

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 3, digital edition 1

Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

January 2019

Meeting Our New President

by Christine Elliott, Hospitality Chair



Virginia Parker, “Ginny” to all who know her, is our new Club president. Ginny was born in the state of Virginia while her dad was in the service, but moved to Raleigh, North Carolina when she was 6 months old, making her about as close to a native daughter as you can get. Coming up through the local schools, she graduated from Broughton High School. Ginny went to business school then began a career with the NC Department of Revenue, where she worked for 30 years in a variety of capacities. Ginny once again lives in the home where she grew up and attends the church across the

street where she’s been a member all her life.

In retirement, her interest in gardening and the social aspect of garden club activities have filled her time. Ginny is not only a member of Gardeners of Wake County, she’s also a long time member of the Raleigh Garden Club, serving in a number of leadership positions with that group, including President from 2008-2010. Her particular interest in herbs led her to join the Herb Society of Wake County. And networking with other gardeners helped her build friendships with members of the Wake Forest Garden Club, where she is also a member.

Ginny volunteers every year at the NC State Fair and enters both herbs and succulents in competition. She has been most successful with her Greek Column Basil, which grows well in her back yard. She was

Club Meetings

Monthly meetings are at 7:30 PM at the JC Raulston Arboretum every 3rd Tuesday. Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00.

“Sharing seeds, knowledge, and tricks of the trade” - that’s how longtime GWC Clubmember and Seed Exchange MC Will Farmer describes the *Annual Seed Exchange* slated for the January 15th meeting. For those who attend, all this comes with the wintertime expectation that something marvelous will happen in the spring. Best of all, the plants and seeds are free. GWC’s annual event began in 2014 and continues to be one of the most popular activities on the yearly Club calendar. Be there—and bring your favorite seeds to share.

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Club Officers and Committees

Board members

President: Virginia (Ginny) Parker

Vice President: Kalli Shevzov

Secretary: Jim Moore

Treasurer: Mac Williamson

Immediate Past President: Paul Hoffman

At-large board members: Barbara Brown, Rich Engates, Leslie Cohen, Eddie Robinson

Committee members

Activities Chair: Will Farmer, Reed & Christine Elliott (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)

Audit: Charles Gilliam, Kathy Moore, Reed Elliott

Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett

Beautification Awards: TBA

Club Awards: Jim Moore

Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam

Friendship: Chris Elliott

Historical: Donna Farmer

Membership, Barbara Brown

Newsletter Editor: Reed Elliott

Nominating: TBA

Programs: Kalli Shevzov

Projects: Sharon LaRusch, Lynn Swanson

Publicity: Charles Gilliam

Scholarship: Joanne Boone

Telephone: Johnny and Sherrill Johnson

Webmaster: Reed Elliott

Meeting Our New President *(continued from page 1)*

invited to enter her herbs and succulents in the Dixie Classic in Winston Salem through her statewide contacts made while working as the State Treasurer for the NC Garden Club.

As you can see, Ginny has been a busy and contributing member of the North Carolina gardening community for many years. In our own Club, Ginny has served for some time as the December banquet chair and as member-at-large on the board.

We are very fortunate to have Ginny's leadership in the coming year. We can thank her best by helping out when she calls, 'Many hands make light work.'" Let's all step up.



Contact Us

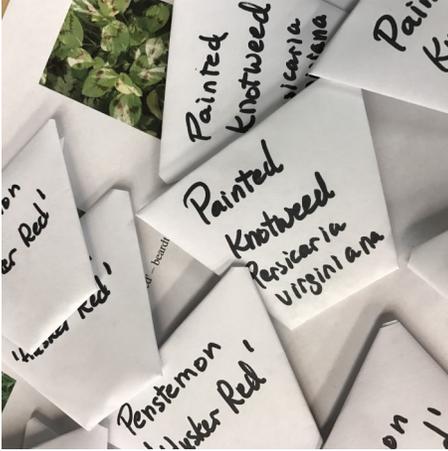
For additional information email our Club at gardener@gardenersofwakecounty.org

Contact Ginny Parker, President, by phone at home: 919-832-5483 or by cell: 919-880-3233

Our Club webpage is available at <https://gardenersofwakecounty.weebly.com/>

Will Farmer's 2019 GWC Seed Exchange

"Sharing seeds, knowledge, and tricks of the trade" - that's how longtime Clubmember Will Farmer describes the GWC Annual *Seed Exchange* slated for the January 15th meeting. For those who attend, all this comes with the wintertime expectation that something marvelous will happen in the spring. Best of all, the plants and seeds are free.



