

A History of the
Westport Garden Club
1924-2014



Louise Ward Demakis





Westport Garden Club

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by

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Plant Sale photo by Debby Angotti

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For Gardeners & Gardening

“The world needs beauty more than ever now”

Anne Clarke, WGC President 1942-43

January 15, 1942

❧ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ❧

Updating *A History of the Westport Garden Club 1924-2014* was a cinch in comparison to researching and writing the 80-year edition ten years ago. This decade's recording secretaries and publicity chairpersons did an excellent job of recounting our history. Ann Pawlick designed the new edition and enhanced photographs in the original publication. In addition, she and Topsy Siderowf read the new manuscript while President Joni Andrews oversaw our efforts. Bill Balch, unofficially our official photographer, took the photo of Charles Lucas. Debby Angotti photographed the 2011 Plant Sale opening on our front cover and other photos of that day. My husband George continues to start dinner when I'm glued to my computer and helps out when my digital skills go haywire.

My gratitude also goes to the many people who helped produce the original *A History of the Westport Garden Club 1914-2004*. Those recording secretaries described the club's proceedings so carefully while Bessie Axley and Virginia Recor produced early histories. Peggy Johnson's and Winnie Balboni's newsletters were valuable resources. Appreciation is also due to Sue Reeves and Judy Sterling who read early chapters and made corrections and suggestions. Enormous credit must go to Elinor Ehrman, who not only edited the text once, but three times. Diane Irvine and Dick Mann of Custom Printing did the formatting and printing of the original publication. Prill Boyle, Nancy Brett, and Katie Chase kindly proofread the galley.

I am grateful to all who have made this publication possible.

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INTRODUCTION

The Westport Garden Club is one of the ten oldest garden clubs in New England, which makes our ninety years of gardening rather unique. The ten people who met on April 11, 1924 didn't have any idea a garden club would be integral to Westport's history, but as I read the minutes of their meetings, I developed an appreciation of their dedication to community service and civic development and saw that it continues to flourish in our Club today. Not long after that first meeting, the founders invited a number of like-minded women to join with them in their love of gardening. Today, we affectionately refer to all those early gardeners as our "grandams."

And "grandams" they were! They appeared at meetings in hats and white gloves. They entered floral designs at virtually every flower show in Fairfield County. They brought out their best china and silver tea services at monthly meetings, and if Dorothy Daggett Schoolcraft's diary does not exaggerate, they "did the house from end to end" when hostessing. Life was a bit easier in those days. Few members have homes large enough to hold fifty active members today. Most of us have demands in our daily lives which would have left our "grandams" wide-eyed in amazement.

They also did something that gave me no end of trouble. Our early members chose to list themselves in the club roster by their husbands' names unless they were unmarried, widows, or divorcees, so we do not know every member's given name. That changed in the 1990s. In the chapters before that decade, members are spoken of by their marriage name initially, followed by their given name in parentheses if we know it, and referred to afterward informally. Knowing our early members names is due to Jodi Mack's diligent research.

Photographs presented a problem in the 2004 Edition. Records of the club were kept in individual board members' homes until the late 1990s. After they were archived and stored at the Westport Historical Society. Photographs illustrative of those early years were difficult to find. Since our 2004 edition, photography has

undergone an enormous change. Most photographs are now shot and stored digitally. Primary sources for the club's early days were few except for minutes of meetings and newspapers. The *Westport News* and other newspapers continue to cover the Club's activities. The website *WestportNow* and Dan Woog's *06880* blog also carry articles about our events. With our members' cooperation, our photo archives in the future will be more complete. The years between 2004 and 2014 catapulted us into a new way of world communication: e-mailing, texting, twitter, and facebook. Who can tell what 2024 will bring?

Any errors or misinterpretations in the text belong to me. Writing the history of an organization isn't quite like writing a biography, but one tries to make its "characters" come alive. While researching the earlier edition, I was amazed at how much our Club had achieved in eighty years. Now I find myself viewing the achievements of our latest decade with equal admiration.

Louise Ward Demakis

Westport Garden Club

August, 2014

THE TWENTIES

It all began on April 11, 1924, when ten people—eight women and two men—met, at the suggestion of Nevada Hitchcock and Mrs. Charles Cutler (Amelia), to form a garden club in Westport, Connecticut.

A graduate of Oberlin College in 1890, Nevada Hitchcock taught school for a few years before becoming a staff reporter on the *New York Herald*. In 1896, she married Ralph Hitchcock, who died in 1913. In 1916, she joined the *Philadelphia Record* as home economics editor and, during World War I, built up a large following in the newspaper. Mrs. Hitchcock came to live in Westport in 1920 when she became a columnist for the *Sunday Post* (today's *Connecticut Post*). Her column, “Your Own Garden,” was one of the *Post*'s most popular features. Amelia Cutler, the wife of Architect Charles Cutler, was an avid gardener and an early member of the New England Wildflower Society.



Nevada Davis Hitchcock
1863-1937



Amelia MacDonald Cutler
1882-1947

The group met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Francis B. Converse. Those invited to the meeting were Mrs. John A. Thayer, Mrs. Harry Ayers, Mrs. Harrison Steeves, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Langzetell, and Mrs. Charles Stamm. Mrs. Langzetell (Kate) was elected president and Mrs. Converse (Ida), secretary and treasurer. A month later, on May 16, 1924, Mrs. William Staples (Mary) was elected vice-president and Mr. John Morris, librarian.

On June 27, 1924, nineteen other women were recommended for membership. Their names read like a guide to Westport history: Bradley, Coley, Fay, and Wakeman. A few months later, Taylor and Birge were added to the roster. Sara Crawford, also an early member of the club, was Connecticut's first female Secretary of State.

In July, with the new members present, it was proposed that there should be an exhibit of flowers at each meeting and prizes awarded for the best specimens. Each member was asked in turn to state which flower or flowers were most pleasing in her garden; the hollyhock was named more often than any other. At the August meeting, the first seed exchange took place.

The club's first project was the installation of a Memory Garden at Holy Trinity Church under the aegis of the Reverend Kenneth Mackenzie. Unfortunately, the garden was destroyed in later years when the church was rebuilt and incorporated as Christ & Holy Trinity. An early WGC historian remarked: This has been the fate—in the face of progress—of a number of our plantings.”¹



*Memorial Church of the Holy Trinity,
Georgiana Gault Collection
Westport Historical Society*

¹ Bessie Axley, "A Resume of Events in the History of THE WESTPORT GARDEN CLUB 1924-1960," Presented at the 36th Annual Meeting, November 4, 1960.

In the following months, the club ratified a constitution, adopted amendments, and approved dues of \$3 per year. Officers were nominated and elected to serve one year. Membership was set at forty, limited to residents of Westport and Weston. Proposed members were to be voted upon, with the condition that two negative votes would preclude membership. That article also stated that any member absent for three consecutive meetings, except for sickness or departure from town, would automatically be dropped from the rolls. The regular meeting of the club was set on the second Friday of the month; the annual meeting was to be held in October; and no meetings were to take place during the months of November, December, and January. It was later decided to have a luncheon and business meeting in November and drop the February meeting.

At the March 1925 meeting, Ida Converse made a motion that men should be eligible to join as associate members, upon payment of dues of one dollar a year. Men had attended meetings during that first year, but with the exception of librarian John Morris, none are mentioned in the minutes. By September 1925, the club numbered 39 members, and as membership was limited to forty, an amendment to the Constitution was passed so that membership could expand to fifty, still the active limit in the 21st century. Guests were permitted for the first time at that meeting, which was held on the sun porch and billiard room of Mrs. Arnold Schlact.

The first flower show on June 25, 1926 was also held on Mrs. Schlact's sun porch and billiard room, but by the following June, the second flower show took place at the YMCA Gymnasium. Twenty-one classes were entered; even Mrs. Schlact's home was not large enough to hold the flower show. The club scheduled two flower shows each year, one in June and another in September, but by 1928 the club's activities had become more demanding, and members voted to have only one flower show each year.

In 1927, dues were increased to \$5, and the Westport Garden Club took on its first civic project. Nevada Hitchcock took charge of improving the landscaping at the Saugatuck Fire House. Mrs. Hitchcock offered the services of her gardener for planting trees, while firemen dug the holes. The pines, that tower over the building today, and a bench outside were installed and completed in 1929. The project cost was \$100, a munificent sum in those days, and the cooperation of the Woman's

Town Improvement Association, today's Westport Woman's Club, was solicited. WGC bore half the cost of the project, while the WTIA bore the rest.

Although a Plant Exchange had begun in 1925, the club's first Plant Sale was established in 1928 for the benefit of Norwalk Hospital. For the Fall Flower Show that year, members were requested to plant purple petunias and zinnias for competition during the exhibit held at the YMCA.

Guessing games were featured at several meetings. At the July 1928 meeting, seventeen flowers were passed around, with each member asked to write the common and botanical name of each specimen on a slip of paper. Mrs. Cornelius Steers (Frances) won, with twenty-three floral names to her credit out of thirty-four examples. Her prize was a one-year subscription to *Horticulture* magazine. Garden tours were another feature of meetings. While members visited each other's gardens regularly, in 1928 they were also invited to three gardens of the New Canaan Garden Club.



*Saugatuck Fire Company No. 4
WGC Pines in the background
(Courtesy of Westport Fire Department)*

At the Annual Meeting in October 1928, a new article to the Constitution was adopted: *“Resolved—that there shall be an associate membership limited to ten members who shall not be required to take active part in the affairs of the club but who shall have all privileges of the club except that of voting. The dues shall be ten dollars per year.”*

The minutes do not discuss the reasoning behind this article, but it could be supposed that as founding members became older, they were unable to participate in the more physically demanding activities.

WGC became politically active in 1929. In April, a letter was sent to the Westport Real Estate Board commending them for a new law prohibiting the placement of For Sale, For Lease, Sold By signs outside homes. This law continued in force until the recession of the late 1980s when such signs became common in town.

Also in 1929, WGC participated in establishing a Nature Walk Exhibit at the Danbury Fair, in cooperation with a number of Fairfield County garden clubs as part of a conservation program. Amelia Cutler, who was in charge of the project, also proposed that a Connecticut Arboretum be established at Connecticut College for Women in New London. The plan, unanimously accepted by the Board of Trustees of the college, was prepared and presented to the State Federation of Garden Clubs Board which recommended including a Bird Sanctuary. The sum of twenty-five dollars was appropriated to circulate this idea among other clubs. The Arboretum, completed in the 1930s and still visited today, serves the state for numerous field studies.

Perhaps the most important event of 1929, however, was when the Westport Garden Club became a charter member of the State Federation of Garden Clubs.



*Miss Katherine Wilcox
an early member
(Courtesy of Judy Sterling)*

Mrs. John Demarest, its president, attended the club's Annual Luncheon that year and presented an outline of future plans for what would become today's Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc. This relationship has endured for over seventy years and provides guidance for many WGC activities.

THE THIRTIES

The 1930s were the years of the Great Depression, a worldwide economic downturn that is thought to have begun with the collapse of the stock market in 1929 and continued until the 1940s. These early years of the Westport Garden Club indicate that many, if not most, of the active members employed gardeners whom they supervised in the design, planting, and maintenance of their gardens. Many of these gardeners in the 1930s may have been men who lost their jobs in the early years of the Depression.

Club members did not limit themselves to gardening concerns, however. They became very involved in the civic and political life of the towns of Westport and Weston. WGC, working with the Woman's Town Improvement Association, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, and the Real Estate Board, made Westport a town without billboards. With the backing of Connecticut Secretary of State, Sara Crawford, and WGC members, legislation was proposed in Hartford that gave individual towns control of billboards under local zoning ordinances.



Sara Buek Crawford

In 1931, WGC started a ten-year program to save the elms of Connecticut. The proceeds of their fund-raising projects helped to pay for spraying 557 elm trees in Westport. It was not only the spraying of the elms that concerned members. After a beautiful elm tree was cut down without the permission of the First Selectman or Tree Warden, the club put forth the following resolution:

In order to preserve our beautiful trees, the Garden Club earnestly protests against any future destruction of that kind and urges the First

Selectman and Tree Warden to prosecute such persons who commit similar acts.¹

Property owners who cut down trees on town property (i.e., along roadsides) continue to be fined today.

WGC meetings in the 1930s centered on the beautification of the town, the roadsides, and, especially, on the development of plantings of native trees and shrubs along the Merritt Parkway. The Civics Committee planted willows at the roadside in the Saugatuck area in 1932 in order to block out an unsightly garage. English ivy was planted at Town Hall (the original Town Hall on the Post Road which is now an annex of Hudson United Bank), and a proposal was made for planting the newly acquired park site at Adams Academy, then called Academy School Park.

In 1933, trees and shrubs for the grounds of the new Greens Farms School were given by members and planted by “unemployed men.” The beautification of the Town Hall grounds—a three-year project for Connecticut’s Tercentenary—was also begun that year. In 1934, bonuses were paid to school children to encourage them to destroy tent caterpillar nests around town. A fund of fifty dollars was raised, to be paid out to the children at the rate of five cents per 100 destroyed nests. Also in 1934, the club persuaded the New York-New Haven Railroad to not permit car parking at the Westport Station. Imagine the hue and cry if anyone tried that today!

An indication of how adversely the economy affected the country and the



Old Westport Town Hall

WGC in the mid -1930s is illustrated by a mention in the minutes that a guest fee, which had been charged to members since the early years of the club, was reduced from one dollar to fifty cents.

The forerunner of Triangles, today’s pocket parks, began in 1935, when WGC, along with the WTIA, began planting trees at Adams Academy, Kings Highway, the Library, and Compo Beach. Many of these trees no longer exist,

¹Minutes of Board Meeting, April 8, 1931.

but the sugar maples planted at Compo Beach continue to shade the children who play there.

In October 1935, two WGC members were elected to the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut board: Mrs. Alden Vose, Sr. (Madeline) and Mrs. Henry Wright (Lucille) respectively became President and Corresponding Secretary of the state organization. During the Vose presidency, the Federated's President's Meeting was established; the first newsletter was sent out in January 1936; a summer garden school and workshop were planned; and the design for the official seal of the Federated was completed.

It was not all work and no play during these years, however. A box luncheon was held in the pine woods at the home of Mrs. Paladini, evocative of today's "Picnic in the Park." Naturally, however, much of the club's focus was on flower shows and awards. Members exhibited at a National Flower Show in Hartford, and a WGC member, Mrs. Henry Brown, received first prize in the *New York Herald Tribune's* competition for gardens of one acre or less.

In 1937, under the aegis of Mrs. Lauren Arnold (Anne), Civics Chairman (later Connecticut's State Representative from 1939 through 1943), the club voted to support a design submitted by Eloise Ray, Westport's respected landscape architect, for planting on Riverside Avenue, near what was then the new Staples High School (the site of today's Saugatuck Elementary School).

Nevada Hitchcock died in 1937. At the April 9th meeting, the entire membership rose and stood in tribute to the woman who was essentially the founder of the Westport Garden Club. The President, Mrs. Walter Peck (Winfred) read an appropriate poem by Mary Britten Miller in her memory. At this meeting, Mrs. Willem C. Schilthuis (Sally) proposed that a memorial be dedicated to Mrs. Hitchcock. A month later, at the May meeting, Sally, along with Anne Arnold, reported that they had developed a plan to plant 137 dogwood trees in her memory along Cross Highway from Compo Road to Sturges Highway. Sally Schilthuis shared a close bond with Nevada Hitchcock. When she first moved to Westport, she had placed a notice in the newspaper asking for someone to instruct her in gardening; Nevada Hitchcock answered the ad.

Planting of the memorial was completed in 1941, but few, if any, of those dogwoods exist today due to the vagaries of anthracnose disease. Our founder continues to be remembered, however, at the Nevada Hitchcock Triangle on the corner of Weston Road and Cross Highway, where her favorite trees flourish and are underplanted with daffodils. As further chapters in this history will illustrate, whenever the Nevada Hitchcock Memorial ran into difficulty, as often would be the case, Sally Schilthuis would come to its rescue.

A memorial to Mary Staples, a prominent townswoman and WGC member, was also started in 1937, again with the Woman's Town Improvement Association. This planting, which took until 1942 to complete, was situated at Bedford Junior



Sally Schilthuis

High School, but is no longer in existence. Another new planting at the Weston Road entrance to the Merritt Parkway was awarded the Certificate of Merit of the National Federation. Junior Garden Clubs were also formed that year. By the end of 1937, there were fifty-six children engaged in the project. The youngsters met once each week and planted gardens at the Saugatuck and Bedford Elementary Schools.

