

Old Westbury Gardens News

Vol. 30, No. 1

Spring 2007

President's Letter

The arrival of spring traditionally brings great anticipation and relief from our imposed indoor confinement. This particular spring promises many new exciting developments and opportunities at Old Westbury Gardens.

As many of you know, we are in the process of finalizing the financial arrangements that will fulfill a long held vision and commitment by Peggie Phipps Boegner. Her estate and farm property will soon become an integrated part of the Old Westbury Gardens experience, forever enhancing our educational and programming needs.

We were more than pleased that the residents of Nassau County unanimously approved the first ever environmental Bond Act enabling the County to secure open space. One of the first actions under this Bond Act was the purchase of the development rights by the county of Mrs. Boegner's Estate, as well as the outright purchase of the 12+ acres of land and historic farm structures located on the corner of Old Westbury Road and the Long Island Expressway Service Road. We will maintain, operate, and have exclusive use of this farm property under the terms and conditions of a 99 year "dollar a year" lease with the County, which is in the process of being finalized.

The Gardens will purchase and own the contiguous 34 acres of Mrs. Boegner's property (located just west of the Walled Garden) with the development rights intact. The purchase will ensure that this land, with its beautiful rolling meadows and historic Quaker structures, will become accessible to our Gardens' visitors.

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Part of the Boegner property

Remembering Mrs. Corey

"Oh Mrs. Corey? Oh Pat? Where are you? I really need your advice on" I cannot tell you how much I will miss not being able to call Pat and ask her for her frank, uncanny, always wise and correct decorating counsel – whether I asked for it or not. How lucky we all are to have known Pat for her bold opinions that always added such enrichment to our lives. She was the *real* Sister Parrish, the *real* Julia Child of decorating. When we first moved out here from New York City, I loved getting to know our new neighbors hovering on the north and south boundaries of the Long Island Expressway. It would not have been unusual for Pat to drop by at any time of the day for a visit. She would "pop in" to give me decorating advice, which could often turn into a complete re-arranging of the drawing room. When she left, the house always looked



Pat at a dog show on the polo field at the Phipps Estate, circa 1940

and felt better. We all knew where we stood with her – no guesswork there! I found this quite refreshing and enriching.

Patricia Grace Corey's father William, was a cousin of Margarita Grace Phipps, who built Westbury House. She was raised in Old Westbury, and wintered in Aiken, South Carolina,

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Taste of Spring

On April 21, following the success of last year's affair, Westbury House will once again host a "Taste of Spring" food and wine tasting and silent auction. For the bargain price of \$20 per ticket (plus dues for yearly membership at the level of your choice), new and renewing Gardens' members will enjoy sampling appetizers, entrees, desserts, and wines provided by some of Long Island's finest restaurants, caterers, and wineries.

Popular returnees include Bistro Citron, Bryant and Cooper Steakhouse, 57 Main Street Imports, Lenz Winery, and Mim's. First time participants include La Bonne Boulangerie, Louie's Oyster



Mary Phipps, Chairman of Old Westbury Gardens, greets guests at last year's Taste of Spring

Bar and Grill, Messina Market & Catering, and Waters Crest Vineyard.

The Taste of Spring Committee Chairman is Brooke Cushman. For tickets

and more information, contact Jana Ryan at 516-333-0048 ext. 309, or jryan@oldwestburygardens.org.

Friends' News

On Tuesday, April 24, the Friends of Old Westbury Gardens will be having a Broadway Theatre and Dinner Trip. This event, for which transportation will be provided, includes dinner at Barbetta's Restaurant, followed by the Broadway Musical *Curtains*. Conveniently located on Restaurant Row on 46th Street in the heart of the Theatre District, Barbetta's has been serving fine Italian cuisine for over 100 years. Playing at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre, *Curtains*, starring David Hyde Pierce and Debra Monk, is a new backstage murder-mystery, musical comedy by Fred Ebb and composer John Kander, the songwriting team behind such legendary Broadway hits as *Cabaret* and *Chicago*. For tickets or more information about this or other Friends of Old Westbury Gardens events, please contact Raena Blumenthal at 516-333-0048 ext. 308, or rblumenthal@oldwestburygardens.org.



