

People and places

# LIFE

Frances Lowe • flowe@winchesterstar.com

## LeAnn Rimes to perform at Patsy Cline Classic

Tickets are available for the Patsy Cline Classic concert, set for Nov. 16 and featuring country music star LeAnn Rimes. The concert will begin at 8 p.m. in the Patsy Cline Theatre at Handley High School. Local singer Britani Myers will be the opening act. Ticket prices range from \$39.50 to \$79.50 with proceeds benefiting the Winchester Education Foundation. For tickets, visit [ticketfly.com/event/162669/](http://ticketfly.com/event/162669/).

The  
Winchester Star  
Saturday  
October 27, 2012



completed work on the front. His crew used hand hydraulic jacks to gently and in tandem lift the columns and then support them with large wooden beams while replacing the decking.

# Preserving porches

By **LAURA McFARLAND**  
The Winchester Star

**MIDDLETOWN** — Some “shifty” business has been taking place at Belle Grove Plantation.

The historic 1797 manor house has been undergoing a major restoration project, with two of the biggest changes being to the house’s front and rear porches, Executive Director Elizabeth McClung said.

Work to both porches has involved delicately “jacking up” the massive wooden columns without wrecking either them or the roofline so the mahogany decking underneath could be completely redone.

“The wooden porches really take a beating with the weather,” she said. “Both porches have had patches on the decking, but we

got to the place where they had to be completely redone.”

In addition to the porches, the house — at 336 Belle Grove Road near Middletown — has had all of its exterior woodwork repaired and repainted, McClung said. The work was completed by Mike Cook’s Painting Service of Winchester during 10 days in September.

Vintage, a restoration company owned by David Logan in Winchester, has been responsible for the work on the porches, she said. The renovation of the front porch was finished during five weeks between late August and late September. Work on the back porch started about three weeks ago and is continuing.

Funding for the restoration came from a grant awarded by

the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Historic Sites Fund, McClung said. The total cost for the porches is estimated at about \$38,000, while the exterior woodwork will be about \$12,000.

Belle Grove is owned by the National Trust, but it had to vie with the organization’s other 26 historic sites for funding, McClung said. The house is operated by Belle Grove Inc., a nonprofit regional board of directors.

The pride was evident in McClung’s voice as she pointed to portions of the house’s facade that have been restored. Renovating a historic house usually is an involved process, but the end result is worth it, she said.

For work on the house, Logan’s crew used hand hydraulic

jacks to gently and in tandem lift the porches’ columns and then supported them with large wooden beams while the decking was replaced. The columns were only lifted by about ¼-inch — “we are not trying to move it; we are trying to loosen it,” Logan said.

“It is always a nervous time for us,” he said. “We put more supports in than we need.”

The crew had to replace some rotten wooden timbers of the floor system under the decking of the back porch, he said. That wood was all white oak.

The decking on both porches is made of mahogany because of its rot resistance, Logan said. When the house was built, workers would have used resinous pine, which was also rot-resistant, but “now it is almost impos-

