

2023



Annual Report



THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF NEWPORT COUNTY

2023 Annual Report
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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 Stable & Carriage House (1895)
The Elms (1899-1901)
Rosecliff (1899-1902)
The Chinese Tea House (1914)
Rovensky Park (1959)

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Cover Photo: Rosecliff, Photographer Dave Hansen
Back Cover Image: Creative floral display at Marble House. Created by Lisa Cinquegrana, Castle and Cottage RI for The 2023 Newport Flower Show.



Chairman Bill Lucey, Kate Lucey, Trustee Lark Mason, Jr. & Leslie Jones



First Lady Susan McKee & Governor Daniel J. McKee



Theresa Guzmán Stokes & Trustee Keith Stokes



International Council members Morrie Heckscher & Stephen Lash along with Fenella Heckscher & architect Andres Blanco at Beacon Rock Estate



Participants in "Oh, Deer" family program at Green Animals



Philip Pelletier celebrates 45 years of service and is presented with a painting by artist John Grosvenor.

Chairman’s REPORT



*Presented by William F. Lucey III
From the Annual Meeting
June 9, 2023*

It’s great to see so many people here for our Annual Meeting. This is a gathering of the people who are the heart of the Preservation Society. I especially want to acknowledge my predecessors as Chair of the Board of Trustees who are here: Monty Burnham and Don Ross.

Many of you come to these meetings year after year. Why do you come? Maybe some of you come for the speeches. Or not! Some of you are here to support the amazing people who will be receiving our Laurel Awards. We’ll be hearing more about them later, but right now, let’s give them a nice round of applause, please.

Many of you are here to enjoy this spectacular view of the ocean. But really, I think we are all here because we feel a sense of community when we’re together. A community bound by our common interest in history and preservation.

We’re also bound together by our sense that the Newport Mansions are fun places! Places where we see old friends and enjoy events like the Flower Show and the Wine and Food Festival. And I think the Newport Mansions are that kind of gathering place, not only for us here, but also for the community as a whole.

The community of Newport – and beyond – looks to us as a hub of activities and opportunities to enjoy the arts and culture. Just a few examples:

- The Newport Classical summer concert series.
- Movie screenings by newportFILM.
- Performances by Newport Contemporary Ballet, including the beloved “Newport Nutcracker.”
- Exhibitions of contemporary art in collaboration with Art & Newport.
- The incredible antique cars that the Audrain Museum brings to The Breakers every year.

The list goes on and on.

For local families, this is also a place where their kids can learn and grow. They participate in our summer crafts programs. They visit the mansions through our collaborations with the Girl Scouts; the Boys and Girls Clubs; local schools like Pell Elementary, Newport Community School and St.



Preservation Society members arrive early to get a front row seat at the Annual Meeting.



newportFILM screening on the lawn at Chateau-sur-Mer. Photo courtesy of newportFILM

Michael’s; FabNewport; Sankofa Community Connection; and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center.

Many of you might not know this, but the Preservation Society supports the community in other ways. Each year we donate thousands of pounds of vegetables, grown in our garden at Green Animals, to the Martin Luther King Center and Lucy’s Hearth. Every holiday season we arrange for a big evergreen to be placed in Washington Square as the official Christmas in Newport tree. We donate the flowers that beautify Touro Park.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center campers at Green Animals
Photo courtesy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center

Much of the money we raise goes right back into our properties, but fundraising for the mansions is like climbing a mountain of ping pong balls. As hard as we try, we never reach the top.

And let’s not forget our collaborations with other nonprofits to repair historic stone walls on Aquidneck Island and to get utility lines put underground in some of the island’s most scenic places.

But to maintain the Newport Mansions as a gathering place in the community, we need to, well, maintain the Newport Mansions!

It is amazing how much money we have put into preserving and restoring our buildings in the past few years.

Just look at Rosecliff. Millions of dollars and months of work are going into replacing the roof and balustrade, repointing the exterior, refinishing the wrought iron, replacing the ballroom floor, and much more.

Look at Marble House, where a major steam-cleaning effort has brightened the façade and made the house look better than it has in many years.

And look at The Breakers Landscape Revival, which has made the grounds much more attractive and welcoming for our visitors.

Much of the money we raise goes right back into our properties, but fundraising for the mansions is like climbing a mountain of ping pong balls. As hard as we try, we never reach the top.

We face daunting expenses just to keep the mansions in good shape. Under our new strategic plan, we expect to spend over 28 million dollars in the next five years.

Hunter House and Isaac Bell House both need extensive renovation work that will cost millions of dollars. Chateau-sur-Mer needs a climate stabilization system to safeguard its furnishings, fabrics and other contents before serious harm is done. And we urgently need to build a 21st-century storage facility to protect our collections. Because it’s not just about the houses – it’s also about what’s inside them.

You know where this is headed. You are going to be hearing from us. We need your support to help us fulfill our mission to protect, preserve and present these magnificent properties. This community needs us – and we need this community to help us ensure a bright future.

Thank you.



Newport Mayor Xaykham Rexford Khamsyvovong greeting members at the Annual Meeting.

Aerial view of Green Animals Topiary Garden



CEO & Executive Director's REPORT



*Presented by Trudy Coxe
From the Annual Meeting
June 9, 2023*

Three fawns were born at Green Animals in the last few hours, not too far from one of the Lego exhibits underwritten by one of our trustees, David Bazarsky and his wife.

As I stand here at Marble House I'm reminded of a day in September 2019 when the Wine & Food Festival was in full swing with thousands of people having fun. When no one was looking, I sneaked out and headed for the Jane Pickens Theater to attend a 4:45 performance of the movie "Downton Abbey." I did this because we were hosting a secret dinner at 7 p.m. in the Gold Room of Marble House with Julian Fellowes along with HBO's top producers, the director, Michael Engler, and the set designer, and I wanted to be able to look Fellowes in the eye and tell him that I'd seen his movie.

We spent the night doing everything we could to wow our guests with the aim of having them walk away saying to each other, "We have got to film here in Newport."

You know the rest of the story. Season 1 of "The Gilded Age" premiered in January 2022. Season 2 will air in September. And the show has higher demand than 95.8 percent of all drama titles in the U.S.

And you also know that HBO's presence in Newport in the winter of 2021 was a godsend – an economic shot in the arm for not just the Preservation Society but for many businesses in the region.

Thank you, Lord Fellowes.

As Bill and Peter have pointed out, we are – right now – in a good place and there's one reason for our success. Very simply, we are driven by the idea of being the best historic house museum in America and the center for Gilded Age history. And after all the lectures that have attracted the best historians in the U.S. to Newport, we have come a long way.

I can remember meeting with some important donors and telling them we wanted to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. There are 30,000 museums in America and under 1,000 have been accredited, so accreditation means a lot.

They chortled and said "Museum? Museum? Why, you're nothing but party houses." And that's when the decision was made that the Preservation Society would become the best historic house museum in America. And that's what you all are supporting. And that's why HBO filmed here in Newport.

And on this quest to be the best, we have not sacrificed our most important mission – to take care of America's most incredible buildings and gardens. As members, I hope you are proud of the work that is being done at Rosecliff and on our gardens like the one at The Breakers.

In a recent lecture by Gilded Age historian Michael Cullinane, we learned that the Gilded Age is characterized by one word: transformation. That the world changed more during the 30 or 40 years of the Gilded Age than it had in the previous 1,000 years. A bold moment in our history. It was a time of



"The Gilded Age: Past and Present" lecture, presented by Dr. Michael Patrick Cullinane in The Breakers Great Hall April 13, 2023.

uber innovation. Uber experimentation and uber inventiveness. And the inventions created then have evolved over the last 100-plus years and are still with us.

