

Merchant's House Museum

Newsletter

Spring/Summer 1995

Merchant's House Museum

A Banner Day

At a hearing on March 28, the Merchant's House Museum's banner design was approved for installation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission with the support and assistance of Community Board #2. The banner, which will be readily visible from both Lafayette Street and the Bowery, will not only immediately identify the House as a museum, it will markedly raise our profile in the neighborhood and attract additional visitors.

Many people helped to make the banner possible. Richard Treadwell of Essex, CT, generously provided the seed money for this important project. Neill Parker, A.I.A., deserves kudos for his elegant banner design. Thanks also to Marie Ennis of Robert Silman's office for her engineering of the banner support. And to Board member Kate Ottavino, who saw the project to a successful end, humongous thanks for

her unflagging efforts!

A glance up almost any street in the neighborhood underscores the Museum's need to join the banner brigade. Hardly a restaurant or store opens without the prerequisite flag in front. Look for our banner (and our attendance!) to go up in early June.

A Midsummer Night's Revelry

"And the whole quire hold their hips and laugh, and waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear, a merrier hour was never wasted there." -- Puck

On Wednesday, June 21, the Merchant's House Museum and garden will be transformed into a magical celebration of Midsummer's Eve for the Museum's annual garden party benefit. Puck and his Committee of Mirthmakers will fill the House and garden with mad

spirits who will celebrate the advent of summer -- and raise much-needed funds for the Museum's educational programs and on-going restoration projects.

We will also conduct a silent auction during the evening. Sipping champagne from Moët & Chandon or wine from The Tuscan Estates of Ruffino, guests can bid for items including luggage from Bottega Veneta, a reading by psychic Frank Andrews, jewelry by Kenneth Jay Lane and much more. The Cleaver Company will lay a delicious repast that guests can enjoy while taking a break from dancing to the hot swing sounds of "hi fi" in the garden.

If last June's *Garden Party* and October's *Good Scary Fun* are any indication, *Midsummer Night's Revelry* will keep the good times going at the Merchant's House Museum. Please mark your calendar and plan to join the revelry.



Museum members and friends gathered for merrymaking on March 16 at Bottega Veneta to celebrate the coming of summer and this year's benefit.

The Merchant's House Museum is New York City's only family home preserved intact from the 19th century and Greenwich Village's only historic house museum. A rowhouse built in 1832, it is among the finest surviving examples of late-Federal and Greek Revival architecture of the period. Home to prosperous merchant Seabury Tredwell and family from 1835 to 1933, the landmark house, which has been a museum open to the public since 1936, reflects in its original textiles, furniture, and decorative arts the lifestyle of a typical New York City upper-middle-class family of the last century.

Hours: Sundays through Thursdays, 1 to 4 p.m. Group tours by appointment.

Admission: Free for members, \$3 for the public.

Celebrating 30 Years of the Landmarks Law

From "Lost, and Found, in New York," an editorial in *The New York Times*, March 30, 1995:

"Because of the law, New York City is far richer in monuments, grand and modest, to its colorful, convoluted history that it would otherwise be. New Yorkers are richer, too. We do not have to go to a movie to see where Edgar Allan Poe was treated for a minor medical problem, or *how a 19th-century merchant lived*, or the greatest collection of cast-iron buildings in the United States. All we have to do is walk the right streets."

That's 29 East Fourth Street, since 1832:

The Road to Accreditation

Accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM) is the goal sought by most museums in the United States. Accreditation demonstrates that the museum and its collections are being managed at the highest level of professionalism. The Institute of Museum Services (IMS), an independent agency within the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, has awarded several grants to the Merchant's House aimed at improving a wide range of museum activities, including bringing the collections management and administration of the Museum into conformity with standards set by the AAM.

The Museum Assessment Program (MAP I) addressed long-range planning of programs and operations, helping the Museum structure its operations more effectively, improve service to the community, and increase its base of local support. Last year, the museum was awarded a MAP II grant from IMS to assess its collections. MAP II has assisted in developing priorities for care and management of the Museum's sizeable collection.

