

The Brenton Arboretum

Spring 2015 Newsletter

Frederick Franck said it best in describing his *Pacem in Terris* as an “oasis of sanity.” He was writing about the restful, meditative setting of this natural garden along a stream near Warwick, New York. In it, he has tucked a handful of his absorbing sculptures. A wonderful place and well worth a visit.

In a real way, the Brenton Arboretum also is trying to build on this idea of “oasis,” this haven. It is really central to our purpose. I know for sure that as our Central Iowa area becomes more populated, crowded, and as we live closer together, the idea of and need for an “oasis” will grow, and, as Frederick’s *Pacem in Terris*, keeping it open to the public without charge is a hallmark and pervasive for us.

That is where you, our members, come in. You make it possible for us to be open to the public free of charge. Membership does and will evermore keep us going. Over the long future, (I am 80 years old), an active membership and an active, engaged board of directors are key. This does consume my attention.

This is then where we stand today: seeking to perpetuate sanctuary and “oasis of sanity” in a rapidly changing world and society with all of its pressures and neuroses....seeking to do this for many generations well beyond the Brenton family that started it. This is what is on my mind.



Photo by Craig Shives

What's Going On Here?

New Board Members: I am pleased to announce the election of three new board members.



Phil Harrington of Adel, president and CEO of Kuder, Inc.; an international company specializing in evidence-based career assessment, education planning, and guidance resources.



Ray Bening of Des Moines, owns and operates Bening Financial; a diversified financial services company of long standing.



Tina Mowry Hadden of Des Moines has joined the board. She is director of marketing for Hubbell Realty and a past marketing and communications consultant.

Executive Director Search: The board has authorized the search for our first fulltime executive director. This is underway.

Landscape Firm Hired: Ohm Van Sweden, a renowned architectural firm known for their work with native plants and trees and for natural landscapes, has been hired to help us adjust our master plan to accommodate new planting areas, unify our path system, signage, and reconfigure our main entrance. They are based in Washington, D. C. This hire is subject to a grant request we have made.

Volunteers Needed: We have positions for both outside and inside (office) volunteers. Specifically, we have a need for a volunteer to help with tree measurements. This would be a fine way to get to know different trees and the timing to take these measurements would be very flexible. Please call Beth Wingert, director of volunteers, at (515) 992-4211. We need your help.

Fundraising Continues: As noted in the fall 2014 newsletter, we are in the midst of our first efforts to raise money to support in part the ongoing operational needs of the arboretum. Its success is very important to us. The arboretum must be self-supporting. I enclose a statement used to support the case for giving.

Rentals at the Vista Room and Pavilion: These two beautiful areas with dramatic views are available for rent to our members. They complement each other. One is inside (Vista Room) and one is outside with a green roof and fully screened from the wind, as needed (Pavilion). Please take a look if considering a personal, company, or organizational gathering.



Vista Room



Pavilion

New Dog Policy: The arboretum is very dog friendly. It's proving to be a great place for dog owners. Therein lies the problem. With the increased dog use we feel we need a dog policy that encompasses membership for dog owners who use the arboretum to walk their dogs. You will shortly see signs posted around the arboretum with instructions for dog owners. Members of the arboretum with dogs will receive a hanging dog pass for their vehicle. (If you are a member and you have not received this pass, please stop by the office and we will give you one.) Again, we love you and your dogs and welcome you to use the arboretum under these new guidelines.

Thank you for your patience in reading this and your interest.

IT'S SPRING! WE HAVE MOISTURE. WE ARE PLANTING! HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL!

Thank you very much,

Buz Brenton

P.S. Enclosed is a list of adult classes. I hope one is a fit for you.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us Saturday, **June 6 at 2:00pm** for our 10th Annual Membership Gathering. Please join us for this special event when we celebrate YOU, our members! Owner of *Iowa Native Trees and Shrubs*, Mike Bevins, will share his expertise on propagating and growing native plants from locally collected seed. Then, enjoy a short tour of the arboretum and some light refreshments. Bring a friend with you and he/she can join for half price!



A Future for the Brenton Arboretum

The Brenton Arboretum was established in 1997 by Buz Brenton and his family. This living museum of trees planted amid a rolling, blooming prairie is a significant addition to our central Iowa experience.

The 140-acre Arboretum includes land that was part of the original tract acquired by Dr. James Brenton and his son, William Henry, soon after they arrived in Iowa in 1853 by covered wagon. The completed original master plan incorporates 2,500 trees and shrubs representing 500 different types, a small lake and reception area. Our mission is to provide a place for quiet enjoyment as well as involving ourselves in education and tree research.

The Arboretum is poised to become an asset to central Iowa far beyond the lives of those who love and support it now. As greater Des Moines inevitably expands westward, more and more people will and do come to the Arboretum for its peace and quiet, open spaces, vistas, with tree and shrub groupings that are suited to the growing conditions of central Iowa. We hope and intend that our presence helps and stimulates others to use a broad palate of woody plants, which can be seen at the Arboretum.

The Arboretum has quietly gone about its business of planting trees and shrubs, and developing educational programs. The funding provided by the Brenton family that created and nurtured this vision will continue. An endowment is in place and will grow. But this level of funding simply maintains the status quo, and we want to do more.

Beyond Brenton

To move the Arboretum forward in the spirit of its new strategic plan, community engagement and donation is vital. To go "Beyond Brenton," the board of directors (which includes ten outside directors, as well as four members of the Brenton family) is seeking additional annual funding for three areas:

1) A full-time executive director is needed to carry out the many goals outlined in the strategic plan. Additional cost: \$35,000 to \$40,000 per year.

2) The Brenton Arboretum can become the United States institution of record on the Kentucky coffeetree. Use of this valuable shade tree, a North American native, is expected to increase across a broad area of our country, including in Iowa.

