

Clippings from the Gardens, Summer 2008





President's Letter

The Designer Showhouse is now history; but it was extremely well received. It provided an opportunity for thousands of visitors, many of whom were already familiar with Westbury House, the home where our founder Peggie Phipps grew up, to be welcomed into Orchard Hill, the other home she loved so dearly, and where she spent most of her life. It also provided a backdrop for all our visitors to share and better appreciate the recent acquisitions of these 34 majestic acres.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank our Trustees who endorsed the plans to proceed with the showhouse, and Barbara Bancroft, who, as Showhouse Chair, skillfully orchestrated this event from concept to completion. Barbara helped create a team headed by Hamptons Showhouse's Tony Manning, that included Honorary Chair Mario Buotta, all the wonderful committee members, individual designers, trades people, and our own talented staff, all of whom worked together seamlessly. I also wish to offer a special debt of gratitude to our volunteer docents who committed their time and knowledge throughout the seven week duration of the showhouse.

As a result of the hard work and creativity of these designers and skilled trades people, the Gardens received hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of improvements and restoration. Most importantly, it gave us a jump start in introducing the public to this magnificent addition of property and structures that are now a permanent part of the Gardens.

One task at hand is the development of a strategic plan that addresses the future uses of Orchard Hill in the areas of education and interpretation, while remaining thoughtful and respectful of the property.



The Deepdale Club House

Inaugural Golf Drive

On Monday, August 25, Old Westbury Gardens held our inaugural golf tournament at Deepdale Golf Club in Manhasset. It wasn't easy choosing from the many challenging courses recommended by our supporters. But after a number of inquiries, we decided on Deepdale.

The grounds of the course were originally a 167-acre farm called Tullaroan, named for a village in County Kilkenny in Ireland. The farm was purchased in 1911 by Joseph P. Grace, and converted to a country estate for use as a family home. Joseph P. Grace was a cousin of Margarita C. Grace,

who would become Mrs. John S. Phipps.

When the estate was sold in 1955 to become the Deepdale Golf Club, it was perfectly suited for golf with its rolling hills, trees, privacy, and sense of tradition. The former home, a beautiful Georgian colonial, is now used as the club house.

Old Westbury Gardens chose Deepdale for our golf tournament to assure that our guests would enjoy the same standard of excellence as do our visitors to the Gardens. In that spirit, the field was limited to a total of 18 foursomes, to ensure an extraordinary golf experience.



This addition, which includes Peggie's former home, will allow us to shift some of our programs and activities to this new location, and in the process, reduce any event scheduling conflicts at Westbury House. The use of Orchard Hill has already allowed us to vastly improve our internship program with on-site housing and the refurbished studio space is being utilized and appreciated by those attending programs there.

Old Westbury Gardens has already

stood alone on our reputation as one of the finest examples of gardens and historic homes open to the public. These new opportunities will strengthen this position as well as introduce Old Westbury to future generations of enthusiastic and appreciative visitors.



Showhouse rooms included the Living Room, Library...



Entry Foyer and Dining Room.



Gardeners' Fair

This year's Gardeners' Fair on May 31, which was attended by over 300 guests, was a great success, due in large part to the hard working Gardeners' Fair committee, led by its enthusiastic and motivated chairperson, Luciene Salomone. Inspired by the art and design of the Art Deco movement, Scarsella's Florist and our Décor Committee transformed a portion of the Gardens into a beautiful backdrop awash in amethyst and lavender.

The funds raised through ticket sales, underwriting and live and silent auctions at this important event will help Old Westbury Gardens to continue preserve our grounds and run our programs. Thanks to all for a fine effort.



From left, Julie and Luis Rinaldini with Committee Chairman Luciene Salomone

Giuliana Salomone and her friend Ella Cushman take an inside peak at one of the auction items, an enchanting playhouse



OWG Hosts UN

On June 11, Old Westbury Gardens played host to the spouses of United Nations diplomats. This visit was organized by the United Nations Hospitality Committee, run by Carol Shuttleworth. Thirty spouses and some of their children met at Westbury House, enjoyed lunch on the West Porch, and were given tours of the house and gardens. Since most UN families don't get many opportunities to visit areas outside the confines of New York City, they were particularly impressed by the size and the beauty of the Gardens' grounds.

Old Westbury Gardens could not have hosted this lovely international event without the help of some exceptional women who agreed to be our own ambassadors: Gigi Sheldon, Elaine Schwartzreich, Carol Large, Rita Castagna, Marianne Cattier, Kristin Miller, Tess Mullarkey, and Terry Phipps.

Orchard Hill Challenge Grant

Old Westbury Gardens is fortunate to have received a Challenge Grant from a private foundation to assist us in completing our Orchard Hill acquisition. If we can raise \$100,000, this grant will match the donations.

The support of our trustees, major supporters, and several foundations has taken us far along on our quest to raise a total of \$3.1 million. But we still face raising the final \$200,000 in order to complete the acquisition and provide immediate improvements to the property. This grant is "dollar for dollar"; so even the smallest donation will help us in reaching our goal.

Old Westbury Gardens is located in a Special Groundwater Protection Area designated by New York State. This specific open space provides an important recharge area to protect and purify our drinking water. Considering that three million people depend upon this aquifer for their water, it's crucially important to protect it from contamination.

Please join us in this last step to protect our environment and preserve this place of beauty.



Some of the open space at Orchard Hill



Wolfgang's All Here Again

This Labor Day Weekend, Old Westbury Gardens will once again host the Long Island Mozart Festival. World-class classical performances will be presented by the Orchestre de Chambre Francais, violinist Anastasia Khitruk, pianists Alexander Panizza and Tatiana Goncharova, and The Kende Trio.

The festival begins on Friday, August 29, with an 8pm performance, "Mozart Under the Stars." On each of the next three days, there will be a Youth Ensemble Program at 3pm, followed (new this year) by a Dance Ensemble Program at 4pm, and the Mainstage Concert at 5pm. Mozart selections performed will include *Serenade for Strings*, *Concerto No. 3 for Violin and Orchestra*, *Concerto No. 24 for Piano and Orchestra*, and *Piano Quartet in Eb Major*. Works by other composers, including Chopin and Saint-Saëns, will also be featured. The Mainstage Concert on Monday, September 1, will conclude



Visitors at last year's Mozart Festival dance to some hits from the 1780's . . . Violinist Tatiana Goncharova.

with the world premiere of *Concerto Green for Violin, Piano, and Orchestra*. Based on a Mozart theme, this new work by David Winkler, Executive and Artistic Director of Chamber Players International, was written specifically for the Long Island Mozart Festival.

Activities will include carriage rides, historic dancing and fencing demonstrations. For children, there will be Punch and Judy shows, face painting, sand art,



croquet, and that old favorite from 1787 that's on the tip of everyone's tongue, Musikalisches Würfelpiel, the Mozart music composing game.

General admission for Old Westbury Gardens members will be at a special discounted price of \$5.00. As always, children 6 and under are free.



Poetica Musica

Poetica Musica, artists-in-residence at Old Westbury Gardens, will be performing two more Saturday evening concerts this season. On September 20, the chamber group will present *Pleasures from the Salons of Vienna*. Soprano Eleanor Valkenburg, pianist, Maria Antonia Garcia, cellist Eugene Moye, and guests will present works by Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven.

On October 18, the renowned pianist, Gilbert Kalish, will join Maria Antonia Garcia for a program entitled *Ten Fingers, One Piano*. In addition to compositions by Schubert, Mozart, and Ravel, the magnificent Fantasy in F minor for piano duet by Franz Schubert will be among the major piano four-hands works presented.

Gilbert Kalish has become a major figure on both the American and International musical scene. As an educator, he is Leading Professor and Head of Performance Activities SUNY Stony Brook. He was also served as the "Chairman of the Faculty" at Tanglewood Music Center. Mr. Kalish's discography encompasses classical repertory, 20th Century masterworks and new compositions. Of special note are his solo recordings of Charles Ives' Concord Sonata and Sonatas of Joseph Haydn, and landmarks of the 20th Century such as Carter, Crumb and Schoenberg. In 1995 he was presented with the Paul Fromm Award by the University of Chicago Music Department for distinguished service to the music of our time.



A Day at the Beech

Sunday afternoon visitors enjoyed cool breezes and warm music at our Beech Tree Concert Series, including this performance featuring Suzanne Mueller and Joseph Rutkowski, Jr.





