Announcing “Gardens & Groves of Gratitude”
A Beautification Campaign to Reestablish Bill & Lois’ Trees & Plants

“Gardens & Groves of Gratitude” is a new opportunity for friends of Stepping Stones to support a major beautification project that will make possible the planting of the tree, shrub, and flower varieties that Lois and Bill once grew and enjoyed. We invite you to participate in this special planting program inspired by the Wilsons. Together we can reach the goal by October 2018 of establishing a $25,000 fund for the plantings. Consider showing your gratitude for someone special through your gift! To support “Gardens & Groves of Gratitude,” a contribution envelope is enclosed.

Beginning with their courtship in Vermont and continuing through life at Stepping Stones, the Wilsons cherished nature’s wonders. After living in 51 places from 1939 to 1941, Lois relished their new life “in the country.” In her memoir, Lois Remembers, she recalls, “How wonderful it was to have a home of our own! At that time in our lives, a home was first of all a refuge from wandering. Then it fulfilled the need to use many of our dormant aptitudes…. All of these perfectly normal activities had been mostly denied us for a long time.”

Lois devoted as much time as she could to gardening and creating an environment that would attract birds. The couple enjoyed walking the tree-lined trails at Stepping Stones, where they enhanced the landscape with significant trees.

“Wherever we went, we brought home plants or seeds to beautify the house and garden.” Lois swapped cuttings with A.A. and Al-Anon friends around the U.S. Still thriving in the center of the garden is the heirloom Harison’s Yellow Rose, or Yellow Rose of Texas, that Lois transplanted from her birthplace in Brooklyn Heights, NY, not far from where it was first cultivated in the 1830s. Unfortunately, the same is not true for many of the Wilsons’ trees and plants that were damaged or lost to severe weather, disease, old age, or pest infestation. Some of this loss included apple trees that the Wilsons had given each other and white birch and hemlocks brought from the area of VT where Bill was raised.

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Greetings from the Board

Dear Friends,

It is my honor and privilege as the newest President of the Board of Trustees to send you my heartfelt greetings. I served on the Board in the mid-nineties, rejoined it in 2015, and was elected President last July.

I have visited Stepping Stones numerous times over the years, but I particularly remember my earliest visit. It was in 1985, and I met Lois Wilson for the first time. I was fortunate to meet her again a few times after that. Each time I turn into the Stepping Stones driveway, I sense a feeling of calm and serenity, along with deep gratitude to be at the home of Bill and Lois as both have meant so much to so many people.

At the July 2017 Board meeting, we thanked John Schultz for his years of service as he concluded his term as a Trustee. In the last several months, we have welcomed Susan Vairo, Bill Barton, Fred Doulton, Terry Bedient, Amalia Castillo, and Will Runyon to the Board.

It is with deep sadness that I inform you that our friend and colleague Bill Borders passed away on February 28. Bill joined the Board in 2015 and played an integral part in its work. He is sorely missed.

As you will see throughout this newsletter, we have several preservation and restoration projects under way, and we thank you for your continued financial support. More importantly, I hope that each of you is able to visit and experience the tranquility of Stepping Stones in the near future.

Very truly yours,

John J. Quinn,
President, Board of Trustees

Hello from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your support of the historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson. It has been a delight to continue sharing the story of Stepping Stones with tour visitors and at recent events in Dallas, TX, and Macon, GA.

Stepping Stones is grateful for its dedicated docents, who love to serve and who have an insatiable appetite for history. Our stalwart Monday volunteer and docent for the last seven years, Jim McC., has moved to the Wilmington, NC, area. We are indebted to him for his devoted service and wish him well.

Writer and researcher Bill S. recently made a presentation to our docents about the creation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, a subject Bill S. has researched for more than a decade at several archives, including the Stepping Stones Archives. We appreciate Bill S. and his wife, Sara J., for their effort to share what they have learned and for the many ways Bill S. has given of his time and talent to Stepping Stones over the years.

We were saddened by the loss of Cora “Tommie” Dayton of FL and CT, a friend of the Wilsons, a loyal Stepping Stones’ supporter, and a past Picnic Speaker. Tommie shared that while most A.A.s knew Bill for his dynamic presence at large-scale gatherings, she glimpsed another side of him. At Stepping Stones she watched as Bill quietly, patiently, and intently worked one on one with an A.A. newcomer in the living room. Everyone at Stepping Stones is grateful to Tommie for relating her firsthand recollections of the Wilsons. We offer our sincere condolences to her loved ones.

Thank you for everything you have helped us to accomplish in preserving Stepping Stones. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you on your next visit.

Kind regards,

Sally A. Corbett-Turco
Executive Director

Preserve a Legacy, Leave a Legacy

- Include Stepping Stones in will and estate planning at any giving level
- Make a gift of appreciated assets, such as securities, or establish a Charitable Gift Annuity
- Set up a recurring monthly contribution
- Celebrate a special occasion or person
- Ask your employer’s human resources representative if they match donations

For planned or recurring giving information, please call (914) 232-4822.

Above: Harison’s Yellow Rose transplanted from Brooklyn by Lois
“Gardens & Groves of Gratitude”

Continued from page 1

When the Wilsons moved to Bedford Hills in 1941, “they were practically the only people in the area, so they created their own walking trails up hill and down dale,” wrote Nell Wing, A.A.’s first Archivist and the Wilsons’ dear friend, in her book Grateful to Have Been There. Nell took springtime walks with Lois to assess the winter’s toll on plants. Lois “loved viewing up close the first emergence of the tiniest baby leaves of the trees and bushes—the pink and white buds of the magnolias and dogwoods,” wrote Nell. These moments for them were a “tender and even spiritual adventure.” Together they were in “awe at the annual, mysterious unfolding of Mother Nature’s fresh young season.” Nell described Lois as “especially in harmony with her environment” and well versed in plant and bird names. To honor her fervor for birds and because Lois had been a member of the National Audubon Society, Stepping Stones consulted with the Bedford Audubon Society for suggestions on the best plantings to attract birds.

“In Bill’s best years when he was feeling vigorous, he could manage to do five miles a day,” wrote Nell. “His walking was a lifeline for him in those years of his sometimes crippling depressions. On days when he could scarcely get up out of bed, he would force himself to walk, taking deep breaths, putting one foot in front of the other, breathing and walking” through the wooded terrain.

The outdoor environment nurtured by the Wilsons was an essential part of their life at Stepping Stones, which they shared with others. Please help continue what this remarkable couple began. A tax-deductible contribution can be made with the enclosed envelope, online at steppingstones.org, or by calling (914) 232-4822.


Garden History — Clues from the Archives

Among the 150,000 pages of manuscripts in Stepping Stones Archives are photographs, correspondence, and diaries that provide information about the flora and fauna established at Stepping Stones by the Wilsons, including the sampling below.

**Flowers & Plants**
- Bergamot, Blood Root, Candytuft, Chrysanthemum, Clematis, Columbine, Coreopsis, Cosmos, Daffodil, Daisy (English), Delphinium, Dusty Miller, Dutchman’s Breeches, Forget Me Not, Forsythia, Foxglove, Fringed Gentian, Ginger, Hepatica, Hollyhock, Hydrangea, Jonquil, Lady’s Tresses, Laurel, Lavender, Lily (Regal and Tiger), Maiden Hair Fern, Marigold, Myrtle, Pansy, Peonies, Pincushion, Poppy, Primrose, Ranunculus, Rose (Harison’s Yellow and more), Snapdragon, Spring Beauty, Star of Bethlehem, Tulip (Don Pedro), Vetch, Violet, and Zinnia.

**Trees, Bushes, & Shrubs**
- Apple, Dogwood (Kousa), Hemlock, John Baldwin Boxwood, Magnolia, Peach, Raspberry, Strawberry, and White Birch.

www.steppingstones.org
2018 Picnic Appreciation

The 67th Annual Picnic on June 2, 2018, was a delightful event with more than 400 attendees. Among them were over 50 volunteers, staff, speakers, and Trustees. We are very appreciative of their service in making the day a success. Powerful recovery stories were shared by four speakers. Al-Anon longtimer Ellen D. of Linden, NJ, spoke about visits with Lois at Stepping Stones and her work with Lois at the Al-Anon Family Groups World Service Office. Alateens Bobbie and Grace from the Hudson Valley made eloquent remarks about the benefits of Alateen to personal and family recovery. A.A. Lee H. of New York, NY, injected humor and eloquence into her long-term sobriety story. She also spoke of meeting Lois and getting to know A.A.’s first Archivist, Nell Wing, who was like a daughter to the Wilsons. Please contact us if you are interested in past Picnic recordings, and mark your calendar for Sat., June 8, 2019, for the 68th Picnic. See the back cover for 2019 Picnic details.