Most recently, through the Collection Assessment Program (CAP), the Museum has received funding for an independent conservator to assess the condition of the objects in the collection. The evaluation is planned for July. Once the CAP Assessment has been completed, the Museum will be in a position to make a Conservation Project Support request for the care, repair, and conservation of specific objects in the collection.

The Gift of Time

We would like to welcome -- and to extend our thanks to -- several new volunteers who have found their way to East Fourth Street. All the way from the Ukraine, Gregoryi and Irina Yalovskaya have brought good cheer and willing hands as they accomplish varied tasks. Gregoryi and Irina come to us through the New York Volunteer Referral Service.

Also new to the Museum is John Rommel, who has taken on the daunting task of overseeing the planting and maintenance of the Museum's garden. The wisteria is being tamed, new plantings are in the ground, and other greenery has been cut back to improve its growth.

Lilli Leill, who gave the garden a new lease on life last year, has now taken on management of the Museum's store, purchasing t-shirts, mugs and postcards, among other items. Lilli is also contributing her time as an intern from CUNY, working on the first consistent, accurate and readable genealogy of Seabury Tredwell and his forebears and descendants.

Special thanks go to Margaret Tamulonis, who sees that Sunday afternoons run smoothly; Sue Preston and Carol Kelly, who arrive with regularity to give tours; and Dea Dios who faithfully oversees the door ... to Betty Chaurize, Anthony Hadaway, and Jennifer Airo for help with mailings ... to Peter Vilsack for his holiday decorations of the House in December ... to Jerry Pivak for repairs and a promise to build shelving needed for the trunk collection ... and to Director's Council members Maryanne Botini, Katherine Jacobus, Missy Kostel, Ariane MacLean, Jennifer Orr, Ashley Perry, and Lauren Zarelli for their outstanding assistance at major events. Our thanks to these and to all of our volunteers whose invaluable gift of time makes it possible to run this historic site.

Calling All Tredwells

This spring, we began a cross-country search for members of the Tredwell family -- direct descendants of Seabury and Eliza Tredwell as well as descendants of other lines of the extended Tredwell clan. Mrs. Ruth Stebbins Cadwell, who lives in Pennsylvania, is a great granddaughter of Seabury and Eliza and has been closely involved with the Museum for many years. Recently, she has seen to it that objects

removed from the house by relatives in the 1930s, after the death of Gertrude Tredwell, are being returned to the house. Mrs. Cadwell has kindly agreed to help us in our search.

We would like to hold an annual "Tredwell Event" at the Museum and perhaps publish a newsletter. A number of Tredwells have already been found -- in Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, Maryland, Montana, Pennsylvania, Florida, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Washington, and New Jersey, in addition to a number in New York State. If you are a Tredwell -- or if you know anyone who is -- please let us know.

Garden Paving Project To Be Completed

Many first-time visitors to the Museum are pleasantly surprised to find that after touring three floors of period rooms with original furnishings, art and objects, they are invited to enjoy our traditional 19th-century walled garden as well. Few representative examples have survived intact, and even fewer are open for public inspection and enjoyment.

This month, we will undertake a project to fill in the two center parterres with granite, which will not only make the garden more attractive but will increase the usable space for museum events. Improvement of the garden is a project that we have wanted to complete for years. A number of generous individuals have enabled us to undertake it now (and just in time for *Midsummer Night's Revelry* on June 21!). We are enormously grateful to Neill Parker, A.I.A., for his terrific design. Thank you, again, to Board member Kate Ottavino and to her father, George Ottavino, of the A. Ottavino CVI Granite company, who generously contributed the granite.



In Memoriam

We are very, very sad to report the death, in March, of our long-time friend and supporter Ruth Berlin (Mrs. F. Henry). Mrs. Berlin was a truly lovely person and her unfailing generosity to the Museum will never be forgotten. We extend our sincerest condolences to members of her family and to her friends.

WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

Last winter, the Merchant's House Museum launched its first formal major donor program, the FRIENDS, with Board members Tim Forbes and Elizabeth Schafer as Co-chairs. Through their combined generosity, members of the FRIENDS group play a critical role in helping the Museum fulfill its mission to restore, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the Museum's Landmark building and its original collections.

Not yet six months old, the FRIENDS program is already playing a significant role in the continued restoration of this irreplaceable building, the documentation and interpretation of its collections, and in outreach to the public, including school-age New Yorkers who get their first exposure to the importance of historic preservation by visiting the Merchant's House Museum.

We hope that you will consider joining those listed below as a FRIEND of the Merchant's House museum. The benefits of membership are described briefly on the general membership coupon in this issue of the newsletter. For more information, please telephone Margaret Halsey Gardiner, Executive Director, at (212) 777-1089.

The Board, staff, and volunteers of the Museum acknowledge with gratitude the leadership contributions of the following charter members of the FRIENDS.

LEADERS

Mrs. Vincent Astor, *The Vincent Astor Foundation*

BENEFACTORS

Mrs. F. Henry Berlin
Mrs. Joan Bull

SPONSORS

C. Douglas Dillon, *The Dillon Fund*
Timothy C. Forbes, *The Forbes Foundation*
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Richard Jenrette
Arthur Loeb
Howard D. Monroe, Jr.
Kate Burns Ottavino
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Paduano
Mr. and Mrs. David Rockefeller
Mrs. Alexander O. Victor, *The Acorn Foundation*
Jeanette and Paul Wagner

Bottega Veneta Hosts Pre-Benefit Reception

A very fine time (with drinks and hors d'oeuvres aplenty) was had by all at a pre-Garden Party reception generously hosted by Bottega Veneta at its store on Madison Avenue. Merchant's House Museum members, friends, and committee members gathered on March 16 to celebrate the coming of summer and this year's benefit, *Midsummer Night's Revelry*, on June 21. In addition to hosting the reception, Bottega Veneta will be donating three leather items for the silent auction on the evening of the benefit.

We want to extend our thanks to everyone at Bottega Veneta for providing the Merchant's House Museum members and friends with such a marvelous evening.



*The Merchant's
House Museum
is now available
for private parties,
corporate events,
still photography,
and film shoots.
Call (212) 777-1089.*

STEP INTO THE PAST AND BE A PART OF OUR FUTURE

Become a member and help preserve one of America's finest historic houses and its collections. Membership contributions play a vital role in the life of this remarkable museum.

- ☐ GOOD NEIGHBOR Individual--\$50, Family--\$75
Free admission during visiting hours. Invitation to the Holiday Party. Bi-annual newsletter. Calendar of Events.
- ☐ PROTECTOR \$125
- ☐ CULTURAL HERO \$250
- ☐ PRINCELY SUPPORTER \$500
- ☐ TRUE FRIEND \$1,000 and above

For those who can consider a leadership contribution of \$1,000 or more, the Old Merchant's House has launched a special FRIENDS program. FRIENDS will be invited throughout the year to receptions and other events for them and their guests only. FRIENDS contributing at the higher levels enjoy additional benefits. For more information, please call Margaret Halsey Gardiner, Executive Director, (212) 777-1089.

I/We would like to join the Old Merchant's House Museum in the category above. Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$_____.

I/We cannot join the Old Merchant's House Museum at this time, but wish to make a tax-deductible gift of \$_____.

Name(s) Acknowledgement listings will appear as written above.*

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip code _____

Telephone: Day _____

Evening _____

Please make your check payable to the Old Merchant's House Museum and send it with this form to the Old Merchant's House Museum, 29 East Fourth Street, New York NY 10003. Contributions are deductible to the extent provided by law. For further information, call Margaret Halsey Gardiner, Executive Director, at (212) 777-1089.

* ☐ If you prefer not to be listed, please check here.

Museum Calendar

Sunday, June 4, 3 p.m.

Madison Chamber Ensemble.