An outgrowth of seed swaps first done for TAGaH (Triangle Area Gardeners & Homesteaders), GWC's annual event began in 2014 and continues to be one of the most popular activities on the yearly GWC calendar. Farmer is quick to point out that saving and trading seeds is nothing new. "It's as old as agriculture itself," he says. "Plant ovules and nuts have been found in many prehistoric site excavations and even in the Egyptian pyramids."

Will started developing his green thumb at an early age. At first, he just helped with his father's garden, but, by age 15, he was working his own patch - and canning much of the produce. In fact, up until this year when they finally had to cut back, Will and wife Donna preserved the results of their home plot, putting up about 200 jars each summer.

The irony of a gardener being named "Farmer" is not lost on the seed exchange organizer. "Everybody laughs about that." Will confesses. "Even me." Somewhat reminiscent of the Johnny Cash song *A Boy Named Sue*, Will says "I guess I have to blame my Dad for hanging that moniker on me."

From 1956 until retirement in 1995, cultivation took a back seat to aerospace engineering for Will. He designed aircraft crew stations for industry giants McDonnell-Douglas, Boeing, Lockheed, and Learjet. "I did take a detour in 1960 and 1961," says Will, "when I went to Huntsville, Alabama, to lead the Saturn Booster Engine Design Group for NASA."

Farmer says he's done his best work after retiring: "Among other projects, I designed and built fixed wing and helicopter flight simulators and a space station module for the Mesa, Arizona, public schools and to date about 100-thousand fifth graders have flown in those simulators."



Will's agenda for January 15th includes a brief demonstration of tomato seed saving, a Calabaza squash discussion, and a cut and share. "We'll have some mini-greenhouse samples and seed starter pots," he says, "and hopefully that'll inspire folks to save rotisserie chicken containers because they make great little seed incubators." January's meeting also marks a pivotal juncture in GWC's seed exchange program because Will Farmer is looking to pass the baton. "I'm 82 now and not in the best of health," he declares. "2019 would be a great time for younger GWC members to step up and share the responsibility of organizing this event and keeping the tradition going." Reed and Christine Elliott have volunteered to give Will a hand at the 2019 event but next year ... how about you? Give Ginny Parker a buzz and step up to help your Club.

January to January—Our First Year at Longview

by Lynn Swanson



What a difference a year makes! When we approached the Longview project on our snowy, first workday in January 2018, we encountered a tangled, overgrown wooded area choked with wisteria. The hardy volunteers got right to work pulling wisteria out of trees, yanking up tenacious roots, cutting down invasive plant material and undesirable saplings, and hauling many armfuls and wheelbarrow loads of debris to a growing pile. Little by little a path was reopened.

We were heartened by the discovery of a brick walkway covered by years of root and soil buildup. Each month volunteers continued to work on the clearing of the bricks and we were thrilled to discover that the brick path continued the entire length of the garden walk! We found a trio of nice camellias that will be preserved and some healthy magnolias. There were also pairs of boxwood and some old crape myrtles that we will try to rejuvenate and preserve. Each month the battle of wisteria and debris was offset by such happy finds, and the joy of working alongside and getting to know our fellow Club members.

January to January—Our First Year at Longview (continued from page 4)

After months of laborious hand-clearing by GWC volunteers, large equipment could be brought in. In December, WakeMed had their landscape maintenance company, Greenscapes, lend a hand tearing out particularly tangled overgrowth and larger plants. As of the end of 2018, the right side of the path had all plants down except those we wanted saved. Work to clear remaining overgrowth on the left side also had begun.

Enough can't be said of the volunteer work last year that got us to this point! The hours of hard work and camaraderie gave us such a great start on this project.

