

# Rendezvous

News and Notes from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Institute

Winter 2006

## Home of FDR: 60 Years Serving a “Splendid Public Purpose”

By Sarah Olson, Superintendent  
Roosevelt-Vanderbilt  
National Historic Sites

This year we are celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the opening of the Roosevelt Home to the public. FDR's gift to America of his family home was extraordinary on many levels, not least of which is that he was the first sitting president to set aside his home for public purposes. He took the first steps establishing his home as a unit of the National Park System in 1939, around the same time he was setting up his Presidential Library. Additional legislation followed, in 1943, 1944, and 1945, completing the property transfer to the United States government.

In considering the name of the site, FDR wrote Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, “I think it should be turned around to read: Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. I do not like Franklin D. Roosevelt Home National Historic Site, because it sounds like a home for discarded politicians . . . Most certainly it is not an estate or a mansion.”

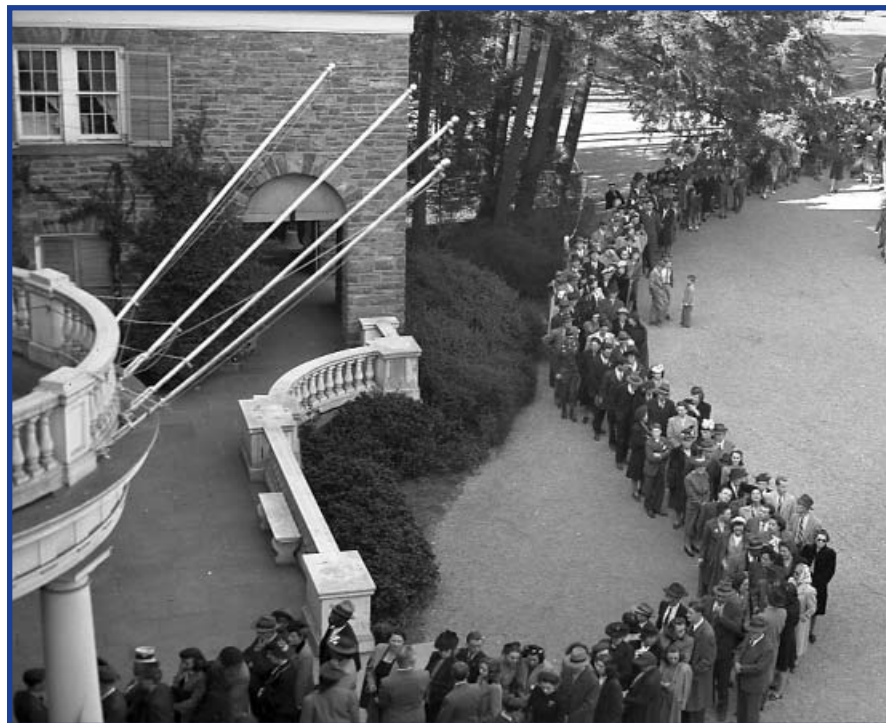
The gift included the “Big House,” the estate buildings, and thirty-three acres of land adjoining the Library property and Post Road. Clearly, he conceived the two Presidential gifts, the Home and Presidential Library, together and planned that they would serve the public in complementary ways. Curiously he did not include the riverfront property needed to protect the view of the Hudson River he so cherished, or the rest of the nearly 1400-acre family estate, which included Val-Kill and his Top Cottage retreat on Dutchess Hill. FDR did protect his family's right to use the house which Eleanor Roosevelt gave up soon after the Home opened in 1946.

FDR himself had laid the groundwork for bringing his home within the National Park System by signing the Executive Order in June, 1933 reorganizing the Park Service to include historic sites, monuments, and national military parks managed until then by other agencies, most under the War Department and Agriculture

Department. With this act FDR redefined and greatly expanded the National Park Service to include cultural as well as natural treasures. The new park system now embraced not only Yellowstone and Yosemite but also the Statue of Liberty and Gettysburg Battlefield.

then Secretary of the Interior, Julius Krug. Marian Anderson was there to sing the national anthem.

Some seven hundred political leaders, diplomats and other notables attended, including nearly all of FDR's former administration, members of the UN



National Park Service

A serpentine line of visitors forms to view the Home of FDR for the first time, 1946.

