

Petite Plaisance Conservation Fund Newsletter

September 2016

Returning to the Source At summer's end, the sign comes off the front gate and Petite Plaisance goes into hibernation for the long Maine winter. But the work of the museum continues. The director fields requests for information from scholars, journalists, and readers and participates in exhibits and colloquiums around the world. Last fall Petite Plaisance returned to the sites of Marguerite Yourcenar's childhood: Saint-Jans-Cappel, where the author spent summers at the Château du Mont-Noir, and Lille, the de Crayencour family's winter home on the rue Marais. The occasion of this visit was a two-day symposium, held November 6 and 7, 2015, to inaugurate the new Bernier/Yourcenar Archive in Lille. Joan Howard, director of Petite Plaisance, and Jayne Persson, president of the Petite Plaisance Conservation Fund, attended the event as guests of the French government and with generous assistance from the Florence Gould Foundation. Joan gave a talk entitled "Petite Plaisance: La Maison de l'écrivain comme lieu d'archives yourcenariennes." Also present for this gathering were PPCF board members Sue Lonoff

de Cuevas, who spoke on Yourcenar's drawings, and PPCF treasurer Jane Gilkes Straßgütl.



The Château du Mont-Noir, circa 1912

© *Petite Plaisance Trust*



Thanks for helping us get things done!

Projects

Painting and scraping out front did not deter a family of robins from building a nest in Petite Plaisance's kiwi vine pergola, as Phase I of the French Heritage Society matching grant project neared completion in the spring. Donations large and small to the PPCF also allowed us to replace a compromised rear section of the roof and build new post-and-rail fencing on the east and west borders of the wood garden. Also crossed off our to-do list were shoring up the leaky lily pond and replacing the old wooden compost bin--before it, too, turned into compost! Composting is an important part of our mission to keep the property organic. Always forward thinking, M^{me} Yourcenar and Miss Frick began composting here in the 1950s.

Petite Plaisance Takes Wing

Air France Magazine features Petite Plaisance in its September 2016 issue. To make a virtual visit of the house, in either English or French, simply click on <http://magazines.airfrance.com/en/air-france-magazine/233-september-2016/#132> (English) or <http://magazines.airfrance.com/fr/air-france-magazine/233-septembre-2016/#132> (French).

President's Message

Acadia National Park celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The park was central to Marguerite Yourcenar's love of Mount Desert Island. She and Miss Frick hiked its trails, had clam and lobster bakes on its shores, went horseback riding on its carriage roads, and watched deer feed at dusk in its meadows. A favorite stop was for tea and popovers at Jordan Pond House. Many a page of the *Memoirs of Hadrian* manuscript was read aloud and polished to perfection at its sturdy wooden tables while the ladies took afternoon tea.

People travel to Petite Plaisance from around the world because they are fascinated by the work of Marguerite Yourcenar and they want to see the place where she wrote the great books of her creative maturity. But visitors often ask where "Madame" liked to spend time on the island, this place that inspired her, so that they might walk in her footsteps. You may find our guests strolling the Wild Gardens of Acadia, swimming in Long Pond, or taking tea on the lawn at Jordan Pond House, just as she did not so long ago.

~ Jayne Persson



Aspiring writer Elise Turner, Sarah Lawrence College class of '20, examines an art book in the "Oriental corner" of the living room library at Petite Plaisance. Elise was accompanied by her grandmother Deirdre English, herself an SLC alum. M^{me} Yourcenar taught part-time at Sarah Lawrence from 1942 until 1953, taking two years off around the publication of *Memoirs of Hadrian*.

No one makes a dollar work harder than we do!
To contribute online, click on <http://petiteplaisanceconservationfund.org/>,
or send a check, payable to the **Petite Plaisance Conservation Fund**, to
P.O. Box 1112
Northeast Harbor, ME 04662

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR 2015 DONORS

HADRIAN, \$2,500–5,000

Rosengarten-Van der Grift Family
Foundation

ZENO OF BRUGES, \$1,750–2,499

Joan Stroud Blaine

SOPHIE DE REVAL, \$1,000–1,749

Penelope P. Harris
Ann & Gilbert Kinney

NATHANAEL, \$500–999

Frank Blair & Caroline Alexander
Florence V. Burden Foundation, *at the
recommendation of Jean & Ordway Burden*
Janneke Seton Neilson
Joan & Paul Van der Grift

ALEXIS, \$200–499

Annie Caubet
Hope Cobb
Claire & Larry Feldman
Emily T. Frick
Elisabeth & Conor Kehoe
Arnaud Lesire
Weston Milliken

MARCELLA ARDEATI, TO \$199

Elly & Schofield Andrews
William Bigelow
Françoise Bonali-Fiquet
Brian & Ford Draper
Richard Estes
Emily & James Fuchs
Ann F. Gilkes
Anne Grandclaudé
Willie Granston
Carol & Richard Habermann
Alfred & Élyane Jones
Arthur Keller
Lydia Fidler Kimball
Lisa Jane Lindblom
Nancy Pyne
Henry A. Raup
John Ryan
Charles P. Schutt, Jr.
Somes Sound Book Club
Lynne Wheat

A very big thank-you as well to our summer visitors for their generosity—merci!

Petite Plaisance also benefited during the 2016 season from the volunteer services of a bilingual young man whose family has summered on the island for many years. Many thanks to Alex Douglas for his careful work coordinating the 17th- and 18th-century volumes in our library with the Bernier inventory.

This issue of the *Petite Plaisance Conservation Fund Newsletter* is dedicated to Ann Fullan Gilkes, longtime neighbor and friend of Petite Plaisance and a Founding Member of The Endowment for Petite Plaisance. Ann Gilkes died at the age of ninety-seven on May 24, 2016.