

KITCHENER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
JANUARY 18, 2005
KITCHENER PUBLIC LIBRARY
7:00 P.M.**

REPORTS FOR 2004

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE - 2004

This was a very busy and successful year for the Kitchener Horticultural Society, and the second year of a joint presidency, which has worked out well for the Society. The Board of twelve enthusiastic directors upheld the Society's motto *Civic Beauty is a Civic Duty* through their continued commitment to the beautification of Rockway Gardens and their leadership and involvement in the many programs of interest to the membership – the speakers, the plant exchange and bulb sales, the garden tours, the youth events, and the horticultural therapy program.

Special words of appreciation are extended to the staff of Rockway Gardens for their commitment and hard work. The Society is continually receiving complements about the beauty of the gardens. This year the Society was delighted to receive a grant from the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation and a generous donation from the Kitchener Lions Club for the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the central pond and for surrounding complementary landscaping. The bridge will be a focal point for wedding photography. A beginning has been made on the restoration of the rockery, which, over the years, has become somewhat unstable. The Board of Directors recognizes the generosity of many donors whose gifts allow the Society to add a little extra to the gardens – a special tree or shrub, a bench, etc.

Over the years the Kitchener Horticultural Society has always had a strong presence in the Ontario Horticultural Association, and, particularly, in the local District 19 of OHA which consists of 9 societies within Waterloo Region. A number of members of our Society attended District 19 AGM in March at Ayr. At this event, Maryanne Weiler and Gerry Reed received honours for their long time dedicated service at the district and provincial association levels. Society members also attended the OHA convention in London and a District 19 workshop in Waterloo.

This year, our membership slipped a little bit (not too much though) possibly due to an increase in fees. Communication with our members through the newsletter, *Growing Thoughts*, and a strong program serving the membership keeps the Society healthy.

The Society has a strong relationship with the City of Kitchener which appoints a councillor - Geoff Lorentz - to the Board of Directors. The Board has appointed Bruce MacNeil, past president, as liaison to the City to keep councillors and officials informed of the activities at Rockway Gardens. The Society is pleased that the City accepted the Board's grant application for its operation of Rockway Gardens.

The Society extends its thanks and appreciation to Board members and to those from the general membership who have volunteered many hours of their time to the success of the Society.

Respectfully submitted by
Maryanne Weiler and John Arndt

Program Report 2004

Throughout 2004 the Kitchener Horticultural Society offered the membership many programs and activities of interest. There were opportunities to hear well informed speakers: in January, David Hobson, a popular columnist for the Record spoke on humour in horticulture; in March, Keith Squires, proprietor of Country Squires Garden, described the scree garden; in April, Larry Sherk, Sheridan Nurseries' horticulturalist emeritus, spoke on rhododendrons, azaleas and other flowering shrubs; in October, Martin Quinn presented an illustrated talk on ornamental grasses; and in November, Maryanne Weiler and Gerry Reed demonstrated how to make seasonal decorations with natural materials.

The Society extends its appreciation to the Kitchener Public Library for publicizing our events in their publication *In Touch* and for making rooms and AV equipment available; to Sheridan Nurseries, on Ottawa Street, for arranging the Larry Sherk presentation and a 20% discount on gardening products for those attending the evening program; and the J. Steckle Heritage Homestead for use of their facilities and for providing garden plots for our youth.

The Summer Garden Tours, held on the second Tuesdays of June, July, and August continue to draw a large number of members. The weather for each of our tours was outstanding and as a result attendance ranged between 90 and 110 on each of the three evenings. In June the Society showed three gardens in the Pioneer Park area; in July, four gardens were shown in Waterloo, and, in August, three were shown on Queen Street near St. Mary's Hospital. The gardens selected are excellent examples of what can be done by creative gardeners in challenging locations and conditions. They continue to be an inspiration for all who attend.

The Plant Exchange with the Master Gardeners and the Bulb Sale, both in May, although on different Saturdays, were successful fund raising events.

Respectfully submitted by
John Arndt

Rockway Committee 2004

The rebuilding of the first section of the rockery was completed during the fall and the new sod has been laid. The new bridge should be in place by spring and the new garden around the main fountain is well under way. More trees were added to the east end in the fall and will add more of a barrier for the houses on Floral Drive. More perennials were also planted. The staff did an excellent job of maintaining the gardens over the season and are to be complemented. Over all, it was a good year and we are all looking forward to next spring

Respectfully submitted by
Charlie Davis

Youth Group 2004

The KHS Youth Program had a very successful growing year in 2004. The 19 children involved ranged from beginner to veteran gardener. Due to high demand some plots had to be shared at J. Steckle Heritage Homestead this season. Again this year, the children plotted, planted and maintained a six by ten plot of land. Our group met at least once a week with planting beginning in May. We celebrated school's end in June with a scavenger hunt. Most junior members attended a wind chime workshop in the barn in July. Anne Morgan from the Master Gardeners gave an informative talk on insects in mid-August. Our October harvest celebration reaped everything from parsnips to cantelope! The emphasis is on community gardening and not competition in this program. This way we feel the children experience all of the challenges, successes and rewards of gardening. All of the children were awarded Ontario Horticultural Association certificates of merit for their efforts.

Respectfully submitted by,
Kim Ball & Trish Malleck

Membership Committee Report for 2004

In 2003, the Kitchener Horticultural Society membership increased to 463, the highest it has been in recent memory. In 2004, we experienced a drop in membership to 394 most likely due to the increase in membership dues from \$5.00 per annum to \$10.00. This represents a decrease of just under 15% from last year. Of the 394, there were 16 Youth Group members between the ages of 7 and 14 and 25 members of the Kitchener Master Gardeners.

Respectfully submitted by

Bruce MacNeil

Horticultural Therapy Report - 2004

Horticultural Therapy programs are offered at Grand River Hospital - Freeport and at Winston Park Nursing and Retirement Home in 2004. Four Society members in total: Theresa Billo, Bruce MacNeil, Ruth Paape and Maryanne Weiler work with staff members at the two facilities throughout the year. The program at Freeport Hospital involves participants who reside at the Hospital during their short term therapy. In the winter, workshops are conducted in the Solarium. Once the weather is good enough for us to work outside, we begin planting the raised garden beds located on the upper terrace. Participants plan, plant, and maintain vegetable and flower gardens in the raised beds and harvest the resultant crops throughout the growing season. They also start plants from seeds and cuttings, transplant and maintain the new plants under grow lights and prepare them for sale at the Annual Plant Sales. For the first time since it began, the program at Winston Park had raised beds to use for the outside portion of the program. Residents planted several varieties of tomatoes that had been started in one of our sessions. In addition to the tomatoes, residents planted vegetables, herbs and flowers. Participants at both facilities vary in number weekly but consistently run between 6 and 10 participants at each of the weekly sessions.

Resectfully submitted by

Bruce MacNeil