



GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

2024 promises to be an exciting year for Magnolia Mound. We started out with a bang with this year's Petite Antiques Forum and House Tour. A sold-out crowd filled the Louisiana State Archives Building to hear from Jim Blanchard and to view his fascinating work. Lunch at Houmas House was followed by a quick visit to The Great River Road Museum, and we were off to Donaldsonville. Once we made our way across the foggy Mississippi River, we enjoyed gracious welcomes and tours of Palo Alto and Belle Alliance by their current owners.

Magnolia Mound participates in First Free Sunday in Baton Rouge where, each month, visitors can enjoy free admission to museums in our area. Our program for February was "back of the big house" which included a tour focusing on the lives of the enslaved community as well as the lives of several early outstanding African American leaders of our community. From the early days of the restoration of the Magnolia Mound site local preservationists involved grasped the importance of telling our complete story. Early on the Friends worked to have an 1830s double slave cabin from Cherie Quarter in Pointe Coupee Parish moved to the Magnolia Mound site where it remains an important part on our tour.

We hope you can join us on the first Free Sunday of each month for more interesting events.

Sincerely,
Susan Eaton
President

Remembering Patricia Comeaux



Pat at the 2019 Le Salon Duplantier event. Left to right: Susan Wilder, Winnie Byrd, Donna Mitchell, Pat, and Cary Saurage.

Patricia Comeaux, the first executive director of the Friends of Magnolia Mound, died on February 3, 2024. A native of Baton Rouge, Pat became involved with the work of the Friends during her years in the Junior League of Baton Rouge. As League President, Pat encouraged the Junior League funding which led to the archaeological work and later, recreation of the open-hearth kitchen at Magnolia Mound in 1979. The kitchen became the centerpiece of creating a more complete story of plantation life in Colonial Louisiana. The first open hearth cooking demonstrations were a "placement" for new Junior League members as they helped thousands of local schoolchildren understand 19th century life and contributions of African Americans to early Southern foodways.

Pat later served two terms as President of the Friends of Magnolia Mound. A scholar herself, she edited two the Friend's publications: *A Year in the Garden: A Monthly Gardening Guide for the Gulf South* (2007), and *Inside Magnolia Mound: Recreating a Creole World* (2020).

Friends Past President Donna Mitchell said "Pat, as the Friends' first executive director,

took seriously the partnership with BREC and helped create a wonderful, collaborative, working partnership that benefited the museum at Magnolia Mound."

Karen Zobrist, Past President of the Friends, recalled "In 2008, Pat and I became co-chairs of the Petite Antiques Forum. Sometimes it was like herding cats, battling the elements, but all the time it was enjoyable with the unflappable Pat Comeaux. In spite of difficulties, she always had a smile and a way of making happenings fun."

Museum Director John Sykes remembers "Pat's arts background and community connections helped secure the initial grants for the first Black History Month programs nearly 30 years ago. Pat always set high expectations for the Friends of Magnolia Mound. Newsletters, programs, events all had to be of top quality. Her emphasis on the details showed the way Pat appreciated the work of our board members and volunteers."

Friends Director Babeth Schlegel (who worked closely with Pat for more than a decade) recalled: "Pat was always available and truly passionate about the success of

Continued on page 2



Pat Bacot, Barbara Bacot, Karen Zobrist, and Pat in 2007

Continued from page 1

Magnolia Mound and the Friends organization. It was always a pleasure to work with her.”

Friends Past President Jane Thomas remembered: “In 2010, Pat asked me if I was interested in being on the Friends’ board. I’m glad she did, the Friends of Magnolia Mound has become one of my favorite nonprofit organizations.”

Pat Comeaux retired in 2021 from her position as Executive Director of the Friends. For over thirty years, she was volunteer, board member, officer, and later director. During her tenure, the Friends grew as an organization and became a professionally-run, nonprofit that continues to support the mission of Magnolia Mound: museum and historic site. Pat left a rich legacy of service to Magnolia Mound.

The family of Pat Comeaux has designated that the Friends of Magnolia Mound be the recipient of memorials to Pat’s memory.