FDR talked of the National Park Service reorganization in a radio address he delivered at Glacier National Park in 1934. “There is nothing so American as our national parks,” he said. “The parks stand as an outward symbol of this great human principle . . . that the country belongs to the people.” He talked of the primary public purposes to which the parks were dedicated, and concluded his remarks by artfully extending the “splendid public purpose” to some of his New Deal initiatives—the development of power sites, improving of navigation, and flood and erosion control on agricultural fields.

A year to the day after his death, on April 12, 1946, Franklin Roosevelt's home opened to the public. President Truman traveled to Hyde Park to participate in the ceremony. Eleanor Roosevelt, with FDR's beloved Fala in tow, formally presented the house to

Security Council, and representatives from twenty-three foreign nations. On the great lawn stretching from the house to the Post Road were five thousand others, mainly residents of Hyde Park and Dutchess County, who felt a special kinship to their neighbor, FDR. A school holiday was declared so that local children could witness the historic event and school girls worked side by side with their mothers in a canteen tent set up to benefit the Red Cross.

The newly opened home of America's only four-term president drew enormous public interest at first. Over 100,000 people visited in August, 1949 alone and, on a single day in October, 1947, 10,000 people filed past FDR's grave. Public access to the Roosevelt Home has continued uninterrupted, every day, year-round, for sixty years. Today, the Home remains among the most visited places in the Hudson Valley region although numbers of visitors have fallen from the early decades to around 110,000 people a year.

Over the years, many organizations have worked with the National Park Service reassembling key parcels of the historic Roosevelt lands to protect the river views, provide land for visitor and administrative facilities, and preserve and open to the public Val-Kill and Top Cottage. Park Service staff often work side by side with Presidential Library staff to provide public services and programs and the two agencies are proud partners in sharing the Roosevelt legacy.

In its 60th anniversary year, the Roosevelt Home embodies the “splendid public purpose” which FDR envisioned for most of the nation's most valued resources.

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Happy Anniversary Historic Hyde Park

Eleanor Roosevelt's words on April 15, 1946—as she formally presented the Roosevelt home to the government—guide all of us in our work today:

*Loving history as he did, I think my husband always rather enjoyed trying to project what the future might bring, and so he could see his own home as one day being owned by the people of the United States and being one of the points where they could come to increase their understanding of history through a greater knowledge of the men who had made it.*



FDR Presidential Library

Eleanor Roosevelt speaking at the dedication of the Home of FDR, April 15, 1946.

In the past sixty years more than fifteen million people have visited the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. We at the Roosevelt Library salute our colleagues at the National Park Service. They have made the Home accessible to three generations of visitors, conducting interpretive history tours on a daily basis, bringing the story of the Roosevelt family in Hyde Park to life in a personal and always-engaging way. The NPS has also preserved and extended the historic site, keeping as it was the property's appearance during the years of the Roosevelt presidency.

We are grateful to President Roosevelt's foresight in making his historic gift to the American people and to the Park Service for its careful stewardship, making sure that the home of our 32nd president is here for the enjoyment and inspiration of generations to come.

The year 2006 also marks an important anniversary for the Roosevelt Library. This year on June 30, the Library marks its sixty-fifth birthday. For it was in 1941, with the Roosevelts still very much in residence in the “Big House,” that

(continued on page 2)



National Park Service

A rendering of the front portico of the Home of FDR National Historic Site.

### UPCOMING NPS EVENTS

Friday, April 7, 2006  
**Commemorative Program**  
60th Anniversary of the Opening of the Home of FDR to the Public  
Program, Reminiscences, and entertainment by the USO of Metropolitan New York  
6:30 PM  
Henry A. Wallace Center

Wednesday, April 12, 2006  
**FDR Remembered**  
61st Anniversary of FDR's Death  
3:00 PM  
Rose Garden, Home of FDR

Monday, May 29, 2006  
**Memorial Day Services**  
12:30 PM  
Rose Garden, Home of FDR

(continued from page 1)

FDR dedicated his library, the nation's first presidential library, with these memorable words:

*The dedication of a library is an act of faith.*

*To bring together the records of the past and to house them in buildings where they will be preserved for the use of men and women living in the future, a nation must believe in three things:*

*It must believe in the past.*

*It must believe in the future.*

*It must, above all, believe in the capacity of its people so to learn from the past that they can gain in judgment for the creation of the future.*

I believe it is this impulse, the impulse to use the study of history as a guide for citizenship, citizenship now and on into the future, that inspired FDR to make his twin gifts of the Library and the Home. Not to memorialize himself or his accomplishments, but rather to be used by generations to come as a guide for their own lives.

