



A Publication of The Preservation Society of Newport County

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NewportMansions.org

### OUR MISSION

Great Houses connect people to a nation's heritage and open windows to another age. The Preservation Society of Newport County is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect, preserve, and present an exceptional collection of house museums and landscapes in one of the most historically intact cities in America. We hold in public trust the Newport Mansions which are an integral part of the living fabric of Newport, Rhode Island. These sites exemplify three centuries of the finest achievements in American architecture, decorative arts, and landscape design spanning the Colonial era to the Gilded Age. Through our historic properties, educational programs, and related activities we engage the public in the story of America's vibrant cultural heritage. We seek to inspire and promote an appreciation of the value of preservation to enrich the lives of people everywhere.

### PRESERVATION SOCIETY PROPERTIES

Arnold Burying Ground (1675) Hunter House (circa 1748) Kingscote (1839-1841) Chateau-sur-Mer (1851-1852) Green Animals Topiary Garden (circa 1860) Chepstow (1860-1861) Isaac Bell House (1881-1883) Osgood Pell House (1887-1888) Marble House (1888-1892) The Breakers (1893-1895) The Breakers (1893-1895) The Breakers Stable & Carriage House (1895) The Elms (1899-1901) Rosecliff (1899-1902) Rovensky Park (1959)

Photography Credits: John E. Corbett, Andrea Hansen, David Hansen, Hawk Visual, Debra Hunt, InVicta Entertainment, Patricia Miller, Sandy Nesbitt, Kate Petterson, Alison Cohen Rosa/HBO, Gary Ruff & Destenie Vital

Cover Image: Sunken Garden, The Elms



Students tour The Breakers using the audio tour app.



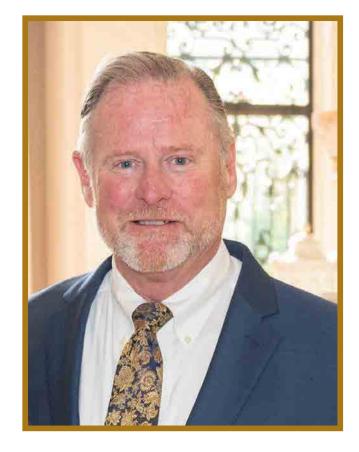
Newport Flower Show guests



Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival guests



Preservation Society members attending the 2022 Annual Meeting



# Chairman's Report

Presented by William F. Lucey III From the Annual Meeting June 9, 2022

Good evening and welcome to the 77th annual meeting of The Preservation Society of Newport County. Wow, seventy-seven years, there was a time in my life that I thought that was an eternity, but the older I get, the younger seventy-seven seems to get! But with age comes wisdom. When I think about all the people who have spent their time (and treasure) to help make the Preservation Society so successful and multiply that number by 77 years, the 77 years starts to seem eternal again.

I've always liked numbers. There is strength in numbers. We are fortunate to have many important, impactful non-profit organizations in our community and tonight, I'd like to take a moment to recognize four talented directors who are leaving four pre-eminent local non-profits – all have been tremendous friends and partners to the Preservation Society.

- Ruth Taylor, Newport Historical Society
- Mark Thompson, Newport Restoration Foundation, who recently bought a home in New Jersey
- Miki Ohlsen, Island Moving Company
- Doug Stark, Tennis Hall of Fame Museum

Thank you for your contributions and for the time you spent making Newport a better place!

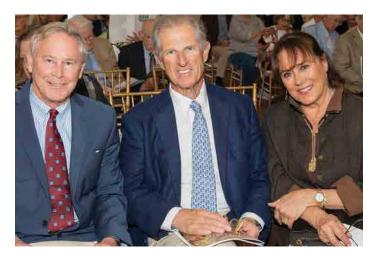
Time is becoming a real theme tonight, so I'll keep my remarks brief. Let's take a minute to think about the past two years. We had to close in March of 2020 at the very beginning of what we expected would be another good year of visitation. In early June 2020, we were the first museum in Rhode Island to re-open. 2020 was about survival, and survive we did. This past year has been about resilience, recovery and new beginnings.



Governor Daniel J. McKee addresses the audience at the 2022 Annual Meeting.



Julian Fellowes, Antiquarian Award recipient, joins the 2022 Annual Meeting via Zoom.



Peter Harris, Doug Newhouse & Holly Bannister



Serpentine Path at The Breakers

Speaking of new beginnings, one of the bright spots was the beginning of what we hope will be a long-lasting TV series, HBO's *The Gilded Age.* The show is important to us on several levels. It introduces our properties to a national audience. We know this because we see a spike in visits to our website just after an episode has run. It also brings national attention to one aspect of an era of American history which is unique to Newport. We seek to be known as a center for the study of architecture and interior design during America's Gilded Age.

Julian Fellowes, creator and producer of *The Gilded Age*, who we will hear from later, spoke to our Board of Trustees a few months ago and used a striking phrase. In Europe, he said, grand houses are far apart, but Newport is "a village of palaces." Think about that. What other small city in the world has a collection of magnificent mansions like Newport's? In response to the show, we are developing a new tour of places in our houses that were used in filming *The Gilded Age*.

Lord Fellowes' comments to the Board were made during our strategic planning retreat in March. His emphasis on telling stories that touch emotions has encouraged us to explore new ways to tell the story of Newport and America in the Gilded Age. We're pretty good at presenting the history of the families who built and resided in the mansions, but Lord Fellowes has shown us that the individuals who spent their time and contributed their talent to running the homes are equally interesting. Their stories need to be told, and we are preparing a new tour of Hunter House for this summer which will relate what we've been able to learn about the enslaved individuals who lived and/or worked there.

