
Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter

December 2015



Beautyberry

What a month! November brought record crowds to the Creche Festival. Everyone agreed that it was the best yet! To top it off, the weather was spectacular and the Volunteers did their usual fabulous job.



The Monks Cemetery adorned with candles and mums



The beautiful wreath at the Library Entrance done by Jamie and her group



Jesus with Joseph (one of a series of paintings featured along the hall)



The wonderful “Mepkin” Creche. This year Father Christian, Brother Robert and Abbey were added. The Mepkin Creche was started last year with Fr Guerric, Br Anthony Maria and Fr Joe as characters with the Nativity scene.

Each year I expect they will add additional monks—living or dead.



The Village by the artists that made the Mepkin Creche



Golden Dome Creche (part of the University of Dayton collection featured in this year's show)



Another Creche from the University of Dayton Collection



"The Accident" (University of Dayton Collection)

Garden Updates:

The Store:

The Store and Creche Shop were busy, busy busy. There was every kind of Creche you can imagine.

St. Clare:



There were Creches featured throughout St. Clare Walk and continued to a wooden hut on the Walk to the Church.

The wooden hut was like a lean-to and the crèche inside was large carved wood.

Cloister:

The Cloister grasses were cut back and all the beds put to sleep for the winter. Here is a close up of the magnificent wreath:



Wreath at Library Entrance

The Orchard:

It looks like the orchard crew hit a home run with the persimmon grove. The brothers like them as do the retreatants. Father Joe has approved their sale in the gift shop and they are selling like hot cakes. The fruit sells for \$2.00 a piece in many stores but half that at Mepkin. Need a treat for the holidays come pick up a sack full. If you need a stocking filler this might just what you need.

More traders from the orchard in the new year ! Howard



Persimmons

Luce Garden:

The Camellias continue their show in Luce Garden. With everything newly mulched, it is even more beautiful than ever.



Branch from Alba Camellia in Room One

Retreat Center:

The Retreat Center had weekend visitors from Appalachian State. Their coursework was titled "The Sacred and the Profane". Look for an explanation next month of this retreat and how it relates to the grounds and gardens at Mepkin Abbey. The photograph below is of the area near the Retreat Center that they cleaned up and mulched.



Area groomed and mulched

Odds and Ends:

As I mentioned last month, we have another new Volunteer: Sylvia, new to the area, has joined us. We are so grateful to have her.



Sylvia

Creche Festival Volunteers:

I want to take this opportunity to commend the Creche Volunteers on the wonderful job that they do every year.. They work tirelessly and always with a big smile. Julie and Fran head up the group and work to pull all this together . This dedication of giving many hours in two weeks worth of days at a holiday time of the year is so selfless. We have watched this Festival not only grow but develop into one of the best events in the area. It is often the first time a person visits Mepkin and instantly, they feel the spirit and serenity of “the place”. We, the Garden Volunteers, want to tip our hats to them. The following photo is one of the Creche Ladies who really got into the spirit. How could you not love her?



The Christmas Tree Creche Volunteer! (Courtesy of Tom Melley)

Many thanks to Howard for the Orchard Report, Carole for the Retreat Center report information and to Langhorne for editing this issue.

As we come to the end of another year, it is so affirming to look back and see what wonders this group of men and women volunteers have brought to the grounds and gardens at Mepkin Abbey. This week I received an article by Joan Chittister. In it she paraphrases Gladwell's book, *The Tipping Point*. Gladwell pointed out that great changes come about when small groups of people do small things persistently. That could be a description of what the Garden Volunteers do—small things persistently! It is a gift to work at Mepkin and come together in fellowship. I hope each one of you will have a wonderful preparation time during Advent. The excitement fills the air---He is coming! He is coming! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all. May your lives be blessed throughout the New Year. Dottie



The Monks of Mepkin Abbey:

Fr Kevin, Br Juan, Br Francis, Fr Guerric, Br Stephen, Br Martin, Abbot Stan, Br Paul, Br Joseph, Fr Jonas, Br John, Fr Joe, Br Robert, Br Vincent