



Spring, 2020

President's Letter

By Kathy Kircher, President

When I sat down to start this letter, it was a bright sunny day with the wind just starting to blow. Then clouds blocked the sun, everything dimmed, and it started to shower. Now it is pouring hard. That's April for you. I find peace in the wonder of all that is happening in nature around us. I'm fascinated by the way the delicate Japanese maple tree leaves unfold and once open, grow so quickly and the way the leaves - invisible just last week - have started to gradually turn the woods green.

Thank you to **Carla Adam**, past president of **FOBG** and **Joe Ann Stenstrom**, past vice president, for all their hard work and inspiring leadership over the past three years. Their excellence inspired and motivated all of us to achieve with them. Carla was impressive! Nothing seemed to faze her. She just kept things moving forward. She helped organize activities and testified numerous times before the County Council and M-NCPPC, advocating for **Brookside Gardens and Parks**. Joe Ann is one of the most active people I know! She volunteered not just with the **FOBG** Board but also with several other local organizations. She was also co-editor of this newsletter, was on the Marketing Committee that plans our fundraising and activities, and did publicity for all our events. **Carla** will remain on the Board and **Joe Ann** will continue to volunteer with us. We are all happy to keep their knowledge, talents and friendship! The grounds of Brookside Gardens and Mont-

gomery Parks are open during this period of social distancing. Part of the upper parking lot is blocked off and visitors are advised to leave a space between cars. Prior to your visit we ask that you visit MontgomeryParks.org/COVID-19 for additional information and answers to frequently asked questions.

Thank you to all the park staff. We appreciate how hard you work every day to keep **Brookside** thriving. I have been to **Brookside** twice in the past few weeks, once to see the daffodils and once to see the tulips. The park glistens with new plantings, perennials sprouting, spring flowers, and trees blooming. It was energizing and calming at the same time.

We are still raising money to add to the Azalea Garden. We are getting near our \$7000 goal, and with your help, we can get to 100%. When I saw the 50th anniversary daffodils this spring, I was proud of **FOBG** and all of you who helped pay for and plant them. They will be a joy for many years to come.

FOBG is sponsoring "Art in the Gardens", **Brookside's** online student art competition for Montgomery County public school students. We are approaching our goal of planning the **FOBG September Plant Sale**. Enjoy spring at **Brookside** through the [Brookside Gardens Facebook](#) page, [FOBG Facebook](#) page, and the [FOBG website](#).

News from Brookside

By Stephanie Oberle, Director Brookside Gardens

This has been one of the loveliest springs in recent memory. The damp, relatively mild winter translated into earlier than usual blooming for spring bulbs and flowering trees, including daffodils, tulips, cherries and crabapples. No frost this spring led to fabulous flowering Magnolia tree displays, which also lasted a long time. Despite the closure of park facilities and cancellation of all programs and events, the horticulture staff are busy working in the garden unfor-

tunately without the assistance of our fabulous volunteers. So garden beds may be a bit weedier and the new plantings may go in a bit more slowly. Significant renovations and plantings are taking place in the Azalea Garden, Parking Garden and Camellia Gardens. We are posting more photos of the Garden on our [Facebook](#) page, to keep our followers updated while they are staying safely at home.

In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks – John Muir



Photo and Muir quote from Elaine Dynes

Art in the Gardens

**By Timothy Barrows and Jay Powell, Brookside Gardens
Community Engagement Fellows**

Due to the “shelter at home” executive order, and because schools are closed and students are learning online, Brookside Gardens has moved “Art in the Gardens” the in-person juried student art competition (organized by Timothy Barrows and Jay Powell) to an online exhibit. Brookside Gardens’ has decided to showcase the competition on their [Facebook](#) page from **May 11-20** and the juried winners

will be announced on May 13th. There will be 4 categories in total: 2D, 3D, digital art and photography. The public will be able to vote for their favorite piece on [Brookside Gardens’ Facebook](#) page from **May 11-17** and this People’s Choice category winner will be announced on May 19th. People’s choice is intended for the public to vote on [Brookside Gardens’ Facebook](#) page by liking the art images submitted.



