Northern Exposure

Newsletter of the
New England Garden Clubs, Inc.

Connecticut – Maine – Massachusetts
New Hampshire – Rhode Island - Vermont

November 2026

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear New England Garden Club member,

May I share with you the report I delivered at our NEGC virtual Business Meeting Friday, October 9, 2026.
New England Garden Clubs, Inc.
10th Annual Virtual Business Meeting
Friday, October 9, 2026

Good morning,

Here we are, celebrating 250 years plus of our history, using 21st Century tools. In a few minutes, each of the six Presidents whose Federations make up New England Garden Clubs, Incorporated, will share with you what their members, collectively, well over 20,000, created in the last twelve months. Our New England States have been recognized as a Region since before Vermont and Maine were granted statehood. While we have many different climatic zones and growing conditions, and some of us have saltwater borders while others portage canoes, we suffer with the same best common crop: rock. Largely because we had to find ways to work with rock or around rock or through rock, we also developed Yankee ingenuity.

Our shared love/hate relationships with tourists is something else again.

You'll hear common themes in those six Presidents' reports. You'll also hear how utterly individual each Federation is.

Here we are, virtually.

Did you know the Central Region just finished its first totally virtual Annual Meeting last week? They had a slightly greater attendance than their in-person meeting a year ago. We'll blend this more muted virtual meeting with what I hope will be a slightly riotous, certainly jam packed in person Annual Meeting next week in Killington. I do hope you're coming to both.

Seven years ago, most of us weren't as familiar with virtual meetings as we are today. Then, many of us felt both as excited and terrified trying Zoom as we would

have were we anticipating walking a high wire across Niagara Falls. We still have a balancing act, haven't we?

We know Clubs trapped in tradition, repeating repeating, "This is the way we've always done it," aren't balancing well.

As more and more clubs celebrate significant anniversaries, we're often amused by some of our clubs' former traditions. That's fair. Most of us no longer drag out the silver polish the week before our Awards Meetings. But we know it's important, not quaint, to recognize our members' achievements.

It's also true that some clubs, CT's Pomperaug Valley Garden Club comes to mind, are stunned to unearth, for example, exact lists of every item and at what expense members of the club sent overseas weekly to members of the armed forces during World War II.

This balancing act is what I want to investigate a bit today. Some see a chasm between tradition and technology. I think they're misidentifying the quandary. I think the intent which established many of our traditions is the exact same as today's. I think the question was and is how to nurture current relationships and attract new members in this rapidly changing world. How do we bring in new members? Where are our new leaders? These aren't questions about either tradition or technology. The answers are neither historical nor contemporaneous.

Let me insert here I attended all the virtual and in person meetings at the Federation, Region and National levels to which I was invited, plus a few I crashed. I loved the Flower Shows I visited (I'll let the Presidents describe them), pored over the scholarship applications (we need to do more or do differently to get the word out about scholarships in many areas), tried and continue to try to connect and stay connected with as many of you as I could.

My trusty Outback and I clocked many miles. In Maine, there were **two** navy blue Subarus with large red Plant America magnets slapped on their rear hatch doors parked outside the venue, Susan Miner's and mine.

In 2025, hydrangeas and zinnias thrived wherever I went. This year, the lupines- oh my, the lupines on 89 and 91 and in Maine. And everyone's dahlias, this year's dahlias. Glorious.

Not listing the meetings individually does not take anything from any of these events its importance. At any of them I learned a lot, shared suggestions, enjoyed meeting our members and extolled NGC's four established schools, only available in two of our Federations.

That is not a balancing act. That's the job, a very real job, I've been doing my best to do well.

There are those who say it's a traditional not a twenty-first century job. That's not my experience of it. Six Federation Presidents and I get together virtually almost monthly, usually without an Agenda. We hear each other's weather reports, offer support when it's needed, cheer accomplishments rather a lot, Kathleen cheering especially.

I actively foster closer relationships among the Presidents. Occasionally, I have done the same for members of their Boards. For example, when I heard at one

Federation's Annual Meeting that their Treasurer had some financial niceties to research, and I knew another Federation's Treasurer's recently addressed similar concerns, I made an introduction and shared with each, the other's contact information. Then I bowed out and let them talk.

I have encouraged other emerging groups in NEGC to Zoom, and I've scheduled and run meetings so they could develop as groups.

Most of our members are immured in their clubs. To those who step out and step up, at the club level, at the Federation tier, especially those of you who accept positions at NEGC, I thank you. I am grateful for what I see you do. Don't forget **you** have peers in nearby clubs, peers in nearby Federations with separate but similar concerns, and solutions.

