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Full Circle at Landis for Fred Breglia —Louise Polli



As a small boy, Fred Breglia always had an interest in big trees, including the large oak near the family home in Richmondville. So when the Breglias visited Landis, Fred was immediately drawn to the Arboretum's choice conifers, the mighty Great Oak, and its vast landscape of towering trees.

Today, as director of the Arboretum, Fred's lifelong love of trees and Landis has come full circle. His provisional appointment in April 2011 was the culmination of his early affinity for this special place, a variety of work experiences centered on the environment and the outdoors in particular, and a series of positions at the Arboretum.

A four-year graduate of the State University of New York at Cobleskill majoring in Plant Science and Horticulture, Fred was referred by Professor and then

Board member Chris Cash for a grant-funded mapping project. He thoroughly enjoyed the work, and yet he later declined a job offer as horticulturist to head west and experience the draw of the giant redwoods and accept a position at a nursery in Oregon. After returning to the East Coast, Fred eventually came back to Landis in a seasonal assignment in 1998. From there, he assumed greater responsibility and, as Fred puts it, did "less mowing" in each successive role.

Over the past 13 years, Fred has worked closely with each of his predecessors in the director's position. He describes himself as a "resource guy" who applied for grants, handled marketing functions, made presentations, and offered recommendations to the Board on, for example, the Arboretum's venture to establish a collection of oak trees.

Fred's professional expertise and background as an arborist clearly bring a valuable and informed perspective to the leadership of Landis. He is truly "home-grown," and his hands-on approach is evident as he works to plan for a

thriving future for the Arboretum. Fred is optimistic that with sound management of resources, i.e., living within its means, the Arboretum will continue to succeed. That includes making the most of the talents of both employees and volunteers. Fred encourages members to share their skills and make Landis "a place they feel is theirs." As he urges, "Help out at your Arboretum; it's in all our best interests."

Landis has been a big part of Fred's life for a long time. The young boy from Richmondville grew up, went to college, and fell in love with Landis—and at Landis. The Arboretum was the destination for many of Fred's early dates with Erin McKenna, now his wife. And, it comes as no surprise that they were married under the boughs of the Great Oak. Today, they bring their little boy Freddy to Landis, the next generation of Breglias to someday hike its trails.

Fred believes continuity of leadership is crucial to the Arboretum's health and vigor. His enthusiasm and commitment are infectious, as he declares, "This is not a job; it's a way of life."

WREATH SALE TO BENEFIT ARBORETUM

The Landis Arboretum will be selling 24-inch holiday wreaths this year! Each wreath features premium balsam and Fraser fir branches, adorned with pine cones and a big red bow. Each wreath is \$20. Orders can be placed beginning November 1st.



Orders must be placed through Erin Breglia, by phone ONLY at 518 922-5742.

A Brief History of the George Landis Arboretum

—Lee Lattimer, Landis Historian
 In 1903, Herman Lape purchased Oak Nose Farm, named for a white oak on a promontory overlooking the Schoharie Valley. He, his wife Emma, and their son Frederick began the arduous life of farming on the 95 acres. They lived there without electricity or running water until 1913, when the family moved to Esperance so that Fred could attend high school, in Altamont, then in Cobleskill. In

1917, Fred continued his education at Cornell University. His mother and father moved back on the hill, but to the old Silvernail farm, located near Oak Nose Farm. After earning a degree in English, Fred taught first at Cornell, then at Stanford University in California.

In 1928, Herman Lape, now 62, became ill and could not continue farming. He and his wife

moved back to Esperance for the remainder of Herman's days. Fred, learning of his father's poor health, returned from California. He moved onto the old farm, which had become decrepit. Having sold an article to *Collier's*, he decided to try to make a living as a writer. Although he wrote several articles and even a novel, sales were slow during the Depression. He worked the farm and did odd jobs,

such as playing piano for area establishments. In 1932, he began a local poetry magazine, *Trails*, which featured his poetry as well as the work of many area writers, including W. W. Christman. Fred was interested in all artistic expression and encouraged visits from people involved in theater, music, sculpture, and other artistic endeavors.

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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.



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Near the end of the 1930s, it became clear that more income was needed. In 1937, he became a part-time English professor at R.P. I. in Troy, NY. There he became good friends with George Edwin Landis, a professor of Economics. In 1948, George purchased a house in Troy and wanted to landscape it with unusual trees and shrubs, and he asked Fred for assistance. The pair began the task of selection by reading catalogs and visiting nurseries and botanical gardens. Many plants selected were planted on the farm as well as at George's home. In December of 1950, George Landis died unexpectedly, leaving the bulk of his estate to Fred. Using this legacy, Fred decided to continue the vision of an arboretum, naming it for the "friend who had made it all possible both in life and in death."