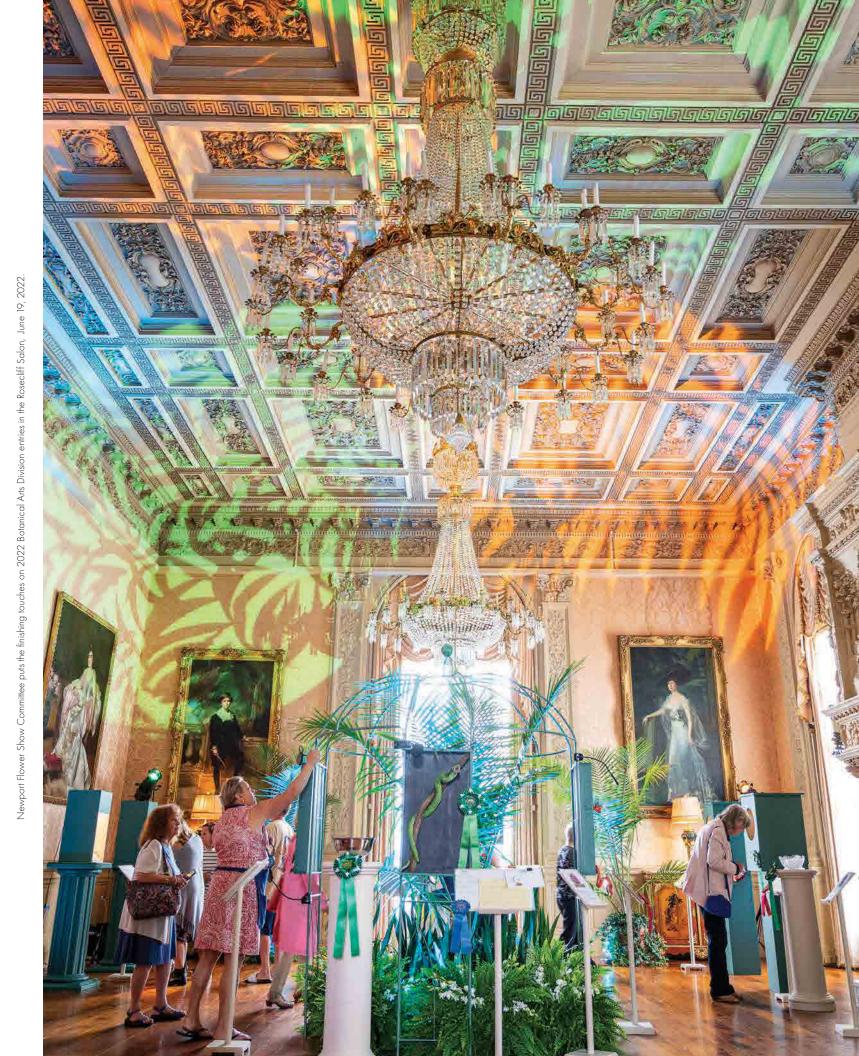
I just mentioned our strategic planning retreat. The Board of Trustees and staff are currently working on a five-year plan for the Society. The process will wrap up in July. One area of focus has been exploring ways of creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization in all aspects of what we do. Doing so will broaden our reach. Those efforts will affect the way we operate, invest and program. We have just completed several videos showing the Society as an exciting place to work. These videos are on the employment portion of our website to encourage prospective applicants of all races, creeds and colors to come work with us.

In connection with strategic planning, we commissioned a complete assessment of our buildings and mechanical systems and have already begun making and scheduling the necessary investments. In a minute, Treasurer Peter Harris will talk about the millions we must invest in our properties over the next five years. But I want to briefly talk about two projects that are of special interest to me.

The first is the restoration of the historic landscape at The Breakers. When we were designing the Welcome Center, we knew it was time to also restore the landscape. In the past few years, we restored two segments of the Serpentine Path, an important feature dating back to the original Breakers in the 1880s. This year, we are restoring a third segment of the path and will also begin work on returning the two driveways, from Ochre Point and Shepard Avenues, to their original design. This has all been made possible by funding from generous donors.

Another area of interest is the third floor of The Breakers, where the Szápáry family lived after the Preservation Society bought The Breakers in 1972 and opened the second floor for tours. It also has about 20 of the 40 rooms where servants lived. These spaces have scarcely been touched since the construction of The Breakers in 1895, and the strategic plan tasks the Board and staff with determining their best use, consistent with our mission of preserving, protecting and presenting.

In closing, I'd like to thank you, our members for your support, Trudy Coxe and the staff for their dedication to excellence, and my fellow Trustees and committee members who have been so supportive of our cause. The Society is in a better place now, and because of all of you we can look forward to the next 77 years.





# CEO & Executive Director's Report

By Trudy Coxe From the Annual Meeting June 9, 2022

It's been such a great year and there are so many people to thank:

- Julan Fellowes, who you'll hear from later, and whose July event sold out in less than 24 hours
- HBO
- Ulysses Dietz for our new exhibition at Rosecliff
- Dave Rogers for bringing "Big Bugs" to Green Animals
- Contractors who worked through the height of Covid. Unsung heroes.
- Our Board, chaired by Bill Lucey. So many ways in which you have helped.
- All of you our members your incredible donations, your time. Your 'Don't lose the faith' emails.
- And, finally, the staff of the PS. I'm going to take a bit of time to talk about them because it's easy to take for granted how much goes on behind the scenes.

That "somebody" story at your chairs. That's what we fight against every day of the week. And as a result, we could be a Harvard case study in management and that is why I'm honored to work alongside the team here.

We were the first museum in Rhode Island to reopen back in June 2020. We've been short staffed ever since.

- The volume of work has grown.
- We've spent inordinate amounts of time scheduling, rescheduling and then canceling events.
- We've had whole departments out with Covid all at the same time.
- So, we're like that duck calm on the surface but paddling hard underneath.

I give credit to the Preservation Society, and I ask those who might be here to please stand and I ask the senior team to come forward so that you get to see them firsthand. I'll introduce each and I'd like you to hold your applause to the end.

Jim Burress, Director of Finance

Maria Corey, Human Resources Director

Jeff Curtis, Director of Gardens and Landscapes

Jim Donahue, Curator for Gardens and Landscapes

Melanie Garcia, Director of Museum Experience

Sarah Iwanski, Director of Institutional Development

Leslie Jones, Director of Museum Affairs and Chief Curator

Laura Murphy, retiring Director of Retail Sales and our new Director, Cassandra van Cott (eight days on the job)

The dynamic team of Philip Pelletier, our Director of Special Events and Beverly Ware, who run all of our events. Beverly is back at the office handling the Zoom audience.

Barbara Shea, our marketing and communications guru

Mike Taber, Director of Properties

And, last but not least, Terry Dickinson, Chief of Staff.



Employees introduced at the Annual Meeting: (L to R) Philip Pelletier, Cassandra Van Cott, Laura Murphy, Leslie Jones, Sarah Iwanski, Melanie Garcia, Jim Donahue, Jeff Curtis & Maria Corey.



# Archival Traces, Untold Stories

"Archival Traces, Untold Stories" exhibit of historic document facsimiles related to the lives of people enslaved at Hunter House in the site's new Orientation Gallery, opened August 2022.

As Bill has mentioned, we've spent a lot of time planning, thinking about what we want the PS to be in five years. It's timely because the hardest edges of the world have been thrown at us in the last few years. We are going through massive change with very little understanding of what is ahead.

What planning has done for me is to force me to think about some of the fundamentals of our mission:

Why do we do what we do?

