

BEAUTYBERRY POST

THE NEWSLETTER OF MACKAY GARDENS AND LAKESIDE PRESERVE

September/October 2019



In Touch by Steve Franklin

How many friends or acquaintances can you name who you would classify as civic-minded? I'm talking about people who have recognized a way they could

help make their community a better place in which to live and actually rolled up their sleeves and got busy doing something about it. I'm pleased to say that I'm familiar with several of these individuals who also happen to be kind, thoughtful, and considerate. I'm proud to work alongside them at Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve (MGLP). Let me introduce you to two of my volunteer friends.

Sandy Woods is a mother and grandmother. She's been volunteering at MGLP for about twelve years. Sandy was born in Butler, Pennsylvania and grew up in Rochester, Minnesota. She acquired a degree in interior design from Florida State University, attended the Parsons School of Design in New York City, and has a master's degree in psychology from the University of South Florida.

Sandy worked in design and advertising in New York and enjoyed sailing the cold waters near Long Island with friends on weekends until an overwhelming desire to be surrounded by green spaces prompted her to move back to Tallahassee. There she opened a small boutique in a new mall where she met the assistant supervisor of construction and eventually became his wife. Unfortunately, an economic recession in the 1970s caused the early demise of her business. That led to a move to Winter Haven where a desire to be involved in her children's lives as a full time mom led her to the world of volunteerism. She became the President of their school's PTA and a Cub Scout pack leader. After they grew up she worked for Mass Brothers as a wedding consultant.

When asked how she became interested in helping at MGLP Sandy explained that she is a third generation gardener. She spoke of fond memories of time spent at her grandparent's house roaming the extensive flower and vegetable gardens which included a table and chairs so cards could be played with friends while enjoying the colors and sweet scents the garden provided. After retirement she chose to attend the Master Gardener program sponsored by the University of Florida and local Extension service. She ended up fulfilling the practical requirements of the course at MGLP, and she has been here ever since. With us she seems to have found additional family and a second home.

Tom Zimmers is a father and grandfather who grew up in the country near Rillton, Pennsylvania. He attended Wabash College in Indiana where he majored in biology and psychology.

Tom recalled spending much of his childhood roaming and playing in the forests that surrounded his home. There he discovered an innate love of nature that stayed with him through his working years as he pursued careers as an insurance claims adjuster and real estate agent.

After retirement Tom's yearning to spend more time in nature and also be of service led him to the Street Audubon Center where he first worked as a volunteer. Then one weekend he attended a nature appreciation walk at Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve. Tom was inspired by the walk's interpretive content, especially the story of local resident Nancy Daley who spearheaded efforts to save the historic house and property from being razed and developed into a housing subdivision. Besides the forest itself appealing to him, Tom also recognized that some of the people volunteering here had extensive knowledge of Florida's ecosystems that he would be able to benefit from by becoming involved. He became a volunteer and has remained dedicated for nine years.

So what are the common threads we see weaving our volunteer's lives together? For one, an exposure early in life to the beauty and abundance of nature, whether in wild places or attractive gardens created and cultivated by man. Secondly, they acquired practical experience or an education, which opened their eyes to a broader perspective of the world's possibilities. And thirdly, they each seem to experience a subconscious attraction to people who share their values and love of nature.

The fact is that those of us who volunteer our services to Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve come from a wide variety of backgrounds that provide a beneficial diversity of skills, which are very helpful in the pursuit of our common goal; to leave the world a little bit better than we found it. This along with our love of nature and the healing powers that her bounty provides must compel us to keep coming back, to keep striving to maintain and protect this cherished resource. If you're a nature lover, you should join us. I bet you'll be glad you did.

