

President's Message

After an anticlimactic winter, one that promised to give us below-average temperatures and above-average precipitation, we find



Bobby Gompers
WVNLA President

ourselves now wondering how many times we will mow the grass this month! We have to just go with it. Spring is upon us once again. Only time will tell what it will bring.

Spring in the Mountain State is a commodity that, in my humble opinion, should be sipped and taken in slowly. I try to notice as many subtleties as I can, from the early crocuses and daffodils to the forsythias blooming. All take center stage when it is their time.

Northern magnolias are breaking bud in Upshur County right now, trying to show off before the frost gets them while the winter pansies are showing beautiful color, rewarding the gardeners who planted last fall. I hope everyone can take a few long walks this spring and really take it all in.

The WVNLA, and its members have been extremely busy this off season – mobilizing, educating and spreading the good word about our industry. Our members are doing some amazing things out there, as you will see in this newsletter.

Thank you.

Bobby Gompers

Bobby Gompers is WVNLA's president and the owner of Highland Landscaping and Highland Nurseries in Buckhannon.

WVNLA Announces 2024 Scholarship Winners

Earlier this year, WVNLA awarded five \$2,500 scholarships to deserving West Virginia University Horticulture, Landscape Architecture and Environmental Soils and Water students with Marcus W. Rennix memorial scholarships. (*Wonder who Marcus W. Rennix was? See article on page 2.*) They were introduced to the members at the February 21 Winter Symposium luncheon in Charleston.

Sam Glazier of Charleston is a junior majoring in Landscape Architecture. He is a graduate of Starr's Mill High School in Fayette County, Georgia. After college, Sam plans to find a Landscape Designer/Project Manager position, prepare for and take the licensed landscape architect exam.



Sam Glazier

Eventually he hopes to own his own landscape architectural and construction firm.

Hailey Lane of New Martinsville is a junior majoring in Horticulture. She graduated from Tyler Consolidated High School. She says she is passionate about protecting what all the Earth offers. She hopes to use her degree to do environmental good, work for significant changes, and continue learning so that future generations can enjoy what is available now.



Hailey Lane

Garrett Oursler of Morgan County is a junior studying Environmental Soils and Water

Sciences with a minor in Horticulture. He graduated from Berkeley County High School. After graduation, he hopes to continue working in the green industry and to partner the skills he learned interning at Cacapon Resort State Park and in various projects at WVU with his passion for conservation. His dream job would be to grow plants for conservation purposes in the National Park System.



Garrett Oursler

James Ranson, a graduate of St. Albans High School, is studying Landscape Architecture with minors

Please see SCHOLARSHIPS, page 3.



Symposium speakers join WVNLA board members for dinner the evening before the event.



Norman Cole III charts "Little Missy's" journey.



Jeff McManus shares insights on growing leaders.

WVNLA's Winter Symposium and Annual Members Meeting & Breakfast

February 21, Charleston, WV



Kim Eierman talks about future designs.



Attendees listen for their names in the lunchtime door prize drawing.



WVNLA members fuel up for the day at the Annual Members Meeting & Breakfast.



Brian Branthoover's employees are family.



Marianne Willburn talks tropicals (left).

Board members visit with symposium speakers over dinner (right).



2024 Person of the Year Finished the Job

Steve Saunders of Saunders Lawn Care in Huntington was named 2024 Person of the Year by WVNLA's board at its Annual Members Meeting & Breakfast.

Citing his leadership in the installation of a Natural Learning Environment at the Cabell-Wayne Association of the Blind, the WVNLA board members chose to honor Steve.

The framed award was inscribed:

“As a long-term board member and during his term as 2021-22 president, Steve exhibited careful consideration of the Association's mission and actions, and was a strong and effective leader. His diligent work committing time, talent and resources to the completion of the Natural Learning Environment as his Presidential Project was both a tribute to his blind aunt and uncle who were active there, and also a

blessing to the center and the families it serves. Steve took the lead in quietly completing the project and in maintaining it.”

WVNLA annually honors a member who has represented the association and profession with distinction.

Past president David Hill III, who initiated the Cabell-Wayne Association of the Blind project, presents the award to Steve Saunders.



Scholarship Honors Memory of Marcus W. Rennix

Who was Marcus W. Rennix, in whose honor WVNLA awards scholarships?

Marcus was WVNLA president from 1973 -1977 and is likely WVNLA's longest serving president. He also served on the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show board for many years, according to long-time WVNLA board member and treasurer/secretary Mark Springer.

The WVNLA scholarship fund was created in 1986. The first award was \$1,000 to James Monroe Jr. in 1987. At its inception, it was called the West Virginia Nurseryman's Student Loan Fund. The name was later changed to West Virginia

Nurserymen's Association Memorial Scholarship Fund.

