

Stratford & District Horticultural Society

Annual Report

November 2016

To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow

Stratford & District Horticultural Society

138th Annual Meeting

Griffith Auditorium, Spruce Lodge, November 28, 2016

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Introduction of Special Guests

Reading & approval of the 2015 annual meeting minutes

Reports

Treasurer

Auditors

Committee Reports

President's Remarks

Motion to approve the actions & decisions of the Officers &
Directors since 2015 Annual Meeting

Nominating Committee Report

Election & Installation of Officers

Appointment of Auditors

New Business, Announcements

Adjournment

President's Message

We have had an exceptional year. We had better-than- plan income from our two major fundraising events, plant sale & garden tour. This supported a larger-than-usual budget in our public gardens for Churchill Circle & the Iris garden renewal. Our volunteer base has expanded in our public gardens which contributed 1,615.5 of the 4,137 volunteer hours we recorded this year. It is you, our members, who have donated your knowledge, skills and talent to make us so successful.

Ryan Bedford and Mary Hoffman and their team were responsible for the creative display at the Garden Festival again this year. The colours and fragrance were a most welcome experience in March. Their team of volunteers gave out bookmarks of our events and our program brochures. Many of our members introduced the speakers which always draws a crowd.

I took the opportunity to visit our public gardens a couple of times a month and the gardens looked beautiful. The garden captains Don Farwell, Darlene Irwin, Bruce Wilkinson, Henry McVey, Marg O'Reilly Dennis Rawe, Louise Spandler, Nancy & Ron Nichol & Felicity Sutcliff and their teams have done an outstanding job while dealing with the oppressive heat and near-drought conditions. There have been many compliments from the public and Communities in Bloom. The availability of water at Churchill Circle garden allowed the planting of annuals which added splashes of colour and gave the plants the necessary moisture to thrive.

The plant sale was a great success and generated a higher-than-planned revenue. The indoor venue at the Local was well received. There was a good quantity and wide variety of quality plants. Maureen Cocksedge and her team did a phenomenal job. The plant sale report below contains a lot of information and is worth the read.

We participate in Green Week with a display which reaffirms our commitment to environmental stewardship. Last year we tracked how many handouts were taken when the display was manned vs unmanned. We discovered that the unmanned time had more traffic. This year the display was unmanned so we could put volunteer hours to better use.

Bub Kelly exhibited her talent again by maintaining seasonal urns at the library. They really enhance the entrance of the library.

The Garden Tour also exceeded our planned revenue. The gardens had something for everyone from formal to somewhat eclectic. Glen Querengusser and his team are to be commended for their contribution to our success.

Nancy Lupton arranged for two bus trips this year. We had bus trips to the Home & Garden show in Toronto and the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. A good time was had by all and it never ceases to amaze me how many plants can be stuffed in a bus.

Larke Turnbull provided us with informative, educational and entertaining speakers for our meetings this year. Bernice Barratt and Doug Reberg are sharing this responsibility and have arranged for our speakers for 2017. Marg O'Reilly provided the plant-of-the-month and door prizes this year and has stepped down to be able to continue as chair of the garden tour and captain of the Iris garden. Bernice & Doug are adding this to their responsibilities. Our thanks to both Larke and Marg for their dedication to our society.

We are grateful to Shelly Meyers who continues to keep our web page and Facebook up to date. Thank you to Mary Hoffman who continues to be membership coordinator. Mary makes sure that we have membership sales at Catherine Wright, local nurseries plant sale and our meetings.

Michael Murray is our editor of The Gardener and we greatly appreciate his talent and the effort that he supplies to ensure that it is For us, By us and About us.

Thank you to the Master Gardeners who contribute their skill & knowledge in our Garden Chats and their assistance at the plant sale and Garden tour. They are a valuable resource to us and the garden community.

We have expanded our community outreach which has increased our visibility in the community. Your contribution of house plants to the Youth Centre was well received. I had the pleasure of providing a Lunch & Learn presentation on the health benefits of gardening for the Perth District Health Unit. We provided plants for various charitable organizations which is detailed in the plant sale report. We have a request from Community Living to advise them on how to make their back yard more appealing thru landscaping and gardens.

I attended the Community in Blooms symposium which had participants from cities and towns in South Western Ontario. This was an opportunity to meet with the Community in Blooms committee and to discuss the horticultural society's involvement in other communities. The symposium included a bus tour of Stratford public gardens and I was asked to give a history of the Dutch Memorial. We also visited Churchill Circle where I explained the transformation that we had just completed. Everyone was impressed with our contribution to the community.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Lori Hall and Leslye Glover for their contribution as board members. Their perspective and knowledge has been an asset to us and they will be missed.

I would like to thank the board members for their support and encouragement. They have provided the leadership required to manage the business aspect of our organization. My heart-felt gratitude to you, the members, for volunteering your time, energy, skills and knowledge to this organization. Our Horticultural Society not only exists for you but it existed because of you.

Every volunteer organization is struggling with the same question. How are we going to sustain a viable membership? Young people are very busy with work, kids and recreation. Near-to-retire people are immersed in their grandchildren's lives while helping or caring for their parents. New retirees want to travel and not be tied down. On top of that we are competing with other volunteer organizations. I don't believe there is a single solution or a quick fix but members join because they see value in being a member and we will have to discover new ways to deliver value. The only thing I know about our future is that will be exciting!

Respectfully,

Mike Matthews

Stratford & District Horticultural Society Annual General Meeting, 2015

The potluck supper was begun with a beautiful prayer by Donna Hinz. The members sang Happy Birthday to honour Flo Bowman's 95th.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by co-president Bernice Barratt. Copies of the Annual Report were circulated by email prior to the meeting and also available on each table. It was moved by Mary Hoffman, seconded by Carol Bradley to approve the agenda as printed in the annual report.

Guests were introduced by co-president Mike Matthews. Steven Douglas, the District 10 director, brought greeting from OHA. He outlined 3 events coming up: April 30 the AGM of

District 10 in Belmont (\$245 per person); June 11-19, Garden Ontario for which OHA is asking each society to plan an event which will be promoted on the OHA website; and sometime in July the OHA convention in Waterloo.

Mike then introduced Anna Peterson who was our speaker.

Bernice resumed asking for a motion to accept the minutes of the last AGM. This was moved by Jinny Macdonald, seconded by Stella Farwell, and carried.

Since our treasurer, Glen Querengesser, was unable to attend this meeting, there were no questions concerning the treasurer's report. However, auditor Ron Nichol, stated that he and Anu MacIntoch-Murray had audited the books and found them in excellent order. Bernice thanked Glen for his careful attention to our finances.

Bernice noted there were questionnaires on each table which asked members to volunteer in any of the many activities of the society. She encouraged members to participate fully in our organization.

Mike Matthews moved, seconded by Ryan Bedford, to accept the reports. This motion carried. Steven Douglas commended the board for "increased presence in the community." Bernice thanked the retiring board members, Ryan Bedford, Henry McVey, Larke Turnbull, and Shelly Meyers. Bernice noted that Shelly has agreed to continue to work on our website and Ryan will continue to work on the Garden Festival.

Bernice presented the nominating committee report. The nominees were introduced. Steve asked for nominations from the floor. There being none, Steve declared the board of directors was appointed by acclamation. Steve continued to install the newly elected board.

Mike asked for reactions from the membership to the screen presentation which had been running during the meal. This included a map of the City of Stratford with our perennial gardens and our annual beds located individually with the names of the garden captains. There was also a request for a photographer and archivist, followed by Christmas greetings and other announcements. These were colourfully done with pictures along with words. The crowd applauded this innovation.

Mike presented Bernice with her past-president's pin. Mike stated that Nancy Lupton was working on a bus trip to the Home & Garden Show next spring and he asked how many would be interested. About ½ a busload put up their hands.

Shelly Meyers and Heather MacDonald have agreed to be the auditors for 2016. It was moved by Marg O'Reilly, seconded by Maureen Cocksedge to elect Shelly & Heather as our auditors. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05.

Bernice introduced Anna Peterson who agreed with very little notice, to be our speaker for the evening. Anna demonstrated several wreaths and floral arrangements for the Christmas season. She was thanked by Don Farwell. The poinsettia centrepieces were given to the person with a tag under his/her seat.

Respectfully submitted,

Jinny Macdonald, Secretary

By: Glen Querengesser - Treasurer

By: Glen Querengesser - Treasurer

Iris Garden Report for 2016

Workshop on planting/maintaining irises

Ready for Spring

Our core committee of five, Virginia Macdonald, Steven and Doreen Zurbrigg, Cobe Giroux and me, plus many other volunteers have worked hard this spring, summer and fall to build a new Iris Garden on McLagan Drive. Several factors, including infestation of Iris Borer, shady low-lying location and crowding of the iris plants necessitated the move. We have dedicated at last 660 volunteer hours to this project.

We have chosen a beautiful iris, hybridized by Bob Granatier, which we named Believe in Tomorrow. It will be introduced in 2018 to mark the 140th Anniversary of the Stratford and District Horticulture Society, pending approval by the American Iris Society.

The area (2204 sq. ft.) was outlined following the design prepared by Ann Granatier of Trail's End Iris. The sod removal presented a challenge because of the dry conditions and the area was roto-tilled several times. We encountered many stones, even asphalt and, of course, lots of weeds.

Our next steps were to spread several inches of topsoil over the area, move the monument stone and outline the public and maintenance paths. We then had the armour stone places for sitting areas at each end and in the middle of the garden.

We were excited to begin planting the iris purchased from Trail's End and completed the first phase at a Seminar conducted by Ann and Bob with 13 attendees on August 22nd. We planted several varieties of iris in order to prolong the blooming season from late April to mid-July. The iris salvaged from the previous bed were planted on September 7th.

We have added auxiliary perennials, sedum and grasses, and will complete this planting in the spring of 2017 when we will add lavender. These plants are designed to provide interest when the iris finish blooming each year.

In spite of the challenges presented by this project, it was been an educational and gratifying experience to work with such dedicated and patient volunteers, hardworking mentors and helpful city workers to provide an inviting public space that we trust people will enjoy for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Marg O'Reilly, Chairperson

Churchill Circle

Quadrant 1
Contact: Louise Spandler

Quadrant 2
Contact: Felicity Sutcliff

Quadrant 3

Quadrant 4

**Contact: Don Farwell
Nichol, Mike Matthews**

Contact: Ron & Nancy

Quadrant one has been a pleasure to work on this year as the soil amendment done at the outset has made upkeep much more manageable. Terrie Wilks was an invaluable helper at Q1 this season, she weeded and planted, and also did Spring clean-up duties. We were able to maintain the glorious colour of our bed through this very hot and very dry summer because of access to water at the Circle.

Many plants were divided in the early spring and were planted in Quadrant 3, following our initial plan to divide plants as much as possible to keep costs down. Some of the red and white tulips were added to Quadrant 1 this fall to show our support of Canada's 150th birthday in 2017. Many people who walked through the Circle while we were working complimented the Society on our efforts. I noticed that the 🐝 bees, dragonflies, and butterflies especially loved our beds...in all my years working at the Circle I have never seen such a variety and abundance of flying insects. Proof that our plan to re-do those beds was an excellent idea 💡 for both humans and insects!

Louise Spandler

Quadrants 2, 3, & 4 were virgin gardens this year. Plans needed to be made; plants needed to be bought; soil, upgraded; mulch, spread; and constant watering of new material had to be arranged. The teams for each quadrant worked independently and together to accomplish an amazingly beautiful total effect. Many thanks for the dedication and hours of time given to this work.

Annual Beds

After the spring commemoration ceremony last May at the Dutch Memorial Garden, the red and white tulips planted the previous fall, bloomed beautifully, a week later! With the cool wet spring that followed, they put on a glorious show for several weeks.

As gardeners know from experience, planting annuals among maturing tulip foliage is a bit tricky! This was still true the end of May! The annual beds were planted quickly over two morning sessions. Heavy rain arrived just before the job was completed but Mother Nature washed the dirt off the plants and planters and gave everything a good long drink!

The annual beds of 2016 were a riot of colour, naturally some plants did better than others. There were snapdragons, coleus, portulaca, and begonias with salvia providing the blue for the blue, red and white to honour the Dutch flag at the Dutch Memorial Garden.

THANK-YOU to all who were able to come out and help with the planting!

Bernice Barratt

Membership report

On behalf of the Society, I wish to again thank those who renewed their memberships and also to welcome many new members. There were several members who kindly helped in selling memberships, a big thank you for their time and support. We truly appreciate as well, the 9 merchants who continue to give discounts to members. If you would like to volunteer to sell memberships, for more information contact me at (519) 271-2246.

Summary:

Paid memberships 39 new, 171 renewed - total 210 Complimentary Garden Tour Hosts

2015/2016 - total 24 Life Members 2

Mary C. Hoffman, Membership Convenor

2016 Plant Sale Committee Report

Location: The Local, inside. Location worked well the day before and day of the sale. The Local provided 5 round, 14 rectangle and 7 square tables. Till was near food counter with chairs lined up to create a checkout line. Two persons were on the till for the morning. Food service was excellent. Note for next year: floors must be washed after the sale. One vendor, Ecouerto, came for the morning.

Publicity: **E-Notices** to local media. **Bookmarks** at District 10 AGM, also at Community in Blooms and library; **Posters** –downtown, on private lawns **Facebook** through Hort Society **Twitter** through U Waterloo **Radio interview – Mike M with Eddie Matthews**

Snap Perth – came to the Local for pictures **Street signs:** 5 were removed. Will need 10 replacement signs next year. These were purchased in 2013 in Tavistock at \$10 per sign.

Plant drop-off - went well; some items were dropped into the greenhouse; it was difficult to know whose plants were whose

Signage **\$60 banner worked very well; it was up one week.**

Parking lot signs and loading zone area prevented chaos. Heavy tubs with flag tape worked well.

Set up and take down: **went well; tarps, then newspaper covered all tables.**

Volunteers 33 volunteers gave 275 hours - Thurs May 27 to Sunday May 29

Outstanding volunteer help was given by all Directors and many members. New members Pat Airdrie, Maryann Flaxbard, Dorothy Van E and Jenny Myers deserve special mention for their help. Also Michael Murray for his tomato advice. Master gardeners, Jim Fitzgerald, Anu M and Leslye G reported many more questions this year, perhaps because the “salespeople” were directing customers to the advice area. The Local provided 2 volunteers at a children’s craft area as well as food service volunteers.

Digs Three gardens – 561 Albert, 10 Dawson and 52 Devon - were offered to us to dig for the sale yielding peonies, Solomon seal, daylilies, daisies, hosta etc.

Numbered Vouchers – \$250 value vouchers were given; \$85 were redeemed. The public did not seem to understand the voucher system. **Charities** benefitting included Emily Murphy Center, Hamlet, Avon school gardens, the Falstaff youth garden project, public gardens, the Local. Very few plants were left over. It is estimated that plants, donated by members, valued at \$600, were given away.

Tomato Demo

Three flats of tomatoes and one flat of herbs were provided by members, with seeds donated by Anything Grows. Volunteer Michael Murray was on hand with master Gardeners, to give advice on seeds, seedlings and transplanting. This didn’t work well. Customers wanted to buy the produce, not learn about it.

At the request of the Local, herbs were planted in the front beds fall 2015 and spring 2016; as well, plants were donated for the garden boxes. Four volunteers assisted. Members were on hand to give gardening advice, assistance, twice a month on Mondays, fall and spring 2016.

Planted / transplanted were: thyme, rosemary, sages, Lesser Calamint, Hollyhocks (pollinators) tarragon, oregano, marjoram, apple mint, lemon bergamot, fennel, several mints. Note: Many plants did not survive the winter or else were overplanted. Sturdier signs are recommended.

Numerous black, red and white, black currants bushes were dug from member gardens and donated to the Center.

Report on work with The Local Community Food Center

Seedy Sunday The Local Community Food Center requested assistance in organizing a Seedy Sunday event. SDHS provided liaison and made arrangements for volunteers and activities, December to February. After several date changes, the Local cancelled the event.

Herbs/ Fruit At the request of the Local, herbs were planted in the front beds fall 2015 and spring 2016; as well, plants were donated for the garden boxes. Four volunteers assisted. Members were on hand to give gardening advice, assistance, twice a month on Mondays, fall and spring 2016.

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Tea garden / Youth garden The Local welcomes donations for their tea garden. They already have several plants, see above. The Local started a youth garden at Falstaff Center. The Plant Sale provided numerous plants for this venture.

Plant Sale The local provided the venue for the plant sale and offered healthy breakfast to volunteers and shoppers.

Requests The Local seeks donations of hand tools.

The Local is looking for gardeners to register for their weekly garden program Wednesday mornings at the Local. They are also seeking workshop leaders.

Maureen Cocksedge, Liaison to The Local

Canada Day Parade

These pictures show something of the building of the 2016 Canada Day parade float.

The 53" drop deck trailer and driver were loaned for the day at no cost by Woodcock Bros. Sebringville. Klomps loaned much of the plant material and garden ware at no cost and Lori Hall loaned the Bistro set. Jane Eligh-Feryn, Landscape designer, drew up the garden plan at no cost.

The four hour preparation of the float and one hour demolition (after the parade) was by several of our members

who took great pleasure in the opportunity.

Garden Tour Report

The 2016 Garden Tour was held on Sunday, July 3rd, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day again this year. Advance tickets were sold to the membership for \$10.00 each at the May General Meeting and a total of 48 tickets were sold there. Advance sales also took place at the Sebringville Garden Centre, Cozyn's Garden Gallery, Catherine Wright Designs and Tom's Eldon Landscaping. There were 138 tickets sold at the four locations. The main ticket sales took place at the City Hall on the day of the tour. There were 226 tickets sold at City Hall. An additional 27 tickets were sold at the homes. This resulted in a grand total of 439 tickets sold. Records from past years show that this was the second highest number of sales ever. Apparently 454 tickets were sold in 2007.

Financially the Society did extremely well, as gross ticket sales were \$5,485.00. In addition, there were six sponsors who contributed \$100.00 each and this made our gross revenue \$6,085.00. A special thanks to the sponsors who contributed \$100.00 each to our revenue.

The home of George and Elizabeth Hardeman served as our refreshment garden. There we had a chair on display donated by CR Plastics for which we had a draw and the winner was Bonnie Butcher. As well, each home had a specific perennial marked with a flag that people on the tour were asked to identify and then place their entry in the perennial challenge draw. The perennial challenge was won by Shelly Zurbrigg. She received a planter donated by the Sebringville Garden Centre.

The Horticultural Society really appreciates the home owners who open their homes and gardens for this event each year. All gardens were very well received and thus made our tour a success. Also thanks to the members who contributed cookies for the refreshment garden. As well, we were very appreciative of the Master Gardeners who worked at the homes helping visitors identify and understand the various species of plants. Various local businesses supported our endeavour and so we ask you to be supportive of the services they provide in our community.

Finally, the committee deserves a good deal of credit for their efforts. The following eight individuals have worked diligently for several years now. They are Sharon McDonald, Shelly Meyers, Louise Spandler, Felicity Sutcliffe, Ron Nichol, Leslye Glover, Stella Farwell and Larke Turnbull. The committee was co-chaired by Marg. O'Reilly and Glen Querengesser. Marg will be continuing on with the chairperson role in 2017, so we ask you give her your support.

Respectfully

Glen Querengesser – Co-chair 2016

Stratford In Bloom

The SDHS board was approached to assist the Stratford In Bloom committee. In previous years, postal carriers nominated various gardens in their wards to be recognized by this group. After several emails back and forth to clarify expectations and details, the board voted to work with their committee. As time was getting short, six of your board members agreed to search out and make the initial nominations. Addresses of four homes/gardens per ward were given to the Stratford in Bloom committee. Their judges went looking at our submissions and chose a first place and a runner-up for each ward and businesses within the city.

In September the nominating group was invited to the awards ceremony where winners were officially congratulated and photos taken. It was an interesting task and they have requested our assistance again for next year.

Bernice Barratt

Flower Show

Many of you visited our mini flower show on Sept 26th.

The judge commented that the horticultural entries were of excellent quality and designs were well thought out and well-constructed. Even though there were fewer entries compared to previous years, they were all of good quality.

Linda Murray was our “clean sweep” winner for the second year in a row; earning the judge’s choice in horticulture and design; congratulations Linda! Darlene Irwin won the president’s choice award for her unusual foliage design; congratulations to you too, Darlene!

It has been discussed and here noted that perhaps the number of exhibits/exhibitors are less because our show is held immediately following the Stratford Fall Fair; certainly a consideration.

Bernice Barratt

Library

In an attempt to raise our visibility in the community of Stratford we have embarked on a new pilot project. Following a discussion with the library CEO we have begun to periodically bring floral designs to be displayed in public areas. A small card advertises that they are courtesy of the Stratford and District Horticultural Society.

The project has been greeted with much appreciation and a small group of designers have been approached to continue with this into 2017.

In addition to this, Dennis Rawe presented a workshop on what to do when transplanting potted shrubs and plants. The intended audience was novice gardeners.

Bub Kelly has continued to create beautiful designs in the large urns for the enjoyment of library patrons.

Bernice Barratt

Nominating Committee Report

Committee Members: Mike Matthews & Bernice Barratt

Our sincere thanks to our retiring board members, Lori Hall, Leslye Glover who have added much to our decisions.

The proposed slate for 2017 Board of Directors is as follows:

President - Mike Matthews

Vice President - Open

Past President - Bernice Barratt

Treasurer - Glen Querenguesser

Secretary - Elizabeth Ainslie

Maureen Cocksedge

Michael Murray
Virginia Macdonald
Marg O'Reilly
Dennis Rawe
Louise Spandler