Giving Thanks
by Dave Barnett, WVBG Board President

I recently had the opportunity to attend a round table discussion about a proposed Blue Zone Project for Morgantown. The proposed project is based off a NY Times bestseller by Dan Buettner that documented communities around the world where people live longer, more active, happier lives. The project looks at improving things within the community such as worksites, schools, grocery stores, community policy, etc. Changes and improvements help benefit the community as a whole and the individuals within. The bigger picture is for Morgantown to set an example and share the success with other communities within West Virginia.

I think the West Virginia Botanic Garden plays a part in making Morgantown more of a “Blue Zone.” It is one of many parts that make our community a great place to live. And WVBG would not be where we are today without our volunteers. It goes without saying just how important volunteers are to a non-profit organization. Often times, those efforts are taken for granted or go unnoticed. I’ve often heard and experienced the saying “many hands make light work.” The many hands for WVBG is sure true but the “light work” part? Well, I’m repeatedly impressed by the number of volunteer hours and efforts, both mental and physical, that help make WVBG a special place — including paid staff that put in extra hours and time unpaid. The bottom line is WVBG wouldn’t be what it is today without our volunteers, donors, and contributors.

As a member of the Board for the last 9 years, I’m very thankful for our volunteers, donors, and staff. WVBG has become an important part of our community and I hope that with the Blue Zone Project and others like it, we will continue to help lead the way for a better and brighter life for West Virginians.

I look forward to seeing you at the Garden!
Greetings,

As I write this in late October, the color of autumn is finally coming on. Well over a month ago the foliage of the Black Gum (Nyssa sylvatica) and the Sourwood (Oxydendrum arboreum) colored up quickly, the color of voluptuous wine. Then the season stalled and we all wondered when and what would happen. When I hike the grounds or look out my office window, the color seems to change by the hour. I suspect it will be a short lived seasonal show, but a glorious one.

The gardens have been cut back and are settling in for winter. New bulbs have found homes at the entrance, in the Shade Garden and especially on the Long Walk. White selections have been chosen as a theme in the Long Walk as they show well in the shade and from a distance.

This past month we hosted our 10th annual Fall Children’s Festival. The day was a gem, if a bit warm. We believe there was a record attendance of close to or over 800 people. This Festival is a true highlight of the season here at the Garden. It draws many from the region and from our diverse communities. There were many new faces and many returning ones. I had the freedom to roam the grounds on that day, with the Fairy House in the forest being my favorite destination. The architecture created there was remarkably creative. The stories of life in these secret spaces told by children was beyond every-day imagination. A special thanks to the many volunteers who help make this happen and for all they do at the Garden.

The Garden has been working on the design of the new Visitor Center that will be located just below our lower parking area. Its design includes seating for up to 250 special event guests, and many more for symposiums and conferences. In time this new building will create revenue for the Garden. The stunning architecture will be a regional draw. There will be multi-functional spaces that will accommodate wedding parties, small meetings and intimate dinners. A reception desk will allow us to greet visitors, and a gift shop will offer carefully curated merchandise. Outdoor garden spaces will connect with the building, and the building will connect with the greater natural landscape.

I hope you have all received our Annual Appeal letter and will consider giving generously. The Garden is at a crossroads in its growth and its movement forward with its Master Plan. In order to grow our garden spaces, we need to consider hiring a horticulturalist and fencing some of our garden spaces from the ever-present deer. I appeal to you as friends of the Garden to help us move our mission forward. The Garden is already a treasure and we hope it will become a mecca for the State of West Virginia and our region. We genuinely appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Bill Mills
This year’s fundraising event, “An Evening of Garden Delights,” was held on Sunday August 19th at the Garden. We had the pleasure of holding the event on our new event lawn funded by the EQT Foundation with the weather in perfect form, making for a lovely summer celebration! Nick Fiasco entertained us with the classic swinging songs of the Sinatra era that immediately got the crowd moving to the beat. Sargasso, one of Morgantown's finest, did not disappoint the crowd with their delectable menu and wine pairings. Specialty café Tutto Gelato provided our favorite gelato flavors throughout the day. Who says you can’t have dessert first!

