



Anglo-Indian Bombay Blackwood

A Very Busy Season

Celebrating 100 Years

From the CEO

Patrick Shavloske

A Very Busy Season at Bonnet House

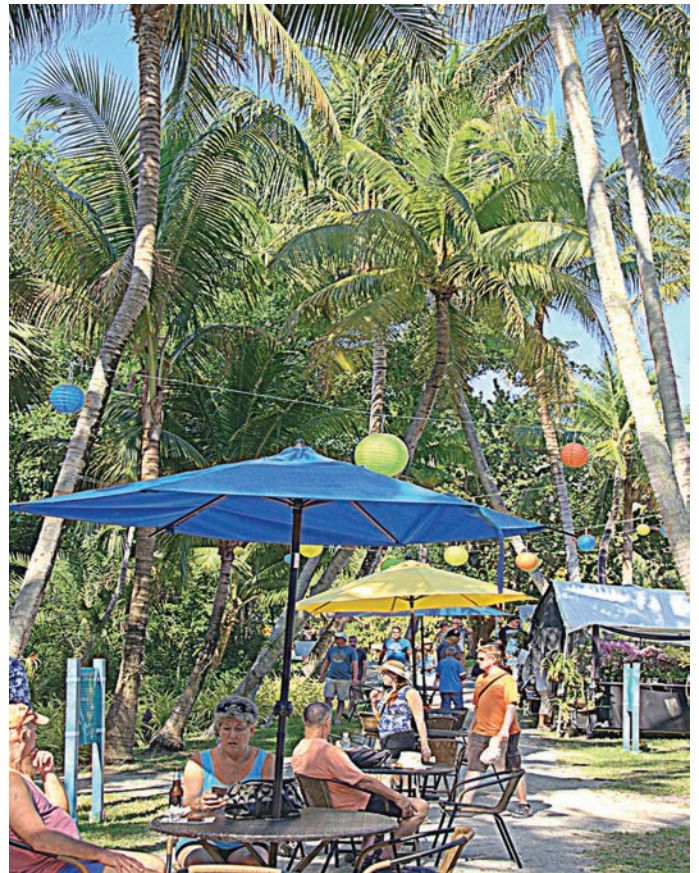
As the calendar moves towards summer and many of our seasonal supporters and volunteers migrate north, Bonnet House will be taking a well-earned pause and deep breath. The winter of 2019 was record setting in our attendance. As of this writing in mid-April, house tours alone have seen over 27,600 people so far this fiscal year. That represents an increase of 11% over last year. Admission revenue is similarly up standing at \$441,585. In a time when many historic homes are struggling to maintain relevance and redefine their missions, these numbers are all the more remarkable.

Why is this? I don't believe there is any one answer that explains it, but I would like to share with you some thoughts I have on what makes Bonnet House such a success. First, you have the story of the Bartletts. No one would say that Frederic and Evelyn, or Hugh Taylor Birch and Helen were world famous. They were each successful in their own ways but not widely acclaimed. Perhaps there is something to be said about their personal stories that makes them and the house they built relatable and relevant. Each of them loved life, loved beauty and harmony, and loved the home they created. That isn't so different from what most everyone works towards. I believe it is that personal story we tell at Bonnet House that has such incredible power and draw.

That story also attracts a certain kind of person both in terms of our staff and our volunteers. There is a joy here that is palpable and seen in the enthusiasm of those who share the Bonnet House story with visitors. Each person seems to take a part of the story particularly close to heart and in turn share that. Unfortunately, there can be embellishment in those stories, but even that shows an emersion in the spirit of Bonnet House and the family who created it.

Another factor would be that Bonnet House offers programs that touch on many cultural and leisure interests. While history buffs would have a natural affinity for the house, so do art lovers, nature enthusiasts, and orchid growers. The placid nature of the grounds also appeal to those simply looking for a respite from the fast pace of modern life and a glimpse into a time without 24/7 connectivity.

There are of course, more mundane, practical reasons



for the museum's success. Our location in an area heavily visited by tourists helps our visitation numbers immensely, as does the fact that aside from the beach and Birch State Park, there really aren't that many other diversions nearby to round-out a vacation. Still, visitor comments reveal extraordinary pleasure and satisfaction in a trip to Bonnet House. The product we offer and the visitor experience is highly valued.

