

Old Westbury Gardens



Holiday, 2014
Home is Where the Hearth is



President's Letter

Another Holiday Celebration at Old Westbury Gardens is upon us. Now, nearing the end of the year, it's a time to reflect on the past season. With the help of some consistently cooperative weather, and very few rain-outs, a record number of visitors passed through our gates during 2014 to revel in the beauty of our world-renowned gardens and to enjoy our many outdoor events. But now, with nothing in bloom, with a magnificent structure filled with creatively, festively decorated rooms, is when Westbury House really gets to shine. From the very moment we embrace the warmth and glow of the fire that welcomes us in the front lobby, we are immediately reminded how special a home this really is.

Maintaining and preserving this home is a great responsibility and a daunting challenge. One of the most important and costly projects ahead of us is the replacement of the Collyweston slate roof. Quite fortuitously, the roof has lasted for an amazing span of 110 years. However, as described by Old Westbury Gardens' Trustee Lloyd Zuckerberg, sometimes a ball on a roulette wheel is going to land where we don't want it to. In

the case of our roof, our number is up.

One of the first rules of preservation is to keep the building envelope watertight to protect the historic fabric within. Our staff has carefully monitored areas of water infiltration over the past five years to determine if simple repairs have worked. After interviewing architectural firms specializing in historic preservation, the Gardens hired Jan Hird Pokorny Associates (JHPA) to conduct diagnostic probes and a forensic study of the roof, the terra cotta cornice, copper gutters, and interior drains. Based upon their Roof Condition Assessment Report, the Gardens engaged JHPA to create Technical Specifications and Construction Drawings.

Collyweston slate, a golden limestone slate quarried in England's East Midlands, is an uncommon building material in the United States where granite slates are the norm and domestic roofers are unfamiliar with its installation. Other kinds of slates are under consideration, but our preservation standard at Old Westbury Gardens has always been to use original materials if at all possible. The terra cotta cornice, the decorative creamy white band

below the eaves, has damage, and selected areas are in need of replacement. The Gardens took the proactive measure of securing the cornice in safety netting, ensuring visitor and staff safety if an element should fragment. The heavy copper gutters, seeming so indestructible, have suffered from pollution and are pocked with small holes that have been repaired but have exceeded the normal lifespan. The cast iron pipes and connections of the internal leader system are failing, resulting in damage throughout the house. Repair will entail careful removal of walls in selected rooms to reach the areas needing repair and replacement.

This project will happen in phases, possibly over several years. It will require the considerable leadership of Gardens' Trustees and development staff in raising funds, and identifying grant opportunities. The Gardens has undertaken ambitious preservation projects in the past and remains committed to outstanding stewardship of our unique resources, of which Westbury House is among the most precious.

*Cracked
Cornice*



*Roof condition is checked by Doreen Lumbr
from Old Westbury Gardens' Operations and
Maintenance staff*



*Damage to
Collyweston
slate*

Horticultural Intern Program

Old Westbury Gardens has benefited greatly by the program established 15 years ago to recruit horticultural graduates from around the world to intern here at Old Westbury Gardens. We receive many small donations, but we couldn't offer this program without the sustained and generous support of Mr. Leo Guthart, a great friend and neighbor. Mr. Guthart underwrites half the program and matches others' donations. We are very grateful for his generosity and interest in this program.

Even as the interns are provided with an opportunity to continue their horticultural education in an amazing environment, it is Old Westbury Gardens that is all the better for their time spent here.

In addition to the obvious impact on the gardens and other areas of the grounds provided by the efforts of these hard-working young people, their personalities and the glimpses into their cultures provide a learning experience for all of us as well. This year's intern group includes Hendrik Heselhaus from Germany, Ali Sunanta Thorharli from Indonesia, Emilie Trager from France, Svetlana Alexeeva from Russia, and Karoly Sieger, from Hungary.



December Dinner

This year's elegant and intimate dinner in the Red Ballroom will be chaired by a very popular couple here at the Gardens, Sandy and Nelson DeMille. They are delighted to be asked to host this event as we honor our President for the last nine years, John Norbeck. John has steered the Gardens through a long recession, a major land acquisition, a Superstorm, and many other challenges, helping to maintain and burnish its reputation as a world class public garden.