This year we had local floral artists Aaron Sears, Trellis Smith, Jason Savage, and our director, Bill Mills join in on the fun of “wearing flowers in your hair” by designing exquisite headdresses that were modeled by our student volunteers. Needless to say, it was the highlight of the day, and many had fun trying on their favorite headdress for a photo op!

The live and silent auction items this year were so unique and varied including items handmade by local artisans, fun adventure trips, getaways, intimate dinners, specialty baskets and more.

Once again, Aaron Sears, our decorations chair, did an outstanding job mesmerizing us with the exotic and beautiful bird of paradise centerpieces and floral decorations throughout.

We had our best success to date this year making $27,000 in profits which will help the ongoing progress of the Garden! We send out special thanks to our committee members, sponsors, board members, volunteers, auction donors, and those who attended. You all help to make our garden grow!

Reflections on the Past and Visions for the Future
by Bill Johnson, WVBG Board Past President

The Board of Directors’ Annual Meeting in November will mark the end of my tenure on the Garden’s Board. I plan to continue helping the Garden in other ways, but after 10 years of serving on the Board it is time to step aside. It is also a good time to reflect on where we’ve been, and to share a few thoughts about the future.

This year’s Annual Meeting will be held at the Education & Event Center in the heart of the Garden. This marvelous facility wasn’t even a dream when I joined the Board in 2008. It took a leap of faith - along with hard work, long hours, and a considerable amount of money - but today it is hard to imagine how the organization functioned without a building on site. In addition to meeting, office, restroom and storage space, the building and the surrounding gardens, decks, patio, and event lawn provide a great venue for events such as the annual Fall Children’s Festival.

This festival is one of my favorite events at the Garden (who can resist hundreds of smiling kids?), and it exemplifies the Garden’s growth over the past decade. The inaugural Festival in October, 2009 attracted what, at the time, seemed like a huge crowd of about 300. Attendance at this year’s tenth anniversary event was upwards of 800! I enjoy seeing many of the volunteers and participants from the 2009 Festival, joined by dozens of newer faces from all segments of our community.

The Education and Event Center opened in 2016. Photo by Erin Smaldone.
I recently had a young visitor ask me what kind of tree produced the prolific number of large acorns found in the Garden this year. The acorn in question was from one of the many Chestnut Oaks that grow abundantly here.

The oaks at the WVBG are currently producing a tremendous number of acorns. There are so many that they can act like ball bearings underfoot. The many creatures that live here; turkey, other birds, bear, squirrel and chipmunk are all feasting and fattening up on the sweet meat of this fruit. Chestnut Oak is also known as the Rock Oak and Basket Oak, as the wood is cut into billets from which strips are pulled for weaving baskets. This work needs to be done while the wood is freshly cut so that it is pliable and supple. Baskets made from Oak are strong and enduring. They are often handed down over generations.

When I first moved to West Virginia, I was a homesteader of sorts, and spent a number of years building a home from scratch. I walked the woods of our 75-acre farm and selected timber to be felled and hauled to the saw mill. Like much of West Virginia, our forest had many species to choose from, including several Oak. The weight of the Oak beams taxed my strength but made for a beautiful home.

The Chestnut Oak was a relatively new species to me. The leaf caught my attention as it is oblong and somewhat toothed, not the leaf shape a novice associates with an Oak. In the spring its buds have a reddish tone and can be confused with those of the Red Oak. Michael Dirr in his tome, Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, mentions that the National champion in North Port, New York reaches to a height of 95 feet with a spread of over 80 feet. We’re talking about a giant of a tree. Here at the Garden it dominates the dryer, rocky slopes. The furrows of its bark are quite deep. Its bark contains more tannin than any other species of Quercus. Micheal Dirr also mentions that this tree is relatively easy to transplant and should be considered for the landscape. It is found native from Maine to Alabama.

