



# The Rosewell Newsletter

## A New Season Brings New Reasons to Visit Rosewell



Architectural Historian and Rosewell Advisory Board Member Jeff Klee gets up-close and personal about the ruins with a group of visiting students.

The Rosewell Plantation Ruins will start the 2017 season on Saturday April 1st with three great new reasons to come to *America's Magnificent Ruin*. The first reason: Opening Day is an Open House and admission will be free to all guests. The Open House will give both new and experienced visitors an opportunity to discover, or re-discover, Gloucester County's best known secret.

The second reason: the new season brings new operating hours. In

response to the many guests who wanted to visit the ruins on Fridays, Rosewell's Visitor and Exhibit Center will now be open on Fridays and closed on Mondays. The Ruins will be open 6 days a week, Tuesdays - Saturdays from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm; Sundays 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm. Interpreted site tours (on Fridays) in addition to self-guided tours of the ruins will be available. And, the best reason: the bold new exploration

**See New Season ...  
Continues on Page 3**

## Will you be a *Friend of Rosewell*?

**R**osewell can't have too many friends! That's the reason the new Friends of Rosewell program has been developed. Becoming a Friend of Rosewell means that you will continue to help protect the ruins now and for future generations.



The **Friends of Rosewell** program is a new way of supporting the Foundation in its work to preserve, present, and protect "America's Magnificent Ruins." Our Friends will help support the increasingly energetic programming, the on-site learning experiences for students, the free public lectures to broaden the knowledge of Rosewell history, and the special events throughout the year, because that's what Friends do!

**Friends of Rosewell** is an outgrowth and modification of the Rosewell Membership Program which is being phased out this year. Instead, current members will become Friends of Rosewell, and being a Friend has benefits that are new and exciting. For example, Friends of Rosewell may visit for free any day that Rosewell is open. And, your friends are also our friends. Bring them to visit Rosewell as a Friend with benefits.

The page two article **Rosewell Can't Have too Many Friends!** explains more about how important our Friends are. Will you be a Friend of Rosewell? We are looking forward to your friendship!

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ROSEWELL IS A HOUSE OF LEARNING - PAGE 2
- ROSEWELL CAN'T HAVE TOO MANY FRIENDS! - PAGE 2
- DR. KLEE INAUGURATES THE ROSEWELL SCHOLAR PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES - PAGE 3
- "WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS" - PAGE 4
- HISTORY... WHY IT MATTERS - PAGE 5
- THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS - PAGE 6
- GHOSTS AND GOV. PAGE RAISE FUNDS FOR ROSEWELL - PAGE 7
- DISCOVER ROSEWELL IN 2017 - UPCOMING EVENTS - PAGE 8



## Rosewell Can't Have too Many Friends!

By Larry Henry  
President and CEO

Rosewell's board of directors has revamped our longstanding constituent program with a name change and a more informal and inclusive character. Introducing Rosewell's FRIENDS.

With their gifts of money and time, our Friends will broaden the support for: Rosewell's increasingly energetic programming; out-of-classroom learning experiences for students; free public lectures that will deepen knowledge of Virginia's history; and will provide for the safekeeping of the ruins. That's what Friends do!

And Rosewell will make being a Friend, well, friendlier. Our Friends can visit for free any day we are open. You won't need a membership card. Just announce that you are a Friend. You'll get a warm welcome and a hearty thank-you for your support. And bring your friends because your friends are our friends. (There are a few annual special events that will require an admission fee, but Friends get advance registration for them.)

Give us your email address and we will easily and economically be able to keep you up to date on all of the news and events happening at Rosewell, including periodic FRIEND IN NEED bulletins to alert you to volunteer opportunities. Would you like to accompany a group of 4th graders visiting the ruins, or do some gardening, or help plan a special event, or take on an office task? Do you have a special talent like familiarity with data management or handyman carpentry? We have volunteers doing many of these tasks now, but with more we could do more. Join us.

Of course, we still value the dedicated members who have supported Rosewell over the years, but can we call you Friends now? Old Friend or new, we appreciate your Friendship. Your support sustains Rosewell. Thanks for being a Friend!

