

com.post

Welcome to the Autumn issue of com.post. I hope you will enjoy all the news from our national, state and local affiliations. Thank you to all that contributed to this great issue.

Robbie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GCA.....Pages 1 - 3

GCV.....Pages 4 - 9

AGC.....Pages 10 - 23

Editor

Robbie Mascotte

Photography

Claire Mellinger

Proofer

Mardi Brownell

Contributors:

Karen Blair

Megan Eckenberger

Colleen Bassett

Esther Hannon

Carol Carter

Carol Hunter

Martha Craddock

Kathryn Parker

Candy Crosby

Carol Roberts

Pati Cunningham

Alexandra Shirley

Shelia Scott

NEWS FROM GCA

GCA Conservation Study Conference: Greening the Bluegrass

September 22-28, 2019

Carol Hunter

AGC Conservation Chair, GCA Assistant Vice Chair for Legislation and Policy

The Conservation Study Conference, one of the quarterly meetings required of members of the Conservation and the National Affairs & Legislation Committees, was established as an off-site meeting in 1989 to promote deeper knowledge of this country's diverse, current and important conservation issues through observation, education and hands-on experience. For the first time this year, the trip was expanded to include 50 delegates from GCA member clubs from around the country. As a delegate from AGC and a member of the GCA National & Legislation Committee, I travelled to Louisville, Kentucky and heard from national and local speakers on issues such as sustainable farming, environmental health issues, storm runoff and toxic substances. A blend of urban and rural, this river community encompassed environmental topics applicable to many communities including our own. Jana Dowds, the Conservation Study Conference Chair, along with Elizabeth Waddill, Conservation Chair, and Lisa Ott, NAL Chair, coordinated an eventful week.

You can read the biographies of our gifted speakers through the link below.

https://www.gcamerica.org/_uploads/filemanager/contentpageresource/2019%20CSC%20Speaker%20List%2009%2017%202019.pdf

One highlight was the presentation by Aruni Bhatnagar, whose work has led to the creation of a new field of environmental cardiology. With Louisville as his urban laboratory, Dr. Bhatnagar, the Director of the Christina Lee Brown Environment Institute

<https://enviromeinstitute.com/>, investigates how our natural, social, and personal

environments impact human health and chronic disease.



A canoe trip on the Ohio River and Beargrass Creek, and a visit to Steve Wilson's and Laura Lee Brown's Woodland

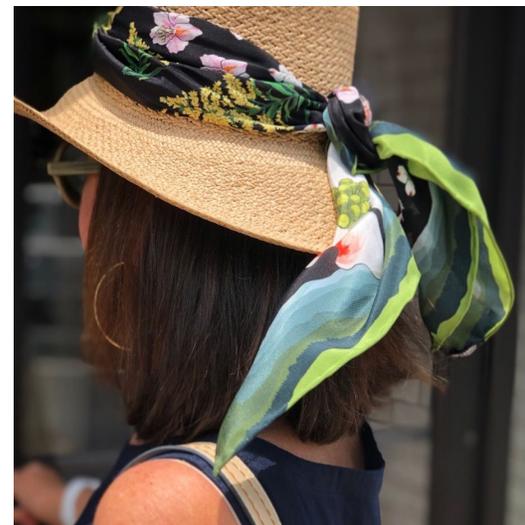
Farm gave me a real sense of the Kentucky landscape – challenges and opportunities. My personal favorite was the time spent at the Berry Center in New Castle, Kentucky. We were graced by a talk by Mary Berry and poetry reading with Wendell Berry. The following quote from Wendell Berry for all of us who attended really represents what I learned on this Conservation Study Conference and what I would hope to be the take-away for the Albemarle Garden Club as well.

What is important to me about the Berry Center, and what I am learning from it, is its willingness to go to work at home, on a small scale, to improve the economy of local farmers and, therefore, the health of the local land. This is radical now, when public attention is all on global solutions to global problems. But what works here is likely to work elsewhere, whereas a global solution that won't work locally is a waste of time.



