

Inaugural *Magic in the Meadow* Fundraising Event Closes the Gap on the *Campaign to Build a Green Legacy*



From left, Capital Campaign Chair Kathy Carmean, Executive Director Ellie Altman, and Board President Dr. Peter Stifel celebrate Stifel's gift of \$1 million to the Arboretum's Campaign to Build a Green Legacy. Stifel, a retired University of Maryland geology professor, pledged the gift to support the Arboretum's goal of building "green" facilities to house its education programs. The gift was announced September 20 at the Arboretum's fundraising event, *Magic in the Meadow*.

Once twilight gave way to one of the starriest skies along the East Coast this past fall, the real magic of the Arboretum's inaugural *Magic in the Meadow* fundraising gala came when Board President Dr. Peter Stifel made a \$1 million pledge to the Arboretum's *Campaign to Build a Green Legacy*.

The gift is the largest gift to the Arboretum's first capital campaign in its 28-year history. With construction of the new Arboretum Center scheduled to begin in mid-2009, the campaign is now only \$2 million away from its \$6.5-million fundraising goal.

The gift also gives Dr. Stifel the naming opportunity for the expanded Arboretum Center. While generous donors have reserved naming rights to the center's open pavilion, art gallery, and North Meadow, other named gift opportunities are available and include choices in both the facilities and endowment categories.

A retired University of Maryland geology professor and lifelong land steward, Stifel lives at his family estate, *Hope House* in Tunis Mills, Maryland. He has served on the Arboretum Board of Trustees since 2002. At the evening's events, Stifel spoke passionately about both the Arboretum's contributions to the region and his commitment to helping it achieve its goal of building new "green" facilities to house its programs.

"The Arboretum is a place for children to roll up their sleeves, get their feet wet, and get in close contact with nature, rather than sitting idle pushing buttons," Stifel remarked. "I am truly honored and grateful to be able to help Adkins improve its facilities and ultimately help people make this important connection with nature."

The *Campaign to Build a Green Legacy* supports a 9,500-square-foot expansion of the existing center to help meet the demands of a growing visitorship and the Arboretum's land stewardship outreach initiatives. The new Arboretum Center is designed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold rating from the U.S. Green Building Council and will be a significant model for environmentally responsible and sustainable living for land stewards throughout the region. The new Arboretum Center will use nontoxic, recycled, and local materials, an innovative energy efficient heating and cooling system, and other sustainable building methods.

Three new pavilions will include a visitor's orientation wing with a reception area, gift shop, and café; additional classroom space; a conference room; and a large meeting space for community events. An L-shaped gallery will act as the concourse and will provide exhibit space for the Arboretum's ongoing art exhibits.

The capital campaign project also includes a reconfiguration of the Arboretum's entranceway and parking areas, the Native Garden Gateway, for easier access and immediate immersion

Native Plant Lore

From Green to Auburn to Gold: Winter Interest

By Nancy Beatty, Arboretum Docent

According to British author and journalist Anne Scott-James, “Dilettante gardeners love the spring and summer; real gardeners also love the winter.” I couldn’t agree more. After the splendor of fall, there tends to be a resignation by many that the gardening season is over and that Mother Nature is ready for a break. The flowers have been nipped by the frost, the vegetable plants are worn out from production, and the trees are dropping their leaves, all in preparation for the cold weather to come. But this wonderful season of winter should be a time of reflection on yet another busy and prolific growing season.

The winter season is an ideal time to study structure and form, or, as we hear quite often, the “bones” of our own gardens and the surrounding landscapes. In the forest, various shrubs and trees create winter interest by the use of their leafless forms, peeling bark, and berries. An ancient white oak, *Quercus alba*, with its sculptural outline is a distinct and dramatic sight against a gray winter sky. Who among us can forget the majesty of the beautiful Wye Oak that stood as a testament to the grandeur of what a tree can offer?

The peeling bark of the river birch tree, *Betula nigra*, is a year-round treat, but it is especially beautiful against a background of newly fallen snow. Growing along a forest stream, it creates a clear, clean reflection when the weather is cold and still.

Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, and red chokeberry, *Photinia pyrifolia* (*Aronia arbutifolia*), offer beautiful red berries throughout much of the winter.

The Arboretum’s South Meadow offers quite a different view, with large drifts of grasses displaying colors of gray, silver, gold, and auburn. In autumn, the wavy, flowing effect of blooming grasses

gives way to perhaps a more static appearance in the winter months, but is no less effective in its contrast to the surrounding landscape.

Tall switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum*, is still holding on to its large seed-filled panicles, waving them to hungry birds as they fly by. The clumping nature of this native grass also offers cover and easy maneuvering for ground birds such as bob-white quail as they make their way through the meadow. Its beautiful open seed heads are also quite delicate looking and contrast with its coarse and hardy texture.

Big bluestem, *Andropogon gerardii*, is one of the tallest grasses in the meadow at 4–6 feet and is also known as “turkey foot” because its seed heads do indeed look like a turkey’s foot. The South Meadow provides an ideal environment for this prolific plant. Like switchgrass, big bluestem also grows in a bunching or clumping nature, and its leaves turn from green to gold to auburn to blonde as the seasons change. There’s nothing static about that!

Of the taller grasses, I have to admit that Indian grass, *Sorghastrum nutans*, is my favorite. This is an upright grass with greenish blue leaves and is found here and there throughout the South Meadow. When it blooms, in late summer to early fall, beautiful copper and bright yellow panicles open loosely on tall wavy stems that are quite lovely as they shimmer like gold on a sunny day. In the winter, these flower heads become very narrow and upright and develop a light chestnut color.

Just as the forest has its layers of plants, with canopy trees, understory trees, shrubs, and groundcovers, the same can be said of the meadow. The tall grasses make up the canopy and throughout the meadow you will find more than just grasses, as the herbaceous perennials and groundcovers make up the understory. Two of the most prevalent shorter grasses, growing 2–4 feet, are little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, and broom-sedge, *Andropogon virginicus*.

A striking display of little bluestem can be found in the landscaped gardens near the Visitor’s Center parking lot. Planted under several large trees and in the butterfly



Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*