During the last week of September, there was a frenzy of activity on the grounds at Bartow-Pell. To the east of the mansion, beyond the formal garden, an area that once looked out over Long Island Sound was transformed. What had been engulfed by such invasive plant species as porcelain-berry vine, bittersweet, multiflora rose, and the scary-sounding mile-a-minute vine was opened up to the light and a bit of water view, suggesting vistas long gone. This miracle was wrought—in just four days—by a hard-working group of volunteers on a Sierra Club work service vacation, one of only two offered in New York City. It was the second such event at BPMM, and a third one for next fall is already in the works—with one of last year’s participants already enrolled!

Seventeen Sierra Club volunteers from all across the country and three leaders came to do this voluntary labor in the Bronx. For Claudia Newbold from California this was her eighth Sierra Club work service trip this year. Participants ranged from regulars like her to a mother-daughter team joining a Sierra Club trip for the first time. Two of the trip’s leaders, Richard Grayson and Jerry Balch, have extensive experience with the Sierra Club. Jerry originated the idea of an urban service trip. In 2000 they started leading Sierra Club service trips in New York City, and they have run twelve of them in Riverside Park along the Hudson River.

The Bartow-Pell group stayed at a youth hostel on the upper west side of Manhattan and was transported to BPMM each morning in a Parks Department bus. Arriving about 9 a.m., the group started with a light snack before heading out to do battle with the undergrowth. Director of Gardens Frazier Holloway and Pelham Bay Park Natural Areas Manager John Grayley were on hand daily to work with and guide the team. Work is done rain or shine, but happily the weather was mostly dry that week.

At lunch time, the volunteers enjoyed a welcome break and listened to a variety of speakers. These ranged from Pelham Bay Park Administrator Marianne Anderson and Mike Feller, Chief Naturalist of the Parks Natural Resources Group, to a tour of the mansion with Education Director and Curator Margaret Highland and a discussion of Lenape culture with docent Linda Sacewicz. City Island resident and BPC board member Barbara Burn Dolensek capped off the week with a bus tour of City Island, which culminated in lunch at one of its famed seafood restaurants.

But the weeklong trip was not all work. It began with a one-and-a-half-day tour of midtown Manhattan and downtown Brooklyn, a trek over the Brooklyn Bridge, and a walk through downtown Manhattan. A round-trip ride on the Staten Island ferry led to another tour through Chinatown, Little Italy, SoHo, and Greenwich Village. During the evenings of the four work days, the group experienced New York City culture by attending concerts and Broadway shows.

Above: Looking east before and after Sierra Club clearing (Frances Hann); right: the hard-working gang (Richard Warren)
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2011 was a busy year at the museum. We offered more than 90 programs, hosted more than 2,000 schoolchildren, and held 5 fundraisers. We increased our visibility and had record attendance at several events. We bid a fond farewell to former Education Director Valerie Albanese-Fraher and welcomed Margaret Highland as Education Director and Curator, marking the first time the curatorial role has been a paid position. A long list of active interns helped in a variety of program areas, with Luis Marmol joining us as volunteer Associate Curator of Gardens after his internship. In addition, Lisa Kiernan signed on as a docent and Karen Lambdin as a regular volunteer.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the help of our supporters. Our heartfelt thanks go to all of them, but we are particularly grateful to the city and state agencies, especially the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts, as well as the Bronx Council on the Arts. Con Edison continues to be our largest corporate funder, and we are very thankful for their support. Additional funds come from the Harmon Foundation, City Garden Clubs of New York City, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Junior League of Pelham, Colonial Lords of the Manor, and of course the Parks Department and the Historic House Trust of New York City, which give us help in so many ways in addition to vital operating support. Please visit our website, www.bpmm.org, to see the list of much-appreciated area business supporters. And, finally, our deepest appreciation to each and every one of our individual benefactors.

Our fundraisers this year have become increasingly successful—and fun! We heralded the arrival of warm weather last spring with the now-annual Kentucky Derby party on a beautiful spring evening the first Saturday in May. Guests enjoyed mint juleps, admired the newly replanted formal garden, and perused the superb auction items. The June luncheon, held under a tent on the pebble court, featured speaker Sara Cedar Miller, Central Park Conservancy historian, photographer, and author. She gave a fascinating presentation of that public-private partnership’s achievements in restoring, improving, and maintaining Central Park—a stellar example for us at Bartow-Pell. A few months later, we greeted autumn with a new addition to our annual fundraiser line-up—an antique car rally. On a spectacular Sunday afternoon, vintage cars toured Pelham and the Bronx on their way to BPMM, where they picnicked and discussed the fine points of the automobiles. Our most traditional fundraiser, the Presentation of daughters of BPC members, was held Thanksgiving weekend. This was its 46th year and six young women were presented. Finally, closing out the year, hundreds of guests joined us for the Storybook Christmas events. All helped to preserve this wonderful place, making it a living, breathing site. If you have yet to join in the fun, make 2012 the year to do so. May it be a happy, healthy, and history-filled year for all!