Researchers to the Roosevelt archive represent many fields—historians, biographers, political scientists, economists, filmmakers, environmentalists, art historians, and children's authors to name a few. Over sixty-five years these researchers have created our common understanding of the fullness of life in the Roosevelt era and its meaning for succeeding generations.



FDR Presidential Library

The Research Room at the Roosevelt Library receives over 1500 researcher visits a year.

Yet the president's gift of history is much more than a research archive. He provided within the Library for permanent museum galleries to show his personal collections, which he believed had educational value. And he gave his own home. Both are places where the public is welcome to seek answers to the questions of everyday living in the Roosevelt era. In so doing our visitors deepen their understanding of the historical basis of civic life today, which in turn helps them shape our nation's future.

Over the past sixty years the National Park Service and the National Archives have operated as neighbors in carrying out FDR's great vision for the future of his Home and Library at Hyde Park. I am proud that as we achieve these significant institutional milestones the National Park and the National Archives/Roosevelt Library are enjoying a strong partnership that only serves to benefit the more than 125,000—tourists, families, researchers, students and teachers—who come to Hyde Park to "gain in judgment for the creation of the future."

Cynthia M. Koch  
March 2006

## News from the Archives: Ever Seen a Document Rotate?

The exhibit presently appearing in the Roosevelt Library's William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery, *Freedom from Fear: FDR Commander in Chief* (which runs through November 6, 2006), has on display over fifty original documents from the Library's archival collections. Many of these documents have never been on display before. Others, such as the draft of the Day of Infamy Speech and the Einstein Letter, are such important documents that they frequently are on display for special anniversaries or exhibits, both at the Library and when loaned to other institutions.

Displaying documents in an exhibit, though, exposes the items to the harmful effects of light. Although light levels in the William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery are kept purposefully low, visitors still need to be able to read the documents. Prolonged exposure to light at any level can cause acidic paper to discolor (just like your newspaper turns yellow on your front porch), cause colored inks and dyes to fade (red is a particularly fleeting color), and even cause signatures to disappear right off the page (iron gall ink turns from blue to brown and then fades away). So how do archivists and curators balance the need to make these documents accessible to the public

## Museum Catalogue Database Completed

In December 2005 the FDR Presidential Library reached an important record-keeping milestone when Registrar Michelle Frauenberger completed work on a seven-year project to enter card catalogue records for nearly 29,000 objects in the museum collection into a new computer database.

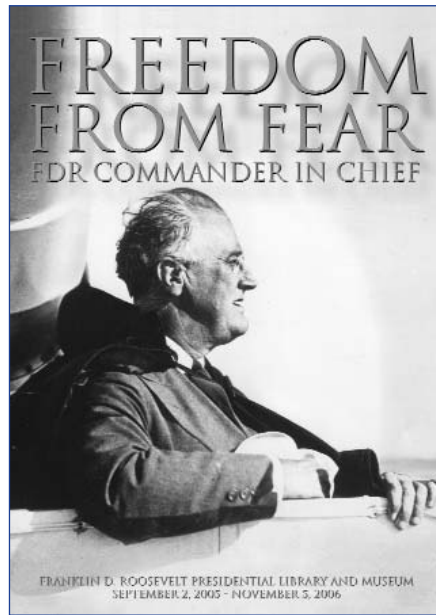
The museum's new IO computer database is an electronic card catalogue which contains all of the vital information about museum objects, including physical descriptions, historical background, digital images, donor information, and storage locations. The database makes it possible for museum staff to instantly access and sort collection information using keyword searches and other specialized functions and create customized reports. It has already saved hundreds of hours of staff time in research, loan, and exhibition work. The museum will retain the original paper card catalogue as a historical record, but all new collection records are now entered into the IO database.



FDR Presidential Library

Thousands of rare World War I and World War II posters were entered in the IO database. In honor of Women's History Month, a selection of WWII-era posters relating the role of American Women in the war effort are on display in the museum through April 30, 2006.

The museum is currently moving forward with another major record-



FDR Presidential Library

*Freedom from Fear: FDR Commander in Chief* runs through November 6, 2006.

through exhibitry while also preserving them for posterity?

