

A vibrant tropical garden scene featuring a central three-tiered stone fountain with water cascading into a small pool. A stone path leads from the foreground towards the fountain. The garden is filled with various plants, including tall palm trees, colorful hibiscus flowers, and other tropical foliage. In the background, a two-story house with a balcony is visible through the trees. The sky is clear and blue.

BONNET HOUSE  
MUSEUM & GARDENS

JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2024

*House Happenings*

# FROM THE CEO

*Patrick Shavloske*



Summer is upon us and the end of Bonnet House's fiscal year is approaching on June 30th. Bonnet House has seen a lot of improvements and many visitors over our busy fall and winter months, and I'd like to share some observations, thoughts and updates on what we have accomplished together as either staff members, volunteers or donors...or perhaps all three!

Our tour visitor numbers were down just a bit this season. As more area visitor data becomes available, I hope to have some more insights on that. Part of it may be "Florida fatigue" which is just a shorthand way of saying that since many people flocked to relatively open Florida during the pandemic, those visitors simply chose to go some place different when more travel options became available. Another possible reason is the reemerging popularity of Fort Lauderdale as a spring break destination. College students looking for a break in the sun don't necessarily have visiting an historic house museum at the top of their vacation must-do list.

More data will allow us to adjust our marketing and promotion as needed.

I am so proud and yet also so humbled to note that in my estimation, Bonnet House and its grounds are looking the best they have in decades. No one could blame Mrs. Bartlett for perhaps becoming less troubled with house and grounds maintenance as she entered her 90s and 100s, but the fact is that Bonnet House in its museum period has been playing some catch up over the years. With our seaside location, normal wear and tear is more intense to begin with and given just a few years of less intensive maintenance, vegetation can quickly spread and obscure previous landscaping. Thanks to generous funding from foundations and estate donors, Bonnet House was able to make incredible progress on some long-known yet unfunded restoration projects over the past few months.



The lack of air conditioning in the second floor bedrooms and drawing room took a toll over the years. Freshly painted and with new or restored lampshades, upholstery, bedding, and blinds these rooms are once again in a state of good repair. The paintings in Hugh Taylor Birch's room that Frederic probably collected in Munich in the 1890s required intense conservation, but are now fully stabilized. The two

paintings of musical instruments are companion pieces to one in the drawing room that had been restored previously. They really are stunning pieces. Plan to take an upstairs tour to see these freshly restored rooms.



The waterways restoration project has been incredibly successful so far and progressed more rapidly than expected. Invasive and overgrown vegetation has been removed allowing for restoration of the east bank of the south slough (the one visible from the veranda), and over four feet of organic sediment has been removed from the bed of the waterbody. I learned that the passage under the chickee bridge was down to just six inches in water depth.

The original plan was to complete only half of the south slough restoration in 2024, but our contractor was able to complete the entire south slough and begin on the area just north of the chickee bridge. Water circulation has already improved, and it looks like the entire project will be completed by summer 2025, a full two years ahead of schedule. The house and the immediately surrounding grounds are now much closer to their 1930s and 40s appearance and are taking on the feel of an all-around well-maintained estate once again. While there will

Cover Photo: Demetrius of Eduardo Schneider Photography. Inside photos: Barbie Pearson, Clay Wieland, Lauren Weissman, Katie Valli, Monica Estevez and Demetrius of Eduardo Schneider Photography.

# FROM THE CEO

(Cont'd)

always be something to repair and restore at Bonnet House, the list of backlogged projects is now considerably shorter.

I began this article by referencing the interplay between donors, volunteers, and staff. That dynamic has been what has made all this progress possible. Our grounds and curatorial volunteers work tirelessly to present Bonnet House in its best light. Tour volunteers welcome and educate



visitors whose admission fees help sustain our operations. Staff efforts work in conjunction with volunteer efforts in leading education

program development, fundraising, marketing and promotion, building and grounds maintenance, delivery of welcoming visitor services, and managing the financial aspects of a nearly \$3 million budget. Donors, of course, provide leadership and sustaining giving that supports operations, preservation and restoration. It takes a team of dedicated people to make Bonnet House function. Thanks to each of you for the important role you play. The future of the museum is bright because of you!

## OUR MISSION

TO CELEBRATE THE STORY OF FREDERIC AND EVELYN BARTLETT, WE PRESERVE THE ART, HISTORY AND NATURE OF BONNET HOUSE, PROVIDING INSPIRATION AND RESPITE FOR ALL.

