

President's message

The winter is always my time for reflection on the past year's season and planning for the next. As this winter also marks the end of my second term as President, it



WVNLA President
Norman Cole

seems appropriate to reflect on the WVNLA's past and future. I have always believed that we gain more from serving than what we give, and as I conclude my second term as President, I would encourage everyone to consider doing what they can, where they can, as often as they can. It is my sincere hope that we keep growing not only the membership, but also that new members are encouraged to consider the idea of giving back - we can always use new ideas and perspectives on our various committees and our board. The value of the contacts and knowledge that you gain from across the state and even the East Coast (*at a regional nursery and landscape leadership conference I attended as President, for instance*) is priceless.

During the last few years, we have worked to insure the longevity of the organization, and have secured a special fund to provide a stable future for all current and future members. It is my hope that measures we have taken over the past couple of seasons will insure the long-term

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CPH manual is coming soon

WVNLA's newly revised Certified Professional Horticulturist manual is getting rave reviews! The Association's board members were so pleased with the manual that they voted to send one to every active Association member at no cost. An online version of the manual is also available at no charge, accessible only to WVNLA members. Email wvnlassoc@gmail.com for details.

"I'd like to have a copy to keep in our office as a reference and to encourage any of my employees to study for the exam. It's an excellent resource with a lot of important information in it," said board member Steve Saunders of Saunders Lawn Care in Huntington.

The original Certified Professional Horticulturist training manual, developed in 1985, was a collaborative effort between WVNLA and the Maryland Nursery & Landscape Association. Although most of the plants included in the manual haven't changed, plant production and breeding, plant nutrition, plant and landscape management strategies, technology and regulations have all evolved in the last 30 years. It was time to have a manual that reflected those changes. The four-color layout and design offer much visual appeal.

What hasn't changed is the high level of professional expertise required to attain certification. The material covered in the manual is challenging, as is the exam based on it.

Passing the exam requires a broad understanding of horticultural principles and specific training. Performance on the exam is a reliable measure of the holder's horticultural qualifications and professionalism, distinctions which are valued by employers and clients alike.

In addition to questions based on manual content, the exam also includes a plant identification section. Plant identification constitutes 25 of the 125 total questions on the exam.

The manual was revised and edited by members of the CPH committee, including Michael Arnold of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Bud Cottrill of ProScape of West Virginia, Eamon Barker of Flowerscape, Mira Danilovich of the

(Please see *CPH* on page 5)



Symposium speakers tackle challenging topics

WVNLA's 2017 Winter Symposium on January 27 will feature faces both familiar and new—lots of presenters with lots of fresh ideas. You'll hear the latest buzz from top-tier speakers in two tracks: one with a business focus and the other with a design emphasis. The symposium will be held in Charleston at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel.

Because Winter Storm Jonas diminished attendance and forced the cancellation of several presentations last year, we're bringing back some of the speakers who were well regarded by the few who heard them. Jody Shilan of FromDesign2Build returns to give two presentations on key landscape business topics. Jan Bils, whose session on the use of social media to build business was cancelled last year, will give it a go again this year. Andrew Bell will present on "Hot New Plants" and Charleston's own Tom Vasale will present a specialty pruning session that was also cancelled last year.

New faces include plantsman Jenks Farmer; Robinson, Anderson and Summers landscape architect Allan Summers; and the American Society for Asset Protection's Larry Oxenham.

Attendees may connect with colleagues over breaks and lunch, and hear from other WVNLA members and WVU horticulture and landscape architecture students during a post-lunch forum.

More good news: There's no reason to miss a minute of either track because the speakers will be videotaped. Downloads of all presentations will be available to paid attendees. The cost to attend is \$50 for WVNLA members and \$100 for nonmembers. Registration is not yet open, but information will be mailed soon.

Design speakers



Jenks Farmer

"Philosophy and Grand Ideas behind Naturalist Landscaping" and "A Practical Guide to Using Naturalist Style" by Jenks Farmer

Augustus Jenkins Farmer III is a renaissance plantsman. He fell in love with the natural world while growing up in a family of artists, musicians, and farmers. Jenks went on to get a more formal education in

plant sciences at Clemson University and then botanical garden design at the University of Washington.

