

NEEDHAM GARDEN CLUB

*Annual Report of
Officers and Standing Committees*

~

2022-2023

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents Gail Davis and Debbie Wentworth:

The Club Presidents conducted 7 Board meetings via Zoom. In addition, we led the following general meetings: “Dahlia Fall –What to do” in September, Tablescape Club Mixer in October, “Make it Nice – Use it Twice” in November, “Designing a Garden for All Seasons” in January, “Floral Interpretation of Artwork” in February and “Jaw Dropping, Traffic Stopping – Floral Containers” in April. These meetings were all held in the Community Room of the Library.

In Memoriam During the year we lost several members, friends and fellow garden enthusiasts: Maryjane Casey, Janet O’Shea, Gabrielle Young, Kay Taylor and Jane Muller.

On a lighter note, the club recognized two fellow members for the “Unsung Hero” award, Terry Luskin and Trish Cruickshank, who made significant contributions throughout the year. We also recognized members by presenting the official “Garden Club Necklace” to those who make the Club a better place: Fabienne Madsen and Nancy Yablonski at the Wreath and Arrangement Sale, and Ellen Barnes and Lindy Roethlisberger for their ongoing efforts to make our Club a better organization.

The Presidents attended the GCFM Fall Coffee, where many fellow Presidents shared their clubs’ activities and what they were doing to make their club a better organization. We will also attend the GCFM Annual Meeting in Hyannis, MA in June. This spring, the Presidents participated in selecting a recipient for our scholarship for 2023. This award is presented to a Needham resident with horticulture, conservation, botany or environmental science in their career plan.

The Presidents are so grateful for all the Committee Chairs and members whose efforts contribute to our many successes. At our Annual Meeting and Luncheon held at the Needham Golf Club we will celebrate our year, vote on our slate of officers, and welcome our new Co-President, Anne Carlson.

Treasurer Nancy Agler:

Each month the treasurer’s report was sent to every Board member prior to the monthly meeting. The 2023-2024 budget meeting has not occurred yet but the next budget most likely will remain close to the previous year. The expense report will be broken down to better define how our money is being spent.

Corresponding Secretary Bonnie Waters:

The Corresponding Secretary sent out 12 cards this year as follows: 2 Sickness, 5 Thinking of You, 4 Sympathy and 1 Thank You for a donation. One book was purchased in memory of former NGC President Janet O’Shea titled *The Flower School – The Principles and Pleasures of Good Flowers*, by Joseph Massie, and donated to the Needham Public Library.

Recording Secretary Mary Toran:

The Recording Secretary prepared minutes for eight Board Meetings, via ZOOM, and the business portions of eight General Meetings. The previous meeting’s minutes were emailed to the Board, and General Meeting minutes were posted on the back table. Reports were collected from each officer and

committee chair on their activities during the year. These reports were compiled into the Annual Standing Committee Report that is presented at the May Annual Meeting and posted on the Club's website.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Community Outreach

Co-Chairs Ellen Barnes and Cathie Cummings

Our Committee had a very active and rewarding year. After several years when COVID prevented us from visiting local nursing homes for Garden Therapy, we were back at it for the 2022-2023 year! Maintaining COVID protocols at each facility, we visited with the residents at North Hill, Briarwood and Avita. We hope to add Wingate to our roster next year. Our visits brought joy to residents and Club members alike.

The Library urns were filled with autumn flowers, winter greenery, and currently are filled with beautiful spring flowers. Summertime will bring another change to reflect the season. Club volunteers keep the urns watered year-round. Noyes Garden is an ongoing project. A spring cleanup will take place soon, and appropriate native plants will be added. Like the Library urns, volunteers also help keep the garden watered. This is crucial during hot, dry summer spells. Drought tolerant plants are being sought by the committee.

Club members continue to place flowers or a plant in the reception area of the Needham Library each week. For this, we rely upon the generosity of the entire membership, while the Committee coordinates the schedule of volunteers.

Flower Arranging

Co-Chairs Carole Grosberg and Lyn Jekowsky

In October, the Flower-Arranging Committee organized the annual mixer. This year's challenge was to create and present tablescapes set for two, each featuring an arrangement of "Flowers, Fresh Fruits, and Vegetables." Participating members were randomly divided into teams of four. It was a great way for members, new and old, to get to know each other.

