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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM:

Challenges, challenges… in so many good and exciting forms! Perhaps our biggest challenge in the next six months is to take the steps necessary to reopen the Arboretum a full seven days a week. FONA is intent on making this happen and is working with the Arboretum to make it possible.

Then there is the challenge of focusing FONA’s efforts to help the Arboretum implement its strategic plan: developing, presenting, interpreting, researching, and preserving the collections; increasing the public’s awareness of and engagement in the Arboretum; enhancing the visitor experience; and ensuring the Arboretum’s long-term stability.

There is the challenge of completing existing projects and beginning new ones. FONA will be working with the Arboretum to complete the Flowering Tree Walk that will ring the great meadow at the heart of the Arboretum. Along with the District of Columbia, the Garden Clubs of America, and others, we will complete the restoration of Springhouse Run and pursue other environmental improvements. And we will be turning our attention to the condition of the majestic Capitol Columns at the Arboretum’s center, much needed repairs, and restoration for this Washington icon.

But first, we must complete our 2014 fiscal year with a balanced budget. This will require your involvement in the weeks leading up to the end of December and your financial commitment—of whatever amount you can afford—to achieve our goal of $240,000. To encourage your personal giving we have… a challenge match! A group of donors has committed a minimum of $25,000 to match any new or increased gift to FONA on a dollar-for-dollar basis for gifts given before December 31, 2014. We must meet this challenge, or the exciting possibilities of 2015 will become all the harder to achieve. Included in Arbor Friends is a postage-paid return envelope. Please return it today with a check or a charge to your credit card enclosed.

We at FONA need your active involvement and support, not for FONA, but to enable FONA to do everything possible to make the National Arboretum an active, available, and refreshing experience. Please call or email me to share your thoughts.

Best wishes to you in this holiday season and for the New Year.

Thomas M. Costello, Executive Director
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Under a bright October sun, accompanied by crisp fall temperatures and rainfall that provided an extra boost of green and growth, the Arboretum’s new exhibit, the Grass Roots Initiative, officially opened to the public on October 18. This four-year exhibit, a collaboration between the National Arboretum and the National Turfgrass Federation, provides a unique opportunity to highlight Arboretum research and the many uses of turfgrass.

Located next to the National Herb Garden, the turfgrass exhibit packs a well-manicured punch with displays of more than 50 different grasses that thrive in both warm and cool climates. An inviting putting green, including the rough and a pond, begs visitors to try their luck with its one-hole golf course. The exhibit features secluded areas to sit and enjoy the greenscape, a visual feast of greens and lines where the different grasses border each other.

Large banners add a vertical dimension to the exhibit, drawing the eyes upward to brightly colored educational showpieces that provide details on the history of how grasses are used for practical purposes and for the Arboretum’s research on grasses for tomorrow.

One aspect of the research involves Dr. Scott Warnke, a research geneticist with the Agricultural Research Service (the USDA’s research arm), and his work studying and developing a grass called Danthonia spicata. The unusual grass, an oat grass, has the potential to become the next major contender as a grass used in lawns and recreational fields because it requires little maintenance and can grow in poor soil. Warnke says that although the grass is not a good fit for all areas of the United States, the plant "grows
well in shade which you find all up and down the East Coast.” Warnke’s work with *D. spicata* fits well into the “Initiative” part of the exhibit. Warnke hopes this exhibit will encourage discussion and seminars among people in turfgrass research and industry and also among critics of turfgrass. Geoffrey Rinehart, Grass Roots exhibit coordinator, echoes that sentiment. He says that in the past, turfgrass has been badly managed and used, but industry practices have changed in significant ways. He hopes that the exhibit will help turfgrass push past its previous reputation of being a luxury item or consumptive.

The controversy surrounding turfgrass involves the maintenance and inputs used to treat the grass and allow it to grow properly. Rinehart says that new cultivars are drought resistant and pest tolerant, meaning the turf requires less maintenance than it did before. Advances in slow-release and organic fertilizers have made grass maintenance less harmful to the environment.

Turfgrass has enormous benefits to homeowners beyond its visual appeal. Scott Aker, Head of Horticulture and Education at the Arboretum, says that turfgrass contributes to noise abatement, dust absorption, and temperature control and helps keep homes cool during the summer by absorbing heat.

After getting involved with the Grass Roots Initiative and seeing the research, Aker said the Arboretum has changed some of its own practices regarding turf. Before, the general practice was to allow some of the Arboretum’s fields to return to meadow to avoid the upkeep required. Aker said that the Arboretum has shifted efforts toward maintaining areas of turf because it reduces major weed problems in the collections. The Grass Roots

Ribbon cutting ceremony at the Grass Roots Initiative. From left to right- Dr. Charles Walthall, Dr. Margaret Pooler, Dr. Colien Hefferan, Geoffrey Rinehart, Kevin Morris, Scott Aker.
A spring bike event is being planned to link all three sites, with stops along the way to discuss the turf and its management. Rinehart says that a unique part of the exhibit is that it features grasses gathered from across the country thus allowing Arboretum visitors to have a connection to their home state. “This exhibit exists not just for people inside the Beltway, it goes beyond the Beltway and acts as a great meeting point for the important conversations needed to further turf research and education.”

Those conversations might spark the interest of people who have been against using turfgrass for lawn maintenance or who favor artificial turf for recreational fields. Rhinehart hopes the Grass Roots Initiative not only provides hands-on experience for Arboretum visitors but gives people a new outlook on turfgrass. “Developments and research demonstrated here show we have taken better environmental approaches to growing and maintaining turf. There is a better way in 2014; this is not old-school lawn care anymore.”

Left: Acting Director Dr. Margaret Pooler presents at the ribbon cutting ceremony to open Grass Roots. Right: Danthonia spicata on display in Dr. Warnke’s research greenhouses in Beltsville, Maryland.

Initiative website is an informative research component that visitors can use to explore the importance of turfgrass beyond the exhibit. It explains that “healthy turfgrass has many miles of fibrous roots that hold soil and filter rainwater” so it can act as a better filter for excess nutrients.

The Grass Roots Initiative is a fitting exhibit for the Arboretum. Historically, little turf research was done full-time by ARS and was mostly fueled by state universities. However, the USDA and ARS saw that they had a role to play in the research to improve the sustainability of grasses. Aker saw the Grass Roots Initiative as an opportunity to highlight the Arboretum and ARS’s little-known research. Being located in the Nation’s Capital plays a significant part as well.

In the spring, the Grass Roots Initiative and the Arboretum will be part of the National Greenscapes Corridor, an effort to link three distinct locations in Washington, D.C., that feature turf, including Arlington Cemetery and the National Mall. The Arboretum’s role will be to provide visitors with an opportunity to understand the research and education behind maintaining turf used on the Mall and in Arlington Cemetery, two important landscaped environments.

Aker said that turf and landscaping are often taken for granted, but without turf on the National Mall, “it would no longer feel right. And for summers in DC, temperature-wise, it is really important to have turf.”

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LINDSEY RIETKERK joined FONA in September 2014 as the Development and Marketing Coordinator. Lindsey graduated from UNC Chapel Hill in May with a B.A. in Political Science and Peace, War, and Defense. Lindsey grew up a military brat and moved all over but is excited to put down new roots in Washington, D.C., as part of FONA’s team.
People to Watch

Elizabeth C. Rea

Not Exactly Like Watergate

Acres of flowering dogwood, azaleas, peonies, and wildflowers are on display this month at the National Arboretum. Besides its breathtaking vistas, which draw thousands of visitors, the Arboretum has become a diplomatic tool. When the President dined with the Emperor of Japan last fall, Reagan's toast included a plug for the ongoing exchange of US flowering dogwood seeds and Japanese cherry-tree cuttings. "These flowers remind us of the beauty of our friendship," Reagan said.

The exchange was initiated by the Friends of the National Arboretum and its president, Betty Rae. The Arboretum is funded by the Agriculture Department, but Rae taps private sources to widen its activities. She raised more than $500,000 to build a national herb garden there. "Fools rush in" is the way she describes her smart lobbying job. "When we had $200,000 I went before the appropriations committees for matching funds. I told my mother about it, and she said, 'Just like Watergate!'" Rae also button-holed committee members, giving each a bouquet of fragrant herbs and a copy of her testimony. She got the money.

Ohio, Rae worked with her husband, Dr. and Mrs. Edward Rea, at the 2009 FONA Dinner. Photo courtesy of Glenda Kapsalis.

Betty Rea presiding over a meeting of the Potomac Unit of the National Herb Society. From The Washingtonian, May 1984 "People to Watch" column by Vera Glasser. Photo by Tom Wolff.
Betty Rea, founding president of FONA, was wont to describe herself as “determined” and that was not an understatement. However, she was much much more, and it was our great good luck that she focused her energy on the National Arboretum.

Her hometown was Hudson, Ohio. A medical technician, she came to Washington, DC, to do research in hematology at George Washington Hospital. There she met her husband, Dr. Edward Rea who survives her. They made McLean, Virginia, their home. Betty was proud to be from the Buckeye State. It was her tradition to pass around a basket of buckeyes at FONA’s fall board meeting and urge everyone to plant a buckeye tree.

She turned her energies and efforts to gardening. As the national president of the Herb Society of America (1976–1978), she became interested in building a National Herb Garden at the Arboretum. She took the project from concept to completion by first smoothly navigating the complicated approval process for creating such a garden on federal grounds. Succeeding in this challenge, she turned her energy toward funding. Determined as ever, Betty took trays of fresh handmade Victorian tussie-mussies (small elaborate herbal flower bouquets) to Capitol Hill and personally delivered one to every member of the House Appropriations Committee. She raised half the funds for the project and then convinced Congressman Jamie Whitten, chair of the Appropriations Committee, to delegate the remaining funds. The National Herb Garden is a magnificent showcase for the beauty and value of herbs.

In 1981, Betty, vice-president of the National Herb Society, Dr. John Creech, director of the U.S. National Arboretum, and Bob Lederer, then president of the National Herb Society and a member of the Nurseryman’s Association formed a new nonprofit, the Friends of the National Arboretum. FONA was incorporated in 1983 and Betty was the founding president.

For many years, Mrs. Ethel Garrett tried unsuccessfully to have the columns removed from the portico of the Capitol Building during renovation in 1959 installed at the Arboretum. Betty took up that cause, returning once again to Capitol Hill to raise the funds. As Chairman of the National Capitol Column project, she earned praise and thanks in the Congressional Record (June 19, 1990) for her “steadfast devotion and leadership.” They might also have mentioned “determination”! The Capitol Columns were dedicated on June 14, 1990, standing tall on the crown of their hill, and delighting everyone to this day.

Her efforts reached around the globe. President Ronald Reagan had made a toast at a dinner for the Emperor of Japan that included the suggestion of an ongoing exchange of American flowering dogwood seeds for Japanese cherry cuttings. In 1982, Betty Rea, on behalf of FONA, took on the challenge. She managed to get American Airlines to fly one hundred pounds of dogwood seeds to Japan and to send along the curator of that collection, Roland Jefferson, to make the presentation. She quipped “We were barely able to afford Roland’s flight. I thought I might be packing him enough peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to sustain him through his stay.”

Betty was ahead of her time; she recognized the importance of gardens and green space and took action to provide those benefits for the public long before our current awareness of such things. Everyone who visits the National Arboretum owes her a debt of gratitude. Where would we be without Betty Rea’s “determination?”