In 1990, the scholarship's name was changed again to Marcus W. Rennix Memorial. Marcus passed away in the summer of 1990. Mark believes that the idea for a scholarship fund may have been proposed by Marcus, but says he hasn't confirmed that information.

“I knew Marcus personally from being on the board with him. He had a landscape business in Elkins and was very active with WVNLA and MANTS,” Mark said.

SCHOLARSHIPS (continued from page 1)

in both Sustainable Design Studies and Sustainable



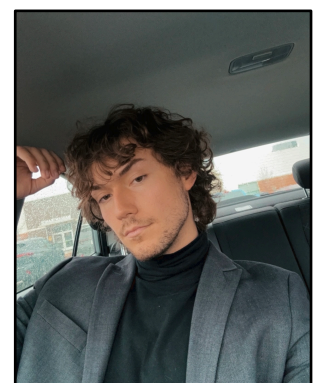
James Ranson

Trail Development. He is a native of St. Albans. Years of exploring the outdoors, and the Coal River in particular, led James to his goal of becoming a licensed Landscape Architect and working on stream restoration projects throughout the state after graduation.

Hayden Swain of Ravenswood is a senior in

the Landscape Architecture program. He graduated from Ravenswood High School and hopes his first job will enable him to gain broad experience by working on a variety of projects. He also plans to obtain licensure as a Professional Landscape Architect.

We congratulate all of our scholars and wish them the best they as embark on careers in the green industry.



Hayden Swain

Board Tackles Bylaw Updates, Plant Guide and Funding Requests

WVNLA's board of directors met on February 20 in Charleston. Board members Zach Crede, David Hill, Lisa McDavid, Betsy Raynes, Steve Saunders, and Mark Springer and Executive Director Julie Robinson attended. The following actions were taken.

Bylaw review committee member Lisa McDavid explained the changes she and fellow committee member Bud Cottrill proposed to bring the Association in compliance with its bylaws. The changes are outlined in the article below. Members approved the changes and advanced them for approval by the general membership.

WVNLA will produce a four-color Landscape Plants of West Virginia guide for distribution to its members. Bud Cottrill, John Jett and Mark Springer will edit content.

Nominating committee member Betsy Raynes announced the selection of Michael Biafore for consideration as a new board member. The board members approved the nomination and advanced it for approval by the general membership.

The West Virginia Extension Master Gardeners requested sponsorship of an annual conference in April at Canaan Valley Resort. The members voted to provide a \$2,500 sponsorship.

Grow This! WV requested sponsorship for the Grow This! Throwdown Challenge. Board members approved \$5,000 in funding, which will provide the award for the county named third place winner in the statewide competition.

The board of directors will next meet on May 1 at Stonewall Resort.

Updated Bylaws Place WVNLA Practices in Compliance

WVNLA members who attended the Annual Members Meeting & Breakfast on February 21 in Charleston approved changes to the bylaws as recommended by the board members. The updates were suggested by a review committee of Bud Cottrill and Lisa McDavid. View the bylaws in their entirety at wvnla.org.

The first four of the rules listed below already exist in WVNLA's bylaws, but have not been enforced. In the future, the nominating committee chairperson will carry out these directives. The fiscal year is a change from the July 1 to June 30 fiscal previously listed in the bylaws.

- WVNLA members elect Board of Directors at Annual Members meeting, usually in January or February.
- WVNLA's Board of Directors elect officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer [or Secretary/Treasurer] and Past President) for two-year terms at a board meeting which the President declares as the first annual Board of Directors Meeting
- A board member's term is three years. If he/she wishes to continue to serve after three years, he/she must be voted on at the Annual Members meeting.
- Also at the next Annual Members meeting, board of director members are divided into three groups, each serving one, two or three years. Board members with expiring terms will be asked by nominating committee members in advance of the Annual Member Meeting if they wish to remain as a board member. If they do, their names will be

on the ballot for election at the Annual Member Meeting. (*Article II, Section 2*)

- WVNLA's fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.
- Member's renewal dates are on the anniversary of their last renewal.

Michael Biafore Elected to Board

Michael R. Biafore, PLA, president of Biafore Landscape Development in Morgantown, was elected to WVNLA's board of directors at the Annual Members Meeting on February 21 in Charleston.

Michael is a 1988 graduate of West Virginia University's Landscape Architecture (LA) program, is a licensed Professional Landscape Architect in West Virginia and has operated his company for more than 26 years. Michael is a past member of the West Virginia Board of Landscape Architects.

Michael is currently the chairman of the WVNLA's workforce development committee and is a member of WVU's L.A. Advisory Council.



