

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS

from the Preservation Society of Newport County

A Weekend of Coaching Returns to Newport in August

(Newport, RI)— Authentic 19th century coaches drawn by matched and highly-trained teams of horses will return to Newport from August 20-23, 2009, in the triennial renewal of a Weekend of Coaching, hosted by The Preservation Society of Newport County. The public will enjoy free viewing of the colorful and historic coaches every day, as they drive through the streets of Newport and the grounds of the Newport Mansions, celebrating and preserving a century-old sporting tradition. Approximately a dozen coaching teams will come to Newport from around the country

The routes of the daily drives will be published in the local press and the Preservation Society's website (www.NewportMansions.org), along with suggested viewing spots. In addition, there will be a free-to-the-public driving exhibition on the grounds of The Elms starting at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, August 22. The weekend will culminate with a formal Coaching Dinner Dance at The Breakers on Saturday evening.

The tradition of coaching grew out of the 18th and 19th century mail runs in England, which later made their way across the Atlantic to the United States. The horse-drawn mail coaches were eventually replaced by railroads, but nostalgia led to the development of coaching as a sport. The Coaching Club of New York was formed in the latter part of the 19th century, eventually becoming part of the social fabric of Newport in the summer. The Wetmores, the Bells, the Vanderbilts and the Belmonts were all active members, bringing their coaches together to go to the races, the polo games, and the Casino.

The two types of open-air vehicles used in the sport of coaching—a Road Coach and the slightly smaller Park Drag—employ a team of four horses. All seating is outside, with the driver, known as a "whip," sitting in the slightly elevated right front seat, and the whip's wife or female relative taking up the "box seat" on the left. The rear bench of the coach holds at least two specialized footmen called grooms. Two center benches can hold up to 10 passengers.

The public will be able to view the coaches as they drive around Newport. The planned driving routes and schedule are available online at www.NewportMansions.org. Tickets for the dinner-dance at The Breakers are \$400 per person, and reservations are required. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.NewportMansions.org, email Events@NewportMansions.org, or call (401) 847-1000.

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Rhode Island is a non-profit educational organization accredited by the American Association of Museums and dedicated to preserving and interpreting the area's historic architecture, landscapes and decorative arts. Its 11 historic properties—seven of them National Historic Landmarks—span more than 250 years of American architectural and social development.

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