

MICHIGAN GARDEN CLUBS INC.,
CENTRAL REGION
JUNE 2005-2007

PRESIDENT; FLORENCE SMITH
28626 OAK POINT DR.
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN 48331-2706
Member of North Farmington Garden Club
Member of Farmington Hills Flower Arrangers Guild

THEME: CULTIVATING GARDENERS





Florence Smith, *FGCM President*

The President's Acceptance Address

I am pleased and honored to have been selected President of The Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan. Many years ago, when I joined my first garden club, I never thought of holding an office – I wanted to be an active member; learn about gardening and floral design and participate in projects to make our community more beautiful. Those things are still important to me, but in addition, I want you to know that I will work hard and do my very best to fulfill my new obligations and responsibilities.

I want to thank the many people who have helped and advised me through the years. I especially want to thank my family for being here to share this special occasion with me and for always being there at times of need. Over the years my family has heard, and tolerated, so much about plants, flowers, arrangements, crafts, and other garden club related subjects. Thanks for listening and thanks for your support.

The theme for this administration is "Cultivating Gardeners" which will address the retaining and increasing of membership.

The next two years will prove to be a challenge for all of us. As members we must ask ourselves what we can do to improve our clubs, our community and the environment. It has become evident to me that one of the most serious challenges we face today is the declining membership in the Federation. It is important that we all work together to reverse this trend and start to increase our membership for future generations. Let's try to increase our membership in the next two years by at least 5%. We could easily meet this goal if each club would add 2 members.

A study group will be formed to come up with recommendations on how to resolve this situation.

It is important that we find out what would attract new members and adjust our programs where possible, to their interests. We must be creative in our thinking and passionate when discussing our organization

with others. We must also value our present members, their experience, their knowledge, and their potential as future leaders in FGCM.

Our Nation has been using yellow ribbons in many ways to show our support for our troops. As garden club members, what better way to show our patriotism and support than by planting "ribbons of yellow flowers" in our personal gardens and community gardens! Let our imagination run free with mass plantings of yellow – marigolds, snapdragons, coreopsis, zinnias, sunflowers, and the list goes on. Yellow is a vibrant color; bright, stimulating, warm and cheerful like sunshine, easily seen – and it sends the message – "We Support You."

I have given much thought as to what we, as a group, can do to support a meaningful and important environmental project. The activity I have in mind is called the Northern Great Lakes Forest Project. It is the culmination of a four year effort on the part of the Nature Conservancy, with the help of Governor Granholm and Former Governor Engler, to complete what is the largest project of its kind in the country and in the Conservancy's 54 year history. The purchase of conservation easements will protect 248,000 acres of high priority Upper Peninsula forest ranging from Taquamenon Falls State Park in the east to Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park in the west. This project is unique not only for its sheer size, but for the positive impact it will have on 70 primary lakes, over 500 miles of major rivers and tributaries, wetlands and a rich variety of wildlife.

We are familiar with the motto emblazoned on our state flag that reads, "If You Seek A Pleasant Peninsula, Look About You." We can help perpetuate the meaning of those words by supporting The Nature Conservancy in spirit and by helping to raise the funds still required to implement this project.

We will raise funds for the Nature Conservancy project by selling an elegant gold and enameled ornament that features our State flower, the apple blossom, and the State bird, the robin. The ornament, a limited edition, was designed by Steve Bixby who also designed the National Garden Clubs ornament for the Butterfly Garden in Washington D.C.

In closing, I again want to thank you for the honor bestowed upon me tonight. I recognize the challenges we face, and as your president, with your help, we will meet these challenges and we will continue to promote, encourage, aid and advance the Federation.

Florence

N.G.C. SCHOOLS 2005-2007

Twelve chairman work with the third vice-pres, all involved in bringing education opportunities to our members. We are at a point where three of our schools are concluding their series and the fourth will in the fall.

At the 2006 convention the three councils voted to combine with one set of officers representing each group. New by-laws were also passed.

