The first fifty years (1915-1965) of the Plainfield Garden Club have been
chronicled by Mrs. Thomas Van Boskerck and Mrs. Gerald Furman who have
written beautifully of its establishment and development, its initiatives
and accomplishments. To continue with the next twenty years, the following
will briefly touch upon the programs and problems, successes and semi-suc-
cesses of our diverse interests in a time of increasing challenge and com-
plexity.

CONSERVATION

As always, our Club has been deeply concerned with the preservation of
our natural resources. Realizing the importance of reaching the young people,
we continued in the sixties and seventies to send teachers to Audubon camps.
After reporting to the Club, they brought their enthusiasm and information
back into the classroom.

We distributed conservation packets in schools and to Girl and Boy
Scouts, as well as to new Garden Club members.

With letters to legislators we urged that the Pine Barrens be made a
National Monument and the Sandy Hook State Park be included in the National
Seashore System. We also recommended that parts of the Great Swamp be inclu-
ded in the Wilderness Bill.

We voiced our concern for far away places such as the Alaska Pipeline,
the Equinelle Barge Canal and Jetport and at the same time we endorsed the
Pesticides Bill regulating the use of "hard" pesticides.

When, in the late sixties, conservation finally became front page news
across the land, we accelerated our efforts. We had speakers on the dangers
of one three Ps - Pollution, Pesticides and Population. We invited Garden
Club members' husbands and city officials to one meeting where our theme was
"Shorey Crisis". We presented a panel on water problems in May, 1966. We
joined the Wilderness Society and North Jersey Conservation Association and
supported the Student Conservation Association. 1968 saw the creation of a
New Jersey Park. Mrs. Willoughby Frost, who designed the park, and her
committee worked diligently to transform a litter-strewn plot into a spot of
beauty. After completion, Conservation turned the park over to a special
committee. The "mini" park captured several awards and an article about it was published in the GCA Bulletin. The park has been maintained by the Garden Club members on a regularly scheduled basis.

In 1969 we began taking conservation field trips. We continued to give conservation packets to schools. In 1972 this resulted in downtown plantings and an anti-litter program. Mrs. Seymour Perkins organized the first recycling station in Plainfield. Recycling was later taken over by the City. We urged the use of recycled paper. We supported the Plainfield Beautification Committee and the New Jersey Roadside Council. 1980 did see some gains in conservation since President Carter signed a bill to protect another million acres in Alaska. Also passed was the 1.6 billion dollar waste clean-up bill. In 1981 we strongly supported the preservation of Assateague Wildlife Refuge and in 1984 joined the Great Swamp Organization, a non-profit citizens group for planning and preserving land use. In September, 1983 Mrs. Robert Hunziker and Mrs. Robert Loughlin prepared an educational poster entitled "Water" which was later submitted to the Zone IV meeting.

The Club continues to honor its deceased members with gifts of money to the GCA's Redwood Memorial Grove in California.

HORTICULTURE

Enthusiastic chairmen inspired their committees and general membership from the sixties through the eighties.

Particularly successful and popular were membership participation programs and workshops. Outstanding, in February, 1966, was the presentation on the "Heath Family" under the leadership of Mrs. Harold Loizeaux and another such program in 1970 on the "Ranunculaceae Family".

Workshops on propagation, hanging baskets, pruning and spraying, growing under lights and bulb-forcing were enthusiastically attended. Mrs. DeWitt Barlow graciously opened her greenhouse several times for these sessions. Field trips were taken to Bowman's Hill State Wildflower Preserve, the Iris Garden in Montclair and the New York Botanical Garden among others.

We started in 1972 to send the requested six rooted cuttings to the GCA annual meeting. In 1978-79 several members worked on the Narcissus herbarium for this annual meeting.
As requested by GCA, we became involved in the endangered species postcard project. Our selection was clematis verticillaris. Mrs. Fred Acomb executed a botanically correct painting of the clematis from which the postcard was made. Mrs. Peter Loizeaux was in charge of the project and has been postcard "saleslady" ever since.