To me, the word "transformation" suits the Preservation Society right now. Our last few years have been years of change – a lot of change – and I want to give you but three of many examples:

- The way we advertise ourselves. The TV ad that I am going to show you in a moment illustrates an approach that I don't think I've seen tried by any house museum in America. And, as a short-run experiment, it has paid off: It was viewed 3.7 million times. A really strong number and certainly transformational and we have started the campaign up for the summer. It is certainly an ad that you like or you don't. One thing is true: It leaves an impression.
- We're transforming the way we teach history using digital technology to immerse our visitors in the stories of the past and to connect our guests to art. Sometime next winter at The Elms you'll see a completely different type of tour – some of it virtual. Try to imagine the Berwinds dancing at a ball in their ballroom or sitting with their guests at a dinner party in their dining room. In order to attract a younger crowd, who we will be dependent upon sooner than later, we need to transform the way we tell stories.

- We're spending time thinking about the role museums play on the sustainability front. It might not seem like something a museum would do but the heat waves, the intense hurricanes, the flooding in areas that have never experienced flooding before require us to think about how to transform our businesses to be green. So, we recycle in our cafes, we've installed geothermal systems that have cut our use of oil, our trees are mulched with our homegrown mulch, our lawns are phosphorous free and if our lawns turn brown in summer, so be it. And we've commissioned a report on what to do with Hunter House if the seas keep rising or if flooding in the Point gets worse.

The most feared word in the English language is "change" and it takes guts and fortitude to face the headwinds. We've mimicked our ancestors from the 1880s and put transformation at the top of our list. And we could not go through the transformation you see underway without your help. I am so grateful that there is a spirit here that allows us to try new things and I attribute that spirit to a talented board, led by Bill Lucey, an intelligent staff (can trustees and staff please stand because you deserve a hearty round of applause) and so many of you who continue to support us with your money, your ideas, your involvement. You're helping us become the best historic house museum in America.

Thank you.

On this quest to be the best, we have not sacrificed our most important mission – to take care of America's most incredible buildings and gardens.



In 2023, the landscape of the northernmost section of The Breakers Serpentine Path by the Children's Cottage was fully restored.

Treasurer’s REPORT



*Presented by Peter W. Harris
From the Annual Meeting
June 9, 2023*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

All right, you’ve heard some compelling remarks. What I am going to try to do is give you an overview of the financials (don’t worry, not too much detail): where we’re putting our money this year, why we’re doing it and most importantly, why all of this is important for us, Newport and the state of Rhode Island.

First the financials. We had a strong financial year. Our fiscal year ended on March 31, and we exceeded our revenue estimate by \$6.7 million while holding operating expenses on budget. Our success in 2022 was due in large measure to the return of normal utilization patterns by you, our members; admissions numbers getting back to pre-pandemic levels; and pent-up demand for special events.

We will invest this \$6.7 million back into our historic properties this year.

Bill mentioned important work being done at Rosecliff, Marble House and The Breakers. I’d like to mention a few other preservation projects:

- Half the windows at The Elms were painted, and the other half are being painted this fiscal year. That alone costs hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- The front entrance steps at The Elms were reset and the ironwork was sandblasted and freshly painted.

- Chepstow needed siding replaced and the carriage house needed painting and other repairs.
- Kingscote was scraped and primed, with the final coat of paint applied this year after our conservation team determined the original color. And Kingscote has a new state-of-the-art security system.

The budget for this current year is equally ambitious, with another \$7 million earmarked for our houses. We must always remember: We don’t preserve our houses to make money; we make money to preserve our houses. As a non-profit, everything we bring in goes right back into our houses and properties.

Let’s face it: Keeping a billion dollars’ worth of centuries-old historic properties in excellent shape is expensive. As Bill previously stated, \$28 million over the next five years.

So, one may ask: Why do we do it? On one level, as our mission states, we protect, preserve and present. Our houses carry exceptional historical and cultural value – they provide indelible insights into the architectural styles, art collections and lifestyles of the past. If you don’t believe it, just ask any recent visitor who’s been to Newport, and they will tell you what they remember most is the mansions.

And yes, keeping these houses in first-class condition is not inexpensive. We have restoration and maintenance costs; compliance with building codes and historic preservation regulations; a limited availability of specialized materials and, of course, the labor-intensive craftsmanship and attention to detail that workers back in the Gilded Age routinely exhibited.

For example, the back terrace at The Breakers must be restored – it is starting to crumble. This is a place enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of visitors every year, and we can’t let it make a bad impression.

Why? Because that is what you and our guests expect. Whether they’ve paid \$25 for a tour or \$500 to attend an exclusive event, they expect a first-class experience. They want to feel and imagine what it was like 125 years ago.

It is this image, this experience, that keeps people coming here, and what makes us the economic engine for Newport and the state of Rhode Island. Our visitors fill hotel rooms and restaurants. They shop in local businesses. They support local jobs.

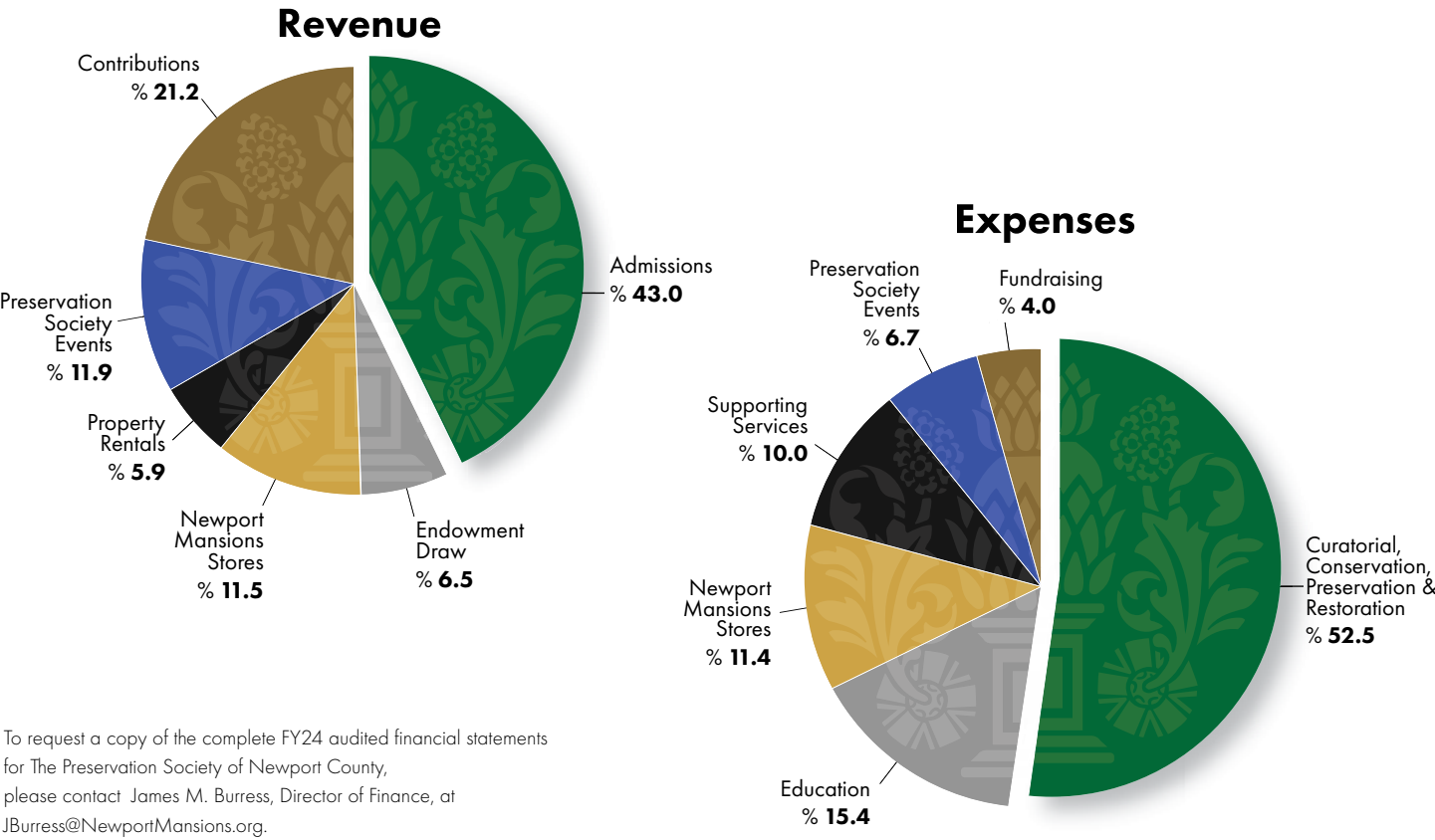
Speaking of local jobs, we are also a major job creator – whether it’s our own 214 employees or those of the contractors and service providers who work for us. Contractors like Donovan and Sons, Shamrock Electric, Newport Window Restoration, Grande Masonry, R.P. Marzilli and Peckham Brothers, to name a few. These firms have large staffs that benefit from the work we provide.

