

2014 Shirley Meneice Conference: Growing a Legacy

Hosted by the Glenview Garden Club, Louisville, Kentucky

Report to the LMGC by Mary Meyer, Horticulture Chair, October 2014

The 2014 Shirley Meneice Conference was held in Louisville, Kentucky and showcased the garden and natural resources treasured by the state: urban parks designed by Fredrick Law Olmsted; world recognized Yew Dell Botanical Gardens; Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest; and the new and emerging Parklands of Floyds Fork.

The conference opened on Monday, Sept 29 with several lectures by local horticulturists. Scott Martin, Director of the Parklands of Floyds Fork, spoke about the legacy of Fredrick Law Olmsted and how his initial parks in Louisville have inspired the next wave of parkland development at Floyds Fork: a 4,000 acre series of parks on the eastern edge of Louisville. Through a private foundation, over \$120 million has been raised to buy the land and develop these parks, which are public (free) and maintained by the private foundation. The Glenview Garden Club, our local SM hosts, donated money to purchase the trees surrounding the 22-acre Egg Lawn. We toured The Parklands of Floyd's Fork on Wednesday and it was a highlight of the meeting. We saw the Egg Lawn, a multi-use open lawn area, playgrounds, community gardens, an events center, the 19 miles of bike trails, planted meadows and prairies, beautiful park space being used by the community.

Paul Cappiello, Director of 35-acre Yew Dell Botanical Gardens, also spoke on Monday, Sept 29 and later that day we toured this unique private estate now a public garden, complete with unique plants and stone buildings. One of the most unique things here was the sedum greenroof on the new greenhouse. Dr. Cappeillo advised us to "start seeing native plants" and their beauty and uniqueness. Look at local areas in natural places for great plants we can grow in each of our climates. At Yew Dell's Hellebore Day, they sold 800 plants in the first few hours of the sale.



At our Zone XI meeting, Gwen McConnaughy, Hort Committee Zone XI Rep., from the Winnetka GC reminded us of the GCA Awards and resources on the website and at headquarters. Each club talked about their Partners for Plants work and I was proud to talk of the success of our work at Wolsfeld Woods. Many clubs do not have a Partners for Plants initiative, there are only 4 projects in our Zone XI. We were also encouraged to nominate a woody plant for the 2015 Freeman Award. NOTE: I explored a couple of options with other LMGC members and we decided on white pine, which I will nominate by Dec 1, 2015. Other clubs talked about their projects: working on seed collection, trail plantings, habitat for humanity housing, guest speakers, public garden shows, etc.



After touring Yew Dell on Monday, we drove to Woodland Farm, overlooking the Ohio River. Owned by Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson their renovated Federal Home sits amid 1,000s of acres of farmland and includes a bison herd, dry-stack stone barn, and extensive organic vegetable garden for their Proof Restaurant at the Louisville 21c Museum Hotel.

On Tuesday, Sept 30, Allen Bush opened the lectures with his look at garden legacy from growing up with plants, plantsmen and plantswomen his whole life. He encouraged us to consider who in our families have gardened and how important it is to pass this interest and knowledge to our children, grandchildren and the next generation. As Gertrude Jekyll said, "The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies." The next presentation was on the use of biochar; an organic farm completed the Tuesday lectures before we left for box lunches en route to Bernheim Arboretum. Wren Smith, their outstanding interpretation director, asked us to recall our earliest garden memory. She encouraged us to create memories for others, especially young people who need to know about the wonders of plants. Create a visual and sensory display for kids using plants. She taught us "All mints are squares (stems) but not all squares are mints." "Share your plant stories, plant the seeds for the next generation," she encouraged us. We also toured the plant collections with Eric Garis: holly, and conifers; and the Edible Garden with the Bernheim Director Mark Holmes. Our afternoon ended in their visitor center which was the first LEED platinum building in Kentucky. He advised us to use the word *regenerative* instead of sustainable, as it better describes the concept.

We had dinner at Churchill Downs and loved the call to post and singing (for those who knew the words) My Old Kentucky Home. The final morning we toured the Parklands of Floyds Fork, where they have built a wonderful park, that they hope will be the "beachfront property of Louisville" where all homes will want to face the parklands. Their project to combine private funds and management of public space was enlightening and a new model of how we can preserve green space and use it for the next generation. They asked the question: "What could our generation do to influence the next generation like Fredrick Law Olmsted did in the past for the Louisville parks?" Thus they created The Parklands at Floyds Fork. The Shirley Meneice Conference certainly lived up to the title Growing a Legacy.

Ideas and Thoughts for our LMG:

- Develop an evaluation plan for our project with Wolsfeld Woods and the Garlic Mustard pull. To show the effect of our work in a measurable way, size of area where we have worked, bags of garlic mustard removed, etc.
- Program meeting ideas: repotting plants at a garden center; local chef to talk about herbs, veggies and other use of local food; make your own pot of herbs
- Horticulture and Conservation Ideas: have a seed collection workshop, possibly with the DNR and another club; plant or herb of the month: special focus on a specific plant that is highlighted at the monthly meeting or in the meeting announcement and possibly used for refreshments; hold a propagation workshop on pollinator plants including a follow up to plant the transplants. Encourage club members to propagate and plant pollinator plants.