Friends of the Arboretum Invited to Art Preview Reception

Members are invited to a preview reception of "Paintings in Gardens and Glasshouses" on Friday June 9 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Hunnewell Visitor Center. (Please R.S.V.P. to 524-1718.) Andover painter Tamara Elizabeth Krendel returns to the Arnold Arboretum with a new exhibition of her watercolors and oils of greenhouse interiors, gardens, and an occasional landscape to delight horticultural enthusiasts and art collectors. The show "Paintings in Gardens and Glasshouses" opens to the public on June 12. Dealing directly with subjects as diverse as rhododendrons, delphiniums and day lilies, Krendel transforms the shape of growing plants and botanical settings into compositions of light. Well-known for her paintings of greenhouse interiors that capture the way light shining through glass affects the colors of petals and leaves, Krendel says, "I try to get close to the mysterious spirit and poetry of light and place."

Many will remember Krendel's show "Paintings in Glass Houses" at the Arnold in 1985. She has also exhibited at Widener University Art Museum in Chester, PA, and the Cosmos Club in Washington DC. She received her MFA at the University of Pennsylvania in 1979 and pursued post-graduate studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Belgium. Krendel's work will be on view in the Hunnewell Visitors Center from June 12 through September 18, daily, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Greenhouse Thrives on Volunteers

Recently I dropped by the greenhouse and long-time volunteer, Les Oliver, was sitting at a work table separating seeds from Cedar of Lebanon cones. I stopped to chat and asked him how he came to volunteer at the arboretum.

"I've been here since retiring in 1972 after reading in arnoldia that the arboretum was looking for volunteers." As he remembers it, his first assignment was labeling plants and he worked under chief propagator Al Fordham.

"I knew I wanted to work in the greenhouse," he said, "because it is the center of the institution, its meristem, so to speak."

Although I'd been told that Les is the greenhouse's expert in seeds, he was too modest to comment on that accolade. The most that I could get him to say about his expertise was, "I guess I do a lot of seed work, especially getting seeds ready for

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Don’t Miss the 7th Annual Plant Sale and Rare Plant Auction

Sunday, September 17
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Case Estates in Weston, MA

Each year’s Plant Sale features many of the trees and shrubs that you read about and seldom can locate. But rarity is not the only consideration in selecting plants for the sale, the Arboretum and the Associates also look for plants whose unique characteristics make them most suitable for specimen or accent use. For example, this year’s sale includes: Actinidia kolomikta, a vine native to Northeastern Asia, Japan and China, which will grow to 20’ or more in the Boston area. It is known for its showy foliage: heart-shaped leaves with pink. Acer triflorum, or three-flower maple tree, is native to Manchuria and Korea. It has exfoliating ash-brown bark and its fall foliage is rich yellow and red with an overall effect of orange. It grows from 20-30’. And, Franklinia alatamaha which is not known to grow wild anywhere. It has brilliant orange or crimson autumn color and its beautiful large, waxy white flowers bloom in autumn.

Each year the Arboretum Associate’s plant auctions offer a wide selection of choice plants from nurseries and private collections. Proceeds from these auctions have supported the following projects:

• 1983—Tissue Culture Laboratory equipment

• 1984—Children’s Education Program
  Protective sleeves for photographs in the Horticulture Library
  Purchase of 20x40’ tent for the Case Estates
  Computer software.
  NSF grant proposal costs.

  Conversion of E. H. Wilson’s glass plate negatives to safety film.
  Supplies for the Children’s Education Program.
  Collection of Chinese specimens for Herbarium.
  Purchase and installation of computer software for Education Program.
  Purchase of Chinese books for Library.
  Signage for Sargent Trail.
  Conversion of herbaria drier to year-round use.

“Reflected Spring” Art Competition Brings More Than 200 Works of Art to Arboretum

From more than 200 submissions to the spring 1989 competition for the gallery show, “Reflected Spring”, 25 works of art celebrating the beauty of lilacs were selected by jury. One artwork was selected for reproduction on the 1989 lilac poster and the jury’s selection was a gouache by Ellen Tikkanen of Cambridge. Her painting captures the arboretums’ own lilac collection. Ms. Tikkanen grew up in Jamaica Plain, not far from the arboretum’s Bussey Hill from which her work of art views the lilac collection, and she remembers the thrill of attending Lilac Sunday as a little girl. Now a free-lance designer, she attended Mass College of Art and has spent many of her painting hours in the arboretum. The 1989 poster is on sale in the Shop at the Arboretum for $14.

Winner of The Lilac Art Poster
Tikkanen, Ellen. Bussey Hill. Cambridge

Works for the Show
Abbott, Jeannie, Lilac Breeze. Brookline
Barbier, Suzette, Still-life. Cambridge
Ciaffaroni, Sara, Lilac. Boston
Clave, Linda, Nostalgia. Boston
Clodgo, Christopher, Untitled. Everett
Cohen, Marjorie, 'Harkness Lilacs'. Leverett
Comolli, Anna, Syringa Prestonia. Milford
Francis, Christine, Le Printemps. Quincy
Griswold, Joan, Summer Hat. Wellesley
Hoey, Julie, May Flowers. Arlington
Hogan, Anna, Boquet. Lawrence
K.-Pastuchiv, Olga, Lilacs. Somerville
Kauffmann, Robyn "Lilac Arch". Milton
Levin, Phyllis, A Lilac Hedge Surrounded the Property. Levine, Phyllis, Ambition Drove Her Through Some Funny Territory. Duxbury
McDowell, Ruth, Lilac Sunday. Winchester
Patrick, Cyndy, (untitled). Everett
Rebek, Thomas, Lilac Walkway. Boston
Regan, JoAnne, Lilac Window. Canton
Rabiner, Carolyn, (untitled). Newton
Slade, Phila, Breath of Spring III. North Andover
Spaulding, Dorothy, (untitled). Boston
Visvis, Elizabeth, Bowl of Lilacs. Wellesley Hills
Wirth, Helena, Lilacs. Sherborn
Wong, Janine, Midnight Lilacs. Cambridge

