

April, 2009

Dear Members and Friends,

These are not the best of times economically, but these also are the best of times here at the Arboretum. This Arboretum has emerged! After twelve growing seasons, one can actually see, on the ground, what Tony Tyznik's master plan once only envisioned. Like compound interest, growth on growth over time is a tremendous force for us. It is most rewarding.

Twelve years sounds like a long time, but it is a short time. In our world of whirlwind velocity, our minds, our pace, our expectations are geared to the very short term. This place is such a contrast to all of that. Its longevity and tempo afford a counter view. It gives us balance. And so in these financially difficult times, the Arboretum helps one see the longer approach. It is healthy.

This Arboretum is run economically. It was set up to do so. It does not depend on receipts from admission, which always need to grow. To grow numbers, new attractions and new ways always need to be found. We do not have that pressure here. This is not our world. We will always seek to improve our collections and our program. Time will give us an increasingly beautiful and luxurious place to be. These are our goals and are not too costly. These goals may change at some future time but as of now, these are the goals.

With all these thoughts running in and out, I also have been developing a long range financial plan for the Arboretum. It will be solid. I will discuss it in a future newsletter.

NEWS AT THE ARBORETUM

Spring Plantings

We will be planting about 120 new trees and shrubs this spring. Some are replacements: Stripped Maple, Turkish Filbert, Golden Raintree and others. Some are additions to collections: most notably the Elm and Osage-orange. Some are totally new additions: Whitespire Birch, Shumard Oak and 'Golden Glory' Corneliancherry dogwood. These are important examples. If you would like the entire list, please visit our web-site.

Directors

I want to recognize our board of directors without whom we could not function. I have indicated with an asterisk those who have been with us since our beginning in 1997:

*Julie Brenton, Bronxville, NY; *Kenneth Brenton, Wayzata MN; *Sue Brenton, Des Moines; *Bob German, Dallas Center; *Dr. Jeff Iles, Ames; Mark Kane, Des Moines; *Lockie Markusen, Edina, MN; Carroll Michalek, Keosauqua; Bob Rennebohm, Des Moines; Harry Stine, Adel; *Peter van der Linden, Milford; *Jim Van Werden, Adel.

This group gives us the guidance and direction we need. I express my sincere appreciation to them herewith.

Stine Land

Several years ago Harry Stine gave us approximately 20 acres adjoining the Arboretum to the south and west. We are now fully utilizing many areas of our original 120 acres and will need to start using the Stine ground in order to expand our collections. We will be developing a master plan for this land.

Building Addition

In our last newsletter, I announced the spring construction of a building addition to house a classroom, library and office. This three hundred thousand dollar project has been put on hold as a result of the current economic travail; but it will be built. I wish to add that we are not cutting back on plantings, nor on our high level of care for our trees and shrubs, our general maintenance or programs. All these will go on. As always, our priority is what happens outside; thus the decision.

Membership

We are in the midst of our fourth membership renewal period. Members will be listed in our Fall newsletter. Although it is too early to know exactly, I am most pleasantly pleased that the numbers are holding steady or increasing, with new members and old members coming back. Thank you to our members, who all receive this newsletter.

Classes

Enclosed is a list of our 2009 adult and family class offering. We have added to our offering a Survey of Pond Life class to be held June 30. I hope you see something that interests you.

Members Meetings

On the afternoon of October 3rd (exact time will be announced) we will host our fourth annual membership gathering. Guy Steinberg, founder of Starhill Nursery, outside of Springfield, Illinois, will be our speaker. More than anyone else in our country, Guy has planted a vast variety of oaks and lectured on the world of oaks, their diversity and uses. Starhill Nursery is a prime example of this, where his oak collection is not to be exceeded. He is also a fascinating speaker. Hope you can make it.

Chamber Music

On August 29th we will offer our second chamber music event. The performance will be by the Polaris Wind Quintet, which performs to much acclaim here in Iowa.

New Initiative

Under the guidance and because of the energy and efforts of our Manager, Andy Schmitz, we are in the early stages of launching, a one-of-a-kind Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioicus*) collection. The Kentucky Coffeetree is a large, majestic tree, with a coarse rugged outline in the winter, and a soft texture in the summer, due to its large, bipinnately compound leaves. This tree grows well in Iowa. Andy is collecting seed from many sources in Iowa and beyond. The seeds will be germinated in containers; then, when small, moved to our test site. We will be the first to find out the potential interesting variations throughout its native range. Some will eventually enter our collections, making it a one-of-a-kind collection in our country. This collection will be in addition to our major elm, Osage-orange, oak and crabapple collections.

This is enough, and at the end may I once again thank you, our members and sustainers, who have become part of us. Without you, we would not exist.

J.C. (Buz) Brenton
The Brenton Arboretum

P.S. Conifer Research: I encourage you to take a look at our seldom planted conifers, just north of our main building in our research plot. This is particularly true if you are thinking of planting trees. Information for each species is found there. Some are quite attractive and hold great promise. They can be purchased.