Cinderella Luncheon

This year's Children in Bloom luncheon had a blockbuster theme: Cinderella. The guest speaker was the renowned costume designer William Ivey Long. Mr. Long has won six Tony Awards for his design work. All attendees agreed that he was a unique and entertaining speaker.

Our honoree was Susan



Susan Lucci

Lucci. A longtime resident of Garden City, she was chosen for her work with the children's organization, The Little Flower House. Joan MacNaughton, the event chair, worked long and hard with her wonderful committee. We are thrilled that the luncheon was sold out and that sponsorships reached a new high. Our Fairy Godmother Sponsorship was taken by Caroline Firestone, who introduced Mr. Long to Old Westbury Gardens. The Glass Slipper Sponsors were the Judy and Jack Meade Foundation and the Bahnik Foundation. The Magic Wand Sponsors were Susan and Matteo Bevilacqua, Karen and Paul Bonheim, and Sandy and Eric Krasnoff. Judy and Jack Mead also underwrote the Cinderella Carriage which graced the front courtyard of Westbury House.

Adding a new dimension, Esther Ambalu of Ambalu Jewelers held a cocktail party and donated a beautiful Cinderella inspired cocktail ring (with a retail value of \$4500) to the luncheon.



*From left, Joan MacNaughton, William Ivey Long, and Caroline Firestone
Photo courtesy of Tab Hauser Photo*

OWG ANNUAL APPEAL



Annual Appeal

Old Westbury Gardens conducts its Annual Appeal from September through December 31st. This year's chair is Trustee Arthur Levine. Several weeks ago, you received a letter from John Norbeck explaining the importance of this effort. Unlike the Brooklyn Botanic Garden or New York Botanical Garden, there is virtually no government support in our annual operating budget. We rely the general public, and most particularly on our members and our trustees to raise the funds so necessary to maintain Old Westbury Gardens as the same precious gift to the public today that it has been since 1959. Among other things, if the Annual Appeal reaches its goal in 2014, it could mean allowing more rooms of Westbury House to be open to the public.

Excerpts from Carol Large's Speech at the Children in Bloom Luncheon

I would like to add my great appreciation to John Norbeck's thank you for your support of "Children in Bloom" for Old Westbury Gardens, and to tell you a bit of what that support has meant to our Environmental Education effort.

Old Westbury Gardens' Children's Environmental programs educate the public in the ways of the natural world. Seasonal programs engage exploration through the senses while fostering the questions, inspirations, and ideas that run hand in hand with the outdoors. Attendance at public programs like Bug Safari, Bat Walk, and Nighttime Noises is at a record high.

Since the inception of Environmental Education here in 2008, there have been over 11,000 complementary visits to the Gardens by Westbury School District students as well as 5400 student visits from other New York State Districts. According to the 2013/2014 Westbury School Partnership Teacher Evaluations, "Science grades have increased for 81% of participating young children who began the Old Westbury Gardens' outdoor educational programs in the fall of 2013."

As of the beginning of 2014, a total of over 6000 Girl Scouts have earned badges at the Gardens. This year's program is on track for the attendance of 1400

Scouts and will meet, and possibly exceed, attendance for previous years.

We are all very proud of Lisa Reichenberger, Old Westbury Gardens' Education Director. Lisa was honored at the Girl Scouts of Nassau County's Adult Recognition Awards with a "Thanks Badge" which "Honors an individual whose ongoing commitment, leadership, and service have had exceptional, measurable impact on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of the council and the entire Girl Scout movement." Lisa and our children's programs will benefit greatly from this luncheon. By participating, you are helping cultivate an appreciation of nature within children and families as we strive to develop a lasting legacy of environmental consciousness and preservation.



Friends of Old Westbury Gardens

by Kay Maris

The Friends of Old Westbury Gardens visited Newport, R.I. for a two night stay the last week in June. Our itinerary was planned to coincide with the Newport Flower Show, which we all enjoyed. The tour included visits to three historic summer houses: The Elms, Marble House, and Kingscote. We also arranged private visits to the Redwood Library and the Museum of American Illustration in Vernon Court. We had accommodations at the charming Frances Malbone House. Dinners were at the New York Yacht Club, where we watched the sunset over the harbor, and at the Black Pearl, a historic restaurant on Ban-

nerman's Wharf. Our visit concluded with an invitation to lunch at the Clambake Club with its panoramic views of the Cliff Walk. The Friends group hopes to offer trips to other interesting venues in the future.



