



Wildflowers

President's Column

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It is an honor and a privilege to be President of an organization as vibrant as WAM.

Our recent 24th Annual Conference held a few weeks ago at MSU's Kellogg Center is the first example of several I want to point out. Over 220 registrants, two superb keynote speakers; Scott Russell Sanders and Janet Marinelli; twelve marvelous presenters; a four person panel and the best educator's workshop on native plants and school gardens in the Midwest made this another memorable event. The dedication of your WAM Board members not only helped put this conference together under the direction of Esther Durnwald, Chad Hughson and our

intrepid Treasurer/Registrar Jean Weirich, but also they wrote almost all of the articles in this edition of the WAM Newsletter. Our conference vendors, contributors, supporters and exhibitors, many of whom are WAM business members are a third indispensable group who add pizzazz to the conference and grateful income that furthers our mission. But most important are you, our members who give freely of your time in attendance, your ideas, and encouragement to your Board members.

This year will start a new project for WAM. We have formed a Finance Subcommittee which is described in this newsletter and are positioned to accept monetary donations to support the association. We were not successful in obtaining a

grant to support our school garden awards this year.

That limited the amounts and numbers of applications we could fund as we only have limited internal funding options. Look for the donation form in this newsletter and please consider WAM to be one of your charitable donations in 2011. You can make our 2012 Grant Cycle – our 25th Anniversary Year – the best ever by being a donor.

My thanks to each and every WAM member for the way in which you have supported WAM this past year. I look confidently to your continued support into the future.

Bob Krueger

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WAM TREASURER?

Well, according to my husband (VERY tongue in cheek) it means “long hours, unrelenting phone calls, and registrations arriving one hour before the conference starts.”

“Yes, Dear,” a Treasurer of any organization does involve work and responsibilities, but the rewards are so great with WAM, it is worth every minute. So as I look to retire and hope there is someone in our membership willing to take on this role,

here is a brief description of what you will do. First and foremost, you must remember that you will be part of the WAM Board and the development of this wonderful Conference and awarding of the WAM Grants. You will also be working with some of the most enjoyable people around. I started with Marji Fuller as President and once or in person at MSU Hancock Center. As Treasurer you attend these meetings with a Treasurer's Re-

never thought her shoes could be filled, but then Cheryl Tolley stepped right in and was so great I had the same feeling for her. But Esther Durnwald stepped up to the plate and look at this weekend's conference! Now Bob Krueger is here taking the reins and will do the same. The entire Board's hard work, devotion and warmth are there supporting each person's work. Now, specifically, on the du-

WILDFLOWER ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

WAM

Observations from the back row....

It is morning...The room is still...yet movement is all around. Folks are filing in deciding on the right vantage point to glean the most knowledge. Teachers being students - A workshop for teachers.

Michelle Serreyn, our lead educator begins the morning with an introduction to native plants. She takes us on a relatively quick tour of the whys and why not's of native plants. Michelle, a naturalist/educator at a metro park in Macomb County, brings sincerity to the presentation that rivals the awe of a child who dances for the first time in a spring shower. Michelle too dances. The teachers are energized and tingling. The room isn't still anymore.

Planning meets reality. The second phase of the morning features two gardens. First is Jon Gray from Waldon Middle School in Lake Orion Michigan. This journey begins with an empty courtyard formerly a bus circle now enclosed and viewed by the school science classes. Jon shares with us the transformation beginning with a pond built by 6th graders, stone for stone. Then brick by brick more 6th graders set a walkway to view the magnificent pond form all around. My nursery entered into the picture with plants and one by one hundreds of native trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, and vines are planted. Questions, questions, questions, the curious teachers wanted to know every detail.

If that wasn't enough, Jean Persely from Macomb School Garden Initiative in Macomb County brought her fire to the stage. Jean enthusiastically featured the garden projects initiated by her group of volunteers. The garden included native and non natives but the message was

clear-gather great thinkers, community leaders, gardeners, parents, teachers and of course students and your possibilities for success are endless. The room absolutely sizzled when she was done. Jon and Jean held court for 15 or 20 minutes answering nonstop questions before their stomachs beckoned to be fed.

Afternoon came with anticipation. Posters, cards, yarn and sticky tags greeted us at our seats. Hmmm, what could this be for? Michelle, with great animation led us into the classroom with games and activities. She walked us through a curriculum guide that the teachers could use right away. The posters, of different Michigan habitats, came to life with a food web activity. Working in groups, students identified prey

and predator with color coded sticky tags. The tags were linked with yarn one tag to another on who ate whom. Maybe the best part of all was the 'goodie' bag at the end. A large bag filled with the habitat posters, critter cards, games and the curriculum guide, everything a teacher could want and more to get the nature studies going in the classroom.

Now, I am not a teacher, nor do I play one on TV, but I do work with teachers, parents and kids on creating native gardens at schools, in parks and as scout projects. Michelle's Educators' Workshop proved entertaining, educational and most definitely fun. Well done Michelle, Well done WAM.

