

Beautification News

Celebrating 40 Years!

Volume 27, Issue 2
Autumn Leaves 2005

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WPBF's Ruby Anniversary Gift to the City: The Maple Ave/Post Road Median Garden

This is the 40th year of the White Plains Beautification Foundation, an occasion traditionally acknowledged as the Ruby Anniversary. In honor of the special occasion, WPBF has given a special gift to the City of White Plains: a lovely new gateway garden in the median island at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Post Road. Gateway gardens are those planted by WPBF at major entrances to the city. This new garden is near Soundview Avenue and Post Road School. Traffic studies indicate that approximately 10,000 vehicles pass by the site daily entering White Plains. The cost of installing the garden was \$10,000, including site plan, bed and soil preparation, soil amendments, plants, mulch, and labor. Approval for the garden was granted unanimously by the Board of the White Plains Beautification Foundation at their September meeting, and the garden was then planted by Nabel's Nursery.

The Maple Avenue-Post Road median garden is 143 feet long, expanding to 12 feet wide at the middle, and narrowing at each end. The perennial plantings in the garden include pink "Carefree" roses, Montauk daisies, Miscanthus (tall grasses), yellow daylilies, mixed Echinacea (Coneflower), and blue Nepeta (Catmint). These were planted in groups

(Continued on page 10)

This Blooming City TV

Tune in to Channel 76 at 9 PM on Tuesday and Saturday nights.

Nov. 22 and 26

How to Build a Waterfall
John Thomas

Nov. 28 and Dec. 3

Master Gardeners
Dorothy Schere
Jeanne Wilcox

Dec. 6 and 10

Dec. 13 and 17

Dec. 20 and 24

Holiday Musical Montage



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Nursery

Next Year on the net! We hope to have
our new website up and running in 2006
with the help of Luria digital.

White Plains Beautification Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 1614
White Plains, NY 10602

A Non-Profit Organization of Volunteers
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A copy of our last financial report filed
with the State may be obtained by writing to:
NYS Attorney General's Office
Charities Bureau
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271



Letter from the President

November 2005

Dear Friends,

I will have been President of White Plains Beautification Foundation for about five months when you read this. I am truly overwhelmed by the generosity and goodwill that our supporters show us. We have received gifts of all sorts in that short time. The first was the repair of the basket on South Broadway which was done by Jack McGrath who built it ten years ago, and Peter Wilcox, the husband of a board member. The city washed it for us and stained it beautifully so that it is good for another ten years.

Peter Gisondi Painting Company generously power-washed and painted our Gazebo so that it looks like new. Luria Digital is building a website for us and has offered to host it as well as a gift. All this in addition to the generosity of the donors to the Ruby Gala, new benches, new trees and of course money to support the gardens.

I have been so impressed by the gardens planted by homeowners, business and apartment owners that decorated the city. Beautification calls White Plains *A City in the Park*; I am beginning to think of us as *A City in a Garden*. Thank you all.

We have added a new entrance garden on the Maple Avenue median where Maple Avenue joins Post Road as our 40th anniversary gift to the city. If you are interested in joining our Adopt-a Park program to support this garden, please contact us.

The one gift we did not receive this summer was rain (remember before the deluge that was October?) and we have run up quite a bill for watering those beautiful gardens and trees. We appreciate your support. To make it easy for you to donate to WBPBF, we have enclosed an envelope in this newsletter.

Thank you all.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dorothy Schere".

Dorothy Schere

We are blessed by contributions from those who feel, as we do, that the beautification of our City lifts the spirits of all who live here, work here, or who are just passing through.

The Foundation gratefully accepts contributions large and small. Gifts of stocks and bonds are also welcome.



If you would like to join this generous, civic-minded group who provide the funds for the creation and maintenance of all our gardens and parklets, please contact:
BARBARA T. VROOMAN, Chairman
Adopt-a-Park Program (914) 949-5790
or (btvrooman@yahoo.com)

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WPBF Helps to Transform a Ferris Avenue Site

This past spring, Ferris Avenue resident Germaine Robinson asked White Plains Beautification Foundation for help with a troublesome site on the corner of Ferris and Wardman Avenues.

Long neglected, this corner site was covered with overgrown shrubs and trees, and the uneven rocky surface was scattered with weeds, broken glass, and dog excrement. Ms. Robinson wanted to tackle this problem. She raised \$250 from the nearby Haitian church and asked WPBF for matching funds and design help.

WPBF does match funds up to \$200 that neighborhoods raise for beautification projects and Ms. Robinson's request was granted. The city agreed to cut down the trees and shrubbery, regrade the site, amend the soil, and plant grass seed. This work was done over the summer and by September the site was ready for a garden.

