



Keeping In Touch

May - July 2016



Sandra H. Robinson

*2015-2017 President
National Garden Clubs, Inc.*

In This Issue

- The President's Greeting and Travel Schedule
- Plant It Pink
- NGC Schools News and Tri-Refresher in Maine
- Environmental Concerns
- Bee a Wildlife Action Hero
- Million Pollinator Garden Challenge
- Membership
- "Toad Abodes"
- Member Services
- 4 and 5 Star Program
- Attracting New Members
- "Sandy's Choice" Hemerocallis
- Leadership
- Penny Pines
- Take a Byte
- News from the Regions
- Youth News and Winning High School Essay
- In Memoriam
- Photo Contest Information

I blinked and a year passed! A year filled with special moments, new friends, great memories, incredible garden club stories, and travels from shore to shore. Thank you for the many invitations to your meetings. Each meeting has left me with renewed passion for our organization and hope for its success throughout this century and beyond. Thank you to the hard-working, dedicated NGC Board of Directors, club presidents, and gardeners who work diligently making a difference in their communities, clubs, and our organization. We know that garden club membership changes lives in profound ways. I met many who shared their story of growth, new found confidence, and the desire to continue challenging themselves to bigger and greater accomplishments. Why not share this opportunity with someone at work, church, or a next door neighbor? Invite others to your garden club.

The voice of the gardener is more important than ever. To understand nature, children must know nature. Younger generations need mentors to show them the value of conservation, preservation, and the environment. The poetry, essay, sculpture, and poster contests are tools to engage students with nature. Fewer students are enrolling in Landscape Architecture, Horticulture, and related fields across the United States. Maybe we are seeing the results of a generation who did not grow up playing outdoors, learning the mysteries of the natural world, and the respect for a career caring and preserving what we hold so dear. As gardeners, we must work to connect youth and nature. Be a mentor, champion a youth, and make a difference in their life.

The Frightened Frog, An Environmental Tale, continues to delight children from coast to coast. Educators are using the book and lesson plans to introduce children to environmental issues in a positive manner. The Monarch butterflies, bees, and other pollinators are increasing, thanks to the efforts of gardeners and public officials to plant host plants and pollinator gardens, educate the general public about the benefits of pollinators, and the economic impact if lost. Thank you for your efforts in the Million Pollinator Garden initiative and other programs working to increase awareness of this timely issue. Remember to register your gardens.

Birthdays are special celebrations. August 2016 we celebrate one of America's "best ideas", the National Park Service. President Ulysses S. Grant, on March 1, 1872, signed legislation establishing Yellowstone as the nation's first national park. The Organic Act of 1916, signed by President Woodrow Wilson, created the National Park Service "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

In our increasingly hectic world, the national parks are natural sanctuaries providing a time out to recharge while surrounded by natural beauty and serenity. We are healthier when spending time outdoors. Researchers identify weight loss, an increase in brain functions and creativity, a boost of the immune system, better sleep patterns, and a greater sense of happiness as some of the benefits of spending time in a "green" environment. The exposure to forests and the possible prevention of certain kinds of cancer is being explored by Japanese researchers. Exposure to nature does reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve mood. Green therapy, also known as ecotherapy, is

believed to reduce depression. The University of Essex researchers found a walk in nature reduced depression scores by 71 percent in participants. Hospital patients with a view of nature also recover faster from surgery.

Americans enjoy the scenic beauty of our natural areas, with all their biodiversity and ecosystems, while learning about natural history. The National Park System excelled in tourism during the 20th century when rapid growth saw our natural resources and biodiversity diminishing. The recently created Natural Resource Challenge moves the National Park Service closer to their mission, nature preservation. Our national parks contain some of the most pristine landscapes in the world with opportunities for scientists to study the effect of human impact on natural communities. Across our vast mountains and seashores, scientists study man's impact on ecosystems and biodiversity from dams, mining, fire, the draining of wetlands, fracking, invasive species, pollution, and climate change. We protect what we love. Visit the parks during this historic 100th birthday celebration, and enjoy the green space and tranquility they continue to provide.

I look forward to visiting the other great state organizations and hearing of the numerous accomplishments of member clubs. Thank you for the priceless opportunity to share the love of gardening and membership.

Leap into Action!

Sandra H. Robinson

PLANT IT PINK ... PLANET PINK!

CARCILLE BURCHETTE, CHAIRMAN

Spring is finally here! The danger of frost is over for most of us by now...time to really get serious about planting PINK FLOWERS EVERYWHERE! Mass plantings of pink flowers can make a big statement for breast cancer awareness.

Many of us have been affected by this terrible disease? Just this past week, one of my former students succumbed after a long, courageous battle and left two young children behind. Her family and friends are devastated. At her age, one does not consider screenings and mammograms, and time may not have been a factor. Time can make a difference for most people. This is why we should plant pink flowers in strategic places and let people know why pink is the chosen color...that men and women both must be aware of breast cancer and encourage all to have routine exams and not wait.

Lawns of city parks, city halls, courthouses, schools, libraries, and centers for tourism all would be strategic places for a Plant It Pink Garden. Invite local sports teams, Girl Scouts,

PRESIDENT'S TRAVEL SCHEDULE	
April 14 -16	Nebraska City, NE Federated Garden Clubs of Nebraska
April 17-19	Orlando, FL Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.
April 29-30	Tulsa, OK Oklahoma Garden Clubs, Inc.
May 2- 9	Grand Rapids, MI National Garden Clubs, Inc.
May 18-21	Irving, CA California Garden Clubs, Inc.
June 7-10	Bellevue, WA Washington State Fed. of Garden Clubs
June 11	Fargo, ND North Dakota State Garden Clubs
June 12-14	Lewiston, ID Garden Clubs of Idaho, Inc.
June 15-16	Bar Harbor, ME The Garden Club Federation of Maine, Inc.
June 17	Burlington, VT Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont, Inc.
June 18	Washington, DC National Capitol Area Garden Clubs, Inc.
June 22	Washington, DC Smokey Bear National Poster Winners
June 24	Newport, RI Newport Flower Show
June 28-29	Gainesville, GA The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
July 8	Springfield, IL Standard Flower Show

school youth clubs, and other youth organizations to help your club with the plantings. Sometimes mass plantings are not feasible, but a pot brimming over with pink flowers would be very eye catching!

Organize walks or participate in walks with other organizations to encourage awareness. Have displays at flower shows or other local events. Organize a Pink Tea or sell Plant It Pink t-shirts for awareness, giving the funds to a local cancer organization. Check your local hospital for foundations that help their cancer patients.

Think **PINK** as you look around your community...tiny spots will become visible to you! Plant pink flowers now or pink bulbs in the fall and mark them as Plant It Pink!

We hope that Plant It Pink markers will be available for purchase on the NGC website soon. By using these markers to designate a PIP Garden or PIP Pot, people will know of the National Garden Clubs' commitment to breast cancer awareness.

NGC SCHOOLS NEWS

GREG POKORSKI, ES, GS AND LD SCHOOLS
COORDINATOR

NGC's Schools Committees will soon be meeting at the NGC Convention in Grand Rapids. **Please let us know if you have issues, questions or suggestions** regarding these schools. Our committees meet only twice a year so it helps to know your concerns in advance so that we can be sure to address them. Our goals include creating and maintaining quality educational programs while making the administration of these programs more user-friendly.

