



NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC

KEEPING IN TOUCH

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

Aug-Sept-Oct 2011

GREETINGS from Shirley Nicolai, NGC President

2011-2013 Theme - NGC: Proudly Serving Our Members and Communities

During my travels from coast to coast and places in between great pleasure and pride has come from meeting with local members of our garden clubs. These dedicated people happily work serving others and accomplish impressive feats while enjoying those special, caring bonds that make our organization so special.

In addition to filling a gap between issues of The National Gardener (TNG), Keeping in Touch (KIT) was created to educate our grass roots members about the bigger picture they are part of because of their membership in a local NGC club. We actually do have members who don't realize that they are also members of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

This publication is sent to every club president and can be found on our website, gardenclub.org. Club presidents are urged to email KIT to all club members who have email. A buddy system can insure that those without email receive a copy and feel included.

For this distribution system to work, it is imperative that contact information for each club president be updated in a timely manner. As wonderful and magical as our staff in St. Louis is, they have no crystal



ball to help determine who's in office in almost 6,000 clubs. Please make sure that your state promptly submits its roster of club presidents when asked.

If you attended the DC Convention or have visited our website recently, you are aware of a professionally designed video created to help recruit new members and to use for

PR purposes. Potential members or anyone from whom you are requesting money for a project has to be impressed by the video's validation of NGC's programs and projects. This tool is just one way NGC is serving our members; no profit is intended.

'Plantings for Public and Special Places', such as gardens with edibles, container gardens or trees and shrubs, is a project which

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Growing Our World
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From Member Services at
1-800-550-6007
\$5.00, including postage
and handling**

should offer something for every club, regardless of size. Community vegetable gardens qualify under Gardens with Edibles. "Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems" could even tie in if trees and/or shrubs were planted in a buffer zone. The ten Blue Star Markers ordered during June offer more possibilities.

As your 42nd National President, I am honored to serve you and welcome your suggestions for making garden club more enjoyable and productive. An initiative is already underway to streamline award applications and forms.

Please enjoy your gardens and your personal garden therapy, while thinking kindly of those who have faced natural disasters this year.

With best garden club wishes,

Shirley

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NGC PRESIDENT'S PROJECT - PLANTINGS FOR PUBLIC AND SPECIAL PLACES

Betsy Steele, Coordinator

Plantings for Public and Special Places is a 2011-2013 President's Project. Representing three areas of interest, this project recognizes ALL garden club service to communities when members provide **Plantings for Public and Special Places**. These plantings can beautify, have environmental value or provide sustenance. Possibilities exist for every garden club, regardless of its size, resources, and energy levels. Clubs, districts and regions will be awarded Certificates of Appreciation and Participation by the NGC President. Details regarding categories and monetary awards will be printed on the NGC website. To receive this recognition, participants are asked to submit an online form, available on the NGC website, along with a before and after digital photo. Check the NGC website under the *Special Projects* section to review monthly updates and TIPS that will inform and stimulate your creative gardening minds!

Garden clubs may submit online forms for any or all of the three (3) areas of interest listed below. Submission deadlines are April 1, 2012 and April 1, 2013. Plantings for Public and Special Places aligns extremely well with other areas of interests of our garden club outreach: Blue Star Memorial Markers, Habitat for Humanity Gardens, Penny Pines, Plant It Pink, Sage and Roses, and Arbor Day ceremonies, to name a few. Imagine the possibilities!

- **Gardens with Edibles:** Chairman: Patricia Rupiper (arupiper@bright.net). Have you heard about Truck Farming? This interesting concept has legs (wheels) that offer a mobile teaching tool, right on the spot! Check the NGC website for details.
- **Container Gardens:** Chairman: Susan Robinson (rerob@mac.com). Think outside of the box! Endless opportunities for teaching children to grow their own greens, right in a pot! Condo dwellers design unique containers and install a unique drip watering system. Much, much more to think about!
- **Trees and Shrubs:** Chairman: Lissa Williamson (erw510@aol.com) Encourage plantings of shrubs to accent your Blue Star Markers. Research your state tree and promote plantings in your community and schoolyard gardens. Consider plantings for erosion prevention. Endless ideas!

Visit the NGC website www.gardenclub.org to review tips and details regarding **Plantings for Public and Special Places**. All State Presidents received a fact sheet in their NGC folders at the NGC Convention in Washington, DC. If you have questions, contact your individual State President or anyone listed in this article for more details. Your state could be recognized for outstanding participation. It all starts with you and your garden club!!

