

A HISTORIC PROPERTY OF  
FULLER E. CALLAWAY FOUNDATION

The background of the cover is a photograph of a formal garden. In the center is a pond with a small island. A large, intricate topiary hedge forms a heart shape around the pond. The garden is surrounded by dense trees and foliage.

the  
**PORTICO**

*News from Hills & Dales Estate*



ISSUE NO. 11 FALL 2011

[www.hillsanddales.org](http://www.hillsanddales.org)

## WELCOME

After a challenging spring with severe storms and nearby tornados, and after our long, hot summer, we look forward to the beauty and crispness of fall. As you might guess from the cover, this edition of *The Portico: News from Hills & Dales Estate* features an article answering commonly asked questions about boxwood, perhaps the most noted plant growing in the gardens. We are excited to be offering a great lineup of fall programs including several hands-on workshops and our annual lecture which will feature noted ornithologist and author Giff Beaton. We are looking forward to Halloween when we will offer traditional trick or treating on the north side of the Callaway home. Christmas will bring our fourth annual Children's Christmas Celebration with Santa, storytelling, a sing-a-long and children will decorate their own gingerbread houses. Also, the Callaway home and visitor center will be adorned with traditional Christmas decorations.

Make plans to stroll in the gardens on a cool fall day and enjoy the changing foliage! Perhaps you'd rather bundle up against the cold of winter and delight in the shapes and textures that can only be seen when the trees are bare. We hope you will take advantage of the many opportunities available at the estate this fall and winter! ♣

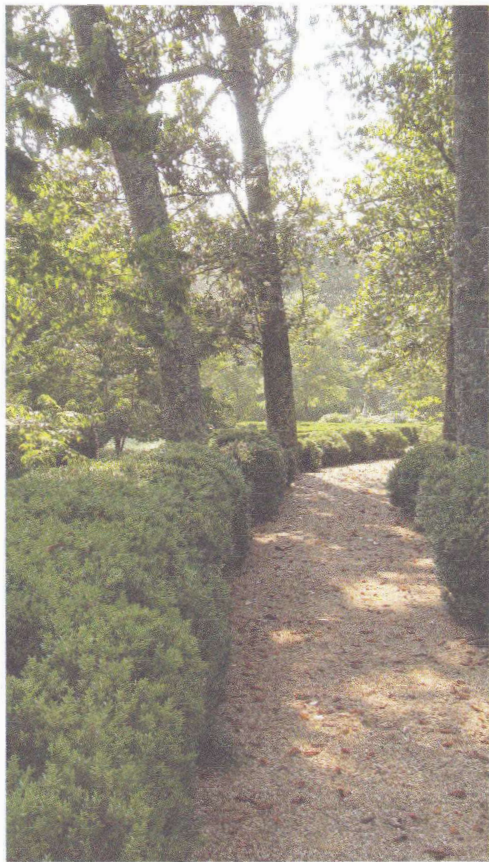
*On the Cover: One of many striking parterres (Boxwood patterns) in Ferrell Gardens at Hills & Dales Estate.*

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# Weighing IN ON Boxwood



*Boxwood and Magnolias line many of the pea gravel paths in the garden.*

Valued by ancient civilizations for its beautiful close grained wood and evergreen foliage, boxwood has acquired legendary status during its 6,000 year history of use. It is one of the oldest plants cultivated by man for ornamental as well as commercial purposes.

The “bones” of the formal parterre garden here at the estate are boxwood, lovingly planted during the 1800’s by Mrs. Sarah Ferrell. We believe that she probably began her garden by rooting plants from shrubs in her mother Nancy’s garden, which was close by. Using primarily *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Suffruticosa’ (known as English or dwarf English boxwood) and *Buxus sempervirens* (common boxwood), she designed and created a magnificent terraced landscape reminiscent of a fine European garden. Other species and cultivars of box have been added to the garden over the years, so that now we have at least a dozen types representing at least five different species growing here. Due to both the popularity of boxwood and their prominence in our garden, it is natural that questions are put to us about the culture and care of these shrubs. Following are some of the most common inquiries that we receive along with answers from our horticulture staff for their successful cultivation in most of the Southeast.



