

Weeders Annual Meeting

June 14, 2016

Kim Frisbie's home, Fort Washington



On a beautiful sunny Tuesday thirty-four Weeders gathered at Kim Frisbie's house in Fort Washington where she had recently installed a walled terrace and landscaped her property for the enjoyment of her guests. The setting matched the day that began with coffee on the terrace at 9:30am. Half hour later we moved indoors for the meeting, chaired by President Marilyn Sprague who thanked the day's chair Sonya Driscoll and hostesses Lloyd Brown, Nancy Evans, Daryle Hanlon, Diana Mason and Margaret Sager.

Marilyn saluted Cynthia Wallace, a Weeder for seventy-five years, who was celebrating her 99th birthday at The Quadrangle in Haverford.

The minutes of the May meeting, which had been distributed via email to the membership, were approved.

Treasurer, Laura Mitchell, distributed the financial statement showing income and expenses since April 12, 2016, with total assets to date of \$45,461.86. Marilyn noted the Weeders' support of various community activities that included \$3,000 for the Magnolia Tribute Garden, \$4,000 in awards to urban farmers, and a total of \$5,000 to community projects and arboreta. She also spoke of our Memorial Fund. Dinny Jackson, daughter of Ella Jackson, named the Weeders as one of the options for donations in memory of her mother and so far the fund stands at \$125 from members of the community. Marilyn encouraged club members to consider donations to this fund. Laura distributed a two-page proposed budget for FY 17. Weeder committee chairs are to review the line items and submit any proposed changes. The budget will be voted on at the September meeting.

Committee reports followed and are summarized below. The reports as submitted are attached to the minutes. The President thanked all committee chairs and officers.

Admissions – Ellie Penniman – we have two new Weeders Elaine Lisle and Ellyn Spragins and the total membership numbers 85. The committee completed two new procedural documents – one for membership and the other for reinstatement. In addition, a new member questionnaire was put together. Marilyn thanked out-going Second Vice President Ellen Pemberton for ably handling all social aspects of orientation and welcome by hosting luncheons for the new members. Before Ellie sat down Marilyn presented her with a nicely wrapped lemon, yes lemon, in recognition of her years of work on behalf of "Lemon Hill" in Fairmount Park. Ellie answered a few inquiries on the status of the house and its collections.

After a cell phone chirped, Weeders were urged to "silence all cell phones."

Second Vice President – Ellen Pemberton (submitted a report, not in attendance) – The responsibilities

include assisting the President and helping new members get acclimated. I gave two luncheons, fall and spring, so our new members could meet other Weeders.

Archivist/Historian – Maria Thompson – Related Weeder involvement with the Magnolia Tribute Garden from the very beginning. Indeed, the idea for “a Magnolia Mall” near Independence Hall was suggested to the GCA by Weeder Mrs. Frederic Rosengarten, nee Marion Sims. She then gave a history of the Esther Lloyd Morton Award, which takes the form of a handmade book, and the club’s commission of volume II, also handmade. Weeders Polly Garnett and Linda Anderson contributed their artistic talent to the new book in the form of calligraphy and watercolor. Marilyn presented Polly and Maria (Linda was travelling to Rome) with their very own Morton “awards” – canisters of Morton salt.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve commissioning decorative clam shell boxes to safely store the Morton books.

Club Flower Show – Patricia Doolittle – The year’s activities included two flower shows, spring and fall, and one photography show held in March. The theme for all three shows was “Art in the Garden” and inspiration for the various classes came from artists and their work. Members supported the flower shows with 61 entries in the fall and 88 in the spring. The committee also organized and sponsored two floral design workshops held the day before the flower shows. Melissa Bullitt gave the fall demonstration and Beth Bartle and Diane McCallister demonstrated the intricacies of bridge design in the spring. The workshops were well attended, with participants paying \$20 and the rest of the costs coming from the committee’s budget.

Community Affairs:

Fairmount Park Holiday Decorating – Lynn Gibbons (submitted a report but was not called upon) – The theme for the holiday tours was “The Twelve Days of Christmas” and the Weeders were assigned the parlor at Strawberry Mansion where twelve members met on November 30th to bring “Three French Hens” to life with feathers, beads and glue sticks. The parlor was transformed and all the ornaments looked great.

