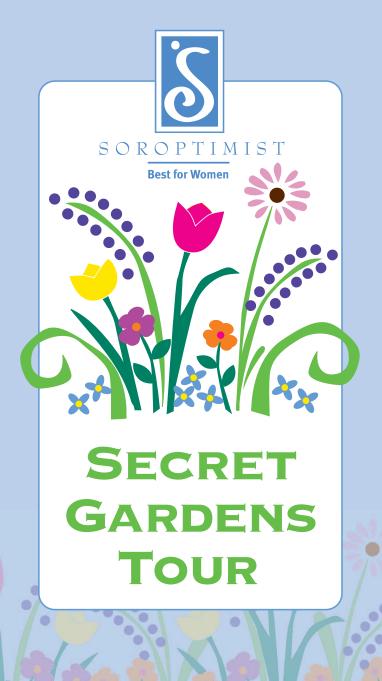
# 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL



Sunday July 10, 2022 • 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Soroptimist means "Best for Women." Soroptimist International of Saratoga County, founded in 1979, is part of a 100year-old global volunteer organization that strives to improve the lives of women and, girls, and their communities, providing them with access to the education and training needed to achieve economic empowerment.

The group includes working moms and single women, small business SOROPTIMIST owners and corporate executives, nurses and physicians, attorneys, teachers and retired professionals. Their common thread is the desire to make a difference for women.

One of the keystone Saratoga Soroptimists initiatives is Project Hope and Power, a financial literacy program delivered through Wellspring to help women gain practical tools to live safely and support their families without fear of abuse.

Another important project is "Dream It, Be It," which helps local girls attain confidence and success as they grow into adult women. Additionally, the club grants financial awards to female heads of households continuing their education in the face of

> adversity; to teenage girls who have inspired, encouraged, and improved the lives of others; and to many organizations that benefit women and girls. Saratoga Soroptimists is a 501(c)3 organization.

Financial support for these initiatives comes primarily from the club's fund-raising efforts, such as this all-volunteer Secret Gardens Tour.

Soroptimists wishes to thank all the incredible garden owners for making this lovely tour possible. Please visit www.soroptimistsaratoga.org to learn more about Soroptimists and how to get involved. And have a wonderful day!



Best for Women

This program can be used as your admission ticket at each garden. All of the gardens on the July 10, 2022, tour are in Saratoga Springs. The descriptions are lettered to correspond to the enclosed driving directions, but you are welcome to enjoy the gardens in whatever order you prefer between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. The tour will be conducted in accordance with CDC, state and other guidelines regarding COVID-19. (Note: New for 2022, an electronic or printed receipt for tickets purchased in advance online may also serve as admission in lieu of presenting the physical ticket.)



Whether you're stopping to buy or pick up a pre-ordered Secret Gardens Tour program on the day of the tour, take a moment to view the garden decor items available for sale by the Heritage Garden Club. The club maintains the visitor center's rear patio garden, which as of the program printing deadline was not yet reopened to the public. Proceeds from the sale of the décor items will be used to fund various community projects sponsored by the Heritage Garden Club.



### Johanna Garrison and Bob Lippman 48 Bryan St., Saratoga Springs

There's always something, whether solid or intangible, that drives a shift in perspective, and for Johanna Garrison, it was moles.

Following the completion of their net-zero home in 2014, Johanna was left with a blank canvas of dirt, gravel, and a jumble of ideas. A local landscaper had introduced her to the concept of natives, so in 2015 she planted her first bed out front, along with a small patch of native grass. As for everything out back, Johanna left it to nature to decide.

One day a friend, spying earthen mounds scattered on the lawn, advised her to throw down Grub-Ex, explaining that if she killed the grubs, the moles would die too and her lawn would be left unblemished. That made her pause: Why use toxins to kill something to kill something else that only temporarily shifted small pieces of soil once a year? Were moles bad? If grubs eat grass roots, why kill the animal that helps control the grub population? Who was she trying to impress, anyway?

A quick search led her to author and naturalist Nancy Lawson, aka The Humane Gardener. Nancy's article "Moles: Underground Wonders" taught Johanna that moles not only consume invasive earthworms and Japanese beetle larvae, but they also aerate the soil. Their wee pushed-up pitcher's mounds create fertile homes for plants which, in turn, provide habitats for butterfly larvae and other valuable insects.

