



# Le Journal des Amis



## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

This past year, we moved our small vegetable garden to a sunnier spot in our backyard. My husband has the green thumb, not me. But as long as he keeps bringing in those beautiful tomatoes, I'm happy.

There's something wonderful about walking around a vegetable garden and seeing what's growing. It just makes people feel good.

You don't have to miss out on the happy garden experience even if you don't have space for a garden or if, like me, just can't grow a thing. Magnolia Mound's kitchen garden, overseen by the Master Gardeners group and supported by the Friends, is an excellent starting point.

A nice array of seasonal fruits and vegetables are growing year-round. During the fall and spring months visitors can watch docents show off their cooking skills in the outdoor kitchen, using the fresh produce and herbs grown right outside the door. What a treat to watch them cook over the open hearth.

You can also shop at your local Farmers Market; tour a local farm and learn how fresh produce gets to the table; or simply take a drive around the neighborhood and see what's sprouting. Get to know your gardening neighbors and you may wind up with all the mirlitons you will ever need.

Like biting into that red, ripe tomato, any one of these activities is guaranteed to make you smile.

Donna Mitchell, *President*

## The Art of Restoring an Important Armoire

by Babeth Schlegel with David Broussard



*Early 19th-century armoire made in New Orleans*

It is magical to see the work David Broussard, furniture conservator, has done on the inlaid cherry wood with cypress armoire\* that is now in the dining room of the historic house. He was able to go back in time and erase all later alterations, and wear and tear. David says he must work as a detective as he looks for details of the past to recreate the original look of the artifact.

Every collector of early Louisiana furniture will at some time be in search of the hardest to find – a highly inlaid armoire. Perhaps an armoire with a cypher embedded in the top rail, marking a marriage

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*\*(2013.7 Friends of MM acquisition)*



*L to R: Noel Tweedel and Darlene Laborde*

## Thank You to the Dunbar Family

by John Sykes

In April, the Friends received a generous donation of original Hart Family items from the family of Winder Hart Dunbar, Sr. Mr. Dunbar was the nephew of Magnolia Mound's last private owner, Annabelle Hart Anderson.

In 1979, BREC acquired Mrs. Anderson's family home, the Hart House, at Magnolia Mound. Some of the donated items were part of the original decorative objects used in the Hart House.

Among the donations was a portrait of an early Hart ancestor, Samuel McHenry Hart of Ohio, who settled in Baton Rouge in the 1840s. Other items included a pair of Bohemia campana vases (ca. 1840-1850), a copy of a portrait of a Hart ancestor, an

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# A Beautiful Day for the 20th Petite Antiques Forum

by Susan Wilder and Babeth Schlegel



Cheryl Stromeier shows Forum guests around the beautiful gardens at Chêne Vert.



Sunday, April 11, was certainly a beautiful day for the Forum! The original date of April 10 was rainy but fortunately the rain date was clear and dry.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Friends Petite Antiques Forum event had to change its usual format to keep this 20-year function going, and still maintain the necessary “social distancing” required. The committee came up with a creative plan. The end result was a forum held at Magnolia Mound in the “open-air” barn, with restricted attendance, distanced seating, individual picnic basket lunches, and a tour of a garden instead of a home. We were extremely fortunate to have had Dr. Wayne Stromeier deliver a talk on early Louisiana gardens and plants. Afterwards he and his wife, Cheryl, opened their gardens at Chêne Vert to us for the tour.

Wayne’s talk included a brief history of his home, Chêne Vert, its early Louisiana garden design, the selection of garden patterns, the acquisition and care of plants appropriate for the historic landscape, and an emphasis of the abundance of native plants that have always adorned Louisiana land and waterways.

After lunch, Our guests were encouraged to stroll Magnolia Mounds grounds, the open-hearth kitchen where volunteer Vince Baccari was giving a cooking demonstration, and to meet with Master Gardener Cathy Richardson at the kitchen garden. Guests then drove to the Stromeiers’ house to tour their 11 acres of gardens, as well as their detached open-hearth kitchen and small guest house.

The Friends of Magnolia Mound would like to thank Clegg’s Nursery, corporate sponsor for the event, and everybody who helped to make this gorgeous outdoor day a success including the Stromeiers, Susan Wilder, Karen Zobrist, Margaret Lawhon Schott, Chet Coles, Jane Thomas, Jeanne Yerger, Mary



L to R: Karen Zobrist; Cheryl Stromeier; Donna Mitchell, Friends president; our speaker Dr. Wayne Stromeier; Susan Wilder, Forum chair.

Tharp, Babeth Schlegel, John Sykes, Mary Lynn McMains, Liz Treppendahl, Jamesie Treppendahl, Celi Shetter, Charles Periloux, Trent James, Suzette Tannehill, Mike Zobrist, John Wilder, Vince Baccari, Cathy Richardson, BREC, and Lamar Outdoor Advertising.