1937 also saw an important amendment to WGC's Constitution: "Membership was to be limited to resi-

dents of Westport and Weston, or those closely associated socially and personally with these towns as to have a Westport Post Office address or telephone number." Included in the amendment was the provision that a member should be an "amateur gardener."² This latter provision essentially barred professional landscapers from membership.

In 1938, a spring flower show was held at the Parish Hall of Holy Trinity

²Minutes of Board Meeting, October 8, 1937.

Church. WGC participated in planting the Weston Road Triangle at the Merritt Parkway. A fall flower show took place in 1939, and during the holiday season the club decorated the store windows on Main Street.

Emphasis in the 1930s was placed on membership requirements as well as practical concerns. Entrance into the club was enigmatic: a potential member did not know she was being considered until her proposer's and seconder's letters were read twice and acted upon. Minutes of meetings stressed that prospective members' gardens were to be visited by at least two members before an invitation to join was issued; the Board position of Member-at-Large was devised for that purpose. More than one prospective member, whose garden did not meet the standard, was not invited to join. Even so, the number of prospective members grew, and a waiting list was put in place, with voting on new members scheduled only twice each year. By today's standards, eligibility for membership in the Westport Garden Club seems archaic, but in the 1930s it was fairly much the standard for most garden clubs.

During the Depression years the Westport Garden Club strived to maintain its commitments to the Town of Westport and its people, no easy task under the severe financial setbacks that many in that era suffered.

Westport Garden Club

Date

Candidate

Proposer

Seconder

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has she a Garden?..... Where located
2. Does she work in her garden..... or personally supervise the work
3. Would she have interest in and attend meetings
4. Would she open her home for meetings.....
5. Would she serve on Committees
6. Would she be willing to exhibit at our Shows

Both proposer and seconder must visit the candidates garden before sending this questionnaire to the Club Secretary.

.....
Secretary

Westport Garden Club Questionnaire

THE FORTIES

World War II had already broken out in Europe in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, but the United States had not yet entered the conflict. Nonetheless, WGC members were well aware of events in Europe, as the minutes of their meetings underscore.

Westport concerns, however, continued to capture their attention. A sum of one hundred dollars, which had been set aside for civic work, was designated again to prune the town's elm trees. The town matched that amount, and WGC women became "Deputy Tree Wardens." By November 1941, 2,247 elm trees were counted in Westport; six hundred were sprayed, and four were cut down. Very few of these trees remain today after the Dutch Elm blight in the 1970s and 1980s.

Two members began a new project with schoolchildren. Mrs. Howard Gault (Georgiana), a new member, supervised the creation of dish gardens by children at the Saugatuck School, and Amelia Cutler did the same at the Bedford School. The club had made a concerted effort in the 1930s to include children in garden projects, and this became a continuing interest.

Past presidents did, and future presidents will, need to find space for art on the walls of their homes. Presented to WGC in 1938 by her daughter, Laura Frazer Gardin, the Alice Tilton Gardin floral painting, hung in the garden corner of the old Library until 1941. It was then that a tradition was established to present it to each new incoming president at the beginning of her term of office. Mrs. William B. Axley (Bessie), a former President who penned the club's history in 1960, wrote: "Now there are presidents, and presidents, and some



Alice Tilton Gardin Painting

weep and some cheer, but this painting is a part of our habit.”¹

By the latter part of 1941, it became clear to many that it would be just a matter of time until the U.S. became involved in war. There was no mention of the December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor at the December 12th meeting, but in the previous month it was reported that the Federated had urged garden clubs to grow medicinal herbs for defense work. WGC voted to specialize in medicinal herb plantings and made it a club competition in the coming year. A month later, plant and seed committee members were asked to research the best seeds for growing vegetables.

A January 15, 1942 *Westport Town Crier* headline proclaimed “Garden Club Plans All Out War Efforts.” WGC’s President, Mrs. James I. Clarke (Anne), was quoted as telling members that “keeping one’s chin up did not entail plowing up the flower garden or lawn in order to plant vegetables...[T]he world needs beauty more than ever now.” She announced that the club’s slogan for the year would be “Vitamins and Vegetables for Victory,” although she said, in an aside, that her husband had remarked that it might well be, “I regret that I have only one garden to hoe for my country.”²

As disconcerting news of the progress of the Japanese in the Pacific and the Nazis in Europe became more serious, the club considered whether meetings should be held at all while the war was going on. Some members felt that a garden club had no excuse to exist in wartime. It was agreed that the Executive Board would continue to meet sporadically, but general meetings would be held only three times each year. Often a scheduled meeting was not official because a quorum was not present. Members were engaged in the war effort—working for the Red Cross, attending war bond rallies, and supervising victory garden efforts. Gasoline was rationed, and WGC went on a wartime footing.

In June 1942, the regular meeting was suspended so that members could attend a canning demonstration at the Saugatuck School and learn to deal with their gardens’ largesse. About the same time Westport’s future First Selectman,

¹“A Resume of Events in the History of THE WESTPORT GARDEN CLUB 1924-1960, p. 4.

²*Westport Town Crier*, January 15, 1942.

Herb Baldwin, formed a local committee of gardeners, a group which included Connecticut State Representative Anne Arnold and Amelia Cutler as representatives of WGC, which he named “The Home Food Supply Committee.” Both women reported back to the club and warned that members should plant only what they could take care of and use themselves. Those who had gardeners in the pre-war years became gardeners themselves as their helpers volunteered or were drafted into the armed forces.

In July 1942, the club supervised the picking of peaches in Ward Thorne’s Old Hill Road orchard. The next year they appropriated funds for food canning at Bedford Elementary School. In 1943, the chairman of the Nominating Committee was urged to select people near the center of town as officers “because of the difficulty of getting together for board meetings, due to rationed transportation.” At least one WGC meeting was arranged for noon so that it could be tucked in between bandage-rolling at the Red Cross and knitting shifts at “Bundles for America.”³ Some members, involved fully in the war effort, did not attend any meetings between 1942 and 1944. When Anne Clarke completed her term of office in 1943, she was given a standing ovation at the Annual Meeting in recognition of her efforts to keep the club together during wartime.

1942-43 were World War II’s bleakest years, but as the tides of war swung to favor the Allies, WGC members focused on other matters as well. The design for a “Green Book” (not to be confused with today’s roster, however) was put into effect in 1943. Membership rules were altered. Earlier, prospective members had not been invited to meetings until they were asked to join; now they were invited to attend. Two Members-at-Large were still required to visit their gardens, making it clear that this was one of the chief requirements for membership. There was even a 1944 resolution declaring the previous Board’s admission of four new members without formal garden visiting was “a wartime measure...in an extraordinary emergency.”⁴

WGC celebrated its 20th Anniversary as a benefit for “Bundles for America” in 1944. The public was invited and everyone, including members, was charged fifty

³*Westport Town Crier*, 1943 clipping undated.

⁴Minutes of Board Meeting, August 1, 1944.

cents which went to the patriotic organization.

After D-Day on June 6, 1944, club activities began to reflect the belief that it was no more than a matter of time until the war would be over. Members became more involved in legislation for the elimination of billboards on rural roads; a letter-writing campaign to offending businesses was conducted, requesting that they limit such advertisements to commercial areas.

It was also in June 1944 that WGC voted funds for establishing a garden at the new wing of Norwalk Hospital. An interior courtyard was designed and planted with the assistance of neighboring garden clubs of Norwalk, Darien, Wilton, and New Canaan.

A publicity campaign began for mosquito control, focused on the fresh-water marshes under town jurisdiction. There was talk of “fogging by air,” but when Dr. Wilkinson of the University of Connecticut at Storrs addressed the meeting of September 1945, he advised that “amateurs” leave DDT spray alone until the experimental stations recommended exactly how to use it and what results might be expected. Already there was alarm about the long-term effects of chemicals on the population.

In November 1945, the club received 300 tulip bulbs imported from Holland as a gift to members who sent clothing or food parcels to that country after the war. Europe had suffered enormous devastation, and people in those countries continued to deal with rationing, food deprivation, extreme weather, and reconstruction. Later, in 1948, the club donated money to a “Seeds For Europe” program conducted by the Church World Services.

Early in 1946, WGC adopted the policy of presenting a book to the Westport Library in memory of a deceased member. Although the original thought behind the measure was to perpetuate a memoriam in lieu of requests for flowers, a memorial book became the prime means for honoring a member or member of her immediate family who had died. The first book was donated for Mrs. Joseph Chapin (Henrietta), a charter member and former president.⁵

⁵Unfortunately, the minutes do not list the title of the book.

By 1947, the club matched the post-war euphoria that gripped the rest of the country. At the June meeting, the first order of business was judging of members' hats—made of fresh flowers, fruits or vegetables. A number of meetings were devoted to home decoration, a pursuit previously on hold during the war years. WGC's first Flower Show & Garden Tour was held on September 6, 1947, entitled "Design For Living In Westport." At the Annual Meeting, the first WGC History, compiled by Mrs. Marvin Everly, was read and applauded.⁶ And in December, the club sponsored a Christmas Doorway competition open to any Westport resident.

In 1948, a special civic fund was approved by the membership to be used for special projects, with monies to come from proceeds of flower shows and plant sales. Until then, there had been no formal vehicle for such projects; individual proposals were made, voted on, and then acted upon by the Board.

During the same year, the club fostered Westport's State Representative and WGC member Helen Warnock Mackie's statewide mosquito control campaign. The club was most concerned about the presence of "shore mosquitoes," and various members monitored mosquito spraying carried out by the Westport Fire Department. The club also became involved in poison ivy control along with the Garden Department of the Westport Woman's Club, and \$200 was appropriated for its eradication. By 1949, fifty private properties had been sprayed.

Two major events took place in 1949. A Conservation Scholarship was formed as a memorial to Amelia Cutler, and the first scholarship, designated to be given to a teacher in the area, was awarded to Mary Annis Roberts for summer vacation study.⁷

The crowning event of the 1940's, however, was the re-consecration of King's Highway Cemetery on October 6, 1949. Restoration began in 1947 under the aegis of then president, Mrs. Henry Booth (Ava), and continued after the end of her term of office. As described in the minutes:

Mrs. Booth sketched in briefly the history of the Cemetery. She told how she gathered this information, then introduced Mr. Marvin, last surviving member of those owning the marble vault and who had asked her to turn

⁶The author has not yet been able to find the earliest history in WGC's Archives.

⁷Forerunner to today's Staples High School Tuition Grants Program.

over the huge key to this vault to the town. Mr. Scully, first Selectman, accepted the key and suggested that since the Garden Club had done such a marvelous job in the restoration of the Cemetery, it might be a good idea to have them active in seeing that it was kept in that condition.

Mrs. Booth then asked [probably thanked] Mr. Manere, Town road foreman, telling about his help in the work; Mr. Nola, road superintendent for 1/3 Conn; and the Westport and Norwalk foreman Mr. Barnes for their aid; Mr. Penna, Westport Contractor, for the labor he had given. Then she introduced Mrs. Woolsey Conover, President of the State Federation of Garden Clubs, who was most enthusiastic and congratulatory over the completion of the restoration. She had seen the work being done at the very beginning.

The chairman told of how the Troop #28 B.S.A. had scrubbed the grimmest tombstones before they began chasing snakes in and out of poison ivy. Then Donald Draves of that Troop placed a cross of garden flowers on the oldest grave (1721) and saluted.

Mrs. Booth then introduced Helen Olheim (Mrs. Fred Michel) who sang 'Hail Columbia' accompanied on the accordion by Mrs. T. A. Robertson. This song was composed in 1789 for the inauguration of George Washington, and it was interesting to note that the words were as apropos today as they were then.

Mrs. Karl A. Bickel, executive of the National Council of Garden Clubs, was the main speaker. Thanks to Mrs. Brewster, she came out from New York where she was stopping over between closing her summer home in Ontario, Canada and opening her winter home in Sarasota. Mrs. Bickel gave several ideas for further utilization of the Cemetery, such as getting the Audubon Society to establish a bird feeding station there; the planting of berry or seed-bearing shrubs. She also said that there were over 5000 clubs such as ours in the U.S. doing projects for the love of beauty not politics. A sonnet by Mrs. Baker, composed for the occasion, was read.

Mrs. Booth thanked each and every member who had helped her in any way, then introduced Rev. Alex. Hamilton, great-great-grandson of the first Secretary of the Treasury of the U.S., who re-consecrated the ground after the tumultuous disturbance of our work there.

The meeting was adjourned with a cordial invitation to everyone to have tea at the home of Mrs. Brewster on Easton Road.⁸

⁸Minutes of General Meeting, October 14, 1949.

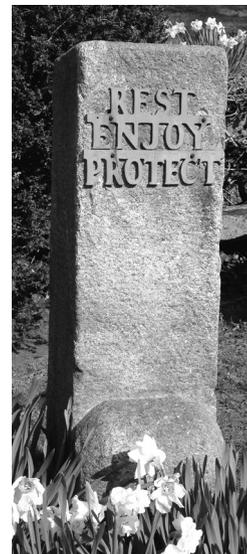


Historic Cemetery Re-Dedicated and Returned To Town

Mrs. Henry Booth (left) speaks at program Friday which re-consecrated and returned to the Town of Westport the old cemetery at Kings Highway and Wilton Road, which has tombs dating back to 1721. The cemetery was restored as a Westport Garden Club project this summer. Seated, hat in hand, is John Marvin who turned over key to crypt containing body of ancestor Capt. Hosea Marvin to First Selectman Albert T. Scully, right. Waiting to offer the re-consecration prayers is Rev. Alexander Hamilton, Assistant Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Norwalk, and great-great-grandson of Alexander Hamilton. Mrs. Karl A. Bickel, president of Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, was the guest speaker.

Photo by Wells Studio (*Westport Town Crier*, undated)

The club had financed most of the cost of the project, except for labor provided by the Town of Westport and the State of Connecticut. Mrs. Clarke produced the sketch for the restoration; Mrs. Edward O'Dwyer (Marion) and Mrs. C. Porter Dietrich (Ethel) plotted the graves. Members were asked to donate stepping stones for the path, and the gates were a gift from friends of the Henry Booths. An aluminum plaque, designed by Garrett Thew, a Westport artist, was engraved "Rest – Enjoy – Protect." Two photostatic copies of the Cemetery Scrapbook were made—one to be kept in the club's archives, where it rests today, and one in the Library. King's Highway Cemetery became the first of four cemeteries in Westport to be restored and maintained by the Westport Garden Club, albeit with



an annual contribution from the Town of Westport.

The 1940s started with the prospect of a global war, but the postwar years solidified WGC's commitment to civic improvement and beautification in Westport. Members raised money and enthusiastically supported a substantial number of projects which continue to be appreciated today.



Kings Highway Cemetery

THE FIFTIES

The Fifties have been characterized as an optimistic decade in American history. Despite the conflict in Korea, the Eisenhower years saw the country benefiting from postwar euphoria. By this time husbands, sons, and brothers in the allied forces had returned home to retake their former jobs, while women who had worked in the defense industry and corporations were relegated to homemaking and careers as nurses, secretaries, and teachers, whether they liked it or not. The G.I. Bill of Rights sent hundreds of thousands of returning veterans to colleges and universities across the United States. In 1950, there were 1.5 million TV sets in U.S. homes; one year later, when color television was introduced, there would be approximately 15 million.

As the postwar boom progressed, WGC members became more involved in civic projects. A Roadside Conservation Commission, formed of State and Town representatives, with two members from each of four garden clubs—Greens Farms, Sasqua, WWC's Garden Department, and WGC—was born “to take care of all existing and future roadside growth—trees, shrubs, and wild flowers.” The club appropriated \$25 to publish maps illustrating appropriate plant materials, and within two years, 179 new trees were planted under the aegis of the Commission.

In April 1950, the National Council of State Garden Clubs awarded WGC their coveted “Kellogg Award” for restoration of the Kings Highway Cemetery. At a ceremony in Richmond, Virginia, Ava Booth represented the club and received the award described as “the highest honor for civic achievement.”

The club did not rest on those laurels, however. In 1952, they donated and planted window boxes with geraniums and ivy at the Saugatuck Railroad Station, an effort which won them the gratitude of the New Haven Railroad. The plantings, perpetuated over a number of years, were removed during autumn, taken to a member's

greenhouse, and replaced with evergreens during winter.

In 1953, WGC's Second Garden Tour was held. The net profit of "A Summer's Day With the Westport Garden Club," held on July 10th, was \$464.22. Tickets were sold in advance to 600 visitors at gardens of various members. Of the proceeds, the sum of \$200 was set aside to be donated to beautification of the Norwalk Hospital grounds.

The club also took on the task of supplying floral arrangements for the Westport Library, including five weeks during the holiday season. The auditorium at Staples High School was decorated with chrysanthemums and evergreens for United Nations Day. Flower shows proliferated, especially the annual Fairfield County Garden Clubs Show, in which many members participated, regularly winning prizes. WGC also mounted its own Standard Flower Show yearly.

