

Weeders Meeting

September 15, 2015
Cheryl Cheston's Home, Villanova



Thirty Weeders gathered at Cheryl Cheston's in Villanova for the September meeting and flower show. It was a beautiful day, which was a good thing because we convened outside. Flower show chair Patricia Doolittle and her committee took over the garage for horticultural entries and set up arrangement classes in the house. The driveway was the site not only for the pre- show entry process and grooming but also for convening. President Marilyn Sprague called the meeting to order by ringing her bell. This somewhat unusual procedure (the convening outside, not Marilyn ringing the bell) was occasioned by a snafu in lining up GCA judges for the flower show. The judging ranks have thinned and our meeting day is popular with other clubs. Ever creative and flexible, Patricia asked Weeders to do the judging themselves and outlined the procedure – after instruction by in-house experts Lorraine Wallace for horticulture and Melissa Bullitt for arranging, we each received a bag of pennies for use in casting our vote for the winning entry. There were upended cups with a slot in the top by the entries and after being divided into three groups of ten we went to work. The show was impressive and the judging challenging. It was a learning experience.

We then filed in to Cheryl's dining room for our conventional business meeting. Before getting to it Marilyn shared news of a phone call she'd received recently from a man who looked up "weeders" on the internet, found our website, somehow located Marilyn "near Devon" and asked if she was available to weed his yard. She declined graciously.

The president thanked the day's worker bees – program chair, Maria Thompson, and hostesses Margaret Sager, Lia Calhoun, Julie DeVuono and Laura Mitchell, as well as Cheryl Cheston who rearranged her house and cleaned the garage. Our newest member, Alice Nacey, was then introduced by her sponsor and cousin Wendy Bailey. The minutes of the June meeting were accepted as distributed.

Regina Wagner was called upon to present a GCA "Civic Improvement Certificate of Acknowledgement" to Ken Kolodziej for his initiative with the PHS Roots to Re-entry program and his more recent work at

Heritage Farm. The farm is part of Methodist Home Services, which serves 150 women and 100 children at the Home for Children on Monument Road. Ken thanked the Weeders for their support and spoke with feeling about his involvement with the only sustainable farm in the city. The farm is about 6 acres, 4 of which are cultivated. Produce from the garden supplies the needs of the kitchen at Methodist Home and is sold to restaurants. You, too, can purchase produce and flower arrangements at a weekly farm market on Thursdays from 3 to 6pm. Ken “advertised” the Farm Fair to be held on Thursday, October 8th, from 6 to 8pm, Belmont Plateau. Tickets are \$75. Jackie Burke, Lorraine Wallace and Regina attended the event last year and heartily endorsed it as a special evening of wonderful food and fine wine (all donated by the snazzy restaurants who patronize Heritage Farm) in support of a good cause. The website is www.heritagefarmphiladelphia.org.

After this pleasant interlude, it was back to business with the treasurer’s report and presentation of the 2015-2016 budget. Laura Mitchell remarked that over 30 Weeders have not paid their dues, which creates cash flow problems because the club is responsible for dues to GCA for each member. So, if this hits home, please pay up. Going forward, dues notices will be mailed to members rather than being sent by email. Laura made a motion the reports be accepted as filed; it was seconded by Diane McCallister and approved by voice vote.

Committee reports and announcements followed:

In October the Weeders are taking a road trip to Wave Hill in the Bronx and to the High Line in lower Manhattan. Linda Anderson reviewed details of the day and is sending email notices to participants. It promises to be a fine adventure and will be led by our-gal-in-the-Big-Apple Amy Freitag. This trip constitutes the October Weeders meeting.

On the admissions front, Ellen Pemberton hosted a lunch for new members Alice Nacey and Daryle Hanlon, and Ellie Penniman has worked diligently to detail the admissions process so that all will run smoothly for our new members.

PCGCA matters were handled with the usual combo of sign-up sheets and passed out envelopes. Workday for the Magnolia Tribute Garden will be October 28th and the joint meeting featuring William Cullina of the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens will be November 11th. Several members spoke enthusiastically about the garden in Boothbay, describing it as “the Chanticleer of Maine.” Marilyn plugged the Fertilizer Fund and urged all Weeders to participate by contributing.

Wendy Bailey passed ‘round a sign-up to make flower arrangements for the Ronald McDonald House at St. Christopher’s Hospital. The workshop will be held at her house on Monday, October 19th at 9:30am.

Marilyn touted a handy booklet titled “Tips” that offers hints on flower arranging and Lorraine noted a booklet she had found with advice on conditioning flowers. It’s titled *Flowers for Bouquets* and is self-published by its author Joanne Lenden (as an aside, your secretary served with her on the national horticulture committee and she was a font of info). The book is available at <http://www.lenden.com> (\$14.95 plus \$3 shipping) and also for reduced rates at other sites. Contact either the secretary or Lorraine for information.