One way is to rotate original at-risk items in and out of the exhibit, thus reducing their overall exposure to light. The Library's archival and museum staffs have identified fifteen documents in the *Freedom from Fear* exhibit that either are at-risk because of their inks and paper quality or are of such high

intrinsic value to the nation (such as the Day of Infamy draft) that special preservation measures are called for to ensure their permanence. Beginning January 3rd, five of these documents were rotated out of the exhibit for a three-month period. After the initial period is over, the first set will be returned to the exhibit and another five documents will be rotated out. This rotation will continue until all fifteen documents have had three months of rest away from light exposure.

Don't worry, though. While these few documents are off exhibit for their brief periods, high quality color digital reproductions will be installed in their place so that museum visitors can still have a rich and complete exhibit experience. There will be some forty-five original documents on display during each rotation period, and all of the original documents will be returned to the exhibit for the final three weeks of its run, October 16 - November 6, 2006.

For details of the document rotation schedule, including dates and the list of documents for each rotation, please contact Cliff Laube, Public Affairs Specialist, (845) 486-7745.

### THE CHAIR

by Delores Thomas

ABANDONED, ABSTRACT, COVERED WITH FINE PARTICLES OF  
YESTERYEAR'S PAST

QUIET FOOTSTEPS, STERNED, CALLOUSED HANDS ARRIVE TO

DELIVER IT FROM A TORCHED ASSIGNMENT

METICULOUSLY PLACED WITH ANTIQUES FROM AFAR

A WATCHFUL EYE; COMPASSIONATE, DELICATE, CARESSES

CAREFULLY

RESTORES THE LIFE OF A MONUMENTAL TREASURE THAT WILL SOON

BE REVEALED

THE ART, THE DETERMINATION

MIST-FILLED EYES, PASSIONATE SIGHS GIVES REVELATION OF WHAT

HAS BEEN HIDDEN; IS STARTING TO UNFOLD

OF THE INITIALS THIS OL' WICKER WHEELCHAIR BEHOLDS

FOR F.D.R., THE MONARCH OF LONG AGO

SUCH A GRAND HONOR THIS CHAIR WILL BESTOW

FOR A SLEEPING LEGEND HAS NOW BEEN AWAKENED

TO THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CHARMS

THAT NOW CAN NOT BE FORSAKEN

FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS, AN HONORED SOLDIER STANDS PROUD  
AND ERECT

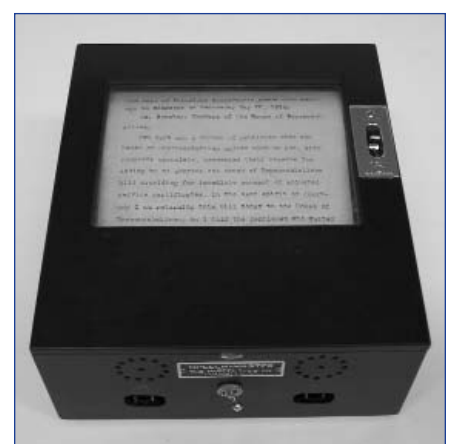
QUIETLY WINKS AND WHISPERS IN GREAT MAGNITUDE

WELCOME HOME, MR. PRESIDENT, WELCOME HOME...

Delores J. Thomas is an award-winning poet, playwright and author.  
She currently resides in Aurora, Illinois.

keeping project that got underway in June 2005—a detailed museum collection inventory. The inventory is resulting in the addition of new details to many older museum records, including new information on thousands of rare World War I and World War II posters, hundreds of naval portraits from President Roosevelt's personal collection, and unusual items like a motorized speech reading machine (an early version of a teleprompter) presented to FDR in 1935. Every item being inventoried is also photographed and measured.

In the future, the museum will make its computer database available to other museums and cultural institutions, as well as individual researchers.



FDR Presidential Library

Many of the objects now included in the database are examples of unique gifts given to FDR. In 1935, President Roosevelt was presented with this motorized speech reading machine—an early version of a teleprompter.

