



## **Redding Garden Club History Update 2011-2013**

2011-2013 Melanie Goldstine and Alice Smith were co-presidents.

June 2011 brought our annual luncheon at the Redding Country Club and the installation of Melanie Goldstine and Alice Smith as the new co-presidents.

In July, the RGC held a program at Topstone Park, “The ABC’s of Good Gardening,” given by members. It was an informal presentation for all levels of gardeners who want practical advice and helpful tips. The program was so well received that we had several ladies apply for membership.

In September, Flo Vannoni was added to our growing list of members with Master Gardener status.

In October, RGC held a joint meeting with the Easton Garden Club. We provided the speaker, July Harrold, a floral designer from Carmel, California.

In light of utilizing technology to our advantage, a Redding Facebook group page was added for members and gardeners in surrounding towns. Alice Smith hosted a special “Intro to Technology: What You Need to Know.”

The RGC’s Conservation Committee asked Redding Residents to help control the spread of some of the most aggressive invasive plants that grow along the town’s roadsides. They identified the following plants and vines that crowd out native plants and are destroying trees -- winged euonymus, Japanese barberry and oriental bittersweet are the villains.

On October 29, Redding had an eighteen-inch snowstorm, which left 100% of the town without power for up to 10 days. During that period, we were able to still have our November 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday Luncheon and Boutique. It was amazing how everyone came together and improvised during setup the day before while the Country Club had to serve their members lunch and dinner. The RGC members worked very hard to make the fundraiser come together as if everything was normal and that the weather was only a slight inconvenience. All of the behind the scene problems are now part of the history and the event was a great success. We were all AMAZING.

November awards given by Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut: 1. Lillian M. Rathburn Award to Catherine Streit to an all around member involved in all phases of garden work; 2. Public Relations and Communications: First place for Newsletter produced by Lynn Hyson;

3. Garden Therapy: Tussie Mussie bouquets made for hospice patients; 4. Horticulture: “Your Victory Garden” publication.

January 2012 — Alice Smith stepped down as co-president due to other commitments. She continued to do the technology workshops for our members. She and Leslie Freyberg hosted a Gardener’s Gentle Exercise workshop. In memory of Annie Halper, a book on roses was donated to the Mark Twain Library.

March — the FGC of CT entered a new era: their newsletter became only digital.

For the third year, we had a presentation at the Redding Elementary School “Big Science Fair.” We focused on terrariums and their unique ecosystems.

After the tropical storm Irene and Nor’easter Albert, the Conservation Committee presented a series of three free programs for the public on how to protect our trees and also protect their beauty 1. “Trees: Protect Our Natural Assets” 2. “Healthy Trees – Healthy Environment” 3. “After the Storm: Tree Management for the Homeowner.”

April — The RGC expanded its Garden Therapy program by approving a proposal by Ruth Moran. This proposal had our members support seniors in creating and maintaining the enclosed raised bed garden behind the Community Center. The goal of the project was to have the seniors join in the efforts of gardening in whatever way suits their abilities. Diana Abshire made an informational brochure to explain the “idea of the garden” with photos and descriptions of crops. Seniors were invited to join the informal fellowship of gardening. Flo Vannoni, Allison Cottle and Diana, with Ruth overseeing, helped the seniors prepare the soil, cultivate and harvest the vegetables and flowers that were grown.

May — Another successful Plant Sale!

Lynn Hyson was asked to publish the newsletter for FGC of CT, an honor for her and also for the RGC. Alice Smith volunteered to take over publishing the RGC newsletter.

June 2012 — RGC Annual Luncheon: Melanie gave recognition to some very special members. Sprouting Acorn: Diana Abshire and Allison Cottle. Golden Spade: Debora DeCarlo Rosa, Karen de Friesse, Rosemary Wright and Alice Smith. Flowering Dogwood: Lynn Grant. Club Treasure: Flo Vannoni. Might Oak: Ruth Moran.

The RGC offered a collection of spring flowering bulbs. The proceeds went to the club’s Scholarship Fund. The order form was put on the club’s website.