Top to bottom: Con Ed volunteers help out at a Volunteer Garden Clean-up Day (Rolando Infante); Beth Billik at the Kentucky Derby party (Richard Warren); Trish Striano, Kate Guenther, and board member Nancy Davis at June Luncheon (Ellen Bruzelius); vintage cars at BPMM (Daniel Smith); greeting guests at the Presentation (Domenica Comfort)
2011 HOLIDAY CELEBRATION
A STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS WEEKEND
BY NANCY DAVIS, BPC BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FUNDRAISING

The annual Holiday Celebration weekend at Bartow-Pell gathered hundreds of guests and visitors for a truly memorable experience as they went from one festive event to the next. Although the mansion is beautiful all year round, it simply shines when decorated for the holiday season, and the 2011 holiday celebration committee worked its magic as never before. Eight spectacular trees inside the mansion were dressed with ornaments inspired by Christmas storybooks from around the world and trimmed by organizations, including local non-profit programs—as well as Real Simple magazine—setting the stage for this year’s theme.

Festivities began with a record crowd at the luncheon on Friday, December 2, featuring delicious food by Scarborough Fair, the weekend’s caterer. Luncheon guests were the first to enjoy the opportunity to shop for unique gifts and homemade goodies, as well as to bid on our many silent auction items. The fun continued that evening with December’s First Friday concert featuring the fabulous Metropolitones, back by popular demand.

The next morning, children and parents flocked to the mansion for our traditional Holiday Family Day. Storyteller and librarian Joan Huenemann Michie held them rapt with classic Christmas tales. Then the families were off to make crafts, including gingerbread people with Irina Brandler of City Island’s Sugar & Spice Bakery, and to pose for pictures with Santa, taken by Pelham’s pro Domenica Comfort.

Finally, Saturday’s Evening Celebration capped off the festivities on a fun and elegant note. The splendid buffet, cocktails, and caroling by the A caPelhams all helped to make spirits bright. And the live auction, which featured magnificent vacation homes donated by board members, the ever-popular Dinner in the Double Parlors, and an opportunity to support the museum’s interior shutter restoration that raised over $7,000, was masterfully led by the evening’s auctioneer Mark Campisano.

A thousand thanks to all board members and helpers with special note of appreciation to the committee co-chairs Mary Beth Fisher and Debra Ballard for an outstanding job!

Above left: Tree inspired by Madeline’s Christmas by Ludwig Bemelmans in upstairs sitting room (Daniel Smith); left: ladies lunching in the Orangerie (Richard Warren); above: caroling at the holiday evening celebration (Claude Roland)
A NOTE FROM CATHERINE CAMPBELL SCINTA
BARTOW-PELL CONSERVANCY PRESIDENT

Welcome, Bartow-Pell friends, to our latest newsletter. We are excited to share with you a few highlights of the past year at the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, along with reports on our ongoing efforts to restore and improve this beautiful 19th-century treasure and its surrounding grounds in Pelham Bay Park.

Speaking of the grounds, I was delighted to experience at first hand last November the fun of joining with many volunteers from our neighboring areas to pull down invasive vines and to clear overgrown vegetation beyond the formal walled garden, where the Sierra Club work-vacation volunteers had cut back the dense understory of the woods. My teenage son and I joined others young and older from City Island, Fordham University, and other parts of the Bronx and lower Westchester County on a beautiful crisp autumn morning to complete the clearing that now allows a view of Long Island Sound that the Bartow family might have experienced when they lived here 150 years ago.

We all support Bartow-Pell in many ways, but I cannot recommend highly enough the pleasure of working outdoors in the fresh air to bring back the glory of this beautiful property for everyone to enjoy. The museum organizes volunteer clean-up days twice a season, in the spring and fall, and no special gardening expertise is required! I would urge everyone to participate next time, not just for Bartow-Pell but also for the sense of camaraderie and accomplishment. Regardless of your talent or your interests, Bartow-Pell offers the opportunity for all of us to contribute in meaningful ways, and I look forward to seeing you at our next public program or event.

Happy New Year!

