



# THE DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST

Vol XXIII No. 1 ❧ Winter 2014

## SUN-BATHED, BLUE AND PINK: JOIN US FOR THE BERMUDA SYMPOSIUM



Vermont House, Smiths, Bermuda

**T**he mere thought of a late winter symposium in Bermuda can bring a smile to your face. Save the dates—March 27–30, 2014—for *Bermuda: Decorative Arts, Architecture and History*. With the guidance of the most knowledgeable Bermuda experts and historians, we will examine the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries of Bermuda. From the colonizing by the people of the *Sea Venture*, the lead ship trying to resupply Jamestown in Virginia, to the extensive

maritime economy that brought wealth and refinement, to the transitions of the 19th century, we will explore the distinctive cabinetmaking traditions, the silver and the paintings, and the colorful architecture of this elegant island. Bermuda has been called a laboratory of history and currently there are extensive archaeological digs on and around the island, making fascinating discoveries that further knit together the social and material histories of Bermuda.

Continued on page 7

## THE TRUST WELCOMES MATT THURLOW

**T**he Decorative Arts Trust Board of Governors is happy to announce the appointment of Matthew A. Thurlow as the Trust's next Executive Director, effective February 5, 2014. Matt joins the Trust from the Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library where he served as Assistant Director of Development, Major Gifts and Planned Giving. In addition to his Winterthur duties, Matt is Vice Chairman and Director of the Classical Institute of the South. As the Trust's new Executive Director, he will replace



Matt Thurlow with his wife, Jennifer, and their two-year-old son Trevor.

## A WORD FROM PENNY

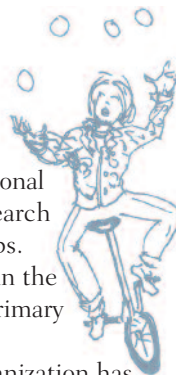
**T**hank you all for the wonderful thirty years of my executive directorship at the Trust. It has been the absolute best decorative arts experience and continued education. I have met the most wonderful people and incredible scholars, all of whom I consider friends.

The fact that our education program has grown to support more and more young people makes me particularly happy. Started years ago, in memory of our founder, Dewey Lee Curtis, the scholarships have always

been a part of what we do. We have increased our support to include institutional scholarships, summer research grants, and now internships. Supporting young people in the field should always be a primary mission of the Trust.

I'm proud that this organization has been one of fellowship, where members call with helpful ideas, contacts and invitations to their own collections, where they open the registration table

Continued on page 8



Penny Hunt, who is retiring after 30 years of sterling service to our organization.

It was a challenging process for the Board of Governors when Penny announced her intent to retire last year, but after a thorough national search, we are confident we have found the ideal match in Matt Thurlow. He exemplifies everything the Trust stands for in terms of intellect, scholarship and professionalism, and we are honored to have him guide us into the future as we expand our programs

Continued on page 7



# THE INCREDIBLE FOUR

The fall symposium of the Trust, *Four Centuries of Furniture in and Around Boston*, took Trust members to the exhibits of the collaborative venture of eleven institutions celebrating *Four Centuries of Massachusetts Furniture*. These exhibits compose the first presentation of rarely seen objects and up-to-date research since Jonathan Fairbanks' exhibit, *New England Begins*, some 40 years ago.

Trust members gathered in picturesque Concord, MA, at the quaint Colonial Inn, and from there traveled out each morning to museums, historical societies and historic sites to see the exhibits. The Thursday Optional Tour visited Historic Deerfield where *Furniture Masterworks: Tradition and Innovation in Western Massachusetts* was the featured exhibit. After a welcome from Deerfield's Director and Trust Governor, Phil Zea, we heard an excellent lecture by Joshua Lane, Curator of Furniture. The *Four Centuries* exhibit in the Wright House



Sandra Smith and Sara White, from Houston, Texas, with Maria Thompson in the background, at the Historic Deerfield exhibit, *Into the Woods: Crafting Early American Furniture*.

on Deerfield's historic mile, displayed the most significant pieces of furniture that show the regional development in cabinetmaking. Lane and his team took several examples of painted regional furniture, analyzed the paint—red lead, white lead, charred bones, ground blue glass suspended in linseed oil, then made a new chest and painted it with true unaged colors. Where the original piece was muted and dull, the new one was a brilliant Prussian blue, orange, and yellow and very bright! Trust members were amazed at this look and knew they were witnessing a new era of how early painted furniture really looked. Ending our glorious fall day at Historic Deerfield