Group Tours

A quiet, reflective stroll though the grounds of the Gardens can be a very personal experience. Absorbed in thought, taking in all the beauty, it is very possible to feel that this is a private refuge for each of us.

But, since the perpetuation of this place is attendance driven, we also need groups, a bunch of them. Please consider bringing members of your church or civic group, school, camp, gardening club, or any other assemblage of family, friends, neighbors, and associates to the Gardens for a group tour. Tours will be geared toward the particular needs of your group, including packages with lunch at our café or afternoon tea. For more information, contact our Group Tour Coordinator, Angela Savino, at 516-333-0048 ext. 310 or asavino@oldwestburygardens.org.

President's Letter

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We are currently in the process of raising the funds necessary to secure this purchase. Thanks to the outpouring of support from family members, trustees, and devoted friends, we have made a significant progress in this effort. Unfortunately, we are still substantially short in securing the total funding required. We have arranged for a temporary loan to ensure that this once in a lifetime opportunity does not pass us by. We are looking to all who, like you, love and appreciate the Gardens, to support this effort.

The importance of acquiring this property will be realized quickly. These properties will be incorporated into Old Westbury Gardens' and interpretive tours. Charming

outbuildings will be adaptively re-used for children's and adult educational programming. Historic interpretation plans for the farm property include additional educational programming, providing visitors a better understanding of an earlier significantly different time in Nassau County's history.

As we look forward to this new season, I wish to extend my thanks to all our members. Whether it is through volunteering your time, financial contributions, or your continued attendance at our events, your support of Old Westbury Gardens is deeply appreciated.

Gardeners' Fair

The most important spring fund raising event for Old Westbury Gardens, the annual Gardeners' Fair, will be held on Saturday evening, May 19th. This year's theme is "Reflections: A Poolside Dinner Dance," with decorations featuring imaginative imagery of the recently restored swimming pool area as created by Scott Lucas and other talented members of our horticultural staff. Entertainment will include Teddy Christman on piano in the Red Ballroom, and dancing to the sounds of the Bob Merrill Band. The evening will include an elegant dinner catered by Sterling Affair, and the opportunity to bid



*The
Gardeners'
Fair
Committee*

on an eclectic variety of gifts during live and silent auctions. This year's committee chairman is Marie Napoli. For more infor-

mation, contact Raena Blumenthal at 333-0048 ext 308 or rblumenthal@oldwestburygardens.org.

Remembering Mrs. Corey

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the last stop on the train before Florida. Her family was one of the original members of Aiken's Winter Colony. In those days Aiken was the center of the horse world – flat racing, steeple chasing, trotters, polo, fox hunting, coaching and riding in the Hitchcock Woods.

Pat was very much involved with Old Westbury Gardens. She was especially interested in the family house that was filled to the hilt with endless treasures of the past. As a long time member of the Board of Trustees, and particularly as Chairman of the House Committee, Pat worked many years on keeping the riches of Westbury House alive for the public to enjoy and learn of an era gone by. With her enthusiasm, she enticed so many of us in the community to help with the house and gardens, enriching us all in a way that so rarely happens these days. She opened doors of knowledge, opinions, and opportunities.

To see Mrs. Corey's gardens in the spring with the endless azaleas, gracefully arranged all over her property, was simply breathtaking. Her details, whether outside or inside her home, were impeccable – as were her enter-



*Pat with Patricia Montgomerie
on their way to the Old
Westbury Gardens Centennial
Dinner in 2004*

taining, her clothes, and the treasured holiday decorations on her dining table. Even her watching every football game on television was a great gathering attraction for her grandchildren. It made her house an "open door."

One day when I happened to drop in for a quick visit at Pat's house, she and I ended up assembling shipping boxes in her basement next to the kiln room for her granddaughter's successful "plate" business. It was "so Pat" to have an industry going on in her basement that was inspired by her mother's magnificent china and her husband's successful nine goal polo career. Her granddaughter, Cynthia, is the recipient of her inspiration.

Pat was also known for being able to spot the most suitable polo ponies – never was there a horse bought without Pat's full approval. Her opinions of horses are legendary.

