Westbury area. Since not all of our guests tell staff where they are from or choose to sign our visitors' log, it's difficult to estimate how many people we get from England, or anywhere else. But we do know of at least one couple who adjusted their travel schedule based upon hearing the broadcast.

Ann and Laurie Horner, from Milton in Oxfordshire, fly to the NYC area at least once or twice a year to visit their son, who lives in Manhattan. Wanting to experience a quiet change of pace from the city, and a chance to see an American version of a stately English home and gardens, they were very pleased to have visited here in September. Laurie indicated that not only will a stop at Old Westbury Gardens continue to be a part of the couple's traveling itinerary, but that they would try to arrange the timing of one of their US visits to include next year's Scottish Games.



Host your next social event on the beautiful grounds of Old Westbury Gardens at Orchard Hill, a 19th century Quaker Farmhouse. For more information contact Lisa Thornell at 516-333-0048, ext. 336, lthornell@old-westburygardens.org



Vol. 31 No. 2 Fall/Holiday 2008

OLD WESTBURY GARDENS NEWS

Published by
Old WestburyGardens
www.oldwestburygardens.org



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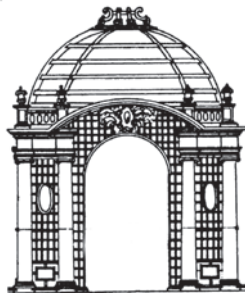


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FALL/HOLIDAY 2008

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