GCA Annual Meeting Scarf

The Annual Meeting 2020 scarves feature hand-painted state flowers and the mountains, rolling hills and bluegrass of Zone VII: Kentucky - Goldenrod Solidago gigantea, North Carolina and Virginia - American Dogwood Cornus florida, West Virginia - American Rhododendron Rhododendron maximum. Contact Colleen Grant, or order online at www.gcamerica.org and click on Zone pages, then click on Zone 7.



NEWS FROM GCV



Garden Club of Virginia 61st Annual Conservation Forum Natural Bridge Virginia

TREES: CANOPY OF CONSERVATION

By Candy Crosby

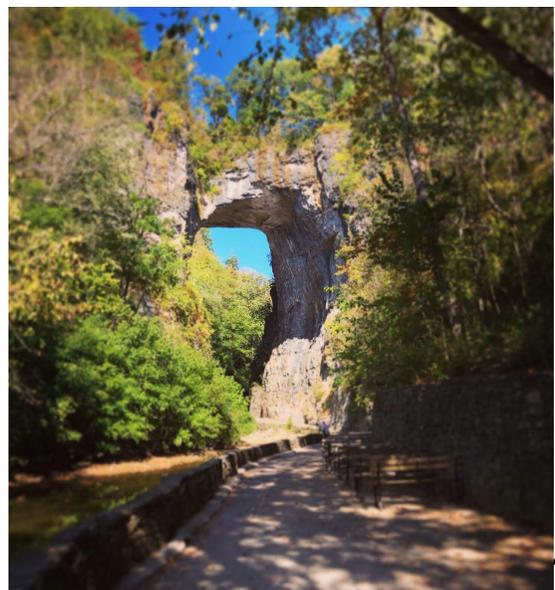
A beautiful sunny day dawned for the 61st Conservation Forum. Natural Bridge, often cited as one of the seven natural wonders of the world, and the surrounding forest was the perfect setting for the theme of trees. Esther Hannon, Claire Mellinger, Alexandra Shirley and Candy Crosby were there to hear all about our arboreal friends.



The first speaker was Frazier Armstrong, Executive Director, Capital Trees, Richmond, who presented “The Evolution of Capital Trees: Urban Greening and the Benefit to the Greater Community”. This non-profit organization was founded in 2010, and in Downtown Richmond, their initiatives include planting trees and renovating two city blocks: the Great Shiplock Park, a riverfront park on the James, and the Low Line Green, a two acre park under a CSX train trestle. Their stated mission is “building public landscapes,

enriching the community.”

Next up was Dr. Elizabeth Brantley, Plant Pathologist for Bartlett Trees, whose topic was “Connections with Trees”. She gave an entertaining presentation which



covered all aspects of TREES, from roots to fungal plant communities.

At the midpoint of the morning, Heidi James announced that the GCV Dugdale Award 2019 is presented to the Nansmond River Preservation Alliance. The Conservation Educator Award 2019 is awarded to James E. Jones, Natural Bridge State Manager.

Our third speaker was Eric Wiseman, associate professor of Urban Forestry in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation @ Virginia Tech, who spoke about the Virginia Big Tree Program. There is nothing more fascinating in nature than to meet one of these 'arboreal giants'. Go to www.bigtree.cnre.vt.edu and you will find the state's registry of over 2,000 trees and see the list of our national and state champions, and perhaps visit them! Learn how to measure and score a big tree that you have discovered and report your findings.

Lastly, Andrew Moore, author of "Pawpaw: In Search of America's Forgotten Fruit" inspired us with many fun facts about this remarkable and unique fruit tree. The pawpaw is the largest edible fruit native to the United States, an organic grower's dream, requiring no pesticides or herbicides to thrive, and delicious to eat. Moore shared his adventures from his journeys all over the US, making many discoveries about the pawpaw fruit, including sampling wild fermented barrel aged pawpaw ale in North Carolina! *Please read Esther Hannon's book review below.*

It was a great day! And remember, FALL is a great time to plant TREES in your landscape!

Book Review: Pawpaw: In Search of America's Forgotten Fruit, by Andrew Moore, 2015. By Esther Hannon

"Pawpaws were there from the beginning..."

