

WHAT'S Inside

- 2 . Going Green
- . Excellence in Teaching Award
- 3 . Collections News
- . Letters
- 4 . Native Plant Trail
- . Landis Portraits
- . Party for Volunteers

the LANDIS ARBORETUM

THE NEWSLETTER

COMBINED EVENTS TOP FALL AGENDA

Does the old saw that two heads—and maybe three—are better than one apply to events as well?

The Arboretum is taking a chance that it does: plans are under way to combine the successful 5K cross-country classic with our signature Fall Plant Sale fundraiser and a VIP Bird Walk on Saturday, September 19.

In addition to expected economies of scale and best use of volunteer time and support, the Arboretum hopes to introduce participants in one event to those in the other events and heighten the excitement of an extended stay at the Arboretum.



Early Morning VIP Bird Walk Saturday, September 19

A limited number of participants is invited to begin the 5K/Plant Sale day with an Early Morning VIP Bird Walk at the Landis Arboretum with Professor Barbara Brabetz on Saturday, September 19, 6:30–8:30 am. On-time start. Donations of \$10/person to aid the Arboretum.

Even casual visitors to the Landis Arboretum will soon discover that bird watching is an easy and fun way for a family to share a day's outing. Birder Barbara Brabetz, chair of the Natural Sciences Department at SUNY Cobleskill and chief financial officer of the Arboretum, welcomes the early birds and birders for a pre-5K warm-up and VIP delivery to the Starting Line!

Advance registration required. Limited to 20. Participants are urged to dress appropriately for the season, wear sensible shoes, and bring field glasses and camera!



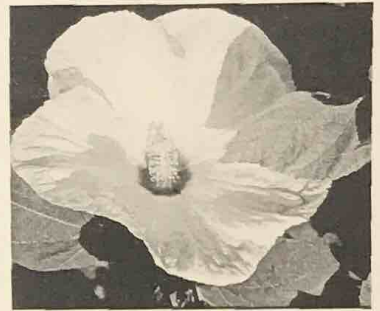
5K Cross-country Race Saturday, September 19

Sign-in for the 5K will take place between 8 and 9 am, followed by a 9:30 am start time at the Meeting-house field. Runners of all ages and levels of proficiency will have the opportunity to compete while enjoying spectacular views of the Schoharie countryside at this perennial Arboretum event. The cross-country course traverses many notable sites at Landis, taking participants past breathtaking vistas, ancient forests, and within sight of the 400-year-old Great Oak. The event is professionally timed by the Albany Running Exchange.

The Arboretum continues its tradition of free family programs with its second annual Tot Trot starting at 10:30 am. Awards include the top male and female in each age group.

Participants registered before September 1 will receive a race day tee shirt. Additional shirts will be on sale after the race. The Arboretum's Acorn Shop gift shop will be open throughout the weekend.

Kintz Plastics of Howes Cave is the primary sponsor of the 5K event. Proceeds will benefit the Arboretum.



Annual Fall Plant/Book Sale Saturday & Sunday, September 19 & 20

This traditional two-day event is slated for Saturday, September 19, & Sunday, September 20, 10 am–4 pm.

As always, the Arboretum will offer a wide variety of trees, shrubs, perennials, and mums for fall planting. Expect plentiful choices of both evergreen and deciduous plants, as well as some dwarf conifers. In addition, we will have a limited number of Van Loveland Garden plants, which will be dug up and potted up for sale.

Fall is one of the best times to install plants, giving them up to eight months to establish strong root systems before the hotter, drier weather of the following season.

Plant donations are needed. As you divide those overcrowded beds, please consider Landis as a destination for all those divisions.

Used book sale? Of course! We offer used books on a variety of subjects, but our gardening book selections are the most popular. Books to donate? Contact the Arboretum.

Visit the bake sale. Our selection of some of the best baked goods offered anywhere is reason enough to come to the sale. We also offer hot and cold beverages, cold soda and water. To donate baked goods, contact Landis at 518-875-6935.



Save the Date Tuesday, November 17

NYS Vintners showcase wines for an Arboretum fundraiser featuring wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, and holiday shopping at Grapevine Farms (Cobleskill, NY).