## ARE BOXWOOD DIFFICULT TO GROW?

In general, no they are not. However, boxwood are like most plants in that they perform best where well sited and when their cultural requirements are given a reasonable amount of consideration.

## WHAT SORT OF SITING IS PREFERRED AND WHAT SOIL REQUIREMENTS ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER FOR THEM TO THRIVE?

Although boxwood will grow in full sun, situating them under high shade or where they will receive primarily morning sun and afternoon shade is more ideal. Avoiding exposure to large amounts of winter sun and wind is also advisable. Good soil drainage is a must, and extremely heavy clay or very sandy soils frequently cause problems. The correct soil pH is absolutely critical as boxwood thrive best in neutral soils with a pH from 6.5 (slightly acidic) to 7.5 (slightly alkaline). Due to the fact that soils in the South are typically acidic, we strongly advise having a sample done to test your soil's pH and then amending to adjust it if necessary. We test the soil in the garden here at least once a year and

usually have to apply lime annually in order to keep the soil from becoming too acidic for the boxwood.

## WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF YEAR TO PLANT BOXWOOD?

In our experience, fall, and specifically October, is the ideal time for us to plant. The month would vary depending on the part of the Southeast you live in.

## WHAT ABOUT FERTILIZATION?

When we fertilize the garden, a light application of an organic fertilizer is broadcast over the entirety. In other words, we do not fertilize our boxwood separately unless it is a new planting or we observe signs of a nutrient deficiency or stress. We apply it every two or three months—even in the winter, although very lightly then. We also try to put compost around our boxwood once every year or two in order to protect their shallow roots and add humus to the soil. Our recommendation would be to tailor a similar fertilizer regimen for your boxwood if they are incorporated into a garden, as most of ours are. If they are being used as a foundation planting around your home, then fertilizing them

individually might make more sense. However, we would still recommend organic fertilizer as well as periodic applications of some compost.

### **Q: WHAT ABOUT USING COTTONSEED MEAL ON BOXWOOD? ISN'T IT A POPULAR CHOICE?**

Yes, cottonseed meal has long been recommended for boxwood, and it is an excellent organic fertilizer. A warning about using cottonseed meal repeatedly—it will contribute to soil acidity (low pH) over time, which can certainly jeopardize the health of boxwood. Annual soil testing in order to monitor proper soil pH levels would be a must.

### **Q: HOW OFTEN DO YOU WATER BOXWOOD?**

The answer to that question depends on several factors. As a rule, we like for our established boxwood to receive an inch of water (rain, preferably) about every ten days. We typically have to supplement with irrigation only during the summer. It is just as important for the plants not to be too dry during very cold weather as it is during hot weather, so being aware of rainfall amounts year

round is very prudent. Newly planted boxwood, as with most shrubs, require more watering until established. Usually we water recently planted shrubs two or three times per week, particularly during their first spring and summer, depending on rainfall and temperature. Extra watering for newly planted boxwood is continued for a couple of summers, although not quite as often after their first full season of growth.

### **Q: WHAT ABOUT INSECTS AND DISEASES?**

Healthy boxwood are not typically bothered by serious disease problems. Siting them properly is more than half the battle in that regard. Also, if they are being sheared regularly, as in a formal garden such as ours, they need to be thinned periodically in order to prevent disease problems from occurring. Thinning involves cutting out small clumps of branches in order to let light and air into the interior of the shrub. The primary insect problem that we encounter is boxwood leaf miner, but not all boxwood fall victim to it. English as well as the many choices of Asian boxwood are quite resistant. However, common box and many

of the hybrids are susceptible. The leaf miner's presence is characterized by small round blisters on the underside of the leaves. If miner infestation is moderate to severe, treatment with a systemic insecticide will likely be necessary to reduce their numbers and control damage.

