

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



WAITE
ARBORETUM

NEWSLETTER NO. 55

Autumn 2008

Secretary
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Editor
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THIRTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 31 March 2008

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

I am pleased to present this Report for the 13th year of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum.

Of major importance has been the restructure within the University so that the Arboretum, Waite Reserve and Urrbrae House now come under the Director of Community Engagement and a Manager of Entrepreneurial Programs and Community Relations. Martyn Evans and Joe Bennink have visited the campus and have expressed strong support for the Arboretum.

Following the fire in November 2006, 48 trees have been removed and more are not expected to survive this year. Removal of dead trees was greatly assisted by Adelaide Urban Tree Services. The remaining affected trees are being monitored.

Over the year your Committee has applied funds to four main areas; arboricultural work by Chris Lawry and maintenance by Mark Ziersch along with items of equipment and further signage and labeling.

We have been greatly assisted by sponsors like Vermeer, Trees R Us and Neutrog along with plant material donations from Maureen Ross and Ian and Narelle Roberts.

We continue to appreciate the work put in by our weekly volunteers and guides.

The Arboretum is visited by many throughout the year including groups holding training sessions and consultants and research personnel.

A new project is the establishment of a Dry Rainforest Demonstration Garden in an area below the old tennis courts. The garden has been planned in collaboration with Daryl Kinnane

(Rainforest Flora Nursery) who has donated all the specimens and assisted with the planting. The garden is part of a Sustainable Landscapes Trail developed by tonight's guest speaker, Sheryn Pitman, from the Department of Environment and Heritage.

Director Jennifer Gardner has faced difficulties with the establishment of new plantings as a result of severe water restrictions. This problem has also prompted a closer look at the survival of avenues of mature trees. Jennifer is putting together a project to try and save the heritage listed Elm Avenue in the Arboretum. Along with Martyn Evans and Joe Bennink, she has met with Geoff Ball from SA Water to gain permission for a satisfactory watering regime. This will need to be monitored and I am keen to see the re-establishment of a meteorological station on campus as part of that. Meanwhile, United Water has provided some timely water using their new 7,000 litre tanker.

The Committee is anxious that the University proceeds urgently with a water management plan. The present situation is that we have a bore under stress and much run-off from the campus buildings going to waste. This is no longer acceptable. TAFE and Carrick Hill have shown great leadership in this area.

Our fund raising activities have been limited to a concert by Aleksandr Tsiboulski, a dryland gardening talk by Sophie Thomson and, in partnership with Basketry SA, the 'Manipulated' exhibition held during the Fringe Festival. We did get good exposure at the ABC Gardening Expo earlier this month. Our plans for 2008 will be outlined in the next Newsletter. You can also learn more from our updated website.

Finally, I want to pay a special tribute to the retiring Committee, especially Secretary Rosemary, Treasurer Peter and Editor Jean. I am pleased that most of the Committee have agreed to serve again and I thank them for their great work over the past 12 months. My sincere thanks go also to Vice President Norma Lee who retires after about 10 years as a member of the Committee and more than six years as Treasurer. In particular, a welcome goes to Beth Johnstone who has nominated to join the Committee this year.

Once again our Director, Jennifer Gardner has put in a very busy year with major functions like the TREENET Symposium and the Basketry Exhibition to organize and helping with the changeover of the Urrbrae House administrative staff.

I hope you will all continue to support us with your time, subscriptions and donations.

I move the adoption of the 2008 Annual Report.

Bryan Milligan
President

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2007

I present the audited Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum for 2007.

Under the terms of our constitution Norma Lee retired from the office of Treasurer at the previous AGM and I was appointed to this position at the first meeting of the new committee.

In the accompanying statement I have arranged Receipts into two groups according to their source. Firstly, receipts directly from members, e.g. subscriptions, (Tax Deductible) donations and sales, which raised \$4,319. Secondly, receipts from Friends activities, e.g. meetings, fund raising events and grants, which raised \$4,314.65. You will note this included a specific Government grant of \$2,200 which was used to purchase a Chipper/Mulcher.

Fund raising events grossed \$1,938 less expenses of \$229.30 and we have paid the registration fee which enables us to host a Fringe Festival event – The SA Basketry Expo during March 2008.

The committee agreed to distribute \$11,500 of its funds, i.e. the surplus for 2007 and another \$5,000 plus from accumulated reserves, to the University of Adelaide to directly enhance the Arboretum.

