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DEAR FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM:

This newsletter is dedicated to the incredible neighborhood surrounding the U.S. National Arboretum. For once, I am not talking about the unappealing approach via New York Avenue or the fact that getting to the Arboretum by any means other than a car is challenging. Instead, I am talking about our backyard—the rich ecological bounty of the Anacostia River.

Last summer, the Department of Transportation announced a $10 million grant to fund a four-mile extension of a walking/biking path that will connect 16 waterfront communities, including Nationals Park, RFK Stadium, the Navy Yard, and yes, the National Arboretum. The Anacostia Riverwalk Trail serves as the backbone of the Anacostia Waterfront, connecting residents, visitors, and communities to each other and to the river. If you go to a Nationals game, you can see the beautiful pathway behind the stadium, part of the 12 miles already open and heavily used.

Recently, two fiberglass-decked steel bridges were opened on either side of the River near the Sousa (Pennsylvania Avenue) Bridge; they take hikers and bikers over railroad tracks and bring them back to the riverbanks to continue safely on their way south to Nationals Stadium or north to Benning Road. Up next will be the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens segment, extending from Benning Road to Bladensburg Park in Maryland, a takeoff point for 35 miles of upstream trails and a place to put in canoes and kayaks. This segment is on track to be completed later this year. Deputy Transportation Secretary John Porcari refers to the missing segment as the “golden spike,” linking a 60-mile-long network of bicycle and pedestrian trails between the District of Columbia and Maryland.

And what about the Arboretum? The next phase in the project will be to connect this multiuse trail from a point near the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens to the National Arboretum via a pedestrian bridge, creating an important cultural link for Washington, DC. I wish we were in the construction phase but, unfortunately, we are not. Additional funding of approximately $7 million will be needed for building the pedestrian bridge. We take great delight in the progress so far, but the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, a world-class gem for the whole region, won’t be recognized for its true value until the comprehensive system connects with our National Arboretum.

Linda Dooley
Chair, Board of Directors
The Future Is in the Balance

“THE FUTURE IS IN THE BALANCE” IS A PHRASE we often hear in political, economic, and international contexts to suggest an unpredictable outcome to an important issue that could be determined by an ever-so-slight change in actions, attitudes, or conditions. In the case of environmental issues, balance itself is often the only issue. At the U.S. National Arboretum, we are recurrently challenged to balance environmental, economic, and social demands not only to conserve but also to sustain landscapes and programs because of our mission to advance environmental horticulture, our strategic goals to model and teach the best in science-based landscape practices, and our desire to be a valued neighbor in Washington, DC. The responsibility to serve as a model of sustainable management is critical to us as part of the most significant urban green space in the region.

The National Arboretum sits at the core of and is the single largest component of a major green corridor that begins with the headwaters and initial course of the Anacostia River through northeast Washington and adjacent Maryland suburbs and includes the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, historic Langston Golf Course (named in honor of abolitionist John Mercer Langston), Mt. Olivet Cemetery, the Gallaudet University campus designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, and pocket parks scattered around Capitol Hill and the National Mall. The area serves as the watershed that drains into the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and from there into the Chesapeake Bay, as a path for a variety of animals from small amphibians to large mammals such as deer and for migratory birds, and most importantly as a potential classroom for teaching about environmental management in an urban setting.

The National Arboretum is substantially increasing the activities that model sustainable management this fall with the dedication of the Terra-Kleen trash collector and hydrocarbon water cleaning system on Hickey Run and new efforts to remove invasive species and restore wetlands along Spring House Run, install bioretention ponds (rain gardens) in the R Street Parking lot, build new solar arrays, and create an exhibit on management of turf and ornamental grasses. All of these actions are taken in collaboration with DC agencies and other private and public partners such as the Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA), garden clubs, and environmental agencies and organizations. As part of a city and region committed to sustainable development, and as an institution that conserves, protects, and studies the role of plants in environmental management, we can do no less.

Colien Hefferan, Director
U.S. National Arboretum

Busy Summer at WYG

The Washington Youth Garden’s (WYG’s) environmental science and food education programs took a huge leap forward this year. More than 2,000 local students participated in field trips to the ¾-acre demonstration garden, and hundreds more were reached through their growing school garden program. A dozen local teens also got their hands dirty working with WYG’s green summer job program. Finally, with more than enough food for cooking activities, WYG donated in excess of 600 pounds of produce to a local hunger relief organization.

