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DEAR FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM:

“The government cannot do all of the things it once did or that we would like it to do.” Last night as I drove by the Washington Monument, encased in scaffolding and beautifully illuminated, I thought about that sentiment from heralded philanthropist David Rubenstein. You will recall that Rubenstein donated $7.5 million to cover half the cost of the monument’s earthquake repairs. Rubenstein describes “patriotic philanthropy” as a way to get people to think about the need the federal government has for resources. He likens it to Kennedy’s call for giving back to the country, to the extent one can.

I’ve been thinking about Mr. Rubenstein’s message while working with my colleagues on the FONA board to raise awareness for various needs at the National Arboretum. An all too common response we hear when we share our story is, “Why should I support an entity owned by the federal government when the government doesn’t care enough to take care of it properly?” I don’t believe the government doesn’t care—it’s resources are just spread too thin.

Just as the Arboretum released its vibrant new strategic plan—which takes the important functions of research, education, and visitors services and puts them into a context where they support and build upon one another to yield a more integrated experience of science, gorgeous blooms, and magnificent trees for the public—it’s financial situation became dire. The Arboretum’s budget was cut from a high of $12.4 million a few years ago to just $10.4 million today. Consider this: in 1999 the Arboretum had 110 permanent employees and now it has 70. Even the Arboretum’s forward-thinking leadership and incredibly hard-working staff cannot turn the tide under these tough circumstances. There is now a real urgency for private support.

David Rubenstein says he knows he is fortunate, and he adopts a high profile with his philanthropy because he wants to inspire others. He tells students that money is only part of it; that it’s good to show people you care. In America we’re learning not to be so dependent on Washington to solve our problems and to invest and give back to those things about which we care, like the National Arboretum.

David Rubenstein is inspiring and we, at FONA, are borrowing his message. Even better, if you happen to see him in Washington, please invite him to our next Cookout Under the Stars.

Linda Dooley
Chair, Board of Directors

ON THE COVER For the Japanese, morning glories evoke the essence of summer. These morning glories are growing in the Japanese Pavilion in the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. The names for the plants are *Ipomoea nil* ‘Tie Dye Blue’ (striped) and *Ipomoea nil* ‘Katsuki no Tsuyu’ (pale blue). Photo by Amy Forsberg, National Bonsai and Penjing Museum gardener.
The fundamental character of arboreta is that they are about the future. Faced with the current, extraordinary challenges of managing the U.S. National Arboretum on a day-to-day basis, it is easy to forget, yet critical to remember this essential truth. What we elect to do today will influence the long-term vitality of the programs and collections we have on the grounds as well as our service to the broader communities of those committed to environmental horticulture.

At the National Arboretum, the future is bound to our scientific and conservation activities. This summer we are recruiting a plant geneticist to fill a shrub breeding position at McMinnville, Tennessee, to continue and expand the work of Sandy Reed who retired last year. This position is important to the landscape industry in the development and testing of woody ornamental plants which thrive under environmental stresses such as drought and in the constrained landscapes of modern homes and gardens.

Similarly, we are responding to the potential threat to boxwood from a recently discovered fungal disease. Boxwood is one of the most economically important landscape plants grown in the United States and is especially popular because deer have an aversion to it. The National Arboretum holds the North American Plant Collections Consortium reference collection of Buxus, thus providing the basis from which to characterize boxwood cultivars, a step toward identifying fungus-resistant varieties. With support from industry and the Agricultural Research Service, the Arboretum is expanding research to quickly address this issue.

Identification of plant diseases, particularly from known and unknown viruses, is a primary focus of research among Arboretum scientists. Their goal is to develop and refine comprehensive, rapid testing procedures that can be used to identify diseased plants at our borders and in commerce to reduce introduction of previously unknown and often rapidly spreading pathogens to the horticultural and agronomic plant industries and the environment. This effort is essential to ensuring the economic and environmental sustainability of our landscapes and illustrates that managing ornamental plants is valuable to maintaining a healthy agricultural system.

The scientists and curators at the National Arboretum are constantly challenged to think about the long-term environment in which the work they do today—whether establishing a research goal or a new garden display feature—will inform citizens, landapers, and scientists of the future. When a 100-year-old tree dies, do we replace it with the same plant, or do we anticipate what will be enduring for the next 100 years? How well we continue to answer these questions will determine the true value of the U.S. National Arboretum.

Colien Hefferan, Director
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The fundamental character of arboreta is that they are about the future.
Gabe Horchler “commuting” to his office.
“THERE’S PLENTY OF ROOM FOR MORE COMMUTERS.” Not a sentiment heard often in the DC metro area, where the streets and highways are clogged every workday. But for Gabe Horchler, commuting is literally a breeze as he steers his rowing shell down the Anacostia River each day past the National Arboretum to his job as head of the Law Cataloging Section of the Library of Congress.