Development Director Doreen Banks (left), President John Norbeck, and Chairman Mary Phipps welcome visitors to the Orchard Hill Decorator Showhouse



A dead tree begins its comedown in the Pinetum

Spring into Summer at the Gardens



Docent John Deignan begins a tour of the grounds awash in the bright colors of Rhododendron . . . A patriotic picnicker relaxes at our Independence Day celebration



A Picnic Pops audience enjoys the sounds of Vince Giordano's Nighthawks. . . Horticulture Director Maura Brush trims the Westbury House ivy



Yoga classes stretch out through September



NY State Tourism cameramen record material for the I Love New York website



Preservation News

Preservation projects are underway, or have been completed, on a number of structures at the Gardens. In preparation for the Designer Showhouse at Orchard Hill, our talented operations staff made significant repairs to the mid 19th century farm buildings recently acquired by Old Westbury Gardens. The living room of the pink guest cottage was jacked-up and leveled by over eight inches. The artist's studio needed foundation repairs where a tree trunk had disturbed the foundation. Gutters were repaired, board and batten siding was repaired or replaced, and extensive window stabilization was performed. At the main house at Orchard Hill, windows that had been altered to accommodate air conditioners were restored to an earlier appearance.

The colonnade by the swimming pool has presented challenges since its design by Boston landscape architect, Paul R. Smith, and its construction in 1918. It acts as a dam to support the height of the land that was deposited to facilitate the magnificent views enjoyed from the South Terrace – the inspiring sweep of the South Allée and to the east, the romantic Temple of Love at the edge of the East Lake. Descending from the terrace towards the balcony atop the colonnade and shell mosaics at the lower level, there is an abrupt drop in the landscape creating the overlook. Key to stabilizing the water infiltration into the balcony and the support piers on either end is a drainage system that alleviates the considerable hydrostatic pressure coming downhill from the terrace. The horticulture and operations staffs have been gently regrading the slope. This has been eased by a system of French drains that carry water away from the center of the balcony and around the piers. As the Preservation Committee assessed the success of this approach, it was confident that masonry repairs could proceed to the colonnade area. Repairs have progressed and the colonnade is now stable and ready for its finish coats of elastomeric paint.

The Palm House is undergoing carpentry repairs including drip and verge boards and sills. As the operations staff has worked its way up to the steel framing, they are encountering significant deterioration in the valleys with some older



Maintenance Carpenters Steve Lygren and John DeMaille see through some Palm House repairs . . . Maintenance Carpenter Mike Grimaldi works on the pool colonnade

repairs that may have impeded proper drainage. Double paned glass is being carefully removed, cleaned of any old adhesives, and new wood rafters are being carefully reproduced.

All drawings and specifications for restoration of the Walled Garden Pergola dome and trellis are ready, and all bid documents prepared. The Gardens will be selecting a contractor in mid-September. Work will commence soon after.

The main flat roof at Westbury House and a flat roof on the servant's wing will both be repaired in September. The challenge with the particular application of membrane material was how to terminate the fabric without creating an unsightly



border that would impact the architectural integrity of the house. The Preservation Committee successfully negotiated a change in the installation method with the manufacturer, and is ready to proceed.



A Bronx Tale

On a gorgeous day in late June, 50 people from the Old Westbury Gardens family, including volunteers, staff, and members, embarked on a day trip to the Bronx. In the morning, we visited Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum and Gardens, a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City nestled in Pelham Bay Park. The site, which is normally closed on Tuesdays, was opened to accommodate us, and we were graciously guided throughout the house, grounds, and carriage house. In addition to learning a good deal of history about the Bronx, the visit provided an interesting opportunity to experience a different style of tour presentation, and to compare and contrast it with our own.

We then moved on to Wave Hill, a 28 acre public garden and cultural center. We

bought lunch in their fabulous cafe, and dined on a picturesque terrace overlooking the Hudson River. After eating and browsing in a very modern and diverse gift shop, we were broken into three groups and taken on tours of the grounds. Giving a little bit of background on the property's past owners, and much horticulture, our tour took us around winding hilly paths, revealing many garden nooks, exquisite vistas, and rare trees and shrubs planted in graded and contoured land (much like a wavy hill) to blend with the Hudson River highlands.

We are looking forward to planning another volunteer bus trip for the fall. For more information on volunteer trips, or for volunteering opportunities at Old Westbury Gardens, please contact Jamie Watkis, our Volunteer Coordinator, at 516-333-0048, ext 302, jwatkis@oldwestburygardens.org.



Lotus Position

Among the many unique features of the Walled Garden to be viewed at various times of the year, mid to late summer is the prime blooming season for the aquatic plants in the pool. Although often referred to simply as the “Lily Pool,” this water is actually home to three distinct types of plants: hardy lilies, lotus, and tropical lilies.