Our International Affiliate representatives have been working with the chairmen for the May 2 NGC Convention Tri-Refresher to pre-register and pre-screen IA Consultants, while Headquarters has assisted with IA payments by credit card. Feedback so far indicates that this has streamlined a process that previously contained glitches.

Consultants who are attending the May 2 Tri-Refresher (and those who participate in any Refresher) are reminded to **advise your State School Chairmen that you will be attending the refresher**. This allows them to advise you if there is any issue with your eligibility to refresh, and alerts them to be expecting updates to your Consultant status and refresher certificate cards that will be forwarded to you after the paperwork for the event is processed.

We now have nine Multiple Refreshers that have been scheduled for this year. Refer to the instructions and forms available on the NGC website. Forms can be emailed, but **send checks (payable to NGC) to Multiple Refresher Chairman Lana Finegold**, 1414 179th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98008. See the Gardening Study Schools article in this issue for information about New York's current innovative approach to staging a Multiple Refresher.

We have received recent suggestions that people (garden club members or not) **sample NGC schools by attending Multiple Refreshers for the fun of learning**. Those who are not Consultants cannot receive refresher credit for attending these events, but they can learn and see new places and enjoy new experiences, and hopefully this will entice some to try our schools. We have recently heard that some believe "only Master Consultants may attend a Tri-Refresher." Absolutely not true. Again, hopefully you **welcome anyone who wants to attend any refresher or school course**. Consultants may receive refresher credit from a Multiple Refresher in one school. Master Consultants may receive multiple refresher credits (two or three) in a Multiple Refresher for all schools in which they hold Master status. Of course, any Consultant must be eligible (in good standing) in order to receive any refresher credit.

We need the cooperation of all involved in the administration of school courses and refresher events to **make sure that outlines, exams and handouts, as well as promotional materials and registration forms, are neat, professional and correct**. Materials should be screened and proofed at every level. State chairmen should not receive messy materials, typos, grammatical errors, etc. from local chairmen and should not pass such poor quality materials on to national chairmen – and these kinds of materials should never reach our students. Our work product should reflect the pride we have in National Garden Clubs and in our State Garden Clubs and should always make a good impression on the public, our students and our instructors. Thanks for helping us shine!

GARDENING STUDY SCHOOLS

BARBARA HADSELL, CHAIRMAN

First of all, a big congratulations to Tennessee for completing Course I in March—the first time the NGC Gardening Study School has been held in that state. Maggie Burns, chairman, reached out for support by having the TFGC District III Flower Show Judges Association sponsor the school with highly qualified instructors Tina Tuttle and Gina Jogan, members of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, come to Chattanooga to teach the Course. Well done! And we recently heard from Colorado and Oregon that Gardening Study School has come back to life under the direction of Margie Soileau—Colorado, and in Oregon as well with help from Washington State and Pacific Region GSS Chair Sally Priebe. Wonderful news!

One of our newest GSS State Chairmen Vikki Bellias, was concerned that some of the GS consultants in the New York City area were about to lose their good standing status and needed to refresh without having to travel extensively. So she developed a new concept for refreshing that turned into a Tri-Refresher with NGC Refresher Chairman Lana Finegold's approval. She writes:

"We have been approved for a Tri-Refresher this spring in Second District. This was a combined effort of our NYS Environmental Studies, Gardening Studies and Landscape Design Chairmen. We are combining two events that are related to our National Garden Clubs educational programs in order to total the required hours of training for refresher credit. The first course sponsored by Second District is Horticulture Day, which covered Urban Landscapes, Environmental concerns and designing with unusual woody plants for the garden. The second day is the Cornell Cooperative Extension Suffolk County Spring Gardening School with

full day attendance required, including the keynote speaker program and class units aimed at the goals related to the area that the students wish to refresh in.

We have been very pleased with this new model. We believe that it will encourage club members, who are not able to travel far or stay overnight, to attend a refresher course to maintain their credentials. As members continue to grow in the areas of gardening, landscape and environmental concerns, we hope that they will be able to bring this information back to their club members to initiate new projects, or to encourage more members to take advantage of these educational opportunities. Increased education and awareness will promote a greener and healthier world for us all."

Congratulations to New York State for innovative thinking and follow-up.

Bring Gardening Study School to your state!

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOLS

JANE BERSCH, CHAIRMAN

Landscape Design Schools are taking place in many states this spring and some are already planned for this fall. Congratulations to the states which have chosen to **Leap into Action!**

A reminder to all the LDS Chairmen to whom I hope this message will be passed. The outlines and exam questions of Instructors who are teaching a new topic must be approved by the NGC LDS Instructors' Chairman, Victoria Bergesen. All the material may be sent by email to her at Victoriabergesen@gmail.com. This is to insure that a clear and high quality outline is given to the students and that core principles are covered. Exam question subjects must be included in the outlines. LDS Chairmen are requested to review the outlines and exam questions before submitting them to the Instructors' Chairman for approval. Accuracy of material is so important for our students and Consultants to benefit from their attendance at the Course.

I urge State Presidents and Landscape Design Councils to consider a Landscape Design Refresher, not only for the benefit of Consultants, but for all their members to enjoy. Consider unique gardens and historic homes, or landscapes displaying the newer trends, such as rain gardens or roof gardens. Visit a garden designed for children or a therapeutic garden for the elderly. Gardens designed to attract pollinators are so crucial. You will need 8 hours of tours and lectures. The LDS Operations Guide 2012 details how to do a Refresher. Contact me for assistance janebersch@aol.com.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS / CONSERVATION AND PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL PROJECTS

MARIAN M. McNABB, MONARCH WATCH CHAIRMAN



Spring has arrived for many of us; time to plant for our butterflies and pollinators. First, decide what you'd like to attract to this garden. Butterflies? If so, what kind? If it's Monarchs, their host plant is Milkweed. Check on what specie of Milkweed is native to your area and plant only that specie of Milkweed.

Add other plants, both annuals and perennials. A few that come to mind are Zinnia's, Sunflowers, a variety of Sedum, Coneflowers, Phlox, Liatrus, Monarda, Nasturtians, Cosmos, and Tithonia, also known as Mexican Sunflower. Tithonia is an excellent flower, an annual, for attracting pollinators. When I plant Tithonia, there's never a day when it's blooming that it doesn't have butterflies on it.

Remember not to use chemicals on this garden because those chemicals will kill the pollinators that we want to attract. Another word of caution is Neonicotinoid. Some plants and seeds have been treated with this chemical. It can kill our pollinators for more than one season. Be cautious! Ask if the plants or seeds that you're purchasing have been treated with Neonicotinoids.

Be sure to check out our National Garden Clubs website, under President's Special Project, Monarch Watch, and look for our new publication, "Inviting Butterflies into Your Garden." If you don't have a printer, you can order a copy of from Headquarters for only \$3. It's an excellent reference when planning or planting a butterfly garden.

NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK - JUNE 5-11, 2016

ELAINE DIPIETRO, CHAIRMAN

National Garden Week is always the first full week in June. This is a special week designed to focus public attention on the programs, projects, and activities promoted by garden clubs. Plan community events. Work with children -- teach them how to grow vegetables and flowers. Clubs are encouraged to promote joining a garden club and to interact with the public. Please apply for an award and describe your club activities during National Garden Week.

**BEE A WILDLIFE ACTION HERO!
COMMIT TO GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE
NEONICS 101**

BECKY HASSEBROEK, HABITAT CHAIRMAN

What's all the buzz about that new word we keep hearing about? You know – the one that no one seems to be able to pronounce. Does it look like this? **NEONICOTINOIDS**. Yep, that's the one. Let's call it "Neonics" for short.

Neonics is a systemic insecticide that began to be used in the mid-1990s. Supposedly, it was a less-toxic alternative to insecticides that were harmful to humans. Neonics were deemed "reduced risk" by the EPA and fast-tracked to market. They quickly became the most heavily used class of insecticides, and they now make up about 30% of the insecticide market worldwide. They are generally present in all landscapes!

Seven chemicals are classified as neonics – and you need to be able to at least recognize them: dinotefuran, acetamiprid, clothianidin, imidacloprid, nitenpyram, thiacloprid, and thiamethoxam. Whew! They are similar in chemical structure to nicotine, and all of them control pests by binding to receptors in the insects' nervous systems and blocking nerve impulses.

So what's the big deal? Well...

- They **persist** in plants and soil **for months to years** after they're applied and can accumulate from one season to another.
- They are **highly toxic** to insects and many animal species, including beneficial insects and **all of our pollinators**.
- They are water soluble and **readily move into water bodies**. The latest research found neonics in more than half of our streams.
- And, because they are absorbed by plant tissues and **become systemic** (even when sprayed on foliage), they move into pollen and nectar, thereby following a direct route to our pollinators!



Neonics are believed to be one of the leading causes of the demise of pollinators! Our pollinators are essential for two-thirds of the food crops we eat every day. The EPA is not scheduled to take action on this problem until 2018.

So it's up to all of us! Please...

- **Plant bee-friendly plants using only organic starts or untreated seeds in organic potting soil.** Many (one study shows over 54%) of "bee friendly" garden plants sold at home garden centers (including Lowe's, Home Depot, TruValue, Ace Hardware, and Walmart to name a few), have been pre-treated with neonics. The treated plants contaminate your gardens and keep harming our pollinators for months to years. Lowe's and Home Depot have agreed to phase out neonics, but it might take some time.
- **Do not use neonics of any kind in your garden!** Provide habitat to attract beneficial insects that prey on pest insects. If pest pressure is too high, use insecticidal soaps or oils and other eco-friendly pest control products.
- **Share your knowledge! This is a serious problem, and to turn it around will take all of our efforts!**

Many thanks to the Xerces Society and Friends of the Earth for the research contained in this article.



Just one more bit of information for you. You all know about the **Million Pollinator Garden Challenge** by this time. Most of our clubs have projects that are involving pollinator gardens – besides your own gardens where you are adding host and nectar plants for our pollinators. There

is a **SHARE** map where you've been asked to register these gardens. The goal is a Million Gardens, and many organizations are working towards that goal! Do you know how many NGC'ers across the nation have registered their gardens? Out of over 189,000 gardens that have been registered at this time, only approximately 350 are associated with NGC members – that's all! We're gaining a lot of good publicity through our inaugural garden partnership with the **Million Pollinator Garden Network**, and this number is a bit embarrassing. We can do better than this! It only takes a moment, and IT'S FREE to register! Please either access it through our website gardenclub.org, or go to pollinator.org and click on the **SHARE** map, and be sure to connect your registration to NGC! Ask your friends, as well! This is an excellent opportunity to show the world who NGC'ers are and what we can accomplish!

MEMBERSHIP --

BRENDA MOORE, MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

“A bend in the road is not the end of the road...Unless you fail to make the turn.” – Helen Keller

Membership is like a highway – there are straight stretches and there are bends in the road. National Garden Clubs has existed since 1929. The first garden club, which was in Georgia, has been in existence even longer. That is certainly a long stretch, and I’m sure there were many bends in the road!

We need to keep advertising ourselves and what we have to offer - we are the largest volunteer gardening organization in the world! We need to keep inviting potential members to join us. We need to keep following up on NGC membership inquiries at the club, state and national level. When membership inquiries come in and there are no garden clubs in the area of the potential member, consider sponsoring and starting a new club. We need to stop looking at ourselves and those who have joined garden clubs, and start looking at those who are not joining. We need to ask why, and figure out how we might change to attract them, especially younger adults. It might mean fewer and shorter meetings. It might mean keeping expenses low. It might mean creating a new type of club to better suit them.

The definition of a club is “an association or organization dedicated to a particular interest or activity”. This definition leaves the door wide open for creating a new type of club. Maybe it’s a club only interested in floral arranging; maybe it’s an hour lunch meeting at a workplace; maybe it’s teachers interested in beautifying their school; maybe it’s a study group that has lectures on landscaping. Think outside the box when it comes to creating clubs.

The NGC Membership Committee continues to work on ways to help attract members. To accomplish changes we will have to maneuver the bend in the road and think outside of the box.

Excerpted from the NGC Newsletter MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Leap into Action!

MULTIPLE REFRESHER “THE WAY LIFE SHOULD BE”

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2016 INCLUDING AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE NGC FALL BOARD MEETING IN PORTLAND, MAINE
FIND MORE INFORMATION ON THE [NGC WEBSITE](#)

TOAD ABODES

By **Mary Ellen Wynes**

Mt. Pleasant Garden Club, Michigan

A toad may be ugly
I will not dispute.
He’s not even colorful,
cuddly or cute.
But his dry warty skin
and his big, bulging eyes
are soon overlooked
by gardeners wise.
For an averaged-sized toad
on a nice summer day
will eat many insects
and keep pests away.
A toad home will give him
a cool shady spot
to reside in your garden
or vegetable plot.
He’ll welcome your kindness
from his toad B. and B.
and you’ll reap the benefits
ec-o-logic-ally!

Make a Toad Abode

Encourage toads to reside in your yard. They provide a pesticide-free method of ridding your flowers and vegetables of unwanted insects. Do-it-Yourself homes are easy and inexpensive to make. Here are three housing ideas that can be placed in a shady spot. If there is no water source nearby, sink a dish into the soil and keep it filled.

- Lay a clay pot on its side horizontally and bury the lower half in the soil.
- Prop a clay pot on some stones which have been arranged in a semi-circle, with one edge higher than the rest to provide a gap for a door.



- Tap out a door on a clay pot and place it upside down on the ground.



MEMBER SERVICES

'Something for Everyone'

BARBARA CAMPBELL, CHAIRMAN

I am looking forward to seeing you all at Convention in Grand Rapids. Make your first stop the Member Services table to pick up your "hot off the press" magnetic NGC logo Badge Holder. This will show off your name while protecting your clothing and neck. Also while there, peruse all the goodies that have been sent for your shopping pleasure, and save on shipping. Gabby will be back at headquarters ready to fill your orders for 2017 calendars, flower show supplies, books for our courses, **The Frightened Frog** and the beautiful scarf depicting President Robinson's theme of protecting our pollinators.