Calendar of Events

September

- **9/5- NO FIRST THURSDAY WORKSHOP-cancelled due to Hurricane Dorian**
- **Nature's Finest Yoga** with Laura Lewe-6:30-7:30pm. This FREE yoga class will be held Thursdays inside the historic house. Laura says "The classes will be at a slow to moderate pace with focus on breath lead movement. During the course of our time together we'll also be working with mudras (healing hand gestures), mantras (positive affirmations) & singing bowls. By diving into the depths of our own unique healing experience this class will build a deeper sense of community. Those coming should bring their own mat & an open mind!" If the house is not available the class will then be held elsewhere on property. Donations are accepted if people are inclined to do so.
- **September volunteer work days: 2 ,9, 16, 23, 30 MONDAYS 8am-11**

October

- **Nature's Finest Yoga** with Laura Lewe-6:30-7:30. This FREE yoga class will be held every Thursday except October 31st. See description above in the month of September.
- **October volunteer work days: 7, 14, 21, 28 MONDAYS 8am-11.**

Forest Magic & Interpretive Nature Walks with Steve Franklin are now offered upon request. Forest Magic offers an opportunity to consciously immerse yourself in the redemptive air, sounds, & sights that forests so generously provide as Steve guides you through stress-reducing mental exercises & recites calming poetry during this tranquil stroll along the trails. 4-8 attendees.

The Interpretive Nature Walk is a moderately easy walk along a MGLP trail where Steve will share information on the natural & cultural history of this area & discuss some of the environmental issues we face as we attempt to conserve & protect our natural resources. 4-15 attendees .To request a date for either of these two events please call Parks and Recreation at 863-291-5272.

All events are **free** unless otherwise noted.

Have you considered **volunteering** at MGLP? By donating a small portion of your time you are helping to improve & protect a piece of Florida's rich history & the habitats which surround it. If you'd like to become involved please contact Volunteer Coordinator Cathy Butcher at:

cassiebelle@verizon.net.



Mackay Gardens & Lakeside Preserve is located at 945 Mackay Blvd. in Lake Alfred, Florida, 33850. It is free & open 7 days a week from dawn until dusk. To inquire about renting the house or picnic shelter, or to ask about upcoming events please call Parks & Recreation at 863-291-5272. Beautyberry Post is a bi-monthly newsletter edited by Cathy Butcher with assistance from Steve Franklin. To receive the BP by email please contact Anaëli Quinones at aquinones@mylakealfred.com

Stop by the historic Mackay house to enjoy the Ridge League of Art exhibit entitled "**100 Years of Mackay**". The exhibit can be viewed during regular business hours 8am- 4pm Monday through Friday. Enter through the Parks and Recreation office located at the east end of the house. The exhibit featuring almost 40 pieces of art is on display upstairs.

