

# FRIENDS OF Florham

Fall 2008

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## Gala Honors Retiring President Emma Joy Dana

On Saturday, May 17, the Friends of Florham and their guests gathered together at the annual spring gala for a very special and twofold celebration. This “Golden Gala,” chaired by Dawn Dupak, Linda Meister and Suzy Moran, acknowledged the outstanding service and enthusiastic leadership of the founding President Emma Joy Dana and the 50th anniversary of the College at Florham. The Dana family was present in full force, as were honorary chairs Ed and Ruth Hennessy.

The Friends prepared a resolution commending Emma Joy’s service, which was delivered by incoming president Linda Meister. College at Florham Provost Kenneth Greene presented Emma Joy with a crystal Tiffany bowl, and Walter Savage, on behalf of the Friends, gave a picture book of memories that included a

very special personal message from University President J. Michael Adams.

*“The officers and the Board of Trustees of Fairleigh Dickinson University want you to know how much we appreciate the significant restorations and improvements made by the Friends of Florham under your enthusiastic leadership.”*

*(continued on page 3)*



*Emma Joy Dana, front row center, with her family at the Gala.*

## Something to Sing About: 50th Anniversary

The Friends of Florham invite you to a unique Sunday afternoon entertainment, “Something to Sing About: Selections Spanning the Half Centu-

ry,” performed by The Ten, a well-known cappella singing group. The performance will mark the yearlong 50th anniversary celebration of the

College at Florham. Please join us at Lenfell Hall in Hennessy Hall on Sunday, October 26, 3 p.m.

The Ten can also celebrate its significant history, with roots in the 125-voice University Glee Club (UGC) of New York City, which was founded more than 100 years ago to perpetuate the tradition of male glee club singing. Founded in 1979 with three quartets — yes, two members sang in more than one quartet — the current intergenera-

*(continued on page 6)*



*The Ten*



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## President's Letter

I am honored to assume the presidency of Friends of Florham, a position so ably filled for almost 20 years by founding president, Emma Joy Dana. I inherit a board of dedicated and talented people, each of whom has contributed in a significant way to the success of this organization in its mission to preserve the historical legacy of the mansion and grounds.

Our present project is the replacement of the front doors of the mansion, or Hennessy Hall, as it is now known. We hope to complete this project this year, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the University on the Florham campus. The new doors will do much to return the building's façade to its former elegance.

We are also pursuing a project to digitize the family ledgers and papers donated by Edward Burden, a descendant of the Twombly family, in 2004. This bequest, recently archived with funding from the Morris County Heritage Commission and the excellent work of archivist Antonia

Moser, constitutes one of the few extant collections of Vanderbilt household records. Once they are available online, the records will be a valuable resource for University students, as well as for researchers of the Gilded Age.

On October 26, again in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the College at Florham, the Friends will host a concert by The Ten, an outstanding a capella group known for its rendition of songs both past and present. The concert will be held in Lenfell Hall in the tradition of the organ concerts staged by Mrs. Twombly more than 50 years ago.

In closing, I must again thank the many members of the Friends of Florham who help with research, fundraising, membership, public relations and most significantly our gala, from which we derive the funds used to renovate the mansion and its gardens. I look forward to serving you as your president.

— Linda Meister

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## Friends Welcome New President

*After nearly 20 years, Emma Joy Dana announced she wished to pass on leadership responsibilities and suggested Linda Meister was the perfect candidate to assume that role. The Board agreed and at their annual meeting in June passed a unanimous motion electing Linda as their new leader. Linda sat at Emma Joy's side for the last eight years as the recording secretary and headed the Long-range Planning Committee, so this transition to a new role was a natural.*



Linda Meister

Linda received her BA with honors in English at the University of Maryland and, as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, her MA from the University of Chicago. Her first job was as a grants analyst at the Ford Foundation in New York City. Her husband, Karl, worked in the pharmaceutical industry and the family spent the next 10 years in San Jose, Costa Rica, and in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

When the family returned to the U.S. in 1981, Linda worked for the Arts Council of the Morris Area and served as president of the Harding Township Civic Association. She later served as president of the Harding Township Historical

Society and president of the New Vernon Garden Club.

Linda's long-term interest in historic preservation is clearly demonstrated by her volunteer activities. She served on the board of Friends of Florham for 12 years and was a board member of the Garden Club of New Jersey and the Harding Land Trust. Presently, she serves on the board of the Glen Alpin Conservancy and is a member of the Colonial Dames of America.

She and her husband live in Harding, N.J., where they remain active in their church and community and enjoy the visits of their children and grandchildren.