For 20 years he's led teams to establish and plant the vision for two of South Carolina's major botanical gardens. He is the former director of Riverbanks Botanical Garden and founding horticulturist of Moore Farms Garden. His designs for homes, museums, and businesses have received recognition and awards, and have delighted hundreds of thousands of visitors who appreciate the joyful, easy exuberance of hand-crafted gardens.

An engaging storyteller and teacher, Jenks has also written articles for *Organic Gardening* and *Horticulture*. He is the author of the quarterly publication *Gardening with Crinum Lilies* and the book *Deep Rooted Wisdom: Lessons Learned from Generations of Gardeners*.



Andrew Bell

"Hot New Plants" by Andrew Bell

Dr. Andrew C. Bell will be joining the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., as a visiting scientist in January 2017. Previously Andrew was the Curator of Woody Plants at the Chicago Botanic Garden, where he was responsible for managing the development of the Garden's tree and shrub

collections. Andrew's work includes evaluating and promoting woody plants for sustainable landscapes and assessing the effects of climate change on the urban forest. He is the past cochair of the Research and Strategy Working Group for the Chicago Trees Initiative, a City of Chicago effort to protect and expand the urban forest.

Andrew has held adjunct faculty positions at Illinois Institute of Technology and in the Master of Landscape Architecture Program at Northwestern University. Andrew holds a bachelor's degree in horticulture and landscape design from the University of Tennessee; a master's degree in botany from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland; and a doctorate in horticultural science from North Carolina State University.

"The Making of Memorable Places" by Allan Summers

Allan Summers is a registered landscape

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architect, a LEED accredited professional, a graduate of Longwood's Professional Gardener Training Program and an artist with a bachelor of fine arts degree from Cooper Union. A principal with Robinson, Anderson and Summers, Inc. in Wilmington, Delaware, he has been providing planning and design services through all phases of landscape architecture for more than 20 years.

Allan brings an awareness and understanding of landscape traditions rooted in the past, combined with the highest levels of creativity and horticultural and environmental stewardship expertise. His firm enjoys national recognition for its work in public and botanical gardens, residential estate design, hospital healing gardens, and restoring historic landscapes, and has been featured in numerous publications, including *Architectural Digest* and *Elle Décor*.

“Specialty Pruning” by Tom Vasale

Tom is a retired horticulturist residing in Charleston, West Virginia. He owned and operated Tom's Word Horticulture Consulting, a small design-build landscaping business, for 23 years before retiring. Prior to that, he was the director of municipal beautification for the City of Charleston, the agriculture extension agent for West Virginia University in Kanawha County, and the state horticulturist for the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Tom has published articles in *Fine Gardening*; *The Avant Gardener*; *People, Places, and Plants* magazine; and *West Virginia Executive*. He has lectured for the Perennial Plant Association and numerous garden clubs and civic organizations.

Tom holds a bachelor of science degree in agriculture with an emphasis on ornamental horticulture from West Virginia University.



Tom Vasale

Business speakers



Jody Shilan

“The Ultimate Landscape Design/Build Sales Process” and “Create the Unbiddable Landscape Plan” by Jody Shilan

Jody is an award-winning landscape designer and former landscape design/build contractor who has sold

millions of dollars of design and installation work throughout his career. Although he still does freelance design, he now uses his more than 35 years of experience to teach other landscape contractors how to increase their sales by following his unique landscape design/build/sales process. He does this through public speaking, private consulting, group workshops and his exclusive, members-only web site, FromDesign2Build.com.

Most recently Jody created and is the host of FD2B Talk Radio, a weekly Internet radio show aimed specifically at the landscape designer and design/build contractor. The show airs every Wednesday evening from 7-8 p.m.

“Making Social Media Work for You” by Jan Bills

Jan owns and operates Two Women and a Hoe, a southeast Michigan boutique landscape company specializing in indoor/outdoor sustainable design, consultation, installation, and organic garden maintenance. Since 2006, Jan has been assisting clients with their landscape and garden needs, as well as sharing her extensive gardening experiences through lectures, presentations, social media and demonstrations.

Jan is an Advanced Master Gardener, Certified Landscape Designer, and contributing writer for *State-by-State Michigan Gardening*. She holds a bachelor of science degree in business and management and a master's degree in organizational management.