Work continues on our community projects. The Strafford Station group meets on Tuesday mornings from 9 to 10 and the Gazebo Garden at Ludington ladies generally work on Mondays. Cheryl noted the garden looked great and she will be scheduling two clean-up days late in October.

This year’s Shirley Meniece Horticulture Conference will be held in Seattle. Julie DeVuono and Michele Bolton will represent the Weeders. A seed exchange is part of the conference and Julie made a plea for contributions.

We will have a presence at the 2016 Philadelphia Flower Show. Our entry is in the container class “Welcome Home” and preliminary approval has been granted to our theme of Georgia O’Keefe’s Ghost Ranch, ca 1938. Diane McCallister is choreographing this effort and noted some challenges in dealing with the class chair and folks at PHS. She credited Laura Mitchell with a brilliantly original idea of

showing a slice of an airstream trailer – home is where you park – and lots of containers but that idea was nixed by the flower show honchos who had a more conventional vision for this class entry. This should be interesting so stay tuned.

Lorraine Wallace is our webmaster and communications guru. Meeting notices are sent by email and request a reply, which is apparently a daunting task for some Weeders who don't understand this is akin to torture for hostesses who are unsure if they should prepare food for 20 or 40. This is not a new problem. Lorraine thanked those who do reply and noted that she acknowledges the responses. She also sends out a reminder notice on the Sunday evening before the meeting hoping to prompt those who haven't replied. In addition, she urged us to consult the website regularly for updates and notices.

Alice Doering acquired a number of challenge class plants for the 2016 flower show and offered them for sale to the Weeders. One is Primulina 'Betty' and the other Euphorbia milii 'Poseidon.' These plants may also be entered in the challenge class at our flower show on May 10th.

The secretary was called away on a secret mission and is grateful to Alice Doering for taking notes for the balance of the meeting.

Weeders' Wit and Wisdom:

Melissa Bullitt spoke about the winter photography show scheduled for March 15th. The three classes continue the theme of art in the garden. She urged us to take pictures now and interpret the classes as we like. Submit your 8x10 image to Melissa; the mat will be provided. She spoke about storing photos and urged us to do so in multiple locations – in house and cloud, for example. Other options are SnapFlix and Shutter fly; there are costs associated with both. One can buy a camera memory card Iffy that automatically uploads to Shutter fly. Melissa spoke about a variety of ways to enjoy our photographs – make books, calendars, prints, etc. and there's also something called a Gru book that costs \$2.99 per month to upload 100 photos each month. Follow up with Melissa if you are interested.

President Marilyn Sprague and her sidekick Maria Thompson then appeared dolled out in fur wraps, white gloves and hats from the late 1950's. This was their attempt to present a "costumed" skit that actually had a serious side. Turns out it's the 50th anniversary of the Magnolia Tribute Garden at Independence National Historical Park and Marilyn was involved in talks with PCGCA over the summer about a proposed update of the garden that would involve financial contributions from all area clubs. The effort is being led by the Garden Club of Philadelphia because their long gone member Dorothy Falcon Platt (secretarial aside – the name should be familiar because of trophy awarded at the November Joint Meeting) was instrumental in establishing the garden. But our president did her homework and found out the person who came up with idea was Mrs. Platt's sister, Mrs. Frederic Rosengarten (Marion) who was, ta da, a Weeder. Of the cast of relevant players over the more than ten years it took to get this effort off the ground, the main players were Weeders, including Mrs. Edwin O. Lewis and Mrs. Laurence Bodine. And the magnolia soulangeana trees (originally to be 48 but scaled down to 13) were grown at Fairman Furness's Upper Bank Nursery, most recently owned by Wirt and Sais Thompson – she, being, you guessed it, a Weeder. The two costumed ladies gave a brief history of the Magnolia Garden project and made a case for our support of its renovation.

What might have been a hard act to follow was no problem for Jackie Burke who had a horticultural display item in the form of an eggplant with, shall we say, an "appendage" that was somewhat suggestive. Alice Doering had grown this unusual item and originally displayed it at the meeting of the executive committee on September 8th. The pressing question was how to best preserve it for presentation at this meeting. So kudos to Jackie for her success.

Diane McCallister's horticultural tip advised using granite grit in the potting mix for Echinacea .

Lorraine Wallace spoke about various methods of gathering seeds – from aruncus, the old flower must go brown for the seed to be ripe. When gathered on a plate, the seeds are heavier and one can blow across the plate to remove the chaff. She moved on to berries – make sure it's ripe and wear gloves when

mushing up the pulp to remove the seeds, then wash them and dry well. Always seal the corners of envelopes so the seeds don't leak out (secretary can attest to this happening with her carefully collected seeds of Aquilegia "Rocky Mountain Blue.")

Flower Show results will appear as a separate report.

The meeting was adjourned so the Weeders could make merry and enjoy lunch.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria M. Thompson,

Secretary