Volunteer at Home or at Stepping Stones

Remote and on-site volunteer opportunities are available for individuals and groups. Membership in a 12-Step organization is not required. Email info@steppingstones.org for information. Examples of volunteer activities follow:

- Archives indexing
- Archives transcription
- Audio / video editing
- Awareness raising
- Data entry
- Editing / writing
- Events
- Gardening
- Graphic design
- Interpretation
- Leading tours
- Online research
- Photography
- Presentations
- Social media
- Trail maintenance
- Videography
- Web design

Docent Recognition

Thank you to our docent tour guide volunteers, who collectively gave more than 1,000 hours in 2017. We honor them for their years of loyal service, as follows: Barbara L. (7), Chris P. (7), Chris P. (3), Dan M. (6), Doon C. (5), Greg H. (1), Jim McC. (7), Joe H. (2), John F. (7), John M. (4), Levi P. (6), Mildred H. (5), and Ron T. (1).

Saluting Volunteers & Advisors

To all volunteers who helped with the A.A. and Al-Anon Delegate group visits, the Annual Picnic, and other events, we are grateful for your service. To the groups and individuals who contributed their time and energy for special projects, ranging from gardening to research, we heartily thank you. We also extend our sincere gratitude to all appointed Committee Members and Advisory Council Members, and we welcome new Committee Members Jennifer Messer and Mary Ann Quinn, and new Advisor Katherine DiGiulio.
“Wit’s End” Studio Preservation Update

Thanks to the many friends who supported the 2015–2016 campaign, Stepping Stones is forging ahead with preservation projects for “Wit’s End,” Bill W.’s Writing Studio. In the fall of 2017, Stepping Stones was the fortunate recipient of a generous gift of flooring materials and installation by friends from the Amherst Snyder Group in the Buffalo, NY, area. The massive effort would not have been possible without their attention to detail, preparedness, and expertise. The assistance of several nearby volunteers was also essential. Peter Gisondi & Company helped by securing Bill W.’s desk and file cabinets for the installation period. Docents and other friends assisted with the removal of “nonhistoric carpet.” The new floor matches the look of the historic concrete. Stepping Stones is grateful for the professional services provided for this important preservation effort.

Funds raised over and above the goal for Studio building preservation have enabled textile conservation of three original items that lend charm to the interior: the sombrero, the Southwestern bedspread, and two floral cushions made by Lois. These have been refreshed, repaired, and returned to the Studio for you to enjoy.

New Parking Area

When you make your next visit to Stepping Stones, you will see a new parking area created to protect the historic core of the property by diverting vehicles elsewhere. The new lot, which has 10 gravel spaces and one special-needs parking spot, protects trees of significance in the heart of the property and makes the site more pedestrian friendly. The lot is located between the entrance and exit driveways off Oak Rd. and is lined with trees, shrubs, and ferns. In addition, the area off Woodfield Rd. where Annual Picnic visitor shuttles used to arrive at the site, has been landscaped and a rustic gate installed. June Picnic guests were shuttled to the new lot and gave it rave reviews. These projects provide for an improved visitor experience while meeting important preservation goals.
Greetings from Stepping Stones

The Stepping Stones News

MISSION: The Stepping Stones Foundation is dedicated to preserving the historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson, co-founders, respectively, of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon Family Groups, and to commemorating their achievements in the field of recovery from alcoholism.

Stepping Stones was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2012.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:
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STAFF:
Sally Corbett, Executive Director
Kathryn Liszewski, Site Operations Manager

Connect with us!
Facebook & Twitter @BillWhome

68th Annual Stepping Stones Lois’ Family Groups Picnic
Special Date – 2nd Saturday in June
Saturday, June 8, 2019, Noon–5:00 p.m.
Parking and Shuttles from Bedford Hills Train Station

Free tickets can be ordered online at http://www.steppingstones.org/events/html in mid-April 2019 while supplies last.

2:00–3:30 p.m. Speakers
Noon–2:00 p.m. & 3:30–4:30 p.m. Home & Studio Viewing

Speaker Nominations are Always Welcome
We are eager to hear from those with firsthand memories of the Wilsons to speak or to be interviewed.
Help Plan the Picnic & Volunteer
To sign up, email info@steppingstones.org.

Plan a Tour Visit
To check availability for tours of the home and studio held 1 p.m. Monday–Saturday (no Sunday tours), email info@steppingstones.org, call (914) 232-4822, or see http://www.steppingstones.org/visit.html.

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Photos: (Pages 1-5) garden & studio, 2018, by Sally Corbett-Turco; (Below) Bill & Lois Wilson, 1953, Stepping Stones Archives; (Right) flower from historic wallpaper, Stepping Stones.