Haverford is currently in the latter stages of restoring the Duck Pond, the larger of two college ponds, that was last dredged in the early 1990s. Years of silt buildup had left the pond very shallow. The depth of about 7 feet of water was reduced to about 2 feet, and threatened the pond’s ecosystem. In all, we will have removed about 7,000 cubic yards of silt and sludge.

Much of Lower Merion Township’s storm water feeds the pond. Along with that water comes silt from roads, sidewalks and lawns. The Duck Pond, in turn, flows into an unnamed creek that is a tributary of Cobbs Creek. The portion that runs through Haverford College is the only section of this stream that sees daylight.

This dredging project spent two years in the planning stage. Permits needed to be acquired, engineers were consulted, contracts were bid out, and conservation and various other local and state wildlife agencies needed to be contacted. A team of Haverford faculty was instrumental in saving and working with the two contracted environmental companies.

Plans for wildlife in the Duck Pond began well before any actions were taken, with the college and the college community working closely and collaboratively. Beginning last spring, a certified wildlife removal firm, in accordance with state law, re-homed fish, turtles and frogs to natural bodies of water such as Darby Creek and brought the non-native koi and goldfish to a college rescue team which cared for them in holding pools while they awaited new homes. The veterinarian on the college’s IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) played an invaluable role in connecting the team with a koi hobbyist who was willing and able to adopt many koi. A third member of the Haverford community joined the team in its rescue effort, helped care for the fish and found homes for all the goldfish.

Overall, this rescue team managed to save and re-home more than 70 fish; about 10 others were euthanized because they were clearly suffering from disease. A small number of other fish have been temporarily relocated to the upper pond. The larger snapping turtles now residing in the upper pond will return to the Duck Pond when it refills with water later this fall. Some smaller turtles have been moving into the surrounding marshland themselves; from time to time some are visible on the mud flats. Turtles routinely migrate across habitats and as of late August, there were no turtles visible from the perimeter of the work area. Our wildlife engineers will continue to advise us about how best to manage any turtles that might stray into the work area.

Months of planning went into the pond dredging project.

As the water level dropped, fish rescue operations went into high gear.
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Big trees, rolling meadows and grand allées make Haverford College Arboretum a very special place. I knew that the first time I saw it. What a wonderful place to work, study and enjoy what Mother Nature has to offer.
I’ve had quite a few jobs at Haverford. Bill Astifan hired me as a horticulturist in 2001. Since then, I’ve held the positions of Arboretum Supervisor, Grounds Manager, Assistant Director of Facilities and now Arboretum Director. So far it’s been a great ride. Where else could you work with the trees one day and help maintain beehives the next?

I start the next leg of my journey with a full plate. In October we are partnering with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and TreeVitalize for a stream bank restoration project. The Arboretum Executive Committee has been hard at work planning for what we hope will be an improvement to the stream bank below the overflow at the pond. Then in March we will begin replanting the College Lane allée. We are working with a contractor and a local nursery to plant 40 young trees. Current oaks will remain and will be removed as they succumb to age and disease. We also just finished a tree assessment, and are cautiously waiting for results on the current health of our collection. Over a period of nine weeks, an outside firm assessed 1,300 trees with a diameter over 20 inches and noted their health status with painted dots. This included the entire Nature Trail. It was quite an undertaking.

The fall schedule of events is in place and ready to go. Our annual dinner October 12 will feature Jenny Rose Carey of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s Meadowbrook Farm. If you’ve never had the opportunity to meet her, I highly encourage you to attend. She is a lively and entertaining speaker. We have also teamed up with the Hardy Plant Society to bring you landscape designer Carrie Preston. She’ll talk on “Natural Planting Design: The Second Dutch Wave?” I look forward to chatting with you at both events.

I want to take this opportunity to inform you of several planned changes. We’re currently interviewing for an Arboretum Program Coordinator to plan and execute new and exciting events for members. This person will work closely with members, volunteers and student workers. Going forward, the program coordinator will take over this column to inform and involve current and future members.

We are looking for inspiration and feedback on how we can make our events more appealing. Please don’t hesitate to contact me at ckent@haverford.edu if you’d like to offer ideas. The success of the Arboretum comes from members like you.

Claudia Kent
Arboretum Director

BIRTH OF A LANDMARK

by Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator

Haverford didn’t always have a pond.

Back when the school opened in 1833, the young Quaker boys were allowed to visit frozen ponds on neighboring farms to ice skate. Eventually the small stream on Haverford’s property was dammed each winter to allow for formation of a small pond. The area reverted to a meadow in the summer where horses and cows could graze.

