



LOTUSLAND NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 No.4  Winter 1994

Not One Complaint!

LOTUSLAND had its first compliance hearing on September 28 before the County of Santa Barbara's Planning Commission. We are thrilled to report that not only were we in complete compliance with every one of the 50 conditions of our permit to operate, but we were applauded by all the Commissioners for doing such an excellent job.

Kimberly Schizas, 2nd District Commissioner and 2nd Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission, said that after having sat through the very lengthy and heated public hearings for Lotusland in 1991 and 1992 when she was a Commissioner, she could only be "astonished and delighted" that there was not even one official complaint against the Foundation during our first year of operation.

Considering the complexity of some of the 50 conditions that regulate everything from the number of visitors and vehicles per day to advertising, signage, hours of operation, number of staff employed, hours and numbers of classes and lectures, free Saturday tours, peak traffic hours, school hours, Saturday hours, evening hours, tour hours and even a condition regulating bus idling time, successful compliance is truly a testament to how seriously the trustees and staff of Lotusland are dedicated

Compliance —continued on page 2



Madame Ganna Walska and birds in front of the main house.

Lotusland Archives

Birds at Lotusland

THE DIVERSE LANDSCAPE and welcoming ponds of Ganna Walska Lotusland are home and resting area for a great many of the bird species that live in or pass through Santa Barbara. On any day of the year you can find black phoebes hawking for insects over the water gardens and resting on the emergent lotus buds or tufa rocks. Every spring a pair makes a mud nest under the porch roof of the bath house, and one can easily believe that this has gone on without interruption since the 1920s when it was built. Of course, since the original Gavit family swimming pool and water gardens were sited by George Washington Smith in the upper end of R. Kinton Stevens' manmade "lake," phoebes have

probably been part of the scene here from the 1880s when Stevens used impounded winter runoff to irrigate his nursery of exotic plants.

Ponds seem to beckon seasonal visitors, and winter finds snowy and great egrets stopping by to share the habitat with the green-backed and great blue herons that can be found year-round. Most winters the Japanese garden pond attracts colorful wood ducks along with the more common mallards. At any time of the year the staccato chatter of a belted kingfisher may shatter the calm of the Japanese garden, followed closely by its dive into the water in quest of a mosquito fish or small koi.

Birds—continued on page 2

BIRDS

continued from page 1

The tall trees throughout the grounds are nesting and roosting sites for red-shouldered hawks and great horned owls, whose quest for food really forms part of Lotusland's integrated pest management program. Every gopher or mole taken by the owls means fewer holes in the lawn and less need for trapping by the grounds staff. Other raptors seen regularly include American kestrel and red-tailed hawks. Turkey vultures cruise overhead and may occasionally roost in the tall eucalyptus.

Although our summer visitors head south for the winter, other birds that breed further north arrive to spend the

season. White-crowned sparrows and yellow-rumped warblers are here from about October to April, and some species that breed in Santa Barbara in the summer, such as dark-eyed junco, have their numbers swollen by winter migrants from the north.

Most of the hummingbirds that spend the summer in Santa Barbara are on their way by fall, leaving the red flowers of the aloe garden to Anna's hummingbird, a year-round resident. With a whir of wings a hummingbird will zip up to a tall spike of an aloe, rewarded with a sip of nectar in return for transferring pollen from one flower to another. The scene seems so well coordinated that it is hard

to remember that all hummingbirds are New World species, while all aloes are native only to Africa and Madagascar. In the aloe's native habitat the counterpart to the hummers, the sunbirds, provide the pollination service.

Although Lotusland's visitors always see at least a few birds anytime they stroll through the gardens, a morning walk when the birds are more active will usually produce a greater list of species.

If you would like to try your luck at birdwatching, look for the announcement of two special birding walks for members on page 7.

