

A photograph of the Morris-Jumel Mansion, a large white neoclassical building with a portico supported by four columns and a balcony on the second floor.

# Monthly Mansion Minute

News from the Morris-Jumel Mansion



What's New at  
the Mansion



Restoration  
Report



New MJM  
Board  
President



Calendar



Spotlight

# Mansion Minute

## Letter from the Executive Director

Hello all,

Happy New Year wishes to you and yours! Ringing in 2025 brings with it a milestone -- the Mansion's 260th anniversary. It is elder to the country itself, which will celebrate 250 years in 2026. We have plans in the works to commemorate the occasion with a special exhibition, events, and programs that will share 260 years of stories from the Morris-Jumel Mansion, spotlighting the historic events and individuals that have been hosted, witnessed, and influenced by the Mansion.

MJM has a new President of the Board of Trustees, and I am looking forward to working with Glenorchy (Glen) Campbell on all aspects of the organization. You can read more from Glen in this issue. I also wish to thank Lisa Koenigsberg for her many years of service as President of the Board of Trustees. It is not an easy job, and Lisa always gave her full focus to the work. She has brought the organization forward through many challenges, and we now look forward to a new era marked by the fulfillment of the long-awaited exterior restoration project. Lisa will continue to serve on the board.

This year will bring many changes and commemorations to Morris-Jumel Mansion. We invite New York area friends to come visit Andrea Arroyo's exhibition, *Faces & Facades*. It is a really strong show of Andrea's artistic vision and connection to people and architecture of the Washington Heights community. On January 18, Andrea will be hosting an open house from 3-4:30 - a great opportunity to see it!

Yours,  
Catherine Hughes



## What's New at the Mansion A chamber pot in Burr's bedroom

At the request of curious school groups, a chamber pot has been installed in the Aaron Burr bedroom, beneath its four-poster bed frame. Manager of School & Community Programs, Caroline Siavichay, inquired if we could satisfy the common question of young students - where would people go to the bathroom in 1800? All parts of history can be fascinating, and personal hygiene and the toiletry habits of people who came before us are definitely up in the top ten about which students have questions. It is also good practice to bring out stored objects from our collection storage to refresh displays and enrich all visitors' interpretation of MJM.





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 Registration process in motion

The exterior restoration project continues to advance with the Historic House Trust (HHT) registering Sienia Construction's contract with various city agencies in November 2024. This process generally takes nine months, which includes approval by NYC Parks Department and final registration by the NYC Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Once the registration is complete in summer 2025, construction can begin. MJM is happy to have the support of NYC Council Member Gale Brewer, who is well experienced in the complex process and has offered to advocate on MJM's behalf to expedite as much as possible.

Additionally, HHT is working to ensure that Phase 2 (focusing on ADA accessibility) moves along seamlessly once Phase 1 is complete by beginning the process of awarding a design contract. MJM is providing critical support by advocating for additional funding for Phase 2. Meanwhile, HHT and MJM are assessing how to provide access to some areas during the critical roof replacement, which will require several months closure of the Mansion for safety reasons.

## Welcome to the new President of the MJM Board of Trustees: Glenorchy Campbell

At the December meeting of the Board of Trustees, Glen Campbell was voted unanimously to the position of President of the Board of Trustees. Glen has a heartfelt appreciation for the Mansion's historical and cultural significance and looks forward to working with the MJM's Executive Director, staff, and Board with particular interest in strengthening ties with neighborhood residents through inclusive and educational programming and community initiatives.



With its links to George Washington, Eliza Jumel, and Aaron Burr, Glen recognizes that celebrating the Mansion's noteworthy legacy in American and NYC history throughout its 260th Anniversary year offers opportunities for meaningful and fun events and he anticipates enthusiastically an exciting year ahead. Please visit the [Staff & Board website page](#) to see all of the Board of Trustees members and officers.

# Calendar



## **ConEd Family and Community Day**

*Make Your Own Victorian Silhouette*

Saturday, January 11th

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



## **Virtual Parlor Chat**

*The mysterious story of Louis LePrince*

Wednesday, January 15th

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



## **Andrea Arroyo's New Years Toast & Open House**

Saturday, January 18th

3:00-4:30 PM

Free - Check-In Upon Arrival



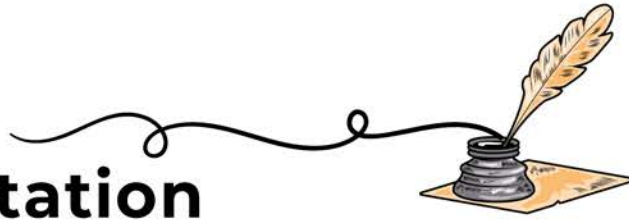
## **Paranormal: Special Edition**

*With Medium Mariah Kunau*

January 23 7:00-9:00 PM

[Sold Out, Join Waitlist HERE](#)

