

The Trowel

December
2022

Volume 10
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**



Dear Members
and Friends,

As always
the time has
run away and
Thanksgiving
is behind us
already with
Christmas just

around the corner. I do hope that you all enjoyed yourselves with family and friends and are ready for the festivities ahead. I need to remind myself to get things done and so, with this, I am sending reminders to you too!

Our Holiday Party will be here before we know it and I really hope that you will ALL come and enjoy what is always a fun evening. Please rsvp quickly to Cheryl with your check so that we have an accurate head count for Jamesons. Don't forget to wrap something for the White Elephant exchange.

Our November meeting was a fun-filled evening making angels for the West Suburban Nursing Home. What

an accomplishment—thank you all for participating. I know that these angels will brighten the halls and doors of the residents. At the same time, may I remind you to please contribute again to our collection of personal items so that each of these residents will receive a gift at this special time of year. Cathy Gall has kindly volunteered again to be the collection point, so drop off your items at her home as soon as possible.

It is a bright sunny day today—cold and sparkly December in Chicago—and I am grateful once again to live here and experience the changes in the seasons even though summer is sometimes too hot and winter often way too cold. I am grateful too for the wonderful friendship of each of you and hope that I will see you all in a week or so to celebrate with you.

All good wishes to you for a bright and Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with fine friends, good health, and fun times.

Love to you all,
Joyce

Flight 2023 Instructions

Debbie Matuszak

Good morning and welcome to flight 2023.

We are prepared to take off into the new year. Please make sure your positive attitude and gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position. All self-destruct devices: pity, anger, selfishness, pride, and resentment should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt, and discouragement should be put away.

Should you lose your positive attitude under pressure during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by faith. Once your faith is activated, you can assist other passengers who are of little faith. There will be no baggage allowed on this flight. God, our Captain, has cleared us for take-off. Destination—GREATNESS!

Wishing you a new year filled with New Hope, New Joy, and New Beginnings!

Stay blessed! And welcome to 2023.



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2023 Upcoming Meetings

January 17

Annual Business Meeting

February 21

Sharpening Garden Tools by Ken Benson

March 21

Top Tool Tips by Beth Botts

April 18

Annual Flower & Plant Sale Prep

May 12 - 13

Annual Flower & Plant Sale

May 16

Activism through Gardening by Jeannie Iseman

June 20

Let's take a Nature Therapy Walk by Jane Grill
This is about the practice of Shinrin-Yoku/Forest Therapy/Nature Therapy. Janie Grillo will guide us through a 1.5 to 2 hours walk at the natural area of our choice.



The Bloomington 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.

Snowman Crossing Library Tree Decorating

Joyce Basel / Photos by Cathy Gall

Our club was again invited to this event and it was decided that we would decorate our tree on Sunday, November 27th (the Sunday after Thanksgiving) starting at 1 PM. This has always been an enjoyable event regardless of the weather and everyone was invited to come and help.

New ornaments were created by Henia this year!



From left to right: Cathy Gall, Joyce Basel, Henia Sullivan, Kathryn Kacalo, Carole Lockerbie



Annual Holiday Party!

Our Annual Holiday Party this year will be held on Wednesday, December 14th.

RSVP by mailing your check in the amount of \$40 per person to our Treasurer, Cheryl Svec, immediately—but no later than Friday, December 9th so that we have an accurate head count for Jamesons. Cheryl's address is 704 S. Rosedale, Roselle, IL 60172.

Your dinner will include soup, salad, entree of chicken and beef with fresh vegetables and potatoes as well as ice cream for dessert!

Cash Bar for cocktails at 6 PM. Bring a white elephant for a grab bag gift fun!

We hope each and every one of you will attend. It is always a fun evening enjoyed by everyone, so please mark your calendars and come!



October's Beauty on a Budget



Photos by Laurie Dring

Joyce's workshop was great and lot of fun! Even our newest member Kim Kennedy (in pink) participated!



November's Angel Craft

Photos by Laurie Dring

We had a fun time creating a Christmas craft project for the residents of the West Suburban Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. We made 110 beautiful angels to hang on the residents' doors throughout the building. The angel color choices were red, green, plaid, blue or pink. Each angel came with an inspirational poem. After we made enough for West Suburban, we were able to make an angel for ourselves.



Helpers of club members, are Laurie (upper left; friend of Joyce from Costco), and Barb (center; friend from Jamie's bible study.)

DuPage County Board Proclamation



Last Tuesday, November 8th, Linda Kunesh had the privilege and honor to receive a Proclamation given by the DuPage County Board for the work many garden volunteers and Master Gardeners have done at the DuPage Care Center.

Linda knows that Bloomingdale Garden Club and its members are instrumental at DPCC and wishes that had been noted in the proclamation as our club's contributions help to improve the quality of life of those at DPCC.



The following *Daily Herald* article from November 24th was submitted by Cathy Gall.

Master Volunteer Gardener— How a former principal has cultivated nursing home's 'Secret Garden'

By Katlyn Smith (ksmith@dailyherald.com)

Retired school principal Linda Kunesh has been tending to a garden at a DuPage County nursing home for more than a decade. In many ways, the therapeutic garden at the DuPage Care Center has become a teaching space.

Every Thursday from May through September, Kunesh and other trained volunteers ring a bell about 10:15 a.m., make their morning announcements and share weekly lessons with the nursing home's residents.

They learn how to deal with plant diseases and the occasional pest and how to grow herbs and



vegetables—tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, carrots, you name it—in their own garden beds at the Care Center.

Some residents are visually impaired, so Kunesh accentuates the tactile experience of gardening. Others have no use of their hands. If they have a doctor's appointment or can't work in the garden that week, another resident, a friend of theirs, will pitch in to help and harvest their crop. "We make whatever accommodations we need to make," said Kunesh, 71, still a teacher at heart.

When everything outside looks bare and gray, Kunesh is preparing for a busy spring. Good gardening is all about patience—"and a lot of hope," Kunesh said. She acquired those lessons from her mom, Grace, who went to work in a greenhouse when her husband died in his 40s.

"She was not into vegetable gardening," said Kunesh, who grew up in Elmhurst with her three siblings and now lives in Carol Stream. "She liked her flowers, especially her little dahlias."

Grace Kunesh decided, on her own terms, to move into the Care Center in 2014. She valued her independence, but in the last years of her life, she needed long-term medical care and found a sanctuary in the garden at the Wheaton nursing home.

Grace Kunesh would sit in the garden every day, with a book or a word search puzzle, surrounded by her little dahlias. She died at 93 four years ago. "She was a spitfire," her daughter said. You could say Linda Kunesh takes after her mom.

"She's so conscientious and so caring and passionate," Janelle Chadwick, the Care Center's administrator, said of Linda. "And if she wants something done, like a tree moved or garbage picked up, she's like a dog with a bone. She won't let it go."

Her passion goes a long way. What started as a modest in-ground garden has blossomed into a

12,000-square-foot world of horticultural beauty that has received awards and thousands of dollars in grants. "It's just taken on a life of its own," Chadwick said.

Seeds of community



Affectionately known as the "secret garden," it's tucked behind the county-owned campus. A dozen rows of raised beds make gardening accessible to people who use wheelchairs or walkers. A garden post reminds visitors that it's a place to "restore, reflect, rejuvenate."

"Some of these residents are dealing with such major medical issues," Kunesh said. "This gives them a time to kind of forget about what their ailments are."

More than 60 volunteers in the master gardener corps, a group trained by a University of Illinois Extension program, offer their expertise and physical labor. Kunesh has been their team leader since 2011.

"The orientation of the master gardeners and what they go through, it's very structured," Chadwick said. Structured, well-organized—sounds like a classroom, right?