Jay Powell and Timothy Barrows

Color Our Future!

Since Brookside Gardens first bloomed 50 years ago, azaleas have delighted garden visitors. This year, the Friends of Brookside Gardens hopes to make the azalea garden even more vibrant. You can help **color our future** by donating now. Your donation will help Brookside to add azaleas and companion plants. With your support, the next 50 years at Brookside will be even more colorful!

To help renew and refresh the azaleas at Brookside Gardens, contribute online by visiting

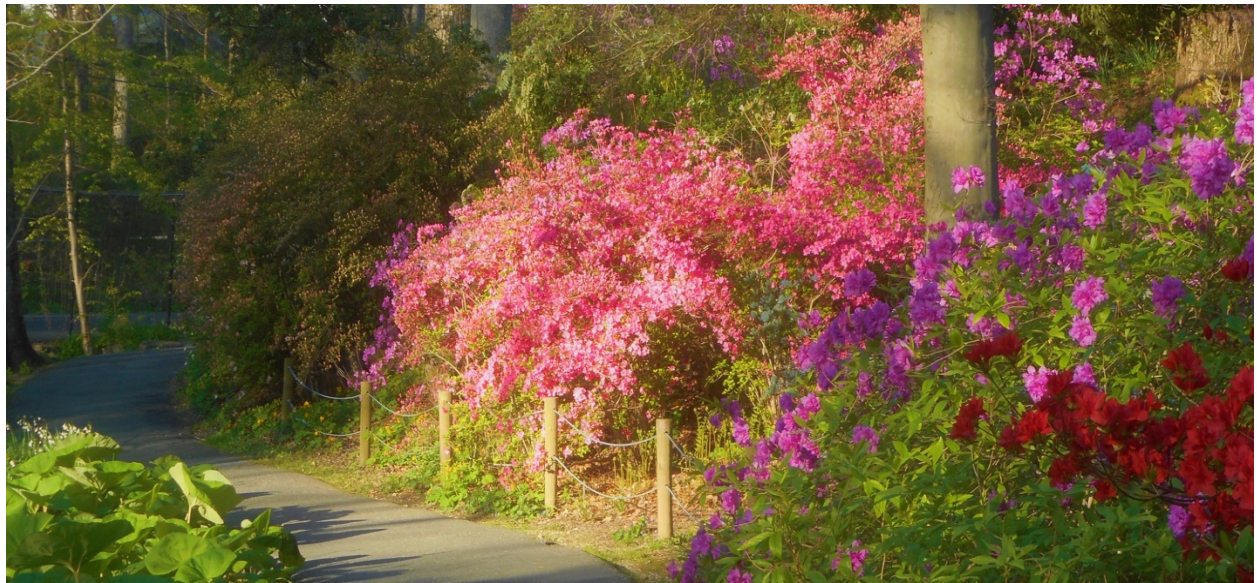
www.friendsofbrooksidegardens.org/color-our-future

or mail a donation to:

Color our Future
Friends of Brookside Gardens
1800 Glenallan Avenue
Wheaton, MD 20902



Thank you!



Azaleas

By Joe Ann Stenstrom

Azaleas – the plants and flowers that brighten our gardens for several weeks in the Washington, DC area in early May. Have you ever wondered what the flower symbolizes? The Oxford Dictionary, as noted on Google, says it symbolizes “feminine beauty”. In China and in other parts of the world, it is a symbol of womanhood and softness.

Several websites list additional “meanings” or “symbols” for this lovely garden offering. Among the lists are found such statements as:

- Elegance and wealth - certainly a wealth of beauty this time of year.
- Abundance and plenty - again, one can revel in the abundance of the ever-present azalea in our area.
- From Victorian times - temperance with various interpretations of this trait of personality such as mild-mannered, careful and cautious about actions, not keen on experimentation, modest and kind to everyone, no false representation.
- First love and fragility - the flowers are certainly fragile as heavy rain will drop them.

