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THE NEWSLETTER

Reaching Out: **Exploring Social Media at the Arboretum**

—Ambika Sambasivan

“I don’t understand Twitter.”
“What is Flickr anyway?”

If these statements sound familiar, you are not alone. For many who have only recently become comfortable with email, Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr may seem rather daunting. The first question most people ask is: “Why should I engage in social media?”

Websites collectively known as “social media” are online forums where individuals or organizations can send out messages to a group of people and receive feedback almost instantly. Sites such as Facebook and Twitter are quickly becoming the primary mode of communication for many, particularly the young. Reaching out to someone is as simple as “liking” a comment or picture, and instantly a connection is formed between two people. This creates the feeling of having a conversation, adding a social twist to traditional media. What makes this so powerful is the

messages, thus spreading information and ideas to an ever-growing audience every day.

It is this word-of-mouth promotion that has attracted businesses and non-profits to these forums. The friendly, water cooler chat style can help organizations reach out to new people quickly and cost-effectively. It also helps them to keep in touch with current members or customers on a daily basis. Forward thinking non-profits have used social media to solicit volunteers and donations and to publicize events. The opportunities are endless; social media are now one of the most exciting landscapes in communications today.

Arboreta around the nation are seeing the benefits of adding Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr to their communication mix. Harvard’s Arnold Arboretum shares interesting scientific news through a popular Facebook page, while the Morton Arboretum in Illinois runs

The LA County Arboretum and Botanical Gardens is all about sharing: visitors are encouraged to talk about their experiences on Facebook and upload pictures of their trips on Flickr. Their successes are self-evident. The Morton, for example, has over 10,500 Facebook fans and 2000+ Twitter followers, allowing them to reach out to a large audience every day.

In the past year, Landis has embraced the social movement, with a fledgling presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr. We ask our members to join us online and share their special “Landis moments” with us. We welcome social media enthusiasts to join our team and help us grow. Together we can bring the Arboretum into the “Social Era” and encourage a new generation to appreciate and care for this local treasure. What’s not to “like” about that?

Those interested in participating in Landis’ social media efforts, please contact: