

December
2020

The Trowel

Volume 8
Issue 4

B L O O M I N G D A L E G A R D E N C L U B N E W S L E T T E R

Greetings from our **President**



Hello dear
Members and
Friends,

I am not sure
that I can ever
recall a time
when I felt
that I had
simply lost

a year !! But I do feel that way
today and I think that it is mostly
because I have not seen most of
you as often as usual, nor enjoyed
the marvelous camaraderie that we
generally share at our meetings. I
do hope that it will not be too long
before can get together again and
give a hug in greeting.

Thanksgiving is such a lovely
family holiday and one that

I do truly enjoy. As usual I
went to my daughter in Indiana
and spent the day with my grand-
sons all of whom stay home when
I am there! Something rare in this
day and age and I am truly grate-
ful to have this time with them. Of
course Nikki cooked a marvelous,
traditional, turkey dinner which
was wonderful. I do hope that even

if you could not have your family
around this year, that you also en-
joyed the Thanksgiving holiday.

As a Club, I believe that we all
are thankful for the fact that our
members appear to still be safe and
healthy. And we all still are ready
and willing to do those
things that brighten the
lives of those less fortu-
nate. Thanks to our great
Board who undertook to
make the door hangings
for the West Suburban
Care Center. They are lovely and I
know will be appreciated. Please
see Linda's appeal join your fellow
members and give what you can to
help make Christmas for these folk
a little happier.

And with Christmas just around
the corner, let me take the opportu-
nity to tell you again how much I
appreciate the lovely friendship we
share. I wish you and your families
a festive and merry Christmas and
a bright New Year filled with good
health, fine friends and lots and lots
of love!

Joyce

A Sweet Find

Cheryl Svee



at the plant sale!" It is now safely tucked away in my shed, patiently waiting to go to work for us at next year's sale.

My husband, Dean, garbage-picked this for me. He was quite proud of himself as he presented me with his find. *Him:* "I thought you could use this for the garden club." *Me, all excited:* "Wow! That's like gold! Just what we need

Another Sweet Find!

Congratulations to Akhila and Sravan who were married on July 9th, 2020. Sravan (pronounced Shrvan) lived on the east coast and moved to Bloomingdale to be with Akhila where they are living together now. We wish you a life time of love and happiness together!



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The Bloomingdale Garden club was formed to encourage the advancement of gardening, development of home grounds and civic beautification. To stimulate interest, knowledge and love of gardening among amateurs. To aid in the protection of native trees, flowers and birds. To further the extermination of noxious weeds and to cooperate with other organizations in the beautification of the community.

November Holiday Crafts



Even with a small October attendance, Joyce showed up to talk about how to make our holidays brighter by making our own wreaths and centerpieces.

Earlier in the month, Bobbi Pulido invited the club to harvest grapevines at her home, and about 23 wreaths were woven together by Linda, Joan, Henia, Jennifer, Heather, Bobbi and Joyce.

Grapevine wreaths were offered free to members and hurricane lanterns for only \$3. Due to meeting restrictions, her demo was limited to an outdoor



display. We all appreciate her dedication. Thank you Joyce, for inspiring us all!

West Suburban Crafts



Jennifer Moore and Joan Skotleski organized our craft for the residents of West Suburban Nursing and Rehab Center. The club could not gather—but 186 snowflake door decorations were still produced by volunteers to donate for residents rooms in time for Christmas.

Jamie created an owl wreath, and with Debbie and Linda, created miniature Christmas trees covering them with materials from home. These were donated to West Suburban for nurses stations, or for them to use as resident's raffle prizes. Perhaps this would be a craft for the club to try next year.



Helen's Arizona Winter



Helen Price

It's fall in the low desert of Arizona. That's where I live and garden now.

This is the time of year when low desert gardeners like me head to the local nurseries. The long brutal summer has made me anxious to garden again. I'm a novice desert gardener and much of it is trial and error—fun and sometimes frustrating. On my list this fall—herbs and garlic, and maybe lettuce or spinach, and eggplant in containers. I joined a Food Co-op at a local organic farm and pick up fresh produce each week. I've never eaten so many greens!

