



Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society

JULY 2018

Summer Meeting July 21

Summer Meeting and Tour of Rockland Botanical Garden

Join us for the Summer Meeting and a tour of the garden of John and Margaret Scott, Saturday, July 21 at 10 am.

Bring a picnic lunch and some plants to share. Drinks, a garden fresh tomato salad, and dessert will be provided. Bring folding chairs if possible. Please let us know if you plan to attend: email: johndscott302@gmail.com, or phone: 610-682-2809. Our web site is www.rocklandbotanicalgarden.org

See directions on page 2.

Rockland Botanical Garden consists of a number of plant collections and a nine acre woods of native plants indigenous to our property. Over the years we have discovered thirty some pteridophytes and several orchids.

A conifer collection was the first to be planted in a spiral around the yard with over 500 trees, bushes and dwarf conifers. There is an angiosperm collection organized by the APG system. Most recently the fern collection has been moved from the woods to around the house. There is a collection of many forms of Christmas Ferns, a collection of eastern Lady Ferns collected from south Georgia to Maine, and a collection of 40 some Painted Lady Ferns.

Agenda:

1. Before lunch we will tour the yard. The ferns are dispersed throughout the conifers.
2. During and/or after lunch we will have a short meeting with reports and discussion of any items those present wish to discuss. I have looked over past newsletters and this year will be our election of officers. I will shortly be appointing a nominating committee to present the candidates for election at the November meeting. **If you are willing to serve, please let me know. At this time, I won't be able to continue as president.**

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ROCK CAP FERN WALKING FERN

*Photo by
Kendra Schieber*

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From the President

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3. After lunch we will tour the lower field which contains the flowering plant collection.
4. If hardy souls would like to peruse the woods which is somewhat rough going, we can discuss it. —John Scott

Directions to Scott's Home and "Rockland Botanical Garden"

55 Hertzog School Road, Mertztown, PA 19539. (note: Mertztown is our PO. We are in Rockland Township, between Fredericksville and Dryville.

We are located west of Rt. 100 between Bally and Hereford.

Routes north include Rt. 100, Rt. 29, Rt. 73 or the Northeast Extension (I-476) to Lansdale or Quakertown.

From the Turnpike (I-476) exit 44 (Quakertown), take Rt. 663 W to Rt. 29 N. Turn left on Tollgate Rd., just past Elderhorst Bells. Turn left on Rt. 100 S. Turn right on Huff's Church Rd. (first right). Turn right on Hertzog School Rd. (go 8.3 miles to a one room school). We are then 0.5 miles on the left, just past the house with two ponds. Use the 2nd drive.)

Dryopteris erythrosora



One of our members is interested in passing on his sizable collection of ferns—native and non-native, and would like to keep the collection intact. If interested or if you know anyone who might be interested, please respond by e-mail to DelValFernSoc@gmail.com.

August Field Trip

Field trips this year are being coordinated by our vice president, Michael Brooks. If you have suggestions or would like to lead a field trip, please contact Michael at 610-293-0693 (cell) Mbrooks@wcupa.edu At the July meeting, we will discuss where we would like to go in the fall.

Perkiomen Trail at Hollywood Drive, August 18, 2018, 9:30 am

After Link Davis's fascinating tour of identifying winter plants, we decided that we would like to return to the same spot and see the plants in their summer glory. Go to www.dvfws.org and see the trip report in the Feb. '18 newsletter, page 7. Walking is about a mile along a mostly wooded, level trail and adjacent fields near the creek. Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy members will be joining us. Lunch will follow at the home of Whitefields, 10 minutes from the trail. **(Note that this is a half hour earlier than our usual start time.)**

Directions from Skippack: Coming west on Rt. 73 (Skippack Pike) cross over Rt. 113 (Bridge Road). Go 2.7 miles and turn left onto Perkiomen Creek Road. Before getting to Perkiomen Creek Rd. you will pass Lucon, Hudnut, and Cross Roads (all on the right side). Once you have turned left onto Perkiomen Creek Road continue about 1 mile to the first road on the right which is Hollywood Drive. Turn right and proceed 300 yards to the parking lot. Look for a sign to the Perkiomen Trail.

