

BOTANICAL GARDEN

4th Quarter 2005

The Conch Call

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ST. GEORGE VILLAGE BOTANICAL GARDEN
127 Estate St. George
Frederiksted, VI 00840



Upcoming Events

CHRISTMAS GALA
Friday, December 9

CHRISTMAS SPOKEN HERE
Sunday, December 11

'SOFT' OPENING-BODINE VISITOR CTR.
Thursday, January 12

GARDENS BY MOONLIGHT
Sunday, February 12

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING
Date yet to be set

GRAND OPENING-BODINE VISITOR CTR.
Sunday, February 26

The Conch Call Newsletter

A publication of the St. George Village Botanical Garden, SGVBG is a non-profit membership organization.

We welcome articles, photos, letters, and content suggestions, and reserve the right to edit.

Submit to: SGVBG, 127 Estate St. George, Frederiksted, VI 00840, email to garden2@viaccess.net or fax 340-692-6154

Visit us at www.sgvbg.org or call 340-692-2874

Board of Governors

Gary Bourdon, *President*
Wendy Ramos, *Vice President*
James Kobak, *Treasurer*
Sandi Savage, *Secretary*

Robert Bartle	David Hamada
Peggy Bodine	Connie Lemco
Monette Booth	Tom Pinchbeck
Amy Claire Dempsey	Joanne White
Teresa Falcone	

Executive Director: Brinsley Burbidge

Newsletter Editor: Lesley Hoffman

Garden Hours
OPEN DAILY 9AM-5PM

New Members

FAMILY/DUAL (\$45)

Pam & Chris DiNardo
Susan Harrison & Kathleen Dailey
Carl & Anna Holley
Vern Lewis & Victor Jackson
Lea Maceyko & Colette Haley
Warren Mosler & Elizabeth O'Tool

INDIVIDUAL (\$30)

Pat Aparicio
Paul Cyr
Celia Jones
Terry Thompson

39 renewing members & families

~ In memoriam ~

SGVBG expresses sincere sympathy to the family of life member **Elaine York** who died during her afternoon nap on October 30, 2005. She served as Librarian, Archivist and Historian for more than 10 years at the Garden. During that time, she and her husband Ray funded the refurbishment of the Library, which included installing floor tiles, an insulated ceiling, glass windows and an air-conditioner to better preserve the books. They also installed the Botanical Garden's entrance gates and pillars as a memorial to their son and contributed to the repair after many of our hurricanes. Elaine was a member of the Historical and Plants Collection committees; and for several years she and Pricey Best served as cashiers for Christmas Spoken Here.

SGVBG expresses sincere sympathy to the family of **Alexis Schultz**, who passed away on October 2, 2005.



*We would like to extend our grateful thanks to:
Denali Asset Management for their continued support in helping
produce our quarterly Conch Call in full color.*

