

LANDIS ARBORETUM

THE NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

—Anne Donnelly

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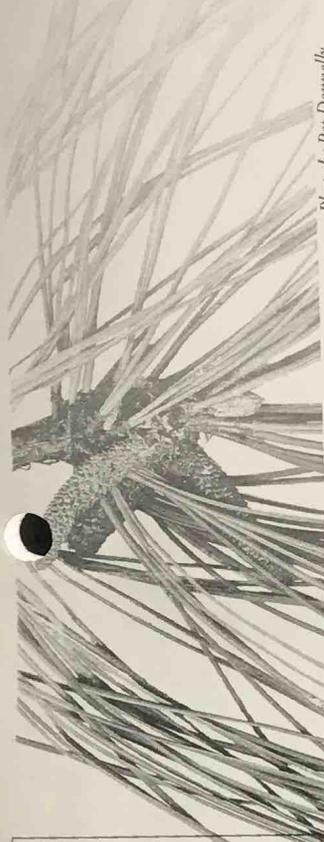


Photo by Pat Donnelly



It was a successful fusion: the 5K Forest Run and the Fall Plant Sale were held on the same day. But that's not all: also

included were a bird walk at a foggy 6:30 am, a book sale, a bake sale, and a live broadcast by Ed Sherlock of WSDE 1190. Assemblyman Peter Lopez officiated the race and promised to be a participant next year. The very challenging course for the Forest Run forced the runners to focus on every step. It is hoped that they return on a slower-paced day and enjoy these trails more fully. There were just under 100 participants, and the winner, Josh Tallent, ran it in just over 18 minutes—astounding to folks like me!

The freshly painted Farmhouse and the recently opened Welcome Center served as a backdrop for the race finish line and the swirl of activity as the runners compared their times and enjoyed refreshments under the shade of the old birch. Many supplemented the fruit and sports drinks with the delicious fresh goodies at the Bake Sale. Marcie Reiff, Phyllis Olsen, and Aunt Phyllis assembled an impressive array of cookies, pies, muffins, and brownies. The expression "run to eat" was heard quite a few times.

The official Third Annual Forest 5K "tree-shirt" sported our traditional "Great Oak" design, along with our race sponsors emblazoned on the back. Bless you Wynn Kintz of Kintz Plastics, Cobleskill, NY.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 14

Anne Frey, former president of the Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Association, will offer an introductory course in beekeeping.

November 17

The Arboretum will host a wine tasting at Grapevine Farms.

Please join us!

For more information, call 518-875-6935 or info@landisarbo-retum.org; or visit our website at www.LandisArboretum.org.

The plant and book sales are always the centerpiece for our "regulars" This shopping is never a chore! As an added bonus, Boy Scout Troop 501 was ready and eager to transport purchases to vehicles and load them. I stand in awe of Susan Sagendorf's masterful orchestration of an army of volunteers. The Arboretum thanks you one and all!

Another recent activity at the Arboretum was the World Wide Plein-Aire Paint Out. We also hosted a retreat for a local agency, two garden clubs, the Gilboa summer cap, and a hiking club. By the time you read this, we will have hosted the Boy Scout Otschodela District Camporee, and our Volunteer Recognition/ Lape Day Celebration.

Quiet Reality

The good news is we have incurred no debt. However, remaining debt-free is not enough. Nor are we alone in facing a financial dilemma. Landis is among many small non-profits and charities that are facing hard economic times and

decisions. The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* predicted that 100,000 of the million non-profits and charities will fail in 2009. Landis will persevere! In last winter's issue of this newsletter, our treasurer, Barbara Brabetz, outlined the drastic measures we had taken to conserve our funds. She surmised that 2009 would be even worse. She was painfully right-on. We have been without an office manager for a year. Our executive director, Thom O'Connor, has recently resigned. Fred Breglia, Board members, and volunteers are covering the office and all fundraising events as required.

Thanks to Thom O'Connor, we enjoy wider recognition than we have ever had. We see increased activity on our grounds, but there are smaller and fewer donations from our members.

Although we have had the best possible exposure on our shoe-string budget, we still hear "What is an arboretum?" or "I've lived in this area all my life and have never been over there."

Sustainability issues:

- **Membership:** recruitment of new members, retention of membership, and finding a way to attract the younger generation to our cause.
- **Maintenance:** We look better, but our buildings are old and require constant attention. Equipment is used constantly, over rough terrain, and needs relentless maintenance.
- **Endowment base** is insufficient.
- **Grants:** We need lots of help here! Grant writing is a skill, and grants are essential for survival of the

—continued on page 4.

