



# Laurel Leaves 2022



# PRESIDENT'S LETTER



*People fill the grassy glen for the Laurel Hill Day Program.  
Photo: Jim Schantz*

169 YEARS ON, and it was the perfect day... Lots of clear sun, no humidity, everything we had dreamt of!

Laurel Hill Day is the most important outreach event that the Laurel Hill Association conducts annually. Neighbors and friends from Stockbridge and surroundings communities, (including two carloads from Boston!) made up the bulk of the audience but curious out-of-town visitors made an appearance as well.

As a new feature, at midday, children arrived with parents and grandparents to join in on a special scavenger hunt themed to celebrate the Centennial birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted, founder of landscape architecture in the United States. We had wanted to have some child friendly programming for some time, and volunteers led by Kimberley Crocker and Debbie Smith rose to the task, closely mentored by Julie Edmonds, one of our Artists on the Laurel Hill Board. Julie created an amazing life-sized portrait of "Flo" as the insiders call Mr. Olmsted! This was used as a pop up all over Berkshire County to great appreciation!

Twenty children ventured off for the Olmsted scavenger hunt, complete with a list of objects to be found on the trails like hickory nuts, oak leaves and even a bear (stuffed of course!). At the conclusion the children joined us at the rostrum to sing "Happy Birthday Mr. Olmsted," which they did flawlessly with gusto, miming blowing out a candle on the cupcake they each clutched.

Music continued as the well-known Berkshire Brass provided the accompaniment, and set the celebratory mood for the audience which had grown to nearly two

hundred. A reverential spirit was set with the reading of poems of reconciliation presented by Monique Tyndall, who is the Director of Cultural Affairs, Mohican Nation, Stockbridge-Munsee Band.

Association Trustee Rob Sedgwick shared a land acknowledgment that presented the cultural and historical context for the lands now protected by the LHA. The statement said in part:

"The Board of Trustees for the Laurel Hill Association acknowledge its properties are located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary homelands of the Mohican people, and before them, other indigenous peoples beyond memory or record.

We acknowledge that this land signifies great spiritual, historical and cultural significance for its original stewards: the Mohican people, nations and peoples in the region."

A special feature of 2022 has been the partnership between the Association and Olmsted 200-the national programs dedicated to honoring the vision and values of Frederick Law Olmsted.

Olmsted and our founder Mary Hopkins Goodrich shared a reverence for nature and recognized the contribution that access to parks and trails played in ensuring the quality of life for our communities.

These values and vision of Olmsted were shared by our keynote speaker Dede Neal Petri, the President of the National Association of Olmsted Properties. We were delighted to have Ms. Petri accept our invitation.



It turns out, that Ms. Petri and the NAOP were fully aware of the connection between Olmsted and our “little hill”, as it used to be called.

Petri’s theme, “The Power of Place”, addressed Olmsted’s philosophy of land design devoted to “parks for all people” not just a monied elite. Olmsted sought to serve ‘the wanderer’ who felt the solace of the woods and the healing power of the forests... this is a basic right that all people SHARE.

The program concluded with a benediction by local minister Brent Damrow and then attendees enjoyed refreshments provided once again so generously by the Red Lion Inn.

Laurel Hill Day serves a special function because it gives us the opportunity to celebrate our past, examine the present, and look to our future and our shared vision. The Association and its supporters provide a community that furthers the tasks at hand—providing the funds and willing hands to make our own vision of nature as a community asset, recreational asset, and place for refreshment and renewal. So mark your calendar today for Saturday, August 26, 2023 and join us for Laurel Hill Day next year!

Hilary Somers Deely  
President of the Laurel Hill Association

## LAUREL HILL DAY



*The kids' scavenger hunt reaches the Butler Bench.  
Photo: Joan Gallos*



*President Hilary Deely opens the festivities.  
Photo: Michael Cobb*



*Mr. Crocker and the kids examine rocks.  
Photo: Michael Cobb*



*Pat Flinn salutes Plain School and WHS alumni,  
asking them to stand and receive recognition.  
Photo: Olga Dunn*



*The kids descend from the Butler Seat.  
Photo: Joan Gallos*





*Monique Tyndall shakes the hand of Patrick White, while her mother Stephanie Bowman and Mary Hoeltzel look on.  
Photo: Lionel Delevingne*



