



BONNET HOUSE  
MUSEUM & GARDENS

FEBRUARY- MAY 2024

*House Happenings*

# FROM THE CEO

*Patrick Shavloske*



AS THE CALENDAR turns to 2024, I find myself looking backwards and forwards at the same time. When 2020 dawned, Bonnet House was on the cusp of its 100th anniversary and was nearing its independence from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. The world seemed our oyster. Then came COVID. While Bonnet House

(and all of us!) weathered that ordeal, it seems like there was about an 18 month gap where time stood still. Thankfully that COVID-ennui passed, and by mid-2022 and early 2023 Bonnet House's board and staff began to think seriously about what the bigger future might hold for Bonnet House, and we began to think about the museum's future in the context of a simple question, "what if?"

For example...

What if Bonnet House were able to install rotating, outdoor sculpture exhibitions? Bonnet House has a fair amount of land that could be used for these temporary exhibitions, honoring the Bartletts' artistic heritage, providing both established and emerging artists with a spot to exhibit their work, and a reason for locals to make regular, return visits to Bonnet House. What if Bonnet House were known for the art of the Bartletts and current art?

What if our Bonnet House Fine Artists and other emerging local artists had a space to display their artwork in rotating exhibitions? Our current welcome center ticketing area accommodates exhibitions as best it can but imagine if there were dedicated space for this. That would further Evelyn Bartlett's wish that Bonnet House should be a community gathering spot to celebrate the visual arts.

What if Bonnet House had appropriate space to store and care for its art collection? To put it mildly, the linen room once used to store the Bartletts' bedding,



towels and table linens is not an ideal storage site for artwork, nor is Florence's bedroom (Florence was Mrs. Bartlett's personal lady's maid). The historic nature of the rooms means they are not adequately sealed against humidity, even with air conditioning. Bonnet House needs a modern location with appropriate storage facilities to properly conserve paintings and other collection items.

What if Bonnet House had an improved parking lot and visitor arrival experience? What if guests could be dropped off at a covered entryway to a visitor engagement center without the need of a golf cart to dodge puddles? What if guests with mobility challenges could seamlessly make it from the parking lot/welcome center to the front door of the main house?

What if Bonnet House had an exhibit space to introduce visitors to the story of the Bartlett and Birch families and prepare them to step out of 2024 and back to a beachfront estate of the 1930s and 40s? What if there were expanded café options that encouraged visitors to stay longer at Bonnet House? What if there were a larger museum store to help further sustain Bonnet House? What if community groups and associations that call Fort Lauderdale Beach home had meeting and gathering space in a natural haven?

What if Bonnet House had more classroom space that made it possible for art classes to be scheduled in the summer or go forward in the winter without outdoor space heaters in cold snaps? What if there were sinks for cleaning brushes?

The new year will be a time for Bonnet House to think more deeply about these questions and hold conversations with our donors, volunteers, and community leaders to discuss additional possibilities and priorities. I am so very excited about the future of Bonnet House, and I look forward to having all our supporters join us on the journey.

Cover Photo: Lauren Weissman. Inside photos: Barbie Pearson, Clay Wieland, Lauren Weissman and Monica Estevez.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR WITH HEARTFELT APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE FOR ALL YOU DO!

*Darla L. Stanton, Director of Development*



## Holiday Magic 2023

It has been an amazing year here at Bonnet House. So many wonderful things have happened, and we could never do it without all of you. We have the great fortune of having the most outstanding board members, donors, volunteers, and staff. We are extremely grateful for your dedication and commitment to Bonnet House.

One of the many successes here this year has been our wonderful, magical, whimsical event called Holiday Magic. We kicked off the weeklong event with a record-breaking sellout crowd of 400 people at the Soirée on the veranda and in the VIP tent. The event has created a groundswell of support from all of you and the entire community. This is certainly something that will be a tradition here at Bonnet House for many more years to come and a new and much needed revenue stream. This year so far, we made just over \$215,000 in funds for Bonnet House making it the single largest fund raiser for Bonnet House! The final numbers will be available in January as we keep selling trees, wreaths, and centerpieces until the end of the year. Out of 90 pieces, we have sold 60!!!! This is the most we have ever sold and the most pieces we ever had available. I would like to extend an extra special thank you to our lead designers Julius Bianchi and Beatrice Florida (pictured above) for decorating just over half of those pieces!

Two truly stand-out underwriters for Holiday Magic were Hansen Group Catering and Neil Goldberg's Pomp Snow and Cirquemstance. The Hansen Group donated all of the catering for the Soiree while our board member Neil Goldberg brought his magical cast of characters to delight and entertain. Who could forget the fantastic juggler?!