**Q: COULD I GROW THE SAME KINDS OF BOXWOOD THAT YOU HAVE GROWING AT HILLS & DALES?**

If you live in the piedmont region you could grow most of the boxwood featured in our garden, including the predominant English and common box. In our opinion, the latter two do not thrive in southeastern zones that are warmer than USDA zone seven. Species native to Asia and their cultivars, as well as some hybrids do very well through zone eight and perhaps even further south. Examples are: Japanese boxwood (*B. microphylla* variety *japonica*), Harland's boxwood (*B. harlandii*), and several cultivars of littleleaf boxwood (*B. microphylla*). Some of our favorites are: 'Winter Gem', 'Curly Locks' and 'Green Mountain' which is a hybrid. Several of the



*English boxwood in the church garden.*

hybrids are quite vigorous in hot climates and have more of the Old World boxwood "look" than do many of the Asian ones.

Considered through the ages as garden classics and aristocrats, these shrubs have long had a secure place in the hearts, as well as the property of many southern gardeners. Mrs. Alice Callaway once wrote of those lining the paths and beds here at Hills & Dales as "cherished old plantings of boxwood." Perhaps that thought, as well as the information we have given, might inspire you to plant this old-time favorite in your garden. ♣



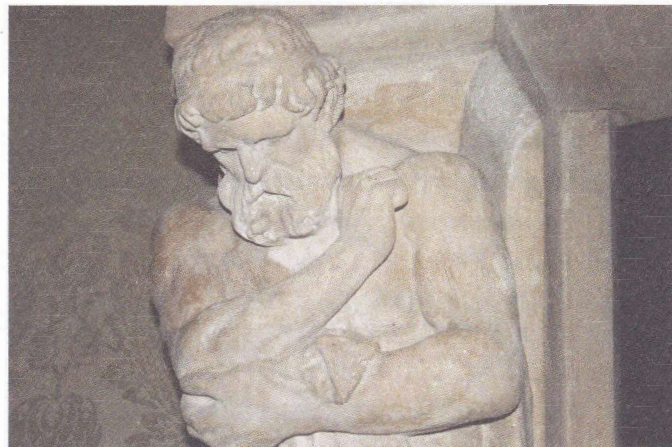
## DELIGHT IN THE DETAILS

The Callaway home, a grand project of architects Neel Reid and Hal Hentz, was completed in 1916. William R. Mitchell Jr., a noted author, historian and preservationist, says:

“REPRESENTING AN ECLECTIC CLASSICISM THAT LOOKED TO THE ULTIMATE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE PROTOTYPES THAT HAD INSPIRED MRS. FERRELL’S ITALIANATE BOXWOOD GARDEN, IT SUGGESTS THE PALLADIANISM OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY BEHIND AMERICAN NEOCLASSICISM. REID DESCRIBED THE FINISHED PRODUCT TO THE CALLAWAYS AS ‘GEORGIAN ITALIAN,’ ACCORDING TO ALICE HAND (MRS. FULLER E. JR.) CALLAWAY.”

The stateliness of the home is sometimes overwhelming to our visitors and the intricate details can be easily overlooked. The house is a beautifully balanced blend of separate parts which combine to create a remarkable setting!

When you visit the Callaway home make sure you take time to savor the many impressive architectural details! ♣



*In Greek mythology Atlas supported the heavens. In the dining room classical figures modeled after Atlas (called atlantes) hold the weight of the mantel. These cast stone figures take the place of a column and are a favorite with visitors.*



*This exquisite egg and dart design, molded in plaster, is located in the music room. Egg and dart has been used as a decorative element since Greek and Roman times.*

# Old Gems

## BEING REDISCOVERED

*"It is a rainy day but this morning I went out and marked all of the japonicas as to color & kind. I also picked 2 lovely bunches of narcissus by the pergola."*

- ALICE CALLAWAY'S GARDEN JOURNAL, JANUARY, 25, 1937

As the heat of summer fades and we look forward to the cooler days of autumn it's time for gardeners to start thinking about planting fall bulbs, especially daffodils, also known as *Narcissus*. Those who think ahead will be rewarded with wonderful drifts of yellow flowers in spring. Here at the estate, some old daffodils that date back nearly one hundred years continue to bloom in shrub borders, under old magnolia trees and in our grassy meadows. Last spring, Charlotte Baker, a member of our garden staff, began photographing and carefully studying the bloom time and botanical traits of these under-appreciated bulbs. While her study is only partially complete, she has identified several heirloom varieties growing at the estate.

