



Fall Newsletter

Nov 2006



Acton Garden Club



Dear Acton Garden Club Friends,

Historically, Presidents' letters are always upbeat but it is hard to be joyful and share good news when we've just lost another great gardener in Priscilla McGarry. Those of us fortunate to know Priscilla would agree that she would not condone such sadness! She encapsulated the 'joie de vivre' and with her soul mate, Pete, made the most of every day.

We must move on, as Priscilla would have wished. She loved the Garden Club and if she were writing this would encourage us to slow down and appreciate our Club's achievements:

The spectacular flower show!

The Pumpkin floral arrangements created by the junior gardeners!

The amazing transformations happening on Meeting House Hill due to the 'teamwork' between the Town and the Garden Club!

Civic Beautification causing the 'Wow' factor when residents see our barrels around Town!

The sell out of 'Calgary' daffodil bulbs by the team working the Oktoberfest!

Sue Whitcomb's leadership out at the Hort Study Group's meeting at Tower Hill Botanical Gardens!

Cornucopias made at the Floral Design Group to grace our Holiday tables!

The Educational Programs to date at our Regular meetings!

And, finally, evidence that we are still a growing and vibrant Club with nine new members so far this year! I, for one, feel very fortunate to be part of this Club and grateful for the friendship found here.

Health and Happiness to you and yours this Holiday Season.

Laura

Laura Lindop, President

Upper photo: Jean Mohr's *Gotterdammerung* from design class *Opening Night at the Opera*
Lower photo: Horticulture Division's Perennial section from *Floral Notes Flower Show*

Meeting House Hill – Daffodil Run Garden

Submitted by Sydney Storment and Joan Yatteau, Co-Chairs, Daffodil Run

Many members, particularly those who have recently joined our club, will be interested to know more about the historic Meeting House Hill Daffodil Run Garden and the work of the Community Service Committee that provides ongoing care to this extensive garden. Located in Acton's Town Center on the embankment along Main Street (Route 27) at Nagog Hill Road, this garden and its sister, the Meeting House Hill Wildflower Garden, were created as part of a civic beautification project begun by the club in 1964 to reclaim this land from the rubble of the razing of the Town Center School in 1960. It is called Meeting House Hill for the meetinghouse that was built on this town-owned one-and-three-quarter acre site in 1737 as a requirement of the incorporation of the Town of Acton (formerly part of Concord).

The beauty of this garden ablaze with daffodils, forsythia, and other flowering shrubs in the spring followed by a rainbow of daylilies mitigates the many challenges of maintaining this large and very public garden. Its prominent location on a steep embankment above the sidewalk along the edge of the heavily traveled Route 27 requires particular care and attention to safety of everyone on the Daffodil Run Committee on work parties throughout the gardening year as we amend the shallow, rocky soil, clean up leaf and plant litter, weed, and prune. In the spring, high school seniors help rake leaves and lay mulch as part of their community service day.

All gardens inevitably need water, and the planting of several new shrubs to extend the season of bloom in the garden requires attentive watering by club members throughout the growing season to get the new shrubs established. Committee chairs work with Dean Charter, head of the Municipal Properties department of the Town of Acton, regarding deliveries of loam and mulch and any large tree removal as needed. The Municipal Properties crew also mows the lawn area.

A club member's responsibilities are given on page 6 of the club's 2006-2007 membership handbook, and you can learn more about Meeting House Hill gardens on pages 19 & 20. Contact information for committee co-chairs and a partial listing of committee members appear on pages 28 & 30. We'd like to extend a warm welcome to new members of the club and particularly to new members of our committee. Work parties are a great way to get to know others in the club, and you can take pride in your contribution to the beauty of this garden and your service to the community as embodied in the care of this very visible club project.

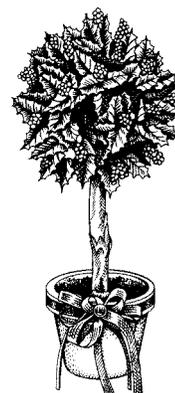
Awards - Fall 2006

Submitted by Maureen Christmas, Awards Chairman

The Acton Garden Club received two awards at the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts fall conference. They were both regional awards. The first was the Laura Wetmore Conservation Award for the work the club has done to promote water conservation with the Acton Water District. We previously received a state and national award for this effort. Cathy Fochtman, Pat Cumings, Trudy Walther and Jane Olesin were the forces behind this project. The second award was First Place for a large club for the publicity press book. Kudos to Susanne Fuller for her work compiling the press book.

Deck Your Halls

Deck Your Halls, Doors, Mantles or Tables at The December Greens Workshop



Catch the holiday spirit as you work on your project at the meeting on **December 5th**, 9:00 am at St. Matthew's Church, 435 Central Street, Acton. This year the Holiday Feature is a "*Faux*" Topiary made with a mix of fresh cut greens, 6-8 inches long, like boxwood, pine, cedar, holly, etc. For this project the bases **MUST** be ordered and paid for in advance. The base will be in a 6" terra pot. The cost of the base is \$10.00. **BRING YOUR OWN GREENS.**

Other choices are a door swag (small cage), mixed green tree (dish and oasis), and centerpiece, (dish and oasis). The cost of these project bases will be \$5.00. **BRING YOUR OWN GREENS.** There will be extra dishes and oasis for those who did not sign up in advance.

If you have any questions or want to sign up, contact:
Thelma Shoneman, 978-263-9466, e-mail tshoneman@earthlink.net or
Sandy Bonzagni, 978-263-6741, e-mail sandybonz@comcast.net

Don't miss the January Floral Design Meeting! "Island Paradise" with Thelma Shoneman



Tuesday, January 16, 9:15 am
St. Matthew's Church, 435 Central St. Acton.
A Fun and Festive underwater design.
Cost – \$20.00. All components will be provided.
Bring pruners, scissors, ****Box for transporting,
and trash bag.

Sign up at the December meeting or call:
Sandy Bonzagni, 978-263-6741
e-mail sandybonz@comcast.net

Nominating

Submitted by Sandy Bonzagni, Nominating chairman

I know it's early to start thinking about next year but we will be looking for people to fill various positions that will be opening up in April 2007. Vice President and Treasurer are two of the more exciting positions. If anyone is somewhat interested, please let me know. Mike Svoboda, our treasurer, is open to working with someone now, in order to make the transition smooth.

Junior Gardeners

Submitted by Pam Nelson, Junior Gardener chairman

The 2006-07 season of the Junior Gardeners is off to a busy start. In September, the Junior Gardeners met for a floral design workshop and a hands-on demonstration of fresh flower arranging. In addition, the children were shown an example of a collage using dried flower materials and received musical instrument templates to be used for the Acton Garden Club flower show. In fact, many of the Junior Gardeners entered the Acton Garden Club flower show and took home ribbons! Congrats to all!

In October, the Junior Gardeners met for a fall floral design workshop incorporating small sugar pumpkins and fresh flowers in vibrant fall colors. Each child selected a pumpkin to use as the "vase" for their arrangement. Oasis was added to each hollowed-out pumpkin and the Acton Garden Club members (parents and grandparents) took turns giving floral design tips to the children. The children decided whether they would create an arrangement to be viewed from all sides or from one side and then diligently selected, trimmed, and inserted their greenery and flowers. Each child created their own unique floral arrangement to take home and share with their family. As always, each Junior Gardener session concludes with tasty, kid-friendly snacks!

The Junior Gardener program is open to the children and grandchildren of members. Future meetings include sessions in garden therapy, horticulture, garden design, conservation, and civic beautification. For more information, contact Pam Nelson at nelson.pamela@verizon.net or 978-266-0464.

