

LANDIS ARBORETUM

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THE NEWSLETTER

Meet Me at the Meeting House:

RENOVATION UNDERWAY —Nolan Marciniac

As the Arboretum implements an ambitious and exciting new capital improvement project, Executive Director Fred Breglia commented that “Fred Lape had a vision. We are capitalizing on that vision. We’re looking at Fred Lape’s long-term vision becoming reality.”

The project has already made significant changes in the Arboretum’s Meeting House, built in 1983.



The improvements include a new 15-foot wide deck on two sides of the existing structure, nearly doubling the existing square footage, and new windows and sliding glass doors. Both improvements take advantage of the structure’s “million dollar view,” according to Fred, noting that it was the Arboretum’s founder, Fred Lape, who

insisted on the site of the Meeting House. In addition, the exterior has been given a new coat of stain and preservative. The old roof has been replaced. A new well has been drilled. The bathrooms and kitchen will be reconfigured and improved. In keeping with the Arboretum’s “green” philosophy, most of the materials used in the renovation have been either recycled or repurposed. Most important, all changes have respected the rustic quality of the building and the site.

Fred and Board President Jim Paley have been directing the refurbishment, working with the Buildings and Grounds Committee, headed by Board member Jason Castle.

By spring 2013, the Meeting House will function as the Arboretum’s environmental education

center. In addition, it will serve as a three-season facility for social events such as weddings and conferences, generating revenue for the continued maintenance of the Arboretum as well as for the development of the Arboretum’s educational mission, according to Fred. The refurbished Meeting House will also serve as a venue for arts events. Fred pointed out that the arts were “always rich in the Arboretum’s blood and have been a part of the Arboretum since Fred Lape founded the place.” In Lape’s day, writers, artists, and musicians frequented the Arboretum, and Lape was himself an accomplished musician and poet. A new Arts and Entertainment Committee is headed by Sam Bates, sculptor and friend of the Arboretum, and will direct the arts program at the new site.

When the Board of Trustees determined that the renovation of the Meeting House was a priority in 2001, funds were raised for that purpose through the generous donations of Arboretum supporters, as well as at several fundraising events. These funds paid for the current refurbishing. To sustain the momentum and to attain the long-term goals for the Meeting House, the Arboretum has asked long-standing members of the Arboretum, many of whom have a special interest in the Meeting House, for their continued support.

Friends of the Arboretum will have a chance to celebrate the new Meeting House at a special “Cinco de Mayo” open house in the spring.

“It opens doors for inspiration,” Fred mused about the project. “It’s like ‘build it and they will come.’ Well, now we’re building it.”

NYPA, An Energetic Supporter of Landis

—Gail Browning

Environmental awareness connects two destinations along the Route 30 Corridor.

As a sponsor of Landis’ 5K Annual Forest Run and contributor to other Arboretum events, the New York Power Authority has become a leading promoter of regional tourism. NYPA is not only an agency that supports regional non-profit institutions such as the Arboretum, but it is also a community resource and educational center.

If you’re a hiking enthusiast, nature lover, or bluebird trail birder, one of the most enjoyable days that you could spend would be to make the New York Power Authority’s

Visitors Center and the George Landis Arboretum your twin destinations. You might start either at the New York Power Authority at Blenheim-Gilboa, at the southern border of Schoharie County, or at the Landis Arboretum, at the northeastern corner of the county.

If you begin your excursion at the Power Authority, the nature trails include a “bluebird trail” segment to Minekill State Park. NYPA’s wetland area trails feature displays regarding the wildlife that inhabit the wetlands. Be sure to stop at the Visitors Center, where you’ll find interactive exhibits about electrical power, as well as natural science exhibits. The handicapped accessible Visitors

Center, housed in a 19th century barn, makes an excellent place to plan a trip for senior citizen groups, bus tours, school groups, and other organizations. The facility is free and open to the public.

A visitor to the NYPA might then walk into history at the near-by Lansing Manor and be greeted by guides in period costume. The manor, an 1819 Federal style manor house, has been authentically restored and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The goal of the NYPA, like that of the Arboretum, is to provide environmental education in a rural but “dynamic” setting.

