



For Immediate Release

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Belle Grove to Host Christmas Tours: “A Child’s Christmas at Belle Grove” exhibit

Historic Belle Grove’s halls will be decked in its Christmas splendor and with a very special exhibit of antique dolls and toys this December. Belle Grove rings in the holidays with its festive Holiday Tours from 10 A.M. to 9 P.M. on Fridays December 5th, 12th, and 19th, and on Saturdays December 6th, 13th, and 20th, and from 1 P.M. to 9 P.M. on Sundays, December 7th, 14th, and 21st. The House will also be open from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. on Monday and Tuesday, December 22nd and 23rd. The Museum Shop, stocked with great holiday gifts and decorations, is open weekdays in December from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. and during all holiday tour hours. As a special treat, children will be able to tell Santa their Christmas wishes on Sundays, December 7th, 14th and 21st from 2 P.M. to 4 P.M. Santa will be sitting in his rocking chair in Belle Grove’s Parlor.

The Manor House will host this year a holiday exhibit in memory of local toy collector and former Strasburg Elementary School teacher Virginia Beeler. The exhibit will run through the Christmas season and will feature a selection chosen from among the hundreds of toys and dolls Mrs. Beeler collected over her rich ninety-seven years of life. Mrs. Beeler was the daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. James B Hederick and born in Peterstown, West Virginia on September 9, 1910. She spent her early childhood at “Belmont” in Warren County, graduating from Warren County High School in Front Royal. After she received her teacher certification from Madison College in 1934 she taught in Shenandoah County Public Schools for 40 years, with the last 37 at Strasburg Elementary School. Mrs. Beeler’s daughter Laura Ellen Wade serves as guest curator for the exhibition, which honors Mrs. Beeler’s keen and discerning eye for quality pieces and her great love of children. The collection will only be available for public viewing during holiday tours in December. You won’t want to miss the opportunity to experience a treat for children of all ages; Belle Grove’s festive decorations, an encounter with toys and dolls that span more a hundred years of American history, and fireside refreshments.

The Manor House's seven period rooms will be decorated by ten area garden clubs with an amazing variety of seasonal plants and decorations. The participating garden clubs are the Little Garden Club of Winchester, the Hawthorne Garden Club, the Colonial Garden Club, the Winchester-Clarke Garden Club, the Valley Garden Club, Middletown Garden Club, the Stephen's City Garden Club, the Glen Burnie Garden Club, the Warren County Garden Club, and the Master Gardeners of the Northern Shenandoah Valley. Belle Grove's parlor features its trademark 12' foot tall Christmas tree, hung with ornaments from Christmases past. Visitors can also enjoy Belle Grove's own spiced tea beside the crackling fire in the Winter Kitchen, while munching on cookies made by Belle Grove's own volunteer "elves." The Museum Shop features a variety of unique gifts and decorations, including locally made porcelain Snowbabies based on the original German designs; individually hand-crafted wooden ornaments from Middletown, fine Belle Grove jams and jellies, a selection of books on Civil War and Valley history, cloth and wool items based on 1860s designs, laser etched paperweights featuring the Manor House, and the Shop's unique collections case, featuring a variety of collectibles.

Belle Grove holiday tours are \$10 for adults; Belle Grove and National Trust members are \$5; and children under 10 are free. Photo opportunities of the Garden Clubs decorating will be available on Monday, December 1st and Tuesday, December 2nd from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Mrs. Beeler's daughter and guest curator Laura Ellen Wade will be available for interviews and photo opportunities from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. on December 2nd and 3rd.

Located in Middletown, Virginia near the intersection of I-81 and I-66, Belle Grove Plantation is both a National and Virginia Historic Landmark and a Property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Constructed between 1794 and 1797, the Manor House boasts authentic Jeffersonian architecture, an impressive decorative arts collection and sweeping views of the Blue Ridge, Alleghenies and Massanutten Mountain. The plantation holds several popular annual events and is open for touring, daily from March 31 until November 4 and weekends in November. For more information please contact Belle Grove by phone at (540) 869-2028, or by e-mail at info@bellegrove.org. Be sure to visit our web-site at www.bellegrove.org.