

NEEDHAM GARDEN CLUB

**Annual Report of
Officers and Standing Committees**

2017-2018

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents Diana Conroy and Nancy Agler:

The two Co-Presidents worked together to set agendas for and conduct eight Board Meetings and seven General Meetings for June 2017 through May 2018. An introductory letter for the yearbook was written, as were five letters for the Needham Garden Club newsletter. The Co-Presidents also represented the Needham Garden Club at several Metro District meetings and several Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts meetings. We were interviewed about the Garden Club for a Needham High School film project relating to organizations in Needham which enhance the community. In addition, we participated in the process of selecting a Needham High School senior to receive the Club's annual scholarship.

The Co-Presidents will continue in these roles next year.

Treasurer:

Martha Schleck

The Treasurer managed the finances of the Club, making deposits and disbursements according to Club activities. Expenses included a \$1,000.00 Scholarship for a graduating Needham High School senior, insurance, GCFM dues, and memberships to Mass. Hort. and the N.E. Wildflower Society. The Treasurer's Report was presented monthly at board and general meetings. Upon meeting with the Finance Committee, the budget for 2018-2019 was prepared. The books will be balanced at the end of June.

Corresponding Secretary:

Cathy MacFarlane

The Corresponding Secretary sent a number of cards to members/families, including seven Sympathy cards, two "Thinking of You" cards, and five Get Well cards. In addition, reminders concerning monthly Board Meetings and hosting assignments were sent out. The Club purchased one Memorial Book for the Needham Public Library this year; A Wilder Life, by Celestine Maddy, was purchased in memory of Peggy Hagerott.

Recording Secretary:

Jane Brand

The Recording Secretary took minutes at the Board meetings (held in September, October, November, January, March, April, May and June). The Recording Secretary also took minutes for the business portion of general meetings, which were held in September, October, November, January, February, March (Tri-Club meeting) and April, as well as at the Annual Meeting and Luncheon in May. The Board minutes were emailed to the Board members, and general meeting minutes were made available on the table in back of the library's Community Room, at the ensuing general meeting. Reports were collected from each officer and the committee chairs/co-chairs concerning activities during the program year. These reports were compiled into the Annual Report for presentation at the May Annual Meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Community Outreach:

Co-Chairs Lynne Jones and Debbie Wentworth

This year, the Community Outreach Committee carried out projects in three areas.

We offered Garden Therapy in several elder care facilities, taking flowers, baskets and greens to the facilities and helping the residents create floral arrangements for their rooms. This year we went to Briarwood, Avita, and Wingate. Unfortunately, a trip to Avery Manor had to be cancelled due to the sale of the home and relocation of the residents. We are exploring the possibility of adding another Garden Therapy location to our schedule next year.

We maintained the Noyes Garden at the intersection of Great Plain Ave. and Noyes Street. Along with composting, Garden Club members signed up to water the garden during the summer months, and in October, we planted several dozen daffodils and crocuses. In April, we had the pleasure of seeing the crocuses and daffodils usher in spring. We monitored the other plantings to be sure they were healthy, and replaced them when necessary. We also made plans to plant a bush or small tree in memory of our departed members.

Another of our responsibilities was providing flowers and/or plantings for the library, in particular, maintaining the outdoor urns at the front of the library and providing either a pot of flowers or a floral arrangement on the table near the circulation desk. For the urns, Garden Club members volunteered to water during the summer, and if the flowers in the urns dried out or died, they were replaced with fresh stock. The winter months saw them filled with evergreens and birch branches.

Flower Arranging:

Co-Chairs Anne Carlson and Char Sidell

In October, the Flower Committee ran a program titled "Let Gourds Be Your Inspiration." We divided the members into groups and each group created a table design with a floral arrangement using gourds of all kinds as inspiration. The colors of Fall were amazing and the diversity of the designs and table settings show what a talented club we have. It was also a great way to get to know our fellow members and a way for the newer members to be part of a team event. We had seven tables that were creatively designed and displayed.