Nor did the club forget its Kings Highway Cemetery project. As mentioned at the re-consecration ceremony, WGC took on the cemetery's maintenance with a partial stipend from the Town. Mrs. John Schoolcraft (Dorothy) planted fifty pots of English Ivy there, a contribution which so inspired members that between two and three hundred more pots were propagated the following year.

Several joint meetings were held with the WWC Garden Department and Greens Farms Club during the early 1950s. The Westport Transfer Company would move chairs from the Fable Funeral Home, without charge, to various houses for monthly meetings. In the club's early years, only one beverage and one food item had been served at the meeting's finale; in the 1950s, more elaborate refreshments were enjoyed.

An annual Plant Sale continued to be a major fund raiser to support the club's civic projects. For several years, it was held in May at Ethel Dietrich's garage; later, Mrs. Bruce Payne (Edna) offered her garage. In 1953, plant sale profits were



*Window Boxes at Saugatuck Railroad Station
(From Mary Jane Pollock Photo History)*

\$116.60; by 1957 they exceeded three hundred dollars. During 1953-54, WGC participated with other garden clubs to establish the garden at Norwalk Hospital; and in 1954, they joined in a workshop with the Norwalk Garden Club to produce Christmas decorations there as well. This effort continued for several years.

WGC had been so successful looking after the Kings Highway Cemetery that in November 1954, First Selectman W. Clarke Crossman asked the club to oversee the care of Poplar Plains Cemetery as well. The club paid \$150 to repair the stone wall at the cemetery and another \$60 to straighten the old gravestones. Early records of the cemetery were collated with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), the group that had renovated Poplar Plains in 1931. Georgiana Gault, whose early Taylor relatives are buried in Poplar Plains, told members at a meeting: “Many of the ancestors of people now living in Westport, and who died in the American Revolution, are buried there.”¹

The window box project at Saugatuck Station had further ramifications. In 1955, WGC President Mrs. Murray Morse (Marion) reported that she had been asked by the New Haven Railroad to head up a committee of garden clubs in each town along the line to beautify their stations. And the gift of memorial books to the Westport Library led to Director Eleanor Street asking the club to donate gardening books for the new wing at the Library.² A book plate was designed and printed by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Sollitt of the Red Coat Press to acknowledge the club’s donations. Later, the club would participate in the Library’s beautification project with Eloise Ray, Westport’s renowned landscape architect, funded by Plant Sale proceeds.

Kings Highway Cemetery also continued to be a concern. It became clear that plant material there was suffering from a lack of watering. In 1956, the club



*Georgiana Taylor Gault
1902-1994
(Courtesy of Judy Sterling)*

¹Minutes of General Meeting, January 14, 1955. Georgiana Gault is Judy Sterling’s mother.

²This reference is to the original library located at the corner of the Post Road and Harding Plaza.



*Poplar Plains Cemetery
Before Renovation – January 1955*

appropriated \$100 to pay for the installation of a water pipe at the cemetery. The project was turned over to Palmer Brothers, Plumbers, who charged the club just the \$50

needed for materials. Kowalsky Brothers, who dug and refilled the necessary trench at no cost, were rewarded with a dogwood tree planted outside the company's office.

A few years later, nineteen mountain laurels, Connecticut's State Flower, and other plants were installed at Kings Highway, and a brass plaque was affixed to a 135-year-old large sugar maple. In recognition of their efforts, WGC received the Federated's "Certificate for Civic Achievement," which read:

The record of this Club's program for Civic improvement is outstanding. They have continued their care of and made new plantings at the Nevada Hitchcock Memorial and the Kings Highway Cemetery as well as rehabilitated and beautified the neglected Poplar Plains Cemetery. We congratulate you on these fine achievements.

It was not only ongoing projects that attracted the club's attention. When the State of Connecticut planned in 1957 to dredge offshore gravel in the salt marsh at Sherwood Island, thus destroying a natural wildlife refuge, members wrote letters to Governor Abraham Ribicoff and the State Parks & Forest Commission as well as the



Poplar Plains Cemetery 1994

State Board of Fisheries & Game to protest the plan. The club was always concerned about wildlife. Conservation Chairman Bessie Axley agreed to keep a watchful eye on the nesting swan in the Saugatuck River.

Also in 1957, WGC began their Christmas Gift program. Members donated gifts to the Newington Home & Hospital for Crippled Children & Adults. A competition took place at the meeting to judge who had done the best wrapping of the children's gifts.

In 1958, a third House, Garden Tour & Flower Show, "Living With The Arts," was set for June 13th. A major portion of profit was given to the Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum (forerunner of the Nature Center, now Earthplace) which was to be sited in Westport. WGC was awarded the blue ribbon of the National Council of State Garden Clubs for the excellence of this project, along with a Certificate of Achievement from the Federated. Also that year, an Arbor Day program was held at Staples High School and Bedford Junior High School.

Throughout the 1950s, the club held Open Meetings. Guests were charged \$1 to attend, with proceeds used to defray the cost of the speaker. Many noted garden experts were invited to lecture, and professional floral arrangers demonstrated the latest trend in flower arranging. Interesting and timely programs were presented. Members, like Helen Van Pelt Wilson, a renowned author of numerous books on gardening and articles for *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *House Beautiful*, *House and Garden*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Family Circle*



*Helen Van Pelt Wilson
1901 – 2003
(Courtesy of Cynthia Luden)*

Magazine, lectured and participated in club events.

The Fifties were enormously productive years for the Westport Garden Club. Members were inspired to expand their gardens, were enthusiastic about mounting flower shows, and, as profits of plant sales increased, contributed monies to the beautification of Westport.

THE SIXTIES

Despite the turbulence in the United States in the sixties, the Westport Garden Club continued its civic, environmental, and conservation programs. Organization seemed to be the byword in that decade as a Finance Committee was formed to present a formal budget, and a Program Committee was established to formalize a yearly agenda for WGC meetings.

1960 kicked off with an Open Meeting in February at the Saugatuck Congregational Church. Dorothy Reister, a well-known artist, sculptor, and designer, lectured on “Design for Flower Arrangers” to a capacity crowd so large that



The Westport Garden Club, meeting for luncheon in the Red Barn, Westport, on Friday, elected Mrs. Willaim B. Axley as president. Seated, left to right, are Mrs. W. Irving Plitt, vice president; Mrs. Axley; Mrs. Richard W. Sutphen, corresponding secretary and Mrs. F. Raymond Sherwood, recording secretary. Standing are Mrs. Charles B. Vose and Mrs. C. Webster Maschal, members-at-large, and Mrs. Joseph Lovejoy, Jr., treasurer. (Unidentified newspaper clipping)

the club could afford a \$300 donation to the Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum (now Earthplace), with the suggestion that the funds be used for landscaping.

In March, WGC began the Cedar Point Memorial Park project (known today as Compo Colonial Cemetery) under the aegis of President Bessie Axley. In May, the Plant Sale was held for the first time apart from the General Meeting and scheduled on a Friday, with a basket lunch provided for members and guests. Proceeds of the Sale were committed to Cedar Point, and in July, 500 grape hyacinths and 500 narcissi were planted, major landscaping efforts which later earned the Federated's Conservation Award.

In August, WGC celebrated a 35th Birthday Party. A theatre was set up in Mrs. Axley's home to show slides, produced by Mary Jane Pollock, illustrating the club's history. Helen Van Pelt Wilson, prolific author of gardening books, gave the commentary, and short talks were made by a number of other members. A display of awards for past projects was arranged, and a huge birthday cake was served with punch. A symbolic three-way candelabrum was featured at the meeting, incorporating a green candle "for the verdant past," a yellow candle "for the golden present," and a pink candle "for the rosy future."

The Nevada Hitchcock Triangle underwent restoration starting in 1960. Vines had tangled on branches in the dogwoods; the trees that had not died were in poor condition, so WGC members solicited contributions from Cross Highway neighbors for help.

A June Flower Show, entitled, "The Library Shelf," was the big event of 1961. A Standard Flower Show, open to the public, incorporated a display of gardening books that had been donated to the Westport Library over the years. On August 24, 1961, the Westport Garden Club was featured in an article in the *New York World-Telegram & Sun*.¹

As construction of the Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum neared completion, a further WGC donation of \$500 funded a permanent exhibit for the interior courtyard entitled "Forest & Field Floor Exhibit." Club member Mrs. Dudley

¹The newspaper stopped publication at the end of the Sixties. Despite numerous inquiries, the article has not been found.

Wadsworth (Lillian) was one of the private individuals who donated land for the museum; she later became a director.

Also in 1961, the Connecticut State Hospital Therapy Service began a “Gardener’s Eden” program for patients at the state’s mental hospital in Newtown. A number of WGC members volunteered in the program during the summer months over the next several years. The volunteers became so fond of their “gardeners” that they made ribbon wreaths and solicited costume jewelry donations to present to the women for Christmas. In the same year, the December program became a Christmas Party, and by 1964 a member’s gift exchange was introduced.

In 1962, WGC sponsored an Anti-Litter Day, the forerunner of “Clean-Up Westport Day.” A proclamation by First Selectman Herb Baldwin was published in the newspaper, and eighth grade students participated in the event. In 1963, an Anti-Litter Poster Contest for elementary schools was sponsored, with winning entries hung at the Westport Library, in stores on Main Street, and in front of Town Hall.

WGC worked closely with Town Hall in 1962 when the Civics Committee was asked to design a garden plan for the rear of the building, then located on the Post Road. The design, which was completed in 1964, incorporated cypress, two kinds of yew, evergreens, and pachysandra. Members were considerably disappointed when the Town Hall Custodian pruned the yew into balls instead of letting them grow into a hedge.

June 1962’s flower show, “Rhapsody In Blue,” won the National Flower Show Achievement Award and the *Purple Ribbon* from the Federated. The Plant Sale was deferred until autumn that year and took place at Saugatuck Shores Beach Club, the first location other than at a member’s garage or garden.

In 1963, a large maple tree was planted in the Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum courtyard in memory of Lillian Wadsworth who had died the year before.



*Lillian Wadsworth
with her daughter Leslie
in 1916*

The Nature Trail at today's Earthplace is also her memorial, funded by personal friends.

Conservation was a big issue in 1963 as members wrote to their representatives asking support for Bill 1234H pertaining to the acquisition of open-space land for conservation and recreation purposes. The issue of billboard proliferation was raised again when one was placed at Exit 52 of the Merritt Parkway. Letters of protest were sent by club members to the State Highway Department and then-Governor Dempsey.

In October 1963, the Westport Garden Club, along with a number of Fairfield County garden clubs, sponsored the Connecticut Federated Annual Meeting at the town's Longshore Park.

Vandalism continued to plague Westport in the 1960s. Damage had been done over the years to window boxes at the Railroad Station; plants were often stolen. In 1963, vandals attacked Kings Highway Cemetery, requiring repair of the cemetery walls as well as repainting and remounting of the urns, all costs borne by the club.

In August 1964, a "Summer Promenade" House & Garden Tour raised over \$1,000, enabling planting of more dogwoods at the Nevada Hitchcock Triangle.

Later that year, WGC President Ethel Dietrich recommended that the club go on record in favor of the town's purchase of Cockenoe Island in order to forestall commercial development. In 1967, when United Illuminating of Bridgeport proposed building a nuclear power plant on the island, the club joined with numerous other Westport groups in support of its acquisition as open space. A town-wide *Save Cockenoe Now* campaign took place over the next eighteen months, supported by the *Westport News* and an editorial in the *New York Times*. Photographer George Silk, husband of WGC's Margery, contributed a photograph to Life magazine which focused on the campaign.²

In 1965, WGC revamped its civic workshop program. Likely because of fire hazards, evergreens at Christmas were to be eliminated for decoration inside public buildings. Eleanor Street, Director of the Westport Library, suggested instead a large

²Woody Klein, *Westport Connecticut* (Westport, Connecticut * London: Greenwood Press, 2000), pp. 267-271.

wreath for outside the building. WGC also continued providing fresh greens at the Saugatuck Railroad Station and wreaths at other locations.

It was also in 1965 that three recommendations were made for establishing the Plant Sale as a “money maker” in the future. A location for the sale was to be found in the center of town; a phone committee would be organized to contact friends as well as members; and the sale would take the place of the May meeting. By 1966, the Plant Sale as a major fund raiser was underway. Ads were placed in newspapers; the radio station carried an announcement; and publicity emphasized that proceeds would be dedicated to civic projects in Westport. By 1969, the reorganization of the Plant Sale was complete, and it was moved to the lawns of the Saugatuck Congregational Church, where it is still held today.

The Plant Sale proceeds in 1965, however, were designated for the completion of foundation planting at the new Church Lane addition at the “Y.” Members were also encouraged to save and donate trading stamps, which were used to purchase a coffee urn.

Miss Katherine Ordway, who became a WGC member in 1961, gave 477 acres of Devil’s Den to the Connecticut chapter of the Nature Conservancy in 1966. Ordway, the 3M heiress known as “The Lady Who Saved The Prairies” because she helped organize the Nature Conservancy, donated the land in memory of her father, Lucius Pond Ordway.



Katherine Ordway

A flower show, “Comes An August Day,” took place at the Mid-Fairfield Youth Museum on August 12, 1966. Also that year, the club received a check in the amount of \$1,250 to establish the Dorothy Daggett Schoolcraft Fund. The bequest, from the will of the late John Schoolcraft, provided income for the purchase of books on gardening subjects in memory of his deceased wife. Mr. Schoolcraft also specified that income could be applied to presenting public lectures, demonstrations, exhibits or similar activities.

In 1967, students at Staples High School were recruited to pot and look after plants for the Plant Sale, an arrangement that proved very profitable. WGC provided

plastic containers, soil, and seeds for use in the Staples greenhouse, and these many extra plants were added to the Sale.

For a number of years, beginning in the 1950s, Lemual Stanford maintained the cemeteries under care of the WGC. It is interesting to note that when he was hired, his fee was \$1.50 per hour; later it was raised to \$2.00, and again to \$2.50. By 1967, the cost of maintenance had risen to \$3.00 and by the end of the decade to \$3.50 per hour. Inflation assailed the Westport Garden Club in the 1960s, but it does not seem remarkable in comparison to maintenance costs of WGC dependencies today.

It was also in 1967 that the Federated was able to attain tax-exempt status from the federal government. Mrs. Joseph Lovejoy, Jr. (Lois), a former President, was quoted in the WGC minutes: “It has taken nearly 10 years to achieve this.”³



*Peggy Johnson and Ginny Sherwood
at work on the Rotary*

In 1968, the town instituted a number of “planting circles.” WGC submitted a plan for a Kings Highway/Canal Street Rotary and received a \$250 grant from the Sears Foundation for its implementation. The Rotary, no longer a Westport feature, was demolished by the State when housing for the elderly was established at Canal Park.

Also in 1968, Mrs. Peter Kenney (Hap) was presented with a badge of appreciation for her artistic production of WGC program announcements. And for the first

time, the new Board of Directors began their duties with the November meeting.

By the end of the Sixties, the Westport Garden Club had been in existence for forty-five years. Many changes had taken place; Constitutions and By-Laws were amended, and the club formalized its activities. Few of its charter members were alive to counsel and guide, but the club’s future was assured by their example and the commitment of those women who came after.

³Minutes of Board Meeting, August 3, 1967.

THE SEVENTIES

The 1970s were as turbulent as the 1960s. The Vietnam War was raging, and Watergate was no longer merely a residence for Congressmen and Washington lobbyists. 1976 was the Bi-Centennial Year and, appropriately, the Westport Garden Club was about to embark on a major civic project.

In early 1970, Mrs. John Sherwood (Virginia) informed the Board that the Town of Westport owned three acres of land on Imperial Avenue which might be turned into a park. In 1969, WGC had received its first check of \$1,000 from the Grace K. Salmon Trust, and the Board was considering how the funds might be used for a civic project. The Trust, named for Martha Grace King Salmon, who preferred to be called “Grace,” was established at her death “for beautification, charity, and education in Westport.” Both she and her husband, Frederick Salmon, were natives of Westport and active in civic and political affairs. The Board determined that monies from the Trust could be used to turn what was then a landfill into a park.

Ginny Sherwood, as she was affectionately known, wrote to First Selectman John Kemish outlining the plan and received a positive reply. President Mrs. John B. Johnson (Peggy) brought the matter before the membership, suggesting that the park could be established to attract birds and for public enjoyment. Members questioned whether the town would maintain the park, and there were concerns about garbage dumping which had taken place on the property. Later investigation found that the landfill needed thirty inches build-up of soil before any planting could be done. Ginny reported that the town would use the area for



*Virginia Sherwood
1917 – 1986*

dumping leaves, and the property would be built up in two years.