Imagine the possibilities!

Betsy Steele, Coordinator,
Plantings for Public and Special Places
betsysteele@truvista.net

PRESIDENT'S TRAVEL SCHEDULE



July 8-9 Dell Rapids, South Dakota State Convention
July 10-14 Headquarters, St. Louis, Missouri
September 20-25 St. Louis, Missouri
NGC Fall Board meeting
September 27 Washington, DC
National Capital Area 60th Anniversary
October 2-4 Grand Rapids, Michigan
Central Region Convention
October 19-21 San Antonio, Texas
State Fall Convention
October 21-23 Baltimore, Maryland
Central Atlantic Region Conference
November 16 Wilmington, Delaware
General Meeting

Memoriams and Personals...

Nancy Voyles' husband Bobby passed away in June. Nancy is serving on the Nominating Committee, is a former president of Arkansas, and is the current SCR Treasurer. Nancy Voyles, 2926 Hwy 75, Parkin, AR 72373-9058.

Jo Williams' husband Edgar, passed away in May. Jo is the Vice Chairman for Habitat for Humanity and has served on many committees. Jo Williams, 1040 S. W. 22nd Ave., Villa15-4, Delray Beach, FL 33445-6028.

Mary Helen Ray (Mrs. George W. Ray) died last October (2010) in Savannah. Mary was the 1971-1973 President of the Garden Club of Georgia and was a member of The Golden Circle.

Deadline for the next issue of KIT - October 1, 2011

Please send information, articles, etc.
to

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NGC PRESIDENT'S PROJECT - PROTECTING AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

Mary Sue Colvin, Chairman

NGC President, Shirley Nicolai, has chosen **Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems** as one of her special projects for 2011 – 2013. As garden club members, we must be educators, advocates, motivators, and participators in order to be effective in the sponsorship of projects to protect our aquatic ecosystems.

Aquatic ecosystems include rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, creeks, springs, marshes, bogs, wetlands, coastal estuaries, floodplains and aquifers. Each one of us can invest in the future by working to preserve and conserve aquatic ecosystems in our local communities, states and regions.

All living things in an aquatic ecosystem share a watershed. A watershed is an area of land over which all water flows to a common body of water such as a lake or pond. Watersheds can be as large as the Mississippi River drainage basin or as small as a farm with a pond. Altering a watershed will affect all the living things within that watershed. Affecting how water flows over the land may cause harmful materials to flow directly into the water, may destroy habitats, or cause certain organisms to cease to exist.

Water is the most quintessential component of most living organisms. There is more animal and plant life found in water than on land and in the air collectively. Now, more than ever, we are at serious risk of failing to protect our aquatic ecosystems. The amount of moisture on Earth has not changed. The water the dinosaurs drank millions of years ago is the same water that falls on Earth today as rain.

With the exception of the air we breathe, water is the most critical necessity the earth's inhabitants require for life. 70% of the earth's surface, 75% of the human body and 90% of human blood is water. Water equals Life.

Of all the water on Earth, 97% is contained in oceans and seas, 2% is trapped in glaciers and icecaps, leaving only 1% fresh water. Freshwater ecosystems cover less than 1% of the Earth's surface, but are home to 35% of all vertebrate species. In the United States nearly half of the 573 animals on the threatened and endangered list are freshwater species. 40% of all fish species in North America are at risk. It is imperative that we conserve and protect that precious 1% of freshwater!

In 2008, NGC members adopted a water conservation platform that states: National Garden Clubs, Inc. believes it is imperative that we support and undertake proactive initiatives for the protection, conservation and restoration of the quality of the Nation's coastal waters, wetlands, aquifers, watersheds, lakes, rivers and streams, through educational programs, conservation efforts, increased advocacy and

partnerships with related government agencies, and state and national grassroots water coalitions.

This NGC special project empowers garden clubs with the incentive and strategies to be on the front line of environmental responsibility for our communities, states and regions.

What are some of the strategies for Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems? The Nature Conservancy suggests that we:

1. Reduce water demand through effective conservation.
2. Manage water within the bounds of an effective ecological flow prescription.
3. Plan for ecological allocations during droughts.
4. Protect source watersheds.

Strategies for Garden Clubs for Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems:

- Create and promote educational hands-on programs for youth (classrooms, Scouts, 4-H, Junior Garden Clubs).
- Sponsor seminars, workshops and community education events to foster awareness and procedures for protecting aquatic ecosystems.
- Clubs, Districts and/or States adopt an aquatic ecosystem as a project.
- Organize and work with cooperative groups of states sharing like-concerns. (i.e. Mississippi River Basin, Great Lakes Group, Dept. of Environmental Quality, Dept. of Fish and Game/Wildlife and Ecosystem Survival for Central and South America).
- Appoint a dynamic Water Conservation/Protection Chairman in each state and region.
- Appoint a Water Conservation/Protection Chairman for each club and district.
- Adopt water-issue positions.
- Regional and State Workshops.
- Contact your local extension service to promote careful use of water.
- Learn and share information about the EPA's role in ecosystem management.
- Educate the public to practice organic gardening at home with handouts of how to make organic sprays using household ingredients. (i.e. baking soda, vegetable oil, vinegar, composting).
- Access programs on websites for teacher/student activities.
- Educational exhibits at flower shows.
- Become legislatively informed.

Mary Sue Colvin
Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems Chairman
jhcolvin2@bellsouth.net

NGC PRESIDENT'S PROJECT - PHOTO ARCHIVING OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Robin Pokorski, Chairman

We Want YOUR State on Flickr

Share your garden club pictures with the world. Send pictures of your Blue Star Memorial plantings and dedications; your flower shows; your daffodil plantings; your civic beautification projects; your aquatic ecosystems projects; your Plantings for Public & Special Places projects; your glorious hydrangeas (President Shirley's favorite flower); your Arbor Day plantings; the list is long. Be sure to identify the club, district or state and the location.

We'd like a monthly feature of a garden club's project – so send a series of 6-10 pictures of your club's project.

Mostly we want your state represented. Our NGC Flickr site has only 22 states and two regions featured – that's less than half. Get YOUR state on the site. Send pictures to Robin Pokorski at RobinP@juno.com. Then visit the site (www.Flickr.com/NationalGardenClubs) and find pictures for your newsletters and flyers and ideas for projects and plantings and staging and, and, and – it's all there for you.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN AND LEGISLATION - Marion Hilliard, Chairman

PROTECTION OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT ... THE EPA AND THE CORPS ... THE NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS and THE NGC LEGISLATION TEAM IN ACTION.

Clean and abundant water is needed for every living thing on our planet Earth. We cannot survive without it, nor can our gardens, our animals, our trees or our food chain. Congress enacted the Clean Water Act "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." However, over the past decade interpretations of Supreme Court rulings (SWANCC 2003 and Rapanos 2008) removed some critical waters from Federal protection, and caused confusion about which waters and wetlands are protected under the Clean Water Act (CWA). As a result, important waters now lack clear protection under the law.

The need was evident. The U.S. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers developed a draft guidance for determining which waterway, water body or wetland is protected by the Clean Water Act. This guidance would replace all previous guidance. On May 22, 2011, as published in the Federal Register, public comments on the proposed document were sought.

The proposed guidance describes how the agencies will identify waters protected by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of the 1972 Clean Water Act.

Although guidance does not have the force of law, it is frequently used by Federal agencies to explain and clarify their understandings of existing requirements. Field staff will benefit from a new guidance written to include lessons learned since 2008; reflects the agencies' understandings with respect to CWA jurisdiction; is consistent with Supreme Court decisions and agency regulations.

The draft guidance will reaffirm protections for small streams that feed into larger streams, rivers, bays and coastal waters. It will also reaffirm protection for wetlands that filter

pollution and help protect communities from flooding. The guidance will keep safe the streams and wetlands that affect the quality of the water used for drinking, swimming, fishing, farming, manufacturing, tourism and other activities essential to the American economy and quality of life. It also will provide regulatory clarity, predictability, consistency and transparency.

After receiving and analyzing public comments on the proposed guidance, EPA and the Corps expects to finalize the document. The agencies will then undertake rule making consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act. Rule making is expected to start with a proposed rule to clarify further - via regulation - the extent of the Clean Water Act jurisdiction, consistent with the Court's decisions. In order to clarify existing understandings while also considering public comments the EPA and the Corps initially decided to begin the entire process with draft nonbinding guidance. These complex procedures can take months before achieving conclusion.