There's a specific person I wish to thank… You're muted, or I'd ask you to applaud Norma Jean Macauto, today's Zoom Administrator, and the CT Federation's 2nd Vice President, who was not in the least intimidated by NEGC's pathetic outdated excuse for a website. "Oh," she said, "I can design a new website while that's still showing. It'll be parallel to what you see. I can insert changes section by section, behind the scenes. No problem." Ingenuity galore. Huge problem changing day by day… Balance. And fostering relationships…

One last bit.

Do you know how you learn to walk a tightrope? You don't start with Niagara Falls. You start with something six inches to a foot from the ground. Balance has nothing to do with height. It has to do with centering yourself.

How do we follow my theme "**We Grow Gardens & Gardeners?"**

How do we bridge the chasm? By centering ourselves neither on tradition nor technology, but on our Mission, and nurturing relationships among people passionate about that Mission.

While I'm seven months away from handing off this position, let me take this opportunity to thank you for the privilege of serving NEGC these 2 years.



Fondly,

Polly

Polly Brooks
NEGC Director

Table of Contents

Roseland Cottage – pages 4 and 5
2027 Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest information – pages 6 and 7
New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. – page
New England Garden Clubs Awards 2026 – pages 8 - 11
Plant-A-Tree Donation Form – page 11
Garden Club Federation of Maine – pages 12 and 13
Theme Announced for 2027 NEGC Annual Meeting – pages 14 and 15
Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. – pages 16 and 17
Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut – pages 18 and 20
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts – pages 20 and 21
Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont – pages 21 and 22
Deadline for next Northern Exposure - page 22

Sign up for The NEGC Photography Group Newsletter

Roseland Cottage
556 Route 169,
Woodstock, Connecticut 06281

Officially, this 19th century building is Roseland Cottage, although locals often refer to it as "the pink house" for its distinctive pink exterior. Located in a quiet and scenic corner of northeastern Connecticut, this Gothic Revival "cottage" was built by New York businessman Henry Bowen (1813-1896) in 1846 as a summer cottage for his family. In the 1800s this land was marshy woods, with oaks, beech and tall "cathedral" pines, and as early as the 1600s Native Americans grew corn here and shipped it to Boston for food.



Henry Bowen purchased a woodlot and pasture on the west side of "the Great Pond" AKA Woodstock Pond. Before settlers arrived in 1686, this area was within the Nipmuc tribal territory, the Nipmuc having descended from the

Algonquin peoples. By the time the settlers arrived this area was held by the Mohegan Uncas as a Pequot conquest. Bowen's vision was to turn this area into a "pleasure ground." Bowen, who had grown up in Woodstock, became an influential NY merchant, newspaper publisher and abolitionist who summered at Roseland Cottage in the mid-1800s. According to family stories, the cottage was named after their favorite flower, the rose. Set on about 60 acres on the shores of nearby Roseland Lake, it was graded and planted over a decade. According to *Journey Through Woodstock*, the heyday of Roseland lasted about 20 years, from 1876 to 1896, when Bowen died. Fourth of July ceremonies often attracted as many as 10,000 people. Fireworks and pink lemonade were enjoyed by national celebrities (presidents, cabinet officers, governors, distinguished literary men and women, poets and clergymen).

The grounds sported a windmill, gilded fountains, statues, lawns and trees and flower beds in decorative shapes, parterres, full of perennials and over 1,000 rosebushes. The crowning glory of this landscape is a parterre garden, with 21 beds thickly planted with roses and other perennials. Each section borders 600 yards of low boxwood. Historic New England continues to plant it in this Victorian bedding style, using more than 3,500 colorful annuals each year, with peak color in mid-July. Parterre is from the French meaning "on the ground." By definition, it is a formal garden laid out on a flat ground featuring symmetrical plant beds, low hedges and colored gravel or paths. The estate also includes an icehouse, aviary, carriage barn and the nation's oldest surviving indoor bowling alley. The drive is lined with specimen trees including gingko, hickory, hawthorn and a tulip tree which continues to bloom regularly. (photos courtesy Historic New England)



www.historicnewengland.org › property › roseland-cottageRoseland Cottage | Historic New England

Sandi Tinyk
NEGC Public/Historic Gardens Chairperson



https://gardenclub.org/sites/default/files/2026-07/2027-contest-info.pdf

Contest entrants: Grades 1- 5

January 22nd: Local Garden Club winners (one winning entry per each grade level) due to State Youth Chairman or State President

February 26th: State winners (One winning entry per grade level) due to Regional Youth Chairman

NGC announces national poster winners **May 2027**

---

https://gardenclub.org/sites/default/files/2026-05/NGC_Youth_Poetry_Flyer_HQ_2026.pdf

Contests Entrants: Grades K-12

January 22nd: Local Garden Club winners (one winning entry per grade level) due to State Youth Chairman or state president

February 1st: State winners (one winning entry per grade level) due to Regional Youth Chairman



Youth Recycled Sculpture Contest

https://gardenclub.org/youth-recycled-sculpture-contest

Contest Entrants: Grades 4 - 8

January 22nd: Local Garden Club winners (one winning entry per grade level) due to State Youth Chairman or state president

February 1st: State winners (one winning entry per grade level) due to regional Youth Chairman

Sheryl Hanson NEGC Youth Chairman
sherylmcgookingmail.com 401-639-8952

Please read over the very important entry details for each of the three contests. I will be in attendance & available at the October NEGC Conference. Fillable NE Regional Winner certificates will be sent to state youth chairman in March 2027 via email.