By Kathy Horan
IT’S THE HOLLY-DAY SEASON
There is an unmistakable chill in the air that marks the coming of winter, and while much of the Arboretum is going dormant, the hollies in the Holly Magnolia Collection are just getting started. In fact, it's often hard to imagine the holiday season without hollies and their distinctive glossy leaves and bright red berries. Because hollies are dioecious, meaning there are separate male and female plants, the collection has a certain romantic air at an already romantic time of the year.

One of the largest collections of hollies in the world, the collection at the Arboretum contains a wide variety of both evergreen and deciduous species and cultivars. Planted in 1943, it is one of the oldest collections at the Arboretum and contains some of the Arboretum's oldest accessioned plants. During the early years, under Director Dr. Skinner and plant breeder Dr. William Kosar, the collection grew fast. By 1957, the holly collection contained 101 American hollies, 92 English hollies, 40 Japanese hollies, and 75 miscellaneous species. The collection continued to grow, and during the 1970s, the collection reached its peak number of species and cultivars. Many of the original plants remain, so a visitor can experience plants in an awesome variety of forms, sizes, and leaf and berry colors.

Patrick Lynch, who currently manages the collection, is bringing back some of the original design. A former nurseryman, Pat has been at the Arboretum for 15 years and in the Holly Magnolia Collection for 11. “We’re reclaiming a lot of the older plants that have started to decline,” says Pat, and he notes that they are trying to incorporate new cultivars as well. “We’re looking at old photos and maps and trying to use the old design with newer plants.”

The Chesapeake Chapter of the Holly Society of America has been helping with this effort. Since 1998, society members have been volunteering in the collection twice a year, and since 2003, they have been donating plants from their “Gene Eisenbeiss Holly of the Year” program. “Hollies are very tenacious, especially the American Holly,” says Holly Society President Sue Hunter. “They are extremely versatile, extremely hardy, have a huge diversity, and are great for birds.” Sue is a native-plant propagator who works at Heartwood Nursery in Pennsylvania. “There’s nothing like walking in the woods in the winter when everything is gray, and you come across a stand of American hollies.”

According to Pat Lynch, pairing the hollies with the magnolias only adds to the year round interest. “In the spring, you have the scent of the Ilex cornuta (Chinese Holly). It smells fantastic. It’s not just my favorite smelling holly, it’s my favorite smelling plant.” At this time of year, you also have the spring flowering magnolias such as Magnolia × soulangiana (saucer magnolia). In the summer the evergreen magnolias such as Magnolia grandiflora (southern magnolia). Finally, going into fall and winter, not only do the berries start to come out on the hollies, but do the red seed pods of the southern magnolia. What’s Pat’s favorite part of the collection? “I like how it’s so open and expansive. The plants can grow to their full size here.” To emphasize the point, he brings me to the base of a massive Buford Type Ilex cornuta. “Unless you have a huge property, you just can’t get something like this. It gives you the feeling of being on an old-world estate.”

Christopher Goulart is a former nurseryman from Little Compton, Rhode Island, and is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island in Environmental Horticulture and Turf Grass Management. Following a spring and summer horticulture internship at the Arboretum, he was hired this fall as FONA’s new Administrative Coordinator.
**Meet our Interns**

In 2014 the National Arboretum was thrilled to welcome a record 21 interns. According to the USNA website, the annual program “offers on-the-job training in horticulture, botany, research, education, facilities management, and public garden administration.” We would like to say thank you to all of this year’s interns. Your incredible hard work and seemingly unending enthusiasm helped us accomplish so much. We would also like to thank all of the participating institutions who so graciously sponsored the interns, and without whom this program would be impossible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>What’s Next?</th>
<th>Funder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERIN HOLDEN</td>
<td>Herb Garden</td>
<td>B.S. Radford University; M.S. Maryland</td>
<td>Continue at the Arboretum and hope to gain a permanent position</td>
<td>The National Herb Society</td>
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<td>KEEGAN BRATHWAITE</td>
<td>Azalea and Asian Collections</td>
<td>University of Maryland Eastern Shore</td>
<td>Continue at the Arboretum and hope to gain a permanent position</td>
<td>FONA</td>
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<td>CHRISTOPHER GOULART</td>
<td>Boxwood and Gotelli Collections</td>
<td>University of Rhode Island</td>
<td>Has been hired as FONA’s Administrative Coordinator</td>
<td>FONA</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARLA ESPOSITO-BARRESI</td>
<td>Introduction Garden, Friendship Garden</td>
<td>Montgomery College</td>
<td>Finish her studies and continue working in public gardens</td>
<td>FONA/National Capital Area Garden Clubs</td>
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<td>MEGAN WIEMER</td>
<td>Turfgrass Exhibit, Herbarium</td>
<td>Eastern Michigan University</td>
<td>Finish at EMU, then hopes to get hands-on experience in the field of agroecology before returning to school to get an M.S.</td>
<td>National Turfgrass Association</td>
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<td>SARAH MOORE</td>
<td>Fern Valley, Dogwood Collection</td>
<td>Wheaton College</td>
<td>Hopes to get hands-on experience in the field of agroecology before returning to school to get an M.S.</td>
<td>LAHR/Women’s National Farm and Garden Association</td>
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<td>REUBEN WEISER</td>
<td>Grass Roots Exhibit</td>
<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Finish undergraduate degree</td>
<td>National Turfgrass Association</td>
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<td>ALESHA BURKE</td>
<td>National Bonsai and Penjing Museum</td>
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<td>FERN CORWIN</td>
<td>Herbarium</td>
<td>University of Vermont</td>
<td>Plans to pursue a career in taxonomy and systematic botany</td>
<td>Floral Nursery and Plant Research Unit</td>
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<td>Field Assistant</td>
<td>Ohio University</td>
<td>Finish undergraduate degree</td>
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<td>DOMENIC BELLO</td>
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<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Finish undergraduate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANGELA MAGNAN</td>
<td>Propagation</td>
<td>B.S. Saint Anselm College; M.S. Johns Hopkins</td>
<td>Plans on continuing to work in public horticulture</td>
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PROFILE: CARLA ESPOSITO-BARRESI

If you’ve visited the Friendship Garden surrounding the Arbor House this summer or fall, then you’ve probably seen the beautiful work of intern Carla Esposito-Barresi. Growing up in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she developed her love for gardening at a young age when visiting her grandmother’s garden and her uncle’s farm. She continued this passion by studying to be a landscape architect at the National University of Buenos Aires, the University of Florence in Florence, Italy, and the University of Morón in Buenos Aires.

In addition to her major classes, she also took classes in French, German, and Italian. The daughter of Italian immigrants, Carla grew up in a bilingual home and always considered translation as a hobby. However, after being inspired by events from a trip to Cologne, Germany, she decided to make her hobby her profession and left architecture school to study Legal Translation and Interpreting at the National University of Buenos Aires, graduating in 1995.

While Carla enjoyed her new line of work, it would seem that she was not quite done with landscape design. While working in the South of France, Carla met the American man who would become her husband and in 2002, she moved to the United States. She has since decided to return her old passion and is currently studying Landscape Technology at Montgomery College in Maryland with only a semester to go.

Her internship here at the Arboretum has inspired her to continue working in public gardens. She has expressed a desire to work in a setting where she can help create gardens that are artistic, educational, and aesthetically pleasing for others to enjoy.

-CHRISTOPHER GOULART
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.

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2015 Garden Fair & Plant Sale

- Expanded Collector’s Corner
- Silent auction of the most unusual plant offerings
- Broad selection of exceptional annuals, perennials, and woodies
- Exciting new vendors
- Expert horticulturists to answer your questions
- Maypole and madrigals by Washington Revels

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
April 24, 2015: FONA Members Only, 10 am to 1 pm; Open to the Public, 1 pm to 4 pm
April 25, 2015: Open to the Public, 9 am to 4 pm

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.