“How to Become Invincible in Lawsuits and Save Thousands in Taxes” by Larry Oxenham

Larry is an author and senior advisor to the American Society for Asset Protection. He is one of America's top asset protection experts, having helped thousands of professionals achieve financial peace of mind by teaching them how to properly structure their assets for lawsuit protection and tax reduction. He has authored and coauthored several articles and books on the subject, including *The Asset Protection Bible* and *How to Achieve Financial Peace of Mind through Asset Protection*. Larry is a nationally recognized speaker who has trained thousands of professionals at hundreds of conventions, conferences and seminars across the country.

Look for registration mailer and online registration information soon at wvnla.org.



Jan Bills

WVNLA partners with Master Gardeners to spruce up shelter

Sojourners homeless shelter in Charleston received a much-needed landscaping facelift this summer and fall, thanks to WVNLA and the Master Gardeners of Kanawha County. The shelter's entrance courtyard, game court, and enclosed patio and playground hadn't received much attention since their original installation by the Association in 2008.

According to Sojourners Director Margaret Taylor, women and families who stayed at the shelter had no outdoor space before WVNLA took on the project eight years ago. When WVNLA converted an adjoining empty lot into a walled and secure playground and patio, the quality of life for people who sought refuge at the shelter improved significantly.



However, over the years, all of the outdoor spaces received a lot of use, Taylor said, and were showing signs of wear and tear. Like most homeless shelters, Sojourners operates on a tight budget and maintains a small staff. One staff member tried to stay on top of weeding and trimming but

couldn't deal with mature shrubs that had died and plants that were not holding their own.

When they were updated on the situation last June, WVNLA's board members voted to provide funding to clean up the shelter's outdoor spaces. Board member Tim Forren approached the Master Gardeners of Kanawha County to see if they would be interested in taking on the project.

Were they ever! Headed by project director Carolee Felber, a group of about 10 women visited the site, made a plan for each of the four major areas, and then promptly got to work. During numerous work parties, the diligent Master Gardeners weeded, trimmed and cleared debris from the landscaping. They removed a screening row of arborvitae, most of which were dead or dying. They also installed pavers in front of a shed used to store strollers. The area had originally been planted

with liriopie, but when a shed was added later, the liriopie got trampled and was no longer appropriate for the space. A bed surrounding a tree in the courtyard had become a shortcut to the playground. The team removed the straggling plants and installed mulch there.

In addition to purchased plants and materials, the Sojourners landscape was enhanced by plants donated by Forren Soil and Valley Gardens in Charleston, and by plants the Master Gardeners dug and shared from their own properties.

The work wrapped up for the season with the installation of bulbs, pansies and additional shrubs. The Master Gardeners plan to return to Sojourners next year for a spring clean-up. They will plant additional groundcover at the shelter's entrance. They also plan to remove brick pavers in the courtyard and add fill to raise the level, so rainwater won't collect there.

WVNLA gratefully acknowledges the long hours and expertise the Master Gardeners provided this project. Margaret Taylor and her staff stopped by often during the work sessions to admire progress on a project Taylor said continues to be a blessing for Sojourners.

"What WVNLA has done for us is nothing short of a miracle and we are grateful," she said. "You all have been mentioned in every tour and meeting held at Sojourner's since August 2008."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 1)

prosperity of the WVNLA and continue to promote the nursery trade and industry education.

I hope that you all took a minute to complete the Association survey you should have received in an email so that the board can plan for the future and better serve you. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or requests on industry issues and how the WVNLA can be there to help, please don't hesitate to contact our Executive Director Julie Robinson or myself.

Please remember to save January 27 for the upcoming winter educational meeting and its great schedule of speakers (*see pages 2-3*) and to get your pesticide points on January 26 (*page 7*).

It has been my honor to serve you and this organization these past few years - I hope I may have planted a seed in a few of you that will grow into a desire to serve.

Best wishes to all of you for a joyous holiday season!

--Norman Cole

Member spotlight:**Freed's Greenhouse thrives in its 30th year**

David Freed started Freed's Greenhouse over 30 years ago, and he has been able to remain in business while other mom-and-pop greenhouses have gone by the wayside.