Mark your calendars for Holiday Magic 2024: Friday, December 6th will be the VIP and Soiree, Saturday, December 7th will be our Whimsical Wonderland and

December 11th, 12th and 13th will be our unforgettable evening experiences!

## Night at the Museum

This component of the Revitalize Bonnet House campaign offers guests a rare opportunity to spend the night at Bonnet House in the newly renovated bridal suite accompanied by a gourmet dinner and breakfast the next morning. Alternatively, donors can host a gourmet dinner for eight at Bonnet House. Either Night at the Museum experience is a \$5,000 gift, but the experiences can be combined for a \$10,000 gift. So far, we have raised \$131,320.00 and all the proceeds go to restoration, preservation, and maintenance of Bonnet House! What a terrific way to enjoy and help your favorite non-profit at the same time!

## International Orchid Festival is Just Around the Corner

Also, mark your calendars for the 15th Annual Orchid Festival which will take place on April 6 and 7, 2024. The hours are 9:00am to 4:00pm on both Saturday and Sunday. Over thirty vendors participate in the festival by selling orchids and garden supplies. Over 5,000 people typically attend the festival. The entire grounds are open for guests to enjoy, and self-guided house tours are available. Lectures and workshops on orchid cultivation as well as live music, food and beverage vendors are scheduled throughout the day. Admission to the event is \$15. This year we added a NEW Tropical Luau Lunch on the Veranda on Saturday, April 6th & Sunday, April 7th from 11am - 2pm. Enjoy a fully catered affair by Hugh's Catering on the beautifully decorated waterfront veranda. Lunch tickets include a delectable tropical buffet, Mai Tais, wine & beer, live music, and access to the house for a leisurely stroll through the rooms and Orchid Display House. Tickets also include access to the Festival and orchid & garden care demonstrations. Tropical Luau Lunch on the Veranda Tickets: \$100. Last year we raised \$123,275 and this year our goal is \$150,475.

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### The New Year is Here and Maybe You Would Like to Become Part of Bonnet House's Legacy Society?

The change of the calendar is always a good opportunity to reflect on the past year and review your personal financial affairs. Perhaps you have experienced a change in your life that would affect your estate plan, or your charitable interests have changed? With a planned gift to Bonnet House Museum & Gardens—such as a bequest or charitable gift annuity—you can combine your desire to support a worthy cause with your overall financial, tax, and estate planning goals. Planned giving gives you a special connection with Bonnet House. You will help preserve this historic site—for now and for years to come! For more information or if you have already left Bonnet House in your estate plans and would like to be listed in our Legacy Society, please contact Darla at [darlastanton@bonnethouse.org](mailto:darlastanton@bonnethouse.org).

### Membership

Lastly, one of the simplest ways you can help preserve and enhance Bonnet House, this wonderful treasure, is by becoming a member. You will receive complimentary admission for a year, get discounted admission for up to 3 guests and receive discounts in our Museum Shop, the best little gift shop in all of Broward County.

### Welcome Lauren

I would like to extend the warmest welcome to the newest member of our Bonnet House team, Lauren Weissman, as the new Development Coordinator. She has already hit the ground running, and we are extremely happy to have her here. Please stop by and say "hello" to her and be sure to check out her article in this newsletter for all the details about Lauren.

### The Gift of Giving - Donor Spotlight

#### John Deere Gator Utility Cart - Charlie, Laura, and Ashley Palmer

There are so many things to be thankful for this holiday season. We have so many wonderful donors. However, some stand out this year, as they have in many other occasions. We love the Palmer family not only for the gift of giving, but also for their true love of Bonnet House Museum & Gardens!



The Palmers own a cattle ranch in LaBelle, between Lake Okeechobee and Fort Myers, so they truly understood the need for a new John Deere for our groundskeeper! The family gave us a tremendous gift to buy a new one! We have 35 acres, and a lot of work needs to be done.

We cannot even begin to thank you enough! I cannot wait to see the new John Deere Utility Cart at Bonnet House and I am so proud that it will bear the Palmer Ranch logo!!

### Generous Memorial Gift

A donation has been made to Bonnet House in memory of Donald R. Hall by his loving widow Paula S. Hall. Thank you for such a meaningful gift.

### Hopes and Dreams for the Future of Bonnet House

We are very thankful and blessed to have all of you involved with Bonnet House and wish you all an incredibly Happy, Healthy New Year!

Cheers to 2024!

"HAPPILY EVER AFTER" STARTS HERE...

**BONNET HOUSE**  
MUSEUM & GARDENS

CELEBRATE WEDDINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC BONNET HOUSE

LEARN MORE AT [BONNETHOUSE.ORG](http://BONNETHOUSE.ORG)

# WELCOME OUR NEW DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, LAUREN WEISSMAN

LAUREN HAS WORKED IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIES in the United States and abroad in Finland. With a Humanities degree from the University of Central Florida, she brings empathy, integrity, creativity, and humanistic ideals to her role.

