

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Bridge of Flowers

Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts



This has not been a “normal” year for the Bridge of Flowers, as it has not been for so many people throughout the world. Normally, we’d welcome thousands of visitors from nearly every state and many different nations and happily share with them the beauty for which the Bridge is rightly renowned. But this year, due to COVID-19, the Bridge did not open on April 1, and remained closed for the entire season. In reaching this difficult decision, the Bridge of Flowers Committee cited two factors: lack of paid staff and administrative resources to enforce the state-mandated requirements for opening, and the potential for thousands of visitors to spread the contagion. Similar concerns prompted us to cancel the annual Plant Sale. The loss of revenue from visitor donations and the Plant Sale also had adverse consequences for our budget, since these constitute two of our major sources of funding. As this report is being written, it’s unclear if or when the Bridge will reopen this year. We are planning to hold the popular Plant Sale, however, on Saturday, May 15, observing state guidelines for safety.

Despite the closure, we carried on the work of caring for the Bridge and were heartened by a few positive developments amid so much otherwise dark news. Although the gates remained closed, Head Gardener Carol DeLorenzo and Assistant Gardener Elliston Bingham maintained a regular schedule and the gardens bloomed beautifully as ever. In mid-season, we celebrated our popular Assistant Gardener, a native of Jamaica, when he became a citizen of the United States. The committee continued to meet, on Zoom, and oversaw a redesign of the Bridge’s website to make it more user friendly, more informative, and more visually appealing (bridgeofflowersmass.org). And we were honored when, despite its closure, the Bridge was once again named by readers of *The Greenfield Recorder* as a Franklin Favorite Tourist Attraction.

But the closing of the bridge, coupled with an overall downturn in tourism due to the contagion, threatened many local establishments, which depend on tourism. As a gesture of support for our business community, the Bridge Committee

partnered with the Shelburne Falls Area Business Association in seeking funding for a twofold purpose: 1) to establish an **Economic Recovery Fund** to furnish sustaining grants to local businesses as well as artists; and 2) to create a **Downtown Revitalization Project** to highlight the unique aspects of the village and make it a more attractive destination once tourism resumes. When the project received a \$30,000 Commonwealth Places Grant from the state’s Mass Development Office, we wrote to our Friends of the Bridge, informing them of the project’s goals and of a crowdfunding site where contributions could be made to meet the required match. Happily, by year’s end, funds raised from various sources exceeded expectations.

Some funds from the grant were used to purchase and install new lighting on the Bridge of Flowers to highlight its graceful arches and brighten the downtown center in the dark winter months. The holiday tree brought in to adorn the center of the Bridge also featured new lighting as well as edible decorations for the birds made by children from the Buckland Shelburne Elementary School.

On a less uplifting note, however, the security system installed in 2019 was tested in late spring when several plants about to be added to the Bridge disappeared. Video footage captured by the security cameras revealed two people carrying off the plants in the early hours of the morning. Thanks to that video, local police were later able to apprehend the suspects and return the plants to us, unharmed.

Since no one could walk the Bridge in person to enjoy the flowers, as the growing season was drawing to a close, several members of the committee offered to “bring Bridge blooms to the people.” Meeting on Friday afternoons, masks on and socially distanced, they transformed armloads of late bloomers into spectacular bouquets that they delivered to Village shops and restaurants, where they were warmly welcomed and proudly displayed.

We look back on this year with heavy hearts for all who have been touched in some way by so much loss inflicted by the pandemic. We remain grateful for the sense of community that has sustained us through months of uncertainty and fear and loss. And we look forward to the time when the Bridge of Flowers can once again welcome visitors from every state and every nation.



Top left: Plant Sale 2019; top center: “potting up for plant sale”; top right: solitary path; bottom left: holiday tree with seed decorations for the birds; above: new decal designed by Joan LaPierre for Friends of the Bridge of Flowers.

