INSIDE:

Remembering Roy:
Founding Curator &
Director

850 trees and $700,000

Festival of Lights: Start planning!

Docents pass the 17,000 visitor test

The Mission of the VGBA is "to inspire understanding of the vital importance of plants to all life." Each issue of CLIPPINGS offers you fresh insight into how we carry out that Mission, and deliver benefits to our members and the community.

The VBGA would like to acknowledge that VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory are located on the occupied, unceded, shared lands of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
by Don Zarowny, President

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the VBGA, I am pleased to provide a summary of your Board’s activities since the AGM in the spring.

We have identified chairpersons for both standing and special committees, who will be reviewing and establishing work plans through the end of the business year.

For the municipal elections, the Board approved an Election Readiness and Engagement strategy, and hosted an all candidates briefing in August, where the mission and objectives of the VBGA were presented. Candidates running for the Park Board were also invited to speak at the Forum held at VanDusen in October.

The Board has begun working toward a new Joint Operating Agreement in 2019. Newly elected commissioners as work begins will continue to work with the Park Board and Association and our members were heard. We ensured the voices of the candidates, we ensured the voices of the candidates, we ensured the voices of the candidates, we ensured the voices of the candidates, we ensured the voices of the candidates.

Two of the most important elements of meeting many of you, and look forward to building these relationships in the coming seasons.

In 1886 the Garden property centered on an extensive 6,000-acre land grant given by the Province of British Columbia to the Canadian Pacific Railway for extending the country’s transcontinental railway line. The original old growth forest was logged around the mid-19th century. By 1895, Granville Street was a dirt path surrounded by thin second growth forest, and was used as the main thoroughfare for farmers along the Fraser River to bring their produce to markets in the city. With further urban expansion came gentrification, and in 1912, the 109-acre Shaughnessy Heights Golf Course was inaugurated. It would remain a golf course until 1950. In 1975, VanDusen Botanical Garden was opened on a 55-acre portion of the original golf course.

Volunteer Profile: Bloedel Docents
by Penny Williams, Volunteer Writer

Remember the titan arum at the Bloedel Conservatory? The epic 10 days in July when the plant stunned 17,000 visitors with its beautiful bloom and dreadful smell? Not only did the Amorphophallus titanum show what it can do, so did the Bloedel Volunteer Docent Program.

Docents at Bloedel act as ambassadors to the Conservatory and enhance visitors’ knowledge of plants and birds that live within the Conservatory through interactive, engaging experiences.

If you were there — if you received guidance, information, a reviving drink of water, or had your picture taken with the plant — then you experienced first-hand the volunteers’ depth of knowledge and cheerful dedication. “It was exhilarating,” says Docent Rosemary Dupuis, one of many who worked long hours to ensure satisfied visitors despite the crowds and heat. “It’s made me even more enthusiastic about my role here.”

Initiated in 2014, Bloedel now has 35 Docents representing the Conservatory daily. “I love welcoming people and sharing information with them,” says keen birdwatcher Mary Landell, who joined the team in 2015.

Gardener and parrot enthusiast Sandi Quattrociocchi, a Docent since 2016, nods agreement. “I love welcoming people and sharing information with them,” says keen birdwatcher Mary Landell, who joined the team in 2015.

EDUCATION AT THE VBGA

Exciting news: Since 2016, the VBGA has doubled participation in our field trip programs, and we're looking forward to increasing that further. Thanks to the support of VBGA donors, we were able to add a Community Outreach Coordinator to the Education team to help meet the increased demand from groups wishing to visit the Garden or Conservatory, or for us to visit them. Hiring a Community Outreach Coordinator means we can spend more time engaging audiences not reachable before. This includes our largest Pollinator Days event yet! We subsidized transportation costs for classes otherwise unable to attend, and hosted almost 600 people. One bursary recipient called the day a “really fantastic educational experience” as her students explored our living classroom.

Even though most seasonal staff have moved on, we want to sincerely thank them for their hard work. Our Summer Camp Leaders reflected on their season in the Garden. “I loved watching the children learn about nature while being immersed in it, rather than sitting in the classroom,” said Alanna. Blakely added, “I am so grateful to have had the chance to walk around the outdoors, talking with kids about nature and call it work.”

We are thrilled to be expanding into a new space for programming, camps, and workshops as the Teaching Garden is developed in 2019. Make sure to sign up at our website for our monthly Education E-News updates to hear more. Want to get in touch directly? Email us at learn@vandusen.org.

COMMUNITY AND OUTREACH

by Penny Williams, Volunteer Writer

The VBGA exists to connect people with nature. Community outreach is one of the ways we strengthen those connections.

