



Monthly Mansion Minute

News from the Morris-Jumel Mansion



What's New at the Mansion



Restoration Report



Don't Miss it!



Calendar



Spotlight

Mansion Minute

Letter from the Executive Director

Hello all,

Happy Holidays everyone! 'Tis the season to be very busy, as we are here at Morris-Jumel Mansion. There is so much happening for our community and supporters! For those in the New York area, we hope the Mansion Minute will help you decide what you might want to attend. We have two special events happening this holiday season, a Paranormal Fundraiser and a new family program: Holidays by Candlelight, which premiered on November 30. Both this immersive candlelight family-friendly program, which evokes MJM in 1843, and the Paranormal Fundraiser are detailed in this issue. We hope that you will join in the fun.

We are in the midst of our Annual Appeal & Membership Drive, for which we seek your support. This fundraising effort is especially important as we begin the Mansion's long-awaited exterior restoration in earnest next year. This will inevitably reduce our earned income by limiting visitors and events. While the restoration will be challenging to get through, it will be equally rewarding when completed.

On a more somber note is the sudden passing of long-time staff member Karen Compton. Her work and life are profiled in this issue.

In staffing news, we are going to miss Presley Rodrigues, MJM's extraordinary Administrative Coordinator, who moves on in her museum career to the Museum of Art at Hofstra University. An exciting development is that Charlie Owens, already a part of the Visitor Services team, will step up and take on this key part-time position.

Good cheer and best wishes to you for the coming new year.

Yours,
Catherine Hughes



What's New at the Mansion Holidays by Candlelight

The popular Candlelight program has been revamped and is now a family-friendly offering focusing on the holiday season, targeting ages 4-11. Still an after-dark program that allows participants to experience the Mansion at its dark and moody best, the evening now features the opportunity to play a hands-on role in the festivities.

Imagine it's 1843 and Madame Jumel has asked that the Mansion be decorated in the new Victorian style, inspired by the publication of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. She wants all her guests to feel welcome, so in that spirit Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa are all part of the festivities. Guests will be able to contribute to the decorations throughout the Mansion, and then together celebrate with a country dance in the Octagon Room and cider in the kitchen.





Click here to watch the December Virtual Parlor Chat about the restoration.

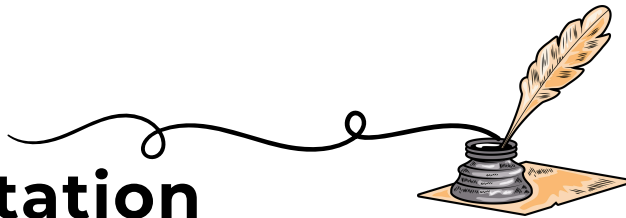


Click here to watch the April Virtual Parlor Chat about the restoration.

Contract submitted for Registration

The construction contract with Sienia Construction for the first phase of the Morris-Jumel Mansion exterior restoration and accessibility project has been submitted to the City for registration. Once the contract is registered with the Comptroller's Office, construction will begin. This process can take several months, during which time we will continue to move the project forward by making plans for collections care, advocating with community and elected officials to continue supporting the project, and spreading the word about this exciting new phase in the museum's history.

Education Station



December is shaping up to be an exciting month for students at Morris-Jumel Mansion, as our school programs are nearly fully booked! We are thrilled to welcome students of all ages from throughout the City's boroughs and to bring history to life for young learners. Our dedicated educators have been working hard to make MJM's programs engaging and impactful, while also enjoying additional professional enrichment through our education department's book club. This month, educators are diving into *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums*, a thought-provoking read that's sparking lively discussions. Feel free to ask any of our educators about what they're learning—we love sharing our passion for history and education.

Calendar



ConEd Family and Community Day

Festive Pomander Ornament Craft

Saturday, December 14th

1:00-3:00PM, FREE (No Registration Needed)



A Paranormal Fundraiser

Come have some fun and support the Morris-Jumel Mansion!