# Red Tailed Angels Film Premiere and Dinner a Success

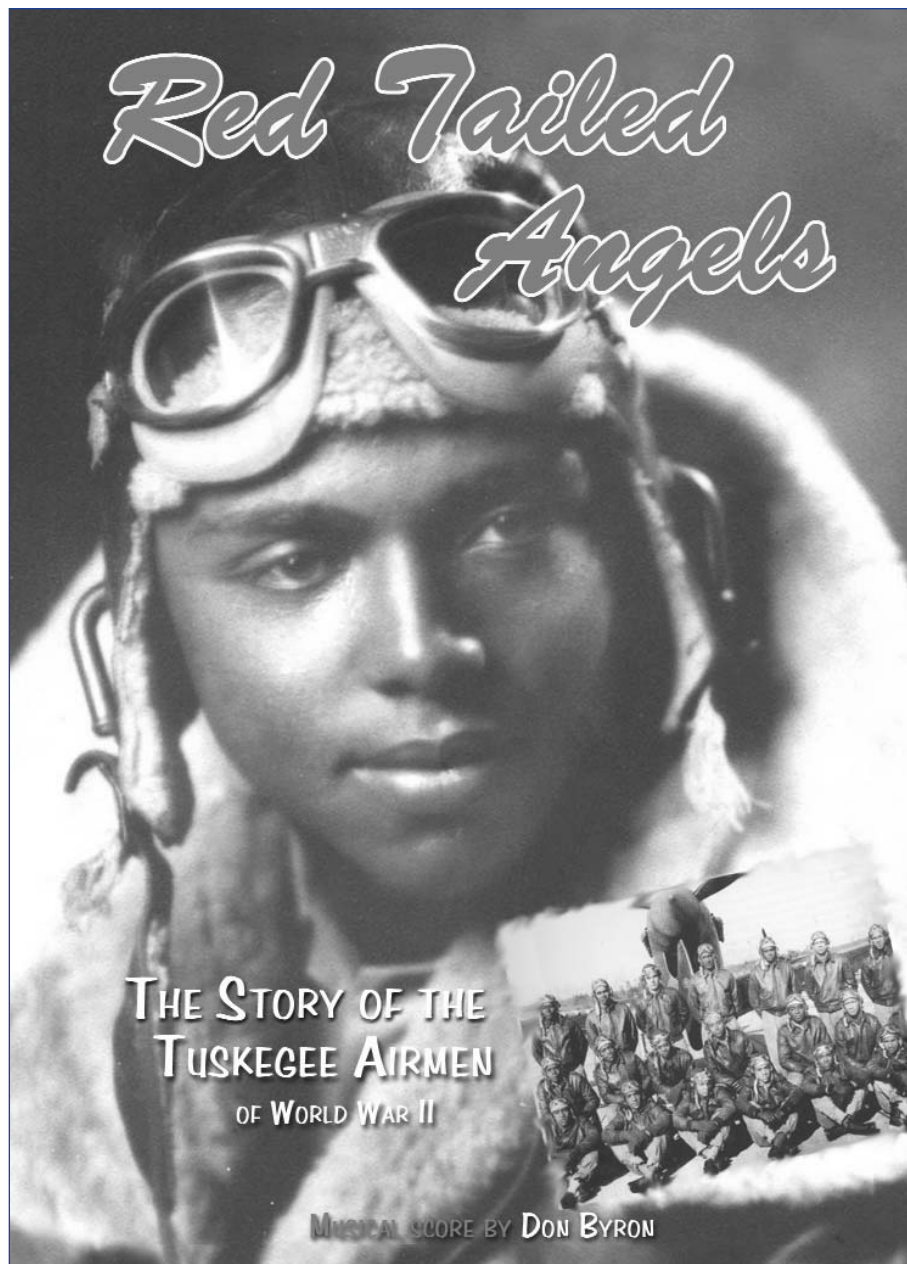
On February 24, The Roosevelt Library and Catharine Street Community Center presented the Pare Lorentz Film Center premiere of *Red Tailed Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*, in commemoration of Black History Month. The film was shown to a sold-out audience in the Milstein Auditorium of the Henry A. Wallace Center. Nearly eighty guests attended a benefit dinner with four of the original Tuskegee Airmen following the premiere.

Proceeds from the premiere and dinner benefited jointly the Pare Lorentz Film Center of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and the educational programs of the Catharine Street Center.



FDR Presidential Library

Honored guests at the film premiere included: (left to right) 2nd Lt. William M. Wheeler; Lt. Col. Charles W. Dryden; Flight Officer Hiram E. Little, Sr.; Col. Roosevelt J. Lewis, Jr.; Lt. Col. Herbert E. Carter; and Josh White, Jr.



