

The Conch Call

THIRD QUARTER SEPTEMBER 2008

ST. GEORGE VILLAGE BOTANICAL GARDEN ~ CONSERVATION, EDUCATION & PRESERVATION

Cruise ships are returning to STX

It is with great excitement that we received the news that St. Croix can expect over 50 calls from cruise ships during the 2008-09 season. This will certainly boost our local tourism industry that has suffered through five years with almost no visits from ships. Of course this is fantastic news for the St. George Village Botanical Garden as we can expect to see an increase in exposure, admissions and other revenue for our beautiful and historic site. However, after these relatively quiet few years, there are many preparations that are under way to ensure a beautiful, educational and enjoyable experience for all our visitors in the upcoming season.

This will be a great opportunity for us to finally maximize the potential of our Bodine Visitors' Center. Before the decision of the cruise lines to stop calling on St. Croix, we had found that our Great Hall was serving too many purposes and suffered from conflicting uses. If we had group tours from the cruise ships and rental events on the same day, everyone was forced into the same area in order to access restrooms and the gift shop. The fact that our administrative offices were in the same building created some rather chaotic experiences for everyone on days when ships were in port. Richard and Peggy Bodine's generous gift allowed us to eliminate this confusion by creating a facility that is intended to greet our visitors with a beautiful Museum Store, modern restrooms, and areas to organize and orient tour groups, while not interfering with rental income and administration.

The staff of SGVBG has been in constant communication with tour operators, the



Tropical Focus



Rebekah creates magical displays at Museum Store

by Nina York

If you haven't recently stopped by the Garden's Museum Store in the Bodine Visitor Center, you have a treat awaiting you. Never before have we encountered such a varied display, so appealing to the eye, in this location, and we have the creativity and vision of one woman to thank for this outcome, which has contributed to greatly increasing the income of the store from the previous year.

Our curiosity about the originator of such an impressive record led us to call on Rebekah Sabia as she opens the store for the day at 10 am. The spacious, cool and cheerful room offers a perfect stop at the end of a Garden tour, both for a refreshing cool beverage and to browse among the large assortment of merchandise that includes gift items for the home, many with a botanical and tropical touch, a large assortment of books, especially about the tropical environment, attractive Garden T-shirts, island jewelry, toys and books for

kids, cards and beautiful artwork by local artists.

We ask her what experience she brought to running a shop such as this one? Rebekah is now celebrating her first year in her present position as store manager, having arrived from her native Colorado to join her beau Peter Dybing in St. Croix.

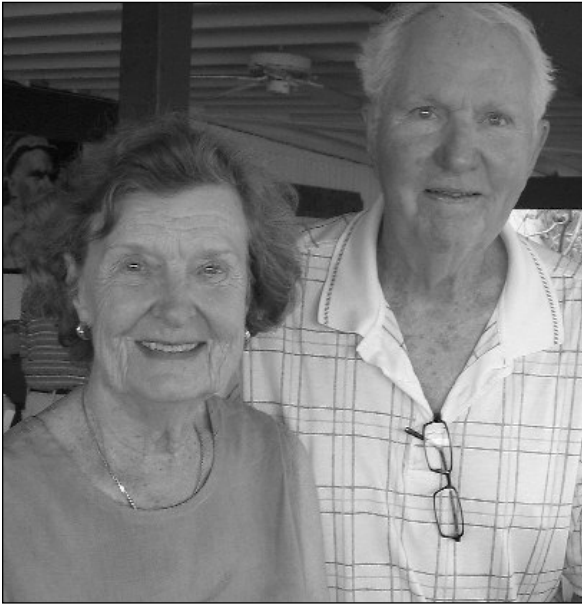
"I have been working in retail for over 20 years now. It started out as something I could do while I was attending college in Colorado. After I graduated, my degree in art was instrumental in my success in galleries. I chose to stay in the field because it offers such a variety of experiences and uses many different skills."