Six years and two dozen plant and vegetable beds later, Johanna continues to ask questions, learn, and corral as many natives into her fifth of an acre pollinator habitat as possible. With no formal background in horticulture or landscape design, she allows herself a wide margin for error, knowing it's all part of the eco-adventure. Gardening for wildlife has opened up an entirely new world, one for which she is ever grateful. Hummingbirds, bees, wasps, butterflies, skippers, beetles, hummingbird moths, toads, bunnies, birds, voles and her tiny tunnelers are all principal cast members, while humans are just part of the show. At the end of the day, when flowers flop and a patch appears "untidy," Johanna says to herself, "Why should I care? The insects don't mind!"



This secret garden is tucked away on a corner at the tail end of a street with great cityscape views and western sunsets. When the Cooleys designed and built the house several years ago, the

mature tall red oaks, sugar maple and shagbark hickory trees that lined the property were preserved. The intention was to keep the wooded landscape and a natural setting in the yard. Dandelions, which help feed the honeybees in the spring, are welcome. No pesticides or herbicides are used.

Susan learned about ferns, wildflowers and gardening from her parents without realizing it as a young child. Weeding was on the list of chores, so learning about flowers was part of the equation. Richard learned about trees from his father. The Cooleys created privacy by enhancing the property with coniferous species of hemlock and red cedar.

The homeowners maintain the property themselves. Each year, they tackle a big project or two, sometimes requiring additional help. Most recently, they hired a stone craftsman to create granite rock walls along their new concrete sidewalk.

The Cooleys describe their property as a work in progress and a labor of love. Susan believes her gardening is therapeutic and compares it to an artist's canvas – ever-changing and a process. She has observed the light exposure, soil condition and the outcome of planting efforts over the seasons. She has learned that only a small section of their garden can sustain sun-loving flowers. Therefore, Susan has begun to appreciate more shade-loving plants and woodland species. The color, shape, variegation and texture are important considerations when she plans a garden. If it doesn't work, it will get dug up and moved!



## **Kar Alley** 142-168 High Rock Ave., Saratoga Springs

The following seven gardens are all part of one stop. Kar Alley is a flat, paved street that will be closed to non-resident vehicles during the tour. It runs for two-tenths of a mile behind the townhomes on High Rock Avenue. Access is from Nelson Avenue.

Visitors are asked to enter and exit Kar Alley on foot from Nelson Avenue, observing these petite gardens by walking along the hill side of the alley heading in and the patio side heading out. While the street addresses indicate High Rock Avenue, all of the gardens are along Kar Alley in the rear.



# Nina and Ralph Douglas 142 High Rock Ave., Saratoga Springs

Ralph and Nina moved to Saratoga Springs in 2016. They left behind a home in New Jersey on an acre that they had been landscaping for 15 years. Their new home offered a wonderful neighborhood in walking distance to town and all its amenities. However, the corner property only had a small strip of land with a few meager shrubs. As the entry drive to their townhouse community, they knew this barren strip deserved and needed attention and love.

The small area is in partial full sun and partial shade. Due to the steep slope, water retention has been a challenge. To address these issues, Ralph began by planting both annuals and perennials, including shrubs, bulbs and flowers. Every year has seen varieties of hostas, lilacs, azaleas and coleus grace the developing garden.

Nina's aesthetic is evident with the addition of wind chimes and

charming sculptures hidden throughout. The garden continues to be a work in progress, shaped by trial and error. They now enjoy watching as neighbors stroll by, stopping to comment and admire. The sound of children's laughter, as they discover the fun art pieces, tell Ralph and Nina that they are definitely on the right track.



This garden, which incorporates a love of plants instilled by their parents and grandparents, was started many years before Stephen and Elizabeth North came to Saratoga Springs. It originally began with plants and rocks that Stephen's sister Connie North brought from her garden when she was relocating from the Adirondacks to Kar Alley. Though she no longer lives at this address, she is still fully involved in the garden that she started. "Connie and I kind of share what goes on in the garden through trial and error," explains sister-in-law Elizabeth.