REBECCA BRAINARD: PROFILE IN PROFICIENCY

When our old house needs special attention, a call to the Historic House Trust (HHT) brings Rebecca Brainard to the rescue. Whether the task involves changing a lock or setting a tile floor, Rebecca is both qualified to do the job and sensitive to the issues that face the owners of all historic houses.

Rebecca grew up in Massachusetts, where she became a young jack of all trades under the supervision of her father, who owned wooden sailboats; her early jobs involved playground construction and the restoration of historic buildings in San Francisco.

In 2007 she applied for a maintenance position with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, which sent her résumé to HHT, which employs her as the only preservation and maintenance worker for the 23 historic homes located in the city’s parks. Rebecca also serves as caretaker at the Morris Jumel Mansion in Manhattan, where she lives with her husband and stepdaughter. “I’m a building buff,” she says.

She spends her days running from one borough to the next, analyzing problems, solving them, and documenting her work with photographs. In addition to her skill in carpentry and other trades, she is an enthusiastic teacher and enjoys working with interns each summer and running workshops for high school students.

Although many of Rebecca’s projects at Bartow-Pell have been relatively simple, she recently undertook the job of rehanging the shutters that were restored at a volunteer workshop last summer. This was a huge, complicated project, but she did a masterful job, and the results are a tribute to both her sensitivity and her skill.
NEW ACQUISITIONS: A TOUCH OF ELEGANCE

BY NORA MAZUR, BPC CHAIR, CURATORIAL & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Former Bartow-Pell Conservancy president Marion Cook graciously donated a beautiful pair of framed silk needlework pictures to the museum last year. Embroidered about 1810–20, this highly decorative and appropriately themed pair now hangs upstairs in Clarina’s bedroom. Each depicts a young woman seated on a rock in a garden under a tree; in one picture she holds a rake, and in the other a bouquet of flowers. The embroideries have their original verre églomisé mats with period-appropriate later gilt-wood frames.

Embroideries like these were rarely signed, but stylistic comparisons with other works often help to identify the geographic region in which they were produced. Further research may one day help us to determine the origin of this beautiful pair. Although they were produced slightly before the Bartow mansion was built about 1840, the house would have been furnished with similar needlework pictures from this period.

Pictorial embroideries were fashionable in the early to mid-19th century, produced by young women who were taught embroidery skills from an early age and who applied those skills to a wide range of domestic uses, from handkerchiefs to pictures meant to be framed and admired. The donations from Marion Cook are expertly worked in a variety of colored silk threads on silk with watercolor, and they represent the highest level of this art form. Be sure to admire our latest acquisitions the next time you visit BPMM.

SCOUT DAYS

BY MARGARET HIGHLAND, EDUCATION DIRECTOR & CURATOR

BPMM launched exciting new programs for scouts in the fall of 2011 with Scout Days. These offer fun-filled activities, as well as an opportunity for youngsters to complete some badge requirements.

Docent Linda Sacewicz, who helped develop our Original Bronx Natives school program, and Native American expert and storyteller Bobby Gonzalez led Indian Lore in October and November. Scouts listened to stories and lore; learned about Lenape culture, food, and language; and viewed artifacts at our Northeast Woodlands wigwam.

The Historic House Discovery Tea Party enabled Girl Scouts to imagine life on a grand Pelham Bay estate in the mid-19th century. Scouts took a journey back in time with a costumed docent, learning about family life in the Bartow household and discovering how people really lived over 150 years ago. After the program, participants enjoyed tea, hot chocolate, and pastries in the Orangerie.

We would like to thank Con Edison for their help in funding Scout Days, and we are delighted that both programs will be held in the spring of 2012.

Above: Bobby Gonzalez enlightens and entertains at the wigwam (Richard Warren); below: a table set for tea in the Orangerie (Daniel Smith)

Robert Bartow (1792–1868) and his son Robert Erskine Bartow (1840–1867) died exactly one year apart on June 24. Both are buried in the Bartow plot at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church at Westchester Square in the Bronx. The elder Robert died in 1868 at the age of 76; his 27-year-old son had predeceased him in 1867.

Mrs. Charles Frederick (Zelia) Hoffman (1867–1929), founder of the International Garden Club, was born in Evansville, Indiana, and had a cosmopolitan upbringing. As a young woman, she graduated from Merton College, University of Oxford. Later in life, after becoming a British subject, she ran unsuccessfully as the Liberal Party candidate for the North Norfolk parliamentary seat.
MOURNING BECOMES US: FALL EXHIBIT
OCTOBER 3–NOVEMBER 20, 2011

“Cards and note-paper are now put into mourning . . . a narrow border of black tells the story of loss as well as an inch of coal-black gloom.” —Mrs. John Sherwood, 1888

Elaborate mourning rituals were popular on both sides of the Atlantic during the 19th century, when death and loss were commonplace and complex etiquette dictated behavior and fashion. Our fall pop-up exhibit—on view from October 3 to November 20—featured jewelry, ephemera, a tintype of a mourning baby, a Nathaniel Currier lithograph, 19th-century bonnets, and more. Quotations from period etiquette books enriched this fascinating array of objects.