Become a new Friend or renew your Friendship by filling out and returning the form you receive in the mail, or by going to [www.rosewell.org](http://www.rosewell.org)



## Rosewell is A HOUSE OF LEARNING

- Estimate the number of bricks that went into building Rosewell.
- Using a trundle wheel, calculate the perimeter measurements of the building.
- Why do the bricks on the edge of the building look different from the bricks in the middle of the building?
- Why were fireplaces in the closets?
- Figure out the perimeter of the icehouse by how many people can fit around it holding hands.
- Sketch a picture of the house as it was when it was newly constructed.
- Reflect on the significance of what you learned during the archeological dig.
- Why are dissolved oxygen levels important to a waterway?
- Measure in units, the turbidity and salinity levels of the water.

Conducting activities and investigations to answer these and other questions kept 200 sixth grade students from Peasley Middle School in Gloucester, Virginia engaged during their five-hour field trip to the Middle Peninsula State Park and the Rosewell Plantation Ruins. The trip was designed to provide Project Based Learning (PBL) opportunities in a number of disciplines. The program set up a total of five learning stations at both the State Park and Rosewell. These stations provided hands-on learning and presentations from experts in archeology, architecture, ecological and water systems, Native Americans, and 18<sup>th</sup> century Colonial history.

Forty students at a time rotated through the different stations, which were: the Archaeology and Native American station, conducted by Thane Harpole and archeologists from the Fairfield Foundation; the Rosewell Plantation Ruins, presented by architectural historian Jeff Klee and Rosewell Foundation staff; the Math Walk supervised by Peasley Middle School teachers; the ecological science, water testing, and oyster station conducted by Park Ranger Katie Shepard, and the composition exercise in which students had to write and submit their thoughts about the environment, which will be developed into a PBL plan. Student writings are also going to be developed into history tweets for research and reference.

The success of this partnership with the schools has provided the impetus for continued development of a multi-dimensional learning model with Rosewell and the under-utilized Middle Peninsula State Park. The Peasley field trip demonstrated that by working in tandem, hundreds of students and/or visitors can be afforded vast hands-on learning opportunities and more memorable experiences.



## **Dr. Jeffrey Klee is the Inaugural Speaker for The Rosewell Scholar Public Lecture Series**



The Rosewell Scholar Public Lecture Series will launch on Sunday April 23, 2017 with Dr. Jeffrey Klee as the inaugural speaker. Dr. Klee will explore **What Rosewell Means** at the free and open-to-the-public lecture from 3:00-4:00 pm at the Abingdon Epis-

copal Church Parish House located at 4645 George Washington Memorial Highway (Route 17), White Marsh, VA 23183. The program follows the quarterly membership meeting of the Gloucester Historical Society.

The lecture series is part of Rosewell's mission to educate the public about the ruins and their historical context. Dr. Klee will address the evolution of Rosewell's meaning from an exceptionally designed gentry mansion, to an icon of early American architectural design, to a memorial of Gloucester County's former preeminence on the world stage as a wealthy center of tobacco production. It will set the stage for how Rosewell can be used to tell other stories.

Dr. Klee is the Shirley and Richard Roberts Architectural Historian for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He is a member of Rosewell's Advisory Board and has served as president of the Rosewell board of directors. He is a graduate of Yale University and the University of Delaware.

The Rosewell Scholar Public Lecture Series is part of our on-going mission to engage and inspire the public with *America's Magnificent Ruin*. The lectures will always be delivered by a scholar and open to the public free of charge. Although the Lecture Series is not a fundraising event, guests will have the opportunity to become a *Friend of Rosewell* as a way of supporting the preservation, stabilization, and educational mission of The Rosewell Foundation.



## **New Season Continued from Page 1**

into the rich diversity of the Rosewell community with the inclusion of interpretive stories focused on all who lived and worked at the house once described as the *best in Virginia*.

Rosewell President and Chief Executive Officer Operations Officer Larry Henry pointed out that broadening the Rosewell story provides a greater depth of understanding of not only Virginia history but also the story of America. "While the Rosewell Ruins and the Page Family will continue to be core elements of the historical narrative told at Rosewell, visitors can also look forward to the ever-expanding story of the Rosewell community. Recent scholarship has broadened Rosewell's historical context to include elements of 17<sup>th</sup> century tobacco-based, slave dependent economy in the Tidewater region. This research continues through the 18<sup>th</sup> century and right up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century decline of the agricultural economy in the region," Henry noted.