2006 STATE CONVENTION

The 2006 Michigan Garden Clubs Convention was held at Boyne Highlands, Boyne Falls, MI. The theme was Connecting, Mind, Body and Sprit The convention was held on May 31, June 1&2

Speakers were: Helen Taylor of the Nature Conservancy, Kristine Stout Hand bell soloist, Dave Barrons speaking on Global Warming, a Design program by Claudia Chopp. Donald Virgovic of the National Forest Service also spoke to us. Many great workshops were also held including:

Tree Peonies 101 - Cathy Hamilton
 Magic of Mechanics - Judy Nykamp
 Garnishing Demonstration- Robert Rodriquez
 New Dimensions in Background - Pauline Flynn
 Historic tour of Bay View- John Higgins

2007 STATE CONVENTION

The 2007 State Convention was also held at the Crown Plaza hotel in Grand Rapids, Mi. on June 4,5,and 6.

The theme was: Sunny Days in Michigan. Chairmen were Deannie Picciotti and Jeanne Poll

Caroline Ball Luncheon speaker she is C.E.O. of the Ball Seed Co.

Dave MacKenzie spoke on Green Roofs and Living Walls

Rick Vuyst C.E.O. of Fruit Basket Flowerland also spoke

All the Speakers stressed Greening of America and caring for our Land and Water

There also were many interesting Workshops including: Photography - Inside Garden Club- Container Gardening- Artistic Craft and also a tour of Meijer Gardens Sculpture Park

Please see President Smith's closing address to the Convention on the last page of this report.

CENTRAL REGION CONVENTION

President Florence Smith attended the following Conventions

Nov. 3-5 2005 Kansas City - she gave a report on Michigan Garden Clubs accomplishments

Oct. 15-17 2006 Clarksville, Ind.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

President Florence Smith attended the National Convention held in May of 2007 in Boston, Ma.

And the May of 2006 Convention in Orlando, Fl.

Florence reported that a sizable bequest had been given to MGC by a deceased member.

A strategic planning Committee under the direction of Sharon Yantis gathered many proposals for a website. A Company was chosen and they are designing a customized website. This website will be user friendly for all members and non members as well. The goal is to have it completed by the fall of 2007.

It was also reported that due to rising costs and the addition of a website "Thru the Garden Gate" will no longer be printed. The newsletter will be sent by mail until the Website is completed. The members who do not have a computer will be sent the newsletter.

ARBORICULTURE

This Chairman reminded us of Arbor Day, presented information for Fall Tree Care, How to Care for Trees in Winter and answered various questions from Garden Club Members.

AWARDS

Deannie Picciotti Awards Chairman reports as follows:

Awards Received Nov. 2005 (for 2004 Calendar year) 42 Books received. Books to NGC 7 books sent to NGC 7MGC yearbooks sent, 4 Flower Show Books sent

Awards Received Nov. 2006 (for 2005 Calendar year) 48 books received. 12 books sent to NCC. 6 MGC Yearbooks sent. 2006 -

BLUE STAR MARKERS

Joyce Witten Chairman reports:

11 Blue Star Markers have been placed and dedicated

These include: South Haven, Friendly G.C. Lake City, Loch Alpine, Swan Creek, Sherwood, Town and Country, Constantine, Ludington, Eden G.C. Friendly G.C. of Traverse City, Milan G. C.

There are now 26 Blue Star Memorial Markers in the State of Michigan

CALENDAR

Dan Abbott was the Calendar Chairman and did a fine job of recording events in the Garden Gate.

CONSERVATION CONFERENCES

Homestead Glen Arbor, Mi. Oct. 23-26 2006 a Ranger from Sleeping Bear Dunes and the Midwest Director of the Sierra Club spoke.

