



## JUNE 2017 ABBREVIATED NEWSLETTER

To see our complete newsletter, view the online version.

### **A Letter From Our Presidents**

May was a very active month! This year we bounced from warm to cold, to rain to cold, then warm again! Fortunately, all our drought worries vanished as the rains came. Plants were planted, triangles were cleaned up, and the town hall planters (both the large round ones and the older rectangular ones on the front entrance) got flowering plants.

The hanging baskets are up despite many challenges. We switched from hanging rods to chains, a very time consuming process. The weather didn't cooperate as we worked in record heat. We honestly couldn't have done it without the help of Walt Jaykus and Jimmy Peck from Public Works who spent hours with us working to switch from rods to chains. The large sidewalk planters for the Pop Up Park had their share of difficulties also. It poured on planting day so Public Works saved us by loaning us one of their spacious garages to work in.

Whatever the combination of cold/warm weather we had, everything bloomed so lush and full this year, and all at the same time! The azalea and rhododendron blooms at Lee Garden were spectacular this year! The Lee Garden Azalea Festival on May 21 saw more than 100 visitors. Staying Put visited with a group in mid-May. The Gardeners visited Lee Garden in early June. Ann Gillerlain's children have given Lee Garden a bench from Ann's personal garden. The bench has 'Gillerlain' carved on the top.

For the month of June, Bianca Romano has organized our volunteers to make flower arrangements for the dining room at Waveny Care Center. Invitations are out for a Garden Walk for new members at Carol Seldin's magical garden and for the Annual Volunteer Coffee at Mead Park. At the Annual Meeting on June 7, we voted for our new slate of officers, and guest cookbook author, Tracey Medeiros, entertained us with a cooking demonstration from her books, *The Connecticut Farm Table Cookbook* and *The Vermont Farm Table Cookbook*. All those who attended had a wonderful time.

We have been honored to be your co-presidents for the last two years. It has been a gratifying experience to lead such a dynamic and dedicated group of volunteers.

*Faith and Sara*



**Welcome Our New Member!**



Laurel Birch

So very nice to have you with us!



Save the Date  
**Autumn Luncheon**

Wednesday  
October 7, 2017  
Woodway Country Club  
Darien, CT

more info to follow!



## MAY HAPPENINGS

### Our May Program Was Creative and Inspiring!

An engaging speaker, Adam Manjuk shared his talent, knowledge, and his love and passion for the flower industry with us.



Our program chairs organized a wonderful program for us again. Shown here are Program Co-chair Gerda Smith, Co-president Faith Kerchoff, speaker Adam Manjuk, Program Co-chair Carol Seldin, and Co-president Sara Hunt.



Adam raffled off the arrangements he made during the program and more! Our happy winners are top row left to right: Peggy Danneman, Sara Hunt, Eileen Boehme, and Nancy Malling. Bottom row left to right: Nell Smith, Susan Smith, Joan Hayenga, and Libby Butterworth.

## The Big Dig

Have you read about the thoughtful donation Dr. Nick Rutigliano, offered to the NCBL? Nick and his wife Ashley bought the house and property previously owned by Bruce and Elaine Pauley which contained a beautiful and mature perennial garden. Needing to create more lawn and less garden in his backyard, he offered the backyard plants to our League.

Faith Kerchoff spearheaded "The Big Dig", organizing NCBL members to dig up the plants, assigning the various plants to specific areas around town and finally, organizing the planting.



Most of the plants were dug up in two days. Here, on one day of "The Big Dig" are Robin Bates-Mason, Liz Orteig, Peggy Dannemann, Sandy Siegel, and Rob Carpenter. Also helping that day and not pictured are Joan Hayenga, Yvonne Hunkeler, Kathy Lapolla, Tracy Phillips, Bianca Romano, and Betsy Sammarco.

The areas of town that were planted with the donated plants were Center Bell triangle, Thrift Shop triangle, other various triangles in town, the Post Office drop off, the Train Station, and Lee Garden.

A wide variety of plants were salvaged: lysymachia, hosta, siberian iris, foxglove, dianthus, daisies, liriope, evening primrose, geranium, ladies mantel, and a couple varieties of grasses.

To be sure that you don't miss the heartfelt response written by Elaine Pauley to Mike Dinan, author of the article about the donation in the New Canaanite, it is being reprinted here:

Mike,

This amazing story brought tears to my eyes. I frequently have dreams about the New Canaan house...a gradual way of letting go. It was on the market longer than we hoped, but when Nicholas and Ashley wrote us the most heartfelt letter regarding their love for our home, we were glad for the time without a buyer.

I learned how to grow things from my time on a farm in Mississippi. But pretty landscapes were not the focus then. We grew food for our animals and ourselves.

It was not until I came to New Canaan and volunteered at the Nature Center that I learned to value the aesthetic aspect of gardening. Many of the plants in my garden were given to me by such gardening gurus as Reba Roorbach, Brace Foster, Ann Gillerlain, and Stan Barnes. Most of what I know I learned working side by side with them. I know Faith and Sandy will remember them.

So it is fitting that their gifts to me, so very long ago, are going to the very places they helped create. That would not be happening without the effort of Nicholas and Ashley to honor and keep alive a New Canaan gardening tradition.

When we plant gardens, if we have been fortunate to know great teachers, we also plant stories. I left those plants behind, knowing they would not survive the move to our colder climate, but the stories are here in my heart.