The work of our Canadian Heritage Educator is an example. This position was created as teachers consistently ask for indigenous-focused content. With federal funding from the Young Canada Works program, we hired Geronimo Alec, of the Wet’suwet’en Nation, to bring it to life. He began with summer camp tours and workshops — “I love teaching children, they soak it up like sponges” — and by early fall was contributing to adult programming as well. “I’m training Volunteer knowledge into their existing tours, and I’m also creating a new Aboriginal Heritage Tour.”

Yet sometimes outreach isn’t about adding content, it’s about removing obstacles. Our Bursary program offers free transportation and on-site resources to community and school groups that otherwise couldn’t afford a visit, and it is constantly in demand. Devon Deckant, Field Trip Coordinator, quotes feedback from a leader on one of these trips: “Some [participants] have never been to such a place. One little girl stood next to me at the lake and said, ‘This is the happiest day of my life.’”

When we meet community needs, we enrich the organization as a whole, and we all benefit.

MEBERSHIP TIPS

by Janene Preston, Director of Membership Services

Over the past months, our members and their family and friends have enjoyed walks, talks, tours; exhibits, education courses, summer camps, and unique events such as the viewing of the titan arum (Uncle Fester) blooming at Bloedel Conservatory. Many members enjoyed respite from the heat within VanDusen Garden and attended the August Social Sunday VSG events! Member Mornings continue to be well attended from April to September. We are delighted with the support of our members, both returning and new, to our Association and look forward to engaging and informing our members through the coming seasons.

Gift Certificates for Membership:
Share the beauty of the Gardens! Gift of Membership is a great idea for special occasions. Purchase at VanDusen Garden 10am-3pm daily or over the phone 604-257-8675.

Monthly Member News & Education Updates:
Discover something new every month and season! Are you receiving our monthly electronic newsletters? If not, please contact the Membership Office 604-257-8675 or membership@vandusen.org.

Benefits:
For all discounts and benefits, a valid photo membership card must be presented.

• NEW! 10% off at Coquille Fine Seafood and L’Abattoir restaurants. Effective until Dec 2018
• Unlimited free entry to both VanDusen Garden and Bloedel Conservatory (special events excluded)
• Discounted admission to special events such as Sakura Days and Festival of Lights
• Bi-annual newsletter VBGA Clippings and monthly emailed Member News and Education Updates
• 10% off VBGA Adult Education programs
• 10% off and priority registration for kids camps
• Volunteer opportunities
• Borrowing privileges from VanDusen’s Library
• Annual Members’ Only Sale at VanDusen Garden Shop
• Discounts at participating nurseries, gardens, and “Vancouver’s Must See Attractions”
• 10% off at Shaughnessy Restaurant

View all benefits at vandusengarden.org/get-involved/membership
REMEmBERING vANDUSEn’S FoUNDING CURAToR AND GARDEN DIRECToR, R. Roy FoRSTER, oC
by Cynthia Sayre, Curator of Collections

“The importance of botanical gardens has increased for the simple reason that the world has changed so much, with loss of habitat, and species extinctions. The role of botanical gardens, not only for species, but for humanity as a whole, is to impart an understanding of the interconnected web of nature, of which we are a part as hominids.” – Roy Forster, 2016

On September 7, 2018, we lost our dear friend, colleague and visionary, Richard Roy Forster, OC, at the age of 85. Reflecting upon his immense contributions to the Garden, I circle the mulched path around the R. Roy Forster Cypress Pond, dodging low-hanging bald cypress branches, full with this year’s growth. The water reflects puzzle pieces of grey sky framed by blurred branches and interrupted by woody cypress ‘knees’ jutting up through the water. Everything is so dense, green and lush. It was Roy’s favourite area of the garden and in 2016 this special place was named in his honour.

Roy envisioned and created 50 botanical collections which, woven seamlessly together, form VanDusen Botanical Garden. A formally trained artist and botanist, Roy used over 7,500 species and varieties of plants as his palette. He described his approach to garden design as “gardenesque” – planting so one collection flows into the next, connected by common elements of geographic origin or related species. Avoiding straight lines, collections are situated in their most suitable ecological niches within the landscape – lessons learned from nature.

Roy recalled, “In 1972, looking at the abandoned golf course (now VanDusen) as a painter, I saw it as a bare canvas ready for paint.” For his inspiring living body of work, which will endure for generations, Roy was awarded the Order of Canada in 1999 and the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal in 2003.

Deeply committed to conservation and environmental stewardship, Roy believed that VanDusen will serve as a centre to inspire future generations to protect the Earth’s great diversity of life, which exists in such a precarious state. Perhaps his greatest legacy is that of hope.