



Maria Asta Sadauskas

May 30, 1947 - February 6, 2019

Remembering Asta

To plant is to believe in tomorrow

Maria Asta Sadauskas was, born May 30, 1947 in Oldenberg Germany in a displaced person's camp following WWII. At age 2 her family traveled by ship to the US and settled in Decatur Illinois, after attending Catholic grade school and high school there, she continued her studies at the University of Illinois Champaign. Asta came to the Alton area and eventually started the Greenery on West Delmar in Godfrey with life partner Bob Thomas. For 20 years they had an active landscaping nursery enjoying happy times together until Bob's death in 2007. Asta passed away on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at Barnes hospital in St. Louis.

Asta was an extremely private person who held advanced degrees in art and horticultural studies. Her business, "Greenery," was in many ways an extension of herself. Her home was on the grounds of the business, so literally, she lived and breathed "plants and flowers."

Although understated and humble, Asta was very important to the vision of the beautification of the Alton, Godfrey area...beautifying it one garden or park at a time. She was always willing to talk with anyone about how and what to plant, what would thrive in our climate and what would not!! She educated

people or encouraged them to educate themselves. Once when a customer mispronounced the plant “liriope.” She told him it rhymed with “calliope,” an amusing way to help him remember. She did not just sell plants, she found out about the customer’s yard, sunshine levels, water, winds, and other plants to suggest a new plant for them. In many ways she placed her leaf babies in “adoptive forever homes.”

Asta worked many projects sponsored by the Jennie D. Hayner Library Association, a local private foundation.

Some twenty years ago Asta worked with them to design and plant the Jennie D. Hayner Park in downtown Alton, often called the “Pocket Park” across from the library itself. Each year she maintained it and planted new bulbs and flowers for the enjoyment of the community. Each year she decorated it at Christmas for the community she loved. That mini park hosted numerous events such as an astronomy outreach day where an astronomer with a solar-scope showed people the sun, live and in real time, in a beautiful setting.

The Jennie D’s are now in the middle of another project to which Asta had been giving her time, attention, expertise and talent. This was to create another beautiful corner of peace, beauty and joy in downtown Alton in a park adjacent to the genealogy building of Hayner Library. Just weeks ago, she sent lovely hand written notes to the board members about her thoughts and suggestions. Although not sure exactly how...the project will go forward this spring as Asta would have wanted. The Jennie D’s will somehow complete the design work she proposed and make it literally come to life. Each member of their Board will miss her very much as will her myriad customers. She was a wonderful and integral part of our community. While we will miss her all year ...it will be particularly impactful this spring as nature begins to BLOOM once again!!!

Asta wasn’t about glitz or glitter, just about simple natural beauty and solid

stable roots that would survive and thrive here in our area. Her Greenery was a community meeting place, a place to rest and renew one's spirit. How many of us would sit under the little roof area of the greenhouse and cut paper grocery bags for Asta, so she would have bags to put plants in for customers to take home. How many of us unloaded truck deliveries, made soil, planted plugs of little hostas. How many of us just sat and talked. It was a village helping her and at times her helping the village - to make it more beautiful.

Asta's working uniform was a long or short-sleeved tee shirt, depending on the weather, and denim bib overalls. A battered straw hat and rubber boots usually completed the ensemble. Asta drove by customer's yards periodically to check on plants or make suggestions. Occasionally "unwanted" or slightly bedraggled plants appeared on people's porches for them to care for and to bring them up to full health. Some were even graced with climbing red roses that needed a good home.

Many of us have realized that none of us knew her whole story. Most knew she was very proud of her Lithuanian heritage, which accompanied her interesting last name. Each of us was given a snippet or two of background. We are hoping as a collective group, we might just know most of it.

Asta was much loved and has been a large, contributing member of the community. One pair of customers, for many years, were blessed to have her accept their invitation to spend Christmas afternoon with them and their other guests. Asta regularly decorated their front yard light with evergreens and red ribbons. A matching wreath would grace their front door as her contribution to their decorations. Asta had a wry sense of humor and engaged in their spirited discussions, to the enjoyment of all. This past Christmas her absence was felt, and she truly will be missed.

This community and her extended family of friends and customers were blessed to have Asta's spirit, knowledge and love, which she shared liberally. She planted seeds of beauty, compassion, renewal, and tranquility. Asta may not be here in the flesh but she lives on in countless yards and parks. Honor Asta by planting something beautiful and helping it grow.