No plants have ever been turned down, whether they were excess iris bulbs found in a gutter or a gift for Mother's Day. This does present special difficulties because the garden is on a hill, half shady with a little sun, lots of clay and squirrels that like to dig up bulbs and eat tender green plant growth.

It is also ever-changing. They installed a newer path so the kids, including grandchildren, can scoot through to visit friends without stepping on the plants. Most of the plants are perennials, with the addition of annuals like elephant ears to entertain grandchildren with their huge leaves. Others have been added to introduce more color.

The garden is really representative of friends, family, favorite flora and plants that survive. The Norths' compost pile is to the left. Tea, coffee grounds and fall leaves help "add back" and fertilize the garden.

# Tom and Anne Gaughan 148 High Rock Ave.

Tom and Anne are original owners of 148 High Rock, having lived there since 2005. They were uncertain at first about the swap of a two-car garage for a one-car space and a small patio garden. It turned out to be the right choice. The ever-changing garden (except for the Japanese maple, which was just two feet tall when they planted it) is a source of peace and joy and not a little frustration. It has never been the same two years in a row.

Having tackled and failed at clearing the hill on the other side of the alley, they hired the very talented folks at Phoenix Landscape and Design who accepted the challenge. The hill required pickaxes to clear it of plants, shrubs, roots and construction material. They then added a deep layer of soil and planted some lovely hostas, astilbe, hydrangeas and other shade lovers. It is still in the "seeing what works" stage, but they are sure that it will be a happy garden when it's done.

Finally, don't miss the herb barrel on the patio. It has been a steady and prolific source of culinary herbs and, at least once, served as a nursery for five baby rabbits.



Christy describes their garden as "a work in progress, with a BIG learning curve." The patio was a weedy hill prior to excavation. Upon its completion, the remaining hill was covered with grass seed, straw and nylon netting in order to prevent erosion.

In 2019, along with next-door neighbors Terry Julius and Michele Mehler, the Hollands contracted with Dawn at WildThings Rescue Nursery to plant native perennials. The project is featured on dawnswildthings.com, with before and after photos.

The Hollands currently fill in bare spots with bright annuals as they continue to learn the blooming cycles of the existing plants. The long-term plan is for the perennials to take root, eventually shading out the existing grass. The property is mostly shaded, so the challenge is to choose the proper plants moving forward as well as keeping the hill intact.

The Hollands have planted hydrangea, black-eyed Susans, day lilies, climbing ivy and impatiens from local nurseries. They enjoy grilling outdoors during evenings and weekends. On cooler nights, they light up the smokeless Solo fire pit.

# Michele Mehler and Terry Julius 160 High Rock Ave.

Michele and Terry purchased the property 10 years ago. They love the walkability of being on the edge of town but missed having usable outdoor space. So, in 2014 they began the first of what would be three phases of back-space development.

King Enterprises built their "grotto" – both the patio and fireplace. They tended toward simple grasses and shrubbery for the next five years, until they asked Dawn, of Wild Things Rescue Nursery, to help with natural plantings. Their 2019 project, coupled with the hillside of next-door neighbors Mike and Christy Holland, are featured on dawnswildthings.com, with before and after photos.

Then in 2021, Michele and Terry asked King Enterprises back to add a pergola. The structure softens the overall look, while lessening the impact of the afternoon sun and the occasional rain shower. "Our approach to our garden has been to keep it natural and simple, especially given the steepness of the hillside. We love the simple tranquility of the natural setting, tucked away 'in plain sight,'" explains Michele.

Some of the flowers and plants visitors will find are a peony bush, hydrangea, hostas, black-eyed Susans, daylilies, Baltic ivy, winter creeper ground cover, climbing vines, and ornamental grasses. Their garden loves its morning shade and afternoon sun.

They say it takes one thing in particular to turn a hillside garden into one that visitors will see and enjoy: No fear of heights! While they both tend to the garden, husband Terry is regularly found climbing the side wall "steps" and hill to weed and fertilize. They hope visitors will enjoy the experience of their "hidden grotto."



The patio immediately appealed to Tom when he moved here some 15 years ago as a contemplative place to read outdoors with an occasional cigar. A Japanese maple remains from the previous owners, but a perennially leaky fountain had to go. He decided to furnish simply with two chairs whose arms are broad enough to accommodate a glass of Chianti.

The real challenge was the hill. Tom ruled out terracing because of both the cost and the problem with soil retention on a hill that steep. Susan Dubois tackled the landscaping with plantings that would root well and provide color at various times, and Chips Landscaping gets the garden spiffed up each spring. Wild geraniums, periwinkle, azaleas and black-eyed Susans thrive.

The main feature is a very large pink and white hydrangea, whose dried clippings Tom enjoys indoors. But Tom, whose name – and voice – are familiar to many from his years calling races for NBC and at Saratoga Race Course, is especially pleased with the birdhouse he situated for viewing from both the patio and inside the house. "I put a pair of my old binoculars to use doing a little bird watching," he said.



The Mittlemans are original owners of their rowhouse, built in 2005-2006. Early on they realized there was only one thing missing: an outdoor space to enjoy. At first, they would lay out a piece of AstroTurf on the driveway with a couple of folding lounge chairs and a table. They'd drink some cocktails and make believe they had a sun deck. The idea was fun and whimsical, but not totally fulfilling.

The next year the Mittlemans decided that since they had a large outdoor hill that they owned as part of their lot on the other side of Kar Alley, they should design and build a custom stone patio area so that they could enjoy the outdoors in a bit of a more permanent and sophisticated manner. They noted that the development of a carriage house with an upstairs apartment is allowed for this area, but that's not a use they considered. Instead, they had two or three local landscape firms conceptually design a usable space for them. Over the next winter, they chose a contractor, conferred on some tweaks and design changes, and commissioned the construction of the patio the following spring. This was the first one to be built on Kar Alley.

Carefully excavating the hillside, preserving as many trees as possible, and designing and engineering a safe, sturdy and secure wall were imperative. (Note the gentle slope of the rear wall, which provides greater strength in supporting the weight of the hillside.) In truth, landscaping the patio was secondary to making sure it was safe, with adequate room for a couple of chaise lounges and a table for dining alfresco.

Once this was constructed, the Mittlemans wanted to set boundaries to define the deck area with low maintenance shrubbery in front. Next, they wanted a feature that would provide a clear entry

way for the patio. They found a wrought iron trellis-like garden arch in their travels and thought it would be great to have vines grow all over it. They also liked the idea of vines growing down the back of the patio wall, giving it a kind of English garden look.

Miscellaneous low-maintenance plantings that would reappear each season on their own, with annual planting of colorful flowers to accentuate the front garden area of the deck, was the plan – and has remained so for the past 15 years. Annuals planted along both sides of their driveway complement the plantings on the patio side of Kar Alley. The addition of fun garden sculptures (including a mountain goat named Yael, a blackbird wind vane, a pink flamingo, and an alligator guard) can't help but make everyone smile when they pass by.

Whether the Mittlemans are relaxing on their patio, sitting on their balcony upstairs in the hot tub looking down at it, or just walking down the alley or driving home, they thoroughly enjoy the rear patio area and garden and are very happy with their decision to build it. They welcome you and hope you enjoy it, too.



Dave and Carol Godette love to see the surprised look on visitors' faces as they walk through their property's white wooden gate and discover a "Secret Garden." First-time visitors may expect a small patch of lawn rather than the expansive garden beds and extensive outdoor living space that awaits.

Dave believes in big splashes of color. Most of the flower beds surrounding their in-ground pool are planted with annuals such as New Guinea impatiens, begonias and wave petunias, interspersed with daylilies and over two dozen varieties of hostas from Shades of Green in Charlton.

Along the south side of the property is a mostly shaded memorial garden. Filled with ferns, pachysandra and forget-me-nots, this garden was created in 2001 for the cremation ashes of the Godettes' golden retrievers. It has expanded to include the ashes of a family member of the property's first owner, Elizabeth Sexton Weiss. Granite benches and a fountain were added to make it the perfect setting for quiet contemplation.

Dave, who grew up gardening alongside his grandfather, has had a vegetable garden his entire life. In 2015, to help expand his vegetable growing season, he built 10 raised wooden beds and cold frames. Tomatoes, zucchini, Swiss chard, arugula, beets, broccoli, kale, peppers, spinach, carrots and lettuce abound.

Until recently, Dave began over 100 flats of annual flowers from seed in a self-constructed greenhouse every February. This labor-intensive process didn't allow for spring travel, so recently he began outsourcing his annuals from The Gardeners Inc.

Dave and Carol spend all their waking hours outside for as long as weather permits in the space they created for their enjoyment and entertainment. They are happy to share their outdoor oasis with you today.



A great garden experience offers more than a collection of manicured flowers, shrubs and trees. Responding to a unique sense of place, a garden connects to its surroundings, responding to the variability of light, space, color and texture. It draws you in, offering a feeling of discovery and features that catch your attention, quiet places to relax, and paths that hint at yet another destination to explore. A great garden invites you to slow your pace and pause to let the garden speak to you with its colors, fragrances and sounds.

Welcome to Jardin de Cadeaux – the Garden of Gifts.

When you arrive, the artisan-crafted natural stone walls that accent the English cottage-style house faced with Saratoga granite will guide you to the entrance courtyard. A cottage garden softens the edges of the bluestone patio and window boxes provide a hint of what lies beyond. A garden gate leads you from the courtyard to the garden's formal entrance. Once inside, pause in the sitting area to enjoy the sounds of the wall fountain and wind chimes and take in a broader view of the main garden rising in terraces of natural stone beyond the pool.

From here, beckoning you is the main garden opening, and then the hint of a pathway to the left catches your eye. Follow the path to the east garden as it meanders behind the garden shed. Pause at the stone bench and enjoy the quiet, meditative space, and the path lined with hostas, hydrangea and lilacs. Clematis climb the fence and scramble up the side of the shed. Then continue along the path to the south lawn to enjoy the terraced perennial beds.

As you wander among the terraced flower beds, stop at the upper patio to look back at the main garden from above. Surrounded by flowering quince and rose-covered obelisks marking the entrance, the upper patio includes a bluestone fire pit and is bordered by a dry shade garden that marks the south end of the main garden. Listen carefully and you'll hear the sound of water beyond your view over the rise. Let the irregular flagstone path guide you in the direction of the sound. Along the path, you'll see a collection of woodland border flowers and plants including primulas, astilbe, anemones, lilies and several species of viburnum and dogwood. Stepping over a large flagstone, you will discover a stream running from under the stone, tumbling over mossy rocks to a small pool set in the woods. Take the path down to a secluded sitting area beside the stream basin and enjoy the waterfall and quiet feel of the woods.

Leslie Brennan and Mike Donovan are excited to share their Garden of Gifts on this 27th Soroptimist Secret Gardens Tour. This is the third time the property has been on the tour over the years, but the first under their ownership. So much has changed, it should delight both new and repeat visitors alike.



Sue and Allan created their landscaping out of necessity. Three large trees were removed from the front of their house, allowing the sun to shine through but causing quite a mess. The residual underground roots necessitated trial-and-error plant placement. The lavender grouping near the light post has had luxurious growth and is harvested for moth-protective sachets because the family wears a lot of wool in the winter. Rose bushes and white David's phlox comprise some of the other sun-loving plants.

The remaining trees provide shade for the holly and shade-tolerant annuals such as impatiens. The plantings directly bordering the front of the house are original. Noteworthy is the Inaba Shidara variety of Japanese maple with its fine feathery foliage, which Martha Stewart planted at her Westchester home in Bedford.

Visual interest was added by the border built by Allan from stones found on the property. Because Allan likes to dig holes and Sue likes to direct, the landscaping is continually changing.



Over a period of more than 25 years, the landscaping of this quarter-acre property derived not from a master plan, but rather it has evolved over time to accommodate the changing and shifting light from growing trees, and the many plants shared by neighbors, friends and family.

Today, it is primarily a shady respite with a series of vignette-type gardens, from a Tuscan-style stone patio with thick moss and a pond inset, to a simple stone bench tucked into a grove of trees. Pots of bright annuals are planted each season to bring a bit more color to the shade-filled areas. The design, planting and maintenance of the gardens are the homeowners' pastime and passion, taking up most weekends from spring through fall with the neverending goal of having blooms and color throughout the season.

