

Garden Conservancy Annual Report

October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008

Each year, we pause to take stock of the Garden Conservancy's activities over the year just past. It is a useful opportunity to review our preservation and educational successes, remind ourselves of the challenges that we have met, and find inspiration in those successes to take on the challenges that lie ahead. It is also our chance to publicly acknowledge and thank the many donors and friends who support our work.

We are especially fortunate, looking from our current context of challenging economic times, to find inspiration in abundance in the year covered by this report, from Ruth Bancroft's centennial celebration in California,

to Pearl Fryar's exuberance in South Carolina (captured by film-makers), to major preservation achievements by project volunteers and staff working steadfastly across the country.

These and other successes, summarized here, remind us that it is a rare preservation goal that is easily achieved; that time, energy, knowledge, persistence, organization, and, yes, money, are required ingredients for success.

We celebrate the occasions when all those ingredients come together, and thank our members and the donors and friends listed in this report for helping us to make them possible.

Preservation Highlights

In the summer of 2008, we celebrated the 100th birthday of Ruth Bancroft, creator of the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, California, the garden that inspired the founding of the Garden Conservancy by Frank Cabot in 1989. A program entitled "An Age of Gardeners: Mrs. Bancroft and her Horticultural Contemporaries" focused on the constellation of noted gardeners at work in northern California during the second half of the 20th century, among whom Mrs. Bancroft was a leading light.

The Bancroft celebration continued in September with the announcement of the inaugural award from the Anne & Frank Cabot Fund for Project Gardens to the Ruth Bancroft Garden Centennial Fund, which will provide for the continuing care of the garden.

The Fells successfully completed its acquisition of 84 acres of historic gardens, structures, and woodland that in the 19th century served as the summer retreat of American statesman and author John Hay. Long protected as open space under the ownership of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the historic core of the estate on Lake Sunapee in Newbury, New Hampshire,

has been managed by the nonprofit group, working with the Garden Conservancy, since the early 1990s.

An award-winning documentary film, *A Man Named Pearl*, introduced a national audience to the inspiring Pearl Fryar and his exuberant topiary garden in Bishopville, South Carolina. The Friends of Pearl Fryar's Topiary Garden produced a stunning 2009 calendar, featuring photos of the garden, as a fundraiser, and members of the Garden Conservancy's Board of Directors purchased a cherry picker, which Mr. Fryar now uses instead of a ladder to reach the ever higher peaks of his topiary sculptures.



Pearl Fryar, second from left, discusses a new garden sculpture with Conservancy board members.

Greenwood Gardens in Short Hills, New Jersey, completed a plan for a three-phase restoration

of the garden and its structures. A \$750,000 grant from New Jersey Historic Trust helped the garden meet its \$5.5 million goal for the first phase of the project. (Construction began in June 2009.)

In April 2008, two milestones on the road to preserving the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden in Charlotte, North Carolina were achieved. The Wing Haven Foundation assumed ownership of its near neighbor and the Garden Conservancy accepted the donation of a conservation easement for the site from its departing owner, Lindie Wilson. The easement will protect the garden, house exterior, and interior study overlooking the garden, where Lawrence did her writing.

In September 2008, Hollister House Garden in Washington, Connecticut, hosted a Garden Study Weekend organized by Bob Hyland. The event featured a seminar, "Transatlantic Connections: Creating a Personal Garden Style," with speakers from England and the United States; a plant sale; and Open Days tour of six private gardens in Litchfield County. The program was a success and will be followed by another such weekend in September 2010.

Open Days Events Highlight and Support Our Preservation Work

The 2008 Open Days season kicked off the first week of April with an exciting group of tropical Florida gardens in Vero Beach and a boost for preservation work at the

McKee Botanical Garden, a local public garden listed on the National Register of Historic Places. More than 500 visitors toured four gardens in the area—three of them open for the first time. Admissions from that day helped support the ongoing preservation work at the McKee Botanical Garden, which co-hosted the Open Day. McKee has received assistance from the Garden Conservancy, including support after being devastated by hurricanes.

In early May, Open Days returned to Knoxville, Tennessee, where garden enthusiasts enjoyed three private gardens and an introduction to the Garden Conservancy's preservation work at the Knoxville Botanical Garden.

On Memorial Day weekend on Long Island, the staff of the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden in Mill Neck, another Conservancy preservation project, joined two of Long Island's best private gardens for an Open Day. Nearly 300 visitors toured the Mary and Howard Phipps, Jr. estate in Old Westbury; the estate's incomparable collection of



Open Days visitors at Burpee's Fordhook Farm enjoyed a plant sale.

rhododendrons and mix of formal and natural landscapes is rarely seen by the public. Visitors to Carol and Jim Large's garden in Locust Valley enjoyed ten acres of mature woodlands, streams, ponds, and fields. Those who visited the Humes Japanese Stroll Garden had the bonus opportunity to shop for native and Asian plants propagated from the garden's extensive collection.

