

# The Brooksider

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April, 2013

## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

The beauty of spring and of Brookside Gardens is in full bloom on this sunny April day. Brookside means many things to the thousands of people who use it, and the next few months will be among the busiest at the Gardens.



As I anticipate the next year as President of Friends of Brookside Gardens, I am reminded of the successful leadership provided by Barbara Waite-Jaques in the past two years. I am also looking forward to developing a renewed sense of mission for FOBG, as we work to increase and diversify our membership, develop a strong management board, increase our visibility as an organization, and strengthen our capacity to support programs of Brookside Gardens.

Among the many programs you will want to attend is the April 21<sup>st</sup> **Earth Day Festival**, sponsored by FOBG. From 12:00 - 4:00 pm you can enjoy this family friendly green craft fair.

Friends of Brookside Gardens also sponsors the **Spring Lecture Series**. Beginning April 12<sup>th</sup> and concluding June 14<sup>th</sup>, you can learn from local and national experts about a variety gardening and horticultural topics. Be sure to check the Brookside Gardens [Experience](#) program guide for details.

Come to the **Garden Party** to benefit FOBG on June 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Behnke Garden Center in Beltsville. There will be a big raffle to benefit FOBG, a plant swap, food and many vendors. It's always an exciting event.

During the month of June, the **Summer Twilight Series**, made possible by the sponsorship of FOBG, will take place in the Gardens on Tuesdays from 6:30 - 8:00 pm. It's such a treat to relax to the sounds of music on the lawns and to see how much everyone enjoys simply being at Brookside.

You will want to put a visit to **Wings of Fancy**, the live butterfly and caterpillar exhibit, on your calendar this summer. You can come anytime between May 4<sup>th</sup> - September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, seven days a week.

As we look beyond the summer months to the fall, we are anticipating an evening gala silent auction, **Holiday in the Gardens**, on November 9, 2013. We are gathering donations for the auction and look forward to your positive response, and hope that you will also consider participating by volunteering and by attending the gala.

I hope you will enjoy the beauty of Brookside Gardens this spring and summer, and will take advantage of the many rewarding experiences it has to offer. I trust you will continue to support FOBG so that we can continue to support the Gardens.

Suzanne

Beginning with this issue, FOBG's *The Brooksider* will include a new series of articles titled "Brookside from the Inside." These articles are based on conversations with the Brookside Gardens' staff horticulturists whose inspiration, skill and hard work create and re-create the gardens that we love. We will look at what drew BG staff members to a professional life in horticulture and public gardens, and how they feel about working in a changing environment that is always on display. We'll take a stab at understanding their complex jobs that require a visionary, designer, project manager – who can dig, maintain plantings and diagnose problems. We'll let them tell us about their areas of responsibility, their challenges and successes, and what they like best about Brookside.

We hope "Brookside from the Inside" will enhance your enjoyment of the gardens by giving you a new perspective on how it all happens.

Julia Horman, co-editor

## *Brookside from the Inside* *a look at what it takes to make it all happen*

By **Julia Horman**

We usually think of Brookside Gardens as a finished product. Our minds hold a blend of impressions that play together to create an image of a beautiful 50 acre public display garden. But the blended thought pattern can obscure all the individual effort, the talent, training, and commitment that's required to create Brookside. It may even lessen our appreciation of this Montgomery County treasure. So, let's look at Brookside through 'a new set of eyes' – those of its staff, the people who make it all happen. Appropriately, this first article is based on conversations with Phil Normandy who, as Brookside's current longest term employee, has a unique perspective on the gardens and lots of history to share with us.

Phil is involved with the structure of Brookside, both exterior (the garden) and interior (the organization). As Plant Collections Manager, he is responsible for developing, documenting and labeling the permanent plant collection – the unifying structure that makes Brookside a garden for all seasons. In this role Phil has direct responsibility for all outdoor horticulture, gardens and grounds. Within the organization, Phil is involved with personnel management – he directly supervises the gardening staff. The Conservatories and Facilities sections, for which



he has oversight responsibility, are directly managed by others. His job involves purchasing, planning, budgeting, communication within and outside the Department of Parks, as well as being the gardens' curator or resident Plant Geek.