With help from taxonomists and botanists, Fred learned by his own successes and mistakes. His expertise grew until he became known world-wide, participating in a seed exchanges with other arboreta and botanic gardens across the globe.

In the late 1950's, another man important to the Arboretum began visiting. His name was Levan Loveland, but preferred to be called Van. He was a bank manager from NYC and an avid flower gardener. He moved to the farm after his retirement, and he planted beautiful flower gardens near the farmhouse. Under his guidance, the Arboretum became a corporation in 1966 and achieved IRS non-profit status in 1967. As the men aged, it became harder to maintain the gardens and grounds. Van died in 1977. While some projects such as

the library (1982) were completed, the general condition of the Arboretum declined. Fred died in 1985 while vacationing in Mexico. After Fred's death, improvements began under the direction of President Elizabeth Corning. In 1987, Pamela Rowling was hired as horticulturist and director, continuing the Arboretum's goals of expansion, protection, and education. In the years 2000 to 2005, new lands were donated and purchased, increasing the acreage to 548. With the assistance of our current director, Fred Breglia, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers, the Arboretum is realizing its full potential as a "tree museum," scenic park, and education center.

I welcome any questions or comments about this article, so please send a message to: rlattimer@midtel.net.

THIRD ANNUAL WINE-TASTING AT COBLESKILL'S GRAPEVINE FARMS TO BENEFIT LANDIS ARBORETUM

Wines from New York's finest vineyards will be featured in an exclusive tasting at Grapevine Farms. All proceeds will benefit the Landis Arboretum. A selection of delicious hors d'oeuvres will be served to complement the wines. You'll learn more about the winemaking process from vintners representing their vineyards at this event.

A beautiful basket of New York State wines will be raffled during the course of the evening.

Grapevine Farms' famous holiday shopping will be available to all as they keep their doors open late for us. Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy a wonderful evening at Grapevine Farms while benefiting the Arboretum.

Thanks to Sterling Insurance of Cobleskill for sponsoring this year's party.

**Friday,
November 18,
from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.**

Admission is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Tickets may be purchased at Grapevine Farms, 2373 State Route 7, Cobleskill, NY 12043, on the night of the event, or in advance from the Arboretum by calling (518) 875-6935.

Visit the Arboretum's website at www.landisarboretum.org for more information about the wide array of programs offered at Landis.

Collections News

New and Underutilized Landscape Trees from to Pyrus to Zelkova

(Part 3 of a 3-part series) —FRED BREGLIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LANDIS ARBORETUM

P*yrus calleryana* 'Autumn Blaze,' Autumn Blaze Callery Pear, is a wonderful landscape tree that produces stunning clusters of white flowers in mid-spring.

It has dark green foliage throughout the season and small yellow ornamental fruits that appear in late summer. The leaves turn a deep reddish purple in the fall, hence the name "Autumn Blaze." It reaches heights of 30 feet and has a nice oval shape. Hardy to Zone 5.

Pyrus fauriei, Korean Sun Pear, is similar to the Autumn Blaze Pear except in its mature height. The Korean Sun Pear only gets 15 feet tall. It has the same great flowers as Autumn Blaze and its fall color is also equally striking, but more red than purple. This small ornamental tree is one of my favorites and is hardy to Zone 4.

Sorbus alnifolia, Korean Mountain Ash, is a relatively fast growing deciduous tree. It reaches a mature height of 25 feet and has glossy, bright green, simple leaves that change to an attractive yellow color in fall before dropping. In late spring, the trees are decorated with clusters of tiny white blossoms that give way to showy red fruits that are a welcome feast for migrating birds in the fall. Another great attribute of this tree is that unlike the sapsucker problems associated with other mountain ash, this tree seems to go unnoticed by this bird.

Ulmus glabra 'Camperdownii,' Camperdown Elm, is one of my favorite



Ulmus glabra 'Camperdownii' Camperdown Elm

ornamental deciduous trees. Its origin dates back to 1840, when the Earl of Camperdown's head forester discovered a mutant contorted branch growing on one of the trees at the Camperdown Estate in Dundee, Scotland. Today, every Camperdown Elm in the world is from a cutting taken from that original mutant cutting. It is a fast growing tree that is wider than it is tall, reaching heights of 20 feet and widths of over 30 feet over time. The contorted

branches gain character over time as they get larger and larger and create a striking landscape plant as the branches eventually weep all the way to the ground. Cold hardy to Zone 4.

Ulmus parvifolia, Lacebark Elm, is a graceful tree with a rounded crown that gets covered with lustrous dark green leaves. When autumn arrives, the leaves change and their color ranges from a showy golden yellow to a reddish purple. As the tree matures, the gray bark begins to exfoliate and creates a striking mottled appearance on the trunk that gives year-round interest. This tree is extremely adaptable to all soil conditions except waterlogged conditions. Lacebark Elm is a relatively fast growing tree that is very tough. Its mature height ranges from 40 to 50 feet with 40 foot spread. Lacebark elm is hardy to Zone 5.

