

Photo: Priscilla Styer



WNGC's 70th Anniversary

The West Newbury Garden club met for the first time in the year spanning 1936-1937, and in celebration, we are planning a number of events and efforts around town over the coming year.

Dianne Faulkner is chairing a truly creative and energetic group including **Cyndy Bourquard, Linda DeCoste, Virginia Hallman, Linda Jackson, Kathy Krajeski, Gloria Kuran, and Pollyann Statom**, who met in October and have identified some great projects. They decided to honor our Purposes (Gardening, Conservation, Horticulture, and Civic Beauty) as well as our un-

stated purposes: learning and fun! Here are some of their ideas:

Town Gardens

Review and renew our town gardens at the 1910 Building, Church Square, Ferry Lane Park, Hills House Herb Garden, the Library, Old Town Hall, Training Field, and Elwell Park. The chairs of these committees and any interested members are invited to the January 11 Board meeting to talk about the current status of the gardens, and how we see them evolving. We will make plans for

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November 2 Wreath Workshop

Members and wreath-weavers extraordinaire **Kathy Krajeski** and **Marsha Cope** will lead a wreath-making workshop for all the members. We will be making "pocket wreaths" like the ones we made in Nancy Perkins' workshop a few years ago, but we will just be adding the greens this time around. The beautiful wreaths we create will be used to "spruce up" the various town buildings around West Newbury that our club decorates for the holiday season. And you can make one for yourself, too! Prepare to spend a nice gossipy evening getting sticky! The club will provide all the materials for the town wreaths.

What to Bring: Garden clippers, and gloves if you like. If you are **making one for yourself**, you should also bring a double-ring wreath frame of whatever size you like, a yard of sturdy dark fabric, a needle and thread, scissors, and enough

greens to fill the ring. You can find the frames in any craft shop, in sizes from 6" to 24". You may want to tear the fabric into 6" wide strips and wind around the frame before the meeting.

Hospitality will be provided by chairs **Jennifer Germain** and **Pollyann Statom** with Joan Colby, Linda Jackson, and Rosemarie McCobb.



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Fall Cleanup in the Veggie Patch

When your beans and peas are finished for the season, tidy them up by cutting off the tops, but don't pull them up by the roots. Being legumes, they have nitrogen-fixing nodules (little white bumps) on their roots, and if you leave them to over-winter, they will repay you by replenishing your soil in time for the next season.

70th Anniversary Observance

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renewal and perhaps expansion, and see what it would take to accomplish our plans.

Composting

Modeled after programs in other towns, work with Town Hall to make backyard compost bins available to townspeople for a nominal fee, to encourage conservation of our resources, to foster good gardening practices, and reduce garden waste in the town. This would include some publicity and education within the town, and we might kick off the program with initial sales of the bins at our annual Plant Sale.

Historical Perspectives

Create a display area at the Library and possibly one at the town hall to highlight the activities of the garden club, and our involvement in the town over the past 70 years. Included would be a retrospective of the farms and farmers of West Newbury, both recent renewals like Brown Spring Farm on Main Street, as well as the familiar Christmas tree farms, Sforza's, Knapp's, Dunn's, and others.

WNGC Commemorative Tote Bag

Design and produce a commemorative tote bag or other item with our club name and a decorative motif for club members as a token of our anniversary.

River Cruise

Schedule a party for club members aboard a river cruiser for an afternoon or evening in the summer or early fall as a reward to ourselves for all our contributions to the town over the years, and for the hard work that made it happen. We might want to have something lovely to eat and drink, too, just to keep the wolves at bay...

Outreach Meeting

Dedicate one of our regular club meetings to be an out-

reach to the townspeople we work with, from town hall, the fire and police, the parks and maintenance workers, and all the "friends of the club" around town asking them to help us celebrate and to thank them for all the things large and small they do every year. We could have a dedication of the Cherry Hill Nursery sign given to the club some years back by Ann O'Sullivan, and arrange a presentation of an Anniversary Certificate from the Federation. Perhaps there are people we would like to specifically honor with a certificate of appreciation or a plaque.

