

# Connecticut Urban Forest Council Awards Notable Trees Tour

Nearly 400 people attended last year's Notable Trees of Hartford Tours. These unique tours garnered so much praise and attention, that in November, they earned recognition and an award from Connecticut Urban Forest Council. Former city councilman Mike McGarry and former Hartford School principal Mary Alice McNaboe of the Leadership of Greater Hartford's Third Age Initiative accepted the award on behalf of the planning committee.

These tours, lead by well-known tree expert Ed Richardson, with the support of Hartford City Forester John Kehoe, and Educational Director of the Cedar Hill Cemetery Irene McHugh, featured the exceptional trees of the Cedar Hill Cemetery and the Institute of Living. This year, Ed Richardson and John Kehoe are teaming up again to cover new ground and highlight even more notable trees, this time, along Asylum Avenue in Hartford. The tour will feature the rare and champion trees on the grounds of The Hartford, Aetna, Hartford College for Women, and Saint Francis Hospital.

To reserve your seat on our upcoming Saturday, May 24th tour (8:50am-12:30pm), please send a check for \$12 per adult (\$6 per youth age 15 and under), along with your name, address, telephone number, and email address to our Laurel Street office. Be sure to write "tree tour" in the memo line of your check and make checks payable to "Knox Parks Foundation." Payments must be received by Friday, May 9th and are non-refundable. For more information please contact Program Developer/Manager Jacquie Berger at 860-951-7694, jacquieb@knoxparks.org.



Mike McGarry and Mary Alice McNaboe receive award for Notable Trees of Hartford tours.

## REMINDER!

Now is the time to sign up for garden plots! If you are either an experienced Knox Parks Foundation gardener or a novice, sign up now and get your garden plot(s) for the 2003 season. Call Donna Gordon at (860) 951-7694 or email her at donnag@knoxparks.org for more information.

## New Faces

The New Year has brought some fantastic new staff members to the Knox Parks Foundation. On February 3, Mary Crean joined the staff as our new Development Director. Crean previously served as Director of Development/Admissions at a local Catholic high school and has over 20 years of successful business development, operations, marketing/sales, public and media relations experience. Her background also includes such entrepreneurial endeavors as The Fitness Clinic and Avant Garde Media. Her responsibilities with Knox Parks Foundation will include directing mail appeals, fundraising events, and corporate and lead donor solicitation.

After a few years of directing and developing programs for the Holcomb Farm Environmental Learning Center in West Granby, CT, Jacquie Berger brings her skills as an educator and pro-



New staff members to Knox Parks, Mary Crean, development director, and Jacquie Berger, program developer/manager.



gram manager to us. She will be helping Knox to continue to bring quality professional development workshops to teachers, enhance educational programs for local youth, and provide enrichment opportunities and programs to community gardeners and the Greater Hartford Community.

We are pleased to be adding these enthusiastic and experienced new professionals to our staff, and are looking forward to seeing how they will help Knox grow.

# The Green Thumb Print

The newsletter of the  
**KNOX**  
PARKS FOUNDATION  
Winter 2003

# Professional Development at Knox Parks: Hartford Teachers Go Back to the Classroom

**K**nox has entered its second year of assisting Hartford Public Schools in introducing a kit-based science curriculum. In collaboration with Ken Fastiggi, Susan Czapla, and Felix Martinez of the Hartford Board of Education Science Department, Knox offers a series of workshops to help familiarize teachers with the new curriculum materials and activities.

On January 16th, Knox Parks' Horticultural Director Ron Pitz bravely crammed four weeks of classroom exploration into just four hours of hands-on learning experience for 17 third grade teachers. The teachers came to prepare for their spring Plant Growth and Development unit and to learn about Wisconsin Fast Plants. These unique *brassic*s, developed specifically for research and educational purposes, are the ideal plant for classroom investigation because they develop from seed to maturity in just four weeks. This not only fits perfectly into the time con-



*Teachers get their hands dirty learning about plant growth and development.*

straints of an already busy teaching schedule, but also satisfies the curiosity and attention-span of third graders.

In March and April, Knox will be offering two more teacher workshops, covering the kit-based science curriculum units on Butterfly Lifecycles and Ecosystems.

