

NEEDHAM GARDEN CLUB

*Annual Report of
Officers and Standing Committees*



2020-2021

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents Jane Lischewski and Martha Schleck:

The Co-Presidents worked together to set agendas for and conduct nine Board Meetings and seven General Meetings, including the Tri-Club Meeting, from June 2020 to May 2021. An introductory letter for the yearbook was written, as well as five letters for the Needham Garden Club newsletter. The Co-Presidents represented the Needham Garden Club at Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts meetings via Zoom. We participated in the selection of a high school senior to receive the Club's annual scholarship.

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to be challenged to conduct our club's activities. All Board Meeting and General Meetings were held via Zoom. Our annual Tri-Club meeting also was held via Zoom. We had several virtual workshops/general meetings and they were well attended. Most of the presentations and workshops were created by our membership and all were very well received. The same Co-Presidents will serve for the Needham Garden Club's 2021-2022 program year, along with new Tri-President Debbie Wentworth.

Treasurer Nancy Agler:

A new treasurer was elected for a two-year term. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been very little accounting activity this fiscal year. Nonetheless, the Treasurer's report was presented at Board meetings throughout the year. The 2021-2022 budget will include an increase in Art in Bloom reimbursements, but most budget lines will remain the same as last year. The club's financial situation will permit it to continue to offer a \$2,000 scholarship to a Needham senior. The members are looking forward to a successful Plant Sale this May.

Corresponding Secretary Bonnie Waters:

The Corresponding Secretary sent a total of nine cards this year as follows: three Get Well; three Thinking of You; two Sympathy; and one Thank You. A book, *A Way to Garden* by Margaret Roach, was donated to the Needham Public Library in memory of former NGC president Carol Roth. A card was sent to Carol's son to inform him of the book donation. A template was created and circulated for Board of Directors' Meeting dates and related hosting/co-hosting sign-ups for the coming year; however, due to COVID-19, many of the meetings were conducted on Zoom.

Recording Secretary Jane Brand:

The Recording Secretary prepared minutes for nine 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 at which business was conducted. Due to changes in programming necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, not all general meeting minutes included a business component, as would normally be the case. The Board Meeting minutes were emailed to the Board members following the meetings, and both Board and General Meeting minutes were 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, which is 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 and/or events 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 other functions with club members and the community at large. Despite restrictions on in-person meetings due to the coronavirus pandemic, we were able to share news of some of our virtual programming this year. The page is continually updated, and members are encouraged to share the page with friends.

Communications – Website:

Chair Nancy Agler

The NGC website has stayed up to date with any and all club information. Essentially, the Yearbook is online and updated in the password protected Members Only section. In addition, any meetings and events held are documented along with photos. This year, due to COVID-19, the meetings have been through Zoom and when allowed, the recordings have been linked through the website. Members are encouraged to visit all of the pages, especially the Horticultural Hints .

Communications - Yearbook:

Chair Trish Cruickshank

The 2020-2021 Needham Garden Club Yearbook was compiled during the summer of 2020. Due to the restrictions and uncertainties posed by the coronavirus pandemic, meeting topics and scheduling of speakers for virtual meetings presented challenges. 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 those sponsored by the Metro District and the GCFM (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 2020-2021 year. We also updated the leadership and committee assignments. Revisions to the yearbook's format have been made, and additional revisions may be made if deemed useful in the future.

Community Outreach:

Co-Chairs Cathie Cummings and Lynne Jones

This year the committee was forced to cancel two of its usual activities due to the coronavirus pandemic. One was Garden Therapy sessions with residents at local nursing homes. The other was providing a flower arrangement or plant for the entrance lobby of the library. We hope to resume these activities when it is safe to visit nursing homes and when the library reopens.

Thanks to the help of club members, we were able to plant the two urns in the front of the library with seasonal flowering plants and greens. Many volunteers kept them well hydrated. Unfortunately, in December, the supporting box for one urn collapsed. Since the other box and both urns are deteriorating, new urns have been purchased, and will be planted with annuals in the Spring. We were also able to continue the maintenance of our garden at Noyes Park, which is enjoyed by the neighborhood and those that use the park. With the help of many volunteers to keep it watered in a very dry season, the plants did well. This Spring members trimmed the plants and fertilized the soil. Once again, we will set up a schedule for members to help with watering. We are also reviewing the current plantings and are considering the addition of a few native plants.

Flower Arranging:

Co-Chairs Carole Grosberg and Lyn Jekowsky

In September, the Flower Arranging Committee organized a flower arranging workshop that was held virtually, via Zoom. Debbie Kraft led this free workshop, which was open to all members. It was a particularly lovely event because she did the presentation from her deck, which added an extra dimension of beauty to her presentation. Participants provided their own containers, plant materials and accessories.

At the General Meeting in September, Lyn Jekowsky presented a Pecha Kucha, "A Walk Through NGC Members' Gardens." A Pecha Kucha is a Japanese term for a "sound of conversation". Lyn's presentation included slideshow images from members' gardens combined with beautiful music, which added elegance to these lovely pictures.

In October, we organized a club mixer that featured a virtual pumpkin decorating program. Members were assigned break-out rooms to socialize while crafting. No two pumpkins looked alike. We had great fun sharing our unique creations.