The local women's club sells geraniums to rival those of the BGC. I had hoped to plant those but the sale has been cancelled this year, due to Covid. I bought some at Home Depot and they don't compare to those of the women's club. Hopefully they'll thrive and last until early summer. In-ground plantings include more Texas sage, aloe, some tall columnar cactus and perennial blooming plants—native and desert adapted plants that can survive and thrive in the heat with little water. I didn't realize the little perennial Angelita

daisies are favored by Gambol's quail so I'm pretty sure they won't survive. Seeing the tiny quail babies is worth it. They are absolutely adorable.

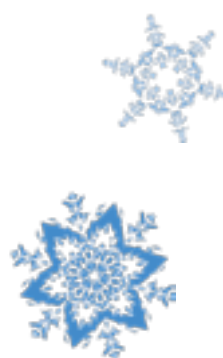


My Aloe Vera blooms every spring.



I have hummingbird feeders in my garden and was astounded by how often I had to refill them. I discovered that the clever flickers figured out how to remove the little feeding ports and drained the feeders quickly.

My desert garden is very different from my Bloomingdale garden, but beautiful nonetheless.



Geraniums in the spring. They were planted the previous fall.



Yellowbells



Mexican Bird of Paradise

I have a variety of established plants: Meyer lemon tree, yellowbells, bougainvillea, Mexican bird of paradise, trailing lantana, date palm trees, climbing jasmine, trumpet vine, natal plum, oleander, pomegranate, Texas sage, and of course, cactus like prickly pear, totem pole, barrel, and succulents like firestick, agave, aloe and ocotillo. Much of it was planted when we inherited our home from my late husband's mom about 10 years ago.



I wanted fig trees and planted two, and then removed them three years later. They need an



Spring Bird of Paradise

enormous amount of water in the summer, and the birds eat the fruit before I do. I planted a dwarf Key lime tree last fall; it struggled thru the summer's record temps, and survived!



My Meyer lemon is a heavy producer; the birds don't bother the fruit, and I had plenty for me, friends and neighbors last year. Even made a tasty batch of limoncello! My lemon harvest should begin soon.



Climbing Jasmine in the Spring.

I've been looking for a local Garden Club to join. I found one in nearby Gold Canyon and another in Sun Lakes. Both are offering programs via Zoom until Covid is better.

Stay safe. Miss you and hope to see you soon.

Helen



We've had 50 days this summer of temps over 110. It is starting to cool off now. The high today is 100, but mornings and evenings are finally nice enough to go outdoors.

Helen also said they had smoke pollution from the CA wildfires which resulted in unhealthy air quality there.

An Inspiring Christmas!



Marilyn and Art Dattilo

We began this family tradition three years ago on Christmas Day. After our close family shares a brunch together at our home in Bloomingdale (the brunch starts at around 10am), we gather at the tree, small as it is, and open presents. All this will take us close to 2pm . . . that's when we begin the real meaning of Christmas.

We begin making 3 blankets for the homeless PADS center in Wheaton.

I usually purchase the fabric in September when Joanne Fabrics has their sale and each year one of the children or grandchildren goes with me to pick out the fabric to be used for the blankets. I have such a good time watching them choose the quality and the patterns and pairing them up for the blankets to be made on Christmas Day! It is a high point for me, in the changing season, to see them caring, and putting thought into the purchase of the materials needed for the blankets.

We do an open house from 2pm to 8pm on Christmas Day for any family or friends who want to stop by and help with the blanket pro-



duction. I serve, for the open house, only soup and small sandwiches and cookies, as everyone has already eaten their dinners at home. This makes for a really good time to socialize with family and friends.

We have had local people stop by and family from Connecticut and New York who have said how meaningful working on the blankets is to them on Christmas Day!

This year, our grandson Conan, picked out the fabric and patterns—he did an outstanding job. Next year it will be my son's turn to go shopping with me.

On the 26th of December, Grandpa and Conan are the 2 men who will deliver the blankets to the Salvation Army on North Avenue. (PADS in Wheaton is restricted regarding Covid.) In 2019, it was Grandpa and Sarah who delivered the blankets to PADS. They have always been well received. We are told these blankets sometimes wind up in cars because not all homeless people are comfortable inside the facility in Wheaton. I never knew that until last year.



This picture was taken on Christmas Day at our home—Frank, Art, Conan, Akiko, Sarah, and Marilyn.