## Art for the Parks a Great Success

**A**splendid crowd filled the halls of the Old State House for the Knox Parks Foundation's annual Art for the Parks fundraiser on October 25. Drawn by XLColor's excellent banner and a new invitation design from Acorn Studio, a congenial group gathered to bid on art assembled and displayed by Korin Watras of Farmington Valley Arts Center. This year's art included three prints donated by the Phoenix Companies and framed by Shortell Framing. Partygoers were treated to the music of the Hartford Conservatory Jazz Duo, irresistible food prepared by Inspired Catering, and a tasty Octoberfest brew from City Steam, safe in the knowledge that free parking was provided by Talcott II Gold, LLC. Not only was the event a great way to spend an evening, but it surpassed its fundraising goal. Special thanks to:

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The Green Thumb Print

The newsletter of the  
**KNOX**  
PARKS FOUNDATION

# President's Message – Changing of the Seasons

by *Richard R. Rendeiro*

Although it's snowing outside as I write this column, I know that with the Hartford Flower Show only days ahead, spring will be coming soon, and we will see another change in our wonderful New England seasons. I love the variety of our New England weather, the beauty and serenity of a deep snowfall, the power of a nor'easter, the vigor of a crisp autumn day, the sensual pleasure of a hot summer day, and especially the joy of that first spring day when the snow has melted, the crocus are blooming, and you can finally go outside without a coat.

Much like our weather, organizations go through "seasons." For the Knox Parks Foundation, our change in the seasons is reflected partly in the departure of several long-time board members, as well as the recent appointment of a group of new board members, and the hiring of two important members of the Knox staff. Over the last year, Knox was devastated by the passing of our dear friend Jackie Lloyd, a past President, twenty-year board member and active participant in virtually all of the Knox activities over the last quarter century. The beginning of 2003 also brought the retirement of two other board members, each of whom had also served as a past President of Knox Parks Foundation. Nancy Macy and Caroline Rohrbach had collectively served on the Board of Directors for over forty years, and their absence will be keenly felt. The contributions which these three extraordinary women made to our organization were enormous. However, while we feel saddened by these departures, we are excited by the wonderful new group of individuals that recently joined the board, as well as by the recent hiring of Mary Crean as our Development Director and Jacquie Berger as our Program Manager. These highly qualified individ-

uals give me a great sense of confidence that Knox will continue to flourish for years to come.

Knox Parks Foundation is also facing a change in the economic seasons. With the state and federal budget crunches, funding for many programs has been

reduced or eliminated. Knox has not been immune to these funding reductions. Several of its key programs, including its major Hartford beautification effort, have had significant public funding reductions, requiring a greater reliance on volunteers from the Hartford area, including civic organizations, school groups and businesses, to assist in running these programs. It has been very gratifying to see the overwhelmingly positive response to our "call to arms" in order to ensure that there is no backsliding in our efforts to beautify Hartford.

As with many challenging projects, the beautification of Hartford appears to be an overwhelming task. However, we have seen tremendous progress in the last several years based on a combination of the Hartford Blooms program, the work of neighborhood organizations, and the efforts of individuals throughout Hartford, a number of whom recently received well deserved recognition. The synergistic effect of these efforts is moving us closer towards our mutual goals. We thank everyone for their financial and volunteer support of the efforts of the Knox Parks Foundation, and hope that you will expand and increase that support to help us work through this latest "change of seasons."



*Richard R. Rendeiro*

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## Short Takes

### **FREE CONTAINER GARDENING WORKSHOP!**

Mark your calendars! On Saturday May 17th Knox is offering a FREE Container Gardening Workshop in collaboration with the Connecticut Master Gardeners Association. In this workshop, we'll explore different ways to beautify your home and porch with potted plants. Ron Pitz, the Knox Parks Foundation's Horticultural Director will offer an educational lecture and then bring us into the greenhouse for some hands-on experience. Attendees are welcome to stay longer to learn about transplanting and plant care and to help us prepare Hartford Blooms pots. Call Jacquie Berger here at Knox at 951-7694 for details and to enroll. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn and give something back!

### **YOU AND YOUR GROUP CAN HELP MAKE HARTFORD BLOOM!**

The Knox greenhouses are gearing up for another season of Hartford Blooms. This unique program, which brings over 1,000 enormous flowerpots to street corners throughout the city of Hartford, requires a tremendous amount of effort and preparation. During February, March, April and May, pots need to be prepared, seedlings must be transplanted, and 1,000s of plants must be cared for. This job is too big for Knox to take on alone—we need your help! If you or your group is interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities at the Knox Parks Foundation greenhouses, please call 860-951-7694 to sign-up or request a brochure today!