New Hampshire Federation Garden Clubs

New Hampshire has had a busy and productive summer filled with plant sales, parades, garden gatherings and Semiquincentennial celebrations. Although many clubs do not meet regularly during the summer, our members continue to be active in their communities and in their gardens.

To celebrate our country's anniversary, we encouraged clubs to plant red, white and blue flowers in the areas they maintain for community beautification. Many clubs participated enthusiastically, and some members carried the theme into their own gardens. Several clubs also incorporated patriotic themes into officer installations and participated in local parades.

Our Fourth Annual Fall Gathering was hosted by District 2 in the Manchester area. The beautiful venue, once a perennial garden resource, provided a lovely setting for members to enjoy lunch, a floral demonstration and, most importantly, time together. The purpose of this gathering is to bring our nineteen clubs together to meet one another, share ideas and strengthen friendships. Next year's gathering will be hosted by District 1 in the Lincoln area.

NHFGC was pleased to partner with the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester for our first *Art in Bloom*. The event generated interest in the Federation from several non-federated clubs. We were delighted to welcome the Garden Club of Deerfield and have also visited other interested clubs to share information about the benefits of membership in NHFGC, NEGC and NGC. We hope to continue growing our Federation.

After many years of discussion, we changed the title "Life Member" to "Life Recognition Award," with the first awards presented at our Annual Meeting this spring.

We felt the new title better reflects the purpose of recognizing members for their years of service and dedication.

The past two years have also brought many updates to our rules, award titles and pins. As we move forward, we need to do a better job of explaining these changes and sharing the many opportunities available through NHFGC, NEGC and NGC. We also need to preserve the traditions and history of our federation and help new members and club leaders understand how our organization works and why certain responsibilities are assigned.

Our goals for the coming year include reviewing our financial decisions, clarifying changes to our rules and procedures, improving communication, supporting new club leadership and continuing to welcome new clubs to the federation.

As autumn begins, we are reminded how fortunate we are to enjoy four distinct seasons in New Hampshire. Many members are looking forward to the NEGC Meeting in Vermont in October and the opportunity to reconnect with friends and share ideas with fellow garden club members throughout New England.

And looking well ahead, please save May 2031 for the installation of our own Sue Miner as NGC President!

Winnie Schmidt
President, New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs

New England Garden Clubs Awards 2026

1.The Sears Civic Beautification Award - St. Albans GC of VT receives this award for their extensive work beautifying and maintaining the historic Taylor Park Gardens in St, Albans, VT.

2. The Laura Wetmore Conservation Award for an extensive multi-town Arbor Day and commemorative tree-planting initiative this award goes to **Noreene Stehilk of Quiet Corner Garden Club, CT.**

5. The Cornelia Williamson Watson Award for Historic Preservation is awarded to **Westbrook Garden Club, CT** for creating a colonial era kitchen/house garden on the lawn of the historic David Bushnell House located in Westbrook.

7. The Helen Hussey Champlin Award for the largest number of new members in a state garden club. **The Federated Garden Club of Vermont** is the winner of this award with 118 new members.

8. The Mildred Black Petite Award for the largest percentage increase in new members. The Federated Garden Club of Vermont wins with a 20.17 percent increase.

12A. The Mary Louise Marks Smith Flower Show Schedule Award for the best schedule by an individual garden club. The winner is The **Shippan Point Garden Club, CT** for their beautiful schedule *"Time to Remember" 100 Years of Beauty and Blooms.*

12B. The Mary Louise Marks Smith Flower Show Schedule Award for States, Districts and Judges' Councils, the winner is **The Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs** for its innovative schedule for the Design Specialty Flower Show, 'Dearly Beloved…'.

13. The Virginia F. Thurston Award for a landscape design education program/ project. For their design of a multi-purpose educational site in the heart of Barnstable High School **Osterville Garden Club, MA** wins this award.

16. The Nancy H. Atwell Award for the most outstanding publicity incorporating NGC and NEGC objectives. Barrington Garden Club, RI is the winner of this award.

17A. The Jeanne-Marie Parkes Award is given to Burlington Garden Club, MA for an excellent exhibit on their new "Pollinator Partnership". This exhibit is highly educational showing the need to save our bees.