Probably one of the most engaging speakers at the recent GCV Conservation Forum was Andrew Moore, who spoke about his award winning book *Pawpaw: In Search of America's Forgotten Fruit*. Only 56 million years old, the pawpaw tree (*asimina triloba*) has been a staple of the American eastern forest, well known by Native Americans and colonists alike. African slaves supplemented their meagre diets with the pawpaw fruit and groves of pawpaw trees have often been found around abandoned slave cabins. Lewis and Clark at one point ran out of food during their westward expedition, and survived on pawpaws, with Clark noting that no one in the party seemed to mind. George Washington loved pawpaws and his favorite dessert was a creamy pawpaw custard. Jefferson sent pawpaw seeds to his



contacts in Europe, leaving a grove of pawpaws to grow at Monticello.

So what happened?

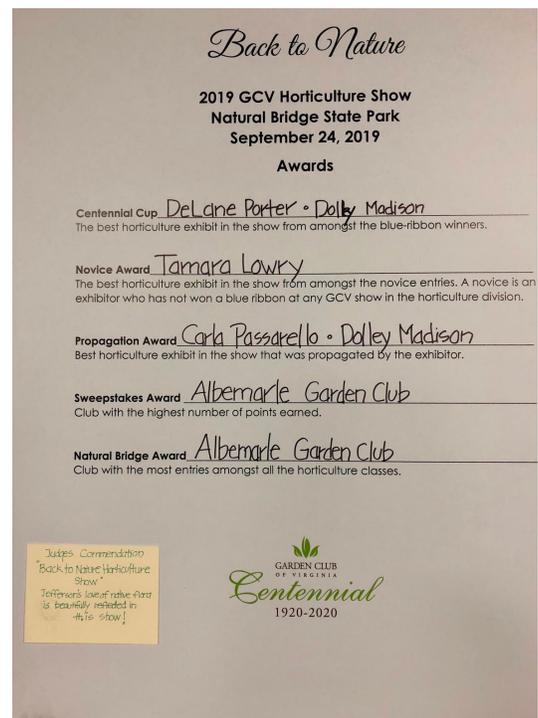
According to Moore, around the turn of the 20th century, as more mass produced fruits such as apples made their way into U.S. markets, the pawpaw receded from our tables and collective memory. Pawpaws seem to prefer their forest habitat as the many unsuccessful efforts to commercialize them has demonstrated.

Moore was clear about his passion for our oldest native fruit tree, extolling the delicious mango-banana flavor of the fruit, and the tree's historical and ecological importance to our Eastern forests. He traveled up and down the eastern part of the country interviewing people, hiking through woods to find century-old groves, learning old folks songs about the pawpaw and reading recipes handed down over generations.

While Moore's love for the pawpaw is wonderful to see and his book a fascinating chronicle of a forgotten part of American history, perhaps the still prolific pawpaw is best left alone to fulfill its role in our forests, feeding zebra swallowtails, birds, opossums, foxes and the occasional foraging hiker. Of course, they are easy to grow (but you need two) and he recommends starting with three in case one dies.

GCV Horticulture Show "Back to Nature" Natural Bridge State Park

With the help of Kim Cory and Fran Carden, GCV hosted "**Back To Nature**" - A Virginia Native Plant Horticulture Show. As you can see, AGC did VERY well!



The Class, **Picnic in The Park**, required entrants to use “a food item from your garden.” Claire Mellinger combined forces with Esther Hannon to create a zesty pesto for the Savory Class and took home the BLUE!

End of Summer Pesto

Fresh ingredients are the key to a fantastic pesto

- 1 cup pine nuts
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 freshly grated Romano cheese
- 3-4 garlic cloves (depending on how much you like garlic)
- 2 cups fresh basil leaves
- 1 cup best quality olive oil
- 1/4 cup goat cheese softened



- Process pine nuts and garlic in food processor - pulse a few times, add basil leaves and pulse a few more times.
- With machine running, pour in olive oil in a thin steady stream.
- Add grated cheeses, goat cheese and a big pinch of salt and a good grind of pepper. Process briefly to combine.
- Use as a spread on crackers, sauce on pasta or chicken

In Celebration of AGC Women of the GCV of the First Century

BESSIE BOCOCK CARTER (aka Carol Carter's Mother-In-Law)

Provided by Megan Eckenberger

Bessie Boccock Carter was a primary member of the James River Garden Club in her home town of Richmond. Later, she joined AGC as a Courtesy member. While she was a legendary flower arranger, she was a fairly disinterested gardener. She liked the planning more than the planting and primarily grew plants that would be handy in her arrangements.

