



Wornall/Majors Columns

The newsletter of the Wornall/Majors House Museums

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Never at Dull Moment at Wornall/Majors!



Top Left Reenactors at the Spring Muster, April 12



Top Right Shrimp Boil (part of the Eat, Drink, Preserve! Barn Dinner series), July 16

Bottom Left Children listen to a storyteller at Summer Camp, June-July

Bottom Right Visitors pet an alpaca at Artisan Day, July 11



Restoring the Wornall & Majors Houses Past, Present, and Future

Foundation Repair & Storm Windows—Completed!

“I was amazed by how professionally the board and staff handled the major repair needs of the house,” says Executive Director Kerrie Nichols. “You would never know something disastrous had happened only two years ago.”

One fateful morning, staff was sitting in the office of the Wornall House when they heard a deafening, tearing noise: A huge crack in the foundation that required immediate attention, caused by the drought in 2012-13. The necessary repair work was quoted at approximately \$300,000. Remarkably, thanks to a matching grant from the William T. Kemper Foundation and the generosity of other donors, the funds were raised in less than a year.

At approximately the same time as the foundation crisis, the installation of new storm windows became necessary in order to preserve the Majors House. Fundraising efforts successfully raised the needed monies in record time. The storm windows project was embraced by United Missouri Bank and R. Crosby Kemper Jr. The Museums were fortunate to receive the funding necessary to create storm windows out of wood, under the recommendation of preservation architects.

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Restoring the Wornall & Majors Houses (cont.)

Wood Restoration—Ongoing

Executive Director Kerrie Nichols explains current renovation plans this way: “Prior to the foundation debacle that occurred in the Wornall House, we had an estimate to do a complete restoration of the wood exterior of the Majors House. Fundraising for that renovation was put on temporary hold in order to handle the foundation repair. But the wood continued to deteriorate, forcing us to use some existing seed money for temporary repairs this past spring - we had to patch the holes to keep deterioration at bay. Since the damage has worsened over the past two years, it is anticipated that the repairs will cost even more than the original bid. The complete restoration will soon continue, and a capital campaign with the goal of raising needed monies will be initiated.”

Foyer Restoration—November 2015!

We are currently working on the restoration of the Wornall House foyer,” explains Executive Director Kerrie Nichols. “An anonymous donor will be funding the project. The Collections Committee has been working very hard to select historically appropriate carpet and paint.”

“We deal with the ‘stuff,’” says Libby Gessley, head of the Collections Committee. “We’re in the first phases of redoing the foyer - we’re at the point of placing carpet in the lower and upper hallways, and we’ll paint the walls. We’ll also be restoring the wood floors.”

Learning Landscape —The Next Big Thing!

This was a project that sprang from the restoration of the Wornall House,” explains Executive Director Kerrie Nichols. “Our landscape plan will address some basic issues, including safety, security, lighting, maintenance and irrigation. What we really hope to do is take our story outdoors, by sharing some elements of farm life with our guests. After all, this was a working farm!” .“We expect people to get really excited about the new plan and anticipate a renewed interest in the house and the grounds as a destination location for field trips” predicts Kerrie.

Our wonderful funders for the Wornall Learning Landscape Plan to date include: Bank of America, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Ford Maurer, and a memorial established for longtime volunteer Cathy Campbell’s beloved daughter. Look for details on how you can get involved in the near future.

How You Can Help:

We Can’t Do it Without You!

Make a Contribution! Vital preservation and education work could only be done with your support. Visit www.wornallmajors.org/donate to make your tax-deductible contribution, or email Kerrie Nichols at director@wornallmajors.org for more information.

Donate Goods or Your Time! Our wish list is available at www.wornallmajors.org/support/wornallmajors-wish-list. We also rely on our wonderful volunteers to serve as the public face of Wornall/Majors. Give tours, help with gardening tasks, or to assist with greeting guests at events. Email administrator@wornallmajors.org to volunteer.



Congratulations to Volunteer Caden Gird!

Caden, an eighth-grader at Shawnee Mission’s Indian Hills Middle School, recently received the President’s Volunteer Service Award after volunteering more than 100 hours with the Wornall/Majors House Museums.

Caden volunteers in many capacities at both Houses, helping with Summer Camp, Ghost Tours, Candlelight Tours, and more.

The President’s Volunteer Service Award is given through a federal agency called the Corporation for National Community Service.