She has left her children with a strong sense of being. Patricia, her only daughter, loves Westbury House and does endless work there. She is organized, very talented, fun to work with, and is also very encouraging to new volunteers. Her sons, Alan and Russell carry on the tradition of accomplishment in polo and racquet sports for which the Coreys are so well known. Her grandchildren now have the legacy that their parents had with Granny Grace (Pat Corey's mother). And what a fine legacy that is.

Now that Pat is gone, we must carry on with the knowledge we gained from knowing her. I thank her for having touched our lives in the way that she did. She still will – always.

Pat Corey left us on January 13, 2007.

~Julie Rinaldini





Preservation News

As the Gardens prepares for the opening of a new season, visitors will see numerous projects underway throughout the property and Westbury House.

From the East Gates of the Walled Garden there is a view of the statue of *Milo of Crotona*. From the West Gates, the view is that of the estate buildings on the former Boegner property. The West Gates, attributed to distinguished metalworker Robert Bakewell, are topped with a monogram, "M and P" for Margarita Phipps, Peggie's beloved mother. Peggie always called the Walled Garden her "mother's garden;" and it was Peggie's favorite as well. These wrought iron gates are badly in need of restoration.

Work on the Walled Garden Pergola and trellis continues as a detailed examination of the wooden members of the elaborate structure is made and beams earmarked for replacement. The cedar shingle roof on the nearby potting shed is being replaced, and carpentry repairs are also being made to the adjoining Palm House. The potting shed contains a display of early 20th century tools and garden implements, and the Palm House is being used for lectures and programs as weather permits.

Closer to Westbury House, the swimming pool area will continue to be



Wallpaper in Peggie's bedroom . . . Cedar shingle roof on the potting shed

restored. The Preservation Committee has overseen creation of a supplementary drainage system to direct water away from the upper balcony area. This will aid in keeping water from infiltrating into the stucco facing above the wooden columns and causing the column bases to deteriorate. Stucco repairs will be made to the lower level concrete walls. The deteriorated limestone steps leading to the pond will be reset.

In the house, the leaking dormer outside of Peggie's bedroom on the third floor has been restored. Through guidance from Cooper-Hewitt Museum, we have identi-

fied a conservator who can help us determine a course of action for taking care of the hand painted wallpaper in this room. A portion of the paper surrounding the dormer window has been damaged by water and will be removed. The scenic wallpaper incorporates architectural features in a mythical landscape replete with peacocks and perpetual blue skies. The Preservation Committee will also be reviewing the room's paint finishes and making appropriate repairs.



Volunteer Program

Your Gardens needs you – to be a volunteer. Old Westbury Gardens is possible only through the fine contributions of many people, including this wonderful core of devoted individuals. Our volunteers fill a number of indispensable roles, including working as Docents (Tour Guides), Gardeners, Gift Shop Associates, Receptionists, Plant Shop Associates, Public Programs/Events Assistants, and Clerical Assistants.

If you think you or someone you know may be interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Jamie Watkis, our Volunteer Coordinator, at 516-333-0048, ext. 302. Or click on the Volunteering Opportunities link on our web site at www.oldwestburygardens.org for more information, including a downloadable volunteer application.

Winter at the Gardens...



*The East Lake from the Temple of Love...
Kim Johnson trimming in the Walled Garden*



An Abe Lincoln dog visits during Presidents' Weekends



Preservation or Restoration

Excerpts from Grounds Supervisor Maura McGoldrick's talk in the Red Ballroom on February 7.

For many homeowners, the task of keeping a tree alive for 100 years is a daunting one. Wind, disease, or drought claim most plants long before they reach their maturity. Old Westbury Gardens has lost trees to each of these factors over the years but many of our plantings have now reached maturity and keep growing! So, the task we are faced with is not keeping trees alive, but deciding what to do with them when they have outgrown their landscape. Do we continue to preserve individual trees, which may be larger than the landscape architect intended? Or, do we remove the existing tree and replant its successor, thereby preserving the overall landscape for future generations? If we allow trees to keep growing until they eventually fail, we may be left with a landscape that is very different from the one the Phipps family viewed from Westbury House.

