

50th ANNIVERSARY TALK
DECADE 2004 THROUGH 2014 CURRENT
By Arlene Weinstein and Shirley Chirico

As we start out this decade Maureen Crinnion is starting her Presidency Term in the fall of 2004.

That September there was a presentation on the Monarch Butterfly by Joan Daily from the Turtleback Zoo in West Orange. The October meeting was led by Theresa DeRoberts where she showed us how to make Williamsburg candle wreaths.

Arlene Weinstein and Eileen McSparran were chairman of The November luncheon which was at Medford Village. We went there a lot but now we have out grown them. The theme was "Autumn Bounty". Colleen Ventrella (Maureen's Crinnion's daughter) was the tombola chairperson. We didn't have regular November meetings then, just the luncheon fund raiser for November.

In December we decorated both floors of Farmers Hall and a man's bedroom at Smithville. Margret Parver and Maureen Crinnion were Smithville chairpersons.

At the March meeting, Mary Ann Renn, teacher and designer, who was a friend of Jean Thomas, did a demo on "Fundamentals of Flower Arranging" She was excellent and her arrangement were beautiful. Looking at the memory book pictures, shows we had a lot less food on the tables then!

We had a flower show Spring 2005. Those lattices you might see in the memory book pictures were purchased at home depot, and we didn't have any place to store them, so we returned them! We had two workshop meetings to help us make entries for the flower show. Eileen McSparran showed us how to make miniatures, and Theresa DeRoberts helped us make candle rings.

Dave Scott of Laurel Oaks Nursery, (and son of our member Alice Scott), planted a flowering tree at the library, for the Arbor Day celebration.

In June 2005 we had a garden tour, it rained part of the time but was still very enjoyable. Maureen Crinnion, Kathleen Lapergola, Eileen McSparran, Alice Scott, Dianne Willis and Pat Rice showed their beautiful gardens. Alice managed to keep koi out of the reach of the herons for several years in her pool. The Courier Post featured an article showing the beautiful clematis in Dianne's garden.

Starting the 2006-2007 year, Loretta Player was President and Arlene Weinstein was Chairman of the Board. The web site was enlarged and redesigned this year, and it continues to grow.

In 2006 we had the November luncheon at Indian Springs and Phil Schaffer was the flower arranger. He was the designer who wore the kilt. He was very good and the arrangements were beautiful. The theme was "Shades of Autumn". We had a lot of very nice tombola baskets. Did you know it was Joan Alzamora who introduced us to the idea of "Tombola" baskets?

We entered the Philadelphia Flower show in 2006. Arlene will tell you about that.

Eileen McSparren and Maureen Crinnion were the chairpersons, and our entry was a room depicting a serene retreat for a master gardener in Kyoto, Japan. The house was decorated with furniture from Arlene Weinstein's oriental collection. The focal point was a magnificent yellow orchid. We competed against three other rooms, and won the first place blue ribbon as well as Best of Show. It was quite a coup, considering our competition. Unusual plant material was used. The outside was landscaped in addition to the inside décor. The room featured a large window. There was a pleasing view both inside looking out and outside looking in. Jim McSparren built flower boxes and he and Sandy Weinstein helped haul a huge Asian redbud tree, part of the outside landscaping, for Maureen Crinnion, who was purchasing the tree at the end of the show. We also had an interesting citrus orange bush called a calamondin inside the room which was purchased by Jean Thomas and is still prolifically producing oranges. There are several pictures in the red memory book titled 2006-2007.

These were busy times. In 2008 we decorated the parlor at Drumthwacket, the governor's mansion. Of interest, Drumthwacket means "wooded hill" in Scottish Gaelic and the house and grounds are listed in the national registry of historic places. There were eight other clubs decorating rooms in the house, Moorestown being our biggest competitor. They were so impressed with what we had done they sent us a gracious note congratulating us on our entry. It was a juried judging and we won first place. Our name has been engraved on the silver bowl that circulates among the garden clubs of New Jersey.

In 2008 Ellen Wilen became President

Once again we took on Drumthwacket chaired by Eileen McSparren and Arlene Weinstein. This time we decorated the dining room. Our theme was "Peace on Earth". White doves were used in abundance on the Christmas tree, as well as beaded ornaments made by club members. We used all natural materials, dried hydrangeas, fresh holly and boxwood. Beautiful silver adorned the dining room table. Two centerpieces made with Asiatic lilies flanked each end of the table. The fireplace mantle was covered with greens, silver balls, and silver plumes on each end. It was beautiful and once again we won first place competing against nine other clubs, primarily from north Jersey. Notable was a picture of our room used on Drumthwacket's 2009 invitations, featuring our display. It was a costly and elaborate undertaking however our expenses were recouped by the purchase of all of the items by club members. I might add that Governor Corzine used this mansion on many occasions to entertain.

A few of our best programs in 2008 and 2009 were Walter Fischer showing us how to force bulbs. He is the one with all of the beautiful daffodils at the Philadelphia Flower Show with the blue ribbons on them. Gloria Stevens gave a talk on butterflies and had a beautiful poster with about fifteen different kinds of butterflies and how to identify them. She gave us a quiz afterwards.