Directions from Collegeville: Take Rt. 29 north out of Collegeville. In a little more than a mile you will come to a traffic light at Rt. 113 in the village of Rahns. Continue on Rt. 29 to the next traffic light where you will make a right onto Graterford Road (could take you to the prison)! In less than 0.5 miles you will turn left onto Perkiomen Creek Road. In about 0.3 miles make a left onto Hollywood Drive. Look for a county sign to the trail. Continue back to the parking lot. —Michael Brooks



DVFWS members at
Stoneleigh Field Trip

Field Trip Reports

Shenks Ferry, April 19, 2018

It was a cool, drizzly day on April 19th when the DVFWS held a spring hike at Shenks Ferry in Lancaster County. I had never been there, but had heard it was a must see from fellow gardeners at Chanticleer, so looked forward to seeing the spring display.

Only 4 people, Michael Brooks, Janet & Tom Whitefield, and myself braved the less than ideal weather. Despite the cool, late spring, the show was impressive. It was dominated by several wildflowers: white Trillium, 2 types of *Dicentra* (Dutchman's Breeches and Squirrel Corn), Virginia Bluebells, and a ground-cover, Waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum canadense*). A number of other wildflowers were seen in decent numbers including Violets, Early Saxifrage, and Spring Beauty. I was surprised at the lack of Bloodroot, usually common in that type of terrain. Ferns were just beginning to leaf out, but mosses covered nearly every one of the numerous fallen logs. I'm a big moss fan, so that was probably a highlight for me.

The trail follows high above the creek, giving some nice views. The hike lasted about 2 hours, and we ended the day with lunch at the Conestoga Wagon. All in all, a pretty nice day. *Submitted by Tom Maczko*

Dutchman's Breeches



Leaser Lake, May 5, 2018

Karen Mohn led a small but enthusiastic group of DVFWS members around the north end of Leaser Lake in Lehigh County. It was a good time and a perfect place for spring ephemerals. There was a lovely stand of Foam Flower as well as Bloodroot, Early Meadow-rue, Hepatica, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Mayapple, Spring Beauties, Trout-lily, and many other flowers of the season. *Submitted by Michael Brooks*



Getting a closer look at the Spring Beauties!

Picture submitted by Karen Mohn



Monocacy Hill , June 2, 2018

On a pleasant, moist and misty morning a dozen met for the walk at Monocacy Hill in Douglassville, Berks County, PA. We joined naturalist, Susan Munch, Professor Emeritus of Botany at Albright College, and author of *Outstanding Mosses and Liverworts of Pennsylvania & Nearby States*, who humbly stated that she was "not an expert in mosses, but an expert in the easy ones." Michael Brooks, our trip leader gave us each a very useful seven-page print-out that included almost all of the ferns and mosses that we would find along the trails.

The diabase rocks and red sandstone were scattered among the redbud, oak, hickory, maple, and poplar forest and made a lovely setting for the many varieties of ferns and mosses throughout the understory.

Susan set us on a quest to find Squawroot, *Conopholis americana*, growing like a pine cone or cob of corn at the base of oak or beech roots with yellow flowers.

Along our trail we found the Fern Moss, the most common moss in Pennsylvania. It has a main branch, and then many side branches with leaves clothing each branch. We found Sensitive Fern with its leaf edges wavy, not toothed or highly divided; New York Fern, also known as Tapering Fern, with tiny leaves at both ends of each hairy stalk. We can remember it with the thought that people from New York tend to "burn the candle at both ends". This writer can personally attest to that presumption.

Christmas Fern, the commonest fern in Pennsylvania, decorated the northern vales of each woodland hillside. In the wet areas were Marsh Fern, and the Rattlesnake Fern with its central sporangia-bearing tip that looks like a rattle.

We found moss—two different species of *Atrichum* along the Creek Trail. Tree Moss has a little bare trunk and a bunch of branches, "taking on the form of small trees," and we found a very large patch of several square yards. Near the boardwalk in the marshy areas of the trail was Cushion (or White) Moss, Hairy Cap Moss, Spoon Moss, and a surprise flower, the Partridge Berry in bloom with its diminutive twin white flowers.

There are 300-400 different mosses in Pennsylvania so we only touched on a few of these amazingly intricate



and awe-inspiring plants. With our magnifiers we could see all the fine details that Susan expounded on.