So, in closing, the money we make, the money that goes right back into our houses, has a multiplier effect across the local and state economy. That’s why your support means so much and goes such a long way.

We thank you.



The Elms



In Memoriam



Chairman Bill Lucey, Monty Burnham & Trustee William Wood Prince at the 2021 Annual Meeting.

Monty Burnham

1944-2023

The Preservation Society of Newport County lost one of its greatest advocates, leaders and loyal friends on September 18 with the passing of Monty Burnham.

Monty was a member of the Preservation Society Board of Trustees for 20 years, including two years as Assistant Secretary, five years as Treasurer and five years as the Chairman of the Board. She provided resolute leadership during a variety of challenges, including the development of The Breakers Welcome Center and the COVID pandemic crisis.

As Treasurer, Monty oversaw a double-digit increase in earned revenues and philanthropic gifts and ensured that each fiscal year ended with a balanced budget. Highlights of her time as Chairman included the installation of the geothermal system at The Breakers, re-accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums and completion of multiple phases of The Breakers Landscape Revival.

Monty officially stepped down from her position with the Board during the Annual Meeting on June 10, 2021. She received the Preservation Society's Antiquarian Award – the organization's highest honor – during the same event in recognition of her extraordinary contributions.

She died peacefully in Providence, less than 18 months after her beloved husband of 50 years, Richard I. "Dick" Burnham. She was a leader and a loyal friend, whose greatest loves were her husband, children and grandchildren. She will be dearly missed.

In Memoriam



Trustee Emeritus Don Ross, Jerry Kirby & Peter Damon at the 2015 Annual Meeting, where Jerry received a Laurel Award.

Jerome "Jerry" Kirby

1930-2023

When Jerome Kirby passed away on December 4 at the age of 93, it was a loss not only to The Preservation Society of Newport County but to the Newport community as a whole.

A 1949 graduate of Rogers High School and 1953 graduate of Providence College, Jerry was a member of the Preservation Society Board of Trustees for 33 years, serving as the Vice President and Chairman of the Executive Committee for 27 years. He received the Preservation Society's Antiquarian Award, its highest honor, in 1993.

His work with the Preservation Society was just one example of Jerry's remarkable commitment to his community. He also served on the Board of Trustees of the Redwood Library, the Newport Harbor Corporation, the Newport County Chamber of Commerce and Newport Electric Corporation, and was President of the Newport Chapter of The American Red Cross, President of the Board of Independent Insurance Agents of Rhode Island and Board Member of the Independent Insurance Agents of America and the State National Director.

Jerry was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1953 and served as a Platoon Commander in the 2nd Tank Battalion, Second Marine Division, and as Executive Officer of B Company, 2nd Tank Battalion. Jerry was promoted to captain in the Marine Corps Reserves and was rightfully proud of his military service. Returning to Newport with his wife Helen, he began his career in the insurance business. Later, he became President and owner of Kirby Insurance and Kirby Real Estate. He will be greatly missed.

The Year In Review



Students touring The Breakers.

- For the first time since 2019, all our properties were open in 2023, and the Preservation Society delivered 797,750 tours.
- The Museum Affairs Department organized 19 lectures centered on various aspects of the Gilded Age, from cocktails to fashion, politics to travel, and architecture to the Chinese community in Newport. Speakers included Pulitzer Prize-winning Author T.J. Stiles; Supervisory Curator of Culture at the Smithsonian National Museum of African History and Culture Elaine Nichols; Executive Director of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society Theresa “Soni” Guzmán Stokes; past president of The Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era Nancy C. Unger; celebrated author and host of the podcast “The Gilded Age and Progressive Era” Michael Patrick Cullinane; and scholars from universities around the country. We also debuted the Gilded Age Orchestra of Newport in the Great Hall of The Breakers. A total of 4,937 attended these programs, 2,357 in-person and 2,580 via Zoom.

- The Museum Affairs Department hosted 35 family and K-12 programs, including programs at Green Animals in connection with the “Sean Kenney’s Nature Connects” exhibition, and an inaugural Mid-Autumn Festival at Marble House featuring a lion dance by the Rhode Island Kung Fu Club and a traditional Chinese tea ceremony in the Tea House. Other partner organizations included the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newport County, FabNewport, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, Newport Public Library, Newport Contemporary Ballet, Newport Festivals Foundation, Pell Elementary School, Providence Promise, Sankofa Community Connection, St. Michael’s Country Day School and URI’s Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures.
- The Preservation Society contracted Schwartz Silver Architects to assess our collection storage and provide space recommendations. The Museum Affairs Department led the Schwartz Silver team through site visits to determine what systems would work best for our varied collections, and how we can make objects in storage more accessible. Schwartz Silver are experts who have previously done collections storage assessment for the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, RISD Museum, Peabody Essex Museum and MIT Museum.
- In January, we unveiled a new website created by the digital design company Happy Cog.
- In March, after a WOW requesting help translating tours into different languages, the Visitor Experience Department hired four local people, who converted written English scripts into Japanese, Korean, Russian and Hebrew. We now offer written scripts for all self-guided house tours in 11 languages.
- In January, the Museum Affairs Department hired a permanent Archivist to manage our institutional archives as well as historical manuscript, photograph and media collections. Also in January, we hired a Textile Conservator to oversee the care of our costume collection, rugs, tapestries, upholstered furniture and fabric wall hangings. In July, two Collection Technicians were added to help inventory objects in storage, assist with exhibition installation and support other collections-related duties. In November, we hired two Collection Assessment Assistants to conduct in-depth object and provenance research into less-known pieces in our collection. Projects included creating new finding aids for Rhode Island Archival and Manuscript Collections Online (RIAMCO.org), moving records from offsite storage to the main archives, and cataloging the curatorial library.

While the \$7.4 million restoration of Rosecliff was the highest-profile project of the year, the Properties Department completed other extensive work – a total of 25 projects at 10 other Preservation Society properties – in 2023. These include:

- At The Breakers, the perimeter walls were steam cleaned, the service entry walls were restored and a new fence was installed along the Cliff Walk.
- At Marble House, The Chinese Tea House porch deck was sanded and painted, and the front fountain basin was waterproofed.
- At The Elms, the north and south gazebos were restored. The windows, doors and trim were stripped and repainted. The iron front doors of The Elms were sandblasted and repainted, and all windows and trim were restored on the Bellevue Avenue side of the house.



Kingscote shows its true colors.