Nathan Lombard inlay at Old Sturbridge Village exhibit *Delightfully Designed—The Furniture and Life of Nathan Lombard*.

with apple cider, Trust members boarded the motor coach and heard a wonderful commentary from Cindy Brockway, a new Trust Governor and Director of Historic Collections for The Trustees of Reservations, the oldest land conservation organization in our country. She explained the economy of the area—mostly rocks, timber, sheep—and described the distinctive New England farm house as we drove past many. The house is four rooms on bottom, four on top with an ell or little house attached. The back house connects to the barn as a way to organize work rooms of the farm, hence, big house, little house, back house, barn.

Our opening lecture, across the street at the Masonic Hall, was from Brock Jobe who spearheaded this amazing collaborative venture and reminded us that the North Bennett Street School was still training people in furniture-making today.

The visit to the Massachusetts Historic Society, the oldest in the western hemisphere and home to three presidential libraries—John and John Quincy Adams' and Jefferson's (93% of his personal papers and over 400 drawings). Gerry Ward spoke to us about their exhibit, *The Cabinetmaker & the Carver*, starting from the 18th-century carriage at the Shirley Eustis House, noting the ball and claw footed card table that Phyllis Wheatly, a slave, used for her writing, then the Revival and Reform in Boston, 1860–1900, which is difficult to distinguish from New York, and the Arts and Crafts furniture. Not only was this exhibit one of rarely seen objects but it also, importantly, focused on the people connected with the pieces.

Lunch at the Somerset Club on Beacon Hill was elegant. Our dining room, once the billiard room but recently redone, had wonderful plaster work and was beautifully painted. The center pieces for our tables were composed of silver that had belonged to Daniel Webster. Private house visits followed our divine Boston Cream Pie! The Nichols House, a 19th century multi-generational Bullfinch mansion left with all the family furnishings, and the Colonial Society, an historic, intellectual club with good Boston furniture, and two exceptional private collections in important houses rounded out our day on Beacon Hill.

Nonie Gadsden, the Katharine Lane Weems Senior Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Boston Museum and Trust Governor, hosted our visit to the new Wing of the Americas. The great American treasures of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries were wonderfully displayed and breathtaking to see. Our final stop in Boston was the ultimate of private collections. We were welcomed as friends, treated to wine and hors d'oeuvres, and encouraged to go to all four floors and enjoy the collection of American furniture, paintings, prints, ceramics, and metals. Trust members returned to Concord happier, perhaps, than we have ever been.

Old Sturbridge Village was an all day affair as we took part in their Collectors' Forum and the opening of their *Four Centuries* exhibit, *Delightfully Designed—The Furniture and Life of Nathan Lombard*. Jim Donahue, President of OSV, welcomed the Decorative Arts Trust and thanked



Christie Jackson, Curator OSV, and Kate Swisher, Decorative Arts Trust Intern at OSV, with Karl Briel, whose ancestor was Nathan Lombard, at the opening of the Nathan Lombard exhibit.



# CENTURIES SYMPOSIUM

us for our internships that have enabled to OSV to accomplish the work necessary for the exhibit. Jane Nylander, Head of the OSV Collections Committee and Trust Governor, stated the Trust's mission of supporting internships and scholarships, and introduced Kate Swisher, the Decorative Arts Trust Intern at OSV.



Jonathan Fairbanks, past president of the Trust and artist, presented Penny Hunt with his painting of the woods behind his house.

Trust members were pleased and proud of this accomplishment. Brock Jobe's lecture told about the discovery of Nathan Lombard and his furniture. Brock said that the most important book in his library is *American Furniture, The Federal Period*, by Charles Montgomery, Viking, 1966. The desk and bookcase on the cover is by Nathan Lombard, but Montgomery hedged the attribution in 1966. After several sightings of the tell-tale signs of this craftsman—swirling patera in diamond inlay, inlay escutcheons—he made the connection with a chest at Winterthur signed Nathan Lombard April 20 1800. Another chest under drawer was signed "Ebenezer Howard Sturbridge." This put Brock solidly on the trail of furniture craftsmen living in Sturbridge. Today, after much research and locating a number of Lombard pieces, Brock considers Nathan Lombard as a master craftsmen rivaling Seymour and McIntyre. Another astounding discovery from the *Four Centuries*.