Bodine Visitor Center to open in early 2006

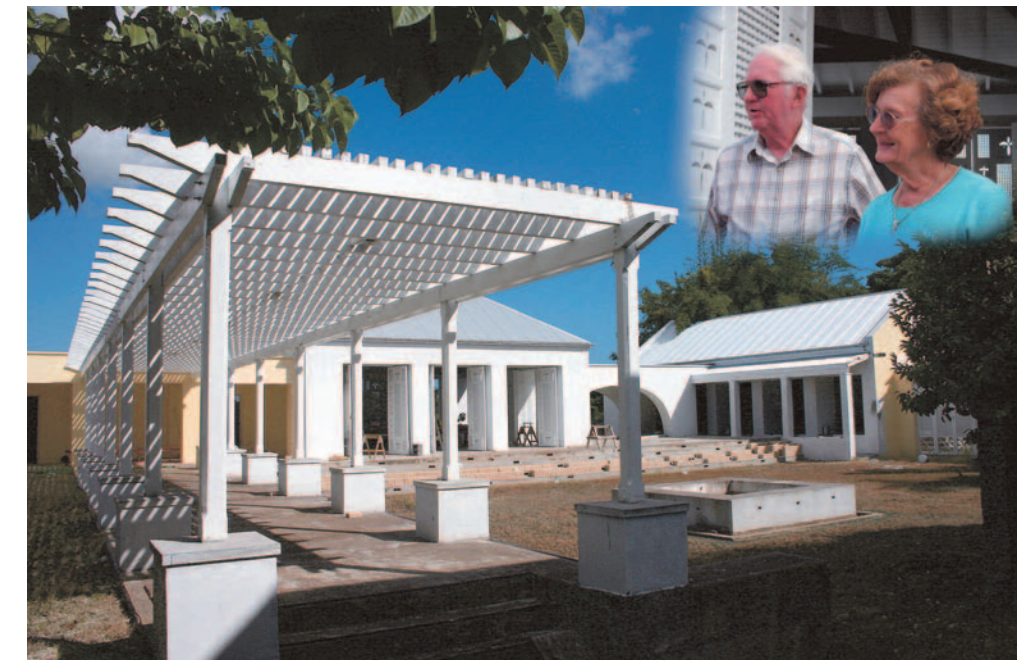
As we near the completion of the construction phase of our new Bodine Visitor Center we look forward to sharing our excitement with all of you! Visitors to the Garden in early 2006 will leave their vehicles in the newly landscaped parking lot and begin their Garden tour from our fabulous new Visitor Center. We will be able to accommodate large tour groups and individuals in our Pavilion, where we will have information panels describing the Garden and its attractions. Our Museum Store will include a seating area where visitors can read and relax in air-conditioned comfort. The center also includes modern restroom facilities accessible to all.

We would like to thank all our donors who have so generously supported our efforts throughout the years in the creation of our Visitor Center:

- Peggy and Richard (Dick) Bodine provided the majority of funding for construction of the Visitor Center and the adjacent parking lot. The Bodines' gift is given in loving memory of Virginia Shannon Bodine.
- Hortensia Lanio of Chalgub-Lanio Architects donated 50 percent of her architectural fees for the development of the documents for the construction of our Visitor Center.
- Richard Gabriel donated the schematic design for our Visitor Center.
- The Marmaduke family bequest provided significant funding to support our construction.
- Tim Pearson of VI Cargo and Tropical Shipping provided shipping sponsorship for our engraved bricks for the surface of the courtyard within the Visitor Center.
- Hundreds of individuals and businesses who purchased engraved bricks provided significant support for our construction.
- Caleb Romero of C/R Construction worked with us in a phased manner to allow us to stop and start construction as we had funds available to continue with construction.
- We must also thank the many board and committee members who worked tirelessly for many years to make our Visitor Center a reality:

- SGVBG Board of Governors 1993-1995 who developed the Master Plan with Judith Parker.
- Long Range Planning Committee of 1997-1999.
- Visitor Center Committee, Museum Store Committee, Interpretation Committee, Events Committee and Construction Committee of our current board.
- SGVBG Board of Governors 1996-2005.
- SGVBG staff and volunteers 1997-2005.

Finally, we wish to thank our membership for their patience and support during the eight years of design and construction. Thank you for believing in the future of the Garden and providing us with encouragement and



The Bodine Visitor Center includes a pergola, left, the Museum Store, right, and the Orientation Pavilion. (Inset) Dick and Peggy Bodine.

support. We hope you will continue to support our engraved brick program, which will help us purchase equipment for the Visitor Center, merchandise for our Museum Store and support other Garden programs.

Let's all celebrate the bright future of the Garden together at the grand opening of the Bodine Visitor Center in early 2006!

~Wendy Ramos

Spotlight

Julia Sheen

Julia Sheen is in her second year as the St. George Village Botanical Garden's Development Director. She is a full-time grant writer and fund-raiser—and just listening to her describe what she does and plans to do would fascinate all of us—and at the same time leave most of us breathless.

