
F A L L 1 9 9 5

N E W S L E T T E R

From the President

We dedicate this issue to Tom Kane, who passed away recently. Tom helped found the Alliance in 1978, and he remained one of its most devoted members. No other individual has affected the direction and spirit of the Alliance more than Tom. As friend and mentor to many, his wisdom and warm ways will be so greatly missed. Our editors, Shary Berg and Ellen Lipsey, have included a collection of memories of Tom. Those who knew him will enjoy the reminiscences; others will catch a glimmer of Tom's endearing qualities and spirit.

Fittingly, the Alliance's 1996 annual conference will be held in Tom's home state, Vermont. Conference organizers Lauren Meier and Bill Clendaniel are planning visits to some of Vermont's most spectacular public and private landscapes. With help from Patricia O'Donnell, who recently relocated her home and office to Vermont, the team will be sending you information in the near future. Register soon after you receive the materials—the spaces will fill quickly!

The 1995 conference in Santa Barbara, California, provided a fascinating glimpse of southern California landscapes in all their diversity. Many thanks to Sharon Crawford, who planned the conference in its entirety.

The Board of Directors will meet in Boston in early November to discuss many facets of the Alliance. Some of the topics on the agenda will be membership (should we try to grow, to whom should we reach out?), publications (whether we want to publish anything after the Alliance/National Park Service case studies come out next year), and training opportunities (the potential to collaborate with other preservation groups on workshops/seminars). If you have any thoughts on these subjects, or if you would like the board to discuss any-



T H E A L L I A N C E

F O R H I S T O R I C

L A N D S C A P E

P R E S E R V A T I O N

Thomas J. Kane

December 15, 1922 to August 31, 1995

By Rachel M. Kane

Tom graduated with a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture in 1948, and received his master's in 1962, both from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Over the course of his career, he designed or restored the landscapes of many historic places all over America including the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Hyde Park, NY; Burnside Plantation, Bethlehem, PA; Historic Pittsford, Pittsford, NY; and Shaker Village, Canterbury, NH. In 1974, he received a HUD Award for designing a master plan for New Harmony, IN. He created master plans for the national Trust properties of Lyndhurst, Woodrow Wilson House, Woodlawn, Belle Grove, Oatlands, Chesterwood and Shad-ows-on-the-Teche. His campus planning included Princeton University, Lehigh University, Mercer County Community College, Moravian College and Union College. He also designed the landscapes for Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ;

1996 ALLIANCE CONFERENCE JUNE 13 - 16, VERMONT

Last spring Tom Kane invited us to "see old Vermont and a few cows". Sadly he won't be there to host the meeting but we will visit many of the sites he wanted us to see. Among them are estates in the Cornish, NH, area, the Billings Farm Museum in Woodstock, Shelburne Farm (an Olmstedian country gentleman's estate near Burlington), and a visit to Tom's home in East Hardwick hosted by Rachel and other members of the Kane family. More detailed information will be sent out after the first of the year.

Cleveland Art Museum Courtyard, Cleveland, OH; Scanticon Conference Centers in three cities; and many others.

In 1988, the Secretary of the Interior presented Tom the Conservation Service Award for outstanding leadership in the conservation and preservation of historic and scenic landscape. Secretary Hodel wrote, "He is an artist in the preservation of historic landscapes; a poet in describing their values; and a mentor to hundreds of conservationists and preservationists who have come to understand that natural and historic places are often 'one'. . . . He has contributed advice and assistance critical in formulating new National Park Service programs and authored the seminal *Guidelines of the Management of Historic Landscapes in the National Park System* that were the first published departmental guidelines on the subject." He maintained his own firm from 1970 to the present. He never retired and the firm of Tom Kane and Associates continues under his son, T. Barnabas Kane.

Tom was a gardener at heart, with an intuitive gift for his profession. As an only child growing up in Worcester, MA, he spent long afternoons in the fields, studying the shapes of the land—the hills, copses, haystacks and streams. He considered the



houses, outbuildings, barns, fences and roads that lay upon the land to be part of the landscape, too. He always knew what he wanted to do when he grew up, and often remarked that he couldn't believe that he actually got paid for his work, because it didn't seem like work to him at all.