I hope this tradition will last in our family—it is meaningful to each of us. Prior to preparing the blankets, after brunch and gift opening, we use to sit around the table and play games or cards. In all honesty, making the blankets has given us ‘food for thought,’ and the conversations are so important! I asked the children to envision the recipient of a blanket . . . and the circumstances that brought a person to a homeless situation. You would be amazed as to all I have learned from that exercise of communication.

This is of our family . . . Art and I, our son, Frank . . . and then there is Akiko. She is widowed. Her husband, Makato (we always called him Mark), and Art were extremely close and both worked for Japanese firms with representation in the United States. My husband spoke at Mark’s wake. Mark actually named us as grandparents to his children. He passed away at age 44, when his daughter, Sarah was only 3 years old.

Akiko and I are very close. Her parents live in Japan. She asked if I would be with her when she delivered Sarah. I was in the labor and delivery room with her when Sarah was born. We

adopted the children, Sarah and Conan, as our grandchildren.

We’ve been to Japan 3 times, once was to enjoy a visit with both Mark and Akiko’s parents. After Mark’s passing, Mark’s parents came from Japan and asked us to continue in our role of grandparents to their biological grandchildren. With no pride intended—it is extremely rare to have Japanese adopted children or grandchildren. This particular culture very rarely releases such a valuable commodity . . . children.

It was a total heartbreak to lose Mark, however, the joy that followed—meaning these children in our lives—can be called a miracle. It’s a beautiful life we have had. We gained so much more by accepting the opportunity to love others.

Our family gives credit to the Spirit because we are the recipients of His planned joy for us!



“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”



This is Frank, Sarah, Akiko and I on Christmas Day working on the blankets at our home.



Thank You from Homeless Veterans Shelter

Cheryl Svec shared this letter from one of the organizations we donate to . . .

Thank You Bloomingdale Garden Club!

Dear Friends,

We have had an unbelievable year. We are living through times that have challenged us all. Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans (MSHV) has found a way to keep serving veterans because that is our vision and nothing can deter us from the personal goal we share with all of you: that we leave no veteran behind due to homelessness, joblessness, poverty and/or mental health issues. In the next two months, we turn to each of you to find a place in your hearts to help us fund our veteran-centric mission.

Last year, MSHV helped over 357 unique veterans and their families with multiple services; and this year is finding that number growing. As you consider your donation towards helping to end veteran homelessness, this may mean renewing your previous annual donation amount; and we

thank you for that consideration. We hope that many of you may consider giving more than what you typically do on an annual basis because this pandemic has called on us to do more than we could ever anticipated for veterans. And, for some, this might be the time to think about an extraordinary gift to help to ensure veteran services are robust and there is a strong foundation for our veterans to stand upon in the coming years.

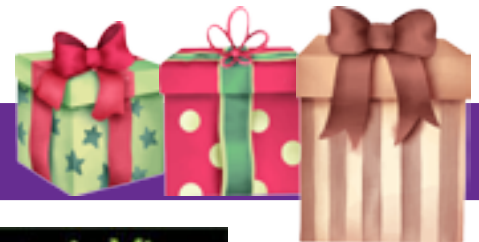
Whatever that personal choice looks like for each of you in giving to MSHV, please know that you are part of a special community that holds our veterans in the esteem they deserve and we could not make it through this year without you.

By placing veteran needs first, you place hope front and center. Thank you for being an amazing human being and a true friend to veterans.

We honor and thank you,



Christine Lewis, Executive Director
Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans
433 S. Carlton Avenue, Wheaton, IL 60187



What's to Come in 2021?

Annual Business Meeting with Elections

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Find out about upcoming events and our 2021 plant sale. Help with decisions for elections and where to direct our charitable donations.

Attracting and Raising Monarch Butterflies

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Bob Erlich will show how to turn our gardens into sanctuaries for these marvelous creatures.

Victory Gardens

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Nina Koziol will present a look at Americans during the first two world wars and what it was like to grow their own food.



Our Corporate Membership at Carol Stream Fountainview Fitness

If you are a member of the Bloomingdale Garden Club, you can get a corporate membership with us at Fountainview Fitness for only \$35 per month. There is a warm water therapy pool and full size pool where you can reserve lap lanes for swim aerobics or laps. Even treading water is good for you! Get those joints moving again on the walking track, machines, or come and join us in the pool!

