

The Brooksider

Published by Friends of Brookside Gardens, Inc.



June, 2014

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

This has been an uncommonly lush and lovely spring, with mostly moderate temperatures and gentle breezes. I love this time of year because everything we do holds such promise. Our gardens are fresh and new and present themselves in the most appealing way in early summer. This is, indeed, a time of excitement and anticipation.



During the past few weeks, as we look forward to fall, Friends of Brookside Gardens and Master Gardener volunteers have enjoyed potting hundreds of perennials, shrubs, natives and other plants in anticipation of the FOBG Fall Plant Sale. It will be held at the Brookside Gardens Hoop House (located on the maintenance hill), on September 13. Throughout the next months, the plants will be watered and cared for so that they will be at their most beautiful when you see them in the fall. Directions to this great new location will be available toward the end of the summer.

The past weeks and months have seen huge transformations at Brookside Gardens, including lovely designs for major garden renewal and continued

construction of a new entrance, driveway and parking lot. An exciting and very informative Garden Gateway reception was held on June 25 to present information on the project.

This is an historic project which offers each of us the opportunity to become part of the legacy of Brookside. We can do this by making financial donations and gifts for much needed plantings and other features. You may contact Ellen Bennett, Advancement Programs Manager of Brookside Gardens for more information.

Regretfully, Gene Horman, the FOBG treasurer and editor of the *The Brooksider*, has retired from the Board. We thank him for the many talents he shared with us and for his dedication and service to Brookside Gardens. **If you know of someone who might qualify for the position of Treasurer of Friends of Brookside Gardens, please contact me by email at Suzanne.carbone@gmail.com or speak with any of the FOBG Board members.**

I hope all Friends of Brookside Gardens will enjoy a happy and healthy summer and that you will continue to help FOBG make the beauty and promise of Brookside Gardens grow and thrive.

Suzanne Carbone, President

Master Plan Report

By Stephane Oberle, Director of Brookside Gardens

Master Plan Phases 1 and 2: Entry and Parking Garden

Construction began on Master Plan Phases 1 and 2, the Entry and Parking Garden, in March 2014. The main parking lot in front of the Visitors Center was closed at that time. Visitors may park at the Conservatory lot, which has 35 spaces. On the weekends, additional staff is scheduled to assist with heavy traffic at the Conservatory and to provide directions to off-site parking when the Conservatory lot is full. Due to construction, both Wings of Fancy and Garden of Lights have been cancelled, but there are still many smaller programs that are running. The Conservatory, Visitors Center and most of the Gardens are open to the public, with the exception of the construction area around the Visitors Center and the upper aquatic garden. Staff are providing shuttles on demand for staff, volunteers and program registrants who are unable to walk from the Conservatory parking lot to the Visitors Center. Construction is scheduled to be completed in June 2015.

Master Plan Phase 4: Gude Garden

Renovation of the ponds in the Gude Garden began in spring of 2013 and is now substantially complete. The following work was completed:

- Drained and dredged ponds;
- Repaired three leaking weirs;
- Repaired crumbling pond edges and stabilized with various treatments for submerged aquatic vegetation, turf and planting beds;
- Replaced the piers that support the Japanese Tea House;
- Installed new bridge that is rated to carry heavy vehicles (i.e. emergency vehicles, plow equipment, etc.);
- Milled, graded and repaved paths to meet ADA accessibility standards.

The work has resulted in deeper ponds that provide a healthier environment for aquatic life both in the ponds as well as downstream. Gardens staff will be replanting the landscape that was impacted by construction. The labyrinth will also be re-installed this summer. Some lawn areas will remain closed until turf is re-established.

Master Plan Phase 5: Propagation Area A: Greenhouse

A design/build contract is being prepared for a new growing greenhouse in the service area of the Gardens. Last year, the Planning Board approved the facility plan and recommended an appropriation in the FY2015-2020 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. This work was prompted by a generous \$1,000,000 gift, with CIP fund providing the balance of the construction cost. Construction is expected to begin in FY16.

Brookside from the Inside

a look at what it takes to make it all happen

By Julia Horman

A wonderful feature of Brookside Gardens is an area with a dual personality. Named for the collection it was designed to showcase, the seven-acre Azalea Garden transitions to a delightful woodland garden as the excitement and color of its famous spring show wanes. As spring turns to summer, the harmony of its multi-layered plantings takes over and the visitor's pace slows. This is a natural garden setting without formality where the plantings seem to flow in areas with soft edges. Here we find meandering paths that lead us to unexpected viewing spots with comfortable benches for relaxation.

It's appropriate that this dual-personality garden would be managed by BG Horticulturist



Stacy Parsons who brings her multi-faceted background to the job. Stacy's career path has always been outdoors, but it was not always on land. She spent several years in the U. S. Coast Guard, working as a Petty Officer 3rd Class Boatswains Mate. During that early outdoor stint, Stacy worked in search and rescue on the Chesapeake Bay; her next assignment was on a ship out of Seattle, working the Alaska Fishery Patrol. Stacy says that those were exciting days, especially her job of taxiing the boarding crews to the foreign fishing trawlers. She describes the seas, filled with seals, whales, and other large fish that followed the fleets, and remembers an Orca swimming right up next to her low, 25-foot boat, close enough to say 'hello.' Luckily, the Orca didn't flip her over!

