

Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter

December 2016



Newest Monk additions to the special crèche.

L to R: Brother John, Brother Stephen, Brother Joseph

November brought the Creche Festival in its full glory. Believe it or not, we did make our goal of having the gardens looking five star! Our biggest challenge was getting the watering done and walks blown before 10am, when the Visitors come. Here is a sample of some of the Creches the Visitors saw:



The traditional outdoor Creche that starts the tour



Walking through St. Clare (see how our Leopard Plants are blooming)



St. Clare



St Clare



At the Crosswalks



On the Walk to the Church



In the Breezeway



Jamie's wreath at the Entrance



Start of tour inside Library (note the additional of the angel to this Creche)



Special Creche with the Brothers



One of my favorites (due to its simplicity)



The other end of the spectrum (made of foil and cardboard)



Carved from Juniper limbs



For those of you who wish your neck was longer

What all goes into everything coming together? Let's take a look....



Jamie decorating the Store



Jamie's wreath workers making the bow for the wreath



Faithful Barbara cutting the material for the displays (she has come for years for the entire time and is a tireless Volunteer)



New Maple at Store being planted in the nick of time



New latticework installed and stained. Before, the Gallery never had a finished look as one could see the cinderblock supports. The lattice was added and stained brown to “go away” and lend stability to the building.



New look in Arbor



Redo of the Alley between the Store and Gallery



The Visitors arrive!



First Day



Coffee, Water and warm cookies



Creche Shop



Creche Shop

This month, with all the Creche news, I have chosen not to have Garden Updates except for the Orchard. As you can see, the Creche Festival with its many Volunteers, was its usual great success. Many thanks to all those who put in countless hours for the pleasure of our Visitors.

The Orchard:

We had a good crop of persimmons and Satsuma oranges this year. The persimmons, near the original mushroom barns and the composting operation, were loaded. I was initially disappointed but after the leaves dropped realized there were plenty. Marketing may be our problem but until we resolve that the volunteers will enjoy the bounty.

We need to come up with a plan to protect the orange trees. At home I can light the Christmas tree lights and break out the tarps but at the abbey we need season long protection. Last year we used cardboard from the mushroom house, this year we will need to expand to accommodate the trees growth. Wish us luck.

Howard

Odds and Ends:

Several occasions for joy at the time of the opening of the Creche Festival. First, the annual Blessing of the Graves of the deceased Brothers was held on Sunday, November 13th.



Graves decorated for the Blessing of the Graves



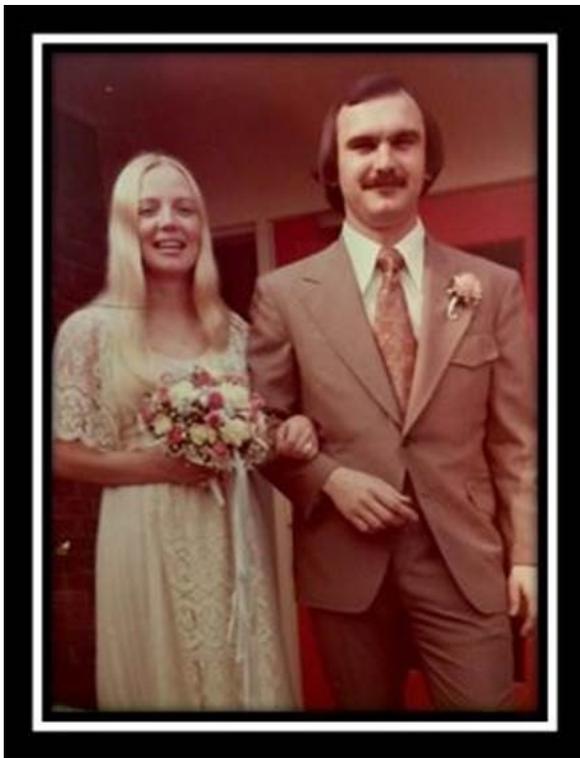
Beautiful Maple at Cemetery and by the Stations of the Cross

The other joyous occasion was the Solemn Profession of Father Jonas. Unfortunately, I was out of town and do not have photos. Congratulations to Father for this important step.