Why does preservation matter?

What's at the core of our work?

Lots of standard reasons. The houses of the Preservation Society are an economic powerhouse for their communities. We provide Newport with a worldwide identity. A prestigious one. Our buildings are unique and therefore should be saved.

But I think there is something more to why we do what we do. And I suspect that what drives me might be the same thing that drives you. Everyone here tonight, everyone on Zoom, we all have something in common – we are history fanatics. We are building junkies. We are culture vultures. We share that commonality.

So, what drives us?

My husband unfortunately couldn't be here tonight. If he were, I couldn't tell this story. So, do me a favor and don't mention this to him.

Several years ago, Jim and I went to see a marriage counselor, a psychologist.

## When I called for the appointment, the doctor asked why we wanted to meet with her. I said it was hard to explain.

Is it domestic violence, she asked. No.

Drug abuse? No.

Alcoholism? No.

Financial problems? No.

At which point she said, 'You gotta give me some idea about why you need this appointment.'

My answer - We lost our view.

And she said, well, I have never done view counseling but why don't you come on in.

The vacant lot in front of our house provided us with a full-scale view of upper Narragansett Bay, Rumford and the Squantum Club, an 1870s Lighthouse. That lot was sold, and, within a matter of months, developed.

We lost our view. But it was something more. We lost our touch point with something that was beautiful. We lost our touch point with something that gave us joy and delight – through times of stress and unhappiness and uncertainty.

So, I guess we were in mourning about having lost something special, something that we loved. Today, thanks to our doctor (who told us frequently that she'd never had patients like us), we have a beautifully landscaped backyard. Our vision is focused away from the Bay; and that intrusive house has been hidden.



56 students from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newport County & St. Michael's Country Day School debuted their Picket Fence Self-Portraits at the 2022 Newport Flower Show. The fence enclosed a flower garden.

It may sound shallow or trivial or superficial, but I can't help but wonder if emotions like these drive all of us to "save" what is important to us. The touch points that provide you with normalcy in your life. That validate why you're here. Familiar places that provide you comfort. Or that bring you joy.

I believe firmly that there is something in the DNA of people like us in this room that is attracted to beauty.

What makes me think this is the universal sorrow people around the world had in April 2019 as we watched the Cathedral of Notre Dame in flames. Collectively, we all experienced the same kick in the gut.

I believe firmly that there's something in the DNA of people like us in this room that tells us that legacy and heritage are meaningful.

And I believe that there is something instinctive in our spirits that knows that there are things worth saving.

This yearning – this mysterious drive –

motivates us to create bucket lists of places to see before we die the Pantheon in Rome, the Parthenon in Athens, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the Pyramids in Egypt, the monasteries in Bhutan, and for others across the world, The Breakers in Newport. Structures of curiosity and beauty with history and culture. Structures that - thank God – our ancestors saved knowing that they were valuable. That people like us would need these sites.

This was all coursing through my brain as our strategic planning moved forward.

And it seems to me in a world that has far more "sameness" than it should (route 114, route 138, the lost working waterfront of Newport), that we must be advocates for preservation and for museums that contain the objects and stories of the past. And I say this because things change quickly today. Remember, we lost our view in a matter of months.

We all know well that there is a lot of uncertainty in the world. So, it's normal to seek out oases of stability in a sea of change. And it is essential, in addition, that we seek out ways to be hip and accepting and embrace the new world out there. It's a rather frightening time, so strategic planning gives us a chance to figure out how we get to where we are going on the terms that are comfortable to us.

Some of you may have gotten addicted this past winter to the TV hit, Billions. If you know the show, the key character is Bobby Axelrod, a sharp-edged, self-confident, self-made billionaire who once said, "There are people that things happen to and people who make things happen." And to me the role that we share is to make things happen in our communities.

To hold on to the emotions that save buildings and landscapes and stories and objects and, at the same time, embrace the new - creating ways to match up our intuitive preservation sense with an unknown world that faces us. As Bill mentioned:

• Telling broader, more inclusive stories (like the one we'll soon be telling at Hunter House where you'll learn about the

> enslaved people who lived there as well as the Nichols, the Wantons and Hunters).

- Researching all aspects of Newport history.
- Becoming digital in order to engage people in new ways.
- Branding Newport as a community of many types of people with many tales to learn from.
- Telling the truth. And it can be done without losing the DNA that drives all of us.

So, when you are thinking about whether to support us or how much to give or whether we're doing a good job, reflect on the fact that the historic sites we are preserving remind us of and teach us about our past.

The book, "Lost Newport," details 59 houses as elegant as The Elms and as grand as Marble House that are gone. We've lost them from this neighborhood. Can you imagine this neighborhood if those buildings were here?

It's YOUR support that helps us hold onto our legacy and our memories. And if we continue to do the job well, we'll never end up on a counselor's couch. Preservation matters and it starts with you. And we have to remind ourselves of this day in and day out.



# Treasurer's Report

By Peter W. Harris From the Annual Meeting June 9, 2022

Our Fiscal Year 2022 (which ended on March 31 of this year) was a very good year for the Preservation Society as we continue to emerge from the pandemic.

Let's review quickly how we make up our top line revenue – the main drivers are foot traffic or visitation, namely our visitors coming through the doors; special events; our retail sales; our memberships; and unrestricted gifts. When we looked at creating the budget for FY22, we were very conservative as the Covid crisis was still very much with us. Along with that conservatism, we scaled back our budget significantly.

Well, the results of FY22 were fortunately pleasantly surprising! Our members and visitors beat all our forecasts in visitation and came in droves! Looking at the numbers - we gave 657,000 individual tours, almost triple the 243,000 tours we gave in Fiscal 2021. Bus trips showed the most dramatic increase from 34 in 2021 to almost 900 in 2022.

Of course, while that's great news, we still have a way to go before visitation fully recovers from prior pandemic levels. We're still down about a third from the almost one million visits we had in 2019.



A budding young artist from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newport County works on her picket fence self-portrait

But even with this decline in pre-pandemic visits, we've managed to keep revenue stable. Admissions revenue for the past year was \$9.9 million and membership revenue was \$1.3 million. Similar solid performances were turned in by our Retail Sales and Special Events which included 65 weddings, and activities such as the Flower Show and the Wine & Food Festival.

On the expense side, we of course cut back on spending during the pandemic and are now feeling the same pinch as every other employer, looking for good employees. Based on guidance from a compensation expert, our Board approved substantial raises for our employees and while we are still looking for 21 employees, we are enthusiastic about the quality of people we are attracting.