Without a doubt though, her real passion in garden club was conservation; locally, statewide and nationally! She was an early advocate for recycling, scenic preservation and land conservation and felt it is everyone's duty to get involved through serious advocacy, letter writing and personal persuasion. She was undaunted. During one visit to Senator John Warner on the Hill, as he began to talk to the "garden club ladies" about his problems in his garden, she promptly interjected with a smile..."Senator Warner, we scheduled this meeting weeks ago to have 15 minutes to talk to you about protecting clean water in Virginia. If you'd like to consult with us about your garden later, we would be happy to schedule a meeting with you about that....but right now let's talk about clean water..." And so it went, everyone chuckled and then got down to serious work.

She loved people and always opened her extra bedrooms and kitchen to garden club members and speakers who needed a bed or a meal in Richmond for KVH meetings or later in Charlottesville. That is the hospitality that was rewarded with so many enduring friendships. She also enjoyed carpooling and would work out complex systems of meeting at rest stops all over the Commonwealth to commute to various Garden club meetings.

She was always funny, laughing loudest at her own mistakes and making everyone in the room feel important while she was trying to advance the cause, whatever it was. So many people remember her for her "Russian Iced Tea", heavy on the cloves and orange juice served with a dose of good humor on the porch!

Bessie's Russian Tea

1 tablespoon whole cloves

2 ½ cups sugar (or to taste)

2 big Lipton tea bags

Juice of 12 oranges, rind of 1 (or 1 quart)

Juice of 3 lemons, rind of 3 – thinly sliced

3 cups of water for making tea

3 quarts of water for boiling cloves

Mint Sprigs

Make tea with tea bags and 3 cups of water. Boil cloves in 3 quarts of water for 20 minutes. Add 2 ½ cups of sugar and stir until dissolved, then strain and mix with tea. Add the juices and thin sliced rinds. Served iced with mint sprigs. Makes about 1 gallon. Enjoy!



NEWS FROM AGC

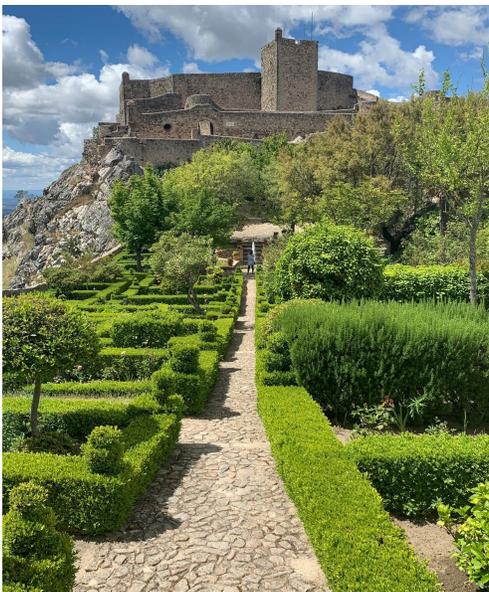
Where Were You This Summer?

Alexandra Shirley reports that she was in Longwood Gardens in July. Laura Ashley Waterlily Dahlia.



Martha Craddock visited Cork Trees after Stripping

Martha Craddock reports that she visited Marvao, Portugal in June and visited the Gillette Gardens





Colleen Bassett visited an ALL-PINK private garden on the Nantucket Garden Festival tour this July. The homeowner was wearing all pink clothes too. It was awesome!

Claire and Colleen caught up in Nantucket too!



Some AGC Memories of Elizabeth Pinkerton Scott

by Sheila Scott

Elizabeth Scott was extremely generous in sharing the hospitality of the beautiful house and grounds of Bundoran Farm with members of the Albemarle Garden Club. Many meetings, lunches, orientation meetings and Nellie Hough classes were held there. A few collected some memories.

I remember being taught, more than once, how to prune boxwood properly. The boxwood at Bundoran surrounded the house and gardens in great billowing mounds, looking like heaps of clouds, as we were firmly told they should, not like round balls in a row. Elizabeth would demonstrate, bush after bush, for many years, just what we should do, and we followed her instructions very closely.



