

Stratford & District Horticultural Society

Annual Report

November 2015

Stratford & District Horticultural Society

137th Annual Meeting

Griffith Auditorium, Spruce Lodge, November 30, 2015

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Introduction of Special Guests

Reading & approval of the 2014 annual meeting minutes

Reports

 Treasurer

 Auditors

 Committee Reports

Presidents' Remarks

Motion to approve the actions and decisions of the Officers &
 Directors since 2014 Annual Meeting

Nominating Committee Report

Election & Installation of Officers

Appointment of Auditors

New Business, Announcements

Adjournment

Stratford & District Horticultural Society Annual Meeting, November 24, 2014

Donna Hinz began our meal with a meaningful prayer at 6:30. The meeting was called to order at 7:40 by co-president Bernice Barratt. It was moved by Franklin Hinz, seconded by Penny Keegan to approve the agenda as published. Henry McVey, co-president, introduced our guests, Roland Craig, Director of District 10 OHA, and Paul Finkelstein, our speaker for the evening. Anna Peterson sent her regrets as the windstorm was dangerous for the drive from St. Marys. It was moved by Jinny Macdonald, seconded by Nancy Lupton, to approve the minutes of the 2013 annual meeting. Carried.

Reports

Glen Querengesser reported that the proceeds from the Plant Sale, the Garden Tour and Membership Drive were all up this year. It was moved by Glen, seconded by Bruce Wilkinson to approve the treasurer's report as presented in the Annual Report. The auditors, Dorell and Harry Brightwell, were unable to be with us tonight, but they certified that the treasurer's books were accurate.

Henry explained that the Centennial Trophy was awarded to the person who received the most points over all our flower shows during the year. The award was initiated in 1978. This year's recipient was Bernice Barratt who won for the 6th time.

It was moved by Jinny Macdonald, seconded by Ryan Bedford to approve the actions and decisions of the board of directors for Stratford & District Horticultural Society. Carried.

Presidents' Remarks

Henry McVey expressed special thanks to Bruce Wilkinson for his work on the Newsletter, Membership lists, and general communications with members. He was very grateful to Bub Kelly for the beautiful urns which she created and maintained at the library. Henry also thanked Franklin (& Donna) for their wonderful work on our brochures to be found on the tables. Bernice thanked Penny Keegan and Darlene Irwin for their hard work over many years on the board. The membership gave them a standing ovation. Bernice also thanked everyone who donated muffins and tea bread for the District 10 meeting.

Roland Craig asked for a motion to approve the actions and decisions of the board of directors for 2014. It was moved by Bruce Wilkinson, seconded by Mary Hoffman, to approve the actions and decisions of the board. Carried.

There being no nominations from the floor, it was moved by Jane Marie Mitchell, seconded by Penny Keegan to elect the board by acclamation. Roland Craig installed the new officers of the society.

Mike Matthews gave Henry McVey a past president's pin. Henry gave Mike a president's pin. Bernice presented Roland with a gift from our society in gratitude for his work with OHA over 5 years.

Linda Neeb, retiring membership chair, was thanked for her 6 years of behind-the-scenes work. Mary Hoffman was introduced as our new Membership Chair. Mike Murray was introduced as our new Newsletter Editor.

It was moved by Darlene Irwin, seconded by Coby Giroux to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10.

Larke Turnbull introduced Paul Finkelstein of the Screaming Avocado at Northwestern High School who entertained us and amused us with slides and stories of his work with the youth of Stratford. He was thanked by Darlene Irwin.

Respectfully submitted,
Jinny Macdonald, Secretary

2015 Presidents' Report

LOOKING BACK & LOOKING FORWARD

We held eight general meetings with a variety of interesting speakers and topics. In addition to that, volunteers and board members participated in many projects and events. The following is a brief overview:

Nov – 2014, General meeting, Annual General Meeting (AGM) and hosted District 10 workshop

Jan – General meeting, Garden chat, reports to OHA & OMAFRA (grants),

Feb – General meeting, Garden chat

Mar – General meeting, Garden chat, Garden Festival, recognition of 6 members at Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

Apr – General meeting, Garden chat, Green Week at Mall, District 10 AGM in London

May – General meeting, Share your creativity, Plant sale, membership drive, hypertuffa workshops

Gardening began in public gardens and planting of Library urns and planter at United Way

June – Bus trip to Port Rowen/St Williams/Woodstock

July – Garden Tour, OHA Convention, Nominating committee work began

Sept – General meeting, mini flower show

Oct – General meeting, Members' plant exchange, Garden chat, OHA Workshops

Succession Planning

Institutional Memory is when an organization runs efficiently because long-time members remember the “how and when” of the activities of that organization. Problems arise when newer members join and struggle to learn who has the knowledge they need to do their tasks. To become more effective, we need to create procedures and supporting policies which will make us more productive and retain this past knowledge in a more accessible format. We are working at this by collecting job descriptions and timelines used by various committees within the organization to support succession planning. We are compiling an inventory of the Society's assets to cut costs and avoid duplication. (If you are storing/using society belongings in your home, please **make a list** and give it to Bernice Barratt. The following is not necessary but, if you want to place SDHS inventory items into our storage locker at Pinnacle, place them into a sturdy box, label the box and bring it to the January meeting.)

Increase our Profile in the Community/partnerships

We partnered with The Local cfc. Our plant sale received a fabulous location with free rent in

exchange for a renovated entrance garden. SDHS partnered with Home Hardware and the Restore for supplies for the two door (Tudor) arbour in the garden at the Local in exchange for advertising for them at Green Week and the plant sale.

We partnered with the Stratford Communities in Bloom committee and planted 700 red and white tulip bulbs donated by Vesey's. They are at the Dutch Memorial and it is being called the Tulip Friendship Garden to commemorate Canada's close ties with the Netherlands during WW2.

Public Gardening

(Formerly called civic beautification committee) has been struggling to accomplish the huge task of maintaining our flowerbeds throughout the city as well as doing a major renovation at Churchill Circle. We are happy to report that we now have "captains" for most of the beds. Captains will be looking for volunteers to work along with them. More information about this will follow at a later date.

It will take effort to get all of this organized and working but we are confident that the end product will be a simplified and smoother running organization. On a final note, we had a total of 2795.5 volunteer hours submitted by our society. Well done everyone; a huge THANK-YOU TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS!

Special thanks to:

Ryan Bedford and Mary Hoffman for their work on our Society's display at the Garden Festival; Maureen Cocksedge for organizing the hypertuffa workshops; Mary Hoffman for the idea and set up for "Share your Creativity", Henry McVey and his team for the plant sale; Mike Matthews for all his work on Green Week, plus the gardens and "two door arbour" at the Local cfc; everyone who helped with the successful membership drive; Bub Kelly for keeping the urns at the library looking beautiful, Dennis Rawe for his steady diligence at maintaining the library garden; Louise Spandler and her team of public gardeners; Nancy Lupton for a fun-filled bus trip; Penny Keegan and her crew for the amazing garden tour; Nancy and Elizabeth Ainslie for their encouragement and work with our mini flower show; Larke Turnbull for always providing interesting speakers and Jim Fitzgerald and Anu MacIntosh-Murray, our "pinch hitter" MG's who came to the rescue when scheduled speakers had to cancel at the last minute; and our Master Gardeners for the Garden Chats! Last but not least, thanks to our amazing, hard working, board of directors who keep us on track and make sure things get done in a timely fashion. It has been a good year!

Bernice Barratt and Mike Matthews, Co-presidents

Exhibit & Floral Design Committee

The decision not to have a June Flower Show and tea room in 2015 was not reached lightly as it has been a feature of our society for many years. The decline in participation and consequently exhibits was a major factor in this decision and it had the board's support.

Our September show theme was *Carousel Capers*. There were only 6 exhibitors and many empty classes. Award winners were as follows: Moss/Green Cup for judge's choice in the cultural division, along with a gift certificate from Tom's Eldon's was presented to Linda Murray. Linda also won the Judge's choice in the design division and received a gift certificate from Catherine

Wright Designs. Bernice Barratt won the Lingard Trophy for the president's choice award. (No, I did not make that choice in case you were wondering!)

Nikki Priestap was the draw prize winner from among the exhibitors. She received two tickets to see the Stratford Festival theatre production of *Carousel*.

We will be re-visiting the possibility of future flower shows.

Thanks to the 2015 committee of Elizabeth Ainslie and Nancy Lupton for their excellent help and feedback.

Submitted by Bernice Barratt, Chairperson

Public Garden Committee (Previously known as Civic Beautification)

Once again this year got off to a rocky start: too much rain in the early spring and summer, and not enough volunteers to get a variety of jobs done. It didn't help that we started the year with a list of jobs that didn't get accomplished the previous fall....but that's gardening for you!

We finally got our act together in the mid-summer. A dedicated group of four, spearheaded by Felicity Sutcliffe volunteered to take on the care and maintenance of the second quadrant at Churchill Circle. They attacked the weeds in order to clear the ground for a variety of purple, blue and pink plants, many of which were donated by group member Maureen Cocksedge.

As the P.G. Group met over the past year it became apparent that we did not have a significant volunteer base to keep all of our perennial gardens looking ship shape. Decisions had to be made...do we keep all of our gardens and hire out the upkeep of as many as our remaining 2015 budget will allow, or do we approach the City to take some off our hands?

In the end we reached a compromise for this year, and we will have to re-visit the problem in the Spring. We hired a professionally trained gardener to clean up the bed on Queensland...one which hadn't been touched for over a year, and we also had her work her magic on the bed at Centre Street. If numbers of volunteers do not increase for next year we have built the cost of hiring her to do more work into the 2016 budget. This does not rule out the possibility of downsizing the number of gardens we look after, as this kind of help does not come cheap! We also hired a young man to help us with the pathways at Churchill Circle. We were very fiscally responsible this year and put our saved money into getting this work completed.

Unfortunately none of the people in the group are getting any younger and we couldn't do the job by

ourselves. We also had all of the remaining quadrants cleared out of old plant stock, with some going into the plant sale and some being reused in other beds, then the mulching was done, and the rocks placed in the new pathways. Next Spring, with Mother Nature's blessing we hope to plant those beds; then we'll be back on schedule, or maybe even a little ahead of the game.

Respectfully submitted by

Louise Spandler, PG Chair.

INVITATION

Invitation is the name of a survey/questionnaire we began to use in January of 2015. The purpose was to invite input regarding the interests of our SDHS membership and to have a list of names of people who are willing to help with specific activities of our Horticultural Society for the coming year. There was a good response and we used the information in many of our events;

thank-you to all who took part! We have begun the process again for the 2016 year. Keep in mind that SDHS is your organization, the board is the facilitator.

Submitted by Bernice Barratt

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

On behalf of the Society, I wish to thank those who renewed their memberships and also to welcome many new members. There were a number of 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.

Summary: Paid memberships 55 new, 176 renewed total 231

Complimentary 12 to Hosts of Garden Tour plus 2 Life Members

Mary Hoffman, Membership Chair

Garden Tour Report

The committee members this year were: Co Chairs Penny Keegan and Glen Querengesser, Sharon Macdonald, Louise Spandler, Larke Turnbull, Ron Nichol, Felicity Sutcliffe and adjunct members Stella Farwell and Shelly Meyers.

The Garden Tour this year was held on July 6, 25 2015, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The prices this year were the same as last year: \$15 each or 2 for \$25. Members were offered a \$5 discount for advanced sales of two tickets each at the May meeting only. There were 27 tickets sold that night.

In total, there were 320 tickets sold for a beautiful, warm and sunny day. The seven unique and varied gardens were well received and we were able to add over \$4180 to the treasury. This year we offered refreshments at the home of members Maureen and Don Cocksedge whose garden was on the tour. A draw was held for the chair donated by CR Plastics and it was won by Hilda Riddersma. The perennial challenge attracted 48 ballots with 28 being eligible for the draw. It was won by Barbara Steed Young, another Stratford resident.

We are so grateful to the homeowners who so enthusiastically offer their gardens for our enjoyment. Thank you to the many members who donated cookies for the day. We also appreciate the Master Gardeners who are at each garden for the day to help answer gardening questions. Many local businesses have sponsored our event for the past several years and that helps with the expenses of the day. Please think of our sponsors when shopping locally.