Asta leaves behind 2 brothers, Linas Sadauskas, wife Dalia and their children, Victor, Alex, Nora, Lilija, and Marisa of Wheaton Illinois and Zigmars Sadauskas, wife Angie and their children Justin and Viki of Detroit Michigan as well as many friends and loyal customers.

Visitation will be on Saturday, February 16, 2019 from 11:00 to 1:00 pm at Gent Funeral Home in Alton. Family and Friends are invited to gather at Lovejoys, 401 Piasa St, in Alton from 2:00 to 5:00 pm to celebrate Asta's life by sharing stories and love over good food and drink. Online guestbook and information may be found at www.gentfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **16**. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home & Cremation Services
2409 State Street
Alton, IL 62002
(618) 466-5544
<https://www.gentfuneralhome.com/>

Celebration of Life

FEB **16**. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Lovejoys
401 Piassa Street
Alton, IL 62002

Tribute Wall

TH

“ Yes, I remember Asta ... We were schoolmates at St. Teresa High School in Decatur, Illinois.

There were maybe 4 of us who had a Lithuanian background at the school - In my case, It was my mother's side - Her maiden name was Bukantos. Her family arrived in North America at the beginning of the 20th century, as opposed to Asta and the others, who arrived after World War II. It was difficult to relate to the two experiences - my family emigrated due to persecution in the Russian Empire, while the others had experienced the horrors of the war and/or its' aftermath. However, amongst other things, sharing similar and differing experiences was possible between ourselves. At any rate, we did connect off and on during High School, and the relationship stayed with me as one good memory from those years.

I gather that the both of us left that area after graduation - Asta to school in Champaign and what sounds like a fulfilling career in horticulture, and I to Dekalb and New Haven, Toronto, and other world areas in academics and finance.

It doesn't appear that either one of us remained in Decatur.

Many years later, one of my sons (who lives in Germany) and I took a "roots" trip to the "new" Lithuania, the first time for anyone from my family since 1905. That time turned out to be an important independence day there. In honour of that time, I planted tree saplings in Vilnius and next to an ancestor's grave in my grandparents' hometown. Outside of my family memories, thoughts of mine went back to Asta and our school times.

These are too many thoughts of my own here, but I had no connection with Asta since school, so I thought an explanation was in order. I regret that our paths did not cross paths again until after her passage from life - she seemed to become a remarkable person. I am joyed that I found this memorial to be able to leave these few words in Asta's honour.

I do hope and wish that her memory stays with the people of Alton. It will be a fresh memory for me.

Thomas L. Hanes

Toronto, Canada

Thomas Lee Hanes - December 19, 2023 at 11:55 AM

PM

“ *Asta and I were best friends in grade school from the moment she arrived in second grade through eighth grade. She was a good friend. She was so artistic and very smart and pretty. She could play the accordion quite well, and the piano. I always admired her many talents. I am happy to hear that she became a gardener. It seems a perfect fit for her artistic talents.*

Pamela Miles - April 21, 2023 at 10:36 AM



“ *Maria Asta Sadauskas*

January 28, 2023 at 10:19 AM



“ *Maria Asta Sadauskas*

January 28, 2023 at 08:19 AM

 Audrey Stewart

“ *Asta was the first person to greet us when we moved the shop to W. Delmar just up the street from her. She was warm and welcoming and I enjoyed our talks over the years - usually in the winter when she couldn't work with her Greenery. Her smile would light up the room but it was those sparkling eyes when she would tease you that I will miss most. I know she is Tending God's Garden. I will miss you Asta.*

Audrey Stewart

Audrey Stewart - February 15, 2019 at 12:16 PM

DS

“ I will be there Saturday to share. We were very close. Sort of each others' social lives. She had me move into her office building, called it my house, was to sell it to me contract for deed, then changed her mind when she saw I was going to plant the plants I wanted to plant. That was Asta. It was irritating, but oddly endearing at the same time. I have so many stories to tell, knowing I can't possibly tell them all. I am soooo looking forward to Saturday. I was dying to know if there was going to be a "this saturday" in the forecast. I share in your sorrows. She was my best friend.



Doug Stickels
618-225-0467

douglas stickels - February 13, 2019 at 09:44 PM