Jane Olesin Memorial Planting

Submitted by Cathy Fochtman, Jane Olesin Memorial chairman

A committee was formed over the summer to recommend a memorial in honor of Jane Olesin, past president of the Acton Garden Club, who tragically perished along with her husband in an auto accident this past spring. Pat Cumings, Judy Dembsey, Cathy Fochtman, Peggy Garrison, and Sue Whitcomb considered a number of options and focused on a project that was being enthusiastically pursued by Jane, co-chair of the Meeting House Hill Wildflower Garden. As a component of a long term plan to reinvigorate the Wildflower Garden, two multi-stemmed *Betula nigra* 'Heritage' (River birch) will be purchased and planted at the garden in Spring 2007. A stone bench will be inscribed with her name. Remaining funds, if any, will go toward the maintenance of the Wildflower Garden. Donations have been received and donors from outside the Acton Garden Club who have expressed interest in contributing once a plan was in place will be notified. Such donations may take the form of a check to the "Acton Garden Club", memo "Jane Olesin Memorial". Please contact me with any questions: (978) 263-5806 or fochtman@verizon.net.

ACTON GARDEN CLUB
INTRODUCTION TO BYLAW CHANGES
 Regular Meeting-November 7, 2006

The responsibilities of the Directors are to oversee the health of the club and bring to the attention of the members our concerns. Last February, we presented a paper “What’s on the Horizon” which stated our concern in regard to our expenses surpassing our income. We suggested at that time that the Board consider various ways to increase revenue that may include budget reductions, increases in dues and/or additional fund-raisers.

Some activities regarding the above concerns have begun and some bylaw changes and additions will be proposed to you today. **Voting on bylaws changes will occur at the regular meeting on December 5.**

On September 26, 2006, the Board adopted a new policy to control expenses. It states: Whenever a proposal for additional funding is requested, an ad hoc committee will be formed to study this funding request in relationship to our current and future monetary responsibilities for the program, our budget costs, and the balance in the savings account. This committee will consist of the Treasurer, Auditor, the Financial Director, the President and a Past President.

The Ways and Means Committee feels that we have reached the maximum amount of income, plus or minus \$10,000, from our plant sale. They have planned an additional event, a fund-raising raffle which they will present today. In February, the Finance Committee will be carefully examining and planning the budget for next year.

THESE BYLAW CHANGES HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE BOARD AND ARE INDICATED IN ITALICS.

Article IV. - Membership
Section 7d.

After two years of Active membership, a leave-of-absence may be requested annually in writing to the membership chairman. Leave-of-absence is defined as a temporary inability to fulfill membership requirements due to health, job or other extenuating circumstances and is granted subject to board approval. Leave-of-absences will be reviewed annually by the board with a three year maximum. A member on leave-of-absence will be required: to pay active membership dues; not be required to fulfill obligations stated in Article IV, Sections 7a & 7c; will not be able to attend Horticulture Study Group and Floral Design Workshops; and will not be credited with consecutive year attendance towards Associate Membership qualifications.

Reason for Addition: Extenuating circumstances do occur in members’ lives, the purpose is to provide flexibility without losing membership.

Bylaw Changes (con't)

Section 8.

To change to Associate status after serving *fifteen* consecutive years, an active member in good standing will submit a written request to the membership chairman who will then present the member's petition to the Executive Board for approval. Associate members will be solicited for fund-raising events, which may include the purchase of tickets, and *will be required to serve on the hospitality committee.*

Reason for Change: This is a response to concerns voiced by the Board regarding the number of workers available to perform our various functions within our own organization and in the community and providing hospitality at the regular meetings.

Section 9.

To change from Associate to Senior Associate status, a member must be age seventy years or more. The member will submit a written request to the membership chairman who will then present it to the Executive Board for Approval. Senior Associate members will be solicited for fund-raising events, which may include the purchase of tickets, and may be required to serve on the hospitality committee.

(Section 1. Senior Associate becomes new c. and old c. becomes d.)