Sally Reinhart told me that at one meeting she remembered Elizabeth asking for hands if anyone wanted daffodils. She was replanting some of her beds of test collection varieties and had daffodils to give away. Sally raised her hand and was the delighted recipient of several bags of bulbs. They were covering the bank down the hill to the road, 21 curves when Sally last looked last spring.



Edie Catlin was running a morning meeting at Bundoran and lunch was to be served afterward. Elizabeth came up to her and asked “Can you make the meeting run a little longer? They are not ready in the kitchen.” Edie agreed, though she says she is a great believer in short meetings. She can’t remember if it was that meeting or another that the chicken salad she and Elizabeth created was deemed so good that it was served to the Queen of England when she came and was served lunch at the Rotunda.

Quoting Judy Boyd, I was never asked to join the Garden Club. I was TOLD by Mrs. Boyd that two of her friends were proposing me. You did not say “NO” to Mrs. Boyd OR the garden club. (Not that I would have, I was thrilled.) Fortunately I was approved to join the club. In the

spring, Ruth Wadlington, Flip Faulconer and I were invited to Mrs. Scott's home for orientation and lunch. The table was beautifully set out on the terrace. We sat down with the club board and other important members and lo and behold at dessert, there was a crystal fingerbowl in front of me. I had never seen one before, but watched the others carefully and copied their finger dipping and wiping. Ruth remembered that day as well. She remembered that fresh peas from the Bundoran Farm garden were served and she still remembers those peas as the best she has ever eaten.

Tommy Boyd also offered this story: As a teenager, he was drafted to drive Elizabeth Scott and Dot Boyd to Washington to the airport to take a plane to Portland for a GCA meeting. Route 29 was still, and for some years later, a two lane road. On the way the car had a flat tire. Tommy pulled over and proceeded to begin to change the tire. Suddenly he saw Elizabeth Scott get out of the back seat and start directing traffic on the highway. She continued until the car was ready to go. Tommy never forgot that day either.

When Mary Pollack returned to Charlottesville she moved to a house in Ednam with a pool table in the basement. She also became our club historian. One day soon after her move her doorbell rang. Elizabeth Scott was at the door with large box. She proceeded downstairs to the pool table and placed the box on it. She then went back for several more large boxes, refusing any help. "Now the history of AGC is all yours," she said to Mary, and left.



Mary Lyle Preston has a raised bed at WCBR along with her garden and works in it a lot. Over the past year, she tells me, she frequently saw Elizabeth being pushed among the many flower and vegetable beds, obviously enjoying each and every one, as well as the pleasure of being out in the garden, always a favorite location for her.

Elizabeth Scott cared deeply about plants and the environment. She worked with energy and enthusiasm over many years to preserve the land and to educate us. May we so continue.

Not All Frogs Are Created Equal

Floral Design Tips

by Carol Roberts



Fifty Flowers (fiftyflowers.com) offers a 4 inch square, bendable wire grid that works with most containers. \$6.99 for 1, \$24.99 for 6, \$45.99 for 12



A benefit of recycling: Reuse the plastic netting bags that avocados come in since they are both strong and flexible. Cut the netting to size to fit the top of your container, square, round, oval. Using clear packing tape secure the slippery netting to the sides of the container, stretching it to keep it tight and rigid. The tighter the netting, the more support the flower stems will have. **Costs: a bag of avocados**

Budable is a handmade polymer, self-sticking, flexible, stretchable, stem assembly tool that the company likes to call the lightweight, any size

portable flower frog. It comes in a three pack for \$15.99.

It can be ordered from Amazon by searching: **Budable 3 pack Flower Arranger, floral supplies, flower frog holder.** It is shipped and sold by Bloomeze.



The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coastal Reserve Field Trip October 10-11

By Kathryn Parker, Conservation Committee Member

Carol Hunter arranged a really fabulous field trip for AGC members October 10/11 in response to an invitation for AGC members to visit The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coastal Reserve on Virginia's Eastern Shore. Carol, Wendy Winkler, Merrick Murray, Catriona Erler, Cathy Lively and I were treated to a wonderful 2 days at the Reserve with our hosts, Jill Bieri TNC's Director of the Reserve and Katherine Knox, Associate Director of Philanthropy for TNC.