With solid revenues and careful control over costs, we've also been able to tackle many of the major projects we've put on hold. Pre-pandemic, we struggled to find even \$500,000 a year for these projects. This past year, we were able to commit \$2.3 million. You all probably noticed the results of some, like the \$218,239 spent cleaning Marble House so the entire building shines. But we also had to spend \$350,000 at Marble House shoring up a below-grade retaining wall which you will probably never see. And \$140,000 was spent repairing sections of The Elms wall on Spring Street which had collapsed. Another \$100,000 was spent replacing the antiquated security system at The Breakers. Another \$389,000 was spent on repaying the Rosecliff driveway you all used this evening.

Along those lines, a few minutes ago, our chairman referred to the results of an architectural study of our buildings and their electrical, mechanical and heating needs. The study found that we need to spend \$23 million over the next ten years. The Board and staff are committed to finding the funds to address all the identified deficiencies. In fact, the budget for this year calls for \$5.3 million for major projects, a sum 10 times the amount we could have afforded three years ago.

In terms of liabilities, the Board and staff are very proud that we decided to pay off the Society's long-term debt of about \$1.4 million. Today, we are debt-free and committed to remaining that way.

Finally, in terms of unrestricted gifts – for those of you members out there who support us on an annual basis I am reminded by my minister in Florida who says, "God loves a cheerful giver, and they will be rewarded." Well, those of us at the PS cannot promise a heavenly reward, but what I can say is that we really appreciate cheerful givers!

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

To request a copy of the complete FY22 audited financial statements for The Preservation Society of Newport County, please contact James M. Burress, Director of Finance, at JBurress@NewportMansions.org.

# The Year In Review

• The Preservation Society developed a Strategic Plan for the next five fiscal years, 2024 through 2028, to define how we will approach the most compelling challenges and opportunities before us. This effort, chaired by Board Secretary Janet Robinson, involved all trustees, senior staff, and a wide range of external stakeholders, peer organizations and experts. The plan was ratified by the Board of Trustees at its July 22, 2022, meeting. It addresses six broad priorities: effective stewardship of our properties through timely preservation and maintenance; enhancing the visitor experience by broadening our narratives and storytelling methods; strengthening and expanding our curatorial offerings while properly safeguarding the collections; defining our brand and broadening our reach and influence; governance and management, including issues of diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion; and identifying new and much-needed revenue streams.



- Our Museum Affairs Department hosted 14 lectures centered on Gilded Age themes, in-person and via Zoom, and 35 family and K-12 programs. This included Traveling Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Garden, a series of 14 Summer Family Programs with activities for youths. There were also collaborations with Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England; The Boys and Girls Clubs of Newport County; St. Michael's Country Day School; FabNewport; Sankofa Community Connection; Newport Community School; the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center Summer Camp; and Pell Elementary School.
- In March, the Preservation Society ended the COVID pandemic requirements that visitors show proof of vaccination and wear face coverings.
- At The Elms, the front entry steps were rebuilt, the west elevation windows and trim were restored, the walls and gazebos bordering the Sunken Garden were steam cleaned, and the south gazebo windows, doors and trim were restored. All the masonry on the marble structures bordering The Sunken Garden was repointed.



- At Marble House, the exterior windows and doors were restored, and the massive 12-foot stone walls around the service entry were completely rebuilt.
- At Chepstow, 6,000 linear feet of exterior siding was stripped and replaced on the south side facing Narragansett Avenue.
- HBO filmed at the mansions in April and May, and again in October, for the second season of Julian Fellowes' The Gilded Age. Scenes were filmed at The Elms, Kingscote, Chateau-sur-Mer and Marble House.



- The Chinese Tea House at Marble House returned to offering self-serve food and drinks to visitors on a daily basis, as well as afternoon tea and fine dining provided by Stoneacre Restaurants on select dates. Stoneacre also offered Holiday Brunch during the holidays at The Chinese Tea House.
- Opening May 27 at Rosecliff, the exhibition Anything You Want: A Closer Look at Treasures from Newport's Gilded Age featured more than 100 treasures selected by visiting curator Ulysses Grant Dietz from across the Preservation Society's properties.



- In June, preliminary work began to replace the roof and all 600 linear feet of balustrade around the perimeter of Rosecliff. Work will also include restoration of all exterior windows and trim, the application of a topcoat to the driveway, the sandblasting and painting of all wrought iron, and the replacement of the Ballroom flooring. This work will be completed by August 2023.
- The Newport Flower Show, held June 17-19 at Rosecliff, featured hundreds of colorful floral creations interpreting the show's theme, Eden ... A Personal Paradise. The three-day event was sold out.



- In June, the 1880 Madrazo portrait of Gertrude Vanderbilt was returned to her bedroom in The Breakers after an absence of several years. Thanks to the generosity of several donors, the Preservation Society purchased the oil-on-canvas painting from Hirschl & Adler Galleries of New York. Previously it had been on long-term loan to the Preservation Society from the Szápáry family.
- On June 23, the Preservation Society hosted The Right Honorable Countess of Carnarvon - the woman behind Highclere Castle, the iconic estate of Downton Abbey – for a series of sold-out appearances culminating with an evening event at Rosecliff.
- On July 1, the Preservation Society opened Pictus Porrectus: Reconsidering the Full-Length Portrait at Isaac Bell House in collaboration with Art&Newport. Curated by Art&Newport's Founder and Artistic Director Dodie Kazanjian and internationally renowned Curator and Writer Alison Gingeras, this was an exhibition of 23 full-length portraits by contemporary artists at Issac Bell House with additional portraits in salon at Rosecliff.

The Preservation Society hosted a sold-out dinner and conversation evening with Julian Fellowes, the Oscar and Emmy-winning writer, director, producer, novelist and actor who created The Gilded Age and Downton Abbey.



• Bob Shaw, the award-winning production designer for The Gilded Age, presented the annual John G. Winslow Lecture on August 11, taking viewers behind the scenes to show what it takes to bring 19th-century splendor to life on television.



- Conservation Intern Caitlin Green performed an extensive survey of outdoor statues on the grounds of The Elms during the summer and cleaned approximately 20 of them.
- In August, Hunter House opened to the public for the first time in nearly three years, offering a new guided tour that explores the lives of the many occupants of the 18th-century house.
- For the first time since 2018, the Preservation Society hosted A Weekend of Coaching, from August 19-21.
- The revival of The Breakers landscape was one of five Newport projects to receive a Doris Duke Historic Preservation Award in August 2022. These awards – a collaboration of the Newport Restoration Foundation and the City of Newport - recognize efforts that protect the architectural heritage and character of the city.

