

Petite Plaisance Conservation Fund Newsletter

December 2022

House Tours Resume

With Covid numbers finally on the decline, Petite Plaisance cautiously opened its doors for the season in 2022. Everyone on site worked hard throughout the spring to prepare the house and gardens for our guests. Despite some remaining travel restrictions, visitors made their way to South Shore Road from thirteen countries in addition to the United States. Flight cancellations and delays made for harrowing travel for some, but those who had postponed their trips during the pandemic were all the more grateful to tour the house in 2022.

We were delighted to welcome back our European docents, Céline Samson from the French province of Brittany and Jane Gilkes Strassguetl from Munich, along with Nicolas Hamilton, who hails from Great Britain. Nic has a knack for fixing just about anything and we are always thankful for the work he does when he is in residence.



Summer's bounty, 2022

Projects

Thanks to our generous donors, the PPCF was able to fund several essential maintenance tasks this year: repairing the structure that supports Petite Plaisance's kiwi vine pergola, painting the window and door trim out front, and pruning the trees in our orchards and wood garden, which must be done every fall. Most exciting, we were able to complete the first phase of our shutter project, with historic reproduction shutters now gracing the front and sides of Petite Plaisance. These authentic replicas of what was on the house when Madame Yourcenar died in 1987 are a beautiful addition to the property. This was a big undertaking for the fund, and we are especially grateful to those who supported it!

Many thanks as well to Ed Libitzki, proprietor of Metal Magic in nearby Trenton, Maine, who volunteered his metalworking expertise to restore the antique sleighbells over our front door. Ed

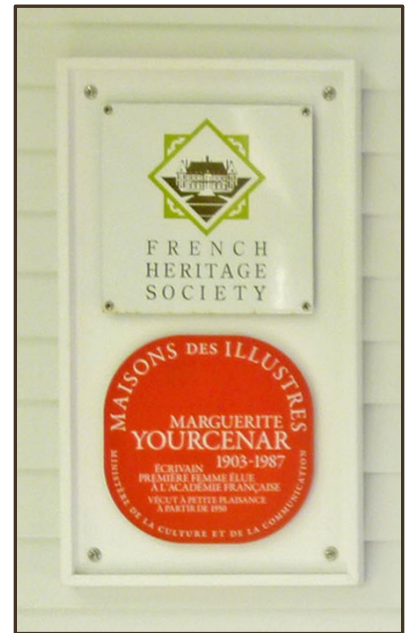


knew Madame Yourcenar and Miss Frick personally, and he was happy to help out when the bells gave up the ghost. A frequent conversation piece, the sleighbells are attached to a cord that visitors pull to announce their arrival at Petite Plaisance, just as friends and neighbors did when Yourcenar and Frick were living there years ago.

President's Message

In the summer of 2022, old friends and new made their way to Petite Plaisance. Some traveled far, dealing with Covid protocols, delayed or canceled flights, and long bus rides when rental cars were unavailable. Europeans came, as usual, from France or Italy or Belgium, but we were especially moved to include among our guests a family from the embattled country of Ukraine. Their visit served as a poignant reminder of how much the work of a beloved author can mean to readers. These travelers set their course on Northeast Harbor, Maine, because Marguerite Yourcenar wrote with such empathy about human suffering and violence. Petite Plaisance was a haven for Madame Yourcenar and Miss Frick when they found it in 1950 and it continues to be a place of refuge and inspiration. Thank you to our generous donors for helping to keep our doors open.

~ Jayne Persson



The Digitization Project

Dr. Anastasia Weigle, a professional archivist and university professor, has been curating and digitizing Madame Yourcenar's photograph albums since we launched this important project in 2021. As meticulous as she is artful, Dr. Weigle will soon finish working on the fourteenth of twenty albums that make up the first phase of this project. We look forward to making these unique artifacts available to Yourcenar scholars and admirers all over the world.

Thank You to All of Our 2022 Donors !

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Thank you as well to our summer visitors for their generosity—merci!