If you would like to contribute, donations can be sent to the Friends of Magnolia Mound, P.O. Box 1254, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 or can be made through website, www.friendsofmagnoli mound.org. Please specify that the donation is in memory of Pat Comeaux.

Past President’s Reflections



These past two years I have served as President of The Friends of Magnolia Mound have flown by! It has been an honor working with you, the Board, BREC, and Babeth, director of The Friends.

The main house at Magnolia Mound is a surviving example of Creole Architecture of the early 1800s. It has been restored to and furnished to that period. The Friends have endeavored to continue to preserve and add to the artifacts in the Collection.

This is the year Magnolia Mound Museum will submit a re-accreditation to the American Alliance of Museums. As past president, I will continue to work to enrich the Magnolia Mound experience.

Thank you for your support!

Karen Zobrist

The Beginning of the Friends Collection

By Babeth Schlegel

You are perhaps wondering how the Friends of Magnolia Mound Museum, under the direction of Henry Parrott “Pat” Bacot, furnished the historic house.

Unfortunately, Armand Duplantier’s probate was never found. He passed away in 1827 and his probate would have been filed in the East Baton Rouge Parish Court house. This document still remains to be discovered. So Pat had to go to another direction. He researched documents of other houses of similar size and time period. He looked at other wills, newspaper articles, written pieces of paper, and letters. Fortunately, the inventory for Duplantier’s maternal uncle, Claude Trenonay of Pointe Coupee Parish, survived and most certainly Duplantier inherited some of his property. This inventory was another helpful guide.

An archaeology dig was done around the house which was very helpful to learn what kind of ceramics and glass the Duplantiers and everybody else used here.

The first piece of the collection, acquired in 1970 by the Friends—which was at the time under the Foundation for Historical Louisiana, was the armoire now located in the salon (parlor) of the historic house.



The New Orleans-made mahogany veneer armoire is remarkable due to its fide hinges made of iron with pewter sleeves and brass ball finials. To Pat’s knowledge they were quite unique. The solid cast escutcheons would have been made in France or England and the ball feet could have been cast in a New Orleans foundry. The inside of the armoire shows the typical arrangement belt of three drawers with shelves. The shelves have a two-inch band of mahogany on the front of cypress shelves. The silver plated pulls were made in England which is a rare occurrence in American furniture.



Thanks to the diligent work of Pat Bacot and the Friends’ Collection Committee, the house museum accurately represents a French Louisiana household of the 1820s.



Our first acquisition, the New Orleans-made armoire (ca. 1815-1825) located in the salon

Welcome to our new Friends Administrative Assistant



The Friends are thrilled to welcome Jerri Becnel to our organization. Jerri has a long work history associated with the petrochemical industry. The last 24 years of her career were with Kean Miller Law Firm where she managed their accounts receivable/collections.

Jerri is an active volunteer in the community; working with the EBR Master Gardeners and LA Master Naturalist of

GBR. Volunteering with Master Gardeners at the Friends Garden introduced her to Babeth.

Some of Jerri's interests include the outdoors/birding, gardening, and entertaining friends with tasty food around her dining table. Jerri and her husband, David Lindenfeld, enjoy traveling. their yorkie, Ella, likes to come along for the adventure when she can.

Creole Christmas & Holiday Fair

Creole Christmas & Holiday Fair was held on the grounds of Magnolia Mound on Sunday, Dec. 10. Mary Williams again served as the Friends' chair for the event and along with BREC staff helped coordinate a wonderful sunny afternoon.

Papa Noel, resplendent in an authentic costume (made by Mary Williams) helped welcome and coordinate our events during the day. We had more local vendors than in previous years. The Hoggs, opera singers from Southeastern University, and Jerry Jenkins performed during the day. We estimated the crowd at roughly 650 persons, 250 of which were young children.

The Friends would like to thank the board members who volunteered their time to make the Creole Christmas 2023a successful celebration: Susan Eaton, Jane Thomas, Cheryl Stromeyer, Rosemary Lane, Chet and Janie Coles, Adelaide Russo, Mike and Karen Zobrist, Susan Wilder, and Camm Morton.

Creole Christmas photos by Hisa Turner, BREC



Garden Bench Dedications

On Sunday, December 3, 2023, five new garden benches were dedicated at Magnolia Mound.