It is an honor to work as the Development Coordinator at Bonnet House Museum & Gardens! I am thrilled to be a part of ensuring the continuity of this special estate, knowing that our work here helps guests connect with Florida's nature, history, and culture.

Bonnet House has so much to discover. Where else in South Florida can we see a stretch of unchanged, natural Florida coastline? I imagine the ancient people who lived here on this land and walk through the halls admiring the art and collections belonging to the Bartlett family. It is easy to think about the people who once lived here as distant historical facts. Yet, each had a vibrant personality, was a family member, and an individual with dreams and desires.

The places that we live in are not just estates, but moments in time. Spaces full of memories, relationships, and countless moments that make life unique and precious. I find it rather intriguing how the Birch and Bartlett



families sought not to create a lavish estate, dripping in opulence. Instead, Bonnet House is a quiet reverie, unassuming and simple, even in its grandness. Clearly, these families sought to create a place with purpose; a home where they could be their truest selves.

At your next Bonnet House visit, I encourage you to imagine that the Birch and Bartlett family members are inviting you to partake in the beauties and wonders of their beloved home. Walk the estate with Hugh Taylor Birch. Listen to the music of the land with Helen. Marvel at the collections of seashells, corals, and orchids with Evelyn. Surely, she and Frederic, "the kindest person I ever met," would show you the mix of colors, textures, and mediums in their art.

When Evelyn Bartlett found new life and vigor in the purpose of creating a museum here, she was not only ensuring the estate would exist in the future, but I believe this experienced collector understood that the special moments that happen here at Bonnet House are also worth collecting. By welcoming us to be guests in her winter home, we are invited to collect our own special memories while we enjoy the enchanting respite of this whimsical estate, full of art, laughter, nature, and peace.

## SPECIAL THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL 2023

*Linda Schaller, Director of Education & Volunteer Programs*

I WANT TO SEND A SPECIAL THANK YOU to all of you who helped get our wheelchair accessible tram. The tram came as an early Christmas present on Thursday, November 30th. I admit, I cried as it was unloaded.

This past year we had two schools who could not participate in our education programs because they had students in wheelchairs. I have invited both back.

Another special thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who helped with Holiday Magic. Beatrice and Julius, our two volunteer elves, started work in December of 2022 for the 2023 Holiday Magic! So many other wonderful volunteers decorated trees, wreaths and floral arrangements and the guests were thoroughly impressed and awed by the creativity! The 5 nights of Holiday Magic take many volunteers - we are also open 5 days of Holiday Magic too! We want to thank each of you who worked so hard setting up, cleaning up and working day and night to make everything magical! I again



think we have the BEST volunteers in the world!!! Each of you gives so much of your time and energy to make our guests feel welcome all year long.

On that same note - we always need volunteers. Our volunteers help with everything here at Bonnet House! We need volunteers for tours as greeters, courtyard coordinators, room docents, nature trail interpreters, tram drivers and guides. Weddings are plentiful here and we need tram drivers and greeters for the guests. We have 35 acres of mostly natural grounds - even the natural grounds do not take care of themselves. Our grounds volunteers do watering, weeding, pruning, transplanting, grafting etc. If you have a love of nature, we sure can use you. We also have many educational programs. Teaching the school students is a very rewarding experience. It is amazing seeing Bonnet House through the eyes of the students. If you are interested in volunteering, please call or email me. 2024 is here and our second big fundraiser the Orchid Fair needs volunteers too!!!



# THE CURATORIAL EYE

*Katie Valli, Curator*



DURING THIS PAST YEAR HERE AT BONNET HOUSE we were awarded an incredible grant from The Jacarlene Foundation for the restoration of our upstairs bedrooms as well as the Drawing Room. Here in this article are a few “before” pictures of parts of the upstairs rooms. As per jacarlene.org: “Jackie Preis was a strong determined woman who liked innovations, was curious, and sought to make a positive difference through charity. She enjoyed adventure. From whitewater rafting to hang gliding, she traveled the world, engaged with her faith community, and in the process, made a positive impact on a large number of people and animals. Jacarlene, the name of Jackie’s family’s grove in Seffner, Florida, combines the names of Jacqueline, her father Carl, and her mother Helene. Jackie’s mantra ‘what can I do for you’ is now the mantra of the Foundation: ‘what can we do for you’ to help strengthen Florida through the arts, the environment, and education.”

I sprang into motion with this project with the generous help of this grant. Having not been in a climate-controlled environment for about 100 years, the collections in these rooms, as well as the rooms themselves, needed a good amount of TLC. First to be done were the walls in the Drawing Room and three upstairs bedrooms. Time had faded the paint, as well as humidity and high temperatures had damaged the wood wall paneling.