18. The Virginia Grandpre Wildlife Gardening Award is awarded **to Harpswell Garden Club, ME** for their "Berry Bushes for Birds" Project turning a plot overrun with invasives into a haven for birds.

20. Deanna J. Mozzochi Creative Design Award goes to **Blakely Szosz, Barrington Garden Club,** RI for her exquisite floor design exhibited at the RIFGC State Flower Show *"Dearly Beloved..."*

22. Pamela C. Hebert Garden of Youth Award goes to **Plum Beach Garden Club, RI** for their work helping Davisville Middle School student identify invasive plants.

24. Excellence in Teamwork Award New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, NH wins this award. Their extensive talks and ultimate collaboration with the Currier Museum paved the way for an outstanding Art in Bloom Flower Show.

25. National Gardening Association Award for their work with children or junior garden clubs who create an edible garden is awarded to **Wilton Garden Club, CT** for its work to educate youth on how to grow food and give back to the community through food donations.

26. The Joyce Kimball Container Gardening Award for the most outstanding container garden display designed for a public place. Bow Garden Club of Bow NH wins this award.

27. The Maria J. Nahom Table Design Award For her creative, colorful Table Design*,* **Marie Gioretti of Framingham Garden Club, MA** is the winner of this award exhibited at this year's CT State Flower Show.

The NEGC Member Award of Honor is awarded to **Marcia Pearce of Cindy Wood Garden Club, RI** for 29 years of "Overall Excellence" in all aspects of Garden Club Life.

An Award of Recognition is given to **Western Cranston Garden Club, RI** for the overhaul of their "Adopt A Spot" Garden at Comstock Parkway and Scituate Ave.

YEARBOOKS 2024-2025
Class 1 Under 20 members Lazy Daisy Gardeners, Chelmsford, MA.

Class 2 21 -29 members Littleton County Gardeners, MA.

Class 3 30 – 44 members Westin Cranston Garden Club, RI.

Class 4 45 - 69 members Norwalk Garden Club, MA.

Class 5 70 -99 members Seacoast Garden Club, ME.

Class 6 100+ members Barrington Garden Club, RI.

NEGC YOUTH WINNERS
Sculpture Contest
5th Grade, Ellis Hutchins, Danbury Garden Club, CT.

Poetry Contest
2nd Grade, Rory Imhoff. Hameho Garden Club, RI.
3rd Grade, Annette Babu New Haven Garden Club, CT.
4th Grade. Fiona Buckley, North Reading Garden Club, MA.
5th Grade, Genesis Marquez, Framingham Garden Club, MA.
6th Grade, Stevie DeVito, Westport Garden Club, CT.
7th Grade, Vivian Vigneault, Barrington Garden Club, RI.
8th Grade, Ashlyn Poulos, Danbury Garden Club, CT.
10th Grade, Adam Guertin, Danbury Garden Club, CT.

Smokey Bear Poster Contest
1st Grade, Zoe Psarofagis, Longhill Garden Club, CT.
2nd Grade, Kinsley Plaisted, Mount Blue Area Garden Club, ME.

3rd Grade, Nivan Adhikari, Burlington Garden Club, VT.
4th Grade, Kavin Antony Jeyahar, Longhill Garden Club, CT.
5th Grade, Vera Vegneault, Barrington Garden Club, RI.

Plant-A-Tree Donation Form

Formerly known as "Penny Pines"

National Garden Clubs, Inc. is a proud supporter of the USDA Forest Service and the Plant-A-Tree Reforestation and Forest Education program.

ALL donations must be a minimum of $50.00 each *(and a maximum of $10,000.00)*

Checks must be made payable to: NGC Plant-A-Tree

Checks AND a copy of this form should be mailed to:
NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC., 4401 MAGNOLIA AVE, ST. LOUIS, MO 63110

These donations are used by the USDA Forest Service to plant trees in US National Forests. You may choose to have your donation go where it's most needed or you may select a National Forest; however, the Forest Service reserves the right to utilize funds based on need. If you choose a forest where no tree planting is needed, funds may be used for planting in another forest.

Date: _____

Name of Garden Club: _____

Where would you like your donation to go to?

☐ Where It's Most Needed *(recommended)*

☐ Specify National Forest*: _____

*National Parks, states, or anything listed other than a National Forest will be automatically marked as "Most Needed." Visit fs.usda.gov/visit/forests-and-grasslands for a list of National Forests by state.

Total $ amount sent with this form: $ _____ .