Free Parking for all events. * 10% Member Discounts * Acorn Gift Shop Is Open * More information at www.landisarboretum.org

THE LANDIS ARBORETUM NEWSLETTER is published quarterly for its members. The Arboretum's mission is to foster the appreciation of trees and other plants and their importance in our environment.

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The Arboretum is located 1.5 miles north of Route 20 in Esperance. Follow the signs from the village to Lape Road.



Going Green

—Fred Breglia, Director of Horticulture and Operations

At the Landis

Arboretum, we have both improved our gardens and reduced our work by emphasizing environmentally conscious horticultural methods.

As director of horticulture and operations, I have overseen the implementation of a number of sustainable practices that have proven very effective. First and foremost, I make sure that the plant material installed matches its site. We never use plants that require us to make adjustments to our overall climate and soils. For example, we don't use plants that need more water than they would naturally receive in rainfall. Nor do we use plants that require us to adjust the soil pH or to amend the soil in any way. We conduct a complete site assessment of the area and match that to the plants we install. For example, a rocky clay loam soil will be planted with material that thrives in such conditions.

We have also incorporated the use of recycled newspaper under mulch to reduce the

amount of time spent weeding and spraying. I have begun using all-natural herbicides such as Burnout™ to control weeds in areas that must be sprayed.

Plant health care is the basis for pest control. Keeping plants healthy prevents them from undergoing stress and bolsters their own natural defenses. Thus, a healthy plant does most of the pest control for us. This preventative approach is not unlike that in human health care. E.g., if we can keep ourselves healthy, we can fight off colds. I use only organic fertilizers, and young plants receive a different treatment than older plants. Similarly, a young child gets a different—but natural—diet from that of an elderly grandparent.

Mindful of energy costs, we have implemented a comprehensive mowing plan. Areas where visitors walk more often are mowed more frequently. Less visited areas are mowed once a year. The mowing is done in such a way that not only cuts down on fossil fuel, staff time, and equipment repairs but is also aesthetically pleasing. Large open fields have walking paths

mowed through them, and the rest is brush-hogged about every three years. The beautiful wildflowers in the unmowed areas are a welcome bonus.

Management for our several areas of old growth requires little or no work at all. The forest is actually designed to manage itself. We work hard to educate the public about “no management” management for these wild areas by giving tours, workshops, and interpretive signage. The signage works well as an informal learning tool for visitors and reduces the need for guides.

In such cultivated areas as the Van Loveland Garden, our gardener and volunteers apply corn gluten as a pre-emergent, hand weed the beds, and use newspaper as a weed barrier.

The Arboretum's Board is currently developing a sustainability policy that will focus on all operations and events that are held at the Arboretum. The policy will focus on efficiency, reduction of wasted resources, and educating the public.

SUNY Cobleskill Professor Receives Excellence in Teaching Award

SUNY Cobleskill Associate Professor of Natural Science Barbara Brabetz received the 2009 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. The award recognizes Brabetz for her consistently superior professional achievement and ongoing pursuit of excellence in keeping with the State University's commitment to providing its students with instruction of the highest quality.

“Professor Barbara Brabetz is a talented scientist and an excellent teacher who repre-

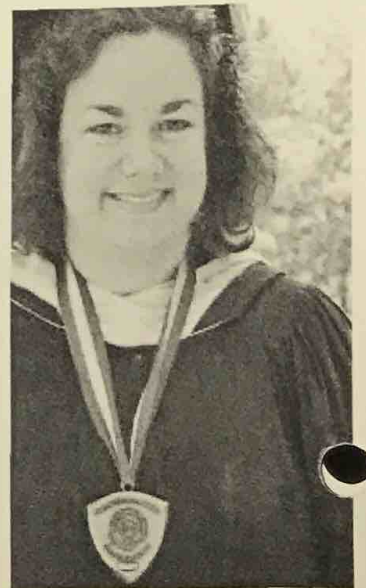
sents the best in SUNY,” said SUNY Cobleskill Provost Dr. Anne Myers. “What is notable about these awards is that they are peer nominated and peer awarded, which is very high praise indeed.”

Barbara Brabetz has been a member of SUNY Cobleskill's faculty since 1999. Throughout her tenure, she has taught a variety of courses within the Natural Sciences Department, ranging from Biology to Anatomy and Physiology to Emergency Management Services and Water

Chemistry. She supports fellow faculty members as chair of the Natural Sciences Department and leads the department's Assessment Committee. She is also the faculty liaison for the Wheeler Hall Science Laboratory Renovation Committee.

