



Northern Exposure

Newsletter of the New England Garden Clubs, Inc.

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

August 2020

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we approach the waning days of summer, I'd hoped to be able to pass on promising news on many fronts – that the pandemic, which has uprooted our lives,



might be slowly coming under control, that our garden clubs would be getting back to some sense of normal operations, and that our fall events would be entering the final planning stages. But much to ALL our chagrin, the situation seems to have worsened since my last message. The pandemic continues to rage in many parts of the country and we have yet to figure out what the new "normal" will be.

Right after our May newsletter was published, the decision was made to postpone our Northern New England Tri-State Symposium until August 2021. I know how disappointed our Chairman Michelle Mensinger was to have to take this step. Now, I find that I too have had to make the tough decision to cancel this year's New England Garden Clubs' Annual Meeting originally scheduled for October 13-14 in my home state of Maine. I received input from the NEGC Board of Directors before making this decision. You'll also see a brief announcement about the cancellation in this newsletter.

I know many of our clubs are struggling to find ways to keep in touch with members since many clubs can't meet in the usual fashion. I'm fortunate that my own club here in Maine has property where we can meet outdoors. We own the land where

the Harpswell Historic Park gardens now stand. We were recently able to hold our installation of new officers in June amongst the blooming peonies. Our July meeting was a late afternoon drop-in social event where members were invited to bring their husbands, partners or neighbors to walk amongst the gardens with a glass of wine and of course, wearing our face masks and keeping our social distance as we visited with each other. I'd love to hear from you how your clubs are doing during these most difficult times. How are you communicating? Are you finding ways to meet in a group? Are you taking field trips? Are you reaching out in your communities to all the new gardeners who seem to be cropping up everywhere as they obey stay-at-home orders from their governors? There is such a great opportunity to find these folks and get them interested in garden clubs and the work your clubs do for the community!

And as the days grow shorter and our tomatoes, squash and cucumber plants bloom prolifically, I hope many of you are sharing this bounty with your local organizations that fight hunger. I continue to promote our Region Project – fighting food insecurity. If you're donating to local organizations such as food banks, soup kitchens, food pantries, etc., please don't forget to fill out one of our Region Project donation forms found under the REGION PROJECT tab at our website www.newenglandgc.org. Then send it on to me at the address on the form. Since many of us are under stay-at-home orders, I decided to stay close to home and highlight what my own town of Harpswell, Maine is doing to feed the hungry. I hope you'll enjoy the article in this newsletter.

I also want to congratulate ALL the clubs, state federations and individuals who won awards and scholarships from the NGC in May! We even had one finalist from New England in the NGC's Virtual Flower Show (which drew more than 350 entries) – Becky Linney from the Garden Club Federation of Maine in the Botanical Arts Division. I also want to recognize Candace Morganstern (Rhode Island Federation) for her outstanding design as she represented the US at the WAFA India 2020 Flower Show! And congratulations to the New Hampshire Federation that sponsored one of the three NGC Award of Excellence winners – John Forti. A LOT of work goes into applying for all of these awards so keep up the great work! And speaking of awards – despite the cancellation of our own NEGC Annual Meeting, we will STILL be having our own award season as scheduled (see article in this newsletter). I'll close by saying I hope all of you are staying healthy and can get out to enjoy not only your own garden but public gardens in your state. This is what I'm doing in the photo – enjoying a day with my husband at one of Maine's premiere gardens -- the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens!

Suzanne Bushnell
NEGC Region Director

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The Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont

The members of The Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont have used their ingenuity to continue their objectives of sharing gardening tips, stimulating an interest in the cultivation of flowers and maintaining their development of beauty in our communities during these unusual times.

Following are some examples of how different clubs managed to meet without actually being close!

The Burlington Garden Club held a tour of one of the member’s gardens complete with masks while maintaining a safe distance. The garden sported a new “sculpture” that



of a large red dragon. This trip led to a contest among members to name the dragon! Following are some examples of their ideas: Drake the Dragon, Summer Raspberry and Vulcan. The club would love your ideas as well!

The Rutland Garden Club plants over 40 planters all over the city each year. As you can see they continue to beautify their town for everyone’s enjoyment. Masks were a must, and distancing wasn’t a

problem here. And, by the way, this club received the "Overall Winner" award from



NGC for Container Gardening accompanied by a handsome check!
The Rutland Garden Club planting crew

Since another club's annual plant sale was canceled at the last minute, the Garden Club of Manchester decided to have a sale among members only. Plants were dropped off at the home of one of the Presidents and members stopped by to make their purchases. Thus all the plants that had been potted up much earlier now had new homes. Plus the club collected \$500 for this project which had no advertising and wasn't open to the public! In addition this club which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, had planned a two day garden tour. The tour was moved to later in the summer, and with the approval of the town manager, certain safety guidelines were set. Thus the club is maintaining its continued objective of sharing its beautiful gardens with the public while following the pandemic rules.

Meanwhile, we Vermonters wish everyone good health! And we can't wait until we can meet again! Our Annual Meeting and Fall Board Meeting have been moved to 2021.



downtown circular containers in front of the
RGC shed built by Stafford Tech students

Sue Hinkel and Caroline Frey
FGCV Co-Presidents
[editor's note: Vermont has co-presidents for 2019-2021]

Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

The RI Federation of GC, Inc. has not had an open meeting since December 2019. Our May meeting was by email. The Bylaws were years overdue for an update. After months of review it was passed on to our clubs. Overly impressing was the number of members who responded with a vote of approval. The Bylaws were passed.

State awards were voted upon outside, in a parking lot of a closed mall. We came from all over RI and had a successful award meeting that lasted 3 hours. The award co-chairpeople sent out the RIFGC award winner with the checks and certificates. Also enclosed were the list of NGC award winners. We are hoping for a December holiday gathering where we will be celebrating our 90th Anniversary and Club Awards will be announced and commended.

Member garden clubs are continuing with monthly Zoom meetings and programs. Many



towns also continued with weekly civic beautification caring for their town's gardens and with litter pickups. Several clubs offered "members only" garden strolls of members' gardens as they practice social distancing. Clubs also had plant sales for "members only" with plants that were from members' gardens donating the sales to their clubs.

RIFGC's annual fundraiser was the Newport International Polo. Newport Polo is the home of America's first polo club, founded in 1876, a charter member of the United States Polo Association. Each year we reserved an area at the polo field where clubs bring their tents, chairs, food and drinks. It has always had a big turnout. This year we have chosen not to attend. We will hope to continue this event next year.



Summer is a no meeting time, but our work continues in many ways. Enjoy this wonderful time of year. Take in the beauty of summer and all it brings. Energize yourself, and prepare for our new unscripted, yet to be determined and flexible year!

Deb Ort
President, RIFGC

New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

NHFGC started the year with great plans for a variety of wonderful activities for 2020, however as with the rest of the country, everything came to an abrupt standstill. Fortunately, NH is back open with our governor's recommendation that we are "Safer at Home." Most of us are slowly and cautiously venturing out with our masks and social distancing. No big meetings at this time but we have found other ways to stay connected, get together and serve our communities.

In lieu of the awards presentation at the NHFGC Annual Meeting in May (which was postponed to 2021), we used our state newsletter, *The Lilac Letter*, to announce our winners and expound on the awards and associated club projects. Our new awards chairperson, Elinor Terrell, did a lovely job “presenting” the awards. Our federation did well at the National level and we were incredibly pleased to receive First Place (in our state size) for our newsletter (*The Lilac Letter*), our NH Designer’s Guild Floral Workshops and our state’s membership brochure. We were also the overall winner for our Blue Star Memorial Landscaping project – a project that is near and dear to my heart!

NHFGC “was over the moon” when we heard that our nominee for the NGC Award of Excellence, John Forti, was chosen as one of the three winners for 2020. Many of you may know of John from his past involvement at Plimouth Plantation Museum, Strawberry Banke, Massachusetts Horticulture Society and the New England Unit of the Herb Society of America. He is currently the Executive Director at Bedrock Gardens located in Lee, NH which reopened in June as NH’s first public garden (additional article, see page 9).

As is the case of most garden clubs, late spring and early summer are prime times for our Annual Plant Sales - often the principle fundraiser for a garden club. With the pandemic, several of these events in NH were canceled. However, we did have some clubs find innovative ways to still conduct their events. One handled the sale completely online and delivered the plants. Another held their sale over several weekends at a member’s home with customers making an appointment for viewing and buying. Yet another had a “Plant-less Plant Sale” where it was suggested that their regular plant sale customers, etc., make donations in lieu of the sale.

Summer is a time that many of our clubs have field trips. This being an outdoor activity and if social distancing and masks are used, it is a safe way to get together. One of our clubs had a scheduled a trip to a smaller garden and arranged for hourly time slots with 8 members allowed during each period. This has also been a good time for gatherings in the garden. Our clubs have modified this popular club event suggesting members bring their own beverage and snacks rather than having communal food.

Zoom has primarily been the tool we are using for business meetings and presentations. Our Boards (both state and club) have been effective by continuing to conduct essential business and local clubs have used it for meetings and presentations. The one downfall of this is the inability of some members to participate if they do not have devices or the technical know-how to join the meetings.

We all look forward to the future that will allow us to gather and celebrate our common goals as garden club members. Until that time, we continue to innovate and find new ways to connect. I am confident that when we have a vaccine, we will look back and find that there were valuable lessons and tools utilized that we can apply to our future work in our communities, states and the world. "Keep apart but stay connected."

Susan Miner
NHFGC President



NHFGC President Susan Miner (seated),
2nd VP Winnie Schmidt (left) and
Immediate Past President Joyce Kimball
visited Laromay Lavender Farm
in Hollis, NH.

Garden Club Federation of Maine, Inc.