Saturday, December 14th

6:00-9:00 PM, \$125-150, [Purchase Tickets HERE](#)



Virtual Parlor Chat

History of the Holiday Season

Wednesday, December 18th

7:00-8:00 PM, [FREE Registration HERE](#)

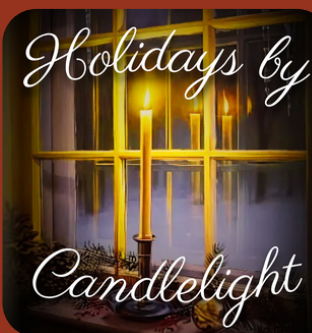


A Christmas Carol as Told by One Actor

Thursday, December 19th

7:00-8:00 PM

\$30 per person, [Purchase Tickets HERE](#)



Holidays by Candlelight

Geared toward ages 4-12

December 7th 6:00-7:30 PM

December 21st 6:00-7:30 PM

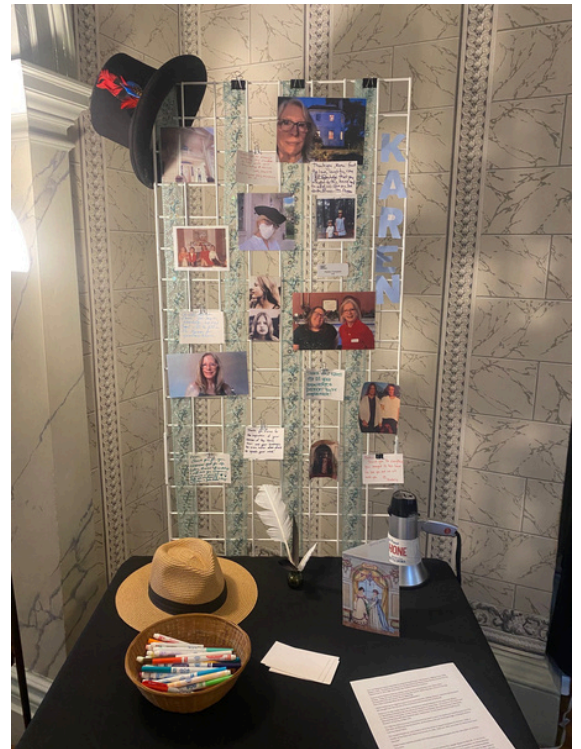
\$30 Per Child, Parents/Guardians \$15,
[Purchase Tickets HERE](#)

In Memoriam: MJM staff member Karen Compton

MJM staff, Board and friends were saddened by the sudden passing of staff member Karen Compton in mid-November. A native New Yorker who grew up on the Upper West Side, Karen worked at the Morris-Jumel Mansion for five years, beginning as a volunteer and moving to staff member in 2022. Karen was most often welcoming guests on Sundays along with colleague Kimberly Eicker.

A rigorous researcher whose passion for history was infectious, Karen relished learning the many histories that are part of the Morris-Jumel Mansion. She was also a dedicated facilitator for Paranormal Investigations and enjoyed sharing stories of her own experiences with otherworldly happenings in the house.

A memorial was held for Karen on



Temporary exhibition for Memorial Service for Karen Compton, Dec 4, 2024



KIMBERLEY EICKER AND KAREN COMPTON AT MJM'S 2023 HOLIDAY PARTY.

November 23 at the Mansion. Staff, volunteers and board members came together to share stories and honor Karen's memory. A plaque in her honor will sit on the gift shop mantel.

She is survived by a daughter, grandsons, and two brothers.

Spotlight on MJM Emergency Procedures



Fire has long been a part of NYC history, including during the recent drought, but we are fortunate that MJM did not add a “fire of 2024” to our own history. On November 19th around 2:30 Public Programs and Visitor Services Manager Danielle Gaita noticed the distinct smell of fire in the Mansion. While all was well there and in the Park, she could see smoke billowing just to the south. Danielle and Administrative Assistant Presley Rodriguez were quick to register the threat to the Mansion, noting helicopters hovering, and numerous sirens wailing. They described it as feeling like a war zone.

Executive Director Catherine Hughes was exiting a conference near Wall Street when Presley called to alert her to the situation. Catherine asked that they use the hose on the back of the Mansion to spray down the east side of the property, to mitigate against potential flying embers. Danielle and Presley jumped into action to keep the Mansion safe while firefighters extinguished the nearby blaze.

The next day a reporter from Bloomberg News arrived at the Mansion inquiring about the effects of the fire on such an important historic building. The article was published online the following day.

(Bloomberg) -- ...As the flames crept closer, the staff of the Morris-Jumel Mansion, just off Harlem River Drive in Washington Heights, began to get worried. The historic estate-turned-museum is the oldest surviving home in Manhattan, built in 1765, and is made of wood.