There was a tour of the Hart Visitor Center

CONSERVATION SCHOLARSHIPS

The Higgins Lake Conservation Scholarship chairman, reports that this is the 61st year that the summer program is being held. This will be held in July and August with Professors from Central Michigan University and Wayne State University being the facilitators for these sessions. Michigan Garden Clubs will award as many students as possible a Scholarship of \$252.20.

71 students received Higgins Lake Scholarships

CRAFTS

Laura Tonar Artistic Crafts Chairman had an article on Twig Weaving in the Gate. She held a workshop on jewelry made from Milk Weed pods at our annual 2007 Convention.

DATA BASE MEMBERSHIP

Robin Courtright Membership Chairman kept very accurate and up to date Membership records . We now have 189 clubs which includes 7207 Members.

DISTRICT DIRECTORS

We have 7 District Directors named below:

Debbie Morrow, Shirley Feight, Jeanette Foster, Lynn Dinvald, Jeanne Poll, Dianne Nemitz and Nancy Stark

Each of these Directors attended District Meetings, visited many clubs, and gave wonderful reports at the Board Meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Anne Wiseman, Legislative chairman, has written four articles for The Gate and prepared reports for each board meeting,. She attended the Mi. Environmental Council's Legislative Day as a representative of MGC and Scenic MI. She has kept us well-informed of environmental issues that have come before the MI. legislature

FLORAL DESIGNS

There was an idea to broaden out the scope of Floral Design Courses to the individual garden club meetings: to break down the unit lesson plans into a one- hour hands on meeting this idea was put into the "Thru the Garden Gate" as a meeting idea for the Program Chairmen's of the garden clubs and the response was encouraging. She urges all judges to find the time to help a club in you area implement design classes. Many Clubs have done so.

FLOWER SHOWS

Many clubs in our State host Flower Shows, some having two a year. Both Designs and Horticulture displays are encouraged and more clubs are encouraged to participate in this endeavor

25 flower shows were held during the 2005-2007 term

FLOWER SHOW CREDENTIALS

We currently have 111 judges in our state: A "Who Needs Judging List" had been maintained .

FOUNDATION OF THE FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS OF MICHIGAN

This became the Michigan Garden Club Scholarship Fund

HISTORIAN

Madelyn Schrottenboer, Historian helped to write a brochure to accompany the ornament that featured our state flower the Apple Blossom and the state bird, the Robin. She also obtained Mr. Leonard Coombs from the Bentley Historical Library to speak to us about putting material that so many of us had in our homes in the archives at the Library. Mr Coombs followed up with a visit to look over our material and has placed them there.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SYMPOSIAM

Held at Fernwood -March 31 and April 1, 2006

LEGISLATION Please refer to Environmental Issues

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Marie Smith, Life Membership chairman, has had numerous articles in the Gate promoting life memberships as well as listing the newest life members. She has processed 79 state life and 5 national life memberships in the past two years.

LODA LAKE/VISITING GARDENS

Carol Phelps Loda Lake chairman has been very busy helping to improve the Loda Lake Site.

Lola lake is the only "Wildflower" Preserve under the US Forest Service jurisdiction. A cooperative agreement was signed by the Secretary of Agriculture and Michigan Garden Clubs in 1949.. Historically efforts to accomplish this agreement date back to 1937

Most recently, an extensive grant in the amount of \$23,000 was written and approved . Also over \$5000.00 was raised by local Garden Clubs. Many wonderful objectives have been accomplished, and there is much ongoing work being done.

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED JUDGES

Sept. 20-21 2005 Was held at the Holiday West in Livonia

June 20-21 2006 was held in Midland

Sept. 25 2006 Designs for Tomorrow and Judging Day Lilies were topics discussed

There was a Standard Flower Show held at Meijers Gardens July 16 and 17 of 2006

THE NATIONAL GARDENER PROMOTION

Susan Kropschot, National Gardener chairman, continues to promote subscriptions to the National Gardener. Along with her garden club she has provided several area libraries with subscriptions. She continues to encourage subscriptions at district meetings. (usually wearing her bright green Garden Club apron. She had a display at the Spring Convention

THRU THE GARDEN GATE

It was voted by the MGC Board of Directors to stop publishing "Thru the Garden Gate" It was voted unanimously to print a Newsletter. The Newsletter will be sent by mail until the Website is completed and at that time the Newsletter will be on the web. For those that do not have a computer the newsletter will be mailed to them.

Judy Nykamp who had been the Editor of the Gate for 17 years was honored at the convention for her many years of service in that capacity.

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Chairman Virginia Frolich

13 applications were received in 2006 and 1 was selected.

Two applications were received in 2007 from which one Michigan winner was selected. The winner was Brianne Danielle Lunn, from Bellaire, MI., a junior enrolled in the School of Biological Sciences at Lake Superior State University. Her application was forwarded to both the National Scholarship Chairperson, to be considered for one of 34 \$3500.00 National Scholarships and to the Central Region Chairman for Scholarship Selections for consideration. Brianne won the National award.

Brianne is studying Fisheries and Wildlife Management, and among her career objectives is to continue her education in pursuit of a Master's Degree.

STATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Nancy McGilliard Scholarship Chairman that she is grateful to all the clubs, members and friends who have contributed \$13,000 to our Scholarship Fund this fiscal year. This makes possible 18 Scholarships for students at Michigan public universities for the next academic year.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Connie Snell Chairman reports that a by-law change was made eliminating terms of Chairmanship which will help to bring a greater turn-over and will allow more Members to participate

WEBMASTER

We have had a webmaster in the past but this will soon be replaced with the new Web Site.

WORLD GARDENING

Chris Rochman World Gardening Chairman has made many trips to Belize working with the Young People there. She states that the Young People are very grateful and worthy of our help in helping them help themselves. She has prepared reports for each issue listing donating clubs with one feature article each year. She included a picture of some of our scholarship recipients that was taken on her 10 day visit in July 2005.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

There has not been much activity of late but as of now clubs have been asked to encourage Students to get involved. Some clubs are actively involved in Boys and Girls Clubs, using natural material in their Craft Projects

N.G.C. AWARDS

Please see the enclosed reports on the Michigan Awards Received at 2007 NGC Convention and the 2006 NGC Convention.

CENTRAL REGION AWARDS

There were Press Book Awards

Chris Rochman received the 2006 Award of honor from Central Region

Holland Garden Club received the Standard Flower Show Award for a show staged in a Public Building

Our Pres. and Vice President attended.

Historian:

Madelyn Schrottenboer

MICHIGAN AWARDS RECEIVED AT 2006 NGC CONVENTION:

Award # Name:	Club
#6 Conservation	Holland Garden Club, large club
#44 Publicity Press Book	Holland Garden Club, large club
#44 Publicity Press Book	Williamston Red Cedar Garden Club, med. Club
#50 Historic Preservation	Holland Garden Club, large club
#62 Landscape Design Program	Highcliffe Terrace, Indian Hills & Shoreline Garden Clubs, more than one club
#62 Landscape Design Program	Shoreline Garden Club, small club

#5 Standard Flower Show B, membership 21-49:

Blue Water Garden Club, Port Huron: "Back in Your Own Backyard"

#57 Standard Flower Show Staged in Public Building: A. one member club:

Holland Garden Club, "Symphony of Flowers"

Member Award of Honor:

Central Region: Chris Rochman, Michigan: Chris is involved in many civic projects, including successfully convincing the residents of Loch Alpine to pay for recycling pickup in their neighborhood. Her World Gardening project of working with the youth in Belize, Central America was adopted by NGC in 2004. Chris belongs to three garden clubs.

Principal Grant recipients:

DeWitt Millennium Garden Club: \$800

Mason County Garden Club: \$500

Stepping Stones Garden Club: \$1,000

Perennial Garden Club: \$500

MICHIGAN AWARDS RECEIVED AT 2007 NGC CONVENTION

Award # Name	Garden Club
#13A Publication: Newsletter	Sweetwater Evening Garden Club,
#16 Yearbook	Niles Garden Club, (45-69 members)
#44 Publicity Press Book	Holland Garden Club, large club
#73 Civic Project with Native Plants \$1000	Big Rapids Garden Club, medium

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PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Florence Smith, recently elected state president of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, sits among the flower bed in the front yard of her Farmington Hills home.

Bright bulb

Farmington Hills woman takes reins of gardening organization

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
STAFF WRITER

Florence and Robert Smith's yard has undergone a renaissance of sorts.

Two years ago the Farmington Hills couple removed several ash trees destroyed by the emerald ash borer in front of their home.

Florence replaced the trees with new plants to color the yard, including a Cleveland pear tree, hostas, yellow lillies, impatiens and begonias. It was also a chance to fill the front with begonias, cigar plants, coleus, sweet potato vine, miniature fuchsia

and grasses. That sort of initiative in gardening should serve Smith well as she was elected president this summer of The Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan.

She was elected to a two-year term by members, after serving as vice-president for two years.

The organization is dedicated to creating, promoting and furthering interest in horticulture, floral and landscape design, and gardening. The group consists of 6,800 members in seven geographic districts. Smith has been a member of the North Farmington Garden Club for 25 years.

LOOKING FOR MORE

Smith hopes to promote gardening with a larger membership.

"One of the things I want is for each club to get a 5-percent increase in membership," she said. "I'm also asking our members to plant ribbons of yellow flowers in public gardens and their own personal perennial gardens to support our troops."

Garden clubs take on many public garden projects by volunteering to plant and maintain them.

"We also have the Northern Great Lakes Forest project. We're selling Michigan ornaments to benefit that project. They are 14-carat gold-plated oval ornaments with apple blossoms (the state flower) and robin, the state bird."

PLEASE SEE GARDENING, B4



Florence Smith has placed a nice little seat along a path for a little quiet in the shade.



With little sun shining into her back yard, Florence Smith has a great pathway lined with shade loving plants for her to walk.

GARDENING

FROM PAGE B1

Easements created by the project will help protect the state forests.

Florence and Bob moved into their current house in 1974. The couple has three sons and seven grandchildren.

STARTING EARLY

Florence started gardening at age 3 or 4. When she was very young, she picked several flowers off a plant in the garden and brought them into the house.

"I picked all the flowers off of our string bean plants and said 'Look, I have all these flowers.' I don't know if (her parents) wanted to praise me or kill me," she said with a laugh.

Smith said her mother reminded her of that story for many years.

She loved gardening as a child, whether it was weeding or picking flowers to brighten up a table inside the house.

"I've always enjoyed it. It's a great stress reliever," Smith said.

When Florence and Robert moved into their current house, the yard had many perennials.

"It's a challenge with a shade yard. It's all trial and error. Whether it is the sun, shade or soil, it doesn't always work for you."

Hummingbirds enjoy the front yard.

"They like anything tubular, that their bill will fit into, like hostas or the cigar plant."

On the front right side, she planted Korean

lilacs, magnolias, azaleas and Michigan holly, hydrangeas and grasses. Once the sunlight hit the bare yard after the ash trees were removed, the yellow hostas became white and blue became green.

Container gardening gives planters more choices of plant variety and color, Smith said.

Her back yard is terraced, and cool with all the shade. Hostas and pachysandra are everywhere. Impatiens, ferns and bleeding hearts are also in the yard.

Three of her grandchildren (Michael, Scott and Kyle) gave them a stepping stone for the yard in 1997.

"You have to get children interested in gardening when they are little," she said.

Federated Garden Clubs hosts many children's garden events, she said.

Smith enjoys the spring.

"It's my favorite time of year with all of its new beginnings," she said. "And it's just about that time (September) to begin the fall planting of bulbs."