- New emergency generators were installed at The Elms, Chepstow and Murray Place greenhouse.
- At Chateau-sur-Mer, asbestos abatement was done in the basement and floors were refinished on the third level.
- At Kingscote, the house was painted in the color it had in the early 1880s, after its expansion and renovation by McKim, Mead and White. This color, a grayish brown, was determined by a painstaking paint analysis commissioned by our curatorial and conservation team. In addition, the parking area and driveway were paved.
- At Isaac Bell House, a new furnace was installed.
- At Chepstow, the exterior of the carriage house was restored and the living area inside the carriage house was renovated.
- At 424 Bellevue, the Preservation Society headquarters, all windows and doors were restored, the front railings were sandblasted and painted, the parking lot and driveway were paved, all rubber roofs were replaced, and the porch ceiling was restored.
- At The Breakers Stable and Carriage House, the caretaker’s cottage underwent interior renovations, including new flooring, paint and a new bathroom.
- At Green Animals Topiary Garden, the ticketing area and potting shed received a new roof, windows and siding and was also painted.

"The Preservation Society of Newport (County) has done an AMAZING job in preserving our American history! The mansions are beautiful and well-maintained. Over the years, I have been so impressed that I joined the society as a member!"

Tripadvisor Traveler Review

The Year In Review *continued*

- In February, Trudy Coxe and the Museum Affairs Department participated in filming an episode of the PBS series "Treasures Inside the Museum" about Chateau-sur-Mer. The episode details the history of the house, its architecture, object highlights, and recent conservation and collections projects. The episode is available to watch on the PBS website.
- The Inside "The Gilded Age" Tour returned for a second straight year from May 12-July 14 on Friday afternoons. We conducted seven tours with a total of 61 guests. An updated tour featuring additional content is being offered in 2024.
- On May 1, we launched a new membership program featuring expanded levels and benefits allowing members to engage with the Preservation Society in more diverse ways. Members receive free and unlimited admission to any of our open properties, discounts on specialty tours, early access to special events tickets, the ability to bring guests, and much more.



Professor & students from Dartmouth College & students from & FabNewport conduct ground-penetrating radar surveys at Kingscote.

- From May 15-18, a team of four students from Dartmouth College led by Dr. Jesse Casana – a Professor of Anthropology at Dartmouth College and Co-Director of the Dartmouth Spatial Archaeometry Lab and Research Collaborations – conducted ground penetrating radar surveys at Kingscote and Hunter House that will be instrumental in discovering the locations of previous structural foundations and outbuildings while also identifying future sites for archaeological digs.
- Beginning May 26, the exhibition "Sean Kenney's Nature Connects" enhanced the Green Animals landscape with 14 sculptures made from LEGO® blocks. There was also a Bonsai Tree sculpture inside the Welcome Center at The Breakers.

- The potting shed at Green Animals was revitalized in 2023, converted into an Educational Sales store as the exhibition "Sean Kenney's Nature Connects" opened. It was very successful and will be open through Labor Day in 2024.
- On June 5, Preservation Society CEO Trudy Coxe was one of four Rhode Island residents honored during Trinity Repertory Company's 24th Pell Awards Gala, receiving the Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts. Coxe joined such past recipients as Senator Claiborne Pell – the main force behind the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities – and George Wein, who orchestrated the Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals for many years. On July 7, Coxe was named to GoLocalProv's 2023 list of the 50 Greatest Living Rhode Islanders.



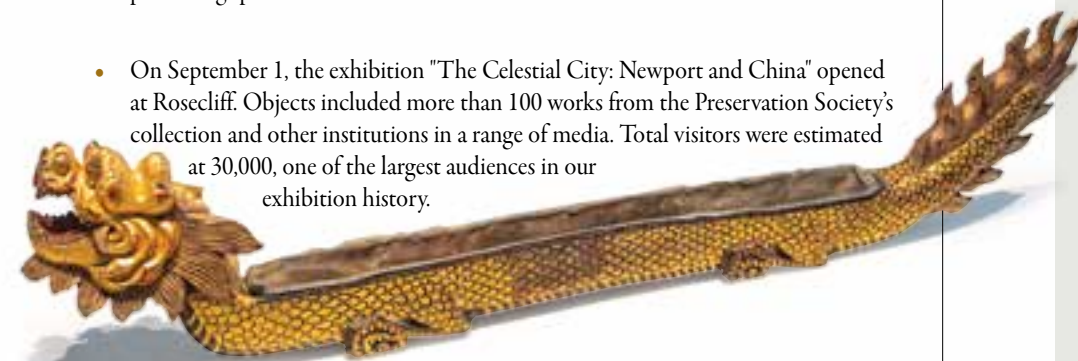
Guests at The 2023 Newport Flower Show

- The 27th Newport Flower Show was held June 23-25 at Marble House for the first time in a quarter century while Rosecliff was closed for restoration work. Themed "The Grand Tour," it featured over 100 horticultural classes and displays celebrating the 18th- and 19th-century travel practice of the affluent, who often made extended visits to the great sights, arts and cultures of Europe. Dozens of floral designs and creative mixed planters portrayed the Wonders of the World.
- The 2023 Newport Flower Show was the highest grossing in Preservation Society retail history, with presentations from three authors who gave demonstrations and offered gardening advice, as well as a roving artist, a cocktail bar and our Garden Shop.



Dr. Nicole Williams, Mr. Douglas Chu, Catherine Chu and Margaret Chu at the exhibition, "The Celestial City: Newport and China"

- Visitors to Chateau-sur-Mer experienced the first-ever self-guided audio tour of this National Historic Landmark starting July 31.
- The Servant Life Tour at The Elms, offered twice daily, often sold out days in advance. Due to demand, we will add a third tour each day from June-August 2024.
- The Gardens & Grounds Department continued fighting beech leaf disease with the strategic application of fungicides in four treatments from July through September. This is a major task considering we have 273 beech trees scattered across 10 properties.
- The Summer Dinner Dance, themed "Outer Space to the Stars," was held August 12 at Marble House. Co-chaired by Diana Prince and Mary Katherine Prince – whose family owned Marble House from 1932 to 1963, before it was transferred to the Preservation Society – this major fundraiser sold out well in advance. It featured dinner by The Catered Affair and music by The Bob Hardwick Sound.
- A field of 88 players participated in the annual Golf Outing at Newport National Golf Club on August 28. The event was supported by Grande Masonry and presenting sponsor Bernard Gewirz.
- On September 1, the exhibition "The Celestial City: Newport and China" opened at Rosecliff. Objects included more than 100 works from the Preservation Society's collection and other institutions in a range of media. Total visitors were estimated at 30,000, one of the largest audiences in our exhibition history.



Dragon Incense Clock by unidentified maker (Peking, China), c. 1850. Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gwendolen E. Rives (Kingscote)



Ted & Amanda Fischer, Sherri & Jack Grace at the Preservation Society's 2023 Golf Outing.

- Repairs and improvements to the middle wing of our greenhouse on The Breakers Stable property were done in late autumn. The work included a new heating system, all new glass and paint, updated operating systems for temperature control and alarms, and refurbishment of the mechanism used to open or close the panels for air circulation.
- In September, we welcomed a 19th century landau, made by the London firm of Peters & Sons and formerly owned by George Peabody Wetmore of Chateau-sur-Mer. This vehicle was put on view at The Breakers Stable and Carriage House. Landaus are formal, four-wheeled coaches with seating for four passengers on two facing seats. Among the more expensive carriages produced, they are still used by the British royal family in public parades and processions.

"We took the Servant Life Tour—it was fantastic! The tour gave us a picture of the people who managed the house; it told us about their lives from the servants' point of view."

Tripadvisor Traveler Review

The Year In Review *continued*



Guests at the 2023 Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival Brunch, including incoming Trustee Jack Murphy (third from right), of BankNewport.

- The 18th Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival presented by J.P. Morgan Wealth Management was held September 22-24 at Rosecliff, which hosted 21 seated tasting seminars, a Vintner Dinner and Sunday Brunch. The VIP Tasting Tent – expanded with the support of J.P. Morgan Wealth Management – allowed seminar guests to sample cuisine and an array of beverages.
- The Preservation Society joined the 2023 Newport Walk to End Alzheimer’s September 22 with its team, the Newport Mansions Memory Marchers. We also participated in the Salvation Army Angel Tree program, purchasing winter jackets, toys, bicycles, pajamas and other gifts for Newport families, and we collected toys and gift cards to donate to the Martin Luther King Center.