Name:_____ Contact Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Please note: As of May 31, 2025, we no longer provide printed, mailed certificates. In our effort to "Go Green," digital certificates will be emailed to donors, who can customize and print them as needed. Receipts will only be sent via email, so be sure to include your email address with your donation. Since we no longer provide mailed certificates, you do not need to make note of whether your donation is in honor of or in memory of something/someone; however, you may customize your own certificates with this information if desired. As always, please allow up to 30 days from the date we receive your donation, for us to process the donation and email you a tax receipt (which includes the link to make your own certificate). We encourage online donations at gardenclub.org/plant-tree, this will ensure we receive your donation right away. Questions? Email us at headquarters@gardenclub.org—we're happy to help! For more information on Plant-A-Tree, please visit www.gardenclub.org/plant-tree.

THE GARDEN CLUB FEDERATION OF MAINE

Greetings from Vacationland, November 2026

As we prepare for the end of year holidays, we pause to give thanks for the beauty that surrounds us in our gardens, fields and shores. Many of our clubs and districts hold special holiday events or provide small holiday arrangements to local organizations, adding cheer to the lives of those without family nearby. Just two examples are the Bath Garden Club's providing 200 mugs of decorated greens to Meals on Wheels, while nearby Harpswell Garden Club sends more than 60 mugs of decorated greens to the Meals in a Pinch program in their town. Other clubs decorate their town's buildings or sidewalks with greens, lights and wreaths.

Our Federation's website has again proved to be a way to publicize our organization. We receive requests from publications, including *Downeast Magazine* and the *Maine Sunday Telegram*, for information to help with proposed articles. This resulted in a recent article featuring a former member of the Foothills Garden Club. Another request came through our website to assist with a televised feature on gardening to air on our local CBS affiliate, WGME-TV. The weekly feature "Forecasting Growth" focused on Garden Club Federation of Maine in the August 7 segment. Suzanne Bushnell (GCFM president 2015-17 and NEGC Director 2019-21) and I were filmed for over 30 minutes, only to be edited to less than two minutes of television time!

Garden Club Federation of Maine added two new clubs this past year, one from Poland, Maine, the other from Pittsfield. The Poland Garden Club was formed in April 2025 and joined the Federation a year later. The second addition to Maine's club roster is Pittsfield Community Garden Club. This club has existed outside of the GCFM umbrella for many years, often asking about joining the federation, but then backing off. Finally, on September 19, two members of nearby Sebasticook Garden Club and I attended a meeting of the Pittsfield club. After we gave a brief presentation about GCFM, those club members present voted overwhelmingly in favor of joining GCFM. We look forward to working with an established club that has been an active part of their community for several decades. We also receive requests for information on starting a garden club and have hopes that those newly formed clubs may join our Federation in the future.

Our Federation's Fall Conference on October 27 took place at Snow Pond Center for the Arts in Sidney, Maine. The theme of the meeting was "In Harmony with Nature," which featured Andrew Tufts of Maine Audubon as the keynote speaker. His topic, "Designing Maine Landscapes Inspired by Native Plant Communities," was not only

informative but also entertaining. After a lunch break, designers from Sunset Flowerland & Greenhouses created seasonal decor using natural materials.



First Vice-President, Lisa Freeman And President Becky Gallery at Vermont meeting

First Vice-President Lisa Freeman and President Becky Gallery in Killington, Vermont for NEGC Annual meeting.

Our First Vice-President, Lisa Freeman, and I are working together to prepare for 2027's transfer of leadership. Our greatest challenge will be replacing our long-time Federation Parliamentarian, Linda Frinsko. Linda has served as our Parliamentarian since 2014 and will be hard to replace. Another issue facing the Federation has been the lack of applicants for the annual scholarships offered by our clubs, districts and Federation. We are seeking to reach more students, in hopes that more applicants will reach out to the scholarship committees. Already, the federation has agreed to increase the size of their scholarship to interest more students in applying for the GCFM's scholarships.

While several members of the Garden Club Federation of Maine attended the recent NEGC annual meeting in Vermont, our state's members look forward to hosting the 2027 NEGC meeting at Sebasco Harbor Resort & Golf Club on the shores of Casco Bay. We hope you will join us next October 4 and 5 for "Costumes in Bloom!"

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Gallery
President, Garden Club
Federation of Maine



Our award winning garden, year one: Berries for Birds in Harpswell, Maine



Theme Announced for 2027 NEGC Annual Meeting

The Garden Club Federation of Maine, your hosts for next year's New England Garden Clubs annual meeting, has unveiled the meeting's theme. It will be *"Costumes in Bloom"* and will spotlight the creations of talented floral designers from around New England interpreting colorful costumes worn by live models. Co-Chairmen for the meeting, Suzanne Bushnell and Karen Rea, were in attendance at the Killington Grand Resort in Vermont, the site of the 2026 NEGC annual meeting, to announce the theme and to distribute "Save the Date" cards to attendees (see the card reproduced for this article). Photo that accompanies this article is of a theatrical costume that was interpreted by a floral designer from Maine at their 2012 state convention for the program "Broadway in Bloom." Costumes were loaned by Maine State Music Theater which produces Broadway musicals each summer at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.



