

NEEDHAM GARDEN CLUB

*Annual Report of
Officers and Standing Committees*



2018-2019

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents Diana Conroy and Nancy Agler:

The Co-Presidents worked together to set agendas for and conduct eight Board Meetings and seven General Meetings for June 2018 through May 2019. 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 participated in the process of selecting a local high school senior to receive the Club's annual scholarship. We joined with the Green Needham initiative and pledged to become more aware of our organization's environmental footprint by limiting copies, utilizing the Club's website and Facebook page whenever possible and decreasing the number of pages in the Yearbook. The Co-Presidents will be joined by a third member next year to do a Tri-President model, with the hope that every year there will be a Tri-President rolling off and one starting new.

Treasurer Martha Schleck

The treasurer managed the finances of the Club, making deposits and disbursements according to Club activities. Expenses included a \$2,000.00 scholarship for a graduating local high school senior, insurance, GCFM dues, and memberships to Mass. Hort. and the N.E. Wildflower Society (now known as the Native Plant Trust).

The Treasurer's report was presented monthly at Board and General Meetings. An internal review of the Treasurer's records was conducted in September 2018 and it was determined that the record keeping has been exemplary. Upon meeting with the Finance Committee, the budget for 2019-2020 was prepared. The books will be balanced at the end of June.

Corresponding Secretary Cathy MacFarlane

The Corresponding Secretary sent a total of 18 cards this year, as follows: six Get Well cards; six Thinking of You cards; five Sympathy cards; and one Thank You card. No Memorial Books were purchased this year. In June 2018, the Corresponding Secretary created and circulated a template for the Board Meeting dates and related sign-ups for the coming programming year. The list of volunteers to host and co-host each Board Meeting was emailed to Board members before each monthly meeting. Paper copies also were made available to Board members.

Recording Secretary Jane Brand

The Recording Secretary took, or arranged for the taking of, minutes at the eight Board Meetings held during the course of the program year. The Recording Secretary also took, or arranged for the taking of, minutes for the business portion of general club meetings, as well as for the Annual Meeting and Luncheon in May. The Board minutes were emailed to the Board members following Board meetings, and General Meeting minutes were reviewed by the Co-Presidents and made available to members on the table in back of the library's Community Room at the ensuing General Meeting. Reports were collected from all officers and 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 organized four Garden Therapy programs at Needham nursing homes and assisted living facilities, updated and maintained the Noyes Tercentennial Garden, and provided the library reception area and outside urns with a continuous display of plants or flower arrangements. The Garden Therapy sessions took place spring and fall at Briarwood Healthcare, Avita of Needham, and Wingate. The two visits to Briarwood were the result of Avery Crossings closing, and no suitable alternative was available. We hope in the future that there will be four visits to four different facilities. In each case, NGC brought flowers, greens, and flower holders to the home and helped the residents create lovely floral arrangements to enjoy. As usual, this was an activity much enjoyed by NGC members and residents alike.

The library reception area was enhanced by NGC members volunteering to display either a houseplant or an arrangement of cut flowers for a week at a time. We are deeply appreciative of Karen Taggart's work in single-handedly keeping the outside urns full of colorful flowers and seasonal greens.

The spring bulbs planted in the Fall in the Noyes Garden provided a burst of color in the early spring. The summer perennials which followed were well cared for with the addition of "Black Gold" compost and by members who volunteered to water through the drier months. We added a few annuals as needed to ensure continuous color. Last summer we planted a small rhododendron in the garden which was designated as a memorial to our departed members. A plaque which so reads stands in front of the planting.

Flower Arranging:

Co-Chairs Lyn Jekowsky and Nina Saltus

In October, the Flower Arranging Committee organized a club mixer on the theme "Dinner for Two in any World City or Region." We divided participants into teams of four or five, and each team created a table design with a floral arrangement and place settings for dinner for two. Seven tables were very enthusiastically, creatively and uniquely set in Russia, China, Africa, Hawaii, New York City, New Orleans and Texas. This "mixer" was a great way to get to know our fellow members and a way for the new members to be a part of a team event.

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 the club agrees to provide a floral piece to make our refreshment table colorful. Our committee had hospitality duties for the monthly meeting in November, so we provided some delicious home-made items and fresh fruit arranged on a beautiful Fall table.

In May we organized and hosted a creative workshop at Elm Bank in Wellesley. With our membership in the Massachusetts Horticultural Society as a Garden Club, we are permitted to use one of their rooms to host an event each year and we always enjoy the opportunity to stroll around the beautiful spring gardens. This year Debbie Kraft facilitated a workshop titled "Sculpture and Floral Design." Participants were provided with a very simple rustic "sculpture," a base, and materials to uniquely enhance the overall design. Then they chose from a variety of interesting flowers to create their final arrangement. This workshop introduced a new element to many members and fostered independence in floral design.

Members brought bag lunches, and water and cookies were provided. The workshop was a great success!

We also provided centerpieces for the tables at our Annual Meeting and Luncheon at the Needham Golf Club on May 21st, using the pastel palette of the table linens as our color scheme.

Horticulture:

Co-Chairs Karen Taggart and Vivian Weller

The Horticulture Committee provided several programs and horticulture information for the club this year. In September, we held an on-site workshop at members' homes to demonstrate how to divide and transplant their perennials. In October, we held an Amaryllis Planting workshop to plant bulbs to be sold at the December Wreath & Arrangement Sale. In November, the Committee sponsored a workshop for making Candle and Greens Centerpieces, also to be sold at the December sale.