As you can imagine prepping the rooms was quite the task. It involved carefully relocating artwork, packing fragile objects, moving the antique furniture, and ensuring all items and walls were documented and photographed to be able to restore the rooms once work was done. Thankfully I had a fantastic team of volunteers and staff to help! We packed all three upstairs bedrooms and the Drawing Room within a few hours over two days in September. Then the

outstanding Jeff Barry Painting came in with specific instructions to rush the Drawing Room first so it would not be closed to the public for an extended period. Within two weeks the room was repaired, painted, restored, and back in business!

The three upstairs bedrooms, now named The Bartlett Bedroom, The Birch Bedroom, and Guest Bedroom respectively, of course took a bit more time. The good thing was that there was no rush with these three as Upstairs/Downstairs tours would begin in January. The walls in these rooms were not only able to be repaired and painted, but the collections and furniture took the forefront as well. Seven paintings from the 1800s in Hugh Taylor Birch’s bedroom were meticulously conserved by Dominguez Art Conservation. A number of deteriorating furnishings were perfectly reupholstered by Margolis Upholstery. A Shade Better created beautiful custom lampshade replacements for our time-damaged shades. Also I had the honor of performing abundant research, which I absolutely love to do, (no sarcasm here!), to make sure the rooms became historically accurate to our period of significance, the 1930s/1940s. This helped me craft a wonderful spectacle for our visitors with new additions. I can’t wait to share these rejuvenated Bonnet House spaces with you.

Upstairs/Downstairs tours take place from January through May on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Buy your tickets in advance online now!

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS FOR MAKING THIS PROJECT HAPPEN: Harold Bedoukian, George Castleman, Steve Connolly, Sally Harris, Walter Jackson, Cindy Jenkins, Anne Marie O’Mara, Susan Ostheim, Wendy Shapiro, Lise Vaziri, and Don Viny.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY - MAY 2023

## YOGA ON THE VERANDA

Fri | Feb 2 | 9:00 - 10:30 am  
Fri | Mar 1 | 9:00 - 10:30 am  
Fri | Apr 5 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

## ACRYLIC WORKSHOP

Thurs | Feb 22 - Mar 28 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm  
6-Week Workshop

## COLORED PENCIL & DRAWING WORKSHOP

Sat | Feb 3 - 24 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm  
4-Week Workshop

## CALLIGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Tue | Feb 27 - Mar 26 | 11:00 am - 2:00 pm  
5-Week Workshop

## BIRDING CLASSES

Sun | Feb 4 | 2:00 - 4:30 pm  
Sun | Mar 3 | 2:00 - 4:30 pm

## WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP

Wed | Feb 28 - Apr 3 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm  
6-Week Workshop

## SPEAKER SERIES

Mon | Feb 12 | 10:00 - 11:30 am  
The Making of Bonnet House- J. Kent Planck

Mon | Mar 14 | 10:00 - 11:30 am  
Women of Florida's Saltwater Railroad  
with Claire Vickery

## COLORED PENCIL & DRAWING CLASSES

Sat | Mar 9 | 9:30 am - 3:30 pm  
Intro to Colorful Bird

Sat | Mar 16 | 9:30 am - 3:30 pm  
Advanced Portrait

## OIL/ACRYLIC WORKSHOP

Tues | Feb 20 - Mar 26 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm  
4-Week Workshop

## BEEES IN OUR BONNET CLASS

Sat | Apr 13 | 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

For more information, to purchase tickets, or to register for classes and workshops,  
please visit [bonnethouse.org/events](http://bonnethouse.org/events).

## 15TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ORCHID & GARDEN FESTIVAL

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 6 & 7, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

The Festival welcomes orchid enthusiasts and plant lovers alike to vividly experience – and purchase – diverse, colorful and fragrant varieties of orchids, tropical plants, herbs, and fruit trees sold by local and international vendors.

## \*NEW\* TROPICAL LUAU LUNCH ON THE VERANDA

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 6 & 7, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Enjoy a catered lunch on the beautifully decorated waterfront veranda by Hugh's Catering during the 15th Annual International Orchid & Garden Festival. Lunch includes a delectable buffet with Mai Tais and Bloody Marys along with live music. Guests have access to the festival, the orchid & garden care demonstrations, and the house for a leisurely stroll through the rooms and Orchid Display House.





**BONNET HOUSE**  
MUSEUM & GARDENS

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15th Annual

INTERNATIONAL  
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**FESTIVAL**

Saturday, April 6th & Sunday, April 7th  
9am - 4pm

**BONNET HOUSE**  
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