

# THE GARDEN GATE

FGCNYS District IV Newsletter: Summer 2013

[www.nydistrictIV.org](http://www.nydistrictIV.org)



## Director's Message

I distinctly remember the sights, sounds, and feel of summer as a child. The grass was somehow softer and greener. Dandelions did not “offend” but were thought of as flowers to be picked and clumsily arranged into bouquets for our mothers. I remember the sound of lawn mowers, Mr. Ding-a-Ling, and kids laughing. The evenings were a wonderland of twinkling patio lights, lightning bugs, and the laughter of neighborhood friends. All was right with the world. I long for those days and fear we may have lost something along the way. The dandelions are no longer flowers but weeds I have yet to battle, and the lawn has become a chore to be dealt with. Have we really become so busy and consumed by electronics that the glow of fireflies has been lost to the glow of computers, iPhones, and technol-

ogy? I would like to ask everyone to take the time to experience and enjoy the world in which we live. There is much to do and see, especially if you are a member of District IV!

District IV recently took a two-day trip to Montreal, Canada, to visit the Montreal Biodome, the Insectarium, and the Montreal Botanical Garden. I am proud to say we took 50 women across the border and we brought 50 back, fairly unscathed! The rain dampened our clothing but never our spirits. We laughed like kids and shared a special bond. We saw amazing examples of horticulture and gained a new appreciation of nature. My heartfelt thanks to Barb Millington for putting the trip together and to everyone who came and kept the faith!

At the time I am writing this, the Schuylerville Garden Club and the Carillon Garden Club are busy preparing for their flower shows. The Schuylerville show, “And They’re Off,” will pay homage to the 150th anniversary of the Saratoga Race Track and will be held on July 13 and 14. The Carillon show, “Let’s Play Poker,” (September 27–28) will focus on this exciting card game and should be fun for all to see. I hope everyone will attend these District IV flower shows. Let’s all support these clubs and recognize the hard work and energy that goes into these shows!

Do not miss the Saratoga 150 Floral Fete sponsored by Marylou Whitney on August 2. Heritage Garden Club has organized local garden club volunteers who will be rolling up their sleeves and decorating a horse-drawn carriage with floral garlands. This carriage will participate in a parade of fifteen horse-driven flower-carriages, antique automobiles, floats and floral-decorated bicycles, wagons and baby carriages, all proceeding from Skidmore College to Congress Park where an ice-cream social is to be held!

Meanwhile, Carillon Garden Club has been busy revitalizing the Blue Star Memorial in Crown Point. Overgrown-shrubs have been removed or pruned. New plant material adorns the site. The funding for this marvelous transformation is part of the \$2,200 grant the district recently received from FGCNYS.

Schuylerville Garden Club is busy making the arrangements for District IV’s Fall Meeting and Luncheon on October 1 at the Fort William Henry Resort. Floral designer Michele Peters will be the guest speaker sharing with us ideas for fall and holiday arrangements. These meetings are an important way for our members to keep informed on what is happening in the district and to socialize with members from other clubs. I look forward to seeing you there.

Finally, District IV is happy to welcome two new judges to our District IV Judges Council. Pat Wania, a newly accredited judge, and Pam Hebert, who has just joined the Lake George Garden Club, are welcomed and appreciated. We look forward to the programs that the Judges Council is offering our district clubs. These promise to be informative and enjoyable.

Please have a safe, fun summer and continue to add to your collection of life experiences!

—Laurene Tompkins, Director

### The Garden Gate

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### District IV Officers

Laurene Tompkins, Director  
Marjorie King-Martin, Second Assistant Director  
Judy Esposito, Recording Secretary  
Heather Cushing, Corresponding Secretary  
Barbara Millington, Treasurer

## District News

### WILDFLOWER and NATURE WALK: Moreau Lake State Park



The District IV Wildflower and Nature Walk took place on a perfect spring day in May. Jackie Donnelly lead 12 members and friends on a walk around the lake at beautiful Moreau Lake State Park.

The group was introduced to a large number of wildflowers and native plants, and, again, was given lessons in recognizing invasive, non-native species and the use of native species as substitutes in our gardens and landscaping. These include high bush blueberry to replace burning bush or the use of viburnum.

Some new, nature-related experiences took place: we saw *many* newly hatched dragonflies of different species resting on logs or on the ground near the lake. They have nearly transparent, silvery wings and are quite beautiful. We also came upon a large mound of

empty snail shells next to the lake, which were the remains of meals for a water-living animal: mink, otter, muskrat. As we came up to a nesting box about 10 feet up on a pole or tree, Jackie explained that the box was for a wood duck. Wood duck babies must fall from the nest to the ground in order to develop and live!

The members of the Schuylerville, Indian Lake, Ballston Spa, and Heritage garden clubs who participated all agreed that they had had a great time in the great outdoors. The Wildflower Walk for 2014 is tentatively planned for early May in Cole's Woods off of Crandall Park in Glens Falls where we will see the spring ephemerals.

—Martha Van Patten, Wildflower Chairman

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### BUS TRIP: Montreal



Fifty District IV members boarded the bus for the annual district trip: this time headed to Montreal for a two-day excursion in June. We arrived at the Biodome for a self-guided tour and lunch. Our bus driver picked us up and escorted us to Old Montreal for an afternoon of sightseeing and shopping. From Old Montreal the group went to the hotel to freshen up before enjoying a wonderful dinner. Some people went to explore the underground malls of Montreal after dinner.

The next day we woke to buckets of rain! The group headed to the Montreal Botanical Garden and Insectarium. We stayed dry while enjoying the many greenhouses with a huge variety of flora. Our bus driver was very kind to pick us up and drop us off for our boxed lunch. After lunch we were given a ride to the Insectarium. Some braved the rain and toured the outside gardens.

Heading home we stopped for a lovely dinner and social time at the Butcher Block in Plattsburg. Everyone expressed how much they enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to next year's trip.

—Barb Millington, Bus Trip Chairman



### Ballston Spa House and Garden Club

Club members gathered on the grounds of the Ballston Spa Public Library and the Veterans Memorial Park on April 27 for the club's 7th annual Patriotic Tree Planting in honor of New York State Arbor Day. On the grounds is a sign welcoming visitors to the Village of Ballston Spa. The sign itself was in some disrepair and the ground beneath it was bare. Club members freshened the sign with bright new paint and planted peren-



nial and annual plants beneath it. Two shrubs were donated by Brookside Nursery in Ballston Spa. The Ballston Spa librarian, Andrea Simmons, was pleased to take the above photo. Since April, more plants and flowers have been added to make the area look great!

The club's annual geranium sale ended in early May on a very profitable note. This sale is the club's main source of revenue for two awards. The first is a \$100 horticultural award that was given to Michael De-Filippo. This is an annual award given by the club that is granted to a Ballston Spa High School or BOCES graduating senior who is entering the field of horticulture or environmental science. The second is a \$350 scholarship to Camp Colby that was given to Ballston Spa middle school student Julia Barnum.

Club members once again celebrated National Garden Week on June 6 at the Ballston Spa Public Library. The club donated two children's picture books about gardening to the library, and club secretary Judy Esposito read them to preschool children and their family members. Club president Barb Millington and vice-president Lorraine McPherson guided the children and family members in making butterfly mobiles.

The club's annual garage sale was also a success, despite some intermittent rain. The sale was part of the Ballston Spa village-wide garage sale on June 7 and 8. Members donated many great items, staged and priced items, worked the sale at Judy Esposito's home, cleaned up after the event, and transported unsold items to Noah's Attic, a local thrift shop run by the Christ Episcopal Church in Ballston Spa.

In July, club member Omar Araya is expected to host an outdoor cooking event for club members at his home. He plans to make paella using fresh vegetables and herbs from members' gardens. This should be a fun event!

In August, club members plan to help decorate carriages for the Saratoga 150 Floral Fete. Club members are looking forward to learning how to weave garlands of flowers and use flowers for decorating.  
—Pam Relyea, Correspondent

### Carillon Garden Club

Carillon Garden Club members have been ducking in and out of the showers tending their own gardens as well as gardens in their local communities. However wet, spirits are high as members prepare for upcoming club events.

The club's June meeting started a three-part series of workshops to prepare for their flower show scheduled for September 27 and 28. June's program, "Yes You Can, Part I" was a demonstration of a floral design and discussion of the flower show schedule and guidelines. In July, "Yes you Can, Part II" will feature another floral demonstration and a hands-on workshop for all attendees. More experienced designers will be able to mentor those with limited experience as members learn from each other. Then in September the third workshop will feature getting horticultural entries ready for the show and filling out the entry forms.

The annual Luncheon and Card & Game Party, which is the club's major fund-raising event, will be held on August 15. Plenty of homemade luncheon foods will be served followed by lots of fun playing favorite games. Reservations may be made by calling the event chairman, Sue Johnson, at 543-6127. Money raised will help with community beautification projects and youth programs including a scholarship to Camp Colby.

The club encourages everyone to attend its flower show, "Let's Play Poker," on Friday, September 27, 2-4 p.m., the reception at 7 p.m., or Saturday, September 28, 1-4 p.m. at the Hague Community Center on Route 8 in Hague.

—Betty Rettig, President

### Glenville Hills Garden Club

During May and June members enjoyed three outdoor events under mostly sunny skies with no rain! Community cleanup day was a grand success thanks to the 67 sixth graders who raked, dug, weeded, and planted at 11 community buildings, all under the guidance of 17 club members, community volunteers, and parents. The annual Memorial Day plant and pie sale raised the

funds needed to carry out the club's programs during the coming year. With spring projects completed, members took a break and enjoyed the annual June picnic at the home of Lenore Lanka on the shores of Galway Lake.

The club's beautification committee has moved forward with the renovation of the circle garden at the Joseph Henry Elementary School. The garden had been planted by club members more than thirty years ago. Overgrown shrubs and plants were removed, and the area was filled with new topsoil. Four new shrubs will soon be planted. In the future, perennial plants from members' gardens will complete the garden design.

In July members will gather at Shades of Green in Charlton, where they will shop for shade plants and picnic on the grounds

A special public program on invasive plants and insects in the landscape is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9, at 7 p.m. at the Galway Town Hall on Sacandaga Road. Laurel Gailor, Agricultural and Natural Resource Coordinator, Cornell Cooperative Extension Service, Warren County, will discuss identification and management of these invasive species. A brief presentation by Camp Colby student campers will precede the main program. All are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served.

—Arlene Rhodes, President

### Heritage Garden Club

There is a lot of activity taking place in the three gardens in Saratoga Springs that the club is responsible for: the Visitors' Center, the Garden of Hope at the Radiation-Oncology Center at Saratoga Hospital, and the Gideon Putnam Burying Ground. The gardens have responded and are looking very good.

In May the club enjoyed its annual spring luncheon held at the Prime at Saratoga National Golf Club. In addition to an excellent meal, members had many health-giving laughs from the presentation by John McPherson, the creator of the "Close to Home" cartoons. The annual barbecue in July for the residents of Woodlawn Commons is a very popular event for both the residents and club members. Salads, desserts, and other foods are provided by members and hamburgers and hot dogs are cooked on the grill.

Many of the club members will be involved in the preparations for the Saratoga 150 Floral Fete. Fifteen horse-drawn carriages and a number of antique cars will be decorated with flower garlands as in the late 1800s for the promenade.