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Now that we’re blooming, a look back at some of the people who make Spring happen.

Since the arboretum is over 100 years old, we are in process of re-invigorating a mature collection of woody plants. Work constantly goes on to repropagate and renew the collection even though trees may not be in any danger. It can take a long time for new plants to grow mature enough to be planted on the grounds.

Because the arboretum is a scientific collection, the focus is to conserve the collections by replacing individual plants with exact genetic duplicates. Thus, plants are propagated vegetatively; in other words, “cloned.” Jack Alexander (picture), the arboretum’s chief propagator says, “Cloning has been going on for thousands of years using one of several techniques that take a vegetative part of the plant and put roots on it. Plants are begun using cuttings, grafting, division (for shrubs), and sometimes, tissue culture.

New plants are also introduced and this work of the arboretum begins when botanists on staff set out on plant collection expeditions. Rob Nicholson (picture), a propagation specialist, went to Mexico to search for rare conifers that may be hardy in Boston.

He also collected seeds for the Center of Plant Conservation, an organization that coordinates the collection of rare and endangered U.S. flora.

The arboretum’s staff is constantly evaluating and replacing the plants. Gary Koller, chief horticulturist, and Patrick Willoughby, head of the grounds crew, are always as are the members of the grounds crew planning ahead — planting and caring for the 14,000 woody plants growing on the arboretum’s 265 acres, and, at the same time, managing for the 21st century.
Microwave oven for Jamaica Plain
Volunteer Program
Chairs for Case Estates

*1986—Signage for Sargent Trail
Matching grant for Herbarium cases' purchase
IBM printer for Education Program
Equipment for Children’s Program
Rare books for Library
Documentation of slides in Horticultural Library
Fans for Dana Greenhouse
Volunteer guide books and vests
Slide projector and loudspeaker system
Books for the Arnold Arboretum Journal
Data input for Living Collections
Typewriter for Business Office
Interactive exhibit for Education Department
Alarm system for Bonsai House
Library addition to catalog of the collections

*1987—Computerization of the plant mapping system
Restoration of the Bonsai House
Fans for the Dana Greenhouse

Volunteers
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germination,” but he’s also worked with the records to support Jack Alexander’s program in hybridization.

Les, who has been an English teacher “everywhere”, is a Harvard Ph.D. even though he hadn’t planned on going to college, much less on even finishing high school. As the eldest male child, he had to work to help support his siblings. Having just one year of high school, he got himself a kit of tools and began repairing typewriters. But he was able to go to night school and was encouraged by a young woman teacher that there was more to life than repairing typewriters. With her support, he convinced the Oregon Agricultural College to enroll him even without a high school diploma and then went on to finish at Oregon State, where he got his feet wet teaching freshman English. After graduate work at Syracuse, he taught English and history at the Naval Academy. From there he went to the Colorado School of Mines where he wrote a text book on technical exposition. After receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard, he was fortunate to become an assistant in the Houghton Library where he helped to build their collection of rare books. After another stint teaching in the west at Washington State College in Pullman, WA, he returned to Cambridge and to Lelsey College where for 18 years he taught English. His favorite subjects? Shakespeare, the romantic poets, and the psychological novel. He retired in 1972 to begin a second career as an arboretum volunteer.

He did not, however, come to the arboretum because he was a successful gardener with an extra green thumb. On the contrary Les said his house in Melrose sits on filled land without any soil good enough for planting. He came because of his first introduction to the arboretum when he lived in Jamaica Plain and would walk here, using he said, “my eyes.” Perhaps that’s when he spotted the trees that have continued to be his center of interest, the Dawn Redwood and the Sourwood.

I said it was interesting to learn how people were attracted to volunteering at the arboretum and asked Lizanne Chapin, another volunteer, who was now sitting across the table in the greenhouse, working on her own project, how she’d come to volunteer.

She explained she’d majored in landscape architecture at Smith and worked in their greenhouse. She comes from a long line of gardeners, has a wild flower garden in Cambridge, and helped design the Dukes County Historical Society’s display herb garden. She had always wished she could work in the Arnold’s greenhouse but it wasn’t until she met the newly-arrived Ashtons at a Wild Flower Annual Meeting that her wish came true.

Ever since she’s been the jack-of-all-trades at the greenhouse—from collecting seedlings to press for the herbarium to washing pots to potting up rare plants for the fall auction.

Her favorite arboretum tree is the magnolia stellata, which she says is a favorite of hers in the winter, too, because of its pretty, soft green buds.

Les and Lizanne invited me to help wash pots, but I said I’d come back another time and left them busily at their work.

—Jo Procter