As Phil tells the story, his path to Brookside was fairly straight with a few propitious right turns along the way. An early childhood interest in plants led him to North Carolina State University, where he began as a Forestry major, turned right to Horticulture and found his life-long favorites, the "woodies." Phil spent the summer of his junior year in Longwood Gardens Internship Program in Pennsylvania. Phil says that at Longwood he learned a lot about life, about interaction and cooperation with peers and supervisors, and he finally found the right career niche in horticulture – that of public gardens.

After graduation from NCSU, Phil's first job was curator of the arboretum of Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories in North Carolina. It was a good starting point, but Longwood Gardens Masters' Program at University of Delaware beckoned. With the help of what Phil describes as an intervention by his family, he applied and was accepted in the program - another right turn on his way to Brookside. Phil made

it through the heavy course-work that moved beyond collecting and caring for plants to human resources management, budgeting, interpretation for the public, and visitors' services. In 1979, when a "Curator of Plant Collections" job at Brookside Gardens showed up on the open positions lists, Phil was ready to apply – life at Brookside started that September.

In 1979, Brookside was only 10 years old and Phil, then called Curator, was considered a side expert who focused on refining the permanent collections and dealing with the gradual loss of canopy trees. At that time the Grounds Supervisor had responsibility for all property maintenance and the implementation of Brookside's seasonal displays, while a separate Conservatory Supervisor held sway under glass. Phil was charged with implementing a plant propagation and evaluation process for the special Asian collection of plants that filled the lath house and sun pit greenhouses. These plants had been collected in Japan on trips sponsored by Brookside Gardens with the goal of identifying and introducing worthy new cultivars and species. As a result of years of observation by numerous plant professionals throughout the country, a number of these plants were eventually introduced into the trade.

Phil's role did not expand into management until 1994 when David Vismara, BG Director at the time, initiated a structural reorganization aimed at improving operations. Phil was promoted to Grounds Supervisor with the message that gardeners should be empowered and assisted. Phil remembers going to each gardener to tell them about this approach; he assured his staff that he would strive to treat them fairly and to be there to facilitate their work in creating beautiful gardens. Phil chuckles today as he describes the first yearly review of his management performance, with David Vismara telling him there had been no grand plan, that giving Phil expanded responsibility was just "let's see what you've got!"

In 1998, the construction of the Visitors' Center gave Phil the opportunity to work on a large project from start to finish. Prior to that time, Phil saw himself as a landscape editor, not a creator, dealing with problems as they occurred and implementing enhancements rather than making substantive changes. When the Visitors' Center was being carved out of the woods, the landscape architect gave Phil a rudimentary plan for the installation of plantings on the site. After much back and forth, Phil convinced the Director that some of the plan would not work and

received a 'just do what is necessary to get it done', which Phil heard as the okay for a redesign. He is proud to say that at least 40% of the current landscaping around the Visitors' Center is his design. A number of the Brookside plant introductions from the early program are showcased on the site.

Phil is the resident expert on woody plants – he's great at identifying and growing them, keeping up with the latest cultivars and finding sources for the newest and best-grown specimens. Recently, Phil found the one US grower who specialized in specimen witch-hazels and was able to purchase 20 new cultivars – witch-hazel just happens to be one of his favorite plants and has been a component of Brookside's collections from the beginning. You'll find these winter-blooming shrubs



throughout the shady parts of the gardens. Brookside is constantly in need of Phil's skills, as growing conditions in various areas change and existing plantings deteriorate. His adept procurement and planting of sizable trees and shrubs often happens with a magician's sleight of hand. Whether it's replacing some struggling *Cornus kousa* with Sweet Bay Magnolias, or finding specimen oaks to fill spots vacated by storm-toppled tulip poplars, Phil keeps the quality of Brookside's plant materials at the highest levels.

