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Landis 5K: Four Years and Running!

Although Jonathan DiCesare has never competed in the Landis 5K Forest Run, he knows the course like the back of his hand.

He should. Since the run's origin as a sparkle in the eye of former Trustee Scott Trees, Jonathan has been involved at every turn, so to speak. With the help of a GPS and an appreciation for the natural beauty of the Arboretum, Jonathan laid out a three-dimensional trail and a challenging course for runners. The resulting 5K route is one that compares favorably to courses throughout the US and Europe.

With the route established, the next steps were course maintenance and improvement. Many hours are invested every year to ensure a better running experience. The first year's trail crew included the combined efforts of Jonathan's daughter Islay and sons Jonathan and Juozas. SUNY Cobleskill students helped with trail clearing. Other volunteers moved and reassembled crumbling stone walls; among them was Ken Hotopp, who fought back encroaching poison ivy. In the following years, SUNY Cobleskill students helped with the ongoing trail maintenance,

and community service workers put their backs into everything from stone removal to uprooting

stumps. Their efforts were boosted by such generous community donors as Gary DeLuke of White

Birch Nursery, who provided countless yards of mulch, and a crew to distribute it, in order to absorb mud and stabilize the course.

Support for the Run has not stopped with physical exertion. With early encouragement of then-Director Thom O'Connor, Landis members have pitched in to help, including Jim Paley and Wendy Kass, who manage registration, Barbara Brabetz, and Ben Fox, whose organizational skills have been critical. Community support from Kinz Plastics' Wynn Kinz and Brent Wielt has ensured that participants sport a colorful T-shirt. Over the years, both Hannaford and Price Chopper have contributed the refreshments at the finish line. The race is also enhanced by the generous support of Lancaster Development, Donna Lavigne Insurance, and Realty USA.

It's a beautiful time of the year, the route is well-designed, and there are few courses in our area more challenging to run. Well over one hundred runners a year agree—just ask runners Ed and Roxanne Gillen, whose wedding at Landis last August included their own run of the course following the ceremony!

Saturday, September 17

FOREST 5K RUN/WALK

Capital Region runners of all ages and abilities will have the opportunity to run or walk while enjoying spectacular autumn views of the Schoharie Valley at this Arboretum classic. The cross country course features many notable sites at Landis—including the Pioneer and Woodland trails, the 400-year-old iconographic Great Oak, symbol of the Arboretum, the Fred Lape Memorial—and finishes at the beautiful Van Loveland Gardens.

Awards

Male/Female (top in each age group): under 15, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+

Registration

Register by August 15 to receive a free T-shirt. Race day registration/check-in: 8-9 a.m. on the Meeting House lawn. Tot Trot: 10:30 a.m. Refreshments and t-shirts will be available in front of the Farmhouse after the race.

All proceeds to benefit Landis Arboretum's Children's Environmental Education Programs.

Last year's sponsors included Kintz Plastics, Inc.; Lancaster Development; Gary DeLuke/White Birch Nursery and Landscaping; Donna M. Lavigne Agency ("The Insurance Lady"); Jonathan DiCesare/Realty USA; Best Western Cobleskill; Hannaford, Duanesburg; Dr. Ionta, DC, Rejuvenate Therapeutic Massage; The George Mann Tory Tavern; The National Baseball Hall of Fame; NBT Bank; Catnap Books; Cobleskill Regional Hospital; NYS Power Authority; The Studio for Arts and Crafts; and Kelley Farm and Garden. To become a sponsor and join this great group of Landis boosters, contact Jonathan DiCesare at jdicesare@realtyusa.com. The race will be held concurrently with the Landis signature Fall Plant and Book Sale.

For more information, including registration fees and forms, please visit www.landisarboretum.org.

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The Arboretum is located one and one-half miles north of Route 20 in Esperance. Follow the signs from the village to Lape Road. The Arboretum is one-quarter mile straight ahead. Visit our website for more information and directions.