(Old Section 9 becomes 10)

Reason for Addition: *This establishes a new membership category acknowledging that our older members may not be able to provide the same kind of assistance to the club as they have in the past but are valued members. Dues are \$5.00 less.*

Article 5-Dues

Section 1. The annual dues for Active members *and those on leave-of-absence shall be \$30.00*, payable before or at the Annual Meeting. *Dues received after April 30th will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee.*

Section 2. The annual dues for Associate members shall be *\$40.00*, payable at or before the Annual Meeting. *Dues received after April 30th will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee.*

Section 3. The annual dues for Senior Associate members (*70 years or more*) shall be *\$35.00*, payable at or before the Annual Meeting. *Dues received after April 30th will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee*

(Old Section 3 becomes Section 5; Section 4 remains the same)

Dues Increase: Dues Increase effective Beginning with 2007-2008 Dues

Reason for Change

The Acton Garden Club gives generously to our community and as a result we currently have a \$14,177.00 budget. This is a lean budget and each year during the budget and review process, each line item is evaluated to determine if it is adequate or too large and adjusted accordingly. Last year, with a \$13,147.00 budget, we had expenses totally \$12,053.53 leaving \$1,093.47 that was not spent – pretty lean.

Bylaw Changes (con't)

There are three sources of funding the Club earns and for the current budget year, these sources are projected at:

\$	35.00	– interest from the Main Checking account
\$	1,400.00	– interest from the 5 year CD
\$	10,498.45	- Net Profit 2006 Plant Sale (actual as of 9/8/06)
\$	<u>2,165.00</u>	– 2006-07 Dues (actual as of 9/8/06)
\$	12,098.45	Total Projected Income to the Club

Our budget this year is \$14,177.00 minus projected income of \$12,098.45 equals \$2,078.55 shortfall.

The Directors are proposing a Dues increase of \$10.00 per member in all categories, to:

Active	- \$30.00
Associate	- \$40.00
Senior Associate	- \$35.00

This will not cover our total shortfall but will assist with reducing the amount of savings that will potentially be needed. Currently our dues do not cover the expenses associated with each member of the Club. The cost per member for 2005-06 was \$51.97.

We as a Club receive many benefits for our current membership and we would like to see that continue with this proposed increase of \$10.00 per category.

Late Fees:

Reason for Change: In an effort to collect the dues on a timely basis, we are proposing a \$10.00 late fee.

Housekeeping Bylaw Change

ARTICLE XI – Committees

Section 1

The last sentence should read: The committee shall perform such duties as are designated in Article VII - Section 2, ARTICLE VIII - excluding Sections 4, 5, and 6 and ARTICLE XI – excluding B, C, Sections 3, 6, 7, and 9.

Reason for Change: *During the yearbook process this summer it was discovered that Article XI, section 1 was not updated during the March 1, 2005 bylaw changes to reflect the updated Article numbering and this proposed change will correct that omission.*

Let's Increase Our Knowledge About Trees and Shrubs

Submitted by Judy Dembsey, Horticulture Study Group Chairman

The theme of Horticulture Study Group this year is a study of trees and shrubs. In October, we began by taking a field trip to Tower Hill Botanical Garden. Sue Whitcomb was our very capable guide. She identified and discussed many trees and shrubs which were in fall color. We continue in November with a program about shrubs that bear ornamental fruit. January is our time to plan next year's program and bring the books and magazines, that are no longer needed, for exchange. In February, we will be discussing shrubs for flower arranging. (I began purchasing shrubs to grow in my garden based on a list for flower arranging.) In conjunction with our study of trees and shrubs, we will hear a program about the woodland garden in March. Anyone in the club is welcome to attend Horticulture Study Group. It is a place to learn and share personal experiences. New members are always welcome.

Civic Beautification

Submitted by Celia Lionetta and Beverly Shorey, Co-chairs



The Civic Beautification committee maintains annual plantings throughout town. They change seasonally: pansies in the spring, summer annuals about Memorial Day, changing over to or supplementing summer annuals with fall bloomers such as chrysanthemums and asters, and evergreen cuttings for the winter. Acton Center plantings include the granite trough on the north corner of the triangular town green, the oval shaped dwarf conifer bed on the lawn of Town Hall, black planters on the steps of Town Hall and two whiskey barrels on the steps of the Acton Memorial Library. West Acton merchants near the intersection of Massachusetts Ave and Central Street have whiskey barrels lining the street. The West Acton trough is on Central St, just before the light at Massachusetts Ave. The Citizens Library on Windsor Ave. also has a barrel. The Public Safety Building and our three fire stations in West Acton, Acton Center and South Acton have whiskey barrels, as does each end of Hayward Rd, at Main Street and at Arlington St. The entire club assists our committee by volunteering during the summer to do daily watering and deadheading of the annuals for a week. In the fall, they generously donate evergreen and ornamental branches. It is gratifying whenever a committee member is working on a planting to hear the compliments and appreciation of residents for the work we do to beautify Acton.