— ANNA BENFIELD

Washington Youth Garden Staff
Aerial photograph courtesy of GeoEye.
MAJOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IS AT THE ARBORETUM’S DOOR

The Importance of the Green Corridor in Northeast Washington Takes on New Significance

Roberta Gutman

If you’ve driven on New York Avenue near the Arboretum lately, you’ve seen major construction activity at South Dakota Avenue NE. A Costco store, nearing completion, will anchor the 42-acre Dakota Crossing development, other retail and commercial structures are in-building, and hundreds of housing units will spring up, too—all this just kitty-corner from the Arboretum.

How will this affect us? We hope our new neighbors will appreciate and support our wonderful 446-acre facility. How could they not?

As readers of the Summer 2012 issue of Arbor Friends know, cleanup of long-standing pollution sources from across New York Avenue is being addressed with an ambitious program under way in the Arboretum. Because new construction projects in Washington are held to high environmental standards, we don’t anticipate additional pollution problems from the Dakota Crossing development. Indeed, the city is working with the developers to encourage “green” building and landscaping at Dakota Crossing. Costco, known for its ethical standards, could be an ideal partner in ensuring environmentally appropriate landscaping and other features to preserve the many attributes of the green corridor of which the Arboretum is a key component.
Consider renting a boat or kayak at the park and paddling down the Anacostia River to see at close range the changes and the thriving wildlife along the waterway.
With this and other development coming to northeast Washington, the corridor will be more important than ever as a several-mile-long green space for human recreation, water purification, wildlife habitat, bird migration—a place where the human soul can regain its equilibrium and where vegetation and wildlife can thrive.

Our neighbors in the green corridor include the Langston Golf Course to the south, the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens to the east, and existing features and ambitious recreational projects along the Anacostia River network to the north and south.

The Langston Golf Course at 26th Street NE just north of Benning Road was established in 1939 as the first public golf course in Washington open to African Americans. (A bit of the golf course can be glimpsed from Crabtree Road southeast of Fern Valley.) The 18-hole public golf course, open to everyone, honors the memory of John Mercer Langston, dean of the Howard University Law School and then president of the University. Before that, he was one of the first African American representatives elected to the U.S. Congress. (His grand-nephew was the poet Langston Hughes.)

The golf course is the focus of neighborhood social and recreational activity. Recently, several golfers gathered around outdoor tables at the clubhouse to enjoy the late summer weather as other golfers started or finished their rounds. A groundskeeper noted that the course adheres to strict environmental standards on the use of pesticides and fertilizers in the area-wide effort to clean up the waters and shores of the Anacostia River system.

Our neighbor across the Anacostia, the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, is extremely important to the green corridor’s ecology. Until they were destroyed by development in the twentieth century, thousands of acres of tidal marshland east and west of the river naturally cleansed the waters that flowed into the river and its tributaries. In the 1880s, a one-armed Civil War veteran named Walter Shaw bought 30 acres of marshland on the east bank of the Anacostia to sustain his passion for exotic water lilies and to breed new varieties and develop a world-renowned business.

The private collection had many admirers, including President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge. When the gardens were threatened with a massive river dredging project in the 1930s, Congress intervened to purchase several acres. Now, this 12-acre sanctuary has more than 45 ponds surrounded by 70 acres of freshwater tidal wetlands and is the only National Park Service unit dedicated to cultivating water-loving plants. Wonderful news: plans are in the works to connect the Arboretum and the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens via a pedestrian/cycling bridge, which will expand enjoyment for visitors to both.

Of great importance to the green corridor are the Anacostia River and its tributaries. Cleanup of the waterways and recreational development along their banks is a work in progress—with an emphasis on progress. Their once-polluted waters are now alive with herons, egrets, ducks, and other waterfowl, turtles, dragonflies, and many more marsh-loving creatures. One can now walk or cycle the banks of the Anacostia from Yards Park at 3rd St SE near Nationals Park to Benning Road in northeast DC, and plans are afoot to extend the network of paths to Bladensburg Waterfront Park, which, in turn, is the southern terminus for more than 30 miles of hiking/biking paths along feeder streams in Maryland.