SAVE THE DATE

**BRIDGE OF FLOWERS
PLANT SALE, 2021**

**Saturday, May 15
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Baptist Corner Green
Shelburne Falls, MA**

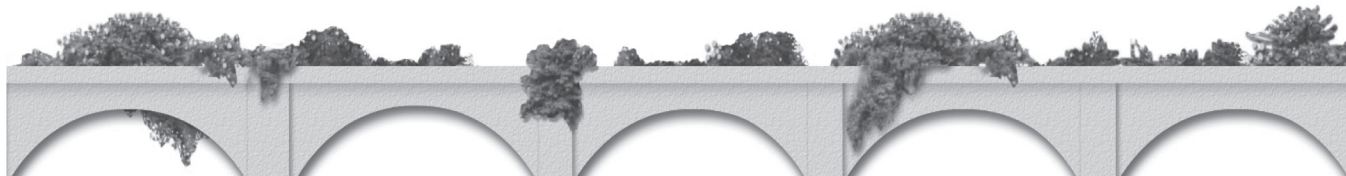
COVID-19 safety guidelines will be observed.

Bridge of Flowers 2020 Committee

- Annette Szpila – Chair
- Lynda Leitner and Carol Angus – Co-Chairs
- Mariana Luz – Recording Secretary
- Peggy March – Treasurer
- Kay Berenson, Connie Clarke, Judy Harlow, Laurel Rollins, Joanne Soroka, Marion Taylor

- Carol DeLorenzo - Head Gardener
- Elliston Bingham - Assistant Gardener

Bridge of Flowers
P.O. Box 335
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
bridgeofflowersmass.org



Memorial Gifts

Joseph H. Babcock
Candae B. Bath
William Berenson
Leigh Maddern Bernard
Jane S. Burnett
Bob Davidson
Scott Davidson
Margaret E. Folgmann
Adeline Fortier
Edward G. Keefe
Kathleen Kippenberger
Mildred B. Knapp
Margaret Lively
Susan Maddern
Dr. Vera Matinsky
Lisa Patricia "Tish" Murphy
Dominic Palazzolo
Les Rood
Hattie O. Salter
Dorothy Wert
Vickie Whalen

Gifts in Honor of

The Hydefrost Family
Lisa Talayco & Bruce Graubart
Nina Talayco

New England Aster (gifts of \$500+)

Anders Ferguson/Nancy Edwards
Michael Herr
John & Barbara Hurley
A. Hale Johnson
Judith & Robert Lawler
Shelburne Falls Academy (Trinity Church)
Three Friends Fund
Cliff & Carol Washer

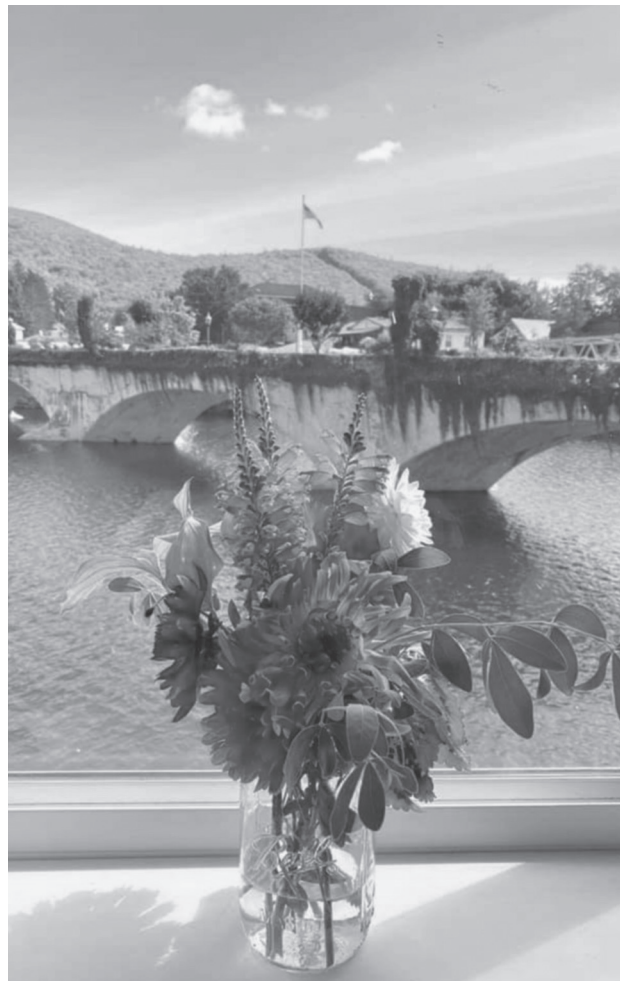


Photo courtesy of Kimberly Guzewicz, A Heart for Art.