Rosewell is also preparing for the installation of three more interpretive signs expected to be placed at the site of the ruins during the year. The first three signs were set in place at the opening of the 2016 season: included on the newest signs will be information on the 18<sup>th</sup> century Rosewell ice house. The impressive remains of the ice house, described as one of the finest examples of such in the entire Tidewater region, can be seen during a tour of the ruins. A total of nine signs will eventually be placed, designed to enhance the historic understanding and significance of the Ruins.



# We Love Our Volunteers!



**Volunteers in attendance at the Appreciation Event included: (back row) Henry Pait, Chris Doyel, Anne Page, Tish Grant. (middle row) Will Grant, Phyllis Eborn, Penny Doyel, Philip Page, Ray Messina, (front row) Mac Eborn, Sandy Pait, and Merrily Messina**

## Signs of Change ...



The latest one is Rosewell's new logo. For decades the image of a single iconic chimney has represented The Rosewell Foundation. The new logo gives a fuller, more vibrant image of Rosewell; reflective of the new vitality in the on-going efforts to preserve, protect, and present the ruins.

Rosewell held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Gala at the home of Will and Tish Grant last month to celebrate a year in which volunteers and docents contributed over 2000 hours of service.

Rosewell depends on volunteers and docents to not only operate the Visitors Center, conduct tours at the ruins, and organize special events, but the Foundation is also run by an all-volunteer Board of Directors.

Operations Officer and volunteer coordinator Katrina White Brown pointed out that "this is the lifeblood of the Foundation. Without our volunteers it would be extremely difficult to continue unlocking the trove of historical treasures at Rosewell."

Volunteers and docents donate their time, money, experience, and skills to ensure that the ruins of what was once "the best house in Virginia" are preserved for the ages.

The event brought together the volunteers for an afternoon of fellowship and fun, hosted at the Grant's riverfront home. Brown told the volunteers "we could never pay you for all you do, but we wanted you to know how much we appreciate and love you for your generosity on behalf of "America's magnificent ruin."

## Our Volunteers

### Board of Directors

Rev. Frederick Carter, Mary Claycomb, Tazewell Fitzgerald, M. Tyson Gilpin Jr., Tish Grant, Larry Henry, Clayton James, Ed Marks, Ray Messina, Dr. David Muron, Marilyn Muron, Rosewell Page III, Philip Page, Valerie Page, Gerlinde Stevens, Philip Strother, Bill Weaver, Mark Wenger.

### Volunteer Staff

John Aldrich, Judy Wiseman

### Docents and Other Volunteers

Chris Doyel, Mac Eborn, Earl Evans, Tish Grant, Will Grant, Sandra Holsten, Clayton James, Merrily Messina, Dr. David Muron, Marilyn Muron, Anne Page, Philip Page, Sandy Pait, Susan Smith, Linda Wenger, Mark Wenger.



**Rosewell Rocks!** Over 200 students from Peasley Elementary School in Gloucester County spent hours digging into the past and connecting it to their present. See *Rosewell IS A House of Learning* on page 2.

# New Eyes on Old History

*By Katrina White Brown, Operations Officer*

**We** in the Chesapeake region have hit the proverbial jackpot. We have the opportunity to take not one, but two amazing trips of a lifetime. We can travel millions of miles through time and space on our trips, yet they will cost practically nothing.

Our trips can take us to the coastline of West Africa where we can knock on the “door of no return.” We can travel to a tiny wooden church on the east end of Richmond Virginia and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the patriots who preferred to die rather than relinquish liberty. We can jump on a Mississippi-bound bus with other freedom riders who were intent on claiming civil and human rights for the oppressed, and we can gather the memories of those who left their lives the battlefields fighting for the liberty promised by the new American revolution against old English thoughts, ideas, and actions.

We are just down the road and around the corner from two new museums: The National Museum of African American Culture (NMAAC) in Washington DC, which opened in September 2016, and the Museum of the American Revolution in Yorktown, VA, which opened March 2017. These facilities give us the power to look at old history with new eyes.

In days gone by, history’s relevance was hoisted onto sterile and uninspired displays by museum professionals who demanded that we “do not touch” and who held the expectation that stagnant exhibits would command a requisite awe and reverence from the privileged few who had access. Little to no consideration was given: to whether or not the visitor could relate to the exhibit; whether or not they could see themselves in the history; or whether or not the visitor even cared about the history. Museums basically fulfilled their role by letting the visitor simply see what life was like way back when.