We stayed at the historic and beautiful Brownsville House built in 1806 located on the Upshur family farm that dates from 1692. We loved seeing the marshes, the birds and the 1250 acres of protected habitat in the Brownsville Preserve.

Thursday evening, before dinner, Jill Bieri gave us an excellent overview of the mission, current projects and successes in promoting land protection of 33,000 acres of land owned by the Conservancy as well as 70 private easement properties that protect more than 13,000 acres.

She emphasized the Preserve's community

involvement and education including connecting 5th, 6th and 7th grade public school students in Accomack and Northampton Counties to the natural world through experiential field trips that are aligned with the VA Standards of Learning.

In addition to a guided birdwatching hour Friday morning, we enjoyed a two hour boat excursion to see first hand the projects that are having a significant impact on water quality in the area and the



local economy, that is largely clam and oyster aquaculture and sales of excellent tasty clams and oysters to customers in a wide geographic area. Water quality protection and oyster, eelgrass and bay scallop restoration are priority projects of the VCR.

The weather was beautiful, the accommodations comfortable, meals were tasty and the



experience enriching and fun! A more than 5 feet above normal tide created some wrinkles in plans, all handled with good humor and flexibility. It was fascinating to see how quickly the rising tide can impact the low lying topography.

We wish more AGC members had been able to participate in this really terrific experience. Hopefully, in the future, there will be another opportunity to visit the VCR and I urge all to participate!!

My EV Journey

By Carol Carter

I drive. A lot. Back and forth to DC once a week and at least 8 miles from the farm to town. Even with my 40mpg car, I felt carbon guilt.

I test drove a Chevy Bolt and loved it. Then the research started. I started calling EV owners and asked how they felt about it. I called folks I never met. I called folks I knew sort of. *Everyone* loved their EVs, said I didn't really need a charging station and gave me happy stories about their cars. So I bought it. I still thought I needed a charging station, so the dealer gave me a deal on it. I still have that charger 5 months later in its box downstairs. Maybe I will install it one day. I've been charging with a regular 3-prong plug or occasionally at public charging stations. I get close to 300 miles on a full charge, which has been plenty.

I have also become a much more intentional driver. I think about where I am driving all week and plan accordingly. I'm spending less time in my car! I have had fun finding public chargers. Honestly, our electric bill has gone up a whopping \$10-15 a month. There was only one day I



had to get to DC and didn't have enough charge; so I stopped at the car dealer on the way and they charged me up, and filled my tires while I relaxed and enjoyed their wifi inside. Spa time for the car.

Fun facts:

Most EVs these days get 250+ miles on a full charge.

There are 3 levels of charging:

Level 1 - 3 prong outlet (110v); slow, about 4 -5 miles per hour

Level 2 - like a dryer plug (220v), about 30 miles per hour

Level 3 - fast, full charge in 45-60 minutes; generally found at highway stops

Plugging it in at night is like putting your car on an IV drip of gasoline...slow, but who cares? You are sleeping.

There are lots of apps that tell you where there are public charging stations. Some are free. Some charge. Some are faster than others. It varies. More come on line each month. Most cars are parked 90% of the time, so think about it...it is easy to charge up even if it is slow.

The engine doesn't have a lot of parts so the only maintenance is rotating tires and changing the air filter until 150K miles when you flush the fluids.

"Range Anxiety" is the description for the feeling that you will run out of charge without a place to charge up. I have not had that. I've gone with as low as 30 miles left, but I trust the informatics of the car.

EVs are not an environmental panacea. Batteries take rare minerals like cobalt, lithium and nickel. Mining is disgusting. These are considerations. Depending on the source of your electricity (coal, gas, renewables), the greenhouse gases are different. The sources I have found say that on average electricity for vehicles use only half the Green House Gases (GHG) of gas cars. I am happy that I am able to charge my car in C'ville with my home solar.

So take a date night and go test drive an EV before dinner or a movie. Just so you know what the rest of the world is up to!

