

The Weeders, 2016-2018

In the last two years, The Weeders have continued to propagate, grow and thrive due to the dedication and hard work of so many talented and enthusiastic women. It has been an honor and privilege to work with so many of you. You have all contributed to make my job easier, rewarding and have reinforced how very proud I am to be a Weeder.

Much has been accomplished through the efforts of Weeders who have stepped up into leadership roles and the many busy hands that assist them.

We welcomed seven new members since our September 2016 meeting. We lost two members to resignation, and suffered two deaths of long time members.

We revised our bylaws to clarify "in writing" clauses and to reflect necessary changes in our admission and reinstatement procedure. We added an additional Article on Archives and Records.

The Finance Committee under Nancy Evans met to review our income and expenses. After taking a hard look at our records it was determined that our dues covers most of our administrative expenses. However, our generous contributions to our civic projects are dependent on our Christmas sale and dipping into our Vanguard Fund. It was decided not to let the Vanguard Fund drop below \$25,000 so we would always have funds for an emergency. We came to the realization that this Fund does not have huge growth in interest each year and that its chances of growing will only be from charitable bequeaths. Two of our Weeders, Margaret Sager and Reggie Thomas, both attorneys, spoke to us at a meeting trying to explain our situation. Margaret prepared a brief primer on Charitable Concepts for The Weeders and they both answered many questions. Over all, it was determined that our civic donations will now be a floating number determined by what our overall annual expenses allow us and how much we can raise from the Christmas sale, interest from our Vanguard account and any additional fundraisers the Weeders may choose to have.

We changed our system of giving Awards every year to every other year with the outgoing president to give people more shows to enter and to hopefully increase their chances at winning an award. We decided on the off year to go on a bus trip and hold our Annual meeting with reports on the bus. Many Weeders worked hard behind the scenes to honor individuals with special GCA Awards. At the Zone V Meeting in October 2016 the Weeders had nominated **Bonnie Van Alen** from the Williston Conservation Trust for the **Zone V Conservation Commendation**, which was awarded to her. At the same meeting Weeder **Lloyd Brown** was honored with the **GCA Zone Conservation Award** proposed by The Weeders. But the most exciting Award that the Weeders were responsible for was **the GCA Nation Achievement Medal** Awarded to Weeder **Amy Freitag** at the Annual GCA meeting in Baltimore MD in May 2017.

The Weeders like to be on the move. We participated thanks to Marilyn Sprague, in **The Rail Trail Park Tour** in Philadelphia starting behind the Rodin Museum and made our way to Reading Station on a train bed that will eventually cover three miles of urban trail. Conservation Committee, thanks to Biddie Edwards went on a remarkable trip to **RAIR** (recycled Artists in Residency). This amazing recycling company in North Philadelphia on the Delaware River has a program for artists who repurpose tossed articles into creative works of art.

We also had our first year-end annual meeting on a bus trip to the **Grounds for Sculpture Gardens** in New Jersey thanks to Ellen Spragins and her hospitality team. We had a new venture to study Viniculture at **Karamoor Winery** thanks to Linda Anderson and Alice Doering followed by a lovely potluck dinner at Linda's.

On our most recent trip to **Bowman's Hill** and surrounding nurseries, organized by Nancy Holmes and Elaine Lisle, we witnessed the spring ephemerals and of course the resident peacock.

We also continued our involvement in The **Magnolia Tribute Garden** under Marilyn Sprague's guidance by participating in two workdays. Last year Marilyn chaired a Garden Party to celebrate the renovation of the garden. After a lovely re-dedication ceremony in the Magnolia Tribute Garden, tea was enjoyed at the historic Powel House as they did 58 years ago. There were many important guest and dignitaries present as well as many Weeders.

We had wonderful workshops. Ellyn Spragins arranged our Botanical Arts workshop where participants had a demonstration and hands on experience in making a broche. Diane McCallister's Critter workshop was a huge success. Succulents became all the rage at the Succulent Pumpkin workshop held at Lorraine Wallace's house. It was so popular that two sessions were needed. It made the GCA website and other clubs have asked how to replicate it. We had our first Photography workshop hosted by Nancy Evans.. There was a wonderful Bulb-forcing workshop at Michele Bolton's and of course Alice Doering had her annual semi hardwood cuttings workshop. We also added a popular wreath-making workshop thanks to the organization of Lyn Gibbons.

The loyal Strafford Station team continued to plant and maintain the annuals, shrubs and trees at the historic station under the guidance of Alice Doering despite some interference from Septa with their installation of a bike rack. The appreciation of the neighbors and commuters keeps this team going despite any setbacks.

The Gazebo Garden at Ludington Library under Cheryl Cheston's leadership continues to improve and looks better than ever due to the Weeder crew trying to simplify plantings and can now deal with primarily maintenance issues.