Visions for the Future (Continued from page 3)

Of course, growth and success come at a cost. In 2008 it took about $23,000 to operate the Garden. Funds from the Monongalia County Commission covered about 40% of those costs, with the balance provided mainly by membership donations to the Friends of the Botanic Garden. By 2018 operating costs have increased tenfold! Although public funding for operations is no longer available, we’ve been able to keep pace through a combination of generous donors and exciting new revenue-generating activities.

Now, about the future.... The master plan completed in 2016 is an ambitious vision of inspiring gardens, educational experiences, and beautiful vistas, supported by a major Visitor Center and necessary infrastructure. Achieving this vision will require another leap of faith (and more hard work, long hours, and $$$$$). Here are a few tough challenges that future Boards will need to navigate:

• Operating costs will continue to increase rapidly with construction of the Visitor Center and hiring of additional staff to manage and operate the expanded gardens. While the Visitor Center will eventually provide income to support other garden activities, this will not happen immediately nor will it be sufficient. In addition to other fundraising actions, we will need to charge admission to the Garden, especially in the absence of a dedicated source of public funding.

• The forested hills surrounding the Garden and the Tibbs Run Preserve are an important part of the visitor experience. We must continue working with the community to prevent development from encroaching on the Garden’s setting.

• Strong leadership is important to the success of the Garden. I have been privileged to work with two visionary and energetic Executive Directors, each with a different set of strengths. Moving forward, the organization must keep adapting to complement these strengths.

What will the West Virginia Botanic Garden at Tibbs Run Preserve be in another 10 years? I’m not sure, but based on the past decade, I’m confident that it will be amazing!
This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Fall Children’s Festival. You may have noticed several mentions of the festival throughout this newsletter. We are all very proud of this popular community event! As the festival has grown, so have expenses. We were fortunate to have the financial support of the following organizations and businesses to help us cover expenses this year and keep this a fun, festive, and free event for all who wish to attend. Thank You!

WVBG Winter 2018/19 Activities Schedule

Please pre-register for ALL activities. A link to register is included in the event details of each activity on the WVBG website, www.wvbg.org.

December 16, 2:00 p.m. Holiday Ornaments from Nature: Just in time for holiday decorating and gift-giving, join WVBG Education Specialist Stacy Clovis-Woofers and Board Member Janet Paladino to craft unique ornaments from natural materials. Most appropriate for children ages 5 and older. $5 for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

January 5, 10:00 – 11:15 a.m. Setting your Compass - A New Year’s Yoga Practice: As the natural world slows through the winter season, activate your inner-compass to build energy for the New Year. Join yoga instructor Heidi Sherwin for a gentle, flowing yoga practice that will set you on course for an aspiring and uplifting 2019. Have fun navigating your sense of spatial orientation with balancing postures, hip-openers, and restorative inversions. Heidi’s guided relaxation will set your natural compass on “calm”, so you can cruise into 2019 with clarity and fresh energy! All levels welcome. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members.

January 13, 2:00 p.m. Winter Botany: Join naturalist Ellen Hrabovsky for a walk in the woods, rain or shine, to observe nature during the cold time of the year. We will begin from the lower parking lot and wander into the woods by way of the Wetland Boardwalk, taking note along the way of identifying features of trees and shrubs. We will also see evidence of wildlife activity. Nature always has surprises, so let’s see what we can find. Best for children 10 and older and dress for the weather. Free for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

January 26, 1:00 p.m. Adopting a Low-Waste Lifestyle: Consider this: 91% of plastic manufactured since 1950 has never been recycled. Billions of tons of disposable products are pouring into landfills and oceans, where they may take 450 years to biodegrade. Discover simple and economical tips to drastically reduce your reliance on single-use plastic, paper, and other products in an interactive, supportive workshop led by zero-waste advocate Shannon Sankey. Free for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

February 2, 1:00 p.m. Winter Family Walk: Will you see a groundhog today? Maybe or maybe not, but you’re guaranteed to see something fun on this walk with your family at the Garden led by Education Director Erin Smaldone. We will read a short story and talk about what animals are doing in winter then go for a one-mile walk to see what we can find! All ages. Free for WVBG members, $10 per family suggested donation for non-members.