The Wiz with flowers by Sandy Wallen

Each state will be asked to provide a model wearing a costume of her own choice which will be interpreted by a floral designer also from her own state. Suzanne and Karen have suggested the models be the current president-elect from each state federation! An information sheet was passed out to each current state president as well as a copy to give to their president-elect which explained what the program would entail. The design program will be held on opening night of the 2027 meeting which is scheduled for October 4th and 5th at the Sebasco Harbor Resort & Golf Club in Phippsburg, Maine. The reception that same evening will honor incoming NGC President Gerianne Holzman of Wisconsin and incoming Region Director Sheryl Hanson of Rhode Island. Both ladies have also been asked to come in costume and will have their outfits also interpreted by floral designers. Suzanne and Karen are encouraging all attendees that evening to come in costume as well to create quite a festive evening!

The 2027 venue, the Sebasco Harbor Resort & Golf Club, is not accepting registrations at this time; however, they will be setting up a special link for attendees to reserve rooms at the resort. It should be going live in the next few weeks and when it does, each state's president will be given the information to pass on to their members. With rates for rooms starting at $169/night and suites starting at $229/night, it's expected that rooms will sell out quickly, especially since it will be the peak of Fall foliage season on the coast of Maine. For those who want to come a day early or stay a day later, the same rate will apply. So don't delay when the information is released on how to book your room. The resort website is Timeless Coastal Maine Hotel | Sebasco Harbor Resort in Phippsburg, Information on speakers and workshops will also be released as soon as the details are ready.

Suzanne Bushnell
Co-chairman of the NEGC 2027 Annual Meeting

Join us on the coast of Maine as we gather for *Costumes in Bloom*, the New England Garden Clubs, Inc. 2027 Annual Meeting!

Designers will show off their creativity as they interpret, in floral design, costumes worn by live models.

Start looking now for your own favorite costume to wear for the opening reception and dinner!

Informative speakers & workshops will be offered.

Sebasco Harbor Resort & Golf Club (www.sebasco.com) is offering rooms that start at $169/night. Watch for information on how to book your room starting November 1st.

Come a day early or stay a day later -- you'll pay the same room rate.
There are a lot of things to see and do on the coast of Maine – from the award-winning Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens to the quaint nearby town of Bath and Maine

Little Rhody has been busy this last year.
Here is what we have been up to since last October

- Our award-winning annual flower show took place in April 2026, with the theme **"Dearly Beloved,"** a beautiful bridal-inspired celebration of flowers and design. The theme was inspired by my installation from April 2025. It was a fabulous show featuring many talented New England designers alongside Rhode Island designers, all showcasing breathtaking and creative floral designs. If you have not yet attended this wonderful show, it is truly a must-see event!
- I am excited to report that two club members have completed the four Flower Show Schools making them student judges. They have been assigned a Student Directive by National that is a schedule that they have to write. We are so proud of these ladies!
- RIFGC applied for tax-exempt status following encouragement and the recommendation from me and others.
- Following the rewrite of our bylaws that were approved in January, it was decided that our monthly meetings should include an educational or engaging program rather than simply a reading of announcements and upcoming events. The goal is to provide meaningful programs that educate, inspire and engage our club members while making each meeting a valuable and enjoyable experience.



- Our Life Member Group was honored to award scholarships to two deserving students Taylor Sirois of Seekonk, MA and Liam Cotter of Gloucester, RI. Taylor also received a NGC scholarship award.
- Our website has been undergoing an exciting new look and is nearly ready to be unveiled. A current board member worked tirelessly throughout the summer to bring this project to completion and we are grateful for the time, creativity and dedication that went into creating our new website
- After several weather-related attempts, the Life Member group was finally able to participate in Newport Polo's All Charity Day. Members and guests enjoyed a wonderful, fun-filled event while supporting a very important cause. All proceeds from the event benefit the Life Member Group Scholarship Fund, helping to support deserving students through educational opportunities.
- In July, I had the pleasure of hosting all club presidents, vice presidents and current board members for another Presidents' Gathering at my home. In keeping with my theme, **"Cultivate Your Strengths…Share Your Knowledge,"** the gathering was designed to foster stronger relationships and provide an opportunity for the current vice presidents to meet one another and connect with the State VP who will serve in the next term beginning in April. We began with an icebreaker and then engaged in an open discussion on topics such as programs for monthly meetings, favorite club programs and any questions, concerns or ideas the group wished to share. It was a wonderful opportunity to exchange knowledge, learn from one another and strengthen the connections among our clubs.
- Once again, we have scheduled three Design Study Classes for the 2026–2027 year in collaboration with the Judges Council. These classes will focus on the design styles and techniques featured in the schedule for the upcoming State Flower Show providing members with an opportunity to prepare, learn and strengthen their floral design skills.
- RIFGC was lucky to have two garden clubs have garden tours this year. One was during the rain and the other during the shine.