The Flower Arranging Committee is responsible for the tea table floral designs each month. We send out a sign-up sheet at our final meeting or luncheon each year and a member of our garden club agrees to bring a floral piece to make our table colorful.

In November, the Committee had Hospitality duties for our monthly meeting. Our group really stepped up with many great items to eat and share.

In May, we organize and host a creative workshop at Elm Bank. With our membership to Elm Bank as a Garden Club, we are permitted use one of their rooms to host an event each year. We all look forward to a tour of the gardens first or just a stroll around this beautiful space. This year we will be making an ivy wreath that will have other decorative and Spring plants added for color. This wreath should last for many months, and the decorative plants or flowers can be removed and new ones added for color as they die out. Members will bring a bag lunch and we will have cookies and snacks to share. This will be a fun event to welcome Spring.

In May, we also will design the centerpieces for our Annual Meeting and Luncheon, held at the Needham Golf Club. This year we are focusing on the arrangements being colorful reminders of Spring.

Horticulture:

Co-Chairs Cathie Cummings and Eileen Mecagni

The Horticulture Committee provided a number of programs and horticulture information for the club this year.

In June, the club participated in the NBA Street Fair with our annual plant sale. This all-club event was coordinated by the Horticulture Committee. There were many helping hands and members contributed a great variety of perennial and annual plants to make our sale a success. We also distributed free sunflower seedlings to children. A garden stroll was held in June, with members Amy Cicala, Debbie Kraft and Bonnie Waters generously opening their gardens for other members to enjoy. The weather was lovely, and the gardens were beautiful.

In September, fifteen members toured the gardens in the Rose F. Kennedy Greenway in Boston. Following the tour, we enjoyed lunch in the North End.

In March, the committee hosted an herbal tea party at the Needham Public Library's community room. We discussed growing, storing and uses of herbs, and had available samples of herbal lotions and tastings of food, teas and punch using various herbs. All recipes were posted on our website. In addition, four different types of basil seeds, with soil and containers, were distributed to members so that growing could be started indoors.

An April field trip to Parsons Reserve in Dartmouth to see the daffodil fields was scheduled, but had to be canceled due to inclement weather. In April and May, the committee organized the Plant Sale, scheduled this year for June 2nd. Preparation for the sale included transplanting the basil seedlings into larger pots.

Throughout the year, the committee presents at the General Meetings a Horticulture Corner covering a variety of topics, which this year included: a display of photos or plants from our Begonia Challenge that started the previous Spring; a swap of members' plant divisions or cuttings; a display of holiday and winter plants and how to care for them; instructions, pictures and examples for winter seed sowing; and a swap of garden and flower arranging books and catalogs.

Hospitality:

Co-Chairs Cathy Flaherty and Mary Toran

The Hospitality Committee arranged for a committee to provide refreshments for each of the general monthly meetings. The Committee also arranged for a members-only luncheon in October, and provided food and beverages for the Christmas Wreath and Arrangement sale in December. Invitations for the Annual Meeting and Luncheon were sent out and the Committee coordinated with Needham Golf Course for this event.

Membership:

Co-Chairs Sally Toran and Bonnie Waters

During the 2017-2018 year, five new members joined the Needham Garden Club. Each new member was introduced at a general meeting. As welcome gifts, the new member was given a green NGC apron and a current yearbook. The Board assigned new members to a committee, taking into account their preferences stated on their application. A mentor also was assigned to

each new member to help them feel welcome and get to know our Club.

The current Garden Club membership totals 71: 1 Honorary, 14 Associate and 55 Active members. Attendance at General Program Meetings averaged 32 NGC members, with an average of 10 additional members from other area Garden Clubs attending. We had 11 members attend the Tri-Club Meeting in March.

We have continued to place our bookmarks in the Library, encouraged our members to reach out to friends to invite them to our meetings, and listed these programs on our website and regularly in the local papers.