The Perfect Green Gift for the Holidays: A membership to Landis Arboretum.

With membership come discounts on classes and programs, as well as merchandise in the Acorn Shop—great for folks who have enough "stuff" and love the outdoors.

We have a beautiful Membership Gift Certificate you can purchase by sending a membership application, available on our website (www.landisarboretum.org) with your check. We will send the membership certificate to you or directly to whom-ever you designate.

THE LANDIS ARBORETUM NEWSLETTER is published quarterly for its members. The Arboretum's mission is to foster the appreciation of trees and other plants and their importance in our environment.

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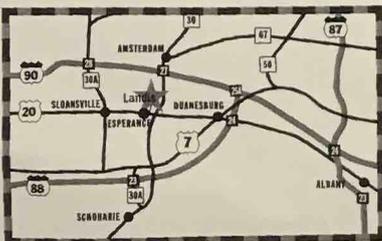
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Welcome to our new board members:

Nolan Marciniac, Gina Nielsen, and Laura Scoones.

The Arboretum is located one and one-half miles north of Route 20 in Esperance. Follow the signs from the village to Lape Road. The Arboretum is one-quarter mile straight ahead. Visit our website for more information and directions.



Education Highlights



—Gina Nielsen

Family and Friends at Landis

My family and I attended

many of the events offered by Landis this year.

We had a great time snowshoeing with Fred in March. There were more than twenty participants—many using the free snowshoes offered by the Arboretum. Fred and Erin's dog Finn often lead the way. All of us, young and old, certainly appreciated the fire and snacks provided by our resident Boy Scout Troop # 501.

Later in the season, we were well armed with bug spray



SNOWSHOE REVIEW
SECOND SUNDAY
SNOWSHOE

Bring your own snowshoes or borrow a pair newly purchased from LLBean, courtesy of our Norcross Grant. Adult and children's snowshoes available. Snowshoes are distributed first come, first served.

Be sure to stop in the Welcome Center for a hot beverage and some snacks. Beginner and experienced snowshoers are welcomed.

Members: \$5/person, \$15 for family; non-members \$10/person, \$25 family.

Donations to support the Arboretum are welcome.

January 10, 2010 Sunday, 12–2 p.m.

Explore the Arboretum on snowshoes to identify animal signs and become familiar with our trails.No snow? We'll take a hike. Meet at the barn.

Guides: Gina Nielsen, educator, and Anne Donnelly, retired biology professor.

February 14, 2010 Sunday, 12–2 p.m.

Using the outdoor laboratory of 548-acre Landis Arboretum, participants will learn how to recognize major trees and shrubs of the Northeast in winter.

Guide: Fred Breglia, ISA certified arborist and snowshoe king.

when we attended the bird hike with George Steele. The group identified 46 species of birds in just three hours. I saw my first indigo bunting by the woodland pond. We were accompanied by an enthusiastic young girl who was present for last year's bird hike and seemed as knowledgeable as our leader. This young girl obviously does not spend her time in front of the TV!

It's tradition that we drag our neighbors "kicking and screaming" to the Arboretum's Garden Party. All joking aside, they love to bid at the silent auction, and we have a wonderful time regardless of the weather. This year, Peter Rumora's talk about the levels of plant addiction had everyone in stitches—and diagnosing his or her own stage of addiction.

We had a gorgeous day for dragonfly hunting with Anne Donnelly and quite a large turnout of all ages. Anne, the dragonfly queen, perches on her bench, adorned with dragonfly jewelry, and awaits the presentation of the dragonflies to her lap. Kids and adults catch the dragonflies for her to identify. We learned to sex them, how to tell damselflies from dragonflies, and to identify the common species found at the Arboretum. We used new nets purchased from Norcross grant money—and we could have used more!

My family and I look forward to the 2010 Arboretum calendar and will plan to attend as many events as possible, always inviting our friends and neighbors.

