

Woodcrest Villa Nature Trail & Arboretum

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November 2023 Newsletter

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Woodcrest Villa Arboretum is Dedicated To Those Recognized with Trees

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Lew Kauffman

Sadly, Lew passed away on October 7. A memorial service was held for Lew in Gamber Auditorium on October 13.



On Sept. 19, 2020, son Kevin, his wife Jenn, and daughter Kathy were present when the Nature Trail Committee dedicated the Nature Trail to Lew and Gloria for their “countless hours in the development and support of our beautiful walking trail.”

John Sauder, President of Mennonite Home Communities, sent the following message to the dedication of the Woodcrest Villa Nature Trail to Lew and Gloria on Sept. 19, 2020.

“Lew, today we honor your incredible labor of love in creating the trail. You will humbly say others helped you. You are right, but you were the one with the vision to create the trail. You put in hundreds if not thousands of hours working on the trail. Today one can easily enjoy a walk in the woods. There are benches if one needs to rest. There are bird houses and ornaments along the way. There are hiking sticks if needed and you have put small logs along the edge to frame most of the trail. I walked the trail a few days ago and found fresh wood chips to insure the trail does not get muddy. I have heard many residents comment on how they love having access to the trail.

So Lew, thank you for your vision and countless hours of hard work for creating and maintaining this beautiful trail for many to enjoy. May you be blessed for having blessed others.”



Plaque placed on nature trail.



Lew's Fretwork Lord's Prayer

Tribute to Lew Kauffman



Lew with Dave Fatora and Jim McCoy (left to right)

When I first moved here in 2015 & saw the incredible Lord's Prayer wall hanging that Lew made, I said "I have to meet this guy". Not only did I meet him but I joined the wood shop & he introduced me to scroll saw work. I then found out he was working on a nature trail, which at the time was just a short path behind the bus building. He wasn't getting any support for this & being a trail builder & maintainer on the Mason-Dixon trail & Appalachian trail I naturally wanted to pitch in & help.

As we were extending the trail there were a number of trees down that needed to be removed. Since chain saw work was routine for me, I took my chain saw up & we cleared the trail. Wow, did this cause an uproar! Somehow administration found out about this & we were called in on the carpet about it. "You can't cut down trees on the property!", & threatening to close down our efforts. We weren't cutting them down of course, just clearing what was in the way. Turns out it is a liability & insurance issue to have residents doing this kind of work. Fortunately they didn't close us down & today the trail is a half mile long, used by residents & staff alike, & our administration is highly supportive & helpful.

We even have an active resident driven trail & arboretum club, with more than 15 members, our own trail shed, tractor, mower, and all the equipment we need to maintain the trail (except chainsaws!). All this due to Lew's dedication & hard work.

Working with Lew has been a wonderful experience for me in so many ways. You couldn't slow this man down; he was relentless in finishing anything he started. His character was second to none, he was a friend to everyone, highly respected by everyone, & the depth of his faith was obvious. He didn't have to shout it out, he showed it in his daily interactions with people, & the works of his hands in his creations.

My life has been richly blessed for having known Lew & I will miss him.

Jim McCoy

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Thanks for Donations

Thanks to those that donated for us to buy supplies such as mulch for the trail, saw blades and service the tractor for the Nature Trail & Arboretum.

Make donations out to:

Mennonite Home Communities

with the note:

WCV Nature Trail & Arboretum

Send all donations to:

David Suh, Treasurer
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