

The Conch Call

September 2004

Conservation, Education & Preservation

What happened to the Conch Call?



The Conch Call, our way of keeping in touch with all our friends and supporters, has not in your mailbox for some time as for the past several months we have been trying to find an editor who knows the Garden and has the computer skills to develop a format and can fit the text and pictures into the format. We now have an editor, a former board member of the Garden, but a very modest one who has asked not to be recognized.

As you have probably guessed, producing and mailing the newsletter is a relatively expensive and time-consuming process and we are very

grateful to those, especially Anne Scigliano, who have taken on this task in the past. We hope, with a new editor at the helm, to keep to our schedule of four newsletters a year.

One of our dreams is to produce our newsletter in color (gardens are about color) but, at the moment, costs prevent this. One way we could do this would be to display the newsletter, in color, on our website sgvbg.org. This would, of course, also cut our printing and mailing costs. In our next issue we will be asking how many of you would welcome the newsletter via our website.

Mango Melee 2004 was the best ever

At this year's Mango Melee we had a wonderful crowd of close to 2,500 visitors and everything went off as planned. There was the odd sprinkling of rain but otherwise the weather was kind to us. Parking was well managed, though when the after-church crowds arrived at the Garden, many visitors chose to park all the way down to Centerline and walk.

The vendors, with no exceptions, said that they had a very good day for food and craft sales, and those with information stands said that the audience was "very valuable". Our biggest compliment was "How on earth do you get all these people here?" The answer to that was lots of planning from a great Mango Melee committee headed by Errol Chichester and some excellent publicity on TV and radio and in the press.

Interviews with Agriculture, UVI (our co-sponsors) and Garden people were seen widely and helped drive the big crowd.

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A profusion of tropical fruits grown by St. Croix farmers was on offer at Mango Melee.

New and Renewing Members

St. George Fellow (\$1000)

Renewing:

Peter & Monette Booth

Patron (\$500)

Renewing:

Thomas Pinchbeck & Thomas Kash

Sponsor (\$250)

New:

Ty & Julie Tybout

Renewing:

Emy Thomas

Benefactor (\$100)

New:

Emily & Bill Danner
David & Mary McMahon
Susan & Gerry Sikorski
Lorine R. Williams

Renewing:

Lawrence & Virginia Angus
Barbara Benner
Gary Bourdon & Ava-Gail Jagroop
Sondra M. Catts
Stafford and Lona Crossman
James & Gillian Downie
John & Frances Fifield
Donn & Dwain Ford
Scott Fricks/Toyota of St. Croix
Edith Galiber
Bill & Helen Gilbert
Carl & Marti Gotts
Constance B. Hadala
John & Theresa Harper
George & Ruth Hazen
Patrick & Patricia Hensley
Susan & William Hulbert
Francis & Gilda Hurite
Leonard & Nancy Marshall
Ted Montigel & Trudy Little
Dan & Amelia Musser
George Novey & Mary Jean Peil
David & Barbara Pennell
Jane & Robert Prantis
Don & Gabby Pratt
Paul & Charlotte Pyles
James Savage

Richard Schierloh
Peter & Anne Scigliano
Jerry Tobin
W. Riley & Wendy Waugh
Mary King & Jill Wilson

Family/Dual (\$45)

New:

Robert & Beverly Bartner
David & Diana Barefield
Marilyn & Paul Chakroff
Dale & Amy Derick
Tetra & Mike DiNapoli
Monica Duelfer
John & Joan Eder
Richard Harris & John Connor
Judy & Fred Huettig
Jean & Jim Kloss
Bent & Sally Lawaetz
Freda & George Logan
Patti & Tim Mason
Sheri & Kevin McKeigue
Steve & Joanne Myrvang
Ron & Barbara Nordstrom
Ryan Rasile & Chris Dagenhardt
Hans & Doris Renschler
Orville & Carolyn Sheldon
Mike Simmons and Jenyne Nelson
Ed & Jodie Skinner
Dick & Debbie Smullen
Kathleen Sturgis & Linda Zerr
Andreas & Debra Tutein
Gene & Lois Watson
Roger & Diana White
Jim Wilson