The Elms

Letters

We welcome feedback through phone calls, e-mail, and social media posts. But sometimes, it's a nice change of pace to go old school and literally return to the drawing board. These comments and faithful cray-on renderings of particularly memorable Old Westbury Gardens' visits are courtesy of Keyana, Shahd, and Ronaldlda from Mrs. Donna Sabella's Kindergarten Class at Dryden School in Westbury.



Keyana saw the beech tree



Shahd saw the bridge and the pond



Ronaldlda saw a pond with ducks in it

LIFC at OWG

Under the direction of Lauren Osnato (who is also a docent at Old Westbury Gardens), the Long Island Holiday Choir consists of 16 professional, adult amateur, and advanced student flutists who are members of the Long Island Flute Club. Their performance at 1pm on December 7 in the Red Ballroom of Westbury House will be their eighth annual appearance here. The hour-long concert will feature traditional holiday favorites such as, *Wexford Carol*, *Silent Night*, *Dances from the Nutcracker*, *Rudolph*, and many more.

"The choir eagerly looks forward to its yearly concert at Old Westbury Gardens," explains Lauren. "The graciousness of Westbury House and the intimate space of the Red Ballroom combined with the beautiful holiday decorations and the enthusiastic crowds make it the highlight of our performing season."

In case anyone was wondering, as verified by Lauren, most flute players prefer the name "flutist" in lieu of "flautist." As James Galway said, "I don't have a flaut, and I've never flauted."



Christmas at Westbury House a Century Ago

In those days, winter seemed to come earlier and last longer than now. Soon after Thanksgiving, the snow fell and there was sleighing on the Roslyn hills and skating on the ponds. The spirit of Christmas followed in due course. It was a season of magic and excitement. We knew that Santa Claus and his little men were working away somewhere near the North Pole making toys for the children. And we were busy ourselves, sewing and painting surprise presents for our family. In the autumn, we had gathered nuts from the chestnut trees that grew so luxuriously all over the Island, and now in the evenings we roasted them by the fire while listening to "A Christmas Carol" and other winter tales.

On Christmas Eve, we hung our stockings on the mantelpiece in Mother's and Father's room. And then, promising not to come down until 7 o'clock next morning, we reluctantly went to bed. When we woke up, we each found a present by our pillows. Then, at the appointed moment, we tore downstairs and rushed into mother's room where everybody hugged everybody and wished them a Merry Christmas. The stockings were just where we left them



hanging limp the night before. But now they were fat and bulging with presents, candy sticks, woolly animals, and bright packages filled the tops and in each of the toes there was a five dollar gold piece. The boys' stockings contained all those things that boys always want, and by my stocking was a beautiful doll. She was almost as big as I was. She had curly brown hair, pink cheeks, and her china eyes were very blue. She wore a dress made of linen and Irish lace with a pink sash just like the one I wore for dancing class. She was the answer to my dreams. The fact that a week before, snooping around the house, I had come upon the dress in the pressing room, did not make me any less grateful to Santa Claus.

After church, we were joined by some of our cousins for Christmas lunch: an enormous turkey with all the trimmings, ice cream, and plum pudding. Then it was time for our tree. It stood tall and beautiful in the red drawing room, sparkling with Christmas ornaments with brightly colored parcels piled around its base. There were presents for everyone in the house, including the dogs. Here was the pleasure of giving as well as receiving.

Later in the afternoon, we bundled into a large sleigh pulled by one of the horses. We trotted down our drive, around the Old Westbury pond, gay with skaters, and up the hill to Aunt Helen Martin's. The whole family was gathered there: grandmother, uncles, aunts, and cousins. A few very special presents were exchanged. Then the younger ones played while the grownups had tea. The moon came out, the sleigh waited for us at the front door, and we drove peacefully home to dream of our lovely day.