Brabetz was nominated by the campus community for this award, and her nomination was reviewed by a panel that included faculty, staff and student representatives.

Photo permission of SUNY Cobleskill.



COLLECTIONS NEWS

—Sonja Javarone, Volunteer Curator

The Allure of Lilacs: Then and Now



Fred Lape, the founder of the Landis Arboretum, was enamored of lilacs.

Lilacs are members of the olive family, along with olives, ashes, and privets. The common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), the one most familiar to most of us, is native to areas of southeastern Europe. Many other species are native to areas of Asia, mostly China and Japan. Although none are native to North America, the common lilac and its cultivars have naturalized in many areas since they were imported in the 1700s. The early bloomers are usually the common lilac and bloom on old wood. The late lilacs are Asian and bloom on new wood.

Lape was well known in lilac circles. One of his friends was Fr. John L. Fiala, an author and breeder. According to Fiala, "Fred Lape was an author, linguist, horticulturist, and lilac enthusiast. . . . He received an Award of Merit and commendation for his translation of Russian lilac publications into English." Several of Lape's lilacs were registered, including one from seed obtained from Russia.

Lape searched far and wide to find lilacs: other arboreta, personal collections, nurseries, a yard in Esperance. Most of the lilacs at the Arboretum were planted from the 1950s through 1970s. Lape kept his notes on 4" by 6" cards. Every card tells a story—for example:

• Spring 1966.

Nursery plant from seed from Alma-Ata Botanical Garden, U.S.S.R.

• 1976.

This plant has blossomed for at least three years now, and is certainly one of the best of the seedlings. Very large panicles of double florets with large petals, slightly late in blossoming. . . . Well worth propagating.

This lilac still survives.

Lape was sometimes at a loss in selecting a superior lilac from open pollinated parents. He could only guess which lilac had polli-



nated what plant. Lape would no doubt have been thrilled to know that the DNA of lilacs and their cultivars is now being used to determine the ancestry and relationships between species and cultivars.

Sadly, the Lape lilac collection, at its current site on the hill between the oaks and the crabapples, is in need of rejuvenation. As an integral part of Landis history, this collection should be maintained and showcased. The Horticulture Committee is in the process of assessing the situation and is considering a new site for the lilac collection between the Barn and the Great Oak Trail. A proposed grant, if funded, will pay for this project in 2010.

The more one delves into lilac lore, the more fascinating lilacs become. According to Fiala, "In Greek legend the nymph Syrinx was pursued by the god Pan and turned into a hollow reed from which Pan made his first flute or pan-pipe. The name *Syringa* derives from the Greek word 'syrinx' meaning hollow stem."

On a sunny day in May, when the Arboretum's lilacs are in bloom, one understands Fred Lape's fascination with lilacs.

Reference:

Fiala, John L. *Lilacs: The Genus Syringa*. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1988.

LETTERS TO LANDIS

Just wanted to mention what a lovely place Landis Arboretum is! Was privileged to be part of a group tour Ed Miller gave earlier in the spring.

I was so impressed by the wonderful collection of native trees and plants and by Mr. Miller's extensive knowledge of our indigenous plants. I thought it was a very effective and convenient way to see all the trees on one site. It was a great way to learn AND enjoy an early spring evening.

I'm very appreciative of Ed Miller's talk and having an arboretum so close to home. Many thanks!

Sincerely,
Kay Ihara

.....

Recently toured the grounds and really enjoyed it.

Been so long since I heard frogs... reminded me of being a boy. . . nice that you've left the ponds as ponds should be... while doing much to make the flora accessible. Thought the bog was interesting, too... didn't realize that flytraps and honeydews were indigenous... and so small.

Everett Whitaker
Schenectady, NY

.....

How very happy we were to have made the decision to come to the Landis Arboretum to celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary. Despite the wet weather, we enjoyed a picnic under the roof of the Acorn Gallery.

For many years we had the intentions of visiting this awesome place of natural beauty. . . . We thank you for being a part of preserving it.

Landis Arboretum soothes the spirit and rejuvenates the mind.

We took a few pamphlets to display in the restaurant because we will try our utmost to spread the word about this magical oasis of Schoharie County.