After the Coast Guard, Stacy took a seasonal position at Fulton Mansion Historical Estate on the coast of Texas. Here the focus was maintaining the grounds and planting seasonal plants. Stacy enjoyed the

mental challenge of maintaining historically correct plantings and she liked working with the land. She had developed an interest in plants and gardening from childhood days spent with her grandfather in North Carolina. He had shared his love of gardening and broad knowledge of plants with her on garden visits, nature hikes and tree id sessions.

When Stacy returned to Baltimore, she got serious about horticulture education and began taking night classes in Plant Sciences at Howard Community College and University of Baltimore. Her day job was on the grounds of a Baltimore hospital.

Stacy moved on to Melwood Horticulture Training Center where she managed a team of developmentally challenged adults working on the 400 acre grounds of Goddard Space Flight Center. Stacy says that job was a wonderful experience as she learned to be foreman, manager, trainer and counselor to a group of adults with differing mental and physical skills. She is proud to say that she got the best from each member of her team. She was able to improve their pay scale by implementing changes in OSHA evaluation standards to more accurately reflect her team's skills and the work they were doing. Stacy left Melwood when she

landed a job at Brookside Gardens in November 1991. She has since received a degree in Landscape Technology as well as a certificate in Cartography/GIS from Montgomery College. Stacy is also an ISA Certified Arborist, Certified Professional Horticulturist, and Planet Certified Landscape Technician.



During the first seven years of her career at Brookside, Stacy was assigned to work on a wide

variety of projects throughout the gardens. She started in the Formal Gardens where some areas were being renovated. It was a good fit - Stacy was skilled at running machinery. She remembers one of her first jobs was digging out all the soil in the Rose Garden. She worked on the re-design of the Fragrance Garden, where the team picked up and saved every good piece of stone and block. Stacy's logistical skills were well utilized on these projects – she could organize the day; organize the work force; ensure that plants were moved from the Maintenance Area to the Gardens in proper order for planting.

Stacy moved on to the Gude Garden. After a few months she started asking for extra assignments and soon found herself in the “natural areas” surrounding the gardens, dealing with the exotic invasive plants. During the first year on that project, she recalls girdling 100 Norway Maples before the mother tree, which was growing near the Stadler House, was removed. To improve her skills and acquire new ideas on managing invasive weeds, Stacy trained with the National Park Service Rangers. She continues the battle today, commenting that she recently led a group of BG volunteers who were pulling wineberry in the woods.

Another of Stacy's early accomplishments was helping with the design of the ADA-compliant boardwalk leading from the Brookside Nature Center to the Gardens. Stacy says that project gave her an opportunity to highlight one of her favorite spots along the streambed. She incorporated an observation deck and seating area into the design. From this lovely spot, visitors can relax and enjoy the view of Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) with their knees sticking up, skunk cabbages and other wild flowers growing in this natural area. As per the design by architect Joan Honeyman, Stacy ordered hundreds of native plants and organized a two-day volunteer planting event for the site.

In 1999, Stacy became the lead gardener for the Azalea Garden. Her current responsibilities also include the lower Aquatic Garden and McCrillis Gardens. Her broad experience at Brookside has given Stacy a great understanding of the Garden's physical features and its organization. She knows what the visitor sees; she understands



how perception of natural areas differs from perception of the more formal gardens. Stacy starts with weeds, saying, “Visitors to the Azalea Garden don't see the weeds that we see.” Vigilance in removing vines, tree seedlings, and exotic invasives is imperative according to Stacy – otherwise Brookside's natural garden areas would be completely overgrown.

Another challenge in the Azalea Garden is dealing with destructive storms. Stacy talked about 2012's derecho and an earlier storm with a microburst. Both storms caused major losses in Brookside's tree canopy. The loss of mature trees brought instant changes to the gardens – more sun, more weeds. Many damaged areas have responded well, such as the hillside below the Azalea Gazebo where fairly large trees were planted to replace those that went down.



An upper bed on the east side of the Azalea Garden developed what Stacy described as soil failure. The recovery plan for that area included removing the existing soil, replacing it with new soil and adding 100 new azaleas, trees and shrubs. Most of the new plants declined quickly and had to be removed and sent up to the Maintenance Area for rehab. Drainage problems still exist, so plants tolerant of poor soil conditions have been added. The rehabilitated azaleas have since been replanted in other areas within the garden.

The recovery work is on-going, and so is a watch that focuses on the health of the remaining mature trees. Stacy's tree strategy includes succession planning – when she notices a tree is failing, her team looks for seedlings in the surrounding area, they choose one or two and let them grow; new trees are planted as well. An additional approach is being used with the hemlocks which have been stressed by the wooly adelgid. In addition to planting new trees as future replacements, soil drenches are applied around the hemlocks in an effort to protect the mature trees.