Z*elkova serrata* 'Schmidtlow', Wireless[®] Zelkova, was developed for its low height, 24 feet tall, and broad spreading shape, 30 feet wide. This cultivar has an ideal shape for street plantings under utility lines, hence the name "Wireless" Zelkova. Its red fall color is a surprising extra feature. Its cold hardy to Zone 5.

Not all cultivars are created equal, and different doesn't always mean better, but the trees in this three-part series have all proven themselves winners in the landscape.

Happy planting!

Remember Landis: A Guide to Charitable Giving

—Jim Paley

We speak often of **stewardship** here at Landis, a commitment to care for and preserve the Arboretum not only for ourselves but also for generations to come. Stewardship can take many forms, such as our prudent use of the land, the protection of our old growth forests, the educational programming we offer, and so much more. In this issue, we feature Part I of Board President Jim Paley's article on charitable giving. Jim reviews the basics of charitable giving, including the benefits that can be reaped by both the recipient of the gift and the donor. As Jim urges, "Remember Landis," when considering your charitable gifts, now and in the future.

Charitable giving can play an important role in many estate plans. Philanthropy can not only give you great personal satisfaction, it can also give you a current

income tax deduction, let you avoid capital gains tax, and reduce the amount of taxes your estate may owe when you die.

There are many ways to give to charity.

- You can make gifts during your lifetime or at your death.
- You can make gifts outright or use a trust.
- You can name a charity as a beneficiary in your will, or designate a charity as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or life insurance policy.
- Or, if your gift is substantial, you can establish a private foundation, community foundation, or donor-advised fund.

Making outright gifts

An outright gift is one that benefits the charity immediately and exclusively. With an outright

gift you get an immediate income and gift tax deduction.

Tip: Make sure the charity is a qualified charity according to the IRS. Get a written receipt or keep a bank record for any cash donations. Get a written receipt for any property other than money.

Will or trust bequests and beneficiary designations

These gifts are made by including a provision in your will or trust document, or by using a beneficiary designation form. The charity receives the gift at your death, at which time your estate can take the income and estate tax deductions.

This is the first of a two-part series.



Ed Miller's Native Trail 10th Anniversary Celebration with family (below & left) & friends



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

—Nolan Marciniac

Donna Vincent's life has always been about people—and plants.



Since she was a teenager, she said, she was always interested in plants, and she pursued

that interest by studying ornamental horticulture at SUNY Cobleskill. Later, Donna and her husband Bob ran a florist shop, greenhouse, and landscaping service in Duanesburg for nearly 25 years. A large vegetable garden was always a feature of their home, but now that their two sons, Bob and Ken, are grown, vegetables have taken a back seat to perennials.

Donna is currently horticulture coordinator for the Schenectady ARC, working in

gardens and the greenhouse with consumers with developmental disabilities. "It's really rewarding to make a difference in a person's life with the smallest things, even a single flower," she commented. She is anticipating starting yet another vegetable garden for ARC, some 2000 square feet, in order to increase the supply of produce used by the organization's several group homes. In addition, she and her ARC consumers participate in Schenectady's Farmer's Market.

In 2006, Donna was invited to join the Arboretum's Board of Trustees by a close friend, Paul Blair, and she has made fund-raising events her specialty. She has made the Summer Garden Party and the Rite of Spring Brunch into two of the Arboretum's signature events. "I love doing events. To me, it's fun to plan—pulling people together, choosing

the flowers, the linens, the musicians. It's tough, but rewarding," Donna said. As a florist, she was always working with her customers to help them plan special functions. Her fifteen years' experience planning educational events for the Board of the Capital District Teleflora Group has certainly stood her and the Arboretum in good stead.

In the mind of this event planner and horticulturist, the wedding of the Arboretum's current director, Fred Breglia, and Erin McKenna was a most memorable event, celebrating both people and nature. "Of course, there's always the emotion of the wedding. But it was also the beauty of nature too. I remember how beautiful it was watching the bridal party walk out of the woods . . . [to the Great Oak]."

She insisted that the Arboretum's mission is to bring people in contact with their natural environment. "So many people are out of touch with nature. Their children are tied to electronics. A simple walk in the woods, the frogs in the pond, the flowers [in the VanLoveland Garden], they can't see the beauty in it," she said.

To be sure, Donna's work has amply rewarded the Arboretum, but she countered that she benefits too. Not only has she received the satisfaction of a job well done, she's also made many friends and enjoys working with volunteers to achieve "a common goal, to help the Arboretum save this little piece of nature."

For Donna, the Arboretum has become a perfect confluence of plants and people.