Our spring workshop this year will be "Submersible Arrangements." Twenty members have signed up, and the cost includes 1 tall and 1 shorter glass cylinder vase, 1 clear kenzan and flowers.

We will also provide centerpieces for the tables at our Annual Meeting and Luncheon at the Needham Golf Club on May 16th, using the palette of the table linens as our color scheme.

Horticulture

Co-Chairs Terry Luskin and Trish Cruickshank

The Horticulture Committee spent most of the year on COVID hiatus until the spring. In-person workshops and day trips remained on hold as the virus levels rose and fell through 2022. Hopes remained, though, that the virus might allow some outdoor horticultural adventures in the spring.

In September 2022, the Horticulture Committee again offered members a choice of three amaryllis cultivars from Van Engelen Nursery. Interest from the Club was similar to the previous year; members

ordered 54 bulbs at wholesale pricing (plus modest shipping charges), and the bulbs arrived in mid-October.

Last year's Spring Plant Sale (May 2022) generated a net profit of \$ 1,752 toward the Scholarship fund and community outreach activities. The membership and Horticulture Committee members contributed much time, plant material, gardening skill and socializing enthusiasm in support of the Sale.

In April 2023, the Container Workshop was again held at Lyn Jekowsky's back yard, with a dedicated cadre of gardeners creating sunny-garden containers. Plant material was purchased at wholesale prices, for the first time, from Cavicchio's Nursery in Sudbury. As of this report, activities are proceeding busily for the 2023 Spring Plant Sale on May 20, 2023. It was delightful to see significant interest among members joining the first garden adventure in several years: an early June tour of the Wakefield Arboretum in Milton, to take advantage of peak bloom time of the extensive varieties of dogwood trees there.

Hospitality

Co-Chairs Anne Brain and Cathy Flaherty

Due to continuing pandemic restrictions, no food or beverages were provided at in-person monthly meetings. Paper goods were provided for the October Members Only Luncheon, with each member providing their own lunch and beverage. The Committee was able to coordinate food and beverages for the annual Wreath and Arrangement Workshop and Sale, and arrange for the Annual Meeting Luncheon at the Needham Golf Club in May.

Membership

Co-Chairs Lynne Braley and Diana Conroy

During the 2022-2023 program year, the Needham Garden Club welcomed six new members with varying interests and talents. A mentor was assigned with Board approval. Each new member was introduced at a General Meeting and given a green NGC apron and current yearbook as welcome gifts.

As of April 25, the current Garden Club membership totals 71: 17 Associate and 54 Active members. We bid a sad farewell to longtime members Kay Taylor, Mary Jane Casey and Jane Muller. Past President Janet O'Shea sadly passed away, and a new book has been purchased for the library, *The Flower School: The Principles and Pleasures of Good Flowers* by Joseph Massie in her memory.

Attendance at General Program Meetings was as follows:

September: 30 members, 1 guest, October (Members Only): 41 members, November 40 members, 1 guest, January: 38 members, 1 guest, February: 26 members 0 guests, April: 40 members, 5 guests.

As we slowly emerge from COVID restrictions, our meetings have been slowly but quietly opened to the public. We continue to place our bookmarks in the library and encourage members to reach out to friends. Most of our new members were referrals from NGC members, but we had one member contact us through Facebook and then join. We have continued to place a member of our committee at the entrance to greet visitors. This contact and greeting at the door proved to be good ambassadorship to those who are curious about our club.

Newsletter

Co-Editors Jane Brand and Amy Cicala

Co-Chairs Jane Brand and Amy Cicala, along with committee member Becky Levanduski, have published the Needham Garden Club Newsletter every two months, September - June. Articles and photos were submitted by chairpersons regarding upcoming programs, horticulture information and the many efforts of club members in both community outreach and fundraising efforts. Members were encouraged to submit photos, which help to document club events.

Nominating

Co-Chairs Nancy Agler and Jane Lischewski

The Nominating Committee prepared and administered an annual questionnaire to determine each member's desired committee assignment for next year, as well as the slate of Officers and Committee Chairs to be voted on at the Annual meeting in May. The Committee felt it important to emphasize to the membership that there are responsibilities to the club over and above the committees on which they are placed. This will be made apparent in a letter to the membership and stated in the Yearbook from now on.