Happy summer to all! Though these last few months have been challenging with respect to meetings, of any kind, we seem to be doing a pretty good job of staying busy and focused at achieving and maintaining our goals. Clubs are finding new ways to stay productive and active in their respective communities.

While we are all in the same boat, dealing with the effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic, GCFM Districts and Clubs have been pulling out all the stops in their effort to bring creative new ways of doing business, whether it is a virtual meeting, teleconferencing, electronic meeting or just meeting in a new venue that provide us with the necessary safety of social distancing that is so important in these uncertain times. I have to say I am quite proud of the results of these efforts and all of those working so hard to achieve them! I plan to devote a great deal of my agenda to some of these new ideas at the next GCFM Board Meeting taking place on August 17th, 2020, at the Elsie Viles Home, Augusta, ME. The location of our Board Meetings is the same; however, it will be taking place in a very different area of the facility: a very lovely, very large barn!

Given the state of uncertainty about health concerns and possible risks, GCFM has made another difficult decision; we have cancelled our Annual Fall Conference previously set for late October this year. GCFM was also scheduled to host the 2020 New England Garden Clubs Annual Regional Meeting in October; instead we are working on putting together a Virtual Presentation of our Awards. We have been very fortunate to be working with great management teams at the various venues we

usually contract with for these meetings and have been able to postpone all of them, deposits will be honored and applied to these events now slated for 2021.

I am very excited and happy to report that GCFM had many of its members receiving State and National awards, all of our winners were announced in our July Newsletter! GCFM also had a finalist in the NGC Virtual Flower Show with 90+ points! Congratulations to one of GCFM's premier designers, Becky Linney! [Please see article on page 17] Many of you may also have noticed that Kathleen Marty's entry into the NGC Photography Competition was featured in the latest issue of *The National Gardener*! Congratulations to all of you!



There is much we do not know about what lies ahead, but for now, my hope is that we continue to work together, bringing into 2021 a bright and positive focus on what we do best, nurturing and protecting all of what Mother Nature brings to us and doing the same for each other. Stay safe and well, my friends.

Barbara Longstaff
President, GCFM

The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.

In a year unlike any other we've experienced, our gardens have taken on a greater importance. Whereas everything else is in a state of never-ending flux and turmoil, our gardens provide a sense of normalcy and a place to retreat to in these uncertain times. Gardens are like an old friend that never lets you down. They keep coming back, year in and year out.

As we know, our gardens are always morphing in their ability to adapt to a changing climate and bizarre weather patterns. They're never static. Mature plants get too big, get removed, die off or are replaced. Gardens are fluid and never the same year over year. Change is constant in gardens.

This same philosophy has taken root in the Connecticut Federation. The playbooks we used for years have been rendered useless. Treasured annual events, tours and educational opportunities have all been canceled. We're not letting the COVID-19 barriers stop us from moving forward with ways to continue to help clubs grow and thrive in this new world reality.

Our fundamental goal over the summer months is to stay engaged with clubs. Based upon conversations with clubs looking for guidance about how to conduct the 2020-2021 program year, we've embarked on comprehensive research with club Presidents from every county in Connecticut. The goal is to get a handle on how clubs are working through the pandemic – ranging from topics of membership and finances

to programs and speakers. Our collective learning is going to be shared in a report aimed at helping club Presidents make informed decisions based upon the best practices of clubs. The response has been great and I am impressed with the creativity and determination of club presidents to stay in touch with their members.

We've readily transitioned many activities to online technologies to stay connected as a Board and through committees. Connecticut is one of three states to participate in a beta test of conducting a school in an online platform (Environmental School – Course 3). We're working closely with National Garden Clubs on this exciting new advancement. The response from potential participants is unexpected as many registrants are from out of state. It's a positive step coming out of the pandemic as more people are likely to attend NGC schools from the comfort and safety of their homes.

Plans are in place to move forward with three Beyond Beginning creative design workshops this fall for clubs without flower show judges among their members. The feedback from these workshops is always positive, with participants praising the instructors about all they learned.

As you would imagine, all of our Federation sponsored tours were canceled for the remainder of 2020. Like our flowers and plants that come up year-in and year-out, Tours Coordinator Kathy Lindroth is busy planning great trips for 2021. A trip to Virginia in April of next year during Historic Gardens week is the first one. Visit the website to see what other trips are in the works – www.ctgardenclubs.org

It's been a tough four months since COVID-19 changed everything. As I talked with Club Presidents over the past few weeks, I am amazed and heartened about the strength and resiliency of our members. The ties that bind us together are strong. I'm confident that we'll come back stronger and better. Nothing can keep garden clubs down.

Plans are underway to shift two immensely popular meetings to virtual events this fall – a Club Presidents' Day virtual meeting and an Awards Meeting webinar. As it became readily apparent that large gatherings remain out of the question, emphasis shifted to supporting both through technology. As you can imagine, the task is formidable; however, we have a strong task force in place to assure that the events are a well-received alternative. We expect that we'll have the opportunity to engage even more members who normally might not attend. We're encouraging club members to schedule webinar "watch parties" to celebrate club awards. Everything we're doing is directed at keeping connected with our member clubs during the pandemic.