But with new eyes comes new power. New eyes can see ways to bust wide open the traditional museum paradigms. New eyes can see how to enliven hundreds of years of stale facts and dates and how to replace oxygen-deprived display cases with fresh interactive air. New eyes have the power to transform, translate, and transfigure items that were formally only collected and catalogued, into the living, breathing soul of human existence - this is the reason history matters.

As such, the urgent mandate for modern museums is this: provide new eyes for the public to see how they can be

change agents in the development of society. Education is critical in fulfilling this mandate. One observer noted that “education that is devoid of the cultures of the people in society is empty and incomplete ... museums enrich the educational process by exposing us to our history; that assists present and future generations in understanding and interacting with history; and in a way that develops pride and appreciation in the achievements of their fore bearers.”

Oprah Winfrey captured the essence of why museums must provide new eyes on old history. In describing why she donated \$21 million to fund the NMAAC, she noted that “what museums do is allow us to see the thread. They allow

us to walk through and experience how it’s all connected. We can understand what happened on the slave ships and in the slave cabins. We feel the pain of how you’re working in the fields and how when you come back your family is gone. And how when that happens to you over and over again, there is a sense of primal abandonment. Its hard to get people to see and feel that. That’s what museums do - they thread the needle,” they connect life.

The Museum of the American Revolution at Yorktown, VA will not only thread the needle, it will help visitors create the materials to do it. In a Virginia Gazette published interview with The Jame-

stown-Yorktown Foundation’s senior director of museum operations, Peter Armstrong described an experience in which visitors will be able to “go through the museum, whether guided by an app or by curiosity, and find interactive and touchscreen exhibits, silhouettes, imposing statues of Patrick Henry and George Washington, as well as hologram-like figures depicting real Revolutionary War soldiers.” The museum has a Continental Army encampment and a Revolution-era farm; Armstrong says “you’re going to feel like you’ve walked into a Revolutionary War encampment, like when the war came to Yorktown and they set up in your side field, at your farm. You’re going to feel like, ‘wow, the Continental Army just plopped down right here.”

It is the eye-popping wow experiences that museums must provide in order for the public to see old history with new eyes. But museums are not just the eyes of our historical consciousness. Museum are also the ears that hear, and hands and feet that move us towards a tomorrow that is better than our yesterday.

Take the amazing, yet convenient trips of a lifetime at these two museums. You’ll see history in a whole new way.





# Our 2016 Supporters

## Thank You for Helping Make History Live!

### Because of you ...

- Rosewell hosted more than 2000 guests and visitors at the Exhibit Center and the Ruins
- Hundreds of students from: Gloucester County and other regional schools; The College of William and Mary; Rappa-

Ana Heath Light  
 Adrienne Ryder-Cook Joseph  
 Alastair S. Macdonald  
 Anita S. Bolger  
 Ann A. Fary  
 Ann B. Hutchinson  
 Ann Edwards Phillips  
 Anne M. Clagett  
 Anne Page  
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 Archaeological Society, MP Chapter  
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 Joseph P. Spang  
 Joseph L. Spruill  
 Judy Wiseman  
 Judith Page Goggin

hannock Community College; summer History Camps; and other institutions of learning journeyed through four centuries of history at Rosewell

- Stabilization and preservation efforts, along with archeological discoveries are continuing
- Additional in-depth interpretive signs are being installed at the site of the Ruins
- Rosewell continues to be the only Gloucester County museum open 6 days a week, providing programs and services that protect, preserve, and educate for the enrichment of present and future generations ... and much, much more.

### Thank You So Much!

Julia A. King  
 Julie W. Fisher  
 June M. James  
 Katharine L. Brown  
 Kathryn R. Loveland  
 Kathy Healy  
 Katrina W. Brown  
 Kearfott M. Stone  
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 William T. Andersen  
 York River Inn B&B

# Ghosts and Governor Page Raise Funds for Rosewell

The reputed “Ghosts of Rosewell”, along with Governor John Page, helped Rosewell’s two main special events raise almost \$10,000 last year in support of the operations, preservation, and educational initiatives at the Rosewell Plantation Ruins. The Annual BBQ and Wine tasting collected nearly \$6500, while the expanded Ghost Tours raised almost \$3000.