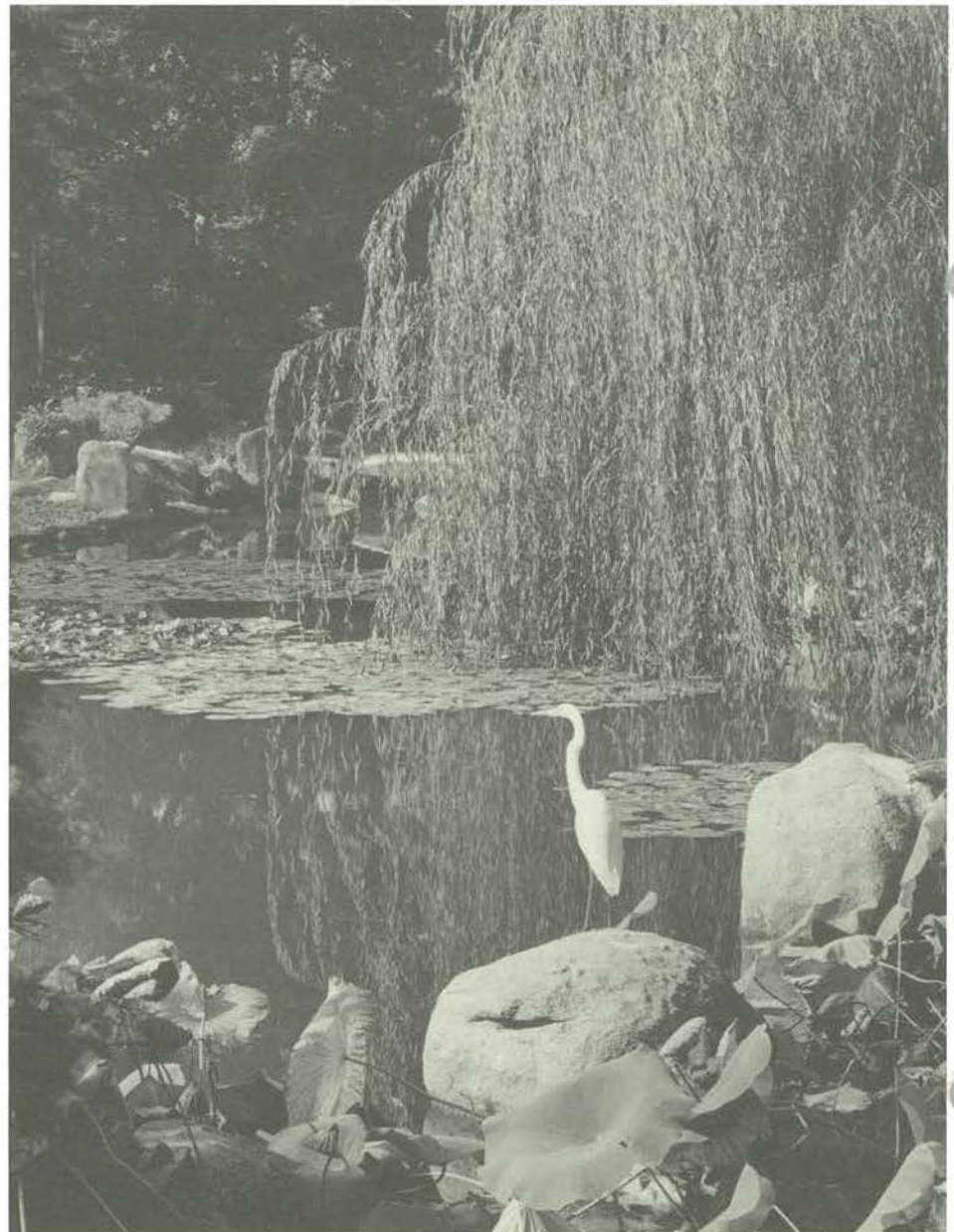
—Steven Timbrook

Compliance—continued from page 1

to working with the neighbors and community to ensure that the garden is preserved for present and future generations.