*Cart chauffeur Patrick White is ready to ferry folks and supplies up the hill.  
Photo: Michael Cobb*



*Keynote speaker Dede Petri tells of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted...his life, philosophy and impact on America.  
Photo: Joan Gallos*



*Keynote Speaker Dede Petri  
Photo: Michael Cobb*



*The Singing Rangerettes are ready with the laurel swag.  
(L to R) Ramelle Pulitzer, Angela Cason, and Lis Wheeler  
Photo: Joan Gallos*



*Monique Tyndall, Director of Cultural Affairs, Mohican Nation, Stockbridge-Munsee Band, reads Native American poems by Joy Harjo.  
Photo: Michael Cobb*



*The Berkshire Brass performs "Ode to Joy."  
(L-R) David Wampler, Tim Atherton, Allan Dean, Jeff Stevens.  
Photo: Olga Dunn*



*Rev. Brent Damrow gives the Benediction.  
Photo: Jim Schantz*



*Robert Sedgwick waits to present the Land Acknowledgement.  
Photo: Michael Cobb*

*Photo Essay by Pat Flinn*



# WHAT'S NEW

## Directional Trail Signs

In June, small directional signs were installed to help hikers navigate the three major trails in Laurel Hill Park. Each has an arrow, the name of the trail in caps, and underneath, the trail's destination. The three major trails are: the Sedgwick Path between Town Offices parking and the Rostrum, the Adams Path between the Rostrum and the Park Street cul-de-sac, and the Summit Path between the Adams Path and the Butler Seat. These signs were one of the last pieces of the Laurel Hill Park Restoration project.



## Memorial Bridge Trailhead Sign

The decades-old trailhead sign at the Goodrich Memorial footbridge was out of date, missing labels, and deteriorating. In April, it was replaced with a new, updated sign. Information about the Mary Flynn Trail was added, and the scope of the map was expanded.



## Memorial Benches

Two memorial benches were installed on Laurel Hill Park property this year:

- The Baum Bench...on the trail from the Park Street cul-de-sac to the Bidwell ballfield, donated by 3 members of the Monday Mountain Boys hiking group, in memory of Elaine Baum, the late wife of the group's leader, Bob Baum.
- The Somers Bench...on the Adams Path overlooking the Rostrum glen, donated by Hilary Somers Deely, in memory of her late mother, Alice Burlington Somers.

The Association extends thanks to the Stockbridge Highway Department for constructing and delivering the two benches. A board member later did the staining and mounted the plaque.





## Lower Bowker's Woods

The original trail had a section that followed the former Berkshire Street Railway trolley line. Over the years that section went into disuse. Efforts in the last couple of years to reopen that section have been hampered by fallen trees. In August, Marc Fadding's crew cleared the downed trees. We encourage hikers to reuse that section on their next visit.



Oak, and Hemlock.) The aim of his research is to learn about ecosystem recovery in New England by comparing secondary growth forests to old growth forests. David's project will focus on the interactions between trees and soil microbial communities. Researchers will take tree and soil samples once in the fall (just done) and once in the spring.



*Landscape Architecture postdoctoral researchers from Harvard University Verónica Cruz Alonso (left) and Estefanía Pilar Fernández Barrancos (right) at the trailhead to Ice Glen. Photo: Kate Fletcher*

## Research Project

This fall, the Laurel Hill Association served as the liaison between the Town and David Moreno Mateos, a forest restoration ecologist from Harvard University. David was interested in collecting samples from Ice Glen old-growth dominant species (White Ash, Red

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## Flowers at the Post Office

This was the second year that Nicole Zaccaria did the plantings at the Post Office for the Association. (She also did the Jonathan Edwards Monument and the gazebo at Roeder Park.) This was the first year for the short dahlias, which were a real show-stopper...as were all the other plants around them! The bed received much attention from locals and out-of-town visitors alike. Many cell phones snapped pictures and accessed apps to identify the plants.



Patricia Flinn  
Properties Committee Chair,  
Laurel Hill Association



# BUTLER BENCH RESTORATION

THE LAST MAJOR PIECE of the four-year Laurel Hill Park Restoration project has just been completed. Mason Verne Tower, he who knows all things marble, has brought the Butler Bench back to life.