Newspaper Series

Publish a series of garden-related stories from West Newbury's past in our local newspapers to celebrate and publicize our anniversary. Published on a monthly basis, the stories will recount the history of our gardeners and gardens, and would be drawn from the members' reminiscences. This is a way to capture the historical memories of the long-term members of the garden club, with stories both about the Garden Club, and the way the town was "back in the day." For example, Kathy Krajewski noted that in the 90's members all brought their own coffee mugs to club meetings to conserve paper products. At the end of the meeting, you just rinsed out your mug and took it home til next time. See the story below about the Lunchbox Peonies, recounted by Dianne at the first meeting of the Anniversary Committee. **Please help by contributing stories of your own.** Jot down a few notes and then talk about it at our wreath-making workshop on the 2nd. Let's get those memories going!

As you can see, this is a really creative committee! If you have other ideas, please pass them along to Dianne, and we will either use them in the coming year, or save them up for the 75th Anniversary.

Club History & a Call for Stories **Lunchbox Peonies**

West Newbury is locally famous for a rare breed of herbaceous peony of exceptional, though varying beauty, known as the Lunchbox Peony. When Cherry Hill Nursery was at its peak at the beginning of the last century, it employed a number of people from West Newbury and the surrounding towns. The highlight of the nursery's fame were the fabulous and much-coveted Cherry Hill Peonies bred by the Thurlows, and cultivated at the nursery. This was in the years of the peony craze, and prices reflected the demand and the scarcity of these early introductions. The temptation proved too great for some of the workers, and more than a few root cuttings found their way into the lunchboxes of the nurserymen at the end of the day, giving rise to the appearance of "Lunchbox Peonies" in many gardens

around town. The Thurlow peonies are still prized and hard to find to this day, though they still can be found in some of West Newbury's backyards...

"James R. Mann", pictured at the right, is one of the Thurlows planted in our Ferry Lane Park garden on Bridge Street.



Members in the News Ribbons at the Fair ...

The final count is in, and the West Newbury Garden Club has made an excellent showing at the Topsfield Fair, thanks to **Gloria Kuran**, **Priscilla Styer**, and **Pat Finley**. Between the three of them, these women brought home a total of 9 ribbons: top honors with the Tricolor Award, 4 blue ribbons, 3 reds, and one yellow ribbon.

Pat took a First Prize for her arrangement in the Class One competition, and was then doubly honored with the coveted Tricolor Award, which is the judges' "Personal Favorite" award, given above and beyond the regular judging. Congratulations, Pat!

Priscilla Styer also entered the "Are you Going..." competition, in this case the "Are you Going to the Arboretum," and won a Red Ribbon.

And just to show everyone in the flower and vegetable exhibitions how it is done, **Gloria Kuran** entered her own zinnias and tomatoes, and won three blue ribbons, two reds

and a yellow! The fame proved to be too much for such a quiet person, however, and she was forced to come to the October incognito. Those paparazzi!



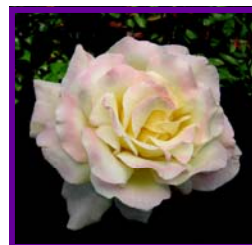
And speaking of the October meeting, what a great job by the Hospitality committee, with a veritable feast laid out on three (!) tables, lights and decorations in the hall, and costumes for all the hostesses. **Dot Cavanaugh** bopped around all night in her headgear! You have raised our standards for all the meetings to come!



Club News ...and a Ribbon Rose Workshop

This November 2, sign up for the "Everything is Coming Up Roses" the Ribbon Rose workshop which Sandra Meyer Cohen will run at our December meeting. These lovely accessories are designed to wear on a special hat, a favored suit jacket, or to brighten up a winter coat, keeping a memory of spring near you through the chilly months. And just in time for the holidays, they make wonderful, personal gifts for friends and family. What IS her favorite color?