Happy Fall,
Kathleen Damiani
President, Rhode Island
Federation of Garden Club



NEGC Awards in VT, L to R: Susan Miner, NGC Third Vice President; Kathleen Damiani, RIFGC President; and Polly Brooks, NEGC Director

The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.

I hope you are enjoying the beauty of fall with family and friends and that your gardens are putting on a spectacular autumn display, filled with seasonal colors, beautiful blooms and the last visits of our friendly pollinators.

BEE RESILIENT ~ Garden for Nature! is my President's theme and project, promoting sustainable gardening and climate resilience. With advance Federation funding, clubs are creating small native gardens in public spaces. I'm thrilled that **36 BEE RESILIENT** garden projects are now underway across Connecticut—at schools, libraries, town halls, senior centers, cemeteries, beaches and even a recycling center. Our members are working together, having fun, and making a difference, while advancing the goals of **NGC's PLANT AMERICA** through environmental stewardship, community beautification, and education. Details and how to apply for project grants are available HERE: https://ctgardenclubs.org/projects/presidents/.







The Connecticut Federation strives to strengthen our Clubs through **Educational Opportunities** and **Personal Connections.** This past year, Connecticut presented **all four NGC Schools.** Members completing two courses in any school become eligible for our Tri-Council programs and field trips to outstanding public and private gardens throughout New England. 2027 School dates are posted on our FGCCT website, HERE: https://ctgardenclubs.org/education/schools/.

Our **annual Club Officers' Day Zoom workshop,** where Board members present information on a variety of topics, attracted more than one hundred members, representing 59 clubs, on September 9th. Our ***Federation Fridays*** Zoom workshops provide in-depth guidance on topics ranging from club finances and fundraising to youth programs and parliamentary procedure. Upcoming workshops: November 13th – "Club Bylaws Workshop" (the value of well-written Bylaws, the anatomy of Bylaws and how to approach amending them - both small changes and full revisions); and December 4th – "The 2027 CT Flower Show and How to Register an Exhibit." Registration is open to all, HERE: https://ctgardenclubs.org/club-corner/federation-fridays/.

Our popular in-person **Regional Roundtables**, held in towns across Connecticut, bring club leaders from neighboring communities together to exchange ideas, share experiences and discuss topics of mutual interest. Moderated by FGCCT Board Members, these gatherings encourage collaboration and provide valuable opportunities to learn from one another. The **Wallingford Garden Club** graciously hosted our October 7th Roundtable.





Three hundred twenty-eight club members, representing fifty-six garden clubs, gathered at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville on October 21st for The Federation's **97th Annual Awards Meeting and Luncheon.** Four New England Garden Clubs awards, sixteen National Garden Clubs awards and one hundred and sixty-five Connecticut Federation awards were presented to clubs and individual members for the exceptional work accomplished over the past year. A highlight of the event was the presentation of The Federation's premier award, *The Bronze Medal*, to Nancy Ballek Mackinnon in recognition of her lifetime dedication to horticulture, environmental stewardship, education and community service.

Excitement is building for the 46th Annual Connecticut Flower and Garden Show, which will take place at the CT Convention Center in Hartford, February 18 – 21, 2027. This event features 150,000 square feet of expansive live gardens, nonstop seminars and hundreds of vendors. (Information and Tickets, HERE: https://ctflowershow.com) The Federation will present a 12,500 square-foot NGC Standard Flower Show, themed: *"ART BLOOMS IN CONNECTICUT" ~ Where Creativity, Nature and Artistry Flourish."* Fine art from twenty-one Connecticut artists will inspire sixty spectacular floral "Designs" and twelve amazing "Botanical Arts" displays. You are invited to exhibit your favorite houseplant in "Horticulture" or enter a favorite photo from your phone in "Photography." The Flower Show Schedule and online Registration to exhibit in any Division is HERE: https://ctgardenclubs.org/events-overview/ct-flower-show/. This ambitious undertaking showcases our garden clubs and the talented gardeners, designers and photographers in our communities. We invite you to join us and greatly appreciate your support.

Our clubs have enthusiastically celebrated **America 250** while supporting NGC's initiative, *PLANT AMERICA ~ For the Next 100 Years*. Members have planted beautiful











red, white and blue gardens, enhanced Blue Star Memorial Marker gardens, decorated town planters and added patriotic touches throughout their communities. Many clubs also participated in festive Fourth of July parades, proudly celebrating our nation's 250th anniversary!

The Federation sponsors remarkable custom crafted Tours. The remaining tours in 2026 include: Morocco and Boston in December for the Boston Pops. In 2027 tours are planned to South India's Karnataka, Morocco, Portugal, The Chelsea Flower Show, Scandinavia, Italy, Smoky Mountains/Blue Ridge and the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California. Details on these tours and Registration, HERE: https://ctgardenclubs.org/events-overview/tours/.