## OUR VISION

A SUSTAINABLE TROPICAL SANCTUARY THAT PRESERVES ITS LEGACY OF ART AND NATURE WHILE INSPIRING MINDS AND SPIRITS.

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James LaBate  
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MUSEUM & GARDENS

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# SUMMER "FUN"DRAISING IN THE SUN AT BONNET HOUSE



*Darla L. Stanton, Director of Development*



## HIT THE ROAD JACK EVENT

Bonnet House was the beneficiary of funds raised by the Hit the Road Jack event that marked the conclusion of former Mayor Jack Seiler's tenure as president of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce. The event was a pub crawl between the Elbo Room, McSorley's, and the Parrot Lounge on February 8th. The event was a great awareness builder for Bonnet House and raised \$2,000. Thank you, Jack Seiler, for supporting Bonnet House.

## MAYOR DEAN TRANTALIS VISITS THE LUAU LUNCH

This year we added a NEW! Tropical Luau Lunch on the Veranda on Saturday, April 6th & Sunday, April 7th as part of the 15th Annual International Orchid & Garden Festival. The event was a tremendous success with 4,800 visitors over the 2-day event. We were very honored that Mayor Trantalis attended the event and celebrated with us.

## HURRICANE SHUTTERS

Thank you to Board Member, Bill Brown for championing this campaign and to Board Member, Andy Weiser for the matching gift. Last but not least, thank you to all our Bonnet House donors for your amazing and quick response to our need for these hurricane screens. You not only helped us reach our goal, but we exceeded it! Screens will be delivered this summer.

## FOREST FORMS OUTDOOR EXHIBIT CAMPAIGN

This summer we will launch a campaign to raise \$97,500 for the Forest Forms Outdoor Exhibit. Forest Forms features over twenty sculptures ranging in height from a playful five feet tall to a monumental

twenty feet tall. These larger-than-life works include a majestic fox family, intricate stacks of flowers, adorable bunny rabbits, a slithery snake archway, butterflies, an ethereal peacock, and much more. Made from powder-coated steel in a style similar to line drawing, artist Huelani Mei begins her creative process with a simple sketch. Back in her shop, Mei turns the sketch into a tiny maquette made from pencil steel, measuring just a few inches in size. This maquette is used to hone the lines and angles of her vision before full-scale fabrication. An avid nature lover, Mei creates her work using a distinct "line work" style in order to convey the form, movement, and rhythm she observes while enjoying her many outdoor hobbies. The joy and peace nature brings her is clearly reflected in her work which she in turn hopes will provide the viewer an unexpected moment of reflection and wonder. The exhibition will take place from January 11, 2025, to April 27, 2025. If you are interested in learning more about this campaign, please email Darla at [darlastanton@bonnethouse.org](mailto:darlastanton@bonnethouse.org).

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME PART OF BONNET HOUSE'S LEGACY SOCIETY?

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).

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## MEMBERSHIP

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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.



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## HOPES AND DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE OF BONNET HOUSE

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On Thursday, March 21, we held our Annual Donor Dinner where CEO Patrick Shavloske and Board Chairman Jim LaBate announced our plans for a new Visitor Engagement & Welcome Center! Stay tuned!

We are very thankful and grateful to have all of you involved with Bonnet House and wish you all an incredibly happy, healthy summer!

With a most grateful heart,

Darla Stanton,  
Director of Development

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2024

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## FAMILY SUMMER SPECIAL

June 1 - September 1

\$25 admission for adults and includes free admission for anyone 17 and under (must be accompanied by an adult)

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## FATHER'S DAY SPECIAL

Sun | Jun 16 | 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Dads free with one paid admission

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## YOGA ON THE VERANDA

Fri | Jun 7 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Fri | Jul 12 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Fri | Sep 6 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Fri | Oct 4 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Fri | Nov 1 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

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## ORCHID CARE CLASSES

ORCHID BASICS

TUESDAY | AUGUST 6 | 9:30 am - 11:30 am

REPOTTING & MOUNTING +  
DIAGNOSING PESTS & DISEASES

TUESDAY | AUGUST 13 | 9:30 am - 11:30 am

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For more information or to register for classes, please visit [bonnethouse.org/events](https://www.bonnethouse.org/events).



# THE CURATORIAL EYE

Katie Valli, Curator

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

IN 1984 ARCHAEOLOGIST ROBERT CARR SURVEYED THE BONNET HOUSE PROPERTY AND FOUND HISTORIC SHELL MIDDEN (A SMALL PILE OF REFUSE) IN THIS AREA OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WAS OF CONCH SHELLS (STROMBUS GIGAS) THAT SHOWED EVIDENCE OF EARLY EUROPEAN CONTACT. MEAT WAS PART OF BOTH THE NATIVE TEQUESTA PEOPLES' AND TRAVELING EXPLORERS' DIET.