Renewing:

William & Rose Anzick
Bob & Christie Bartle
Judy Baumgarten & Joe Pitts
Doug & Bunny Bewick
Alpheus & Wistel Bolah
Amanda & Raymond Brown
Edwin & Linda Camacho-Cordero
Betsy Campen & Jim Bierowski
John & Patty Colburn
Tom & Ethel Corrigan
Jon & Gabrielle Farnsworth
Johanne Finley
Brian & Michele Flavia
Frank & Beverly Fox
Philip & Rasa Glengary

Truman & Janet Hagbloom
Kenneth C. Haines & Kristina Vandenberg
James & Marian Hamilton
Muriel & Fred Herold
Donald & Judith Hinkel
Gordon and Kathleen Hotchkiss
Richard & Eleanor Hurt
Jay & Brenda Isherwood
Owen & Carol Johnson
Daniel & Annie Johnston
Herbert & Dixie Jones
Jennifer Jordan & Tom Eldridge
Rudy & Jeannette Jurman
Rod & Janie Koopmans
Clinton & Roselyn Lang
Bonnie Luria & Kelly Gloger
Tracy Nixon & James Lyle
Judi Perazzo & Eric Joyce
Chris & Christie Powers
Pauline & Robert Price
Gordon & Marilyn Puckett
Dan & Nancy Putnam
Edwin & Virginia Riebel
David & Susan Ridgway
William & Ethel Ritch
Linda & Doug Roach
Alvin & Anne Rymsha
Gary & Stacy Shapiro
Sara & Jim Simpson
Kathy & Jim Thobe
Judith & Richard Thompson
Sweeny & Yvonne Toussaint
Gary & Sherry Trommer
Mike & Barbara Walsh
John & Vickie Wessel
Bob & Joanne White
Pamela D. Young
Ed & Nina York

Individual (\$30)

New:

Mary T. Bodio
Debbie Flavia
Patricia Schielke
Patricia Smothers
Lea Ann Robson
Eva L. Thomas
Claire Winker
Sara White

Individual (\$30)

Renewing:

Ferdinand Abraham
Jane Akin
Lloyd Austin
Madeline Baker
Sherman Beresford
Claudia Carrington
Leo Carty
Karen Chasen
Bradley Christian
Valerie Combie
Ann Daum
Connie Dehler
Jayne Edwards
Lynn Fahy
Nancy Finegood
Doris Gardine
Valeria Gasperi
Jan Giles
Kay Gobey
Janet Goodman
Emil Gundelach
Ethel Harris
Richard G. Harris
Margaret Hayes
David Howlett
Marilyn Humphrey
Douglas T. Jones
Jeff Keularts
Jacqueline Kowalski
Freda T. Logan
Doug Millar
Frances M. Molloy
Teddi L. Morrison
Barbara Murray
Kathleen Newman
Myrtle Pemberton
Dolores Petachenko
Winston Quammie
Bonita Oswald Repp
Susan Sheehan
Martha L. Shoemaker
Clare W. Silka
Jessica Spacil
Phyllis V. Spaulding
Lisa Thomas
Barbara Vogt
Janet Vollmer
Chanel O. Wheeler
Tom Zimmerman

Society (\$15)

Renewing:

Jean Burns

In Memoriam

The St. George Village Botanical Garden expresses sincere sympathy to the family of Mauricette Brin, who passed away on July 20, 2004 and the family of Frank Fox, who passed away on September 22, 2004.

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The Garden, for the first time, had a publicity table on Queen Cross Street at the Alexander Hamilton Jump-up on Saturday night prior to Sunday's Mango Melee that helped us publicize the event and sell some T shirts.

Radio, especially Roger W. Morgan (Paradise 93.5FM) complemented our advertising by talking up the event.