Interested in selling new items at your next meeting? NGC's Member Services Department is now offering consignment orders exclusively for State and Region meetings. Unsold items may be returned, and billing will follow after your meeting. Discounts on quantity orders, and shipping costs may be applied. This is a great opportunity to make some extra money for your state, and will help connect local members with the national organization. For more information, please contact Member Services at headquarters@garden-club.org. To order call 1-800-550-6007 or Fax 314-776-5108

FOUR AND FIVE STAR PROGRAM

JULIE SCHOENIKE, CHAIRMAN

Increase your gardening knowledge and expand your interests. Now is the season to take advantage of NGC Schools!

Credits from schools all over the country transfer to your state record. Taking a course that is of interest to you and is available in a neighboring state can be a refreshing experience! It's fun to meet garden clubbers from a different area. Why not enjoy a "built in vacation" and cultivate new friendships? Gardeners all over the country enjoy similar interests and have similar values. Check the NGC Website and **The National Gardener** for schools offered.

Keep your own careful records so you will know when you qualify to apply for a Four Star Certificate. Become a part of this prestigious group of students after you successfully pass all of the school requirements and apply for a Four Star Certificate.

NGC Schools offer a wealth of learning! Refreshing keeps you updated as to new procedures and products. Learning about gardening, design and the environment can indeed be a "fun activity". Join this rewarding and happy group!

MEMBERSHIP IDEAS

ISABEL OLSEN, COMMITTEE MEMBER

HOW DO YOU WELCOME NEW MEMBERS?

We talk and share ideas of how to attract new members, but what are we doing to make that new member feel welcome and included in our clubs?

So let's ask ourselves these questions.

- Does your club give a welcome gift? It could be something as simple as a seed packet or a plant grown by a member.
- Do you introduce yourself to new members and show genuine interest in them?
- Does the calling committee have the new member's phone number and email address on the Call List? Many clubs contact their members to remind them of the day and location of the next meeting.
- Do you or your club members offer to give a ride or carpool to the new member?
- Was a club name badge offered for the new member?
- Do you and your club members encourage the new member to express their thoughts and ideas during a meeting?
- Do you and your club members have a positive and enthusiastic tone in the meetings?
- Do you and your club members encourage involvement, such as being on a committee?

Welcoming a new member can be as simple as following a few of these suggestions. **Together We Bloom and Grow!**

We invite you to explore the NGC information available on the Internet and promote your club, state and NGC on social media.

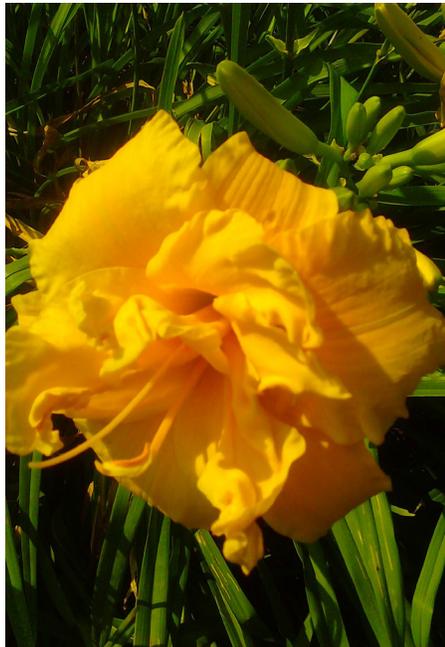
HORTICULTURE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

DEBI HARRINGTON, CHAIRMAN

INTRODUCING HEMEROCALLIS "SANDY'S CHOICE"

In honor of NGC President, Sandra H. Robinson, we are proud to introduce this amazing 'self' *hemerocallis*. It is a late-blooming, dormant variety, heavily laden with double, fluffy-ruffly, gold blossoms. This plant was hybridized by NGC member Kathy Larson of Fusion Daylilies. Mature plants are 28" tall, well-branched and budded. It will be a valuable addition to any garden, with a bright show of color late in the season.

Quantities are limited; please order early. It will be available for sale beginning May 5, 2016. Each fan is priced at \$25, which includes shipping. Order directly from grower/hybridizer Kathy Larson by phone: (641)752-2264, by email: m.k.larson55@gmail.com, or by mail: Kathy Larson, 312 West High Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158



LEAP INTO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

ROBIN POKORSKI, CHAIRMAN

EYE APPEAL

Leadership roles usually engage public speaking as a method of communicating with various groups of people or members of organizations. Important aspects of public speaking include the use of body language and vocal delivery to enhance, beginning with the speaker's appearance, and continuing through audience eye contact. Formerly, eye contact was direct eye contact with individual audience members, and is now often referred to as updated eye appeal used to correct vision. Eye Appeal is the vehicle that keeps the relationship between the speaker and the audience in touch with one another and open to new aspects of the subject being discussed. This is particularly important when speaking from a prepared script. In such instances we should leave several inches from the bottom of the page blank, so we are not looking down and losing our appeal to

the audience. Try this method when using a prepared script and keep the eyes of your audience in your view as you appeal to them for agreement with your subject.

PENNY PINES REFORESTATION

ISABEL OLSEN, CHAIRMAN

In 1941, NGC and the USDA Forest Service formed a partnership. This year marks 75 years that the first Penny Pines Plantation was planted in California. Penny Pines is one of the longest existing projects for National Garden Clubs, Inc. I want to thank the many individuals and clubs that have made contributions to this very worthy program designed to help reforest our national and urban forests. For the year 2015, NGC received \$44,475 from the garden club members. Many of our States and Regions have a Penny Pines chairman, and I encourage you to contact them or me for any information or questions that you may have. Inform your chairmen when your club is sending in contributions by sending them a copy of the form that you are mailing to headquarters. All contributions must be in increments of \$68.00. Please remember to identify the state and the forest name on your donation form. You can get more information about this program and the form on the NGC website www.gardenclub.org.

I hope the suggestion of a Penny Pines jar displayed at each of your garden club meetings has generated more conversations and donations. Seeing it becomes a silent reminder to all members without having to ask them. I know many clubs that, when they have fundraisers, have been committing the first 68 dollars earned to Penny Pines. What a fantastic idea! Donations may be made in honor of or in memory of an individual. What an excellent way for a club, district or state to be able to show tribute to special people. One thing that I've noticed about the members of NGC is their generous spirit of giving. Again thank you for supporting this project for 75 years!



nationalparkservice.org

This huge site has interesting categories a visitor can spend time in perusing. The 58 National Parks of America are one of our greatest assets. There are lists on this site by state, alphabetized and printable for anyone hoping to visit a number of them. These are amazing public spaces that are our heritage, and we need to be sure to pass on a love of them to the next generations. You can obtain a National Parks Pass, and there is a Senior Pass available.

On this site, you will find videos, maps, news, and photos to dazzle and inspire. I chose to “visit” the Great Smokey Mountains Park, and it was a delight. There is extensive information on Tours, Hotels, Camping Facilities, Directions, Photos, Things to Do, and so on. Grab the kids or grandkids, and make plans to enjoy the magic and majesty of our National Park system on this 100th Anniversary of the National Parks in America. Other excellent sites to visit are recreation.gov and nps.gov.