Cordially,
Jeannette and Janis Balins
A Taste of Europe
Cobleskill, NY

.....

Along the Native Plant Trail

—Ed Miller, Curator of the Native Plant Trail



The Landis Arboretum's Native Plant Trail is the best place to see nearly all of New York State's native trees

and shrubs.

At last count, we have planted well over 200 species, and since we try to have at least two plants of each species, we have over

...we planted each species with its family members. This makes it possible... to compare the details of closely related plants.

500 plants in our collection. About the only ones we don't have are noxious plants like poison sumac and prickly ash. We have also omitted alpine and endangered plants, as well as some plants

endemic to the coastal regions of Long Island. We do have some southern NY species like tupelo, red bud, summer-sweet, cucumber magnolia, and persimmon that seem to be thriving, and we just planted a paw-paw. It has not all been a success: this last winter we lost our sweet gums. We will try again. We have also had success with northern species like bog birch and balsam poplar, but given our elevation, perhaps that was to be expected.

Following a lead from Kew Gardens in England, we planted each species with its family members. This makes it possible for serious students to compare the details of closely related plants. For instance, we have all 12 species of native oaks in one area, all five species of maple in another, all five birches in still another. Other families are similarly grouped. However, as you have no doubt observed, all family members do

not like the same growing conditions. Where we have grouped together plants that love the sun or the shade, dry hillsides or wetlands, we have included plants like shad, swamp rose, river birch and tamarack, which are also planted with their family members.

Recently we have placed mailboxes at six of the planting areas, and in each we have a laminated map showing where each species is planted. The other side of the map tells something about the family or the local habitat.

One of the most popular sites along our Native Plant Trail is the Bog Garden, which provides a home for the trees and shrubs of our northern acid bogs. You can see the log structure of the Bog Garden from the Barn, but you will want to get up close to inspect plants that many people have read about but few have seen. You probably would never find a single bog with all the diversity of ours.

LANDIS PORTRAITS

A series about the people behind the plants at the Landis Arboretum

—Nolan Marciniak

Marcie Reiff

"I like to organize things . . . [and] improve efficiencies. I see it as a personal challenge. I must have been a sheepdog in another life," Marcie Reiff said.

For over 15 years, Marcie worked in the Capital District, first in the commercial printing industry and then running a client services program for a large real estate firm. The Landis Arboretum has certainly benefited from her experience and her talents—as well as her "sheepdog" tendencies.

While she lived in suburban Albany, she held onto an Arboretum brochure for a long time, intrigued by the notion of an "arboretum." When she and her husband Rob moved to rural Braman Corners, she drove to the Arboretum in midwinter just to see where the place was. Her

volunteer experience at Landis began a little more than three years ago when she encountered "those nice ladies" at the Arboretum's booth at the Capital District Flower and Garden Show who encouraged her to visit and to volunteer.

Since then, Marcie worked to clean and organize the Acorn Shop, putting the inventory on a database—and even sewing curtains and scrubbing the wide plank floor. She also served on the Publications Committee, working to bring order to the newsletter's ad pages. She worked to organize two bake sales at the Plant Sale. She spoke about the opportunity the Arboretum has given her to combine two worlds, design and marketing. "But there is yet another world at the Arboretum," she said.

At this point, she would like to "get involved in the world of growing things, make it a learning experience. That's the world I want to live in. You could not walk away from [the people at the Arboretum] without learning something. Only rub against them and you're bound to learn something . . ." She mentioned the invaluable lessons she's learned from Cindy King, Ed Miller, and Viktoria Serafin, among others. "Spending an afternoon with them is like a semester horticulture class," she noted.

As a child, Marcie admired her father's garden and, although she didn't much like weeding, she said she admired her father's enthusiasm. She moved to Colorado, then Maine, then Oregon, and finally returned to New York when her mother

became ill. She gardened in containers. When she and her husband bought a home in Latham, she finally had an opportunity to "dig in my own dirt." Her neighbors were all avid gardeners, and she received an "over-the-fence education in gardening." Now she has several acres and that much more possibility.

At the Arboretum, she's drawn to the Great Oak: "The way walking up to it, you see glimpses of the Schoharie Valley, then you look up and there it is. You can feel the energy in that tree. It's so old . . . broken by storms. It's perseverance. Endurance. That is really the Arboretum."

