
Potpourri

News and Information

The Garden Club of Montclair, Inc. 60 S. Fullerton Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042

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Email: gardenclubofmontclair@yahoo.com

May/June 2021

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Provisionals,

With 2020 and almost half of 2021 behind us, we still have high expectations for Garden Club activities to continue into 2021- 2022, despite the pandemic. We will create interesting ways to meet and communicate and we are already planning to provide engaging programs, tutorials, presentations, and other projects for the upcoming year.

We all hope to meet in person in the near future, but things are still very uncertain for the coming year. The first reason is the situation of the pandemic; the second one is the status of construction at the United Way Building. We are planning virtual programs, workshops, board, and committee meetings with the flexibility to get together when circumstances permit.

That said, we will have an outdoor Annual Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 (rain date May 27) at 1 pm at Avis Campbell Gardens to celebrate the awards recipients, the installation of new officers and Connie Young's 100th birthday! There will be no lunch served, only light refreshments.

The two years of my presidency and especially the second year have been challenging to say the least! But it has been a wonderful learning experience and without your support, talent, and knowledge, we would not have been able to accomplish the mission of our Garden Club. Thanks to all of you, we stayed connected and involved with our members and our community. And because of this very unprecedented time, I have been asked to stay for a third year. I am grateful for your support and trust. You can be sure I will do my best to keep moving forward and stay attentive to your suggestions.

The Garden Club of New Jersey will hold its 95th Annual Meeting (virtually) on Thursday, June 10, 2021. The speaker will be world-renowned arborist, Dr. Margaret Lowman, also known as "Canopy Meg." Dr. Lowman explores the top of the tree canopy in forests throughout the world to help us understand and conserve our global forests. **Online registration at the GCNJ website will be necessary to join.** Additional information will be forthcoming shortly.

This is the last issue until September, and I want to wish you a very nice summer. With longer days and warmer temperatures, our gardens awaken, bringing bountiful beauty for us to enjoy. So, after a long winter inside, get outside and have fun with this season of growth.

Stay tuned for more Open Gardens Tours this summer! See you all in the fall.

Very Fondly,

Florence Leysse



OPEN SEASON FOR OPEN GARDENS

Calling all Garden Club Members! There may never be a better year to offer your garden as a respite for our members.

The winding down of the pandemic with vaccines being plentiful (among those of us finally having the advantage of being “older”), the security of our mandatory mask policy for this year’s gatherings and the craving to see our friends in natural surroundings before the world opens up to those weekends out of town, makes THIS a year to remember.

All that is required from the host is to contact me with your possible dates and hours, even if it’s weeks or months before your garden’s peak viewing time. Don’t disregard September nor October when the sun is low, the heat gone, and (gasp) perhaps the masks will be too. As always, families and friends will be welcome.

Let this be our most casual year, following the rhythms of the earth, and ignore that inner voice that tells you that your garden is too small, too shady, too sparse or too quirky. Half of our hosts during the last three years have held a second Open Garden. What better way to see a window to our personal style than visiting a garden in progress, a before and after, or a spring and summer comparison.

In our fourth year, our theme remains “It’s Our Garden And I’ll Weed If I Want To.”

Marilyn Zaret
marzaret@comcast.net



A VIRTUAL YEAR IN FLOWER DESIGN – WAS IT A ZOOM BOOM OR BUST?

Let's do the numbers: 5 virtual workshops with an average of 25 attendees, 3 certified judges/presenters, 6 flower design challenge exhibitions, 23 designers and 95 flower designs created. Sounds like a Zoom Boom to me. Or perhaps we should call it a Zoom Bloom!

It is easy to see that the Garden Club of Montclair was not a shrinking violet during the pandemic but continued its tradition of remaining active and vital by providing opportunities to teach, to learn, and to create artistic and original floral designs.

The success of this venture is due in no small part to our behind-the-scenes Zoom workshop designer, Floss O'Sullivan; our accredited member-judges and presenters, Florence Leyssène, Debbie Moran, and Brenda Bingham; and our website SmugMug portal engineers, Amy South and Sue Young. Together they provided seamless visual presentations that integrated member interaction throughout.

Asking the judges to weigh in as to their responses to the virtual workshops resulted in some interesting takeaways. Florence felt that despite the limitations of critiquing a two-dimensional photo, she was impressed and inspired by the number and quality of the designs all year long. Debbie Moran agreed with Florence on this point and was thrilled with the turnout. She felt that the most challenging part of doing a workshop was deciding the best way to present certain things/concepts. The adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" was her mantra for these visual presentations.

Brenda Bingham, our Hogarth Curve expert, found doing her virtual workshop a challenge with preparation more time consuming than she expected. She said that she dug out photos of her previous designs and reviewed them and that she relied on the Hogarth Curve both consciously and sub-consciously to develop both Traditional and Creative design styles. Brenda also made the point that designers must try to identify their own "style" which makes designing easier.