Gabe grew up in northeast Philly where he and his friends would take anything they thought might float out on the Delaware River. He always wanted to row, envious of those fancy clubs along the Schuylkill that you glimpse from the train pulling out of the 30th Street Station.

He got his chance when he moved to Cheverly 25 years ago, where he and his wife raised five daughters now 17 to 31 years old. After discovering the Anacostia as a place to spend time in his shell on weekends, he began to think of how he might commute to work by boat and, beginning 14 years ago, he put his plan into action. He bicycles 10 minutes from home to the Bladensburg Marina and Waterfront Park, rows 50 minutes in his shell to the Anacostia Community Boathouse near the Sousa Bridge, and rides another bike 15 minutes to the Library.

Gabe loves the tranquility of the river, the waterfowl, and the birds and fresh air. He has spent many hours as a volunteer for the Anacostia Watershed Society and as a long-time member of the Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee for the river cleanup. One of his favorite spots is the dock at the base of the Arboretum’s Asian Gardens, where he always stops on his commute to rest and take in nature. This has led to a special relationship with the Friends of the National Arboretum. Because it extends into the flow, the dock serves to catch the large amount of trash that still comes down the river. Gabe collected and bagged the trash, but he had nowhere to dispose of it. Enter the FONA staff; by recent agreement, Gabe simply e-mails FONA Executive Director Kathy Horan when he has filled a bag, leaves it along the dock and FONA staff retrieve it for disposal.

Despite the continuing problem of trash, and especially plastic bottles, Gabe has seen numerous signs of improvement in the Anacostia over the years. Many acres of wetlands have been restored. More and more miles of hiking and biking trails are opening up along the river and its tributaries. The massive underground combined sewer storage facility near RFK Stadium is progressing well, promising a day when storm-related sewage overflows are history.

Most of all, there are a lot more people on the River—high school and college crews practicing, rowing schools, and students on field trips. As more and more people see the spectacular natural beauty of the river, it cannot help but put pressure on upstream politicians to resist the plastic and bottle lobbies and pass the laws that will reduce the trash.

But despite the increased activity on the Anacostia, Gabe is still the only river commuter, as far as he knows. There have been rumors of others, but Gabe has not encountered them, as much as he would like to. He has some years to do so. As he says, “I love my commute; it’s what makes me hesitate to think about retirement.”

BILL MATUZESKI, known to all as “B-MAT,” is chair of the FONA Environment Committee, which helps lead the restoration of the natural areas within and around the Arboretum. He was the 2008 recipient of the Sustained Achievement Award by the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation, a consortium of national professional societies.
While they set their own pace and itinerary, the club’s members meet up at the end in the parking lot. Sarah Blanding (left, in the colorful shoes) had knee surgery 2 weeks before. Delores Aldridge (front row in white cap) is the group’s guiding force.
ONE SATURDAY MORNING IN JUNE, I HAD THE PLEASURE of joining a group of kindred spirits for a vigorous walk through the Arboretum. For 12 years, Delores Aldridge has organized a group of friends and neighbors who meet near the R Street entrance at 8:30 every weekend and holiday morning, rain or shine, hot or cold. The Brentwood Running Club has about 15 hard-core members from D.C. and Maryland (plus a number of “fair-weather folks”) whose ages range from the 20s to the 80s. Some of them do run, but most simply walk as briskly as they can—and they ramble all over the undulating roads of the Arboretum. Some stick together, others take off at their own pace—but everybody manages to come together an hour or so later in the parking lot after doing 3 or more miles.

Delores, a spry 80-year-old retiree has been into physical fitness for decades. At one time she did weight-lifting and, with a partner, owned an exercise studio. She now serves as a personal trainer on equipment in her own home in nearby Brentwood. Every year she and her daughter participate in the Race for the Cure. She feels strongly that physical fitness is important for people of all ages, and what better place to foster this healthful habit than the Arboretum? When she enters the R Street gates, “I breathe in the fresh air and relax. It’s been my refuge for decades. Who needs a psychiatrist when you’ve got the Arboretum?” (Amen, sister.) But she’s also ready to get moving.

Delores and James Clark were the first to meet me that Saturday. James says, with a wink and a nod, that he’s 99—I’d subtract about 30 years from that (maybe 60 considering the furious pace he later set). Delores said that James, a licensed D.C. tour guide, is the group’s historian who leads tours all over the city for a professional tour company; he has also taken the group on city tours. He is one of most vigorous walkers in the group. James and 67-year-old George Westry, who’s hooked on marathon running, like the challenge of walking and running down and up China Valley—on what they call the Yellow Brick Road—in the Asian Collections. They left me in the dust, or rather the pollen, as they strode down to the fence near the Anacostia River and back (they often do this more than once).