In her current position, she considers her most important task at the store to provide our visitors an extension of their visit to the Garden itself and St. Croix. That is, offering unique products that encourage them to learn more about botany, nature,

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An emotional farewell



DICK & PEGGY BODINE
WITH GRATITUDE &
APPRECIATION OF
THEIR EXTRAORDINARY
SUPPORT & GENEROSITY
SGVGB BOARD 2007

July 16 marked a day of departure from their beloved St. Croix of two people who have done more for the Garden than words can describe. Dick and Peggy Bodine, for whom our new Visitor Center aptly is named, had come to the conclusion that health issues made it advisable to relocate to their alternate home in Memphis, Tennessee. Their lovely residence at Prosperity Ridge on the North Shore sold in record time, and suddenly the moment had come to say goodbye.

Peggy promises that there will be visits to St. Croix in their future. She left on a high note after having organized our Anniversary Gala, having attracted many personal friends to assist the Garden in various ways, and generously supporting the Garden through difficult times. For all their kindness we thank them profusely. They will both be missed, and we wish them all the best.

Ships: Continued from page 1

Department of Tourism, and other local attractions as we work to ensure a pleasant experience for both our visitors and our local community. The V.I. Department of Tourism and the Economic Development Authority presented a conference entitled "Preparing the Path," on Aug. 1, in which various businesses, organizations and individuals had an opportunity to learn about what can be expected and what we have to do to prepare for the more than 120,000 passengers that are likely to disembark during the

coming season. The upcoming season will bring several cruise lines with several types of ships and a varied clientele.

The major challenge for SGVGB will be provide an educational and pleasant experience for the passengers who visit as part of the pre-arranged group tours with only a limited time to enjoy our 16 acres. We are gearing up to start hiring and training tour guides who are interested in helping us share our incredible story of 2,000 years of people and plants.

~ David M. Hamada

Tour Guides Needed

We are looking for candidates who have flexible schedules and, most important, are enthusiastic about sharing with our visitors the rich culture and history of our beautiful site.

We will provide paid training for suitable candidates. Please contact the Garden office at 692-2874 if you are interested in being a part of creating a memorable experience for our visitors.

Rebekah: Continued from page 1

conservation, island life - mementos that will remind them of their visit with us. Obviously, she has been quite successful in so doing.

Her favorite things about St. Croix are the tropical vegetation and marine environment. One minus about living here for her is being so far away from her family in Colorado, which, she reminds us, is another spectacularly beautiful place.

An imminent happy challenge for the store lies ahead, when the cruise ships soon start calling on St. Croix again. Rebekah does not let this faze her; getting adequate help does not seem to be a problem for her, and additional merchandise orders can easily be handled.

She states her vision for the store : "I would like to see the Museum Store live more up to its name. That is, being more educational, more interactive and more classy. I am continually trying to strike a balance between carrying local art and merchandise and still carving out a niche that is uniquely our own. I strive to increase our visibility and provide a shopping alternative for our local residents."

We wish Rebekah Sabia a great future in business as well as artistic endeavors and look forward to her next innovations in improving the Museum Store. We encourage you to make it your favorite venue for Christmas shopping, and remember that Garden members get a 10-percent discount on their purchases.

New SGVBG Museum is set to open later this year

We are looking forward to the opening of the Garden's first museum, located in the former Education Building across from the Orchid House, later this year. The building has been spiffed up with painting of woodwork and walls, new glass and wood cabinets supplied by Gary Bourdon are installed, and exhibits are being prepared.

The St. George Village Museum will tell the story about our site from the early times of the Saladoid Amerindian dwellers, through the Sugar Plantation era, its days as a cattle ranch, along with its early 20th century residential identity, and finally its start as a Botanical Garden in 1972. Obviously, this is quite a span of time, and has required thorough research and documentation.

Upcoming Events at the Garden

October 2008

Sunday 5th, 11am-4 pm

Nursery Sale with Orchid Society

Wednesday 8th, 3-5 pm

Grow and Learn - Educational Workshop

Saturday 11th, 9-noon

Second Saturdays - Making and Using Natural Dyes

Tuesday 14th, 7-10 pm

Gardens By Moonlight

November 2008

Saturday 8th, 9-noon

Second Saturdays - What is Soil?

