

The Clod-Hopper



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Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

June 2019

Connecting People—It's What Life's About

by Christine Elliott, Friendship Chair



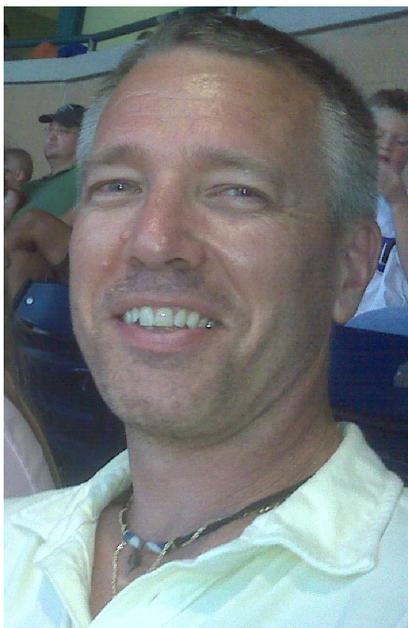
Norm and Sharon LaRusch joined Gardeners of Wake County six years ago and quickly became contributing members. Norm served for two years as Club treasurer and Sharon for two years as refreshment coordinator. Now, with Lynn and Jim Swanson, they lead the charge at the Garden Walk at Longview, our Club's service project.

They met at WakeMed hospital. After retiring from the Army, where he served as an Electronics Tech, Norm went back to school to become a Respiratory Therapist. Working in intensive care, he volunteered for the Mobile

Critical Care Transport Team. While checking on a patient in the pediatrics unit at WakeMed, he saw Sharon and her schnauzer, KiKi, visiting with the children. They connected right away.

Although Norm has no background in gardening, (he says she's the gardener, he's the muscle) Sharon grew up in Cary on a small farm with cows, horses, and gardens. After college at NCSU, Sharon got KiKi as a pet and quickly realized she was a natural with children. Together they went through training to become a Certified Therapy Team and began weekly visits to WakeMed as a Pet Hospitality team in the pediatric unit.

Norm and Sharon joined the club after moving into their home with 1/3 acre of land. Now they have several fruit trees, a vegetable garden, and a chicken coop. Encouraged by Sherrill and Johnny Johnson, Sharon graduated from the Master Gardener's program in 2014. One of her other pet projects



Club Meetings

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

At our next meeting on June 18th, past GWC President Mark Boone will share photos and experiences from his September 2018 pilgrimage in Spain's famed Camino de Santiago, a path that has been travelled by pilgrims for 1,200 years. Gardeners will enjoy Mark's description of a magical landscape that softens from rocky highlands into woodlands dotted with towns and villages, then farmland. Mark's goal is to convey the experience both of natural gardens and of pilgrimage and its power to change mind, body, and spirit.

This will be a presentation no avid gardener should miss. Be sure to be there on Tuesday, June 18th!

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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

Committees

Activities Chairs: Will Farmer, Reed & Christine Elliott (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)
Audit: Charles Gilliam, Sharon LaRusch, Reed Elliott, Donna Farmer
Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett
Beautification Awards: Laine Thomas
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

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/>

It's What Life's About *(continued from page 1)*

today is growing milkweed to support Monarch Butterflies. She gives talks and passes on the plants and Monarch chrysalises to encourage others to enjoy the miracle of metamorphosis, and to support the butterflies needed habitat.

As an ongoing volunteer at WakeMed, Sharon joined the Volunteer Board and serves on a committee with the Foundation. At a meeting in the Poe House, she noticed the overgrown garden out back and asked the Foundation Director, Brad Davis about it. She had remembered that Paul Hoffman, our then Club President, was looking for a service project that would allow the club members to work together as gardeners. Now 18 months in, it's been a delightful way for many of us to work together, building friendships as we work to rehabilitate a garden.



Thank you, Sharon, for effectively connecting people and ideas. Thank you, Norm, for your ongoing support and ever ready humor.

A Trip to Spain with Mark Boone

by Kalli Shevzov, Vice President



This month's speaker will be past GWC president Mark Boone. In his presentation titled, The Camino de Santiago, Mark will share photos and experiences from his September 2018 pilgrimage. Mark traveled the oldest and most clearly marked route, The French Way. This path has been travelled by pilgrims for 1,200 years. In 2018, 186,187 pilgrims followed this path.

Mark's pilgrimage began in St. John Pied de Port, France in the raw and jagged rocky beauty of the Pyrenees. The highest altitude along the French Way is about 1,250 meters (4,100 feet), and in this rugged terrain, walking alone, schedules

and daily demands of life became distant. As the landscape softened into woodlands, dotted with towns and villages, then farmland, Mark observed that his thinking was evolving and changing along with the terrain.



His presentation will share photos, but his goal is to convey the experience of pilgrimage, the change in mind, body, and spirit.

Mark suggests viewing the 2010 film, "The Way", written and directed by Emilio Estevez and featuring Martin Sheen as a way of getting some sense of what it is like to make this 500 mile trek.

Chipping Away at Longview

by Sharon LaRusch

This past Saturday, before the mercury went too far up the thermometer, a handful of us came out to spread a little mulch. We welcomed Sid and Rachel who were first time visitors to Longview but very aware of the progress because our awesome website! WakeMed had mowed, weed-eated (Weedate??) areas and delivered two piles of mulch for us.