Not everyone in the group that day was game for the Yellow Brick Road. Indeed, one of the women, youthful-looking 54-year-old Sarah Blanding, was walking oh-so-carefully 2 weeks after arthroscopic knee surgery for a torn meniscus. After running for 30 years, her knees ran low on cartilage (the dreaded osteoarthritis), and now she’s happy just to be walking with the wonderful friends she’s made. You know she’ll soon be keeping up with, if not setting the pace for, many of them.

The group—most are FONA members—includes lawyers, health care professionals, government workers, retirees, and others who discuss current events, counsel each other, prod each other to keeping moving, and socialize beyond the Arboretum—including dancing (exercise with a beat!). Many are also cyclists who ride at the Arboretum and around town, including some who meet at Hains Point for a 6:30 a.m. ride before heading for the Arboretum. In May several of the group took a bus to New York for their second spring weekend of walking in Central Park and elsewhere in the Big Apple.

On this Saturday they had planned to hold their annual picnic, which had to be rescheduled because of threatening weather. I can only imagine what a good time these outgoing people will have at their picnic. They would welcome others to join them for their early-morning weekend jaunts. Come share the infectious good spirits!

I thought I was active and physically fit. But the Brentwood Running Club set a challenging pace—and a wonderful example—for this “mature” Arboretum fan and friend.miş

ROBERTA GUTMAN is a long-time FONA member who loves cycling in the Arboretum. She is a retired writer and editor who also volunteers for the U.S. Botanic Garden and Casey Trees.
Laurie Metzger developed an early appreciation of nature and the outdoors, working in her family’s garden and hiking in Maryland forests. A talented dancer, she pursued a career in classical ballet landing her first professional ballet contract at age fifteen. After earning a Bachelor of Science from Indiana University in Ballet and English, she had a successful twelve-year career performing as principal ballerina and guest artist with various national companies as well as instructing aspiring dancers.

Perhaps it was fate that brought Laurie to the US National Arboretum in 2009.

However, remaining true to her roots, she also worked part-time as a tour guide at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. There she observed the gardeners and horticulturists at work and knew she wanted to join their ranks. But the challenge of such a career change was daunting—how to proceed?

Perhaps it was fate that brought Laurie to the US National Arboretum (USNA) in 2009 for a promotional photo shoot with The Washington Ballet. This serendipitous encounter had two results. One was the book, *Wonderland*, in which Laurie appears. Additionally, Laurie was fascinated with this glimpse of the USNA and wanted to learn more. She contacted Tanya Zastrow, the USNA Volunteer and
Intern Coordinator. Laurie asked if it was possible to shadow a USNA staff member to learn about a career in professional horticulture. Tanya asked curator Lynn Batdorf if he would be interested in helping. He was. Many in-depth discussions ensued and Laurie began to see an appropriate professional path.

To begin her transition into the world of horticulture, Laurie applied to become the next USNA Friendship Garden intern, a position generously funded by the National Garden Clubs Inc. She was interviewed by a selection panel and ultimately selected as the 2010 intern. Her work was so exemplary she was hired for a second season in 2011. During her two-year internship, she led the intern group project, learned a wide variety of gardening tasks, and was introduced to the care and identification of many ornamental plants. A few tasks, such as wielding a weed whip and a leaf blower, are things she never imagined doing as a ballerina.

Reflecting back, Laurie described her USNA internship experience as a pivotal and positive experience in her career development. With great pride she declared, “During the internship, Lynn [her supervisor] would assign homework each week and then would spend an hour or so testing me on the information. While we ate our ice cream [at her last-day-at-work party], I remember the Intern Coordinator asked which assignment I liked best. Lynn mentioned the assignment on the Grove of State Trees—memorizing the names of all the State trees and learning to identify them by their leaves. I confirmed that it was one of the hardest assignments but definitely my favorite one.” Then Laurie said, “I think it goes without saying that the things most difficult to achieve are usually the sweetest in the end.” She thought further and continued, “Of all the ballet roles I danced, my favorites inevitably began with tears after the first rehearsal because I was convinced that I wasn’t capable enough to dance them and ended with more tears because I fell in love with the ballets that I never wanted to stop dancing them.”

In February 2012, she interviewed for the prestigious Longwood Graduate Program. It is a two-year, thesis-based academic program culminating in a Master of Science degree in Public Horticulture from the University of Delaware, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. In this highly competitive process, Laurie was selected to enroll. Currently, Laurie is preparing to begin her second year in this program.

Upon graduation from the Longwood Graduate Program in May 2014, Laurie’s metamorphosis from a principal ballerina to a professional horticulturist trained at two world-class horticultural institutions will be complete. An exciting and promising professional horticultural career awaits her, and it began with one telephone call to the U.S. National Arboretum.