Since there are many heirloom daffodil varieties, and flower color can vary with seasonal temperatures, identifying old daffodils can be notoriously difficult. As a result, to help with this process we have been studying our old garden records. Several garden journals refer to specific daffodil varieties



*"Thalia" was introduced into cultivation in 1916, the same year Mr. & Mrs. Callaway finished their new home. It is known for its fragrant white blooms. Ida Cason Callaway planted "Thalia" in the garden in 1931 and it is currently growing in the church garden.*





*Charlotte found what we believe is 'Grand Monarque' growing in the garden. This group of daffodils dates back to before 1798. The variety 'Avalanche' looks almost identical to 'Grand Monarque' but apparently performs better in the south.*

and indicate the year they were planted. This information has helped us confirm the identity of several bulbs, but it sometimes just lets us know what used to be growing in the garden and is now lost. According to Ida Cason Callaway's 1927-1931 Flower Book, in 1931 she planted the white 'Thalia' daffodil along with daffodils given to her by Mrs. Hand from Pelham and her daughter-in-law Alice Hand Callaway. She also notes ordering and planting some 'King Alfred' and 'Van Waveren Giant'.

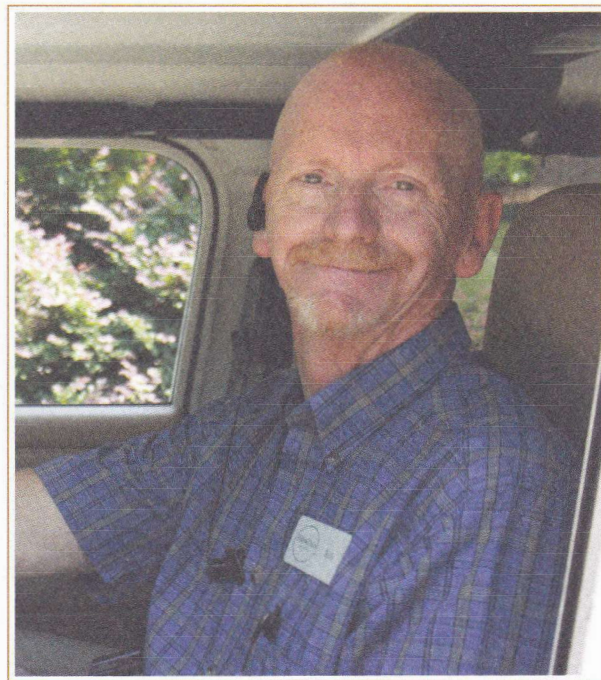
Alice Callaway also periodically kept a garden journal and some references to daffodils survive. Based on photographs and notes in her 1941 journal, we know she worked diligently to identify the daffodils in the garden. In 1950, Mrs. Callaway recorded that she had ordered a soft apricot colored daffodil called 'Mrs. R.O. Backhouse' to add to the garden. This variety was named in 1921 and no doubt appealed to her because she loved soft subtle colors. Alice also added 'Mt. Hood', a white daffodil released in 1938, and 'Geranium', an orange trumpeted daffodil that was gaining popularity in the 1930's. Other daffodils discovered at the estate include: 'Twin Sisters', lent lily, several different double varieties (probably 'Orange Phoenix' and 'Sulphur Phoenix') along with the species hoop petticoat daffodil. While our daffodil study is still ongoing, we have included photographs of a few favorites. These daffodils have stood the test of time and proven that they are well adapted to our tough clays and southern climate.

Soon it will be time to place your bulb order and get planting so you can enjoy this classic garden flower in your garden next spring. To learn more about daffodils we invite you to attend our fall workshop entitled, "Heirloom Daffodils for Southern Gardens" conducted by Sara Van Beck on Saturday, October 22. Sara is a noted daffodil expert and recently authored a new book on daffodils for Florida and the South. ♣