February 10, 2:00 p.m. The Love Which Surrounds Us: Loving something means getting to know that something better. In this season of love, join Judith Clister to renew your love of nature and get to know something of nature in a deeper way. Beginning with earth related readings, we will spend time out of doors appreciating the nature that surrounds us. We will be closely observing objects from many angles and participating in sensory awareness activities. We will close with a time of guided meditation. Please bring your journal, sketch book or camera. Most appropriate for ages 14 and above. Free for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

February 28, 7:00 p.m. West Virginia Mammals: What do you know about the furry forest animals with whom we share our state? Join West Virginia University Extension Wildlife Specialist Sheldon Owen for an informative presentation on mammals of WV with an emphasis on furbearers. All ages. Free for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

* All activities take place at the West Virginia Botanic Garden, 1061 Tyrone Rd., Morgantown, WV 26508
* Programs will last approximately 1.5-2 hours unless otherwise noted.
* Please register for all activities online at www.wvbg.org. If you have questions, call 304-322-2093 or email erin@wvbg.org.

Thank You Fall Children’s Festival Sponsors!

This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Fall Children’s Festival. You may have noticed several mentions of the festival throughout this newsletter. We are all very proud of this popular community event! As the festival has grown, so have expenses. We were fortunate to have the financial support of the following organizations and businesses to help us cover expenses this year and keep this a fun, festive, and free event for all who wish to attend. Thank You!
We would like to give special recognition to the following members/donors who have been giving for at least 10 years. Many started giving when the WVBG was just an idea – even before a site for the Garden was identified! More and more people have appreciated the beauty and potential of the Garden and committed to help make the progress continue. Please join them!

20 or more years
Carolyn Eberly Blaney
Mary Ellen Brady
Jason and Jessica Coffman
Judith Hall
John and Eleanor Renton
Annette Tanner
Doyle and Nancy West
Karl and Pam Yagle
Organizations
City of Morgantown
Hemlock Hills Garden Club
Valley Hills Garden Club

15 or more years
Mike and Linda Bagby
David and Robin Barnett
Kay Beamer
James Coleman and Elizabeth Swiger
Jim and Judy Culberson
Strat Douglas and Jodie Jackson
John and Nancy Elliott
Eric and Tammy Everly
Betty R. Fonner
Alice Frost
Deborah J. Fulton
Shirley Giuliani
Bob Goodman and Linda Hoffman
Evan Hansen and Pam Kasey
Linda Herbst
Barbara J. Howe
Ellen Hrabovsky
John and Edie Jett
Joann King
Michael and Diane Kinney
Mike and Sally Kirkpatrick
George and Caryol Longenecker
Katherine Madison
Earl and Cecelia Melby

10 or more years
Robert and Miriam Miller
Bills Mills and Tom Gillooly
David and Cheryl Ornick
John and Joyce Pearson
Tim Prescott and Linda Wessels
Tom Pue
Donald Reinke
Sherman and Rama
Riemenschneider
Shirley F. Rosenbaum
Don and Susan Sauter
Don Spencer and Carol Hamblen
Bob Steele and Chris Linton
Judith Gold Stitzel
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Trevor Swan, Jr.
Vienna Trapp
Dick and Ann Walters
Jon and Donna Weems
Carolyn Welcker
Charles Wernzt and Donna Ford
Wernzt
Tom Witt and Grethe Myles
Richard Zimmerman
Organizations
Cranberry Garden Club
Durbanah Garden Club
Salem Garden Club

Welcome to the Following New Members Who Joined Between 7-1-18 and 9-30-18

Contributor
Robert Lehki
Peggy Chappell

Household
Kathy & Chuck Karnack
Melanie Page
Janis Boury
Gwen Perrott
J and Ginny Aultman-Moore
Anna Alexander

Individual
Nicole Gauthier-Schatz
Robert Bills
Charles Harman
Susan Crist
Clementine Calleja

Student
Mohd Freezely Mazri
Katie Cooley

These long-time members and donors represent almost 1/3 of current WVBG memberships (there are often more than one name per membership). It is gratifying that so many have maintained their support for all these years. We are extremely grateful for their continuing provision of financial assistance that has enabled the Garden to grow!
At the end of every year, we send out a request for special year-end donations. Every dollar helps and we appreciate any amount you can give to help us achieve our goals and support our mission. Why support the WVBG? See below for some ideas. What is your inspiration to give? Visit wvbg.org to make an online donation or mail a check to the address above and mark it as 2018 appeal.