Evan Harding, owner of Daybreak Nurseries, was consulted and proposed planting trees and shrubs which attract birds along Imperial Avenue as the first stage of the project. When the proposal for a park was put before the Parks & Recreation Department, the acreage was called "Sycamore Park," because of its abundance of sycamore trees, but by January 1971, the project was known as "The Grace K. Salmon Memorial Planting."

One dozen trees were brought from the Connecticut College Arboretum in May to be planted along the road, but by July they were in dire straits. The trees were replaced in the fall, but workers at the site claimed they had not been killed by insect infestation and lack of water, but by gases escaping from the landfill. The WGC Board, as reported in the minutes of November 29, 1971, "question[ed] the fallibility of these words of wisdom," but by August 1972, when the trees died again, they became convinced of the workers' diagnosis. The Agricultural Agent at Danbury was consulted, and the Board decided that a field of wild flowers might be an alternative until the gases dissipated. One member suggested wrapping the tree roots in plastic, but the town had already tried that elsewhere and found that it did not work.

By this time WGC had received \$3,000 from the Grace K. Salmon Trust, and the Board was concerned that an explanation for the lack of progress was due to the Trust, lest they lose the funds. Furthermore, a pumping station was to be built on the property, although the Board did not know then that work would not get underway until March 1974 and would not be completed until July. Naturally, WGC members were upset and disappointed that the project had run into so many difficulties; nearly four years had passed, and there was nothing to show for their efforts.

WGC, however, was not completely at a loss. In 1971, \$150 for books was donated to the Connecticut Audubon Library from the Dorothy Daggett Schoolcraft Fund to thank the Society for advice on birds in the area. The annual Plant Sales continued to raise funds. The cost of maintaining the cemeteries had risen, so an increase in the town's stipend was requested. Lemuel Stanford could no longer take care of the cemeteries due to ill health and was replaced by Joseph Jones, who continues as groundskeeper today.

WGC became involved in other civic undertakings. Members were concerned that dredging for a marina at Hendrick's Point would upset ecology in the area. They opposed the building of a replacement high bridge on Bridge Street; opposed a proposal to fill in the wetlands from Parker Harding Plaza to the Canal Street Bridge; and opposed the building of a mammoth shopping plaza which would have put 42 acres of hardtop on the Post Road. They also signed a statement to Senator George Gunther backing his proposal for a two-year moratorium on nuclear construction on the Sound. In order to preserve their non-political standing, however, petitions and letters in opposition to such development were signed by individuals.

The Fall Flower Show in 1972, in cooperation with the Garden Department of the Westport Woman's Club, won a Flower Show Merit Award. Mrs. Richard Whidden (Bambi), a WGC member, was chosen that year to be the first woman president of the Mid-Fairfield Youth Museum.

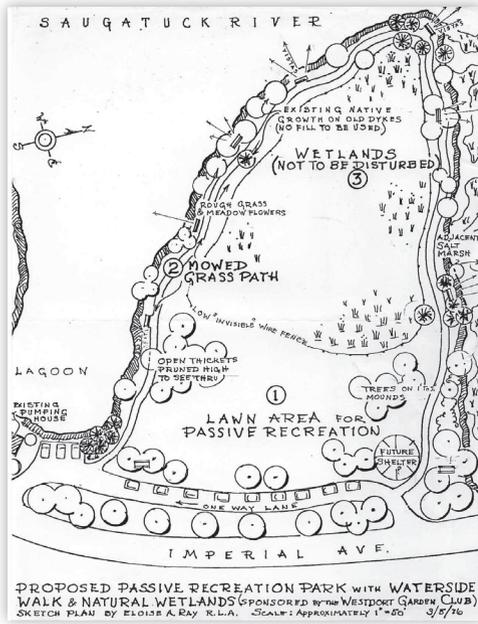
The Dorothy Daggett Schoolcraft Fund was used to place books, published by members, in the Westport Library. These included Jean Hersey's, *These Rich Years*; Hap Kenney's, *Little Windjammer*; Lucy Sargent's, *Tincraft For Christmas*; and Helen Van Pelt Wilson's, *The Fragrant Years*.

In 1973, the club financially supported "The Greening of the Post Road" project, when hundreds of trees were planted by the Westport Beautification Committee and WWC's Garden Department. Members were also involved in "The Greening of Main Street."

In early 1974, as the club looked forward to celebrating its Fiftieth Anniversary and Grace K. Salmon Park was still on hold, it was decided that the improvement of the Nevada Hitchcock Triangle, again in dire need, would become its anniversary project. Property owners along Cross Highway were contacted and asked for their support. Profits from previous plant sales were dedicated to replacement of dying dogwoods, and Sally Schilthuis, who had long been a prime mover behind the establishment of the memorial, stepped forward again. The Lara Chapman stone, memorializing Mrs. John Chapman, an early member, was moved to the opposite side of the Weston Road, and more ilex and laurel were planted, only to be stolen a day after they were put in the ground. Nonetheless, that did not dampen the members' spirits as they held their 50th Anniversary Summer Flower

Show in August.

Later that year, as the pumping station construction was completed and the land regraded, WGC again turned to solving the problems at Grace K. Salmon Park. Landscape architect Eloise Ray, who had designed the Saugatuck Congregational Church sunken garden and Canal Street Park, was approached to develop a plan.



Eloise A. Ray Plan for Grace K. Salmon Park

Mrs. Murray Sargent (Lucy) worked with Mrs. Ray and requested that maintenance be as low as possible. Eloise suggested a formal design for the foreground of the park while leaving the background natural. A grass path was to be cleared, circling through the park and along the river, a feature which has proved to be popular with birders and walkers. By November 1975, Mrs. Ray indicated that the monies already received from the Trust would not be sufficient to do the work and calculated that the cost of the project might run as high as \$20,000.

In December, Mrs. Anthony Balboni (Winnie) and Mrs. Ray met with First Selectman Jacqueline Heneage “to find out exactly what the town is intending to spend and do with Salmon Memorial Park.” At that point, finances were still not certain, but the club designated \$1,500 to go ahead with the project, and the Salmon Trust added \$2,500 more to the funds. Winnie Balboni wrote to Rutgers University asking for information about planting on sanitary landfill. Rutgers replied that it was all by trial and error; they couldn’t guarantee that anything could grow on a landfill, but they suggested that it might be feasible to seal the ground with a layer of clay and add soil to the depth of three feet. The members must have thrown their hands up in horror!

By early 1976, the Ray design was estimated as possibly costing between \$50,000 and \$80,000. Winnie had been working with Mrs. Betty Abdilean at

Westport Town Hall to find ways to obtain further funds. She asked the Board for permission to send for a grant application from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, a federal government agency. Under the agency's guidelines, however, a matching grant request was required to come from the town and then to be forwarded to the Bureau through the Connecticut



Winnie Balboni at Grace K. Salmon Park

Bureau through the Connecticut State Environmental Office. Interestingly, grants such as this were funded by monies obtained from admissions to National Parks and from offshore oil drilling.

It was propitious that these events took place during the U.S. Bi-Centennial Year, when townspeople were engaged by memorial events. In addition to matching grant money from the club and the town's contribution, which then totaled \$13,500, Ginny Sherwood came up with the idea to compose a letter asking the public to donate funds for memorial benches at the Park. Those donating benches were Lester Giegerich, in memory of his wife Betty; Sherwood, Garlick & Cowell, in memory of Harry Sherwood; Merchants & Farmers Bank; Westport Woman's Club; Carol Kelton; the Westport Beautification Committee; and, of course, the Westport Garden Club.

WGC did not rest while waiting for positive news of the grant. Members were encouraged to transplant wildflowers from their gardens: daisies, black-eyed Susans, daylilies, water iris, and columbines were put in the ground. Importantly, the many volunteer hours members served were recorded at the rate of \$10 per hour, and those hours were designated as matching funds. In August, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation approved the grant, which was then sent to the federal government for further approval. At the Annual Meeting in October, Winnie Balboni gave a progress report which encouraged members to believe the project would finally reach fruition. One hundred fifty-six botanical specimens were identified; benches were installed looking south over the river; and by November, the town had received approval



Eloise Ray & Ginny Sherwood overlooking the Saugatuck River

of a matching grant of \$27,500. The minutes of December 9, 1976 recorded the far-reaching implications Grace K. Salmon Park had as an experimental project on a sanitary landfill; the club's experiences could be extremely useful to other towns planning similar undertakings.

Still, not all the hurdles had been overcome. In March 1977, the town presented a budget which included monies for Grace K. Salmon Park. In June, the Planning & Zoning Commission passed zoning for "a passive recreation park." At the same time, the P&Z objected to a wooden sign that had already been placed in the Park, and President Mrs. Theodore Muller (Helen) sketched a more modern version which was submitted to the Commission. The lane into the Park was paved, while members continued to water and weed the young plants and shrubbery.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on October 8, 1977, with First Selectman Heneage officiating; other Westport leaders were present, and our members came out in fine array.

At the Federated's Annual Meeting a few days later, WGC received a Certificate of Achievement for the work already done. Not long after that, 3,000 postcards bearing a photograph of Grace K. Salmon



*Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony at Grace K. Salmon Park
October 8, 1977*

Taking part in the ceremonies were, from left, Mrs. John Sherwood, Westport Garden Club civics chairman; Mrs. Theodore Muller, Westport Garden Club president; Richard Wallace of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection; First Selectman Jacqueline Heneage and landscape architect Eloise Ray.

(Westport News, October 12, 1977)

Park were printed and sold to restaurants and local businesses as another fund raiser.

The club's work was not finished in 1977, however. A watering system was installed by the town in late 1978. Helen Muller's husband, Ted, designed and installed a bronze plaque, which was placed on a large boulder. Still, the newly-planted trees were not doing well; landfill gases continued to have a deleterious effect. In a true example of landscape genius, Eloise Ray devised a solution. Plastic dryer hoses, the kind used to vent household appliances, were planted around the trees' borders, and—Eureka!—they worked. Finally, this enormous project was nearing completion.

On January 1, 1981, eleven years after Ginny Sherwood's original proposal,



*WGC Postcard of Grace K. Salmon Park
(Kodacolor by Ruth Thomas)*

WGC would receive the prestigious National Council of Garden Clubs' Lucille B. Droge Mauntel Certificate for Conservation for the Grace K. Salmon Park project.

One might suppose that members had little time for anything else while they were devoting their efforts to the Park, but that was not the club's *modus operandi*. Katherine Ordway donated more land to the Nature Conservancy, eventually bringing her total gift to 1,500 acres, and in 1978 she was named a "Land Guardian."

Plant Sales flourished; a “Time and the Ocean” Flower Show was held at Mrs. Gay Land’s (Liz) home in 1976; field trips to Winterthur and Newport were taken; a hawthorn tree was donated to the Triangle Parade Ground at the intersection of King’s Highway and Old Hill Road; planters were installed at the Compo Shopping Center; Christmas wreaths continued to be made and hung at town landmarks; and new members were added to the roster. The minutes noted amusingly, “It would be an asset if they had strong backs.”

A Flower Show, “All on a Summer’s Day,” was held in 1979. Last, but not least, as the decade waned, Helen Muller reorganized the Plant Sale suggesting that it be held in the morning, instead of afternoon; committees were set up for digging, dividing, and transporting plants; and the luncheon was deferred until after the Sale so that members would have the opportunity to enjoy it socially.

The Seventies may have had its problems, but Westport Garden Club members surmounted obstacles that might have given them second thoughts about what a garden club can achieve. As it passed its 50th Anniversary, the club could indeed claim that the Seventies were truly its “golden years.”

THE EIGHTIES

The 1980s were an era of expanded civic development and activism in Westport. Based on their past successes in helping to prevent the building of a nuclear power plant on Cockenoe Island and by turning an unsightly landfill into glorious Grace K. Salmon Park, the women of the Westport Garden Club continued to make strides toward beautification of the town.

They were not always successful. In 1980, WGC opposed the development of an office complex on Gorham Island, where a Victorian building was situated on the banks of the Saugatuck River. After the club passed a motion “wholeheartedly” to oppose the plan, President Bambi Whidden represented WGC at public meetings in opposition to such development. Unfortunately, despite the clamor of many groups in town, the old house was torn down and the developers went ahead with the building.

Ignoring this setback, the club continued to concentrate on Westport’s beautification. When housing for the elderly was under construction at Canal Park that same year, the Westport Woman’s Club took on the task of landscaping an area across the road at Canal Green. WGC supported their efforts by donating a park bench as a starter and later funded permanent planting on the site. Work on the park was completed, and it was dedicated in 1985. Levitt Pavilion also became a project in 1980 when WGC planted a white pine tree there on National Arbor Day. Later, further plantings were donated, in particular the shrubs placed around the Henry Moore statue.

In November 1980, WGC received a Certificate of Achievement for Conservation from the Federated for their work on Grace K. Salmon Park, and Ginny Sherwood was awarded the Club Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of the culmination of her ten years of work there.

Club members were involved in the purchase of Wheeler House in 1981 when a 1795 farmhouse that had been converted into an Italianate-style residence in the late 19th century became the headquarters of the Westport Historical Society. Mrs. Roy Dickinson (Joan) and Mrs. Clayton Elmer (Bobby), both later to become WGC and WHS Presidents, joined with a group of Westporters to raise funds for the purchase. The club donated \$1,000 to the Wheeler House Fund, and in 1982, a further \$2,000 was given toward landscaping the vault area.

Grace K. Salmon Park benefited in 1982 from the memorial established in honor of Mrs. Richard Sutphen (Betty), WGC's former president (1965-66). One thousand crocuses were planted, and a plaque was placed on a boulder at the site.



"Celebrating the First Grandchild" – 1986

Later in the year, the club received an unexpected gift of \$1,000 toward the planting of four Bradford pear trees at the Park; the generous donor, Charles Simonds of Riverside Avenue, lived directly across the river from the Park.

WGC also donated \$200 that year to glaze the windows at the Nature Center (formerly, the Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum) greenhouse; begonias raised there became a feature of the Plant Sale. In October, a field trip was arranged to view the Japanese Chrysanthemum Display at the New York Botanical Gardens, and a miniature flower show, "Nostalgia," was held in November at Greens Farms Congregational Church. And for the first time, at the

holiday party in December, name tags were distributed to members as a means to assist both long-term and new members to become better acquainted.

Not all the club's interests were devoted to gardening in 1982. In March, a tour was arranged of the Katherine Ordway Art Collection at the Yale University Galleries, and Mrs. Paul Van Orden (Barbara), a WGC member and Yale docent, guided and lectured to the group.

In 1983, WGC became involved in the first of a number of flower shows at Burr Mansion in Fairfield to benefit the Easter Seal Foundation. Over the rest of



*“Get Me To The Church On Time” – 1987
Linda Fleming is shown in the photo
(Westport News, April 15, 1987)*

the decade, the club, along with eighteen other clubs, participated in raising money for a number of Easter Seal projects. An individual room in the mansion was decorated by WGC volunteers. Many rooms were of unique design, particularly, one in 1986 which incorporated the theme of “Celebrating the First Grandchild;” and another in 1987, entitled

“Get Me To The Church On Time,” which featured a wedding theme.

Landscaping at the renovated Staples High School became a club project as well in 1983. Bradford pear trees and azaleas were planted at the school when remodeling was completed.

In late 1983, WGC again became a supporter of the Westport Historical Society. WHS President Joan Dickinson wrote a letter asking her fellow WGC members to financially support the maintenance of landscaping at Wheeler House and to consider the future establishment of a Victorian Garden. A vote was passed to donate \$500 from the budget to meet this maintenance request, an annual donation which continues today; and a promise was made to design a garden on the property.

In 1984, WGC rescued Platt Cemetery from possible desecration when a shopping center owner attempted to turn it into a parking lot. The overgrown private cemetery, which was designated in Samuel Platt’s will of 1812 “as a burial ground for me and my children and my children’s children forever,” had been bulldozed just as the club was making arrangements to preserve it. The developer had removed trees and knocked down part of an ancient stone wall surrounding the site. WGC took over maintenance of Platt Cemetery in 1986, and an out-of-court battle by the town and the Historic District Commission led to repair of the wall, restoration of the tombstones, and renewal of plantings by the end of the decade.



Platt Cemetery – 1986



Platt Cemetery Today

Westport Garden Club celebrated its 60th Anniversary at its Annual Meeting in 1984. Much to members' delight, a skit, entitled "Our Town – 1924," written by Mrs. J. Henry Smith, Jr. (Dell), was performed by Mrs. Jack Kelly (Janice), Mrs. Cecil Olmstead (Frances), Mrs. Donal Reeves (Sue), Mrs. George Sterling (Judy), Mrs. Thomas W. Wilson, Jr. (Molly), and Mrs. Frank Winch (Susan). The script, based on a nostalgic journey through Westport in 1924, depicted a small rural town with unpaved roads, inhabited by an eclectic mix of artists, farmers, writers and long-time Yankees, dramatized by the group of women.

