

NEEDHAM GARDEN CLUB

*Annual Report of
Officers and Standing Committees*



2019-2020

OFFICERS

Tri-Presidents Jane Lischewski, Diana Conroy and Nancy Agler:

The Tri-Presidents worked together to set agendas for and conduct eight Board Meetings and seven General Meetings* for June 2019 through May 2020. An introductory letter for the yearbook was written, as were five letters for the Needham Garden Club newsletter. The Tri-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 paper copies, utilizing the Club's website and Facebook page whenever possible and decreasing the number of pages in the Yearbook. *With the emergence and surge of COVID-19 in March our club's activities changed in a way never seen by the club before. Our annual Tri-Club meeting was cancelled, as was the April general meeting. Our May general meeting/annual luncheon has been postponed until September or October. April and May Board meetings were held by Zoom conferencing. There will be Co-Presidents for the 2020-2021 program year of the Needham Garden Club.

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 Native Plant Trust.

The Treasurer's report was presented monthly at Board and General Meetings. Upon meeting with the Finance Committee, the budget for 2020-2021 was prepared. The books will be balanced at the end of June.

Corresponding Secretary Bonnie Waters

The Corresponding Secretary sent a total of 19 cards this year as follows: 8 Get Well, 5 Thinking of You, 5 Sympathy and 1 Thank You. A visit was paid to the family of one of our deceased members. Two memorial books were purchased and donated to the Needham Public Library. In June 2019, the Corresponding Secretary created and circulated a template for the year's Board of Directors' Meeting dates and related sign-ups for the coming year. The list of volunteers to host and co-host each Board Meeting was emailed to the Board. Also, a week before each monthly meeting, an email reminder was sent to the entire Board.

Recording Secretary Jane Brand

The Recording Secretary prepared minutes at the eight Board Meetings held during the course of the program year. The Recording Secretary also prepared minutes for the business portion of those general club meetings which were not canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board minutes were emailed to the Board members following Board meetings, and General Meeting minutes were reviewed by the Tri-Presidents and made available to members on the club's website. 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 and posted to the club's website in May.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Communications - 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.

Communications - Social Media:

Chair Lyn Jekowsky

The club's Facebook page continues to serve as a way of sharing information, including photos, of 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.

The Needham Garden Club website is a full-service resource for all members and for those interested in joining the club. All Minutes, Treasurer Reports, Bylaws and Yearbook information is available on the Members Only-password protected page. Other informational pages include but are not limited to past and upcoming meetings and events, horticultural hints, many photos and the newsletters from our club and the GCFM. Members are encouraged to send the website manager photos and items of gardening interest for inclusion in the website.

Communications - Yearbook:

Chair Trish Cruickshank

The 2019-2020 Needham Garden Club Yearbook was compiled during the summer of 2019. The subcommittee obtained the following information for inclusion in the new yearbook: the new scheduling information regarding education, events, and gatherings sponsored by the Metro District and the GCFM (Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts); contact information for the District, Regional and National Garden Club leaders; and updated information for all Needham Garden Club members for the 2019-2020 year. We also updated the leadership and committee assignments and our own calendar of events. The yearbook's format revision was begun and will be further adjusted in the coming year.

Community Outreach:

Co-Chairs Cathie Cummings and Lynne Jones

This year the committee coordinated the following: two Garden Therapy sessions at Needham nursing homes; the maintenance of a garden plot at Noyes Park; providing an attractive plant or flower arrangement in the library reception area; and keeping the outside urns in the front of the library filled with a display of seasonal flowers and greens. All club members were encouraged to participate in these activities.

For Garden Therapy, the Committee took flowers, greens and baskets to Briarwood Healthcare in October and to Avita of Needham in November. Then club members helped residents create flower arrangements for their rooms -- a rewarding activity enjoyed by the residents and club members.

The garden at Noyes Park has been planted with bulbs, small shrubs and perennials with the

aim of having year-round color from Spring to Fall. Maintenance included fertilizing, weeding, cutting spent foliage, adding annuals when needed, and watering. Thanks to the help of many volunteers, especially with watering, the garden has been a lovely spot in the park for the public to enjoy. In addition to watering the Noyes Park Garden, club members watered the outside urns at the front of the library.

Also due to the many volunteers, there was a new plant or flower arrangement each week in the library reception area for the library staff and patrons to enjoy.

Sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel our last two Garden Therapy sessions at North Hill's Vista Terrace in March and Wingate Healthcare in April. We will resume our activities at the library when it reopens. We plan to continue caring for our garden at Noyes Park.

Flower Arranging:

Tri-Chairs Carole Grosberg, Lyn Jekowsky and Nina Saltus

In October, the Flower Arranging Committee organized a club mixer on the theme "A Meal for Two in a Natural World Environment." Six teams of 4 or 5, which were randomly divided, chose a destination. Meals for two were very enthusiastically, creatively and uniquely set in the Scottish Highlands, a tropical jungle, a serene beach, a camp in Maine, a unique seaside and by a campfire in the woods. This "mixer" was a great social event and learning experience for all members.