Michael Biafore

All Hail The “Almost Native” Dandelion

By Barry Glick

Sometimes the title for an article comes to me well before the idea for that story materializes. That was the case here. I was watching one of my all-time favorite movies, “Almost Famous,” quite the engaging coming-of-age flick that I’ve watched on multiple occasions, when, for some unexplained reason, I thought of *Taraxacum officinale*. The thought that entered my mind was – here’s a plant so ubiquitous that it’s “almost” native. I know you’re familiar with the plant and honestly, probably hate it, but perhaps when I tell you more than you already know about said plant, that relationship will morph from pure hate into a more forgiving love/hate relationship.

The plant as you know it, dandelion, was not endemic to this continent when the Mayflower pulled into Plymouth Harbor some 404 years ago. I don’t know if there were any specimens on that particular voyage, but if not, the plant did arrive shortly thereafter. I’m not sure how those early European settlers knew that it didn’t grow here, but it was so valuable to them in their homelands, that they brought some with them on their long journey just to be safe.

Now, you’re probably wondering what they treasured in this plant that you curse every spring when the monotone of green grass on your lawn is interrupted by gazillions of bright yellow dots. The answer, in a word, is, “lots!”

It’s interesting to compare nutrients, such as vitamin A, in dandelions to other sources. My mother always told me that if I ate my carrots, I would have X-ray vision like Superman. That’s because, as everyone knows, carrots are exceedingly high in vitamin A, right? Now, I’m not making this up, but a 100 gram sample of carrots contains 10,000 International Units (IU) of vitamin A. Guess how much a 100 gram sample of dandelion greens has? You’re not gonna believe this, but 14,000 IUs. And fiber. Don’t get me started on fiber. Dandelions have much more. (Source: USDA.)

I’m not going to give up my morning espresso, but in wartime and during coffee shortages, besides *Cichorium intybus*, (Chicory), which was dried and ground, dandelion roots were used as a coffee substitute.

I thought I was hallucinating last winter when I saw fresh dandelion greens bundled for sale in the produce section at our local Kroger store. I haven’t noticed them since, but you have to give Kroger credit for the attempt.

There are so many medicinal benefits listed for dandelion, you would think that every doctor would carry a bottle in his little black bag. Do doctors still carry little black bags? A friend of mine swears that a cup of tea made from fresh dandelion flowers cured him of night blindness. During the years 1831-1926, dandelion was listed in the *U.S.*

Pharmacopoeia.

The roots of dandelion have been used for

treating joint sprains, cirrhosis, gallstones, hepatitis, jaundice, swollen liver to name a few ailments.

But please folks, this is not an endorsement for using dandelion for any medicinal needs. Consult an accredited herbalist and, like the man on television says, “Don’t try this at home, kids.” By the way, there are almost 30 species in the genus *Taraxacum*, but none are native to North America.

I hope that this short treatise has given you a new respect for one of America’s most hated weeds and that you’ll soon be sipping some dandelion tea or dandelion wine. (I think you can

safely do that without consulting an herbalist.)

Oh yeah, and lastly. Where did the name “dandelion,” come from? Well you can thank the French for that moniker. And anyone with a vague knowledge of Latin or any of the other romance languages could probably figure it out. The French saw a resemblance to a lion’s tooth in the leaf, so they called it “dent de lion,” or “tooth of the lion.” By the time it arrived here on our shores, it had morphed into “dandelion.”

Barry Glick, a transplanted Philadelphian, has been residing in Greenbrier County, WV, since 1972. His mountaintop garden and nursery is a mecca for gardeners from virtually every country in the world. He writes and lectures extensively about native plants and Hellebores, his two main specialties, and welcomes visitors with advance notice. He can be reached at barry@sunfarm.com, www.sunfarm.com or 304-497-2208.



Three Achieve Status of Certified Professional Horticulturist

Congratulations to three people who recently attained the distinction of adding Certified Professional Horticulturist to their credentials. They have met the certification's education and



Joshua Hamrick

experience requirements and passed the examination on February 21.

We are pleased to introduce WVNLA's newest Certified Professional Horticulturists.

Joshua Hamrick,
Conservatory Director at the Huntington Museum of Art.

Katherine Millette,
Horticulturist with the City of Morgantown, Urban Landscape Department



Katherine Millette



Diana Vercillo

Diana Vercillo, Landscape Horticulturist with Terra Care, Inc., Charleston.

The next CPH exam will be administered in mid-July at Glade Springs Resort in Daniels, WV, at a date to be determined.

MANTS Produces Another Banner Show

The 2024 Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS), known as the Masterpiece of Trade Shows,™ brought together more than 11,200 attendees, including exhibitors, at the Baltimore Convention Center from January 10 to 12.