**THE FINDINGS**

150 THOUSAND SHELLS OF BEING OPENED WITH METAL KNIVES SUCH AS SWORDS. THERE IS NO KNOWN STEEL TECHNOLOGY CAPABLE OF SUCH A CHALLENGING TASK. A METAL BLADE USED BY THE TEQUESTA WOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO OPEN SHELLS OF SHELL MIDDEN.

RECALLED THAT THE DATE WAS TESTED BY SUBMERGING BEANS IN WATER TO DETERMINE THE DATE. SHELLS WERE NOT A TECHNOLOGY THAT HAD BEEN USED BY THE NATIVE TEQUESTA PEOPLE AT AN EARLY DATE. HOW TO DETERMINE THE DATE.

THE DATE OF THE SHELL MIDDEN WAS DATED BY THE TEQUESTA PEOPLE AND WAS DATED TO THE 15TH/16TH CENTURY TO AID IN THE DATING.

**2008 SECOND SURVEY & DIG**

AN AMERICAN ROBERT CARR DETECTOR.

THE MANNER OF AN EARLY EUROPEAN CONTACT.

15 THY CONCH SHELL CLEARLY.

**THE TEQUESTA NATIVE AM**

THE FIRST KNOWN EUROPEAN CONTACT WITH THE TEQUESTA NATIVE AMERICANS WAS IN 1565 BY SPANISH EXPLORER PEDRO DE MENDOZA. HE FOUND THEM IN THE TROPICAL WILDS OF FLORIDA. THE TEQUESTA WERE A SEMI-NOMADIC PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE TROPICAL WILDS OF FLORIDA. THEY WERE KNOWN FOR THEIR SKILL IN HUNTING AND TRAPPING. THEY WERE ALSO KNOWN FOR THEIR SKILL IN FISHING AND HUNTING BIRDS.

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### IRENE RILEY HART

January 1924 - June 2022

Bonnet House Resident (1937-1942)  
Bonnet House Board of Directors (1995-2001)  
Bonnet House Ambassador (1943-2022)

Irene Riley was born on January 28th, 1924 in Savannah, Georgia. In 1937, at the age of thirteen, she, accompanied by her aunt, Armathea Hawkins, traveled by train to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She planned two weeks' stay with her aunt and uncle, Armathea and Dewey Hawkins, and cousin, Atlanta Nash, somewhere located throughout Irene's teen years. They lived here, in the Caretaker's Cottage, until a larger home, under Mr. Birch's direction, was built. The new home was situated at what is now Hugh Taylor Birch State Park.

Irene attended Dilford, the segregated public school in Fort Lauderdale. She bicycled a twelve mile roundtrip trek twice daily to attend school and to participate on Dilford's basketball team. In between those daily trips, Irene had chores to complete at Bonnet House.

Dilford is also where she met her future husband, Lafayette Hart. Together, they instilled in their five children strong spiritual and family values, the importance of a good education, and the need for community activism.

Irene Riley Hart with cousin Marie Hawkins Little in the Bayport's Parlor, 2022.

Irene Riley Hart with her late Uncle Dewey and his family on the cottage porch, 2008/1940s.

Her childhood home at Bonnet House is preserved in the cottage book "Caught in a Florida Sun" (Hawkins).

Coming very soon to Bonnet House (or may already be up!) are four new informational signs on property.

I take a couple moments every week to walk around the house and grounds, making sure everything is where it should be, assessing condition and work to be done for the collections, and thinking about how to incorporate more information not only on the items, but the story of those who lived and worked here. I do plan to keep enhancing the information about the Birches and Bartletts. I also found that we could be telling a deeper story when including their employees as well as the Tequesta Native Americans and European explorers who found refuge on this property.

On the grounds, we already have great signs for the House of Refuge site and the Chickee Bridge's building and history with the Seminole Native American tribe. I had known some bits of information about an archaeological site located by the South Gate but wanted to know more and investigate how best to share the knowledge. I began researching in our digital and physical archives and found quite a significant story. There is evidence of Tequesta Native American settlement on our grounds, as well as English or Dutch occupation. This was determined

through a few archaeological digs headed by the instrumental local archaeologist, Robert Carr. A midden (refuse pile) was found with conch shells that had been sliced opened using a metal blade such as a sword. This method of meat extraction was highly inefficient and not what the Tequesta did. The Tequesta taught Spanish explorers how to best acquire the meat, so it was not evidence of the Spanish, but of explorers 50-100 years before them!