Committee members potted up dahlia tubers in April to be sold at the Club Plant Sale in June. They also put together "seed bombs" composed of clay, soil, and wildflower seeds to offer at the sale. A late spring field trip was organized for a guided tour of the Arnold Arboretum led by an authority on trees (who we were fortunate to have a connection to through a member of the club.) In June, the Club held its annual plant sale at the Needham Congregational Church for the first time. The change in location was related to the absorption of the Needham Business Association into the Newton/Needham Chamber of Commerce and a tripling of the cost of being part of the spring street fair. This all-club event was coordinated by the Horticulture Committee. There were many helping hands and members contributed a great variety of perennials, annuals, and houseplants as well as herb garden and floral containers.

Throughout the year, the Committee presented information on various garden and floral topics in its "Horticulture Corner" at the General Meetings, including arrangements of flowers from members' gardens, garden books and seed catalogs, native plants for pollinators and favorite gardening tools.

Hospitality:

Co-Chairs Mary Toran and Cathy Flaherty

The Hospitality Committee arranged for a committee to provide refreshments for each of the monthly General 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 Club for this event.

Membership:

Tri-Chairs Nancy Gallerani, Eileen Mecagni and Bonnie Waters

During the 2018 -2019 year, the Needham Garden Club welcomed four new members with varying interests and talents. Each new member was introduced at a General Meeting and given a green NGC apron and current yearbook as welcome gifts. The Board assigned new members to a committee, taking into account their preferences as stated on their membership application. Each new member was assigned a mentor to help them feel welcome and get to know the Club.

The current Garden Club membership totals 79: 1 Honorary, 14 Associate and 64 Active members. Attendance at General Program Meetings averaged 37 NGC members, with an average of nine guests per meeting. We had 22 members attend the Tri-Club meeting in March – more than double the number from last year.

We have continued to place our bookmarks in the Needham Library, encouraged our members to invite friends and acquaintances to our meetings, and listed NGC programs on our website and in local town newspapers.

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 during the program year, 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 Anne Carlson

Preference sheets for the 2019-2020 Garden Club year were emailed in early December 2018 and again in early January 2019. The Nominating Committee met a number of times and determined that the Club will have Tri-Presidents for this coming year. It also combined the Publicity, Yearbook and Social Media Committees into one larger Communications Committee. Additionally, it placed all the current and new members in committees compatible with their talents and requests. The Board voted to accept the slate of 2019-2020 Committee Chairs at the March Board meeting and the slate will be voted on by the entire membership at the Annual Luncheon in May. The 2019-2020 Board and Committee rosters were made available to the entire NGC at the April meeting.

Programming:

Co-Chairs Fawn Hurwitz and Lori Markell

Once again, programming for the year covered a little bit of everything. We started the year off with a "wow" with *Tablescapes and Flower Arrangements* by Evelyn Lee, which inspired us for our October mixer. In November, Candace Morgenstern shared *New Techniques in Floral Design*. Sue Robinson taught us about bees at our very well-attended January meeting, with *A Friendly Look into a Beehive*. In February, Rebecca Warner shared her wisdom about how to create a "sustainable enough" garden, with tips on how to benefit our gardens in an environmentally friendly way that also meshes with our busy lives. The programming year concluded with a presentation by Suzanne Mahler, who taught us techniques for dividing and transplanting plants, which was helpful as we prepared for our plant sale in June. We hope everyone has enjoyed the variety of programs that have been offered.

Publicity:**Chair Gail Davis**

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. Posts about Club activities appeared on the Facebook pages of The Needham Garden Club, Town of Needham, Needham Perennial Share, and Town of Wellesley.

Social Media:**Co-Chairs Nancy Agler and Lyn Jekowsky**

The Needham Garden Club website has grown this year by two pages, entitled More Gardening Tips and Travels. All Minutes, Treasurer Reports and Yearbook information is available on the Members Only-password protected page. Members are encouraged to send the website manager photos and items of gardening interest for inclusion in the website. We have approximately 23 views per day, with the average viewer reading two pages of information per visit. The number of inquiries increased 200% through the Contact Us page. Inquiries included membership queries, requests for garden assistance and solicitations. The website is a full-service resource for all members and for those interested in joining the club. The club's Facebook page continues to serve as a way of sharing photos depicting meetings, events and outreach functions with club members and the community at large. The page is continually updated, and members are encouraged to share the page with friends.

Ways and Means**Co-Chairs Jane Lischewski and Mary Louise Kehoe**

Ways and Means organized and held the Club's Annual Wreath Sale. Members were invited to the Fellowship Hall at the Congregational Church on Thursday, November 29th to decorate their own wreath. Then on November 30th, all members worked on decorating wreaths and designing centerpieces for the annual wreath sale. This year a new feature was added to the event -- gently worn jewelry, donated by Club members, was sold at the Wreath and Arrangement Sale. The sale was held on Saturday December 1, 2018. Proceeds from the Wreath and Arrangement and the new Jewelry Sale fund the Club's scholarship program, and the Club's other numerous civic activities.

Yearbook:**Co-Editors Cathie Cummings and Nina Saltus**

During the summer of 2018 the Yearbook committee gathered, corrected and entered 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 2018-2019 year. They also started a revision of the yearbook's format for the coming year.