Christie Jackson, Curator at OSV, expounded on the inlay as Nathan Lombard's strong point especially his use of the diamond pattern. She noted that there is 385 feet of sting chevron inlay in the exhibit pieces! Clark Pearce told us about more specifics of Nathan Lombard's furniture such as the hundreds of candle stands with exuberantly shaped

feet, the French feet that are almost always broken or missing, the sand shading with hot sand on veneer and his characteristic banding of small alternating dark and light brown rectangles that create a shimmer effect. As Trust members viewed the exhibit with this information fresh in their minds, they could immediately see the outstanding characteristics of Lombard and began to put a new master in their vocabulary.

After lunch with *This Old House* star Norm Abrams, who is a huge advocate of supporting the wood craftsmen of today, the Village was open to Trust members, who were highly impressed with the true sense of this early village site—good dirt paths, smoke penciling out of chimneys, villagers spinning, sewing, cooking, and wonderful interiors especially that of the 1748 Parsonage interpreted as c. 1830s, where wallpapers and furnishings gave a comfortable feel of village life.

Winding our way back to Concord, we stopped at the Emerson House, The Old Manse c. 1770, for tours, wine and cheese and a chance to meet board members of The Trustees for Reservations who own and preserve the house. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne both lived there.

Sunday morning found Trust members at the Concord Museum where we were greeted by a dear old friend and Honorary Chairman of the Trust, Jonathan Fairbanks. It was Jonathan who, 40 years ago, presented the first comprehensive look at Massachusetts furniture in the exhibit,



Bedroom of the Parsonage at Old Sturbridge Village.

*New England Begins*. And, in true Jonathan fashion, he gave us a PowerPoint look at four centuries of Massachusetts furniture, soup to nuts, in grand tutorial style. He recalled names of people involved who made the exhibit possible



Chuck and Dea Akre, Hume, Virginia, with Jonathan Fairbanks and his daughter, Gothic collector and antiques upholsterer Hillary Fairbanks, at the Fuller Craft Museum.

and throwing in some Jonathan tidbits like wooden pegs were called "trunnels" short for tree nails, and that the later 19th century Boston furniture is the "black hole" because there is still so much to discover. Our final lecturer, David Wood, Curator of the Concord Museum, talked to us about William Munroe, a cabinetmaker in Concord from the late 18th century to 1860, whose journals tell the story of behind-the-scenes life in a cabinetmaker's shop. This unique social history was fascinating, sometimes brutal but clearly a true representation of the workers' lives. Afterwards, Trust members enjoyed the Munroe exhibit and the other excellent regional exhibits of the Concord Museum.

The Sunday Optional Tour took members to The Fuller Crafts Museum. Jonathan Fairbanks, Director, led us through their *Four Centuries* exhibit, *Made in Massachusetts: Studio Furniture in the Bay State*, which presented colorful, whimsical furniture by living craftsmen. With Jonathan's enthusiasm for this craft, Trust members immediately became enthralled with the current state of this art. Accompanied by Cindy Brockway, Director of Historic Collections, we stopped at The Trustees of Reservations Archives and Research Center. Many of the furnishings of the historic houses owned by TTR are stored here and much was viewable for Trust members to enjoy. We were struck by the immense difference between "home furnishings" that have become "museum artifacts." Thanks to Cindy and her staff it was a huge lesson in proper storage and inventorying of artifacts. Our day