Peggie Phipps Boegner, 1978

Above photo courtesy of *Halcyon Days* by Peggie Phipps Boegner and Richard Gachot



Long Island Museum Educators' Roundtable

On October 8th, Old Westbury Gardens played host to the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Long Island Museum Educators' Roundtable organization, LI MER. In attendance were more than 30 of education's brightest stars representing a variety of Long Island institutions including The Hofstra University Museum, The African American Museum of Nassau County, The Heckscher Museum of Art, and The Oyster Bay Historical Society.

The working mission of LI MER is "to inspire and support the best practices of Long Island museum educators in serving our communities." This network of colleagues will gather annually in four seasonal meetings to open air exchange successes and opportunities, up to the minute education reports, and new and exciting program ideas. Our own Environmental Educator, Lisa Reichenberger, has supported the organization from the ground up noting that, "It is with great affection that I welcome the creation of a collaborative team of individuals with a shared goal to further hands-on experiential learning. As educators, we foster the next generation of museum advocates through interactive programs bringing life to history, nature, and art on a daily basis. I'm delighted to see lifelong learning in the museum setting take center stage through LI MER. I look forward to contributing to its progress onwards and upwards."



Volunteer Focus

On September 10, the volunteers at Old Westbury Gardens bid a fond farewell to longtime docent, Mildred Kroecker. Weekly, for 22 years, Mildred commuted here from her home in Babylon to delight visitors with her extensive knowledge of both house and grounds. Much as she would no doubt prefer to continue her tenure for another decade or two, a recent move to New Jersey has rendered that wish impractical. Wednesday mornings will not be the same without her.



From left, back row, Lucy Jaffe, John Sullivan, Joyce Weber, James Taylor, front row, Irene Casagrande, Josepha Jenks, Joan Giampetruzzi, Mildred Kroecker, and Marlene Proct



Preservation Update

There are many brick and limestone features that enhance the landscape but require periodic restoration to maintain their beauty and function. This season two masonry projects were addressed.

The limestone balustrade on the north side of the stairs leading to the West Pond was becoming unstable. The entire portion of the balustrade and bases was dismantled and repositioned to make the railing safe and secure.

The Red Ballroom faces the upper level of the South Terrace and the exterior steps from that room end at the upper, grassy level of the Terrace. In the center of the lawn is a oval shaped feature composed of brick in a herringbone pattern and framed in limestone pavers. Over the years water pressure (hydrostatic pressure) had pushed the eastern portion of bricks and limestone out of position, causing these features to become uneven. This area was excavated and a new anchored foundation created to secure the limestone frame to deter movement. Bricks were relayed with a softer mortar and expansion

joints to allow the bricks to have some movement without becoming dislocated.

The pair of gates leading from the Garden of Appreciation to the Rose Garden have been removed for repairs and recoating. In the spring, the fence on either side of the gates will also be repaired and re-finished. This project is funded through a generous gift of an Old Westbury Gardens' trustee.

Over the past two years a program assessing the painting collection in Westbury House has led to the conservation and cleaning of a number of paintings. Recently an oil on copper painting, by Swiss artist, Angelica Kauffman, was stabilized and cleaned and returned to the White Drawing Room. Another painting, "The Cottage Door," by English artist George Morland, will be cleaned and restored and returned to the Entry Hall. We appreciate the support of private donors and the Friends of Old Westbury Gardens for these projects.



From left, Old Westbury Gardens' Chairman Carol Large, Jack Foley, Bob Hussey, and Old Westbury Gardens' President, John Norbeck

Golf Outing

The Sixth Annual Old Westbury Gardens Golf Outing was held on June 23. The chairman of the event was Jack Foley and our honoree was Trustee Bob Hussey. We were fortunate to have one of the loveliest golf days of the year, with low humidity and plenty of warm sun. Set at Deepdale Golf Club, the guests enjoyed an efficient but challenging round of golf and some great food. Our thanks go to Bob Hussey and Jack Foley for their commitment to this event.

Art in the Ballroom

“There are no maps on the road less traveled. It is the unexpected twists and turns, the detours, and side trips, and one’s own passion for the discovery that make the journey memorable.”

Following his highly successful exhibit and painting sale here in 2011, “15 Years to Life, the Education of a Painter,” local artist David Peikon returned to the Red Ballroom for another show this September, entitled “On the Road Less Traveled.” Sales from the exhibit totaled \$100,000, \$30,000 of which was donated to Old Westbury Gardens.



