



BARD-ING SCHOOL?
 Summer workshops teach young actors how to do Shakespeare **A3**



SPORTS
 Softball team has fun - and wins **B1**

LIFESTYLE
 Benefit has Coney Island flavor **B4**

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Anne W. Semmes/Staff Photographer
This Ruby Horse Chestnut tree in Cos Cob's Strickland Park was planted four years ago as a memorial to George Smith IV, who disappeared at sea on July 5, 2005 — during his honeymoon.

Five years later

Smith family still looking for justice — and answers

By Anne W. Semmes

There's been impressive growth in the Ruby Horse Chestnut tree planted four years ago in July in Cos Cob's Strickland Park in memory of George Allen Smith IV. Its fullness is beginning to offer shade on these hot summer days.

Last Saturday would have been the fifth wedding anniversary of young George and Jennifer Hagel Smith. But, George tragically and mysteriously disappeared at sea in Greek waters on July 5, 2005 during the couple's Royal Caribbean honeymoon cruise.

Since that date, the Smith family has not ceased fighting for justice for their son and working to discern what caused his disappearance. Their fight has brought some tangible and impressive results: a long-fought-for Cruise Safety Bill was recently passed by the U.S. Senate after having been passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill brings far tighter security and transparency on cruise ships, and the family has hopes it will soon be signed by President Obama, close to the anniversary of their son's disappearance.

The family is also looking toward Oct. 18, when their long-standing appeal of

See SMITH on A16

VOL. 9 NO. 26 30 PAGES
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Inside

- Police ReportsA6
- ObituariesA8
- EditorialA15
- Legal NoticesA4
- LifestyleB1
- ClassifiedsB10

Weather

SUNNY
 H 79 L 60
 0 percent chance of precipitation

Putting on a show

Anne von Stuelpnagel is the creative force behind Bruce Museum exhibitions



Anne W. Semmes/Staff Photographer
Anne von Stuelpnagel, director of exhibitions at the Bruce Museum, is boning up on circuses in advance of an exhibit this fall, "Under the Big Top," which will explore the art and science of the circus. Von Stuelpnagel, who considers herself a set designer, has been with the Bruce for 30 years.

By Anne W. Semmes

Anne von Stuelpnagel's formal title at the Bruce Museum is director of exhibitions, but she defines herself as a set designer. She often can be seen in her work jeans creating set designs — Bruce exhibitions — with her team of three, and usually with a smile on her face.

"This is a dream job," says von Stuelpnagel, with a grin. "I've been here 30 years this summer, because the work is so cool and so different. It never gets boring."

Walking with her through the Bruce's new exhibit, "The Dressmaker's Art: Highlights of the Bruce Museum's Costume Collection," you can see the many layers of her involvement in each set of glorious vintage dresses from the collection. "The costumes range across 100 years of fashion, beginning in the 1930s," she says. "Doing it chronologically, I had to make the show look cohesive with the different sets."

First off, she didn't know how puffy the dresses would be. "This was their first exhibit since 1994. The costumes were in storage — in acid-free boxes. I had no chance to see the dresses, but the guest curators described a number of them," she said.

Working with her team, von Stuelpnagel determined the backdrop color for each set of dresses, with period moldings brought from a local lumberyard. The props include the occasional rug from the Bruce collection, paintings to fit the dresses, and a Tiffany-style lamp taken from a staffer's desk to set off two flapper dresses. Two summery costumes posed in a porch setting stood before a reflection of leaves on the wall. "We used a *gobo*," she says, "a metal disk with a leaf pattern, to shoot that pattern on the wall."

All the underpinnings of the day — including corsets — needed fitting on the mannequins before the dresses could be added. Hair styles were created out of crepe paper.

"Everything for each show is done fresh," she says. Von Stuelpnagel's background is as a studio artist. She has the whisper of an accent from her native Germany. "I finished art school in 1977 in Munich with a bachelor's



When she is not designing the many "set changes" at the Bruce Museum, von Stuelpnagel is an artist in her own right. She created this woodcut of a coyote.

degree in studio art and painting. I then went for a masters in stage design. But how do you make a living?" she said. "Museums then didn't really have museum designers."

See SHOW on A17