Meeting House Hill Wildflower Garden



This photo is from a recent work party at the Meeting House Hill Wildflower Garden. Dean Charter is assisting with unwanted tree and shrub removal and Fred Knippel is generously donating new trees and shrubs, as is Sue Whitcomb. Pictured left to right:

Back: Mary Beth Orfao (co-chair), Susanne Fuller, Gail Wick.

Front: Sue Whitcomb, Carol Stewart-Grinkis, Gena Manalan (co-chair), Kathy Burke, Dean Charter (Town of Acton Municipal Properties Director), Mike Svoboda, Fred Knippel. Not pictured: Maureen Christmas and Lorraine Plimpton

CONSERVATION TIPS

As the point of a clothes dryer is to make a lot of hot air, in many homes, the clothes dryer is the number two energy-guzzler, after the refrigerator. Typically, an average clothes dryer costs about \$85 to operate each year. Because of its high energy use, making changes in how you dry your clothes and how you use your dryer can result in significant energy savings, and the purchase of a new energy-efficient dryer may be well worth the investment.

Dry your clothes outdoors with natural sun and air. Get some clotheslines, wood clothespins, and wooden drying racks. Clothes dried out-of-doors often seem fresher and cleaner than those that are machine dried.

Use your dryer efficiently. The manner in which you use your clothes dryer can affect how much energy is used to get the job done. To save energy:

- Dry full loads.
- Do not overload the dryer. Put in only as many clothes as can easily tumble, and allow room for air flow.
- Use the cool-down cycle to allow the clothes to finish drying with the residual heat in the dryer.
- Save up your laundry and run several loads back to back; a lot of energy goes into warming up the dryer each time you begin.
- Don't open the door while the dryer is in operation. It shuts off when the door is open and takes 5-10 minutes to return to full heat.
- Clean the lint screen between each use, as lint impedes the flow of air and makes the machine work harder. Put lint out in the garden for birds to use for nest building. Not only does it "recycle" this material, but it will insulate the bird's nests and keep baby birds warm.
- Experiment with drying times. Separate your clothes and dry similar types of clothes together. Dryers have different time settings, but most people just use one. Towels and sweat clothes may take a long time to dry, but t-shirts require less drying time. Try setting the drier to a shorter cycle. You can always run it again if clothes aren't dry.
- Remove clothing from the dryer immediately when cycle ends and fold or hang them. Many wrinkles are removed as the clothes spin around. Leaving clothes crumpled in the dryer or in a laundry basket actually makes wrinkles, which then require the energy-use of an electric iron.
- Locate the dryer in a heated space. Putting the dryer in a cold or damp basement will make it work harder and less efficiently.
- Make sure your dryer is vented properly. If you vent the exhaust to the outside, use the straightest and shortest metal duct available.
- Clean the lint regularly from vent hoods.
- Check the outside dryer exhaust vent periodically. If it doesn't close tightly, replace it with one that does to keep the outside air from leaking in to reduce heating and cooling bills. Have the exhaust hose cleaned periodically. Not only will this make the dryer work more efficiently, it will prevent exhaust hose fires. Usually chimney sweeps will perform this service.

Julie Eacott, Conservation and Environmental Education

Floral Notes Flower Show

Submitted by Maureen Christmas and Susanne Fuller

Hundreds of people came to see the Standard Flower Show, "Floral Notes – Interpretations of Arrangements Through the Ages", presented by the Acton Garden Club at the Acton Memorial Library on September 25 and September 26, 2006. The exhibits were distributed throughout the library during the show.

Floral Notes consisted of three divisions; Division I – Horticulture, Division II – Design, and Division III – Special Exhibits which included Educational and Youth sections. The judges, as well as the visitors, had many favorable comments about the show. A special commendation was given to the arboreal section for the quantity, variety and condition of the exhibits.