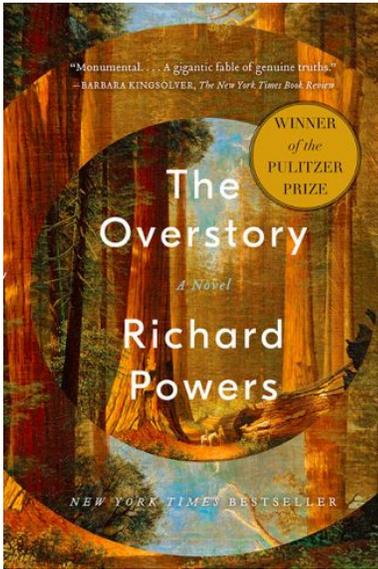
Listen There Is Something You Need to Hear

A Book Review of Richard Powers's *The OverStory*

by Pati Cunningham

The trees are talking - and if your ears are burning, it's because they're talking about us - and in a not so flattering way. Our problem? We can't envision a world where humans aren't the most important species. We can't even stop ourselves from destroying the very thing that gives us life, the natural world.

In Richard Powers's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, "The Overstory", trees understand humans all too completely. In fact, the notion of trees understanding, communicating, and struggling to survive in a conscious way as social beings is at the center of this amazing novel.



The Overstory follows nine human characters who ultimately come to understand the importance of trees. From a Silicon Valley prodigy to a radical environmentalist tree hugger, the lives of these characters are dramatically altered over the course of the novel. Through it all, the trees bear witness, silently and slowly emerging as the true protagonists of the story.

The science of the novel is astonishing and based somewhat loosely on the work of Peter Wohlleben's *The Hidden Life of Trees* - another book worth delving into. While it's a lot to get your head around, please read this novel. You'll never take a walk in the woods in the same way. Even the mighty American Chestnut plays a role in this novel. Reading it on paper - the body of trees if you will - will also open your eyes and your mind to the difficult conundrum we face as humans working to coexist

with the natural world. Here's an excerpt:

First there was nothing. Then there was everything.

Then, in a park above a western city after dusk, the air is raining messages. A woman sits on the ground, leaning against a pine. Its bark presses hard against her back, as hard as life. Its needles scent the air and a force hums in the heart of the wood. Her ears tune down to the lowest frequencies. The tree is saying things, in words before words...

A chorus of living wood sings to the woman: If your mind were only a slightly greener thing, we'd drown you in meaning.

The pine she leans against says: Listen. There's something you need to hear.

Christmas Workshop 2019

Wednesday, December 4th, Tabor Church, Crozet

By Karen Blair

The Holidays are coming and AGC will get you ready!

Bring your checkbook to buy raffle tickets to win one of 5 arrangements made by an all-star lineup of AGC members.

Bring your credit card and do all of your last minute shopping at our own Folly Boutique and AGC Boutique.

Bring clippers and a vase you can donate to make an arrangement for Georgia's Healing House, a friend in need of cheer, or another organization of your choice.

Bring an appetite for a delicious lunch.

We will be cutting greens at Morven on Sunday, December 1st.



An Interview with Esther Hannon for AGC

By Karen Blair

Thank you, Esther, for agreeing to share your thoughts with Albemarle Garden Club.

Let's start with the name Esther, a beautiful and old-fashioned name; for whom were you named and do you share any traits with that relative?

I was named for my grandmother. I was the 16th granddaughter and she was not happy that no one had used her name. So, before I was born, she announced that whoever was named after her would get the family jewels. She was in Rome when I was born and my father sent her a telegram that only said "Hurrah! We get the family jewels." So, she knew she had a new granddaughter and that her name was Esther. Unfortunately, there aren't any "family jewels."



You have had an unusual upbringing. Can you tell us a little about that?

My father was an army officer who also served as a diplomat. When I was five, we were posted to Buenos Aires. We stayed four and a half years. My parents believed in the axiom "when in Rome do as the Romans do" so I was sent to an Argentine-English girls school. During the summers my brothers and I would go and stay at an estancia or ranch. I think my parents completely forgot about us. It was bliss.