Consider renting a boat or kayak at the Park and paddling down the Anacostia River to see at close range the changes and the thriving wildlife along the waterway. Pack a picnic lunch and pause at the Arboretum’s Anacostia dock at the base of the Asian Collections (two more docks in the river network are in the planning stages) before paddling on past marshy Kingman Island. After passing the historic Navy Yard, you will approach the rapidly developing Southeast neighborhood and its new, beautifully landscaped riverfront parks. You will see firsthand that while most Washington sites are swarming with visitors, many of our treasures are hidden in plain sight—and will reward the visitor with the restorative calm that only the great outdoors can provide.

ROBERTA GUTMAN is a contributing writer, gardener, and frequent visitor to the Arboretum.
SEASONAL SPLENDOR

Fall

Carole Ottesen

IF SPRING IS A HOPEFUL SEASON, fall is the year’s most nostalgic as well as its most vibrant. Intense colors blaze under what is finally, finally a sky so clear and blue, we know we are on a planet that is spinning through space.

The contributors to the autumn festival of colors are many. A few stand out.

The delicate flowers of the native witchhazel, Hamamelis virginiana, are a discreet yellow but bloom so late there is little floral competition. Often, the yellow of the flowers overlaps with the bright yellow of this small tree’s falling leaves.

Another small native tree, Stewartia ovata, the mountain stewartia, puts on an autumn show that actually competes with the brilliant fall foliage of Japanese or sugar maples or dogwoods. A fifteen-foot-tall, wide-spreading tree, the mountain stewartia not only blooms gorgeously in dappled shade but also turns from riveting orange to a deep coral red in October.

In concert with red foliage, red berries as well as orange and yellow ones—of winterberry, Ilex verticillata and cultivars—shine like bright jewels, at least until they are eaten by hungry birds. And the berries of beautyberry plants, Callicarpa species, present a lovely and unexpected purple.

Purple, the color of autumn blooming asters, is also in abundance in the meadow around the Capitol columns. There, mixed with the earth tones of declining forbs and grasses, purple asters are the last bright note in the fading landscape.

CAROLE OTTESEN is a gardener and writer with an interest in native plants. She has written and photographed for the Time-Life garden series and has published several garden books, including The Native Plant Primer, Ornamental Grasses: the Amber Wave, The Herbal Epicure, and The New American Garden. She was also the associate editor of American Gardener.
I first met Carole in the early 1980s at a Garden Writers of America Conference where she received one of that organization’s annual juried awards. During the thirty years that she has been my friend, gardens at her Maryland and Cape Breton homes have showcased her designs and talents. Experimenting with a vast number of plants over the years has provided fodder for articles and photographs in virtually all of the country’s garden magazines, including *House Beautiful, Garden Design, Horticulture, Fine Gardening, Organic Gardening,* and *Martha Stewart Living*. Carole has served as associate editor of American Gardener magazine, garden editor of Washington Home and Garden magazine, and managing editor of *Arbor Friends*.

Carole’s books have chronicled the cutting edge of garden design in the United States. Often illustrated with her own photographs, they reflect the various gardening passions that have captivated her over the years.

*New American Garden* urged gardeners to adopt regionally suitable plants and design rather than simply mimicking English style. *Ornamental Grasses: The Amber Wave* was a love song to what was then refreshing new plant material. *Time-Life’s Wildflowers* and the epic *The Native Plant Primer: Trees, Shrubs, and Wildflowers for Natural Gardens* emerged after a coast-to-coast trip (she sometimes had to sleep in her car in remote places), discovering the wealth and beauty of America’s indigenous plants. *Gardening With Style: A Private View of the World’s Most Innovative Gardens* was published in England and it celebrated extraordinarily eccentric gardeners while *The Herbal Epicure: Growing, Harvesting, and Cooking Healing Herbs* grew out of her love of cooking.

After she finished *A Guide to Smithsonian Gardens*—a beautifully illustrated guide to the gardens that surround the Smithsonian museums—she turned to crime writing. Carole’s latest effort is a gardening murder mystery, *Dying for the Christmas Rose*. There is nothing quite like it. A story of intrigue, it provides a surprising look at the competitive world of plant breeders, garden writers and photographers, and nurserymen.