Ruth Vrbensky

By increasing awareness and knowledge, the Wildflower Association of Michigan encourages the preservation and restoration of Michigan's native plants and native plant communities.



2011 Grant Awardees: Anne LaSovage, Shara LeValley, Michele Shafer, Lena Swehla

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Mission Statement: The Finance Committee will be made up of the President, Treasurer, Grants Coordinator and one volunteer from the Board. The committee may add additional ex-officio members as it deems necessary.

The duties of the Finance Committee will be to develop a policy for the handling of all monetary donation and in-kind donations to WAM. This will include in the policy some type of recognition of the donors.

The Treasurer will be responsible for maintaining financial records of the donations and issuance of letter compliant with IRS regulations thanking each donor.

The Finance Committee will develop a program for periodic solicitation of donations from the members as well as explore support for the funding of WAM educational efforts from other foundations and

granting agencies.

Donors who grant permission will be recognized periodically in the WAM newsletter as well as at the annual conference.

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Robert Krueger, PhD, President/Grant Chairman
Chad Hughson, 1st Vice President/Website Coordinator
Trisha Hacker-Hennig, 2nd Vice President
Ruth Vrbensky, Secretary

Board of Directors

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Susan Baldyga-Grubb, Member-at-large
Tom Small, Member-at-large

Conference Committee

Esther Durnwald, Chair
Chad Hughson
Robert Krueger

Past President
Esther Durnwald

WAM Donation Form

I wish to provide a gift to WAM at the level of:
\$ _____ amount

My gift should be directed to:

WAM Educational Grant Program

WAM is an IRS 501c3 registered charitable organization.

WAM Annual Conference (education, workshop, student scholarships)

Please acknowledge this donation is in memory of: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Send your check to:

Jean Weirich, Treasurer
3947 E. Saint Joe Highway
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

WAM Conference Financial Report

This year's WAM Conference was financially the best we have had in many years. Our total net income this year was approximately \$3500 compared to a negative \$902 last year! The WAM Board and Conference Committee planned carefully this year to turn the finances around, especially with the loss of the Glassen Grant funds.

Thanks to all of you who:

- attended and paid the small increase in Conference rates of only \$10/day (the first increase in many years!)
- purchased seeds or raffle tickets or t-shirts or books, netting around \$1300!
- donated toward future WAM Grants and Educational Programming a total of \$3800!

Each and every dollar that you contributed is giving WAM resources to:

- provide more and larger WAM grants
- continue a strong Educator's Workshop during the 2012 Conference (the 25th Annual!)
- present more Conference scholarships to college students majoring in landscape or horticulture.

It is important that you help us continue this positive momentum by renewing your membership if you were not able to attend the Conference, and by encouraging other individuals to join WAM in order to keep up to date through our Website (www.wildflowersmich.org) and Newsletter.

As Treasurer and Conference Registrar I have had the pleasure of working with the WAM Board over the last five Conferences. As my husband and I

retire from the work world, we are looking at travel plans that may make it difficult to maintain this commitment. At the Conference I provided a description of what it means to be Treasurer for WAM, which is included in this newsletter. If you are interested in and willing to volunteer your time as Treasurer you will enjoy a wonderful organization, learn a lot about native plants, and get to work with a Board that shares a passion for the world around us!

Jean Weirich



Book Review

National Wildlife Federation: Field Guide to Wildflowers of North America

This is a very useful guide written by David M Brandenburg, PhD with a forward by Craig Tufts. It was published by Sterling Publishing of New York in 2010. It is pocket sized, but with 673 pages quite thick, and it is very sturdy. Its contents include a brief introduction; short discussions on habitats and conservation; two nice sections entitled "What is a Wildflower" and "How to Identify a Wildflower"; and a very useful 24 page pictorial key to floral shapes and colors.

By far the greatest part of the text, over 520 pages, is a long compilation of genus monographs organized under an alphabetical listing of plant families from the Acanthaceae to the

Zygophyllaceae. Each monograph states blooming times, a brief morphological description of the genus, select native species range maps and photographs of the described species emphasizing their flowers. For example, the genus *Amorpha* of the family Fabaceae is described along with *A. canescens* (lead plant) and *A. fruticosa* (False Indigo Bush). Both species and the genus have range maps and the former are further depicted with photographs that contain captions highlighting important identifying features.

The remaining pages are dedicated to brief descriptions of commonly encountered introduced plants, various acknowledgements, references, synonyms of scientific names and a comprehensive species index.

This guide is not for the unedu-

cated laity. A basic knowledge of botany and floral morphology helps one to use this guide efficiently. Not all flowers are present. No dichotomous key is presented rather the aforementioned color/shape visual key assists the user. Not all poisonous plants are noted as such so the user is admonished "to treat every plant as potentially toxic until they are certain that it is not harmful".

Dr. Brandenburg is the taxonomic botanist for the Dawes Arboretum in Ohio and has done all of us who are interested in wildflower identification a wonderful service by compiling this volume.

Bob Krueger, PhD