An exciting upcoming event in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park is the *synchronous fireflies* viewing. There is an 8-day peak period that will take place this summer. Visitors must enter a lottery for parking privileges. The lottery for 1,800 available parking passes opens at noon on April 29th and runs until May 2nd at 8 p.m. You might think about trying next year if you miss out this year on this special experience. No matter where you live, it would be worth a trip!

On the three sites mentioned, you can find information on Auto Touring, Bicycling, Historic Buildings, Fall Colors, Ranger-led Programs, Wildflowers and Blooming Shrubs, Wildlife Viewing, Hiking, Fishing and much more.

wildflower.org

This is a site that takes you to information about the famed Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas, founded by our former First Lady Mrs. Lyndon Johnson. You will find tips on visiting the Center with needed information on planning a trip. It is fun to search the extensive Native Plant Database. There is a Bibliography. A list of events will entice you to visit the Center where the focus is on Conservation Research, Endangered Species, Beneficial Insects, Pollinator Plants by Region and more. Plant Conservation is the Center's mission, and her family is still involved with the effort. This reviewer found that the pages are a bit slow to load, but it's worth the wait.

www.easygardener.com

This company, founded in 1983, has a focus on “the limitations a busy lifestyle places on a gardener” and on providing lawn and garden products to help gardeners achieve “great results with minimal effort.” The Easy Gardeners list of brands includes Jobe's®, Jobe's Organics®, Weed-block® and other well-known products. The shopper will find the following products: landscape fabrics, edging and borders, rubber mulch, plastic fencing, sunscreen fabrics and more. One of their brands is Ross® and Ross sells root feeders and refills, netting and tree care products and outdoor tree stakes. This merchandise can be found at all the “big box” home and gardening retailers, and there is a Quick Links spot on the site to go directly to the home page of each of the stores. The store's inventory of these products is available for perusing.

There is a Gardening Help category with Frequently Asked Questions that includes information on installation, instructions, videos, etc. The information relates to using their products, rather than general horticultural information. For example, you will find lots of guidance on using landscape fabrics. An additional category on the site is MSDS which means Material Safety Data Sheets. This consists of helpful product composition information, such as any hazardous ingredients, and so on.

provenwinners.com

This is a beautiful commercial site. Did you know that 2016 is the year of the begonia? By clicking on “New for 2016” you'll find a comprehensive list of the new PW begonias, with botanical names, common names, essential growing information, such as zones, light requirements, availability, and so on. Also, on the site, you will find annuals, perennials, seasonal plants, grasses, and shrubs. The photographs are crisp, detailed and beautiful. Of note -- the P. Allen Smith Platinum Collection® is exciting. NGC Board members will remember a delightful visit to Allen's home and gardens on the Arkansas River a couple of years ago. We were treated like royalty there and had a scrumptious lunch made from family recipes with ingredients from Allen's garden. We saw his goats, his chickens, and his fabulous garden, and toured his home. He could not have been more welcoming to everyone! In his collection, you can find “Plants for Pollinators” with plants that are perfect for attracting bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, a favorite topic for Allen.

A helpful category on the Proven Winners site is “Regional Recommendations”, as is “Find a Retailer or Professional.” You can even see photos and information about the 2017 plants that are under development now.

NEWS FROM THE REGION DIRECTORS

NEW ENGLAND

<http://www.ngcner.org>

Spring is here in New England, and it has brought us lots of rain, snow, and heavy winds. The late winter ritual of pouring through catalogs, planning the garden and choosing seeds is done. It's time to plant!

As usual, all of our Presidents are working hard to bring their individual talents to their respective states.

Vera Bowen, Director



Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island all held State Flower Shows. These shows are always a welcome sight in the cold of winter. Both the Rhode Island and the Connecticut State Presidents held major positions in their shows this year. RI President Catherine Moore chaired the show, and CT President Jane Waugh ended up having to take over when her show chairman passed away.

Maine President Suzanne Bushnell and NGC Board Member Becky Linney are moving into full gear to welcome the NGC Fall Board Members to the meeting in September.

First and foremost on the minds of many of us in the New England area and throughout the country is the news of NGC rescinding the "Acknowledgement of Entity" for the Regions. Though rumored for many years, this came as a shock to most of us. Much time is being spent on the process of dissolving the Region and making sure that all of the funds are disposed of in a fair and equitable manner.

The New England Environmental Chair is still working on what was to be a region-wide environmental project. We will still proceed with this, though I wonder how much support we will have knowing that May 2017 will end the Regions as we know them.

CENTRAL ATLANTIC

<http://www.ngccar.org>

Spring has finally arrived here in the Central Atlantic Region. Our cherry blossoms came and went very quickly in March because of the erratic weather we experienced most of the month. Now we are having warm, sunny, flowery weather which makes me feel wonderful. I

Anne M. Bucher, Director



attended the Winter Board Meeting in Charleston, S.C. along with the other members of the Executive Board. There were a number of recommendations that we addressed, along with a surprise letter from the Audit Committee informing the Regions that they would no longer be carried under the umbrella of National Garden Club Inc. as an Entity. This created a bit of chaos among the members as it was not put on the agenda. After much discussion, it was agreed upon by the Board that a letter would be constructed by the NGC President and the two Vice Presidents attending which would explain what this decision entailed. A letter was developed and given to the Region Directors to send to their Boards for information. At present, some of the Regions have decided to obtain a 501c3 which will enable the Region to continue conducting business in 2017. This Region hopes to apply for a 501c3 after we return from the Michigan convention.

In April, I have visited the Ohio State Convention in Dayton, Ohio. It was held in a hotel that was next to the Wright Patterson Airforce Base. We had the opportunity to visit the base and have a lovely dinner at the Officers Club. The Convention itself was very well planned and attended. There were lots of wonderful programs, workshops, awards and recognition for many of the members. It was a wonderful event and I was proud to be part of it.

A few days later, I drove to State College in Pennsylvania. It snowed in the morning, but the roads were clear by the time I went into the mountains. The convention was held at the Nittany Lions Inn Hotel on the grounds of Penn State. The theme for the convention was "Bee Dazzled," and there were a lot of Bee programs, flower arrangements and information. It was truly wonderful to see such enthusiasm for Bees.

Visiting the clubs and states is the joy of my job. I get to meet so many members, and spend time with them learning about what they do as garden club members, as well as share with them what National and Region are doing. This is the best part of my job!

Next week I am off to Delaware for a state meeting and then to Michigan for the convention. Hope to see many of you in Michigan.

National Garden Clubs, Inc. provides education, resources, and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility.

SOUTH ATLANTIC

Sarah Ann Parler, Director

<http://www.southatlanticregiongardenclubs.org/>

It is my pleasure to serve the South Atlantic Region as Region Director along with the five State Presidents. They are Edith Nelson from Kentucky, Gail Hill from North Carolina, Yvonne Morris from South Carolina, Janice Clem from Virginia, and Judy Guye from West Virginia. They provide us with a host of very qualified officers and chairmen that represent their states as they serve on the South Atlantic Region Board. Our former SAR Directors have provided excellent leadership for 53 years and set the Standard for this Director.



