

## Spring Newsletter 2012

The arboretum is alive...in so many ways: people, planning, building, research, education, and SPRING! Let's start with spring.

What could replace the experience of spring, and so early! Spring brings hope, joy, stability and purpose to our lives. To let it pour over us, we need to be out in it; to touch, smell and hear all this exuberant growth. It is palpable and forceful. The air has a softness and its own scent. Spring is part of a yearly cycle; we have our own cycle. They are intertwined.

I hope we understand what we have here in this natural world around us. We must be sensitive. It needs our accommodation. We must decide if we have a role in its protection, or if "protection" is even the right word. I think it is. For those of us who believe so, we must act.

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Well, I have these thoughts off my chest. Let's now get down to business. I will try to keep it short.

Vista Room: The centerpiece of our recently completed addition is a large multi-purpose activity room. Its prospect is very inviting. The eye is drawn to the west wall, which is covered with floor-to-ceiling, fifteen-foot glass windows, which open up to a panoramic vista of the arboretum. This room is here for your use no less than ours. The exceptional view will not be duplicated. Come see it and use it. Lee Goldsmith has details.

People: As previously reported, Lynn Kuhn will be elected Director of the arboretum at our April board meeting. Lynn will do much of what I have done, only better. She is a professional, a landscape architect with strong organizational, managerial, and people skills. I will remain chairman of the board and be around most days to cause trouble. Lynn and I work well together. She has been here for over a year now.

Andy Schmitz is General Manager and Director of Horticulture. This is both his title and description of what he does. His continuing research with Osage Orange and Kentucky Coffeetree is being recognized nationally, and the way he keeps the arboretum looking speaks for itself. No one could do it better.

Lee Goldsmith has been our Director of Education and Outreach since last fall. She has a masters degree from ISU in horticulture, plus relevant work experience. She is a marvelous addition, and will most certainly make an important mark at the arboretum.

New Directors: Bill Brenton was elected to our board last fall. Bill lives in Des Moines and oversees the Brenton farm operations, which are primarily in Dallas County. His knowledge of this area is invaluable.

Deb Wiley of Des Moines will be elected as a board member at our April 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Deb is former garden editor of Midwest Living Magazine, published by Better Homes and Gardens. She currently freelances.

Over time, the board of directors makes this institution what it is. I feel that we are in good hands. Our other board members are: Julie Brenton, Bob German, Jeff Iles, Mark Kane, Lockie Markusen, Bob Rennebohm, Harry Stine, Peter van der Linden, Jim Van Werden, and Sue and Buz Brenton.

Nature Play Area: Just east of the pavilion you will see a developing, all natural material children's play area. It is in use now even while being completed, and is quite popular. Nature Play is made possible with a gift from the O'Brien Family Foundation in honor of Carolyn and Sam O'Brien. We are grateful.

Master Planning: We are just now interviewing two exceptionally recognized, national landscape architectural firms, one of which we will engage in a master planning process for the topographically diverse, twenty-acre Stine ground, found along our southwest border. When completed, the plan will give us the "road map" for its "development", which, we hope, will start next year. This very significant undertaking is being funded by the Eddy Family Foundation of Des Moines. Its significance for the arboretum cannot be overstated.

Spring Planting: This year we will be planting about 100 trees and shrubs. Here are a few: we will add a group of Shantung maple, *Acer truncatum*, to our growing maple collection. According to Michael Dirr, in his Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, "it is a lovely small maple, little used, with potential for street and residential use".

A group of American Larch (Tamarack), *Larix laricina*, will be planted close to our European and Japanese larch found just north of the entrance and planted at another site as well. This is a large, graceful tree, liking moisture and open space. The close grouping will make a bold statement as you drive past the entrance.

A group of Korean mountain ash, *Sorbus alnifolia*, will mostly replace our European mountain ash, *Sorbus aucuparia*, which have not done well. They will be planted along the path by the northeast bridge. The mountain ashes are graceful small to medium sized trees with beautiful red berries developing in the fall. A refined look, but they have some disease problems.

Endowment: The board of directors is taking steps to establish an endowment, the income from which will be used to help perpetuate our work here. The fund will be established with several initial gifts. It will be our goal to grow it to one million dollars over the next five years. I hope that some of our members and friends will see fit to join us in making this endowment important in allowing us to continue to do what we say we will do for the years to come: we say that we will be a place of quiet and tranquil enjoyment, education, research, and an example of land conservation. Please contact me if you wish.

