

Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter  
April 2018



**Cherry Blossoms on turn to Retreat Center**

April is here with the glory and joy of Easter-early this year. Father Guericc outdid himself as usual in the Church. Just look at the beauty and joy of the interior of the Church:





He is Risen! Inside the Church and outside on the grounds, God's gift is proclaimed!



Cloister by 10 man Cottage



Indian Hawthorne in front of the 12 man Cottage



Father Francis Kline Azaleas leading up to the Breezeway

The various tasks of March, such as fertilizing/applying aluminum sulfate to the Hydrangeas were completed as has pruning and planting the various new shrubs and trees. We held up on fertilizing the Daylilies this year, as the Russian Sage (in the same area) took over last year! The Azaleas have bloomed and we are getting ready for the the annual “feed the azaleas and camellias program”. We did not burn the bog this year as Peter has been opposed to it and so the fields were cut. We will see how that turns out so far as keeping some diversity in the Labyrinth.

The weather continues to be crazy—hot, cold, frost warnings. This plays havoc with trying to keep up with the every present weed war. That will be a main focus for us this month. Watering all the new plantings and pots has also been a task. Hopefully we will not lose any of our new plantings.

## **GARDEN UPDATES:**

### **Store/ St. Clare:**

We were able to get the Acuba planted as a start to the screen I mentioned last month. Hopefully they will quickly grow and we can fill in with Palmettos or something similar. Again, the weeds are ahead of us at present, but we will continue to work on that.



Acuba screen

We have also added some additional Encore Azaleas near the gate in St. Clare. The Dwarf Gardenias have not been up to our expectations, so we are using them as a background to these Encore Azaleas. In front of them are the Lantanas, which will be out this summer.



Encore Azaleas

**St. Gerard:**

The business office Azaleas were wonderful in the early wave of Azaleas. Mary has worked magic on this area and the results show!



Several years ago this was a massive vine patch!

**Walk to the Church:**

Several other early Azaleas could be seen in “the Park” along the Walk to the Church.



**Cloister:**



**The Cloister at Easter**

### **Orchard:**

The orchard is coming back to life, at least most of it. We lost a Cara cara orange and a substantial amount of one of our figs but for the most part flowers and buds are covering most of the plants. Norm and I uncovered the citrus plants and put away the heat lamps for another season. There were two oranges left on one of the Satsuma oranges. They had been hidden until we had the plants wrapped and it wasn't worth digging them out. The plants have fearsome thorns.

The blackberries look great but the raspberries need a patient hand and perhaps another season to recover.

We are investigating a conversion to electric fence instead of the plastic deer fence which has seen better days. Jimmy Livingston ( a real farmer) believes we can keep the deer out with a less obtrusive fence. While we were inspecting the current fence Jimmy spotted a hole that he thought had been made by a turtle looking for some soft earth to lay her eggs. If that's so the ground is definitely soft since we have been digging up weeds and turning in the mulch we have spread over the years.

All we need now are the beginnings of some fruit.

Howard



## **Luce Garden:**

We continue to have problems with visitors being locked into the Monastery by staying late in Luce Garden. The sign, as seen below, states clearly the hours, but we have had to have additional wording on this sign to say, "ALL GATES LOCKED AT 7PM". Hopefully this will avoid the Brothers having to reopen the gates to let them out.



## **Columbarium:**

We continue to await the Niches for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the Columbarium. We understand it will be several months before they arrive. In the meantime, Peter is working on the hill across from the Niches along the new steps and we are addressing a serious erosion problem we have on the hill on the Niche side. Green Carolina has priced the work plus the additional plantings to fill in where the Sweet Grass has not taken and will schedule the work as soon as they can.

## **Odds and Ends:**

## **New Bee Hives:**

Diana has added another hive! Things seem to be going very well with the bees and we are delighted to have them on the property. The bees in our country are having a hard time and it is important that we do all we can to extend their numbers. Can you imagine not having honey?

### **Additonal Signage:**

We have had a request from the Store that a sign was needed to inform the policy about dogs on the Mepkin property. We are having a sign made that says the following:

“DOGS MUST BE ON LEASHES AT ALL TIMES

DOGS ARE VISITORS LIABILITY”

Hopefully this will cut down on any problems we are having with dogs.

### **How Mepkin Abbey Supports Itself:**

This is the fifth and last article in a series of how Mepkin supports itself. This month we feature the Forest Operation. The woods themselves are managed by Capstone, harvesting wood for sawdust or board lumber. The woods are also leased out to local hunt clubs. All of these endeavors respect the environment and use approved practices.

### **Spotlight on a Volunteer**

Our choice for Volunteer of the Month is Richard Abrahamson. Richard has been volunteering at the monastery for years. He helps Father Gueric with the construction and take-down of the Creche exhibit each year, serves meals at special occasions, and is hands down the best leaf blower Mepkin has ever seen. He is always quick with a smile and a warm greeting and is an important part of our volunteer program.



I was Born in Arlington, Washington. I moved to Mt. Pleasant in the Old Village when I was 2 years old and lived there until the age of 20. Dad met Mom when he was in the Navy and on his way to Sullivan's Island where he was living at the time. I've been collecting Vinyl LP's since I was 11yrs. old. My interest is from 1964 until 1986 and I currently have 2500 records (150 have never been opened). I was with Millie Lewis Models in Charleston and was discovered by Faces Models in NYC, working with them from 1983 until 1986. I had to come home because my younger brother was diagnosed with Lymphoma Cancer. Thankfully, they caught it in time. I enrolled in EMT Basic Training at Trident Tech, did my EMT-Intermediate Training & Advanced EMT- Training at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington, North Carolina. I am also a Nationally Registered Advanced EMT which means I can work in any State without having to take their State Boards. I became totally burned out of Emergency Work after 12yrs. I lost my partner of 12yrs to Liver Cancer. He was 53 and my one & only true love. His Death brought me to Mepkin where I have grown in my Faith tremendously and have made many wonderful Friends.





1-Who would you want with you if you were stranded on a desert island?

Brother Steven

2-If you could do anything you wanted right now, what would it be?

Practice more on the piano.

3-If money were no object, what would you do all day?

Volunteer with neglected Horses & People.

4-Where do you most want to travel, but have never been?

The Fiji Islands.

5-What is your favorite memory?

Playing with my Cousin Andy who was killed in a car wreck at 19 years old.

6-What is your favorite movie?

Harold & Maude.

7-What is the one thing that should be taught in school that isn't already?

Childhood Development, too make better Parents.

8-What one thing would you change if you had to do it over?

Have more self-assurance.

9-If you could share a meal with three people from the past, who would they be?

My Grandmother Mary Caraway & Andrew Caraway

10-What actor/actress would play you in your life movie?

Rob Lowe.

11-Why do you Volunteer at Mepkin?

Healing powers and to strengthen my Spirit.



Many thanks to Father Jonas and to Craig for the photographs and the Spotlight on Volunteers article, and to Howard for the Orchard Report. Many thanks also to Langhorne, who is back on foot and editing. I have been away from the Abbey almost a month as I had a trip out of the country and family events. I could not have put this together without the help of those mentioned above.

Happy Easter to each of you. May the joy of the promise of the Resurrection be yours. Until next month, dottie