We are one of the eight Regions in the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and have some difficult internal issues to resolve during this term. I feel we are blessed to have very qualified members in our Region that will be protective of our members and will guide our decisions with careful thought. You can be assured that the very best interest of our members will be kept at the forefront of any decisions that are made.

Your Director is excited about visiting four of our SAR states during the month of April. I returned to North Carolina on April 17-19 where the Garden Club of North Carolina hosted the GCNC State Convention in Durham, NC. I left there for the Kentucky State Convention on April 19-21 at General Butler State Resort Park near Carrollton, Kentucky. Then on April 25-27, I attended the Virginia Federation Garden Club Convention in Lynchburg, VA, and on April 27-29, I traveled to Columbia, SC to be with the Garden Club of South Carolina for their convention.

We are all excited to be traveling to our National Garden Clubs, Inc. Convention being held in Grand Rapids, Michigan on May 2-7, 2016 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel.

Many thanks to the Garden Club of North Carolina and all of their talented members for hosting a beautiful and enjoyable South Atlantic Region Convention on March 13-15, 2016 at The Hilton North Raleigh/Midtown Hotel in Raleigh, North Carolina. We enjoyed wonderful speakers, exceptional accommodations and wonderful fellowship with all of the South Atlantic Region members. It was my pleasure to work with the Garden Club of North Carolina members, President Janice M. Clem, the Convention Chairman Ginny Parker and Co-Chairman Susan Hooper. Thank you for an exceptional SAR Convention.

DEEP SOUTH

Carol M. Bullard, Director

<http://dsregion.org>

The 55th Annual Convention of the Deep South Region was held on March 6-8, 2016 in Tunica, Mississippi hosted by The Garden Clubs of Mississippi Inc. Highlights included guest of honor National Garden Clubs President Sandy Robinson, award presentations, workshops on hummingbirds, a visit to Crosby Arboretum, native pollinators, native host plants for pollinators and a fantastic floral design program by Tracy Proctor.



Members of The Garden Club of Georgia attended the DSR Convention and brought home a nice collection of awards, including one \$5,000 DSR Scholarship. At the GCG Annual Convention held on April 13-14, GCG awarded a total of \$72,000 in scholarships to deserving students. GCG is ready for our next workshop promoting projects of NGC President Sandra Robinson, DSR Director Carol Bullard and GCG President Martha Price. We have sown seeds of knowledge and are now reaping conservation with WOW beauty.

The 2016 Louisiana Garden Club Federation Annual Convention was held April 12-13 2016 in Vidalia, Louisiana. The theme of "Down by the Riverside" was entirely appropriate since the convention took place at the Vidalia Convention Center on the banks of the mighty Mississippi River. LGCF held a very successful and profitable Open House and Tea on March 18th at the beautiful LGCF Headquarters in Le-compte, Louisiana. The money will be used to refurbish the landscaping at Headquarters.

The Garden Club of Alabama is preparing for the 84th Annual Convention April 3 – 5th, "Southern Charm – Alabama Style" in Montgomery, Alabama. Our honored guest will be Sandra Robinson, NGC President. The convention will offer workshops in the field of horticulture and flower design. College professors and creative business owners will share their knowledge with the members.

The Garden Clubs of Mississippi offers a GCM Nature Grant to clubs of up to \$1,000 for the beautification, preservation and/or improvement of an existing nature area, or for a new nature-related project. GCM also offers a Plant It Pink grant of up to \$500 to clubs for projects and a \$100 Plant-It-Pink State Award for landscape projects. GCM will provide the first-ever series of Environmental Studies Schools in April 2016.

Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. 89th Annual

Meeting and Convention took place in Murfreesboro, Tennessee April 14-15. Programs and workshops following NGC, TFGC and DSR themes and projects were presented. The first TFGC Standard Flower Show in 20 years was staged. Programs on Floral Design, Landscaping, Ecology, Butterflies, Leadership, and even a Fairy Garden Workshop were included for the two-day convention. Our members have truly been "Volunteers in Action" and will continue to be with all of the projects and plans we have for 2016.

Florida Federation of Garden Club's 90th Annual Convention and Biennial State Flower Show was April 17-19th, and we were delighted that NGC President Sandra Robinson joined us as our guest. Chairmen of our Wekiva Youth Camp and SEEK, for Florida high school students, are preparing for the summer's activities. Clubs from throughout the state send students to each. Many of these will become our environmental leaders of tomorrow. Clubs and Districts have contributed to Echo, Penny Pines, Coral Reef Restoration and are restoring and dedicating new Blue Star Memorial Markers.

CENTRAL
<http://ngccentralregion.org>

Judy Newman, Director

The members of Central Region continue to "Cultivate Connections" during their conventions. Spring is an especially busy time in the Central Region as all seven states will be holding their conventions during the months of April, May and June. We are looking forward to NGC Convention "Blooming On the Grand" in May in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Hope to see you there.



"The World of Hummingbirds" is the theme of the Garden Clubs of Illinois Convention in Naperville, IL which will include a trip to the Naper Settlement, an outdoor historic village, in April. The Garden Club of Indiana has incorporated a Standard Flower Show and Symposium into their convention in celebration of the Indiana Bicentennial. "Small but Mighty" is the theme of the Petite Standard Flower Show to be staged during the Iowa Garden Club Convention. They will also have a speaker from a local garden radio talk show. Members of the Michigan Garden Clubs will gather in Frankenmuth, Michigan to enjoy its Main Street overflowing with three miles of lush, abundant and natural looking gardens that speak to the German heritage. The Blue Star Memorial Marker will also be installed at the Michigan Mil-

itary & Space Museum on June 6. Attendees to the Minnesota State Convention have been asked to dress in the 60's era with hats and gloves. The focus of the Federation of Missouri Garden Clubs' Convention in May will be "Caring for Our Beautiful Missouri," President Nancy Bahn's theme. The emphasis will be on tree plantings with special tours along "Route 66." The Wisconsin Garden Federation Flower Show Judges Council is staging a Petite Standard Flower Show during their convention at a resort.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Darlene Skari, Director

<https://sites.google.com/site/rockymtngardenclubs/>

As we begin waking up from the dark days of winter, it is a good time to look around and see what can be done to publicize our volunteer work in our communities. For those states on the north, Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas, we are in early spring with pretty quiet weather. However, Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado have already had some spring storms that have been damaging.



Many of the members of our eight states are looking with dismay at the proposed negative changes for the Region. In our far flung area, members are much more likely to attend Region meetings, and it is the place they identify with beyond their club and state. We don't meet until September so no plans have been voted on yet, but we are exchanging views and considering our next step. The **Rambler** editor and many of the chairmen are busy promoting the Rocky Mountain Region, the clubs, and National. The renewed emphasis on pollinators and the world around us is of real significance for our clubs. We want the people around us to know that garden club members are serious about the fate of our environment and all the creatures we live with. That emphasis gives us a great reason for membership when we are enrolling new folks!

NGC CONSERVATION PLEDGE

I Pledge to Protect and Conserve the Natural Resources of the Planet Earth and Promise to Promote Education So We May Become Caretakers of Our Air, Water, Forest, Land and Wildlife.