The Committee was responsible for the tea-table floral designs each month. A sign-up sheet was circulated at the final meeting/luncheon for club members to provide a floral piece to make our refreshment table colorful. A co-chair sent a reminder to the floral designer for the upcoming general meeting one week prior to the meeting.

The Committee also created arrangements for the October 25th Needham High School Distinguished Career Awards, which included arrangements for twelve round tables and one large arrangement for in front of the podium.

The Committee had no hospitality duties this year because of meeting cancellations due to Covid-19. We normally would provide centerpieces for the tables at the club's Annual Meeting and Luncheon. This, too, was canceled due to Covid-19.

The creative workshop to be held at Elm Bank in Wellesley in May was canceled because of the coronavirus, and has been rescheduled for September 8th.

Horticulture:

Co-Chairs Karen Taggart and Vivian Weller

The Horticulture Committee provided several programs and horticulture information for the club this year. In October we sponsored a "Chalk Painting" workshop, transforming ugly old clay pots into decorative ones. In November, we held an Amaryllis Planting workshop to plant bulbs to be sold at the December Wreath & Arrangement Sale.

Planned workshops, day trips and the annual Plant Sale were all cancelled because of the coronavirus requirements instituted by the state.

Throughout the year, the Committee presented 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 Cathy Flaherty and Anne Brain

The Hospitality Committee recruited and coordinated members to provide baked goods and/or fruit snacks and beverages for the monthly club meetings. The Committee also organized a members-only luncheon in October, and provided refreshments for the Arrangement/Wreath Sale in December. We had begun arrangements for the Annual Meeting Luncheon in May; however, the Annual Meeting was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, the Committee catalogued and maintained the hospitality supplies.

Membership:

Tri-Chairs Nancy Gallerani, Eileen Mecagni and Debbie Wentworth

The Needham Garden Club welcomed nine new members during the 2019-2020 season. All but one was introduced and welcomed at a General Meeting. Because the club’s program year was cut short due to the coronavirus pandemic, our final new member for the season will be introduced at the September 2020 meeting. Each new member was given a yearbook and a Needham Garden Club apron and assigned a mentor. They were invited to become a member of a committee, taking into account their preferences and interests. Our current membership consists of 58 active members, 9 new members and 15 associate members, for a total of 82. Attendance at our meetings has been excellent.

9/17/19	39 Members	18 Guests
10/15/19	37 Members	No Guests
11/19/2019	47 Members	20 Guests
1/28/20	44 Members	7 Guests
2/25/20	38 Members	6 Guests

COVID-19 caused the cancellation of the rest of our meetings for the year. We continue to display our NGC poster with our bookmarks on the table in the reception area of the Library.

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 2020-2021 Garden Club year were emailed in early December 2019 and again in early January 2020. The Nominating Committee met a number of times and decided that the club will have Co-Presidents for this coming year. The Committee put in place the heads of all the committees. Additionally, the Nominating Committee met and placed all the current and new members in the various committees based on their preferences and compatible talents.

The Board voted to accept the slate of 2020-2021 Officers and Committee Chairs. Because of coronavirus-related distancing requirements, the May Annual Meeting and Luncheon was canceled, and the membership voted on the proposed slate of officers remotely and the final committee assignments were made available to the NGC members via email.

Programming:

Co-Chairs Pat Hession and Bonnie Waters

The Club began the year in September with Debbie Kraft, a talented member of our club, presenting "Flowers for the Home". She inspired us to use floral materials widely available to us to create beautiful and perfectly scaled arrangements for many areas of our home. Our annual tablescape theme this year was Natural World Environments and many participated in this fun October club mixer. Thelma Shoneman delighted us in December with her "Through the Holidays" program which included a front door holiday design and other creative arrangements for the rest of our home. For a behind the scenes look at the work done by the MFA senior associates, Thu-Hang Tran and Linda Weisberg presented a power point, followed by a live floral demonstration. Their arrangements were stunning. Jen Kettell of Radiant Leaf consulting presented a program on "Drought Tolerant Plants" in February. We were introduced to a new palette of plant material that will decrease water use while increasing species diversity. Our April program, "Your Body in the Garden" by Susan Guest, has been rescheduled for April of 2021 due to coronavirus.

Ways and Means:

Co-Chairs Diana Conroy and Fabienne Madsen

The Ways and Means Committee organized the annual Wreath and Arrangement Sale at the Congregational Church of Needham on Saturday, December 7, 2019. A make-your-own wreath opportunity was offered to members on December 5 after preliminary set-up. On Friday, December 6, members participated in making wreaths and arrangements for sale to the general public. We once again featured a sale of gently used jewelry. Despite a large quantity of pieces, the jewelry sale was not as robust as the first year's sale, and members of the jewelry sub-committee decided that the sale should be on hiatus for a year in 2020.

Having a sale in 2021 will be readdressed.

Profit from the sale was \$2,643.32 (\$2020.48 from the wreaths and arrangements, and \$662.94 from the jewelry). Proceeds from the sale will be used to fund the Club's scholarship program and numerous other civic programs.