Mangos and other tropical fruit prepared by Errol Chichester, chair of the Mango Melee committee, draw big crowds.

Most important, all of our visitors had a great time: Our audience represented the diversity of our island and we received so many comments on how great and enjoyable the event was. We had good coverage in the Daily News and The Avis. Local food,

local crafts, local fruit, and local people are a powerful mix to create local fun.



Clarice Clark, member of the Mango Melee Committee, hands out mango ice cream made by Clint Ferris.

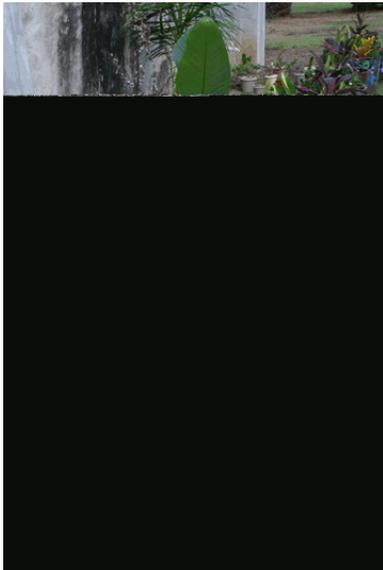
As always we have so many people to thank for making the day a success: not only Errol's working committee (Stafford Crossman; Clarice Clark; Clinton George; Sue Lakos; Clint Ferris; Sara Smith and Brinsley Burbidge) but the great team of volunteers with Sheri McKeigue and Kathleen Montier doing a terrific job of being in the middle of things and keeping everything on track. Special thanks go to Amy Dempsey of Bioimpact for sponsoring the T-shirts. So, thanks to all for giving every visitor a day to remember.

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Oct. 10 | Nursery Sale with Orchid Society |
| Oct. 27 | Gardens By Moonlight |
| Oct. 31 | Orchid Society field trip to SGVBG |
| Dec. 10 | Christmas Gala at the Garden & Tree Auction |
| Dec. 12 | Christmas Spoken Here |
| January | Series of tours of Island Gardens |

Youngsters benefit from Summer in the Garden

The Creative Adventure Summer Art Program ran for six weeks from June 21 to the end of July and around 30 kids aged between 8 and 15 used our Garden's resources to help develop their creative potential.



Cruzan Rum half barrels planted and decorated by the students of the Creative Adventure Summer Arts Program now grace the Great Hall entryway.

The course was coordinated and led by Danica David, Christiansted-based artist. It was funded by the Virgin Islands Council for the Arts — to whom we are very grateful. Among the more familiar names who helped guide the students are Maria Henle, Ferdi Abraham and Ras Lumumba Corriette.

The students each paid for the six weeks of classes but the grant provided scholarships for 5 of the students whose parents could not afford the fee. Island (and some mainland) artists gave talks on different approaches to painting (historical and contemporary) and in addition they had several guest speakers who facilitated discussions

on a wide variety of topics. Each day they undertook an adventure activity (much of this at the Garden) that involved discovery. They also learned about native and important plants of St Croix and the basic skills of plant propagation. In all, it was a well-rounded education program designed to help kids explore their potential in a beautiful, stimulating and safe environment. Half rum barrels, donated by Cruzan Rum, planted by the kids from this program now decorate the entrance to the Great Hall.

From the Garden's point of view, it was wonderful to have our resources used in such a positive, educational way. The Education Center was an almost ideal base for the class activities and converted into an excellent gallery for the exhibition of



Students of the Creative Adventure Summer Arts Program together with their parents and tutors enjoy the exhibition and reception in the Garden's Education Building.

student work on the final evening.

The students learned respect for the Garden and the plants and all went away with happy memories of the Garden as a fun place to learn. The concluding reception and exhibition to which all the students, parents and tutors were invited was a delight. The Garden has made some new friends.

The School to Work Program is funded by the Department of Labor and has, in total, brought around 470 children from our schools to the



Ras Lumumba explains the natural world to students.