Wednesday 12th, 3-5 pm

Grow and Learn - Educational Workshop

December 2008

Friday 5th, 6:30 pm

Christmas Gala at the Garden - "Carnival Christmas"

Saturday 6th, 10am-4pm

Sip & Shop in Museum Store

Sunday 7th, 11am-5pm

Christmas Spoken Here/Nursery Sale

Wednesday 10th, 3-5 pm

Grow and Learn - Educational Workshop

Saturday 13th, 9-noon

Second Saturdays - Botanical Scents and Potpourri



Horticultural Director David Hamada gives the campers a lesson in origami, the Japanese art of paper-folding, on July 29.

Garden hosts summer campers for fifth year

The Garden hosted Christiansted artist Danica David's Creative Adventure Summer Art Program again this summer, as it has done for the past five years.

Twenty-two young campers between the ages of 7 and 13 spent six weeks, from June 23 to Aug. 1, in the Pavilion at the Bodine Visitors Center to enhance their creative skills through drawing, painting and printing. They also learned about gardening and how to express themselves through creative writing and poetry.

Each Friday the campers set off from the Garden for off-site adventures, which ranged from a day at Hotel on the Cay to a visit to some of the Christiansted art galleries where they met some of the island's top artists. Each week local artists and artisans also shared their talents with the youngsters. Among them was David Hamada, who helped them create a "flapping bird" by folding colored paper in the ancient Japanese art of origami.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Annual Gala at the Garden
"Carnival Christmas"
at St. George Village Botanical Garden
on Friday, December 5, 2008
6:30 p.m. sharp

*Tickets \$125 per person until Oct. 17
\$150 per person after Oct. 17
Limited seating – Reserve early!
Call 692-2874 for reservations.*



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***Third Quarter
New and Renewing
Members***

GOLD PALM

George & Ruth Hazen*

SILVER PALM

Douglas & Anita Bewick*
David Carnahan
Gerry Groner & Lisa Yntema*
Richards & Joanna Isherwood
Ray & Florrie Janson
Daniel & Amelia Musser*
John & Marion Walley

BRONZE PALM

Robert & Christie Bartle*
John Connor & Richard Harris*
Stafford & Lona Crossman*
Sue Ladwig & Don Diddams*
Pam Nielsen*
Dan & Nancy Putnam*
Andrew & Andrea Rowley*
Warren & Barbara Wylie*

COUPLE

Gary & Gail Bourdon*
Paul & Marilyn Chakroff*
Johanne & William Finley*

Patty & Pat Hensley*
Dan & Chris Mahai
Tanya Nichols & John Orr*
Chris & Christie Powers*
Paul & Charlotte Pyles*
Gary & Stacy Shapiro*
Georgeanne & Charles Taylor
Marcia & William Taylor*
Andreas & Debra Tutein*
Chanel Wheeler & Gary Mills*
Denise Young & Tom Singleton*

SENIOR COUPLE

Tom & Ginger Anderson*
Alan Brown & Gail Chupein*
Bill & June Buck*
Ed & Mary Grimes*
Truman & Janet Hagbloom*
Jay & Brenda Isherwood*
Jean & Jim Kloss*
Phyllis Littmann
Bonnie Luria & Kelly Gloger*
Marie McKinstry & Stuart Fox*
James & Gail Nealon*
Virginia & Stiles Stevens*
Mike & Barbara Walsh*

INDIVIDUAL

Danica David*

Nancy Fisk*
Jan Giles*
Lori Hirons*
Jacqueline Kowalski*
Freda Logan*
Ian Lundgren
Gilbert McFarlane
Frances Molloy*
Teddi Morrison*
Vicky Pedersen*
Bonita Repp*
Diane Russell*
Barbara Vogt*

SENIOR INDIVIDUAL

Greta Basile
Judy Baumgarten*
Susan Belyea
Barbara Benner*
Phyllis Charles
Winston Quammie*
Janet Vollmer*

**denotes renewing members*

Board of Governors

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Susan J. Ladwig (Vice
President)
James Bland, Jr. (Treasurer)
Monette Booth (Secretary)
Marilyn Chakroff
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James Kobak
Max McIntosh
Sandi Savage
Virginia Stevens
Joanne White
Nina York
Horticultural Director:
David Hamada
Administrative Director:
Lesley Hoffman

In Memoriam

SGVBG expresses deep sympathy to the family of **Sue Hulbert**, longtime Nursery volunteer, who passed away in Connecticut on August 27, 2008.