The permanent damming of this tributary flowing into Cobbs Creek was debated for decades. Alumni members of the Campus Club, predecessor to today’s Arboretum Association, led by Dan Smiley Class of 1930 and Ed Woolman Class of 1893, experimented with a year-round pond in 1931. Consensus was reached, and the pond became a permanent part of Haverford’s landscape.

Winter skating continued to be a popular pastime through the 1960s until sufficient ice formation tapered off. Since then, ducks and Canada geese have taken over the approximately 3-acre water feature. The occasional migrating great blue heron stops to check out the fish thriving in its depths. Several species of turtles, including quite large snapping turtles, surface to sun and occasionally wander through the nearby lawns.

The Skating Pond has been renamed the Duck Pond, and it remains a much-loved feature of Haverford’s historic landscape.

A TRADITION NO MORE

As Haverford welcomed the incoming Class of 2021 with Customs Week, one practice that’s no longer part of orientation is throwing a freshman into the Duck Pond. In this photograph from 1955, upperclassmen toss a ‘Rhinie’ into its waters. The tradition dated to the early 1870s as did use of the name Rhinie, which was a mythical Greek term for “little green worm.”

Photo courtesy of Haverford College Special Collections
A TREASURED CAMPUS ECOSYSTEM
(continued from page 1)

Once the wildlife was relocated, the dredging company started hauling the sludge and silt from the bottom of the pond onto Merion Field, the lawn area between the pond and Lancaster Avenue. Huge earth movers spread the sludge around in an effort to drain out the water. At initial completion the field will be 18 inches higher than its previous state. The soil, once it dries out, will be reduced by about two-thirds. The large pile of topsoil now stored at the edge of the field will be distributed over the spoils, and grass should be growing by mid-October.

So no, we’re not filling in the Duck Pond, nor are we building residence halls on Merion Field. What we are doing is ensuring that the pond remains a vibrant ecosystem for many years to come with fish, turtles and other wildlife for the next generation. We consider our campus a treasure, and take seriously our responsibility to care for it.

MEOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD PLANTS . . .
by Carol Wagner, Horticulturist

While my learned colleague has waxed poetic about the dogs in his life and the canine-named plants in his garden (see the summer newsletter issue), I feel that it would be cat-astrophic to ignore the feline-inspired elements of the landscape.

There might be a Tiger’s jaw perched on your windowsill right now. This small succulent has thick green leaves whose white teeth along the edges are not as dangerous as they appear.

Out in the garden my Callie Cat was always attracted to the Catnip, one of the most famous of the plants in the genus Nepeta. As a member of the mint family, it contains an oil which can turn a pussycat into a lion, and vice versa! Butterflies love it too!

What spring garden or Philadelphia Flower Show visit would be complete without an armful of Pussy willow branches. These shrubs in the Salix family are famous for their furry flowerbud coverings, a true harbinger of spring. But it’s a dog of a plant for the rest of the year.

Cat tail is another plant more famous for its buds rather than its flowers. With 37 species from America to Australia and Russia to southern Africa, there are many mud puddles ready to grow some type of Typha!

Tiger lily is the name for an Asian daylily which has naturalized in North America and around the world, known for its orange flowers with dark markings. The flower buds are very tasty in a salad!

But do not even think about eating Leopard’s bane, also known as Aconite, wolfsbane or monkshood. This beautiful fall-blooming perennial in the buttercup family is so toxic that it has been used as an arrowhead poison for hunting from Algeria to the Aleutian Islands. The Roman poet Ovid mentions it in a poem he wrote over 2000 years ago.

Most fascinating might be the lowly Dandelion. Found in 30 million year-old fossils in Russia, this member of the Aster family was probably brought to North America on the Mayflower for its medicinal uses. The leaves are edible, the flower petals are used to make dandelion wine and the roots can be ground, roasted and used like coffee. It is one of the ingredients in root beer. In the garden it is a beneficial, but invasive, weed. The nectar is important for bees and butterflies in the early spring, while the seeds are food for birds. The plant adds nitrogen and minerals to the soil while the taproot breaks up heavy soils. It is a nuisance in lawns and causes significant economic damage . . . it is the plant we love to hate!

With even more feline-y plants not mentioned here, I am sure you will find one that is purr-fect for your garden.

So, raise a glass of Dandelion wine to celebrate on National Cat Day, October 29!!
HOMEGROWN AT HAVERFORD

As summer wanes, the tomatoes are offering their abundance, melons are ripening, chard is thriving, pumpkins sprawling, peppers fruiting and broccoli sprouting. Our main farm plot, which is a part of the Haverford Community Gardens, sits alongside the southern bend of the Nature Trail. Next to the plot we have our fruit trees, beehives and the greenhouse where all our plants are started, farm meetings are held, tools are kept, and where we weigh and prepare our produce for distribution.

At the Haverford College Apartments located down-campus, we have another garden where this season we are growing sage, lemon balm, oregano, lavender, basil, raspberries, blackberries, peas and beans. Both gardens are outdoor classrooms for learning about sustainable agriculture and making local organic produce accessible to Haverford students and friends.

The summer was full of fun and productive collaborations. For the second year we had students from the nearby Shipley School as apprentices on the farm while they completed their community service requirements. These three fabulous high school seniors helped weed, plant, and harvest for three weeks. We took them on field trips to Heritage Farm and Greensgrow Farm, both in Philadelphia, to enrich their understanding of urban agriculture.

Malin Ehrsam ’18 hosted a kindergarten class field trip from the Parent Infant Center in Philadelphia. The college’s Serendipity Day Camp brought children from the local neighborhoods to the farm as a weekly elective activity. A large group of children and their counselors came to the farm for an hour during which Malin and I gave them a short presentation and guided them through an activity such as weeding or harvesting garlic or cherry tomatoes. We love having children on the farm!

This summer marks the second year of our CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. This year we had about 20 Haverford students involved. Each student worked for two hours a week in exchange for a weekly share of the farm’s harvest. We worked around the students’ schedules with one large group on Thursday evenings, another large group on Saturday mornings and a few people who came during the weekdays. This structure has been very beneficial in providing us with consistent labor and consumers for our produce. I would like to modify the program for the fall semester so that students who are interested can have more access to the farm and our produce.

As I am writing this, it is August at the farm. The weeds are high, the harvest is plentiful and I am looking forward to the students’ return. Our farm club will reunite in early September to delegate watering, compost-turning and weeding responsibilities, and plan the end of the year activities. I am planting the fall crop of hearty brassica that will be able to withstand cooler weather. These will be ready to harvest for our annual Ehaus (student Environmental House) farm dinner.

Every day at the farm is an adventure, and I am always learning. It is my pleasure to be here as a resource for our student farmers and the larger community that benefits from our farm. Keep an eye out for our fall veggies and open volunteer parties!

KING COTTON

I t was as if I was marching knee-high on a cloud. The cotton research fields at Texas A&M were ready for harvest. The plants had been chemically defoliated, leaving only each miniaturized cloud-like boll showing itself to the sun.

Texas leads the U.S. in cotton production; it is the state’s largest cash crop. This country’s production is surpassed only by India and China; the best quality pima cotton comes from coastal Peru with its ideal growing conditions. Texas grows cotton on nearly 6 million acres, an area about as large as New Hampshire.

The cotton plant is in the genus *Gossypium* and finds its place in the mallow family, *Malvaceae*. Besides the long list of obvious textile and fabric products derived from cotton, it is also a food (cotton seed oil) and forage product for humans and livestock. More recently you may see the plant used in ornamental horticulture as a summer annual. This is how we can enjoy the plant at Haverford.

If you are fortunate enough to come upon it at your favorite garden center next spring, give it a try. It is grown as an annual in our region. You can expect the plant to be in the 2 by 2-foot range and sport hibiscus-like flowers. The foliage has been bred to be a nice burgundy color and the flowers range from white to pink. In order to enjoy

(continued on page 5)
If working for the Arboretum was a class, it would fulfill all distribution requirements. Perhaps, most obviously, it would fulfill the natural science requirement by providing a background in horticulture, permaculture and plant identification. I’ve learned to distinguish the various trees and flowers, and not a day goes by that I don’t lovingly name the plants to myself along my walks. I’ve learned how to care for plants, everything from the obvious watering and weeding, to pruning and deadheading. I can describe fascicles, peduncles and girdling roots (and assure you that these are, in fact, real words).

The Arboretum would also meet the social science requirement. Through a sociological lens, working for the Arboretum made me consider how different jobs and social roles are valued or devalued, and the ways in which the college community interacts with college staff. While so many of the people I know view the Arboretum as one of the best parts of Haverford, few think about the expertise and effort that goes into maintaining it. While students expect a clean living space, few appreciate the staff who make it so. While students take the meal plan for granted, few realize how much thought and planning goes into meal preparation. The jobs that form the backbone of our community and provide the services we demand are largely thankless and seldom considered.

Arboretum 101 would also be cross-listed under humanities. It may be listed under history, as I’ve learned more about our school’s past in the last two months than I had in the last three years. I’ve seen layouts, maps and photographs of campus buildings and trees which correspond to the earliest days of Haverford until the present. I’ve heard invaluable information about the Penn Treaty Elm on Barclay Beach from Carol Wagner, who very likely knows more on the subject than any living person. I’ve heard stories of the Victory Gardens on campus during World War II, of when the Duck Pond was only filled during the winter to be an ice skating rink, and of the time that Lady Darwin visited campus. It may also be listed under philosophy, perhaps as philosophy of mindfulness. Working outside with my hands has been meditative work, which has helped me remain in the present moment, clear my head, and become grounded (pun intended).