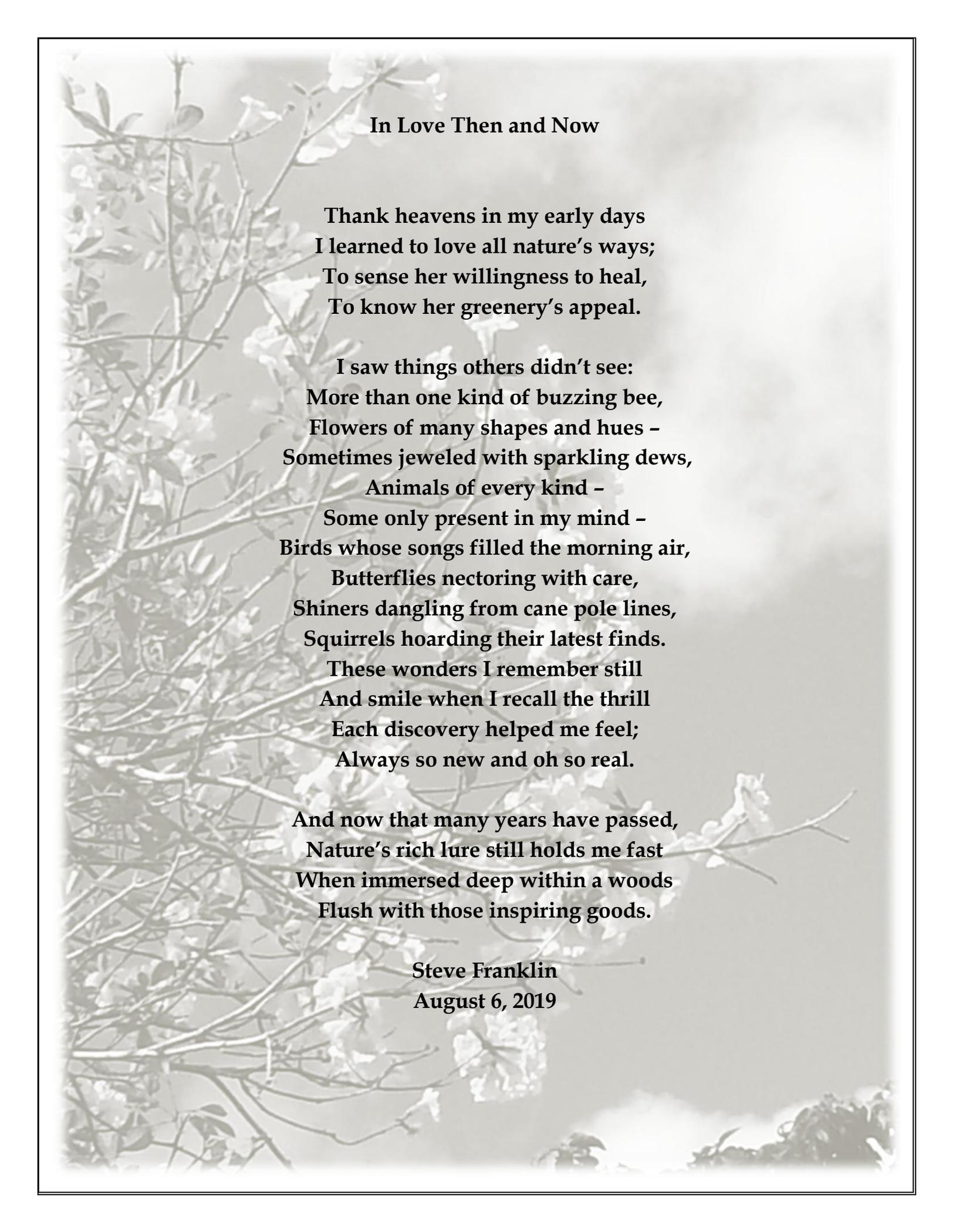
Recent Happenings

The Arbor or Garden Room just west of the Mackay House has been a popular site for weddings over the last few years. In the early nineteenth hundreds this structure was used as a tea room or other times as a classroom for Alexander Mackay's granddaughters.



Unfortunately, its foundation was not properly constructed so over the years the walls of the block and brick structure began to crack and separate. City of Lake Alfred officials eventually decided that its use as a safe location at which weddings could take place had become questionable. Crew members removed the building this summer and a new building of historically accurate similarity will be completed by Austin Historical.





In Love Then and Now

**Thank heavens in my early days
I learned to love all nature's ways;
To sense her willingness to heal,
To know her greenery's appeal.**

**I saw things others didn't see:
More than one kind of buzzing bee,
Flowers of many shapes and hues -
Sometimes jeweled with sparkling dews,
Animals of every kind -
Some only present in my mind -
Birds whose songs filled the morning air,
Butterflies nectoring with care,
Shiners dangling from cane pole lines,
Squirrels hoarding their latest finds.
These wonders I remember still
And smile when I recall the thrill
Each discovery helped me feel;
Always so new and oh so real.**

**And now that many years have passed,
Nature's rich lure still holds me fast
When immersed deep within a woods
Flush with those inspiring goods.**

**Steve Franklin
August 6, 2019**