

HILL-STEAD MUSEUM

Dear Friends,

I woke early and visited Hill-Stead to watch the sunrise on this equinox day when, in just the right celestial alignment, 12 hours of daylight match 12 of night. I took this photo and listened to this music, *Cai Thomas singing Handel's Lascia ch'io pianga*, as I welcomed spring.



At this moment, I paused to think about the anomalies of the seasons, halfway between the Winter and Summer solstice, when the winds of change serve as a metaphor for our current state of affairs. At once, we are on the precipice of a new transformative chapter for our cultural center, all while dealing with the ongoing world health crisis.

Then I said a silent prayer of thanks to our trailblazing founder, Theodate Pope Riddle, for her vision in creating this oasis and for her deep belief that a healthy state-of-mind required a direct relationship with nature. And, I quietly thanked all those who are also soft in the heart for this special place, and who have generously given and enabled us to preserve it. Their belief in this institution and its relevance inspired them, but I doubt they could have predicted how very much their investment would serve our visitors now, in our time of great, collective need.

Any hour. Any season. Any weather. That's when *Hill-Stead's grounds* are most beautiful. And today, in response to the challenges before us, we are happy to announce that we are expanding our hours of access. Going forward, our estate will be open to the public from 7:30 a.m. to sunset. We are honored to be able to share Theodate's gift with you.

Tomorrow, sadly, the much-anticipated sheep-shearing event **will not** go on as planned. But, determined to share this wonder with you as well, we imagined a new way to bring it to you at home. This Saturday, March 21st, from 1 p.m. onwards, *via our website* you will be able to view video, interviews, and some adorable before-and-after footage of the sheep who graze our pastures. And since many of them are pregnant, we invite you to join their owners, Clatter Ridge Farm, in naming their expectant lambs, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PVVPJ5>

The revenue from this event, and all those like it, upon which we depend to keep operating, has disappeared. Poof. Gone. With that new reality comes serious concern about the future of our financial wellbeing. The brainchild of one impressive survivor,* we shall stay calm, keep perspective, and trust our inner grit. And, we take comfort in the fact that generations of donors have sustained the museum for just over 73 years. We would be humbled to have

you join their ranks – at any level – **by donating now.**

For the foreseeable future, our glorious grounds and gardens are open for all to enjoy. With plentiful room to roam, please keep your social distance as we work together to reduce the spread of Coronavirus. Come and enjoy spring on our grounds – for a walk, a hike, or simply sit in the Sunken Garden to listen to the returning birds. Let's turn to the marvels of nature, and their awesome power to help us through.

Take good care,

Anna

Dr. Anna Swinbourne, Executive Director & CEO

** For those who don't know the story, Theodate survived the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915*



Hill-Stead Museum | 35 Mountain Road, Farmington | HILLSTEAD.ORG

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