The white flowering hardy lilies, which have a rhizome root system, grow in the middle and the back area of the pool. The brightly colored tropical lilies, which are grown from bulbs, float near the front. And the tall, majestic lotuses, which have roots of elongated tubers, surround the fountain in the center of the pool. The hardy lilies and lotus remain in the pool all year, receding into a dormant state during the colder months. But because tropical lilies thrive best in minimum water temperatures of 70 degrees, new plants are introduced each year in early July, which are then removed in early fall. The installation, removal, and maintenance of these aquatic plants is



Walled Garden Assistant Mary Ellen Albers performs some pool maintenance

undertaken by our horticulture staff, who wade out into the three foot depth of the pool outfitted in what we hope is waterproof clothing.

At least every other year, the pond is drained and totally cleaned. (The goldfish don't seem to mind their temporary tank residence). Every four years, plants are added, removed, or divided as is necessary. All the plants are supplied by S. Scherer and Sons, a family business in Northport which, like the lily pool, has been around for over a hundred years.

A particularly interesting aspect of the lotus plant is the self-cleaning property exhibited by its leaves. Their unique structure and waxy surface are such that water rolls right off like from a duck's back, taking away dirt and just about anything else that might land on it. This characteristic is also found in some other plants such as nasturtium. But the common name for this superhydrophobicity belongs to our friends in the pool: The Lotus Effect.



Peter DeBlasi Appointed Director of Maintenance

John Norbeck, President and CEO of Old Westbury Gardens, recently announced the appointment of Peter DeBlasi to the position of Director of Maintenance.

Pete's long tenure at the Gardens began in 1983. Following in the footsteps of his brother Mike, who was the Gardens' Arborist, Pete worked on a seasonal basis while attending East Stroudsburg University and Dowling College. After graduating from Dowling, Pete became a full time employee in 1989, working with George Wittlinger in the Restoration and Visitor Services Department. Pete's projects included everything from restoring statues, the swimming pool, pergola, tennis house, and other structures on the grounds, to managing the Picnic Pops Concert Series.

Pete left the Gardens in 1998, moving



Pete DeBlasi getting up in the world

to Greenwich, Connecticut to become the Property Manager for the National Audubon Society. There he was involved in a myriad number of restoration and landscaping programs, including rehabilitating old buildings, bringing mature meadows and fields back to their original landscapes, and creating natural environments for many types of wildlife.

Upon moving back to Long Island in 2002, Pete rejoined the Gardens on a part time basis while working as a home improvement contractor, prior to returning full time in 2006. All at Old Westbury Gardens wish Pete the best in his new position.





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

Donations to both funds have been received from April through July, 2008, in memory of the individuals as follows:

- Edmund Bartlett
- Joseph B. Conolly M.D.
- Marie Deery
- Dorothy Hausler
- Joan Hawkey
- J. Victor Herd
- Alice J. Langevin
- Gerda Lenhart
- Charles McAuley
- Gary S. Paston
- Richard H. Robinson
- Anna Vaiana Cavanagh
- Cheryl Warner
- Cliff Wicke
- Dean Widner

Save the Dates

Upcoming member-only events at Old Westbury Gardens include the following:

Oct. 2 or Oct 3: **Twilight Garden Stroll** – In our way of saying thank you for being a member, enjoy a beautiful evening strolling through the house and gardens while enjoying wonderful music, drinks, and catered hors d'oeuvres. There is no charge; but because space is limited, please register for one evening only.

Dec. 21: **Members' Holiday Party** – Be our guest for an end-of-the-season-party as we close Westbury House for the winter.

Upcoming events for members at the Friends level (and Patron, Contributor, and Benefactor levels) include:

Sept. 9: **Friends Meeting and Luncheon**

Oct. 7: **Friends Meeting and Private Art Tour**

Oct. 16: **Atlantic Avenue (Brooklyn) Gourmet Tour**

Nov. 4: **Friends Meeting and Floral Presentation**

Nov.13: **Lecture and Exhibition: Mrs. Strong's History of Stationery**

Dec. 8: **Friends Meeting and Holiday Luncheon**

For more information on Members' and Friends' events, please contact Jana Ryan at (516) 333-0048, ext. 309,



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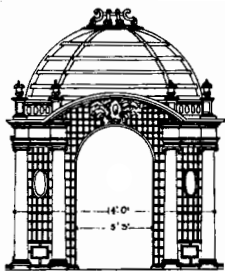
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Old Westbury Gardens
Post Office Box 430
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SUMMER 2008

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