Jeanne Wilcox, WPBF VP for Garden & Landscape (see article, right) and also a Certified Landscape Designer, drafted a simple plan to beautify the site that included evergreen shrubs and stepping stones in an "S" pattern across the length of the property. Ms. Robinson bought nine *Taxus baccata* (Yew) evergreen shrubs and got a donation of stepping stones and a large decorative rock from the Lake Street rock quarry. The city planted the yews and laid the stone path and now this once-troublesome site is truly transformed!

"The difference between
ordinary and
extraordinary
is just a little extra."
—Anonymous.



Jeanne Wilcox

New WPBF VP for Garden & Landscape

Jeanne Wilcox is WPBF's new Vice-President for Garden & Landscape with overall responsibility for planting and maintaining the Foundation's 50 gardens. Jeanne stepped into this position last spring after the death of Pat Terhune in March.

Jeanne has been a professional editor and writer for over 30 years, but began a second career in the 1990s while living in London. There she pursued a Certificate in Horticulture from Britain's Royal Horticultural Society in 1997-98. Once back in the States, she spent a year of intensive study at the New York Botanical Garden to earn a Certificate in Landscape Design in 2002. That same year, she became a Master Gardener volunteer with Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Westchester County and launched her own garden design business, Jeanne's Gardens & Landscapes. She has worked at Nabel's and Kent Countryside nurseries, has been an estate gardener, and has completed multiple homeowner garden-design and installation projects. She is currently employed part-time by Cornell University Cooperative Extension as Master Gardener Coordinator and Media Relations Director. She is also on the board of the Taconic Gardeners Club where she serves as director of Programs. An avid gardener for decades, Jeanne is delighted and proud to be a part of the White Plains Beautification Foundation. She has lived in White Plains with her husband, Peter, and daughter, Leslie, since 1987 except during their four-year stint in London. "When we left London and returned to White Plains in 1998," she says, "I was thrilled by the beautiful gateway and downtown gardens in the city. I'm so proud to be part of this group that has brought so much beauty to White Plains."



We Celebrate 40 Years at Our Ruby Gala

Sunday, November 6, 2005, was a very special day for the Beautification Foundation as we celebrated our 40th Anniversary. This year our annual fundraiser was appropriately called "The Ruby Gala," and our Gala Co-Chairs, Steven and Linda Rasch, worked very hard to plan and deliver an extremely successful and enjoyable evening for all. Hundreds of local residents and numerous local politicians were in attendance to enjoy an evening with old and new friends who have something in common – an appreciation and desire to continue to beautify White Plains.

The beautiful Woman's Club of White Plains was once again the setting for our annual fundraiser and everything was coming up roses! Thanks to Nabel's Nurseries, tables in the ballroom and throughout the club were decorated with vases overflowing with 300 (we counted) gorgeous long-stemmed, red roses.

Ten restaurants were on hand to provide an irresistible selection of delectable food. Peter Herrero, owner of Sam's of Gedney Way and Caperberry Events, coordinated the participating restaurants. Our wholehearted thanks go out to the following restaurants for their generosity in sharing their specialties with our guests.

Abatino's Restaurant, Caperberry Events, The Great American BBQ Company, Papa Razzi, Pizzeria Uno, Reka's Thai, Sam's of Gedney Way, Scarsdale Pastry Shop, Tango Grill, Vintage.

For wine lovers the evening was a treat as they were served an array of fine wines generously provided by Wine & Spirits at Cheers of Scarsdale. The pleasure of sampling various wines was graciously presented by Westchester Wine Warehouse, which supplied an excellent wine tasting enjoyed by many. WPBF thanks you both!

A PowerPoint video show that brought to life the many gardens, fountains, benches, sculptures and gazebo that our city enjoys was displayed by Justin Stuart. This wonderful video was created by Rose Marie James. The White Plains High School Honors String Ensemble, directed by William Eckfeld, played many delightful numbers including music

(Continued on next page)



Top Left, Beth Wallach with Linda Rasch, co-chair of the Gala Committee and WPBF Recording Secretary at the irresistible desserts table

Top Right: The lovely ladies of WPBF check in Gala guests; Past President Ann Edwards, Lucille Claroni, Charlotte Szabo and Alison Walsh.

Middle: Hon. Robert E. Ruger, former President of WPBF and Betty Gruessle, Board Member

Bottom Right: Gala Co-Chairs Linda and Steve Rasch enjoy the festivities.

(Continued from previous page)

from the Broadway musical *Wicked* by Stephan Schwartz, Finale in D by G.F. Handel, Winter from the *Four Seasons* by Antonio Vivaldi, as well as pieces by P.I. Tchaikovsky, Duke Ellington and J.S. Bach.