Taken together, these observations provide some glimpse into our museum's remarkable success and why TripAdvisor.com (the world's largest travel website) ranks Bonnet House as the 4th most popular attraction in Fort Lauderdale, outranked only by two beaches and Las Olas Boulevard. Donors, volunteers, and staff can all take great pride in not only preserving an important historical and cultural legacy but in providing a destination that resonates so strongly with visitors. Whatever contribution you have made to Bonnet House, thank you for giving the museum a fantastic start to 2019 and a tremendous starting point for our 2020 centennial celebrations.

Newsletter design by Monica Estevez.

Cover Photo: *Organic Moments Photography*, Photo above: *Barbie Pearson*

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR: JUNE - SEPTEMBER

Father's Day

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is giving fathers the gift of art and culture free of charge with one paid admission this Father's Day, Sunday, June 16 from 9am to 4pm. Dads get in free with one full paid adult admission and have the opportunity to step back in time and experience life as it was in the 30s and 40s.

July 4th

Come and explore all that Bonnet House Museum & Gardens has to offer at a discounted rate this Independence Day. Admission is \$10 for adults and free for children 12 and under on Thursday, July 4th from 9am to 4pm. No other discounts apply. Tickets sold at the door.

Cool Saturdays Summer Special



July - October

COOL SATURDAYS

summer special at bonnet house

1st saturday

under 12 free

900 N. Birch Road
Fort Lauderdale 33304
bonnethouse.org

adults \$10

Bonnet House kicks off its Cool Saturdays Summer Special on July 6th this season. Cool Saturdays take place the first Saturday of the month July through

October. Visitors can explore the whimsical house where fish sculptures rise in the air, shells have their own museum and shady nature trails invite you to search for playful monkeys in the trees and a majestic swan in the fresh water lakes. Admission is \$10 for adults and free for children 12 and under from 9am to 4pm on these days.

Specific dates are: July 6, August 3, September 7 and October 5. Tour admission is always free for Bonnet House members. Visit Bonnethouse.org for updated information and additional summer events.

Orchid Care Classes



Join Bonnet House orchid curator, Jose Exposito, and his team of orchid care experts on the estate for three key orchid cultivation classes beginning Saturday, August 10th. The classes take place in the lovely air-conditioned Island Theater and are scheduled on Saturdays from 10am - 12pm. Learn how to care for your orchids on the beautiful Bonnet House estate.

Saturdays from 10am – 12pm, the schedule is as follows:

Orchid Basics – August 10, 2019
Orchid Repotting & Mounting – August 17, 2019
Diagnosing Pests & Diseases - August 24, 2019

The cost of each class is \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. For more information or to register, visit www.bonnethouse.org or contact Linda Schaller at lindaschaller@bonnethouse.org or (954) 703-2606.

Development News

by Darla L. Stanton



Celebrating 100 Years! 100th Anniversary Challenge



Dear Friends of Bonnet House,

It has been an amazing year here at Bonnet House! So many wonderful things have happened, and we could never have done them without all of you. From a sparkling Holiday Magic celebration to a phenomenal Orchid Festival and lots of regular house tours in between, it's been a remarkable start to

2019. 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.

As you know, Bonnet House will be 100 years old next year in 2020. We are hoping that you will help us start celebrating our 100th Anniversary now.

We need at least 100 friends of Bonnet House, to donate \$100, to help us kickoff 100 years!

Donate \$100 today at bonnethouse.org or mail in a check and be one of the first to receive a commemorative 100th Anniversary t-shirt, lapel pin and Swarovski crystal pen. Your entire gift is 100% tax deductible, too!

We are very thankful and blessed to have all of you involved with Bonnet House! Please help us end our fiscal year 2019 with a bang!

With the most heartfelt thanks and gratitude, yours very truly,

Darla L. Stanton
Director of Development

The Little Gift Shop & Cafe

by Dianne Ennis

We presented our newest guest experience "The Little Café" on January 15, 2019 a little over three months ago and it's a GO!

This Café was a long-time coming. The staff has stated that it is a wonderful feeling that overtakes you when you see our guests sitting at our outside café enjoying a relaxing lunch and taking in the grandeur of Bonnet House and an occasional monkey visit. The added flowers and plants also enhance the Café experience, and we thank May Muench and Jose Exposito for their work on this project. Another project which enriches the Café is the Orchid Shop supplied by our Bonnet House Curator, Jose Exposito. This is just another part of Bonnet House for people to add to their memories of the day they spent enjoying a unique piece of Florida history.

The ladies of the Gift Shop should take a bow because of all their hard work to ensure a positive breakfast/lunch experience for our guests. We have raised our revenue significantly while fulfilling our guests' request for a light menu at Bonnet House. Our menu is simple. An assortment of muffins and coffee cakes seems to meet the request for a light breakfast, while our lunch menu offers turkey, roast beef and ham sandwiches with chips on the side. Also included on our menu are Italian wraps, hummus wraps, and chicken and tuna salads, and don't forget those big chocolate chip cookies! During our summer months we will be offering seasonal fruits. If you are in the neighborhood, stop by and join us for a relaxing lunch followed by our famous Fruitique ice cream.

The Gift Shop has also seen a substantial increase in revenue due to a significant sale of *A Legacy of Artistry & Elegance*. A southern company purchased 300 books as a gift for their employees as a remembrance of their trip to Florida. Also, the Gift Shop has acquired a number of new vendors which have provided an increase on our profit line.

This has been a banner year for the Museum Gift Shop, the best ever. The reason for this is our hard working Gift Shop associates and volunteers and of course all who generously donated to build this new addition to enhance the Bonnet House experience.

Anglo-Indian Bombay Blackwood

by Denyse Cunningham



European colonials in India, including the Portuguese and later the Dutch, British and French, were accustomed to the elevated furniture of their homeland. Traditionally Indians sat cross-legged on the ground on portable textiles. By the mid-19th century colonials had started employing local craftsmen to fabricate furniture out of locally sourced materials in European styles. These furniture makers would use Indian techniques to produce a unique hybrid style referred to as “Anglo-Indian.” Using a single tool to carve away the wood with great technical skill, native carpenters created designs of flowers, foliage, and whimsical animals. The timber used was known by the colonials as “Bombay blackwood.” It is extremely heavy and will sink in water. It takes a fine polish.

After being featured in the Great Exposition of 1851, as well as other international expositions, the popularity of this type of furniture grew. Europeans admired that the pieces were hand made as their furniture was becoming mostly made by machines. The furniture was often sold in suites and most were exported. It was packed up without being joined or polished. English workmen would put the pieces together. It is believed the British workmen did not think highly of its craftsmanship.

Two of the most important collections of Anglo-Indian furniture are in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (which has the world’s largest collection) and

the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. More information on this fascinating furniture style can be found in the book *Furniture from British India and Ceylon*

A Catalogue of the Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum by Amin Jaffer assisted in Salem by Karina Corrigan and with contribution by Robin D. Jones. Evelyn Fortune Bartlett gave a great deal of money to the Peabody Essex Museum during her life time and in her will. A gallery in the museum is named after her daughter, Evelyn “Evie” Lilly Lutz.



Evelyn Fortune Bartlett purchased the two Music Room sofas in Marblehead, Massachusetts. These sofas were often originally upholstered in red velvet but Mrs. Bartlett chose to cover hers in pale blue satin.

Magic in the Gardens

by Nicholle Maudlin



For those of you who have visited Walt Disney World, have you ever noticed that you never see staff working in the garden? The gardens, though, always look perfectly manicured, almost by magic. Bonnet House also has its own magic in the form of



gardening volunteers. One notable, unsung, garden hero is John Jors who sneaks onto the estate very early in the morning to water, prune, plant, and otherwise beautify Bonnet House for the pleasure of our visitors.

John, originally from Cedarburg, Wisconsin, where he earned a Fine Arts degree from the

University of Wisconsin and was also a certified Master Gardener, now lives on Galt Ocean Mile. John was Chair of the Garden Committee at his condo and has also worked with the Galt Mile Association to oversee The Galt landscape with the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department. After hearing about Bonnet House through friends, John came to the estate five years ago and has since

completed many redeeming projects including the rehabilitation of the welcome center garden, beautification of the sunrise gate area (east of the lion and tiger), replanting around the courtyard aviary, and the set-up of a plant nursery near the north greenhouse where Bonnet House propagates plants for seasonal use.