In April of 2008 there was a big write up in the Courier Post about our garden club with several full page color photos, including photos of us digging plants from Lorna Lecrenier's garden for the plant sale. It was a great ad for our plant sale and it helped draw in customers for several years.

We had a neighborhood beautification award project in 2008, where we gave an award to a few local residents who had especially nice gardens.

The plant sale was in great demand the spring of 2009. The article in the Courier Post was so effective, there were long lines of people pushing to get in before our opening at 9:00 am. Lorna Lecrenier and Gloria Stevens made up charts of plants conducive to this area, separating them between sun plants and shade plants. The lists are still on the web site and in the memory book.

In 2009 we had a garden tour. It was arranged with very little notice, limited publicity, and not the turnout we anticipated. But the weather was great and the gardens were beautiful. Members who showed their gardens were Maureen Crinnion, Eileen McSparren, Arlene Weinstein, Kathy Lapergola, Michele Ciuro, Alice Scott, and Dianne Willis. Diane designed a lovely brochure with blue hydrangeas on the cover, and a map on how to get to the sites.

In 2009-2010 we changed our name from the Country Garden Club of Mt. Laurel, to the Mt. Laurel Garden Club. Susan Chirico Landis embroidered a quilt with our new name to use as a sign to replace the old one. Susan said this was in thanks for all of the beautiful plants she has received from our plant sales.

In 2009-2010 we became active at Laurel Acres Park and the plantings at the veterans memorial. Shirley Chirico, Arlene and Sandy Weinstein did a walk through with the Twp. Manager to discuss improvements to the park which was in very poor condition. We began doing a fall as well as a spring planting and are often complimented by the park walkers thanking us for what we do.

In 2010 Gloria Stevens became president and Arlene Weinstein was chairman of the board once again. Gloria did a lavender sachet workshop provided with lavender from her garden. It was enjoyed by all.

In February Gloria gave a virtual tour of the Medford leas arboretum, and in November an outstanding program was given by Triple Oaks nursery on decorations for the holidays.

The Philadelphia Horticultural society gave us the community greening award for our work at Paws farm, chaired by Kathy Vasell.

The November luncheon was held at the Doubletree Hotel. There were problems with the audio system but the luncheon was a huge success in spite of it.

Once again we met with Mt. Laurel Twp. officials to discuss problems with the wall at Laurel Acres Park and lack of an irrigation system. Our committee members were scooping pails of water from the pond to water the flower beds. The Twp. eventually funded for a new wall and irrigation system. Arlene and Sandy Weinstein selected the tiles for the wall and worked with the company to get it installed. We again received the community greening award for our work at the memorial.

In April 2011 we had an Arbor Day ceremony; a friend of Arlene and Sandy played the harmonica and Gloria Stevens did a poetry reading. We planted two Kousa dogwoods at the library. Over the years we have planted many trees to enhance the library area.

May 2011 Fran Dever gave a tole painting workshop and it was enjoyed by all.

Also in May we had a welcome tea at Arlene Weinstein's for new members. Board members and officers were invited to join them and it was a good way to start getting to know each other.

Our spring trip was to Bryn Athyn cathedral and Pearl Buck house. The building and grounds of the cathedral were quite impressive.

2011-2012 was the year of the new member! We had over 20 members join, 4 of whom were men. While 2 of the men dropped out, we still have 2 of them remaining and now another man has joined.

A lot of changes were made to the by-laws in this time period, one of which was to cut the nominating committee (for board members) from 5 to 3 members.

In 2012 Cathy Hepp became president.

Dues were increased from \$25 to \$35 in 2012.

Dianne Willis and Eileen McSparran won a blue ribbon for their display at the Philadelphia Flower Show.

We decorated the Alice Paul house, and Cathy Hepp brought in the girl scouts to help create a butterfly garden.

In 2012 Emeritus Status was given to Joan Alzamora and Lorna Lecrenier.

Our trip that year was to the New York Botanical Gardens. 'Monet's Garden' was the theme.

In the fall of 2013 we established a new committee to enhance park areas. The first project was planting around the sign at Laurel Acres Park entrance. We planted grasses, spirea bushes, pansies and daffodil bulbs. When the mums died we replaced them with cabbage and kale plants for the winter.

In December of 2013 several members decorated all the rooms of Alice Paul house. They were absolutely beautiful with all fresh material including 2 or more flower arrangements.

Eileen McSparran and Cathy Hepp made a live flower arrangement of roses and carnations at the library at Christmas time. They had it right inside the door with a sign saying it was made by our club.

This year we did a lot of decorating, with Farmers Hall, chaired by Sue Beacher, Smithville, chaired by Jeanne Grayson and Barbara DeLamater, Alice Paul, chaired by Cathy Hepp, the library, and our wreaths. It was an active winter.

In December, 2013 we had a fund raiser tea at the "New Leaf Tea Room" in Riverton where we all wore hats. It was fun.

In 2014 we had a talk on hostas by Walter Cullerton, (President of the hosta society), that was very good. He also gave us information on how to control voles and moles. Another good program was the flower arranging demo by Linda Lord of Bakanas Florist. The program was well received and she handed out coupons for free tulips.

In January 2014 we began preparations for our 50th anniversary celebration which will be at The Tavistock Country Club in June. We plan to award three \$1000 scholarships this year.