Situated on his family's farm and encompassing over 40,000 square feet, Freed's business has multiple greenhouses where he grows and sells a wide variety of vegetable plants, flowers, mulches, fertilizers, herbs and trees.

"I have about 12 greenhouses, since it's easier to grow certain plants when they're isolated from each other," Freed said.

Freed said he learned the greenhouse business as a young man.

"I learned how to raise vegetables and plants when I went to work at the Jehovah's Witness farm in Newburgh, New York," Freed said. "I was assigned to the garden there. After that, I moved home and started a greenhouse."

During the store's busy season, from about April through July 4, Freed employs 48 employees, some of whom are part time and some full time. During the remainder of the year, he has six employees, he said.

Throughout the decades, Freed's Greenhouse has managed to stay afloat and do well, Freed said.

"Most of the time, we've been going steady over the last 30 years," he said. "We've grown the business from nothing to what it is today. We started out with 1,000 square feet and now have



over 40,000 square feet."

"We've held a steady business," said Jennifer Bierbaum, Freed's daughter and the greenhouse's store manager. "A

lot of people who had small businesses like ours have died and their family sold the business. Or the owners retired and their kids tried to make it work for a while and then sold them. We survived the recent recession by cutting payroll.

"I've been working here my whole life," she said. "I do the book work, order plants, make up the planting schedule, make the combination basket formulas and help out with watering and cleaning

and whatever else my father needs," Bierbaum said. "My husband also works here doing maintenance."

"There are fewer greenhouses around now because places like Lowe's, Walmart and Home Depot started selling plants about 15 years ago," Freed said. "The big box stores haven't hurt our business because I have a much larger selection than they do and because of the quality of my plants. The big box stores don't have people who water and fertilize the plants like we do with our plants.

"We also stay afloat with repeat customers," Freed said. "We get older families with their kids and when the kids grow up, they become our customers too. There are also new people moving into the area all the time, which is good for business."

Freed's Greenhouse, located at 57 Freed Drive in Bridgeport, is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. For more information, call 304-592-0897 or visit freedsgreenhouse.com.

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CPH MANUAL

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WVU Extension Service, David Davis of WVU Plant & Soil Sciences, John Jett of Jettree Landscaping, and Jason Testman of TerraCare. The time and expertise they gave to the project are greatly appreciated.

Additional manuals may be ordered for \$60 for WVNLA members and \$100 for nonmembers. To register to take the exam, next given on January 26, 2017, in Charleston, visit wvnla.org, e-mail wvnlassoc@gmail.com or call 304-553-1234.



David Freed

A walk through the tunnel shows students what's underfoot

WVNLA recently contributed financially toward costs associated with transporting and staffing The Soil Tunnel Trailer as it travels to schools throughout the state.

Do you know what's going on underneath your feet? It's Aimee Figgatt's mission to educate you. The District Manager of the Capitol Conservation District has been working on a project for more than 3 1/2 years and it's ready to hit the road. The Soil Tunnel Trailer is part classroom, part museum and



Aimee Figgatt leads students through an oversized replica of the world underground in the Soil Tunnel.

all labor of love. Figgatt got the idea for the concept at a National Association of Conservation District Conference in San Antonio, Texas in 2013. A group from Kansas was showing off a mobile soil lab that gave people a sneak peek into the underground world. Figgatt immediately knew she could adapt that concept and create something even better for her conservation district.

"I didn't ask my district for any money. I made them a deal. If I could procure a grant to get the construction phase started, would they be willing to purchase the trailer itself. They agreed," said Figgatt.

She worked with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture to write a Specialty Crop Block Grant and was awarded \$10,800. The conservation district then purchased the trailer, an extra-wide 8 x 16 x 8.

"We designed it to go along with the specialty crops in West Virginia as well as soil and water

health. Those three all go together," said Figgatt. "We wanted to make sure a child could understand that good soil and good water equal good food."

Even though Figgatt had the money and the trailer, finding someone to do the actual work turned out to be the hardest part of the job. An artist was hired to sculpt polystyrene foam to make the inside of the trailer look like a slice of earth. A year and a half later, very little work had been done. With the Specialty Crop Block Grant deadline

looming, Figgatt decided to take on the task herself with the help of a contractor.