Next year even more members and their guests and visitors will be able to enjoy the garden. The result of having successfully completed our first compliance review is that we may increase our annual number of visitors from 5,000 to 7,500 in 1995. This is still a very small number compared to other public institutions in Santa Barbara, but we will do our utmost to give our members and supporters more access to the garden in 1995 while still saving space for the community and visitors to Santa Barbara. Please plan ahead as 1995 reservations are moving briskly for members and non-members alike. Next year we will once again offer interesting classes at the garden for members only which will be announced in our quarterly newsletter. We are also allowed to have a special event which will take place in July. It's going to be a great summer party while the lotus are blooming. Invitations will be sent to members, so please renew your membership, reserve tour space for you and your guests, and look forward to special invitations to Lotusland classes, lectures and events.

—Anne Dewey





"Private Gardens & Great Art"

THE SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART and Ganna Walska Lotusland Foundation are co-sponsoring a spring trip next year for the members of both institutions to visit northern California gardens and the exciting new Monet exhibit at the de Young Museum in San Francisco. This is going to be a rare op-

portunity to see private gardens in the Sonoma, Napa, Healdsburg and San Francisco areas that are not open to the public. The trip is scheduled for May 5 through 10, 1995. An announcement with registration information will be mailed to members of both institutions at the beginning of next year.

Garden Shop Dreams



YOU CAN HELP fulfill our dreams for the Garden Shop! Give us positive, creative suggestions on how to improve the shop, its inventory and service. Patronize the shop when you come for a tour next year. You'll be able to buy and wear our exclusive T shirts. Send your friends our beautiful cards with fabulous color photos of the garden by Wm. B. Dewey, plus our dramatic sepia photo cards of the youthful Madame Ganna Walska.

Did you know that among the plant

collections we have for sale are succulent wreaths in 8" to 16" diameter sizes? We appreciate it when you can special order these wreaths ahead of time as our volunteers are few in number and restricted in time available. Better yet, come join us and help create these special one-of-a-kind items!

One of our dreams is to utilize the wealth of dried plant material that abounds in Lotusland—pods, leaves, spathes, cones, etc. How about joining us to experiment in creating beautiful

Waiting Out the Winter

VISITORS to the garden in the waning months of the year may be disappointed to see that the lotus flowers have all turned to seed pods (*photo at left*) and the once glorious display of foliage is now decidedly ragged and soon to be a wreck of broken stems and brown sodden leaves. By contrast, in the next pond the tropical waterlilies continue to lift perfect blossoms up from the surface, and though their leaves may be somewhat reduced in size, they look as if they will continue to do so indefinitely.

Most plants which normally inhabit the temperate zones of the world have evolved a solution to the problems of reduced water availability, low light levels or cold for a portion of the year by going dormant. The lotus, native to North America, India and Asia, survive sometimes freezing winter temperatures by storing large quantities of starch in their underground tubers and shedding their leaves for a period of months. In the spring, the starch is converted into food for the emerging leaves which can then take over and through photosynthesis supply the growth needs of the plant.

In tropical regions, however, there may be no such growth limiting factors, and the plants native to those regions had no need to evolve such elaborate survival mechanisms. The tropical waterlilies in Lotusland's pond will eventually cease to grow as our night time temperatures cool the pond water too much, but it is with seeming reluctance that the plants stop their lovely floral display.

—Virginia Hayes

gift items to represent Lotusland? We always need and welcome volunteers to work in the shop and to create items for the shop to sell.

Put Lotusland on your New Year's resolution list and call B. Jo Dake at 969-0105 (or leave a message at the Lotusland office at 969-3767). Help make our dreams come true!

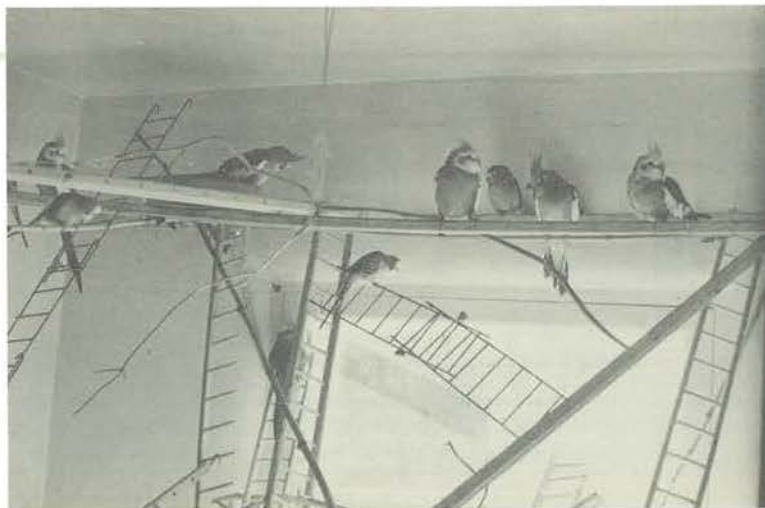
A Love of Birds

MADAME WALSKA loved birds both wild and tame. She had bird feeders scattered throughout the garden for the myriad birds which frequent the estate. Every morning it was one gardener's job to go around refilling them with bird seed, which was purchased in bulk. She was particularly fond of the great blue herons which visit the pond in the Japanese garden. As she walked through her estate supervising the garden, her beloved cockatiel Happy sat upon her shoulder. Whenever she entertained a large group such as the Palm Society or held a holiday celebration, Happy accompanied Madame Walska as she mingled with her guests. She especially enjoyed delighting children with her avian companion.

Happy Talk

Shade garden designer William Paylen recalls that the colorful personality of Happy was a joy to Ganna Walska, who loved to talk to him and her other birds. A playful companion, Happy was always nipping at her ear and chatting with her. IPM Coordinator John Lafleur relates that Madame Walska used to whistle "Happy Birthday" as she approached the pavilion on her way back from one of her daily rounds. Happy would whistle back, and the two songs were identical. No one could tell which was the bird and which the woman! Others recall that she would even put Happy on the phone to sing his song.

One day Happy was startled by something and flew up to the top of a tree. Unable to coax him down, Madame Walska called the Montecito Fire Department. Firemen sent ladders up the tree and shot water through hoses at poor Happy until he finally flew down. (Madame Walska later gave each of the brave firemen a check for his rescue efforts. That was her way.) After that Happy never went outdoors again. He resided with his "wife," Malutka ("little," in Polish), and intermittently with several other cockatiels and green par-



Lotusland Archives

An inside view of the aviary.

akeets in his own aviary in the pavilion where Madame Walska lived.

The wrought iron bars which jutted out from the windows were covered with screens so that the birds could be "outdoors." They had free reign of the room, the floor of which was covered with newspapers.

In the late 1940s, Madame Walska dispatched an emergency call to her New York physician, Dr. Herbert Koteen, at his lakeside cabin in the Adirondacks. He was paddling his canoe when summoned by the local police, and he went with them to the station clad only in his bathing suit to receive the call of one of his more famous patients. Aware that he had many stars and society women under his care, a small crowd gathered outside the station, hoping to hear interesting news.

Confidential

To his surprise and chagrin, it was not his famous patient who was ill, but her parakeet, a predecessor of Happy. It had fallen ill and appeared to be dying. Though he knew nothing of avian medicine, the doctor calmed the hysterical Ganna Walska by suggesting she give her pet some penicillin. As he emerged from the police station, his response to the crowd's questions as to who had summoned him was, "I'm sorry. It's a confidential matter." He gave the impression that he was protecting the anonymity of a starlet.

Unbelievably, the same scene was repeated a half hour later as Ganna Walska called him back—this time to thank him for his efforts, but to let him know that her bird had died. Dr. Koteen was much impressed by how the illness and death of her pet bird brought out so much emotion in this woman who, two years later, reacted with no emotion or tears to the news that her maid of 20 years, Mary, had died of a heart attack.

Birds in the Garden

Tame birds can still be found at Lotusland today. The aloe garden hosts a group of cockatiels donated in memory of Happy. They love to whistle back at passersby who talk to them in their thatched-roof cage across from the reflecting pool. There are mourning doves and Australian zebra finches in a cage adjacent to the citrus orchard. Although this area of the garden is not on the public tour, the cooing of the doves and warbled squeaking of the finches can often be heard from the neighboring shade gardens or parterre. Birds, so endearing to Ganna Walska, remain a part of the estate which the Lotusland Foundation preserves in her memory.