Heritage Garden Club invites members of District IV clubs to attend a presentation by Kerry Mendez: "Top Performing Perennials, Shrubs, and Annuals for Our Area" on September 9 at 1:30 p.m. at Woodlawn Commons in Saratoga Springs. Please con-

tact Martha Van Patten for reservations (583-0688 or Gmvan6@aol.com).

—Martha Van Patten, Correspondent

### Indian Lake Garden Club

The Indian Lake Garden Club's June meeting featured a DVD program, *Olmsted and America's Urban Parks*. The film examines the creation of America's great city parks in the late 1800s through the enigmatic eyes of Frederick Law Olmsted, visionary urban planner and landscape architect. Members had fun preparing for the town's 4th of July parade, in which they wore placards representing seed packets and distributed sunflower seeds to the children along



the route. A small float provided a ride to those members who preferred not to walk the parade route. For the July meeting, club member Lois Kelley will present "Woodland Wildflowers." Her program progresses through the seasons with woodland wildflowers, including a look at some of the flowers that appear on trees (pine, cedar, etc.) far above the ground because they do of course flower. Club barrel tenders and civic gardeners are eagerly awaiting more sun and less rain to keep their plantings flourishing.

—Pat Leonard, President

### Lake George Community Garden Club

This year, the Lake George Community Garden Club was responsible for the Spring District IV Meeting and Luncheon at the Fort William Henry Hotel and



Conference Center. During the winter many club members started herb seedlings to be potted, wrapped in colored foil, and placed on the tables for the guests to take as a favor.

In May, Amy Howansky gave a presentation

## Lettuce Begin

It all began with the lettuce challenge for the Schuylerville Garden Club's flower show. Could I accept the challenge? How was I going to start the seeds in the dim light that filters into my house surrounded by woods?

According to a garden talk I heard, it is possible to use under-cabinet lighting as a grow light. This sounded very convenient, but just how did it work and were my existing lights the correct wattage?

I planted the seeds in a six-pack filled with vermiculite and covered it with Saran Wrap. Then I put the six-pack up on a block so that it was very close to the fluorescent tube. It was a naked bulb, the cover had fallen off and was lost years ago.

In three days my seeds had sprouted. A month later they had four leaves. It worked! I kept the light on all day and turned it off at night. As the plants grew I removed some of the blocks so the leaves did not touch the light and get burned.



It is important to have a period of darkness, mimicking nature. The light helps plants produce energy, which is broken down during the period of darkness and used for growth and blooming (respiration).

So now I was curious to learn more about grow lights. The light needs to provide the proper spectrum for photosynthesis. Cool blue light is good for starting seeds, and red light triggers a hormone response, which is good for growing blooms. You have a choice of light bulbs: incandescent, LED, or fluorescent. Incandescent lights are cheapest but produce a lot of heat, so are less efficient and the plants need to be two feet away from them. LEDs are the most versatile—they are small, light weight, and can combine blue- and red-producing light bulbs in one

strip. However, for on-the-spot convenience, fluorescent lights are long-lasting, produce a cool light, and a decent spectrum.

My next venture will be growing herbs during the winter. No need to buy an Aero Garden, I have all I need right here!

—Liz Gee, Herb & Vegetable Chairman

on unusual trees and shrubs for our area. One of the oddest was the contorted beech, *Fagus sylvatica* "Tortuosa": its branches curl around and grow into themselves. Another species coming into popular use in landscapes is the Rhus family. Amy specifically suggested *Rhus typhina* "Dissecta" (zones 4–8) and a fragrant sumac, *Rhus aromatica* "Gro-low" (zones 3–9), great for bank stabilization. The state of Rhode Island has used the Rhus in their highway dividers and the fall color is spectacular.

In June, during a spell of warm sunny weather, the Perennial Planters visited Eileen Ruel's garden in Queensbury. Her garden abounds with lush perennials (both shade and sun), interestingly pruned shrubs, and a small lily pond.

On the first day of spring, the club distributed floral note cards, created by members, to residents of the Westmount Nursing Home. And, in honor of National Garden Week, members created floral arrangements and placed them in displays at local libraries.