September 2012 — A committee was formed to plan the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the founding of the RGC for 2014. Members Melanie Goldstine, Johanne Kurz, Jill Kotch, Sharon Epstein, Ruth Moran, Lynn Ruffing, Flo Vannoni, Diana Abshire,

Dorothee Funk, Edith Van Oostendorp, Natalie Ketcham, and Victoria Eastus worked on putting together activities for every month during 2014, some for members and some for the town of Redding (CB sites, special programs, etc.)

Alice Smith, Newsletter Chair, stated that her goal was to go digital for the distribution of the RGC Newsletter.

October — Ruth Moran explained how rewarding the Senior Garden Therapy has been to the seniors at the Community Center. The garden produced abundant crops that were given to the seniors. The Redding Pilot did an excellent article on the project.

Alice Smith designed yellow signs to put on CB sites.

Dorothee Funk and Ruth Moran planned a program for small “floral play groups.” Edith Van Oostendorp did a floral design demonstration for the group. Ruth created a notebook for class members to take notes and to include the handouts provided, which explained fundamental guidelines of floral design. After the three classes were over, the members demonstrated their designs at a general meeting. They looked forward to more classes and opportunities to show off their new skills.

November — The Fall Luncheon and Holiday Boutique was a huge success. For the second year in a row, Redding and surrounding areas were without power for almost a week caused by terrible storms. Roads were closed by downed trees and wires, no phone services, etc. The RGC carried on and even the Floral Design speakers in 2011 and 2012 demonstrated their best programs for a very grateful audience. It was a time that everyone had a special story of hardship, but as tough new Englanders we conquered the elements. That was the year that even Halloween was cancelled.

December — Redding’s First Selectman Natalie Ketcham asked the RGC if we would change the red bows on the holiday wreaths to white in memory of the Newtown Tragedy. Catherine Streit created special decorations and ribbons for the wreaths. She also made a special display inside of Town Hall called “A Neighbor’s Prayer.” RGC members volunteered to plant 100 bulbs in Newtown (Sandy Hook) as a memorial.

January 2013 — The RGC’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee worked with the C B committee to decide where to add daffodil bulbs and where new plantings of bulbs should be.

February — RGC was featured in the Town of Redding Annual Report 2011-2012.

March — the RGC exhibit for the RES Big Science Fair, “How Man Recycles and How Nature Recycles” was a big hit.

April — We were asked to participate in the RES art festival for the school children. The theme for the event was “Build Me a Garden.” Ruth Moran, Lynn Ruffing and Flo Vannoni created the program and worked with the children. The activity, called “Create a Garden of Rainbow Colors,” had the children create a picture of flowers in a garden on construction paper with flowers, leaves, ladybug shapes, and pipe cleaners. The children were very enthusiastic about the project.

May — Ruth Moran arranged for a workshop at Country Brothers Emporium with members of the Bethel Garden Club, conducted by Sally Pfeifer on container gardening.

Membership Chair Nancy Tse and her committee updated the RGC brochure, which was designed and printed by Debora DeCarlo Rosa. It reiterated what the bylaws stressed as to required participation by members.

Memorial Day Parade — Catherine Streit was in charge of our participation in the parade, which went on as scheduled in spite of a rainstorm. Our exhibit consisted of a golf cart with plants and our banner. Catherine started working on plans for the RGC 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 2014 parade as soon as the parade was over.

June — The Membership Committee provided a list of members' committee preferences and sent the list to Board members.

Annual Luncheon — Change of officers; new honorary member: Gloria Jaccarino; President's awards: Sprouting Acorn – Pamela Page and Nita Alarcon, Golden Spade – Victoria Eastus, Flowering Dogwood – Nancy Andrews, Club Treasure – Marianna Kaufmann, Mighty Oak – Marion Hichwa.

We thank all of those who have helped to make the Redding Garden Club what it is today, and look forward to a bright future.

Johanne Kurz  
Historian