Kunesh is a former special education teacher and principal of the Independence Center for Early Learning in Elgin Area School District U-46. The Bartlett preschool serves students with and without disabilities.

"It was just wonderful to see kids together and learning together rather than in isolated classes," Kunesh said. "There were many years where special education isolated the kids away from other kids."

Now, she's reducing feelings of isolation in seniors. With 368 licensed beds, the center provides long-term care and short-term rehabilitative services for hundreds of patients, most of whom have Medicaid.



"One of the best things about this garden program is that we developed a community of gardeners," Kunesh said. That community stuck together during the darkest days of the pandemic.

When residents went into quarantine, master gardeners kept planting and published tips in

"The Secret Garden Gazette." Copies of the newsletter were delivered to each resident gardener. Employees of the Care Center even read articles aloud over the PA system.

"This provided a wonderful opportunity to still connect them to what was going on in the garden," Kunesh said.

A beautiful bounty



The numbers behind the garden operation are staggering: Master gardeners have volunteered 23,475 hours to the DuPage Care Center from 2009 through 2022.



Kunesh has generated support for the garden with her grant applications. The Bloomingdale Garden Club—she's a member—has donated more than \$4,000 in flowers since 2012. For decades, Prosek's Greenhouse in Winfield has donated vegetables and herbs.

During the 2022 season, 55 resident gardeners, all with their own 15-square-foot plots, planted vegetables and flowers of their choice.

Resident gardeners sell nutritious produce and floral arrangements at a mini farmers market set up in a hallway, with the money raised funding their end-of-season luncheon in September. They also donate produce to the People's Resource Center food pantry in Wheaton.

Chadwick buys bouquets to brighten up employee desks. "The way they put them in vases and arrange them, it's just gorgeous," she said.

A garden planted in 2020 with bee balm and about 80 other kinds of pollinators should be more beautiful than ever next summer. "You know what they say about perennials? First year they sleep, second year they creep, third year they leap," Kunesh said.

But this time of year, she gives a gardening lesson in gratitude. "To be able to work with these wonderful people, the residents, the master gardeners, the staff, I cannot say enough about the quality of the people that gather there to garden."

McHenry Farm Stroll by the U of I Extension

Laurie Dring

My husband, Steve, and I enjoyed a Farm Stroll adventure on September 25th. We visited 4 out of 10 farms. Each was very unique. These were some of things we did (websites provided).

Codysfarm.com (Marengo) Main attraction was the apple orchards. We didn't pick our apple, but purchased a 1/2 peck of Galas. Steve already made 2 open face apple pies using 5 apples each, no sugar added. There were vegetables for sale as well. They had an activity area for children.

Broadviewfarmandgardens.com (Marengo) Their garden was gorgeous, about the size of two Springfield Park gardens. Very clean. A lady was selling honey bee comb products and a little indoor farmstand. Also, sold some natural body ointment for various uses. They sell to Rockford and Elgin farmers markets. We purchased eggs; we've never had fresh from the farm before.

Soulfulprairies.com (Woodstock) This was pretty cool for an equestrian farm known for Equine Gestalt Therapy. That instills a safe place for humans to heal with support of horses and nature, which can be through their retreats. They also sell naturally made products as well. I purchased lavender scented goat milk soap.

HillBunkerFarms.com (Woodstock) Hobby farm committed to natural food and healthy products sold in a little store. They are breeders of Kune Kune pigs. I held a cute little piglet. I worried that they would poop on me, so handed them back to their dad within a couple of minutes!

Joyce having some Halloween Fun!

Never a dull moment for Joyce Basel, club president. She's always enjoying life be it dressing up for work or filling her garden with lots of surprises for trick or treaters! *Photos by JamieSchneck*



Laurie was still getting blooms in November that included an Iris—and dill that made it's way in-between cement to her garage!



Holiday Recipes



Three of Debbie Matuszak's favorite Christmas cookie recipes.