SOUTH CENTRAL

<http://ngcscr.com>

Barbara S. Baker, Director

The regional and state conventions this spring have emphasized education and programs featuring the area's uniqueness and camaraderie. Our region convention April 8-9 was hosted by Northwest District of AFGC in Bentonville, Arkansas and featured a tour to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, a Standard Flower Show and programs about the "The Wild Plant Food & Medicines of the Ozarks" and the Native Plants at Crystal Bridges. We renewed our commitment to be a solid and productive region within NGC.



In January, Arkansas Federation of Garden Clubs celebrated their 85th anniversary with the 25th annual State Flower Show at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock. Their spring convention preceded the SCR Convention. President Rose Knight and their members welcomed NGC President Sandy Robinson and SCR Director Barbara Baker. More than \$1500 in donations were received during both AFGC and SCR Conventions to benefit the SCR Monarch Butterfly project to purchase butterfly related supplies for school children.

President Carol Moore presided at the Texas Garden Clubs' convention April 17-20 on the Gulf Coast at Corpus Christi, and all enjoyed programs about coastal sea life and habitat. TGC continues to sponsor the four schools: Environmental, Landscape Design, Gardening Study and Flower Show Schools. Clubs have embraced Butterfly Gardens at schools and **The Frightened Frog**. Designers & Diggers Garden Study Club donated 125 copies to every Dallas ISD Elementary School.

Oklahoma Garden Clubs President Mary Ann Holman continued her project "Recruit-Retain-Reward" by awarding eight crisp \$100 bills at their convention April 29-30 in Tulsa. Northeast District published a butterfly nectar list "Where's My Food, Mama?" Convention programs included **The Frightened Frog** and Mason Bees.

New Mexico Garden Clubs met March 31-April 1. Through planting and habitat protection, NM gardeners have increased the number of native butterflies and helped increase the Monarch population from 4 thousand counted in 2014 to 11,000 counted in 2015. Youth garden clubs are very active in the state. President Suzy Andreggo created procedure manuals for her officers and chairmen and a "New Mexico Gardeners Journal and Diary" to help newcomers to the Southwest.

PACIFIC

<http://pacificregiongardenclubs.org>

Kristie Livreri, Director

Greetings from the Pacific Region, the largest and greatest region of all National Garden Clubs. I only say that because I am not as familiar with the members of the other Regions. I have been a member of garden clubs since 1976, and some of the most amazing people throughout our eight states have been mentors to me.



In the event there are significant changes to the regions of National Garden Clubs, it is our hope that the Pacific Region will find the glue that will keep us together in purpose and to help carry out the objectives of this wonderful organization of which we are a part.

When we ask an individual member what are the objectives of National Garden Clubs, often he or she has a blank look on his or her face. Once we begin to enumerate all of the programs and objectives of National Garden Clubs, he or she want to know more and want to know how their clubs can be more involved. It is our duty and responsibility, as members who are familiar with this organization, that we spread the word of all the good things that National Garden Clubs is doing in our communities, our states, our nation and around the world.

The individual garden club member is becoming more and more important to National Garden Clubs. The individual member must be educated as to its purpose and objectives. As leaders, we must continually instruct and positively explain just how important the individual garden club and garden club member is to National Garden Clubs, to make sure that National Garden Clubs are recognized for all that we do. The list is extensive: Penny Pines, Habitat for Humanity, Plant it Pink, Schools, Clean Water, Blue Star, Gold Star Families, Backyard Habitat, Scholarship.... And those that are reading this know that the list goes on and on and on.

A small Garden Club, in Nevada, should rest assured that its contributions to the greater whole are appreciated and needed to help this organization continue to grow and become a stronger force for good.

No matter what course the Regions take in the future, our hope is that we will continue to move forward as that force for good in our clubs, communities, and states. It is our hope in the Pacific Region that we are united in word and deed as part of National Garden Clubs. Inc.

Now with that being said, I want to get out into my garden and get my hands in the soil, and hope I find a worm or two.

Youth News

THE CHICKEN QUEEN

by Lara Thompson

6th Grade, Plattsmouth Garden Club Member

From as far back as I can remember, chickens have been a part of my life. When I was a baby, my mother would carry me in a sling on her back while she collected eggs. Since we live on a semi-rural road with almost no kids, my chickens have been my friends. Many of them have unique personalities, like Bruce Leroy, who we named because he seemed to be doing kung fu when he checked the chicken run for danger. Molly, the hen, would follow my mother around and help her dig in the garden.

I take treats to my chickens and collect their eggs every day. When I want my chickens to come to me, I cluck like a rooster that has found a tasty grub, and they come running as fast as they can! I feel like a queen...the Queen of the Chickens!

Since I love chickens and one of my favorite times with them is watching a momma hen rear her chicks, I decided to make that my sculpture project. We saved styrofoam from egg cartons, take-out containers, grocery packaging, and thick packing styrofoam. I looked at pictures, models, and real chickens to help me form my sculpture. After many hours of sticking styrofoam pieces and fingers together, Hen-and-Chicks was born.

Lara and her family are members of the oldest federated garden club in Nebraska -- Plattsmouth celebrating 80 years! Lara usually enters the poetry contest, but was ineligible this



year because she won last year. So, she tried her hand at the NGC Youth Sculpture Contest using recycled materials -- lots of them. It took experiments with glue and a two-day, kitchen table take over, but Lara created a winner! Her sculpture won 1st place for sixth grade in the Plattsmouth Garden Club contest, and took 1st place for sixth grade and overall sculpture winner at the Federated Garden Clubs of Nebraska level. Congratulations to Lara; we love your creativity.

Forest Hills Junior Garden Club, North Carolina -- Sowing Seeds for Future Generations --

Trish Stewart started her GCNC membership as a member of the Forest Hills Junior Garden Club as a child. Now, Trish said that she is the oldest member, and her fellow junior club member Camilla Carrington is the youngest member. The club disbanded several years ago, but Caroline Carrington re-established the junior club a couple of years ago. The club joined GCNC in April 2016 and was ratified at the 2016 GCNC Annual Meeting. Welcome back to The Garden Club of North Carolina!

There is another NEW youth club in North Carolina. Clinton Junior Garden Club leader Becky Todd Edwards reports that she started her GCNC membership as a junior member of the Warsaw Junior Garden Club. Becky still has fond memories of her junior club leader Alta Kornegay.

It took several years, but those seeds planted many years ago are now reaping a harvest!

NGC Youth Committee Coordinator Lynne Ehnert asks that we get the kids engaged. They want to 'do' things and it might just be a project on making a paper frog, or sculpture out of recycled materials, or coloring a poster for Smokey the Bear/Woodsy Owl. It might be a bigger project by planting pollinator gardens or vegetable gardens. Some may want to write about it. Either way they are learning about the environment. We need to make it fun to learn about the environment!

National Garden Clubs, Inc. is excited to announce a new grant opportunity for garden clubs working with youth clubs or groups planning and planting Pollinator Gardens. Grants, up to \$200, are available for projects that include educational materials on the vital role pollinators play in nature, and youth involvement in planning and planting gardens providing nesting and food sources for pollinators.