Gazebo Garden at Ludington Library – Cheryl Cheston – Thanked the members of the committee especially Marilyn who never missed a Monday when the group gathers between April and October to tend the huge borders. Working at the site since 2012, efforts have focused on lowering maintenance by adding shrubs and eliminating aggressive perennials. Three Emerald Green Arborvitae and a Shasta Viburnum were added this year and a lot of annuals were planted for color. Cheryl reminded members this is a club project and urged those who had not participated to do so. The garden is an asset to the community and a voice from the crowd piped up to say how great it looks from the PNC bank drive-up window.

Strafford Station – Alice Doering – Weeders gather at the station on Tuesday mornings at 9 to tend the gardens and containers. Members of the faithful team include Marilyn, Leslie Undercofler, Polly Garnett and the late Ella Jackson whose specialty was pruning the roses. Alice’s report contains photographs and she noted she’s been reporting on Weeder work at the station since the 1970s.

Ronald McDonald House – Wendy Bailey (submitted a report, not in attendance) – She has served as chair of this committee for five years and is passing the baton to Laura Mitchell. The club decorates the house at Front and Erie Streets near St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia twice a year. In the fall, Wendy held a workshop at her house to create flower arrangements that were delivered to the house by Marilyn Sprague. Come spring, Wendy purchased some flowers and committee members cut azaleas, lilacs and boxwood from their gardens to make nine arrangements.

GCA Annual Meeting in Minneapolis – Jackie Burke (Patricia Doolittle also submitted a report) – Our Weeder representatives went to Minnesota at the end of May and enjoyed beautiful weather while attending workshops and meetings and touring gardens. They were proud to see fellow Weeder Lloyd Brown on the dais in her role as GCA secretary. GCA President Anne Copenhagen presided and introduced local Congresswoman Betty McCollum, an author of the 2015 National Park Wilderness and Waters Protection Act, whose top priorities are protecting our air and water. The keynote speaker was Joe Wiegand, a Theodore Roosevelt repressor, who stayed in character the entire weekend, which was very appropriate because of TR’s role in the National Park system and the organization’s 100th anniversary. Jackie attended a workshop on strategic planning, fund raising and membership development that she found very informative. There was also a program on navigating the GCA website. A walking tour along the Mississippi and dinner at a club overlooking Lake Calhoun rounded out the first day. The Sunday morning meetings included committee reports and a presentation by Tom Oslund, recipient of the 1991 Rome Prize Fellowship in Landscape Architecture. Garden tours followed

lunch and lectures at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. The evening event included the Medal Awards presentations that included inspiring life stories and notable achievement. There was also a flower show and our Weeders enjoyed the company of fellow Zone Ver Laura Gregg who interpreted the judge's critiques. For fun there was the Heartland Boutique at which Jackie bought a beautiful scarf for Marilyn, but otherwise exercised restraint, and Patricia, from all accounts, had a good time shopping.

Horticulture – Diane McCallister – Thanked Alice Doering for arranging a workshop on pruning and conducting workshops on propagation and seed starting. She also noted all the horticultural activities taking place at our meetings ranging from “Weeder Wit and Wisdom” to tours of Wave Hill and the High Line, a visit to Bartram’s Garden, and a program on Fairmount Park and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Diane thanked Melissa Bullitt and Julie DeVuono for their work on our exhibit evoking Georgia O’Keefe’s studio at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico for the PHS Flower Show. Her report also includes ideas presented to the committee for future workshops, meetings and trips.

Alice Doering, incoming chair, reminded members of the challenge plant for fall. Lorraine Wallace found some additional plants (in bloom) and they are available for \$5. Alice confessed to a most unusual ailment – propagationitis – and is offering seedlings that include a pink swamp milkweed, a blue flowered lace cap hydrangea, and a shade plant with a shield shaped leaf that has no common name and goes by a name beginning with the Greek word for shield – “pelto”

PCGCA – Sonya Driscoll – The Philadelphia Committee’s Fertilizer Fund supports city wide community projects and relies on member donations for support. She thanked those who already contributed and urged others to do so.