*Dana, continued from page 1*

*Beginning with the Clowney Gardens, the restoration of the Italian Gardens, Lenfell Hall and the Great Hall, and more recently, the restoration of the lanterns in the Courtyard, the Friends have made tremendous gifts to the College at Florham, reminding us always that we are stewards of an impressive heritage.*

*Thank you for founding the Friends of Florham, for sharing your passion, for enlisting the support of your friends and for your personal contributions of time, seemingly boundless energy and financial support. Your vision and considerable commitment to historic preservation has influenced us all. Moreover, your efforts offer persuasive testimony to what a committed group with a*

*singular mission can actually accomplish.*

*You are truly the best friend anyone — university, historical site or board — could have, and I'm so grateful you chose "Florham" to embrace, protect and restore. Thank you."*

Thank you, Dr. Adams, for so eloquently expressing the gratitude and respect we all share for our outgoing President Emma Joy Dana, who assures us she will remain an active and committed member of our Board.



*College at Florham Provost Kenneth Greene presents a gift to Emma Joy Dana.*

## **Two New Trustees Named to Board**

The Friends of Florham are pleased to announce the election of two new members to their Board of Trustees.

Kathleen Atencio is a source of ideas, activity and accomplishments and a welcome addition to the Board. The Friends are familiar with her dynamic energy, attention to detail and organizational skills since she has served as an active and enthusiastic member of more than one Spring Gala Committee.

Kathy graduated from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Washington, D.C., with an undergraduate degree in international politics, preparing her for government foreign service. Following graduation, she determined that, despite her excellent preparation and education, her interest and passion were leading her down another path. With typical energy and drive, she followed her heart and enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America, earning yet another degree. Friends have been known to say Kathy possesses the unique qualifications of two "CIAs."

Armed with her newly inspired and acquired expertise, Kathy landed a job as an editorial assistant with *Gourmet Magazine*, where she moved up through the ranks. She survived and succeeded in the challenging publishing market for nine years. Upon the birth of her daughter, Audrey, she said, "Enough," and moved to what she considers to be the most important role of her life, that is full-time love-, life- and care-giver.

Now the mother of two children, Audrey and Augie, she is active in church and community activities and continues her enthusiasm and expertise for great food and wine.

Carol M. Ponder, originally from Jackson, Miss., received her BS degree in accounting from Mississippi State University and subsequently her MBA from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Ga.

After graduating from Georgia State she married her husband, Ron, and moved to Memphis, Tenn. During her 22 years in Memphis, she worked with American Express and then Union Planters National Bank as a financial analyst. She also taught accounting and statistics at the University of Memphis, becoming a CPA along the way. After receiving her CPA, she joined Touche Ross and Co., the accounting firm.

After leaving Touche Ross, she became the CFO for Care Inns, Inc., a regional nursing home company which owned nursing homes in several southern states.

In addition to her duties as CFO, she was responsible for the development and financing of new nursing homes. When the company was sold in 1986, she retired to devote her time to her family, church and charity work.

Carol and her family have lived in New Vernon for 15 years. During that time, she has been active in the New Vernon Garden Club and the Women's Association of Morristown Memorial Hospital, serving in various positions. She is a member of The First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon, has served on their board of deacons and is currently serving as an elder of the Session of the church. She was active for many years in the leadership of the Cub Scouts in Memphis and New Vernon.

Carol and Ron have two sons, the oldest is married and living in Madison, N.J., and the youngest just graduated from Madison High School in June.

The Friends are pleased to welcome these two talented individuals, Kathleen Atencio and Carol Ponder to the Board of Trustees.



*Kathleen Atencio, left, and Carol M. Ponder*



## A Mystery at Florham

*The plot of  
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is simple, but  
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The game's afoot at Florham! The plot of the mystery is simple, but the solution is complex. In June 2007, Theresa Montalbano, administrative assistant in the literature, language, writing and philosophy department, discovered a journal on the top shelf of the closet in the department offices on the third floor in Hennessy Hall. The handwritten cover page of the typed journal states "Diary European Trip — June–Dec. 1843, E.A. Thorn," while the inside typed first page announces the Diary of Mrs. W.K. Thorn, dated June–December 1843, and below: Account of trip to England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, Italy, France — in other words, the proverbial "Grand Tour" of the upper classes in the 19th century.

Our local in-house sleuths set to work, and here the plot becomes very interesting. Mike Holland, assistant vice president for facilities at FDU, and an amateur historian, and Karen Yates, special assistant to the College at Florham provost, did some rewarding Internet-searching, discovered that E.A. Thorn, was actually Emily Almira Thorn, nee Vanderbilt, one of the eight daughters of Cornelius "Commodore" Vanderbilt, founder of the legendary dynasty, and aunt of Florence Vanderbilt Twombly of Florham. Born in 1823, Emily married William K. Thorn (1807–1887), a lawyer and member of the well-known Thorn family of Long Island, in 1839. She had three children, Emma, William K. Jr. and Caroline, and died in 1896.