## Hurdles

The major hurdle Verne had to face was the bench location...at the summit of Laurel Hill Park. The steep slopes have loose soil, which his tractor couldn't negotiate. After multiple unsuccessful attempts, he resorted to using a sled, and winched heavy materials and supplies up to the site.

The next hurdle was getting water to the summit. He laid a hose from the rostrum level below up to an empty water tank he had positioned near the bench. The next day, when he went to pump water from a truck below...nothing. Pesky squirrels had chewed holes in the obviously-tasty hose, and Verne had to lay another.

Refusing to give up with the tractor, Verne laid down 150 feet of chain link fence, and anchored it with huge metal staples. Result...traction, success!

## Restoration Work

### Step 1 – Clean

Verne sprayed on a special cleaning solution, then wrapped the whole bench. After letting it “stew” for almost a week to seep into the pores, he removed the wrap and did a light power wash. Result...gone was the thick crusty grey surface, gone was the moss and mildew, and what remained was the beautiful white marble underneath.



*“Stewing”*



*Before cleaning*



*After cleaning and Verne's 100-year-old tools on top*



**Step 2 – Remove old mortar and reset stones where needed**



*The raised section weighs 800 pounds!*

**Step 3 – Repoint**



*Verne and his Italian tractor*



#### Step 4 – Glue and pin cracks/fix breaks

Verne used an advanced adhesive that soaks in and stabilizes cracks, which were then secured with long, flexible pins. To repair the one major break (on the front edge of a seat), he first reshaped the gap into a more stable rectangle. Then he found a stone that matched in color, cut a new piece, rounded the front edge, and fit it into place.



*Glueing cracks*



*Before*



*After*

## Verne Tower

You may have seen a couple of Verne's other projects in the area. A few years ago, he restored the marble Chief Konkapot Fountain in the Lee town green. He has been recognized for his on-going restoration work at the Freylinghuysen Morris Museum in Lenox.

Verne is a marble guru; he can look at a piece of marble and tell you what quarry it came from. He says the Butler Bench stone is from the Lee quarry. The total weight, including the granite platform, is 25 tons. He rates the original marble work as exceptional, especially the laurel leaf carvings.

Verne is 70, and doesn't have a cell phone or computer. Conversations with him reveal knowledge on a wide variety of topics. He exudes common sense and enhances it with a warm sense of humor.

The Association extends special thanks to Verne for bringing the Butler Bench back to life. Go see it for yourself.

Patricia Flinn  
Properties Committee Chair,  
Laurel Hill Association



# FORTY YEARS A TRUSTEE: A TRIBUTE TO PAT FLINN



LAUDED AS BOTH the keeper of the history and the soul of the Laurel Hill Association, Pat Flinn is celebrating her 40th year as a trustee and 36th year as Laurel Hill's secretary.

Living on Park Street at the foot of Laurel Hill Park, Pat was fated to be a LHA trustee. Her first encounter came one day in 1982 when she noticed that the trail sign at the Goodrich Memorial Footbridge was damaged. Pat tends to take initiative when she sees a problem, so she knocked on the door of Laurel Hill's president at the time, Lillian Bender. Lillian greeted Pat warmly, thanked her for the information, and invited her to fill a recent board vacancy. Pat agreed, and has served on the board ever since. In her time as a trustee, she has spanned 14 Laurel Hill presidents and survived tests like the time a large tree fell down the hill from Laurel Hill Park and demolished her garage.

The initiation ritual for new trustees for many years has included Pat's personal tour of Laurel Hill's holdings, both the signature properties (like Laurel Hill Park and the Sedgwick Reservation) and the less prominent. Patrick White, a trustee and Laurel Hill vice-president before he was elected to the Stockbridge Select Board, recalls Pat's tour fondly: "I will never forget joining the LHA Board and driving around Stockbridge with Pat. Part chauffeur, part tour guide, but above all the memory and conscience of an institution that's been a vital

part of Stockbridge for the better part of 200 years. Pat's lifetime of selfless service on behalf of our tiny patch of paradise, well, it's an example for us all."