The Brenton Arboretum is the *only* institution working with this species, collecting seeds from a variety of locations, growing the varieties from seed, planting and caring for the trees, and keeping detailed records. The arboretum is seeking recognition from the North American Plant Collections Consortium, marking it as a serious player in the botanical world. Additional cost: \$5,000-7,000 per year.

3) Environmental education, especially for young people, is a priority. Our field trips are free for schools, and education is provided to youth organizations at a very low cost. Most of the expenses are for teacher salaries and supplies. Expansion of the Knee-High Naturalist program, as our youth program is called, well beyond our current level of 500 to 700 children per year will cost an additional \$2,000-5,000 per year.

Summary

To further the strategic goals of the arboretum, an annual additional \$42,000 to \$52,000 in operating funds is needed. The arboretum is a wonderful and beautiful place located in the path of rapid development. It has fine potential and is a real asset here in central Iowa. Please help us take the next step.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the Brenton Arboretum

2015 Classes and Events

MAY

Spring Bird Hike (Family Friendly)

Saturday, May 2
7am, Vista Room

Welcome the birds back to Iowa on this annual birding event with John Bissell! Veteran and beginning birders are invited to join us as we search for some of the 184 bird species that have been observed at the arboretum. Checklists are available. Children are welcome to attend!

Members, free; Non-Members, \$5

Yoga Workshop: Promises of Spring

Saturday, May 9
1pm to 3pm, *Pavilion*

Celebrate springtime by attending our first yoga workshop surrounded by new buds and blossoms of the season. We will engage in a full spectrum yoga practice of connecting with nature and community while exploring the abundant promises of spring in our lives, both on and off the yoga mat. Participants of all skill levels are welcome to attend the workshop. Please bring a yoga mat, water bottle, and journal.

Members and Non-Members, \$35

JUNE

10th Annual Membership Gathering

Saturday, June 6
2pm, *Pavilion*

Please join us for this special event when we celebrate YOU, our members! Owner of *Iowa Native Trees and Shrubs*, Mike Bevins, will share his expertise on propagating and growing native plants from locally collected seed. Then, enjoy a short tour of the arboretum and some light refreshments. Bring a friend with you and they can join for half price!
Exclusive Member Event

Summer Play Week (Family Friendly)

June 22 to 26
2 to 4pm, daily; *Pavilion*

Join us for Summer Play Week at the arboretum!

Members, \$5 / day; Non-members, \$10 / day

Stream Hike. Monday, June 22

Treasure Hunt. Tuesday, June 23

Pond Life. Wednesday, June 24

Tree Art. Thursday, June 25

Water Color. Friday, June 26

JULY

Insects at the Arb with Bill Johnson (Family Friendly)

Saturday, July 11
10am, Vista Room

Take a closer look at insects with naturalist and photographer, Bill Johnson, as he shares his techniques to capture amazing images of these creatures. Bring along your magnifying glasses and camera as we join him on an insect hunt to search out, identify and photograph insects!

Members and Non-Members, \$5

Tree Knowledge Walk (Family Friendly)

Saturday, July 18
9am, *Vista Room*

Lee Goldsmith, M.S. horticulturalist, will help you learn to identify common trees of Iowa as we explore the many leaf shapes around the arboretum.

Members, free; Non-Members, \$5

AUGUST

Prairie Plant Discovery (Family Friendly)

Saturday, August 1
10am, *Vista Room*

Learn about Iowa's prairie plants with Inger Lamb, representative from the Iowa Prairie Network, as we stroll through the fields at the arboretum. Along the way, discover what you can do to help protect and restore prairie in Iowa.

Members, free; Non-Members, \$5

Water Quality Adventure (Family Friendly)

Saturday, August 15
10am, *Pavilion*

Enjoy a hands-on learning adventure in and around the water as we explore water life and quality issues in Iowa. Susan Heathcote, water program director at the Iowa Environmental Council, will lead a water testing exercise where we look at water chemistry using field test kits.

Members, free; Non-Members, \$5

SEPTEMBER

B.A. Dog Day (Family Friendly)

Saturday, September 26
10am, *Pavilion*

We want to welcome you and your dog to the arboretum! Spend the morning with Ruth Vogel, from Seelah Kennels and Training Center, as she teaches a

few helpful training tips and ways to enjoy the arboretum with your dog. There will also be delicious treats (human and dog) and an opportunity to capture an endearing photo of you and your companion enjoying the arboretum together. We hope you both find the arboretum to be your new favorite place!

Members and Non-Members, \$5

Founder's Walk

September, TBD
10am, *Vista Room*

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to tour the arboretum with Founder Buz Brenton. He will share the arboretum's history, his insights and plans for the future.

Members, free; Non-members, \$5

OCTOBER

Fall Bird Hike (Family Friendly)

Saturday, October 3
7am, *Vista Room*

Enjoy the fresh air on an early morning bird hike with John Bissell! Veteran and beginning birders are invited to join us as we search for some of the 184 bird species that have been observed at the arboretum. Children are welcome!
Members, free; Non-Members, \$5

Family Photography

Sunday, October 11
2 to 6pm, *Vista Room*

It's family picture day at the arboretum! Professional photographer, Katie Lindgren, will stage you and your family in the beautiful outdoors of the arboretum to capture the perfect family photograph. Register for your session by emailing Katie at katie@katielindgren.com.

\$125 Per Session

NOVEMBER

Bare and Beautiful (Family Friendly)

Saturday, November 7
10am, *Vista Room*

Landscape Architect, Molly Rennebohm, will lead you on a morning tour of trees looking their best when bare in the winter.

Members, free; Non-Members, \$5

To register for classes please call 515.992.4211 or visit our website, www.thebrentonarboretum.org.