An old-school draftsman, his plans were always drawn and lettered in a beautiful hand. He developed his sketching techniques over the years as a way of recording his experiences as a Marine in China, a bicyclist through the territory of Alaska, a tourist through post-war Europe and as a honeymooner, driving a tractor caravan from England to Australia. He was also a skilled photographer and watercolorist.

Tom's approach to landscape architecture was passionate yet understated. He had little interest in creating triumphal parks or grand schemes. His desire was to enhance the distinct beauty inherent in every site. He himself derived as much pleasure from surveying the sublime view from mountaintops as from examining little abandoned pastures, sprinkled with ferns, wild lobelia, horse-tails, high-bush cranberries and grass-of-parnassus, with infant spruce trees moving in to reclaim the forest. Native plants were his favorites and, like landscape architect Jens Jensen, he used them in projects as much as possible.

Ever kindly and patient with his clients, he was always able to put a personal stamp on a scheme. Tom was comfortable in any social strata; his clients enjoyed Tom's laid-back manner of designing and problem-solving. He knew instantly and intuitively how to bring out the best in a site, identifying (in the old parlance) the "genius loci" of the lands. He could awaken and accentuate that force, and create a harmonious environment with the simplest of methods—by shifting the driveway, planting a clump of white birch, causing a stream to flow gently so that the frogs and dragonflies would come. The little things

meant a great deal to him because he never lost the ability to see nature as a child does.

His garden philosophy was simple. No matter what the conditions, time or place, wherever nature is lovingly tended by people, a garden is made. It is an emotional space, a refuge that is safe, creative and meditative, where the soul opens out as unconsciously as do the flowers. The special joy of the garden comes to those who tend them, and Tom thought the idea of the "no-maintenance" garden was ridiculous because it entails no gardening!

Looking through his papers recently, I found that he sums up this idea beautifully in the following poem:

There is No Garden Without a Gardener

There is no garden without a gardener.
The making of a garden is the ontogenous
Microcosm of the making of the world.
The soul of the garden is in labor and
Reward in smells and hues and in shadows
Twiggy patterns sound and light
Breath of living things the life given
To inert things cared for and made into
A paradise a place apart from the world
Growing dying changing in years or
Days with wind or frost or moonlight.
No surprise that Eden is a garden
Nor gardeners close to God. Has it not
Always been so. No matter aesthetic triumph
Magazine cover stuff. It's between
The garden and the gardener and one
Can always tell a gardener by the
Way he leads you through his garden
As in the presence of newborn babies.
(Thomas Kane, 1992)

Certainly he and our mother Judith gave us, their five children, an unusual knowledge and love of plants. I remember him showing us how to distinguish sweet birch by the taste of the bark and encouraging us to try spruce gum (which I never learned to like). All of us have pursued professions revolving

around plants and the environment.

One of his most recent accomplishments was a tree-planting for our village of East Hardwick. Tom went door-to-door, identifying good locations for trees and talking to the neighbors about how to care for them. He organized the planting day and oversaw the group effort, making sure the trees were properly planted, staked and mulched, and reminded the villagers to keep up watering through the dry summer. He continued the old tradition of planting trees to commemorate family events.

Tom was active in the ASLA, having served as president of the New York chapter from 1969 to 1971, and in many other organizations. His favorite was the Alliance. The concept that our familiar landscapes have value in themselves is one which has gone relatively unnoticed until recent decades. Now, with increasing development pressures, there are many who recognize the danger of losing a vital component of our culture. I quote my father: "The difficulties in defining and affecting the preservation of the historic landscape have been due not to disinterest but conversely to the very visceral relationship between man and nature and the nuances and colossal scale differentials from backyard gardens to streets and townships. Architectural structures are simply comprehended and dealt with compared to the landscape complex which is not structural but organic and cosmic as well. But the awareness is about it, and it is this generation which will discover and mend the fabric of our cultural heritage in the land."

My father is buried in the land he loved so well in East Hardwick, above the rapids of the Lamoille River, with scatterings of wild aster and meadow rue decorating the site as nature wills it. Ever gentle, he wished always to fit into the natural scheme.