Recently, the Viburnum Garden has moved to the top of Phil's list. Phil thinks that dispersed collections can be more pleasing to the visitor and he plans to use that tactic in the renovation of the Viburnum Garden. In addition to solving some drainage problems, Phil will modify the static quality of the space by introducing a variety of new plantings including small flowering trees, shrubs and ground covers. This approach is being used to very good effect throughout the gardens to augment the short-term seasonality of featured, large scale plantings.

Phil is excited about the action on the Master Plan. He says it is great to be involved with the planning and feels that the Brookside team has the opportunity to have a huge impact in the final choices for the extensive planting areas. He expressed his appreciation for Director Stephanie Oberlie's efforts to keep their team focused on successful outcomes.

Phil is pleased with his long run at Brookside (fortunately, he's not ready to leave.) It has allowed him to enhance, and restore, the permanent plantings; to develop a reasonable management style; and to maintain an extensive Plant Database for Brookside Gardens, which is available [on-line](#) for the public. When asked if he had any advice for home gardeners, Phil's words of wisdom were: "grow what you want; take chances – you may not really know what you like; don't let anyone tell you what to plant." He encourages us to keep alert for new woody plants coming on the market. This is an exciting time be-

cause new cultivars are being introduced as never before.

Throughout our conversation, Phil stressed how important FOBG has been to his work. He said that FOBG came to the rescue when it was most needed – over the past several seasons, its contributions paid for all 'ready to go' plants for renovations and collection enhancements, and for the seasonal garden staffing. In Phil's words, "I couldn't have done my job without the help of Friends of Brookside Gardens."

***In this and future issues of The Brooksider, we will provide a listing of upcoming FOBG sponsored events and Brookside Gardens adult programs. The list will be updated as information becomes available. We hope this will be helpful in planning how you can take advantage of all that Brookside Gardens has to offer. Additional offerings, such as children's programs, art exhibits and excursions are available in the [Experience](#) program guide.***

### **FOBG Sponsored Events**

	Date	ParkPASS #
FOBG Fall Plant Sale	09/07/13	-----
FOBG Silent Auction	11/09/13	-----
FOBG Greens Sale	12/07/13	-----
FOBG Orchid Show and Sale	03/15/14	-----
FOBG Orchid Show and Sale	03/16/14	-----
FOBG Spring Lecture Series:		
Capital Splendor Gardens	04/12/13	231502
Network for Life: Stitching Together the Natural World	04/26/13	229309
My Weedless Garden	05/16/13	229310
Gardening with Deer?	06/14/13	231749
FOBG Summer Twilight Concert Series:		
Oasis Island Sounds	06/04/13	-----
Rita Clark and the Naturals	06/11/13	-----
DreamStreet	06/18/13	-----
Trio Caliente	06/25/13	-----
Earth Day Festival	04/21/13	-----
Children's Day	09/21/13	-----

### **Brookside Gardens Adult Programs**

	Date	ParkPASS #
Make & Take Rain Barrels	04/12/13	219299
Make & Take Rain Barrels	04/13/13	219300