We ended up in Charlottesville in the mid-sixties where my father retired and raised horses. As luck would have it, an old friend of his became president of Argentina and the State Department/Pentagon sent us back for a year and a half so that they had some access to the new government. That was great fun for me as I reconnected with my old friends, went back to the Anglo-Argentine school and got to escape the misery of American high school, for a year at least.

What is a favorite place you have lived and what customs there do you admire?

Buenos Aires (of course). I have lived in Central America too but Argentina is more of a home for me. I love the way they have parties that include everyone from the great grandmother to the little 3 year old, and dinner is served at midnight.

You and your husband Brian work together; what is the division of expertise; what do you each excel in doing? What languages do each of you speak?

He does the financial and contractual management and I oversee some of the technical work, and help develop work plans and project activities. We both prepare and write proposals and all the planning that goes into bids. I also spend a great deal of time editing reports that have to be submitted regularly. I speak Spanish although I never get much of a chance to use it. He speaks a little Spanish.

Is there any special ritual that you and Brian share to mark the end of a workday?

Yes, we open a bottle of wine.

Do you consider yourself as someone who has a management style and if so, how would you describe that?

I have learned over the many years of helping to manage these overseas projects to build a collaborative approach. I always make sure that the team is getting the support they need and are being appreciated for what they are doing. In the last five years, our project teams have been composed of and led by local nationals (as our government calls them). Many of our project leads are women. They are very smart and competent, but a little insecure with their American counterparts. So, I try to make them feel empowered by highlighting their successes and hard work and respecting their decisions. I have some wonderful friendships from these projects.

Your next travel for AGC is where?

Shaker Village Kentucky, outside of Lexington. This is for a GCA President's Council Meeting. Nancy Inman, Claire and I are driving there together. It should be an interesting road trip.

Your next travel for business is where?

Not sure, but probably Ethiopia. We just started a new project there in February.

What is your biggest area of procrastination?

Housework.

When you consider past presidents, whom do you try to emulate and what traits do you admire in that person? Yes, you can name names!

George Bush (just kidding!) I am in awe of our past presidents. This is very hard to answer because I probably try to emulate some aspect of each of them: Claire's creativity and sense of fun, Carol's kindness and commitment, Kim's enthusiasm and vision.

What is one aspect of AGC that you wish would get more attention and member participation?

Civic projects. I think sometimes we forget that we are fundamentally a civic organization with a commitment to our local community. I would like to see everyone participate in our local projects and not just leave it up to the Civic Projects Committee to do the outreach and hands-on work.

What are a couple of favorite cuisines from across the globe? Where do you shop for ingredients when making a special dish?

I am crazy about Mediterranean food. Lebanese is the best. Lebanese cooks and restaurants seem to be everywhere in the Middle East and North Africa so I think I am not alone in this view. It is all about really fresh food...and parsley. I ate a salad composed almost entirely of finely chopped parsley with some grain in it after a long hot hard hike in Jordan (to Petra—which nearly killed me). I couldn't believe how good the salad was and I didn't particularly like parsley. I am a fan now. My favorite spice, which you can get at Whole Foods, is sumac. I like to make chopped salad with yoghurt and sumac and cumin. And of course, parsley. Lots of parsley.

What gardening book influenced your own garden? What gardening book would you give as a gift?

When we built our house in Free Union, our builder, Chris Halstead, gave me Penelope Hobhouse's *Color in Your Garden*. He must have had high hopes for me, but I did read it assiduously and still do for fun.

For a gift, it would be any book about native plants or pollinators. I love Doug Tallamy, so his book *Bringing Nature Home* would be my first choice for someone.

Where are your children now and what are they doing?

Ah, my children. Molly, my oldest has moved back from Europe (for now) and is working for Batten at UVA as a writer and editor. She spends a lot of time in Denmark with her Danish husband. James works on business development for us and also does music on the side. Will works in Washington for a defense contractor on cybersecurity for Homeland Security. And Conor, my youngest, works at Monticello and Grelen. I used to teach him, but now he teaches me about horticulture.

What is your favorite holiday and what food do you associate with that day? I love Christmas. I'll never grow up. There are so many family traditions that I cherish, and it is so beautiful to see that big green lit tree in your living room for all those weeks.

**Thank you so much for opening up and thank you especially for your service as
President of AGC.**

You are welcome!!