Over the years, Pat has worked tirelessly to make Laurel Hill's properties more accessible, attractive and useable for Stockbridge residents and visitors. Among her favorites is one of the smallest and less visited, Pagenstecher Park on Interlaken Road, the site of America's first wood pulp mill.

Those who've worked with Pat are unanimous in their praise for her resilience, genial willingness to take on whatever needs to be done, and her passion for LHA's mission of improving the quality of life and the environment in Stockbridge.

Laurel Hill President Hilary Deely adds her own tribute: "When I first became the president of LHA Pat took me right under her wing. We spent at least 4 hours sitting in her cozy living room discussing everything to do with her life and also of mine! I was enchanted and I still am! Pat is a rare bird... her head full of knowledge, her strength and stamina like that of a twenty year old, earmuffs called muffies, a hot red car named Pepper, a prince valiant white shock of hair. Oh, and her humor! Pat represents the best of the best."

Among her many friends in Stockbridge are Anna and Bucky Smith who say, "Pat Flinn has been an official member of our family ever since Dorothy McGregor, Mr. Rockwell's bookkeeper, introduced us in 1970. Pat has shared all our birthdays, and holidays with us. On Christmas day, she always designated herself "the Elf" and passed out presents from under the tree to all of us. For the town, Pat has been the glue that has held many organizations in town together. For our small family, she has been the link to all of us."

Pat Flinn came to Stockbridge from Ohio as a teenager when her father took a job as an executive at a local paper mill. She has said that her family's move to Stockbridge makes her feel like she's the luckiest person alive. After graduating from high school, she left Stockbridge to go to college in Virginia, but she came back after graduation and has been here ever since.

All of Pat's friends at Laurel Hill and in town are grateful for all she's done, wish her well in the future and look forward to seeing her from time to time on the trails or around town.



# PATTI AND HARVEY KLEIN



*An Interview by Phil Deely, LHA Board Member*

Patti and Harvey Klein have called Stockbridge their ‘other home’ since the mid-1970’s and have been supporters of Laurel Hill Association ever since. Following Harvey’s death in 2020, Patti has been spending more time in the area and, most recently, she was busy with the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the Stockbridge Bowl Association, of which she is a long-serving director and officer. I called Patti at her New York apartment in the spring to ask about her engagement with her community and Laurel Hill Association.

## **What first brought you to the Berkshires?**

We had friends—a Cornell Medical School physician colleague of Harvey’s—who had rented a cottage in a community on the Stockbridge Bowl in the early 1970’s. We visited them one summer, became enchanted with the lake, the town and the Berkshires altogether, rented a house in that community shortly thereafter, then bought a house and later built one there, and now our children and grandchildren also think of Stockbridge as their second home. Now that I am retired (as a lawyer) and since Harvey passed away two years ago, I am spending more time here.

## **How did the two of you connect with Stockbridge?**

Early on, our kids spent dawn to dusk on Stockbridge Bowl—swimming, sailing, hanging out with friends, catching frogs! Harvey braved the Bowl as a sun-fish sailor and got much-needed relaxation time on the beach talking to friends. Our city children were able to bike, play and make friends without constant adult supervision. We made many more friends after

we joined the Stockbridge Golf Club and I became a board member of the Stockbridge Bowl Association. Over the past 50 plus years, we became members of the Laurel Hill Association, the Berkshire Garden Center and many cultural groups as well, and have also enjoyed walking on the well-maintained Laurel Hill trails in Stockbridge as well as elsewhere in the Berkshires.

## **As you got to know Stockbridge, what were your impressions of Laurel Hill?**

The first thing I’d say is that Laurel Hill is one of the oldest organizations in Stockbridge and has been dedicated from the beginning to making the Town a more beautiful place to live—as an example, the flowers in the town center—while keeping good conservation practices in mind. The Association also plays an important role in continuing to preserve the quality of life in our community, which made us appreciate Laurel Hill’s significant and long-standing contributions to the often hard and diligent work required to preserve the natural beauty of Stockbridge.

## **Over the years how has your connection to the Town been important?**

As the years passed, the children and I were spending at least three months a year here, and Harvey would come up for weekends and vacations. He loved photography and often disappeared on ventures to find just the right view. Harvey was an internist in New York City for over 50 years and after my children were both in college, I gave up my archival consulting business and went to law school. Stockbridge was a place where we could unwind with our family and friends. Today our children and four grandchildren return when they can—they’re the next generation that will help preserve our community.