The gardens encompass stonework, fountains, birdbaths, benches, arbors, garden sculptures and garden lighting. A particular favorite when in full bloom is the yellow magnolia from their home state of Maine, and the large red chestnut tree planted in memory of a loved one. The property showcases a wide variety of hostas from big blues to praying hands and a large variety of peonies. Roughly 25 yards of mulch are spread each year to keep the weeds at bay and allow the plants and flowers to be the stars of the show.



We encourage you to enjoy all the gardens in the order of your choice.

The following recommendations are provided for your convenience.

### DIRECTIONS

# (A) Saratoga Springs Visitor Center – 297 Broadway, Saratoga Springs

The Visitor Center is located on the corner of Broadway and Congress Street across from Congress Park. In front of the Visitor Center you may pick up or buy tickets for the Secret Garden Tour. Street parking is recommended.



### (B) To 48 Bryan St., Saratoga Springs

(~4 minute drive) From (A), head north on Broadway and continue straight onto North Broadway. Turn right onto Second Street and then take an immediate left onto Bryan Street for a total distance of one mile. 48 Bryan is on your right.

#### (C) To 17 Martin Ave, Saratoga Springs

(~3 minute drive) From (B), continue north on Bryan Street toward East Avenue. At stop sign, turn right onto East Avenue and continue 0.5 miles (through traffic lights that cross both Route 50 and then Excelsior Avenue. Take the next right onto Bingham Street. The garden is located on the corner of Bingham Street and Martin Avenue (there is no street sign here for Martin Avenue).

## (D) To Kar Alley Gardens, Saratoga Springs

(~2 minute drive) Please note there are 7 gardens along Kar Alley: 142, 144, 148, 158, 160, 164, 168 High Rock Avenue. From (C), Turn left onto Martin Ave and then turn right onto Avery Street. Cross over Warren Street onto Elbern Street. Park on Elbern (0.1 miles to Kar Alley) or continue to Nelson Ave and park there. Nelson Ave has alternate side parking. Additional parking is available in the lot at The Mill (125 High Rock Ave). Enter (and exit) Kar Alley on foot from Nelson Ave. Please note Kar Alley is not open to cars today. Also, construction of a bike lane may be underway on Excelsior Avenue.

### (E) To 308 Nelson Ave, Saratoga Springs

(~1 minute drive) From (D), head south, walking or driving, on Nelson Avenue to 308 Nelson Ave. Please note, Nelson Avenue has alternate side parking. Another option: parking on North Street, just past the Nelson Avenue garden.

#### (F) To 52 Waterview Drive, Saratoga Springs

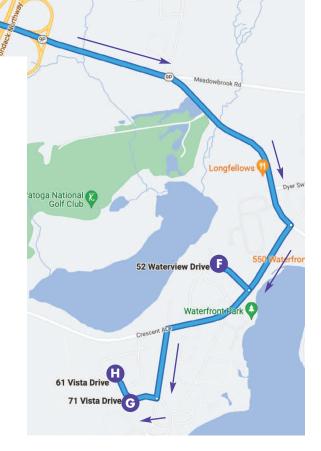
(~8 minute drive) From (E), head south on Nelson Avenue towards North Street. Cross over Lake Avenue and continue 0.7 miles to the intersection of Nelson Avenue and Union Avenue. Turn left onto Union Avenue and continue 2.9 miles (crossing over the Northway) to the traffic light at Crescent Avenue, after passing Longfellow's Restaurant on the right. Turn right onto Crescent Avenue and proceed 0.4 miles. Turn right onto Waterview Drive. The garden will be on the left.

## (G) To 71 Vista Drive, Saratoga Springs

(~3 minute drive) From (F), head back to Crescent Avenue on Waterview and turn right. Proceed 0.4 miles and turn left onto Arrowhead Road. Continue on Arrowhead for 0.3 miles and turn right onto Vista Drive. In 0.1 miles, the garden is on your left.

## (H) To 61 Vista Drive, Saratoga Springs

[~1 minute drive] From (G), continue on Vista Drive for 0.1 miles, garden is on left.



Soroptimists would like to thank all of the sponsors, donors and gardeners who so generously opened their lovely gardens for the 2022 Secret Gardens Tour.

#### Honorary Committee Chairs

Mary Caroline Powers Dolores "Dee" Sarno

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