

# GENE STRATTON-PORTER MEMORIAL SOCIETY, INC.



FALL 2005

P.O. BOX 639 • ROME CITY, IN 46784

## From the President

..... John Kessen

We have had a very challenging year at the site with the death of two long time friends of the site. The site was fortunate to be able to attract Ed Cable to come back and fill in where Pat Bolman had left off, but Ed had been gone for a few years and it has been a relearning process. He has moved ahead in many ways and put his own spin on things. It is always great to get some new viewpoints and improve the operations. Speaking of improving the operations, Ed knew of a master gardner with a lot of background in flower gardens and perennials. Her name is Martha Ferguson. At sixteen she was a member of the National Championship Team for the National Junior Horticultural Association. When her church built a new church in Huntertown she was responsible for the landscaping and creation of the formal gardens. Now they have acquired thirty additional acres and she is being asked to use her skills as they build a new family life center. She is researching all available materials on how Gene had her gardens and wants to make sure that the site does a good job of presenting the gardens in the way Gene had planned them. Both Ed and Martha will be regular contributors to our newsletter. This will give you a chance to hear about some of the things that they are involved in on a daily basis.

We are considering doing a new activity this Spring that may be of interest to a number of you. When the Meehan family comes to visit we always take them to see all of the historically significant sights for their family here in Indiana. Now we are planning to turn that tour into a one day bus trip in the Spring. We will visit Largo, Decatur, and Geneva. The approximate cost to take the trip for one day without food costs would be about \$40 per person. You will note a little cut out where you can indicate that you have an interest in taking the trip. I would really like those of you interested in going to please fill out the slip and mail it back to me. I need to know how big a bus to charter.

Don't forget to visit during our Holiday Open House this year. We are going to be moving time back a bit by offering to take you to the cabin from the parking area in a horse drawn wagon. The dates and times are November 12 from 9:00 AM till 9:00 PM and on November 13 from Noon till 5:00 PM.

I hope to get a chance to visit with you at the site during the Holiday Open House.



*Come and Enjoy the  
Holiday Open House  
at the  
Gene Stratton-Porter  
State Historic Site  
Rome City, Indiana*

**Saturday, November 12, 2005**

9 am - 9 pm

Candlelight Walk 6. pm - 9 pm

**Sunday, November 13, 2005**

Noon - 5 pm

*Festive days filled with the  
sights, sounds and smells of the season.*

*Crafts for all ages and  
horse drawn wagon rides too.*

Entertainment:

Saturday and Sunday at the Cabin  
*'Music and Old Lace'*

Nancy Blough & Leonard Pickering  
Saturday Evening at the Carriage House  
*Music by 'The Group Morris'*

Gift Shop

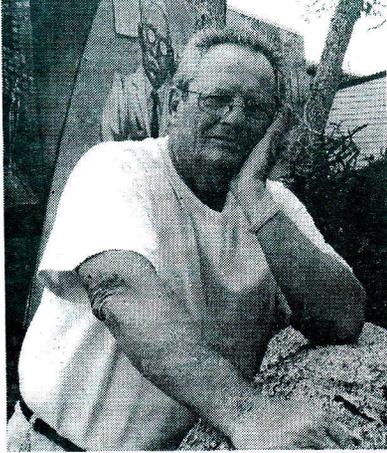
Purchase unusual gifts  
for your favorite people.

Information: 260-854-3790

Sponsored by:

*Gene-Stratton-Porter State Historic Site  
Gene Stratton-Porter Memorial Society, Inc.*

# FOCUS ON THE STAFF



## BUD EDHOLM....

Many of you, I am sure, have seen Bud busy keeping things humming at the site. He has been with us for 5 years. Bud is the person who keeps the mechanical things functioning and the outside chores under control. Actually, if it has to do with maintenance and repair Bud is the one who takes

care of it. With 125 acres and all of our buildings this is a daunting job assignment. GSP is very fortunate to have an employee with the background and experience that he has. Bud almost never knew what it is like not to be working. He worked in the family restaurant when he was in school, but found time in high school to start dating his future wife, Linda. He and Linda decided that it was time to get married in 1958. They have lived through all of life's experience together ever since. Bud and Linda have five children, twelve grandchildren and one great grandchild. He has drilled wells, repaired vehicles, been a church maintenance and repair person, driven a semi coast to coast, done purchasing and collected construction bids. Most of his working years were with Bendix in South Bend. Bud did retire from Bendix in 1999. At the same time he was working for Bendix he fulfilled his dream of opening his own food establishment. It involved three different locations and distinct settings over ten years. The business always had the name Cozy Corner and all of their children worked in the business. It was his dream and Linda's nightmare. The inevitable happened. It was time to call it quits with the Cozy Corner. About 1993 they decided that they would enjoy a little free time living at the lake and purchased a trailer on