Although the Azalea Garden challenges may seem overwhelming at times, Stacy, her seasonal employees and volunteers have enhanced the garden's personality beyond its relatively short spring flash. With a design focus on contrasting patterns, textures and foliage colors, they have created an area that encourages the visitor to slow down and take a closer look. This is a comfortable place - cool and shady

in summer, with interior paths that feel good under our feet. Colorful hydrangeas, unusual ground covers, fabulous ferns, giant hosta – there is something different everywhere you look. This garden is beautiful year round – Stacy reminds us to look for the striking fall leaf color of the azaleas and the exciting winter bloom of the witch hazels.



Stacy echoes the sentiments of her colleagues when she tells us that she loves working at Brookside. To her, horticulture is a profession where one never stops learning. At Brookside, the staff's practice of working together, especially on big projects, ensures that they share learning experiences, and continue to develop new systems and a strong sense of camaraderie. Stacy used "The Stumpy Award" as an example of the good humor enjoyed by the staff. This floating award appears to be based on the premise that everyone should expect to make a mistake from time to time. She even shares that idea with her volunteers – you're not a true gardener until you've dug up or cut down the wrong plant. Stacy says she has two great teams of volunteers, ten at BG and six at McCrillis. And here's another echo - Stacy says she couldn't maintain her gardens without her volunteers.

In response to my question about the Master Plan, Stacy said that the first time she looked across from the Azalea Garden to the newly cleared area by the Visitors' Center she was amazed. Here was a whole new vista, a new garden! She was enthused about storm water management, permeable paving, boardwalks in pedestrian areas, new plantings. She said, "It's a wonderful thing - to be focused on changes for the future!"

As you might expect, Stacy has some interesting advice for homeowners. She encourages us to browse Brookside's Azalea Garden to get ideas for new plantings in our home gardens – especially if we are surrounded by oak, hickory and tulip poplars. Stacy also suggests that when we have a plant that is not thriving or one that seems to be in the wrong place, we should move it and see how it does in a new area. Her most important advice relates to tree planting. She says, "Always look for the root flare. If a tree looks like a telephone pole, it's too deep." She reminds us to be sure anyone who does the work for us knows how to plant a tree properly.

Finally, Stacy sends her thanks to FOBG, saying, "It's wonderful that FOBG exists and has done so much to benefit the garden through fund raising and encouraging others to visit Brookside."

Fourth Annual Garden Party Does It Again!

Well, we just keep doing it better. Word is getting out there! The Friends of Brookside Gardens plays a bigger role each year to make this all-day fund raising event at Behnke's Beltsville Nursery is huge success. Yes, we have raised over \$7,000 in our four Garden Parties, but the involvement of clubs, plant societies, vendors and attendees has increased each year. We had the National Arboretum join us this year.

The Plant Swap, wine tasting, garden talks, sales, door prizes, cooking demonstrations and Jim's harp music create a "makes you smile" atmosphere. And then there's the Raffle. Stephanie Fleming (Queen of Raffles) at Behnke's and I are already planning for next year's Garden Party: June 6th! Her hard work, positive spirit and commitment to Brookside Gardens is irresistible to me! She is a delight to work with!

If you have ideas, feedback or would like to play a role in our 2015 Garden Party, please let me know!

Carole Galati cagalati@rcn.com

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 *Xperience* program guide.

FOBG Sponsored Events	Date	ParkPASS #
Fall Plant Sale @ Beech Hill maintenance area	09/13/14	-----

Brookside Gardens Adult Programs	Date	ParkPASS #
Start Drawing and Painting (also 7/15/14)	07/08/14	271649
Dealing with Deer	07/10/14	270600
Start Drawing and Painting (also 7/26/14)	07/12/14	271650
Truly Tomatoes	07/16/14	272653
Low Tunnel Construction Demonstration	07/19/14	272599
An Introduction to Water Gardening	07/30/14	270601

*For additional programs, more information and fees,
see the Xperience program guide or click this link for ParkPass.org.*

Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!

Friends of Brookside Gardens, Inc. Board of Directors

1800 Glenallan Avenue, Wheaton, MD 20902
301-962-1435 (voice mail checked daily)

Email address: friendsofbrooksidegardens@yahoo.com

Web address: <http://www.friendsofbrooksidegardens.org/>

Suzanne Carbone, *President*

Directors: Carla Adam, Suzanne Carbone, Elaine Dynes, Freddi Hammerschlag,
Kathy Kircher, Joan O'Rourke – founding president,
Joanie Palmer, Nithya Raghavan, Barbara Schwarz, Gloria Sherman, Coriolana Simon,
Joe Ann Stenstrom, Betsy Thomas – ex officio, Barbara Waite-Jaques – ex officio

The Brooksider: Gene Horman, Julia Horman co-editors