PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL REPORT - 2017

What will you remember most about the last 12 months? The U.S. election? The celebrations of Canada’s 150th anniversary? How about the beauty of our gardens due to the cooler, wetter weather that was to be the summer of 2017?

A hundred years ago during the First World War the OHA and the Ploughmen's Association teamsters established the Vacant Lot Gardening movement in Ontario where vacant lands in the Toronto area were ploughed to grow food for the needy. These gardens, numbering in the hundreds throughout the province provided great quantities of food that helped in the war effort.

I mention this historical tidbit to highlight OHA as a positive force and partner in the lobby movement of this province through our societies and the work we have done and continue to do in our communities.

This year we were fortunate enough to partner with the Thorold Library in a number of projects. We consulted with them in the development of their Children’s Pallet Gardens advising them about safely using used pallets, the construction of their raised beds and the best choices of herbs and plants for continual harvesting.

We also provided them with contacts to discuss a future Seed Library project.

During the summer months the Thorold Garden Club decorated their lobby with a display that was well received by the public and served to advertise our Garden Ontario Week project as we transformed our garden behind the library into a Pollinator Habitat Garden. The work of our volunteers was invaluable and the whole project was sponsored by funding from the OHA and the Thorold Garden Club with Two “Bee Houses” donated by “WEE BEE HOUSE” for use of Mason and Leaf cutter Bees.

This year we presented speakers on Local Gardens, Public and Private, with Theresa Forte in February at our 88th Anniversary meeting; Fairy Gardens in Unusual Containers, with eleven year old Norah Legros; the “Bug Lady’ Stacey Hickman; Kellie Sherman from the Ontario Invasive Plant Council and Paula Berketo, a landscape architect from the Ministry of Transportation, spoke to us about the Oakes Park Gardens and the Rainbow Gardens, which is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year in Niagara Falls.

In May we held our Tree of Life Ceremony honoring Joan Armstrong, Carla Kuchard, Greg White, Marilynn Burke and Edith Allen long time members who passed away this year. Thanks to St. Andrews Church who provided us with emergency accommodation due to inclement weather.

We again held our annual Rose and Flower show, awarded a small bursary to a Thorold High School student, offered a book, or shrub to local schools and supported various community projects such as Mel Swart Park and other local parkettes.

This year we were approached by the Thorold Business Improvement Association to help with the planters on Front Street. However after considerable planning and preparatory work in early May, choosing plants and nurseries willing to provide them at a good price, as well as cleaning out the old plants and finding enough volunteers to take on the project, it all fell through when we were not able to access the funds to undertake the planting in a timely manner and had to bow out in mid-June to undertake our annual flower and rose show preparations.

Tonight you will hear our proposed budget for next year but rest assured that we as your executive will be looking at ways and means to bring more variety, fun and interesting new activities, speakers and community projects to keep everyone enjoying their time as our members because without your participation there would be no Thorold Garden Club. We would also like to thank our sponsor’s without whom we couldn’t carry on our activities:

OHA

OMAFRA

Thorold City Council

And our community businesses and members.

Now to end I have taken the liberty to decipher the REAL meanings of plant catalogue terminology for example,

"A favorite of birds" means to avoid planting near cars, sidewalks, or clotheslines.   
"Grows more beautiful each year" means - looks like roadkill for the foreseeable future.   
"Zone 5 with protection" is a variation on the phrase Russian roulette.   
"May require support" means your daughter's engineering degree will finally pay off.   
"Moisture-loving" plants are ideal for landscaping all your bogs and swamps.   
"Carefree" refers more to the plant's attitude than to your workload.   
"Vigorous" is code for has a Napoleonic compulsion to take over the world.

and finally . . .

The only way to guarantee some color in your gardens all year round is to buy a garden gnome.

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Leslie Daniels, President, November 15, 2017