Messick Lake. They now had a new bug. It was the lake bug. Linda had a little more free time than Bud, so she would start looking for a permanent home on the lake. One day in 1996 she called Bud and said I have found the perfect lake home for us on a lake with no water. She found the home that they live in today on Sylvan Lake. Bearing in mind that this was the perfect dream home, Bud has since personally added a 10 x 24 addition and a 7 x 24 addition to the home. If you haven't guessed it yet, woodworking is now his favorite skill or trade. He utilized it at the site with the construction of the gazebo. Bud hand made and designed a number of the features of the gazebo. He has enjoyed establishing the Heritage Trail and working with the work crew from the Chain of Lakes Confinement Center. He says that they are always looking forward to coming to help at the site and are polite and considerate. They are willing to help in any way. Bud feels that they are a real asset to the upkeep of the site. He enjoys seeing projects coming together. Bud even uses his old restaurant skills by helping the Society prepare the thank you dinner for the Porters. When he is home at the lake they just plain enjoy the quiet serenity of looking out on the lake, but every now and then Bud and Linda both have their own kayak and enjoy using them on the lake. When Winter arrives Bud sees the need to gradually leave for Florida for several months. If you caught it, I said gradually, because it becomes about a two week event to go and return home in the Spring. They have relatives and children in Kentucky and Georgia. Why not stop and visit along the way. When they get to Florida bicycling, hiking and seeing more of the State of Florida are important. However, visiting Hammock State Park is a must, because it is quiet and peaceful with wild tangerines and oranges growing. It has many birds, swamp that you can walk over and they do see a few gators. Bud loves the outdoors and the GSP site. He says that the more you are around the GSP site the more you learn to love it.

**GINNY SPELLMAN.** . . A Hoosier who has moved around and seen the sights of Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee and Ohio, Ginny now finds herself back in Indiana. In the 1950's, she owned 3 horses and boarded many others. She always enjoyed showing both quarter horses and English thoroughbreds. Ginny also remembers having a sulky. She raised one baby colt. Along with her husband, they owned and ran a restaurant for 14 long years in Ohio. In 1999, she answered an ad in the paper and started working at GSP on the Green Thumb Program which has since been renamed Experience Works. Ginny has read a lot about Gene, visited libraries and researched especially Charles Porter. Her wealth of information has made her a very knowledgeable tour guide for the last 6 years. Visitors always enjoy her stories. When we have children's field trips, we send the kids into the kitchen with Ginny for lots of information about Gene's

kitchen. She has started a personal scrapbook on the Porters which is not quite finished. At our special events, Ginny volunteers her time to help however she can, usually with the children. She has 9 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren of her own. She likes to visit her sister living in Ohio and hopes to return to North Carolina to visit her grandchildren during this winter. Ginny keeps busy with genealogy, music (she has played the guitar since she was 12) and makes and sells lovely dolls.



# Under the Arbor

## Fall Gardening at Wildflower Woods

With a riotous backdrop of Chrysanthemums, Asters, Sedums and Cosmos and the sound of school children touring the garden, the gardeners have been busy this fall getting the Formal Garden ready for winter.

Before the heavy frost and snows, most beds have been weeded. The west Arbor bed has been readied for renovation next spring. With deep shade, competition from the wisteria vines and lack of irrigation, this bed was overtaken by wildlings, to use a Gene Stratton Porter term. Others may call these wildlings weeds, but a weed is only a plant where it doesn't belong. Wild Ginger was running rampant in the arbor bed, but it is a delightful plant along the paths in the woodlands.

Fall is also the time for planting. We are planting spring bulbs, but this fall we had a very special addition to the garden. One of the Board members discovered that a large bed of Fringed Gentians were in danger of being destroyed by a gravel pit. We dug four plugs, about six inches square, and transplanted them near the flagpole. They were planted in sunken pots filled with gravel, in order to mimic natural conditions. Since Fringed Gentians are biennial, with seeds germinating into small plants the first year and blooming the next year, we may not see their fragile blue blooms again for two years if we were successful in this tricky transplant.

Seeds have been collected to plant next spring with the extra seeds packaged for sale in the gift shop, benefiting the Society. We are attempting this winter, for the first

time, to save the especially beautiful or rare tender annuals by pottings or cuttings. These annuals are spending their winter in the big bay window at the farmhouse.

Many bulbs have been dug and dried on screens in the Garden Shed (reminiscent of *The Harvester*) before being stored in the cool, dark farmhouse basement for the winter. These include Gladiolas, Begonias, Canna Lily, Peacock Orchid, and Dahlias.

The hardy plants overwinter in the garden. Some have been cut back, but those with attractive foliage or seed heads remain intact, as they are especially beautiful in winter laden with snow.

Perhaps the best part of fall gardening is planning for the next season. We have inventoried the plants in the formal garden beds, noted what works well and what hasn't thrived. We then cross-referenced the existing plants with the plant list maintained by Gene Stratton Porter from 1912 through 1922. And we talk about the "what ifs." What if we plant these in drifts for more impact? What if we revive the yellow bed, perhaps adding this plant? What if we make part of the herb bed into an herbal tea garden? What if we outline these beds to draw the eye to the layout? What if we move this to the rock garden? What if we add some cabbage roses to the rose bed? What if? What if?

If you have some "what if" ideas to share, now is the time.

—Martha Ferguson

## TREES AND TRAILS

Fall was sure quick to arrive and appears in a rush to leave! The colors began to appear the third week of September. The buckeyes and most of the trees produced an abundant mast, (great year for nuts ☺). Sassafras and Virginia Creeper were quick to yellow and red. October put more color to Sumac, Maple, Oaks, and also upon the young cheeks of the wonderful fall school groups and all who came and enjoyed the Family Fun Day. The young people really enjoy their time at Wildflower Woods, I also have enjoyed this summer and fall. Working day after day indoors before my return to GSP has given me a new appreciation for the time I now have outside. Thank you to everyone for your encouragement and support of all the staff in adjusting to the loss of Pat Bolman. November is here and snow is in the forecasts, bundle up warm, grab your hat and come visit the site! (Holiday Open House is November 12 & 13!) Gene Stratton-Porter's Wildflower Woods is beautiful in it's winter dressings and with enough snow I plan to ski the paths of the Heritage Tree Trail. This memorial-walking path around the

Sower's farm fields is developing quickly with the addition of many new trees. These trees are small and young yet come with a pedigree, some are from trees growing at historically significant locations, others are from the homes or property of famous people. One task (of many) under way is to get Gene Stratton-Porter's Chinkapin Oak placed in this national heritage tree source. Chinkapin- a North American Indian word, old spelling chinquapin, meaning "large". It is indeed the large tree that Gene wished to be placed by for eternity. Our winter season will not last an eternity, yet it is quite a long season so plan to get out and enjoy!



—Ed Cable

# A PAGE FROM CHRISTMAS PAST

From *Lady of the Limberlost* by *Jeanette Porter Meehan*

The Christmas of 1917 we spent at the Cabin and the children were delighted. There was much snow and the ice on the lake was fourteen inches thick. Men from the little town were fishing through holes in the ice and for a very few cents we could buy enough frozen perch and sunfish for a meal.

After we had decorated the tree in the house for the children, Mother prepared a tree which she had bought especially for the birds. It was a cedar almost as large as the one in the house. She placed it on a little porch just outside the sun parlour so that we could all see it plainly from the inside. On it she put all the things birds like; little wire containers filled with suet; others filled with scraped beef; huge bones with bits of meat and gristle were fastened on with string; there were little tin baskets filled with various sorts of seeds; and there were baskets of nuts for the squirrels, and over it all there were strung yards of popcorn, unsalted. Pieces of apples, oranges, and fresh vegetables were put on each day. There was no lovelier sight than the brilliantly coloured birds as they chirped to each other while they ate greedily. It was a great lesson to the children and they never tired watching the birds and

asking questions.

Mother wrote of this Christmas: "Our Christmas was a dream of beauty. I had a lovely red-ribboned holly wreath in each window and door-glass, bells in the door-ways, the lights and mantels draped with Spanish moss and groundpine sent me from Pennsylvania. I had a big Christmas tree loaded with glittering ornaments in the library and one on the cement porch for the birds loaded with suet, meat, bones, nuts, and grain. Fifteen minutes after it was up the birds were swarming over it. Then a man sent me for a gift a darling little blue spruce tree, perfect in shape, which I trimmed with the tiny, cunning things for the dining-room buffet. We draped the electric lights and used red candles and roses in the living-room, yellow in the dining-room, and white lilies and candles in the library, which is in green and white.



## Hezikiah's Wish List . . . .

Hezikiah wishes everyone —

- holidays filled with good times
- wonderful memories from Genes cabin, gardens and woods
- a healthy winter
- time to dream about next years flowers and gardens

He has a little dictionary to help you with your catalog reading from some friends of his in the Garden Club of Stow.

### A Useless Garden Dictionary

From the Garden Club of Stow

As you are perusing catalogs this winter for spring planting, this humorous dictionary of terms may or may not help you in selecting plants.

