

BLAIR STREET GARDENS  
NEWSLETTER and NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING  
SPRING 2021

**THANK YOU** for your contribution to Blair Street Gardens. With your help, Blair Street Gardens Committee, Inc. continues to maintain two gardens at or near the intersection of John Nolen Drive and Blair, Wilson and Williamson Streets in downtown Madison.

- Gateway Garden on the 600 block of Willy Street
- Wilson Green on the 400 block of E. Wilson Street

As we begin our 2021 season, you are invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 18 to plan activities and elect Board members and officers.

**NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING**

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

*OUTSIDE*

The Gateway Garden

600 block of Williamson Street

- |          |         |            |
|----------|---------|------------|
| • Elect  | • Adopt | • Plan for |
| board &  | the     | 2021       |
| officers | budget  |            |

**THANKS TO THE BOARD**

Thank you to the 2020 Officers and Board members - Ellen Henningsen, President; Mary Knapp, Vice-President; Kevin Earley, Secretary; Eileen Somers, Treasurer; and Gary Tipler, Board member. Even a small organization like BSG requires the attention of a Board of Directors, plus the Board's volunteer time maintaining the gardens is invaluable. Thanks for your service.

**VOLUNTEERS MAINTAIN THE GARDENS AND ...**

During the 2020 gardening season, six volunteers contributed many hours to maintain the gardens – planting, pruning, weeding, etc.

Last year we didn't schedule workdays due to the COVID pandemic. It remains to be seen whether we will do so this year. Check our Facebook page or website for the latest info. To receive e-mails about the schedule, email us at the address below. Or look for signs posted at the gardens.

The Board decided our current roster of active volunteers couldn't keep up with weeding and mulching, so we hired a landscape service for The Gateway Garden. This year we intend to hire a landscaper for both gardens. Volunteers are still needed throughout the season, so please consider volunteering.

**PLANT DANE**

This is our second year participating in the Plant Dane Native Plant Program, a project of Dane County's Land and Water Resources Department. Donors purchase plants for Blair Street Gardens grown by a local grower. The plant varieties are then selected by BSG. This season, donors contributed enough money for BSG to select 56 plants. Plants will be used to refresh both The Gateway Garden and the perennial bed at Wilson Green. *Thank you to our donors!*

**AND THANKS -**

Thanks to Kate Nagel of Business Support Solutions, LLC, for volunteering her time and expertise to maintain our website.

BLAIR STREET GARDENS P.O. Box 1333 Madison, WI 53701-1333

[info@blairstreetgardens.org](mailto:info@blairstreetgardens.org)

[www.blairstreetgardens.org](http://www.blairstreetgardens.org)

[www.facebook.com/ Blair Street Gardens](https://www.facebook.com/BlairStreetGardens)

*Beautifying the Gateway to Downtown Madison*

## **GATEWAY GARDEN UPDATE**

### ***Commemorative Bench for Jeff Kuesel***

We are pleased to announce that BSG has installed a second bench at The Gateway Garden. The bench honors Jeff Kuesel, one of BSG's co-founders. Due to his tireless dedication over nearly 30 years, the BSG continues today. Jeff handled the administration and fundraising, and spent endless hours planting spring bulbs and summer annuals, and tending to the perennials and shrubs. Many of you will remember seeing him working in the Gardens in all kinds of weather during evenings and weekends. *Thank you to all who contributed!*

The bench, designed by local artists Michael Burns and Kevin Earley, is made of white oak and aluminum. You can see photos on our Facebook page and website.

### ***Reiner Family Tree***

Once again, we will be replacing the evergreen tree that sits near the point of the Gateway Garden. We had hoped to plant it last Fall, but couldn't find the right specimen. We plan to plant a Virginia Juniper 'Canaertii' this Spring. A spruce was originally planted many years ago by the Reiner family to commemorate the first Christmas tree in Madison, erected in 1855 in their family home which once stood near the garden. In 2016, we replaced that spruce because it was misshapen, too large for the site, and in the wrong place. But the replacement became diseased and was replaced in 2018. And then the third died. Hopefully the fourth will be the charm! The Juniper is believed to be the type of conifer that was the Reiner's original Christmas tree, and is more tolerant of the growing conditions at the site. Thank you to the Reiner Family for continuing to support the Gardens and for lighting the tree every holiday season.

## **WILSON GREEN UPDATE**

BSG's second garden is called Wilson Green, and is located on E. Wilson Street across from the World Nomad Pub (formerly The Cardinal Bar). It includes a large, raised perennial bed which we continued to maintain this past season. Part of the property is owned by the City and part is owned by the Madison Water Utility. We are pleased to announce that the Water Utility will be providing annual financial support to Wilson Green which will allow us to hire a landscaper to assist in maintaining the area. Thank you to Alder Mike Verveer for his advocacy.

The City is intending to widen the street next to the garden in order to install a bike lane, and we are working with City staff to minimize the impact on Wilson Green.

## **MGE BED UPDATE**

Originally, in addition to The Gateway Garden and Wilson Green, BSG maintained a third garden – a small bed next to the MGE building on S. Blair Street. MGE has made regular donations to BSG over the years, including a significant donation toward the redesign of The Gateway Garden, and also donated the labor and plants for the MGE bed for several years. In 2019 BSG transferred responsibility for that garden to MGE. BSG appreciates MGE taking over the garden, as well as its generous support over the years.

## **BOARD MEMBER NEEDED**

If you are interested in helping guide Blair Street Gardens over the next season, please consider joining the Board of Directors. Responsibilities include 1-2 meetings a year, plus being available for input via e-mail or phone. If you prefer, you can participate on an informal basis. If interested, e-mail [info@blairstreetgardens.org](mailto:info@blairstreetgardens.org).

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