It's clear that not only does she love her work, but also she knows what she is doing and what has to be done in order to meet her own goals and the goals of the Garden. Simply put, Sheen's goals are (1) to assist the Garden in attracting grant money; (2) to help realize its five-year strategic plan; and (3) to expand the annual giving program.

To accomplish this, she is putting together and training a development committee that will solicit gifts for ordinary projects in addition to looking ahead to major giving programs.

Sheen is a lifelong resident of St. Croix, married, and the mother of three children. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Management from Morgan State University and a Master's degree in Public Health from Emory University in Atlanta. She has 11 years' experience in grant writing and program management and is the former director of the Chronic Disease Prevention Program for the Department of Health.

At the Botanical Garden, her major focus is building an annual giving program.

"I am currently devoting much time to working with the development committee to formalize our giving process and begin cultivating donors for solicitation to begin," Sheen said. "This work will be followed by a database, which will increase communications with donors and provide needed information for future planning."

MOVING THE GARDEN INTO THE FUTURE



Julia Sheen, Development Director

"We are also forming a media committee to focus on the image of the Garden so that the community will become more aware of the Garden's many projects, especially as it relates to our work with the youth," Sheen said. "People will not only be able to find out more about the Garden online, but will also be able to make electronic donations."

"We have a lot to look forward to," she said, emphasizing recent grant funding to conduct the Museum Assessment Program and Conservation Assessment Program.

It is the goal of the entire Board, led by President Gary Bourdon, to become more knowledgeable about the fund-raising process to sustain the financial viability of the Botanical Garden.

"We are thrilled to have Julia as a part of this growing process," Bourdon said. "We are looking for great things from her and are looking for her guidance as we work with her."

~Anne Scigliano

UNIQUE REPLICA GREAT HOUSE TO BE AUCTIONED AT GALA

Our big fund-raising weekend—Christmas Gala at the Garden on Friday, December 9, and Christmas Spoken Here on Sunday, December 11—is almost upon us. Tickets for the Gala (\$125 per person) were still available at press time.

This year we will have a special treat in addition to the 10 gorgeous decorated Christmas trees in the live auction. Life member Gladys Orr has donated a miniature fully furnished Great House, built to scale, to be sold to the highest bidder. This is no ordinary dollhouse. The late John Orr, who Gladys describes as "a faithful Botanical Garden member" created this masterpiece by hand in 1982.

John and Gladys decorated the "little" Great House. John made beds, desks, corner cupboards, wash stands, and all kinds of

tiny furnishings by hand, while just a few pieces were purchased. The little roof shingles were made of shingles recovered from the Steeple Building in Christiansted when it was re-roofed. The mahogany flooring was laid piece by piece. Before deciding on the final design, the Orr family went all over Christiansted and Frederiksted looking for representative interiors and exteriors. True to form, there is no kitchen—because in the old days cooking was done in a separate building.

At the Gala, Roger W. Morgan will auction off this unique historic replica, for which there is a reserve price of \$2,000.

Sunday's Christmas Spoken Here will again be a wonderful family day, with Santa and his workshop, choirs singing in the Great Hall, and scores of craft and food vendors.

All funds raised at the Gala and Christmas Spoken Here will help fulfill the Garden's mission of Conservation, Education and Preservation of our ethnobotanical heritage.



All of us at the St. George Village Botanical Gardens would like to wish you a healthy and happy holiday season!

Seasonal Blooms



The Christmas orchid flowers in January and February.

CHRISTMAS PLAYS ROLE IN NAMES OF PLANTS

A significant number of plants have the word Christmas in their names: Christmas tree, Christmas berry, Christmas bell, Christmas rose, Christmas palm, Christmas bush, Christmas orchid and so on. Most are so called either because they produce flowers or fruit at Christmas time, or because they have strong color contrast of red and green, the traditional colors of Christmas. Some, such as the Christmas palm, satisfy both with bright red fruit produced in December set against contrasting deep green leaves.

The problem with these names is that they often apply to totally different plants in different parts of the world. The name Christmas tree is given to several conifers in the U.S. On St. Croix the inkberry is often called a Christmas tree. In Europe two conifer species contend for the name. In New Zealand a Christmas tree is a giant member of the Myrtle family and in Australia it is a small tree that lives parasitically on the roots of grasses. On St. Croix we have the same confusion: the name Christmas Bush is used arbitrarily for *Senna bicapsularis*, *Chromolaena odoratum* and *Comocladia dodonaea* (the latter two are poisonous plants). We have scientific names (sometimes called Latin names) for plants to avoid this sort of confusion: by using the scientific name we can be sure we are all talking about the same plant.

We have, however, only one native Christmas orchid, *Epidendrum ciliare*, on St. Croix but it doesn't fit the pattern: It has white flowers that open in January and February. So why is it called Christmas orchid? Here we have a mystery, because if you talk with people who remember the island 30 years ago and earlier, they will tell you that, at Christmas, it was a tradition to fill the churches with sweet-smelling Christmas orchids that were collected in the wild. The orchids were abundant in our mountainous forests and, apparently, flowered in time for Christmas. Now it is unlikely that you will find a flower before mid-January. We don't have an answer for this baffling change in flowering time.

It is also unlikely that you will, without a lot of searching, find Christmas orchids at all. Collecting for gardens has reduced our island population of this beautiful plant to a few individuals that survive in remote places. If you do find it, it is a fascinating and lovely plant that grows either over rocks or on trees. It is not a parasite but uses the trees for support. It has very specialized aerial roots that hang down from the orchid and absorb water and nutrients washed down from above.

We have several Christmas orchids at the Garden growing on trees, the way they grow in the wild.

GREAT HALL ROOF TO BE REPAIRED

The Plexiglas skylight and the surrounding wooden framework in the Great Hall roof have finally succumbed to our weather. The Plexiglas is breaking up and the wood has rotted. The skylight now leaks badly. We have made a temporary fix by stretching tarpaulin over the skylight but we need, urgently, to carry out permanent repairs and, if financially feasible, install vents to create a draft and help cool the building. This will cost a total of \$11,800, funds that we don't have. One of our Board members has given us \$1,000. Is there a generous donor out there who would like to help?



Tim Malik and his crew install a tarp over the Great Hall roof.

President's Message

Dear Members:

With this edition of the Conch Call being the last in 2005, it seems only fitting to talk a little about the future of the Garden.

In this issue you'll read about our Development Director Julia Sheen. She has had many tasks in front of her this year, which—just to name a few—include the development of two more grants; developing policies on how we accept gifts; and working with the events committee to develop a fund-raising plan. Please give Julia all the support you can in the coming months; her success will be vital for the growth and financial strength of the Garden.

The Board has re-established the St. George Village Botanical Garden Endowment Investment Policy and moved our funds from off-island to the local firm of Raymond James. We are impressed with Rick Fain, who manages the company, and we have already made some major changes in how our endowment will be invested.

The Botanical Garden is a recipient of the prestigious Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museum Assessment Program (MAP) grant. The program comprises three main elements: a series of self-study activities (which the Board will begin this month); a visit to the Garden from a professional peer reviewer; and the implementation of the recommendations of the reviewer. This endeavor is of great importance to the Garden and, when completed, will open the doors for major grants and funding.

Last, and certainly not least, is the opening of the long-awaited Bodine Visitor Center and Museum Store. With great excitement we are planning a 'soft' opening for January and the grand opening toward the end of February. I would like to personally thank the Bodines for their support, patience and guidance through this long building process.

I would also like to say that it has been a great pleasure serving you, the members, this year and I can confidently say the Garden is moving in a good direction. I'd like to thank our Board members, as well as all the staff and our many volunteers for staying the course and making this an enjoyable year.

Sincerely, Gary M. Bourdon