

Weeders Meeting

May 10, 2016

Haverford Reserve Community Recreation and Environmental Center

Patricia Doolittle and the Flower Show Committee transformed the entry hall at the Haverford Reserve Community Recreation and Environmental Center into a staging area for our spring flower show. The morning was somewhat drizzly so as Weeders were submitting their entries and the show tables were filling up. Members of the community who were coming and going from their exercise programs stopped by to admire the submissions. Someone even wanted to buy a blossom – what a compliment.

After flower show registration and passing, thirty Weeders including guests, but not the Flower Show Committee, gathered in a brightly lit space with theater seating for the meeting and tables for the luncheon. President Marilyn Sprague called the meeting to order at 10:45am. Marilyn thanked meeting chair Laura Mitchell, and organizing hostess Karen Doyle and her crew, Connie Carlson, Patty Greenhalgh, and Tessa Hooper. She thanked the Flower Show Committee and especially Beth Bartle and Diane McCallister for a wonderful workshop held the day before to encourage and support flower show entries.

After a welcome, guests were introduced. Cindy Pierce brought Dinny Jackson, Ella's daughter; Laura Mitchell came with her mother, former Weeder, Holly Wendt; Polly Garnett brought her friend Jeanne May and Sonya Driscoll introduced Carlos Alvare.

This was billed as an "information only" meeting so we dispensed with approval of minutes and a treasurer's report. However, the meeting was later convened as "official," as a vote on an expense was required of the membership.

It was noted that Marj Frazier was about to celebrate her 100th birthday and Cindy Pierce circulated a card so all Weeders present could send their greetings.

After this, Cindy made a wonderful tribute to our late beloved member Ella Jackson. Cindy was introduced to the world of Weederdom by her neighbors on Steeplechase Road in Devon. Ella, Marj Frazier and the late Cyrena Gouge, all fine gardeners, dropped the net, so to speak, on Cindy and brought her into the club. Cindy noted that she and Ella were somewhat notorious in the neighborhood because both ladies cut their own grass. Ella joined the Weeders in 1985 and, gardener that she was, worked at Strafford Station each Tuesday deadheading roses, which was her specialty. She received the club's Biddle Award in 1992 and the Trusty Trowel in 1999. Ella was known for her community involvement, working at the St. David's Fair and the Neighborhood League Shop. She enjoyed hunting with the Ardrossan Beagles, had a fine sense of humor and was forever making wry statements. All in all, Ella Jackson lived a life treasured by those who loved her.

Dinny Jackson spoke of her mother's affection for the Weeders and thanked the club for their devotion to its members. Her remarks were followed by a moment of silence in memory of Ella Jackson.

Marilyn gave a plug for the Memorial Fund and spoke of its tradition as a way of honoring Weeders.

First vice president and awards chair Jackie Burke has been very busy and Marilyn thanked her for her attention to Weeder matters.

The following committee members gave reports or made announcements:

Linda Anderson announced a garden party at **Stenton** on Thursday, May 10th from 5 to 7 and Marilyn noted a garden work day at Stenton on Tuesday, May 17th.

Sonya Driscoll and Regina Wagner reported for the **Scholarship Committee** and passed on the

recommendation of the executive committee that the Weeders support four individuals working in community gardens to further urban farming. As background, they explained our past association with GCA's Hull Award that recognizes community service with a financial award. Recent submissions to the national committee were denied and last year the Weeders established the Farm Stipend Program. We voted to recognize the work of Chris Bolden Newsome and Ty Holmberg who farm at Bartram's Garden. This time around, Sonya and Regina researched potential recipients by contacting PHS and seeking the guidance of Nancy Cohn of PHS's City Harvest, which supports 140 farms and 400 community gardens. The farmers are passionately devoted to their cause and earn modest salaries of around \$30,000 a year.

Sonya and Regina proposed, with the endorsement of the executive committee, that the Weeders give four awards of \$1,000 each to four individual farmers as "undesigned funds" to use as they like. Nicole Sugarman and Ari Rosenberg are co-managers of the farm at Guild House West, an independent living community for low income residents, located a few blocks from the Divine Lorraine Hotel. The garden serves the local community as well as the Guild House residents. Nina Berryman is manager of the Weavers Way Farm, which is on the grounds of Awbury, and Troy Johnson is farm supervisor at Heritage Farm at the Methodist Home for Children. A motion was made, seconded and passed.

There were several "reports" related to **Conservation and Horticulture**. Nancy Evans reviewed the financial records and compiled a list of our donations, which come to \$5,000 for this fiscal year. In all, the Weeders have made direct gifts and grants to the community in the amount of \$12,000.00 this year. Marilyn spoke of the National Affairs and Legislation meeting each February in Washington, DC. and urged the club to send a representative. There is also the opportunity to attend the annual Shirley Meniece Horticultural Workshop, which this year will be in Brooklyn in September. She further urged members to attend our own Weeder workshops and noted two recent offerings - Jim Ward's session on pruning held at Lorraine Wallace's and the flower arranging workshop focused on bridge design. Alice Doering shared seeds of an interesting pepper plant she collected last year. She also had packets of a lettuce that appeared in her garden. She allowed it to bolt so she could collect the seeds of the peppery flavored pepper, shared with the Weeders as a boost for any salad. Hands dove into the baskets of seeds as they were passed around. Alice announced she had selected the challenge plant for the fall flower show and they were available for \$4 each. It was supposed to be a tuberous begonia but is a cross between tuberous and wax begonias that goes by the name 'Dragone Sunset.'

