

Town of Greenburgh
**ASSISTANT
TOWN HISTORIANS**



———— felicia barber + riley wentzler ————

*A Beautiful View for the Perfect Event:
The Belvedere Estate*

By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber



Photo Credit: Linda Fiorentino

On 25 acres of land in Tarrytown, stands a grand estate which has recently gotten a new purpose in its life. This magnificent Great Depression Era estate, located on 723 South Broadway, is now an upscale venue in which to book your: business meeting, wedding, photo-shoot, or other community event!! This is the Belvedere Estate and although it was reconstructed in 1928, it was originally built in 1910 (<http://www.thebelvedereestate.com/about.html>). The original owners were the famous journalist and sports writer Caspar Whitney and his wife Florence (personal communication from Linda Fiorentino-The Belvedere Estate's Sales & Marketing Director). Whitney's home stood on five acres of land.



Photo Credit Linda Fiorentino

In 1928, Dr. Philip Gillette Cole, a physician educated at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and originally from Helena Montana, purchased the house and land (<http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/2aa/2aa556.htm>). At this point he also purchased the neighboring estate of W.L. Bull. He then demolished both Whitney's and Bull's houses and combined Whitney's five acres with Bull's 20 and built a new house (personal communication from Linda Fiorentino). The main house that Cole family built and lived in overlooked both the Hudson River and Tappansee Bridge. Accordingly Dr. Cole named the estate "Zeeview" (<http://www.thebelvedereestate.com/about.html>).

Though he did well financially in New York after he took over his father's business, which manufactured the Schrader tire valves, he greatly missed Montana, so he filled his home with one of the largest collections of western art in America (<http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/2aa/2aa556.htm>). Dr. Cole died thirteen years later but his family continued to live there until 1951 (personal communication from Linda Fiorentino).

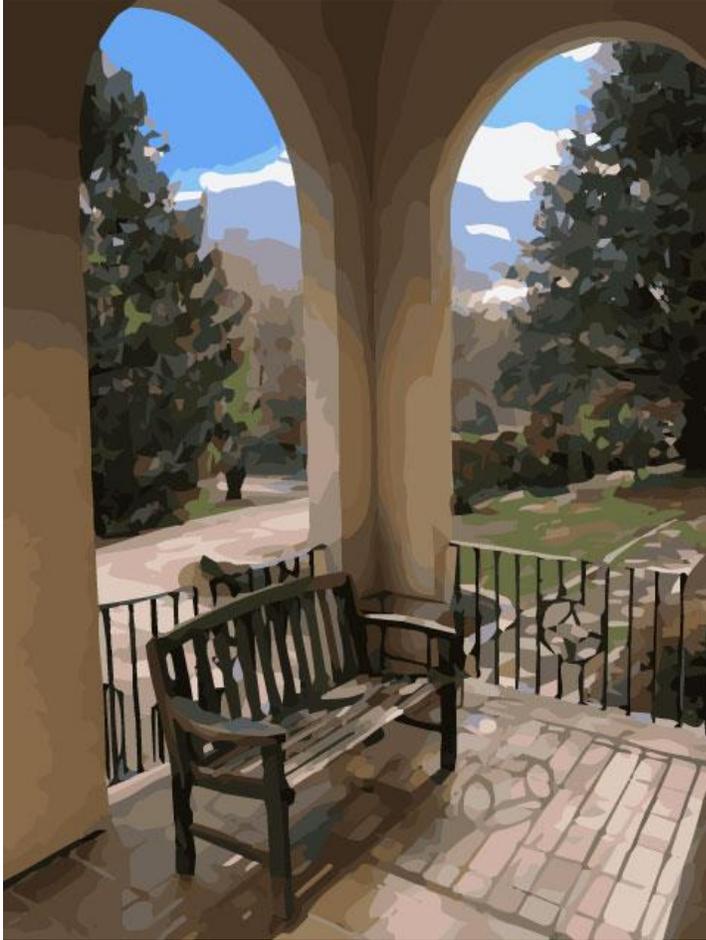


Photo Credit: Linda Fiorentino

When the Cole family put the house up for sale, no one bought it for a while, but eventually, Samuel Bronfman, owner of the whiskey making business Seagrams and Sons Company, bought the place (personal communication from Linda Fiorentino). Unlike Dr. Cole, The Bronfman family did not live in the estate, they used it to conduct business meetings and social events. It was the Bronfman family who gave the estate its current name “Belvedere,” which was the name of their primary home in Toronto Canada (<http://www.thebelvedereestate.com/about.html>). The name means “beautiful view” in Italian. Mr. Bronfman died in 1971 and the house was then again put up for sale. 420 interested buyers attempted to buy the home including a company planning to convert it into a senior citizen retirement center, and Penthouse Magazine intending to build their own version of the Playboy mansion (personal communication from Linda Fiorentino).

However in 1972, it was the Unification Church that finally purchased the estate. Today with the help of Mike and Linda Fiorentino, the church leases most of the property out for corporate business meetings, presentations by public speakers, weddings, film and photo shoots and other community events (<http://www.thebelvedereestate.com/about.html>). This arrangement has been in place since March of 2017 (personal communication from Linda Fiorentino).

Mike and Linda Fiorentino moved to New York from Stamford, Connecticut in 1992. They settled in Greenburgh's village of Hartsdale in order to be closer to the economic and cultural opportunities in New York City. They chose to settle in Greenburgh, because even though White Plains and Scarsdale were larger and had more name recognition, they liked the idea of having a home close to a train station, and being close to a wide range of shops, like those on Hartsdale Avenue. To schedule an event at the Belvedere Estate, call Linda Fiorentino at (914)-419-1013 or email her at linda@thebelvedereestate.com. The estate can accommodate events of almost any size because if/when the main building fills up, additional guests can congregate in the Agora House (<http://www.thebelvedereestate.com/about.html>).



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An Unspoken Promise of Redemption: How Hartsdale Got its Name

(1/31/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Greenburgh%20is%20one%20of%20the%20few%20communities%20anywhere%20that%20provides%20residents%20with%20frequent%20history%20bytes%20about%20their%20community.pdf>

Lost History: The Tragedy of Malkasten (1/26/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com2.pdf>

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<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47278&TID=10&jump2=0>

**Greenburgh's BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH: A History of
The Freemasons in Greenburgh (9/12/18) <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cite-Access/news/archnews.cfm?NID=47212&TID=10&jump2=0>**

About the Authors:

We are both Assistant Town Historians at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

Riley Wentzler:

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computer-based tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com, or to help me find employment, you can contact me at rjwentzler413@gmail.com**

Felicia Barber:

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com. To learn more about my artwork or to help me find employment you can contact me at feliciadbarber@gmail.com.**

Two Interviews with the authors

<https://riverjournalonline.com/around-town/a-love-of-history-and-each-other/13708/>

<https://wchs880.radio.com/articles/news/stories-main-street-couple-cerebral-palsy-brings-manytalents-town-greenburgh>

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Fiorentino, L. (2019, February 6). *About*. Retrieved from The Belvedere Estate:
<http://www.thebelvedereestate.com/about.html>

Joyner, J. ., (2011, (Not Given) (Not Given)). *Gilcrease Museam and The American Westren Collection of Dr. Phillip Gillette Cole*. Retrieved from Gilcrease Museam: <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/2aa/2aa556.htm>