Continued on page 8



# THE FALL STUDY TRIP

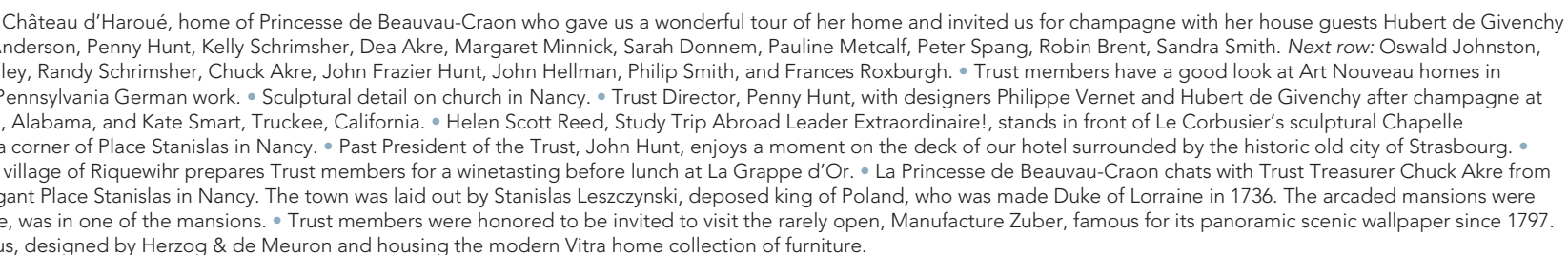
Along the Upper Rhine is an area known as Alsace, bordered on one side by the Rhine River and the other by the Vosges Mountains in France. Historically, it is a region that was claimed by many—first the Romans, then it was Teutonic, later for 600 years it was under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire, then it was part of the League of ten free Imperial cities. After the Thirty Years War, France claimed Alsace, then Germany again, and, since 1918, France again. It is understandable that today Alsatians, whose language and culture is a mix of French and German, think of themselves as rather independent.

Our Study Trip, too, was a mix of fascinating towns, collections, and buildings from Strasbourg, France, through Baden-Baden, Germany, to Basel, Switzerland. The pictures to the right show a few of the amazing places we visited, but at some we were not able to photograph. For instance, the Bibliothèque Humaniste, founded in 1452 in Selestat, houses some of the most interesting and beautiful manuscripts and books donated in the 15th century by learned people in this early university town, and are still in their place there today. We saw the famous Mathias Grunewald altarpiece, 1512–16, in Colmar, partly conserved and now being moved by the government under controversy over its safety and conservation techniques. The kind hospitality of La Princesse de Beauvau-Craon, amidst her valiant work of preserving the family château, was especially memorable. The Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy, founded by the glassmaker Emile Galle, a forerunner of the Art Nouveau movement in France, displayed glass by Galle and Daum as well as furniture, ceramics and textiles by other notable designers of the period. The Zuber factory was a highlight, as we watched craftsmen use the 200-year-old wooden blocks, made of plane and pear wood, that are now National Treasures not to be copied, loaned or repaired. Another favorite was the newly installed Auerbach Cabinet of Curiosities in Basel's Historical Museum and their beautiful 15th and 16th-century tapestries. Also, in Basel, we enjoyed the hospitality and expertise of ceramic specialists George and Margaret Segal. Much thanks goes to Helen Scott Reed, whose dream this trip was, for giving us such an amazing mix of sites to see and learn about. ■



TOP FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Decorative Arts Trust Members of the September 2013 Upper Rhine Study Trip stand in front of and Philippe Venet. From left to right on front row: Molly Weaver, Neal Lavelle, Nancy Lavelle, Ellen Ilkanic, Mary Lee A, Susan Johnston, Kate Smart, Cynthia, Redick, Preston Smart, Chris Mumm, Jim Weaver, Helen Scott Reed, Marcia Bans Nancy. • The Musée Alsacien in Strasbourg displayed Rhine area works from 1750–1860. So many were reminiscent of f Château d'Haroué. MIDDLE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Keeping in touch from Château d'Haroué are Kelly Schrimsher, Huntsville Notre-Dame-du-Haut completed in 1954 in the hills above Ronchamp. • The great gilded ironwork by Jean Lamour at a Wild boar's head on private house in Colmar. BOTTOM FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: David Ling, wine expert at Hugel winery in the Hume, Virginia, before she invites Trust members into her beautiful family home, Château d'Haroué, c. 1720. • The eleg designed by Emmanuel Here and the ironwork with gold leaf is by Jean Lamour. Our hotel, the Grand Hotel de la Reine • Trust members explored the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany. They are standing in front of Vitra Hau







# TRUST INTERN AT OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE

by Kate Swisher,  
Decorative Arts Trust Intern  
at Old Sturbridge Village

For the past three months and over the next nine, I have the privilege of working as the 2013–14 Old Sturbridge Village-Decorative Arts Trust Curatorial Fellow.

