



## BELLE GROVE PLANTATION



**B**elle Grove Plantation's staff and Board of Directors send warm wishes during this season of Thanksgiving.

On the following pages, you will see that many activities are bringing new information, understanding, and audiences to this historic treasure.

After two years of restrictions, Belle Grove held all its events again. The Hite of Excellence Series of Sumptuous Feasts returned with a full schedule of events that sold out quickly. It will be expanded in 2023.

Huge crowds attended events with free admission, such as June's Garden Fest and November's Kris Kringle Market. Now only in its third year, the Market recently attracted 4,000 people in one weekend.

However, the economic downturn affected sales for other events and site rentals. A weekend of bad weather for the "Of Ale and History" Beer Festival severely impacted Belle Grove's budget. This brings into stark focus how critical every revenue stream is to the organization.

Belle Grove was fortunate for members and donors' support through the pandemic and recovery, and several government funding sources provided financial relief.

In 2022, these special programs were gone and Belle Grove returned to being self-sufficient, relying on donations and earned income from museum admissions, Museum Shop sales, special events, and event rentals. Thank you to Belle Grove members whose annual dues provide an important level of support.

This year's annual fund campaign is more essential than ever so that Belle Grove may end the year well. Planning an ambitious schedule of activities for 2023 is underway, and your gift will make it possible.

*Thank you* for your generosity, which keeps the history of Belle Grove and the stories of the many people who lived here alive.

Happy holidays to you and yours,

*John Clancey, Kristen Laise*

John Clancey     Kristen Laise  
Board Chair     Executive Director

### How to Donate

- Use the enclosed envelope to donate by check or credit card.
- Click the blue "Donate" button at [bellegrove.org](http://bellegrove.org) to donate via PayPal (does not require an account, you may use a credit card).
- If you are over 70 1/2 years old and have a tax deferred IRA, you may make a "Qualified Charitable Distribution" donation from your IRA directly to Belle Grove without paying taxes on the donated amount, even if you do not itemize tax deductions. Consult your IRA trustee for details. Belle Grove's EIN is 54-1047175.
- Give a stock gift by contacting Bayliss Wealth Management Group of Wells Fargo Advisors at 540-545-7700. Reference Belle Grove Inc.'s account #5697-7377 and DTC #0141.

Belle Grove is a 501c3 non-profit organization and is registered as a charitable organization with the Commonwealth of Virginia and a financial statement is available upon request from the Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs. Your donation is tax deductible and will be acknowledged in writing.

## 2022 HIGHLIGHTS POINTING TO ANOTHER GREAT YEAR TO COME!

Belle Grove’s busy 2022 included new programs and activities that will continue into 2023 and beyond.



“Unearthing Enslaved Lives” exhibit

This spring the new exhibit about the archaeology at the enslaved quarter site opened. “Unearthing Enslaved Lives” is a permanent exhibit and is part of the Manor House tour. It is a compelling way to tell the full history of life at Belle Grove. It is also now part of the school tour itinerary, and it is amazing to watch young people connect to the field of archaeology.

Speaking of school tours—they are back! Belle Grove is delighted that area schools resumed field trips. Almost 500 students visited this year. In addition, staff and volunteers interacted with 3,000 8th graders from seven local municipalities in the World of Work! expo.



Kristen Laise leads a tour for Powhatan School 3rd graders

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park Rangers partner with Belle Grove staff to provide excellent educational content to visitors of all ages. Ranger Shannon Moeck has been particularly successful in her presentations about families enslaved at Belle Grove. The Park collaborated with other local historic sites to bring back presenters from the Slave Dwelling Project for in-person programming this November. A seasonal “Education Technician” joined the Park staff, and will work with Belle Grove to improve outreach to schools.



Another education resource is [virtual.bellegrove.org](http://virtual.bellegrove.org). This year Digital Public Historian Jess Pritchard-Ritter added two more exhibits: one on Hite granddaughter Mary Briscoe Baldwin and one on Lucy Walker, an African-American woman who witnessed the Battle of Cedar Creek at Belle Grove.

Thanks to special donations, Jess included on Virtual Belle Grove the monthly feature newsletters (now at 23 issues) about individuals whom the Hites enslaved. Researcher Robin Young leads this initiative, which provides valuable new insights into the African American history of Belle Grove. Historical research is one of the many volunteer roles at Belle Grove, with hundreds of hours donated each year. This new website provides an effective and engaging way to share newly discovered information. The next exhibit will feature the Jackson Family, who purchased their freedom from the Hites; it is an inspiring story!