Arlene Field

President, Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.

"Award of Excellence" Recipient John Forti

John Forti, currently the Executor Director of Bedrock Gardens in Lee, New Hampshire, was recently presented with the National Garden Clubs, Inc.'s highest award, "The Award of Excellence." This award is given to "an individual, organization

or institution that has made a significant contribution toward the advancement of goals and purposes of National Garden Clubs." This distinction is paid to only three of the many nominees proposed by state garden clubs from all over the country and it is an extreme honor for the NH Federation of Garden Club's nominee to have been selected to receive this recognition.

We were advised of the NGC Award of Excellence Committee's decision in this regard in early May and John was subsequently notified that he had been selected to receive this distinguished award. The National Garden Club's 2020 Annual Convention was scheduled to be held in mid-May in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was subsequently cancelled due to the pandemic. We later learned that the presentation of John's award would be deferred to the NGC's May 2021 Annual Convention being held in East Rutherford, New Jersey. At that time, John will be an honored guest and will receive his award at a special event honoring NGC Award of Excellence recipients.



We are delighted for John - he is so deserving of this award and he is such a friend and supporter of our organization and all that we stand for, hence our eagerness to nominate him for this distinguished honor.

A little about John Forti: he is a nationally recognized lecturer, garden historian, ethnobotanist, (native plants) and garden writer. Prior to taking on the position of Executive Director of Bedrock Gardens in Lee and being responsible for its transition from a private garden to a public garden, he was the Director of Horticulture for the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and Curator/Director of Historic Landscapes at the Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH. Before his work at Strawberry Banke, John served as the Director of Horticulture at Plimouth Plantation Museum in Massachusetts. He co-founded and served as the board chairman for "Slow Food Seacoast" and he currently serves on the bio-diversity committee for "Slow Food USA." He is also chairman of the board for the "Herb Society of America's" New England Unit.

John has received many awards acknowledging his contribution to local agriculture, historic land preservation, agri-tourism and organic gardening movements. He is also an author and contributor to several gardening, lifestyle and food publications. Throughout his career, John has enjoyed interacting with garden clubs and public groups, big and small - anyway he can share his vision, passion, knowledge and experience. He is a true friend of NHFGC and we heartily congratulate him for receiving National Garden Club's highest award, the "Award of Excellence."

For more about John and his many activities and accomplishments, please see his website, www.jforti.com and/or his Facebook page where he blogs as "The Heirloom

Gardener—John Forti.” For information about visiting Bedrock Gardens or registering for one of a series of gardening lectures please visit www.bedrockgardens.org

Joyce Kimball
Former NHGC President
and NEGC Director

Cancellation of NEGC Annual Meeting in October

It's with much regret that we announce that our New England Garden Clubs' Annual Meeting, originally scheduled to be held in Wells, Maine, October 13-14, 2020, has been cancelled. We've also been in contact with NGC President Gay Austin, who was to be our special guest at the meeting, to let her know of the decision. Because of the continued COVID-19 pandemic, and the restrictions imposed by Governor Janet Mills on holding meetings and welcoming visitors to Maine, it became readily apparent that it would not be conducive to hold a large meeting this year. Under current restrictions, gatherings of more than 50 people are not allowed. Also, visitors from all states (with the exception of New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey) must quarantine for 14 days when arriving in Maine, or, certify that they've tested negative for the virus within 72 hours of coming to Maine. Input from the NEGC Board of Directors was requested prior to making the decision to cancel the meeting.

The Garden Club Federation of Maine, hosts for the meeting, will now regroup and plan to have the meeting in Maine in October 12 - 13, 2021, at the same venue of Village by the Sea in Wells. This condominium resort has meeting facilities and offers guests the option of staying in a one- bedroom condominium, a half suite, or a two-bedroom condominium -- all with full kitchens. With this year's meeting being cancelled, and keeping the current rotation of states to act as hosts, the Garden Club Federation of Maine will host in 2021 and the New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs will now host the 2022 NEGC Annual Meeting.

In the meantime, plans are going ahead to still have Region awards given out this October. More information is available in the following article.

Suzanne Bushnell
Director, New England Garden Clubs, Inc.

It's NEGC Award Season!

We may not be having an Annual Meeting – but we're still going to be giving out awards to deserving individuals and clubs in our Region! The NEGC Award year covers projects that have been worked on or completed during the period June 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020. Be sure to go to our AWARDS tab on our website at www.newenglandgc.org. There you'll find both the *List of Awards* you can apply for and the *Awards Application Form* which must be submitted first through your individual State Federation Awards

Chairman. The NEGC Awards Chairman is Judy Stallworth who is eager to receive your awards from the State Federation Awards Chairman NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1ST. Judy can be reached at ejstall@comcast.net if you have any questions.