This is in large part due to the generous support of the Decorative Arts Trust, without whom the position would not exist. The fellowship is mutually beneficial, providing me with invaluable professional experience and allowing Old Sturbridge Village to augment its curatorial staff for a full year.

I started at OSV after receiving my M.A. from the Winterthur Program in Material Culture and completing a summer internship at the Art Institute of Chicago. Moving from 20th-century studio craft to the material culture of early rural New England proved a stimulating transition, though not quite as extreme as one might think: treenware bowls remind me of the wood-



Helping to prepare OSV's Folk Art Gallery for the Nathan Lombard exhibit by placing quotes on the walls.

turning masterpieces of Mark Lindquist, and rustic redware jars foreshadow the free spirit of modern studio pottery. Still, a living history village complete with livestock and costumed interpreters is not an urban art museum, and comparing the priorities and approaches of these two institutions has helped me to better understand the field in which I work.

With OSV's exhibit on cabinetmaker Nathan Lombard opening just two months after my arrival in August, it was a busy and exciting time for the curatorial department. The project's "all hands on deck" nature meant that I almost immediately became part of the team effort to prepare everything on schedule. I quickly got to know my



Measuring a bandbox as part of the collections inventory, which involves checking and updating records for OSV's collection of around 50,000 objects.

wonderful coworkers by helping them move furniture, proofread label text, and paint stripes and diamonds in the Folk Art Gallery, among other things. In addition, I prepared a small case exhibit in OSV's Bullard Tavern as a companion to the Lombard show. My exhibit, "Get A Grip," traces the history of sewing birds and other clamping devices used for needlework. This relates to a table in the Lombard exhibit, owned by OSV, which bears round indents on its underside suggesting the frequent use of a sewing clamp. I enjoyed the opportunity to both learn about a new topic and share my research with a public audience through the exhibit.

Now that the Lombard opening is behind us, I will spend more time assisting with OSV's collections inventory. This effort to locate, record, and consolidate information about the Village's extensive historical collections, numbering about 50,000 objects, will enable the curatorial



Old Sturbridge Village, an outdoor living history museum in central Massachusetts, introduces visitors to life in a rural New England town of the 1830s. Its substantial collections provide a record of material culture in early-19th-century America.

staff to better assess the collections' strengths and weaknesses and think strategically about the future. It also allows me to gain hands-on experience and learn more about OSV's holdings by examining them on an object-by-object basis.

Beyond the inventory, I'll be working on a variety of other projects, such as giving curatorial tours, putting together more case exhibits, and assisting with object rotations in the Village. In 2014, I'll be leading two "Take A Closer Look" events, in which staff share selected collections objects with OSV members; my first session will highlight bandboxes, while the second will focus on hygiene accessories. I will also be on hand to assist with planning and installation for OSV's next major



My case exhibit in Bullard Tavern, a companion to the Nathan Lombard show, traces the history of the sewing clamp. This handy gadget, which typically included a vise and a pincushion, could be fastened to the edge of a table. The seamstress could then pin her fabric to the cushion and pull it taut, speeding up her work. By the mid-19th century, manufacturers were producing the devices in a variety of whimsical shapes; metal "sewing birds," which held fabric in their spring-loaded beaks, became especially popular in the U.S. and are highly collectible today.

exhibit, Bucket Town, which opens in June 2014. Finally, I will complete at least one independent research project during my time here, while also conducting targeted research for upcoming exhibits in 2015 and 2016.

OSV's wealth of collections and programming makes it an exciting place to work, and I am grateful to the Decorative Arts Trust for its support of this opportunity. I hope the experience will prove as rewarding for OSV as it has already been for me. ■

## THE TRUST WELCOMES MATT THURLOW

Continued from page 1

and graduate internships. Because of the exciting work that lies before us, Matt will be working full-time for the Trust, and we look forward to his leadership as we enter this new era.

Prior to Matt's advancement role at Winterthur, he worked in the Metropolitan Museum of Art as Research Associate and Installations Coordinator for the American Wing. While at the Met, he assisted in developing an innovative and interactive system to increase access to the American Wing's collection as well as an organization aimed at building interest in the arts among young people. Throughout the past 12 years, he has been associated with a broad variety of organizations that support the arts including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Colonial Williamsburg, the Bermuda Maritime Museum, and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.

