

**Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council
May 10, 2000**

**Emergency Planning Meetings
Held at Belwin Nature Center in Afton, MN
And at Sexton Commons at SJU**

Note: Both meetings had the same agenda. Meeting notes have been combined.

Members Present:

At Belwin: Gordon Bailey, David Hartwell, and Peter Olin.

At Saint John's: Bob Ellenbecker, Fr. John Kulas, Scott May, Janette Monear, Ron Wienhold, Linda Mock-Admin. Volunteer, Donna Blanchette-Education Comm., Cheryl Knox- SJU Academic Dean, Br. Benedict Leuthner, OSB- Corporate Treasurer and Land Manager; Br. Doug Mullin, OSB -Education Comm., Anne & Dave Kaluza-Fundraising/PR Comm

Present at both meetings: John Geissler, Dorothy Johnson, John Taylor-Associate V.P. for Institutional Advancement.

Absent: Larry Davis, Tom Kroll, Linda Marrin, Bob Thomsen

Meetings began at 2 p.m. at Belwin Nature Center and at 6:40 at Saint John's

Agenda: 1. Saint John's plans to meet Arboretum challenges

2. Upcoming work -immediate attention -

Education, Land Management, Public Relations, Membership,
Administration, Fundraising, Advisors and Partnerships

3. Leadership - Advisory Council Structure &Staffing

1. Saint John's plans to meet Arboretum challenges

Father Paul Schwietz died on Thursday, May 4. His legacy of the Arboretum at Saint John's will be supported by the University and the Abbey. At the beginning of each meeting John Taylor reviewed Saint John's actions planned to support Arboretum operations. He represented SJU President, Brother Dietrich. He brought up immediate challenges, including the following:

- A) SJU and Abbey assistance will include picking up wherever they are able. Areas discussed: -council liaison, working to develop an understandable budget, personnel needs.
- B) Memorials – John described the Arboretum Endowment Fund Memorial as being linked with the Abbey for land management work, and the Education Matching Memorial as education staffing (matching dollars for the G. & J. Bailey grant). Memorial Information should be accompanied by an explanation of the funds.
- C) Staffing – John stated that John Geissler is the acting director. He expressed the thanks of the University for John's ability to define needs, make plans, and supervise students during this stressful time. The University is working on plans for staffing.
- D) Long-range planning – The University and Abbey decision will be whether the Arboretum is ultimately an internal or external program.

John Taylor said that the Council needs to review and prioritize strategic plan actions in light of Fr. Paul's death, but that it is not an immediate priority. The detailed plan will be reviewed by the President's office. Dorothy recommended that committees review and make changes to the current draft plan and bring to a council meeting in fall as a final draft.

With Fr. Paul's death, the Advisory Council members want to assist in whatever ways are possible to assure that Arboretum work is accomplished. Discussion at both meetings stressed the interest and concern of council members, and the interest of the University and the Abbey for consultation with the committed volunteers in meeting future needs.

At St. John's, a council member stated that developing a leadership structure shows that the council is solidified and ready to go forward.

- E) Arboretum planning - At Belwin, Gordon stated that his main concern is maintaining the stability of the Arboretum; he sees needs of leadership and budget requirements to maintain operations. Peter believes it is important to define how the Arboretum fits into the structure chart of the University, and to develop specific program and capital budgets.
- F) Land Use & Acquisitions - At Belwin, David distributed a letter he wrote to Father Paul regarding his concerns about encroachment of development on land surrounding the campus, and his observations on outreach. Peter stated that he is concerned with the watershed area extending beyond the campus boundaries. Ownership of watershed areas is of particular concern, and Peter stated that watershed maps need to be used to define areas for future land purchase. Long-range planning should include maps – one showing the physical land and watershed, plus a second (an overlay) which shows educational or programmatic uses.
- G) Funding – Saint John's has recently funded 2 education projects: \$1,000 for the Wetlands Boardwalk Planning and \$2,000 for the Deciduous Tree Walk brochures and signage.

2. Upcoming work - immediate attention (see Future Activities attachment)

A) Education

1) K-12 tours - The school tours will be completed during May. Approximately 700 students have visited the Habitat Restoration Project this spring.

**Upcoming work requiring immediate attention – the kindergarden-12th grade tours are at the peak of the season. They will continue to take place in the spring and fall.

2) Wildflower Trip – Dorothy Johnson is coordinating and serving as tour director for this event. Goal for net proceeds is \$500.

B) Land Management

1) Oak savanna burn and brush work – The burn is scheduled for the week of May 15th. David Hartwell offered equipment and staff training for mechanical chopping, which would reduce the time and labor needed for brush clearing in the remaining 5 acres of oak savanna.

2) Wetland Boardwalk – Questions included handicapped accessibility, how to manage burns around boardwalks, and possible use of Stearns County workers through SJU contacts. (Lee Lenzmeier would be the contact person at Stearns County.)

Janette stated that she had contacted the Minnesota Society of Arboriculture to discuss a memorial donation from that group for construction of this project. She will also propose that workers from Tree Trust build the walk sections in the work readiness program. She will coordinate the efforts to finalize arrangements, if these organizations accept the concept.