Harvesting Timber the Ecological Way

—Jason Castle

A mature forest ecosystem actually has a relatively low level of biodiversity, especially a monoculture of any tree species. Removing a selection of mature trees will create openings that allow sunlight to reach the forest floor and expose vertical structure for wildlife such as nesting and game birds. These new edges will foster a natural display of successional ecology. Within weeks, grasses and briars will colonize, followed by more woody pioneer species, such as poplar and white pine, in the following years. This culling provides maximum diversity and an ideal habitat for wildlife of all sizes. The remaining tree material creates nesting areas for birds, restricts browsing by deer, and, as it breaks down, returns valuable nutrients to the soil.

Silviculture is the name given to the practice of actively managing a forest to achieve a desired outcome in a sustainable manner. One method of ensuring sustainability is by single-tree selection. Individual trees of high-grade timber are harvested rather than larger, more dramatic cuts. In addition, poor quality trees are selected and removed. The resulting stand will be much healthier and better able to resist disease and insect outbreaks. Within a single species of tree, some are more prone to infestation or disease. Taking these trees out of the forest leaves a stronger stand with more resilient genetics.

Maintaining small-scale harvests and implementing best forestry practices will leave the ecosystem with minimal negative impact. These best practices include proper road placement and grading to reduce runoff and erosion. To further this end, use of the site will be limited during excessive rain in order to reduce the amount of mud and ruts. Installing water bars and reseeding with grass will also ensure a limited effect on landing areas and nearby watercourses.

A low impact, selective harvest that follows best management practices will yield benefits that can last a lifetime. Establishing a trail system opens up the forest for a variety of activities

It was with shock and sorrow that the Landis Board of Trustees learned that Brett Armstrong was killed in a logging accident on June 15. Brett embodied the responsible forest management principles discussed in this article. The Landis project will proceed in collaboration with a forestry professional whose philosophy reflects a similar stewardship of our resources. The Landis Arboretum offers its sincere condolences to Brett Armstrong's family and friends.

including bird watching, snowshoeing, and horseback riding into previously inaccessible areas. A variety of educational opportunities will also present themselves with respect to ecology, biodiversity, and sustainable forestry practices.

Landis Arboretum has entered into an agreement with Brett Armstrong of Back Forty Acres. Brett is a trusted forester with over a decade of experience and record of responsible land management. In the coming months, he will begin a small operation in the northern portion of Landis. There will be no timber harvested on any of the core 250-acre Arboretum lands, including the old growth forests. Instead, the project will focus on the Arboretum's Montgomery County property, where there is currently no visitor activity. Eventually, however, a trail system will be in place that will provide access to those 30 to 50 acres of Arboretum lands for all to enjoy—and to learn from.

The Arboretum will be working with the New York State Forest Owners Association and following their guidelines for sustainable timber management.

All questions concerning a selective timber harvest at Landis are welcomed and should be addressed to Fred Breglia, fred@landisarboretum.org or (518) 875-6935.

GOT WOOD?

Landis Arboretum has some high quality firewood and camp wood available. Inquire fred@landisarboretum.org for details, orders, and prices. Get some great wood and help support your local arboretum at the same time!

WISH LIST

- 4WD pick-up with or without snow plow
- Gardening tools
- String trimmers and mowers in good shape
- ATV to patrol trails



Collections News

New and Underutilized Trees for the Landscape: from *Cornus* to *Prunus*

Part 2 of a 3-Part Series —Fred Breglia

Cornus kousa or Kousa Dogwood is certainly not new to the landscape, but is a wonderful small tree (20–30 feet tall) that is native to eastern Asia. This tree has extremely showy white flowers that appear in late spring. Kousa dogwood is very similar looking to our native dogwood but is resistant to the dogwood anthracnose disease.

A new hybrid dogwood tree that is definitely a bit out of the ordinary is *Cornus kousa* × *nutallii* ‘Venus’ or Venus Kousa Dogwood. This new and underutilized tree is one of the most prolific bloomers of all the dogwoods. Not only are its blooms plentiful, they are also enormous and beautiful. The shamrock-shaped blooms are fully 6 inches wide with 4 huge petals surrounding a tiny green center. Not only is this tree lovely, but also it is disease resistant, hardy in our zone, fast growing, and drought tolerant.