After careful review of the guidance document, on the 5th of July 2011, Shirley S. Nicolai, President, National Garden Clubs, Inc. submitted comments in support of the Draft Guidance on Identifying Waters Protected by the Clean Water Act. The NGC President noted in the remarks sent to the EPA and the Corps that a special presidential project for her administration was "Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems."

*Are you interested in Legislation Advocacy? Would you like to receive legislation information? Send your name, state and email address to Marion Hilliard: marionh@bellsouth.net (904-264-6619). You also will meet the new NGC Environmental Concerns Legislation Committee Members.

NGC AWARDS 2011-2013 Bobbie Verser, Chairman

NGC AWARDS – 2011-1013

Thank you for working with us as we attempt to make applying for NGC awards much easier. A NEW Awards Application and Listing of Awards appear on the NGC website and will be printed in *The National Gardener, 2011 Fall issue*. (Be sure to save the 2011 Fall issue of *The National Gardener* for future reference.)

If 'BIG MONEY' is in your vocabulary, please study the information concerning NGC awards #71, #73, and #74, listed under "Operation Wildflower Awards". The use of native plants in your landscaping projects may be rewarded. Many of you are doing this type of planting. Consider applying for the nearly \$10,000, which was divided among states and clubs last year.

Bobbie Verser
NGC Awards Chair
bobbieverser@att.net

NGC GRANTS/DEVELOPMENT/ BEQUESTS COMMITTEE Pat Westgard, Chairman

This committee wishes to report that a new Contribution Form has been placed on the NGC website. The NGC Stewards/Friends/Honor Books Chairman, Joan Wipperman, has updated the old form so that it reflects changes in acknowledging donation amounts for the current administration. It also updates the list of funds.

This form is to be used for donations that your clubs or members wish to make to PH&E as well as for Natural Disasters (International and USA), Scholarships, World Gardening, Running Waters, Plant it Pink, Penny Pines, Seeds of Tomorrow or any other NGC donations.

Pat Westgard
Chairman

NGC FLOWER SHOW ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS Jo Krallman, Chairman

FLOWER SHOW ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS BOOK OF EVIDENCE UPDATE

In an effort to simplify flower show award applications and to cut cost of mailing for both the state and NGC, a pilot program is being tried in the hopes of making some permanent changes to the Flower Show Awards application process. The following are the rules I'm asking be used on a trial basis.

RULES FOR FLOWER SHOW AWARD PERSONNEL WISHING TO SUBMIT CD/DVD BOOK OF EVIDENCE

(Books of Evidence will still be accepted if a club chooses not to do a CD/DVD.)

Book of Evidence (BOE) may be prepared either on CD/DVD using either WORD or Power Point if you don't have the capability of saving in PDF. (Due to difficulty of some not being able to open other programs, these are the only formats that will be accepted.) **BUT if you have the capability of saving in PDF format then you can compile your BOE in any program that you choose as long as you save it into PDF before putting it on a CD/DVD.** That allows the people on my end of the system to open it in Adobe Reader.

You should attach the label to the CD/DVD so that we know what your CD/DVD contains. Then proceed to assemble the pages of the BOE in the order dictated in the *Handbook for Flower Shows* found on pages 61-63.

DO NOT put the Flower Show Schedule on the CD/DVD

Submit CD/DVD with 1 paper copy of Award Application and 1 copy of the schedule. Put all components inside an envelope for mailing. Submit to your state awards chairman. State Awards Chairmen will then include evaluation sheets before sending to me.

CD/DVD & schedule will not be returned. Only evaluation of show will be returned.

Question arose following this year's awards regarding states that move BOE's to another award # if they have two really good books applying for the same award. I realize that if the CD is in PDF that number cannot be changed. If anyone has a solution to this problem I would love to receive your idea and I'll pass it along to all chairmen if I think it is feasible and will work. So far I am at a loss as to how to change this.

If questions arise during composition of the CD/DVD do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

I would love to hear from anyone with positive or negative comments regarding this process. It is a learning process for all of us and hopefully we can work out the problems before making any permanent changes.

Jo Krallman, FS Achievement Awards Chairman
4714 Pine Drive
Benton, AR 72019-9196
krallman@sbcglobal.net
(501-847-9171)

NGC SCHOOLS NEWS - Greg Pokorski, ES, GS and LD Schools Coordinator

The following recommendations (applicable to Environmental Studies (ES) Schools, Gardening Study (GS) Schools and Landscape Design (LD) Schools were adopted at the May 27, 2011 Pre-Convention NGC Board Mtg in Washington, DC.

1. ES, GS and LD Schools held back-to-back must consist of at least a two (2) day minimum for each course.
2. All requirements as stated in the ES, GS and LD Handbooks/Operations Guide must be maintained; i.e., number of subjects and time allotment for each subject - ten (10) hours per course - exclusive of the examination time allotment.
3. Unless these requirements are met, the NGC Schools Chairmen have the final authority to grant or not grant approval or accreditation for a state school course or event.

This action taken by the NGC Executive Committee at its Winter Board Meeting in January 2011 was ratified by the Board of Directors at the May 27, 2011 Board Meeting:

That ES, GS, and LD Schools/Refreshers held without prior NGC accreditation be disqualified, and the establishment of a six-week time line for ES, GS, and LD School chairmen to submit rosters following the conclusion of a course, refresher or multiple refreshers be ratified. (This ruling applies to state, regional and NGC sponsored courses/events.)

All local, state and national Schools Chairmen should note these policies. State Presidents, please share this information with your state ES, GS and LD Chairmen.

If there are questions, please contact the Educational Opportunity/NGC Schools Team, led by the following for the 2011-2013 term:

Environmental Studies School:

Judy Newman – newman9641@aol.com

Gardening Study School:

Greg Pokorski – gregpokorski@earthlink.net

Landscape Design School:

Jane Bersch – janebersch@aol.com

NGC LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOLS - Jane Bersch, Chairman

NGC Schools offer members a multitude of opportunities to learn and become better stewards of our world. Landscape Design Schools is one of these. State Presidents are requested to advise their state Landscape Design Schools Chairman that, at the recent NGC Convention in Washington, DC, the name of Landscape Design Study Program was changed to "Landscape Design Schools" to coordinate with the titles of Gardening Study Schools and Environmental Studies Schools. The Operations Guide will be updated but all the material contained therein is still correct.

Do consider scheduling a series of LD Schools Courses.

The LD Study Program Operations Guide outlines the procedure and the Committee will assist. Contacts are the 3 Accrediting Chairmen: Pat Clayes(SA, DS, C) patchayes@aol.com; Allison Beards (SC,RM,P) windymt@prexar.com; Jacqueline Connell(NE,CA) themusesgarden@netscape.net; Vice-Chairman Janet Kinney - jh.jbkinney@verizon.net; Reading/Literature Chairman Jo'C Walker - jocwalker@centurytel.net; Instructors' Chairman Rebecca Linney - rlldesigns@aol.com; Consultants' Councils Chairman Victoria Bergensen - victoriabergesen@gmail.com will edit Newscapes. Sara Lambarri, saralambarri@prodigy.net.mx continues as the IA Chairman.

For any concerns contact me at - Janebersch@aol.com.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES SCHOOLS - Judy Newman, Chairman

There is a NEW Environmental Studies School brochure available at NGC Headquarters which includes subjects taught at each of the four courses.

Also approved by the NGC Board of Directors at the Convention in Washington DC was the addition of a second Required Reading Text Book, *Bringing Nature Home – How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants* by Douglas W. Tallamy. This text is filled with insights about the relationships between plants, insects, butterflies, spiders, birds and animals which relates to "Gardening with Nature" one of the subjects taught in Course I of the Environmental Studies School.

Judy Newman, NGC Environmental Studies
School Chairman - newman9641@aol.com

SMOKEY BEAR/WOODSY OWL POSTER CONTEST - Elaine Dates, Chairman

After celebrating fifty years of collaboration with the Forest Service, NGC invites you to participate in the **2012 Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest**. Rules and prizes are found on NGC's website as well as the 2011 winners with their posters.

The 1st grade, winner Ciana Cecilia

Main, sponsored by the Ketchikan GC in Alaska, the 2nd grade winner, Jacob David Lucero, sponsored by the La Casa GC in California, the 3rd grade winner, Emma Marie Fockele, sponsored by the Crabapple GC in Georgia, and the 5th grade winner, Ana Alvarez, sponsored by the Owyhee GC in Idaho were honored.

The Grand Prize Winner and the 4th grade winner, Vaibhavi Patankar, was sponsored by the West Valley Garden Club in California and received a trip to Washington. The state chair with the most participants was Barbara Ohmsen from Virginia. Congratulations to all participants.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

NEW ENGLAND REGION JOYCE A. KIMBALL

"Observe, Conserve and Preserve the Beauty All Around You..."

New England is bursting with colorful blossoms---our new State Presidents! Having had the opportunity to become more acquainted with our 2011-2013 NER State Presidents during the National Convention, I am delighted to report that they are all ready, willing and able to bring their enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise to their garden club members over the next two years! I am sincerely looking forward to working with these special ladies during this administration in the pursuit of honoring and promoting NGC's mission.

NER Officers and Chairmen will be getting together on July 14th for an informal Organizational Meeting where attendees will give reports, make announcements about their areas of responsibility, ask questions, offer opinions, socialize and network.

The New England Region's 77th Annual Meeting will take place on October 17-18 immediately followed by the NER Symposium on October 18-20 in Chelmsford, MA hosted by the Garden Club Federation of MA, Inc. Details can be found on the NER website www.ngcner.org.

CENTRAL ATLANTIC REGION JEANNE T. NELSON

The CAR's *Regional Review* is a great success with state presidents contributing their objectives. The inclusion of a new CAR award, "GOLDEN PERENNIAL BLOOM AWARD", honoring long standing club members with the planting of a shrub or tree, has been met with enthusiasm. "Generations Gardening Together" is a new youth program started with the hope of extending our adult membership into the local schools and contact with young people. To honor service personnel, the "Trail of Blue Stars" project has been developed into a map with the Blue Star Markers forming a trail through the CAR. One area of concern is the "community garden". Workshops are being planned to develop guidelines on how to develop them, different types suitable to each community and continued maintenance. "Call to Action - because every new member matters!" Will be a block by block plan to increase garden club membership. We are looking forward to working together as a team. "GARDENING WITH PRIDE, HONORING HOME, COMMUNITY & COUNTRY".

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION MARY DIXON

The theme for the South Atlantic Region, "Members Are The Link To The Future" has an emphasis on: Inviting new members to join our clubs, Communicating the Rewards of Membership and Educating our members about the Opportunities will be carried out with Special SAR Awards to encourage participation. The goal for the South Atlantic Region will be to increase membership. A new website is being designed to support better communication and will include a more up-to-date calendar of events so members will be aware of schools, symposiums and events in the South Atlantic Region. Regional chairmen are requested to communicate information and goals about their chairmanship to the members through their state representatives. Keeping the line of communication open and flowing will be everyone's responsibility.

DEEP SOUTH REGION SARA LANIER

In 1891, twelve ladies met in Athens, GA to organize the first garden club in America. So that we best keep the legacy of those twelve ladies alive, the theme for this term will be "Membership Offers Opportunities for Everyone" and the Deep South Regional Project is "Building Membership".

What are the action plans for "Building Membership"? (1) Recruitment - how to get them? (2) Retention - how to keep them? (3) New Clubs - how to grow them? (4) Education - what's available for them?

The first step in the Deep South action plan...a booklet, "Building Membership", was compiled and focuses on ways to build membership such as - 40 ways to increase membership, understanding a garden club's organization, procedures for forming a new garden club, suggested bylaws for a new garden club, and samples of an invitation to a meeting, a business card about the garden club, and a letter from the club president welcoming the new member. This booklet has been printed and given out to our 6 Presidents and the Deep South membership leaders to be used and copied for their State Membership Chairmen.

In order to continue the legacy given to us, we need the support of all members and team leaders as we seek new and innovative methods to encourage new member growth and retention.

CENTRAL REGION FLORENCE SMITH

It has been a very busy spring from Conventions to the WAFA show. Many thanks to the Central Region members who entered or participated in some capacity in the show. It was a spectacular event to behold.

Michigan Garden Clubs are preparing for the Tri-Refresher/Central Region Meeting, October 2-4, 2011 in Grand Rapids. The Co-chairmen, Deannie Picciotti and Lynn Miller, Vice Chairman Dolores Stouwie and committees have been preparing for this event. Shirley Nicolai will be our guest at the Convention and we are looking forward to her visit.