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# Knox Presents "One Book" Haitian Garden at the Connecticut Flower & Garden Show

The Knox Parks Foundation presented a Haitian yard garden and natural surroundings at the February 2003 Connecticut Flower & Garden Show. This exhibit was inspired by the One Book for Hartford Campaign's fall 2002 book, *Breathe, Eyes, Memory*, by Edwidge Danticat. From the first sentence, the book describes Haiti's trees and flowers to invoke the feeling of this tropical island. The purpose of Knox Parks Foundation's exhibit was to bring the atmosphere of this narrative to life.

"This was a new challenge for us," commented Knox's horticultural director Ron Pitz as he described the process of researching and developing this latest exhibit. Every effort was made to create an authentic Haitian scene, complete with typical island hut and plants selected to provide a tropical atmosphere. The Knox Green Crew constructed the hut out of corrugated tin, with a roof made out of corrugated tin topped with a layer of thatch.

From daffodils to banana trees, the horticultural

elements of the display came together from a wide variety of sources. The plants featured in the yard garden, including corn, squash, and tomatoes, were all raised from seed in the Foundation's Laurel Street greenhouses. The large spike plants (*dracaena*) are veterans of the Hartford Blooms Program, finally joining their tropical cousins after many years of adding color and beauty to the City of Hartford. The bougainvillea and *murraya paniculata* were on loan from Karla Dalley, and many of the other plants in the display had been donated to Knox over the years as they outgrew people's yards and foyers.

By bringing this exotic garden into the Connecticut Flower & Garden Show, Knox hopes to raise awareness about our region's diversity, and to promote activities, such as the One Book campaign, that strive to add to the cultural strength and unity of the Hartford area.

## Park Plan Adopted

Pope Park has become the only Hartford park with a full-scale master plan adopted by the City Council. Spearheaded by the Friends of Pope Park, funded by the Pope Hartford Designated Fund, and supported by the Knox Parks Foundation, the master planning process was carried out by Carol R. Johnson Associates (CRJA), a well-known planning and landscape architecture firm from the Boston area.

The 71-acre, 100-year-old park was once defined by the south branch of the park river, which formed its western edge from Hamilton Street to Capital Avenue. Without the river, which was buried by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1970's, Pope Park, a gift of noted industrialist Col. Albert Pope, needed a new defining characteristic. Through many public meetings and work sessions, CRJA realized that new character, emphasizing pathways and entrance points to make the park the crossroads of four adjoining neighborhoods. Where possible, the plan restored historic design elements. It also focused on strengthening the ecological systems within the park while keeping maintenance costs low.

The final plan, which will cost at least \$9 million to complete, includes enhancement of forest areas, extensive plantings of trees and shrubs, creation of an amphitheater overlooking the pond, restoration of formal gardens, creation of adequate parking for events, closing Pope Park Drive, and re-aligning the intersection of Sigourney Street and Park Terrace to give children from the Burns School area safer access to the park. The plan, scheduled to take 3-10 years to complete, also includes a detailed phasing plan and indicates likely funding sources for various types of work.

The plan is available for review at the Hartford Public Library.

## Cultivating Better Growers



Jon Rowley gets down and dirty discussing composting at the 2nd Annual Community Gardening Conference. Photo: Betsy Sneath, New Haven Ecology Project.

Many community gardeners (including 14 from Hartford), community garden coordinators, greenspace organizers, and organization staff members convened on January 25 at Southern Connecticut College to participate in Connecticut's 2nd Annual Community Gardening Conference. Participants enjoyed having the opportunity to become better gardeners and more informed and active community members by attending workshops on soil health, horticulture, and the social issues surrounding community gardening and food policy.

In addition to being one of the conference's sponsors, Knox Parks had the pleasure of hosting the conference's keynote speaker, Master Composter Jon Rowley. Rowley is the inspired former Site Coordinator of the Interbay P-Patch Community Garden in Seattle. He regaled the assembled with wild tales of oyster composting, his "compost wedding," and stories of how soup and bread can bring a whole community together to compost and build a better garden. His stories, experiences, and determined yet quirky outlook, provided yet another inspiring example of how soil building can build both a garden and a community.

### Knox Parks Foundation

75 Laurel Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
(860) 951-7694

e-mail: [info@knoxparks.org](mailto:info@knoxparks.org)  
[www.knoxparks.org](http://www.knoxparks.org)

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