- Member Appreciation Night was held September 27 at Rosecliff. Approximately 500 members gathered on the back lawn to picnic, enjoy live music from Motion Avenue, a variety of offerings from eight food trucks, and a raffle.
- On September 29, we hosted a Mid-Autumn Festival (Zhongqiu Jie), also known as a Moon Festival or Mooncake Festival, on the grounds of Marble House and inside The Chinese Tea House. A time-honored celebration from China dating back more than 3,000 years, the Mid-Autumn Festival was offered as the Preservation Society hosted the exhibition “The Celestial City: Newport and China.”
- The International Council held four days of meetings in Newport October 3-6. It was the first meeting in Newport since 2017.
- As part of the Strategic Plan, we entered into a working partnership with Digital Kitchen, a global creative studio that merges Emmy-winning storytelling and design to captivate audiences. Digital Kitchen will help enhance the visitor experience through expansive narratives, multimedia content, imaginative experiences and immersive spaces.



Trick or Treaters at The Breakers



New way-finding signage at The Breakers

- For the fourth straight year, we hosted costumed visitors for Trick or Treat at The Breakers on October 27. Ten rooms were decorated, and donations of non-perishable food items were collected for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center pantry.
- The long-awaited debut of Season 2 of HBO’s “The Gilded Age” – featuring scenes filmed at four of the Newport Mansions – aired Sunday, October 29. Highlights included extended exterior shots and indoor scenes at The Elms – serving as the Russells’ Newport summer cottage – and the introduction of Kingscote. The final episode of Season 2 aired December 17. Shortly afterward, it was announced the series will return for Season 3.



Carrie Coon as Bertha Russell and Nathan Lane as Ward McAllister on the back Terrace of The Elms during filming of HBO’s “The Gilded Age” Season 2.

- A total of 5,128 visitors – 1,079 more than in 2022 – enjoyed free admission under our programs for local residents and employees of the hospitality industry. Newport residents, Naval Station Newport personnel and Salve Regina University students are given free admission to the Preservation Society’s Newport properties throughout the year. In addition, Newport County Days on April 22-23 and October 28-29, and Newport County/Hospitality Days on June 10-12, extended free admission to all residents of the county and hospitality employees.
- In November, Phase III of The Breakers Landscape Revival – the northeast quadrant encompassing the North Gate and Children’s Cottage – was completed. Work included re-establishment of the historic pin oak allée on the Shepard Avenue driveway and a segment of Serpentine Path near the Children’s Cottage. Sidewalk repairs were made using period-accurate macadam, granite detailing and landscape lighting. There was additional new landscaping around the Children’s Cottage, and the hedges near Shepard Avenue were replaced with a historically accurate hedgerow of trees and shrubs.
- From November 17-December 30, Sparkling Lights at The Breakers lit up the 13-acre landscape with holiday displays for the fourth straight season. Meanwhile, the interiors of The Breakers, Marble House and The Elms were adorned with seasonal decorations. On December 4, members were invited for a special night that included discounted tickets, holiday crafts, complimentary beverages, live music and special treats.

- On November 22, the Preservation Society appealed federal agency decisions approving wind farms off the Rhode Island coast. These appeals – filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia – detail how the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) failed to comply with heightened levels of review required under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. BOEM improperly approved wind farms that will damage historic resources within the City of Newport, which is heavily dependent on heritage tourism. These appeals highlight BOEM’s errors and ask that the process be done correctly.
- Extensive work on Isaac Bell House began in November. This project will include replacement of all shingles and the repointing of chimneys as well as restoration of the shutters and windows and fabrication of new storm windows. Isaac Bell House was built between 1881 and 1883 by McKim, Mead and White. This \$3.2 million project will be completed in the summer of 2024.
- The sold-out Holiday Dinner Dance at The Breakers, a black-tie event featuring a four-course dinner in the Great Hall and Dining Room followed by dancing in the Music Room, was held December 16.
- In 2023, the Preservation Society continued to implement elements of its Strategic Plan, including DEAI training, periodic visitor surveys, and the ongoing Capital Campaign.

"A huge thanks to this organization for saving the mansions of Newport. What a loss it would be to have them destroyed. A great organization with wonderful vision."

Tripadvisor Traveler Review

The Year In Review *continued*

- We continued to offer the Museums for All program, providing admission to the mansions for up to four people for \$2 per person to anyone with an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) or a Special Supplements for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) card. A total of 2,593 people used this discount, which translated into almost \$60,000 in ticket sales donated by the Preservation Society.
- The Café at The Chinese Tea House had its first full season after a revised victualing license was passed by the Newport City Council.
- In 2023, the guest count for Preservation Society events was 15,575, continuing an upward trend since the last pre-pandemic year of 2019, when 14,870 guests attended Preservation Society events.



Samantha Brown & Trudy Coxie during filming of “Samantha Brown’s Places To Love” at The Chinese Tea House.

"Green Animals Topiary Garden is the perfect place to spend a summer afternoon. With massive trees, expansive lawns, and a front porch complete with rocking chairs, Green Animals can't be missed."

Tripadvisor Traveler Review



Live The Drama billboard on Route 95 in Connecticut.

- We welcomed 2,152 groups that represent more than 89,000 visits. In addition, our Exclusive Experiences program continues to grow in interest with 195 Personal and Private Tours in 2023. Forty-seven cruise ships visited Newport in 2023 with a majority of the passengers visiting either one or two Newport Mansions.
- In December, new directional and informational signs were installed on the grounds of The Breakers. The sign outside the Welcome Center features a QR code that takes users to our website, where they can learn about downloading the audio tour app and see other tour options.
- Media exposure accounted for 3,580 mentions in 2023, up from 2,478 mentions in 2022. Highlights included a Marble House/Chinese Tea House story from "Samantha Brown's Places To Love," coverage of the "The Celestial City: Newport and China" exhibition from RI PBS and WJAR, coverage of the Rosecliff restoration in the Boston Globe, Providence Journal and on local television, and coverage of "The Celestial City" exhibition.
- We attracted 12,000 new followers and 5.2 million impressions on Instagram last year. Our growth rate on this platform is 4 percent, well above the industry standard of 1 percent. Facebook attracted 7.6 million impressions, 324,000 video views, and continues to trend upward. Our post engagement rate on Facebook was 5.6 percent. The industry standard for this metric is 1.5 percent.
- In a 2023 survey, 94% of visitors to the Newport Mansions rated the experience “very good” or “excellent,” with 70% giving an “excellent” rating. Overall, a combined 98% of visitors rated the experience “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.” A total of 2,082 email surveys were completed by 2023 visitors to the Newport Mansions in November. The Newport Mansions also earned a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 87. The NPS is a market research metric based on a single survey question asking respondents to rate the likelihood they would recommend a company, product, or service to a friend or colleague. It is the most widely used tool for assessing customer loyalty. A score of 50 or above is considered excellent.
- This year, IT achieved a comprehensive upgrade, replacing legacy network infrastructure, enhancing cybersecurity, and implementing new hardware and software across properties. Improved accessibility, security and business continuity were achieved through initiatives such as server upgrades, cybersecurity enhancements, and collaboration with Apple. The implementation of Fortinet VPN replaced LogMeIn, ensuring a more secure remote access method. Overall, these efforts have streamlined operations, strengthened cybersecurity posture and improved the efficiency of IT systems. We also harnessed the power of AI – in fact, this summary was written by ChatGPT based on a multi-bulleted list of accomplishments.