Jerome Bias speaks with visitors

For six weeks in early fall, Belle Grove hosted a North Carolina furniture maker, Jerome Bias, as an artist-in-residence. He set up his handmade, period workbench and tools in the lower level of the Manor House, and was available to guests as well as several bus group and school tours.

Jerome’s project was to reproduce a china press that is in the collection of Locust Grove in Louisville, Kentucky. One of his ancestors was enslaved there, and could have used it on a daily basis. Making a similar china press for his home helps Jerome connect with his family’s past and sharing the process with others is healing. Jerome uses all hand tools in his work, and demonstrated all the skill and time needed to construct such a piece of furniture. His project was featured by the NBC affiliate in Washington, D.C., and the story can be seen at: <https://tinyurl.com/bdfmjy46>.

While here, Jerome also prepared a hearth-cooked meal for the first gathering Belle Grove has had for descendants of those enslaved here.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Interpretation and Education Fund made this residency possible. Because Jerome added so much to the experience of visiting

Belle Grove, continuing an artist-in-residence program is being considered.



Crack in the portico window

In the summer newsletter, Belle Grove asked for donations to restore windows in the Manor House. Donors Fred and Christine Andreae pledged to match any funds raised. Currently, \$6,500 has been donated and will be matched. This will allow the nursery, bedroom, and plantation office windows, as well as the front portico, to be repaired and restored this winter, and to begin a fund to restore more in winter 2024. Thank you to the donors (listed on page 4) who are making this important preservation project possible.

The small but mighty staff and dedicated Board Members and volunteers work exceptionally hard to preserve and interpret this special place. This year Belle Grove welcomed 12,000 guests. Building and Grounds Manager Anders Skandsen oversaw two critical infrastructure projects with Belle Grove’s water purification and heating systems. He and his team continue to manage the restoration of Fort Bowman and myriad maintenance tasks that keep the site looking its best.

***Thank you for considering a gift this year to ensure a continued high level of operations and another successful year ahead.***



December 2-30, Belle Grove will celebrate “A Few of Our Favorite Things” in the holiday decorations for the Manor House. Area garden clubs are creatively bringing this classic song from *The Sound of Music* to life in each room.

**SPECIAL THANKS**

In October, Program Assistant Rich Coyle retired after 11 years on the staff. Rich is an avid historian and conducted research that transformed the interpretation of Belle Grove. He also mentored many docents. He was the power behind many successful “Of Ale and History” Beer Fests and Wine Fests. Belle Grove is grateful for his expertise in managing these complex events.

Also in October, Katya Smith concluded her seasonal position as a Building and Grounds Assistant. She was a tremendous asset to the staff and the volunteer team, and together they tackled and completed many projects.

At the end of 2022, John Clancey will conclude his service as Board Chair. He has been a docent at Belle Grove since 2012, was elected to the Board in 2015, and served on the Education Committee. In 2017, he was elected to be an officer and with his role as Chair, John will have served for eight consecutive years—his dedication is commendable!



Guided tours will be held hourly Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m. On Friday and Saturday evenings, 4-8 p.m., the Manor House is open for self-guided tours, lit by candlelight, with live music in the parlor. Belle Grove members may use their free admission benefit for touring in December and will receive 10% off in the Museum Shop

The Museum Shop is open during all touring hours. It is fully stocked with unique gifts, with an emphasis on local products from area artists, artisans, and farms.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Belle Grove celebrates the life of Gee Gee Pasquet, who passed away on November 8 at the age of 80. Her family, the Fishers, lived on Belle Grove property and she played in the Manor House as a child. Gee Gee was devoted to her family and to service through her church and community. As a docent, she treated Belle Grove as if it were her own home, warmly welcoming guests and sharing its history with them.

She and her husband, and now her family, are the loving caretakers of Long Meadow. This historic home and property has connections to the Hite family and is the site of the Hite Family Cemetery.



Gee Gee Pasquet at the 2013 National Sheepdog Finals puppy sitting so a guest could tour the Manor House!



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Belle Grove is grateful to the many people who donate time and funds each year. We particularly thank and acknowledge the following exceptional individual, corporate, the Hite of Excellence Series of Sumptuous Feasts and event sponsors, as well as Belle Grove's Madison, Heritage, and President's Society level members.

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Belle Grove Plantation is one of the 27 historic sites of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Since 1977, it has been operated and funded by Belle Grove, Inc., a 501c3 non-profit organization.



Belle Grove Plantation is a partner in the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. The Park was founded in 2002 and is a partnership between the National Park Service, four non-profit organizations, and one municipality.