

April 1, 2014

Welcome to spring, at long last! Winters are always long in Michigan but this year tested even the hardiest among us. Like many of you, I've thought a great deal over the past few weeks about spring and how pleasant it will be to not see snow on the driveway and salt on the streets. I know, too, that none of us will miss the Michigan potholes as we make our way to campus each day!

At the same time, I have also thought about spring at Cranbrook, a time when the first flowers transform our campus into a landscape of extraordinary beauty. From the daffodils at the girls middle school to the flowering dogwoods arching over Lake Jonah, the new season is a special time across our campus in so many ways.

Spring is also a time of intense activity across all of our program areas; we will graduate Schools students ready to challenge the world, recognize Academy artists who will design the future, and excite minds of all ages about the natural and cultural worlds around them at the Institute of Science. Indeed, the spring season is truly a special time at Cranbrook.

It's also the time of one of my favorite traditions at Cranbrook—the President's Award for Excellence. This event allows us to formally recognize those individuals whose contributions to Cranbrook go above and beyond what is expected.

This year, I'm delighted to be able to honor four extraordinary individuals: Linda Flaga counsels students at Brookside and the girls middle school and prepares them to become Cranbrook ambassadors in the world; Chris Hopp assures that Cranbrook's Information Technology systems are fully functional at all times; Judy Lindstrom, whose years of volunteer service at the House and Gardens Auxiliary has contributed to the preservation of the heart of Cranbrook; and Rhonda Reed, who creates special events at Cranbrook of the very highest caliber and with an extraordinary level of detail. Each of these individuals make Cranbrook a better place in many ways.

In addition to the President's Award, this year we revive a long-standing tradition when we bestow the Founder's Award, Cranbrook's highest honor, on Cranbrook President Emeritus Lillian Bauder.

While president at Cranbrook, Lillian was a skillful and respected administrator, community supporter, and a passionate advocate for Cranbrook history, art, education, science and architecture. In addition to leading efforts to acquire National Historic Landmark status for Cranbrook, she oversaw the repair and restoration of campus buildings and landscapes, and initiated the most significant expansion since the Booth's founded Cranbrook.

Lillian will receive her award at an event at the Kingswood campus of the Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School on April 17 and will also join us at the President's Award for Excellence event the day before at the Cranbrook Kingswood Middle School for Girls-Kingswood. This is especially fitting as the President's Award for Excellence is a Cranbrook tradition started by Lillian herself.

In addition to these very special events, there is activity all over our campus.

In the Schools, we are pleased to announce that after a thorough and extensive national search we have hired Ms. Karen Watson to be the next Director of The Vlasic Family Early Childhood Learning Center. Ms. Watson holds an MS in Early Childhood and Childhood General Education, and currently serves as the Managing Director of Teach for America's Leadership Development program in Detroit. After a year-long, national search, Mr. Deren Finks joins the Schools July 1 as Dean of College Counseling. Mr. Finks comes to us after 18 years as Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid at Harvey Mudd College in southern California. Mr. Finks holds a B.A. in Liberal Studies from the University of La Verne.

It's been a busy season of competitions for the Schools. The Boys Swim and Dive Team entered the season with the intent of striving to overcome the close 2nd place finish at States last season. This year's State Finals were electric, and at the end of the day, the Cranes brought home Cranbrook's first Boys Swim and Dive State Championship trophy!

Upper School students competed at The Michigan Schools Band and Orchestra Association's (MSBOA) State Solo and Ensemble Festival. In total, Cranbrook students brought home twenty-five 1st division and four 2nd division awards! Congratulations to our outstanding musicians.

On the Robotics front, every active VEX and VEX IQ Robotics team from Cranbrook's Lower, Middle, and Upper School programs qualified to compete in the VEX State Finals Tournaments. Of the seven CK teams participating, five took top honors, with three qualifying (out of five total spots in the State) to compete at the World Championship Tournament in Anaheim, CA in April. Cranbrook teams brought home eight of the top awards at the State finals, and of the twenty Michigan teams that qualified for a space at the World Championships, five spaces (25% of the total spaces allotted to Michigan) were secured by Cranbrook Robotics teams. Bravo to all of our remarkable student competitors!