A bench dedicated to the memory of Anne Gueymard Shirley (1937-2018), former tour guide and longtime volunteer is placed near the Hart House.

A bench dedicated to the memory of Denis A. Duplantier III (1944-2015) and his wife, Suzanne Payne Duplantier (1945-2015), is placed near the historic Duplantier house on the riverside.

A bench in memory of former BREC tour guide, Eunice Thompson Pavageau (1936-2014) is placed near the historic well adjacent to the vegetable garden.

A bench donated by Liz Treppendahl, chair of the Friends Site Committee, is placed near the garden shed under a live oak tree.

A bench in memory of Kathleen Bordelon Duplantier by Dr. and Mrs. Wayne Stromeyer is located on the front gallery of the historic house.



(L) Bench given in memory of Anne Gueymard Shirley, (R) Dr. Wayne Stromeyer, and wife Cheryl, helping to secure new brass plaques for the garden benches.



2024 Petite Antiques Forum

By Catherine White, event chairman

On January 25 the auditorium of the Louisiana State Archives building was filled with people enthralled with Jim Blanchard's informative and entertaining talk about sights along the Mississippi River in the 1800s. He shared archival drawings, photographs and his own beautiful, detailed paintings to illustrate these historic structures, many of which no longer exist.

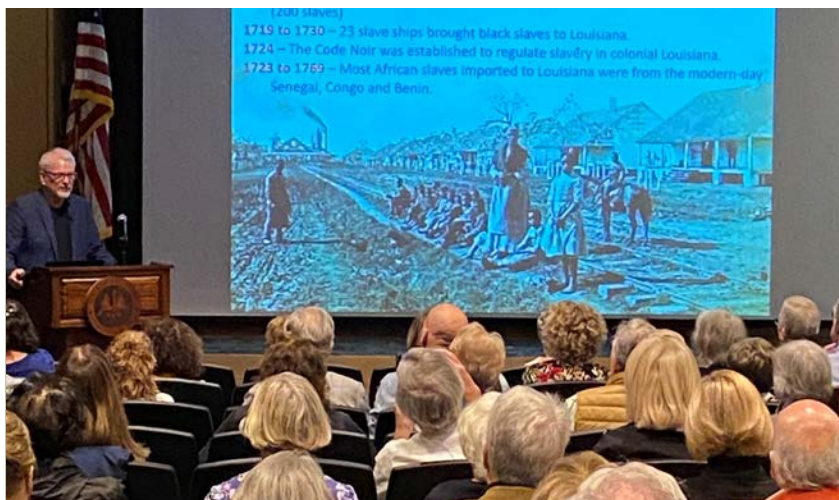
Afterward, the participants journeyed to Houmas House and Gardens to visit the dynamic new Great River Road Museum and have lunch.

The third segment of the forum featured tours of two historic privately owned homes on Bayou Lafourche. Participants enjoyed meeting DeeDee Lemann and Kathleen Lemann Waguespack who shared Palo Alto plantation home with them. Attendees also visited Belle Alliance plantation home where they were welcomed by Colby Danna, Jake Stout, and Blaze Blanchard. Our volunteer docents also helped the attendees explore the distinctive architecture and furnishings of these homes. I would like to thank docents Sandy Arst, Ira Babin, Chet Coles, Janie Coles, Donna Mitchell, Katherine Scherer, Mary Tharp, Mike Zobrist, and John Sykes, Craig Rowley, and Stephen Vidrine. Mary Boston kindly furnished morning refreshments to begin the day.

The Petite Antique Forum Committee of Barbara Bacot, Babeth Schlegel, Jane Thomas, and Karen Zobrist worked diligently to present the forum.

In addition to being an educational event, the forum helps provide funds for the Friends to continue to maintain the collection of historic Magnolia Mound.

The Forum Committee is thankful for the fourteen donors to the forum. We are grateful to the following for their generosity: Pat Alford, the Eaton Family, Harriet Babin Miller, Donna Wright, and the Zobrist Family. Sponsors at the Corporate Level include BREC, Houmas House Estate and Gardens, Neal Auction, Thomasgraphics, and the H.P. Bacot Fund. Donors to the H.P. Bacot Fund include Janet and Sanford Arst, Barbara SoRelle Bacot, Robert and Linda Bowsher, Jessica Kemm, and Catherine White.