Workdays in 2019 will begin to have a different feel as we move from the rough work to finer details. We will go over the ground, looking for and removing remaining roots and small debris, and leveling it. We will mark the space into grids (which will help with layout and planting), transfer the layout of the design onto the ground, and then the moment we're all waiting for....planting!

Keep an eye on any foster plants you took home and, as your spring garden emerges, look for those that could be divided. Refer to Sharon's article in the October 2018 Clodhopper for a list of some of the perennials that might be used (others, especially natives, can also be considered). We will also be exploring sources for the larger plant material needed.

Since we now know the exact length of our new garden walk, it is time for design revision. I am adjusting the layout to accommodate plants that we plan or hope to save, and from there will fill out the rest of the design. If you have any desire to be involved in the design process, please let me know!

The first workday day of 2019 will be Saturday, January 19. It will be fun for everyone to see how different the right side of the path looks. If Greenscapes was able to fit in another workday of their own, we might see the same on the opposite side as well! We will need folks to go over the ground and others to begin measuring and getting some stakes up. Updates and goals for each workday will be announced at GWC meetings, and 2019 workdays will once again be held on the Saturdays after Club meetings.

We are looking forward to another great year at Longview and to seeing you out there!



My Corner of the Garden

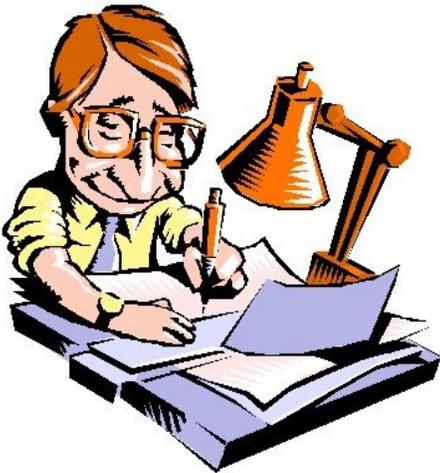
by Reed Elliott, Editor

Happy 2019 to all Gardeners of Wake County! We wrapped up 2018, a year of great gardening and great fellowship, in style at the always-popular Christmas Awards Banquet. What a feast and what fun!

This year the Club honored seven individuals for their outstanding service to the Club. Honorees were Pam Medlin of Pam's Farmhouse (Dogwood Award for non-members), Katelyn Lee (Green Thumb Award for members with less than two years membership), Sharon LaRusch, Lynn Swanson and Charlie Leverett (The Silver Trowel Award for members with more than two years membership), Ed Ponek (Lifetime Achievement Award), and Mark Boone (Silver Vase Award for exemplary individual service).

This year's Beautification Awards went to Melanie Wyatt for her work with daylilies at her house, garden clubs, flower shows, fairs and the Daylily Society, and to The Garden Club of North Carolina's Martha Franck Fragrance Garden at the School of the Blind. This latter award was accepted by Jane Barbot on behalf of the Garden Club of North Carolina.

In addition, we presented six well-deserved scholarships to NCSU agriculture majors including (in alphabetical order) Donovan Battle, Amanda DeLucia, Alana Farris, Evan Garner, Libby Indermaur, and Madison Tesh. What a pleasure and inspiration it was to see those young people and hear their personal stories. All of us in the GWC can feel proud of our contribution to those scholarships through participation in the Club's fundraising activities, especially the annual Azalea Sale. Bios and ongoing stories of the scholarship recipients are available on the Club Webpage if you want to see how our hard-earned Club dollars are being put to work.



As we move into a new year, it's time to bid farewell and offer our heartfelt thanks to several outgoing Club Officers. Thanks go to Paul Hoffman for his terrific two-year tenure as President; Don Strickland retiring Vice-President, Rose Cotton, audit, Josephine Tayao, Beautification, and Ed Ponek and Gail Posey as outgoing Board members. Our Club thrives because of the unselfish work of such wonderful people. All of us say "Thank you!"

Have You Renewed Your Membership for 2019?

Only paid-up members are included in the 2019 Club Directory and name badges of inactive members are subject to removal. Get your name in the Directory and avoid having to wear a "visitor" name badge! Mail renewal checks today to Gardeners of Wake County, 517 Wyndham Dr., Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526-7706. Annual dues remain unchanged for 2019 and are only \$30 for a regular member and \$45 for a member and spouse.