## **As you look to the future, what is the issue that most engages you?**

There is a direct connection between two of my special local interests: the Stockbridge Bowl Association and Laurel Hill Association, both of which are focused on conservation of the Berkshires’ natural resources, as are the Berkshire Garden Center and Housatonic Valley Association. We all have an important part to play in preserving this community that continues to be so meaningful to the extended Klein family.



# LAUREL HILL TALK AT THE 2022 SEDGWICK REUNION A BIG SUCCESS

*By Robert Sedgwick*

MORE THAN 200 members of the Sedgwick family converged on Stockbridge last June to celebrate their quinquennial reunion after the event was postponed two consecutive years due to the pandemic. These gatherings not only provide family members with an opportunity to reunite with far-flung relatives, but they also allow us to directly engage with our Sedgwick heritage. There are three specific places in town that hold tremendous significance for the family: The Old House, which was built by Judge Theodore Sedgwick in 1785; the Sedgwick “Pie” where most of us are buried; and Laurel Hill Park with its magnificent rostrum designed by Daniel Chester French and dedicated to the Judge’s grandson, Henry Dwight Sedgwick.

It came as no surprise then when one of the outstanding highlights of the reunion weekend turned out to be a slide presentation and talk on the Sedgwick connection to Laurel Hill given by LHA board member Pat Flinn in the library of the Old House. This was followed by an excellent walking tour of Laurel Hill Park, which began on the newly named Sedgwick Path leading from the Stockbridge Town Offices to the rostrum.

Speaking before a packed room of family members leaving many people to stand in the adjacent hallway and butler’s pantry, Pat eruditely and succinctly covered 188 years of the park’s history as it pertains to the Sedgwick family in just under 45 minutes. It is indeed a compelling story.

In 1834, Theodore Sedgwick II, representing the heirs of the Judge, purchased what was then known as the “little hill” for \$450 to preserve it in perpetuity and make it available for public use. Hence, as Pat and others have suggested, an argument can be made that this action on the part of the Sedgwick clan was the genesis of the public land trust movement in the United States. Yellowstone Park, which was officially the country’s first national park, didn’t open until 1872, and there was no National Park Service until 1916, so the Sedgwicks were definitely ahead of their time in this regard.



*Pat Flinn with Sedgwick family members. Photo: Robert Sedgwick*

Then in 1878, the Sedgwick family deeded Laurel Hill to the Laurel Hill Association, which had been established 25 years earlier by Mary Hopkins Goodrich. The deed specified that the property be “...dedicated...to the use benefit and pleasure of the public intending that the same be protected and preserved forever for that purpose.”

Since that time, Sedgwicks have continued to maintain a strong connection to Laurel Hill and the Laurel Hill Association serving as board members, presidents and benefactors. My great-great grandfather, Henry Dwight Sedgwick, served as president for twenty-two years, from 1881-1903 followed by my great grandfather Alexander Sedgwick who served from 1905 – 1925. More recently, my cousin Arthur Schwartz served as president from 1993 – 1995.

For generations now, Laurel Hill has provided a peaceful sanctuary from the crowds and traffic of Stockbridge, especially during the sweltering months of high season. There is nothing quite like spending a lazy summer day on the hill with the late afternoon sun streaming through the trees surrounded by an abundance of wildlife and lush vegetation. It’s almost impossible to believe that the center of town is just a stone’s throw away.

A recent three-year restoration project overseen by the Laurel Hill Association has returned the park to its former glory after years of neglect had left much of the property overgrown. But we need to rely on the continued generosity of all those who cherish this park and other LHA properties if we are to maintain them in a way that is ecologically and financially sustainable. Your donation to the Laurel Hill Association, no matter how large or small, will help us in our endeavor to preserve these resources for future generations to use and enjoy.



# DONORS



The Laurel Hill Association gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their contributions between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022. If your name has been misspelled or inadvertently omitted, please contact us at [info@laurelhillassociation.org](mailto:info@laurelhillassociation.org) or 413-298-2888.

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*Photo: Joan Gallos*