Cotinus obovatus, American Smoke tree, is an eastern U.S. native tree that typically reaches 25’–40’ in height and seems to favor alkaline soils. The American Smoke Tree, is an much less utilized than the common smoke bush that is more familiar in the nursery trade. It has been shown to be stem hardy to -25°F. The American smoke tree has brilliant fall foliage that ranges from yellow to red, which become almost fluorescent in autumn.

Fagus sylvatica “Tortuosa,” Contorted Beech, (photo above) is the twisted sister of the beech family. The Contorted Beech is a cultivar of the European Beech and is truly a great tree that has been around for a long time yet is rarely used in landscapes. It is a wide-spreading tree with distinctive twisted and contorted branches. With its short and twisted trunk the Contorted Beech grows more in width than height, only seldom reaching a height of more than 25 feet tall.

Ginkgo biloba “Presidential Gold,” Presidential Gold Ginkgo, is a relatively new cultivar of the oldest tree species in the world. The Presidential Gold Ginkgo is considered one of the best cultivars of ginkgo on the planet. It is outstanding in both the nursery row and the landscape; this seedless cultivar has set the new standard among ginkgos. Selected by Dr. Michael Dirr, it has a strong leader and full branching when young, then develops a perfect



upright crown when mature. It also has one of the nicest golden fall colors of all the ginkgos.

Liriodendron tulipifera ‘JFS-Oz’, Emerald City™ Tulip Tree, is a new cultivar released in 2010. It is a refined cultivar of our familiar native tulip tree. This uniform growing selection is straighter and more upright, with a dominant central leader and deeper green, slightly glossy foliage. The Emerald City Tulip Tree matures to 55 feet tall by 25 feet wide and produces a larger, more vibrant flower that blooms in late spring.

Malus ‘JFS-KW5,’ Royal Raindrops® Crabapple, has bright pinkish red flowers that combine with deep purple cut leaf foliage to present a unique new crabapple. Deeply lobed leaves and upright form with good branching are just a few of this trees great characteristics. Combined with excellent resistance to the common diseases that plague most crabapples this tree is a truly great new cultivar.

Malus ‘Dolgo’, or Dolgo Crabapple, has been around for a long time yet is rarely used in landscapes. The Dolgo crabapple has one of the largest fruits of all crabapples. These ¾ inch diameter fruits are not only ornamental but also make excellent red jelly. It has beautiful white blossoms in spring and is very disease resistant.

Nyssa sylvatica ‘Haymanred’, Red Rage Tupelo, was discovered by plantsman Mike Hayman in southern Indiana and was released in the nursery trade in 2010–2011. The red rage tupelo is hardy in our zone and matures to a height of 35–40 feet tall and 20 feet wide. Red Rage has deep green, high gloss summer foliage that resists leaf spot. When autumn arrives this tree really lives up to its name Red Rage. The glossy green foliage gives way to the most intense and brightest red fall colors, perhaps of all trees!

Phellodendron lavallei ‘Longenecker,’ Eye Stopper™ Cork Tree is aptly named as this cultivar has the clearest, bright yellow foliage of all the cork trees introduced to date. It was selected from trees at the University of Wisconsin Longenecker Gardens.

Prunus sargentii ‘Pink Flair,’ Pink Flair Cherry, is one of the most cold hardy of the flowering cherries. Hardy to Zone 4 this tree has survived over 7 years without damage in Zone 3 test plots. Narrow and upright in habit, but compact in height, this flowering cherry is well suited for urban landscapes and other tough growing locations. It produces an awesome pink flower that literally covers the tree, and avoids frost damage by flowering a week or two later than what is typical of the species.

Be sure to visit our Fall Plant Sale on Saturday and Sunday, September 17 & 18, to shop for many of these trees and at the same time help support your local Arboretum.

About the Plant Sale—

- **Arboretum plant experts** will be available all weekend to answer your questions and to provide suggestions and advice on plant selection, site requirements, and proper planting and care techniques.
- **Handicapped parking and drop-off space is available.** Please inform the parking attendants of your needs.
- **Sorry—dogs are not** permitted at the Plant Sale.
- **Restrooms and picnic tables** are available for your convenience.
- **Have your membership card** handy for quicker checkout. (10% discount for members.)
- **All purchased items must be removed by 4 p.m. Sunday.** Landis does not make deliveries and is not responsible for items left after 4 p.m.
- **For more information,** call the Arboretum: 518-875-6935; or email: director@landisarboretum.org; info@landisarboretum.org. Check our website: www.landisarboretum.org.