Cool Mint Oreo Cookie Balls

6 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 pkg (15 oz.) Cool Mint Oreo cookies, finely crushed
12 oz. white chocolate, broken into fine pieces, melted
6 drops green food coloring
2 Tbsp. chocolate sprinkles



Mix cream cheese and cookie crumbs until blended. Shape into 40 one-inch balls. Place into single layer in shallow wax-paper lined pan. Freeze 10 minutes. Mix melted white chocolate and food coloring until blended. Dip cookie balls, one at a time, in chocolate then return to pan. Top with sprinkles. Refrigerate one hour until chilled. Store in tightly covered container in refrigerator. *Makes 40*

White Chocolate Bark with Cranberries and Pistachios

Makes 24 two-inch pieces. Other versions are roasted pecans or walnuts, dried cherries or apricots.



1-pound high quality white chocolate, chopped
1 cup toasted salted pistachios, roughly chopped
2 teaspoons orange zest

½ cup dried cranberries, roughly chopped
Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Melt white chocolate in double boiler. Stir in orange zest and half of the pistachios. Spread the mixture evenly over the prepared baking sheet. Scatter the remaining pistachios and the cranberries over the top and gently press into the chocolate. Refrigerate for 20 minutes to set. Cut or break the bark into 2-inch pieces.

Chocolate Oreo Cookie Balls

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 pkg (15 oz.) Chocolate Oreo cookies, finely crushed
16 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, broken into fine pieces, melted



Mix cream cheese and cookie crumbs until blended. Reserve ¾ cup of cookie crumbs for topping. Shape into 40 one-inch balls. Place into single layer in shallow wax-paper lined pan. Freeze 10 minutes. Dip balls in melted chocolate, then return to pan. Top with remaining cookie crumbs. Refrigerate one hour until chilled. Store in tightly covered container in refrigerator. *Makes 40*

Jamie Schneck found this Italian recipe years ago in the Daily Herald—it's now a family favorite!

Ricotta Cheese Cookies

2 cups Sugar
½ lb. Butter
3 Eggs
4 cups Flour
1 tsp. Baking Soda
1 lb. Ricotta Cheese (drained)



Preheat oven to 350° degrees.

Combine ingredients one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Drop onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 7 to 9 minutes. Cool on a rack.

Frosting:

3 cups Confectioners Sugar
1 tbsp. Hot Water
½ tsp. Anisette

Frost cookies and dip into non-pariels to decorate. *Makes 8 dozen*

Club Correspondence

By Joyce Basel



I recently wrote a nomination on behalf of Cornerstone Church for the Best of Bloomingdale Awards. I was guest of Pastor Jeremy and his (extended) family group at the Awards Banquet. While they did not win, it was a fun event and they certainly got very nice exposure. The arena (non-profit) had seriously stiff competition! And Bloomingdale Park District won! I saw Joe Potts and congratulated him and their group.

Dear Pastor Jeremy,

This is just a little note, but it contains a very Big “Thank you” for inviting me to be part of your group last night. I certainly enjoyed the camaraderie of your “family” and truly hoped that you might just win! The odds were stacked against you, but these things do happen.

You are to be congratulated in making the effort and in getting your Church and its huge endeavors out to the community. On behalf of the Bloomingdale Garden Club Board and all of our members, please know that we sincerely appreciate all you do for us—we are certainly proud to be associated with you and the Cornerstone Faith Community Church.

Very best, Joyce Basel

Good Morning Joe,

I hope that we may be among the very first to Congratulate you and your wonderful staff on winning the Best of Bloomingdale Award in the non-profit category! The Board and every single member of the Bloomingdale Garden Club are delighted and are extremely proud of our close and wonderful association with you.

Very Best, Joyce Basel - President
Bloomingdale Garden Club



RE: Congratulations!

Thank you, Joyce! It was great to see you last night. Thank you so much for coming over to say

hello. We, too, are very proud of our association and the strength of our valuable relationship with the Bloomingdale Garden Club!

You put the “Bloom” in Bloomingdale! Have a great weekend!