Garden. The objective of the program is to raise kids' awareness of the potential career opportunities that can come from a knowledge of or interest in plants. Our role was as a venue for the tours/instruction and to select guides/tutors who are acceptable as role models for the children. The

program was taught by two excellent tutors, Veronica Gordon, our knowledgeable Island Weed Woman who is also a craftsperson who uses plant materials, and Ras Lumumba Corriette, who inspired the kids with his wide knowledge of the use of plants, especially those from our island, and helped the kids develop a respect for our environment. The program was ably coordinated by Marilyn Chakroff.



Ras Lumumba teaches the School to Work program.

Full Moon Tours continue in October

Our June 2nd Gardens By Moonlight was a memorable evening. Some 64 people had a great time — and said

so. Brinsley Burbidge gave talks at an exhibition of his personal collection of botanical art and David Hamada led his highly regarded tours of the Garden. Sadly, we had to turn away over 30 people who would have loved to be there, but we have limited capacity for activities we can safely run at night.

692-2874 to book your place. Once again we will have to limit attendance.

Each time we try to do something different and in October we will be keeping alive an island tradition by holding a story-telling **under the taman-tree**. This story-telling will have a twist as the talk will be by Brinsley and will be about adventures in search of plants. It will be illustrated by slides and, for those of you who notice these things, we will be holding it under a saman (*Samanea*) tree. In the event of rain we will retreat to the Great Hall.

Music, wine and hors d'oeuvres, along with Woody Montier's amazing telescopes, make these moonlit evenings very special.

Our next Gardens By Moonlight is on Wednesday, October 27th, so mark your calendar and call the Garden at

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2004-2005

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Amy Claire Dempsey
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James Kobak, Treasurer
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The Orchid House undergoes a renaissance

Those of you who visit the Garden regularly will have seen a steady transformation in the Orchid House over the last six months, all of it with wonderful volunteer help.

First, Gary Briggs of Cruzan Gardens restored the waterfall, patching numerous leaks, buying a new pump and creating an ingenious method for ensuring that the pool is topped up. He and his staff also cleared the overgrown vegetation and replaced the rotting beams at the front of the house. He continues to do sterling work by bolting the roof beams to the framework so that we can eliminate the (now corroded) galvanized roof ties.

The collection has recently been enhanced with the arrival of Mauricette Brin's collection of orchids. Sadly, Mauricette, a long time supporter of the Garden, passed away in July and generously left us the bulk of her collection. David Hamada has been working on the time-consuming and difficult job of

naming them.

The St. Croix Orchid Society has also been very active in their support. Under the leadership of Diana Freas-Lutz, the president, the orchid collection has been repotted, rejuvenated and a program of care implemented. The Orchid Society set up a table at the August Rummage Sale and sold *Schomburgkias* that they had attached to bark and also some unidentifiable orchid specimens. They raised \$330 towards a fund to maintain our collections.

And Gary Lalor of Butler Bay Plantation, another generous supporter of our orchid program, has helped us financially and has added to his generosity by donating each month a "pick of the orchid delivery" to the Garden.

The one vision we all share is to make the Orchid House the most spectacular and colorful place in the Garden every day of the year.

The Flamboyant: a treat for visitors

The Flamboyant tree is familiar to all of us who live in the Caribbean but to visitors it is an almost overwhelming and delightful surprise. There is probably no other tree in the world that creates such a spectacular floral display. First discovered over 150 years ago in its Native Madagascar (Malagasy Republic) by the botanist Wenzel Bojer, it has since been taken to every part of the tropical world (it can even survive brief frosts) in which it will grow. It is an undemanding and tolerant tree that will grow in most soils, needs little care, is drought and salt resistant and in good conditions can grow very fast. With us, it quickly becomes a large spreading

tree but the branches break easily and many of our older trees show the ravages of hurricane damage.