## MEET THE STAFF

If you have visited the estate and toured the house there is a good chance you have met Kelly Calvert. Kelly has been our tram driver for the last three years and also helps with general maintenance, customer service and security at the estate. Kelly moved to LaGrange from Churdan, Iowa when his wife Katy was transferred by American Home Shield and we are fortunate to have him as part of our staff. In Iowa, Kelly worked in law enforcement and also spent many years working on a cattle farm. According to Kelly: "Of all the things I do at the estate, I really enjoy helping someone with physical challenges see more of the garden than they thought was possible. The joy on their face is well worth the small amount of effort on our part." Kelly also enjoys meeting guests from all over the United States who come to tour the estate. He is an active member of New Community Church and is an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan. The next time you are visiting be sure to say hello to Kelly, and if you want to make a close friend, tell him you root for the Iowa Hawkeyes. ♣



*Kelly Calvert*

## Halloween AT THE CALLAWAY FAMILY HOME

The long tradition of celebrating Halloween at Hills & Dales will continue on Monday, October 31. Trick or treat for little goblins will begin at 5:30 p.m. and will last until 8:00 p.m. at the Callaway family home. To participate, enter the Hills & Dales Drive entrance gate and our staff will direct you to the north side of the house where we will continue the custom of giving candy bars to all costumed children. ♣



*Trick or treating at Hills & Dales Estate.*



# WHY ROBIN! IT'S "BATS" MAN!

Meet Auburn Ph.D. candidate, Sam Hirt and enjoy this multisensory presentation that will capture your attention and stimulate your brain. Come *see* and *hear* a live bat. *Feel* some of the equipment used to research these mysterious and important flying mammals. *Look* at the many different types of bats through pictures and videos. *Listen* to why bats are important. Then test your knowledge by taking a quiz on common misconceptions about bats, and see if you can identify some of the species based on their description. This presentation will have something for everyone and give you an opportunity to see a bat...up close. Call to sign up for this workshop which will be October 29. ♣



*Sam Hirt with his friend, the bat.*



# Celebrate Christmas! ❁



## Christmas TOURS

Experience our circa 1940's tinsel-laden Christmas tree, brilliant Poinsettias and other seasonal decorations during the holiday season. The Fuller E. Callaway family home and the visitor center will be decorated for the holidays from Friday, December 2, through Friday, December 23. Regular tour prices apply.

*The palm room at Christmas.*

# CHILDREN'S Christmas CELEBRATION

*Saturday, December 10, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.*



*Visiting Santa.*



*Decorating gingerbread houses.*

All children are invited to the Hills & Dales Estate visitor center to participate in our fourth annual Children's Christmas Celebration. Guests will decorate their own gingerbread house and Christmas ornaments. Santa will be here at 10 a.m. At 11 a.m. Debbie "Mama Jama" Burdette will delight children with Christmas stories and musician extraordinaire, Robin Treadwell, will lead children in a holiday sing-a-long. We invite everyone to come and enjoy the festivities along with fresh cider and Christmas cookies. All children's activities are free. Tours of the home decked out for the holidays will be available at regular price.



## HILLS & DALES ESTATE WORKSHOPS AND LECTURES

*We hope you will take advantage of the exciting opportunities we offer this fall and winter. Workshop fees include garden admission and refreshments. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Call 706-882-3242 or e-mail [info@hillsanddales.org](mailto:info@hillsanddales.org) to register. Annual pass holders receive a 20% discount.*

### LEAF CASTING

*Saturday, September 17, 10 a.m. - noon*

Staff from the estate will lead this hands-on leaf casting workshop. Each participant will create a wonderful casting of a large leaf that can be used as a decorative feature in your home or garden. Leaf choices will include big leaf Magnolia, hosta, castor bean, oakleaf hydrangea and elephant ear. All supplies will be provided. \$25

### BIRD MIGRATION: HOW DO THEY REALLY DO IT?

*Thursday, October 6, 6:30 p.m.*

Join noted author and ornithologist Giff Beaton as he takes you on a journey to discover the secrets of bird migration. According to Beaton, "Bird migration has entranced humans for centuries, and in this talk you will learn why birds migrate and how they navigate on their often incredible journeys." During the talk, Beaton will reveal the wonders of bird migration by using examples of birds found in or passing through Georgia. Beaton has authored six titles including: *Birding Georgia*, *Georgia Birds*, *Dragonflies and Damselflies of Georgia and the Southeast* and *The Breeding Atlas of Georgia Birds*. A 6:30 p.m. reception will be followed by a lecture at 7:00. The evening will conclude with a book signing. FREE but reservations are required.