During John's tenure, he has made an impact on other garden volunteers. Notable among them is George Herrgott, who sees John as "an inspiration and also as a mentor who has an understanding of architectural garden design." You may not see John when you visit Bonnet House, but just know that he is hard at work in the background to ensure Bonnet House makes a good impression when you visit!

Volunteer Appreciation

by Linda Schaller

Kelly's Landing and Dr. DJ made the Annual Meeting & Volunteer Appreciation the best event ever!!! Debbie from Kelly's Landing presented a great buffet and Dr. DJ (Daniel Paulish) had wonderful entertaining music that made the special night truly festive. We had the pleasure of thanking our volunteers for the many hours of hard work they performed in 2018. Volunteers completed 22,580 recorded hours. Believe it or not there is a website that calculates what volunteer hours are worth per hour; the 2018 calculation is \$25.43 per hour minimum. At that rate our volunteers gave \$574,209.40 worth of time and talent. We have many long term volunteers, and special pins are given for completion of years of service.

Special pins were given to: Fred Steinhardt for 20 years of continuous service and Jim Black, Kathleen Barrett, George Castleman, Bill Hines, Fran Koerner and Emmy Wilson for 15 years of continuous service. Herb Diamond received his 10 year pin and Kim Byham, Ken Goosens, Cindy Jenkins, John Jors, Harrison Lassiter, Lil Robertson, Janis Rubel and Dan Schwartz received their 5 year pins. We are so very blessed to have such wonderful volunteers who give of their time to make sure every visitor has a wonderful experience. Dane Jensen gave 1,025 hours of service and the runners up were Jim Dunn with 804 hours and Vern Hammond with 653 hours. Many volunteers did well over 200 hours. Bonnet House Staff and Board of Directors are very proud and grateful for our wonderful volunteers. We have the BEST volunteers!

Baobab Tree

by John Lucas



On a garden tour, I stopped the tram near the Baobab tree to explain that in Africa it is known as the “Tree of Life.” My littlest passenger knew the tree from *The Lion King*. She hopped off the tram and ran to it. Ignoring her parents’ pleas to come back, she faced the Baobab and began to sing in a high pitched voice the “Circle of Life” from that production.

“From the day we arrive on the planet. And blinking, step into the sun, there’s more to see than can ever be seen. More to do than can ever be done.”

In 1996, Evelyn Bartlett ceremoniously planted our little tree in the desert garden. At twenty feet high with a slender trunk, it does not project the Baobab legacy of longevity and size; some trees have been estimated to be up to 4,000 years old with girths up to 150 feet. With age, though still alive, the trunk cracks open, exposing a hollow center that can be used for storage and homes for creatures great and small.

“There’s far too much to take in here. More to find

than can ever be found. But the sun rolling high through the sapphire sky keeps great and small on the endless round. It’s the Circle of Life.”

Universally, there are nine species of Baobab with Madagascar Island home to six. They are found from eastern Africa through Saudi Arabia to India with another species in north-west Australia. Recently, die-offs have been attributed to the Baobab’s lifespan combined with excessive drought and increasing habitat changes.

“And it moves us all through despair and hope. Through faith and love till we find our place on the path unwinding. In the Circle, the Circle of Life.”

The Baobab thrives in arid areas, savannahs, and ocean-side deserts. Sparse rains, stored in its expansive trunk, makes its wood pulpy and moist. When confronted with drought, elephants will tear the trees apart to get to the watery pulp. In the barren deserts, the football size fruit is also a rich source of vitamin C. Interestingly, the ancient trade routes from Africa to India were rediscovered because the traders ate the fruit, spat out the seeds and now mature Baobabs line that trail.

“And it moves us all through despair and hope, Through faith and love till we find our place.”

In Africa, the Baobab tree is considered a sacred tree. Rather than bury family members in arid ground, where night creatures easily dig them up, individuals are placed inside the tree where the interior cocoons their loved one. The Baobab tree truly gives shade, food, and comfort for those that live in its grace.

“On the path unwinding in the Circle. The Circle of Life.”

This article is dedicated to our Bonnet House friends and volunteers that have completed their Circle of Life.

Songwriters: Elton John / Tim Rice
Circle of Life lyrics © Walt Disney Music Company



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12TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ORCHID & GARDEN FESTIVAL

PHOTOS BY ANNA COLLINS & BARBIE PEARSON



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