Because of the cancellation of our NEGC Annual Meeting (see related article), we won't be able to give out the awards in person. However, we're planning to do a virtual awards ceremony in October with our State Presidents and individual State Award Chairmen included on a videoconference call. We've also invited NGC President Gay Austin to participate. She has already agreed to join in if it works for her schedule!



Photo from last year's NEGC Annual Meeting Awards Ceremony in Vermont at the Woodstock Inn. Pictured left to right: Barbara Longstaff (Garden Club Federation of Maine President), Suzanne Bushnell (NEGC Region Director) and Judy Stallworth (NEGC Awards Chairman).

Close To Home Community Garden

During my term as your Region Director, I've tried to put a spotlight on the great role that community gardens play in our towns and how they relate to our Region Project of fighting food insecurity. They not only provide a place where families can grow their own food, but also provide a fertile growing spot where volunteers can tend a garden which provides home-grown food for the less fortunate. Such is the case in my own coastal home town of Harpswell, Maine.



Common Good Garden

In 2001 a plot of land – some 120 acres large – was turned over to the town by the U. S. Department of Defense. Mitchell Field, which sits along the beautiful shore of Middle Bay, had been used for decades by the Navy as a fuel depot supplying jet fuel to Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine. Now, this undeveloped piece of prime waterfront property is the site of miles of hiking trails, the Harpswell Bandstand by the Sea and the Harpswell Community Garden. For such a large piece of property, the Community Garden started out small with 25 plots rented to individuals, families and groups to organically grow food and flowers. The Garden is

considered a town-sponsored recreational program which was organized by a volunteer committee. Financial support has been provided by our local land trust. To rent a plot you pay \$25 for a 10' by 10' space or \$35 for a 10' by 15' space. Because the plot fees don't cover all the costs of running the Community Garden nor provide enough for a paid staff, all administrative and maintenance tasks are done by volunteers. All gardeners are asked to contribute at least six hours of volunteer work during the season. This might involve mowing and helping out in an area called the *Common Good Garden*. It is this particular space which provides food to the local food bank. One major improvement to the Garden was the addition of a reliable watering system. In 2018 a deep well was dug to feed two 275-gallon water storage tanks which supply water spigots throughout the garden. Deer fencing was installed around the perimeter and a locked storage shed was made available to hold communal tools. High quality compost is also provided each growing season for families to use.

While the day I visited to take some photos, only one volunteer was working, a few members of my garden club also volunteer there and were instrumental in getting the Community Garden off and running.

The same day I went to the Community Garden, I also made a trip to our Town Office where every Thursday in the summer, a mobile food pantry truck stands ready to donate food to families who live in



Harpswell Community Garden



Mobile Food Pantry

Harpwell. The mobile food pantry is a project of Mid Coast Hunger Prevention in the neighboring town of Brunswick. It partners with the Good Shepherd Food Bank to provide everything from fresh eggs, fresh produce, meat and things considered "staple food items." The mobile food pantry was started in 2016 and serves as many as 60-80 households on a regular basis in my town. Mid Coast Hunger Prevention also runs a very popular year-round soup kitchen in Brunswick. They provide families with fresh produce and food items donated by local grocery stores and restaurants. This

is where my husband and I as well as several members of my garden club drop off fresh-grown produce each growing season to support the mission of Mid Coast Hunger Prevention AND contribute to our NEGC Region Project of fighting hunger in our community.

Suzanne Bushnell
Director, New England Garden Clubs, Inc.

Shippan Point (Connecticut) Garden Club Donating to Treat Healthcare Workers

The onslaught of COVID19 has left us all anxious to various degrees – anxious for our family and friends, of course, but also about people who are steadfastly working on the frontlines of healthcare putting themselves in danger. In early April I was talking to Meg Kelley, our Membership Chairwoman, about what we as a garden club could do to help and show we appreciate the risks people were taking for the rest of us. We talked about Dr. Kevin Dwyer, Chief of Trauma Surgery at Stamford Hospital, a dear friend who is married to our former club President, Dianna Dwyer. Dianna told us about the unrelenting hours the doctors and nurses were putting in treating COVID patients while often not being able to find the time to get meals for themselves while working non-stop. We couldn't make them casseroles and cookies because Stamford now had put in very strict regulations about what could be brought in. Their website did however say that they would appreciate meals sent to the staff so long as it came from a commercial kitchen or restaurant and that the meals needed to be individually wrapped and packaged to avoid cross contamination.

I sent a simple email to Shippan Point Garden Club members asking if they would donate money to cover lunch for the staff to show our deep appreciation for their tireless work. I had no idea how much money we would collect. I figured I'd shop around for restaurant meals after I saw how much the donations came to, never

imagining our members would come through with such alacrity and generosity. I guess everyone needs a way to help out at this time. Within a fortnight we collected \$4,650! We chose a local Shippan-based caterer who had experience cooking and delivering hundreds of meals at a time to the Hospital. They could make 375 really excellent meals for us for the amount we'd collected – 100 of which we requested go to the staff at the ICU, the rest of the meals would go where they were most needed.