*Red Tailed Angels* is a documentary short that tells the story of the dedicated, determined young men who enlisted to become America's first black military airmen, at a time when many people thought that black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism. Using historical footage and interviews with original Airmen, the film is the latest in a series of documentary films produced by the Pare Lorentz Film Center of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.

After the film was screened, Josh White Jr., son of Josh White, Sr., the legendary blues singer and songwriter, performed the Jim Crow protest songs that his father made famous and that are featured in the film.

Josh White Sr.'s songs "Uncle Sam Says" and "Defense Factory Blues," which criticized segregation in the military and the defense industries, were written in 1940. When President Roosevelt heard a recording of these



FDR Presidential Library

Blues guitarist, Josh White, Jr., performs to a sold-out audience at the Wallace Center.

songs, he invited Josh to perform at the White House in 1941. Josh, Sr. would return to the White House many times to perform for Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. As a child Josh, Jr. often visited the Roosevelts' Hyde Park home with his father and shared holiday dinners with the Roosevelt family.

The four original Airmen—Lt. Col. Herbert E. Carter, Lt. Col. Charles W. Dryden, Flight Officer Hiram E. Little, Sr., and 2nd Lt. William M. Wheeler—made remarks during the dinner. Flight Officer Little commented that his favorite experience of the day was when the Airmen met with a group of children from Catharine Street Community Center earlier that afternoon to discuss the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Ongoing through  
Monday, November 6  
**Museum Exhibition**  
**"Freedom from Fear":**  
**FDR Commander in Chief**  
FDR Presidential Library  
William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery

Friday, May 26  
**USO Show**  
Wallace Center; 7 PM

Saturday, May 27  
Sunday, May 28  
**Bivouac - Living History**  
9 AM to 4 PM  
FDR Library Lawn

Saturday, June 24  
**Roosevelt Reading Festival III**  
10 AM to 4 PM  
Wallace Center

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE EMAIL BULLETIN

To learn about programs and events at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum and the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center sign up for our Email Bulletin by sending an email to [clifford.laube@nara.gov](mailto:clifford.laube@nara.gov) and typing "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

Col. Roosevelt J. Lewis, Jr., flight instructor and founder of Air Tuskegee in 1989, also attended the dinner and spoke to the guests about his own experiences being trained by the legendary C. Alfred "Chief" Anderson, flight instructor of the Tuskegee Airmen.

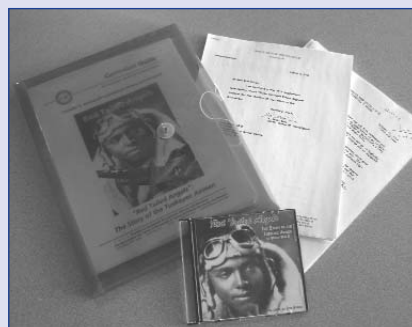
The Pare Lorentz Film Center, funded by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute through a generous grant from the New York Community Trust, applies audio visual techniques to the teaching of the history of the Roosevelt era.

Catharine Street Community Center promotes and coordinates educational, health, and cultural programming that enriches and enhances the lives of individuals, children, and families.

## Red Tailed Angels Curriculum Guide Now Available

The Education Department of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum presents a new curriculum guide for educators entitled, *Red Tailed Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*.

The guide presents an exciting array of creative ideas that will enliven the teaching of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen at a variety of grade levels and through standards relating to many subject areas including history, civics, citizenship, government, economics, geography, fine arts, and writing and journalism.



The new curriculum guide, *Red Tailed Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*.

Included in the curriculum guide packet is the DVD, *Red Tailed Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*, a twenty-five minute educational film that tells the story of the Tuskegee Airmen using historical footage and interviews with original Airmen. The film is the latest in a series of documentary films produced by the Pare Lorentz Film Center of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.

This guide was created through the generous support of the Robert L. Beir Education Center of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and the New York Community Trust.

To receive a complimentary copy of the curriculum guide please call (800) FDR-VISIT, prompt 4 for the Education Department.

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum offers a wide variety of programs to meet the educational needs of students and the curriculum concerns of teachers. Call for details and schedule a visit.

## Hyde Park Free Library Donates *Olivia* Book

The Hyde Park Free Library donated a novella once owned by Eleanor Roosevelt to the Roosevelt Library last fall. The book had been in the possession of the late Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. and was among a collection of books his widow donated to the Hyde Park Free Library.