# The Year In Review continued

• Phase III A of The Breakers Landscape Revival – the planting of bushes and trees in the northeast quadrant of the Serpentine Path surrounding the Children's Cottage and the creation of a new path and sightlines to the ocean – began in July and was completed in November.



• In August, an exclusive "Inside 'The Gilded Age" tour was launched. Fans of HBO's popular historical drama enjoyed a guided visit to locations in the Newport Mansions where scenes from the first season were filmed, including The Breakers, Marble House, The Elms and Chateau-sur-Mer. This four-hour tour, offered on Fridays from August 12 through September 23, included transportation and refreshments.



On August 29, the annual Preservation Society Golf Outing was held at Newport National. A field of 84 turned out to play golf and enjoy the reception and auction that followed. Bernard S. Gewirz served as the event sponsor.



WEALTH MANAGEMEN

2022

• The 17th annual Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival, held September 16-18 at Rosecliff, was another great success. All seminars, the Vintner Dinner and Sunday Buffet Wine Brunch were sold out.



- On October 28, costumed guests of all ages turned out for the third straight Trick or Treat at The Breakers. Ten rooms were decorated for the evening while toys and treats were handed out at six stations throughout the house. Visitors were asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the local Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center food pantry.
- The biggest and brightest Sparkling Lights at The Breakers kicked off Holidays at the Newport Mansions on November 19. Visitors could stroll a complete loop of the historic grounds for the first time in the three-year history of this event, enjoying roughly a half-mile of lights and seasonal displays. There were also warming stations where visitors could make s'mores over five fire pits.

• From November 28 through December 5, the Preservation



Society conducted a virtual Exclusive **Experiences** Holiday Auction, featuring 21 unique packages. Highlights included a Private Chef Dining Experience at Chepstow and a Gilded Age Cocktail Reception at The Chinese Tea House. The items were actively bid on as the auction drew a great response. The high bid was \$13,000 for a dinner for 10 in the Gold Room at Marble

House following the Flower Show.



- The Holiday Dinner Dance at The Breakers, held December 17, once again sold out well in advance.
- On December 21, 250 members of the Preservation Society gathered at The Elms for our Members Holiday Open House, which featured live music and light refreshments.
- Our website numbers grew significantly. The website had 2.8 million sessions, 6.8 million page views, and approximately 1.5 million users, compared to 2.1 million sessions, 6 million page views and 1.2 million users the previous year.
- Our social media numbers also continued to grow organically: Instagram has nearly 37,000 followers, up from 29,000 at the beginning of 2022, and LinkedIn connections grew close to 1,000, up from 697.



• The website address remained the same, but we unveiled a • We continue to progress with our Diversity Equity Accessibility new design for NewportMansions.org, featuring user-friendly & Inclusion (DEAI) program, building our community connections interfaces and page layouts. Work on the site continues in 2023. while making our properties more accessible through our affiliation with Museums For All, offering reduced admission to eligible visitors with Electronic Benefits Transfer cards. We developed the Mandarin language audio tour for Marble House and are working to incorporate more foreign languages into our scripts. We began offering Closed Captioning for our Zoom lectures and updated the Newport Mansions app to be more accessible to those with vision impairments.



• Museum Affairs acquired a number of important objects in 2022, including an etching of Bishop Berkeley's Seat, also known as Hanging Rock, in Middletown from 1887; a photographic cabinet card sharing a view of ice cutting on Easton's Pond in the late 19th century; chairs from the Seamen's Church Institute, part of Maude and Edith Wetmore's patronage of the site; an Oelrichs family photo collection; and a pickled oyster jar from the shop of African American "Oyster King" Thomas Downing (1791-1866).



• August closed with Member Appreciation Night on the back lawn of Marble House. Roughly 600 members turned out to picnic or enjoy offerings from a variety of food trucks as live music from the cover band My Joe Called Life filled the air.



- A total of 4,049 visitors enjoyed the free admission offered to City of Newport residents, Naval Station Newport personnel and Salve Regina University students, while a combined 1,410 Newport County residents were admitted free during Newport County Days on the weekends of April 30-May 1 and September 10-11.
- Key initiatives begun by Museum Affairs in 2022 included a survey of all Jules Allard-attributed objects covering four of our properties; a permanent initiative to digitize the collection following the end of a major matching-grant period with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Ala Isham, whose support continues; and active engagement with community voices from the greater Newport and Rhode Island community with groups such as the Tomaquag Museum and NewportOut.



• The Preservation Society partnered with NAIL Communications, an award-winning creative agency based in Providence, to devise an innovative advertising campaign that would engage new audiences. The result was "Live The Drama," a cinematically-themed campaign dramatizing the people and stories behind the Newport Mansions in the style of a Hollywood blockbuster. It will continue in 2023.



# An Evening with Lady Carnarvon

Lady Carnarvon of Highclere Castle - the estate known to millions around the world as "Downton Abbey" - brought her passion for history and preservation to Newport for a series of public and private events June 22 and 23.



attended media conference at Marble House, she shared her experience owning and maintaining a large historic house, opening it for tours and hosting film and television crews for several years. She also was the guest of honor during a private luncheon at Fairholme, the residence of Sue and George Petrovas.

During a well-

The busy schedule culminated in a Floral Soirée at Rosecliff, which featured a cocktail reception with tastings of the award-winning Highclere Castle Gin, a toast to Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, live music, and a talk and Q&A session about her many interests from historic buildings and landscapes to gardening and sustainable practices.



Steven Feinberg, Anika Kimble-Huntley, Trudy Coxe, Lady Carnarvon & Evan Smith



Sue Petrovas, Lady Carnarvon & Meg Braff





A new NewportMansions.org web page was created to focus on the show and was updated weekly after each episode. It details all the Newport Mansions spaces that appeared in the series. It also includes insights into the historical people, places, events, social conditions and customs depicted in the show.

The Gilded Age and the Newport Mansions' role in it were featured in major national and regional publications including Variety, Vanity Fair, Vogue, House Beautiful, Town & Country, Tatler, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Post and the Boston Globe.

Taking advantage of the increased interest generated by the show, in August the Society launched a specialty tour, Inside The Gilded Age, that takes visitors to The Breakers, Marble House, The Elms and Chateau-sur-Mer to see the places that were used as settings - from the Russells' ballroom to Chef Baudin's kitchen to Mamie Fish's dining room to Oscar van Rhijn's bedroom. Visitors learn from an expert guide how these real Gilded Age spaces added grandeur and authenticity to the popular HBO series.

HBO returned to the mansions in the spring and fall of 2022, filming scenes for Season 2 at The Elms, Kingscote, Chateau-sur-Mer and Marble House.