Compiled by Janet Eastman. Thanks to Sharon Crawford, Mike Furner, Dr. Herbert Koteen, John Lafleur, Bill Paylen, Hania Tallmadge and Patricia Tarkowska.



These are the Volunteers who made it all possible!

IN 1994 LOTUSLAND was able to operate its first official year as a public garden thanks to its many volunteers. Special recognition is due the many docents who led public tours through the garden four days a week from mid-February to mid-November and to the volunteers who staffed the Garden Shop, worked in the garden doing grounds maintenance and plant propagation, organized the archives, and provided clerical assistance to the administrative staff. We look forward to another successful year, thanks to their tireless efforts on Lotusland's behalf!



Madame Walska in a Polish Easter costume with Happy on her finger in 1951. (Lotusland Archives)

Ho, ho, ho!

MADAME WALSKA's characteristic generosity was known not only to the gardeners on her staff but also to their families. All the gardeners received bonuses at Christmas time. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Madame Walska dressed up in a red Santa Claus suit and hat made of fine French velvet with white ermine trim and carried presents to the young child of her head gardener, Gunnar Thielst.

According to Mr. Thielst's widow, Louisa Thielst, Madame Walska would call out, "Ho, ho, ho!" as she approached the house. Though in her seventies, she attempted to transport a television set one Christmas. Luckily, Mr. Thielst saw Madame Santa Claus in time and ran out to help her with her heavily laden holiday sack.

—Compiled by Janet Eastman

Karen Bates
Hampton Bell
Bonnie and Stuart Brandt
Kathleen Bresslin
Adi Brewer
June Bristow
John Boyer
Jayne Murray Burton
August Cal
Jaye Carman
Jeff Chemnick
Karole and Russ Christian
Karen Coberly
Frances D. Connors
Sharon Crawford
Nancy Cross
Elizabeth Dake
Donna Dalton
Leota Daniel
Kathy Dapont
Lori Ann David
Jane (Poney) Eagleton
Julia Emerson
Carol Endicott
Ann Forrest
Virginia Gardner
Cathleen Grabowski
Ann Golden

Betsy Graham
Reba Green
Norma Greene
Lou Greer
Anna Griffin
Louise A. Harding
Nancy Harrington
Patricia R. Harris
Nancy Huebner
Sean Hutchinson
Anne Jones
Beth Jones
Fred Keller
Dana Kent
Linda Krieger Hughes
Karen Kolb
Lyn Longley
Maude H. Lowry
Dorothy Marking
Malcolm McCabe
N. Suzanne McClure
Mikaela Mennen
Annette Myck
Lee Neill
Eleanor O'Brien
Daniel Pedersen
Maija-Liisa Pekkanen
Barbara Peterson

Maureen Peterson
Terry Peyton
Joanne Perrot
Robin Primich
Dave Prowell
Robert and Virginia Puddicombe
Richard Riffero
Andrea K. Ryan
Kathleen Sale
Roman J. Salvador
Nancy Salvucci
Sandy Schneider
Helen Service
Rajiv Seth
Susan Scott
Alice Sheldon
Patsy Sears
Hilda Seibert
Judy Thielscher
Louise Tucker
Carol Valentine
Emma Lou Van Deren
Shirley Varner
Richard Warner
Antoinette M. Willock
Adele Wojciechowski
Pia Woolverton

Are you or is someone you know interested in becoming a volunteer or docent next year? If so, please contact Janet Eastman, Volunteer Coordinator, at (805) 969-3767, Monday through Friday.

July 16, 1995—An Important Date!

A great summer party will take place at Lotusland next July while the lotus are in full bloom. Invitations will be sent to members, but mark your calendars now—it will be lot(u)s of fun!