Youth will learn the importance of providing appropriate food sources, nesting areas, shelter, and practicing sustainable gardening practices for pollinators by planning, planting, and maintaining these pollinator gardens. To apply for a grant, complete an NGC Grant Application (available on the NGC Youth School Garden Projects page), provide detailed information about the project, and submit your request to the NGC Youth Committee Chairman for approval.

DON'T LET THE FROGS CROAK!

BY JACQUELINE UNGER

Greg the Frog: Hi Gracie, how are you doing today?

Gracie the Frog: I just heard terrible news on the *Toad Day Show*. Al Croaker said that amphibians are the most endangered group of animals on Earth. According to Animal Planet, frogs are in a perilous condition with 170 species lost in the last 10 years.

Greg: Wow. I guess I wasn't imagining that there were fewer relatives at our last family reunion.

Gracie: It's only going to get worse because there are so many problems. Climate changes are causing many habitats to dry up. The frog neighborhoods have to move further up the mountainsides so they can find places with enough moisture to lay their eggs. What is going to happen to them when everything dries up?

Greg: You're right...this sounds really serious.

Gracie: It is serious Greg! My favorite swamp just got drained, the forests are getting cut down, and the dammed river is preventing me from getting good water. Frogs everywhere are losing their access to important resources like food, water and shelter. Every year, millions of frogs get taken from their homes to be used in lab dissections, as pets, bait, or eaten for food! People love to eat our legs!

Greg: Well, I mean...I know I look delicious and all, but my legs are mine. No one else can eat these babies.

Gracie: I think you're missing the point. If the frog population dies off, the world is in for some big issues.

Greg: Obviously! It'd be a sin to kill something as good-looking as me.

Gracie: It would be a sin to let your head get any bigger. Frogs really are important though. Here, let me explain. Frogs eat a large quantity of insects, including those that can transmit fatal diseases like malaria. The mosquitoes actually happen to be one of my favorite snacks to eat. Not only do we help with eating deadly disease-carrying bugs, but we also help with medical advancement. There are many frogs that can produce skin secretions that have potential to improve human health. The secretions can be used as pharmaceuticals and protect from drug-resistant microbes. Humans need the frogs in order to stay healthy, even though they will rarely admit it.

Greg: Wait, so let me get this right. Humans need us so they can stay healthy?

Gracie: Yup! Helping humans isn't the only thing that



the frogs do, either. I still have a lot more to tell you about how important we are. Frogs are thought to be accurate indicators of environmental stress. The health of the biosphere can be indicated by the health of frogs. That's because we frogs have permeable skin which easily absorbs toxic chemicals. It makes us much more susceptible to changes and disturbances in the environment.

Greg: So we warn humans when things aren't right with the environment?

Gracie: That's right! We clean the environment, too.

Greg: Whoa, whoa, whoa, we clean the environment?

Gracie: You probably can't remember being a tadpole since it was so long ago for you. As tadpoles we fed on the algae to keep the waterways clean and we filtered the drinking water, too.

Greg: Does that mean that when my mom says I didn't do my chores when I was younger, I can say that I cleaned the water?

Gracie: I don't think it works that way, but if it did, then frogs should get an award. While the tadpoles keep waterways clean and water filtered, adult frogs serve as important meals for a wide range of predators. We are such an integral part of the food web that if our population was to become extinct, the entire web would be in trouble. Negative effects would ripple throughout the entire ecosystem.

Greg: I never realized how much our existence really mattered to the rest of the world. I always thought we just looked and sounded really cool. I guess it goes a lot deeper than that.

Gracie: It does, but that doesn't mean we don't still sound cool. Our voices are lovely as long as people don't let us croak.

Jacqueline Unger is the 2015-2016 NGC High School Essay Contest winner. She's in 10th grade at Southern Region High School in Long Beach Island, New Jersey. The Central Atlantic Region sponsored her in the contest.



Floral Designer Anna O'Kelly presents NGC President Sandy Robinson with a design created in her honor at the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc. convention this spring.

IN MEMORIAM

Bernese (Berne) Davis of Fort Myers, Florida passed away on March 21, 2016 at the age of 102. Berne Davis was a member of the NGC Golden Circle Committee and served in many capacities on the NGC Board of Directors over the years. Berne was an Emeritus Flower Show Judge, Master Landscape Design Consultant, and a National Life Member.

A note of condolence may be sent to the Davis Family, 1121 Wales Dr., Fort Myers, FL 33901-7738.

It is with a sad heart that we must pass along a notice of the death of **David Robson's Father, John H. Robson** who passed away on March 28, 2016. He farmed for more than 60 years, retiring in 2015, and was an avid woodworker.

David Robson is a member of the NGC Board of Directors in several capacities.

A celebration of John Robson's life was held March 31, 2016 at Hinchliff-Pearson-West Galesburg Chapel.

Notes of condolence for the family may be left at ww-w.h-p-w.com or sent to David Robson at 1515 W. Fayette Avenue, Springfield, IL 62704-2306.

NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

Website: www.gardenclub.org

4401 Magnolia Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110-3492
(314) 776-7574 headquarters@gardenclub.org



Find Us On Pinterest and Facebook under
National Garden Clubs Inc.

A current list of the 2015-2017 Board of Director Roster changes and additions appears in the Board Member Section on the NGC website.

NEW - All issues of KIT appear in the Member Section on the NGC website. Members should contact their District Director or State President for access information.

Submissions for KIT are due July 1, 2016

Phyllis White, KIT Editor, gardens@bresnan.net
Jan Sillik, Assistant Editor, gluegunjan@aol.com



Lastly, if you are not using Pinterest, you are missing out. Member Services has an area where you can see gift items and then click to order directly from Headquarters. You can also view marvelous photos of American gardens, horticulture, or floral designs. You will find hundreds of NGC members' names that you will recognize with floral designs from many NGC Flower Shows around the country.

Check it out!



Just click on the red Pinterest logo to the right.



NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

International Photography Competition
Celebrating the National Parks System - USA
Entitled:



"In wildness is the preservation of the world"

Henry David Thoreau

The contest is open

May 1 - August 1, 2016.

All the submissions will be juried.

The 30 highest scoring images

will be displayed and judged

in Portland, ME

Sept. 21-24, 2016

at the NGC Fall Board Meeting.

Competition Submission - Login at:

<http://cgburke.com/ngc/>

This competition is open to members of

National Garden Clubs, Inc.

and its affiliated organizations.

Fees:

You may enter as many as 3 images. The fee for the 1st image is \$15 (US) and \$5 (US) for each additional image.

Image Preparation Guidelines:

All images must be submitted in the "JPG" format.

Image Resolution:

Each image must have a minimum resolution of 300 pixels per inch.

Dimension:

When the image resolution is 300, the maximum allowable dimensions for an image are 14 inches (4200 pixels) on the long side and 11 inches (3300 pixels) on the short side.

For images having a resolution greater than 300, a proportional increase in their dimensions is allowed. As an example, for an image with a resolution of 350 pixels per inch, the long side dimension may be 4900 pixels and the short side may be 3850 pixels.

For more information: arabellasd@aol.com

File size: Minimum 2 Megabytes