In 1985, when Westport celebrated its 150th Anniversary, WGC held their "Westport In Bloom" Flower Show in June at the Westport Historical Society. As part of the Anniversary, the club fulfilled its promise to establish a Victorian Garden at the Society headquarters. The design incorporated a parterre of brickwork planted with flowers appropriate to the era. A sundial completed the structure when WGC member Mrs. John Cuneo (Myrtle) donated the garden accent in memory of her husband, a past president of WHS.

Then in July, the club, represented



*Members of the Cast of "Our Town – 1924"
Left to right: President Judy Sterling, as
Librarian John Morris, with Susan Winch,
Molly Wilson, and Dell Smith.*

by President Judy Sterling, planted a garden surrounding the new flagpole at Town Hall, installed to commemorate the founding of Westport in 1835. Later that autumn, the Lois Lovejoy Memorial Garden was established at Grace K. Salmon Park in honor of the club president who served two terms of office (1950-52 and 1960-62).

It was during this sesquicentennial year that members became concerned about poor conditions in the town's public parks. Helen Muller wrote a strong letter to town officials regarding the lack of maintenance at these public properties. Motivated by the club's concerns, the *Bridgeport Post* ran an article on its front page. Members vowed to be outspoken on the situation, which became an issue in the election that year.

After a multitude of activities during 1985, WGC members enjoyed a brief respite in 1986. Still, a field trip was arranged to attend the Treasure Houses of Britain & French Impressionists Exhibit in Washington, D.C. in March.

For a number of years members had been concerned about the lack of a water source at Nevada Hitchcock Memorial. In May, Sarah and Patrick Kennedy, neighbors adjacent to the site, gave permission to hook up hoses to their water system, and a sugar maple was planted there in August.

The club added Westport's Women's Crisis Center to their holiday party largesse in 1986 when it came to their attention that its residents were sadly in need of clothing; many of these women had fled spousal abuse with no more than the



*Members Planting
Westport Historical Society Parterre
Left to right: Margaret Yingling, Charlaime
Foneliu, and Virginia Recor.*



Nevada Hitchcock Memorial in Spring

garments they wore.

Also that year, WGC's support of Wheeler House prompted a very meaningful asset when the Westport Historical Society agreed to accession the club's records into its archives. Old minutes, dating back to the club's foundation, photographs and slides of various events, newspaper clippings, and other historical records were deposited, making a significant contribution to the publication of this 80-year history. WGC's activities, so closely involved in the town's evolution during the 20th century, are not only part of the club's history but of Westport as well.

In 1987, Grace K. Salmon Park again came to the forefront with the institution of the Virginia Sherwood Memorial Garden. Ginny Sherwood was memorialized by the planting of a seaside garden, designed by Eloise Ray. A dedication



Nature Center/Earthplace Entrance Garden

ceremony was held on August 11, 1988, attended by members of Mrs. Sherwood's family and Westport First Selectman Martha Hauhuth.

Further attention was also paid to the Nature Center in 1988 when WGC donated \$500 to purchase two kiosks for today's Earthplace. Eloise

Reilly, who was instrumental in refurbishing the greenhouse at the Center, received a citation from the Federated for her efforts. Throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s, WGC was able to plant and nurture annuals and perennials in the Nature Center greenhouse, an activity which added greatly to Plant Sale proceeds. In 1989, WGC would contribute \$1,500 to establish an Entrance Garden at the Nature Center, which continues to be maintained today.

A Flower Show on September 15, 1988 again focused on the club's contributions of gardening books to the Westport Library. "Gardening by the Book," staged at the Library, was accompanied by a display of books which had been contributed in memory of members and their families over the years.

Later, in November, the membership voted to donate \$2,000 to purchase two

parcels of land at Devil's Den to complete its forest conservation plan, an activity supported by the club at the inception of the project. In 1989, \$500 additional was donated to Devil's Den.

None of these contributions would have been possible without proceeds of the Plant Sale held each year in May. By 1989, yearly Plant Sale profits numbered in the thousands of dollars, the bulk of the proceeds earned by selling plant divisions from members' own gardens. In the 1980s, "Sale Days" for members, which usually took place the week before or after the Plant Sale, were co-sponsored with Gilbertie's Herb Gardens, for which the club received a portion of the profit. A banner announcing the Plant Sale was made and displayed at Westport Bank & Trust (today's Hudson United Bank) which further publicized the event.

By the end of the 1980s, the Plant Sale had become a highly sophisticated venture, which Westport townspeople eagerly anticipated each year. The public is well aware that plants grown in local gardens are more likely to survive transplanting. The club's contributions to the beautification of Westport depend largely on the success of these annual sales.

THE NINETIES

The Nineties were the era of a booming stock market. The Gulf War in 1991 was over almost before it started, and the American public benefited from a strong dollar and relative peace. There was a growing interest in gardening in the United States, and the Westport Garden Club's Plant Sale profits reached heights never imagined in the early days of the organization. At the same time, the club became more of a "hands-on" operation than ever before.



*Westport Beautification Committee
Award - 1990*

*Doing their job at Kings Highway Cemetery
(clockwise from top) are Susan Reeves,
President Bobby Elmer, Virginia Recor,
and Carol Yonan.*

(Westport News, June 29, 1990)

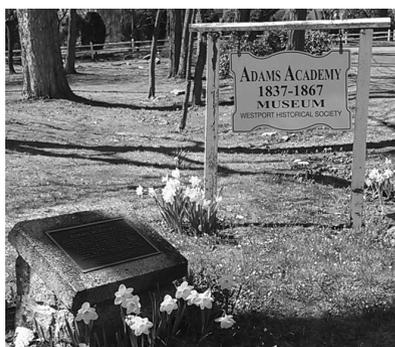
A Health Information Day took place in 1990. WGC donated \$150 to produce shopping bags, with the club's logo, to be used for information brochures. Arbor Day was celebrated in April when six trees were planted in Westport: two maples (acers) honored the U.S. Constitution's Bicentennial, while two others became part of "Plant a Living Legacy" sponsored by the Federated. A Bradford pear and sycamore were planted on Jesup Green, as WGC's contribution to the North East Region Project of the National Council of State Garden Clubs. To celebrate Earth Day, the club installed a composter at the pumping station at Grace K. Salmon Park to demonstrate the types of refuse acceptable for use. Also that year, the Westport Garden Club was cited in June by the Westport Beautification Committee for its care of three

town cemeteries.

Virginia Recor updated the Westport Garden Club history in 1991, extending coverage of WGC activities from 1960 through 1977. Construction of the River Walk at the Westport Library began the same year, and WGC donated \$1,000 as “seed money” for the project. Members produced a “Fly Fishing & Bird Watching” vignette at Burr Mansion’s Flower Show for the benefit of the Greenhouse Therapy Program as well. Also in 1991, Article III of the Constitution was amended to extend the term of office for elected Executive Board members to two years.

Adams Academy became a major project for the decade when Joan Dickinson recommended that it be considered as a long-term beautification project. Adams Academy, a one-room schoolhouse built in 1830, located on North Morningside Drive, became Westport’s first private high school in 1837 when Ebenezer Banks Adams opened it to coed students, some of them coming from as far away as New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia. It was operated as a public school from 1882 until 1917, and later became headquarters of the Westport Historical Society until the Wheeler House reconstruction was completed in the Eighties.¹

The property was overgrown due to years of neglect, but by 1991 work was begun at the site. The driveway was more clearly defined; a plaque identifying the property was found and reset; the front stairs were rebuilt; treated wood steps were set on the rear slope under the direction of Bill Gault (husband of WGC President Nancy Gault); and the building was newly painted by the Town of Westport. An



Adams Academy in Spring

¹Klein, *Westport Connecticut*, p. 103.

All-Club Saturday workday took place in April 1992 at which members and their spouses cleared a jungle of undergrowth in the vicinity of the building. Later that year, a walk was opened by the brook; new shrubbery was put in place; bulbs and wildflowers were planted with funds from an “Operation Wildflower” Grant and Exxon Project Award; and a wrought iron railing was installed on the front steps. The club was determined to maintain the historical integrity of the 19th century site and adhered to landscape principles particular to the period.

Adams Academy became the venue for a number of events in the 1990s. A standard flower show, “Adams Academy Revisited,” was held there in September 1992, and a family picnic was arranged in August 1993. Jack Kelly (husband of Janice Kelly) took on the job of carving a flagpole from a beech tree found locally. Despite Mr. Kelly’s careful workmanship, the tree was subject to checking. In order to insure that the flagpole would last, Sue Reeves, who had been



*Joan Dickinson
1933-1995*

WGC’s President 1977-79, consulted experts at Mystic Seaport and was

informed that, like the ship masts at the Museum, a flagpole is not expected to last forever. To be historically accurate, an authentic coat of whitewash was applied by Sue, and the flagpole was installed by Richard Stein. The flag-raising took place at Adams Academy on October 7, 1993.

WGC was awarded the Federated’s May Duff Walters Trophy in 1994 for preservation of Adams Academy. A



*Raising of the Flagpole at
Adams Academy – October 7, 1993*

Eagle Scouts from Troop 100, Christ and Holy Trinity Church, are represented by Seth Orkand, Peter Davis, Stephen Fox, David Pacer and Scoutmaster Joe Bajek. (Westport News, October 13, 1993)



*Jack Kelly presenting the Flag
to Sue Reeves*

second plaque was placed at the site in 1996, appropriately in memory of former WGC President Joan Dickinson, who died that year. To this day, Adams Academy remains one of the most important dependencies of the Westport Garden Club.

The Sound Waters Program also became a club project in 1992. Established to raise awareness of the ecology and marine life of Long Island Sound for Westport's elementary public school children, it continues to be a recipient of funds generated by the Plant Sale. A "Gardener's Cookbook" was featured at the 1992 Plant Sale, and Winnie Balboni took over production of the WGC Newsletter from Peggy Johnson, who had edited it for twelve years. The Peter Kenney family donated a memorial plaque at Grace K. Salmon Park for WGC's Mary Jane Pollock, who had produced the club's 35th Anniversary photo history, as well as exceptional publicity and programs over the years. And in June, a general meeting took place in the gardens of nationally-famous Martha Stewart on Turkey Hill Road.

The wall at Platt Cemetery was damaged again in 1992 when a young man fell asleep at the wheel of his car. Ironically, he was a stonemason and repaired the wall with the assistance of the "buddy" whose car he had borrowed without permission. WGC received An Award of Excellence from the Federated and a traveling silver bowl that year for its continuing work on Platt Cemetery.

1992 was an award-productive year. In addition to the silver bowl, WGC received two Certificates of Achievement from the Federated—one for the Sound Waters program and a second for heightening environmental awareness through that program. Two individual Awards of Appreciation went to Peggy Johnson for her publication of the Newsletter (1979-1992) and to Helen Muller for horticultural expertise.

1993 started off with a severe Nor'easter which hit Westport in January.



*Presentation of Silver Bowl to
President Nancy Gault*

At the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut Awards ceremony are, from left, Mrs. William H. Horton, president of the Federated Garden Clubs, and Mrs. William Gault, president of the Westport Garden Club.

(Westport News, February 3, 1993)

One of the boat ramps positioned on the Saugatuck River washed up at the foot of Grace K. Salmon Park and had to be towed away by the town. In February, the Board voted formally to provide an annual scholarship to a Staples High School Senior; the first recipient of the award was David Orr, who attended Ithaca College. WGC contributed \$500 to the Westport Beautification Committee to plant a Triangle at the end of the renovated Post Road Bridge, and that summer members participated in a vintage vignette at Burr Mansion's "Fashion, Flowers & Flair" Show. WGC also donated \$1,000 to aid in the restoration of the Saugatuck Church Sunken Garden after it had been destroyed by contractors working on the church buildings.

In the Nineties, a host of new members joined the club, which revived the custom of wearing name tags at meetings. WGC's seemingly ill luck with protecting Platt Cemetery was tested in July 1993 when the stone wall was damaged and repairs needed to be made again. Later that year, the club donated \$1,000 to the Westport Historical Society for restoration of the octagonal barn and grounds.

Another hands-on project got underway in October when WGC undertook the landscaping of three Wassell Lane houses which Interfaith Housing had taken over from the military to use as temporary shelters for homeless women and their children. With a landscape plan devised by WGC President Laura Coen, members weeded the sites, tilled the soil, and purchased new plants and shrubs.

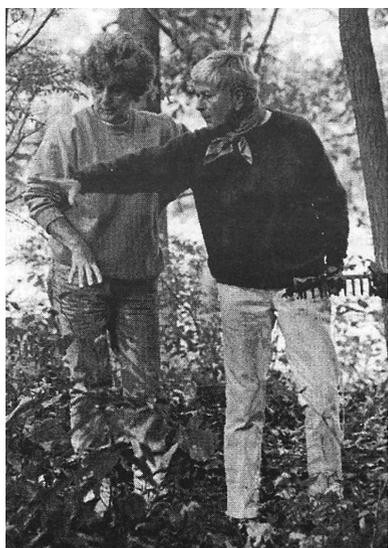
1993 was another banner year at the Federated Annual Awards Luncheon in October. The Cornelia Williamson Watson Bowl for Historic Preservation was awarded to WGC for its work at Adams Academy. The Lucille Schavior Bowl was given in recognition of the club's continuing contributions to Westport, and WGC also received the Publicity Press Book Award. Certificates of Achievement noted the club's horticulture programs and service to the Bridgeport Rehabilitation Center, while individual awards went to Winnie Balboni for her efforts toward the environment and to Sue Reeves for her work in civic development.

For the holiday party that year, it was decided to dedicate funds from the Holiday Money Tree, a miniature contemporary Christmas tree slotted to hold member's folded greenery, to benefit local citizens and organizations.

In 1994 WGC began the PETALS project at Compo Colonial Cemetery

with a grant of \$500 from the Shell Oil Company. Of 560 applicants, the Westport Garden Club was one of only eight recipients of the nationwide grant. Margery Silk surveyed fauna and flora at the site which prompted an application for a further grant from the Department of Environmental Protection for signage identifying plants and birds. Interestingly, the funds for those signs, in place today, came from the Long Island Sound License Plate program.

Pam Weil, chairman of the 1994 Plant Sale, coined the term “twenty perky plants,” which members are asked to contribute from their gardens. Workers now wore straw hats, white shirts, jeans, and gardening aprons at all annual sales to



Weed They Must

The Westport Garden Club has been clearing out overgrowth and helping create a park and walking trail along Gray's Creek, one of Westport's long-neglected historic sites. For their efforts, the club won the prestigious PETALS (Protect The Environment Through Action, Learning and Service) grant from Shell Oil. Tree

Warden Joe Saxton helped with tree removal. Also on the agenda is planting spring bulbs. Above, Hap Kenney (right) and club President Laura Coen plan their next move.

*(Westport Minuteman,
October 20, 1994)*

identify themselves to the public as salespeople. Plant Sale profits increased dramatically during the Nineties, from \$5,000 in 1990 to nearly \$10,000 by the end of the decade.

The July 1994 meeting took place on *The Eagle*, an 80-foot, three-mast schooner operated by Sound Waters as a floating classroom. In November, members were asked for the first time to contribute baskets of fruit to be used as centerpieces for the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Saugatuck Congregational Church, an activity that continues today. Before the end of the year, WGC also contributed \$500 for the enhancement of the Westport Arts Center, located then at the Greens Farms Elementary School, which had been closed when enrollment declined. Today, however, the school has been renovated and is back in the business of education.

It was early in 1995 that the Constitution was amended to accept new members for a year as “provisionals.” As “hands-on” activities increased at WGC dependencies, it became

important that prospective members familiarize themselves with the club's expectations and determine whether they are able to make that kind of commitment. Provisionals are expected to participate in club activities and work days but do not pay dues. Their number is limited to openings in a roster of 50 active members.



Monument at Compo Colonial Cemetery

“The Elements,” a flower show, was held in the octagonal barn at Wheeler House in conjunction with the Westport Historical Society's “Hidden Garden Tour” in June 1995, for which the club received four Certificates of Achievement from the Federated. The event took place prior to the 1996 restoration of the barn, which made it necessary for members to engage in an extensive clean-up project prior to the show, while a layout, designed by Hap and Peter Kenney, incorporated architectural features of the Westport landmark.

In August 1995, WHS was the subject of a *Westport Minuteman* editorial entitled “Westport Garden Club is more than flowers,” lauding its many civic beautification projects over the years. Included on the editorial page was a John LaPick cartoon.