In June, an all-new Open Day debuted in Louisville, Kentucky, featuring four private gardens, a Hardy Fern Foundation Display garden at the Ralph Archer Woodland Garden in Whitehall, and Yew Dell, our preservation project in Crestwood.

When the gates closed on the season's last Open Day—on November 2 at the garden of Judy and Michael Steinhardt in Westchester County, New York—the program had welcomed nearly 75,000 visitors to 323 private gardens, raising public awareness and dollars for the Garden Conservancy's preservation work from coast to coast.



The McKenna Garden in Evanston, IL, welcomed Open Days guests.

Report of Gifts

We are grateful to the many generous donors who made gifts and pledges between October 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008

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Ruth Bancroft, sitting at center in green, celebrated her 100th birthday in her garden with a few friends.

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Garden-Study Tours from Coast to Coast

2008 was a banner year for travel with the Society of Fellows. The Fellows visited San Antonio in April, (above) Newport in July, the Hamptons in September, and were also treated to two day trips—in New Jersey and in California's Napa Valley. The Society of Fellows is a group of garden enthusiasts whose annual leadership support is critical to sustaining the operations, programs, and preservation efforts of the Conservancy. A benefit of membership in the Fellows is the opportunity to participate in annual garden-study tours offered by the Conservancy. These tours were the highlight of our gardening year.

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 Hoyt Arboretum Friends
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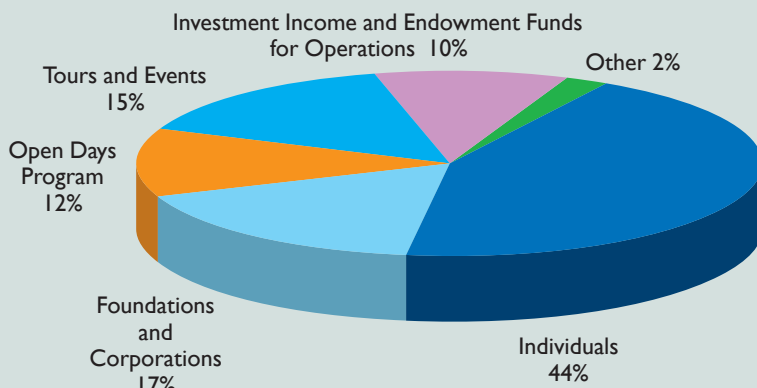
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Statements of Activities & Changes in Net Assets for Year Ended September 30, 2008

	Operations	Project Gardens	Endowment	Total All Funds
Public Support and Revenues				
Public Support				
Contributions	\$ 911,833	\$193,247	\$ 2,157,924	\$ 3,263,004
Foundations, corporate and other grants	319,953	170,076	—	490,029
Membership	149,692	5,430	—	155,122
Unrealized loss	—	—	(815,073)	(815,073)
Donated services	12,800	—	—	12,800
Total Public Support	\$1,394,278	\$368,753	\$ 1,342,851	\$ 3,105,882
Revenues				
Open Days Program, sales and admissions	\$ 343,956	—	—	\$ 343,956
Admissions and special events	386,608	\$ 48,346	—	434,954
Interest, dividends and realized gains (net)	25,241	—	(1,013,052)	(987,811)
Other	57,473	—	—	57,473
Total Revenues	\$ 813,278	\$ 48,346	(\$1,013,052)	(\$151,428)
Net assets released from restrictions	502,951	(502,951)	—	—
Transfer of unrestricted endowment earnings for operations	262,503	—	(262,503)	—
Total Public Support and Revenues	\$2,973,010	(\$85,852)	\$ 67,296	\$ 2,954,454
Expenses				
Program services	\$2,349,011	—	—	\$ 2,349,011
Supporting services				
Management and general	261,529	—	4,151	265,680
Fundraising	366,583	—	—	366,583
Total Expenses	\$2,977,123	\$ —	\$ 4,151	\$ 2,981,274
Changes in Net Assets (Deficit)	(4,113)	(85,852)	63,145	(26,820)
Net Assets – beginning	672,577	557,847	10,050,534	11,280,958
Net Assets – ending	\$ 688,464	\$471,995	\$10,113,679	\$11,254,138

Complete audited financial statements are available upon request from The Garden Conservancy.

Sources of Revenue



Distribution of Expenses