As I review the calendar and work on plans for next year, I see one trend in our 2009 calendar offerings: a program was rarely well attended if the cost was greater than \$25. In fact,

many of our programs with fees of \$25 or more had to be canceled. Members should remember that, as a benefit of membership, \$20 is subtracted from the cost of the program they are attending, and they are eligible for discounts at purchases at the plant sales and the Acorn Shop. When I worked at the plant sale and pushed for new and renewed memberships, I certainly mentioned this fact. Many members admitted that they don't take advantage of the programs. So if you pay \$50 for membership, use \$20 for a program, and spend \$100 at each

Sponsor a Program

If one of your neighbors happens to be a business owner, encourage him or her to support the Arboretum by sponsoring educational programs. The name of the business will appear prominently in the program description in the *Calendar of Events*, published in January.

sale (which, with the member's discount, saves you \$20), then your cost of membership is actually only \$10. I think that many of our programs might have been retained if members kept these figures in mind.

I would encourage members to make maximum use of their memberships by attending our exceptional programs. If you cannot attend the program, then seize the opportunity to introduce your neighbors or friends to the Arboretum's offerings. And make sure to fill out an evaluation form so we can better serve the needs of the community.



Photo of Fred Breglia by Sonja Javarone

COLLECTIONS NEWS

Fred Breglia, Director of Horticulture and Operations, He is a regular guest on WAMC's "Vox Pop"

Despite tough financial times, we have had a banner year here at Landis. It was our good fortune that many programs provided us with the labor to accomplish all those tasks that were on the "to-do" list for a while.

The Private Industry Council supplied us with nine workers who helped care for our very valuable plantings. All the primary collections were weeded, mulched, and edged, including the entry hillside plantings, the rhododendron collection, the crabapple collection, the lilac collection, and many individual notable specimens. Together, we pruned and continued to clean out dead wood from specimen trees. New plantings have been structurally pruned.

The grounds are in better shape than ever. The stone walls along Lape Road and the Loveland Gardens have been rebuilt. We did substantial trail work throughout the Arboretum. Brush piles have been removed. A new drainage tile system has been installed on the roof of the Visitor Center, with the help of Steve Perog (Capitol Supply Company), who donated materials, and Nelson Miller, who donated the use of his backhoe to dig the trench.

A group of 30 SUNY Cobleskill students in the Community Outreach Group donated a day's worth of labor to help with trail work and perennial garden maintenance.

Phase I of the handicapped accessible gardens is now complete. The infrastructure, which includes handicap parking and a turn-around, has been installed. As funds become available, phase II will include the installation of shrubs, paved walkways, and a pergola.

The entire Farmhouse has been scraped and painted, and the visitor Welcome Center (formerly the garage) is now complete. The electrical service has been upgraded to 200-amp service.

The Department of Social Services has made available workers who continue to assist in grounds work such as weeding, mulching, trimming, and setting up for events. They rebuilt and stained many picnic tables. They cleaned up and organized the Barn and Greenhouse.

Another organization, Experience Works, now pays a person for our house cleaning services.

Horticultural Developments

Our plant database, (BG Base), continues to grow with the help of Ed Miller and

his work on the Native Plant Collection. I have entered half of the collection into our BG Base system and have uploaded it onto the Plant Collection server. The Plant Collections portal is up and running with our updated data, so be sure to visit it from your home computer: <http://plantcollections.pathf.com/>. It will enable you to see Landis Arboretum's entire database.

Toledo Botanic SWAP

As an official North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC) garden, we agree to share our collection for propagation and research. Just recently a contact of mine, Mat Ross, Horticulturist at the Toledo Botanic Garden, and I swapped daylilies for acorns. I sent him a package of acorns from various NAPCC oaks at Landis, and he shipped me a sampling of NAPCC hybrid daylilies and a species hosta which have been incorporated into the Perennial Gardens.

The link to the NAPCC page is also now on-line.

For more information, call 518-875-6935, email info@landisarboretum.org, or visit our website at www.LandisArboretum.org.



FROM ACORNS, MIGHTY OAKS: *Quercus*

—Ed Miller, Curator of the Native Plant Collection

In our publications, you probably have read that the Arboretum has a nationally recognized oak collection. You may have wondered what makes it so special.

First of all, the collection boasts many species, including nearly all of our native oaks as well as some horticultural species from temperate zones around the world. Moreover, the trees are now about 50 years old, many of them having been started from acorns by Fred Lape. Some trees are even older, including our iconic 450-year-old white oak, (photo right) which was growing long before Lape was born. The tradition of growing oaks from acorns at Landis continues: the shrub oaks

added to the Native Plant Collection this year were grown from acorns collected in 2007.