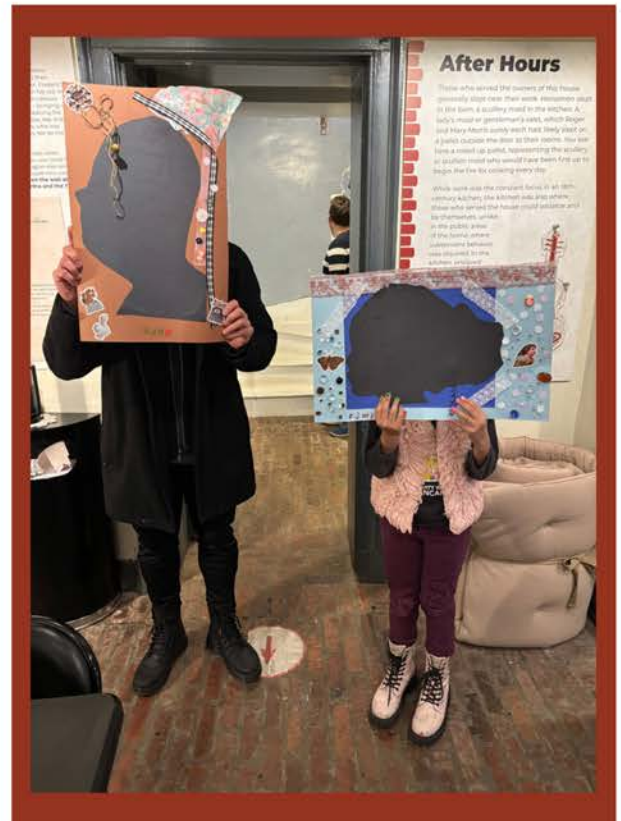
## Education Station



The Education Department is happy to share that January is shaping up to be an incredibly busy month at Morris-Jumel Mansion. Nearly every available day is booked with engaging programs for schools and community groups, showcasing our commitment to making history come alive for learners of all ages.

We were also excited to invite visitors to our Family and Community Day this past Saturday, January 11th. Participants discovered the timeless art of silhouettes. Popular during Victorian times, silhouettes were an affordable way to capture a person's likeness before the advent of common-use photography. Eliza Jumel commissioned silhouettes be made of her and her second husband, Aaron Burr. Additionally, in the MJM collection there is a silhouette on lithograph portrait of Madame Jumel in Saratoga, NY, purportedly by Auguste Edouart, one of the most important silhouette artists of the nineteenth century.

Visitors had the chance to trace and cut their own silhouette keepsakes—a fun and creative way to connect with history. To the right is a photograph of a young participants and her father who created their silhouettes together.



*Watch for future Family and Community Days in our website calendar.*

## Support and Spirits were Raised



Morris-Jumel Mansion's Paranormal Fundraiser took place on the night of December 14th, adding new meaning to "spirit of the season" while raising money to support MJM's operating budget. This funding is key to enabling MJM to carry out its low cost and free programming throughout the year.

The date of December 14th was chosen because that is the day in 1799 that George Washington died at age 67, and the young country fell into a deep mourning. His sudden death after a brief illness had an electrifying impact, binding the republic in shock and grief. Many people felt an unusual connection with Washington, and his death created a new market for mourning souvenirs such as memorial paintings, china, handkerchiefs, needlework, medals, and jewelry.



During the Paranormal Fundraiser in honor of Washington's death, two objects from the Morris-Jumel collection were brought out and displayed: a large textile by an unknown artist depicting the death of George Washington (left); and in the small frame, a purported wood chip from George Washington's casket.

Attendees enjoyed paranormal investigations with dousing rods and electronic sensors, which often respond in certain areas of the period rooms, indicating potential otherworldly presences. At right, a group used dousing rods to ask questions of those who might still inhabit Eliza Jumel's bedroom. Guests also enjoyed wonderful food prepared by Spoonbread Catering and "Madame Zoltara," MJM's very own Caroline Siviachay, offered insightful Tarot Card readings in the Octagon Room.



# MJM receives NYC Green Fund grant

City Parks Foundation has announced that Morris-Jumel Mansion is among 22 new grantees receiving two-year funding through the NYC Green Fund's 2024 Treetops program. This grant program is intended to support an equitable and resilient network of parks and open spaces to benefit the well-being of all New Yorkers. The Treetops grants will provide funding for MJM's outdoor arts and cultural programming over two years.



## Support from our local State Representative



At left,, New York State Assemblyman Manny De Los Santos presented a check on December 14, 2024 for \$10,000 to support programming at the Morris-Jumel Mansion. From L-R are Board of Trustees member Michael Unthank, Assemblyman De Los Santos, Executive Director Catherine Hughes, and President of the Board of Trustees, Glen Campbell.

# Mansion Minute

**Thank you to our members and donors, with  
special thanks to new supporters**

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Have a question? Want to know more?  
Email [info@morrisjumel.org](mailto:info@morrisjumel.org)

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