There is little question that the journal is a significant find, which can provide important historical documentation of a way of life that has passed, of a period in European history that has changed significantly since 1843, and potentially more information about members of the extended Vanderbilt-Twombly families, with perhaps some relevant connections to the Morris area. A simple enough statement, perhaps, but the discovery of the journal also gives rise to many questions.

### **The 'Case'**

In this first of two projected newsletter articles, we address the issues, which may or may not have actual "solutions." First, we would like to know how the journal got to Florham in the first place. At some point, did Emily give the copy to her niece? Remember that Florham was not occupied by the Twomblys until the spring of 1897. Of course, Emily and Florence could have visited each other in New York where both had homes. Or was Florence Twombly even aware of the journal or that it was lodged at Florham? More important, where is the original copy? Remember that the copy was typed, but there were no typewriters

in use in 1843, and as an Internet search reveals, commercial typewriters were not developed until the 1870s and were probably not in general use until even several years later. Mike Holland conjectures persuasively that the journal may have been brought in by a former employee of the Thorns — even typed by this employee who may have worked on the manuscript along with Emily — and that this employee may have worked later for the Twomblys. Similarly, it is also possible that the manuscript was brought to Florham by another former employee of the Thorns. Remember, Emily Thorn died in 1896, so it is altogether possible that one or more of her employees moved on to work for the Twomblys. Of particular support for these "theories" is that the third-floor offices of the FDU department where the journal was found were formerly the servants' quarters of the Florham estate.

The journal itself raises its own set of questions. First, the pagination as set out in the three-hole binder that held the journal is a bit quixotic, although the days and months of the tour are in chronological order. The text indicates that the tour began with the arrival of Emily and her husband, William, in Liverpool, England, on board the ship Sheridan, on June 20, 1843. Yet the numbering begins on page 82 ending on page 105 as the travelers having visited cities in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Belgium, leave Brussels for Antwerp on August 5, and the following pages 1-81 do not begin until August 21 in Austria. Here, the plot thickens. Pages 106 and 107 are dated August 1855, which are placed at the end of the journal with the arrival of the group at Malta on August 16, conclude with the comment that they wish "to enter Constantinople" on August 28.

Did Emily and her husband actually make two trips to Europe? A bit of a case can be made for this theory since the writer complains that they were disappointed that they had not visited Naples and Rome, yet in what we assume to be the original text of the 1843 trip (pages 1 through 81) — which tantalizingly begins on August 31 in Austria, the travelers actually visit Naples and Rome in early October 1843, travel to other cities in Italy, move on to Germany, France, Paris, London and return to New York on December 20. And are the journal pages covering August 6–20, 1843 missing? Or were the two pages on Malta and Constantinople simply part of the often inexplicable cache of documents that families tend to accumulate and pass on to each other; or perhaps in this case, did servants find these papers, which may or may not have been part of a larger "story"? We simply don't know.

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## A Brief Look at the Journal — 1843

**Liverpool, June 20** — “Arrived in Liverpool on board the ship Sheridan, Capt. De Peyster. We took ourselves and baggage to the Grecian Hotel which we found very comfortable after so long a sea voyage penned up in a little state room.”

**Edinburgh, July 1** — “The city of Edinburgh is built directly over the old town and in walking over the beautiful bridges we looked below us and saw people walking in the town below. Quite a novelty to us Yankees who had never seen anything like it before.”

**Glasgow, July 8** — “Glasgow is a large commercial city and has more the appearance of our own commercial city (N.Y.) than any other we have seen. The inhabitants are all bent on attaining one object, namely riches.”

**London, July 26, A pre-environmental awareness time** — “Took steamboat at Blackfriar’s Bridge for Richmond.... The steamboats are as thick as bees on the Thames...In passing under the numerous bridges the pipes are so constructed that they let down so that anybody standing under them gets the full benefit of all the cinders, smoke, etc.

**London, July 29, Observing Queen Victoria at the Opera** — “She is rather short in stature and not pretty but interesting. Prince Albert at her side.”

**Vienna, September 4** — *Regarding travelers:* “There is [are] in Vienna constantly 20,000 strangers and none can leave the city without the permission of the police who keep strict account of everything that goes on in the city....”

**Venice, September 14** — *From the tower of San Marco — a bit of irony here:* “When I look upon beautiful Venice with its many palaces gradually falling to decay, I ask myself what it must have been in its days of prosperity and power.”

**Naples, October 5** — *Interesting economic commentary:* “Naples is a very expensive place to live in, more so than any we have visited since we left London.”

**Rome, October 12** — *Visits the Vatican, the apartments of the Pope,* “...plain and neat, not corresponding to the display he makes in

public.” *Visits the gallery, and comments that* “The Transfiguration by Raphael, the “Entombment of Christ” by Michelangelo, and the “Crucifixion of St. Peter” by Guido are three of the best [paintings] I have seen.”