This is the letter we got from the Dwyer's: *"Kevin asked me to thank the Shippan Point Garden Club for their generosity providing lunch for Stamford Hospital health care workers on Sunday. The ICU staff and his residents all agreed that it was the best meal they had had for a long time. Everyone was so grateful to enjoy a yummy meal, it was a welcomed break to their long day. I personally am so proud to belong to such a thoughtful loving group of women and men. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts."*

Well, we didn't stop there. Cathy Bertasso, who co-chairs our Community Outreach Committee, had been doing Garden Therapy for over a year with residents of the nearby St. Camillus Skilled Nursing Facility. The residents are seniors, many with functionally limiting conditions. Members of the Shippan Point Garden Club would meet with residents – it grew to about 20 regulars – for monthly activities and garden projects. They planted flower and vegetable gardens from seed, did seasonal floral arrangements and decorative crafts for Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving and



other holidays. For Christmas, residents were given potted amaryllis and other gifts donated by SPGC Members. Garden club members report that the residents are truly joyful and excited about the projects they do together. Residents say they look forward with great anticipation to the monthly sessions and are very grateful for the time spent with them and the sharing of flowers. (Cathy says some prefer not to share too much!☺)

Well, COVID19 shut down those activities with a firm slam. We approached St. Camillus to see if we could send flower arrangements to cheer up the residents, but the nursing home was on lockdown. Cathy remembered our successful lunch drive for Stamford Hospital and thought we could do pizza and beverages for the home's staff and aides. Another letter went out to membership and again we received more than we expected -- \$1,500! For that amount, forget pizza, we could go back to David's Catering and do a 3-course meal for the 70-member day crew and 18-member night crew. Donna, liaison at St. Camillus said, *"The staff and aides were overwhelmed by the treat. The food was delicious and enjoyed by all. They were so thrilled, as they get very few expressions of appreciation for their hard work."*

We are hoping that come Christmas and the Holidays, we can go back to giving donations of holiday gifts to the Residents of the home. (Cross fingers!)

Nolini Barretto
President, Shippan Point (CT) Garden Club



Staff at David's Catering preparing our meals!

Environmental School 3 – Air and Related Issues via Zoom! September 22-23, 2020

You can be a part of history this Fall! The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut's Environmental School in September has been chosen to be a testing ground for the development of National Garden Club virtual learning protocols. We are an experimental offering and proud to be an integral part of helping to establish national standards for NGC Zoom school offerings.

There are only 30 openings for students and 20 for refreshing. Almost half are taken already. Why?

We always have superb presenters. This course is no exception.

Oswald Schmitz, PhD. - Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

Susan Quincy - CT DEEP Environmental Educator

Wendy Welshans - Forman School and Rainforest Project

Abby Peklo – EdAdvance

Jim Sirch - Yale Peabody Museum.

Were you cringing watching the Amazon wildfires? Would you like to learn ways to initiate school programs? As you saw the photographs showing differences in air quality over the past few months, did you want to know more about the Ecology of air quality? Chat with fellow garden club members from CT and the country as you help establish new school protocols.

From the comfort of your home, with our tech support, take Course 3 - Air & Related Issues. For anyone not familiar with Zoom technology, a practice session is scheduled for registrants one week before the class.

Environmental School is open to members of the public as well as to garden club members. Garden club members may work towards joining the Environmental Consultants Council.

Please find the full brochure at ctgardenclubs.org Other questions? Please contact Sharon Bender, FGCT Environmental School Chair, at 203-530-2920 or eschair@ctgardenclubs.org.

National Garden Clubs, Inc. Perfect Vision 2020 A Virtual Flower Show

Garden Club Federation of Maine former president, NGC 2016 Fall Board Meeting Chairperson and NGC Flower Show Master Judge Becky Linney of Cape Neddick, entered the NGC Virtual Flower Show "Garden Visions" in Class 1, "Botanical Arts" Division.

The Entry information and two of the photos she sent on June 15, 2020, are shown here.

Class 1. "Eye to Eye" Decorated outdoor seat (chair, bench, stool, etc.) of designer's choice

PLANT MATERIAL USED IN THE EXHIBIT:

Hedera, Algerian Ivy

Lichen

Verbascum thapsus, Mullein

Rhododendron



back of chair

Five (5) photographs of design were entered

Member of Old York Garden Club, York, ME and the Garden Club Federation of Maine

Chair dimensions: 29" tall, 26" wide, 23 1/2" deep

Becky's inspirations:

Garden Antiquity; Natural: fresh and dried plant material in my gardens. Bold forms and textures echo rugged Maine landscapes; was requested the chair "function". . . no problem sitting on the chair; spontaneity of assembly and mechanics flowed together easily; challenges over a 24 hour period were "visions of FUN."