More than any class, the Arboretum has taught me to enjoy life’s simple pleasures. I learned how to hold a snapdragon and make it grin and giggle, that daylily buds have a pleasant, fresh taste with an almost spicy aftertaste, that columbines make musical rattles when shaken during their seeding. I developed a love for the rich, robust, earthy smell of mulch, along with the delightfully steamy and warm sensation of plunging one’s hands into it. I grew to appreciate waking up to the sunrise and basking in the crepuscular glow of morning light, and the otherworldly and distorted whir of cicadas.

For these reasons and so many more, I am eternally grateful to the Arboretum for this learning opportunity. I cannot express enough how thankful I am to the absolutely incredible horticulturists who made my summer job an informative, transformative and immensely pleasurable experience.

KING COTTON (continued from page 3)

the onset of the cotton boll itself, a long hot summer is necessary.

Over the centuries advances in technologies have kept pace with the demand for cotton. At first a simple drop spindle was used to twist cotton fibers into thread; then the first spinning wheel was developed. But it took the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 to dramatically change cotton production. This machine increased the speed of which the seeds of the cotton plant could be removed from the boll by a magnitude of 10.

The cotton plant is riddled with a myriad of diseases and insect pests: at least a half dozen bacterial leaf blights, soil-born wilts, army worm, cut worm, aphids and the king of all, the cotton boll weevil. It is undeniably true that for generations cotton was king in the Deep South. American march master John Philip Sousa immortalized it in his composition "King Cotton." In his familiar style, Sousa penned this military march in 1895 for the Cotton States and International Exposition. “King Cotton” is a march I always enjoy hearing; I have fond memories of playing it in high school marching band.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Lecture
Sunday, October 1 • 2 p.m. • Sharpless Auditorium
“Natural Planting Design: The Second Dutch Wave?”
by Carrie Preston

New Jersey native Carrie Preston is among the first generation brought up with the “Dutch Wave” school of landscape design. After studying horticulture and sustainable agriculture and after years of travel, she settled in the Netherlands in 2000 to establish her own landscape design firm. She returned home last spring at the invitation of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to design a large garden in the 2017 Philadelphia Flower Show. The lecture is co-sponsored with the Hardy Plant Society/ Mid-Atlantic Region and the Henry Foundation for Botanical Research.

Annual Dinner
Thursday, October 12 • 6 to 8 p.m.
Dining Center • $38
Guest Speaker Jenny Rose Carey

Enjoy an evening reception and sit-down dinner with fellow Arboretum members in the Dining Center’s Swarthmore Room. Newly appointed Arboretum Director Claudia Kent will summarize projects in the Arboretum over the past year, followed by our evening’s speaker, Jenny Rose Carey.

Jenny Rose Carey, senior director of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s Meadowbrook Farm, most recently spoke at Haverford on the historic gardens of the Philadelphia region. This year, she’ll bring us up-to-date on life at Meadowbrook, the former estate of J. Liddon Pennock, Jr., as well as the back story of her new book, Glorious Shade: Dazzling Plants, Design Ideas, and Proven Techniques for Your Shady Garden.

Arboretum members will receive separate dinner invitations in the mail. Reservations are requested by October 5.

Tree Canopy Conference
Friday, October 13, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Roberts Hall • $125

This all-day conference on the importance of trees to the ecosystem will bring together experts on tree canopy preservation both nationally and locally and the threats communities face as in their efforts to preserve this cover. While trees provide habitat for wildlife and have a positive impact on mental health and community cohesion, they also work on air pollution removal, storm water runoff reduction and improved energy conservation.

Co-sponsored with the Morris Arboretum, registration includes lunch and break refreshments. To register, call the Morris Arboretum Education Department at 215-247-5777 ext. 125, or register online at https://online.morrisarboretum.org/canopy

“I have fond memories of planting wildflowers in the Pinetum meadow as bluebirds and swallows meandered above me.”

Matthew Fernandez, Class of 2014

A Closer Look . . .

Cool autumn days bring color to campus and piles of leaves to rake!

Photo by Mike Startup

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Members at Large
Agnes Moncy         Matt Simon ’77
Laura Patterson     Alan Wood
Doug Ross ’69

Staff Representatives:
Claudia Kent, Arboretum Director
Don Campbell, Director, Facilities Management
Jesse Lytle, Chief of Staff, President’s Office

Student Representative:
Austin Huber ’19

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