"None of us had ever carved foam. None of us had ever done sculpting. We had to teach ourselves how to do it. It was trial by error. It wasn't an easy task but we learned as we went along."

There was a lot of improvising along the way, like creating port holes where visitors could see an enlarged version of microbes that live underground. Figgatt wanted the appearance of looking into a microscope. The Robert C. Byrd Institute helped create those microbes with a 3-D printer. Finding something to cover the portholes posed a new challenge.

"I looked everywhere for convex acrylic domes and couldn't find them. I finally located some on a pet website. They're dog portholes for a privacy fence. They are perfect! The company custom made them to the size we needed."

Figgatt added some florescent lights to highlight the micro-organisms to "make them come alive." She said it's the first thing that attracts children when they step into the trailer.

"Every inch of the walls is in 3-D and 4-D. It's a 'touch me' museum. One of the things that was important to me was to make it as life-like in texture as possible," she stressed.

Creatures like moles, worms and bugs are carved out of the walls. Carrots, beets and potatoes are part of the underground world as well. Written bits of information can be found next to them to explain how each impacts the soil. Figgatt estimated it's taken about 700 man hours to complete the project.

(Continued on next page.)

Pesticide CE course coming Jan. 26

Registration will soon open for Pesticide Applicators Recertification Training, to be held at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Charleston on Thursday, January 26, 2017. All WVNLA members and licensed applicators will receive a mailing with registration information, as well as e-mail notification with an online registration option.

Nominations for board members open

Do you know a WVNLA member who would serve the Association well as a member of the board of directors? The nominating committee will soon present its candidates. The membership will vote on the slate of board members and officers at the annual meeting, to be held on January 27, 2017, at the conclusion of the Winter Symposium.

Contact any of the nominating committee members with your suggestions:

- Mike Bartholomew, info@premierprosinc.com or 304-617-0152
- Brett Merritt, brett@gandgnursery.com or 304-762-2100
- Mark Springer, mdeespring@aol.com or 304-544-8491

SOIL TUNNEL

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“I want children and adults to know when they walk in we’re not just talking about dirt. There’s life beneath the ground and without it we can’t sustain our own lives!”

The trailer is still very much a work in progress. Figgatt is waiting on placards for all the plant and animal life, as well as hand rails for the wheelchair accessible ramps.

The total cost of the trailer came in at just under \$30,000, which doesn’t include funding for a full-time educator to travel with the trailer to schools, fairs and festivals. The cost to book the trailer for an eight-hour visit is about \$350, which covers the rental fee, fuel/mileage and educator pay.

“Teachers have told us schools don’t have that kind of money. Now we know we need to get out there and procure donations for the trailer to set up scholarships that help offset the cost of renting the unit,” said Figgatt. That’s her next challenge.

For more information on the Soil Tunnel Trailer, visit wvsoiltrailer.org or contact Aimee Figgatt at affiggatt@wvcawvca.onmicrosoft.com.

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Your voice matters

When WVNLA’s board members gather in for a special planning session in December, they will take a close look at the results of an online survey of WVNLA members. In it, members were asked to weigh in on the Association’s future focus and direction.

WVNLA has made significant strides in recent years, including the revision of our CPH manual and program; a new website design; the addition of education courses and special events; and contributions to relevant projects, scholarships and research. As they map a course forward, the board members want to be sure to take the members’ priorities and concerns into consideration.

Of course, they can’t act on those concerns if they haven’t heard them.

If you haven’t filled out an online survey yet, it’s not too late. The plan will evolve over time and input from members will continue to be sought and heard. E-mail wvnlassoc@gmail.com to request a link to the survey.

WVNLA NEWS

P. O. Box 20284

Charleston, WV 25362

WVNLA Dates to Note

2017

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|------------|--|
| Jan. 11-13 | MANTS, Baltimore, MD. mants.com |
| Jan. 26 | Pesticide Applicators Recertification Training (PART), Charleston |
| Jan. 26 | Certified Professional Horticulturist Exam, Charleston. wvnlassoc@gmail.org |
| Jan. 27 | Winter Symposium 2017 and Annual Members' Meeting, Charleston. |
| Jan. 27 | WVNLA Board of Directors and Annual Members Meeting, Charleston |
| Feb. 22 | Ag Day at the West Virginia Capitol |



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