Program

Co-Chairs Nancy Gallerani and Martha Schleck

We started September hosting Betsy Szymczak, who gave us a brief overview of the history of the dahlia. She is always enjoyable as a speaker, but unfortunately, due to the summer's drought, she did not have many dahlias to share with us. October was a fun-filled Tablescares Club Mixer. In November, the Club hosted Richard O'Mara, owner of Cedar Grove Garden. Richard was very entertaining demonstrating festive holiday greenery that can be repurposed. January we were treated to Suzanne Mahler. Suzanne shared her knowledge of having a garden for all seasons. Thu-Hung Tran treated us to her fabulous expertise in floral design for the February meeting. In March we enjoyed the Tri-Club program. For our final program in April, we were entertained by Deborah Trickett, owner of The Captured Garden, who created four amazing container gardens.

Ways and Means

Co-Chairs Fabienne Madsen and Nancy Yablonski

The Ways and Means Committee held its annual Wreath Sale at the Congregational Church of Needham on Saturday December 3, 2022. Our innovative and creative members decorated and sold 72 wreaths, multiple swags, floral arrangements, and bows. Several new ideas were implemented including faux wreaths, faux arrangements and holiday headbands, which added a fun flair to the event. The jewelry subcommittee reinstated the jewelry sale which was a tremendous success generating revenue of \$1,223. The jewelry sale will be run every other year to allow time to replenish the jewelry supply and keep the excitement fresh.

We had several activities during the year to prepare for the sale. Our first team meeting was in May to introduce the team and solicit ideas for the upcoming sale. We displayed a sampling of decorations that were purchased, and members stored over the summer. In October, we met to decorate faux wreaths and arrangements. In early November, we participated in a bow workshop and created bows for the wreaths. Extras bows were sold at the sale. Advertising began in mid-November in the Needham Hometown Weekly and the Needham Patch. We also advertised with strategically placed road signs and the electronic sign at the recycle center. Wreaths were delivered to the Congregational Church on December 1 and the room was set up with tarps, vases, ornaments, and racks. December 2 was the "all-hands"

activity to decorate wreaths and arrangements, test the sound system, place outdoor signs, and perform the final “walk through.” Doors opened on Saturday, December 3, to an enthusiastic and loyal group of customers.

The Club’s net profit was \$4,467 after expenses of \$2,764, which was under budget. The Ways and Means team met in January for a post-sale discussion and evaluation. A huge thank you goes out to the entire membership for helping to make the sale a success!

Communications – Publicity

Chair Anne Carlson

Because our monthly meetings were not open to the public this year, due to Covid concerns, they were not advertised. The only newspaper in town, The Hometown Weekly, was very good about printing ads for our major fundraiser, the Wreath and Arrangement Sale, in December. We also posted our activities on the Town of Needham web page, the NGC Facebook page, the electronic sign at the recycle center and The Patch. A flyer was also circulated to advertise our sale. Our Spring plant sale and our 2023 High School Scholarship winner will receive the same publicity.

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 other functions, with club members and the community at large. The page is continually updated, and members are encouraged to share the page with friends.

Communications – Yearbook

Chair Trish Cruickshank

The 2022-2023 Needham Garden Club Yearbook was compiled during the summer of 2022. Due to the continuing restrictions and uncertainties posed by the coronavirus pandemic, decisions concerning virtual vs. in-person meetings and scheduling of speakers presented challenges to presenting the calendar of upcoming events. To the extent possible and as known at the time of publication, the yearbook included information regarding education, events, and meetings organized by the club, as well as any sponsored by the organizations with which the club is affiliated, such as the Metro District and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. It also included contact information for the District, Regional and National Garden Club leaders, and updated information for all Needham Garden Club members for the 2022-2023 year. Information concerning the leadership and committee assignments was also updated.

Communications – Website

Chair Nancy Agler

The NGC website has stayed up to date with any and all club information. The Members Only section is updated any time a new member joins and if there are any last-minute changes to meetings or errata. In addition, meetings and events held are documented along with photos sent to the Website Manager by fellow members. Members are encouraged to visit all of the pages, especially the monthly Horticultural Hints.