L to R: Mary Tharp, Chet Coles, Jeanne Yerger, Babeth Schlegel

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The tables featured centerpieces of clay pots holding flower & herb plants, surrounded by garden tools, gloves, and seed packets. This helped to make the Magnolia Mound barn festive and carried out our garden theme perfectly.



Photo credit: InRegister  
Charlotte Daigrepoint and Cynthia Graves

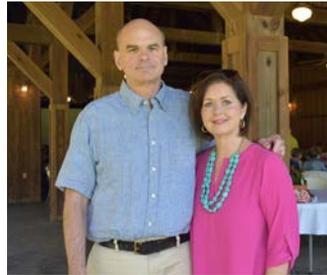


Photo credit: InRegister  
Bobby and Kayla Robison.

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Hurricane lamp shade original to the Hart House and now in the historic house parlor atop the piano forte.



Suzette Tannehill arrived early to help with decorating the tables.



Heirloom Cuisine put together individual gourmet lunches in small picnic baskets, tied up with red bandannas.



Karen Zobrist and Kayla Robison at Chêne Vert.

unidentified portrait miniature, and three antique books.

Also included in the gift was a large early hurricane etched glass shade. A note identified the shade as once part of a pair of shades used by the Duncan and Conrad Families at their home, "the Cottage," located south of Baton Rouge on River Road which accidentally burned in 1960. The shade was inherited by Miss Blanche Duncan who resided at the Hart House from 1915-1958.

These gifts were made by Mr. Dunbar's widow, Shirley Jarreau Dunbar, and arranged through her children, Darlene Dunbar LaBorde, Noel Dunbar Tweedel, and Winder Hart Dunbar, Jr.

In previous years, the Dunbar family made possible the return of the original Hart House dining room table and chairs, and an early garden statue. They also gave to the Friends the 1820 portraits of Leon and Caroline Bonnacaze. The Friends are grateful for these generous gifts made by the Dunbar Family to Magnolia Mound.



Photo credit: InRegister  
John Sykes, Magnolia Mound director, and Jeanne Yerger.



Photo credit: InRegister  
L to R: C.B. Owen, Al Walker, Allen Bridgforth, Mary Owen



Guest toured the many different gardens found at Chêne Vert.

**FMM Newsletter Team:**

Editors: Jane Thomas, Babeth Schlegel

Contributors: Donna Mitchell, John Sykes, Susan Wilder, Camm Morton

and a dowry that would become the crown jewel of the collection. Perhaps, instead of a cypher in the upper rail, it would have a decorative inlay marking some other occasion. Maybe, it would be that and more, with an acanthus leaf inlay or vine inlay on the panel between the two doors and the doors' edges would be banded with barber pole inlay as well.

Pat Bacot, who is recognized as the founder of the Friends of Magnolia Mound collection, was always on the lookout for that sort of highly prized armoire for the house museum.



Top: Cartouche inlaid in the upper rail

Bottom: Center panel inlay

On August 28, 2013, Pat assembled his team: furniture conservator David Broussard; Babeth Schlegel, now executive director of the Friends; and John Sykes, director of Magnolia Mound; for an exploratory trip to a New Orleans auction to look at a very captivating armoire. This particular armoire that Pat had set his sights on, was one with the ubiquitous cabriole legs and flush door panels. It had an inlaid cartouche in the upper rail along with string inlay on the top rail. The false stile (narrow vertical door panels) was embellished with acanthus leaf inlays at the top and

bottom. Another inlay was in the center of the panel. The door frames were banded with barber pole inlays.



The armoire before its restoration

David recalled that the armoire needed some restoration. The original cornice was there, but it had voids and the corner joints had become loose. The back was held together with metal braces. There were broken back panels. The inside of the armoire had been modified in such a manner that only two drawers remained. The face of the doors appeared to be recently refinished, but had been overly sanded. The rest needed refinishing.

The most mysterious detail of this armoire that intrigued Pat and David was the inlays that covered the 45-degree mitered joints of the door frames. They appeared to be a single piece of veneer in the shape of a teardrop or inverted baseball bat. Some people suggested it was an added feature to cover a gap of the intersecting door frames

that often occurs as the wood dries. David thought that would have been a lot of trouble to go to hide a gap. Also, if that was the explanation, he was going to be tasked with making them disappear. We wouldn't know exactly how to explain it until David

could explore it in his shop. The Friends had the winning bid, and so that would soon be determined. David's detective work could start.

First, David began with an indepth evaluation of what needed to be done. Modifications, such as the changes to the interior, needed to be removed. The pulls for the drawers and the keyhole escutcheons needed to be figured out based on traces of markings from the original brasses left on the cherry wood. A lock needed to be ordered. Hinges would need adjusting to make up for two centuries of use. The false stile needed to be reattached to the door properly and the added bracing removed and all of its screw holes filled. The armoire needed shelving to replace the missing section within the belt of drawers framework, and gaps, voids, and back joints repaired. David discussed all of these items at length with Pat.