The Minnesota Tree Trust may fund both the material for the boardwalk and the labor to build it.

There was a discussion about the boardwalk. The Arboretum may need to hire someone to formulate a plan/design of the boardwalk. Where will it be placed? How long will it be? How wide will it be? Will it accommodate handicapped people? Because controlled burns are done in that area, will it be built in removable sections? What will the cost be?

C) Public Relations

- 1) Newsletter – The spring newsletter was scheduled to be completed by the 10th, and will be ready to print with little delay. A memorium to Father Paul will be included on the front page.

An additional insert will be included with the Newsletter for memorial gifts to the Arboretum. The insert will give donors the option of designating their gift to the educational fund or the Arboretum Endowment fund. The Educational Fund will help to match the donation made by Gordon Bailey. The Endowment Fund will go to maintain and restore the natural resources of St. John's Arboretum.

A question was raised regarding donors not designating a gift. If neither of the funds are checked, where will the money be placed? John Taylor thought Fr. Don LeMay was checking into it.

- 2) Kiosk signage – This is a top priority. The sign revisions need review, and the work needs to be completed and mounted as soon as possible. John asked for a volunteer to work with this.

The Kiosk will need signs thanking Target and other donors.

Other discussion: A question was raised regarding the care and maintenance of the Arboretum. Will it be joined together with the grounds department? Br. Benedict explained that all land is owned by St. John's Abbey. Maintenance of the property is determined by the division that is the primary user (i.e. University, Prep School, etc.)

D) Membership

- 1) Renewals –second notices. Membership renewal requests were sent in February. About 50% have renewed. Members of the Fundraising/PR committee will develop a letter; that will be followed up with a phone call.
- 2) Upcoming Renewals – A monthly expiration system has been developed, with a renewal request letter and 2000 membership card being sent in a timely manner.
- 3) Student Club – Steve McGreevey will be asked to represent the Student Arboretum club on the Advisory Council, and will be a member of the Education committee. No activities are planned for the student club during the summer.

E) Administration

- 1) Volunteer leadership – Anne Kaluza has offered to work with volunteer development later this year.
- 2) Budgets for fiscal year 2001 (beginning July1) SJU will assist John Geissler with revenue and expense budgets
- 3) Strategic Plan John Taylor stated that the Council needs to review and prioritize strategic plan actions in light of Father Paul's death, but that it is not an immediate priority. The detailed plan will be reviewed by the President's office. Dorothy recommended that committees review and make changes to the current draft plan and bring to a Council meeting in fall as a final draft.

F) Fundraising

- 1) Plant Sale – a benefit plant sale will be held on May 20, as part of the Stearns County Horticultural Society's spring sale. Plants are being removed from the perennial display garden, as a native plant garden is being installed. Ron is planning the garden; Scott, Linda Mock and John G. are digging and potting plants. Janette will supply pots.

2) Dinners – The PR/fundraising committee will continue with planned home dinner meetings in 5 locations, with the goal of reaching long-term donors.
3) Grant Requests- John G. reported that grantwriting is on hold for the present time. The 3-year Target Foundation grant is ending. John Taylor will assist here. The current DNR grant does not need a final report. Local Target stores offer grant monies as well as the central foundation.

G) Advisors & Partnerships

At Belwin, Peter Olin offered assistance from the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum wetland specialists, Sue Galadawitz and Julia Bohnen. Someone suggested JoAnn Weber would assist with questions regarding grant writing.

3. Leadership

A) Advisory Council Structure – temporary. With Father Paul's death, the Advisory Council members want to assist in whatever ways are possible to assure Arboretum work is accomplished. Discussion at both meetings stressed the interest and concern of Council members, and the interest of the University and the Abbey for consultation with the committed volunteers in meeting future needs. At St. John's, a Council member stated that developing a leadership structure shows that the Council is solidified and ready to go forward.

At the Belwin meeting, Peter expressed his opinion that the Arboretum needs a structure chart (for interaction and supervision from the University and Abbey). As the possible leadership structure for the Council was brought up, David stated that the Abbey and the University should say what this group should do; and that the Council should not be proactive, but should wait to be asked for assistance.

***Br. Benedict indicated he would like to see a structured board with a chairman.

***John Taylor suggested the University may need a voice from the Advisory Council. Perhaps the voice would consist of four people. One from each committee, (Land Management, Fundraising & PR, Education) and a liason between the Arboretum and the University. Scott May was asked to be the liason person.

B) Staffing - Discussing new assignments for John Geissler at Belwin, Dorothy stated the need to prevent John from being overburdened with responsibilities, and expectations of accomplishing more than is possible. David stated that John G. should be comfortable in calling on individuals and committees during the summer to accomplish needed projects, and that Council members should be in direct contact with him.

**Would a monk be available to help in the office?

Regarding a new staff position, the Belwin group discussed qualifications, and concurred that the chief staff person does not need to be a biologist. Enthusiasm and interest in environment and education, with good people skills are needed qualities.

Submitted by Dorothy Johnson & Linda Mock

Attachment: Future Activities Sheet compiled by John Geissler