The Flamboyant bears many different vernacular names and is called *Royal Poinciana* in Florida, *Peacock Flower* or *Flame Tree* in India and *Flame of the Forest* in Malaysia. The scientific name of Flamboyant is *Delonix regia* and it is a member of the Fabaceae, the pea and bean family — one of the world's largest plant families with over 18,000 species. This giant family is split into three smaller subfamilies, the Papilionoideae (largely herbaceous or vining plants such as peas, beans and kudzu), the Mimosoideae (mimosas,

acacias and the familiar tamarind) and the Caesalpinioideae (which contains the cassias and *Delonix*, our Flamboyant). The Flamboyant usually flowers at the beginning of the rainy season, often before the leaves are produced (though this depends on the climate and the tree). The spectacular display comes from the massed flowers, but individually the flowers are also magnificent (like their relative, the poor-man-orchid or *Bauhinia*). The flowers are about five inches across with five scarlet petals. The uppermost petal (the standard) is white or pink, streaked with red. This standard lasts for one day only and the other four petals last for two. The five fleshy sepals are scarlet on the front and yellow behind. Only 20 years ago Flamboyants with



Newly opened Flamboyant flower shows its beauty.

golden yellow flowers were rare, with a few in south Florida and one spectacular tree in the Botanical Garden in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Now this color form is being more widely propagated and is sometimes available on St. Croix.

Unframed Art and Rummage Sale raises more funds for Garden

This event, held on August 14, was somewhat quieter than last year. A great group of volunteers, including the hard-working nursery team led by Carol Bamforth, supported Lesley Hoffman in making the event a success. We had 24 sellers and vendors. Ten artists exhibited some outstanding original work at great prices.

The expected early surge of dedicated

buyers took advantage of the morning cool, but as the day warmed up the visitor numbers dropped.

The total attendance was more than 200, including 155 paying adult admissions. The net income to the Garden from this event was \$2,196. Thanks to everyone – artists, sellers, buyers, and especially our wonderful volunteers – for making the day a good one.

Orchid Society field trip set for October 31

The St. Croix Orchid Society will be holding a “field trip” to St. George Village Botanical Garden on Sunday, October 31st, at 2 p.m. This will be a tour, conducted by David Hamada, of Orchids in the Garden.

The Orchid Society was generously extended an invitation to Garden members to join this field trip. There will be no charge, but – after you have had

an opportunity to see the great work that is being done – we would welcome donations to the Garden’s orchid fund that supports the Orchid Society’s work maintaining our collection.

To ensure that everyone has an enjoyable and informative experience, the tour will have a maximum of 30 participants. Please call the Garden at 692-2874 to reserve your place.

Plans for 'A Holly Jolly Christmas' get under way

This year's Christmas Spoken Here festivities will be held December 10 and 12. The committee has selected "A Holly Jolly Christmas" as the theme and we can be sure that board member David Hamada will make the most of this when he decorates the Great Hall.

Co-chairs of Friday night's Gala at the Garden are Rasa Glengary, Connie Lemco and Vickie Wessel. Christie Bartle will chair Sunday's Christmas Spoken Here events.

The committee has set some ambitious goals this year with a view to raising significant funds so the Garden can continue to carry out our mission of conservation, education and preservation.

Save The Date cards for the Gala have



already been sent out to all our members as well as to other supportive people in the community. We've decided to keep the price the same as last year: \$100 per person before October 15; \$125 thereafter. We are still looking for a few more talented tree decorators; we are also hoping for some generous sponsors.

If you know of anyone who would like to attend the Gala but did not get a Save The Date card, please call Lesley Hoffman in the office and let her know. Last year some very dedicated members put together a table (or two!) of eight to ten of their friends. This is a lovely way to show your support of the Garden.

As always, on Sunday we will be holding a White Reindeer – as opposed to Elephant – Sale during Christmas Spoken Here and will be most grateful for donations of any kind. Volunteers are always needed for this busy weekend of events; if you are not on our volunteer list, please be kind enough to let Lesley know. She will be happy to tell you how you can help us all have a Holly Jolly Christmas! Call 692-2874.



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