FRIENDS OF LOTUSLAND

We welcome new members who joined in August, September, October 1994

Level I

Norman and Hannah Ackerman
Dr. and Mrs. Fred Adler
Nancy Alletag and Terrill Hill
Gretchen M. Bataille
Sara Baum
Nancy M. Bayer
Don and Terri Bennett
Mike Berezner
Carolyn Biller
Celia Book
Thomas Bortolazzo
Julie D. Bowden
Nancy Bull
Anna Bunting
Gail Burchett
Michael and Marsha Burgoon
Sharon Campbell
Eugene C. Cherry
Frances D. Connors
Blythe Coulter
Kathleen and William Crevier
Robert and Lynne Cummings
John and Susan Dennell
Maureen Durkin
Bee and Carl Ellisman
Grace Florez and Dianne Schnitzer
Brenda Goggin
Mr. and Mrs. Robert V. Goode
Annette Goodheart
Marie Gressel
Mary B. Grigsby
Mrs. H. R. Haldeman
Stan and Jean Harfenist
Kareen Hart
Sandra Lei Isa
Zoe Iverson
Michael B. Keegan
Nancy S. Kelly

Julie Kindig
Ruth Lane
Maria Suzanna Levitt
Georgia Lynn
Lynn and Jim Lyon
Brenda Martin
Alex Massian
Amanda McBroom
Marsha McCollum
Harold McHugh
Elizabeth B. Miller
Rand Molnar
Darwin Muilenbury and M. Lyle
Karen Ribbens
Lee Sanders-Malave
Rajiv Seth and Cynthia Husted
Joseph Michael Sharp
John and Linda Sheaffer
Dona M. Sloan
Mr. and Mrs. Ted Swift
Joan and Dave Taylor
Mr. and Mrs. William A. Taylor
Kim Vallely
Anne and Vladimir Volokh
Dr. and Mrs. Richard Ward
Robin and Stephen Ward
Carl and Barbara Westerlund
Claudia Wickstrom
Leora Williams
Antoinette M. Willock
Wynette Winkler

Level II

Mr. S. L. Abercrombie
Jeanne M. Anderson
Ryan D. Base
Mark Bennett and Paul Blake
Gaye Birtcher
Dennis and Susan Chiavelli

Martha Davis and Marty Nokes
Bruce and Regina Drucker
Ralph and Nancy Edebo
Caryl Irvin
Sarah Jane Lind
Jane Harris McFarland
Patrick L. McMahon
Mr. and Mrs. Max E. Meyer
Shawn and Lorraine Miner
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond King Myerson
Mr. and Mrs. Bob Ray Offenhauser
Don and Doris Ray
April Rhoads-James
Joe and Lila Scher
Anne Schoellkopf
Eve Rozsa Senn
Robert H. Thorson
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Webber
Mary Ann and Marvin Weiss
Mrs. Rianna Williams
Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Wright, Jr.
Karen and Matt Yonally
Mrs. Shelley Zadik

Level III

Betty Bass
Virginia Castagnola-Hunter
Will and Mary Richeson
Barbara and Ed Rosenblatt
Jeanne C. Thayer
Laura Tomaszewski

Level IV

James S. Bower
Dorothy Smart Bowles
Stephen Hahn
Mr. and Mrs. Austin H. Peck, Jr.

Members who have increased their level of support in August, September, October 1994

Level II

Heloise L. Bacon
Sydney Baumgartner
Jan and Ralph Baxter
Ann W. Beebe
Mr. and Mrs. Russell and Suzanne Bock
Ms. Anne K. Borax
Gary H. Brown
W. Joe and Cathy Bush
Eunice S. Butler
Carnzu A. Clark
Elda G. Colefax
William B. Cornfield
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon J. Durenberger
George and Poney Eagleton
Sandra Fastnow
Marilyn and Jeff Harding
Norman and Helen Hillemann

Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Holland
David H. Jones
Ruth C. Mahoney
Janet R. Milligan
Norman Neuerburg
Bee Ottinger
Mrs. Godwin J. Pelissero
Sandra and Gary Roberts
David Ruja, PhD
George E. Schoellkopf
Mary N. Sheldon
Gary and Diana Simpson
Mr. and Mrs. C. Paul Slater
Ellen J. Somdahl
Arden and Julia Stevens
Charles and Elizabeth Storke
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lionel Warner
Adele P. Wilder

Level III

Donald and Nancy Balch
John and Shelby Bowen
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Harriman
Margaret Marble
Mrs. Joseph R. Osherenko
Mrs. David T. Shiffman
Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Straus

Level IV

Cecelia A. Dalsemer
Thomasine Hahn and Robert Harrison
Mrs. Richard H. Hellmann
Mr. Harold Simmons
Carol L. Valentine

Horticultural Happenings

With MIKE IVEN

Lotusland Grounds Superintendent

LOTUSLAND'S 30-YEAR-OLD Ford tractor was put out to pasture. A new John Deere 5300 diesel tractor with a power take off for future attachments has been purchased. The new, more powerful tractor enables grounds staff to work more efficiently.

UNFORTUNATELY, it was necessary to remove one of the two *Neobuxbaumia polylopha* in front of the main house due to an irreversible root rot that was killing the plant and creating a danger of it falling at any time. A combination of factors contributed to the root rot problem. Heavy clay soil in the area became saturated by a fire hydrant supply line underground leak that wasn't discovered until water surfaced. Healthy roots of the cactus were cut in order to pour the footing for a renovated brick pathway to the receptionist's office. The wet soil and the injured tissue were ideal conditions for the root rot to flourish. A large cutting from the top of the cactus was saved and is being rooted in the nursery.



Grounds Superintendent Mike Iven, who recently celebrated 10 years of employment at Lotusland, sits atop the new John Deere tractor.

WINTER BIRD WALKS

Class Open to Members Only, January 20 & 21, 1995

TWO SPECIAL BIRD WALKS for members of Friends of Lotusland are coming up in January. Led by Steven Timbrook, Director of Lotusland, and Jeff Chemnick, a Lotusland docent with a strong background in birding around the globe, small groups will search the plantings and ponds of Ganna Walska's garden for avian residents and winter tourists. The bird walks will be from 10 a.m. to noon on Friday, January 20, and Saturday, January 21. The class fee is \$6.00, and you may reserve space by filling in the coupon below and returning it with your payment. Classes are limited to 25 members each day, and reservations will be made in the order coupons are received.

Ganna Walska Lotusland Registration Form Winter Bird Walks — January 20 & 21, 1995

Check one: _____ Friday, January 20, 10:00 A.M. to noon
_____ Saturday, January 21, 10:00 A.M. to noon _____ Number attending, \$6.00 per person \$ _____

PAYMENT METHOD

☐ Check Enclosed (payable to Ganna Walska Lotusland)
☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard Expiration Date _____

Card Number _____

Signature _____

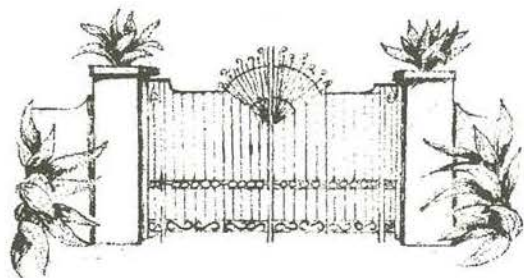
Member Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____



Planting the Bombax LOTUSLAND is grateful for the memorial donation of this *Bombax ellipticum* tree made in memory of Jerry Freud by his sister, Nancy Haring. She chose the flowering *Bombax* because her brother loved anything that bloomed, and she wanted Jerry's children and grandchildren to be able to visit the garden and see the tree planted in his memory. The *Bombax*, a native of Mexico, is being planted by grounds staff Robert Carrillo and Peter Schneider with Curator Virginia Hayes looking on. This rarely planted succulent tree, which will grow to medium size, was recently placed in the *Dioon* area of the Cycad Garden.



**Ganna Walska
Lotusland Foundation**

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