Sandra will teach us to create these decorations using French wire ribbon in a rainbow of hues. So plan to sign up at the November meeting and reserve your space! The cost of the workshop is about \$7 (actual cost at sign-up) and includes all the materials. You just need to bring a few simple sewing skills.



Flower Arranging Art In Bloom is Back!

The MFA has once again invited us to help make Art in Bloom a success, not only introducing thousands of museum-goers to the art in the museum, but also to the art of floral arranging. **We need 3 people**, an Arranger and her Assistant to represent the club at AIB, and a person to handle the trip arrangements, so the rest of us can enjoy the amazing spectacle. This year the MFA Associates are introducing Garden Club Tuesday, a special day to honor all garden club members and their friends.

Please consider volunteering as either the Arranger, Assistant, or Trip Coordinator, and continue the tradition of our club's participation in this very worthwhile event. It is the



major fund-raiser for the Museum, and for the Arranger and Assistant, it is a fascinating and challenging honor to put your talents "out there" in this very public venue.

Priscilla Styer has been our arranger for the past 2 years,

and will gladly and enthusiastically support anyone interested in taking on the role this year. The deadline for our application is December 2, but we should have our paperwork in by Thanksgiving, as this is a first come, first served roster. If you have any interest, please call either Priscilla or Marsha Cope with your questions. We would be very happy to talk about the time involved and the undeniable thrills!



WNGC

WEST NEWBURY GARDEN CLUB

30 Merrimac St
Amesbury MA, 01913-4009

Phone: 978 388-2076
E-mail: bpgroup@verizon.net
Website: www.WNGC.org

*Gardens for beauty,
learning, and sharing*

The West Newbury Garden Club was founded in 1936 to encourage and cultivate an interest in gardening, to aid in protecting and conserving our natural resources, to further the study of horticulture and flower arranging, and to promote civic beauty. For more information, please contact Marsha Cope at 978 388 2076, at bpgroup@verizon.net, or at 30 Merrimac St, Amesbury MA, 01913.

Next Board Meeting
November 9, 2006 7:00pm



Ask Peony **Staggering Spring Bulbs**

Dear Peony,

I went simply wild at that spectacular Fall Bulb Sale you folks hosted, and now I'm staring at bags and bags of the silly things. Frankly, they are not the most attractive little items I've ever bought. And why did you call it a Fall Bulb Sale when you are selling Spring Bulbs!? Anyway, I bought just tons of Narcissus Acropolis, and I want to plant them all in one big artistic swath, just like you suggested, but I don't want them all to bloom at the same time. What should I do?

Flummoxed in the Fall

Dear Flummed;

You certainly did the right thing by buying all those bulbs. We wore our fingers to the nubbins stuffing them into paper bags! To get a long display from a single variety, plant half the bulbs in the approved way, that is, with the pointy end up, and plant the other half with the pointy end down. The downward-facing bulbs will still grow and bloom, but it will take them longer to do it. This way, you will have a staggered display, lasting longer than you could normally expect. The easiest way to plant a lot of bulbs in an "artistic swath" is to

first lay out the shape using a length of garden hose. Then get a good sturdy spade and dig a trench in that shape, to a depth of 4-5 times the height of the bulbs. Our bulbs, you may have noticed, were all of a wonderfully zaftig (fat) size, so dig down about one foot. Scratch up the bottom of the trench, whip in some bulb food like Bulb Booster, and plant those little devils. If you want to get really artistic, fill in the trench with half the soil, then add a layer of a small early-blooming bulb like crocus or Scilla, and add the rest of the soil. The early bulbs will bloom, and just as they are fading, the narcissus will start their show. Your friends and neighbors will talk about you in admiring tones, and court your favor.



Happy gardening, and keep those cards and letters coming!
See you next month!

— Peony