Spotlight on a Volunteer:

Spotlight on a Volunteer

In an effort to get to know each of you a little better, we are choosing a garden volunteer each month to answer a few questions and submit a brief bio for the monthly newsletter. This month we have chosen volunteer Ursula Wells. Ursula has been working and volunteering out at Mepkin for 16 years. She is our “go to” for guidance, advice, and a shoulder to lean on. Her beautiful voice and wonderful attitude embody all that is good with our volunteer program.



Ursula and Wayne Wells

Here is a brief bio from Ursula:

By God's grace, a German couple brought my family on a two month voyage to New York City and we settled in Atlanta, Georgia (1948). I was five years old and didn't realize at the time that my family had lost their home, property, business, and wealth during World War II. I was born in Java, Indonesia and attended public school from 1949-61. I wasn't a good student and really didn't care about high grades. I was active in chorus and basketball and the church has always been a big part of my life. I have my parents to thank for that. I attended Brenau College in Gainesville, GA, but left in my junior year when my father passed away. My first job was at Sears in the Atlanta office. In 1968-72 I was the resident manager of the first single's apartment complex in Atlanta called Peachtree Town. That is where I met Wayne. The rest is history. We married and moved to Moncks Corner. I worked in the Family Flower Shop from 1974-2000. One afternoon Brother Stan offered me a job working with Father Gueric in the Mepkin Store. I absolutely loved working there. At the age of 68 I retired and thought I was finished working. Two months later, I received a call from Dottie Roddy asking if I would help her in the Mepkin gardens. Never think you're too old to learn a new vocation. Working with Dottie has truly opened my eyes and I really wish we had met when I was 20 years old. I might have been a better student! My relationship with my Lord and Savior is my stronghold. My good life has been given to me by HIM. Thanks be to God.



- 1) Who would you want with you if you were stranded on a deserted island?
 - a) Wayne O. Wells
- 2) If you could do anything you wanted right now, what would it be?

- a) I am in the “now” and happy.
- 3) If money was no object, what would you do all day?
- a) Travel
- 4) Where do you most want to travel, but have never been?
- a) Canada
- 5) What is your favorite memory?
- a) Christmas Eve with my family.
- 6) What is your favorite movie?
- a) *Out of Africa* and *Meatballs*
- 7) What is the one thing that should be taught in school that isn't already?
- a) Common Sense
- 8) What one thing would you change if you had to do it over?
- a) Of course there are some “would have, could have, should have.” But I've made it to the age of 73 so I must have made some good choices. I'm healthy, have a home, and many dear friends. Why would I do anything over?
- 9) If you could share a meal with three people from the past, who would they be?
- a) Claire Booth Luce, Joyce Meyer, and Oprah.
- 10) What actor/actress would play you in your life movie?
- a) Meryl Streep
- 11) Why do you volunteer at Mepkin?

The Brothers of Mepkin Abbey, the people who volunteer, and the privilege of being a caretaker of this beautiful land.

Recently I was reading USA Today and came upon an article entitled, “...Nature Improves Your Mind”. Modern researchers, measuring brain activity, heart rate and

other factors, have confirmed it. Nature is good for you. Exercise is good for you. Exercising in nature is even better. Exposure to nature improves concentration and problem solving. It reduces stress and increases feelings of empathy. Volunteering at Mepkin is good for your mental and physical health! Please consider joining our Garden Volunteers. Contact Craig Clark, Assistant Director of Grounds and Gardens at 843-709-8362 or Mepkin.volunteers@gmail.com. You will even get to meet Ursula---our Director of Volunteers!

Many thanks to Howard for the Orchard Report, Craig for the Spotlight on Volunteers feature and Langhorne for editing. Keep the faith! dottie