*Cartoon by John LaPick
(Westport Minuteman, August 17, 1995)*

Later in 1995, WGC donated two Bradford pear trees to Wakeman Farm Park. Further vandalism took place at Kings Highway Cemetery when one of the cast iron urns at the entrance was stolen in autumn. It was fortunate that a similar one was found to replace it, albeit in aluminum. And at the holiday party that year, it was decided to allocate the proceeds of the Holiday Money Tree to purchase gift certificates for needy Westport's teenagers, often forgotten during the holiday season, a practice which continues today.

Early in 1996, the club joined the Federated's successful campaign to protest cutting funding for the Connecticut Agricultural Experimental Station. Members signed a petition and wrote letters to the state against its closing. Later that year, WGC donated \$200 to help defray the cost of Stonington Garden Club's publication of *Naturescape*, an informative booklet targeted to Connecticut elementary school teachers.

Hostas became a perennial specialty at 1997's Plant Sale. Members had been encouraged to pot up and grow several varieties of the plant, perfect for the many shaded gardens in the area. Unfortunately, it turned out the plants were also a perfect "salad" for the town's growing deer population. The deer problem was the focus of several WGC meetings in the Nineties and continues to be of concern in the 21st century. Other than installing a deer fence, gardeners struggle to find a solution to the problem.

WGC chose a tile depicting Adams Academy for its 1998 contribution to the Westport Public Library's "River of Names" mural, particularly appropriate in view of the many hours members spent working there. This mural may be viewed at the lower-floor hallway in the Library. The club also donated \$100 in 1998 for landscaping at the Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport, which provides basic literacy and life-skills training to low-income women.

The Edna Payne Memorial was planned at Grace K. Salmon Park early in 1999. Mrs. Payne, an active member for 43 years, was honored with the planting of an oxydendrum (sorrel tree) and a drift of spring bulbs which included the "Edna" daffodil.

On April 11, 1999, the Westport Garden Club celebrated its 75th Anniversary with the dedication of the Winter Garden at the Westport Library. The garden, inspired by Helen Van Pelt Wilson's *Color for your Winter Yard and Garden*, features plants which highlight winter scenery. It was planned by President Eugenie Hamm



President Christine Lorusso poses with the Westport Garden Club's Money Tree
(Westport News, December 29, 1996)

and a WGC committee, with the assistance of Richard Stein, a Westport landscaper, and the Town of Westport. First Selectman Diane Goss Farrell, Library Director Maxine Bleiweis, and a number of dignitaries attended the ceremony. A commemorative plaque was installed at the site.



*Library Winter Garden Dedication – April 11, 1999
President Eugenie Hamm, second from right; First Selectman Diane Goss Farrell, third from right; Stuart McCarthy, Westport Parks & Recreation Dept., fifth from right; and Library Director Maxine Bleiweis, fourth from left.*



*Library Winter Garden
(Photo by George Demakis)*

A reception, for members, spouses, and guests, took place at the home of Drayton and Eugenie Hamm after the dedication. In the following year, April 2000, WGC was awarded the Federated's Civic Development silver tray in recognition of its contribution to the town.



Long-time member, Mrs. W. Scott Hill (Betty), celebrated her 100th birthday on July 22nd, and was featured on NBC's *Today Show*. Club members provided floral arrangements for her birthday fete at Norfield Parish Hall in Weston two days later.

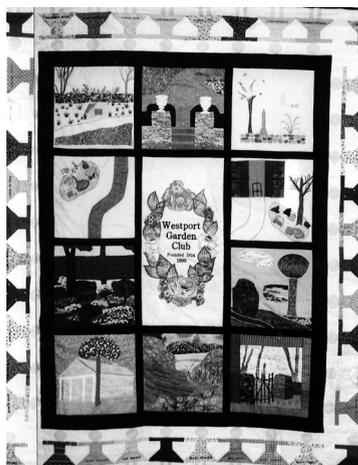
On September 11, 1999, WGC members and guests attended a Cocktail and Buffet Dinner at the Westport Woman's Club in further celebration of their seventy-five years as a garden club. Featured at the event was a wall-hanging, the "75th Anniversary Quilt," which illustrates the club's nine ongoing civic projects, as well as its strong cooperative effort and spirit. Organized and finished by Sue Reeves and Janice Kelly, the quilt consists of nine large squares designed and sewn by individual members, with a border of young girls, holding hands, on whose dresses are

embroidered the names of WGC Presidents during those seventy-five years.

At the Federated's Annual Meeting the following month, the club received an award of excellence, represented by a silver tray, in recognition of its 75th Anniversary.

Field trips, too numerous to list here, were part of WGC activities throughout the nineties. Highlights were visits to the Governor's Mansion in Hartford to view the wildflower garden installed by the Federated; to the Rockefeller Estate, Kykuit, in Pocantico Hills, New York; to the Bellamy-Ferriday House and Garden in Bethlehem; to Gertrude Jekyll's Glebe House Garden in Woodbury; to Beatrix Jones Farrand's Sunken Garden at Hill-Stead in Farmington, all in Connecticut; and to Wave Hill and the Glass House at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx.

As the Westport Garden Club looked forward to the Millennium, it could look backward to a decade of successful plant sales, to furthering civic development, and to the continuing maintenance of its numerous dependencies. As in previous decades, the club continued to recognize its mission to affect legislation and to contribute to the social welfare of Westport.



75th Anniversary Quilt



75 Years of Excellence

Mary Baumann, president of the Westport Garden Club, and Nancy Roberts, vice president, received the award from the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut. (Westport News, January 19, 2000)

THE NEW MILLENNIUM

9/11 and the War in Iraq: these are events that command global attention during the early years of the New Millennium. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the uncertainty of the times, the Westport Garden Club continues to follow a commitment to civic development and social responsibility. Gardeners contend with the problem of deer control, Lyme disease, and environmental issues. Terrorism is an every-day concern, but somehow getting out into a garden, working the soil, putting new plants into the ground and seeing them grow, can ameliorate some of the fears and anxieties that permeate life today.

As the deer population in Fairfield County and the State of Connecticut continued to increase in the 21st Century, the Westport Garden Club and the Westport/Weston Health District sponsored a Lyme Disease Meeting at Long Lots Middle School on March 28, 2000. Representatives of the Center for Disease Control and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station spoke of ways to deal with the problem of ticks carried by white-tail deer and other animals. Practical applications intended to alter the landscape—by pruning trees, eliminating underbrush, and developing areas less hospitable to ticks—were the focus of a program intended to better inform a public concerned about the implications of Lyme disease. As the deer problem became critical, deer control was a common topic at many WGC meetings.

In June 2000, a large group of WGC members went on an overnight-trip to the Polly Hill Arboretum in Martha's Vineyard. Later that year, the Westport Garden Club was named one of the ten oldest garden clubs in New England. In the fall, more than 1,000 bulbs were planted at Adams Academy, Nevada Hitchcock Triangle, Compo Colonial Cemetery, Grace K. Salmon Park, and the Library Winter Garden.

The 2001 Plant Sale, which for years had been held on a Thursday, was

changed to Friday. Members concentrated on providing plants for sale that were both deer-resistant and drought-resistant, as continues today.

A number of field trips took place in 2001. Several members attended the BB&B (Bed, Breakfast & Barnes) outing sponsored by the Junior League Sustainers of Philadelphia in March, which included attendance at the Philadelphia Flower Show, tours of the city, and a visit to the Barnes Foundation Art Galleries. Members also visited Old Westbury Gardens, and, in September, a WGC group visited The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden, the Asticou Gardens, and the Thuya Gardens on Mount Desert Island, Maine, a four-day tour led by WGC's Elinor Ehrman.

The Nature Center entrance garden underwent replanting in autumn 2001 after a new entry driveway was constructed. Members replanted the 50-foot bed with hundreds of narcissus bulbs. Incorporated in the project was a horticulture class for the four-year-old pre-school class at the Center.

The big event of 2001, however, was the "Full Bloom" Flower Show, dedicated to deceased President Peggy Johnson, held at the Nature Center (now Earthplace) on August 26th. Featured in the show were a number of unique classes, particularly one which interpreted florally the permanent diorama exhibits encased at the Center. A challenge class for herbs—chives, parsley, thyme—and one for dahlias grown from seed were also included. Although considerable concern was expressed about the amount of horticulture available late in the season for judging, members were astonished at the number of entries.

Then, just as the problems of dealing with deer control and Lyme disease were foremost in gardeners' awareness, two dead crows which tested positive for West Nile disease were found in Fairfield County. According to recent reports, the area has also



Garden Club Looks Toward Spring

The four-year-old class at the Westport Nature Center planted the center's entrance garden following a horticulture class presented by the Westport Garden Club. Armed with narcissus bulbs and bone meal, the students planted the fifty foot bed with the help of Garden Club members.

(Westport News, December 5, 2001)

become increasingly hospitable to birds carrying the disease.

September 11, 2001 is a date that will forever have significance for those alive today. At the October 2001 Annual Meeting, a moment of silence took place in memory of the more than 3,000 lives lost at the World Trade Center in New York, at the Pentagon in Washington, and in western Pennsylvania. The club also contributed \$200 toward a memorial bench at Connecticut's September 11 Monument established at Sherwood Island State Park in 2002.

At the Federated Awards Luncheon in October 2001, Judy Tannen and Maggie Feczko received the Federated's "Publication First Place Award" for WGC's *Gardener's Gazette*, which Ginger Ewing had named in a club competition. Fifteen hundred bulbs were planted that autumn in WGC dependencies, which included plantings at Poplar Plains Cemetery and specimen crocuses at Grace K. Salmon Park in memory of recently-deceased member Betty Hill. A European hornbeam tree was also planted at the park in memory of Ethel Dietrich, a past president. In the lead-up to the Wreath Making Workshop in December, greens were collected for the hanging baskets provided on Main Street by the Westport Beautification Committee, and twenty-six wreaths were made and distributed to locations in town.

Tours of members' gardens were revived in June 2002. The gardens of Dona Andersen, Betsy Dickinson, Lori Meinke, and Helen Muller were visited and admired. During the July meeting, several members demonstrated flower arranging techniques. At the Annual Meeting in October, President Nancy Roberts welcomed honored guests Sal and Marie Gilbertie, owners and operators of Gilbertie's Herb Gardens, who have been so very supportive of the club over the years. Mr. Gilbertie was given a "Certificate of Appreciation" in recognition of his contributions.

WGC also received a "Certificate of Achievement for Historic, Memorial or



Gilbertie Graced

Sal Gilbertie, left, owner of Gilbertie's Herb Gardens, was honored during the Westport Garden Club's fall luncheon.

Gilbertie was recognized with an award of recognition "for years of community support and horticultural education," according to Nancy Roberts, right, Westport Garden Club president.

(Westport News, October 30, 2002)

Public Gardens” at the Federated Awards Meeting that year, and Janet Wolgast was given the Horticulture Award. At the holiday meeting in December, Nancy Gault, Hap Kenney, Sue Reeves, and Judy Sterling were installed as Honorary Members of the club.

In 2003, the Plant Sale saw a new version of “Gardener’s Cookbook” for sale, published by Kip O’Brien and Mary Youngling. The cookbook includes members’ recipes and gardening tips. A new flagpole was purchased and installed at Adams Academy, and a flag-raising took place on June 11th in memory of Bobby Elmer, a WGC Past President, a WHS Past President, and a dedicated Girl Scout leader. Westport Girl Scout Troop 88 and Brownie Troop 269 participated in the event, at which First Selectman Diane Goss Farrell made the dedication and led the company in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A second members’ garden tour was also held in June at the gardens of Sally Balch, Mary Baumann, and Angela Trucks.

The Annual Meeting in October was held at the Saugatuck Yacht Club in Westport; for the first time, the luncheon was catered and members acted as servers.

It does not seem that the deer problem will be solved in the Millennium, much to members’ dismay. In October 2003, an article in the *Norwalk Hour* stated that there are 120 deer per square mile north of the Merritt Parkway. New legislation was passed that month which allows baiting of deer and hiring sharp shooters. However, it is unlikely that these actions will take place soon in Westport, as such programs are expensive and animal rights advocates will certainly protest hunting.

WGC did make strides when the Town of Westport agreed to raise the budget line item of its contribution for the care of the four Colonial and Pre-Revolutionary cemeteries which it maintains to \$5,000. Costs to the club for maintenance have



Garden Club member Judy Sterling raises the new flag in memory of Bobby Elmer. (Westport Minuteman, June 26, 2003)

risen enormously over the years.

The 80th Anniversary celebration of the Westport Garden Club took place at the April General Meeting on April 8th, three days before the official anniversary, at the home of Past President Nancy Roberts. In a tradition inaugurated in 1965 by former President Bessie Axley, a three-branch candelabrum holding a green candle “for our verdant past,” a yellow candle “for our golden present,” and a pink candle “for our rosy future” was lit by President Louise Demakis. An 80th Anniversary Cake was served, incorporating the design of the frontispiece of WGC’s membership roster book.

By tradition, that April meeting was also the Plant Sale planning meeting. It is through the profits generated by those sales that the Westport Garden Club has been able to be a mainstay of civic development and beautification in the Town of Westport.

NINETY YEARS

An Addendum

The decade following the 80th Anniversary of the Westport Garden Club witnessed significant change. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, an unsettled Middle East, terrorist activities at home and abroad continue to be of concern. A recession which began in 2008 went viral globally and affects economies today. Climate change and Obama Care are issues of serious debate while various scandals have brought government to a near standstill.

Change also affected the Westport Garden Club. Changes took place in The Constitution, By-Laws, monthly meetings, membership, and, not least of all, with the introduction of a new member who is male. Our constitution was altered in 2007 to limit membership only to Westport residents, then revised in 2013 to include Weston residents again. WGC By-Laws now permit Resident Associates and Non-Resident Associates to serve on the Board if they choose. A number of the latter moved to nearby communities and were able to remain active in the Club. Monthly meetings now follow the schedule of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and are no longer held in July or August.

For most of the Club's history, notifications of meetings were sent out as post-cards and later as flyers; now they are electronically transmitted on the Internet. The savings on postage is considerable while the e-mails continue to be designed as flyers for those who wish to print and post them on bulletin boards. With a bow to our "grandams," invitations to the Annual Luncheon and Christmas Party continue to be mailed. The Club now has its own website, originated by Jenny Robson and developed by Ann Pawlick. A new informational brochure was designed by Pam Weil to be distributed at Open and Joint Meetings as well as at the Plant Sale.

Members questioned whether a male would feel comfortable in an

organization which, except for its first year, 1924, was totally female. Russ Miller took on Civics and is dedicated to renovating the Nevada Hitchcock Garden. Male members are more usual in Federated Garden Clubs these days and no one can deny that Russ brings expertise and experience to the Club.

Another change affected the Club, as well as town residents, when the Representative Town Meeting banned the use of plastic bags in Westport. Long-time member Winnie Balboni warned that our landfills were already polluted with plastic which could take another millennium to disintegrate. She appeared at one meeting with a stack of green cloth bags provided by the Green Energy Task Force and encouraged members to use them instead of plastic bags for shopping. Not long after, Westport's shops and grocery stores began to sell cloth bags with their own logos. The ban in Westport became effective in 2009 and is deemed a great success.



Winnie Balboni with cloth shopping bag

The Club currently takes care of eleven properties in Westport, including the Compo Beach Entrance and the Charles Lucas Garden at the Ned Dimes Marina, projects new this decade. With such a considerable number to tend, finances are always a critical issue. A record sum was spent in 2013 for mowing and maintenance



Compo Beach Entrance

of our properties. While a stipend from the town covers only half that amount; the rest comes from Plant Sale profits. The Board feels that ideally the Club should focus on beautification instead of maintenance, but there is concern that the Town will not maintain these properties if the Club does not.

The entrance garden at Compo Beach was originally a project of the Fairfield County Horticultural Society. WGC member Linda Bruce, a former president of that group, had designed and replanted the entrance garden with perennials of four-season interest and encouraged the Club to take on its maintenance and renewal

when the Horticultural Society disbanded. Renamed the Beach Buds Garden in 2008, it became an attractive venue for performing members' "hands on" obligations when Chair Nancy Stewart introduced "Weed and Wine" at the beach. Usually begun at 6 PM on summer evenings, the weeding often finishes with a beautiful sunset and definitely with a glass of wine. Nancy said that when a full moon rose after sunset that first September evening, she knew the effort would be a resounding success. In 2010, the Beach Buds project received a Westport Beautification Award.