Two national organizations, the American Public Gardens Association and the North American Plant Collections Consortium, have recognized our collections and our "commitment to the conservation and care of plant collections curated at the highest professional level." In participating in this consortium, we have documented the history of each oak in Fred Lape's collection and have recently included the record of each of the young oaks added in the Native Plant Collection. These records are now shared with a network of botanical gardens and arboreta across North America. We also agree to share

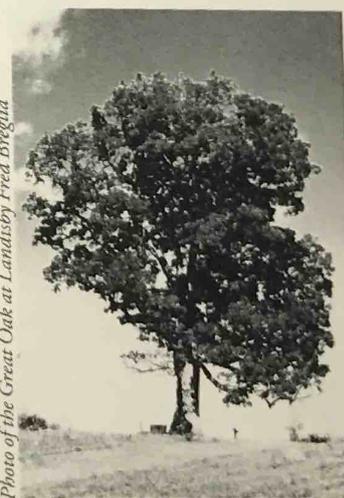


Photo of the Great Oak at Landis by Fred Breglia

our collection for propagation and research.

According to the Consortium, "The genus *Quercus* has been estimated to contain over 500 naturally-occurring taxa which are distributed throughout

the northern hemisphere in a broad variety of climate zones and habitats. It would be virtually impossible to develop a comprehensive collection of oaks at a single garden due to climatic constraints. Having a multi-institutional collection with gardens in a variety of climate areas expands the possibilities for maximizing the representation of oak diversity."

Perhaps the best thing about our oaks is that they are right here waiting to be admired. Visitors should take the Fred Lape Trail and read the labels on the oak trees as they climb the hill and beyond. The foliage is changing color and there is much beauty to behold.

—continued on page 4.

Time for a change

Landis's Thom O'Connor resigns

By Jim Poole

Citing the need for a change, Thom O'Connor, the energetic director of the Landis Arboretum in Esperance, resigned his position.

He directed the Arboretum for three years, and members of the volunteer board of trustees called those three years the most productive the Arboretum has ever had.

The Arboretum, which has hundreds of acres of gardens, unique trees and plants, trails and special events, is a non-profit organization and has struggled financially recently.

But Mr. O'Connor said money wasn't an issue.

"It was time for a change for me personally," Mr. O'Connor said from his Richmondville home.

"I met some very wonderful people at the Arboretum,

and I hope to use those contacts to move on to something else."

A veteran marketer, Mr. O'Connor created several new events at the Arboretum and greatly broadened the facility's reach.

He also brought in much-needed funds, including grants and legislative member items.

"We're very grateful for all he did for us," said board President Anne Donnelly. "He gave us a face, a brand name, and a national reputation."

Board Treasurer Barbara Brabetz agreed with Ms. Donnelly.

"Thom had great vision, and he had a terrific ability to keep many balls in the air," Ms. Brabetz said. "He was a wonderful director in this tough economy."

A statement from the board to Mr. O'Connor echoed

Photo: Ken Nichols



those words, saying that he "single-handedly rehabilitated the Landis reputation with local and state entities . . ."

He resigned August 2. Ms. Brabetz said trustees urged him to stay, but "he indicated to us he really wanted to leave."

Ms. Brabetz and Ms. Donnelly agreed that the board will probably wait before beginning a search for a new director.

The Arboretum's season ends in about six weeks, so bringing in a new director with a schedule already in place might be unsettling, Ms. Donnelly said. "I think we'll coast on Thom's legacy through the end of the

season," she said. "But we don't want to lose the momentum."

Trustees may redefine the job, she added, possibly making it a part-time and altering some duties.

"We're obviously not going to fill his shoes," Ms. Brabetz said. "We'll have a search but we're not sure when."

Even though he left the Arboretum, Mr. O'Connor has continued to help. He worked on the Hot Tunes for Hard Times concert, a fundraiser, this past weekend and will help with the Arboretum's 5K and fall plant sale in September.

"Thom's been very generous with his time," Ms. Brabetz said. "It's not like he cut all ties."

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Landis Arboretum Adopts a Paperless Future

According to Yogi Berra, "The future ain't what it used to be." And that's certainly true of the "paperless" future of the Arboretum's *Newsletter*.

Although the Arboretum's "green" philosophy is the primary reason for the move to electronic publication, our current financial situation makes printing and mailing a newsletter cost prohibitive. But e-publication will also give us a chance to be vastly more creative—sharing color photos and in-depth articles on horticultural issues, bringing you up to date on Arboretum events, and linking you to a larger world of people with similar interests and values.