In November, in conjunction with the recommended reading of *The Orchid Thief* by Susan Orlean, we sponsored Tom Kuligowski, a speaker from the Florida Orchid Society, who provided a virtual presentation on orchids in the Everglades. Cathie Cummings spoke about the care of native orchids. Lyn Jekowsky presented a Pecha Kucha on orchids. The meeting was open to the public. In December, Lyn presented a Pecha Kucha on members' Holiday Doors and Decorations. It was a great way to see everyone's holiday decorations without having to brave the cold!

Horticulture:

Co-Chairs Trish Cruickshank and Terry Luskin

The Horticulture Committee spent much of this year on hiatus. In-person workshops and day trips could not be planned because of MA coronavirus limits on gatherings. The Plant Sale is scheduled for May 22, 2021, and will be held in accordance with MA COVID regulations.

Hospitality:

Co-Chairs Cathy Flaherty and Anne Brain

In a typical year, the Hospitality Committee recruits/coordinates members to provide baked goods and/or fruit snacks and beverages for the monthly club meetings. It also arranges for a members-only luncheon in October, provides refreshments for the Wreath and Arrangement Sale in December, and arranges the Annual Meeting Luncheon in May. Its duties also include cataloguing and ordering hospitality supplies. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation of

in-person meetings, as well as the Wreath and Arrangement Sale this year, the Committee's activities were severely curtailed. The Committee arranged for the catering of the Presidents' Luncheon, scheduled for June.

Membership:

Co-Chairs Eileen Mecagni and Debbie Wentworth

The Needham Garden Club welcomed one new member during the unique 2020-2021 season. She will be given an apron and a yearbook whenever we can gather in person again. The mentor has been assigned, with input from the Board. Committee assignments will be a Board decision using the preferences indicated on the application form.

Our membership consists of 12 Associate Members, 62 Active Members and 1 New Member for a total of 75 members. Unfortunately, we lost a long-time member and past President, Nina Saltus, during the year.

We look forward to resuming regular in-person meetings, which we hope can happen in the Fall. Many thanks to those who coordinated the Zoom events this year.

Newsletter:

Co-Editors Carol Alper and Amy Cicala

The two co-chairs, Amy Cicala and Carol Alper, along with committee member, Jane Brand, have issued Needham Garden Club newsletters every other month. Martha Schleck has graciously distributed it to the membership via email. Even throughout this pandemic year, our club has remained active virtually, and thanks to the stories, photos, and news items for the newsletter submitted by the various board and club members, we have been able to produce a document to keep our members informed about the goings-on of the club.

Nominating:

Co-Chairs Nancy Agler and Anne Carlson

The 2020-2021 year for the Nominating Committee has been unique. The Nominating Co-Chairs asked the other committee chairs and officers at the January 2021 Board meeting if they would be willing to stay on in their positions for an extra year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Every committee and officer agreed to this. In addition, the Co-Presidents and Ways and Means Committee asked the Nominating Committee to find Tri-Chairs for an easier transition the following year. The Nominating Chairs found suitable candidates for these positions; Debbie Wentworth will be serving as a Tri-President, and Nancy Yablonski will serve as Tri-Chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

Programming:

Co-Chairs Pat Hession and Bonnie Waters

Our September program, "Fun with Flowers" had to be rescheduled due to COVID-19 restrictions; however, presenter Kathryn Leva has agreed to give her presentation this coming September. We are thankful for Debbie Kraft, who presented a flower arranging workshop to our members to fill the void. Our October Club Mixer/Luncheon was replaced with a pumpkin decorating Zoom program that the Flower Arranging Committee coordinated. Our November program, "Season's Greening with a Floral Twist", to be presented by Karen Gorton, also was rescheduled for this

coming year. Instead, Lyn Jekowsky and Cathie Cummings presented an Orchid-themed program via Zoom on the scheduled November date. December found us making holiday teacup arrangements and delighting in Lyn Jekowsky's holiday Pecha Kucha. In January, Nancy Riggs presented "Retirement Gardening," aka "Gardening for the Future," in a Zoom format. Our original February speaker, Dan Jaffe, was replaced with a speaker from the Massachusetts Master Gardener's Association, Kathy Gariepy, who delighted us with a program on "Bulb Forcing." Our Tri-Club meeting was held via Zoom in March, and famed floral designer J. Schwanke presented a virtual flower design program. In April, Susan Guest, a fitness professional, presented "Your Body in the Garden" as a virtual program, with helpful hints on how to protect our joints, avoid injuries and optimize our time in the garden.

Ways and Means:

Co-Chairs Diana Conroy and Fabienne Madsen

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ways and Means Committee regrettably cancelled the annual Wreath and Arrangement Sale for December of 2020. With cautious optimism, we have reserved space to hold a Wreath and Arrangement Sale on December 4, 2021 at the Congregational Church. Our ability to have the sale in the space will be determined in large part by the church's leaders, and their assessment as to whether the event can be held safely. Assuming the outlook is positive for holding the sale, greens will need to be ordered in early September, so the club will make its own decision by then. In the meantime, some prep work has begun. A team met for a socially distanced outdoor pinecone painting session in November. Any excess ornaments made by the Festival of Trees team will be shifted to the Ways and Means Committee for use at the Wreath and Arrangement Sale. We also will discuss with the Jewelry Sale sub-committee whether they are interested in tackling a gently-used jewelry sale again.