Speaker Jim Blanchard at the Louisiana State Archives.



Kathleen Lemann Waguespack giving tours of her childhood home, Palo Alto



Guest speaker, Jim Blanchard on the left, with Kevin Harris at the Great River Road Museum.



Stephen Vidrine, Diane Finley, Beth Mays, and Ann-Felice Fourrier at the Great River Road Museum



Salon Duplantier

The third annual Duplantier Holiday Party, Sunday afternoon, December 3 was a festive success! The Hart House was decorated for the holidays in Victorian splendor. The mantels were decorated with fresh greens and potted lavender. The Friends recognized the DuPlantiere honorees, who were honored for their gifting of \$1,000 or more to The Friends of Magnolia Mound.

Thank you, Mary Boston, Karen Zobrist, and Susan Eaton, for chairing this event. Also thank you to Susan Wilder and her committee for the delicious food and coffee punch, Pat Alford for the wine, Trader Joe's for the rosemary trees, and to Cary Saurage for underwriting this event!



Mary Williams, Michael Williams, John Turner, and Jerry Fischer



Karen Zobrist, Susan Wilder, John Wilder, and Diane Finley



John Sykes, Claire Coco, Brenda Perkins, and Cheryl Stromeyer



Babeth Schlegel, Karen Zobrist, Mary Boston, Susan Eaton, and Harriet Babin



John Sykes and Kay Collier

Volunteers Honored At Salon Duplantier

The Friends of Magnolia Mound and BREC honored the work of our volunteers for the years 2021 and 2022. Each year, volunteers contribute over 1,200 hours to Magnolia Mound serving in a variety of roles.

East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners meet on Thursdays to keep our kitchen garden looking its best year-round. House docents serve as additional tour guides, and our Kitchen docents have served faithfully as cooks in our open-hearth kitchen.

The volunteer with the greatest number of service hours receives the "Shirley Award" name for our longtime docent, Anne Gueymard Shirley, who was the first volunteer of the year winner. The winner for 2022 and 2021 was Camm Morton.

We also recognized retiring cooking docents, Jeanne Yerger and Susan Wilder for 35 years of volunteer service. They've educated and delighted thousands of school children in the open-hearth kitchen.



Meet Mykayla Jackson

Mykayla Jackson is our new volunteer coordinator and education assistant at the Mound. A Louisiana native, Mykayla grew up in Vacherie, before moving to Dallas, Texas. She began work as a tour guide at Magnolia Mound in Fall 2022, and during the Summer 2023 served as a camp director for the 43rd Summer History Camp Program. Mykayla is a 2023 graduate of Southern University in Therapeutic Recreation and Leisure Studies.

For information about volunteer opportunities at Magnolia Mound, please contact Mykayla at Mykayla.jackson@brec.org or at 225-615-7659

2022

1 YEAR

- Judy Boyce
- Kay Collier
- Mazie Doomes
- Trish Felder
- Gee Gee Hargon
- Jen Kelly
- Fran Martin
- Janet Smith

5 YEAR

- Vince Baccari

15 YEAR

- Cathy Richardson

20 YEAR

- Lisette Carmichael

25 YEAR

- Brenda Perkins

2021

10 YEAR

- Mary Williams

15 YEAR

- Diane Finley

20 YEAR

- John Turner

30 YEAR

- Rosemary Lane

35 YEAR

- Susan Wilder (2024)
- Jeanne Yerger (2024)

Thank you!

Friends of Magnolia Mound Underwriters, Membership and Donations as of Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024

Thanks to the following donors for joining the Mound or renewing their membership.

If you have questions about membership or your renewal date please call Babeth Schlegel at (225) 421-3162.

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Clegg's Nursery
Thomasgraphics – Graphic Design

MEMBERSHIP

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John G. Turner & Jerry G. Fischer

CONSTANCE JOYCE

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If you wish to make a donation in memoriam please call Babeth Schlegel at (225) 421-3162.