This will be a transition for us all, and we will ease into it by making the Winter 2009 issue available in both print and electronic formats. Beginning with the Spring 2010 issue, however, we will mail printed newsletters only to those members who have requested that we do so.

Let's take this leap into the future together. The first step will be making sure that we have current e-mail addresses for our readers. If you haven't already provided or updated your e-mail address, contact info@landisarboretum.org to do so.

More information about our bigger, better, greener newsletter will appear in the Winter 2009 issue of the *Newsletter*.

President's Message—continued from page 1.

Arboretum. We rely heavily on the NYS grants to support our operations. Due to the State budget crisis, some of our funding is 11 months overdue.

- Funds are restricted for specific use and cannot be tapped for operations. It is very difficult to find grants that can be used for operations—phone, lights, heat, gas, computers, fuel oil, etc. It costs \$11,000 per month for us to remain in business.

Solutions:

- We have a dynamic new membership management volunteer in Wilma Jozwiak. We need more members to manage.

- **Underwriter for Education Programs:** Outdoor education is part of our mission. Just \$1000 would support the backbone of our offerings. It costs \$250 to sponsor one program. Your company's name would be printed on our calendar.

- **Bring our neighbors in:** promote Landis as a local resource, easily accessed, with lots to offer individuals and families. Travel is easy and convenient.

Please do what you can to help us with these solutions!

For more information, call 518-875-6935 or info@landisarboretum.org; or visit our website at www.LandisArboretum.org.

From Acorns—continued from page 3.

Do Try This at Home: Oaks from Acorns

I have been successful growing acorns by screening the wormy ones from the good ones before planting. If you steal your acorns from a squirrel hoard they will already have done this. Otherwise, discard all the acorns that float in water. I plant the acorns, horizontally and just under the surface, in well drained soil in the fall. I protect them from squirrels by placing chicken wire over the planting. Don't be too fast about removing the wire in the spring. One year the squirrels dug up the sprouting seedlings!

Please note that you must obtain permission to take plant materials from the Arboretum.

LANDIS PORTRAITS

A series about the people behind the plants at the Arboretum

Ron Neadle

Ron Neadle has been a good neighbor.

Ron was born in Esperance and spent his boyhood on his family's farm—a "stone's throw" from Landis. After the milking was done, he spent his time hunting, trapping, or just wandering, often coming home just after dark. He remembers spending time with Fred Lape at Oak Nose Farm. He remembers Lape mowing with a horse-drawn mower attached to his Ford tractor. He remembers, too, the Van Loveland garden when Levan Loveland planted it. And, as a neighbor, he witnessed the gradual deterioration of what is now the Arboretum after the deaths of Lape, George Landis, and Loveland.

But what has most impressed Ron was the resurgence of the Arboretum, largely as a result of volunteer effort. "If people could only see the amount of work done by volunteers, they would be surprised... encouraged... that a few people can make a big difference. So many people have made the place beautiful again," he said. He instanced the work and dedication of Ed Miller, whose brainchild was the Native Plant Trail, but also the volunteer who planted chestnut seedlings and the volunteer who worked to restore the stone walls, both of whom remain anonymous.

The volunteer spirit comes naturally to Ron too: "I like to help people. I just love doing [volunteer work]." Ron has worked for the Red Cross, driving

patients to medical treatment, and the Schenectady Library Association. He and his wife volunteer at Sagamore, a Great Camp in the Adirondacks. He's led over a hundred hiking and canoeing trips with the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club and cut over 22 miles of hiking trails in the Charleston State Forest.

He began volunteering at the Arboretum, mowing and doing odd jobs—"second nature for a farmer," he noted. (Ron operated a dairy farm from 1946 to 1957.) Fixing tractors. Fencing the rhododendron collection against the deer. Doing what neighbors do. He served the Arboretum as groundskeeper when Florence Grimm—a neighbor too—served as Director of Buildings and Grounds.

—Nolan Marciniac

Summers, he spent long days at the Arboretum and looked forward to meeting his wife for a picnic supper at the hill by the Meeting House. They joined many local families who came to that spot. Of the view of the Schoharie Valley, he remarked that "there's nothing like it."

These days, he is thinking about lining the new access road with a stone wall—his father had a "magic way" with stone, he remembered.

Although Ron has lived in Esperance for all of his life, he has traveled too, mostly to cold places—Baffin Island, Siberia, Greenland—for which he has a great affinity.

But home, as is said, is where the heart is. And Ron's heart seems to be at the Arboretum.