—Nancy Boericke, Correspondent

### Schuylerville Garden Club

Members of Schuylerville Garden Club are consulting their award-winning yearbooks frequently, trying to schedule in all the fun and exciting things planned for this spring and summer. NGC Master Judge Stephen Brown demonstrated vibrant and pot-et-fleur designs, which will be used for the club's flower show, "And They're Off," July 13 and 14. In the midst of all their grand plans, the club's annual plant sale and

municipal plantings have kept members down to earth.

Several members enjoyed the District IV trip to Montreal, and the club is planning an overnight stay at Wiawaka Holiday House on Lake George in late July. Members plan to spend many hours making ever-green roping, embellishing it with flowers, and making arm bouquets for dignitaries in the Saratoga 150 Floral Fete. Summer meetings include trips to Yaddo Gardens and Gardenworks in Salem.

Schuylerville Garden Club will host the Fall District Meeting and Luncheon on October 1 at the Fort William Henry Hotel in Lake George. The planning committee is busy making all the final arrangements. Designer Michele Peters will demonstrate some new designs for fall and the holiday season.

—Kathy Turcotte, President

## DISTRICT IV Fall Meeting & Luncheon

Tuesday, October 1

Fort William Henry Hotel, Lake George  
*Hosted by the Schuylerville Garden Club*

“Autumn’s Splendor”

Presenter: Michele Peters

### District IV Calendar of Events

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|-------------|--|
| August 2    | Saratoga 150 Floral Fete Promenade & Ice Cream Social, downtown Saratoga Springs, 7:30 p.m.  |
| August 15   | Carillon GC Annual Card & Game Party and Luncheon, Hague Community Center, Rt. 8, 11:30 a.m., (RSVP Sue Johnson, 543-6127)   |
| September 9 | Heritage GC presents: “Top Performing Perennials, Shrubs, and Annuals for Our Area,” program by Kerry Mendez, Woodlawn Commons, Saratoga Springs, 1:30 p.m. (RSVP Martha Van Patten, 583-0688) |
| Sept. 10-12 | FGCNYS Fall Conference, Radisson Hotel, Corning  |
| Sept. 27-28 | Carillon GC Standard Flower Show, “Let’s Play Poker,” Hague Community Center, Rt. 8<br>Friday: 2-4 p.m. / Reception 7-9 p.m. (\$5.00 per person); Saturday: 1-4 p.m.                           |
| October 1   | District IV Fall Meeting & Luncheon, Fort William Henry Hotel, Lake George (Speaker: Michele Peters)   |
| October 9   | Glenville Hills GC presents: “Invasive Plants and Insects in the Landscape,” program by Laurel Gailor, Galway Town Hall, Sacandaga Road, 7 p.m.  |
| October 17  | Carillon GC presents: “Making the Cottage Garden of Your Dreams,” program by Jo Ann Gardner, Hague Community Center, Rt. 8, 11:15 a.m.   |
| October 23  | District IV Board Meeting, Lake George Senior Center, 9:30 a.m. (coffee), 10:00 a.m. (business meeting)  |

### District IV Clubs

Ballston Spa House & Garden Club

[www.BSHGC.org](http://www.BSHGC.org)

Carillon Garden Club

[www.facebook.com/carillongc](http://www.facebook.com/carillongc)

Glenville Hills Garden Club of Saratoga County

[www.glenvillehillsgardenclub.org](http://www.glenvillehillsgardenclub.org)

Heritage Garden Club

[www.heritagegardenclub.org](http://www.heritagegardenclub.org)

Indian Lake Garden Club

Lake George Community Garden Club

[www.lakegeorgecommunitygardenclub.org](http://www.lakegeorgecommunitygardenclub.org)

Schuylerville Garden Club

[www.schuylervilllegardenclub.org](http://www.schuylervilllegardenclub.org)