Holiday Recipes

Two of Cathy Kreis's favorite Christmas cookie recipes.

Angel Kisses

2 egg whites, room temperature

1/2 c. sugar

1 t. almond extract

1/4 t. vanilla extract

1 c. mini chocolate chips

1 c. chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350°. Beat egg whites until foamy; blend in sugar until stiff. Add extracts; mix well. Fold in chocolate chips and pecans; drop by teaspoonfuls onto parchment-lined baking sheets. Place in oven; **turn oven off and let set 8 to 10 hours or overnight. Do not open door.** Makes about 2 + 1/2 dozen.

Jennifer Moore says this appetizer looks Green and Red—colors of the Holiday!

Czech Radish Cheese Spread

1 stick salted butter (softened)

1 - 8 oz package softened cream cheese

1 - 2 cups shredded radishes

1/2 cup sliced green onion

1 tsp Garlic powder or cloves of garlic chopped

Blend together. Yields: 2 cups



Chocolate Kringles

2 + 3/4 c. all-purpose flour

3/4 t. salt

2 + 3/4 t. baking powder

1 + 1/8 c shortening or butter

2 + 3/4 c sugar

1 c. cocoa powder

6 eggs

1 tb. pure vanilla extract

1 c. powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350°. Sift together the flour, salt, and baking powder and set aside.

In separate bowl, cream together the shortening, sugar and cocoa for about 4 minutes or until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the vanilla and beat until well blended.

Gradually add the flour mixture to the creamed mixture and mix only until combined. **Chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.**

Drop the dough by the tablespoon into the powdered sugar and roll until well coated. Place on **greased** cookie sheets and bake for about **10 minutes.** Do not over bake.

Loosen the cookies from the pan while still warm. Makes about 4 dozen.



Christmas Cookie Exchange



We will have a club cookie exchange at noon on Saturday, December 12th. Please divide and prepackage 3 to 4 holiday cookies (or can be store-bought candies/goodies) into cellophane bags (or baggies). The bags will be collected and distributed so everyone goes home with a gift bag filled with treats. Location will need to be announced depending on weather. You will also receive a pre-wrapped cookie and cup of hot chocolate for a short visit outside with club members. Jamie and Debbie will coordinate.

Snowman Crossing Tree Decorating



Left to Right: Cathy Gall, Kelly Vittaco, Joan Skotleski, Hector Rivera, Debbie Matuszak, Joyce Basel, Henia Sullivan, Jennifer Moore. Not pictured, Laurie Dring and Jamie Schneck.

A group gathered on Sunday after Thanksgiving to decorate the garden club tree at Bloomingdale Library's Snowman Crossing. Stop by and see them all—they are very unique and cute! Thank you to Henia Sullivan and Cathy Gall for making all the seed labels for the tree and finding the ornaments to complement them!

Help for West Suburban
 Drop off 12/14 thru 12/17 at Cathy Gall's to help the Center (see Linda's email). Young residents there are in need of small items like make-up, tissues, coloring books, game books, etc.

Winter Plants?



Marilyn Dattilo's Primrose is in a protected area, and it is blooming! These are so confused . . . blooming in November!



Joyce Basel's garden is filled with pots. Her



Dusty Miller and Snap Dragon is still thriving!



This is Jennifer's Moore's Crown of Thorns she bought as a leafless thorny stalk, only 6" tall, 4 to 5 years ago at BGC's plant sale.



Jennifer received Curly Willow from Linda Kunesh and painted it for her holiday porch pot. The spray she used was Ace Mirrored Silver Metallic.



Notes of Gratitude



“Thank You” Everyone

I think that most of you are aware of the fact that this year—due to the unusual circumstances with Covid and the fact that our Park District had limited staff and funding—our own club members attended to the watering and weeding not only of our Memorial Garden, but most of the gardens in the Park at Old Town.

Jennifer Moore headed up a very small group including Kelly Vitacco, Laurie Dring, Susan and Kirt Shore, and they did a truly marvelous job!