Scholarship – Sonya Driscoll – Inasmuch as she was on her feet, Sonya reported that members of the committee went to the Awbury Arboretum last week to present the \$1,000 awards to the four urban farmers identified as recipients [secretary’s note – there is additional information on this matter in the May minutes.] There were five representatives from PHS in attendance at the check presentation, which was a nice endorsement of our support for urban farmers.

PCGCA - Marilyn Sprague – The Philadelphia Committee raised \$22,800 from the ten GCA clubs to restore the Magnolia Tribute Garden on Locust Street. The garden is part of the National Park system and they supply all the mulch and fertilizer for the spring workday. The committee also received a donation of \$940.78 for bulbs, which were planted in the fall. McFarland Nurseries was paid \$4,200 to supply and plant replacement azaleas, and add boxwood, hydrangeas and soil amendment. Next spring on May 7th there will be a garden party for all PCGCA garden club members to celebrate the vision and accomplishment of the Sims sisters, Weeder Mrs. Rosengarten, and Garden Club of Philadelphia member Mrs. Platt.

Photography – Melissa Bullitt – Thanked Marilyn Sprague for making her house available for the initial staging and judging of the March show. There were four classes that followed the overall theme of the year’s flower shows – “Art in the Garden – and they were inspired by the artists Ansel Adams, Johannes Vermeer and Henri Matisse. Five entrants submitted forty photos. After judging, the photos and display boards were disassembled and moved to Hilltop House in Devon where they were reassembled for the pleasure of Weeders, spouses and guests as they enjoyed wine and hors d’oeuvres. Next year’s show will again be at our evening meeting, which will be in April. Keep your cameras handy this summer!

Print and Communications – Lorraine Wallace – Committee reports will be available online, as will a version of the questionnaire circulated by Linda Anderson and Weezie Johnston. Please fill out the form online so responses may be tabulated. Speaking of responses, Weeders’ manners seem to be improving and more members answer the call to meeting. The Sunday night reminder with the lists of names serves as a prompt to elicit additional responses. All of this is rather important to those serving as hostesses.

Program – Julie DeVuono – Thanked vice-chair Karen Doyle, committee members, hostesses and meeting chairs for an informative and entertaining year that began at Cheryl Cheston’s and saw Weeders in New York, at St. David’s and St. Christopher’s Churches, Hilltop House in Devon, Bartram’s Garden, the Haverford Reserve and Kim Frisbie’s in Fort Washington. Topics included our own “Wit and Wisdom,” and “Weeders Home Grown,” tabletop arrangements and holiday sale, Fairmount Park and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Flowers on the Frontier and Amazing Bees. Next year we will study landscape photography, learn about mushrooms, new shade garden plants and what to plant for pollinators, be inspired to create beautiful arrangements and hear about the history of Philadelphia’s waterways. Set aside the second Tuesday of the month, except for April when we will meet on the 18th.

Karen Doyle made a plea for hostesses; over forty are needed during the year, so don’t be shy about signing up.

Visiting Gardens/Trips – Polly Garnett – The October bus trip to New York, initiated by Marilyn, was chaired by Linda Anderson working with our New York city based member Amy Freitag and members of the committee who provided delicious food and drink throughout the trip. The first stop was Wave Hill in the Bronx overlooking the Hudson River. The garden was deeded to New York City in 1960 and the public areas were imaginatively designed by Marco Polo Stephano. Lunch was served on the bus en route to the Whitney Museum where we met Amy and landscape designer Patrick Cullina who was our guide for the High Line. New York based daughters of Weezie Johnston and Wendy Bailey joined our group as we explored what was an elevated rail bed that once served the city's meat packing district. The trip was very successful.

Polly then urged members to avail themselves of the GCA's visiting gardens program. Contact Polly two to three weeks before you leave home and she will get the process going to assure a visit to a private garden as an added treat during your trip.

