



ROSE-FILLED west planting area and Rotary pergola, at Smith Gardens' peak of care in 2007. New fundraising will provide for upgraded planting areas and new vegetation. In current photo below, the walkways, benches, pergola and sweeping green lawns that comprise the largest park in downtown Hood River.

## Far and Near



Photo by Jim Haun

This spring and summer, Hood River News' Kaleidoscope will feature places in our own backyard and all around the world, along with the general array of B1 topics.

Readers will see two recurring themes as articles will regularly touch on topics at home and abroad, starting with this week's retrospective on Georgianna Smith Gardens. Look for:

- Near — locales in the Gorge such as Jackson Park in Hood River and Mt. Hood Railroad terminus in Parkdale, and;
- Far — places as disparate as Finland and Borneo, as we begin a new rotation of "Travelogues" written by local residents.



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea



## Georgiana Smith Gardens undergoes more changes

In 2005, two years after the successful expansion of the Hood River County Library, the grounds surrounding the Jacobethan-style library building were completely renovated.

The adjoining lot to the west was generously donated to the Library Foundation by the Stoltz family of Hood River. That vacant sloping lot at Sixth and State Street, separated from the library by trees and tall

shrubs, was merged with the original park during construction. Marion McNew, of Mount Hood Gardens, created the design for the new Georgiana Smith Memorial Gardens, named for the 19th century benefactor who started the first Hood River library in her home, and whose family donated the land for the 1913 Carnegie Library. (The building was expanded in 2002 after a community fund-raising

drive.) The late Virginia Hosford, long-time Foundation president, was instrumental in the development of the park, as was June Knutson, the previous library director, now retired.

The preferred way people traversed the grounds determined the layout of the current paths. Installation was completed by Hood River County Public Works and Mount Hood Gardens, along

with copious in-kind work and generous donations. (Master Gardeners regularly tend the xeriscape beds on the State Street side in front of the library.)

The gardens connects State and Oak Streets, and provides pedestrian access to Sixth Street via a curving pathway lined with benches and commemorative bricks, sold by the Foundation as a gardens fundraiser.

Three different patio

MAY 2015, looking west across Smith Gardens. Compare the same view to the 2004 photo at lower left. Lower right, also in 2004, view west from Sixth Street; note the line of trees and shrubs that had separated the property from the main park.

spaces create separate outdoor rooms, and all are handicap-accessible. They allow for sitting, eating, or staging small musical events. Benches along the natural rock wall entice visitors to sit and relax, and offer stunning views of the Columbia River Gorge. The patio at the Sixth Street end features a pergola and other improvements donated by the Hood River Rotary Club in 2005.

In 2014, McNew oversaw new plantings just up the hillside from the Rotary patio, after trees were removed that had grown into

view-blockers at Stoltz Winery, overlooking the west end of the park.

An intriguing feature of the gardens is "stone-iferous pine," a 12-foot conical sculpture built in 2006 by a national group of stonemasons who were conferring in Hood River at the time.

A new phase for the gardens is in the planning with the Hood River Library Foundation, which funds the maintenance and upgrades. (The March 7 Feast of Words this year raised about \$30,000 for the near-

See GARDENS, Page B2



Photos courtesy of Marion McNew, 2004-07