At the end of April the Wissahickon Garden Club sponsored a flower show that was described as "fabulous" by those who attended. Beth Bartle received a second place award for her arrangement entry and Alice Doering a second for her horticultural submission. Alice related an anecdote about losing to a very special fern; she admired the plant and later was given one by its grower Anne Kellett.

Sally Wood, for **Nominating**, reminded Weeders that the slate of officers was presented at the April meeting and will be voted on in June.

Julie DeVuono announced that next year's **Program** is all set and she circulated a sign-up sheet for hostesses. Members are each expected to hostess when needed. There will be an evening meeting in April.

Going forward, Weezie Johnston and Linda Anderson will be contacting Weeders with a questionnaire to determine our interests.

For the good of the order: Maria Thompson has shed her cervical collar and Lorraine Wallace is out of the hospital after back surgery. Cheryl Cheston conveyed thanks on the part of the Wallace family for the meals supplied by the Weeders.

The announcement portion of the meeting ended at 11:25 am.

Laura Mitchell introduced the day's speaker Jim Bobb whose topic was "Amazing Bees." Jim is a past president of the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association and instructor at Longwood who began his

career as a computer whiz working with sound systems in nightclubs. As an introduction, he used an excerpt from a TED talk by photographer Louis Schwartzberg with clips from a video of pollinators to set the stage for a “sense of wonder” in the insect world.

Jim said he would talk about “The Joy of Bees, Namely Honeybees.” He got into beekeeping in 1995 when he purchased his grandparents’ property, which had an orchard, and he decided to keep bees. An aunt gave him two hives. There were bees all over the place and he loves plants and the process of pollination.

He then reviewed the hierarchy of hive habitation. Worker bees, the ones we see flying around, are non-reproductive females. There are about sixty thousand of them in a hive. Boy, do they work not only to gather nectar, most of which comes from trees like the tulip poplar and black locust, but also to maintain the temperature in the center of the hive, which must be 95 degrees for the queen to be comfy enough to lay eggs, her sole job and one from which she takes a vacation in the heat of the summer. The workers cool the hive in summer or heat it in winter by flapping around so it is no surprise they live about 35 days. In winter, they can relax a bit by staying in cluster and eating honey to maintain the heat. Surely this is an exhausting task. And where are the guys during all this? Aptly named drones, the males, who live about 40 days, have just one job and that is to mate with the queen. Spent, they die around Thanksgiving.

Bees are covered with hairs and the pollen sticks to these hairs. Instinctively, they move the pollen to “baskets” on their back legs for storage. They have five eyes but cannot see the color red or differentiate between red and black. To compensate, they see ultraviolet waves that we cannot see and this color orientation helps them navigate. What is really amazing is that “scout bees” leave the hive to check out the countryside for flowers. They return to the hive and perform a kind of dance that communicates directions for their fellow workers to follow so they can gather nectar. On each trip from the hive they collect from only one species of plant. They have an internal clock and always return home at night. To help with navigation, they have two antennae for smell and taste.

The queen can live for several years, but usually just two or three of active egg production when she lays up to 2,000 eggs a day to maintain colony cohesion. Near the end of this cycle, multiple eggs are fertilized with special food separating potential queens from the workers. The multiple baby queens fight to the death until there is only one left. When the hive is happy with the new queen, they kill off the old one.

Another group in the worker category is known as “guard bees” that protect the hive by patrolling within one foot of it. Otherwise, tasks are based upon age and Jim described five: 1) some clean the cells by helping rid the hive of dead bees and tending to the birth of new ones, 2) nurse bees make food for the larvae, 3) others tend the queen, getting a dose of her smell every 45 minutes – this group is also known as the construction bees who build the comb, process the food, and remove the dead, 4) the bees responsible for ventilation and guarding, and lastly 5) the retirement group who forage and die from exhaustion.

The bee industry is of considerable value to the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a big grower of apples where the pollination value is \$66 million

Jim spent some time talking about the bad wrap bees get because most stings we receive are from yellow jackets, which are wasps, and hornets. He did, however, tell us the best way to deal with a sting from a bee by explaining that the stinger is made of two sawblades that move back and forth with two channels containing poison. The bee pushes the stinger out from her abdomen and flies away. Because of the sawblade construction, it is best to scrape off the stinger immediately. Or stay inside.

Weeders were very interested in Jim Bobb’s presentation and they “swarmed” (sorry) around him with questions as we moved to the lunch tables and enjoyed excellent Weeder fare.

The results of the flower show will be circulated separately.

submitted,

Thompson

Respectfully

Maria M.

Secretary