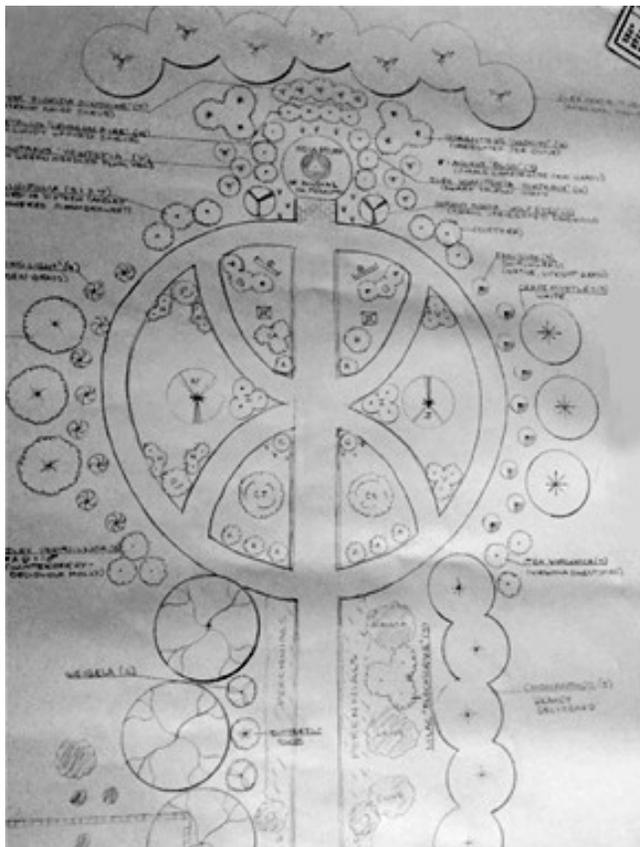


It was nice to be able to view the garden area without the debris piles blocking our view of that beautiful beech tree and I could see all the way down to the water feature base at the end. Instead of removing all the debris, some had been chipped into mulch at the rear of the garden.

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Eddie and Norm brought new meaning to 'piling it higher and deeper' and you can't help but have fun with them around!



In the next couple of weeks, we'll provide a complete list of the plants on the Longview plans to you. Some of you are fostering some them right now and it will be exciting to return them in the fall! The GWC Board has approved a budget and WakeMed is going to be investing in trees and some plants as well, but I would love to have you review the list and let us know if you have any that you would like to contribute to our project.

Keep our website bookmarked! It's a great place to keep up to date on the summer's progress!

My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor

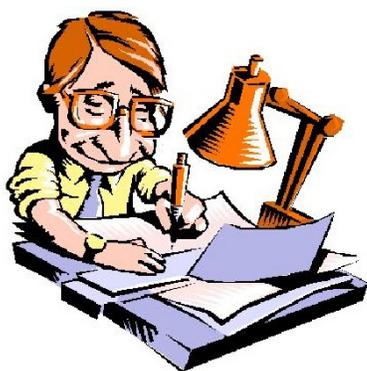
June's a time for weddings – for something old and something new. Accordingly, I'll start with something old – last month's annual picnic, a tradition that harkens back to the very beginnings of the GWC. For a ninth year in a row, our 2019 Club Picnic (and Plant Exchange) was held at Mark and Joanne Boone's beautiful Raleigh home and garden. As always, Pam's Farmhouse catered the event and produced a magnificent spread featuring traditional favorites that included beef chips and rice, BBQ and fried chicken, potato salad, butter beans, collard greens, dinner rolls and sweet or unsweetened tea. Club members contributed by bringing appetizers and desserts.

A major feature of the evening is always the legendary Plant Exchange. Everybody lines up, Land Rush style, and, at starter Mac Williamson's word charges *en masse* to grab prized plants they'd scoped out in advance. Since there are always many more plants than people, no one went home empty-handed.

This year the fireflies put on a spectacular show for us as the party broke up putting a perfect ending on another great GWC Picnic. Many thanks to all who contributed to making it another memorable success.

And about something new—if you're a Netflix member you've got a treat coming in a series called "Big Dreams, Small Spaces." Each episode follows different amateur gardeners as they renovate the garden of their dreams from concept to completion—all with the affable assistance of "Britain's favorite gardener" and the show's host, Monty Don. Monty's a gardener who learned his trade through a lifetime of experience that contributes to how relaxing and encouraging it is to hear him converse with the gardeners he mentors.

The show is so much more than watching grass grow. With Monty's guidance, amateur gardeners create sensory gardens for children with special needs, jungle spaces reminiscent of childhoods spent in the Philippines, and much more. Communities are strengthened. People find hope in grief. And the world becomes a more beautiful place, one plant at a time.



Perhaps it's contradictory to suggest that in an age when we already spend too much time in front of screens, we can benefit tremendously from Monty Don's *Big Dreams, Small Spaces*. But then, maybe this reminder of the beauty of nature and the encouragement to get our hands dirty and care for our outdoor spaces as a means of caring for ourselves is simply a good use of technology. And we all need to start somewhere.

If Monty Don has taught me anything, it's that "however small your garden is, everybody can cultivate a big dream."

New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcomes anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. We rarely add new members at the annual Picnic and this year was no exception. That said, the GWC has grown an average of two members each month since the beginning of the year! No surprise—it's a great Club! If you're not already a member, c'mon and join in on the fun!