What did our designers have to say about this Virtual Zoom Boom? I thought you might like to hear from several of them, so here are some of their comments:

"This year, the Zoom Workshops provided a lot of information that was visual instead of just hearing it. I especially like when designs were compared side by side and you could see why one worked and one didn't work as well." . . . Fran Ackerly



“I thought the strong focus on Principles and Elements of Design was excellent. What a beautifully organized workshop with amazing tech support to deliver the information.

This finale was helpful for designers to recognize the dedicated design area and the reality and difficulty of working a design.” . . . Sarah Stransky

“For a relatively new designer, the workshops were so helpful. Watching a demonstration by one of our expert designers gave me the confidence to try some designs I might have otherwise been too intimidated to attempt.” . . . Ginny Demoreuille

“I think the Workshops are very helpful and very well done. It is always good to see a visual to help clarify and illustrate the words in the Handbook.” . . . Cynthia Corhan-Aitken

“The exhibits were so excellent and so successful; they should be continued even when we return to Normalcy! The workshops got better and better and better, smoothly professional, visually attractive, and technologically sophisticated. Debbie and Florence and Brenda and Floss are clearly becoming more and more attuned to exploring Zoom’s capability for creative presentation.” . . . Tova Narrett

“I found the workshops to be very helpful. For me, it’s such a hard transition to go from traditional to creative. I found Brenda’s workshop on the Hogarth Curve very informative and I felt I was able to execute my first attempt pretty well. The workshop gave me confidence and broke the steps down well.” . . . Sarah Olson

The jury is no longer out. This difficult year surpassed all our expectations as to what our talented garden club members can do in the face of incredible challenges. Kudos to everyone!

Barbara Baletti

April 2021

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH FLOSS O’SULLIVAN

If there wasn’t such a thing as a “Floss-of-All-Trades”, there certainly is now. I doubt that there are many people in our Club who have not experienced Floss O’Sullivan. Floss leans toward understatement. She doesn’t make herself known but she is everywhere, often hidden from view. Modesty and self-effacement trump fanfare and flash. A member of the Garden Club for only a few years, Floss has volunteered for just about any task, be it mundane or exciting, taking on responsibilities in areas where others fear to tread. In addition to her garden therapy projects, Crane House organizing and decorating, and Zoom Workshop developing, Floss serves on a plethora of Garden Club committees. These include Flower Design, Nominating, and Garden Therapy. Did I mention that she chairs the Workshop Committee and serves in the appointed positions of Corresponding Secretary and Memory Book?

Floss attacks each task with energy, dedication, and a smile. If a project requires a learning curve, she forges full speed ahead to make something happen sooner rather than later. Case in point: adapting her workshops to pandemic parameters when virtual became the new normal. You might be interested in learning how Floss met the challenge of presenting workshops for us in an entirely new format. Here are some questions I posed for her and her responses:

1. What were the most challenging issues you dealt with in putting your workshop presentations together in such a seamless way?

"One challenge was balance - how to incorporate a solid foundation of flower design theory with illustration through photos, video, and live demonstration while keeping attendees engaged. We challenged ourselves to take new technological leaps for each workshop, not knowing exactly how to accomplish them, but figuring things out along the way."



2. How much time and preparation does it take to put a single workshop together?

"It's definitely a team effort! Each workshop involved days of preparation by the judges, 40 hours of building and editing the slide presentation, flower design practice sessions, video production and editing, and five rehearsals before going live on the day of the workshop."

3. Are there any changes that you might make if we "go virtual" again next season?

"I'd love to make the virtual workshops two-way to involve attendees more, including breakout rooms, polling, sharing pictures back and forth and getting some live coaching as we design. Hopefully, we can expand our topics to gardening trends and issues and pull in some additional instructors. Personally, I think we could do a lot with video editing to demonstrate techniques and provide refreshers. I'm open to ideas and welcome any

member's input!"

It is clearly apparent that the Garden Club of Montclair remains dynamic and vital thanks to the dedication of members like our "Floss-of-All-Trades."

Barbara Baletti

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Next issue of *Potpourri*:
May/June 2021

Potpourri Staff

Terri Breen – Editor

Florence Leysène – President

Karen Whitehaus & Marilyn Zaret – Committee

CALENDAR

May

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 3 | M | Board of Trustees Meeting 10 am <i>via Zoom</i> |
| 11 | Tu | Avis Campbell Gardens Lift Tulips and Plant Annuals 9:30am-noon |
| 17 | M | Triangle Gardens Lift Tulips and Plant Annuals, 9:30am Meet on Church St |
| 18 | Tu | Avis Campbell Gardens Lift Tulips and Plant Annuals 9:30am -noon |
| 26 | W | Annual Awards Ceremony at The Avis Campbell Gardens, 1pm Social Distancing and Masks required |
| 27 | T | Annual Awards Ceremony Rain Date at Avis Campbell Gardens, 1pm Social Distancing and Masks required |

There are no Flower Design or Horticulture Exhibitions scheduled in May

June

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 7 | M | Board of Trustees Meeting 10am <i>via Zoom</i> . |
| 18 | F | Committee Annual Reports Due to Yearbook Editor, Claire Stepleton with Copy to Recording Secretary |