Memories of Tom Kane

By Shary Berg

I met Tom in the late 1970s at the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park, NY. His "Comprehensive Report on Historic and Cultural Landscape" was characteristic of Tom's work—concise, thorough, practical.

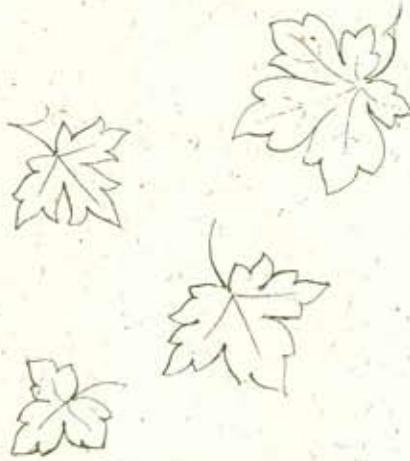
Later, while the rest of us struggled with broad landscape guidelines, Tom wrote about "The Crunch Underfoot" reminding us about more subtle and immediate aspects of landscape. With a recipe for stabilized earth and a discussion of crushed stone technology he gave useful advice and admonished us that "it is the nonverbal, as well as the verbal, experience of the site that affects the visitor." The issue had apparently come up during the 1985 Alliance meeting where there had been discussion of the appropriateness of a crushed stone pathway at President Herbert Hoover's fishing camp at Shenandoah National Park.

I have fond memories of Tom from almost every Alliance meeting: arriving in a battered car with at least one member of his family; telling stories about the origins of New Harmony; a brisk early morning walk to see the Acadia carriage roads; singing songs in Swedish at the council ring at The Clearing, accompanied by Julia Sniderman on the harmonica.

I am grateful to Tom for the support he gave all of us in keeping the Alliance alive and well and true to its original vision.

By Patricia M. O'Donnell

Tom was a special colleague and I have many memories of our times together. Tom's laid back attitude was in sharp contrast to his insightful thinking about the field of landscape preservation. I came to see Tom at the Pleasantville, NY, office one Saturday in 1982. We were meeting to talk about his work during the 1970s on the ASLA Historic Preservation Committee. He



had made extensive efforts, with some good results, and he shared his attempts with me.

The discussion evolved to the future and I asked his advice on the HPC that I was about to take over. He was thoughtful, encouraging and generous in his responses. I went away with his guidance and some files. His support and his previous work provided the basis for the growth and expansion of influence of the Historic Preservation Open Committee of the 1980s. Over the years I shared meetings and conversations and outings with Tom that were also the source of memories at New Harmony, Williamsburg, The Clearing, etc. Most recently he stopped in unannounced at the Westport office and helped out efforts at Lyndhurst with his records from the early 1970s. He is missed, but his influence spread widely and memories of our times together will remain a living tribute.

By Hugh C. Miller

Tom's quiet words dealt with his knowledge and his humor expressed his feelings. Nothing was sacred, but everything was special and solutions were simple. Tom was always teaching. I learned about jacking up a garden wall from him. To him, landscapes were art and preservation was common sense. He once told me that landscape preservation should be done with the right side of the brain. When I asked him to write policy for preserving landscapes in NPS, he wrote prose about the feeling of a landscape . . . what he said was beyond the bureaucratic process. Tom's perceptions have become the substance of landscape preservation as we know it today.

By Arnie Alanen

I first met Tom in 1979 at the second meeting of the Alliance, which was held at The Clearing. Since Tom was the only individual who attended every Alliance gathering from 1978 to 1994, one could always be assured of meeting him on an annual basis.

Tom and I roomed together at some of the meetings, and we always shared our experiences and thoughts about the landscape; nevertheless, we never failed to give equal attention to other issues that were of interest to us—especially those associated with our common Nordic heritage. Tom was of Swedish background, and had numerous contacts with Finnish Americans in New England. My heritage is Finnish, but I was quite familiar with Sweden and Swedish settlements in the Midwest. Therefore, we regularly shared our stories and perceptions about any number of experiences and perceptions, but the humorous aspect always predominated.

