



LANDIS ARBORETUM

2017 Annual Report:

Building on the Past, Looking to the Future



This is that time of year when we find ourselves looking back on the year that was – and looking ahead toward the future.

In the last century, founder Fred Lape began planning an arboretum in the Schoharie Valley. With a vision for the future, he determined that, after his death, others would be able to benefit from his legacy.

2017 was a good year for finances:

- ZBGA (Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums): \$35,000 for the next 5 years
- Community Arts Grant: \$4,203
- Schoharie County Tourism Event Marketing Grant: \$3,333
- SPN (Signal Plant Network): signage & resource materials
- Stewart's Holiday Match Grant: \$800
- Schwab Foundation: \$15,000

and for fundraising:

- Plant sales: \$14,048
- 11th Annual 5K Forest Run/Walk: \$ 4,559
- Full Moon Music Series: \$ 2,071
- Mettawee River Theater: \$ 435
- Wine Tasting: \$ 829
- Weddings and special events: \$1,700

Building and Grounds

The first phase of the installation of our new lilac collection was completed, marking the beginning of what will eventually become The Lilac Trail – funded by a generous donor. In April, Joel Caraher, Jim Murphy, Jim Paley, Steve Perog, and Jeff Schworm resumed work on the restoration of the Raymond Greenhouse. This stage of the project included spreading 12 tons of crushed stone for the floor (assisted by three AmeriCorps volunteers) and erecting a new wooden rafter and beam system and a state-of-the-art polycarbonate shell to enclose the entire structure. Many years overdue, the historic barn and adjacent shed finally received a new coat of stain and wood preservative. In the Welcome Center, a new wooden floor is nearly complete. Landis acquired yet another sculpture for its collection. Planning continues on the emergency shelter that is to be built onto the existing Meeting House through funding from the New York Rising Program. Many of the interior details and amenities have been selected with particular care given to maintaining the rustic nature of the existing building.

-- Jim Paley, Board President



Looking to the Future



It was a good year for our collections:

- Lilac Installation, Phase I, was completed
- Additional insect and plant disease signage has been placed throughout the grounds and in the Welcome Center and parking lot kiosk
- The Ed Miller Native Plant Trail now has photo-metal QR signs to replace the old laminate signs
- Executive Director Fred Breglia became a member of the National Big Tree Measuring Cadre. The group is working to develop more accurate measuring guidelines in conjunction with the American Forest Association
- Key Bank's Make a Difference Day brought new and enthusiastic volunteers to Landis
- The Memorial Tree program added two trees planted in memory of loved ones
- Our trail system benefited from ditch work, stone, and culverts, and brush hogging in all areas has both maintained habitat and added to the aesthetic appeal of the grounds

Arts, Entertainment, and Special Events

Landis hosted three weddings this year in the renovated Meeting House. The Full Moon Music Series offered four top-notch groups, surpassing previous attendance records. The Upper Catskill String Quartet performed a rousing selection of dance music through the ages. There was standing room only for the Theater Project of Schoharie County's hilarious production of Radio Show. The Metawee River Theater Company once again enchanted young and old alike with a charming play that included life-sized puppets, masks, and live music. A full house welcomed Professor Robin Wall Kimmerer for her inspirational talk, "Lessons from Sweetgrass," which focused on our relationship with and responsibilities to Nature.

-- Wendy Kass, Chair



Looking to the Future

Communications

The Communications Committee was responsible for all publications, both print and electronic, that speak to the public on behalf of the Arboretum. During the past year, our committee produced four issues of the Landis Newsletter, each featuring regular columns by Executive Director Fred Breglia and Landis Gardener Erin Breglia, as well as by science writer Anita Sanchez. Those four issues offered our readership a look at the plants, people, and events at the Arboretum. The committee worked closely with the Education Committee and with graphic designer Chandra Burkhart to produce the 2017 Calendar of Events and the 2017 Annual Report. It is currently working with the Membership Committee on a new membership brochure, again with the assistance of Chandra Burkhart. The committee collaborated with the Marketing Committee. It continued to make ongoing improvements to the Arboretum's website and communicated news and updates through Facebook and Constant Contact mailings, relying on the expertise of Wilma Jozwiak. Writing and editing were within the very capable purview of Gail Browning, Lee Lattimer, and Louise Polli.

-- Nolan Marciniac, Chair



In 2017, Landis Arboretum's public outreach included both new and established relationships throughout the greater community.