Food Gardening in Containers	04/16/13	231151
Garden Party Cooking	04/17/13	231950
Green Roofs for Feathered Friends	04/18/13	231203
Historic Garden Week/Fredericksburg, VA	04/23/13	231249
Working the Rain Garden (Garden Demo)	04/24/13	231851
Splendid Spring Blossom Tonic	04/24/13	232049
Hardy Terrestrial Orchids - Really?	05/01/13	231156
Native Plant Preview Sale and Lecture	05/02/13	231453
Native Plant Sale	05/04/13	-----
Aquatic Garden Plants (Garden Demo)	05/07/13	231800
Mother's Day Modern Floral Fusion	05/08/13	232050
Plant a Garden Trough	05/09/13	231202
Hanging Basket Workshop	05/10/13	231257
Hanging Basket Workshop	05/10/13	232699
Plant Walks: Shade Garden Plants	05/14/13	231799
Herbs of Summer	05/15/13	231951
Selecting Native Trees and Shrubs (also 5/29 and 6/12)	05/15/13	232199
Butterfly Container Workshop	05/16/13	232149
Butterfly Container Workshop	05/16/13	232150
Focus on Butterflies! (nine additional dates)	05/19/13	229299
Northview and Chanticleer Gardens	05/22/13	231250
Container Gardening with Succulents	05/28/13	231158
Container Gardening with Succulents	05/29/13	231159
Conservation Landscaping Techniques	05/31/13	219301
Conservation Landscaping Techniques	06/01/13	219302
Private Gardens of Montgomery County	06/01/13	231499
Tabletop Fountains	06/04/13	231207
Think it! Build it! Willow Furniture Workshop	06/08/13	231209
A Bit of Brookside	06/11/13	231199
A Bit of Brookside	06/12/13	231200
Feasting with Fireworks	06/19/13	231952
Butterfly and Garden Photography (also 6/29)	06/22/13	229308
Garden Whimsy Mosaic Totems (also 6/28)	06/25/13	231208
The Fragrant Year (Garden Demo)	06/26/13	231899
Focus on Butterflies	07/07/13	229303
Fall and Winter Food Gardening	07/09/13	231152
Summer Stones (Cooking Demo)	07/17/13	231953
Focus on Butterflies	07/20/13	229304
Concrete Leaf Sculpting	07/25/13	231205
Concrete Leaf Painting	08/01/13	231206
Focus on Butterflies	08/03/13	229305
Focus on Butterflies	08/11/13	229306
Focus on Butterflies	08/24/13	229307
Focus on Butterflies	09/07/13	229399

***For additional programs, more information, registration and fees  
See the [Experience](#) program guide or click this link for [ParkPASS.org](#)***

## *Report on Orchid Show and Sale, March 16 and 17, 2013*

Although the weather forecast was not so promising, the rain held off and mild temperatures prevailed. Hundreds of orchid lovers thronged the Visitors Center on Saturday and Sunday to enjoy the fifteenth annual Orchid Show and Sale and purchase their beloved flower. Our wonderful and dedicated vendors brought a large array of colorful beauties, including many miniatures.

As in the past, Clive Atyeo repotted many pre-owned orchids, much to the delight of his customers. He is much loved and very interesting and entertaining.

Our orchid raffle has become a very popular event. Lucky winners walked away with beautiful orchid plants.

Even if you're not inclined to purchase, it's a treat to visit the Rock Creek Orchid Club's exhibit of prized orchids in the Visitors Center Atrium. The members of this club are knowledgeable and delightfully enthusiastic and are happy to answer your most pressing questions regarding the care of orchids.

Thank you to all of the FOBG volunteers who staffed the show, to Clive for his services and to the vendors for the fabulous selection of orchids. And thank you for attending the show and supporting FOBG.

Mark on your calendars March 15 and 16, 2014 and plan to visit the Orchid Show and Sale at Brookside Gardens. The proceeds of this event help to support the many activities Brookside Gardens offers throughout the year.

Gloria Sherman, Chair



**Gloria Sherman**



**Gene Horman & Betsy Thomas**

## PLEASE JOIN THE GARDEN PARTY!!

There is an important fund-raising event that will take place on Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at Behnke Nurseries, Beltsville: **The Third Annual Garden Party**. The first two Garden Partys raised almost \$3,000 for Friends of Brookside Gardens. To make this year's event a success, we need lots of support from Friends. Here are some ways you can help:

- Solicit merchandise, gift certificates & services from your neighborhood businesses, neighbors & friends.
- Spread the word to organizations & garden clubs you belong to.
- Volunteer to help us on June 8<sup>th</sup> by contacting me ([cagalati@rcn.com](mailto:cagalati@rcn.com)) or Barbara Waite-Jaques ([waitejaques@aol.com](mailto:waitejaques@aol.com)).  
We are setting up 2-hr. shifts to handle raffle items, Plant Swap, etc.