Landis Is for Families: An Afternoon with George Steele

—Kristin Fox

In keeping with its mission of nature education, the Arboretum offers many programs for families and children. Kristin Fox and her son Jed spent an enjoyable hour with science educator George Steele.

The red-backed salamander is the most numerous vertebrate in the northeastern forests. The call of the green frog sounds like a banjo string. These are just two of the many interesting facts we learned at the “Amphibians and Reptiles” program at the Arboretum.

George Steele led a group of children and adults on a walk through different habitats, including three ponds. At the upper pond near the Meeting House, we found a green frog, many red-spotted newts, and a water snake. We continued into the woods where we learned how to properly turn over and replace logs and rocks to look for specimens. The group leader pointed out a red-backed salamander, while my son Jed, 10, found a millipede. We counted and found that our millipede had 240 legs. It seemed that all our searching would reveal only more red-backed salamanders until another explorer found a Jefferson salamander that was about six inches long. We all had a chance to hold the salamander before putting



it back where it was found. We then continued on along the beautiful trails to the Woodland pond.

We ended our excursion at the pond behind the barn. There again we noticed several green frogs and the heads of painted turtles, their bodies hidden in

the water. The eyes of the turtles were always upon us, keeping vigil as we circled the pond. George enthralled us with a description of a painted turtle making a mud nest that he was privileged to witness. While we may have found only four species of amphibians and two of reptiles, we discovered a lot more about them, their habitats, and their life cycles. In the quiet of the woods, I’m also sure we discovered a little something about ourselves as well.



Jed Fox Holding Jefferson Salamander, above & left.

Photos by Kristin Fox

Landis portraits: Jason Castle

A series about the people behind the plants at the Arboretum

—Nolan Marciniac

In a sense, Jason Castle, one of the Board’s newest trustees, has come full circle.

Jason grew up in rural Schoharie County and, as the only boy in a family with four girls, spent quite a bit of his childhood entertaining himself in the outdoors. He spent summers camping out in the woods, and then, in time, hiking, fishing, and hunting.

He pursued his interest in nature at SUNY Cobleskill, earning an AS in Biology in 1997. He completed a BS in Environmental and Forest Biology, with a minor in Microbiology, at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 1999. After a year of research at the Milkhaus Labs in RI, Jason moved back to Schoharie County and took a position at GE Global Research in 2000, where he has involved in preclinical trials in fields ranging from molecular imaging and ultrasound technology to cancer therapy. At GE, he met Jeff

Schworm, a long-time friend of the Arboretum, who suggested that Jason join the Board of Trustees.

Jason felt that serving on the Board would provide him an opportunity to capitalize on his dedication to ecological issues as well as his environmental studies. He said that he wholeheartedly supports the Arboretum’s educational mission. He is concerned about “the lack of respect for nature and the role it plays in people’s lives, even such a simple thing as the weather.” The Arboretum, he believes, can bring people back in touch with nature. “There are so few open . . . [and] relatively undeveloped spaces around us. [Here] there are manicured gardens, overgrown pastures, and old growth forests—and everything in between” so that people can appreciate the diversity of nature, as well as its closeness and its beauty.

Jason remembered bringing his family to the series of bluegrass concerts at the Meeting House last summer, the back doors thrown open to the sweeping view of the Schoharie Valley, a blanket spread on the lawn, children running and tumbling. “There’s something for everyone here,” he said, “and it’s rewarding to contribute time, or money, or even baked goods.”

“You really cannot beat the scenery and open spaces of Schoharie County. It’s where I grew up, and after going away to college, then living in Rhode Island, you develop an appreciation for what it has to offer. . . I wouldn’t have it any other way,” he said.

In 2005 he and his wife Jessica built a house in Esperance. They have two children, Tyler, 4, and Collin, 18 months. They maintain a large garden, chickens, cows, and bees.

All within walking distance of the Arboretum.