Guests visiting the Horticulture Division – "How Does Your Garden Grow?" were treated to 212 entries in seven sections. The purpose of the horticulture section is to stimulate interest and educate the public. There was much note taking of the names of the beautiful specimens. Blue ribbon winners in horticulture were Sandra Bonzagni, Lynn Bruce, Maureen Christmas, Judy Dembsey, Claudette Duhamel, Julie Eacott, Cathy Fochtman, Susanne Fuller, Laura Lindop, Phyllis McDonough, Pam Nelson, Sally Patrick, Doris Prendiville, Noreen Rowe, Thelma Shoneman, Mike Svoboda, Susan Whitcomb, and Joan Yatteau.

In addition to the blue ribbons awarded, seven top awards were given. The Arboreal Award in Section A, Branches, was given to Susan Whitcomb for *Thujaopsis dolobrata* 'Variegated'. Five Awards of Merit were given: Section B - Perennials to Judy Dembsey for *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert', Section C - Ornamental Grasses to Laura Lindop for *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrinus', Section D - Annuals to Susanne Fuller for *Cleome hassleriana* (Spider Flower), Section E - Bulbs to Joan Yatteau for *Dahlia* 'Trudy's Favorite', and Section F - Rosa to Sandra Bonzagni for Rosa 'The Fairy'. The Award of Horticultural Excellence, which is the top horticulture award, was given to Judy Dembsey for *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'.

The Design Division, "You're Beautiful," carried out the musical theme with artistic arrangements of fresh flowers and plant material in six classes: Folk Music, Opening Night at the Opera, Just Jazz, Roaring 20's, Big Band Era, and Rock 'n' Roll. The designs were judged according to National Garden Club standards.

The first place winners of each class in the Design Division were Pam Rentschler for her Folk Music exhibit, Joan Yatteau for her interpretation of the Opera Madame Butterfly, Sally Patrick for her creative design in Just Jazz, Sue Whitcomb in the Roaring 20's Hanging Design class, Carol Stewart-Grinkis for bringing the Big Band Era to life and Maureen Christmas for her Rock and Roll design. The blue ribbon winners that scored 95 points or more were eligible for the Designer's Choice Award. Based on the number of designs in the division, two awards could be given. Sally Patrick and Joan Yatteau were the recipients of these Top Awards.

The Education Division - "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" - featured four educational exhibits. Joan Yatteau won the blue ribbon and Educational Award for her exhibit on "How to Make a Trellis." Other exhibits taught container planting, the benefit of and how to attract beneficial bugs, and the elements and principles of design.

In the Youth Design Division, "Kidz Bop", Paul Nelson won the blue ribbon and Youth Award in Class 1 - "Sing-a-long Songs" for his design, "London Bridges". Emily Victor won first place in Class 2 - "The Sound of Music" for her interpretation of "Bop to the Top" from High School Musical. In the Youth Artistic Craft Section, children were asked to make a collage of either a drum or a guitar (based on their age) out of plant material. Justin Dudziak and Emily Victor were blue ribbon winners for their creations. Blaise Dudziak, Natalie Nelson, Olivia Drake, and Amy Dudziak were also ribbon winning participants in the youth sections.

The Acton Garden Club would like to thank all those who helped with the show, in particular the extraordinary cooperative spirit extended by the library staff.



Floral Notes Top Awards (left to right)

Award of Horticultural Excellence: Judy Dembsey for *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'

Designer's Choice Award: Sally Patrick's *Just Jazz* entry

Designer's Choice Award: Joan Yatteau's *Opening Night at the Opera* entry, *Madame Butterfly*

Deck Your Halls

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

St. Matthew's Church, 435 Central Street, Acton



Coffee begins at 9:00 am...Supplies will be available before the meeting...Lunch will be served.

Details on page 3 of this newsletter
Sign up for your topiary in advance!

It's a Great Time...Don't Miss It!

Acton Garden Club

P.O. Box 2137

Acton, Massachusetts

01720