Together with the committee's hours and those of the volunteers for the day we contributed 440 volunteer hours.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AND A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN ANY WAY.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Keegan & Glen Querengesser, Co - Chairs

Bus Trip Report for AGM Nov 2015

On June 8th of this year we had our annual bus trip. On a cloudy damp day we departed Stratford at 8am for our first stop Oxford Instashade south of Woodstock. We were given a brief talk about the business and then many happy faces embarked on a shopping and fact finding mission. Lots of variety and nice specimens. We also received some nice donations for our

prizes on the bus. Leaving there we made our way down to Southcoast Gardens where Kevin Kavanaugh spoke to us and gave us a lovely tour of his display gardens. Again dodging rain. There were lots of native plants, trees and shrubs. We all headed for lunch to our next stop Burning Kiln Winery. Kevin and his assistant joined us for lunch to answer questions and enjoy the comradery with fellow gardeners. Once our bellies were filled we had a bit of time to try the wines if we wanted to and purchase a bottle. Then we boarded bus and headed over to the Off the Grid House. Connie and Craig were wonderful hosts as they shared their journey and answered questions about the house. Amazing how well a home with no electricity, water lines or sewer hook up works. We had a great day and made memories with our Horticultural family. Looking forward to our next adventure.

Nancy Lupton, Bus Trip Co-ordinator

New project offered:

For the past 6 months, I have talked among members trying to garner enthusiasm to collect seeds from public beds before the plants are composted. I had hoped this would be both educational and cost effective, contributing seeds to the October seed exchange and Ontario seed exchange. In fall, dates were chosen and notices went out. Three members were interested, but only one person actually came to collect. This low interest indicates no need to do it next year as a Society initiative.

The organizer collected the following, to date:

Pergola: Grass, unknown; Blue Fescue; Karl Forster Reed Grass; Pink and White Echinacea
Center St - Salvia, Cosmos, Sedum, penstemon, veronica

Near the art gallery: Buddleia, Salvia (white), various cuttings

Dutch Memorial: Salvia

Many seeds were finished or unripe. Better Timings would be - late Aug, mid Sept, mid Oct. Although this year's effort had little return, it may be worth trying a second time with better information provided about what is involved.

Maureen Cocksedge

Plant Sale

The 2015 plant sale started off without a chair and without a venue. At the board meeting we decided that the board members collectively would make up the committee. We were able to partner with The Local Community Food Centre and in return for the use of their greenhouse we would recondition their front garden. We added compost to the garden and a two-door arbour was built with the Restore donating the doors and Home Hardware donating the lumber and paint. This arbour was installed over the walkway entrance to the garden to welcome visitors to the garden.

While the event contributed over \$1,900 in profit it also increased our presence in the community. The non-gardeners that frequent the LOCAL learn of the relaxing atmosphere that a garden creates. The Restore and Home Hardware are aware of our activities and we can thank them for their contribution by frequenting their establishments. The Restore is a wealth of inspiration for projects for both inside and outside the home.

These activities are only made possible by the generous donation of time and talent by the membership. Henry for taking the leadership role in this event and the many volunteers that donated plants and worked at the sale. Special thank you to Wanda for her generosity in letting

us use her property over the years.
The Plant Sale Committee

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee members: Bernice Barratt, Mike Matthews, Glen Querengesser, Larke Turnbull, Shelley Myers,

Our sincere thanks to our retiring board members: Henry McVey, Ryan Bedford, Larke Turnbull, Shelly Meyers, Karen Hartwick (retired in February)
It has been a pleasure to work with all of you.

The proposed slate for 2016 Board of Directors is as follows:

Executive:

President: Mike Matthews

Past President: Bernice Barratt

First Vice: *open*

Second Vice: *open*

Two Year directors:

Virginia Macdonald, Secretary

Glen Querengesser, Treasurer

Marg O'Reilly

Louise Spandler

Leslye Glover

One Year Directors:

Dennis Rawe

Elizabeth Ainslie

Maureen Cocksedge

Doug Reberg

Lori Hall

Submitted by Bernice Barratt, chair