

St. Margaret's Bay Gardening Club Annual General Meeting

President's Report September 2018 - August 2019

This is our Seventh Annual General Meeting as a Registered Society. The AGM provides the Board with the opportunity to report to the membership on finances and activities of the club, and hold nominations to elect a slate of officers for 2019 - 2020.

This club is truly a collaborative team. The Board of Directors meets monthly to plan, implement and budget for the club's activities. The Treasurer provides us with a monthly financial statement and prepares the year-end Financial Income Statement. The Club Secretary records our enthusiastic and robust conversations, and notes the decisions of the group. On August 29, 2019 Heather Wood made the very difficult decision to resign as the President of the St. Margaret's Bay Gardening Club due to family business commitments effective that day. As a result, it was decided that the following three Past Presidents Claudy Levy, Jerry Walsh and Paula Fredericks would step up to share the leadership role until the November 2019 Annual General Meeting.

We would like to recognize and thank the Board for their time, vision, organizational skills and leadership in achieving the club's goals and living up to our motto, "Gardeners helping Gardeners". A major focus for the Club this year has been the insurance review, the financial and by-law review and audit, and membership recruitment strategy.

Board Members, 2018/2019 SMBGC

Heather Wood: President (November 2018 to August 2019)

Claudie Levy: Past President, Insurance Review and Summer BBQ

Vacant : Vice President

Carole Ross: Treasurer, Membership and Email

MJ Cavicchi: Secretary and Plant Sale

Paula Fredericks: Member at Large: Facebook, Posters, Spring /Summer Newsletter, Website and Membership Recruitment Strategy

Jerry Walsh: Member at Large and Membership Recruitment Strategy

Diane Giffin Boudreau: Member at Large, Perennial Order

Ann Nielsen: Member at Large: Crossroads Garden

Gerry Thibeau: Member at Large: Presentations and Workshops

Rosie Maclean Member at Large: Insurance Review, Financial and By-Law Review and Membership Recruitment Strategy

Tammy Carew: Member at Large

Darlene Soulsby: Member at Large: Presentations, Workshops and Perennial Order

We would also like to thank the members who stepped up to volunteer for the many club activities we undertook. Your commitment is greatly appreciated, and many hands make light work. I feel that as a group we have accomplished a lot this year, but an important question the Executive has reflected on is, why have we been so successful?

We have a shared vision, goals, and objectives.

We come to meetings prepared to listen, discuss and make decisions.

We all respect one another, and are open to new ideas and suggestions.

We have a "can do" attitude, and take the initiative to make things happen.

We share the workload and get things done in a timely manner.

We are enthusiastic and passionate about gardening. We have fun and laugh a lot.

So, what have we accomplished?

The SMBGC was 105 members strong this past year, and communication with members is key. The club uses e-mail, Facebook and our website to connect with our membership, and also with the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs Association, and the community at large.

Program Committee: Presentations and Workshops 2018-2019

A series of guest speakers and workshops were planned and implemented, with a focus on presenting topics that were relevant to each season. All were well attended by the membership. A big thank you to Gerry Thibeau and Darlene Soulsby, and the members who stepped up to volunteer their time.

Guest Speakers 2018/2019

September: Jeffrey Morton, Horticulture in China

October: Andrew Hebda, Tick Talk

November: AGM and Holiday Social

January: Franz Fritzl, Organic Pest Control

February: Niki Jabbour, Vegetable Garden Remix

March: Callum Hardie, Trees in the Urban Landscape

April: Denise Stockdale, The Flower Business in Nova Scotia

May: Jeffrey Morton, Landscaping for Life

Workshops 2018/2019

May: A workshop on Monarch Butterflies, on a Saturday morning, held in partnership with the Tantallon Library and the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute, presented by Nicole Hubley. This was open to the public and all ages were welcome. It was well-attended.

November: Karen Llewellyn, Holiday Decorating Workshop. This was attended by approximately 20 members and a festive morning included the creation of holiday planters, and light refreshments.

Insurance Report:

SMBGC Directors' and Officers' Insurance policy was scheduled to expire on September 26, 2019. A sub-committee was formed to review the nature of the insurance coverage, the cost and other potential providers. Research revealed the existing policy did not effectively meet the club's needs as it was more applicable to an employer/employee relationship. The Insurance sub-committee recommended that SMBGC become a member of Recreation NS and get coverage through MCT Insurance, based in Kentville, Nova Scotia. This policy provides Commercial General Liability and Directors' and Officers' Insurance. It more aptly covers a volunteer, not-for-profit organization, (Sport, Recreation and Leisure Activities) and is less expensive. The new insurance policy began September 11, 2019.

Financial and By-Law Review:

A SMBGC Member-At-Large (retired CPA) offered to perform a review of the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 Operating Years and review the club's By-Law's. All financial transactions were reviewed with 26 Working Papers developed. Overall, the findings concluded that the financial records are well maintained, transactions are well documented with appropriate controls in place to safeguard assets. Three Financial Review recommendations were made and accepted by the Board, to strengthen controls already in place:

- Adopt formal policy for expense reimbursement
- Perform formal review of collection and deposit of Membership Fees
- Implement formal oversight of cash count at Plant Sale

Five SMBGC By-Law Review recommendations were made and accepted by the Board:

- Identify financial statements as unaudited, have executive members review and sign, and include in Official Books and Records
- Fill vacant executive roles - Vice President and Corporate Secretary
- Begin using Google Docs as a central repository for all SMBGC Books and Records
- Update mailing address with Joint Stock Registry and update Credit Union with names of current Executive Members and update signing authorities with the Credit Union.

Membership Recruitment Strategy:

A sub-committee was formed to develop a Membership Recruitment Strategy to actively recruit and engage new members to ensure a viable Executive Succession Plan, continued volunteerism in the community, and enough members to sustain the gardening club. The Membership Recruitment Strategy was developed in January 2019 with the following focus:

- Review current membership demographics - membership survey
- Ask members what they want – membership survey
- Develop new brochure with updated information
- Develop small poster promoting SMBGC
- Increase use of the social media, namely Facebook
- Partner with local community groups that share like-minded community objectives

Completion of **Phase 1** saw development of a membership survey, poster production /placement in the community, more Facebook promotion and partnering with the Tantallon Public Library and the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute. There was also publicity in the Masthead News. **Phase 2** will focus on partnering with local community groups that share same community objectives to promote awareness of the SMBGC.

Perennial Order

This year the club partnered with two nurseries, Oceanview and Village, to provide a larger selection of plant material to the membership. The order included annuals, perennials and shrubs, and the June delivery date was perfect for planting. Village was unable to provide all the plant material that members ordered and the cost for them to deliver was high, so in future the club has decided to stay with Oceanview.

Annual Plant Sale

The plant sale, which is the club's largest money making event, was held on Saturday, June 8 at St. Luke's United Church, Lower Hall. The membership came through with flying colours, donating plants and signing up to help with set up on Friday, June 7 and on sale day. We had more volunteers this year than any previous year, which made everything run smoothly. A huge thanks, once again, to those who volunteered their time and energy.

As usual, we had buyers lined up outside before the doors were opened, eager to purchase plants for their gardens. We also had a door prize draw and gave away three spring planters to delighted recipients. After expenses, the plant sale made \$1,167.65 for the club.

Mark Russell, from Garlic Mountain Farm, was happy to sell his compost from his truck outside and to advertise his garlic while doing so.

Crossroads Garden

After the redesign and rejuvenation accomplished in 2017/ 2018, the garden has continued to flourish. In the Fall of 2018 a total of 189 bulbs (hyacinths, tulips, daffodils, crocus and allium) were planted and proved to be a real eye catcher in the spring.

The garden provided over 60 plants (perennials that were split) for our spring plant sale.

Redmond's Home Hardware has continued its support by providing finances for the bulbs, soil for potting plants, a first aid kit and 2 safety vests.

Most Tuesdays, (except for rain cancellations) found 2 - 8 people volunteering their time - weeding, edging , trimming, sharing information and learning from each other. Coffee time fostered friendships and an opportunity to socialize. A great team has developed that has strengthened our club and its Executive as well.

A Saturday 'work party' in October focused on pruning many bushes and evaluating work to be accomplished next Spring.

The garden had many compliments all summer, and considering the lack of rain, (and no artificial watering) - it was amazing - providing joy to those who work there and to the community at large, who appreciate a quiet colourful distraction.

Summer BBQ and Picnic

The SMBGC hosted its second annual BBQ and Picnic at the Hubbards Barn in August. It was a huge success, and we had a great turnout of members and guests. The event provided the opportunity for people to share food, connect, socialize and tour the grounds and gardens. There was musical entertainment and members also made bouquets for the table that were donated for prizes at the end of the night. With the bouquets, gift cards provided by the club and many donated prizes, each attendee won a small prize. We would like to thank The Hubbards Barn Association for donating the space.

Promotions

Our website continues to be a solid source of basic information. The Club had a promotional table at the Hubbards Barn Market in September, and we were featured in the Masthead News. All of our events were advertised on Facebook and we had promotional posters displayed in the Bay. We welcome everyone to LIKE our Facebook page, which currently has almost 550 fans! Please share our events with friends! We also appreciate the help in distributing posters for things like the plant sale and membership recruitment.

St. Margaret's Bay Food Bank

At monthly meetings, members bring food and monetary donations for the local food bank. We have received notes of thanks from the food bank, and we hope to continue strong support for this organization. Many thanks to the Flemmings who faithfully come to pick up our donations.

In closing a big thank you to the Board, all the members who stepped up to volunteer, and to the membership who attended the many club initiatives. As a group we can be proud of what we have accomplished. We would also like to thank three members who are stepping down from the board for their significant contributions to the Club; MJ Cavicchi, Dianne Giffin-Boudreau and Heather Wood.

Ann Nielson summed our year up very eloquently, "To see all that was accomplished written down makes me realize that we truly are a cohesive and supportive group, each person working to their strength"

Respectfully submitted -

The St. Margaret's Bay Gardening Club Executive Team.