LYNN BATDORF served as Curator of the National Boxwood Collection and horticulturist for the Friendship Garden, Perennial Collections, and Maple Collection at the National Arboretum for 36 years. He retired on May 31, 2013.

LYNN BATDORF HAS RETIRED—AND WON’T HE BE MISSED!

National Arboretum horticulturist Lynn Batdorf retired after a thirty-six year career. Among Lynn’s many credentials are Curator of the National Boxwood Collection at the National Arboretum, International Cultivar Registration Authority on Buxus, and author of three authoritative guides and more than 50 articles on a variety of boxwood topics. He has lectured nationally and internationally.

And now, Lynn says, he is “exceptionally tardy” in entering the next phase of his life: retirement. The Arboretum staff said farewell with a rousing good cheer on May 31, 2013.

Lynn says of his plans: “I plan to vigorously pursue my interests in philately and the National Symphony Orchestra. But most importantly, I am exceptionally fortunate to have the best wife in the world, four wonderful children, and five beautiful grandsons—I’m excited about spending more time with all of them.”

We send heartfelt thanks to Lynn for his years of service; we sense that he won’t find it difficult to do the things that please him.

—KATHY HORAN

—SUMMER 2013—
Celebrating Iowa

Nearly 600 Arboretum enthusiasts and corporate sponsors braved the afternoon rain and were rewarded with sunny skies for our annual Cookout Under the Stars. This year FONA honored the state of Iowa. Guests enjoyed a lovely evening with cocktails in the Herb Garden, dinner inspired by America’s Heartland, and a twilight stroll to the Capitol Columns. Visit fona.org/cookout for more photos and for information about next year’s event.

1 Anna Rotrosen and Elizabeth Dugan pose for photos in the National Herb Garden
2 Chandler Goule of National Farmers Union with Elizabeth Wise of DIAGEO 3 Carolyn Davis and Francesca Smoot 4 Guests of table sponsor Snack Food Association
5 FONA Board Chair Linda Dooley, Dr. Colien Hefferan, Nadia Mercer, Tuckie Westfall, and Senator Tom Harkin gather around the Iowa apple tree to be planted at the Washington Youth Garden in his honor.
6 Cal Dooley of American Chemistry Council and Robert Guenther of United Fresh 7 Just a few of the many garden club members who work tirelessly to support the Arboretum.
The Friends of the National Arboretum is an independent, nonprofit organization established to enhance, through public and private sector resources, support for the U.S. National Arboretum.

This newsletter was printed using 80# Sappi Flo, Matte Text and is FSC-certified using 10% post-consumer waste. 100% of the electricity used to manufacture Flo sheets at their Cloquet Mill is generated using Green-e certified renewable energy. Printed by Delmarva Printing, Inc.

HAPPENINGS

For more information visit www.usna.usda.gov or fona.org

EXHIBITS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Under the Arbor Series:
Informal, drop-in presentations on herb-related topics are held under the grape arbor in the National Herb Garden.

Elderberry, Herb of the Year
September 7, 1:00 – 4:00 pm. Free.

Lemon Herbs September 28, 1:00 – 4:00 pm. Free.

Chile Peppers October 12, 1:00 – 4:00 pm. Free.

Autumn Bonsai, Falling into Winter October 26 – November 10, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm (Fridays – Mondays only). Free.

LECTURES

Presentation: Ginkgo: The Tree That Time Forgot
October 15, 7:00 – 9:00 pm. Fee $12 (FONA $10).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Wildlife in the Garden
September 7, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Fee: $12 ($10 FONA)

Fall Lawn Care Expo—Do it Now! September 14, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Free.

Annual Orchid Show and Sale
Vendor Tent: October 12 – 14; 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Exhibits: October 12 & 13, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm; October 14, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Free admission.

Orchid Show Photo Session
October 12, 13, 14; 9:00 – 10:00 am. Fee: $12 ($10 FONA)

The Botany of Beer
October 26, 4:00 – 6:00 pm. Fee $39 ($31 FONA)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Have you ever considered volunteering at the U.S. National Arboretum? Come and learn about the Arboretum’s wide variety of volunteer opportunities. The orientation will include information on the current volunteer opportunities, volunteer requirements, volunteer benefits, and how to begin volunteering. After the orientation, volunteers will have the opportunity to select their top volunteer choices. To register for this training or for more information, call the Volunteer Office at 202-245-4563 or email USNA.Volunteers@ars.usda.gov.

Give. Dedicate. Endow. Bequeath. What will your legacy be?

Please include the Friends of the National Arboretum in your estate plans. It’s easy. Our 501(c)(3) federal tax identification number is 52-1257712. Questions: Contact Kathy Horan at 202.544.8733 or khoran@fona.org.