The Charles Lucas Garden, nearby at the Minuteman Yacht Club, memorializes an avid gardener and one of the Club's best Plant Sale customers. Charles, who was usually seen lining up with early buyers and wielding a wheelbarrow across the Saugatuck Church lawn, died in a boating accident during the fireworks display at Compo Beach on July 4, 2011. As a memorial, his family asked that contributions in his memory be made to the Westport Garden Club. Later, Kathy Lucas suggested that a garden in her husband's name would be appropriate to establish at the Marina.



*Charles Lucas
(Photo by William Balch)*



Charles Lucas Garden 2014

A plan drawn up by Member Angela Trucks was presented to Westport's Board of Selectman and approved. The foundation plantings around the Minuteman Yacht Club had not been refreshed for a number of years, so Westport's Parks & Recreation joined the effort, removed undesirable plants and improved the soil. One weekend in October 2011, Charles Lucas' son and a group of his friends helped to install plants from Charles' own garden and others purchased locally. The Lucas Garden was dedicated on September 15, 2012. A bronze plaque was installed not long afterwards.

It might seem like the Club's efforts have gone to no avail when Hurricane Sandy almost wiped out the Beach Buds and Lucas Garden, but the Club has weathered such storms before. The Lucas Garden was replanted, but the Beach

Buds Garden will be delayed while the Town of Westport redesigns Compo Beach's facilities.

The Nevada Hitchcock Garden, on the corner of Cross Highway and the Weston Road, was renovated in 2013 and expanded in 2014. Russ Miller and Dency Mann have encouraged members to donate plants from their own gardens which, until now, had been purchased from nurseries. Much of the garden is in the shade, but volunteers are carving out areas where plants needing more sunshine can be situated, thereby adding more color to the site. The Club is grateful to Pat and Sarah Kennedy, residents of the home behind the garden, for providing a water source essential to survival.

Plant Sales are just as vital now to the success of the Club as they always have been. In addition to maintenance of our dependencies, profits are devoted to a list of charities which seem to grow yearly and also help to pay for the ever more costly venues and speakers integral to our open meetings. The plant material which members divide from their gardens is the major source of revenue at the Plant Sale, and the event itself fosters fellowship with other gardeners and helps to educate the public about gardening.



Kim Sherwood and Lori Meinke



*Mother's Day Booth 2011
Jo Jo Reeves, Angela Trucks, Dottie Fincher*

No Plant Sales have ever been a failure but some have been rather daunting. During the sales of 2005, 2006, and 2008, heavy rain fell on workers and buyers alike, but neither seemed intimidated by the torrents, as a sea of yellow slickers moved steadily among the rows. In 2004, an enchanting straw hat decorated with tiny figures of children which Judy Sterling bought during a visit to Peru and later sewed onto a ribbon hatband sold for \$210 straight from her head. "Think Pink" accessories were worn by our members during the 2005-2007 sales, but for the last few years, sunshine yellow has been the designated color, perhaps intended to keep away the thunderclouds of yesteryear.

In 2009, a Mother's Day Booth became a venue for beautifully planted containers showcasing colorful blooms. Now some members prefer to design a floral arrangement in lieu of bringing baked goods to the sale. The Fancy Bake Shop is still a big draw. The "rules" change from year to year, "store-bought goods" have been eliminated entirely now, but the bake shop table continues to be loaded with delectable cakes, pies, muffins, scones, cupcakes, and breads in beautiful packaging.

The Plant Sale of 2012 was quite uncertain after a devastating fire at the Saugatuck Church, but the church elders



Fancy Bake Shop

Alice Siegel, Sue Crollius, Janet Wolgast, Dona Andersen, Ginger Ewing

did not let the Club down, so with a couple of Porta Potties installed nearby and hoses attached to water sources, the sale went on and did again in 2013. For the first time in forty-five years, the 2014 sale was held at Jesup Green as the church was undergoing extensive restoration. Just to add to the change of venue and so our members did not become complacent, steady rain fell on both the prep day and the day of the sale. Despite the rain, Connecticut's Channel 12 covered the sale and featured an interview with President Joni Andrews. Topsy Siderowf worked diligently as Publicity Chair. Westport's Dan Woog contributed a 90th Anniversary column on his 06880 blog and Phyllis A.S. Boros followed with a similar article in *The Connecticut Post*.

But it isn't all work at Plant Sales. We no longer stop for May Wine and catered lunches as we once did, but Jacquelin and John Cutrone hosted after-parties at their lovely home on Cross Highway from 2009 through 2011. Members were able to breathe a sigh of relief and congratulate themselves on a job well done.

Nor has it been all work this last decade. The gardens of Laura Coen, Pam Weil, and Janet Wolgast were toured in June 2004. A pink Kousa dogwood tree was planted in September that year as a memorial for long-time member Helen Muller

at Grace K. Salmon Park. And our 80-Year Anniversary was formally celebrated at the Annual Luncheon in October at the Saugatuck Yacht Club. The Club's 75th Anniversary Quilt was displayed and copies of our recently-published 80-Year History were presented to members.



*Louise Demakis accepting the
Tommy Donnan
Certificate of Merit in 2005*

At Earthplace's Trail Day 2005 Celebration in June, the Club was honored with an award in recognition of our contributions to the Nature Center gardens. At the Connecticut Federated Annual Meeting in 2005, former President Louise Demakis accepted the National Garden Club's Tommy Donnan Certificate of Merit in recognition of our recently published history. This national award memorializes Thomasina Donnan, editor of *The National Gardener* from 1969 through 1990, who died in 1994. That November, the Club sched-

uled an evening meeting to which husbands and friends were invited to hear Guest Speaker Stuart Woolf, brother of past President Nancy Woolf Roberts, describe his family's Woolf Farming Company of California, where tomatoes, almonds, and pistachios are grown on a major scale.

The major event of 2005 was the flower show "Our Hometown," co-chaired by Jodi Mack and Betsy Green, held at the Westport Historical Society on September 10th. Floral entries were judged in the Sheffer Gallery, while numerous exhibits were spread throughout the Avery Place building. A large tent outside housed the horticultural section and a Challenge Class tested the prowess of sunflower and geranium growers.

In 2006, the Club received three major awards at the Federated Annual Meeting. "Our Hometown" Flower Show was awarded the National Garden Clubs



*2006 Connecticut Federated Awards
Winnie Balboni, Maggie Feczko, Louise Demakis,
Jodi Mack, Jane Potkin*

Standard Flower Show Achievement Award, represented by a Burgundy and Pink Rosette presented to President Jodi Mack. In addition, a Silver Bowl Award of Excellence for Preserving Historical & Memorial Gardens and a Certificate for Environmental Awareness for our Sound Waters Program were also presented.

It wasn't only the Club which received awards during this decade. Judy Sterling won an Individual Civics Achievement Award at the Federated Annual



*Maggie Feczko and
Gordon Joselof 2012
(Photo by Dave Matlow,
WestportNow)*

Meeting in October 2004 recognizing all the years she served as WGC Civics Chairman. Winnie Balboni was honored at Yale University in 2009 by The Connecticut Fund for the Environment. In 2010, Pam Weil, founder of The Connecticut Gardener newsletter, was awarded the Federated's Mary Freng Sherley Memorial Silver Bowl for Horticultural Excellence. In 2012, Maggie Feczko was honored with a special award at the Historic District Commission's Annual Preservation Awards Ceremony for her many years of service to the town. In addition to serving as WGC's President 2007-09, she also had

been President of the Westport Historical Society. Shortly before her death in 2013, Maggie was instrumental in obtaining a designation of Historic Landmark for the Westport Historical Society's Bradley-Wheeler House. Earlier she had helped to place the building on the National Register of Historic Places.

As our April meeting is traditionally devoted to Plant Sales, it has been difficult to schedule a proper anniversary celebration near April 11th, the actual day of our first meeting in 1924. Our 85th Anniversary was celebrated in June 2009 with a theme of "Table Design through the Decades." Members chose to represent each of our decades with a display of china, crystal, napery, and flowers particular to those years. In honor of our founders' tradition, members wore hats and gloves to this meeting, a wonder in the 21st Century.



*85th Anniversary Party
at President Jenny Clerkin's
garden June, 2009.
Bev Hennemuth,
Jodi Mack, Jenny Clerkin*

In the early years of the Club, joint meetings were sometimes held with The Westport Woman's Club Garden Department and Greens Farms Garden Club. In 2005, these events were revived, beginning with a talk by Frank Laning of Chappaqua, New York, designer of flowers at three presidential inaugurations and a fellow of the Institute of Floral Designers. Laning wowed the audience with arrangements of shawls, scarves, and his grandmother's quilt as backdrops for his floral displays.

Westport's Mar Jennings, Emmy-nominated TV Host and best-selling author, demonstrated "Casual Luxury for the Holidays" at 2007's joint meeting, while Linda Dean, an Irish Floral Designer, followed with her presentation, "A Chanel Christmas," in 2009. Peter Stephens of Elegant Effects brought "Creative and Unique Flower Arrangements for the Holiday Season" in 2011, and in 2013, Deborah Herbertson, design specialist at Westport's Terrain, presented a holiday program of unique centerpieces and terrariums entitled "Creative Touches in the Home." Raffles of designers' arrangements bought a microwave oven for the Gillespie Center at one meeting and considerable funds were raised for WWC's Food Bank at other meetings. The Club teamed with the Westport Library for a jointly-sponsored meeting in the McManus Room in September 2012. Steve Silk, photographer and co-author with Sydney Ellison of *Gardens to Go*, spoke about the elements of garden photography to a crowd of more than 100 attendees.

Raffles raise money, but the major source of donations comes from the proceeds of plant sales. In 2004, WGC established the Senior Center Flagpole Garden, in 2005 it donated \$1,000 to the Hydrangea Garden at Westport Country Playhouse, and in 2008 it became the biggest benefactor of "Regreening of the Post Road," when 165 trees of the original 400 planted thirty-five years ago needed to be replaced.

In addition, WGC has contributed to a Naugatuck Community College scholarship yearly for a horticultural student, to River Watch-Harbor Watch Project and to Experimental Station Associates. The Club also joined with the Federated Garden Clubs of CT to establish a children's rooftop garden at the Connecticut Science Center and helped fund our state organization's Habitat for Humanity project. The Sherwood Mill Pond Preserve was recipient of a \$500 donation and \$1,000

went to the Nature Center at Sherwood Island to landscape the newly opened facility.

Occasionally, the Club is the recipient of a donation. In 2006, we received a \$400 grant from Paul Newman's "Hole in the Wall Gang" as part of Westport's "Make A Difference Day." The money was used to replace shrubs at Kings Highway Cemetery which had suffered the vagaries of old age.

Yearly plantings of bulbs take place in autumn at the Library Winter Garden, Grace K. Salmon Park, Adams Academy, and Earthplace. Cleanup sessions are scheduled every Spring and Fall at all our dependencies. Not everyone in Westport knows who those women are working in the town's cemeteries and gardens. In 2004, a sandwich-board sign indicating "Westport Garden Club at Work" was ordered and continues to grace our various work sessions. Westport Garden Club baseball caps and work clothes aren't the only way in which townspeople can identify us.

In addition to our Spring and Fall activities, wreathmaking workshops are held every year in November. The tradition, 60 years old, started in 1953 when the Club first supplied floral arrangements and wreaths to



2013 Wreathmaking Workshop at Ned Dimes Marina

the Westport Library during the holiday season. Over the years wreaths have been made and designed for ABC House, Adams Academy, Earthplace, Gillespie Center, the Housing Authority, McLaurey House, Project Return, Saugatuck Railroad Station, Westport Historical Society, Westport Fire Department, Westport Police Department, Parks & Recreation, Senior Center, Westport-Weston Health District, and the Women's Crisis Center.

The Club is often recognized in print, not only for our wreathmaking workshops and plant sales, but we pop up regularly in newspaper articles and

WestportNow. “Westport Garden Club’s deep roots” were identified in Dan Woog’s column in the *Westport News* on May 4, 2012. Rita Ross’ “The Ladies of the Westport Garden Club: At Ease in White Gloves” appeared in *Fairfield County Life* in Summer 2013.

Innovation continues. The holiday tea was transformed into a cocktail party for the first time in 2013. To introduce club members to flower arranging and horticulture displays in a gentle and instructive manner, bench shows are sometimes held at general meetings. Formal flower shows have become so demanding and expensive that mounting them regularly is impossible. Finding venues for general meetings also became more difficult as fewer facilities are available; in 2014, meetings were held regularly at St. Luke Church. Only the April Plant Sale meeting and the Holiday Party are held in private homes now. Member’s homes are no longer large enough to hold the full complement of active, resident associate, and non-resident associate members who attend meetings.

Despite change, today’s members carry on the traditions of their founders. A corps of new provisionals bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and manpower to the Club. With so many women working outside the home, we are fortunate to have volunteers who are able to devote time to our many properties. Our members have become even more avid about preserving the beauty of Westport. Open meetings offer interesting speakers who help to educate the public about new gardening techniques. Emphasis is placed on ecological concerns and natural gardening. These practices are applied at all the Club’s dependencies.

The Westport Garden Club is now 90 years old, one of the ten oldest in New England. Hundreds of women became members during our 90-Year history, women dedicated to gardening, eager to learn new techniques, and willing to devote time and effort to inform themselves about environmental issues. They supported



*Santa and Elves at 2012 Holiday Party
Beverly Stanley, Santa Margaret Yingling, Ellen
Greenberg, Linda Bruce, Alice Siegel*

legislation to improve not only Westport, but Connecticut and the nation as well. A number were prominent in our state government, two were directly responsible for the preservation of hundreds of acres of open-space land in Fairfield County, others published books about gardens and horticulture, while some simply enjoyed the sorority that love of gardening provides. There is as much *joie de vivre* among our members today as when the Club was founded in 1924. We evolved from wearing “white gloves” to “pushing wheelbarrows,” no change in philosophy but recognition of the reality of gardening today. The Westport Garden Club annals celebrate all these members and their accomplishments.



*2013 - 2015 WGC Board
JoJo Reeves, Jenny Robson, Joni Andrews, Jenny Clerkin,
Katje Donovan (Photo by George Demakis)*



 PRESIDENTS 

Mrs. Herman Langztell (Kate).....	1924-25	Mrs. Donal C. Reeves (Sue)	1977-79
Mrs. Joseph Chapin (Henrietta)	1926-29	Mrs. Richard M. Whidden (Bambi)	1979-81
Mrs. Charles Stamm (Anna).....	1930-31	Mrs. Theodore J. Fontelieu (Charlaine) ..	1981-83
Mrs. Walter Peck (Winfred)	1932-34	Mrs. George L. Sterling (Judy)	1983-85
Mrs. Frederick O'Neil (Lulu)	1935-36	Mrs. Orvis C. Yingling (Margaret)	1985-87
Mrs. Walter Peck (Winfred)	1936-37	Mrs. Roy M. Dickinson (Joan).....	1987-89
Mrs. John Baker (Adelaide)	1937-38	Mrs. Clayton M. Elmer (Bobby)	1989-91
Mrs. Leland Holly (Constance)	1938-40	Mrs. William L. Gault (Nancy)	1991-93
Miss Kathleen Comegys	1941-42	Mrs. Terrence Coen (Laura)	1993-95
Mrs. James Clarke (Anne)	1942-43	Mrs. Richard Lorusso (Christine)	1995-97
Mrs. Nesbit Woods (Frances)	1944-45	Mrs. J. Drayton Hamm (Eugenie).....	1997-99
Mrs. Norman Litchfield (Cora)	1946-47	Mrs. John Baumann (Mary)	1999-01
Mrs. Henry Booth (Ava)	1947-48	Mrs. Roy Roberts (Nancy).....	2001-03
Mrs. Paul C. McAbee (Frances)	1948-50	Mrs. George Demakis (Louise).....	2003-05
Mrs. Joseph Lovejoy, Jr. (Lois).....	1950-52	Jodi/JoEllen Mack.....	2005-07
Mrs. William W. Axley (Bessie)	1952-53	Maggie Feczko.....	2007-09
Mrs. Murray Morse (Marion).....	1953-55	Lori Meinke	2009-11
Mrs. Paul C. McAbee (Frances)	1955-56	Jenny Clerkin	2011-13
Mrs. Raymond Sherwood (Barbara)	1956-58	Joni Andrews.....	2013-14
Mrs. William Axley (Bessie)	1958-60		
Mrs. Joseph Lovejoy, Jr. (Lois).....	1960-62		
Mrs. C. Porter Dietrich (Ethel)	1962-64		
Mrs. Sidney Parry (Billie)	1964-65		
Ms. Richard Sutphen (Betty).....	1965-67		
Mrs. J. Henry Smith (Dell)	1967-69		
Mrs. John B. Johnson (Peggy)	1969-71		
Mrs. Murray Sargent (Lucy)	1971-73		
Mrs. Donald M. Shafer (Ann).....	1973-75		
Mrs. Theodor Muller (Helen).....	1975-77		



 MEMBERSHIP LIST 1924-2014 

Earliest members are listed in alphabetical order because no information is available for when they joined. Also, many given names are unknown, as in those years members were listed by their marriage names. An asterisk indicates that the member served as president.