1. We preserve a piece of West Virginia’s natural landscape. *(Did you know that we are the only botanic garden in the state?)*

2. We are a one-stop showcase for skillfully designed gardens, wetlands, and diverse forests to be enjoyed by all West Virginians. *(Did you know we protect mature hemlock and deciduous forests?)*

3. We inspire curious minds of all ages through education. *(Did you know we provide year-round educational workshops for the public as well as school field trips and summer nature camps for kids?)*

4. We celebrate the arts through the lens of our physical surroundings. *(Have you experienced our collection of garden sculptures, walked through our photo gallery, or attended one of our art classes?)*

5. We are sensitive to our environmental footprint. *(Did you know we adhere to strong reduce and recycle practices and our Education & Event Center is solar powered?)*

6. We value the benefits of nature on the mind, body, and spirit. *(Have you walked our peaceful trails through the Tibbs Run Preserve, visited the Mediation Garden, or participated in one of our yoga classes?)*

7. We provide a healthy habitat for a variety of wildlife. *(Did you witness the beautiful invasion of Monarch butterflies this summer?)*

8. We are a social hub for groups, nonprofits, and businesses to gather, learn, and serve. *(Did you know that our Education & Event Center, which overlooks the Garden, can seat up to 50 people and our new Event Lawn provides the perfect outdoor setting amongst the trees?)*

9. We partner with colleges and universities to provide them with an outdoor classroom to study biology, botany, and ecology. *(Did you know we have over 82 acres to explore for academic research?)*

10. We are committed to sustaining the West Virginia Botanic Garden at Tibbs Run Preserve for future generations to enjoy, explore, and experience. *(Did you know that within the next 4 years, we will be operating a state-of-the-art Visitor Center to help support our mission?)*

Please Contribute to Our Annual Appeal

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Master Gardeners Support the West Virginia Botanic Garden
by Barb Howe, Master Gardener

You have seen us at the Garden wearing our West Virginia Botanic Garden name tags. We also have Monongalia County Master Gardener name tags. Who needs two name tags? We do because we are among the volunteers welcoming you to the Garden on weekends, weeding and planting the gardens, clearing trails, mowing, and leading walks and workshops. For the Fall Children’s Festival, we lead activities like painting pumpkins and planting bulbs, in addition to organizing the Fairy Garden and preparing and serving refreshments. We are planning events and serving on committees and as officers and board members of the West Virginia Botanic Garden, Inc. From July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017, we donated precisely 671.85 hours to the Garden. From January 1 to June 30, 2018, we donated 403 hours. As a group, we have donated $4,000 to the Garden from our dues since 2014 to support improvements in the Education Center, the plantings in the Shade Garden, materials for the new shelter for hosts, and some of the metal blazes for the trails.

Why do we volunteer? We do it because we love the Garden, and also because, as Master Gardeners, we are required to volunteer to achieve and then retain Certified Master Gardener status. The Monongalia County Master Gardener program is offered through the West Virginia University Extension Service. For further information about that program, contact the Monongalia County Extension Office at 304-291-7201, email Sheryl Bergen Jarvis at SBJarvis@mail.wvu.edu, or go to https://extension.wvu.edu/monongalia/master-gardeners. To join us as volunteers at the Botanic Garden, contact former Master Gardener and current WVBG Volunteer Coordinator Kay Jones at volunteers@wvbg.org.

Barb Howe (left) and Janet Kemp, both Master Gardeners, take a break while waiting for eager pumpkin painters to arrive at the Fall Children’s Festival. Photo by Carol Spears.