Connecticut has 6,269 members in 111 active and creative garden clubs, ranging in size from 8 to 154 members, along with 37 Affiliate organizations. This year, we presented **17 NGC Certificates of Merit and Presidential Citations,** recognizing club anniversaries, including 11 clubs celebrating 100 years or more and six clubs marking 50 to 95 years!
We're very proud of what our clubs accomplish in their communities and we remain committed to providing the resources, education, and connections that help them thrive.

Very best regards,
Nan Merolla
President, The Federated Garden Clubs of CT, Inc.

Photos not labeled: Wilton Garden Club; West Hartford Garden Club, Stonington Garden Club, Pomperaug Valley Garden Club, Colchester Garden Club

New England Garden Clubs, Inc. State Report
Garden Club Federation Of Massachusetts

October 9, 2026

Good morning. GCFM will proudly be celebrating our Centennial in 2027. Preparations for recognizing this achievement have been in the "works" for the past year. A dedicated committee has been planning and coordinating our forward calendar to mark this occasion beginning with our Annual Meeting in June.

This will be a two-day event to be held at the Renaissance Hotel in Framingham, MA on June 10 and 11. Workshops, speakers and a "Books in Bloom" display will be part of this two-day event. Our goal is to continue to organize programs and presentations on topics of interest to our membership throughout 2027 as part of our recognition of this impressive milestone. Affordability and access to these future events are being carefully assessed in order to minimize any constraints on participation.

Our Federation's clubs are assigned to one of nine differing districts within our state. Each district has a District Director who works closely with the leadership beginning each fall with an in-person district meeting attended by the club presidents and interested members. This is a two-year commitment. We have just concluded all nine of these meetings. At these meetings, Information regarding Federation procedures, opportunities and other "housekeeping" topics are given and then the "floor" is opened

for discussion on topics of concern, share experiences regarding program speakers and promote individual club projects and commitments. It is a source of amazement at the breadth of expertise and creativity that is invested by the clubs' members in their respective communities and their garden clubs.

We are so fortunate to have two exceedingly talented web masters who keep a careful eye on our Federation website. Essentially, everything you might want to know about what is currently available through GCFM is on that website. As communication is one of our greatest challenges due to our Federation size, the comprehensive posting of timely information is a huge asset for our clubs to find the information they need quickly.

And in conclusion, it would be remiss to not credit GCFM's incredible Board for all the time that they commit to ensure that our Federation is providing the most that it can for our membership. There is so much talent, expertise and dedication from these Board members, many of whom wear multiple "hats." And all as volunteers. It is my continuing honor and privilege to be working with all of them.

Thank you.

Respectably submitted,
Susan E. MacPherson
President, Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

New England Garden Club October 9, 2026
Report of the FGCV President

I am pleased to submit this report to the New England Garden Clubs, with information on activities by The Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont.

Our Vermont garden clubs have been occupied nearly all year with the upcoming 10th New England Garden Clubs, Inc. regional meeting, which we are hosting at Killington. We are thrilled at the response and registrations, now days before the event. topping 100.

Mother Nature will do her best to welcome our New England states' visitors, promising bracing temps, glorious scenery and the scurry of critters getting set for winter. The promise of time together to gain new knowledge, see old friends, make new friends, discuss topics of concern to gardeners and chart paths for continuing

endeavors supporting our communities seems to resonate among all of us. We are grateful that Vermont can provide this opportunity this year.

The other highlight of the year was the FGCV's 88th annual meeting, held June 9th at the St. Albans Museum and hosted by the garden clubs of our Northern District. We had great participation from throughout the state and everyone enjoyed the meeting content and tour of Taylor Park afterwards.

Our theme for the FGCV this year is "gardening fosters connections," recognizing that our work involves: 1.) connecting members and clubs – our internal community, 2.) connecting with the community – via public outreach and education and 3.) connecting with nature and the environment – through conservation and ecology. Our activities to further these endeavors have included Zoom roundtable conversations for club officers on topics related to strengthening their individual organizations; assisting with a regional photography affinity group that focuses on outdoor scenes; hosting speakers for the upcoming NEGC meeting that will speak to issues of climate change and ways to redress its impact on our environment.

Our finances continue to reflect Yankee conservative fiscal management and investments, allowing our state federation to support our 15 clubs through scholarships, awards and community projects. Their good works are the truest representation of the strength of their volunteer spirit.

Submitted by: Martha Dale
President, Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont

NEGC Calendar

Deadline for the February issue of Northern Exposure is January 25 – that issue will cover the months of February, March and April - please e-mail articles or questions to editor Nancy Atwell at atwelln@aol.com