On the walk to the Lower Trail we found Liverwort, *Porella*, growing with flattened leaves coming out from the bottom of a rock like a tiny shelf. We came upon the Marginal Wood Fern with its spores along the edge margins of each leaf. And there, at last, was the elusive Squawroot. Michael said that he's heard that bears eat it when they awaken from hibernation to provide digestional movement.

Along the Lower Trail there was a rocky outcropping where Susan led us on a sporty climb to the spot where the rare Walking Fern was growing vigorously, near to a Rock Cap Fern, (see photo page 1). At the base of this rocky hill was found Broad or Southern Beech Fern. As we went further down the trail we spied the lovely Lady Fern with its extreme regularity.

Seven hearty hikers went on to see the large Maiden-hair Fern patch that is further down the trail, and we all reconvened back at the parking lot to thank our guide and trip leader and say our "frond" farewells.

*Submitted by Kendra Schieber, Corinth, NY
pictures by Michael Brooks and Janet Whitefield*

Stoneleigh Garden, June 30, 2018

Despite the 90 degree weather on the last day of June, there was an impressive turnout of 19 DVFWs members and friends for a guided tour of Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden. Stoneleigh is an estate dating back to 1877. Otto and Phoebe Haas purchased it in 1932 and their son John and his wife Chara acquired it in 1964. In 2016 the Haas family donated and endowed Stoneleigh to Natural Lands, for the public as a show place for native plants in a designed garden. It was opened to the public this past May.

We were met at the entrance by Ethan Kauffman, the Director of the garden, who is overseeing the transition from a private estate to a natural garden. He filled us in with a little of his background. He had previously been at Moore Farms Botanical Garden in Lake City, South Carolina, where he similarly led the transition from a private pleasure garden to a non-profit botanical garden. He gave us the history of Stoneleigh's gardens, first laid out in the 1870's by landscaper Charles H. Miller, who trained at Kew Gardens in England and later was chief gardener for Fairmount Park. He was succeeded by the New York landscape architecture firm Pentecost and Vitale who redesigned the gardens in a formal "Beaux Arts" style. In 1908, the Olmsted Brothers of Massachusetts, sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, began the transformation of the garden to mostly what we see today: open vistas of sweeping lawn, wonderful trees, winding pathways and terraces.

The trees are magnificent, among the oldest and largest in the state. Close to the entrance are a single trunked River Birch *Betula nigra* and a magnificent *Magnolia acuminata*, both ranked #6 champions in Pennsylvania. There are 110 Hemlocks, including one which has defied identification. Among the other unusual trees were weeping Nyssa and Katsura, and a White Pine with multiple branches layered completely around its base. Because they had never been limbed, many of the trees had a sculptural quality with huge horizontal branches with native vines climbing some of them.

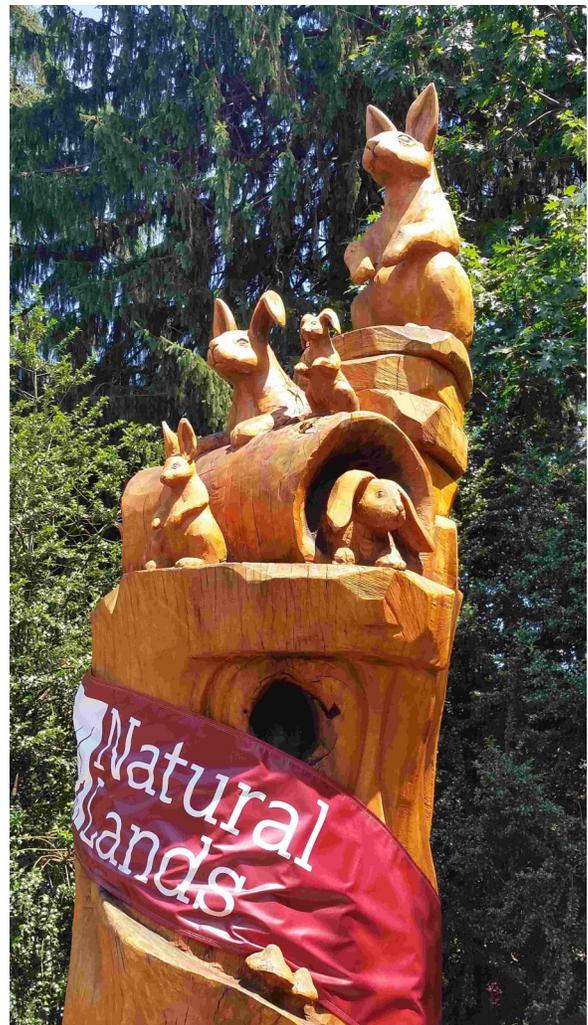
Native plantings are being developed, such as the bed of *Carex* species near the entrance, and the three bog gardens with Pitcher Plants and Sundews in the area