They mysterious teardrop inlay

David decided it was time to some sleuthing regarding the intriguing teardrop inlays at the mitered joints. David removed one of them by applying heat and moisture at the site. Initially, he was looking for evidence of a router machine having been used to create the shallow mortise for the

veneer. To his surprise, the inlay was made up of seven different pieces. This suggested that each piece must originally have had slightly burned shading on a certain adjoining edge of each piece. David realized that the intent of each piece was to create petals of a flower bud, and likely, an acanthus flower bud. Clearly, all of this was done by hand. The shading was probably sanded away in the somewhat recent "cleanup" of the doors.

When Pat came to David's shop to see the discovery for himself, he recognized that with the shading added back to the petals, the armoire would now have another value-added embellishment. Now thanks to David skilled restoration work, and Pat's research perseverance, this armoire is one of the jewels of the Friends collection.

When I approached David for this article, he came to the Mound to look again at the armoire while we both reminisced about Pat. It is impossible to go in the house without feeling his presence. David contributed to the writing of this article and shared his memories of Pat.

*"I've probably known Pat since the late 1970s when I was starting out as a furniture maker and made a trip to LSU's Anglo-American Art Museum to learn more about early Louisiana furniture. Pat brought to my attention that I was going to have to learn how to do French polishing (a process of applying shellac finish). I really believe I caught Pat's attention with my construction of some Greene and Greene inspired furniture that Jon Emerson designed for Cary Sausage in the 1980s. But it wasn't until he saw the mahogany armoire that I had made for myself with a French polish finish that he realized I'd taken his advice.*

*The most common problem with antique furniture is normally a need for refinishing. Pat had a phrase, "needs a little cheering up."*



*The restored armoire filled with a harlequin set of green shell edge English creamware which matches sherds excavated at Magnolia Mound.*

*That could also entail possibly just a wax polishing. We thought the same when it came to the appearance of the furniture. You should be able to see the beauty of the wood.*

*I realized after the fire in the 1990s at Magnolia Mound set off the water sprinklers just how important it is to have a stable and sound finish. I made quick work of restoring the finish on the dining room chairs because of the excellent condition of the finish prior to that incident. They looked awful when I picked them up, but didn't require a complete refinishing.*

*Pat was one person that I would often consult when a piece was lacking a particular element like an escutcheon, a pull or a cornice. Many local collectors sought his advice when purchasing a piece whether it was Louisiana furniture or an Early American piece.*

*Those who were acquainted with Pat knew he could be a harsh critic. But most would also know his compassion could also be very sympathetic if you ever lost a loved one. He loved books, the arts, architecture, music and movies. He also loved pets. On his many trips to my shop, he would always greet my pair of border collies. He thought one had more going for it because of his distinctive markings.*

*He was the first person to recommend that I should watch the movie "Babe." It's now a family favorite and it exemplifies another gift Pat possessed that I appreciated. He had a sense of humor along with his extensive range of knowledge of the decorative arts."*

*Photos by Jim Zietz and Babeth Schlegel*

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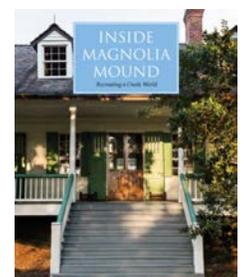
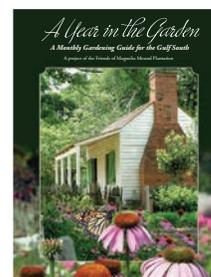
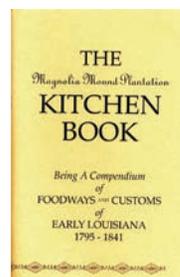
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BREC owns and operates Magnolia Mound. All of the furniture, decorative items and artifacts are owned and cared for by the Friends. This collection brings to life the interiors of the house and other buildings for the community, school groups, and tourists.

The Friends provide advisory and financial assistance for the kitchen garden, which is part of the educational tour at the Mound. Produce from the garden is used in the cooking demonstrations in the kitchen building.

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# Our Spring Kitchen Garden at Magnolia Mound

By Camm Morton



L to R: Master Gardeners Jennifer Kelly, Judy Boyce, Cathy Richardson, Mazie Doomes, Janet Smith, "Gee Gee" Hargon and Liz Treppendahl shown here with the fruits of our labor. Thanks to all of the crew who are making this happen.

Despite the very rainy and cool season that we have experienced this year, our garden is really looking great. Best of all late May and early June are great months for harvest in the garden.

We have added 5 new regular volunteers to the 4 regulars that we have had for the past year or so. That extra people power makes a huge difference in our ability to take care of everything.



A day's picking

We are currently harvesting cucumbers, corn, tomatoes, string beans, sweet and hot peppers, squash, sweet onions, and potatoes. Soon we will have okra and cantaloupe. Following the corn we will plant watermelon, sunflowers and pumpkins and we just planted our sweet potatoes.

The wet cool spring has caused a few problems with the plants like cucumbers, eggplants, okra and peppers that love hot weather. Rain and cool weather cut down on the amount of pollination and I have seen a lot of female cucumber flowers just turn yellow and drop off.



Drone view of the kitchen garden

Photos by Camm Morton and Babeth Schlegel



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