**Attracts butterflies:** Attracts bees.

**Beautiful foliage:** The flowers are pathetic.

**Blue:** Purple plant people are notoriously color blind.

**Delicate flowers:** You need a magnifying glass to see them.

**Designer colors:** Paper bag beige.

**Dormant in hot weather:** Looks dead most of the year.

**Double blooms:** Has strange mutant flowers.

**Drought tolerant:** Prone to rot.

**Edible flowers:** The deer love them.

**Evergreen:** Leaves turn dark maroon for the winter.

**Excellent for cutting:** The single flower is at the top of a spindly, two-foot stalk.

**Flowers all Summer:** It had one minute, insipid bloom in June and I thought I saw another in August.

**Ground cover:** See "Vigorous."

**Hardy** (no mention of zone): hardy in Surrey, England.

**Heavy feeder:** Yellowish foliage and puny flowers unless fed constantly.

**Invasive:** It will come up through a foot of concrete.

**Late to emerge:** Looks dead most of the year.

**Native:** It's a common weed.

**Nearly thornless:** This plant has slightly fewer three-inch razor sharp barbs than usual.

**Sow seed in situ:** Say good-bye to those seeds. The weeds will germinate first.

**Tall:** It lies flat on the ground most of the time.

**Tolerates lean soil:** Leggy stems with occasional puny flowers when fed.

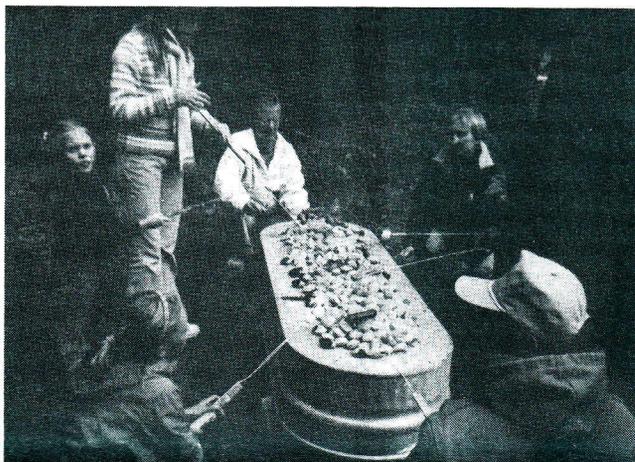
**Unusual:** One of the ugliest plants on the planet.

**Vigorous:** The smallest particle of this plant will take over your yard and you can't ever get rid of it.

**Winter interest:** Probably looks stunning under the snow.

# PORTERS

Our volunteers were in full force for Fall Family Fun Day. We have around 40 willing helpers now. The following day, more than half of them returned for a special thank you day. John took the pontoon out for two different lake tours. Volunteers enjoyed the relaxing rides and having time to visit with each other. Over the years now, our volunteers have made some strong friendships. It ended with a wonderful dinner prepared by our own chef Bud. We are so grateful to so many great helpers.



## Fall Family Fun Day

A wonderful time was had by all on our favorite fall family fun day. The horse drawn wagon kept busy moving visitors around the grounds all afternoon. Many people took advantage of the pontoon boat rides. A sock hike, an animals get ready for winter workshop and many craft activities kept everyone occupied. A big bonfire ended the day with visitors roasting their own hot dogs and marshmallows.



### BUS TRIP IN THE SPRING

I am very interested in taking the one day bus trip in the spring.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: John Kessen, c/o Gene Stratton-Porter Memorial Society  
P.O. Box 639  
Rome City, IN 46784

The following recipe was called Katherine Comstock's Apple Salad (she was the mother in "Girl of the Limberlost") and is special because of the dressing. Please curb your impulse to add marshmallows to this.

### Apple Salad

#### Dressing:

Juice from drained pineapple chunks (see salad ingredients below)  
 1/4 cup butter                      2 tablespoons cornstarch                      1 tablespoon lemon juice  
 1/4 cup sugar                      1 cup salad dressing                      Water

In small saucepan, combine the pineapple juice, butter, sugar and lemon juice. Heat to boiling. Combine cornstarch and enough water to make a smooth paste and add to the juice mixture. Cook until it is thick and smooth. Chill. Mix in salad dressing. (This can be done the day before.)

#### Salad:

8 cups chopped tart apples, (skins left on)                      2 cups green seedless grapes                      1-1/4 cups toasted pecans (don't use peanuts)  
 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple chunks, drained                      1 cup chopped celery                      1/2 cup chopped parsley

**Gene Stratton-Porter  
STATE HISTORIC SITE**

Limberlost North,  
Rome City, Indiana

**EVENTS 2005**

**HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**

Site decked out for the holidays.  
Entertainment, holiday goodies,  
crafts and activities.



**Saturday, November 12**

9am - 9pm

Candlelight Walk, 6pm - 9pm

**Sunday, November 13**

12 noon - 5pm

Site is open April 1, 2005 - End of November  
INFORMATION: (260) 854-3790  
Please call for details on events.

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE <http://www.genstratton-porter.com>

**GENE STRATTON-PORTER MEMORIAL SOCIETY**  
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