The Elms kitchen plays a supporting role in the drama as the Russells' New York kitchen.

# **HBO**'s Historical Drama

The much-anticipated HBO's The Gilded Age series debuted in January 2022. Scenes for Julian Fellowes' historical drama were filmed at The Breakers, Marble House, The Elms, Chateau-sur-Mer, Rosecliff and Hunter House.



# A Night with Julian Fellowes, Creator of **HBO**'s The Gilded Age

Julian Fellowes, creator of *Downton Abbey* and *The Gilded Age*, delighted our guests at a July 26 reception and dinner at The Breakers highlighted by a conversation with CEO and Executive Director Trudy Coxe.

A sold-out audience of 150 packed the Great Hall for dinner and discussion. The audience experienced Lord Fellowes' warmth, wit and storytelling talents. Board Chairman Bill Lucey served as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening while Daisy Prince introduced Lord Fellowes prior to his talk with Trudy, which ranged from his creative processes to his experience of winning an Academy Award for his first produced movie, *Gosford Park*.

Lord Fellowes was also formally presented with the 2022 Antiquarian Award, the Preservation Society's highest honor, in appreciation of his abilities as a historian, writer, storyteller, director and novelist; and in recognition of the positive impact the HBO drama *The Gilded Age* will have on the city of Newport and the mansions for many years to come.

Earlier in the day, in the Marble House Gold Room, Lord Fellowes met with members of the local and regional media, Coxe and Steven Feinberg, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Film and Television Office.

The location of the press conference highlighted the crucial role Marble House played in selling Lord Fellowes on the idea of filming scenes for *The Gilded Age* in Newport. The Gold Room was the site of a dinner for Fellowes hosted by Coxe and the Preservation Society on September 22, 2019. Among the other attendees were television producer and executive Gareth Neame, production designer Bob Shaw, director Michael Engler and executive producer David Crockett.

Fellowes marveled at the condition of the interiors of the mansions during that dinner. At the press conference, he noted the importance of having an opportunity to film *The Gilded Age* in authentic surroundings that have been so carefully maintained.

"They add a kind of luster to the program that we would be the poorer without," Lord Fellowes said. "We very much benefited from that. There's a pleasure in showing these houses, these rooms, this town to the American public, those of them who haven't been there. All of that I think is a win-win, really."

His visit to Newport also included private tours of Marble House, Hunter House and the *Anything You Want* exhibition at Rosecliff.

A video of the conversation at The Breakers can be seen on the Newport Mansions YouTube channel.

Above: Stephen Feinberg, Julian Fellowes & Trudy Coxe Left: The Breakers Great Hall





Chairman Bill Lucey presents Julian Fellowes with his Antiquarian Award, Great Hall, The Breakers, July 26, 2022.

# ANTIQUARIAN AWARD

Awarded to Lord Fellowes of West Stafford

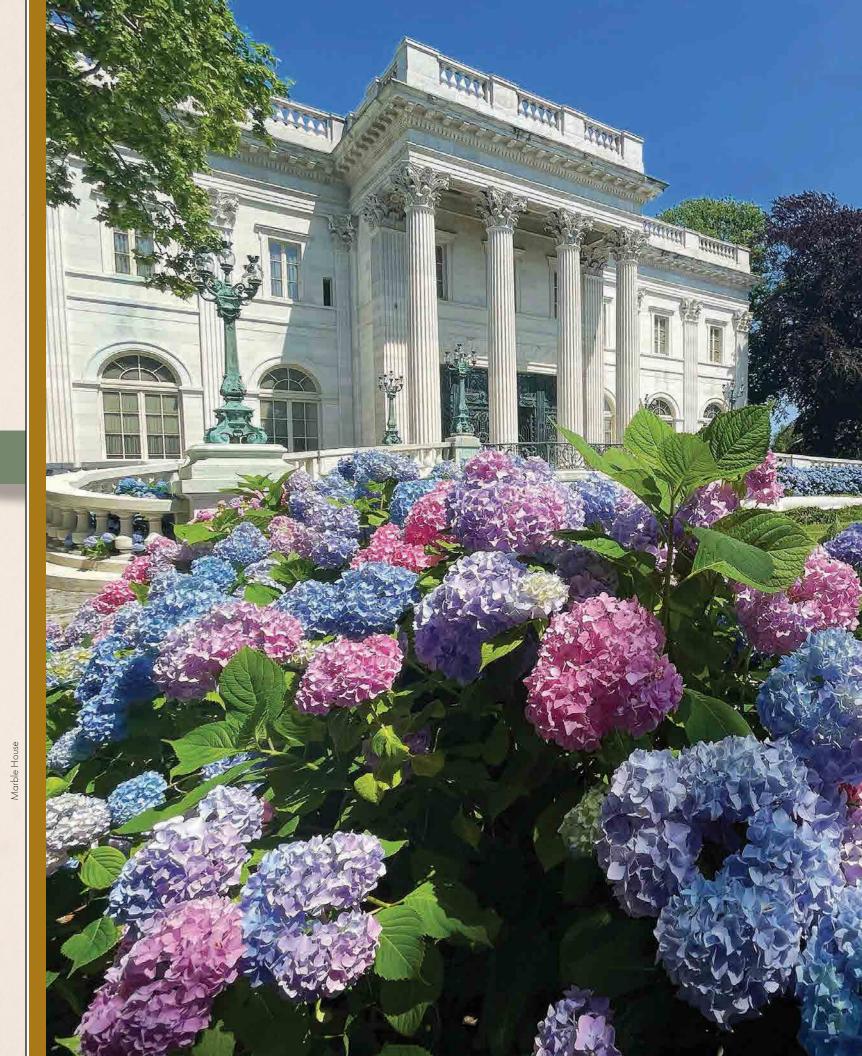
The rich imagination of Julian Fellowes has ignited a worldwide and unprecedented interest in periods of history of which people knew little nor cared about. The Antiquarian Award, The Preservation Society of Newport County's highest tribute, honors Lord Fellowes' unique abilities as historian, researcher, writer, storyteller, director, producer and novelist, as well as the individual and collective impact of his works. He has instilled in viewers and readers alike a love of history with his creation of Downton Abbey and The Gilded Age; his screenplays for Gosford Park (for which he received an Oscar for Best Screenplay), The Young Victoria, Vanity Fair and his Emmy Award-winning Little Lord Fauntleroy, and the British Academy of Film Television Arts (BAFTA) - nominated The Prince and The Pauper; and his novels Belgravia, Snobs and Past Imperfect.