Clearly if we are going to continue to support the Arboretum to this extent, we must engage in more fund raising activities in the coming years. The committee has programmed a Poetry Reading afternoon during the winter of this year. It is reviewing subscriptions this year, and has noted that they have not been increased since the inception of The Friends of The Waite Arboretum. It is considering holding another musical concert, which last year was well supported, and a film evening at Mitcham Shopping Centre. It is also actively engaged in sourcing grants from State and Local Government bodies. Other ideas for fund raising would be welcomed by the committee.

I thank all members of the committee for their help and ideas during 2007 and Norma Lee and Jennifer Gardner who provided back up during my absences. I thank all members who gave direct donations to the Friends and all who brought friends and family to fund raising events. Finally I thank all volunteers who assisted the committee at fund raising events.

Motion: That the Audited Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ending 31st December 2007 be adopted.

Peter Nicholls
Hon. Treasurer

The Treasurer presented two further motions, namely that Bevan Craig be appointed Honorary Auditor for 2008 and that the subscriptions to the Friends of the Waite Arboretum be increased to \$15 and \$20, respectively for the year beginning 1 January 2009. Each of these motions was seconded and passed without dissent by the members present.

NB If you received a red spot with your copy of this Newsletter, it is a reminder that you have forgotten to renew your membership. Annual membership rates for 2008 are \$10 for individual membership, \$18 for family membership and \$40 for institutions. Donations are most gratefully received and are **tax deductible**. Unless you renew your membership, you will not receive future Newsletters.

2008/2009 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bryan Milligan (President), Beth Johnstone OAM (Vice President), Rosemary Sawley (Secretary), Peter Nicholls (Treasurer) Jean Bird (Editor), Heather Beckmann, Jennifer Gardner (*ex officio*), Cathryn Hart, Colin Jenner, Henry, Krichauff, Jeanette Lord, Judy Tyler, Lynda Yates. A personal profile of our new Vice President, Beth Johnstone OAM follows:

Original qualifications in Nursing included midwifery and post-basic qualifications in operating theatre and management.

Studied Nursing administration and became Fellow of College of Nursing.

Elected Secretary Royal Australian Nursing Federation, Queensland branch and studied Industrial law.

Worked as Superintendent of Nursing in Queensland and then as Director of Community Health at two different sites in New South Wales. While working at Tweed Heads began an association as volunteer to Lifeline, which is a social welfare outreach of Uniting Church in Queensland.

Following retirement continued working with Lifeline Brisbane where I became a member of their Board and subsequently became inaugural Chairperson of what was developed to be Lifeline Community Care, Queensland. Concurrently with the work at Lifeline I served with the West Moreton Family Support Service, providing training and supervision to volunteers, etc.

I served as member of both the St Andrews Private Hospital and Uniting Health Care Hospitals Boards, in Brisbane.

I was awarded an Order of Australia Medal, General service Division in 2004 for services to the community.

I have a limited knowledge of botany but a deep and abiding respect for the Waite Arboretum, both for the history that it represents and for the great service it provides to the community.

Following the announcement of the election of the 2008/09 Committee members, Jennifer Gardner proposed that Cicely Bungey AM be awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum for her long and distinguished service. This proposal was met with great enthusiasm by those members present and Cicely was duly presented with the award.



Jennifer Gardner and Cicely Bungey after the presentation

GUEST SPEAKER

At the conclusion of the business proceedings, the President introduced the Guest Speaker, Sheryn Pitman, who manages the **Sustainable Landscapes Project**, a collaborative partnership that educates and assists the South Australian community to use resources more efficiently, develop sustainability skills and employ best practice environmental principles. The project demonstrates and promotes appropriate park and garden design, plant species selections and sustainable horticultural practices for South Australian environments.

With a Masters in Environmental Studies, Sheryn spent many years in environmental project management roles specialising in communications, community education, project development and revegetation.

Before that (in another life) she worked in film, television, theatre and radio as a writer, and has a small selection of published books, all with environmental themes. Last year she visited China to attend and present at the 3rd Global Botanic Gardens Congress, an international congress focussing on the conservation of plant diversity.

A summary of Sheryn's most interesting and very well illustrated talk follows.

SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING AND GARDENING

The Sustainable Landscape Project is less than four years old and is a collaborative partnership between the Land Management Corporation, Innovations and Economic Opportunities Group (through the Mawson Lakes Economic Development Project), Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board, SA Water Corporation and the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide (Department of Environment and Heritage).

