

floral management

THE FLORAL BUSINESS AUTHORITY
JULY 2016 | VOLUME 33 | NUMBER 5

KATE F. PENN EDITOR IN CHIEF
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER
KPENN@SAFNOW.ORG

SHEILA S. SANTIAGO COMMUNICATIONS
AND PRODUCTION MANAGER
SSANTIAGO@SAFNOW.ORG

MARY WESTBROOK SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
MWESTBROOK@SAFNOW.ORG

KATIE HENDRICK CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
FMEDITOR@SAFNOW.ORG

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
BUSSOLATI ASSOCIATES

PUBLISHING ADVISERS
PETER J. MORAN, SAF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DREW GRUENBURG, SAF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

EDITORIAL OFFICES
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS
1001 NORTH FAIRFAX, SUITE 201, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-3406
(800) 336-4743; (703) 836-8700; FAX (800) 208-0078
WWW.SAFNOW.ORG

ADVERTISING SALES
KELLI NILSSON
KELLI@SAFNOW.ORG
214-291-3652

MATTHEW THOMASSON
MATTHEW@SAFNOW.ORG
214-291-3656

FLORAL MANAGEMENT (ISSN 1067-4772) (USPS-936-400) IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS (SAF), THE ASSOCIATION THAT PROVIDES MARKETING, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR THE ENTIRE FLORICULTURE INDUSTRY. STATEMENTS OF FACT OR OPINION IN FLORAL MANAGEMENT ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND MAY NOT REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POLICY OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS. PERIODICAL POSTAGE IS PAID AT ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314-3406 AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. ALL MATERIAL IN THIS MAGAZINE IS COPYRIGHTED 2011 BY SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. \$25 OF SAF MEMBERSHIP DUES REPRESENTS A MEMBER'S SUBSCRIPTION TO THIS PUBLICATION. SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR NON-MEMBERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR \$49 PER YEAR. SINGLE COPIES: \$4. MATERIALS MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION.

POSTMASTER
SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO FLORAL MANAGEMENT, 1601 DUKE STREET, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-3406. PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT #40589029. CANADIAN RETURN MAIL ADDRESS: STATION A P. O. BOX 54, WINDSOR, ON N9A 6J5. E-MAIL: CPCRETURNS@WDSMAIL.COM.

INSTRUCTION TO CONTRIBUTORS
FLORAL MANAGEMENT WELCOMES ARTICLES AND PRESS RELEASES TO BE SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE PUBLICATION. SEND TO: FMEDITOR@SAFNOW.ORG. ANY UNSOLICITED MATERIALS SENT, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHS, WILL NOT BE RETURNED UNLESS REQUESTED. FLORAL MANAGEMENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OF PHOTOGRAPHS OR ANY OTHER MATERIALS SENT.

FLORAL MANAGEMENT IS A MEMBER BENEFIT OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS. WWW.SAFNOW.ORG

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE MAGAZINE. PLEASE SEND YOUR OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO: FMEDITOR@SAFNOW.ORG.

WORK THAT MATTERS

> On a hot, humid day in northern Virginia, a woman approached me, looking for peonies. It was Memorial Day, and I was thousands of miles from my home in Encinitas, California, where I'm the general manager of a flower farm. I'd brought my wife, Robin, and our kids, Michael, 8, and twins Jenavee and Madeline, 10, to Arlington National Cemetery to pay tribute to service members who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The woman was a widow, and like thousands of other grieving family members, she'd made her way to Arlington that day to honor her loved one. She was already inside the cemetery when the sight of another visitor holding a peony stopped her: Her husband had loved peonies. She wanted to have one for his gravesite, too. So, she turned around and walked the half-mile back to the visitor center where, thanks to an effort spearheaded by a nonprofit called the Memorial Day Flowers Foundation, a group of us were waiting with flowers, including that important peony.

Flowers matter to people. They matter in profound ways that those of us who dedicate our lives to this industry understand but don't always communicate — or remember — in the daily busyness of life. That's part of the reason I was so moved by our industry's participation in the Memorial Day Flowers Foundation outreach last May.

Thanks to that effort, more than 400 volunteers — floral industry members, Boy and Girl Scout troops and ordinary community members — placed almost 140,000 flowers on gravesites or distributed them to family members. That number is even more impressive when you consider that Ramiro Peñaherrera, himself a longtime floral industry member, started the group just five years ago with plans to hand out about 10,000 stems and 200 bouquets. He eventually hopes to honor each of the 228,000 headstones and 7,000 burial niches at Arlington Cemetery with flowers.

I am happy to help him reach that goal. It was humbling for me to be at Arlington, and important to have my kids with me. Friends and family members of the deceased come from far away and have to figure out how to get to the cemetery from the airport. They have to bear the cost of a hotel

or taxi, not to mention the airfare. Once they get there, they'd like to put flowers on the grave, but that's hard to do in 90-degree heat in a city you don't know well. One



woman told me about how she walked to a grocery store eight years ago on a holiday weekend with her kids in tow to find flowers for her son's grave. It took hours. These families have been through so much. They shouldn't have to worry about flowers.

It's a testament to our industry's spirit of generosity and also its agility that, this year, so many families had flowers on-site. As president of the California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers (CalFlowers), I was proud that we worked in concert with our friends in South America and Miami to deliver those nearly 140,000 stems — 40,000 of those we sourced and shipped from California at the last minute, when Peñaherrera realized he'd run into the happy "problem" of having twice the number of volunteers ready and waiting to hand out flowers. Retail flower shops and wholesalers across the country also participated with their own giveaways at local cemeteries. I was amazed at business owners in the industry who stepped up to donate product, to provide shipping, to process and hold the flowers, to join us at Arlington to hand out those flowers.

I was only in Virginia for five days, and coming home was a whirlwind of cross-country flights and catching up on calls and emails. I had to get back into my daily grind pretty quickly. But stepping into my office, I felt refreshed and grateful. Watching families who are in pain hold onto their flowers, and knowing that our industry eased their burden even a little — that's why we do what we do. When we come together as an industry, there's no group like us. It's easy to get caught up in the challenges of any job. In the end, though, people matter. Flowers matter. Our work is about connecting the two. It's work I'm eager and proud to do. 🌸

Mike Mooney is the general manager of Dramm & Echter in Encinitas, California. mmooney@drammechter.com