Lord Fellowes has entertained millions of people around the world with memorable stories and characters dealing with every level of society and all aspects of humanity. The worldwide hit series *Downton Abbey* was created, written and executive produced by Fellowes. He was the sole writer for the series, the highest rated drama in PBS history, which received 69 Emmy Award nominations and won 15. Downton Abbey remains the most nominated non-US show in the history of the Emmy Awards. It has generated two feature films: *Downton Abbey* and *Downton Abbey*: *A New Era*, which premiered recently to rave reviews.

With his adored or reviled characters leading the way, viewers enter two parallel worlds: the life of the aristocracy and the lives of those in service. Lord Fellowes' HBO series *The Gilded Age*, an epic tale, chronicles the calculating and often scandalous social history of the time, pitting established society against new. Fellowes deserves huge credit for highlighting the character Peggy Scott, an aspiring writer and single mother from an upper middle-class African American family in Brooklyn.

His love of and passion for Newport shines through in *The Gilded Age*. The Preservation Society, the owner and steward of 11 historic house museums in which Gilded Age history is meticulously preserved, reaffirms that Julian Fellowes' fictional tales are based on authentic history in which Newport plays a starring role.

Both the Preservation Society and the City of Newport have benefited from his careful filming, which provided a massive economic stimulus. *The Gilded Age* captures and showcases the beauty of Newport and our mansions in ways no one could imagine and brings to life an era of history that is underappreciated and often misunderstood. Here's to Season 2 and well beyond!





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Jane Fontaine nurturing the gardens at Rosecliff.





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# The Coaches Return!



A skilled groom readies the horses for their scenic drive around Newport

Coaching Exhibition at The Elms, August 20, 2022

2022.

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The sounds of hooves and horse-drawn coaches echoed through the historic streets of Newport and the grounds of Chateau-sur-Mer, The Elms, Rosecliff, Marble House and The Breakers as A Weekend of Coaching returned for the first time since 2018, hosted by the Preservation Society of Newport County.

From August 19-21, nine colorful 19th-century coaches, drawn by teams of highly trained horses, drove around Newport and surrounding areas, carrying costumed whips, or drivers, and elegantly dressed passengers. Eager spectators lined the roads to watch them pass by.

The Elms grounds were packed with spectators for the free driving exhibition on August 20, a spectacular display of skill by horses and whips alike. And the formal Dinner Dance in Honor of the Whips on Saturday evening at The Breakers was a sold-out affair.

The coaches came from as far away as Ontario and Kentucky. We appreciate the continued support of the Coaching Club of America for this event.

The next Coaching Weekend will be in 2025.





One of the nine historic coaches that participated in Coaching Weekend arrives in front of Rosecliff.



A member of one of the coaching crews sounds the posthorn during the Driving Exhibition on the back lawn of The Elms.



The weather was perfect for a ride around Newport's Ocean Drive.



The coaches exit through the main gates after a visit to The Breakers.

# Exhibition



A Closer Look at Treasures from Newport's Gilded Age



Visitors enjoy the details of silver objects included in the exhibition, specifically the centerpiece illustrated here by Tiffany, Young and Ellis, c. 1851, a gift of Norrie Wetmore Sellar



# Rosecliff, May 27 – October 30, 2022

Visiting Curator Ulysses Grant Dietz went on a treasure hunt in the Newport Mansions in the spring of 2022. His goal was to give visitors a close-up look at interesting objects that might be little noticed amid their surroundings and to tell their stories. The result was the exhibition at Rosecliff, Anything You Want: A Closer Look at Treasures from Newport's Gilded Age.

The 100 objects ranged in date from the late 1400s to the early 1900s, but all were acquired by someone during the Gilded Age. Many were valuable and produced for the rich, such as the 2-foot-tall "Four Elements" silver centerpiece from the collection at Chateau-sur-Mer and an elaborate Louis XIV-style cabinet from Marble House. Others were plainer and used by "ordinary" folks, such as a wooden washstand from the servants' quarters in The Breakers. The selection of objects included furniture, metalwork, ceramics, glass, paintings, sculpture, prints, photographs and more.

In the descriptive panels throughout the exhibition, Dietz prompted viewers to ponder the question: Why did people in the Gilded Age want to own these things? The answers are almost as varied as the things themselves. Some displayed wealth and status, some were simply practical, others evoked far-away places the owner had visited, and a few represented racist stereotypes that are disturbing today. The exhibition displayed a cross-section of this complicated and often contradictory period in American history.

Ulysses Grant Dietz, Curator of Anything You Want, addresses guests at Opening Reception, Rosecliff, May 26, 2022.



Les Trois Amis (The Three Friends) by Charles Chaplin, French, 1887. Bequest of Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt, 1979.





Umar Rashid, Avec plaisir. Or, The Newport News according to Lord Baltimore upon his return to New Frengland, joining Phillip Morris's Hussars and rooting out the last of the Dutch Resistance. An advertisement for the plantocracy, 2022.

# Exhibition PICTUS **PORRECTUS RECONSIDERING THE** FULL LENGTH PORTRAIT

# Isaac Bell House, July 1 – October 2, 2022

The Preservation Society's commitment to presenting contemporary art in our historic houses continued with this collaboration with Art&Newport. The exhibition Pictus Porrectus was curated by Art&Newport's Founder and Artistic Director Dodie Kazanjian with renowned curator and writer Alison Gingeras. A selection of 23 works by 22 artists showed how a new generation has revised the traditions of the full-length portrait, making it more inclusive with subjects from

a multitude of identities, classes and communities.







Andrew LaMar Hopkins, Creole Child Portrait, 2022





Curators Alison Gingeras and Dodie Kazanjian at the exhibition opening.

Curators and artists enjoying the opening reception.

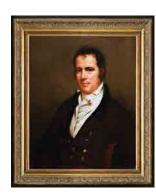


Second Floor Northeast Sitting Room at Hunter House

# New Tour at Hunter House

In August, the Preservation Society reopened its landmark colonial property Hunter House with a new guide-led tour that highlights the experiences of the home's many occupants, including generations of prosperous merchants and enslaved and free people of African descent. The new visitor experience was made possible through the generosity of the Decorative Arts Trust. A Dean F. Failey Grant supported the conversion of two period rooms into gallery spaces to facilitate close looking at objects and research conducted by Fellows MaryKate Smolenski and Catherine Doucette.

The reinterpretation of Hunter House was inspired by the vision of legendary connoisseur and preservationist Ralph E. Carpenter (1909-2009). After Hunter House was acquired by the Preservation Society in 1945, Carpenter led the effort to furnish the property with the aim of opening a house museum that formed "an active functioning part of community life, constantly interpreting as many sides of the past as possible in terms the people of today can



understand." Preservation Society staff and fellows recognized the need to expand the narratives told at Hunter House to center important aspects of Newport's past left out from previous iterations of the tour, such as the major role the city played in histories of colonization and the transatlantic slave trade. With the goal of learning more about the lives of individuals at Hunter House, research efforts continue on the owners and occupants of this historic site.



