

## President's Message

Greetings everyone. I hope late spring has found you soaking in the beauty of Mother Nature's treasures, and that you are out there working steadily.

I came across an article recently in the *National Concrete*



David Hill II

*and Masonry Association News* that shared a thought I have had frequently over the last few years. I am a product of the "90s College Push," when seemingly

everyone made statements such as, "With a college degree, you will come out of the salary starting gate \$10,000 ahead of anyone without a college education." Or another: "Use your brains and not your back." And so on and so forth. I think you get the picture.

It never dawned on me to do what my dad did. He is a retired master electrician with 43 years' experience. I can only recall him saying to me once as a soon-to-be high school graduate, "You can go to trade school, college, or straight into the workforce. And I know firsthand that trade school is cheaper, with a lot less time spent in a classroom." I chose college, like many around me did.

The National Concrete and Masonry Association article shares some insight into a 19-year-old concrete mason's life. It explains that this young man chose this profession because (1) he wouldn't

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## Institution Residents Get High Marks on Certification Exam

When plant science instructor Jenny Stoneking heard that WVNLA had launched a certification program for high school agriculture students through the West Virginia Department of Education, she immediately asked if her students could participate too. Her students were a bit older than the typical high school student. Their life experiences made them well aware that knowledge and professional certification would be an advantage in a job search. They were anxious to take on the challenge of mastering the information in the Certified Professional Horticulturist (CPH) manual.

Jenny's highly motivated students are male inmates at the St. Marys Correctional Institute in Pleasants County. CPH committee members (WVNLA board members Bud Cottrill and John Jett, and WVU professor Dave Davis) considered the curriculum and horticultural experience Jenny provides in her plant science program and agreed that they fulfilled certification requirements.

Jenny couldn't wait to tell her students that they were eligible for certification.

"I had already told them about the program, and that if they wanted to do anything related to agriculture, this would be a big help. They were really excited, but I warned them that we'd need to get approval to participate. Thank you so much for this opportunity," she said.

Jenny's students spent several months preparing for the exam. She was out of town for two days during the week before the exam and learned that her students had met in the library to study on their own in her absence. They even made flashcards to use as they studied together.

Exam day came and went. Jenny mailed the answer sheets to WVNLA with a request that they be processed as quickly as possible because her students were anxiously waiting to hear the results.

As it turns out, the results were outstanding. Each of the 14 students who took the exam scored well above the required 70 percent. Most scored in the mid- to high 80s. Not only did



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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have any student loan debt, (2) he would probably make more money right away and more in the future than others who chose college, and (3) there was such an abundance of work, he could likely make a career of it. The article notes that according to Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), the number of construction-type jobs is on the rise in the United States. This is good news for those working in the trades.



David Hill and his son Ryan work together to construct a raised garden bed for their backyard.

Reading this article and others that share the same theme has confirmed what I have been seeing as a possible trend. With billions of dollars in

student loan debt piling up in America (my wife and I have our share) and job placement fresh out of college being a tough proposition, maybe trade jobs are where it is for the future. I have read time and time again articles stating that trades work is there but the people are not. How often is this happening to many of us in the green industry in West Virginia? Far too often, I am sure.

That is why I am proud of the direction WVNLA is taking to put our industry on the career opportunity map. With the trades starting to trend in the job markets around the country, and as more and more people see the benefits and opportunities available, I see our future getting brighter in West Virginia.

The board has been working hard to create new ways to build a better green industry workforce. I am humbled and excited to be a part of this, and I see some positive things to come. It is a work in progress and we are always open for suggestions, educational opportunities, questions, etc. Our next board meeting is July 19. Feel free to contact any board member with your ideas. We're listed on the back of this newsletter.

Until next time, take care and see you out there!

David Hill II

*WVNLA president and owner of Three Trees Design and Landscaping in South Charleston*

## INROADS AT ST. MARYS

(Continued from page 1)

they all identify the plants on the plant identification portion of the exam, but they also provided both the scientific and common names.

"I am so happy for these guys. They studied so hard. I was impressed with their efforts," Jenny said.

Several of her students have experience in landscaping and agriculture. Just as she credits their hard work, each of four inmates who were interviewed after learning of their test results credit Jenny for the education and motivation she provides. Correctional rules prohibit the printing of their names, but below are some of their comments.

One 33-year-old student, who has especially enjoyed growing vegetables in the facility's plant science curriculum, said the class sparked an interest in both landscaping and floriculture.

