

BOOTHE MEMORIAL PARK & MUSEUM

JUNE 2025

Newsletter produced and distributed by Ann Minton

Hats Off to Roses!

By Betty Powers



On Saturday, June* 7th, The Friends of Boothe Park will celebrate their magnificent Rose Garden with the “Hats Off to Roses” event from 5-7 pm.

This has become an annual event due to its popularity with neighbors, visitors, and rose admirers from near and far. The Hats Off to Roses event includes light appetizers and wine, as well as music filtering through the garden. The Friends of Boothe highly recommend the wearing of lovely hats. Pre-sale tickets are on sale now for \$15 or \$20 at the door. <https://boothememorialpark.com>

(Please Note: *Rain date Sunday June 8th)



The original rose garden was created by David and Stephen Boothe located slightly northeast of where the garden graces the grounds of Boothe Park today. The current Rose Garden was created by the Friends of Boothe and gifted to the Town of Stratford on June, 1991. Joan Brazzell, the Rose Garden Chair at that time, acknowledged that the hardworking volunteers had created a “Wedding Rose Garden” consisting of two sixty-foot square sections.



After 34 years, the garden still thrives thanks to the dedicated volunteers who care for more than 450 roses, many from Jackson & Perkins Rose Growers. The current roses were chosen for scent as well as beauty. Plantings also include other flowers so that the garden blooms from April to November. For instance, purple iris, which were saved from the original Boothe brothers garden, outline the spacious roses. There is also a beautifully restored fountain in the center of the garden which belonged to the Boothe brothers.

During the Rose Garden event, many of the volunteers will be available for discussions about the various roses and their care. Frank Kecko, who has been overseeing the garden for many years, loves to reminisce with those at the event. Frank came by his love for nature, and especially roses, while traveling through Europe and the United States with a nature photographer, photographing gardens and wildflowers in mountains and deserts. Upon his retirement, he joined The Friends of Boothe, three years after the garden's dedication.



He says that while he loves all the roses, some of his favorites are Mother of Pearl, Garden Delight, and Wedding Bells. Frank especially enjoys a Rosa rugosa variety that was developed in the 1800's, and is the oldest plant in the garden.

Each year The Friends of Boothe Park celebrate the rose garden with this event, but we also celebrate Frank and his band of volunteers. Without them, we would not have this glorious space. The crew nurtures this thriving garden at least 2 mornings a week. Frank is always looking for volunteer gardeners with all levels of skill, from novice to expert. If you stop by the garden on a Tuesday or Friday morning, you may find Frank resting on a bench and he'll gladly share his roses and knowledge with you.



Frank Kecko will be present at the "Hats Off to Roses Event, wearing his father's 105-year-old bowler hat.

Frank is turning 95 this month and still spends many hours planning, watching over, and getting his hands dirty in the garden. Frank received a proclamation for his service to the Town on September 15, 2023.



Please feel free to share this newsletter with family, friends and neighbors. If they would like to stay connected, they can send a request to us via:

friendsofboothepk@gmail.com

Just ask to be added to our mailing list!

Volunteering with The Friends of Boothe

People ask us all the time about becoming a volunteer at Boothe Park. What types of skills or interests are needed? There is a spot for just about anyone. You can join us once a month or twice a week. From investing to baking, tour guides to blacksmith!

We have a place for you!

Yes, you can!

Just get in touch to investigate the options.

Contact us at: 203-381-2046

friendsofboothepk@gmail.com

We will look forward to hearing from you!

Opening Day at Boothe!

By Rod Jovanelly



If you missed this year's Opening Day at Boothe Memorial Park, you missed a lot. There were over 300 antique automobiles visiting and competing for awards and trophies. The VFW Color Guard along with the Port 5 Naval Veterans put together an emotional Flag Raising Ceremony to honor all who had served our country complete with a rifle salute firing a civil war musket. Our own volunteer Steve Korosh was presented with a service award by Mayor Laura Hoydick for his many years of dedication to keeping the Clock Tower running and engineering a unique way to warp the loom for rug weaving.



(L to R) Mayor Laura Hoydick presenting a service award to Steve Korosh, long-time clock-tower keeper. Joined by Virginia Harris, President of the Friends of Boothe.

Tours of the Homestead were given by Boothe Volunteers showing guests around all the rooms helping them discover the Boothe Brothers' legacy. The Blacksmith Shop was fired up and visitors were shown how iron was shaped into tools.



Blacksmithing from left to right are Rich Mancini

Nearby people wandered in and out of the Technocratic Cathedral getting to see the inside of a building created entirely out of the first redwood that was shipped east of the Mississippi River. The bells in Clocktower rang every 15 minutes reminding everyone to stop by this unique building that was a haybarn until it was turned into David and Stephen's first museum in 1915. Children and adults got to try their hands at weaving inside the Americana barn where rugs are still being made today on a 100-year-old loom. The Visitor Center was showing a video complete with restored 8mm footage from one of the Easter Sunrise services that was held annually in the Sunken Garden or as the brothers called it, "The Basilica".

All the other museums were open in the park as well. The trains were running inside and out at the Stratford Railway Society and the Chapel-Meeting House was hosting an Art Show and giving tours of their newly renovated lower level. The Veteran's Museum was open which was originally the brother's summer cottage. They display hundreds

of photos of Stratford veterans, and even have a flight simulator. Outside the Coliseum hot dogs and hamburgers were being served – I had one of each. There were also amazing antique auto-mobiles from The Horseless Carriage Club that were on display in the center of the green by the crosses. They were courtesy of one of our Volunteers and Board Members, Alex Dragone.



Above is Alex Dragone, Member of the Board of the Friends of Boothe and

In the same area, the balloon man was creating take-home memories for children courtesy of the Friends of Boothe. The Friends were also handing out pieces of David Boothe’s birthday cake along with a glass of lemonade. May 18th is actually David Sr’s birthday, and this year he would have been 212! Even if you were at the park, you probably missed seeing Ann Minton - she was running all over the place. Her tireless coordination over the past year made the event a wonderful success.

I’ve met so many wonderful people since I got involved with the park just a few years ago. The best way to learn about this Park and the Boothe Brothers is to become a volunteer - even if it’s just one day a month. It’s one of the best things I’ve done over the last few years. Thanks to all our volunteers for making this park shine.

How to Become a Member of the Friends of Boothe Memorial Park or Send a Donation

Because we are a non-profit organization, we welcome all donations and memberships. Becoming a member has benefits each year, to the Friends of Boothe as well as to you!

Personal Benefits include:

***Schedule a private tour with up to 7 guests, scheduled at your convenience, any time of year.**

***Attend Members only events .**

***Get discounts on some event tickets prices.**

Donation Options:

Individual membership = \$20

Family membership = \$30

Business Contribution = \$50

Simply click here:

<https://boothememorialpark.com>

- In the top row click: “Support Us”
- Click on: “Membership”
- Fill out the online form on our [secure website](#).
- Click “Submit” at the bottom of the screen.

Or: Print the form found on the same link above and fill it out. **Mail** it with your check to the Boothe address listed.

All donations are gratefully accepted. Each and every member makes a positive impact on our daily operations throughout the year.

Thank you from the Friends of Boothe!