Marble House Dining Room, The Newport Flower Show





The Restoration of Rosecliff

One of the most extensive and complicated restoration projects in the history of The Preservation Society of Newport County began January 2 and was completed and officially unveiled August 24, when CEO Trudy Coxe and Director of Properties Mike Taber conducted a media tour of the newly refurbished Rosecliff.

Vendors and donors who made this restoration possible were invited to a special private showing of Rosecliff later in the morning as a thank you for their vital contributions to the project. The culmination of eight months work, the Rosecliff restoration cost \$7.4 million and utilized the skills of numerous local vendors.

Rosecliff reopened in time to host the groundbreaking exhibition “The Celestial City: Newport and China” starting September 1, as well as the Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival later that month.



Commissioned by silver heiress Theresa Fair Oelrichs in 1899, architect Stanford White modeled Rosecliff after the Grand Trianon, the garden retreat of French kings at Versailles. The 28,800-square-foot house was completed in 1902, at a reported cost of \$2.5 million, and quickly became renowned for its fabulous parties. The ballroom, measuring 40 by 80 feet, is still the largest in Newport.

Rosecliff was purchased in 1947 by J. Edgar and Louise Monroe of New Orleans, who used the house as a summer retreat. In 1971, the Monroes gave the house and all its furnishings to the Preservation Society along with a \$2 million operating fund. The J. Edgar Monroe Foundation continues to be a generous supporter of the Preservation Society, providing substantial backing for this restoration initiative.

Additional supporters of this project include Mr. & Mrs. John H. Manice, The Duniry Foundation, Mr. & Mrs. Tyson C. Reed, Mr. & Mrs. Donald Gulbrandsen, Mr. & Mrs. David B. Ford Jr., The Ford Family Foundation, Ms. Karen Piacentini & Dr. David P. Mirkin, Mr. & Mrs. Clay Rives, Ms. Nancy K. Bond, The Winifred M. Purdy Foundation, Mr. & Mrs. John M. Purdy, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Metzger, Mr. & Mrs. James Eagan, and the Knickle Family.

Highlights included:

- Replacement of the 5,000-square-foot roof with a new 30-year roofing system with a 90-millimeter-thick rubber membrane. The wooden roof planking under the old rubber membrane was carefully inspected and replaced where necessary before the new membrane was installed.
- Replacement of all 600 linear feet of the ornate balustrade that runs around the perimeter of the roof. This was a complex task done in stages, beginning with the creation of a 20-foot cast stone mockup of a section of balustrade to guide the prefabrication of all balustrade components. At each stage, a section of balustrade was removed, then the curb on which the balustrade is anchored was removed and rebuilt. The new balustrade section was then secured to the curb.
- Construction of a new 3,200-square-foot Ballroom floor, composed of 305 white oak 3-by-3-foot panels, that exactly replicates the original floor. The panels were fabricated onsite.
- Steam-cleaning of all exterior marble and terra cotta surfaces.
- Stripping and repainting of all windows, new textiles for the ballroom windows, and a new protective film coating applied to all windows on the ocean side of the house.
- Restoration of all front doors, including gilding.
- Repointing of exterior terra cotta tiles.
- Sandblasting and painting of all exterior wrought iron.
- Cleaning of basins in the front and back fountains followed by the application of a new five-coat waterproofing system.
- Rebuilding of the exterior back stairs.
- Restoration of the Cour D'Amour central garden in the front of the house.
- Repointing, cleaning and painting of the perimeter wall running the length of the property bordering the Cliff Walk, and rebuilding of the service pit walls.
- Cleaning and repointing of statue bases.



INTERNATIONAL PRESERVATION AWARD

Awarded to Álvaro Fernández-Villaverde y Silva

For your extraordinary commitment to safeguarding the cultural and natural heritage of Spain and the nations of the European continent within a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.

The International Preservation Award acknowledges the extraordinary efforts undertaken by individuals and institutions around the world to safeguard and preserve culturally significant properties. This distinction is awarded to those whose preservation efforts and actions evoke a sense of passion and inspiration in others.

As a preservation leader with few peers, Álvaro Fernández-Villaverde y Silva has worked tirelessly for much of his life to preserve and protect the cultural heritage of Spain and greater Europe.

Álvaro is internationally recognized for his leadership of several important preservation organizations. During his years of service, he sought to overcome myriad challenges and burdens that befall nearly all preservation endeavors of importance, and with each success he made the organizations stronger and more resilient.

As Chairman of Patrimonia Nacional from 1994 to 2004, Álvaro maintained oversight of 24 palaces, monasteries, royal convents and annexed buildings housing more than 160,000 historic and artistic pieces including paintings, sculptures, tapestries, clocks, gold and silver works, archives, books, musical instruments and furniture. Included as well are 22,000 hectares of historic gardens, forests and other natural spaces. Coming from the legacy of the Spanish Crown, the collections and land holdings represent the magnitude of Spain's cultural heritage. They are a national treasure that serve as a source of pride and enjoyment for the citizens of Spain and for visitors from around the world.

Álvaro's leadership during his tenure as Chair helped position Patrimonia Nacional to be ready to meet the needs of 21st-century audiences.

Not resting on his laurels, Álvaro served as President of Hispania Nostra for several years. For nearly 50 years, Hispania Nostra has protected and

promoted the values of cultural and natural heritage in Spain and their relationship to important aspects of economic development.

Hispania Nostra has overseen programs that spotlight endangered heritage, advocate best practices in preservation, encourage collaboration between private and public entities, and promote participation in educational activities to express the intrinsic value of culture and heritage to a society.

Álvaro also served as Europa Nostra's Vice President from 1998 to 2016. Europa Nostra is Europe's largest organization devoted to preserving cultural heritage, with an army of professionals and volunteers numbering in the millions. Its reach is felt throughout Europe. For his dedicated efforts, Álvaro received the Medal of Honour, Europa Nostra's highest award, in 2016. The accompanying citation articulates two of the many attributes that have guided Álvaro in his quest to do meaningful things: his ability to think strategically, and his skill at offering keen insights based on his invaluable diplomatic skills, honed over his years in the Spanish diplomatic service.

Álvaro's untiring service continues. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Prado Museum and the Naval Museum in Spain. He currently serves as President of the Álvaro de Bazan Foundation, which runs various family buildings in Spain that contain art collections open to public visitation.

Álvaro's service to Spain resulted in his being awarded the Gold Medal of Fine Arts by the King of Spain.

The son of a Spanish diplomat, Álvaro was born in London, England, in 1943 at the height of the Second World War, with all its ravages. It's possible that this legacy may have influenced Álvaro's untiring interest in safeguarding Spain's cultural heritage and that of Europe in a world increasingly marked by fragility and peril. Álvaro has left an indelible mark on the preservation of countless tangible artifacts, for which we express our sincere gratitude and admiration. His personality exudes integrity, grace, dignity and, above all, a genuine respect for others.



Chairman Bill Lucey presents Álvaro Fernández-Villaverde y Silva with his International Preservation Award. The Elms, October 5, 2023

Collections Care Specialist Dogan Farancz repairs gilt decorative plaster elements from the Gold Room ceiling at Marble House.



Laurel Awards

Presented in recognition of outstanding service, leadership and artisanship.



Trustee Evelina Taber, Steven Feinberg & Chairman Bill Lucey



Trustee Meg Braff, Lauri Pitkus & Chairman Bill Lucey

Artisanship

Steven Feinberg

Executive Director of the Rhode Island Film and Television Office

In recognition of your great success in attracting television and film productions to Rhode Island, and especially your vision and tenacity in bringing Julian Fellowes' "The Gilded Age" to Newport and the Preservation Society mansions.

Artisanship

Lauri Pitkus

Location Manager, HeyDey Productions

In recognition of your important role in showing the Newport Mansions at their best on HBO's "The Gilded Age," as well as your diligent care and advocacy for our properties during the filming of the series.

Horticulture

Peckham Brothers Co.