At the Art Museum, our Academy students, Artists-in-Residence and alumni are busy and productive preparing for the Graduate Degree Exhibition that will open on April 19 at the Art Museum, to which all are invited. We just learned, for instance, that five Cranbrook Fulbright Fellowship applications have moved forward to finalist status. The Academy is already the highest per-capita producer of Fulbright Fellows in the United States, but even for us, five finalists is a remarkably large number. It's not a guarantee that each finalist will receive a fellowship, but it is a strong endorsement of the quality and creativity of our students (and of the effective work of our Fulbright advisers Judy Dyki and Sarah Turner). Ceramics Artist in Residence Anders Ruhwald's work was recently acquired by the Musee des Arts Decoratif at the Louvre in Paris, while Liz Cohen in Photography has been invited to participate in the prestigious Site Santa Fe this summer. Recent Cranbrook 3D Design alums Brian DuBois and Reed Wilson were featured in the "New York Times" design section just last week. And please visit the Art Academy's website to see a series of great new videos on other important alums (<http://www.cranbrookart.edu/Pages/Alumni.html>).

I'd also like to invite each of you to Open Studios on Sunday, April 27 at the Art Museum. Open Studios is a fantastic event, during which patrons are welcomed into the Academy's studios for an intimate evening of dinner and discussion with the students and Artists in Residence. Guests experience the Academy in action, situated at the physical, intellectual, and spiritual core of our programs. It is an event like no other, one to which people return year after year to meet the extraordinary people who make the Academy the national treasure it has been for more than 80 years. All proceeds from the event directly support financial aid for our Academy students.

The Center for Collections and Research recently announced its spring programs, including both a five-lecture Behind the Scenes and its third Day Away program. This year, Behind the Scenes focuses on "Collections and Conservation" and pairs campus experts with the professional conservators with whom we work to preserve our rare books, outdoor sculptures, architecture, paintings, and even State treasures such as the Sanilac petroglyphs. The popular Day Away program—which sold out last year—will travel on May 10 to Saginaw and Midland to learn more about the connections among sculptor Marshall Fredericks, architect Alden B. Dow, and Cranbrook.

At the Institute of Science, tens of thousands of guests have now experienced "*Dinosaurs of The Lost World*," and it remains a very popular exhibition. Institute staff are now planning a blockbuster fall installation, National Geographic's "*Women of Vision*," fully funded and brought to the Institute by PNC Bank. The Institute is one of only eight venues nationally to host this extraordinary 5,000 square-foot show of the best National Geographic photography taken by female photojournalists. The exhibition will officially open this fall with a black-tie gala on September 13. Programs are currently under development to bring this exciting experience into the Schools and the Art Museum.

The Institute was enormously proud to have been selected as one of only ten venues worldwide to debut FOX broadcasting's remake of Carl Sagan's "Cosmos" to a live audience via satellite feed. Two hundred and ninety-seven guests attended, with a wait-list that exceeded 350. Other venues hosting the simulcast event included New York's American Museum of Natural History, Florida's Johnson Space Center and Chicago's Adler Planetarium as well as a number of foreign institutions.

Cranbrook House and Gardens kicks off the season with the surest sign of spring—their annual plant sale on May 13 and 14—featuring the best Native Michigan plants and wildflowers, annuals, perennials, conservatory greenhouse-grown organic heirloom tomatoes, herbs, shrubs, trees, and much more! In addition to the remarkable assortment of plants, the sale offers garden items, ideas, tips, and "green thumb" knowledge from Cranbrook House and Gardens Auxiliary volunteers. Special tours and a new Member event are planned for the spring as well.

I like to think that George and Ellen Booth would be proud of our faculty, staff, students and leaders for striving to make our world a better place. George Booth once said, "We have blazed a new trail; it will be largely the work of others to extend, to widen, and to improve." I hope you will agree that, based on our many accomplishments this year, we are doing just that!

As warmer temperatures transform our campus with the beauty of true spring, I urge each of you to visit, enjoy a walk, or experience one of our upcoming programs. If it's been a while since you have been on campus, I hope you will find the time to visit again soon. Please know how very much you are valued for being part of the Cranbrook family.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and ideas,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dom". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

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