

**THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA/MEN'S  
GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL CONVENTION  
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA**

On April 18, Ed and Gerry Herman began their trip to the National Convention. Leaving Ohio began a beautiful scene of Spring unfolding her arms. Red Bud trees adorned the highway all the way down to Spartanburg and deciduous trees began to leaf out. It was beautiful traveling through the West Virginia mountains, each turn like a new page in a book.



We arrived at the Marriott at Renaissance Park on April 19. It was built in 2002 and was beautiful but tricky to get about. We had our exercise daily as we



traveled to elevators to rooms and others to the garage, then finding the dining rooms and meeting rooms. The gardens around the hotel were beautiful. Meals were excellent and our hosts were great.

We got down to business on Thursday when meal times were also award times. Seminars began after breakfast. Barrie Bain did a nice presentation on *Brightest & Best in Annuals & Perennials*. We attended an interesting National Directors Meeting. I was impressed with the dedication of the executive board in looking over the clubs assets and the directors desires to share the feelings of their clubs and work for success at the local, regional and national levels. It takes an awful lot to keep a boat this size afloat.

Friday began a very strenuous day of tours from 9 AM to 4:30 PM. We did Hatcher Gardens first, followed by a box lunch at USC-Upstate's Arboretum then on to Milliken & Company. Our tour guide at Milliken was Dr. Michael Dirr who managed to delight us with his enormous knowledge of trees and shrubs that made up the landscape. You really had to be there to understand the beauty of the arboretum. The magnolias and cypress trees and the landscaping around the 4 guests houses made you wish you were one of Mr. Milliken's guests. WOW! Then it was back to the hotel for a BBQ dinner.

Saturday started out with the Membership Meeting. I believe there were about 177 attendees from around the country. The Central Great Lakes Region made a good showing. Thanks. It was then "Green Marketplace" time. This was a shoppers delight. We bought the book *Gardening through your Golden Years* by Jim Wilson. A chapter called "The Engineers Touch" was about Joe Maple who was the presenter of the seminar "Seed Starting Made Easy" which we attended. Joe is a master gardener who had a no nonsense approach and had much to offer. I will be glad to share the book AFTER I read it.

"Fragrance in your Garden" by Barbara Pleasant was another seminar we attended. It was basically about how we smell.

We had about one hour of free time which allowed for a quick shower and a refreshing nap. Anyone who says conventions are all play, has never attended one of our conventions.

We all gathered for the last time for the President's Reception followed by dinner and Dr. Dirr who gave the keynote speech. "Breeding, Introducing and Marketing New Woody Plants". What a treat and what a Buckeye enthusiast he is!



It's been a long day and we settle in after repacking our suitcases and head for Oglebay, W.V. to set up the itinerary for our August 14th bus trip. This worked out well and I am sure you will all have wonderful memories after the bus trip.

As the saying goes, "There's no place like home", we couldn't help but smile as we drove up our driveway and thought about a good night's sleep in **our own bed**. And so dreams of a great, informational convention and thoughts of the 2007 convention in Illinois surrounded our heads, we drifted to a well needed rest.

PS: Calendars will be on sale at the May meeting.

Our national website: [tgoa-mgca.org](http://tgoa-mgca.org). will have A listing of all who won awards and our next National newsletter will also have convention information. Please check the web.