Elaine Bernstein, Soprano; Robert Avery, flute; and others. Program to be announced. Reservations are required.

Monday, June 5, and Wednesday through Saturday, June 7 through 10, 7 p.m.

Six Figures Presents a Festival of New Plays.

Six Figures is an all women's theatre company which, while embracing the other half, is committed to focusing on the woman's story. Company members will present readings of a number of original works. Reservations are required. Tickets may be reserved by calling (212) 696-8931.

Tuesday, June 6, 8 p.m.

The Chamber Chorus of New York Concert.

Program to be announced. Reservations are required.

Sunday, June 11, 3 p.m.

"Big Blonde."

Actress Jessica Weglein reads Dorothy Parker's short story.

Wednesday, June 21, 6 to 9 p.m.

Midsummer Night's Revelry.

It's Midsummer's Eve and the date of the Merchant's House Museum's annual garden party benefit. By invitation. Call for information.

Mondays in July, 7 p.m.

Heritage of American Food: A Celebration of American Regional Food and Wine.

New York Chef Titus Thompson presents American regional foods and wines followed by group tastings and discussion. A different region will be highlighted each week. Admission is \$25 per session. Reservations are required.

Wednesdays in July, 12:15 p.m.

Noontime Tours and Lunch in New York's 19th-century Secret Garden.

Join curator Mimi Sherman for thematic tours beginning at 12:15 p.m. Bring a bag lunch. Admission is \$3.

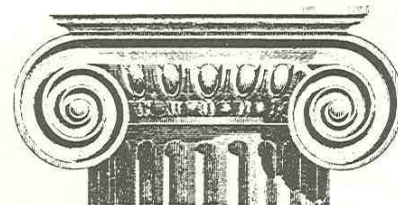
Wednesday, July 19 at 8 p.m.

"Sueno en Mi Jardin."

Lisa Spraragen and Josue Perez of Indulto Guitar Duo present an evening of Spanish Guitar music, with special guest singers Sharon and Francisco Perez-Abreu.

Admission for Special Events is \$10, \$7 for members, unless otherwise noted.

The Merchant's House Museum is open Sunday through Thursday, 1 to 4 p.m. Admission is \$3. Members free. Group tours by appointment.



Board of Directors

Merrickay S. Hall, Esq.

Chair

Helen Michalis Bonebrake

Joan Bull

Spencer Davidson

Timothy C. Forbes

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Kate Burns Ottavino

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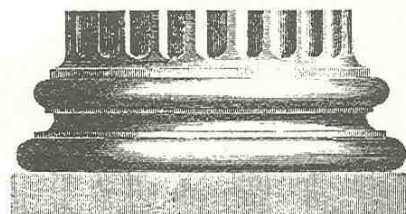
Staff

Margaret Halsey Gardiner

Executive Director

Mimi Sherman

Curator



Merchant's House Museum is the bi-annual newsletter of the museum. Inquiries may be sent to the Merchant's House Museum, 29 East Fourth Street, New York, NY 10003. Telephone: (212) 777-1089.

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Best routes to the Merchant's House Museum

By Subway:

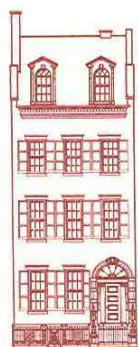
IRT: Lexington Avenue local #6 to Astor Place. Walk South on Lafayette Street to 4th Street and walk 1/2 block East.

BMT: Local R or N to 8th Street. Walk South on Broadway to East 4th Street and walk 1 1/2 blocks East.

IND: D or F to Broadway/Lafayette. Walk North on Lafayette for 3 blocks, then East 1/2 block.

By Bus:

Bus #M5 or M6 to Broadway and 4th Street. Walk East 1 1/2 blocks; Lexington-Third Avenue Bus #M102 to East 4th Street, walk West 1/2 block; Bus #M1 to Broadway and 8th Street, walk South on Broadway to East 4th Street and 1 1/2 blocks East.



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New York, NY 10003

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