Membership: Most of you have recently received a request from Lee Goldsmith and me to continue your association with the arboretum by renewing your membership, so vital to our existence. Thank you.

Volunteerism at the Arboretum: We are putting forth a major push to expand our volunteer program. We have many types of job experiences, both inside and out. Volunteering here can be very rewarding work. Please consider us.

Classes: I enclose a listing of our 2012 adult classes. I hope you will find a class or two of interest to you. I particularly draw your attention to a new art workshop to be held on May 19th Please note also that the membership gathering has been scheduled for June 9th and not in the fall as before. It will be from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

I now close this ample newsletter. I hope you have found it of interest. I try to keep it to the highlights, but enough to give you a feel for our agenda and pace. Thank you for reading it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Buz Brenton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Buz" being more prominent and the last name "Brenton" following in a similar style.

Buz Brenton

## May - December 2012

### events. programs. classes.

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#### May

##### BRING YOUR BINOCULARS

Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>

7:30 to 10:30 AM

Join us on a walk through the trees with John Bissell and prairie to discover these many, feathered creatures.

Members free, Non-members \$5.00

##### SPECIAL OLYMPICS 5K

Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

1:00 to 4:00 PM

Special Olympics Iowa will host their annual Special Olympics 5k Walk and Fun Run at the Arboretum.

##### NATIONAL PUBLIC GARDENS DAY

Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>

Visit the Arboretum for free tours, natural beauty sessions, color-me corner and panoramic picnics in celebration of our public gardens. Use your Garden Passport here and at other public gardens that day to receive a garden gift! Free.

##### ART AT THE ARB.

Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>

###### Nature Photography Workshop

9 AM to NOON

Photographers Ryan Leafgreen and Luke Tingley will teach photo composition and mounting. Please bring your camera.

Members \$20.00, Non-members \$35.00, children \$5.00.

###### Landscape Painting and Drawing Workshop

1 to 4 PM

Artists Dwight James and Pete Cornell provide instruction for beautiful, botanical masterpieces.

Members \$15.00, Non-members \$35.00, Children \$5.00.

Both workshops: Members \$30.00, Non-members:\$60.00, Children \$10.00. Please bring a lunch.

###### Jazz at the Arboretum

4:30 PM

The Dallas Center-Grimes Jazz ensemble will give a free performance in The Pavilion at the conclusion of our art workshops.

#### June

##### 7TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP GATHERING

Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

3 to 5 PM

Members are invited to an evening in recognition of their special contributions. The public is welcome to attend and become members at the Gathering. A special presentation by Trees Forever Founding President Shannon Ramsey will be followed by refreshments.

##### TINDER AND TWILIGHT

Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>

6 to 8 PM

Come listen to stories by the fire, roast a marshmallow, and play games among the trees. Bring the whole family!

Members free, Non-members \$5.00.

#### July

##### CITY TREE COUNTRY TREE

Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>

9 to 11 AM

David Jahn, Des Moines Municipal Arborist, will discuss trees for your site and how the right tree can improve your home. Members free, Non-members \$5.00.

#### August

##### MEASURE ME!

Thursday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>

9 to NOON and 5:00 to 7:00 PM

Learn how to measure a tree and contribute to the Arboretum's tree records. Free

##### IOWATER INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup>

8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Learn about water quality and sampling practices.

##### CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT

Saturday August 25<sup>th</sup>

3 to 5 PM

Violinist Jonathan Strum will perform as you enjoy pastoral vistas from our open-air pavilion.

Members \$5.00, Non-members \$10.00.

#### September

##### FOUNDER'S WALK

TBA

10 AM to NOON

Tour the Arboretum with Founder Buz Brenton. He will discuss the Arboretum's history and his unique insights.

Members free, Non-members \$5.00.

### tours and program series

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#### GROUP TOURS

Please contact the Arboretum to arrange a tour for your group. A typical tour for 5 - 20 people highlights the collections, history, and research projects of the Arboretum.

#### WEDNESDAY WANDERERS

3rd Wednesdays every month

4 to 6 PM

Explore the Arboretum and your personal relationship with nature. Learn nature writing, photography and other interpretive techniques.

Members free, Non-members \$5.00 each month

This schedule is subject to change. Updated postings are found on our website at [www.thebrentonarboretum.org](http://www.thebrentonarboretum.org) and Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/thebrentonarboretum](http://www.facebook.com/thebrentonarboretum). Please contact Lee Goldsmith at 515.992.4211 or [lee@thebrentonarboretum.org](mailto:lee@thebrentonarboretum.org) to pre-register or for information.