Newsletter:

Co-Editors Carol Alper and Amy Cicala

Carol Alper and Amy Cicala have served as Co-Editors of the Newsletter for the past year, and with Jane Brand, they have alternated responsibility for preparing the five editions of the NGC Newsletter. Karen Taggart and Nina Saltus continued to assist as proofreaders. The Newsletter is emailed to members every other month, and also appears on the NGC website.

The Newsletter features articles of general interest from the Club's Committees, as well as information and photographs pertaining to activities and programs sponsored by the Club. Members are encouraged to share their ideas for the Newsletter, as well as photos they have taken.

Nominating:

Co-Chairs Lynne Braley and Karen Taggart

Preference sheets for the 2018-2019 Garden Club year were emailed/distributed early in January 2018. The Nominating Committee met several times and determined that the Club will, again, have Co-Presidents for this coming year. It also worked on placing all the current and new members in committees compatible with their talents and requests, to be completed before the May Annual Meeting.

Publicity:

Co-Chairs Gail Davis and Karen Shapiro

The Needham Times, Wicked Local, and the Hometown Weekly consistently published press releases promoting Garden Club community activities and those programs which were open to the public. Flyers for presentations were posted in Needham, including in the Needham Public Library where club meetings are held, and event information was shared with other local Garden Clubs. In addition, posts were placed on Facebook and our website.

Programming Committee:

Co-Chairs Fawn Hurwitz and Lori Markell

This year we had a little bit of everything as far as programs go.

We started out in September with Carolyn Ellis, an MFA Flower Arranger, and Beth Paisner, a specialist in drought-tolerant shade plants, showing us everyday uses of flowers, with arrangements which included working with foliage.

In November, Anna Holmes, an award-winning and certified master floral designer, shared her unique floral designs and demonstrated a variety of floral arranging styles.

We stayed warm and learned about tea in January with Lisa Tavakoli. In Lisa's "Harvest to Cup" presentation, she shared information about tea harvesting and production, and proper brewing methods for different types of tea.

February featured a fun hands-on pressed flower workshop with Cheryl Monroe, with participants being able to create their own cards.

The Tri-Club meeting in March, hosted by Temple Beth Shalom, featured presenter Kirsten VanDijk, an award winning designer who has studied and worked internationally.

We welcomed Spring by learning about the history of the tulip in May with Ila Cox.

We are already planning for a fun assortment of programs for next year.

Ways and Means:

Co-Chairs Janice Berns and Jane Lischewski

Ways and Means organized and held the Club's Annual Wreath Sale. Members were invited to the Needham Public Library on Wednesday, November 29 to decorate their own wreath. Then on December 1st, all members worked on decorating wreaths and designing centerpieces at the Fellowship Hall of the Congregational Church for the annual wreath sale, which was held on Saturday, December 2, 2017. The proceeds from the sale fund the Club's programs and civic activities.

Website:

Chair Nancy Agler

The website is fully operational. Over the year we have added photos of almost every activity we have hosted and have updated the Gardening Tips monthly. All minutes, Treasurer Reports and Yearbook information is located in the Members Only-password protected page. A new Recipes page was added after our Cooking with Herbs workshop. Members are encouraged to send the website manager photos, recipes, and items of gardening interest for inclusion in the website. We have approximately 300 views per month, with the bulk of the viewers reading the Home Page. The second most viewed page is the Calendar Page and third most viewed is Gardening Tips. We have had a number of inquiries through our Contact Us page. These were for solicitations, volunteering, garden assistance and membership. We have had five direct inquiries for membership, with one new member joining and one Associate Member rejoining.

In addition, the club started its own Facebook page this year. Photos from meetings, events and outreach are constantly being updated and members have been encouraged to join the page and share it among their friends.

Yearbook:

Co-Editors Nina Saltus and Karen Taggart

During the summer of 2017, the Yearbook Editors gathered, entered and corrected the Club's detailed schedule (including meetings and programs offered by the Metro District and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts), the current Club by-laws, and comprehensive contact information for the District, Regional and National Garden Club leaders, as well as all Needham Garden Club members for the 2017- 2018 season.