

FROM SHORE TO SHORE: Waterloo in Bloom rededicates Memory Bank garden

By SUSAN CLARK PORTER | Posted: Sunday, October 4, 2015 2:00 pm

When you speak with Cal Goodman, his grief is still palpable.

Diane Freezee, Cal's partner in life — and gardening — died this past July at the age of 79.

For years, the duo volunteered their time and gardening talents with Waterloo in Bloom, the group founded in 2002 to beautify the village with flowers. Freezee's and Goodman's palette was a bank of beds on Locust Street near the Cayuga-Seneca Canal.

There, the couple transplanted perennials from their own garden, weeded, watered and nurtured the public spot. They named it the Memory Bank and each had a bench in memory of their first husband and wife there.

But as age and illness crept up on them, the couple was no longer able to maintain the area, which had become jungle-esque with untamed weeds and a lack of pruning.

"They adopted this area and put their heart and soul into it and made it an absolutely beautifully landscaped area," said Dave Duprey, the co-chair of Waterloo in Bloom along with his wife, Darlene. "They spent four or five hours a day there, brought things from their gardens, cut down trees, put up a plaque. They created something that was gorgeous, but was also a monster."

Waterloo in Bloom members had been thinking of redoing the area for a few years, to make it easier to maintain. Freezee's death hastened that effort, since members also wanted to rededicate the new area to her and Goodman.

Goodman, 88, is a man of few words. Being at the canal garden without his partner of 25 years — and the garden they had created together — was certainly hard. But he seemed to understand the necessity of creating a low-maintenance site.

"It's nice, a lot less weeds," Goodman said.



Memory Bank

Waterloo in Bloom recently gathered to celebrate and rededicate a Memory Bank garden along Locust Street near the Cayuga-Seneca Canal.

The project involved taking out the overgrown flora, putting down landscape fabric and placing gravel donated by Seneca Stone atop the beds. Some ornamental grasses, shrubs and a few perennials were planted.

Mike Bradley of Kingdom Road Nursery created stone walls and stairs through one of the beds.

“We gave Mike some ideas and a couple of pictures and he took it from there,” Duprey said.

The project was completed late last month and Waterloo in Bloom members gathered Sept. 24 to celebrate and rededicate the garden. Mark Benjamin of Seneca Meadows, one of the project’s biggest contributors, and Bradley of Kingdom Road Nursery, were also on hand.

A few large lilacs remained from the original beds and Bradley was sure to also keep a few of Freezee’s favorite shrubs — the Rose of Sharon. No surprise — they happen to be Goodman’s favorite, too.

As he looked on before a Waterloo in Bloom group photo was arranged, Goodman’s thoughts turned to the woman who worked by his side for years to brighten the canalside landscape.

“I hope she’s out in the garden,” he said.

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