With the theme of *Gloucester Through the Ages*, four centuries of history were represented at the BBQ: food was supplied by Scoot’s BBQ; live music was provided by Good Shot Judy; and the afternoon highlight came when former Governor John Page returned home to his beloved Rosewell. Gov. Page was portrayed by the talented and accomplished actor Ron Carnegie, who has been bringing history to life for over 20 years by character portrayals of some of history’s most prolific leaders. He spoke eloquently about the concerns that 18th century government leaders had for holding elections in an unstable political environment.

Event attendees also heard “Stories Told Under the African Skies” delivered by Griot Bridgette Houston. Houston related the importance of storytelling in the African and African American communities. She used her unique ability to weave life, culture, joy, sorrow, and triumph into the stories that she told about the experiences in the lives of the enslaved in 18th century Virginia.

## Ghosts Among Us

The stories that fuel the haunted legends of Rosewell were colorfully retold during the 2016 Ghost Tours. The Tours were conducted on two consecutive weekends in October 2016 and Halloween night - most nights were sold out as Clayton James and Sandy Pait recounted the eerie stories that have chilled-to-the-bone thousands of guests and visitors to Rosewell.

The fact that John Page’s last child, Lucy Burwell Page Saunders, wrote a true ghost tale for youth” entitled *Leonora and the Ghost*, gives credibility to the notion of “spirits” being alive and well at Rosewell.

This year the 2017 BBQ will include an oyster roast, and wine tasting selections from several different Virginia wineries.



Ron Carnegie  
portrayed Gov. John Page



Griot Bridgette Houston



Ghost story teller  
Clayton James



Exhibits and displays were provided by the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA), The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), the Gloucester Historical Society, archeology by the Fairfield Foundation, and presentations by The T.C. Walker and Woodville Rosenwald School Foundation.



Good Shot Judy provided classic jazz, blues, swing music, and rock and roll

## The Rosewell Newsletter

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or to comment on  
anything in this  
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## Contact Us

*Please give us your email address*  
Because of the cost of postage, contacting you via email helps to make the most of your contributions towards preserving the Rosewell Ruins.

Send your email address to:  
[foundation@rosewell.org](mailto:foundation@rosewell.org)  
Subject: Contact information

**Visitor Center Hours**  
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 4:00pm  
Sunday 1:00 - 4:00pm  
Closed Mondays

**Navigation address (GPS)**  
5113 Old Rosewell Lane  
Gloucester, VA 23061

**Mailing Address**  
P.O. Box 1456  
Gloucester, VA 23061  
(804) 693-2585

Visit us on the internet at:  
[www.rosewell.org](http://www.rosewell.org)  
and  
[www.facebook.com/rosewell](https://www.facebook.com/rosewell)  
E-mail us at:  
[foundation@rosewell.org](mailto:foundation@rosewell.org)



## Discover Rosewell



## in 2017

### Upcoming Events at The Rosewell Plantation Ruins

**Saturday April 1st - Season Opens!**  
**Open House 10:00am - 4:00pm**

*Free Admission to see the ruins  
of the 18th century home once  
called "The Best House in Virginia"*

**Sunday April 23rd**  
**The Rosewell Scholar**  
**Public Lecture Series**

**Abingdon Episcopal Church Parish House**  
**4645 Geo. Washington Hwy**  
**White Marsh, VA 23183**  
**3:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

**Featured Speaker: Dr. Jeffrey Klee**  
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Architectural Historian  
*Dr. Klee will be addressing the evolution of  
Rosewell's meaning from the exceptionally  
designed 18th century gentry mansion, to the  
memorial of Gloucester County's presence on the world stage as  
a wealthy center of tobacco production*

**Thursday May 18th**  
**Rosewell Hosts the Chamber of  
Commerce's Business After Hours**  
**5:30 to 7:00 pm at the Ruins**

**Friday October 20th, 27th and  
Saturday October 21st, 28th**  
**The Rosewell Ghost Tours**

**Sunday October 15th**  
**The Annual Rosewell BBQ,**  
**Winetasting, and Oyster Roast**  
*Features: all you can eat BBQ and Oysters;  
live music; storytelling, exhibits and displays,  
and guided tours of the ruins*