Two meanings are particularly appropriate in these times:

- Taking care of oneself and others: as we isolate to care for ourselves and others, looking out at these plants reminds us to do so.
- In Japan and China, the azalea is associated with remembering fondly time spent at home and even homesickness. We may become sick of home as we isolate, but also there is comfort in the safety of our homes.

If you are interested in pursuing these meanings, google “azalea” and go to websites such as: myflowermeaning.com and flowermeanings.org, among others.

Other interesting findings when searching “azalea” are ways to enhance these special plantings while we are isolating or after:

- Are you making more coffee than usual? Coffee grounds in limited amounts can add nutrients to the soil around the plants as azaleas like slightly acidic soil.
- Are you using a lot of eggs lately? Those eggshells when crushed into small bits can also feed the plants.
- Epsom salts, used when soaking tired feet after all that jogging to keep yourself active, can help the soil when in limited amounts.

Have fun researching azaleas and enjoy the beauty of your garden. Plus – why not make a donation to the **FOBG “Color Our Future”** campaign to enhance the **Brookside Gardens** Azalea Garden? You can contribute online by visiting <http://www.friendsofbrooksidegardens.org/color-our-future>.



Azalea photos by Doug Wolters, Timepoints Photography

The Healing Power of Nature

By Elaine Dynes and Joe Ann Stenstrom

During these challenging times when most of us are social distancing, we are all looking for a happy place. Time in nature can provide health benefits, physical, mental, emotional and behavioral. Many in Montgomery County look to [Brookside Gardens](#) for peace and serenity. We need that moment in nature, such as, power walking on paved trails, sitting by a stream, or watching wildlife. Visitors appreciate [Brookside Gardens](#) for relaxation, reflection and peacefulness – a calming walk, an idea of plants for their gardens, attractive subjects for photographs and birdwatching.

[McCrillis Garden](#): For quiet reflection, consider a visit to Brookside's sister garden, [McCrillis Garden](#), a secluded shade garden hidden in a Bethesda neighborhood. Although **McCrillis** is especially lovely in May, you might feel like you have the garden to yourself. Before you visit, pull up the Summer 2015 **Brookside** article by **Joe Ann Stenstrom**.

[Trails and More Trails](#): The **Montgomery County Parks** system includes 422 parks, 36,991 acres, 490 miles of streams and 251 miles of hard or natural surface trails. During the **COVID-**

19 lockdown, parts of Sligo Creek Parkway, Beach Drive and Little Falls Parkway will be closed to vehicular traffic on weekends, adding even more paved area for walkers and cyclists. One advantage to using the trails and paths in parks outside of **Brookside Gardens** is that your dogs (on a leash) and bicycles are welcome. Step off the trail to find spring ephemeral wildflowers—spring beauty, Virginia bluebells, trillium, Dutchman's breeches, and others. Observe frogs, tadpoles and salamanders in the vernal pools. Bring binoculars for a better view of pileated woodpeckers, bluebirds and phoebes. Before you go, please visit: <https://www.montgomeryparks.org/activities/park-trails/> for safety tips, trail etiquette, COVID-19 guidelines, maps, and information about which trails are paved and which are natural surfaced.

As you explore some of the other parks and trails, pay attention to sounds, colors, textures, and smells. Share some of your pictures and experiences with us on our [Facebook](#) page, so that those who are unable to get out can also experience nature's therapy.



Virtual Meeting, a First

By Anne Roland, Vice President

Although **Montgomery Parks** closed its public buildings and canceled events and classes through May 31, **FOBG** is still on the job. On April 23, the **FOBG Board** held its first-ever virtual meeting via the video conferencing tool Zoom. Webmaster **Nitya Raghavan** organized the meeting with much patience and explanation.