"I'm not sure what's out there, but I'd like to make a career in this area. I find growing things to be relaxing. It would be great to be able to donate some of the food I grow—to give back," he said.

Another man said he had helped in his family greenhouse and landscaping business in the past. Perhaps because he already had some green industry background, he enjoyed working on the material. However, he found learning the scientific plant names to be challenging.

"We had to sign up to take this class. Not everyone is motivated in here to better themselves, but we saw it as an opportunity. We have a great teacher and are all really excited with our results," the 32-year-old said.

Another man who is 40 years old said he was drawn to the scientific part of the program and would like to find a position that involved plant grafting.

One of the program's younger participants, a 26-year-old, ran his own landscape business before incarceration. His stepfather fostered his interest in plants, based on what he had learned from his own mother.

"I'd like to impress my grandmother with what I've learned here. It feels good. She taught my stepfather and he taught me," he said. "This was a great opportunity to further my knowledge in horticulture. I plan on a career in this field."

# Customers Say Kim's Greenhouse is Worth the Drive

Don't rely on GPS if you're heading to Kim's Greenhouse. It's not many miles south of Milton, but they're country miles. About halfway there, you're likely to find yourself without phone service. But the garden center is well worth the drive and occasional stop for directions. That's obvious from the significant number of customers perusing the well-organized and immaculate greenhouses and rows of plants, even on a sweltering midweek afternoon.

"We come every year. There's a garden center and greenhouse nearer us, but you can't beat the plants and service you get here," one customer told owner Kim Jackson on a recent visit.



*Kim Jackson talks with a customer.*

Kim's Greenhouse is tucked on 3.5 acres along Two Mile Creek in a narrow valley between sloping hills. Kim knew it as his great-grandparents' property, but it's been in the family since the Civil War. Kim comes from a family of farmers, as does his wife and business partner, LaDonna, who hails from neighboring Lincoln County.

Until 11 years ago, Kim also had a day job. He ran the farm, raising tobacco and then sweet red peppers for the Moody Dunbar cannery. Then he decided he wanted to grow hybrid peppers, so he built a greenhouse for them. He created some hanging baskets as well. That was 25 years ago. He started with 100 hanging baskets. Today, they sell around 8,000 baskets annually. Most of the colorful combinations are LaDonna's creations. Kim uses a cold method for his petunias, placing them outdoors in mid-March. His dense, thickly flowered petunia baskets are ready a good 10 days earlier than most and are cold-weather hardy.



*The newest greenhouse holds ferns.*

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As it turns out, that original greenhouse was the first of 11. One of Kim's greenhouses holds only tomato plants, another holds a variety of peppers. The rose house holds a rainbow of vibrant blooms for those

prepared to care for them. The most recent addition is a fern greenhouse, which holds 6,500 graceful ferns, all ready for retail, which accounts for 70 percent of Kim and LaDonna's sales.

Trees and shrubs ring the greenhouses, with shade-loving perennials under partial cover. The perennials have spent the winter partially sheltered but are moved into their space in mid-March, which increases their hardiness. Kruger, a Grand Pyrenees with a beautiful coat and a tendency to wander, watches over the back portion of the property.



*Colorful baskets and annuals fill one greenhouse.*

There's no fancy inventory system at Kim's, but the owners know exactly where to find any plant in stock. Kim and LaDonna rely on memory when a customer asks for a particular plant.

"Zinnias are in number four," Kim tells a customer.

Another is searching for a red-leaved ornamental plum, but the tree is not currently in stock. "Just tell Kim what you want and he'll order it for you," LaDonna tells the customer.



*LaDonna and Kim Jackson.*

"Anybody who does this knows it's a seven-day-a-week job during the season. We open at 8 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. Supper, if we have it, is at 9:30," Kim says. "That's just how it is this time of year."

Kim and LaDonna have been married for 32 years and live about a mile from the business. That's just enough distance, Kim says. They have a daughter, Cheyenne, who helps out in the business and a son, Orin, who goes to WVU and is studying—you guessed it—horticulture.

You can reach Kim and LaDonna at Kim's Greenhouse at 304-743-3310, or find them on Facebook.

## WVU Davis College Seeks Answers to “What’s Next?” for WV

*By Andrew Barnes  
Director of Development,  
Davis College, WVU*

Few would argue that the future is now for the state of West Virginia and its people. In seeking answers for how to build a strong economy, the Mountain State has no better resource than the faculty and students of West Virginia University’s Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design. A key department of the state’s flagship institution, the Davis College plays a vital role in the future of the state’s economy.