Tulips and daffodils paint a colorful front yard for the Smiths as Florence plants approximately 250 bulbs in the front yard every September.

Husband Bob likes the flowers.

"You have so many varieties," he said to Florence.

He also gives her credit for her work.

"I'm not a flower planter, I'm a flower watcher."

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State Convention June 4, 2007
Annual Meeting
Michigan Garden Clubs Inc.

Members and Guests,

The theme for this administration is "Cultivating Gardeners". I know we have accomplished this thru our many activities in all levels.

One of the objectives for this administration was to plant ribbons of yellow flowers to support our troops. You certainly did that. I have had reports and photos of gardens with ribbons of yellow flowers. My local newspaper as well as the Detroit News had a wonderful article about the planting of yellow flowers as one of the goals and objectives for this administration. I was proud and honored to be able to educate the public about MGC.

During this administration the members supported the Northern Great Lakes Forest Project, which is the purchase of conservation easements that will protect 248,000 acres of high priority Upper Peninsula forest in Michigan. This project is unique not only for its size but for the positive impact it will have on 70 primary lakes. Funds were raised by MGC by selling elegant gold enameled ornaments that featured our State Flower, the Apple Blossom and the State Bird, the Robin. I am pleased to say raising funds for this project was a total success and all of the 964 ornaments were sold. A donation of \$5,518.90 will be given to the Nature Conservancy at this convention

Deannie Picciotti was chairman of this great project.

I have represented MGC at District Meetings, Flower Shows, Schools, State conventions, Central Region Meetings and National Conventions. I just returned from the National Convention in Boston, where Barbara May was installed as NGC President. It was a fantastic convention from beginning to end the centerpieces were outstanding, the Speakers excellent and so was the food. It was a fantastic convention from beginning to end.

In June of 2005 MGC was fortunate to have been given a bequest from Edna Rosenfield to be used to promote membership. Her wishes were to inform members and non members of the structure of this organization from the club level to the National level.. Due to the generosity of Edna Rosenfield

Michigan Garden Clubs is about to make some major changes in the way we communicate with members and the world around us.

I'd like to give you an update on how we plan to give MGC a new image and help the organization move forward now and in the future. These updates will benefit all of our members as well as non members who will be able to learn more about MGC. I'm really pleased about the changes that are to come about and I know they will be beneficial to the whole organization.

A strategic planning committee was formed and after considering a DVD and a website it was determined that a website would be more beneficial to the organization. The Strategic planning Committee under the direction of Sharon Yantis gathered many proposals for a website. Bright Bridge Studios was chosen and they are designing a customized website for MGC. This website will be user friendly for all members and non members as well. It is the committee's goal to have this website completed by the fall of 2007. My thanks go to Sharon and her committee for working so tirelessly on this project.

With the addition of the website it was realized that the publishing of "Thru the Garden Gate" magazine wouldn't be necessary and a smaller more condensed Newsletter could be published, which would be more cost efficient.

After much thought and consideration the MGC Board of Directors voted by an overwhelming majority to stop publishing "Thru the Garden Gate". The MGC board voted unanimously on the printing of a Newsletter. The Newsletter will be sent by mail until the Website is completed. You should have received the first newsletter, upon completion of the website the newsletter will be on the web. For those that don't have a computer the newsletter will be mailed to them.

Other accomplishments for 2005-2007 are the participation in the Let Freedom Ring Project where four garden clubs received grants, The Blue Star Memorial project with 14 new markers; The Loda Lake Project \$5,000 was raised by members and a grant to Loda Lake of \$23,000; 71 students received Higgins Lake Scholarships; 34 students received \$1,000 scholarships; 25 flower shows were held and the list goes on. I will leave more details to the District Directors, and Vice Presidents.

I want to thank all of you for allowing me the honor and privilege to have served as MGC President. All that was accomplished is due to all of you.
Life is made up of memories and you have given me so many wonderful ones.
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU,

Respectfully Submitted,

Florence Smith