FOBG President, **Kathy Kircher**, started the meeting by thanking outgoing President **Carla Adam**, Vice President **Joe Ann Stenstrom**, and Board member **Judy Marcum** for their service. Because of the uncertain situation in the next few months, the group decided to cancel a scheduled November fundraiser. **Brookside**

Gardens' Director **Stephanie Oberle** shared an update on **Brookside**. Also on the agenda: **Color Our Future**, the campaign to raise funds for the azalea garden, which will wrap up in June, **FOBG** sponsorship for **Art in the Garden**, and the **FOBG** September **Plant Sale**. President **Kathy Kircher** said "Brookside and parks are more essential now than ever. It is important to appreciate them and let the County Council know that parks need support because they are so critical to the health of county residents."

With the help of technology and each other, **FOBG** is working to support Brookside now and in the future.



See next page for names

First virtual meeting: Row 1: Freddi Hammerschlag (Brooksider), **Nithya Raghavan** (Webmaster, Marketing, photographer), **Anne Roland** (Vice President), **Barbara Schwarz** (Marketing). **Row 2: Barbara Waite-Jaques** (Secretary), **Kathy Kircher** (President), **Joe Ann Stenstrom** (Immediate past Vice President, Brooksider), **Suzanne Carbone** (Marketing). **Row 3: Elaine Dynes** (Marketing, photographer), **Taffy Turner** (Plant Sale), **Carole Galati** (Marketing), **Stephanie Oberle**, (Director, Brookside Gardens) **Row 4: Carla Adam** (Immediate past President), **Joan O'Rourke** (Founding President, Plant Sale), **Gloria Sherman** (Orchid Show and Sale), **Gale Shannon** (Treasurer). **Not pictured: Coco Simon** (Marketing, photographer).



Garden Guardian

By Dr. Dick Hammerschlag, Master Gardener, Howard County

COVID19: What's Gardening Got To Do With It??*

A lot!! Considering that we're all confined to house and property for the foreseeable future, what a perfect opportunity to stretch our muscles and manage extra garden time. To emphasize - the garden, now more than ever, gives the opening for mental and physical therapy. I mean, what else have you got to do with yourself? You can read just so many books and tire of watching Harry Potter again on TV, or listening to the downbeat news!!! We need to get out of the house sometime for sure, and we've got no place special to go really but stroll around the 'backyard'. When forced to look at that house surrounding space more and more, it isn't hard to recognize that it could use more work. It doesn't matter whether you have been gardening earnestly for years or have paid your property little attention. A more intimate contact will reveal that there's more work to be done!! Now is the time for gardening especially since it is springtime. To this end, a number of garden centers and nurseries (especially wholesale/retail) are open for business, apparently considered essential at least as suppliers for landscape restoration work. Surely, they are as essential as liquor stores! Even if your favorite/closest vendor is unavailable, there is now the opportunity of buying on line and having plant material shipped directly to your home. Pretty easy! The thing is you're not spending \$\$\$ on eat-

ing out, haircuts, Mall shopping, etc., so convert some of those \$\$\$ and time to gardening!! Take it from me, when you have done this, it will put a smile on your face.

A simple plan might be to use the spring season to first analyze some ways your garden may be improved. Next, go ahead and procure some plants that will give benefit throughout the growing season. Finally, plant them before the weather gets too hot. Perhaps after that, do some weeding and keep things tamed with judicious pruning. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, you can sit out on your lawn chair and actually enjoy your surroundings – hopefully with pride!! For those of us who have been gardening earnestly for a while, it does give pleasure to see a newly planted plant flourish, but the greatest joy is to see a plant from 'last year' reappear healthily!! That is successful gardening! Voila!

At any rate, the 'silver lining' for COVID19 (you've got to try to look at things with some positive angle) is that it absolutely provides the 'excuse' or really the impetus to go about improving the garden and reaping the myriad benefits now and in the future.

So, what are you doing with your garden??

**From Tina Turner's "What's Love Got to Do With It"*

A Tribute to Betty Bieberly – “A Rare Treasure”

By Nithya Raghavan with contributions from FOBG members and Keith Bieberly

Betty Bieberly, a long-time volunteer of **Brookside Gardens** and a founding member of the **Friends of Brookside Gardens (FOBG)**, passed away at age 95 of natural causes. She was elegant, gracious and as someone aptly summed up, her beauty had no age! We will all miss **Betty** and we hope that her spirit will encompass the beauty of **Brookside** forever.