In gratitude,  
Elaine Pauley

# Lee Garden Azalea Festival

This year's Azalea Festival was attended by over 100 people! Our visitors were awestruck at the color and variety of plants in the almost three acre woodland.



Faith Kerchoff cuts the beech tree seedling that have planted themselves on the hill at Lee in preparation for this year's Azalea Festival.



Visitors enjoyed refreshments in the sitting area.

## Two Town Organizations Get Tours of Lee Garden

Some members of the New Canaan organization Staying Put, and members of the gardening club, The Gardeners, visited Lee Garden in May. Although the garden is open to all visitors dawn to dusk, these groups were fortunate to get docent lead tours from Faith Kerchoff and Kathy Lapolla, two of our Lee Garden chairpersons and experts on the garden.



Staying Put Director of Member Resources, Kathy Collins, sent this note of thanks:

*Dear Faith, Kathy and all members of the NCBL,  
Thank you so very much for all you do to make our town so beautiful.  
A special thank you to Faith and Kathy for taking the time to give  
Staying Put members and staff a wonderful tour of Lee Memorial  
Garden. It was a very enjoyable afternoon.  
Best,  
Kathy Collins*

## HANGING BASKETS

This year's hanging baskets may just be the best yet! With white and blue 'supertunia', bicoloored Petunia 'raspberry blast', and red 'dragonwing' begonias, the flowers really stand out among the town's landscape.



Walt Jaykus and Jimmy Peck (from Public Works) helped assemble the new baskets. The hardware was changed from the old cumbersome hanging rods to new hanging chains. The four chains on all 217 baskets (that makes 868 chains) needed to be shortened so the planters would not obscure our street signs. This created extra work this year and we are quite grateful for the help Public Works gave! As you can see by the photo below from Hanging Baskets Day, it takes a village to decorate a village!



Back row left to right:  
Jimmy Peck (Public Works), Eileen Boehme, Susan Smith, Angie Brenninkmeyer, Debra Prosek Simpson, Walt Jaykus (Public Works), Ann Brookshire, and Sara Hunt.  
Front row left to right:  
Jeanne Piscitello, Simin Zendehrouh, Susan Bergen, Liz Orteig, Faith Kerchoff with grandson Thayer, and Libby Butterworth.

## POP UP PARK PLANTERS

Torrents of rain came on Planting Day, Thursday, May 25 so Public Works loaned us one of their big garages to plant in. Those planting the large town planters stayed nice and dry while it poured outside. A big thank you to Public Works and our volunteers for making this happen!



Susan Weatherley,  
Libby Butterworth,  
Eileen Boehme and  
Liz Orteig enjoy some  
conversation after  
they finished planting  
six large planters.

Not pictured is Sara  
Hunt.

You can see the planters now on the corner of Elm and South Streets. They also will be used at the Pop Up Park.

# Town Triangles



This beautiful triangle greets those driving on Route 123. Sitting across from "Mose's Meadow" on the corner of Parade Hill Road, it is maintained by Val Monaghan and Shirley Stancik.

A note from our Triangle chairs:

*Tracy and I would like to thank all the triangle volunteers who are working so diligently this year. Every triangle is spectacular. We look forward to seeing you at our annual "Volunteer Coffee in the Park" on June 12th.*

*Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Nick Rutigliano and his wife Ashley, we have used his plant donation in various location around town: Center Bell, the Post Office Drop Box area, the new Thrift Shop triangle, and the right side of the Train Station driveway, Lee Garden, and various plants to other triangles as well. Also a big thanks to Judy Gilroy for becoming a triangle volunteer for the Thrift Shop triangle.*

Kathy Lapolla and Tracy Phillips

# Town Hall Plantings

The two very large planters flanking the new Town Hall entrance are planted. Designed and planted by Heather O'Neill of **Second Nature Landscape Design**, the plantings are purchased by NCBL.



Kathy Lapolla sits in front of one of the Town Hall planters. Kathy commented that the color scheme of the planter is very similar to that in her own garden.



The old Town Hall entrance has been planted by Yvonne Hunkeler and Faith Kerchoff. The flowers in the four gorgeous cement planters compliment the planter design beautifully. They are planted with bacopa, New Guinea impatiens, and caladium.

## A Very Meaningful Donation

The family of Ann Gillerlain donated a bench from her property for Lee Garden. Ann passed away in February and had a special connection to Lee Garden; as a friend to George and Olive Lee, executor of George's will, dedicated volunteer on the property, and member of NCBL for 45 years.



This newsletter would have not been possible without my proofreaders, Sara Hunt and Susan Smith. Often given short notice and a copy complete with errors, I have been so grateful month after month to have them catch the mistakes, grammar, spelling, and formatting before sending the newsletter out to our membership.  
Thank you so very much!

Betsy Sammarco



## Don't be fooled ...

Sure, we've had a lot of rain lately, but our reservoir levels are still below what they were last year. Aquarion officials are protecting our precious water supply by *limiting sprinkler irrigation*.

Residents with addresses ending in even numbers can water on Sundays and Wednesdays before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m. Odd numbered addresses can water on Saturdays and Tuesdays during the same time period.

The restrictions apply to both in-ground irrigation systems and above-ground sprinklers. Drip irrigation, soaker hoses and hand-held watering are allowed at any time.

Read about this update with an illustrative chart on the Aquarion website.



## CLOSING THOUGHT



"Gardens are a form of autobiography."  
- Sydney Eddison

Pictured are tree peonies and allium from Carol Seldin's personal garden.