*Dying for the Christmas Rose* is available for Kindle and in paperback through Amazon.

—NAOMI FLINN
Who Is Louisa King?

Mary Eugenia Myer, MLA

MRS. LOUISA YEOMANS KING (1863–1948)—in her time, a horticultural luminary—is the woman who founded and presided over the Woman’s National Farm and Garden Association (WNF&GA) and who founded, co-founded, and officiated in both the Garden Club of Michigan and the Garden Club of America. In 1952, the Dogwood Collection at the Arboretum was created in her memory.

Called “dean of American gardening,” she was highly regarded for her work and the garden advice presented in her nine books, including The Well-Considered Garden (1915). She was acquainted with other well-known horticulturalists, including Charles Sprague Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum and Gertrude Jekyll who attributed to Mrs. King “practical knowledge, keen insight, and splendid enthusiasm” in a preface to one of Mrs. King’s books. As well as having gladiolus, daffodil, and tulip cultivars named for her, Mrs. King received many other honors and prizes, including the National War Garden Commission’s bronze medal for placing 15,000 “farmerettes” on farms during World War I and the George Robert White medal from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1921.

Intelligent, firm in her well-informed opinions, open-minded, generous, and egalitarian in spirit, she was adamant that the pleasures of gardening are for all, not just those with large estates and gardeners to care for them. Her conviction that a shared love of gardening eliminates class differences and can bring people together comes up again and again in her work. After World War II she urged that an International Horticultural Society be formed to help bring nations together.

NOTE: For a better understanding of her thoughts on gardening, farming, and women’s work, turn to her books. Several are available in the FONA office on the used-book shelves.

Thanks to Stefan Lura of the USNA staff for tracking down material on Mrs. King.

Top: This bench stands at the bottom of the sloping greensward in the USNA Dogwood Collection near the fountain; Bottom: Detailed view of the plaque.

MARY EUGENIA MYER is a landscape planner, FONA Board Member, and Chair, Curator, Collector and Seller of Used Books to benefit FONA.
ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2012, a ribbon-cutting ceremony formally celebrated the installation of the Terra-Kleen filter system at the point where Hickey Run enters the Arboretum and recognized the team involved in making it all possible. In the past, Hickey Run was the biggest source of pollution flowing into the Anacostia River. The Terra-Kleen filter system collects trash and oil, freeing Hickey Run from pollutants as it flows through the Arboretum to the Anacostia River.

Ten years in the making, this project’s culmination is a source of joy and pride to all who love the Arboretum. Next on the list of environmental clean-up projects: the restoration of Springhouse Run and the installation of rain gardens. Please stay tuned.

KATHY HORAN is the Executive Director of FONA.

HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING

The perfect gifts for all the plant enthusiasts in your life...

- A gift certificate for plant purchases at the FONA Garden Fair and Plant Sale April 26–27, 2013
- A gift certificate for FONA’s Advance Sale. Find exquisite, one-of-a-kind, rare plants
- Used garden books on every topic. Visit the FONA office and find the perfect specialty book for the plants person in your life
- The “Gift of Nature” garden tote. $30. Available at the FONA Office.
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](http://www.usna.usda.gov)

**Garden Fair 2013** is scheduled for April 26 and 27, 2013. FONA is already talking to its suppliers to locate new, exciting, and tried-and-true plants that will flourish in our area. The popular members-only advance sale will return with some amazing offerings. In addition, FONA will again be seeking donations for plants chosen by the USNA curators that are being purchased for the Arboretum grounds. Be sure to save the date!

**WE WOULD APPRECIATE DONATIONS OF YOUR CAR, TRUCK, OR BOAT**...if your vehicle is no longer of use to you, FONA can benefit. Once you sign up, your car will be picked up free of charge, and FONA will receive a cash donation. Your donation is fully tax-deductible. It’s easy, just call us at 202.544.8733.

**IF YOU’RE A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE** consider giving to FONA through the Combined Federal Campaign! Give a one-time or monthly gift to support FONA’s work for the Arboretum. **CFC# 81610**

Ensure the vitality of the U.S. National Arboretum through a planned gift to the Friends of the National Arboretum. Remember FONA in your will.

Contact us at 202.544.8733 or khoran@fona.org or consult your financial advisor.