

Belvedere is Ours!

Farley Jones
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Examining the back of main house

At 1:00 p.m., October 10, the caretaker of Belvedere received a call from Mr. McGuire, representative of the seller of Belvedere, the Bronfman family, saying that, from that moment, "Belvedere is in new hands." This last miracle of many, the settlement of Belvedere, was over, and we became the new owners. That evening, at the New York Center, the story unfolded. Philip Burley, director of the New York Center, explained that he and Miss Kim went to the bank at opening time -- 8:30- to obtain the check for buying Belvedere.

But Philip and Miss Kim discovered that the bank in Washington had not yet transferred \$ 69,000 to New York. Miss [Young Oon] Kim, through long and careful preparation for any such circumstance, had obtained a number of large loans from friends.

With that money she paid for the remainder of the settlement. "At the last minute," said Philip, "she saved the day."

Then, with the check, they went to the realtor's office, where, with their arrival, Belvedere became ours. All concerned were exuberant. The sellers took everyone to lunch, asked Dr. Oyama and Miss Kim to pray, and then toasted the new owners of Belvedere.

Some of the new owners were already arriving at Belvedere. The HSA Headquarters national staff opened it up, readying it for Mobile Fund Raising teams 1 and 2, who arrived shortly, and then Farley [Jones], Vivien [Burley], Bob Standard, and Betsy Drapcho [Hunter] came, bringing word that now we own Belvedere!

The teams met on the east lawn, overlooking the Hudson, to pray and talk about what Belvedere meant to them. Farley, citing the accomplishment, said, "Now we have experienced what we can achieve through day-by-day application of ourselves."

After touring the house and grounds, the team members enjoyed some fellowship together in the front hall and enjoyed our first meal at Belvedere: a roast beef dinner eaten on sheet "tables" stretched across the floor of the bare dining room.

At the New York Center the celebration continued. "This part is for God," said Miss Kim, as she cut off a large portion of the layer cake, baked for the occasion by Steve Babcock. Philip, in speaking of the settlement, revealed the crucial role of Miss Kim both at the last minute and throughout the process, and described some of the history of obtaining Belvedere.

He looked at many houses, trying to find a suitable one for our Leader to work from. When he found Belvedere, it had been on the market for only three days, having been tied up.

In negotiations for over a year. He sent our Leader a brochure; our Leader said to buy it. Since then the behind the scenes work has been considerable, undergoing setbacks and triumphs that caused those involved in the negotiations to say: "Now we know the power of prayer." Just one example; a wealthy Englishman offered to buy before we had made a written agreement for a larger sum than we had offered, but the seller declined, saying "I cannot betray the Oriental lady (Miss Kim)."

Mr. Oyama concluded the evening with an inspiring address. "For 6,000 years God never had a dwelling.

In America we have prepared a place for Him. For millionaires it is a small sum; for us it is a huge sum." He then described the work of the Japanese flower-selling teams which he started. Dr. Oyama also held up as an inspirational example. Miss Kim's devotion to obtaining Belvedere, indicating that all people involved in the negotiations were moved by her dedication.

Mr. Oyama described the reasons for this kind of miracle; determination, hard work, courage, effort, and time. "There is hope for saving America. Continuous work can bring a miracle. Do your best for posterity. Keep up your spirit."

At Belvedere

"How can you describe a miracle?" Miss Kim asked us. "Now you've seen Belvedere. Is it better than your dreams?" It is. We've never felt so happy as when we asked the caretaker for the keys to let us into Belvedere, knowing that it was now ours. After prayer, we entered the house that had awaited so long to be ours. The large library, the paneled living room, the elegant dining room, and the bright kitchen, though bare, reflected the design of someone who wanted to build a perfect house. Elsewhere there were many rooms for guests and servants, most with a view, a fireplace, and a bath. Dr. Nelson, the caretaker, came to help us prepare for the coming guests. For the first time in a long time, the heat, gas, and water were turned on in anticipation of the inauguration of a new generation of owners.

After the fund-raising teams arrived, the tour began in earnest, with Farley in the lead. The French doors of the dining room lead to a colonnade with a detailed mosaic ceiling and a fountain at the end. The large green lawn is bordered by a stone terrace and another fountain. We walked past it, towards a rock that looks like a perfect site for the sermon on the Mount or Jesus' ascension into Heaven. On each side, the land dips; on the right is an excellent view of the Hudson River, on the left, of the tennis courts, swimming pool and front lawns. We went down on the right to a path taking us by the apple orchard, grape arbor, and greenhouse to the gardener's cottage, bigger than the houses many of us grew up in.

The path gently wound across the property to a shaded pond, built, said Farley, for the children to ice-skate on. Nestled on the side was a playhouse complete with fireplace and chandelier, looking across the pond to a bridge. After crossing the bridge, we explored the artist's studio, set on a hillside near a stream. Coming back down the hill, we stood together on a bluff overlooking layers of green grass and trees, melting into the mountains in the background. Then, crossing the large and gracefully dipped lawn bordering route 9, we saw an old tree. Someone had cared enough about maintaining its beauty to build metal braces supporting its spreading limbs. Back on the other side of the house, we explored the garage and caretaker's house. Mr. and Mrs. Nelson talked to a few of us as we went through. Yes, tried to explain one member, these young people really did help buy Belvedere through selling candles! The garage, bordered by a stable, has three stories. At the center of the building is a round brick tower. This was the last cranny to explore, so we climbed the winding circular stairway inside. Suddenly from the top, Fred Goble yelled "Everyone go outside and look!" We ran to the hill side next to the main house, overlooking the river. There we saw a rainbow encircling the sun. To the left was a bright, unknown source of light, intersecting the rainbow and creating a pattern resembling a cross, or a base of four positions, depending on where you were standing. Together and happy, and sure that God was showing us his pleasure, we joined arms and closed the afternoon with singing "Tong-il."