Sheryn emphasized the major problems associated with sustainable landscaping and pointed to some misconceptions such as (1) gardens are automatically environmentally friendly (2) gardens always use too much water. She showed the relationships between landscapes and the environment and pointed out that parks, roundabouts, street trails, etc. are all considered to be landscapes. Some important factors affecting landscapes are (1) climate change (2) loss of biodiversity (3) energy use and carbon emissions (4) pest plants and animals (5) water quality and availability (6) soil degradation (7) air quality (8) the growth of the human population and urban areas.

Sheryn pointed out that CSIRO projections for SA indicate 10-50% increase in the number of hot days, 20-80% decrease in frost, a substantial reduction in autumn and spring rainfall, a decline in average rainfall, all of which will have an impact on sustainability in the future.

Historically, SA parks and gardens have reflected English taste with plantings with a high demand for water and other resources but now we need to move towards planting arid region plants.

A sustainable landscape is healthy and resilient and will endure in the long term without the need for a high input of scarce resources such as water. The eight principles for sustainability are (1) design to suit local environmental conditions with regard to soil type, fire risk etc. (2) water wise plants (3) non-invasive plants - ~ 7% of the environment harbours garden escapes, e.g. Arum lily, prickly pear and some 3,000 plants introduced into Australia are now weeds (4) water saving measures e.g. mulch, rain water tanks, gadgets to detect soil moisture and, importantly, planting at the right time of year (5) provision of a suitable habitat for small animals, birds, butterflies – big trees, logs, rocks, damp patches, nectar rich flowers and so forth, all of which can be done quite simply (6) minimal use of harmful chemicals and, preferably, use of organic fertilisers (7) minimal use of non-renewable energy sources (8) use of sustainable and locally sourced products and materials – recycled timber rather than rainforest or old growth timber and no rocks from the bush. If the above criteria are met the result will be sustainable gardens and landscapes which will be special places because they provide habitats for local animals and use few pesticides or other chemicals.

Throughout her interesting and thought provoking talk, Sheryn illustrated her points with photographs of the Demonstration Site Trail in which local indigenous plants and Australian native plants and recycled materials have been used. The Loxton Mill Corner 'before' and 'after' photographs showed how a site could be transformed by sensitive planting, the use of recycled materials and of storm water irrigation.

Sheryn concluded with a quotation from Prof. George Seddon AM: 'This is a garden of earthly delights. The earth is home. If we are at war with it, it is a war we cannot win; better to think of it as a partner, for richer or poorer 'til death do us part'.

IN THE ARBORETUM

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director's Report Feb. March April 2008



United Water to the rescue

Following a segment on ABC TV 'Stateline' about the plight of the Elm Avenue with the drought and water restrictions, United Water offered to assist. Under their Water Recovery Program a new 7,000 litre tanker is used to capture and recycle the first flush of water after repairs have been done on burst mains. Previously the water went into the storm water system. To date more than 200 KL have been delivered to Elm Avenue.



Urrbrae TAFE collaborations

Several projects have extended our partnership with Urrbrae TAFE. Lecturer Marian Mcduie is involving her students in practical GIS exercises in the Arboretum. The students will georectify the Waite Arboretum plan and produce a georeferenced image which will be used along with the high resolution aerial photograph to produce a map of the features such as sculptures, seats and interpretive signs. The idea is to produce a map with several feature 'layers', with possible links to the plant database, that will be able to be added to the website and provide an informative visual asset for the Arboretum.

In another project, seed has been collected from a number of species in the Arboretum which may have merit as street trees but are not commercially available. These include Brush Apple, *Mischocarpus pyriformis*, an attractive and drought tolerant tree with clusters of small colourful fruits.

The students in the Plant Propagation course are also growing Gallipoli Rosemary™ using a flood and drain system. The plants will be sold to schools, Councils and RSLs to generate funds for the Treenet/Avenues of Honour project.

ABC TV publicity

The Arboretum will be featured in a forthcoming 'Gardening Australia' program with Sophie Thomson. This time it will be our Palm Collection. Previous programs which showcased our Californian Oaks and our Mallees were well received and generated a lot of interest from viewers. Our pine collection also featured on the ABC program 'The Cook and the Chef' – cooking with pinenuts!

Masters Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue

In March the Arboretum and Treenet hosted the inaugural Tree Climbing Masters Class. International champions Richard Kenyon and Grant Cody from Victoria demonstrated the latest techniques and equipment in an intensive and interactive workshop.

Labelling

90 new labels, funded by the Friends, have been put in place.

Jennifer Gardner
Director

DRAGON DECAPITATED!