With this I am thanking them on behalf of every single member of the Club—I know that you join me in this appreciation and hope that when you see any of them you let them know. **Joyce**

Congratulations!

Bloomington Park District recently announced that Mevsudin (Mesha) Hadzic has been promoted to Superintendent of Parks & Planning. Hadzic previously served as assistant director of parks and planning since May of 2018.

Hello Mesha,

I know that the Board and every single member of the Bloomington Garden Club join me in saying a very big “Congratulations” to you on your promotion. Well deserved and we wish you all success in the future.

Looking forward to continuing to work closely with you in the seasons to come.

Very best, Joyce Basel

President, Bloomington Garden Club



Cathy Kreis Update

Cathy Kreis and her husband Steve, finally found their new home and made their way to: **2915 Fox Court East, Martinsville, IN 46151.**

Unfortunately they lost their buyer just prior to closing. Cathy also just recently fell and frac-

The Travel Corner



The latest medical technology will be available on the Viking Star to test for Covid-19 passengers. This is big news. If you board a ship, and all is well at the time of boarding, what happens if you subsequently test positive while on your cruise? Will the ship's protocol be to put you and your traveling companions ashore at the next port of call? Will you be deposited at a port of call that has International Airport departures? Will the airline allow you to board for a flight home? Will you be allowed reentry into your home city? Who pays for this very expensive, instant airline ticket, one way? Truly, if ever there was a time to get answers to questions before you plan to travel, it is right now!

Most travelers will be holding off on making travel arrangements until there is a safe vaccine, and all questions presented for liability can be correctly answered.

Viking now has developed river boat cruising in the United States. That's an excellent move on their part! Travelers are tending to stay closer to home, and I think that kind of traveling will persist for the coming year! Best advice . . . stay healthy and close to home! All those exciting places will still be there in 2022!

Look your travel advisor in the eye before you hand over a deposit for future travel

Marilyn Dattilo—Travel Techniques
630-671-0750 • traveltech@att.net

tured her knee cap and had to have surgery for this. We hear she is on her way now to recovery.

We all know Cathy as a woman of faith. She loves us and appreciates our support. Please say a prayer for her quick healing and for sale of their home.



2020 Club Officers and Committees

- *President Joyce Basel
- *1st Vice President..... Henia Sullivan/
(Membership) Cathy Gall
- *2nd Vice President Laurie Dring
(Programs)
Program Committee Joan Skotleski
- *3rd Vice President..... Linda Kunesh
(Ways and Means)
- *Treasurer Cheryl Svee
- *Publicity Jamie Schneck
(Promotions, Trowel, and Website)
- Publicity Committee
- Facebook..... Cathy Gall
- Website Support Dan Vitacco
- *Recording Secretary Joan Skotleski
- *Corresponding Secretary Joyce Basel
- Community Garden..... Gail Sanders
(Plot-To-Plate)
- Good Cheer Jennifer Moore
- Hospitality..... Laurie Jenkins &
Susan Glick-Shore
- Memorial Garden..... Joyce Basel

**Denotes Executive Board*

Let Us Hear From You:
jschneck1233@sbcglobal.net
 Text: 630-915-0051
Posting Months:
 March, June, September and December

OUR VISION

To educate members and the community about gardening through informative and educational meetings, workshops and activities

- To develop and promote projects for civic beautification and environmental stewardship
- To support philanthropic endeavors which aid the residents of the Bloomington community and surrounding areas
- To provide opportunities for fellowship for those interested in gardening and environmental and civic responsibility
- To aid in the protection of native trees, flowers and birds
- To further the extermination of invasive and/or noxious plants

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all persons at his or her request of application regardless of residence. Annual dues for a single new member are \$20 and \$25 for a couple, when paid January 1 through June 30.

Half year dues for a single new member are \$10, and \$12.50 per couple when paid July 1st through December 31st.

Visitors are always welcome, but we encourage them to join the club after 3 visits in order to help out with the costs of our monthly programming.

Meeting Location:

The 3rd Tuesday of each month. Social time and announcements at 6:15. Program begins at 7 PM. Cornerstone Faith Community Church
 118 S. First Street, Bloomington, IL 60108

Contact Us At:

bloomingtongardenclub@gmail.com

We're On The Web:

bloomingtongardenclub.org