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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Miller Printing and Litho Amsterdam, NY

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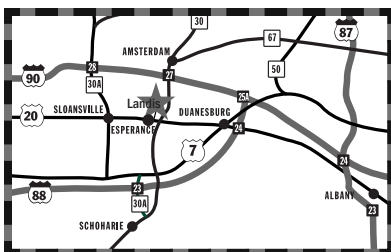
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The Arboretum is located at 174 Lape Road, Esperance, NY. It is one and one-half miles north of Route 20 in Esperance. Follow the signs from the village to Lape Road. The Arboretum is one-quarter mile straight ahead. Visit our website for more information and directions.



Invasive Species: Become a Beetle Buster

Last Article in a Series —Fred Breglia, Executive Director



So what's being done in the battle against invasive species?

In 1998, US customs regulations were changed to require that wooden packing materials from China be chemically treated or kiln-dried to prevent further infestations. There are many state and federal groups working on detection of invasive species before they become a major problem. Federal agencies include the Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) under the USDA. APHIS is dedicated to the detection of invasive species and has set up stations with trained inspectors at all US international ports. The Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service also has port inspectors working on detection.

On a local level, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is also diligently working to identify pests. Purple box traps have been set up throughout the state to attract the emerald ash borer.

Early detection is one of the keys in winning the war against invasive species. To this end, botanical gardens are forming partnerships. Landis Arboretum is a member of the American Public Garden Association's Sentinel Plant Network (SPN). The SPN contributes to plant conservation by educating public garden professionals, volunteers, and visitors in the detection

of high-consequence pests and pathogens as well as in the diagnosis of diseases. As part of a national effort, several black-colored Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) traps have been hung at various locations on the Arboretum grounds. The traps are baited with a pheromone attractive to the adult beetles. So far the traps at Landis have not yielded any beetles, but if the ALBs do appear in the area, they will be sent to the National Diagnostic Labs to be included in their research.

What can you do to help?



Purchase firewood where you will burn it. Moving firewood is one of the easiest ways to spread invasive insect species.



Allow officials access to your property to perform surveys.



Diversify the trees you plant.



Report signs of beetles.



Go online and familiarize yourself with ways to accurately identify these pests.

Here are a few websites to use as resources:

Asian longhorned beetle information:

www.beetlebusters.info/

Emerald ash borer information:

www.emeraldashborer.info/

Contact your County Extension or nearest Department of Agriculture office if you see anything that looks suspect. You may also contact the USDA Emerald Ash Borer Hotline toll-free at **1-866-322-4512**.



Fred Breglia presented Ron Needle with the Arboretum's "Landis Above and Beyond Award" at October's Volunteer Recognition Event.

Wish List

The Arboretum needs—

- fireproof cabinets for our plant and financial records (approx. \$1000)
- hand tools: shovels, rakes, garden tools, etc. (excellent condition only)
- 4-wheel drive pickup truck with or without plow (reliable running condition)
- gas-powered pruning pole saw
- weed whacker (new)
- new Mac computer or \$1400

Budding Writers Take Root at Landis

—Louise Polli

Propagating plants is nothing new at Landis. But can writing be considered as propagation of a different sort? Writers often speak of planting “seeds”—possibilities—in the fertile soil of our minds. What happens later is often miraculous.

A few months ago, Landis hosted a nature writing workshop open to anyone regardless of writing experience. Landis is ripe for such a class, as the natural beauty of the Arboretum’s landscape is exceptionally conducive to inspiration. The three-part workshop was funded by Poets & Writers, Inc. and the New York State Council on the Arts. It was led by Susannah Risley, a local writer who has conducted similar classes in settings such as libraries, schools, prisons, and senior centers. She tailors her workshops to the participants’ needs and interests. Susannah discussed the craft of writing, illustrative works of noted writers, and her own artistic journey. The classroom quickly flowed from the Landis library to its fields and trails, each vista expanding those of the students.

As the class progressed, the students found their voices with the support of the group and Susannah’s guidance. Words came to life as students honed their observational skills, revealing details of a tiny

plant, insect, favorite tree, or stream. These discoveries were further amplified, perhaps including a childhood memory or loved one. The poems and stories that emerged were as light as an airborne leaf, or as laden with emotion as a darkening sky, often with a twist—unexpected as a sun shower on a cloudless day. Nature as muse is an enduring truth, and what better place is there to let the imagination wander than at Landis?