Some of my local procurement for this event involve successfully approaching my hairdresser, Giant Foods, Starbucks, Blue Herron Spa, Trader Joe's (Colesville Rd.) and my friends who are artists, crafters and musicians. The items we raffle are quality items (not used) and vary greatly in value. Some of the smaller items we bundle. We even had Redskin tickets! Raffle items **do not** have to be garden-related. Each participating garden club, plant society and vendor donates one or more items. We are hoping that many Friends can also donate items and spread the word about this fun event.

There are many things happening at the June 8<sup>th</sup> Garden Party. Here are most of them:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 7 + Garden Club Tables                                 | Mini-Garden Talks by Carol Allan |
| Vendors of garden-related products                     | Plant Society Tables             |
| Behnke sale & door prize gift certificates             | Plant Swap (bring one/take one)  |
| Master Gardeners on hand to answer gardening questions | Food for sale                    |
|  | Huge Raffle for FOBG!            |

Thanks for your help and support. Special thanks to Barbara and Gloria, who make this event possible!!

## COMMUNITY MEETING

Montgomery Parks staff will hold a meeting on:

### Brookside Gardens Greenhouse

M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks invites you to discuss a concept plan to install a new greenhouse located within the propagation and maintenance area at Brookside Gardens. Plants are grown in the maintenance area for use throughout Brookside's display gardens and conservatory. The new greenhouse is consistent with recommendations from the 2005 Master Plan for Brookside Gardens and will provide improved growing conditions and consolidated growing space for more efficient operations. Sustainable and energy efficient features will be incorporated into the project.

For additional information on this project please visit:

<http://www.ParkProjects.org>

**WHEN:** Wednesday, April 24, 2013  
**TIME:** 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
**WHERE:** Brookside Gardens  
Visitors Center  
1800 Glenallan Avenue  
Wheaton, MD 20902



BROOKSIDE GARDENS GREENHOUSE

For more information or to submit written comments contact:

Kimberly Paniati, Park Engineer  
M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks  
9500 Brunett Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20901  
[Kimberly.Paniati@MontgomeryParks.org](mailto:Kimberly.Paniati@MontgomeryParks.org)  
Phone: (301) 495-2465

[www.ParkProjects.org](http://www.ParkProjects.org)

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the participation of individuals with disabilities in its programs, park sites and its facilities. For support in using programs, sites and facilities, such as policy changes, staff support, or adaptive equipment, contact Management Services at (301) 495-2540. For communication supports such as sign language interpretation, large print materials, listening devices, etc., contact Management Services at (301) 495-2540 or through Maryland Relay, 1-800-735-3258.



***Friends of Brookside Gardens Board of Directors is pleased to announce  
the following appointments for Fiscal Year 2014 (4/1/13 – 3/31/14):***

President: Suzanne Carbone  
Vice-President/Membership: Elaine Dynes  
Treasurer/ Brooksider: Gene Horman  
Secretary: Carla Adams  
Founding President/Plant Sale Chair: Joan O'Rourke  
Marketing Committee Chair: Coriolana Simon  
Silent Auction Chair: Freddi Hammerschlag  
Green Sale: Joan S. Palmer  
Green Sale: Nithya Raghavan  
Orchid Sale: Gloria Sherman  
Marketing Committee: Joe Ann Stenstrom  
Ex Officio: Betsy Thomas  
Ex Officio: Barbara Waite-Jaques



**Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!**

**Friends of Brookside Gardens, Inc. Board of Directors**

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301-962-1435 (voice mail checked daily)

Email address: [friendsofbrooksidegardens@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofbrooksidegardens@yahoo.com)

Suzanne Carbone, *President* Gene Horman, *Treasurer*

Directors: Carla Adam, Suzanne Carbone, Elaine Dynes, Freddi Hammerschlag  
Gene Horman, Joel Lerner - ex officio, Joan O'Rourke – founding president,  
Joanie Palmer, Nithya Raghavan, Gloria Sherman, Coriolana Simon,  
Joe Ann Stenstrom, Barbara Waite-Jaques – ex officio

*The Brooksider*: Gene Horman, Julia Horman co-editors

Photography by: Coriolana Simon, Douglas Wolters, Gene Horman