Volunteers quietly made floral arrangements for Ronald McDonald house thanks to Laura Mitchell. It was so easy, fun and appreciated that we are going to do it three times next year. We contributed to Strawberry Mansion's holiday décor thanks to Lynn Gibbons and Patricia Doolittle. We transformed The Lewis Parlor into a

Swedish enclave one year and this past Christmas followed a Very Philly Christmas theme.

Our Club Flower Shows have been better than ever. Last year, Patricia Doolittle and Patty Greenhalgh co chaired and the theme for the Fall and Spring Shows including photography was "Jarden de Couture" with inspiration for the various classes derived from influential designers in the world of fashion. This year's shows under Patty Greenhalgh and Daryl Hanlon utilized "Weeder Whimsy" as a theme. We received high praises from the judges who were quite impressed. It was very rewarding to see so many Weeders go home with well deserved multiple ribbons.

We made a concerted effort to encourage photography in the Weeder Program. We had two speakers on photography and a workshop. We held an annual photography show judged and on display at our evening spring meetings. Due to Melissa Bullitt's encouragement and hard work the shows were very successful and we sizably increased entries. There were many first time winners and it was exciting to see newer Weeders enter.

Under Linda Anderson's guidance, we contributed meaningful articles to the GCA Bulletin representing our club at the national level. Special thanks to Regina Wagner, Biddle Edwards and Nancy Evans who contributed and helped refine the articles before their submission. They included: The new "Community Service Award" from the Weeders to recognize some of the farmers who have made urban farming a success in our Philadelphia area; and Trash to Treasures: the description of The Weeder visit to RAIR (Recycled Artists in Residency. Marilyn Sprague collaborated on an article featuring the Magnolia Tribute Garden and we are presently hoping for acceptance on an article about the Strafford train Station.

Our Programs were wonderful, thanks to Karen Doyle and Patty Minehart. We held two evening meetings with guests, one featuring Adam Levine, Philly H₂O and the other by Janice Kelsey of Solar CITIES describing Home Scale Biodigester. We heard about Planting with a Purpose, went to Meadowbrook Farm to hear about Shade Gardens by Jenny Rose Carey. Jennie Love presented Backyard Bouquets and Steve Wright of Jenkins Arboretum talked about Endangered Species Conservation. Weeder Patty Minehart did a presentation on a garden trip to Cuba and we learned about Fairy gardens from Julie DeVuono and Sally Wood. We had two table top workshop at our December meetings followed by successful holiday sales which help raise money for our civic projects.. We had insightful contributions at every meeting by Alice Doering Horticulture Chair usually with accompanying plants for sale

Conservation Chair Biddie Edwards organized our trip to RAIR and kept us well informed about local and national issues by sending out monthly report of various publications appearing on the Internet. Recently all of these reports were added to the Weeder website complete with links and pictures organized by topic, with the

help of Weeder Taddie Dawson ,who we are most grateful for. Biddle also represented us for two years at the NAL conference in Washington DC

Our Garden History and Design Committee under Julie DeVuono and her committee has labored very hard with many setbacks to document Inta Kromholz's garden. Hopefully the final pieces to complete it will be turned in soon.

Our Nominating Committee, chaired by Sally Wood worked very hard to find us qualified leaders among our group to ensure a wonderful Weeder future.

In our spare time we organized s Fall Fun Raiser in October at the home of Laura and Ken Mitchell. It consisted of a cocktails and dinner a silent auction and prizes for the best Halloween hat or mask. Many Weeders under the guidance of Lorraine Wallace, Marilyn Sprague and Ellie Penniman contributed to the party's success and we raised over \$5000 which we were able to use for civic contributions.

None of this would be possible without the wonderful Weeder communication system created by Lorraine Wallace and assisted by Cheryl Cheston. There is a lot of work behind the scenes, which these two do and have been doing for many years, from getting the blue book formatted and printed, sending out meeting notices and blasts, and printing mailing labels and award certificates. In addition, Lorraine maintains the Weeder website, is the GCA administrator and is currently working on procuring a data base system for the Weeders that will capture each individual's 'records and allow us to easily utilize this information on line. This is no easy task and an expensive mistake if not done properly. The website needs its own person as more and more information needs to be posted. We have generated an online survey for new members but it needs to be sent to all Weeders to update their information and help with strategic planning for the future. So as we go forward my hope is that things that we have been working on will come to fruition slowly but surely. I have confidence that this will happen as so many people have stepped up to the plate to take on leadership roles and help redefine and redistribute job responsibilities, as Lorraine has so graciously stepped to the plate to fill our vacant president spot. Change is good as it leads to efficiency and there is always a better way of doing things.

Many Weeders contribute to the fabric of this group by hostessing, chairing meetings, procuring speakers, showing up to garden, entering flower and photography shows, taking officer positions, making flower arrangements, supporting conservation causes and hosting workshops. There is camaraderie as we learn new skills from one another, attend meetings, try new things and enjoy potluck dinners and spontaneous garden tours. The last two years have been very rewarding and enriching for me personally and I take great pride in being part of such a unique and special group of women The Weeders.

Jackie Burke