that had once been a pool. There is a data base of 20,000 plants and 600 trees for which accession and/or display tags are being developed. More native plants are being introduced, invasives eliminated.

We also toured the house, built in the style of an English Country Manor. The first floor has elegant wood paneling and stained glass windows, often featuring rabbits. (Haas means hare in Dutch and German). An unusual feature is an Aeolian-Skinner Opus 878 player organ that is being restored. Many original documents related to it are on display. Other than the ground floor rooms, only the library on the second floor was open. The upper floors are occupied by the National Organ Historical Society and its archives.

We are indebted to Michael Brooks for arrangements and to Ethan Kauffman for the extended tour of the house and garden.

Submitted by Hope Punnett



The Haas (hare) family sculpture welcomes visitors

Member News

New Member

Don Nigrani
220 Rively Avenue
Glenolden, PA 19036
610-586-8429
does not use e-mail

Former Member Returns

Richard Carl
537 Lakeview Avenue
Rockville Centre, NY 11570
516-764-1147 - Home
510-306-7540 - Mobile
rpc121047@gmail.com
NY Fern Society

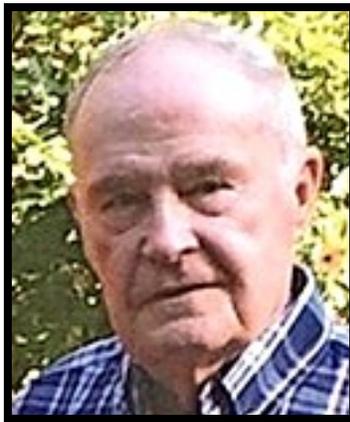
Kathy Klein added her husband John to her dual membership. Same address as in your 2018 directory.

Valarie Schwarz changed her e-mail:
Valarie.schwarz1@gmail.com

Sandy Bressler Does anyone know Sandy? Her e-mail bounces, her phone numbers are disconnected, and a personal note to her address was not answered or returned. Please notify Janet Whitefield with any information.

John DeMarrais died on April 7, 2018.

John was a retired hospital CEO and an ardent conservationist who lived life to its fullest. He was a Master Gardener, a skilled birder, and an all around naturalist who had traveled the world widely. Locally, he headed many groups with interests in the natural world and conservation. John was past President of DVFWS in 2007-2008



His wife, Nancy, wants DVFWS to know that John enjoyed his participation in the group and thought highly of its members and programs.



About DVFWS

The purpose of DVFWS shall be to encourage the enjoyment of ferns and wildflowers by cultivating and propagating them in the home and garden; by studying them in their wild habitats, gardens and conservatories; by promoting their conservation and preservation; and by providing a forum for the exchange of information and expertise.

Officers

President: John Scott
johndscott302@gmail.com

Vice President: Michael Brooks
Mbrooks@wcupa.edu

Secretary: Donna Wilhelm
donnacwilhelm@gmail.com

Treasurer: Alice-Blake Simonson
asbjj28@yahoo.com

Membership in DVFWS is open to anyone who is interested in ferns and wildflowers. Three general membership meetings are held each year and a number of field trips are scheduled each year to areas rich in botanical interest.

Membership is \$10 for individuals or \$14 for two members at the same address per year or \$28 and \$39, respectively for three years. Dues are payable to DVFWS and mailed to:

Alice-Blake Simonson
28 Chancery Court
Souderton, PA 18964
215-868-0440

The newsletter is published quarterly. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome and may be e-mailed to

delvalfernso@gmail.com

or to **Janet Whitefield**, editor
jntwhite@verizon.net

Web site: www.dvfws.org
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