In America, the death of George Washington in 1799 sparked an outpouring of public grief unlike any other in the young nation, and mourning became a national pastime. Eighteen years later, Princess Charlotte (1796–1817), the only daughter of George IV and dazzling heir to the British throne, died in childbirth at the age of 21, sending a disconsolate Regency England into shock.

The premature death in 1861 of Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, and the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865 produced a second wave of mourning in each country. Meanwhile, everyday people faced constant loss from illness, maternal and infant mortality, war, and shorter life expectancies.

Although mourning was sometimes very expensive and overly complicated, these social customs helped people grieve while paying homage to their loved ones. The objects on display at BPMM this fall represented only a tiny glimpse of the compelling mores of a bygone era.

DIBBLES AND DAISY GRUBBERS: THE ART OF THE GARDEN TOOL

On view at BPMM from April 1 to June 30 will be a seasonally appropriate exhibition of antique garden tools collected by landscape architect Mark Morrison. These beautifully crafted and exceptionally useful objects provide a fascinating glimpse into the art of gardening as it has been practiced in Europe and America since the 17th century. Specialized tools such as clod crushers, cucumber straighteners, and wasp catchers are displayed alongside more familiar objects such as dibbles (for planting bulbs) and watering cans, each handmade in practical yet elegant forms that will appeal to all visitors, even those who have never weeded a garden with a daisy grubber.
BARTOW-PELL MANSION MUSEUM

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Contributions to Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum support the care and growth of the museum collection, development and implementation of public and school programs, and general operating support. There are many ways to help. For further information or to become a member, please call 718.885.1461.

MAKE A PLANNED GIFT

BPMM’s Legacy Can Be Your Legacy
Support the preservation of the history, buildings, collection, and grounds of BPMM by entering into a planned giving program. This can be accomplished by including BPMM in your will. By doing this you can help to ensure that future generations experience the museum’s rich collection and offerings.

ESTABLISH A NAMED ENDOWMENT

Help Secure the Future of BPMM
Named endowment funds are a meaningful way to honor a loved one, celebrate a family’s commitment to history, or recognize the contribution of a foundation or corporation. These provide crucial financial support, in perpetuity, for BPMM’s important work. Income generated by named endowments may be applied to general operations or a specific use such as school programs, care of gardens, or acquisitions.

MATCHING GIFTS

Companies often will match employee contributions to cultural organizations. If you are eligible to have your gift to BPMM matched by your company, please complete the matching gift form (provided by your employer) and send this paperwork with your donation.

VOLUNTEER AT BPMM

A wide range of volunteer opportunities is available for anyone interested in donating their time and energy to help keep the mansion and property accessible to the public. Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to, leading education programs, supporting public programs and special events, providing administrative assistance, and garden help (seasonal). Benefits include training and advance notice of lectures and concerts.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Become a member today and join an ever-widening circle of friends who are helping to keep this historic site vibrant for generations to come. Your membership helps support Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum’s ongoing operations and programs. Members at all levels enjoy free museum admission as well as member discounts on programs.

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A yearlong membership to Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum makes a great gift for any occasion.

I would LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF BARTOW-PELL MANSION MUSEUM:

- [ ] FRIEND $40
- [ ] HERITAGE $180
- [ ] BARTOW-PELL SOCIETY $500
- [ ] FRIEND FAMILY $100
- [ ] HERITAGE FAMILY $300
- [ ] CONSERVATION CIRCLE $1,000
- [ ] LEADERSHIP CIRCLE $3,500

Enclosed is my check for $________________ made payable to Bartow-Pell Landmark Fund or

Please bill my [ ] MasterCard [ ] Visa Card Number _____________________________

Name as it appears on credit card ____________________________________________ Exp. date ______

City ______________________ State ______ Zip ______

Phone ______________________ Email ___________________________________________

Name(s) for membership card(s) _____________________________

Will your company match your gift? If so, please enclose a matching gift form.
SUPPORT BEAUTY, CULTURE, HISTORY CLOSE TO HOME

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Sierra Club project, fundraising events, Holiday Celebration weekend, new acquisitions, educational programs, exhibition review and preview

PLEASE VISIT WWW.BPMM.ORG OR CALL 718.885.1461 FOR MORE INFORMATION