**Indicates Honorary Member
Please email Babeth Schlegel at friendsofmagnoliamount@gmail.com if your name has been omitted, if there is an error, or if you do not wish to be listed in future newsletters or on the Friends' website.*



IT'S EASY TO JOIN, RENEW, OR DONATE.

Use the form or go online to our secure website at friendsofmagnoliamount.org.

You can also use your smart phone's camera to scan this QR code to learn more about the Friends of Magnolia Mound, the House and the Collection.

Members receive 20% off Friends of Magnolia Mound Publications at the Turner Family Visitors Center

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One free tour
20% discount in gift shop
Invited to Le Salon Duplantier
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Advance notice of events

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Honored at Le Salon Duplantier
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Free private tour for you plus ten guests

20% discount in gift shop
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Printed newsletter mailed to you
Advance notice of events

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\$2,500
Honored at Le Salon Duplantier
Name on donor page
Two tickets to the Petite Antiques Forum

Free private tour for you plus ten guests
20% discount in gift shop
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Printed newsletter mailed to you
Advance notice of events

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DUPLANTIER CIRCLE**

\$5,000+ Honored at Le Salon Duplantier
Name on donor page
Four tickets to the Petite Antiques Forum
Free private tour for you plus ten guests
20% discount in gift shop
Inside Magnolia Mound book
Printed newsletter mailed to you
Advance notice of events

Friends of Magnolia Mound

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist in the preservation and interpretation of the historic house and site as a demonstration of early plantation life in south Louisiana for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations and to procure and manage the Collection

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Friends, working with BREC, the Museum Director and staff, assist in implementing the master plan for the structures, landscaping, future additions and changes to Magnolia Mound.

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.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS THIS MISSION

Friends of Magnolia Mound

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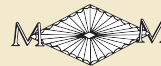
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The Friends & BREC - partners in preservation for over 50 years.

Questions? Please send an email to friendsofmagnoliamound@gmail.com or call Babeth Schlegel at (225) 421-3162

Friends of Magnolia Mound is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

1-Year Membership (For a renewal, the year's membership will begin when the current membership expires.)

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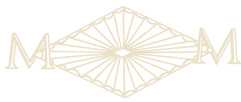
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News from the Mound Kitchen Garden

By Camm Morton

In the early 1800s when the Duplantier family owned Magnolia Mound Plantation, herbs and spices were so expensive that they were kept under lock and key in the main house and taken to the kitchen only as needed. Today there are many ways to grow and prepare herbs and spices and they are common commodities.

The Master Gardeners, who plan and take care of the demonstration kitchen garden at the Mound, grew and prepared many of those herbs and spices this past growing season. It was a fun experiment and when we showcased what we had done for the Creole Christmas in December 2023 many people were interested in buying them. So, in 2024, we are working on that project to raise money for the garden.

Do you know the difference between an herb and a spice? Most people use the terms interchangeably, but in fact they are different. Both come from plants, but herbs are the fresh part of the plant, like oregano, parsley, and cilantro. Spices are the dried root, stalk, seed, or fruit of the plant and almost always dried, not fresh. Examples would be the seed of cilantro (coriander), or ground paprika which is the pepper of the paprika plant dried and ground.

This past year we also grew a variety of sugar cane named after the house museum – Magnolia Mound Sugar Cane, a product of LSU's early sugar cane breeding that was originally planted at Magnolia Mound. We were successful in growing a small plot which we harvested, crushed, and made into cane syrup

and, with the help of Sugarfield Spirits of Gonzales, we also had some made into rum. This year we will be expanding and adding legacy varieties of cane from Cuba, Thailand, and LA Stripe, the latter was grown here in Louisiana prior to the many improved varieties made possible by the LSU Sugar Research Station.

Finally, last year we added three honeybee hives so we can sell local honey, and a pumpkin patch where kids and adults can pick their own pumpkins. It was a fun year for the gardeners at Magnolia Mound despite the heat and drought. Come visit in 2024. There is always something new.



Top left: sugarcane patch at the Mound.
Top right: Magnolia Mound Cane Syrup.
At right: jars of herbs and spices from the garden.



Photos by Camm Morton