In recognition of your outstanding service to the Preservation Society's landscapes for more than 50 years, including major restoration projects such as The Elms Sunken Garden, the Rosecliff Rose Garden, the front lawn of Marble House and many more.



Chairman Bill Lucey, Jay Peckham of Peckham Brothers & Trustee William J. Corcoran



Katrina Pierce, Barbara Kimoto-Berg, Gerald Stevens, Helen Welch, Annegret Miller, Pam Fleming, Ron Fleming, Carolyn Petrocelli, Jane L. B. Griffith, Sheila Lang, Caroleen Frey, Christine Ferzoco, Debra Hunt, Judith Meyer, Barbara Holland, Hinda Perdreaux, & Elaine Hart. Missing: Judith Cavanaugh, Louise Murray, Jennie Rhoads & Nina Weiss

Volunteerism

Green Animals Topiary Garden volunteers: Judith Cavanaugh, Christine Ferzoco, Pam Fleming, Ron Fleming, Caroleen Frey, Jane L.B. Griffith, Elaine Hart, Barbara Holland, Barbara Kimoto-Berg, Sheila Lang, Judith Meyer, Annegret Miller, Louise Murray, Hinda Perdreaux, Carolyn Petrocelli, Katrina Pierce, Jennie Rhoads, Gerald Stevens, Nina Weiss, and Helen Welch.

In recognition of your dedication to helping with nearly every aspect of the garden's success, maintaining the high standard of horticultural excellence which has been the hallmark of Green Animals for more than a century.

In Their Own Words



Genna Duplisea, MSLIS, MA
Archivist

In January 2023, I started work as perhaps the first permanent, full-time archivist at the Preservation Society, and I have been getting my hands dirty – literally! One of my first projects, and my most significant accomplishment this year, was sorting through and stabilizing more than 130 boxes of records stored in the Rosecliff basement. These papers spanned decades, from the beginnings of the Preservation Society in 1945 to just a few years ago, and told the stories of many of the organization's departments. A long-ago water leak had damaged the boxes for these records, but fortunately, the documents themselves were salvageable because they had been stored in preservation-quality boxes.

Folders in hand (and respirator on face), I rehoused documents that we need to keep for the institutional archives in accordance with the records retention schedule. Working with these papers taught me a great deal about the Preservation Society's history and functions, which are vital lessons for a new employee. Moving, storing, and sorting records required me to lean on the rest of the Collections staff and showed me what a supportive and driven team I had joined. The records are out of the basement and will join the rest of the archives in the secure and climate-controlled storage at the 424 Bellevue headquarters.

Implementing records management principles will help in the stewardship of historic properties and give the organization better control over its own story.



Jason Fourquet
Team Leader, The Elms

When I reflect on the past year at The Preservation Society of Newport County, I am most struck by the strong interest our visitors have in HBO's "The Gilded Age." So many are fans, and they arrive eager to learn more about the true-life people and places that inspired it. From helping the young couple who want their photo taken while posing "like George and Bertha Russell" to discussing how the production allowed three different houses to seamlessly blend in one scene to play the part of Mrs. Astor's new Beechwood mansion, the show has generated so many new and exciting ways for the staff to engage with our guests. Upon entering a house, one of the first questions visitors often ask is, "Which scenes were filmed here?" They are always delighted to learn they are standing in the same spaces their favorite characters inhabit.

Importantly, the interest generated by "The Gilded Age" has proven to be a valuable tool in telling the story of the Preservation Society's houses. Our visitors are often intrigued to learn that many of the show's plot points were inspired by actual events and involved the people who lived in our houses. The show has helped the public better understand the world in which these people lived, what motivated them to build these grand houses, and how they lived in and used the houses. With the recent announcement that the series has been renewed for a third season, I look forward to seeing this interest continue.



Patricia Miller
Chief Conservator

Last summer, we installed new reproductions of the Four Seasons on the west facade of Rosecliff. The original statues were removed during the 1980s facade restoration. While glazed terra cotta is considered a long-lasting architectural product, it is susceptible to wear and deterioration from exposure in a northern coastal climate. The original statues were in such poor condition that only a few elements were saved and placed in storage.

In the late 1990s, Curator Paul Miller identified a similar statuary group in France and received permission to replicate the group for Rosecliff. Molds made in France were shipped to Newport, cast, and installed in 2001. Unfortunately, the material selected for the reproductions (resin-bonded gypsum) deteriorated sooner than anticipated. My 2017 inspection of the statues identified extensive cracks, surface delamination, corrosion of internal pins, and losses. Deciding to replace these sculptures again was challenging; however, they could not be repaired in a way that would result in long-term stability.

The statues were removed in November 2022 and transported to Skylight Studio for surface repairs, molding, and casting. Several replication materials were evaluated based on crucial factors: appearance, weight, durability, maintenance, and cost. We selected GFRP (glass fiber reinforced polymer), a lightweight architectural fiberglass product with a long history of use in historic preservation. The color match was selected using the flower wreath from the original terra cotta statue of "Spring." In June 2023, the statues were secured in place, again completing Stanford White's architectural vision for Rosecliff.



Patrick Surber
*Operations Coordinator,
Special Events*

Having worked for 15 years in the Special Events Department, I still have a passion for event planning, especially fundraising events hosted by the Preservation Society. I enjoy contributing to the process, from planning to execution to breakdown, which allows our staff and me to impact the success of these events and support the broader mission of raising funds for future projects at Preservation Society properties.

Special Events starts working on details well in advance, reviewing staging pieces for The Newport Flower Show up to six months beforehand, for example, to ensure everything is well-prepared and aligned with each year's theme. Collaborating with vendors for the annual Summer Dinner Dance adds another layer of interest and motivation to my position. Coordinating with professionals in event design, music, food, staffing, and parking allows our department to ensure a memorable experience for our supporters and guests. Working with our in-house team and external professionals to achieve a common goal is gratifying. There is always an opportunity to collaborate and learn something new about a product or trend in the event world.

Although our season is short - generally the summer months - we work long hours to help rental clients successfully present Preservation Society events. Our staff finds fulfillment in the intricate details and the overall impact of our work.

Of course, it is always exciting when we can assist with a celebrity wedding or the filming of a movie or TV series! Events are ever-changing and always interesting.



Exhibition: Sean Kenney's Nature Connects

The unique setting of Green Animals Topiary Garden continued to provide a scenic stage for outdoor exhibitions in 2023.

The latest was "Sean Kenney's Nature Connects" made with LEGO® bricks, an award-winning exhibition that uses colorful works of art made from simple toy blocks to explore animal endangerment, the balance of ecosystems and mankind's relationship with nature. "Nature Connects" depicts important topics that the artist, Sean Kenney holds dear, from protecting an animal's habitat to planting a garden or using a bicycle instead of a car.

Fourteen sculptures were strategically positioned around the grounds at Green Animals while a 15th sculpture - Sean Kenney's "Bonsai Tree" - was displayed inside the Welcome Center at The Breakers. The exhibition ran from May 26 through September 10, attracting

35,136 visitors. To put that in perspective, Green Animals hosted 18,622 visitors in 2019, the last year before the COVID pandemic.

This exhibition built on the success of "David Rogers' Big Bugs," which drew huge numbers of visitors to Green Animals in 2021. Visitors also continued to enjoy the opportunity to picnic on the scenic grounds of the oldest and most northern topiary garden in the United States.

"Nature Connects" was presented by Imagine Exhibitions. It was sponsored by Carol and David Bazarsky, BankNewport, National Trust Insurance Services, Discover Newport, Casey's Oil & Propane, Devaney Energy, Donovan & Sons Inc., Grande Masonry, T.J. Brown Landscape Contractor Inc., Charter Books, Dr. Brian Melzian, Lisa and Paul Perrault, and Shamrock Electric.