Joe Potts, Executive Director
Bloomingdale Park District



Happy New Year Revisited

Submitted by Joyce Basel

T’was the month after Christmas and
all through the house
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.
The cookies I’d nibbled, the eggnog I’d taste
At the holiday parties had gone to my waist.

When I got on the scales there arose such a
number
I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).
I’d remember the marvelous meals I’d prepared,
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,

The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the
cheese
And the way I’d never said, “No thank you,
please.”
As I dressed myself in my husband’s old shirt
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt

I said to myself, as I only can
“You can’t spend a winter disguised as a man!”
So, away with the last of the sour cream dip.
Get rid of the fruitcake, every cracker & chip.

Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
‘Till all the additional ounces have vanished.
I won’t have a cookie, not even a lick.
I’ll want only to chew on a long celery stick.

I won’t have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,
I’ll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.
I’m hungry, I’m lonesome, and life is a bore
But isn’t that what January is for?

Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!

Linda Martin

Our dear former member, Linda Martin, passed away recently of natural causes at her home in Bellwood, IL. And although she had not attended meetings for the past few years, she stayed in contact with several of our members including Akhila who chatted with her regularly. She was a childhood friend of Mary Sue who introduced her to the Club.



Linda served on the Program Committee for several years. For those of us who knew her, she will be most fondly remembered for her huge success in selling raffle tickets at the plant sale each year. A delightful person, it was hard to pass her by without being persuaded to purchase a ticket—she will be missed.

Joyce

Vivian Krotz

It seems like only yesterday that we were all singing Happy Birthday to Vivian at her house on the occasion of her 100th Birthday. And now, our very dear most senior member has left us. Vivian passed away peacefully at her home. Rest in Peace lovely lady. Joyce



Bobbie Pulido Update

It was one of those days when Bobbie was quite lucid and chatty and my daughter Kim and I had spent an hour or two rearranging her room. We had recently brought her many scarves to Sunrise for her to wear and so while sorting them, Bobbie and I starting playing with them. This image of us, taken by Kim, is one of the happy moments captured!



Bobbie is now on the third floor at Sunrise, which is the "Memory Care" unit and while I worry that she will not get any better, she is well cared for and appears settled. I still visit her almost every day and if you wish to send a card you can still mail it to her house and I will take it and read it to her.

Joyce

Blankets for Homeless

Marilyn Dattilo

We had a good time making the blankets, and when they were dropped off at PADS, Art and our grandson, Conan, got



to meet the director of PADS for Wheaton! That never happened before. He told Art and Conan how appreciative they are of the continued project to produce blankets for the needy. Some of the recipients don't stay at PADS, they prefer to live in their cars, and they also have received the blankets in the past. Difficult to imagine, living out of a car, especially in these colder days! God's got a plan . . . so we do what we can.





2022 Club Officers and Committees

- *President Joyce Basel
- *1st Vice President..... Marietta Serenda
(Membership)
- *2nd Vice President..... Laurie Dring
(Programs)
- *3rd Vice President..... Linda Kunesh
(Ways and Means)
- *Treasurer Cheryl Svee
- *Publicity Jamie Schneck
(Website, Trowel, Graphics)
- Publicity Team
 - Publications..... Akhila Meda
 - PhotographyDebbie Matuszak
 - ProofreadingLinda Kunesh
 - Facebook..... Cathy Gall
 - Website Support Dan Vitacco
- *Recording Secretary Linda Steck
- *Corresponding Secretary Joyce Basel
- Plot-to-Plate Garden Gail Sanders
Susan Glick-Shore, Eileen Spaman, Cheryl Svee
- Good Cheer Jennifer Moore
- Hospitality..... Carol Lockerbie
- Memorial Garden..... Joyce Basel
- Nursing Home Liaison..... Chris Magnatowski

**Denotes Executive Board*

Let Us Hear From You:
jschneck1233@sbcglobal.net
 Call or 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