The class was transformational for the participants, many of whom had never written before or shared their work with others. All found the strength to read their works aloud and benefit from the group’s astute and thoughtful critique. The workshop was so rewarding that at its conclusion the students decided to continue meeting, a testimony to the value of the experience shared on those Sunday afternoons.

What will become of these budding writers? Will one be named the New York State Poet or otherwise honored by the Writers Institute? Sometimes it’s hard to imagine what fruit a tree will bear. To date, at least one student is looking at an opportunity to publish, and others may contribute to the Arboretum *Newsletter*. Yes, this really was a propagation class after all. And miraculous.

Book Review

Last Chance to See: Douglas Adams

—Lee Lattimer

“Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Western Spiral of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun. Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety-eight million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue-green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea.”

Thus begins the adventures of a Mr. Arthur Dent and his perilous yet humorous exploration of the Milky Way in Douglas Adams’ popular *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* series. But here I want to discuss another of Adams’ books, titled *Last Chance to See*. It chronicles the adventures, equally perilous and amusing, of the author on that very same small blue-green planet. His quest was in search of endangered or threatened animals before they became extinct.

The animals visited consist of the familiar and the unfamiliar. They include the Komodo dragon (Indonesia), the mountain gorilla, the Northern white rhinoceros (Zaire), the kakapo (New Zealand), the aye-aye

(Madagascar), the Yangtze river dolphin (China), and the Rodrigues fruit bat (Mauritius). We are introduced to and come to understand these creatures in a way that is simultaneously humorous and heartbreaking. We also meet many dedicated guardians who explain the challenges inherent in trying to protect not only the animals, but the environments on which they depend. Bureaucracy, transportation nightmares, local color, seemingly near-death experiences, travel tips, and just plain awe round out the story.

It was difficult to pick out just one example that captures both the humor and reverence of Adams’ writing style. Here he describes why he is so keen on finding the kakapo, a small flightless bird in New Zealand: “There is something gripping about the idea that this creature has actually given up something that virtually every human being has yearned to do since the very first of us looked upward. I think I find other birds rather irritating for the cocky ease with which they flit through the air as if it was nothing.”

The American edition was first published in 1991, after Adams’ travels in 1985, 1988, and 1989. The population changes that have occurred since then are both encouraging and discouraging. The kakapo has increased in number from about 40 to 126, all in predator-free island sanctuaries. Only six of the northern subspecies of the white rhino exist, and those are in captivity. The baiji, or Yangtze river dolphin, is considered extinct. Last chance to see, indeed. Which obviously is the theme of this book. The system of life is so complex that we are still learning just how complex it is, as well as how to treat it with the respect it deserves and the dedication it requires. We must save the plants and animals to save ourselves.

This book is insightful and thought-provoking without being preachy. Paperback editions still exist. Scout it out and buy it. It’s well worth the effort. Even if you have to hitchhike through a galaxy to get one.

LANDIS PORTRAITS: A series about the people behind the plants at the Arboretum

—Nolan Marciniak

Community service runs in **Jim Paley's** blood.

He spent 15 years on the Board of the Hudson Valley Girl Scouts and several on the boards of both the Albany County Historical Society and the Wildwood School. For six years, he has been a valued member of the Arboretum's Board of Trustees and is beginning his third year as Board President.

Jim and his wife, Wendy Kass, moved to the Schoharie Valley in 1985 and visited the Arboretum soon after that. "I had no idea," Jim said, "that it was as expansive as it is." They attended a plant sale or two, but it was his friendship with Jeff Schworm that brought him to the Board. His service to the Arboretum is a reflection of his philosophy of giving back to the community. "That's just how I was raised," he said. "It's a karma thing . . . [and] the Arboretum was a good fit."

He cherishes the Arboretum for "the seclusion, the quiet, the special feeling" he finds there, noting that "places like this are worth preserving. People are losing more and more of their contact with nature." He admitted that "it's the people that keep me involved," insisting that Fred Breglia, Executive Director, members of the Board of Trustees, and the



Jim Paley and his wife, Wendy Kass, relax in their Asian-style garden in Duaneburg.

many dedicated volunteers keep the Arboretum alive and thriving.