My theme for this administration is "Together We Bloom and Grow." I'm challenging the seven CR states to grow new members. Membership is a great concern to all of us not only in garden clubs but in every volunteer organization. I'm also asking CR states to plant flowering trees in public and special places.

I'm looking forward to the challenge of this office and to growing Friendships in Central Region.

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION JUDY GROTTES

Theme 'Share What You Grow - Share What You Know'

Greetings from the South Central Region. The SCR installation was March 12th, in Oklahoma. Our states, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas selected an outstanding Executive Board. Work has started on major projects. Each state has selected a project from NGC President's Special Projects.

'Growing Edibles' is the title that was selected for the SCR project. Members were reminded that some flowers might be edible. Keep a record of what you grow and share. If a member gives a program(s) containing Edibles, Planting for Community, or Water Quality we are asking that they include it in the book of evidence.

A Revision committee is working on the Bylaws. The Awards chairman and committee is working on simplifying the rules. A book will be produced at a later date.

Texas and New Mexico have dedicated Blue Star Memorials; Oklahoma held a symposium; Arkansas is busy gardening and preparing for the next SCR convention March 30-31, 2012. It will be held in Little Rock, AR.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION TERRY KROKE

Theme - "Garden Clubs Make Your World Better". Regional Project - We Make Our World a Better Place to Live.

Mother Nature has not been kind to much of the Rocky Mountain Region this spring. Heavy rainfall and deep snow pack in the mountains have caused devastating floods from Montana and the Dakotas to Kansas. Thousands of homes have been inundated. Clubs in several states are making plans to apply for NGC's Natural Disaster USA funds to help restore gardens in their communities.

Meanwhile, state garden clubs have been meeting to install their new officers. This director was pleased to attend the conventions of Montana Federation of Garden Clubs in Havre and North Dakota State Garden Clubs in New England. Thank you to RMR Alternate Director Margaret Straley for standing in for me at the Wyoming Federation of Garden Clubs convention in Cheyenne on the same day as the North Dakota meeting.

PACIFIC REGION DEBBIE HINCHEY

Theme - "Looking In and Reaching Out"

We have been quietly giving out scholarships (so quietly that sometimes applicants are lacking). We have been buying, installing, and maintaining public spaces (so quietly that often people do not know how those wildflowers or tulips suddenly showed up along a roadside; or that a tree on the school grounds was donated to celebrate Arbor Day).

I am encouraging all members to keep a diary of garden club related activities. Count hours spent preparing plants for your club's plant sale; advertising/giving scholarships; preparing educational programs and displays; time discovering and implementing water use (or conservation) methods like xeriscaping, rain gardens, fish habitat restoration, water and air purity; Penny Pines donations; etc.

Members will be pleasantly shocked how important they and their garden clubs are. By adding up the hours, cash, in-kind donations, and keeping track of the various activities the raw data will be readily available to inform others (hopefully in the media).

This not only gives us pride, it gives the garden club clout.

NATURAL DISASTERS USA FUND Adrienne Langan, Chairman

There has been a change in the amount of money that can be allocated from the NGC Natural Disasters USA Fund to Clubs and States sponsoring restoration projects due to natural disasters in their area. Upon review by the Natural Disasters Committee, a Member Club or State Garden Club may now receive up to a maximum of \$5,000.00 per natural disaster project within the NGC fiscal year. Applications are available on the website.

Unfortunately, as we all know, sections of our country have been beset with disasters of epic proportions! Our fellow garden club members are struggling in these devastated areas to find a way to assist in restoring their landscapes, their treasured gardens and park lands which have all but disappeared in the wake of tornadoes, fires and floods. We are receiving requests for assistance from Member Clubs and States. Their Garden Club spirit is alive, but funds are desperately needed for the success of their planned restorations. Won't you extend a helping hand to our fellow Garden Club Members across the country, by generously contributing to the NGC Natural Disasters USA Fund? Your donations to this Fund will not only help to support their restoration efforts, but will go a long way to strengthen their motivation to achieve their goals and objectives.

Send donations to the NGC Natural Disasters USA Fund to:

Adrienne Langan, Chairman,
27 Strawberry Lane
Lakewood, New Jersey 08701

All donations will be gratefully acknowledged, deposited in NGC's Natural Disaster USA Account and disbursed as grants to qualified applicants.

*** * CONGRATULATIONS * * CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUBS, INC.**

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