Looking to the Future



Volunteers

In 2017, Landis garnered nearly 1,800 volunteer hours at Arboretum sponsored events, but these figures, impressive as they are, don't tell the entire story. There are many, many volunteer hours of service that most members are probably not aware of: the Board of Trustees and the many committees that are dedicated to fulfilling Landis' mission. They also include the members of the Garden Club, the propagation team, the folks who prune and weed – not to mention the many hours spent on computers coordinating and communicating. On a personal note, as Volunteer Coordinator, I estimate I spent 300 hours doing what I love to do: to be a part of the active engagement and collective wisdom that is the Arboretum. I would encourage you to become involved in any of the committees whose reports appear in this special edition of our newsletter. You will certainly reap more than you sow.

-- Anne Donnelly, Chair

Building on the Past

Our executive director was spreading the word:



- Capital District Garden and Flower Show at Hudson Valley Community College
- Audubon Society of the Capital Region
- Guilderland Garden Club
- Fulton-Montgomery County Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners
- SUNY Cobleskill's Ecology class
- SUNY Cobleskill's Landscape Career class
- with Ann Parillo on "Schenectady Today"
- with Mark Kilmer and the Montgomery County Business Development Center on WTVL
- on WAMC's "Vox Pop" call-in show
- on Bob Graves' WGY show, "Garden Talk"



Education

A 2017 Calendar of Events was successfully compiled and distributed with assistance from the Communications Committee. We were able to expand and diversify our workshops and classes, ranging from beekeeping to birding, from astronomy to pruning - and everything in between, including the very popular Moon Music series and the Albany Amateur Astronomers' Star Parties. Some information has already been received for the 2018 year, promising many old favorites and some new and stimulating programs. To assist in planning events, an activity survey was posted on our website and Facebook, requesting feedback about past programs and future needs.

-- Lee Lattimer, Chair

Building on the Past



Garden Club

The club began the gardening year in February, creating hundreds of “seed bombs” that included many varieties of annuals and vegetables donated by Hannaford in Esperance. These were handed out at the Landis booth at the HVCC Garden and Flower Show. As the spring progressed, we met with Dave and Darlene Laraway and tapped their long experience with vegetable gardening – and in August, we followed up with a tour and a tasting at Laraways’ prolific and sustainable garden. In April, members tidied up the beds in the Arboretum’s VanLoveland Gardens. In June, we planted our kid-friendly educational mini-garden containers: “A Sensory Garden,” “A Purple Garden,” “A Culinary Herb Garden,” “A Pizza Garden,” and a “Fun Plants for Kids Garden.” In September, we studied seed saving and collected seeds to start our own seed bank – small packets of “Landis Sown” seeds will be on sale at the Spring Plant Sale. To end the gardening year, we met in November to engage in a lively discussion about what worked and what didn’t, about the trials and errors and the learning experience that is what gardening is all about.

-- Erin Breglia, Garden Manager

Looking to the Future

Marketing

In 2017, the committee worked to promote the Arboretum to both business and non-profit organizations –and, above all, the general public. In September, for example, we showcased the renovated Meeting House and the natural beauty of Landis at a “Business After Hours” event for the members of the Montgomery and Schoharie Counties’ Chamber of Commerce, “Vox Pop” and WGY’s “Garden Talk” programs, Anne Parillo’s “Schenectady Today” show on Public Access Television, Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara’s “Assembly Update,” and the highly visible “I Love New York” ads, as well as through articles which appeared in the Gazette, Albany Times Union, the Schoharie Quarterly, and other publications. Through our cooperation with the Communications Committee, we developed print marketing materials, most notably a press kit, to disseminate news about the Arboretum and its mission. Committee members represented Landis at a wide variety of public events, ranging from the New York Power Authority’s Festival of Trees, to Council of the Arts conferences, to the Capital District Garden and Flower Show – and many others.