The Waite Arboretum has an interesting and growing collection of Dragon Trees (*Dracaena draco*). Two trees were amongst the first trees planted when the Arboretum was established in 1928. One of these trees is now a very fine tree indeed as well as being the inspiration for the Arboretum logo.

During all the years our Dragon Trees have been disease free, have not been blown down, have not dropped limbs. One tree on the western boundary, # 1711 (D14), was grown from seed from Icod in Tenerife and has a tall silvery trunk 3 - 4 m tall and four stout branches. Imagine our dismay when on 4 January 2008 the entire canopy was stripped by two Long-billed corellas. Not a single leaf remains on the four branch stumps, and, when discovered in the act, the corellas were chewing and shredding the branch ends.

The corellas spend much of their time on the ground digging up corms of the weed *Moraea* and though they may nip the tips off some trees, they have never attacked a *Dracaena* before. What could have caused such an attack? Water cannot be a factor even in our hot dry summer as the dam water is readily available. As in palms the central growing shoot can be tender and is sometimes eaten, but the leaves are tough and stringy. So it was probably the relatively soft fleshy crown that they were after and in fact they have chewed the leaf cone down to what was the base of the leaves.

Whether it will shoot again is yet to be seen but the wreck is worth a visit to see what fun corellas have in the holidays.

David E. Symon

Note: Rescue work has been undertaken on the tree. The branches have been cut back to below the damage which went quite deep and the cut surface has been painted with a water soluble wound balm. All branches were then netted.



Dracaena draco #1711 (D14) Waite Arboretum. The image on the left shows the tree before the onslaught of the Long-billed corellas in January 2008, that in the middle the damage inflicted and the one on the right the sealing and netting of the tree. Photographs courtesy of Jennifer Gardner.

POT – POURRI

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following new members: Ms Pat Flint, Colonel Light Gardens; B.G. Roberts and Beth Johnstone OAM, Netherby; Felicity Doolette, Colonel Light Gardens.

BASKETRY EXHIBITION

'Manipulated – An Exhibition of Creative Basketry' the Collaborative Fringe Event with Basketry SA was well attended despite the extremely unseasonable heat which prevailed for its duration. The exhibition was excellent and the talent of the many contributors much admired. Pine needles, eucalypt bud caps, grasses, reeds and much more material gleaned from the Arboretum were used and many people commented upon the fact that such beautiful objects could be made from such ordinary materials. Members of Basketry SA were in attendance at all times to answer visitors' questions and demonstrate techniques. Some 24 baskets from the main exhibition in the Drawing Room were sold, as were many from the general trading tables in the Foyer of Urrbrae House. The proceeds for the Arboretum from the sale of the baskets were about \$1000. The exhibition gave us the opportunity to showcase Pat Hagan's silver jewellery and the proceeds from the sale of this were about \$450. Miscellaneous Arboretum items were also sold. We acknowledge with thanks the grant of \$500 from the Mitcham City Council which was used for publicity and promotion.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 15 June: 2 – 4 p.m. Urrbrae House. 'Australian Flora in Verse' – poems selected and read by David Symon. Afternoon tea will be served. Cost - \$10.

Sunday 20 July: 2 – 4 p.m. Urrbrae House. The Arbor Wind Quintet Inaugural Concert. Afternoon tea will be served. Cost - \$15.

Monday 18 August: 8 p.m. Urrbrae House. General Meeting. Richard Heathcote, Director of Carrick Hill, will speak on 'Creative Garden Developments and Innovative Storm Water Harvesting at Carrick Hill'.

Sunday 24 August: Visit to Ian Roberts' garden and gallery at Blyth. See winter Newsletter for more information.

Thursday 4 & Friday 5 September: National Wine Centre and Arboretum. TREENET. 9th NATIONAL STREET TREE SYMPOSIUM.

Volunteers will be needed to put together Symposium Satchels and name badges, staff the registration desk on Thursday 4 September and be in attendance at the Arboretum on Friday 5 September. Please contact Jennifer on 8303 7405 or by e-mail if you might be able to assist.

The Committee is investigating new means of raising funds and would like to canvass your views regarding a film evening at the Mitcham Square Cinema Complex later this year. We envisage a film which will appeal to a wide audience and will be appropriate for all age groups. At this stage, we anticipate that the cost per ticket will be about \$10. To make this a viable fund-raising event we need as many people as possible and ask you to make up a party (10 seems to be a common number for such events). We need to know of how many of you are willing to participate before we pursue this matter further. If you are interested will you please e-mail the Director? jennifer.gardner@adelaide.edu.au