Those of you who are frequent visitors may have already noticed renovation projects that have been started in the gardens. The decision was made to replant the cherry trees in the Walled Garden last



Renovating the lawn behind the servants' area of Westbury House

spring because some of the cherries had started to decline and the others were so large that they obstructed the views to the lower borders. Similarly, the crabapples in the Walled Garden were removed in 2003. The original crabapples were beginning to degenerate. There were pest and disease problems and the older, spreading branches made it almost impossible to see "through" the borders as the architect intended. The crabapples were removed and replaced with a superior cultivar named 'Tina', which only reaches a little over 5' at maturity, and has improved pest and disease resistance.

The gardens are always growing. Although we do our best to insure that our plants live a long and healthy life, there are times when the choice has to be made to

remove older plants to make room for their successors. Bill Alexander, the historian at the Biltmore Estate, released a statement during the renovation of their tulip poplar allée. His words can easily apply to the restoration of our garden areas.

"I think the most important thing to understand is that while we can preserve a landscape, we cannot preserve and keep alive every individual tree and shrub in it forever," said Alexander. "Trees are living things, and just as annuals last for a season, perennials last several seasons, and trees are for many seasons, the time comes when you cannot expect them to live and be healthy for that much longer and you replace them."



The South Allée in a mid-March snowstorm



Tea and Tour on the West Porch... Josephine and Julian Robertson, Honorary Chairpersons of the December Dinner Party



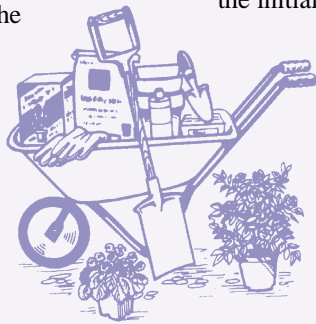
Spring Plant Sale

This year's Spring Plant Sale is May 3-6. In addition to the usual ten percent discount, Old Westbury Gardens' Members will have first pick of each day's selections from 9-10am, prior to the sale being open to the general public from 10am-5pm.

As described by Assistant Director of Horticulture, Kim Johnson, these are some of the many plants that will be available. In the event of severe weather or crop failure, some substitutions may be made.

SUN PERENNIALS

The 2007 Perennial Plant of the Year is *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low' (Catmint). This long growing 18-24" tall Catmint has



become increasingly popular due to lovely, aromatic, blue-violet flowers, and long blooming time. Catmints are easy to grow with very low maintenance. Used prolifically in the Walled Garden to edge the flower borders and walkways, the gardeners prune the plants two-thirds when the initial flowers fade to keep neat and tidy. The only requirements for these low maintenance plants are full sun and well draining soil. Catmint is a perfect foil for early and late perennials, and a classic companion for planting around roses. For a wildlife conscious garden, Catmint will be visited constantly by an array of bees and butterflies. As with all Catmints, this plant does contain the chemical which attracts cats.

Some evidence supports the claim that 'Walker's Low' does not inspire



extensive feline activity.

Other Catmints available: *Nepeta* 'Snowflake.' A white flowering form 10-12" tall. Mass planting can be viewed around the central fountain of the Walled Garden. *Nepeta* 'Little Titch.' Deep lavender-blue flowers, 8" tall. *Nepeta* 'Kit Kat.' This is the most dwarf Nepeta yet, containing tiny leaves smaller than that of 'Little Titch' with a somewhat stiffer habit. Deep blue-purple flowers, 6-8" tall.

Echinacea (Coneflower). Due to many new introductions, everyone is going "Cone Crazy." Grow in full sun, and well draining soil. Long blooming time in mid summer. 'Big Sky Sunrise,' 30" tall. Large 3-4" diameter lemon yellow blooms with golden-green cone. Fragrant.

'Big Sky Sunset,' 30" tall. Rust colored cone, coral petals with salmon tips, 3-4" across.

Other *Echinacea* varieties will be available.

Phlox paniculata (Garden Phlox). Newer mildew resistant varieties make

English Roses in the garden



The rose collection in the Walled Garden was redesigned in 2002. Many of the new roses planted are David Austin English Roses, which have been gaining popularity in the US since the

1970's. The "English Roses" as the group is called have a unique charm all their own. They are bred to have the flower shapes and growth habits reminiscent of old fashioned plants, but with repeat flowering and other characteristics of more modern roses. These newer types are the most fragrant and are available in many different, delicate and rich shades of colorful blossoms.