The City Center Dancers, guided by their Artistic Director, Dina Giordano, also showcased their many talents. Those who strolled over to the cozy sunroom were beautifully serenaded by professional pianist, Jeff Rainer, our very talented WPBF Associate. The evening also provided 23 lucky guests the pleasure of leaving the Gala with one of our wonderful raffle prizes. The Silent Auction was also a success with eight distinct items to bid on.

So for all those who attended, thank you again for being a part of our Ruby Gala celebration. If you missed it, we look forward to seeing you at our next year's fundraising event. The best part is knowing that the funds raised by the Gala will continue to allow WPBF to contribute even more to the beauty of our city.



Sampling dishes at the Gala are Karen Hererra, Marie Silverman Marich WPBF Board Member and Barbara Loucks

Thank you to our Ruby Gala Sponsors 2005

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Beautification Trivia

1. How many fountains have we built, where are they and who were they named for?
2. How many gardens do we maintain?
3. How many structures have we had built?

(answers on page 15)

Bouquet in our Mailbox

"I am so proud of White Plains and Beautification has a lot to do with that"

*Civil War Statue Garden Major Sponsors:
The Benerofe Family & The Tobin Family*



Barbara T. Vrooman, Adopt-a-Park co-chair and John F. Butler, Regional Manager Community Affairs, Verizon.

VERIZON and Adopt-a-Park a beautiful connection!

This Major Sponsor's name may have changed over the years, from New York Telephone, to NYNEX, to Bell Atlantic to Verizon, but **we're still connected.**



Triantafyllu Fountain Gardens - Funds for this garden are contributed by New Adopt-a-Park Major Sponsor Ginsburg Development Corporation.

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Roland Barnes
Doris Breit
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Trees In Honor Of

Hank Priestley
by Marjorie Priestly

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The Basket Restored: Adopt-A-Park Sponsors Barbara and Richard Dannenburg. Pictured at Right: Peter Wilcox, Stephen Benson, Barbara Vrooman, Jack McGrath, and Roland Barnes.

The Basket was Beautified

Thanks to a cooperative effort in late August and early September, The Basket at South Broadway and Armory Place was cleaned free of moss, repaired with several new pieces of wood woven into the sides and edge pieces replaced, hand stained, and newly planted with annual flowers. A White Plains Beautification gift to the city in September 1996, The Basket was conceived by Barbara Vrooman and built by Jack McGrath at Nabel's Nursery over a four month period.

As with any piece of wood left outside in the elements it was time for repair and refinishing, and as luck would have it, the creator was in town. The Department of Public Works staff scrubbed the basket by hand after Commissioner Bud Nicoletti determined power washing could do it harm. Next, the basket was repaired by the volunteer efforts of Jack McGrath, now living in Florida, his grandson Stephen Benson, and White Plains resident Peter Wilcox (husband of Garden and Landscape Chair Jeanne Wilcox). Finally the city returned to re-stain the whole basket to preserve the wood and make it gorgeous once again. Plantings for the basket are changed seasonally by Nabel's Nursery as part of the Adopt-a-Park Program. The Major Sponsors for this amazing planter are Barbara and Richard Dannenberg. Keep a look out for the stunning winter and holiday display.

Rev. Everett Parker, Adopt-a-Park Major Sponsor, in Geneva's Garden (right), a garden in his wife's memory.





(Continued from page 1)

between an existing *Cotinus Coccinea* (Purple Smokebush), Cotoneaster, and two lovely *Acer Griseum* (Paperbark Maple). Around the perimeter and at each end of the bed, annuals will be planted for seasonal color — currently pansies. The garden displays a blue and white “Welcome To White Plains” sign and holds a large artificial rock, which houses the water supply to which a drip watering system will be attached by the City. This lovely new garden now joins the other eight gateway gardens planted by WPPBF at the entrances to our city.

Photo of construction on the Maple Ave/ Post Road Garden (below) courtesy of Nabel's Nursery. We're currently seeking Adopt-a-Park Sponsors for this location.



At the Adopt-a-Park breakfast this year: Barbara Vrooman, Adopt-a-Park Co-Chair, Rev. Carter Via of the WP Presbyterian Church and Nanette Bourne, Adopt-a-Park Co-Chair.

Special Thanks

To Roland Barnes for his help with the Fisher Island Garden that is planted and maintained by Mrs. Vivian Rooks.

Gazebo Refreshed

The Edwin G. Michaelian Memorial Gazebo, dedicated to the former County Executive Oct. 14, 1984, in Tibbits Park on North Broadway, received a fresh coat of paint recently thanks to the generosity of Gisoni Painting Co. According to John Gisoni, president and CEO of Gisoni Painting, which was established in 1953, this is the third time the White Plains business has assumed the responsibility of restoring the gazebo.