Matt graduated magna cum laude from Washington and Lee University and holds two master's degrees, one in archeology from the College of William & Mary, and another in early American culture from the University of Delaware. He and his wife, Jennifer, a nurse practitioner, live in Philadelphia with their two-year-old son Trevor. It is with the greatest enthusiasm that we welcome the Thurlows to the Decorative Arts Trust family. Matt and Jennifer will be joining us in New York for the Trust's VIP weekend Jan. 23–25, and we look forward to introducing them to our membership. ■

## JOIN US FOR THE BERMUDA SYMPOSIUM

Continued from page 1

Come join us for this extraordinary symposium. For full information and registration, please go to [www.decorativeartstrust.org](http://www.decorativeartstrust.org) or call the Trust office for a brochure. ■



Portrait detail of Frances Harvey, painted by Joseph Blackburn, Bermuda, c. 1755

## THE DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST

*The Decorative Arts Trust* is a non-profit organization created for the study and preservation of the decorative arts through an exchange of information, lectures, seminars. Membership is open to all who share a deep interest in decorative arts subjects.

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## IN THIS ISSUE

Sun-bathed, blue and pink: Join Us for the Bermuda Symposium ....	1
The Trust Welcomes Matt Thurlow .....	1
A Word From Penny.....	1
The Incredible Four Centuries Symposium .....	2
The Fall Study Trip to the Upper Rhine...	4
Trust Intern at Old Sturbridge Village ...	6
Calendar .....	8



Bermuda gate leg table. Vermont House, Smiths, Bermuda. C. 1710. Photo, Keith Adams.

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The Decorative Arts Trust ❧ Winter 2014

## THE DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST CALENDAR

VIP ANTIQUES WEEKEND:  
NEW YORK CITY  
JANUARY 24–26



SPRING SYMPOSIUM:  
BERMUDA: HISTORY,  
FURNITURE, ARCHITECTURE  
MARCH 27–30



STUDY TRIP ABROAD:  
IRELAND: DECORATIVE ARTS  
AND ARCHITECTURE  
MAY 17–25, MAY 30–JUNE 7



STUDY TRIP ABROAD:  
ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSES  
AND LIBRARIES  
SEPTEMBER 8–16



FALL SYMPOSIUM:  
HISTORIC NATCHEZ:  
JEWEL OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI  
OCTOBER 23–26

### A WORD FROM PENNY

Continued from page 1

when the Thursday Optional Tour is late getting back, where they help hand out glasses of wine and Cheez-its on the coach, who feel free to add interesting information at our lectures and where everybody has great respect for our speakers who share their life's work with us so graciously. After all, we are all peers, all students of the decorative arts, happy to learn and share.

There is not a nicer group of people than Decorative Arts Trust members gathered together. Or, a group that is more fun. I have always said, the members ARE the Decorative Arts Trust, without you, your involvement and your support there would be no Trust.

### FOUR CENTURIES SYMPOSIUM

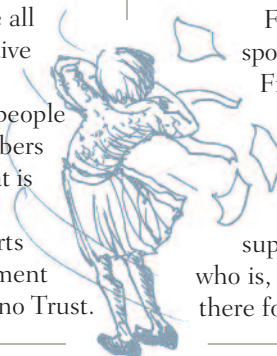
Continued from page 3

ended with sunset at the Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate, another TTR house. Designed by noted architect Charles Platt in 1902 for Dr. Arthur Tracy Cabot, this impressive country home in its natural surroundings brought us into the 20th century architecturally. In the

Thank you... and take good care of Matt!

Our Officers and Board of Governors are the best, there are none better. Special appreciation goes to Randy Schrimsher, who for the last year has worked diligently with the Search Committee to make the transition to a new director a superb success. There is a chance that he just might love the Trust more than I do!

Finally, I want to thank the true sponsor of my directorship, John Frazier Hunt, who, as president following Wendell Garrett, saved the Trust when there were some early growing pains, who is always supportive and encouraging and who is, and ever will be, always there for the Trust. As am I. ■



spirit of the times, lovely trays of cheese and crudités were presented to us in the sun room, and wine was poured in the dining room, Trust members made their way around this gracious home appreciating country life of 100 years ago and reflecting on the incredible collaborative effort we have enjoyed at this symposium. ■