Nominating – Sally Wood – As required by the by-laws, the proposed slate of new officers and new members of the admissions committee was circulated to the membership before the annual meeting. The slate was read aloud:

President – Jackie Burke

First Vice President – Patricia Doolittle

Second Vice President – Weezie Johnston

Treasurer – Nancy Evans

Assistant Treasurer – Leslie Undercofler

Admissions Committee – Lloyd Brown and Weezie Johnston

The slate was voted upon by the members and, as is our tradition, the secretary, on behalf of the membership cast one vote. The new officers and committee members were duly elected.

Awards:

Flower Show – Melissa Bullitt – Before announcing the names of the award recipients, Melissa showed a multi-colored spread sheet recording the names of entrants in club and outside flower shows, the number of entries, awards and points earned. The spread sheet also noted the years of membership and, as a secretarial aside, is an impressive piece of work.

Melissa read the description of each award before naming the third, second and first place winners.

[The descriptions may be found in your blue binder; they are not reprinted here.]

The Cadwalader Award

Third – there was a six way tie with the following members having two entries each: Jackie Burke, Patricia Doolittle, Patty Greenhalgh, Weezie Johnston, Jane Kline and Diane McCallister.

Second – Melissa Bullitt (3 entries)

First – Beth Bartle (5 entries)

Neophyte Bowl – No winner this year

Sweepstakes Award

Third – Lorraine Wallace (10 points)

Second – Beth Bartle (11 ½ points)

First – Alice Doering (86 points)

The Horticultural Award

Third – Julie DeVuono (47 ½ points)

Second – Alice Doering (66 ½ points)

First – Lorraine Wallace (67 ½ points)

Arrangement Award – This is a new award presented to the Weeder accumulating the highest number of points for arrangement entries in club shows.

Third – Diane McCallister (9 points)

Second – Beth Bartle (12 ½ points)

First – Melissa Bullitt (24 ¼ points)

Photography Award

Third – Lorraine Wallace (5 ½ points)

Second – Tie – Melissa Bullitt and Nancy Evans (11 ½ points each)

First – Taddy Dawson (47 points)

Founders Cup

Third – Melissa Bullitt (46 ½ points)

Second – Julie DeVuono (47 ½ points)

First – Alice Doering (66 ½ points)

The Biddle, Morton and a GCA Award – Jackie Burke – Thanked those who served on the Awards Committee. The Biddle Award will be presented at another time because the recipient was not at the meeting. Jackie then read a summation of the qualifications and service to the Weeders by the recipient of the Morton Award and applause erupted when the name of the winner was announced – Lloyd Hall Brown.

Jackie also had the happy task of reading a letter submitted to the GCA nominating a Weeder for the Horticultural Achievement Certificate. When the name of the recipient – Diane McCallister - was announced there was another round of enthusiastic applause.

The President's Commendation – Marilyn Sprague – Past President Linda Anderson introduced this award as a form of special recognition for a Weeder who has been a "personal inspiration" to the president and Marilyn then read a moving and very personal tribute to Sally Ann Wood that is attached to these minutes. There was more applause.

Before giving The Weeders' kneeling woman metal sign with hollyhocks that resides with the president to Jackie Burke, Marilyn presented Jackie with the gavel, bell and a box containing an official GCA tie that, unworn, had been passed on to her. Weeders are hoping for a sighting at a future club event. And, as her last act as President, Marilyn read a poem.

There is a special feeling, just because you are here.

The kinship of a garden, of the things we all hold dear.
You might be a great big blossom, of whom we are so proud
Or maybe a quiet perennial, with a voice that is not so loud.
Among us are lots of native plants, tradition wide and deep
But we have room for some exotics, whom we intend to keep.
Some of you bloom often and bless us every day
Some are more biennial, but help in their own way
To make a Weeder garden of which you all can say
YOU play a part in Weederdom, and what it is today.

Well done! Hooray! Hooray!

President Jackie Burke read a tribute to Marilyn and gave her flowers and a present. She then adjourned the meeting and the Weeders enjoyed a delicious lunch and one another's company on the terrace.

Maria M. Thompson

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary