



E.B. Dunn Historic Garden Trust

Fall 2010/Winter 2011

Best Wishes and Thank you, Roger!!

Interview of Roger Lackman, Head Gardener, by Pat and Susan Dunn on the eve of his retirement from the Dunn Gardens after 19 years of devoted service
This interview of Roger Lackman was conducted by Pat and Susan Dunn on October 28, 2011. As they moved into their home in the Spring 1991, Pat and Susan can hardly remember a time when Roger was not on the grounds. He was a great help to Dorothy Dunn Bayley in her years on the property before her death in 2003 and has become a good friend of Pat's Mother, Virginia Dunn. Roger has sent starts of flowers home to London with Pat's Sister, Vinny, and watched her three girls grow up. Roger has regularly gone beyond the call of duty as when Pat and Susan were away and their housekeeper called to notify Roger that the Dunn's basement had a foot of water in it. Without missing a beat, Roger left his comfortable home, grabbed a hose and channeled the water out through the toilet, minimizing the damage.

Who hired you as Gardener and when did you begin your service?

As a consultant to Edward Dunn's estate, Nancy Rottle, currently at UW but then with the Jones and Jones firm, hired me shortly after Mr. Dunn died in fall 1991. I can remember the interview in the old sun room which was located where the classroom is today. I had an opportunity to meet Mr. Dunn. Nancy found me through Edmonds Community College where I was studied the landscape program.

What was your first impression of the Dunn Gardens?

My first impression was awe, the Gardens are an unbelievable find. Before my interview I did not know of an Olmsted private property open to the public. At that time the garden was rough around the edges, but to see a mature form of an Olmsted design was thrilling.

What was your first major project here?

In Ed Dunn's later years he was not physically up to the rigors of gardening he had enjoyed in the past. Mr. Dunn's estate wanted to clean up the property before turning it over to the non-profit EB Dunn Historic Garden Trust. For the first two years I was involved with clean up projects. For example, what is now the parking lot area was piled 15 feet high with branches, the ravine area was filled with debris that had been dumped, the whole NW corner of the garden was under blackberries, the tennis court lawn area was so completely covered in English Laurel and blackberries that I remember the day I discovered the historic stone staircase. Sanitary Service Company of Whatcom County donated about ten construction size dumpsters. I would hire temporary workers from the Millionaire's Club to help. I have a picture of me and Katherine Dunn in her early years working to fill a dumpster.

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Roger Lackman

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Message from our President—Chris Smith-Towne

An autumnal hush descends on the Dunn Gardens – a soft gray mist in the morning, a hesitant, low-slanting sun in the afternoon, colors fading to brown ... the only activity the acorn-greedy squirrels and the restless birds preparing for departure.

We had a busy and rewarding spring and summer, enjoying old friends and new, welcoming them at our many special events, the endless but satisfying mowing, edging, weeding, and the pure delight of brilliant colors and fragrances.

But now is the season to savor a moment of repose in the Gardens, when the elegance and simplicity of the Olmsted plan is revealed, the structure of each of our magnificent heritage trees is visible, and the first subtle hints of the return of our ephemerals can be spotted in the leaf-strewn beds.

In the coming months, watch for notices of our Open Sundays events ... immerse yourself in the subtle delights of the underappreciated half of the Gardens' seasons.

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Connie Hokanson & Douglas Houck

Message from our Executive Director—Sue Nevler

I'm looking at clear blue winter skies above and bright yellow blooms on the Mahonia 'Charity' nearby. What a vista, what a quietly bold piece of landscape, a truly irreplaceable gem. I find it surprising to be stepping down after being the first Dunn Garden Executive Director, but seasons change, and new adventures are unfolding. I have been involved as a docent, board member and ED for 14 years, and each year the garden has blossomed with some new beauty, event or challenge. Even as I depart, I think, we should have that "Dinner in the Field", the Chihuly installation, the Salmon Safe wine tasting, the Carbon Exchange program, the "Living Laboratory" for students, the Olmsted conference, the mid summer concerts, the 2nd July 4th parade, the 3rd ArtWalk and more.

If as a fellow gardener you enjoy the process of imagining what's up next for spring, I hope you join the Dunn Garden Board of Directors in imagining what will be next for the Dunn Gardens.



Garden Conservation continues despite the recession

Dr. Robert A. Findlay, FAIA, trust board vp for conservation



The Dunn Gardens conservation committee gave our lengthy 2006 development plan a reality check, given the state of the economy and the prospects for funding, and came up with four priority projects. It should be noted that the development plan includes needed rehabilitation projects that exist outside of our annual operations budgeting. More importantly, the committee applied some creative thinking to the four projects in order to make some headway by phasing larger efforts, redefining job descriptions and enlisting volunteer groups.

First priority is relief and access to our crowded house. Our administrator, accountant, executive director, and tour manager – although all part-timers – share Ed Dunn’s small former library. Access is not ADA compliant and is through the front door of the curators’ residence. We are seeking a grant to stabilize the roof structure of the east wing, aka garage, as a first phase to relocating all garden administration there with direct ADA access from the parking lot. Gardening equipment would be located throughout the gardens closer to where it is needed, and the archives will descend from the upstairs closet to Ed’s library with its own ADA compliant door.

Second priority, the rehabilitation of the Eighth Avenue hedge, is actually underway through the efforts of our gardeners as part of the fall cleanup. We are bringing out the troops, in the form of a neighborhood Eagle Scout troop to limb-up the existing hedge and install a privacy fence while the two-year effort to eradicate invasives takes place. The curators are working on a replanting plan as part of their responsibilities in the gardens.

Third priority is the rehabilitation of the irrigation system serving the great lawn and surroundings. Gardener Zsolt Lehoczky devised a plan to run a new line from the well house around the central residence and diagonally through the great lawn. Branches would serve the varying needs of different understory plantings as well as the lawn itself. He will try to find time to do the manual digging necessary to get the feeder line installed this winter. We will look for mechanized help once the line approaches the great lawn next year.

Fourth priority is the Heritage Tree Program, designed to prolong the life of the most important attribute lending historic significance to the gardens. As we are preparing for the retirement of our grounds manager, Roger Lackman, we will be searching for a second gardener with expertise in plant material and trees to complement our continuing gardener’s expertise in garden infrastructure. We are considering making management of the HTP a part of the new job description.

Much to our satisfaction, and your enjoyment, some projects on our lengthy list do get finished. Take note of Peter Horvath’s paint job on the Dunn Gardens Resource Center, as we call the curators’ house, classroom, and east wing. Alternatively, don’t take note of it - as it is intentionally a background color for the foliage display that surrounds it.

Thank you for your continuing support during these challenging times for the gardens.

Dunn Gardens Docents Lead the Way by Jenny Wyatt, Docent Program Director

Each year, hundreds of visitors tour Dunn Gardens under the able guidance of a trained docent. Although each docent leads the tour according to his or her particular interests, all are well versed in both the history of the gardens and the major plants within.

Docent training takes place through identification classes with curators, Glenn Withey and Charles Price, and through a variety of classroom activities and field trips. This year, outings included tours of the Streissguth Garden in Seattle; the Japanese Garden in Washington Park; fellow docent Cynthia McGrath's garden; Lakewold Gardens in Lakewood; and the Miller Garden in the Highlands. Among the activities were a workshop on propagation by Riz Reyes of Landwave Gardens; a presentation on Garden conservation by board member Robert Findlay; and a workshop on containers at Swanson's Nursery.

The 2010 tour season has now ended and its conclusion brings a change in leadership. Jenny Wyatt will step down as program director, to be replaced by long-time docent, Beth Weir. Barbara Waske will remain program coordinator. We look forward to next season!

Many thanks to docents and volunteers who were active in the 2010 season!

Vivian Brehm

Linda Breiwick

Gwynne Fowler Briggs

Bonnie Chester

Toni Ciardullo

Dorothy Clark

Laurie Colman

Stacie Crooks

Jerene Cunningham

Tanya DeMarsh-Dodson, tour coordinator

Beth Dodrill

Robert Findlay

Patty Flowers

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Anita Nason

Karen Olsen

Ann Ormsby

Malene Pierce

Malena Pontious

Christine Reis

Susan Routh

Janet Seery

Terry Walsh

Barbara Waske, program coordinator

Beth Weir, incoming program director

Carolyn Wenzl

Jenny Wyatt, outgoing program director

Kathryn Yerke



Garden docents enjoy the annual docent luncheon on a sunny October afternoon. Left to right, Beth Weir (incoming docent program director); Dorothy Clark, Pamela Hughes, Barbara Waske (docent program coordinator), Gwynne Fowler Briggs

DUNN GARDEN WISH LIST

Help us share our photographs in educational lectures. We would make good use of a Digital Projector with features like the [EPSON PowerLite S7 Projector](#).

Want to help? Contact Dot McCain at dmccain@dunngardens.org

Want advance notice of all Dunn Gardens events?

Visit our website www.dunngardens.org or

Send an email with CONSTANT CONTACT in the subject heading to us at info@dunngardens.org and we'll gladly add you to our email list.

Thanks to our volunteer photographer, Douglas Houck. A retired engineer, Doug has spent hours photographing the gardens and we are indebted to his skill and commitment, and riveted by his photos. See his foliage pictures on pages 1 and 2 and be sure to look at www.dunngardens.org to see more of Doug's beautiful work.



Tillium grandifloruminsun



Bench for Repose on Garden Path



Rhod.fabiabureavii

(Continued from Page 1—Interview with Roger Lackman, Head Gardener, Retiring December 31.)

What has been your biggest challenge (or project)?

Maintaining a property of this size (7.5 acres) with the limited budget we have – prioritizing the work.

What has brought you the biggest satisfaction over the years?

I love to watch the faces of the visitors light up when they come to see the gardens. It is a very special place that gives you a rare glimpse of a turn of the century private estate Olmsted Garden without leaving the City of Seattle.

What was your scariest experience?

Four or five years ago Zsolt (Lehoczky my fellow gardener) and I were pruning some of the vine maples. I had the 12 ft. ladder and was on it with a chain saw, when the ladder tipped in a mole hole. Luckily I was able to drop the chain saw and ended up hugging the maple tree and sliding down to the ground. It wasn't until I got home that the impact of what could have been hit me. I don't climb the ladder much anymore.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss the camaraderie of fellow workers, Dunn and Bayley family, docents and board members. I will also miss walking through the gardens each morning enjoying the beauty and assessing what needs to be done.

What words of advice do you have for your successor?

Don't get caught up in the details because this property is so big. You have to keep the big picture in mind as there are endless things you can do every day. Luckily this is a woodland garden and it is not supposed to be maintained as a show garden. It is fine for it to have some rough edges.

Who were mentors who were particularly helpful to you over the years?

The late Katy Jo Johnson of the Olmsted Society, as well as professional landscape designers Becca Hansen, Kate Day, Nancy Rottle have all been generous with their knowledge and advice over the years.

Curators' Corner by Charles Price & Glenn Withey



Well, where did summer go? What a strange year, weather wise... The two of us fervently hope that 2011 is a better year, in multiple ways.

In a garden so well established, changes are minor and incremental. We want to replace the three Cornus 'Stellar Pink' (these trees are next to the classroom and in Ed's perennial border) with Cornus kousa 'Heart Throb'. The word 'stellar' is a misnomer, as the flowers of this hybrid dogwood are a complete bust in our cool, maritime climate. Whereas the flowers of 'Heart Throb', this year, flowered for a good three months.

Another 1,000 Crocus 'Twilight' have been ordered for the lawn off the classroom. They will join the 5,000+ existing bulbs, and come next spring the show should be spectacular! This selection is a form of *C. vernus*, which we've found to be the most squirrel proof.

This past spring, squirrels nipped every yellow flowered *C. chrysanthus* that tried to flower. We'd planted them in hopes of having them add some contrast to the blues and purples of *C. vernus* cultivars. Oh well...

Otherwise, renovation still needs to happen in the Western Woodland Walk (too many epimediums and *Lathyrus vernus* and not enough springtime ephemerals). We'd meant to start this project last winter, but good intentions and reality don't always mesh.

And, we are slowly renovating the tennis court green space. The Japanese anemones have proven to be quite persistent, and we don't want to plant until they've been eradicated.

In a woodland garden, such as ours, it is easy to have a springtime blast of color/interest, but we're trying to extend the season of interest. This is a slow process, and even after a decade we are still hard at work!

Do plan to stop by for one of the special garden open days, this coming early 2011 and later in the year. The garden comes alive when people are in it. And, we'd like to thank all of you who have supported this endeavor, over the years.



Wreath and
Photo by
Charles Price

Recent Events in the Gardens



Dunn Family Hosts Docent Thank You Party—December 7, 2010

Jack Fletcher Sculpture (1962) deaccessioned from SAM, conservation work by artist David Jacobson Photo by Doug Houck



**Boy Scout Troop 853
Eagle Scout Project:
8th Avenue NW
Hedge Renovation
December 2010**

Photos by Sue Nevler