Another topic that I never grew tired of hearing about was Tom's animated discussion of the time that he, his wife, and another couple drove a tractor and wagon through much of Europe and—if I remember correctly—into a portion of Asia. Theirs was quite a phenomenal journey, and it's unfortunate that Tom never wrote about this experience. The trip illustrates just what a "can-do" person Tom was: when he spoke about some facet of landscape preservation—be it a fence, garden, pathway or whatever—it was totally from personal experience. One knows that Tom was able to envision how a landscape could be rehabilitated, but that he was also able to implement his recommendations at every level of application, whether it meant moving rocks, spading the earth, grafting trees, or mixing and applying mortar.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not emphasize that Tom was a true gentleman in an old-fashioned, comfortable way. Although Linda, my wife, only met him

once (when he visited our house after the 1979 Alliance meeting), she still recalls what a kind and considerate person he was. We don't meet such people as Tom Kane often enough, but when we do, our lives are enriched and enhanced forever.

By Thomas W. Salmon II

Tom Kane and I met in the late spring of 1948 in the old offices of Clarke, Rapuano and Holleran in New York City. As neophytes, we had our drafting tables in the rear center of the room (most of the experienced men were near the windows along the edge). When I returned from Italy in 1949, Tom and I took an apartment together on 52nd Street.

We had a number of conversations about motivations for landscape design. We both admitted that a great deal of our inspiration was based upon illustrations from our childhood books. We recalled the techniques of some of our favorite illustrators—most of those which had interested us as children worked in a bucolic genre. Tom was very fond of Arthur Rackham, especially his renditions of Anderson's fairy tales. We both favored N. C. Wyeth and Howard Pyle, but we remembered others: Maud and Misha Petersam; Tony Sarg; Johnny Gruel; and the creators of old newspaper comics, Lyonel Feininger, George Herriman and O. F. Outcault. Perhaps our interest sprang from the fact that so few of those landscapes were based on any known locale; they were familiar, but imaginative. Or perhaps, concentrating on the story and the characters, we inferred the landscapes subliminally. Nonetheless, they stayed with us.

In the 1970s, when Tom and I again worked together in New Harmony, we spoke often, almost jokingly, about our admiration for literary landscape illustrations. I will miss Tom Kane, not just for our shared enthusiasms, but for his humor, his generosity and his imaginative approach to social and professional endeavors.



By Barbara Wyatt

It's difficult to remember an Alliance meeting that Tom did not attend. His was a moderating presence. He reminded us of our roots and our mission as stewards of the landscape, and set a standard of excellence in his own work. Best of all, he was always ready for fun. I remember dancing on the lawn with Tom, as music surrounded our group at an outdoor concert at Middleton place at the Charleston conference. Quite a graceful dancer he was. I hope we continue in the thoughtful ways that Tom fostered in the Alliance, but let's not forget to dance too!

By Susan Bugey

We all have fond memories of Tom Kane and his role in the founding and nurturing of the Alliance, and we will miss him so much for many different reasons. We think back to those days of the first concept for the Alliance, at the Association for Preservation technology (APT) meeting in Cleveland in the fall of 1977. Above all, Tom convinced us that what we needed was not another organization, but a network of people interested in, and committed to, landscape conservation. When we met the next year at New Harmony, his term for our objectives and relationships was a Committee of Correspondence, with all the connotations that phrase carries in American history. In the early years of the Alliance, as we struggled to define our directions, it was also Tom who kept us true to the values of the network rather than losing ourselves in organizational matters. He always reminded us of the unity of the personal network and the commitment.

By Ellen Lipsey

Tom Kane greeted me at the opening reception of my second Alliance conference with a gleeful chuckle and a big hug, and mid-squeeze I felt imbued with the spirit of the gathering. A true zest for life, an abiding sense of place, a facility to distinguish the essence of a design and the commitment to good times together—qualities I ascribe to Tom Kane and his guiding spirit. And should the Alliance wander, I will hear a voice and a chuckle I have heard before, and a loving admonition to us all: that it shouldn't be so damned complicated!