The growth habits of English Roses are conducive to being used to excellent effects in a number of ways. Most vari-

eties are shrub roses and are at home being grown in a mix flower border. Their large blooms combine nicely with the lighter texture of perennials around them. The perennial plants also cover the bare legs of the bottom of the roses. English Roses also have the benefit of continuous flowering or reflowering, which adds a boost of more color later in the season.

In the Walled Garden, there are groupings of three shrubs each in some of the borders such as: 'The Dark Lady,' 'Graham Stewart Thomas,' 'Golden Celebration,' 'Gertrude Jekyll,' and 'Heritage.' Some varieties produce canes that can reach 8-10 feet and can be trained as short climbers. The height and habit of these roses work well on the rose posts and chains in the Walled Garden. Some prime examples are: 'Tess of the Durbervilles' and 'Benjamin Britten.'

Visit the Walled Garden in June, and then choose your favorites at the Plant Shop for your own garden. These are some of the varieties available (dimensions referenced are height by width):

Benjamin Britten. Flowers are a strong salmon pink that changes with age

to a particularly strong shade of pure pink. Deeply cupped flowers open to a slightly cupped rosette. Can be pruned to keep at medium height or allowed to grow into a climber. 4' x 3'. Fragrance is intensely fruity.

Gertrude Jekyll. The flowers open to form perfect scrolled buds into the most beautiful, large, rosette-shaped flowers of a rich glowing pink. The growth is upright and vigorous. 4' x 3.5', or a short 8' climber.

Golden Celebration. One of the largest-flowered and most magnificent of the English Roses. Its color is rich golden yellow and the flowers are in the form of giant, full-petaled cups. It has excellent shapely growth, forming a nicely rounded, slightly arching shrub with ample foliage. Reliable and easy to grow. 4.5' x 4.5'. Flowers sweetly scented.

Graham Thomas. Rose has cupped flowers of medium size; their color being a rich and pure yellow. The growth is upright but bushy and very vigorous, with shiny, pale green, disease-resistant leaves. 5' x 4' or a climber of 10-12'. Fresh Tea Rose scent.

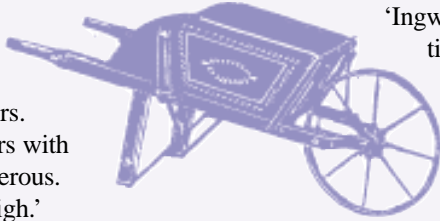


this old fashion flower easier to grow and enjoy. Grow in full sun. Flowers mid summer. 'David.' Pure white flowers on bright green foliage. 3-4' tall.

Most mildew resistant variety. Used extensively in the Walled Garden borders.

'Laura.' Purple flowers with white eye. Very floriferous. 24-30" tall. 'Nora Leigh.'

Prominent, creamy-white leaf margins. Lavender-pink flowers, 30" tall. Useful as a foliage accent. 'Robert Poore.' Medium to deep pink, lightly fragrancd flowers. Red tinged foliage. 4-5' tall. Used in the Walled Garden borders.



with tree roots. Mass plantings of Epimedium can be seen in the Cottage Garden under a very old Silver Maple.

Geranium macrorrhizum

'Ingwersen's Variety.' A decorative perennial Geranium that edges the Lilac Walk.

Produces spreading weed-smothering mounds, 12-18" tall. Pale lavender-pink flowers

in May and June. Scented semi-evergreen foliage. Red fall/winter foliage. Partial shade to full sun perennial that is dry shade tolerant.

Heuchera 'Obsidian.' Another new exciting dark leaf Heuchera variety. Black-purple shiny, smooth foliage all season. This one really stands out. 10" height in foliage, 24" in flower. Partial shade to full sun with adequate moisture.



ANNUALS/TENDER PERENNIALS

A variety of annuals will be available to make selections for your seasonal sun or shade containers. Horticultural staff will be on hand to help you create colorful plant combinations.

Begonia boliviensis. Bright, eye-catching profusion of red-orange flowers. Dark green foliage has serrated edges highlighted by a red margin, and a neat, bushy growth habit. For sun to partial shade.

Fuchsia 'Professor Henkel.' Light orange, long tubular blooms set off by dark foliage. Height 30-36". Partial shade and indirect light.

