

Geddy Garden News

Jim Baker of the *Virginia Gazette* wrote in a July 7, 1997 article that "Feminism's Scary Sometimes." He proceeded to ask "Have you seen that beautiful female scarecrow behind the Geddy House in the Historic Area? I've been pondering what to call it. Scarecrowess? Scarecrowette? Or just plain lady scarecrow?"

Unfortunately, my response to Jim must be, "Call her vandalized." On the busy weekend of July 4th, sometime between the evening of July 5th and the morning of July 6th, a mean-spirited person or persons destroyed our attractive lady scarecrow. I found her remains scattered about in the garden. Her gown was stolen and her head, straw, and pole were left behind.

We had recently held our traditional scarecrow-naming contest and the junior interpreters who helped create her offered their suggestions for an appropriate name. The winning name was suggested by Tyler Adams. The scarecrow was aptly named **Lady Dunmore**, who was reportedly a great beauty. Perhaps it was our scarecrow's fine appearance that led to her downfall. Too much beauty can cause problems, so I'm told. I feel her elegant colonial gown tempted someone to commit this act of theft and destruction.

Scarecrows in general have a history of being extremely ugly. The origin of the scarecrows in Greece gives us the myth of the Greek god of gardens. His name was Priapus and he was the son of Dionysus and Aphrodite. His body and face were so extremely ugly that birds in the vineyards were frightened away by his appearance. Soon farmers started carving wooden statues in Priapus' likeness and they placed those wooden images in their gardens. They soon found those statues saved their grapes from being consumed by the birds in their vineyards. They started to add to their fearsomeness by including a club in the hand of the statue.

Today in England they celebrate Guy Fawkes Day on November 5th in a similar fashion to our celebration of July 4th, but they include in their celebrations the burning of the scarecrows in bonfires.

We are now planning a less attractive replacement to our Lady Dunmore. Myself and some of our junior interpreters will be creating our new lady and this time we are striving for the middle ground. She will be less beautiful than our late Lady Dunmore, but less ugly than Priapus!

The lack of rain has been a serious problem in most of our gardens. We really hope to have a good rainfall soon. I share this wish with many as the water shortage is beginning to pose a problem in the community at large.

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