# The Pineapple: A Bitter History

"The Pineapple: A Bitter History" exhibit in the new Orientation Gallery at Hunter House.

Inset Left: Portrait of Senator William Hunter by Charles Bird King, 1824. Gift of the Wunsch Foundation.

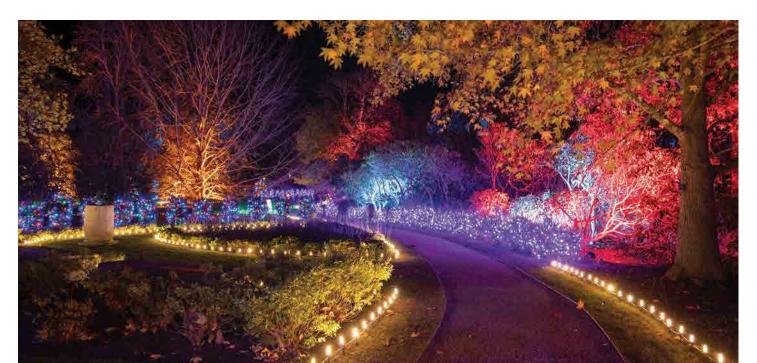
Orientation Gallery at Hunter House featuring new exhibits and close-looking opportunities, opened August 2022.



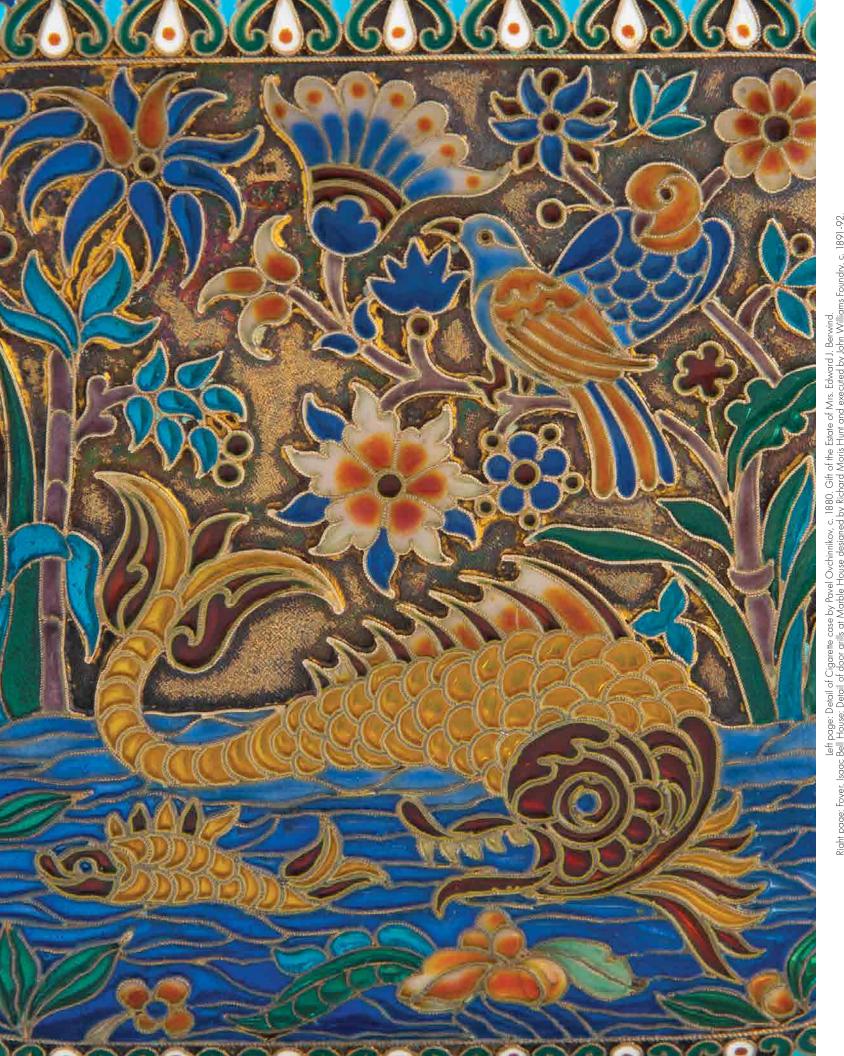


# Sparkling Lights at The Breakers

In its third year, the holiday spectacle of Sparkling Lights at The Breakers continued to grow, with thousands of lights along an illuminated outdoor path that formed a complete loop around the house for the first time. Warming stations were added and refreshment stands were located at the Welcome Center and on the Lower Loggia, offering beverages and sweet treats including s'mores that guests could heat over a fire pit. New features included a group of animal light sculptures in the north garden, a double Tunnel of Lights and the "Van-Deer-Bilt" selfie station.



Sparkling Lights was held November 19, 2022, through January 1, 2023, on Thursday through Sunday evenings. Admissions were timed, a measure made necessary by the great popularity of this holiday offering. The Preservation Society is grateful to sponsors BankNewport, Bartlett Tree Experts, National Trust Insurance Services Inc. and OptoGlo Solar Signs for their support of Sparkling Lights at The Breakers.



# Donors January 1 - December 31, 2022

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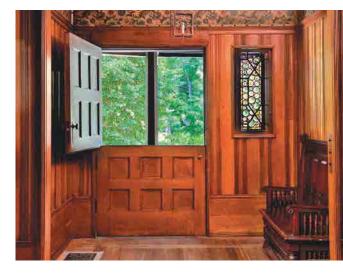
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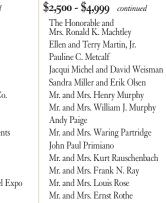
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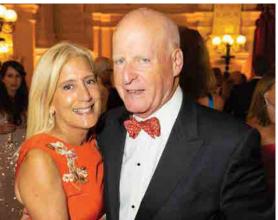


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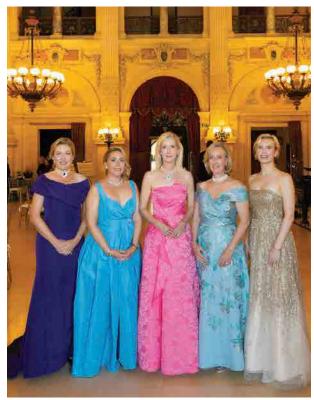
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