Scirpus cernuus. Fiber Optic Grass. Very fine bright green stems with a small flower on the tip drapes wonderfully over the edge of a pot. Grows in moist soils in full sun.

SHADE PERENNIALS

Epimedium 'Lilifee.' (Barrenwort), One of the showiest of Epimediums. Lavender-violet nodding flowers on 9-12" stalks. Small scale groundcover that is shade and drought tolerant. Can compete

Heritage. Blooms have a cupped formation and are a soft, clear pink. Almost thornless stems. 5' x 4'.

Sharifa Asma. Blooms form a loose rosette of delicate blush pink.

Strong fruity fragrance. 4' x 3' or short climber.

Tess of the Durbervilles. Large bright crimson colored blossoms. Flowers are deeply cupped shape then eventually curving back. Growth is robust, bushy and spreading. Leaves are dark green. 4' x 3.5' or 6-8' climber. Lovely old rose fragrance.

The Dark Lady. Large sumptuous blooms with the most wonderful range of colors from crimson to dark purple. Attractive, rounded and well branched shrub. 4' x 4'. Good old rose fragrance.

Abraham Darby. One of the most splendid of the English Roses. Bears numerous, very large cup-shaped flowers in shades of apricot and yellow, becoming tinted with pink as they age. 5' x 5' or a short 8' climber. Rich, sharp fruity fragrance.



Andrew Loessel

Julianne Frascinella had been with the Gardens since joining us as a summer horticultural intern in 2002. She left at the end of February to return to her native New Hampshire, opening the gate for Andrew Loessel to take over as Cottage/Rose Garden Supervisor.

Andrew, who has a B.F.A. in Interior Design from Pratt Institute, started here as Plant Shop Coordinator in April of 2004, working his way to Greenhouse Assistant two years later,

Changes in the garden



Melne Thomas

and to this new position as of March.

Assuming Andrew's former position in the greenhouse is Melne Thomas. Melne, who lives in Moriches, has been with the Gardens since April of 2006, where she too worked as Plant Shop Coordinator.



**The Dianne Wittlinger
Memorial Tree Fund
and The Volunteer Tree Fund**

Donations to both funds have been received from November, 2006 – February, 2007 in memory of the individuals as follows:

- Fernanda Konstant Nee Arquilla
- Anthony Bruno • Santa Bruno
- Patricia Corey • Theresa DeRespino
- Louise Eide • Thomas Eide
- Jean Emmert • Gustave Gaguski
- Helen Gaguski • John Galanaugh
- Nancy Gay • Mildred Giangreco
- Ann S. Healion • Peter F. Karches
- Abraham Krasnoff • Kevin Lanigan
- Raymond Lorenzo • Albert Lyons
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- Katherine Meyer • Neil Bruce Miloro
- Margaret Polimeni • Cyndi Schulman
- Neil Scotto • Adele Seglia
- Alexander B. Slater • Joseph Smorto
- Anthony Zesare • Laura Zesare



Music in the gardens

Now in their thirteenth year as Artists-in-Residence at Old Westbury Gardens, Poetica Musica will present two spring concerts in the Red Ballroom, Faces of France on May 12, and a Concert of the Two Americas, Part IV on June 2. In the summer, Picnic Pops returns to run for five consecutive Wednesdays (weather permitting), kicking off with Vince Giordano and his Nighthawks on July 11 through a performance of the Glenn Miller Orchestra on August 8. For more details on these and other concerts, including our Beech Tree schedule, and a Labor Day Weekend Mozart Festival, make sure to hold on to your copy of our soon to be released 2007 Journal, *Notes from the Garden: A Season of Music*.

Plant a Row

Old Westbury Gardens is again participating in the Garden Writers Association nationwide program – Plant a Row for the Hungry. All produce from the



Demonstration Gardens will be delivered to the Interfaith Nutrition Network's soup kitchen in Hempstead. Please join us

in this effort by planting an extra row, or two, of vegetables or herbs in your home garden.

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(1906-2006)
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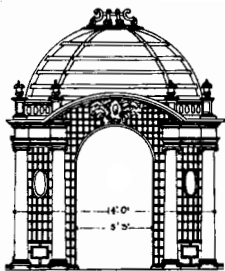
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SPRING 2007

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