Thank you National Garden Clubs, Inc. for the experience and the excellent support from the Flower Show Committee. The "Horizons" for this show were endless. Hope the "Committee" and all of the National Garden Club members were pleased. Looking forward to chapter two for flower shows in the future.

Becky Linney



front of chair

WAFA India 2020 "The Grand Floral Affair"

I was pleasantly surprised and flattered to receive a phone call in 2018 from Renee Blaschke, President of United States Floral Design Society (USFDS) asking if I would represent the United States with an Honorary Exhibit in the next World Flower Show (WAFA) in Jaipur, India.

After the excitement wore down, the nervousness set in! Now, I had to create a design to represent the United States . . . with our diversity throughout the country, this was not an easy task! I attended the NAFAS flower show in London in the summer of 2019 and asked several people what they felt represented the United States ~ many said tall buildings! That was the last thing I had thought of, but after doing some research I discovered that the very first skyscraper *in the world* was built in Chicago, Illinois in 1885. Coincidentally, about the same time Katherine Lee Bates wrote the patriotic song "America the Beautiful," she was inspired by Pikes Peak in Colorado and

referred to them as 'Purple mountain majesties.' So, now that my theme was complete, I had to figure out how to implement it.

My space was 4' wide x 4' deep x 8' high. My thought was to create 3 "tall buildings" and have the purple mountains sweeping across and through the buildings. To create the buildings I collected populus alba (white poplar) leaves during the summer of 2019, conditioned and put them in the freezer until I was ready start gluing them on the polystyrene (insulation board from Home Depot). The back of the leaves are a beautiful white/gray color that I believed, would replicate the color of skyscrapers. I had 3 panels of ¼" Lucite cut to 6' high x 9.5" wide to place in front of the polystyrene panels covered with the populus alba to add depth and light to the design.

Somehow, I had to take this to India with me, so it had to be able to be completely disassembled and re-assembled during set-up. The base of the "purple mountains" was purple sisal wrapped around wire that would be flexible and would help camouflage the water tubes for the fresh plant material. Of course (and this is typical in most flower shows) the plant material I ordered was not purple, but pink! Luckily, I did receive some purple lisianthus and was able to carry my purple theme through with a little orange for the sunset!

I truly felt honored and humbled to be asked to represent the United States at the WAFA India Show, it was a wonderful experience I'll never forget.

As a side note, my design is now in Kenya! Kavita Podder was the WAFA flower show President. I told her I would leave my design and she could give it to whoever could use it for a future display. She mentioned it to her cousin (I think), who represented Kenya and she was delighted to take it home. She was all excited and thanked me several times.



Candace Morgenstern
Newport Garden Club (Rhode Island)
Tiverton Garden Club (Rhode Island)

On my way to India, with design in tow,
Boston Logan Airport. The box measured
67" tall x 14" deep x 10" wide.



Hunting Wild Orchids in New Hampshire and Vermont

Here in a corner of our NH woodland hillside, *Cypripedium acaule* - the pink lady slipper - grows in the dappled light, out of the wind in the duff and acidic soil beneath the mixed hardwoods and the white pines.

Nearby, on an old wood's road near Squam Lake a group of white

Cypripedium acaule grows on the banks of the old roadbed. These white Pink Lady Slippers have the same crease in their pouch as their pink siblings. The white color mutation of the flower



doesn't merit a new species name currently, although some folks describe it as *Cypripedium acaule* f. *albiflora* in recognition of this color



Most have a single bloom poised above each leafy a stem, although some have two blooms per stem, and rarely we find three blooms!

Tucked in among these Showy Lady Slippers are other kinds of orchids that require either fen or bog habitats. This year, because the Eshqua Bog was not open until recently, we were

mutation. *Acaule* means stemless –unlike most plants, “the leafless flowering stem”¹ of this orchid shoots out of the ground without any connecting leafy stems above its roots.²

We enjoy heading over the mountains to Woodstock, VT, to see the Showy Lady Slippers - *Cypripedium reginae* – coming into bloom.

They appear to carpet acres of the Eshqua Bog. The pouch on these orchids have no crease and vary in color from almost purple to nearly white. Inside the pouch, the patterns vary also - from



too late to experience the yellow lady slippers, but we did catch sight of a few *Platanthera huronensis* - the green bog orchid. It grows on a straight stem with little leaves and tiny bug-like flowers. In the nearby Plainfield Sanctuary NH (across the CT. River), *Epipactis helleboris* - the Bastard Helleborine, are just beginning to show buds. It is a European transplant happily naturalized in disturbed areas

¹ https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/cypripedium_acaule.shtml

² <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/about/cypripedium.htm>



throughout the northeast. Its common name reflects its tenacity.

My most favorite discovery this month is the tiny pinky-white *Pogonia ophioglossoides* - the Rose Pogonia – found growing on the floating sphagnum islands in a vast bog in Sandwich NH.

The pale pink flowers appear to have a yellow beard and a tattered lip.