### HEIRLOOM DAFFODILS FOR SOUTHERN GARDENS

*Saturday, October 22, 10 a.m. - noon*

Join noted daffodil expert Sara Van Beck as she shares her extensive knowledge of this unique group of garden bulbs. Sara will highlight the best varieties of daffodils for the South and discuss varieties that bloom from January through April. Fragrant, white



and orange types will be covered. Sara will also review planting and proper cultivation techniques and be available to sign her new book entitled: *Daffodils in Florida: A Field Guide to the Coastal South*. Participants will be provided a small bag of antique daffodil bulbs. \$20

### **WHY ROBIN! IT'S BATS MAN!**

*Saturday, October 29, 10 a.m. - noon*

More bats in Troup County would benefit us all! Experience live bats and learn about these often misunderstood creatures and the contribution they make to our environment. This unique program will be presented by Sam Hirt. Sam is a native Alaskan and a Ph.D. candidate in the Bio-Science Department at Auburn University. School age children and up welcome! \$5

### **MAKE YOUR OWN COAT OF ARMS**

*Saturday, November 12, 10 a.m. - noon*

What do Hogwarts, Aslan from Chronicles of Narnia and the Callaways have in common? They all have their very own coat of arms or crest. During this workshop you will learn about heraldic symbols and then design and create your very own coat of arms. If you're noble include stars, use blue to signify truthfulness or add a unicorn for courage. We'll provide all the supplies and materials along with a fun handout about symbols that commonly occur on a family crest. This workshop will be led by Carleton Wood and Joanna Baxter. All supplies will be provided. Suitable for children ages 8 and up. \$5

### **CHRISTMAS WREATHS**

*Saturday, December 3, 10 a.m. - noon*

Hills & Dales Estate horticulturist, Charlotte Baker, will help you create a beautiful, fresh wreath to add to your décor during the holiday season. Bring clippers if possible. All supplies will be provided, including evergreens from the garden. \$30

### **A CHRISTMAS FLORAL ARRANGEMENT**

*Saturday, December 10, 10 a.m. - noon*

Bring your favorite container and join floral designer, Jerry Rigby, in creating a colorful, fresh arrangement to enhance your home for Christmas. Bring clippers if possible. All supplies will be provided. \$30

# WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**LEAF CASTING** (10 a.m. September 17)

# People \_\_\_\_\_ Regular - \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Pass Holders - \$20 \_\_\_\_\_

**BIRD MIGRATION: HOW DO THEY REALLY DO IT?**  
(6:30 p.m. October 6)

# People \_\_\_\_\_ Regular - free \_\_\_\_\_ Pass Holders - free \_\_\_\_\_

**HEIRLOOM DAFFODILS FOR SOUTHERN GARDENS**  
(10 a.m. October 22)

# People \_\_\_\_\_ Regular - \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ Pass Holders - \$16 \_\_\_\_\_

**WHY ROBIN! IT'S BATS MAN!** (10 a.m. October 29)

# People \_\_\_\_\_ Regular - \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ Pass Holders - \$4 \_\_\_\_\_

**MAKE YOUR OWN COAT OF ARMS** (10 a.m. November 12)

# People \_\_\_\_\_ Regular - \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ Pass Holders - \$4 \_\_\_\_\_

**CHRISTMAS WREATHS** (10 a.m. December 3)

# People \_\_\_\_\_ Regular - \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ Pass Holders - \$24 \_\_\_\_\_

**A CHRISTMAS FLORAL ARRANGEMENT** (10 a.m. December 10) # People \_\_\_\_\_ Regular - \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ Pass Holders - \$24 \_\_\_\_\_

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or Call: 706-882-3242

**OUR MISSION:** *We seek to preserve and interpret the unique horticulture, architecture and history of Hills & Dales Estate so that our guests can be enriched by the legacy of personal involvement and stewardship.*

**VALUES:** *Acceptance, Community, Education, Family, Graciousness, Integrity, Patience, Perseverance, Southern Hospitality, Spirituality, Stewardship*



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❧ 1916 Hills and Dales Drive ❧  
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