The novella, *Olivia*, published in 1949 by Hogarth Press, was written by British author and historian Dorothy Strachey Bussy, herself once a student of Marie Souvestre and later a teacher at Souvestre's Allenswood School, which Eleanor Roosevelt attended in London. The book is inscribed "For Tottie, in



Courtesy Photo

Roosevelt Library archivist Alycia Vivona and director Cynthia Koch receive a copy of *Olivia* from Greg Callahan, director of the Hyde Park Library.

memory of old days from D.S. (Olivia)." "Tottie" was Eleanor Roosevelt's nickname at the Allenswood school.

## NPS Offers Shuttle from POK Train Station

The National Park Service will offer the *Roosevelt Ride*, shuttle service from the Poughkeepsie Train Station to the Roosevelt sites in Hyde Park, Thursdays through Mondays, May 1, 2006 - October 31, 2006.

A National Park Service escort will meet travelers at 10:30 a.m. at the station and shuttle them to the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the FDR Presidential Library and Museum.

In the afternoon, guests will be escorted to the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site (Val-Kill) and Top Cottage (FDR's personal retreat). The shuttle will return to Poughkeepsie Train Station to connect with the 5:30 p.m. train back to Grand Central Terminal.

Reservations for the *Roosevelt Ride* shuttle service are required. Call (845) 229-5320 to reserve your ride.

# Rendezvous

News and Notes from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Institute

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## JOIN THE WORLD OF THE ROOSEVELTS

Become a member of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute. Enjoy the benefits—and the knowledge that you are providing vital support to the FDR Presidential Library and Museum.

### Membership Benefits

- |                            |                |  |
|----------------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Individual</b>          | <b>\$35</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i Unlimited free admission for one adult to the FDR Presidential Library for one year. <i>Children 16 and under admitted free;</i></li> <li>i 10% discount at the New Deal Museum Store;</li> <li>i Subscriptions to <i>The View from Hyde Park</i>, the FERI newsletter, and <i>Rendezvous</i>, the Roosevelt Library newsletter;</li> <li>i Discounts for conferences, lectures, and seminars sponsored by FERI and the Roosevelt Library;</li> <li>i Free admission to all Presidential Libraries administered by the National Archives and Records Administration.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Family</b>              | <b>\$60</b>    | Includes all of the benefits of individual membership <i>plus</i> unlimited free admission for two adults.   |
| <b>Ambassador</b>          | <b>\$100</b>   | Includes the benefits of family membership <i>plus</i> unlimited free admission for four adults.   |
| <b>New Dealer</b>          | <b>\$250</b>   | Includes the benefits of Ambassador membership <i>plus</i> free admission to all Roosevelt Library and FERI seminars, conferences or lectures, where a fee is required.  |
| <b>Cuff Links Club</b>     | <b>\$500</b>   | Includes the benefits of New Dealer membership <i>plus</i> behind the scenes tour for up to four people of the Roosevelt Library archives.   |
| <b>Brain Trust</b>         | <b>\$1,000</b> | Includes the benefits of Cuff Link Club <i>plus</i> one complimentary ticket to the FERI's annual fundraising event (odd-numbered years will be the Four Freedoms Medals Ceremony and Laureates Banquet).  |
| <b>Student (age 17-22)</b> | <b>\$15</b>    | Includes all of the benefits of individual membership, for students with valid student ID.   |

### Membership Form

To become a member, please fill out and return the form below, or join online at [www.feri.org](http://www.feri.org). Call (845) 486-7769 for information.

<b>9 Student</b>	\$15	<b>9 New Dealer</b>	\$250
<b>9 Individual</b>	\$35	<b>9 Cuff Links Club</b>	\$500
<b>9 Family</b>	\$60	<b>9 Brain Trust</b>	\$1,000
<b>9 Ambassador</b>	\$100		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made out to *FERI* and mailed to:

Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute  
4079 Albany Post Road  
Hyde Park, NY 12538

Please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my  Mastercard  Visa

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (as printed on card) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership

Renewal Membership

My company matches my charitable contributions. I will contact my corporate giving office to have a form for matching gifts sent to FERI.

I wish to give but not become a member.

Please send a Gift Membership to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category \_\_\_\_\_