This is a fun link for some interesting 'facts' about orchids,
<http://orchidmaniapk.blogspot.com/.../aphrodisiacs-and-orchi...>

To learn about the pollinators of these orchids, try www.plantipedia.com.

For more about fens and bogs here is a good link
https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflow.../.../California_Fens/what.shtml.

For more about our New England Natives check out the Native Plant Trust's web site
<https://www.nativeplanttrust.org/> and for plant ID their GoBotany site is excellent
<https://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/> I'm really enjoying their online courses too.

Arabella Dane
 Board Member, Native Plant Trust

Cheshire Garden Club Now a Century Club

Could anyone have known 100 years ago, when the fledgling Cheshire Garden Club was formed on **June 17, 1920**, that it would survive into the 21st century? Not only that, but also that it would continue 100 years?



A huge bash had been planned in celebration of the club's 100th Anniversary but that plan fell by the wayside due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So a smaller gathering of club members took place instead around the blue Town of Cheshire history sign on the property of the Cheshire Historical Society exactly one hundred years later in celebration of this important event.

Historian and former club president Inge Venus – just as the bell tower of the First Congregational Church struck ten - gave a brief ten-minute presentation in back of the club's Colonial Garden, highlighting the many significant milestones the club had reached over the last ten decades.

The club became a charter member in **1929** of the state organization, The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc., which in turn became a charter member that same year of the National Council of Garden Clubs, now known as the National Garden Clubs, Inc. And in **1934**, as a member of the state organization it became a member of the New England Region, joining with the five other New England states. More recently, it has adopted the New England Garden Clubs, Inc. name. It has sponsored over 50 standard flower shows since, with the bicentennial "Our Town" flower show winning the top National award, a purple rosette, in 1976. The club's huge project of re-landscaping the Town Green in **1942** earned it the Bronze Medal, the Federation's highest award. Two club members also earned the



Bronze Medal – Ellen Carder (1936) and Tekla Tedesco (1985).

A town-wide Holiday Door Decorating Contest took off in **1955** with seven different categories and has remained popular to this day. The hugely popular Beauty Spot of the Month program was established in **1968** and just a couple of years ago





its 50th anniversary was celebrated at the Andrews residence on Payne Drive.

Furthermore, each year since **1974** a \$1,000 scholarship has been awarded to a graduating high school senior.

The club has also sponsored many town-wide garden tours, including the popular water garden tour several

years ago.

Supporting local and National conservation organizations is possible by virtue of the handsome proceeds from the club's popular Holiday Luncheon held each December at Aqua Turf.

Since **1982**, the club has been actively involved with the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show staged in Hartford each year in February, with two of its members serving as chairman – Peg Mischler and Ginni Donovan.

Also, two of its members have served as president of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut – Sally Shumway 1983-1985 and Inge Venus 2017-2019.



The club has an active Youth program, sponsoring high school students to enter the annual essay contest, with the most recent one taking first place among the New England states.

Over the years elementary students have entered the Woodsy Owl poster contest and several of them have won on the National level.



The club has planted 19 trees throughout town, including an Eastern Redbud to commemorate 911, and has designed and constructed historic, memorial and public gardens in seven different locations, receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from the Town Beautification Committee for the four garden areas at Dodd Middle School.

Standing behind the "ten decades" poster Venus has prepared for this momentous occasion of the Cheshire Garden Club having

reached one hundred years,

are the following four former club presidents, from left to right: Inge Venus, holding up the National flower show rosette award won in 1976; Marvin Carley, holding up the stained glass cement art prepared by



him; Ann O'Hara and current Scholarship Chairman, holding up the club's logo; Nettie Polito and current Membership Chairman, holding up her welcome basket for new members; off to the right side behind the Beauty Spot sign are Treasurer and Bird Report Chairman Carol Goertz, holding up the club horticulture bowl; Assistant Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary Pat Pavelkops, holding up the club design bowl; and Hospitality Chairman Francine Shannon, holding up the Beauty Spot of the Month sign. The poster in the center features the club's annual group pictures taken over a 25-year-period, starting in 1994.

Each of the seven members wore a mask in light of the current pandemic, knowing how important this precautionary practice is nowadays – resting assured that a small ceremony to commemorate the club's 100th anniversary could be held after all on June 17th, exactly at 10:00 a.m. when the club was formed a century ago.

Inge Venus
Cheshire Garden Club Historian
and former Club President

NEGC Calendar

Deadline for the **November issue of Northern Exposure is October 23 – please e-mail articles or questions to editor Nancy Atwell at atwelln@aol.com**

[Editor's note: for additional dates, please check the New England Garden Clubs web site: www.newenglandgc.org and click on **My Calendar**]

Environmental School

Sign up now!

Work your way toward being an Environmental Consultant.

Environmental School 3 - Air and Related Issues, will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 22-23, 2020, virtually, on Zoom!

Go to www.ctgardenclubs.org for the complete brochure and to register online.

Regional Meeting

October 12-13, 2021 - NEGC Annual Meeting at the Village by the Sea Resort in Wells, Maine.