- Gail Browning

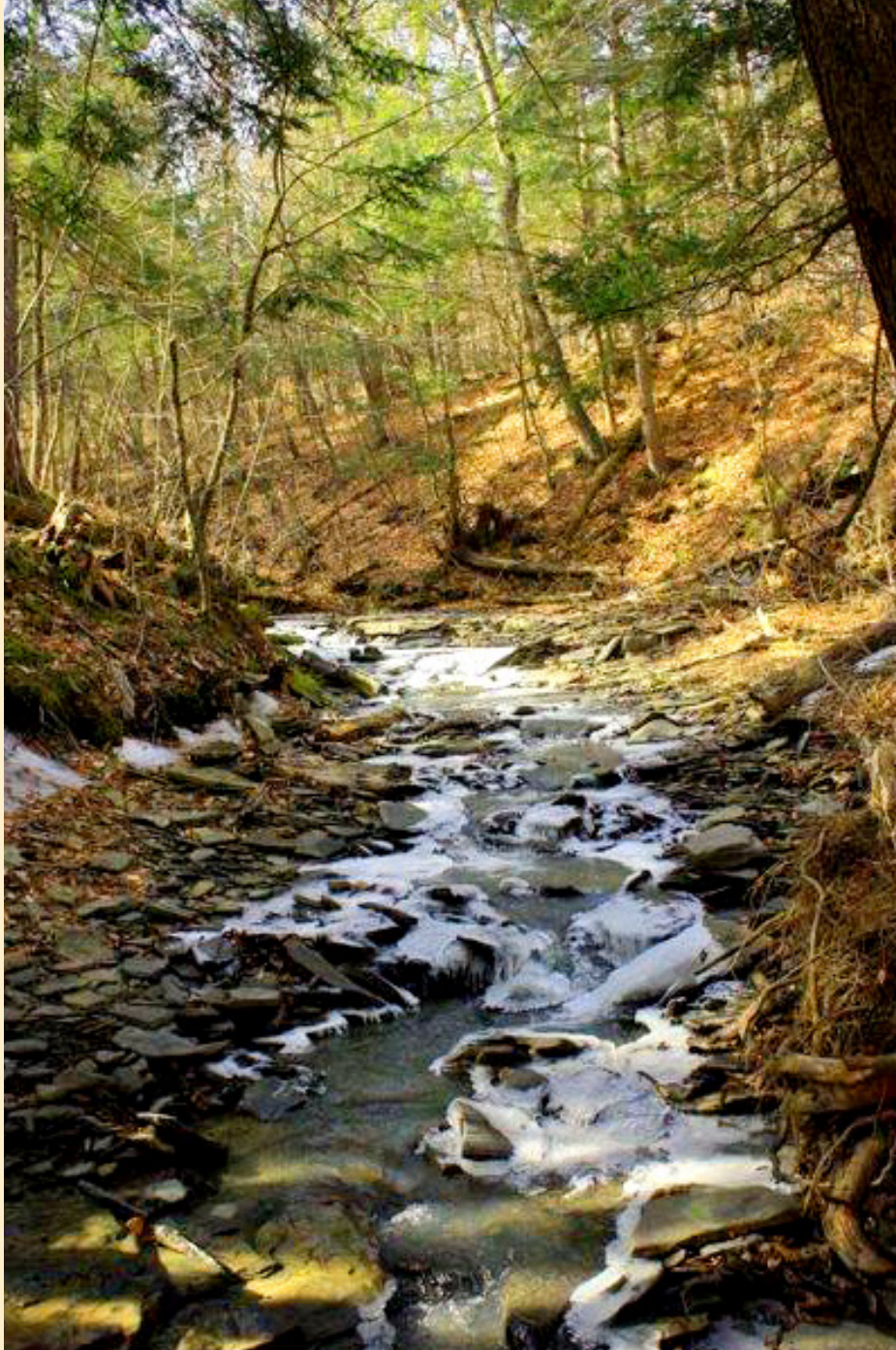
Membership

Two years ago, Landis initiated a system in which annual memberships would expire on either April 30 or August 31, just before the spring or fall plant sales. The transition was not as smooth as we had hoped, but we have since settled into a rhythm. Reminders to renew memberships are mailed a month before each sale, and the number of memberships has increased. In 2017, there were 318 memberships, including 8 lifetime members. The committee has also added a new CLUB category of membership for organizations: check the website for this opportunity.

-- Jeanne Post-Sourmail, Chair

And there were other highlights too:

- Stephen Cushing spent 400 hours in a SUNY Oneonta internship at Landis, learning what makes the Arboretum “work”
- Gavin Leach completed the second of a series of promotional videos, “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.” Both videos are available for viewing on our website
- The Great Oak Hunt, sponsored by Landis and underwritten by ten community businesses, raised public awareness about trees and other plants and their importance --and identified a new champion pin oak
- An Instagram account for Landis Arboretum was established, along with an account for Big Trees, linked to Landis Arboretum
- Our Facebook presence continues to grow almost daily
- Four seasonal TV commercials were shown on WNYT, WXXA, Time Warner, and WCWN
- Cindy McKeon came on board as the housekeeper at Landis
- Participation in the 11th Perennial 5K Forest Run / Walk reached an all-time high
- Beekeepers Anne Frey and Earl VanWormer donated honeybee hives to serve as part of our educational mission
- Landis’ Bluebird Trail maintenance and monitoring indicated a stable population of birds fledging in 2017
- A new database system, including both computer and software, will keep our plant information current and secure



The George Landis Arboretum is blessed with a rich history of environmental stewardship. With your support, we can preserve our past and move into the future, sharing our heritage and our mission for many more generations.