**Rome, October 12** — *A visit to the sculpture galleries, including some decisive commentary:* “Thursday being a public day everybody was there particularly the English.... They are a perfect nuisance wherever they go, giving themselves airs that are hardly tolerable to any decent people.”

**Liege, November 3** — *The more things change....* “It is really amusing to see how the French hate the English. Until we tell them we are Americans they are cross and surly....As soon as we tell them who we are, their manner changes and they are communicative and good natured.”

**Paris, November 4**—“Really a little city in itself, filled with people all apparently endeavoring to attain the same object namely ‘pleasure’.”

**Paris, November-** (*undated, excerpted from a four-page listing of purchases*) — *A bit of retail therapy:* A green velvet bonnet in Rue d’Vivienne No. 9, Fr-48, US\$-9.00; One pair of boots with cork soles, Fr-19; US\$-\$3.63; Perfumery, etc., Fr-17, US\$ -3.40; 15 yds. silk for dress at Fr-9.25, total Fr. 138.75, US\$-26.50.

**Paris, November 22** — “...we go to the Gobelin Tapistry [Gobelin Tapestry], which is so celebrated throughout Europe. We saw there a portrait of the King made of Tapestry, the colors which were richer than any painting I ever saw.” The interest or irony here is that Emily Thorn viewed the famed tapestries, while her niece, Florence Twombly and her husband actually purchased the famed Barberini tapestries, made in the same workshops, which hung in the Great Drawing Room and Hall of the Mansion at Florham.

**Boston, December 20** — *Return to New York via Boston in those jet-free days of history:* “...reached the Harbor of Boston, where we laid until daylight, then took a pilot, and were safely at the side of the dock at 7:30 am, thus performing our passage from Liverpool to Boston in 14 days and about 6 hours.”

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### A Request for Outside Assistance

If you’re still with us, we would like to engage your help in finding some answers, or at least partial solutions — more information about Emily A. Thorn, her family, her involvement with Florence Vanderbilt Twombly and her family, your general theories about the sources of the typed journal, perhaps some thoughts on the missing pages. Of course, we’re too ethical to offer meaningless prizes but will include the names of those respondents with the more promising and/or helpful theories or actual leads in the next issue of the newsletter. Please send your responses to the e-mails listed below. In return, or as encouragement, we include some characteristic excerpts from the journal, and will discuss the journal further in the next newsletter — hopefully, with a bit more knowledge of the writer, Emily Almira Vanderbilt Thorn. Please respond to: [cbere@aol.com](mailto:cbere@aol.com) and/or [Elaine\\_ewine@hotmail.com](mailto:Elaine_ewine@hotmail.com)

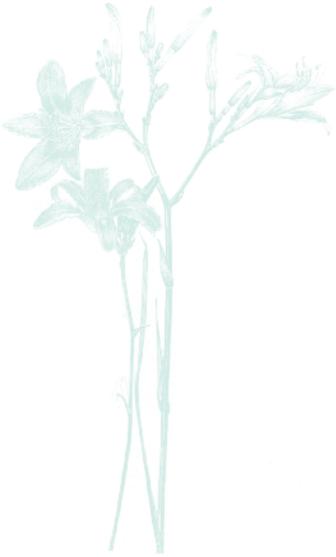
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*The Ten, continued from page 1*

tional a capella singing group has expanded to 18 members, yet retained the original name of The Ten. Today, 10 members perform at each event and are alumni of such a cappella groups as Yale’s Wiffenpoofs and Spizzwinks, Princeton’s Nassoons, Brown’s Jabberwock, Hamilton’s Buffers, Skidmore’s Bandersnatchers and Washington and Lee’s Southern Comfort.

The Ten has some notable connections to New Jersey with founding and current members residing in Ridgewood, Short Hills, Summit, Englewood and Far Hills. In addition to performances throughout the northeast, the group performs at benefits for local charities, weddings, the Willowood Arboretum’s Lilac Party in Chester, St. John on the Mountain Church in Bernardsville, the Knickerbocker Church in Tenafly and at two of the Friends of Florham Annual Galas.

We invite you to celebrate FDU’s College at Florham’s 50th year with the Friends on October 26, and enjoy songs from The Ten’s extensive and varied repertoire, which includes secular and sacred songs, spirituals, motets, as well as selections from popular artists such as James Taylor and Billy Joel. Also expect a bit of the unexpected, with the group occasionally singing in six parts, or being accompanied by a piano or guitar.

Tickets are \$25 per person and can be purchased at the door. A reception will follow the performance. For more information, call 201-692-7008.

*Become a Friend*

Join the Friends of Florham. Participate directly in our efforts to preserve the architectural history of Florham, and support our informative program series. Your support will make a difference.

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