Mrs. Carl Anderson	Mrs. George Davis (Alma)
Mrs. Lauren Arnold (Anne)	Mrs. C. Porter Dietrick (Ethel C.)*
Mrs. J. J. Asche	Mrs. Howard Dietrick
Mrs. Harry Ayres	Mrs. James Donovan
Mrs. Franklin Bailey	Mrs. John Door
Mrs. John Baker (Adelaide)*	Mrs. Robert Duffus
Mrs. Morgan Barber	Mrs. Walter Eager
Mrs. Edward C. Birge	Mrs. S. Arlent Edwards
Miss Helen Booth	Mrs. Sanford Evans (Helen)
Mrs. Henry Booth (Ava)*	Mrs. Marvin Everly
Mrs. Everette Boughton (Susan)	Mrs. Dwight Farnham
Mrs. Irving Bradley	Mrs. James Farrell (Mary)
Mrs. Kenneth Bradley	Mrs. Porter Farrell
Mrs. John Brewster	Mrs. Clark Fay
Mrs. Henry Brown	Mrs. J.W. Foard (Florence)
Mrs. Ralph Buell	Mrs. Sylvester Foster
Mrs. Schuyler Carlton	Mrs. Ward French
Mrs. Robert Chamberlain	Mrs. Howard Gault (Georgiana)
Mrs. Joseph Chapin (Henrietta)*	Mrs. Gibson
Mrs. John Chapman	Mrs. Edward Grout
Mrs. John Chiappeta	Miss Katherine Grout
Mrs. C. G. Childs	Mrs. Lyman P. Hammond I
Mrs. John Clark	Mrs. Lyman P. Hammond II
Mrs. James L. Clark (Anne)*	Mrs. Hendrik Hansen
Mrs. Frank Cobb	Mrs. Donald Hart
Mrs. Thomas Coggeshall	Mrs. Carlyl Haskins
Mrs. R. V. Coleman	Mrs. Alfred Hawes
Mrs. Francis Coley	Mrs. Nevada Hitchcock
Miss Kathleen Comegys*	Mrs. Leland Holly (Constance)*
Mrs. Francis Converse (Ida)	Mrs. A. M. Houston
Mrs. Arthur Corbin	Mrs. Margaret Howell
Mrs. John Crawford	Dr. Francis Humphrey
Mrs. Charles Cutler (Amelia)	Mrs. James Ingram
Mrs. Charles Davis	Mrs. Henry Jennings (Grace)

Mrs. Oliver Jennings (Anne)
 Mrs. W. K. Keith (Miriam)
 Mrs. Edward Klotz
 Mrs. Herman Langzetel (Kate)*
 Mrs. Edgar Leaycraft (Helen)
 Mrs. Edgar Leonard
 Mrs. Harrison Lillibridge
 Mrs. Ossip Linde
 Mrs. Norman Litchfield (Cora)*
 Mrs. Joseph Lovejoy, Jr. (Lois)*
 Mrs. Paul McAbee (Frances)*
 Mrs. William McCune
 Mrs. Fred Michel
 Mrs. Elizabeth Miller
 Mrs. Frederick Minard
 Mrs. Roger Minton
 Mrs. John Morris
 Mrs. Robert Neal
 Miss Nevitt Oats
 Mrs. Frederick O'Neil (Lulu)*
 Mrs. Edward O'Dwyer (Marion)
 Mrs. J. E. Owsley
 Miss Mildred Page
 Mrs. Pagenstacker
 Mrs. B. J. Paladini
 Mrs. Roger Palmer (Elizabeth)
 Mrs. J. Parmley Paret
 Mrs. Walter Peck (Winfred)*
 Mrs. Lionel Phillips
 Mrs. William Poole
 Mrs. Wilbur Preston
 Mrs. William M. Prince
 Mrs. Stuart Ralph (Elizabeth)
 Mrs. Edward Robotham (Marjorie)
 Mrs. Howard Sadler (Jan)
 Mrs. William Schilthuis (Sally)
 Mrs. Arnold Schlact
 Mrs. Edward Schwab (Edith)
 Mrs. John Selby (Esther)
 Mrs. D. H. Shambaugh
 Mrs. Walter A. Shaw
 Mrs. Robert Shawl
 Mrs. Harry Sherwood
 Mrs. Raymond Sherwood (Barbara)*

Mrs. Ralph Sollit
 Mrs. Charles Speaks (Charme)
 Mrs. Charles Stamm (Anna)*
 Mrs. William Staples (Mary)
 Mrs. Cornelius Steers (Frances)
 Mrs. Harrison Steeves
 Miss Mary Stephenson
 Mrs. Edmund Stevens
 Mrs. E. J. Taylor
 Mrs. John A. Thayer
 Miss Hattie Thomas
 Mrs. Weston Thomas
 Mrs. Ward Thorn
 Mrs. May Tompkins
 Mrs. James F. Towers (Edna)
 Mrs. Jesse Underwood
 Mrs. Von Valzah
 Mrs. Philip Vivian
 Mrs. Harold von Schmidt
 Mrs. Alden Vose (Madeline)
 Mrs. Alden Vose, Jr. (Gerry)
 Mrs. Dudley Wadsworth (Lillian)
 Mrs. Isaac Wakeman
 Miss Lillian Wald
 Mrs. Webb Waldron
 Mrs. Carl Warner
 Mrs. Donald Wheeler (Florence)
 Mrs. Arthur Whiteside (Mona)
 Miss Katherine Wilcox
 Mrs. Donald Williams (Alice G.)
 Mrs. Roger Williams
 Mrs. Henry Wiser
 Mrs. Roy Witmer (Dottie)
 Mrs. Nesbit Woods (Frances)*
 Mrs. Henry Wright (Lucille)
 Mrs. Sidney Wright, Jr (Lucille G.)

The following Members are in chronological order by the year they joined Garden Club:

Mrs. W. W. Axley (Bessie)* 1948
 Mrs. Murray Morse (Marion)* 1948
 Mrs. Stuart Otto (Peggy) 1948
 Mrs. J. Alan Riley (Mary) 1948

Mrs. R. B. Milligan (Marian)	1948	Mrs. Peter Kenney (Hap)	1962
Mrs. Karl Dolge (Anna)	1948	Mrs. G. Robert Wepler (Connie).....	1963
Mrs. J. W. Lichtenauer.....	1948	Mrs. Gerald Vosburg (Joan).....	1963
Mrs. Elbert Fretwell (Jean H.)	1950	Mrs. Arthur Bannister (Orpha)	1963
Mrs. Irving Plitt (Myra).....	1948	Mrs. Leonard O. Mayo	1963
Mrs. Robert Lawson.....	1948	Mrs. W. Frazier Scott (Marion)	1965
Mrs. George Dunham (Ruth).....	1950	Mrs. Ben V. Luden (Cynthia)	1965
Mrs. Charles Lubrecht (Gertrude).....	1950	Mrs. P. M. Francoeur (Sarah).....	1965
Mrs. Grafton Pyne, Jr. (Mary)	1950	Mrs. Donald M. Shafer (Ann)*	1965
Mrs. Kendall Jones	1951	Mrs. James Craw (Patricia)	1966
Mrs. C. Thomas (Bunny)	1951	Mrs. W. Scott Hill (Betty)	1966
Mrs. Henry Hitzrot (Hester)	1952	Mrs. Curtis Melton (Marcia).....	1966
Mrs. John Schoolcraft (Dorothy).....	1952	Mrs. John B. Johnson (Peggy)*	1967
Mrs. C. Webster Mascall (Sara)	1952	Mrs. Cecil Olmstead (Frances)	1967
Mrs. J. Henry Smith, Jr. (Dell)*	1952	Mrs. John Cuneo (Myrtle).....	1967
Mrs. W.D. Keith Oxenaar (Lisa)	1953	Mrs. Theodor Muller (Helen)*	1968
Mrs. Seeley Van Pelt Wilson (Helen)	1953	Mrs. Hayden Brockway (Marianna)	1968
Mrs. Richard Sutphen (Betty)*	1953	Mrs. David Swett (Emily)	1968
Mrs. William Bomar (Byrd)	1954	Mrs. Donald Watson (Barbara)	1969
Mrs. Stephen Jaquith (Libby).....	1954	Mrs. Robert Ensher (Anjin).....	1970
Mrs. Robert W. Hershey (Jean)	1954	Mrs. Philip Francoeur, Jr. (Sarah)	1970
Mrs. Bruce Payne (Edna).....	1955	Mrs. Richard Widden (Bambi)*	1970
Mrs. John Kelton (Carol)	1956	Mrs. Richard Shirey (Esther)	1970
Mrs. Stephen Hartshorn.....	1957	Mrs. Kenneth Karsten (Judy)	1971
Mrs. Jerome Fenton (Elizabeth)	1957	Mrs. Roland Carreker (Miriam)	1971
Mrs. Murray Sargent (Lucy)*	1957	Mrs. Allen Crolius (Sue).....	1971
Mrs. Thomas Nye.....	1957	Mrs. Richard Fincher (Dotty).....	1971
Miss Mary Jane Pollock.....	1957	Mrs. George Reynolds (Pat)	1972
Mrs. Henry Green.....	1957	Mrs. Orvis C. Yingling (Margaret)*	1972
Mrs. Kirk Greiner (Elizabeth).....	1958	Mrs. George Sterling (Judy)*	1972
Mrs. Charles B. Vose (Margaret).....	1958	Mrs. George Grune (Betty Lou)	1973
Mrs. John Meagher (Adele)	1958	Mrs. Arthur Hunter, Jr. (Marge)	1973
Mrs. Richard Ordeman (Martha)	1959	Mrs. James Hurley.....	1973
Mrs. Stanley Barton (Estelle).....	1959	Mrs. Alfred Norling (Kristin)	1973
(Later married W. Irving Plitt)		Mrs. Harry Reasoner (Kay)	1973
Mrs. Sidney Parry (Billy)*	1960	Mrs. Clifford Recor (Jinny)	1974
Mrs. J. F. Simpson (Emmie)	1960	Mrs. Anthony Balboni (Winnie)	1974
Miss Katherine Ordway.....	1961	Mrs. Theodore Fontelieu (Charlaine)*	1974
Mrs. John Wilson (Molly)	1961	Mrs. Charles Jones	1974
Mrs. Robert Aspinwall (Marguerite).....	1961	Mrs. Gay Land (Liz).....	1975
Mrs. Donal Reeves (Sue)*	1962	Mrs. Robert Current, Jr. (Sona).....	1975
Mrs. John Sherwood (Ginny).....	1962	Mrs. Edwin Michaels (Nancy).....	1975
Mrs. Arthur Peterson (Marie-Louise).....	1962	Mrs. Douglas Stewart (Jake).....	1975
Mrs. John Forbes (Margaret)	1962	Mrs. Edward Robotham (Marjorie).....	1975

Mrs. William Gault (Nancy)*	1976	Pam Weil (Mrs. James)	1990
Mrs. Charles Mayne (Marnie)	1976	Mary Baumann (Mrs. John)*	1991
Mrs. David Silver (Judy)	1977	Beth Brink (Mrs. John)	1991
Mrs. Roy Dickinson (Joan)*	1977	Janet Wolgast (Mrs. Arnold).....	1991
Mrs. George Silk (Margery).....	1977	Louise Demakis (Mrs. George)*	1992
Mrs. Clarence Drew (Mary)	1977	Loralyn Eadie (Mrs. Richard).....	1992
Miss Eloise Reilly	1977	Nancy Mason (Mrs. Norman).....	1992
Mrs. Clifford Oman (Phyllis)	1978	Deirdre Kantor (Mrs. Thomas).....	1992
Mrs. Paul Van Orden (Barbara)	1978	Mrs. James Steele.....	1992
Mrs. Thomas Wilson (Molly)	1978	Jodi Hardin (Mrs. Russell)	1993
Mrs. Peter Sperry (Jean)	1978	Birgitta Ingvarson (Mrs. Bror).....	1993
Mrs. Frank Winch (Susan)	1978	Pat Lammers	1993
Mrs. Malcolm Allen (Chris)	1978	Ginger Ewing (Mrs. Meredyth)	1994
Mrs. William Luedke (Phyllis)	1979	Elinor Ehrman	1994
Mrs. William Tailyour (Amanda)	1980	Jan Folsom (Mrs. John)	1994
Mrs. Edgar Fales (Nancy)	1980	Jodi/JoEllen Mack (Mrs. Robert).....	1994
Mrs. Frederick Roberts (Jane).....	1981	Harriet Gartner (Mrs. Elliott).....	1996
Mrs. Joseph Grotto (Vivian).....	1981	Tammy Kouns (Mrs. Steven).....	1997
Mrs. Clayton Elmer (Bobby)*	1981	Sue Atkinson (Mrs. Thomas).....	1998
Mrs. Lewis Browning (Helen)	1982	Corinne Youngling (Mrs. Ted)	1998
Mrs. Cecil Gamwell (Charlie)	1982	Susan Low (Mrs. Andrew).....	1998
Mrs. John Sias (Lucretia).....	1982	Maggie Feczko (Mrs. Joseph).....	1998
Mrs. Robert Smith (Joan).....	1983	Nancy Roberts (Mrs. Roy)*	1998
Mrs. Jack Kelly (Janice).....	1983	Betsy Dickinson (Mrs. Roy)	1999
Mrs. Robert Gill (Olivia).....	1985	Carol Buffinton	1999
Mrs. William McDonald (Carol).....	1985	Sheryl Reifler (Mrs. Stewart)	1999
Lydia Menendez.....	1985	Dona Andersen	2000
Mrs. Michael Fleming (Linda).....	1986	Pat Sullivan	2000
Mrs. Peter Nilson (Maria)	1986	Angela Trucks (Mrs. William)	2000
Mrs. James Amschler (Judy)	1986	Judy Tannen (Mrs. Chuck).....	2000
Carol Yonan	1987	Lori Meinke (Mrs. Alan)	2000
Mrs. Coleman Charnok (DeeDee)	1987	Wendy Pieper (Mrs. Paul)	2001
Mrs. Cutler-Wotton (Barlow).....	1987	Ann Hill (Mrs. Mark)	2001
Mrs. D. G. Sadler.....	1988	Kip O'Brien (Mrs. James).....	2001
Mrs. Terrence Coen (Laura)*	1988	Mary Youngling (Mrs. Ted, Jr.).....	2001
Mrs. William Balch (Sally)	1988	Dency Mann (Mrs. Richard).....	2002
Mrs. Drayton Hamm (Eugenie)*	1988	Debby MacArthur (Mrs. Burton).....	2002
Mrs. John Plantinga (Colleen)	1989	Debby Tiede (Mrs. Vance).....	2003
Mrs. Brian Slater (Janet).....	1989	Jane Potkin (Mrs. Marc).....	2003
Mrs. Richard Lorusso (Christine)*	1989	Betsy Greene (Mrs. Walter)	2003
		Linda Bruce (Mrs. Iain).....	2003
		Alice Siegel (Mrs. Daniel).....	2003
		Deena Bellman (Mrs. Jeff).....	2003
		Nancy Stewart (Mrs. Cameron).....	2003

In 1990, in keeping with the times, members' given names are first.

Sarah Shaw (Mrs. John)**	2004
Jenny Clerkin (Mrs. James)**	2004
Katje Donovan (Mrs. Robert)**	2004
Andy Pettee (Mike)	2006
Joni Andrews (Nigel)	2008
Jackuelin Cutrone (John).....	2008
Bev Hennemuth.....	2008
Chris Spring (Raymond)	2008
Debby Angotti (Anthony)	2009
Jane Eyes (Peter).....	2009
Nathalie Fonteyne (Paul).....	2009
Elena Byrne (Michael).....	2010
Susan Land.....	2010
Russ Miller (Sue Brenner)	2010
Joanne Reeves (Rob).....	2010
Jenny Robson (Tim).....	2010
Andrea Cross (David).....	2011
Sue McCabe (John).....	2012
Ann Pawlick (Lock).....	2012
Beverley Stanley (Charles)	2012
Ellen Greenberg (Paul)	2013
Janice Yost (Stephan)	2013
Laurie Holst	2014
Topsy Siderowf (Richard)	2014
Rosanna Mihalick (Peter)**	2014
Kelle Ruden (Jeffrey)**	2014
Kathie Bennewitz (Scott)**	2014
Barbra Utting (Ken)**	2014
Darcy Sledge (Joseph)**	2014
Sue Kirby (William)**	2014
Susan Pike**	2014

** Indicates Provisional Year