"Lantern Stories: Newport and China," Yu-Wen Wu (b. Taipei), 2023,
The Preservation Society of Newport County

Exhibition: The Celestial City: Newport and China



Robe, Dress, and Headpiece Worn by Mamie Fish. Unidentified maker (Chinese), and Edward Farmer (American, 1872 – 1942), 1914. Embroidered silk satin, polychrome silk, and gold embroidered headpiece
Gift of Dr. Marian Anthon Bruen Marrin.

A groundbreaking exhibition highlighting the contributions of Chinese and Chinese-American individuals to life in Newport from the 18th century through the Gilded Age opened at Rosecliff on September 1, 2023, and ran through February 11, 2024.

The exhibition, "The Celestial City: Newport and China," included more than 100 extraordinary pieces in a range of media, from paintings, sculptures, prints and photographs to fashion, ceramics, lacquerwares and lanterns.

These objects came from the collections of The Preservation Society of Newport County and from renowned partner institutions including the Winterthur Museum, the Huntington Library, the Museum of Chinese in America and the Library of Congress.

The research behind this exhibition began almost two years ago, shortly after Dr. Nicole Williams joined the Preservation Society as its Curator of Collections. Her work – with contributions from Dr. Bing Huang, Assistant Professor of Art History at Providence College, Research Assistant Claire Barnewolt and Research Fellow Dani Zhang – shed light on how Chinese women suffragists influenced U.S. suffrage leaders like Alva Vanderbilt of Marble House, a forceful voice in the fight for women's right to vote.

The exhibition also fostered a deeper understanding of the Chinese community that thrived in Newport during the Gilded Age and how it contributed to the city's culture. Dr. Williams' interview with the grandson of one of Newport's earliest Chinese business owners provided an intimate portrait of this previously overlooked aspect of Newport's diverse history.

Contemporary artworks by Yu-Wen Wu and Jennifer Ling Datchuk illuminated Chinese contributions to Newport as well as hidden connections between the Newport mansions and the Chinese American experience. Yu-Wen Wu's remarkable lantern installation, "Lantern Stories: Newport and China," marked the first time the Preservation Society commissioned an original artwork.

Other highlights of the exhibition included treasures of Chinese art collected by Newport merchants and industrialists; photographs and stories from Newport's early Chinese community; and the writings, portraits and family heirlooms of Chinese women suffragists who inspired American women's rights leaders.

The exhibition was presented by Carolann C. Kummins and the Sante Center for Natural Healing, and sponsored by The Sullivan Family Charitable Foundation, Debra & Claudio Del Vecchio, Margaret & Sean Maloney, Mary & Guy Van Pelt, Mr. Patrick Barry-Nolan, Mr. & Mrs. Peter S. Goltra, Trudy & Lew Keen, Dr. & Mrs. Robert B. Walsh, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth R. Woodcock, Mr. & Mrs. John W. Brooks, Jr., Nina Barbaresi & James B. Grosvenor, Anne Marie Biernacki-Smith & Kenneth Smith, Andrea & Bill Keogh, Mr. & Mrs. Donald O. Ross, Julie & Tom Borden, Fernanda M. Kellogg & Kirk Henckels, and Diana & Paul Szápáry.



Sparkling Lights at The Breakers



Top Photo: Architectural detail, Marble House. Bottom Photo: Tall Case Clock, Clockworks (detail) by William Cloggett (Newport, between 1735 and 1748). Japanned case by unidentified maker (Boston). Pine. Loaned by Redwood Library and Athenaeum for "The Celestial City: Newport and China" Exhibition.

Donors

January 1 – December 31, 2023

The Preservation Society of Newport County thanks our donors and supporters. Your generosity makes it possible for us to protect, preserve and present the exceptional collection of historic house museums, landscapes and decorative objects entrusted to our perpetual care.

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Top Photo: Architectural detail, Marble House. Bottom Photo: Architectural detail, Rosecliff

Top Photo: Elms Bedroom Set (detail), Gift of Alan Fletcher and Ronald Schiller, 2021. Bottom Photo: A Jade Clock in Bangle, Undetermined creator, Russian, 20th century, jade, semiprecious stone, mother-of-pearl. Gift of Mrs. Edward J. Bewwind, 2008.

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Bottom Photo: Portrait of Gertrude Berwind, Baroness von Boecklin, by Frieda Menshausen Labriola, German, 1902, oil on canvas. Bequest of Mrs. Anita Grosvenor McAndrews

Middle Photo: A set of Minton Art Studios Tiles, Chateau-sur-Mer, by Minton Art Studios, designed by Walter Crane, English, 1876, glazed earthenware. Purchased by The Preservation Society of Newport County, 1969.
Bottom Photo: Architectural detail at The Breakers



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Bottom Row: Jennifer Tumbarello, Kelli Arcidi, Carolann Kummins, Bryce Wallis & Chris Eisold



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Paul & Alisa Callahan at Member Appreciation Night



Guests at the "Outer Space to the Stars" Dinner Dance



Kim & Dan Tutcher



Nick & Abby Roache, Leigh Mills & Hank Bell



Angela Brown Fischer & Janet Robinson



Lisa Wise & Laurie Nicoletti



Sue & Peter Metzger



Andrew & Felicity Jones



Snehal Shah, Lisa & Chuck Wise



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Melissa Caldwell Quinn, Alison Caldwell,
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Anika Kimble-Huntley & Alexis Gaskins



Member appreciation night at Rosecliff



Guests at the "Outer Space to the Stars" Dinner Dance



Meg Steiner, Trudy Coxe & Bettie Pardee



Kate Enroth & Dana Schmalz, Anne & David Ford



Ralph & Ala Isham



Chairman Bill Lucey, Meg Braff
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Jim Gaffney, Bonnie & Philip Cabaud, Trudy Cox, Andrew Zimmern, Mr. & Mrs. McBeth, Liz & Steve Casper
attending Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival's Vintner Dinner.



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Bottom Row: Ala Isham, Snehal Shah, William F. Lucey III, Sherri Grace, Evelina Taber, Beverly Y. Little, Cynthia Stewart Reed & Kim Darden
Middle Row: Lark E. Mason, Jr., Meg W. Braff, Patrick Wood Prince, Stephen Huttler, Dale J. Venturini, David Bazarsky & Susan C. Petrovas, R.Ph.
Top Row: William J. Corcoran, Steven B. Gewirz, Edward F. Sanderson, Peter W. Harris & Keith Stokes
Missing: Hank Bell, Peter C. Erichsen, Anne Ford, Patrick Kerins, Earl A. Powell III & Janet L. Robinson

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We gratefully acknowledge Holly M. Bannister, MD, John D. Muggeridge and Naomi L. Neville for their outstanding service to the Board of Trustees.



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Row Two: Peter Eltz, Trudy Coxo, Francois Poulet, Anne L. Poulet, Bonnie Burnham, Constance T. Haydock, Pauline C. Metcalf & Morrison H. Heckscher
Row Three: John Winthrop Aldrich, Andrea Berthoud, Jean Berthoud, Brooks Lobkowicz, Margaret Lobkowicz, Carol J. Epstein, Robert B. MacKay, PhD & Anna MacKay
Top Row: Hermes Mallea, Frederick W. Beinecke, Count Denis de Kergorlay & William G. Allman

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The International Council is a group of internationally recognized leaders in the fields of arts, culture, horticulture and historic preservation. They provide insight and guidance on global issues that affect cultural heritage institutions and help the Preservation Society identify the best practices in preservation, conservation, education, development and museum management.

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Library at The Breakers

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January 1 – December 31, 2023

The Preservation Society thanks all individuals who donated countless hours of their time and talents.



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Top Photo: Debra Hunt, Volunteer Coordinator. Bottom Photo: Volunteers & employees at the annual Trick or Treat at The Breakers.



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2023



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2023 Annual Report

THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF NEWPORT COUNTY