Someone ran to a shed at the rear of the property to find the hose that had been stashed away for the winter. With the smell of smoke heavy in the air, workers sprayed the outside wall closest to the park where the fire was spreading, hoping a good soaking would prevent stray embers from setting the home ablaze.

The strategy worked. Firefighters eventually got the flames under control, and the home survived unscathed. “They were heroes,” Catherine Hughes, the museum’s executive director, said of the workers who sprung into action.

The threat of fire was a frightening reminder of the vulnerability of historic wooden buildings and the need for constant vigilance. The staff of MJM, and all of NYC, were grateful for the rain that ended the dangerous drought conditions, while remaining aware of our responsibility for the preservation of this unique structure.

A Paranormal Fundraiser

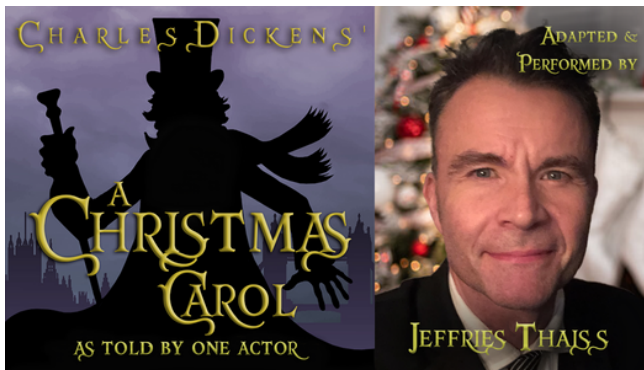
Saturday, December 14, 2024 6:00-9:00 PM

Ever wondered what goes on during MJM's always sold out Paranormal Investigations at the Mansion? Find out why the Mansion is considered one of the most famous haunted houses of NYC (as featured in the Bowery Boys podcasts) during this special event on December 14 when MJM opens the Mansion for three evening hours. It's a Paranormal Open House! Guests at this "spirited" event will have unique access to explore and investigate the period rooms, nooks and crannies for paranormal activity using electromagnetic detectors, dousing rods, and other equipment. Is it Madame Jumel? Aaron Burr? Hessian soldiers? Ask the spirits questions! Have your Tarot Cards read! You will also enjoy historically-inspired snacks and beverages as you have a great evening while supporting MJM. Buy your tickets for MJM's Paranormal Fundraiser [HERE](#).

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* as Told by One Actor

Actor Jeffries Thaiss performs his popular adaptation of Dickens' tale of greed and redemption in one hour at the Morris-Jumel Mansion!

Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 7:00 PM



Limited tickets
available [HERE](#).

"It was an absolute delight"
Broadway World

Mansion Minute

Thank you to our members and new donors

Susan Arnot Heaney
Joachim Auer
Brooke Baldwin
Priscilla Bassett
Wayne Benjamin
Sean Benum
Marion Bochner
Stuart Braman
Robert Burke
Antonio Burr
Jane Campbell
Glenorchy Campbell
Alexander Campos
Steven Cappel &
Katherine Fritts
Jon Carver
Leslie Casey
Sara Chase
Katherine Chen
Alan Cohen
Karen Compton
Fred Cookinham
Emma Craven-Matthews
Fiona Davis
Rose Deler
Vincent DeLuca
Stephen Paul DeVillo
Isabel Dische
John Doherty
Francis Dubois
Suzanne Ducat
Tessa Dunning
Annette Duran
Brad Eckensberger
Sehra Eusufzai
Erik Fiks
Ruth Fischbach

Gary + Karen Fowlie
Matthew Kester
Daphne + David
Geanacopoulos
Paul Glassman
Mitchell Glenn
Robert Gregg
George Daniel Greenia
Zackary Goncz
Marta Gutman
Jeffrey C. Hahn
Douglas Hartman +
Michael Villani
John Harvey
Susan Hesse
Elizabeth Hipp
Dana Hockenbury
Lucille Horkan
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Zead Ramadan
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Steve Simon
Matthew Spady
Suzanne Smeaton +
Kenneth Gillespie
Kevin Stayton
Patrice Tanaka
Karen Tarjan
Jerry Thomas
Maria Thompson
Deborah Trupin
Michael Unthank
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Gregory Washington
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Glenn Weiss
Kevin White
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Jason Wilcox
Suzanne Wray
Elizabeth Yockey

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Email info@morrisjumel.org

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