Shifts in the economy in recent decades, partly caused by changes in the energy and manufacturing industries, as well as concerns about climate change, create the need for innovation, new opportunities, and new markets, in order to realize West Virginia’s vast potential. Through research, outreach, and cutting-edge projects, WVU Davis College students are striving to meet the challenges of today and identify the transitions required to create a healthy economy for the future.

For example, the WVU Davis College Leadership Academy is preparing the next generation of thinkers and doers by connecting



*Graduate student Wijdan Dabeek freeze dries ramps for a grant-funded project that will research the possible positive effects ramps have on lowering hypertension.*

them with internship and entrepreneurial opportunities. Through the Young Innovators Program, Davis College students are creating a culture of entrepreneurship by developing ideas for



*Recent WVU Davis College graduate and entrepreneur Jordan Masters recently opened his own business growing microgreens in Westover.*

products and businesses, as well as finding solutions to challenges. Collaborating with the WVU IdeaHub, Davis College is strongly encouraging entrepreneurship. In the past year alone, 41 Davis College student entrepreneurs and 22 student entrepreneur teams participated in pitch competitions, securing thousands of dollars in seed funding for students to start their own businesses or projects. The successes are already being realized. One recent Davis College graduate, Jordon Masters, who participated in the Young Innovators Program, has launched his own greenhouse business in Westover growing microgreens for local restaurants. As the Young Innovators Program continues to grow, so will the success stories.

Through dedicated research, Davis College faculty and students are also unlocking new markets for West Virginia in sustainable industries. Research supported by the Hardwood Research Trust is exploring the development of cross-laminated timbers, which could help transform the construction industry and unlock economic opportunities for the third most-forested state in the country.

Additional Davis College research into traditional products, such as maple syrup and cider apples, is also attempting to capitalize on the state’s natural resources and prime location for East Coast markets. Finally, the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences at the Davis College continues to research the positive economic impacts of reclaiming

*(Please see WVU on page 5)*

# Research Confirms: Americans Love Their Lawns

FAIRFAX, Va.-- The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) recently announced new research which finds that Americans' love affair with their lawns is going strong. The survey, conducted by the Engine Group on behalf of NALP, found that 81 percent of all Americans have a lawn, and a vast majority (79 percent) say that a lawn is an important feature when renting or buying a home. In fact, when asked to prioritize home features, respondents ranked a nice sized yard second, falling only behind a renovated kitchen – and well ahead of other popular features including updated bathrooms, storage and hardwood floors.

The research found that younger generations of Americans place an even higher value on lawns than their parents and grandparents. When ranking home features, a nice sized lawn was the number one priority among millennials, beating out even an updated kitchen. Eighty-two percent of millennials report that having a lawn is important when renting or buying a home.

“While some may assume that trends toward urbanization or the increase use of electronics and technology have resulted in a decreased interest in lawns among younger Americans, the results of our research found just the opposite,” says Missy

Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for NALP. “Overall, the results confirm what professionals in the lawn care and landscape industry have long known – Americans have a great appreciation for the value that healthy lawns bring to their lives.”

The survey found that beyond valuing lawns, Americans are indeed making regular use of their yards. Forty-seven percent of Americans say they entertain in their yards at least once a month, while 57 percent use their yards for recreation at least monthly. Nearly 80 percent of respondents report relaxing in their yards at least once a month, and about one in three Americans (32 percent) garden in their yards multiple times a week.

Americans are also enjoying grass and green spaces beyond their doorsteps. The research found that Americans visit public parks and playgrounds more often than movie theaters, pools and beaches, bowling alleys and museums.

“Lawns and public green spaces provide a backdrop for Americans' memory-making moments while offering tremendous benefits for our communities and environment,” says Henriksen. “The research supports the important work that lawn care professionals do to create and maintain healthy lawns across the country.”

## WVU

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abandoned mine lands for use with new agricultural products, as well as the feasibility and economic potential of growing hemp in West Virginia.

The Davis College is working hard to identify new possibilities for the future of the state and its people. Today's research will provide tomorrow's opportunities for current and future students, giving them a chance to stay and work in the state they call home.



Students work at the WVU greenhouse as part of their studies and research projects.

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On-line Registration is available 24/7 beginning October 1.