Challenges. Activity. Education. Cameraderie. Tranquility. "There's something for everyone at the Arboretum," she said.

Party
Party
Party

Honoring Our Volunteers!

October 3 promises beautiful fall weather to celebrate and thank our volunteers. Festivities will start at the Welcome Center at 3 pm with a Plant Swap.

Save your heritage seeds and bulbs or pot those plants that you are dividing and bring them to the table. Please label, and if you have photos, please attach to your offering.

A "thank you" repast will be followed by a short walk up the hill to the meeting house where Lape Day will be celebrated in honor of Fred Lape. A number of musical groups will play until sunset—or longer, if encores are encouraged!

TIMES JOURNAL

July 29, 2009

The News of Schoharie County

\$1.00

The hometown paper of Schoharie County Sunshine Fair.

www.timesjournalonline.com

Cobleskill, New York
133rd year — No. 30

Arboretum fights back, reaches out

By Jim Poole

Lilacs on Facebook?

Well, not really. But facebook and other electronic connectors are helping the Landis Arboretum survive the deep recession.

It was back in December that Arboretum Director Thorn O'Connor, correctly predicting the recession hit non-profits especially hard, began taking measures to endure hard times.

Those steps and others have helped, the Arboretum, like many other public and private entities, has it rough.

"It's going to be very, very tough to get through 2009 and very, very tough to get through 2010," said Treasurer Barbara Brabetz.

Yet Mr. O'Connor is cautiously optimistic the Arboretum has done this well. Visits to the 500 acres of gardens, old-growth forests and woodland trails are up sharply in '09.

"There have been more visitors this spring than I've ever seen and most of the people who have been here a long time have seen," Mr. O'Connor said.

"It's mostly families—weekdays and weekends."

He attributes the increased visits to the Arboretum's presence on Facebook, Twitter and Capital District magazines and radio stations.

"We've tried to get the Arboretum out there in as many ways as possible," Mr. O'Connor said.

"Some of the families that come here the first time know the trails or know what they want to see, so they've seen

us on facebook or somewhere else.

People are discovering the Arboretum because we're really putting ourselves out there."

Money is still tight, of course. The Board of Directors cut the budget from \$200,000 in 2008 to \$168,000 this year, Ms. Brabetz said.

And membership is down, too, according to President Anne Donnelly, though she understands why.

"Are you going to buy food for the kids or membership in a charity?" she asked. "It's really a no-brainer."

Private and corporate donations—major revenue sources—have declined, too, but Mr. O'Connor has made adjustments by cutting costs accordingly and seeking funds elsewhere.

For instance, besides the cost-cutting energy measures instituted in December, the Arboretum now cuts much less grass for trails.

"It's going green, as we should be," Mr. O'Connor said. "We mow less, so we need less gas and fewer people.

"And we recycle everything. Stuff that comes through the fax machine or computer we flip over and use the other side."

Director of Horticulture Fred Breglia now uses newspaper mulch to reduce weeding and spraying, another savings.

Also, there are only two paid employees—Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Breglia. Volunteers carry much of the load.

"Our board of directors puts in an enormous amount of time," Mr. O'Connor said. "They don't just make policy. They do everything they have to do."

And then there are fundraisers. Mr. O'Connor asks his directors to think six months in advance to plan events that will pump up the budget.

A recent outdoor summer gala—this year, naturally, in a downpour—raised \$3,000.

"It took months to plan and was a lot of work for \$3,000," Ms. Brabetz observed.

A new event on August 23 is the Hot Tunes for Hard Times concert. Nine area bands and performers are donating their time for the event, put together by supporter Walter Wouk.

"It should be a fun day," Mr. O'Connor said. "It will be the kind of day when you can laze on the lawn and listen to music."

The Arboretum has also rolled its fall plant sale and 5K run into one event on September 19. One large event, Mr. O'Connor said, is likely to draw a larger crowd than two smaller dates.

Another event, though not a fundraiser, is Boy Scout Troop 501's camporee in October. The Troop, supported by the Arboretum, is hoping to bring in Scouts from around the area to camp for the weekend.

"It's a way to make more people aware of the Arboretum," Mr. O'Connor said. "It's another way to reach out to the public."

By Permission of Times Journal