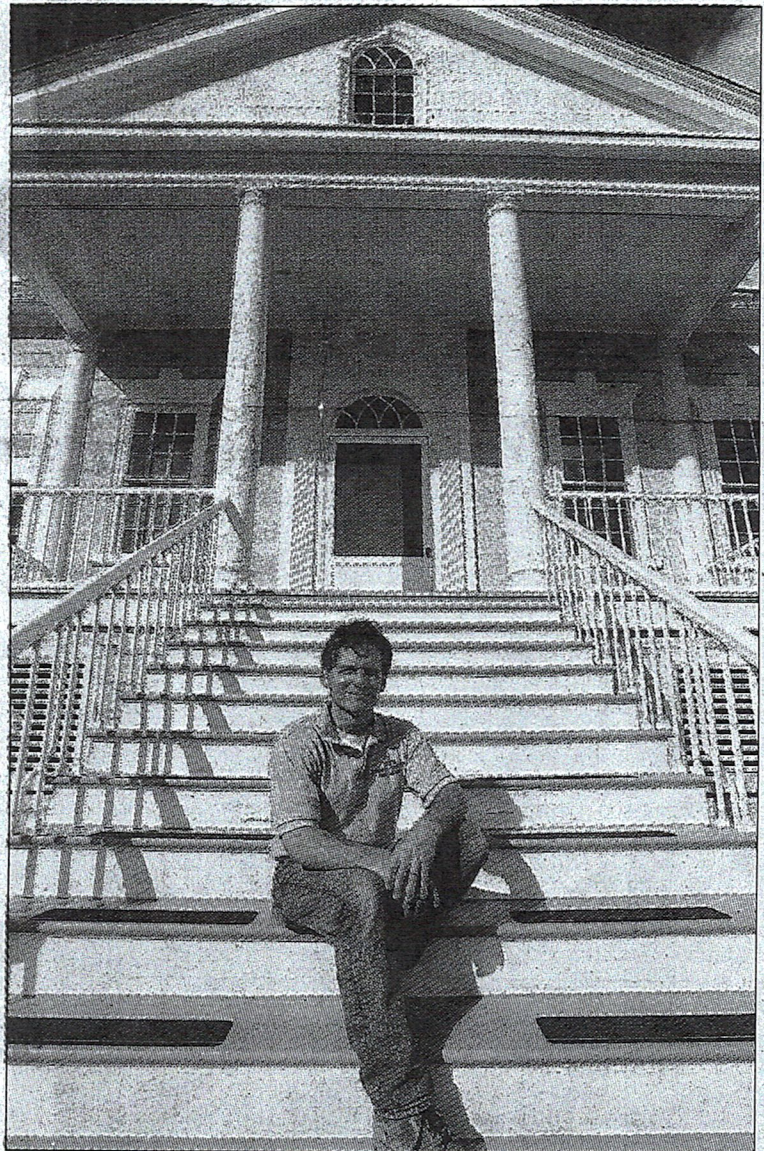
sible to find old-growth pines.”

Another feature of the porches was that the decks were built at a positive (upward) slope away from the house, so all the new wood had to lay flat but not level, he said. Metal shims, or spacers, were also placed under the column bases to help them “breathe” by giving them more air space.

After the decking is completed on the back porch, the crew will finish the ends and put on new porch wraps. Then it will fix the stairs by replacing the failing trim boards and redoing the railings. Then Cook’s team will come back and repaint.

For his part of the exterior wood restoration, Cook had to first remove the lead paint on the

See **Porches**, Page **C8**



JEFF TAYLOR/The Winchester Star

David Logan of Winchester and his company Vintage Renovation have restored the front porch at the Belle Grove Plantation and are now working on the rear porch.

## Porches

from **Page C7**

building, said Dennis Campbell, building and grounds supervisor. He had to wear a hazardous-material suit, use a special vacuum cleaner with enclosed suction and place plastic sheets on the ground to catch any materials that escaped.

The work was completed on the window and door frames, moldings and trim, and all the elements on the newly restored porches. All of the painting was accomplished with paint donated by Valspar through the Lowe's store in Front Royal.

"We had three lifts and nine guys," Campbell said. "They completely scraped the whole house down and repainted it."

Outside of the actual restoration

work, one of the major positive aspects of the project was that only local contractors were hired to do the work, McClung said. The project has been a group effort among the contractors, the staff at the house, and Ashley Wilson, the Graham Gund Architect at the National Trust, to make sure the preservation work was correct.

### Information

Belle Grove, at 336 Belle Grove Road near Middletown, is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and from 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and \$6 for students. For more information, call 540-869-2028 or visit [bellegrove.org](http://bellegrove.org).

— Contact Laura McFarland at [lmcfarland@winchesterstar.com](mailto:lmcfarland@winchesterstar.com)

By **LAURA McFA**  
The Winchester

**MIDDLETOWN** — So  
business has been tak  
Belle Grove Plantatio  
The historic 17