# Pesticide Applicators Recertification for Lawn/Landscape Professionals

Sponsored by: West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association  
and West Virginia Department of Agriculture

**When:** Wednesday, July 10, 2019 *Registration begins at 8 am*

**Where:** Glade Springs Resort, Bright Ballroom A, 255 Resort Drive, Daniels, WV 25832

**Parking:** On site, no charge.

**Cost:** WVNLA members attend free. Charge for non-WVNLA members is \$50.

**Recertification Credits:** 10 credits will be issued for categories 3, 4A, 4B, 7, 11 and 13C. Attendees must attend the entire day to receive full credit.

**Registration:** Pre-registering for this program is required and space is limited. **Online registration is strongly encouraged. Visit wvnla.org.** If you choose to mail your registration form and check made out to WVNLA, please do so before **July 1.** **View the day's schedule at wvnla.org**

<p><b>To register by USPS, mail this form with your payment to:</b>                  West Virginia Nursery &amp; Landscape Association,                  P.O. Box 20284                  Charleston, WV 25314                  Make checks payable to: <i>West Virginia Nursery &amp; Landscape Association.</i></p>		
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Return this form with the required fee(s) before <b>July 1, 2019</b> to the address listed above. You will receive an email confirmation.		
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<input type="checkbox"/> WVNLA Member (no charge) <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> WVNLA Non-member (\$50)</span>		
<p><b>Be sure to bring your commercial applicator, certified public applicator or registered technician card number with you.</b> This is required for the sign in sheet to earn your recertification credits.</p> <p>Bring a writing tablet and pen or pencil. You may need to take notes or participate in class exercises.</p> <p>Lunch is on your own and time is limited to 1 hour.</p>		

## Two Summers County High School Students Master the CPH Exam

Congratulations to Summers County High School students Emily Harris and Dakota Gill, the first high school students to achieve the distinction of Certified Professional Horticulturist (CPH). WVNLA and the West Virginia Department of Education made the curriculum, exam and certification available to high school agriculture students for the first time this spring semester.

Summers County High School teacher Kathy Duffield offered the curriculum, which dovetailed with existing Plant Systems materials, to her students. Of the seven students who took the CPH exam, which includes 100 multiple choice and 25 plant identification questions, Emily and Dakota achieved passing scores. Their accomplishment is especially notable because industry professionals do not necessarily pass the challenging exam on the first attempt.

Requests for materials from several other West



*Emily Harris and Dakota Gill hold folders containing their CPH certification in the SCHS greenhouse.*

Virginia high school agriculture teachers have already been made for the upcoming school year. The hope is that these students will use their certification to get a jump on productive and rewarding careers in the green industry.

## Horticulture, Plant Science and LA Students Take Note!

The lazy days of summer are an ideal time for enterprising students to research and apply for some of the generous scholarships that abound in green industry. A few are noted below.

### HRI Submission Deadline: September 13

Scholarships totaling nearly \$20,000 for the 2019-2020 school year are made possible by seven special HRI endowment funds that aid students who are seeking a lifelong career in horticulture. HRI and its member firms consider graduating students in horticulture to be the lifeblood of the green industry. The scholarship application and prerequisite information are available on the Horticultural Research Institute [www.hriresearch.org](http://www.hriresearch.org).

- The Timothy S. and Palmer W. Bigelow, Jr. Scholarship
- The Usrey Family Scholarship
- The Bryan A. Champion Memorial

### Scholarship

- The Susie & Bruce Usrey Scholarship
- The Spring Meadow Scholarship
- The "Muggets" Scholarship
- The Carville M. Akehurst Memorial Scholarship

For more information, contact Dr. Jill Calabro at [JillC@AmericanHort.org](mailto:JillC@AmericanHort.org) or call her at 202-789-0683 or contact Jennifer Gray at [JenniferG@AmericanHort.org](mailto:JenniferG@AmericanHort.org) or call her at 614-884-1155.

### Scholarship Opportunity for WV Students

WVNLA's Marcus W. Rennix Memorial Scholarship makes \$5,000 available each year to West Virginia resident students who are studying horticulture, landscape architecture and related majors. The deadline for that submission is December 1. Details for application can be found on WVNLA's website [www.wvnla.org](http://www.wvnla.org).

# WVNLA NEWS

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## WVNLA Dates to Note

- |           |                                                                                |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 10   | Pesticide Applicators Recertification Training,<br>The Resort at Glade Springs |
| July 19   | WVNLA Board of Directors meeting,<br>Stonewall Resort                          |
| Oct 21-22 | Northeast Regional Leadership Conference,<br>Charleston                        |
| Feb. 12   | WVNLA Winter Symposium, Charleston                                             |

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