We have these conch shells, carbon dated to the 15th/16th centuries, displayed in the Studio and the Caretaker's Cottage. I felt an outdoor sign representing these incredible finds and history would enhance the museum experience. It will be situated near the archaeological site - a bit north of the South Gate and west of the Dry Fountain. Come see it soon and learn a lot more than what I talked about here!

Our Caretaker's Cottage is a space where we get to highlight the people who aided the Bartletts and kept the house and grounds in shape during its 75 years as a home. The exhibits in the cottage allow for a peek into the world of the employees who lived here. However, I found that it could use a lot more detail and information, especially putting names to faces and highlighting a number of

individuals. Gathering information from our archives, collections management system, Bonnet House books, and collaborating with relatives of Irene Riley Hart along with the wealth of knowledge from current staff and volunteers, I created three new signs for the cottage. One details the cottage itself and the Hawkins family, the first family to have lived there. Another showcases a number of past employees from the 1920s to the 1990s. And another is a memorial sign of recognition to Irene Riley Hart, cottage resident, part of the Board of Directors from 1995-2001, and lifetime Bonnet House ambassador. (Yes, Irene from the Gallery introductory video!) It was very important to us to honor Irene and her family.

We are incredibly excited to have you come by and learn more. Make sure to follow our blog too - I recently wrote an article about Jeff Lockett, Hugh Taylor Birch's property caretaker, town representative, and friend, as well as Marie Hawkins Little, Fort Lauderdale pioneer, head cook for the Bartletts in the 1930s and 1940s, and cousin to Irene, respectively. I absolutely love learning the intricate history of our home and gardens and hope you will enjoy it as well. And, as always, more to come.

# VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION 2024

Linda Schaller, Director of Education & Volunteer Programs



Bonnet House's annual Volunteer Appreciation Event was on April 18th, and the museum welcomed approximately 130 volunteers and staff. The best part of this evening is thanking our volunteers for the time and talent each has given to Bonnet House over the past year.

Bonnet House volunteers take their duties here very seriously! They cover so many roles including greeting guests, tram driving, leading nature trail tours, teaching field trip groups, guiding tours, acting as room docents, coordinating tours in the courtyard, assisting with wedding and events (including being bridal assistants), and providing the governance and oversight function of being a board member. And, of course, who can forget our grounds and orchid volunteers who work extra hard to make the museum look GREAT!

Each of our volunteers is special, but there are some who have given so

much time and so many years to Bonnet House that they deserve a special shout-out. Thanks go to: Dee Weiner, Bill Sydnor, Sami Settlemire, and Gene Cain who have given over twenty years of service. We have three volunteers who received their twenty-year pins this year: Randy Mayweather, Justina Furey, and Rick McKenzie. Four wonderful volunteers who received their ten-year pins were James Long, Pam Roberts, and Sue and Pete Dwyer. Volunteers John Erikson and Fred Greenblatt received their fifteen-year pins. We also had ten volunteers who received pins for five years of service: Bonnie Lundy, Debbie VonBehren, Richard Baptista, Peter Hechenbleikner, Sidney Goldenberg, Cecila Farinas, James Watts, and Peter Liszewski. Thank you all for all the talents you have each shared over these many years.

The swan pins were the first recognition pins Bonnet House gave to the vol-

unteers. Little did we know years ago that we would need to keep adding pins: swan for five years, monkey for ten years, orchid for fifteen years and the Bonnet House archway for twenty years.

This past year we lost a few of our long-time volunteers including Patricia D'Antonio, Rhea Spellman and Michael Hoehn. They will be missed but always remembered and cherished parts of the Bonnet House story.

In 2023, volunteers recorded 14,400 hours, but we know there were many unrecorded hours too. The estimated value of a volunteer's time in the United States reached \$31.80 per hour this year. This shows the immense contributions of individuals who give so freely of their time, talents, and energy to make a difference. We the staff at Bonnet House thanks every one of you who help us present our programs all year long. THANK YOU ALL!!!

## TAKE ROOT FOREST SCHOOL & FOREST CAMP

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Learn & Play





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A blue banner with tropical flowers (hibiscus and palm leaves) in the corners. The Bonnet House Museum & Gardens logo is at the top center. The main text is in white and yellow. A yellow button at the bottom contains the text "To learn more, please visit us at BonnetHouse.org".

  
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