Betty's mother and father came to America from France, met in California, and married. She grew up in a small farmhouse in Gold Country where she learned to love nature, plants, and animals. When **Betty** was older, she lived and worked near San Francisco. She remembered one time seeing an elegantly dressed woman walking down the street wearing a mink stole, and a MUCH less elegantly dressed man with a fur collar of his own walking towards the lady. When they passed each other, the live raccoon riding on the man's shoulders reached out to the lady's fur stole. “Just to say hi”, **Betty** guessed. She married **Walter Bieberly** in 1956 and moved to Washington, DC. They had two sons in the early 60s, **Bruce** and **Keith**, and she became a full-time mom. She volunteered at both their schools and, later, volunteered at bloodmobiles. She ran the St. John the Evangelist blood drive for 20 years and was a tireless organizer, energetic worker, and dedicated promoter. Towards the end of this time, she became one of the earliest, founding members of the **FOBG** in 1996 when many “Friends” organizations did not exist in the Parks system. **Joan O’ Rourke**, the first president and founder of **FOBG** remembered Betty as a volunteer at

Brookside Gardens when **FOBG** was founded. Betty was the first secretary of **FOBG** and who according to Joan, actually took notes by shorthand. She was Joan’s right hand in the early days and did a lot of pioneering work when **FOBG** had to trail blaze on its own. Betty was an **FOBG charter member** and **member number 4!** Since the early days, she participated in plant sales, the butterfly exhibit, Chrysanthemum Show, rare Plant Auction, Orchid Show, and Silent Auction to name a few! She was an integral part of the Plant Sale. Every year she put together hundreds of packages of labels and stakes that had to be put in each of the pots for the Plant Sale. She was a great team member, potting at the hoop house, watering plants and an expert pruner and trimmer - all this while she was beautifully dressed with crisply ironed blouses and coordinated jewelry! In addition to volunteering at many events, she was frequently seen at the raffle tables with **Joan** and other **FOBG** volunteers and board members. She was Joan’s constant helper.... and as **Joan** puts it “she was a sweet, dear friend and sister of my heart”. She was wise, had a great sense of humor and a signature wink, like she was sharing a secret with you. She was a great cook and baker, and loved the outside cats that often became inside cats.

Betty had varied interests - reading a wide variety of subjects, painting, needlepoint, sewing some of her own clothes, watching birds, and of course, working in her garden. As she always said, “inside stuff was work, gardening outside was fun!”. She loved plants and while she ad-

mired fancy cultivated flowers, she also delighted in wild-growing weeds with pretty blossoms or foliage. She shared many of her plants and was pleased that yards all over the area had contributions from her garden. Her love of beauty and the natural world extended to other areas. She appreciated art, jewelry, and crafted

glass, but just as much, she enjoyed dewdrops on spider webs, interesting clouds, the stars and the moon, and creatures from insects and toads to deer. She was always grateful if any of these were pointed out to her, like they were surprising, rare treasures. Betty was a surprising, rare treasure herself.

A Pictorial Essay of Betty Bieberly



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/>

Kathy Kircher, *President*, Anne Roland, *Vice President*, Barbara Waite-Jaques,
Secretary, Gale Shannon, *Treasurer*

Directors: Carla Adam, Suzanne Carbone, Carole Galati, Freddi Hammerschlag, Kathy Kircher,
Joan O'Rourke – founding president,
Nithya Raghavan, Anne Roland, Barbara Schwarz, Gale Shannon, Gloria Sherman,
Betsy Thomas – ex officio, Barbara Waite-Jaques

The Brooksider: Freddi Hammerschlag and Joe Ann Stenstrom, *Editors*

Editorial Staff: Elaine Dynes, Nithya Raghavan, Gloria Sherman

FOBG Webmaster: Nithya Raghavan