Caden (in back) at Summer Camp



Volunteer Spotlight: Jim Tipton

Volunteer Jim Tipton works as a popular docent in both the Wornall and Majors Houses, although he spends the majority of his time at the Majors House. “I love giving tours,” says Jim. He enjoys public speaking and currently gives presentations at senior living communities. Jim moved to Kansas City at the age of 7, and considers himself a native. Jim’s background is in business, working primarily with computers. Since his retirement, he has lent his talents to multiple endeavors, including tutoring at Red Bridge Elementary, mentoring at the Blue Valley School District, and volunteering as part of the Spiritual Care team at St. Joseph Hospital.



Alexander Majors ranks as Jim’s favorite Wornall/Majors character. “He was extremely influential in turning Kansas City into a major trade hub and important commercial center,” says Jim.

Also fortunately for the museums, Jim enjoys home repair. “I have a great tool collection,” he confides. Jim recently helped paint a room of the Majors House, and he and his wife Mary Kay worked tirelessly on Cleanup Day.

“I’m associating with great people here,” says Jim, who enjoys delving into the background of both houses. “The more you find out about history, the more you discover parallels in today’s world.”

Staff Spotlight: Executive Director Kerrie Nichols



Kerrie Nichols has the important role of Executive Director of the Wornall/Majors House Museums. Born in Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, she grew up in Independence, Mo. Her formal training is in horticulture. A graduate of Missouri State University, Kerrie followed her studies with a prestigious internship at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C.

Kerrie lived in Maryland for 10 years, working at the 50-acre Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Md. “I began planning, producing and marketing our horticultural programs there,” she recalls. “I created my own position as Marketing Director, and I was on a first-name basis with the Home and Garden editor of *The Washington Post* and other publications. For more than a decade, I promoted the gardens.”

Kerrie’s job at the museums entails fundraising, overseeing the direction of programs, marketing, and generally sharing the wealth of the museums with the public. “My goal is to emphasize what a unique and important cultural hub the museums are – in and for our community,” she says. “I want everyone who comes to the houses to feel like honored guests.”

Knowing that the Wornall House Garden Tour was a major fundraiser for the Wornall/Majors House Museums helped to inspire Kerrie’s interest in joining the staff. The Herb Garden was another draw – as was the fact that she cherished vivid recollections of touring the Wornall House as a child. “I remembered the costumes the docents wore...and when I saw the job posting, it brought back a flood of memories,” recalls Kerrie.

“In general, people understand that the East Coast is rich in history,” explains Kerrie. “But they don’t always realize that we have just as much in Kansas City – right in our own back yard. As a small, not-for-profit museum, we have the ability to reach out and understand the individual needs in our community.”

Artifact Fact

A small treasure is tucked away in the upstairs hall of the John Wornall House—a tilt-top table fashioned of papier-mache and adorned with eight semi-circles of mother-of-pearl inlay around its scalloped edges. A painted floral design adds additional interest.

The table was quite a fashion statement in its day: paper-mache goods were very popular in the mid-1840s. It is interesting to note that such luxury goods were available to Kansas City customers as early as the mid-19th century. Fabricated in England, our table was displayed at the 1853 New York Crystal Palace Exhibition.

Mr. and Mr. Webster Withers Townsley donated the table to the Wornall House in 1969, in memory of Mrs. Townsley’s grandmother.



UPCOMING EVENTS



CANDLELIGHT TOURS

December 11-12, 2015

Celebrate the holidays with this beloved Christmas-themed tour of the Wornall House. Delight your senses with the sights, smells, sounds, and tastes of a Civil War-era Christmas. \$15 per person. Tours leave every 15 minutes from 6:00-7:30 pm.

Through November 30, 2015

Restoration Tours at the John Wornall House

In the month of November, all tours of the Wornall House will be Restoration Tours, as we undergo a foyer restoration project. Tours are \$5, and guests will receive a sneak peek at the restoration process. However, please be aware that some rooms of the house may not be available during the restoration. If you have concerns, please feel free to call ahead at 816-444-1858 for that day's tour route.

SAVE THE DATE: April 21, 2016

Herb Cocktail Party at the Alexander Majors Barn

Enjoy signature herb cocktails inspired by herbs grown in the Wornall herb garden, paired with delicious appetizers and great ambiance. Start your spring off right with us!

SAVE THE DATE: April 23, 2016

Herb & Wildflower Sale at the John Wornall House

Purchase your herbs and native plants for the season, all while supporting the Wornall/Majors House Museums!

SAVE THE DATE: June 4, 2016

2016 Wornall/Majors Garden Tour

Join us for Kansas City's premier garden tour since 1996, and tour some of the finest gardens Kansas City has to offer. We'll also have a pop-up craft fair with garden themed vendors and food trucks presented by Strawberry Swing.

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