Upper right, from left, Jenny Young du Pont, President of the Garden Conservancy, Howard and Mary Phipps, Carol Large, and David Peikon. At right, “Mid-Summer,” one of David’s many works painted at Old Westbury Gardens



Art under a Tent

In October, representatives from Rago Arts and Auction Centre in Lambertville, New Jersey, visited Old Westbury Gardens for an afternoon appraisal party. Visitors were able to bring up to six items each, including jewelry, paintings, books, small furniture, and virtually all manner of decorative arts, furnishings, and antiques that could fit into a car trunk or van. Free verbal appraisals were included with regular Gardens’ admission.

This was a wonderful opportunity to receive information about the potential value of hidden treasures (or in at least a few cases, to schedule a trip to the town dump). But it was also fascinating to observe the entire appraisals process and to learn the history and provenance of the other peoples’ objects.



Mick Byers from Rago appraises a painting

Rago is the largest auction house in New Jersey, and one of the 10 largest auction houses in the United States. Object identification and valuations were provided by their specialists, who, as seen on the PBS series, *Antiques Roadshow*, included David Rago and Suzanne Perrault (decorative arts and ceramics), Sarah Churgin (jewelry), Meredith Hilferty (fine art), and Sebastian Clarke (decorative arts, furnishings, silver). They were joined by colleagues with expertise in Asian property, Americana, books, maps and ephemera.

Art in the Drawing Room

by Vince Kish

The painting in the White Drawing Room by Angelica Kauffman has the title *Tancred and Clorinda* etched into the frame. Although they sound like a juggling team from the *Ed Sullivan Show*, Tancred and Clorinda were actually characters in *Jerusalem Delivered*, a 1581 epic poem about the First Crusade by Torquato Tasso. Especially since Tancred mistakenly kills Clorinda during a battle, the whimsical scene depicted in the Kauffman painting does not seem to match with this couple.



This was not lost on Jethro Hurt, the one-time curator for Old Westbury Gardens, who in 1983, wrote to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London seeking help in determining the correct name for the piece. He was answered by John Murdoch, the museum's Deputy Keeper of Paintings. Murdoch was also at a loss regarding the actual title of the painting described by Hurt, although he agreed that Tancred and Clorinda were out of the picture. The titles of Kauffman works in the Victoria and Albert collection included *A Nymph*

Drawing her Bow on a Youth and *A Sleeping Nymph Watched by a Shepherd*, and Murdoch believed that the Old Westbury Gardens painting might have been based on a similar theme.

Aided by technology unavailable 30 plus years ago, I have discovered that the actual name of our Kauffman painting is *Damon and Musidora*, who were characters in the poem "Summer," which was part of a larger work, *The Seasons*, completed in 1730 by English poet James Thomson. Interestingly, Thomas began writing this series with "Winter," which he completed in 1726. Therefore it is entirely possible that he was inspired by Antonio Vivaldi, whose *Four Seasons* concertos were first performed in 1725.

Also etched on that frame, Kauffman's name is followed by the initials R.A., as in Royal Academy. Angelica Kauffman (Oct 30, 1741 - November 5, 1807) was born in Switzerland, but traveled extensively all over Europe with her artist father, Joseph Johann Kauffman. Angelica's talents at portraiture were clearly evident at an early age, and she started

receiving commissions for work when she was only 13. In addition to highly regarded portraits, she would also branch out into painting historical and mythical scenes, and do wall paintings in rooms designed by the leading architects of the time, including Robert Adam.

The Royal Academy was established by decree of King George III on December 10, 1768. Its 34 founding members included a number of artists whose works are on display at Westbury House, such as Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Richard Wilson, and John Constable. Angelica Kauffman and the English artist Mary Moser were the only women represented. No other female artist would be elected to the Royal Academy until Dame Laura Knight in 1936. In 1772, the German artist and RA member, Johan Zoffany, completed a piece titled *The Portrait of the Academicians of the Royal Academy*. Because the artists were joined by two nude male models in the scene, Zoffany declined to include Kauffman and Moser in the painting, although their presence was "represented" by their portraits on the wall of the studio.



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