A total of six labor days were spent power washing the gazebo to remove the mildew from the roof, scraping, sanding, priming and finish painting to fully restore the beauty of the structure. Keeping a watchful eye on the gazebo through the years, and tending to its upkeep every three to four years, Gisoni explains, “preventive maintenance is key.”

The idea of a permanent structure in Tibbits Park was discussed while two friends — Brian Wallach, first president of the White Plains Beautification Foundation, and Robert Pollack, architect, and WPPBF VP — were enjoying a lunchtime concert in the park back in 1979. Today the gazebo is the site of regular spring and summer midday music events that make living in or visiting White Plains just a little more special.





We were there in more ways than one for the George Washington School's 5th grade graduation present to the school. The fifth graders presented the school with a bench and plants so that staff would have a relaxing place to rest after a strenuous day teaching. Our school gardening fund helped with the gift.

Front Yard Gardens

White Plains is well known as "A City in the Park" and our new president Dorothy Schere would also like it to become "A City in a Garden." In order for that to happen we want to encourage more homeowners and businesses to create colorful front yard gardens.

One beautiful September day you may have spotted Dorothy and her Front Yard Garden Committee tooling around town, squeezed into a little red convertible with a back-seat designed perhaps for garden gnomes but not for grownups. However we were delighted by what we found—dozens of gardens worthy of recognition in just two neighborhoods. During the summer, many others were noted. We followed up by sending letters to over 100 homes this fall thanking them for adding to the City's beauty. There are obviously more lovely gardens visible to the public that we missed. Come next spring and summer, we'll be cruising around again, so start planning... Maybe we really can become "A City in the Garden."

McMahon Lyon
& Hartnett
AD HERE

PIP
AD HERE



Sculpture on the Move: Hans Van de Bovenkamp's Sag Portal 2004 (below) has been replaced at the sculpture garden at the White Plains Public Library by another Van de Bovenkamp work, Circles and Waves, 1987 (above).

Our Temporary Sculpture Show is Evolving

The White Plains Beautification Foundation has partnered with the City of White Plains and the Sculptors Guild of New York City to bring world renowned sculpture to our City. This program was introduced at the White Plains Library Plaza in September of 2004. In essence, sculptures are borrowed from artist members of the Sculptors Guild on a temporary basis to create the sculpture gardens.

As you may have noticed when walking or driving down Rev Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd on the side of our Library, the large stainless steel sculpture resembling a gateway, which was entitled *Sag Portal*, has been replaced by a large white sculpture entitled *Circles and Waves*. *Sag Portal* has moved to the International Sculpture Center in Hamilton, New Jersey, where Mr. Van de Bovenkamp is enjoying a one man show. The artist has informed us that *Sag Portal* has been purchased and will soon make its way to Europe to join its new owner. *Circle and Waves* is one of 40 in a series and was created in 1987. The theme of using strictly two shapes indicates how two simple shapes can produce such a variety of configurations or sculptures. The circle represents centering (stability is used in Eastern symbolism) while the waves are a series of part overlapping circles and symbolize endlessness and searching. Thus two shapes related or coming from the same source can have opposite meanings and at the same time be complementary to each other. Please come and visit!



Sculpture in Tibbits Too!

More exciting news... we are currently in the process of selecting and siting sculptures to be placed throughout Tibbits Park. Be sure to look for the show in the spring. We hope you enjoy the sculptures and cultural image we are helping to bring to White Plains.

WPBF Volunteers Honored

On November 1, Mayor Joseph Delfino and Commissioner Arne Abramowitz honored local citizens groups at the City of White Plains Recreation & Parks Cultural Arts Volunteer Recognition Night. Individuals were recognized for going above and beyond to help others by beautifying our city or bringing serenity to residents of White Plains. We appreciated the recognition!

Midland Avenue Angel

Midland Avenue resident Vivian Rooks has been the guardian of a stretch of land in the median of Fisher Avenue at Bank Street, opposite Kittrell Park, for many years, planting, weeding, and trying to keep the area free of litter. It's a never-ending job, and we salute Vivian for her tireless efforts. Be sure and give her a salute when you pass by. Great job, Vivian!

Remembering Nancy Bookman

It's been a sad year for us, having lost three long-time board members. We reported on former City Historian Renoda Hoffman and Vice President Patricia Terhune in our Spring Newsletter. In May we lost Nancy, a member of our Board of Directors for more than 30 years and a participant in our Urban Design study tours both in Europe and the U.S.

Wife of Bill Bookman, former Editor of *The Reporter Dispatch*, now known as *The Journal News*, Nancy was a dear friend, well known to everyone involved in White Plains life, and we miss her very much.