A sold-out tradeshow floor featured 920 exhibitors spread across 1,532 booths showcasing an extensive array of plants, nursery stock, heavy and light-duty equipment, and industry innovations. Drawing attendees and exhibitors from diverse geographical locations, MANTS attracted high-level decision makers, with more than 82 percent of attendees identified as influencers or final decision

makers maintaining the show's reputation as the tradeshow where solid business relationships are built. Sharing ownership of MANTS with the nursery and landscape associations of Maryland and Virginia, WVNLA enjoys a portion of the show's profits, which significantly helps fund WVNLA events, education courses, certification, volunteer projects and scholarships.



Julie Robinson chats with Bobby Gompers (right) and Steve Saunders at WVNLA's booth. Both men serve on the MANTS board of directors.

Norman and Missy Cole of Cole Nurseries (center of upper photo) review boxwoods with customers, while Brett Merritt (right) talks availability at G&G Nursery. Norman and Brett both serve as MANTS board members.



WVNLA Welcomes 14 New Members

Best Lawn, LLC dba Teays Valley Weedman

Dustin Kincaid
P.O. Box 802, Scott Depot, WV 25560
304-546-3379 teays.valley@weedmanusa.com
Landscape and lawn maintenance.

Fairmont State University

Devin Carpenter
1201 Locust Ave., Fairmont, WV 26554
304-367-4139 devin.carpenter@fairmontstate.edu
Public space landscape administrator/maintenance.

Dixie Green

2553 Beechtown Road, French Creek, WV 26218
740-525-1101 dlgreen95wv@gmail.com
City Horticulturist, Buckhannon, WV.

Green Horizons Turf Farm

J. Ware, III
153 Doctor Flanigahan Rd., Kearneysville, WV 25430
304-725-2895 info@greenhorizonturf.com
greenhorizonturf.com
Sod farm.

Greenbrier Hills Golf Club

Terry McClung
P.O. Box 611, Rainelle, WV 25962
304-438-9050 terrylmclung@hotmail.com
Public grounds maintenance.

Groundbreaker Home & Land Services LLC

Dane Jackson
Grady Jackson
2295 Braden Hill Road, West Union, WV 26456
304-405-2491 groundbreakerllc.wv@gmail.com
Landscape construction, landscape and lawn maintenance, hardscape design and installation.

Ivandale Farms, LLC

Frank Bredimus
16894 Ivandale Road, Hamilton, VA 20158.
571-344-2278 fbredimus@aol.com
ivandalefarms.com
Wholesale nursery.

Lake County Nursery

Joe Zampini
5052 South Ridge Road, Madison, OH 44057
440-290-5005 zampini@lakecountynursery.com
Lakecountynursery.com
Wholesale nursery.

MinneyScapes LLC

Virgil Minney
148 Cactus Lane, Kenna, WV 25248
304-761-0735 virgilminney148@gmail.com
Landscape construction, landscape and lawn maintenance, fertilization and weed control, hardscape design and installation.

Siobhan O'Brien

222 N. Mildred St., Ranson, WV 25438
304-725-7011 siobhan.obrien@sscoop.com
Charles Town Southern States garden center manager.

Outdoor Tranquility, LLC

Thomas Brown
4210 Persimmon Woods Dr.
Morgantown, WV 26508
304-906-1836 thomas@outdoortranquility.com
outdoortranquility.com
Landscape architect or designer, landscape construction and maintenance.

Superior Parts & Service

James Rollins
5100 Elk River Road N., Elkview, WV 25031
304-935-2287 wallyssuperiorparts.com
info@wallyssuperiorparts.com
Industry supplier.

Terra Fate, LLC

Nathan Adam
2202 Madison Ave., Huntington, WV 25704
315-256-3283 terrafatellc@gmail.com
terrafate.com
Retail garden center, wholesale nursery, educator.

Vine & Fig Tree Landscaping

Seth Glazer
2556 Fifth St. Rd., Huntington, WV 25701
304-360-0922
sethglazer@outlook.com vftlandscaping.com
Landscape architect or designer, landscape construction and lighting.



WVNLA NEWS

P. O. Box 20284

Charleston, WV 25362

Dates to Note

March 23	SkillsUSA Landscape and Horticulture competition , Fairmont State University
May 1	WVNLA Board Meeting , Stonewall Resort, 9 a.m.
July TBA	Pesticide Applicators Recertification Training , Glade Springs
July TBA	Certified Professional Horticulturist Exam , Glade Springs



Officers & Board of Directors

President:

Robert Gompers – bgompers@aol.com

Vice President:

Jason Testman – valleygardensjt@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer:

Mark Springer – mark@lavalette.net

Past President:

Stephen Saunders – saunders801@aol.com

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Michael Biafore – michael@biafore.com

Pat Biafore – patrick@biafore.com

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Zach Crede – zach@credelawncare.com

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John Jett – drjohnjett@gmail.com

Lisa McDavid – lisasgardenscapes@yahoo.com

Betsy Raynes – betsyraynes@yahoo.com

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Julie Robinson – wvnlassoc@gmail.com