Gardener's Circle (gifts of \$250-499)

Sally Cornish
Country Aire Campground
Davenport's Service Station
Kate Downes, Esq
Florence Fowlkes
Greenfield Cooperative Bank
Greenfield Savings Bank
Joan MacIver
David Nims
Peter & Eva Otten
Kathleen Simpson
Gordon & Marion Taylor
Gordon & Liz Van Guilder

Silver Trowel (gifts of \$100-249)

Abby, Tracey, Kate, Ron, Lisa,
Annmarie, Callie, Liza,
& Don Ahern
Colleen Armstrong
Amy & Craig Barry
Mary Bartlett
Sam & Marie Bartlett
Abby Bassett
Kay Berenson
Ron Bilyk
Friends at Blackmer Insurance
Agency, Inc.
Cynthia & Jeff Boettner
Marlene Borer
Cynthia Brown & Patrick Cadran
Carl's Four Season
Michael Chovonec
Karen Croot
Deborah Davids
Anush Dawidjan
Gordon Dean

Debb Decoigne
Ronald & Karen Dobosz
Ellen Eller
Constance Emmett & Suzy Groden
Cheryl Faufaw
Andrea & Steven Frank
Paul & Melinda Godfrey
Gregory & Diane Grillone
Gail Hanlon
Judy Ann Harlow
Richard & Sharon Khachadorian
LaPierre Media Marketing
Doreen & Rick Leskowitz
Pat & Henry Leuchtman
Ellen & Ron Louie
Tom and Gail Lucia
Mark & Amelia Madenski
Mildred March
Belden Merims
Karen O. Moore
Dr. & Mrs. Clark Moseley
Dick & Dianne Muller

Kerry & Carol Murphy
Nancy L. Dole Books & Ephemera
Sylvia Orcutt
Judith W. Perera
The Perry Family
Regina Purinton
Ted & Nancy Raczka
Sylvia Smith
Russell Snow
Randi Stein
Alan & M.A. Swedlund
Annette Szpila
Cynthia Tomasini
Don & Kathleen Upton
Wash N Wire
Judee & David Wayne
Robert & Janet Weissman
Nikki & Bob Welsh
Donald & Marcia Wheeler
Karen Winkler
Nancy & Joe Woods
Deborah J. Woodsome

Green Thumb (gifts of \$25-99)

Heather Alexander
Barbara Bodzin
Daniel & Phyllis Brown
Constance Clarke
Ellen Coty
Chris Coveney
Catherine Daly
Penny DeGeorges
Karen Fairbrother
Fred & Lois Feldman
Robert & Nancy Fischlein
Maureen Flaherty
Flanders Law Office
Judy Fogg
Kathe Geist
Ginger Cat Designs
Nancy Hoff
Barbara Hoffman
Nancy Parland/Steve Howland
Rita Jaros
Yvonne Jenkin
Sally Judd
Ellen & Marc Kaufmann
Pam Kelleher
Heidi Kranz

Robert & Toni Ann Kubica
Lake Lure Flowering Bridge
Jennifer LaPierre
Bill & Lynda Leitner
Amelia Leonardi
Maureen Lieurance
Brian & Patricia Lowell
Peggy March
Robert March
Nathalie McCormick & Mark
Pichette
Edward & Dorothy McGlynn
Geraldine Mead
Marilyn Mele
Bill & Amy Mish
Wanda Mooney
Evelyn Motte
Tom & Vanda Mullins
Jon & Marilyn Osgood
Elizabeth Otis
Kim & Tim Paige
Elaine & Richard Parmett
John Piepul
Jim Picardi
Catherine Porter
Jean and Larry Rankin

Pamela M. Roberts
Laurel & Scott Rollins
Nina Rossi
Barbara and Bob Ruchames
Sarah Saville Shaffer
Paul Schroeder
Ann and Edward Shanahan
Susan Shearer
Steven Shuda
Wes Slate & Georgia Bills
Penelope Spearance
Gene & Patricia St. Pierre
Jody Stewart
Shauna Stokes & Joel Chew
Lois & Al Symonds
Lisa Talayco/Bruce Granbart
Kiera Taylor
Tregellys Farm
Frank R. Tocci, Jr
Lindsay Turner
Kathleen Nicklas Varraso
Gina & Larry Wells
Ann Wetherbee
Marguerite Willis
Nancy Wight