As president, Jim has made the refurbishing of the Meeting House one of his top priorities. The Meeting House now features a glass wall and wrap-around deck to capitalize on the spectacular view of the Schoharie Valley. Jim envisions the Meeting House as a community and educational center. As a facility to accommodate weddings, conferences, and arts events, it will serve to generate revenue for maintaining the Arboretum. It's a place, Jim noted, "wide open for possibilities"—like the Arboretum itself.

On their 3-acre property, Jim and Wendy garden "in the Asian style," where "it seems everything is weeping or contorted." Every one of the more than a hundred conifers is artfully placed, as are more than a hundred varieties of hostas. He and Wendy are both very interested in bonsai and prune many of their outdoor specimens according to bonsai techniques. But stonework really is Jim's "opportunity for artistic expression," and he takes great pride in the stone walkways and walls he and Wendy have built.

Jim credited his wife with the Asian influence in their lives. They first traveled to Thailand in 1991 and fell in love with the country and the people. They now own a home in Phuket, Thailand, and spend two months there every year. They also travel extensively throughout Asia—to Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Bali, Singapore, and other places.

Jim currently serves as senior vice-president and financial advisor for the investment firm Janney Montgomery Scott LLC. Retirement, he said, might mean spending three winter months in Asia, but "spring, summer, fall, this is where I want to be." The pull of the Arboretum is palpable.

2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS: A Preview —Wilma Jozwiak

Was that you, sitting on a rock and writing about what you saw in the grass? Or perhaps that was you playing in the "mud," making garden containers from hypertufa? Then again, perhaps you spent a day learning about keeping bees.

To the many who visited Landis this past year, we want you to know that there will be another great event calendar for 2013. Many popular offerings to be repeated include nature photography, dragonflies and damselflies, and holiday decorating with native greenery. George Steele will once again host several natural science classes for the whole family, but additional offerings by great new instructors are also planned. We are especially looking forward to a **First Annual Fall Harvest Festival**, held in conjunction with the fall plant sale, celebrating harvest time with workshops and fun events for everyone.

Because we conserve energy use during the winter, classes begin in the spring with the full calendar presented in our spring newsletter. Until then, we're offering the activities described below to keep you from suffering from cabin fever.

Sunday, February 10, Noon-2 pm Second Sunday Snowshoe

Don't let Old Man Winter keep you indoors! Join us for an invigorating day of winter fun. Adults and children alike are invited to learn about different snowshoe types and to practice the basic skills needed to enjoy the serenity and unique beauty of winter on snowshoes. A limited number of snowshoes for adults, and youth from toddlers to teens, are available. Everyone will get a chance to try the snowshoes, but arrive early if you need them—or bring your own. For even more fun, bring your sleds! We'll all meet back at The Farmhouse to enjoy some hot cocoa, coffee, and home-baked goodies. Please dress appropriately for the weather, and don't forget a sturdy pair of boots. No snow? We'll take a hike.

Saturday, March 23, 10 am-Noon Kitchen Gardening:

Enjoy Great Food While Saving Money

Fresh vegetables are important in our diets, and knowing where your food comes from is wise, so why not start a home kitchen garden? Join Master Gardener Laura Scoones and learn about site preparation, use of containers, and choosing the right herbs and vegetables for your site. The entire process, from planting through harvest, will be presented. Discussion will also include topics such as growing from seed or planting seedlings, plant feeding, harvesting, and other elements that lead to gardening success.

Location: The Library;
Free parking.

Members: \$5 individual/\$15 family
Non-members: \$15/person, \$25 family

Saturday, March 23, 10 am-Noon

Propagation I:

Growing New Plants from Woody Perennials

Join us to learn about propagating new plants from perennials. The first hour will be lecture providing information about propagation, and the second hour will be a hands-on opportunity to collect some cuttings from woody plants at the Arboretum. Everyone will pot up and take home at least one plant. Participants will receive a folder of descriptive handouts to help as you try your new propagation skills at home. Participants should dress for the weather.

NOTE: Class size is limited to 10, so register early to avoid disappointment.

Cindy King, Master Gardener and Arboretum
Propagation Queen

Location: The Greenhouse and Library

Free parking

Members: \$10/person

Non-members: \$20/person

Call 518-875-6935 for more information or to register.