A troughgarden workshop was given by Mrs. Loomis Bell and Mrs. William Fuller of the Englewood Garden Club in May, 1980. The following year Plainfield's entry of a landscaped troughgarden won first prize at the Zone IV meeting.

The Horticulture Committee arranged a wreathmaking workshop in December, 1981 and presented a volume of "Exotica" to the Club's library from proceeds of a cocktail party given by the Committee.

For many years - in conjunction with the Union County Park Commission - we have maintained the Cornus-Arboratum, the Iris and the Shakespeare Gardens in Cedarbrook Park. In the seventies, due to severe droughts and, conversely, bad flooding, the Cornus Collection suffered considerably. Since building of recreational facilities and parking in and near the Arboratum were planned, no new trees were planted.

In the middle seventies an interested and able committee renewed the Iris Garden which, due to labor difficulties, had been somewhat neglected and also plagued by a particularly pernicious weed. At the same time a number of beds were eliminated in order to ease maintenance. The Garden continues to provide a beautiful spring display.

In spite of vandalism and dry summers, the Shakespeare Garden manages to survive, due to devoted chairmen and a nucleus of members who tend the garden faithfully from April to October.

In 1978 on the occasion of the Shakespeare Garden's fiftieth anniversary a delightful party took place in the garden. City officials and Park Commission dignitaries were among the guests.

The Shakespeare Garden continues to be a favorite place for wedding ceremonies and picture-taking.
EXHIBITION

We have ever been fortunate to have very talented members in the fields of design and flower arranging. Individually and in committees they have gathered laurels everywhere.

It is not possible to list here all ribbons and awards but they have been properly recorded in the minutes and annual reports.

We have had in-Club shows and participated in local and garden club shows in neighboring communities. For the Christmas season in 1965 the Club was asked by one of Plainfield's leading banks to decorate their windows. Mrs. William Elliott and her Committee did a superb job with large pinecone wreaths framing copies of famous "madonna" paintings.

Then in March, 1966 came a very special event. Designed by Mrs. William Elliott with the assistance of Mmes. Wayne Holman, Victor King, Alex Kroll, Edgar Davis, Richard Sheble, Bruce Reid and Benson Wigton, the "Back Yard Garden" captured the first prize for the Club at the International Flower Show at the Coliseum in New York City.

In 1967 several members started making decoupage items in preparation for selling them at the "Garden Walk" planned for May, 1968.

The Club responded to requests for decorating historic Drake House for Christmas, 1969.

In the early seventies hostesses were supplied for the Bryant Park shows in New York City as well as for the New Jersey flower shows in Morristown. We also exhibited several times at the Morristown shows and won ribbons of all colors.

In 1975 a windowbox was done for the Philadelphia Flower Show by Mrs. Willoughby Frost and her Committee and several members worked as judges' aides.

In 1976-1977 Mrs. Alden de Hart conducted a flower arranging workshop and Mrs. Willoughby Frost captured a first at the Zone IV judging workshop. Mrs. William Elliott's decoupage tray won third prize at the Bryant Park annual show.
In October, 1978 we were fortunate enough to have Sheila McQueen speak and demonstrate to us at our monthly meeting.

In 1979 we started to have three members providing arrangements for the membership meetings. We entered the Newark Museum's Christmas tree competition where Mrs. Charles Detwiller and Mrs. Eric Pfeifferkorn won a red ribbon with their Mexican theme entry.

At the Zone IV Meeting Flower Show Mrs. Dwight Zeller won a second and Mrs. Robert Hackman an honorable mention.

In 1980 we exhibited at the newly established GCA Flower Show at City Corp's "Autumn in the Atrium" and also served as hostesses. At the Atrium show in October, 1982 our entry, "A City Window", won third prize and a collection of dwarf conifers captured first place. At the same show in 1984 a far more ambitious exhibit was undertaken. A four foot by six foot city garden was designed by Mrs. Willoughby Frost and, after being tenderly cared for by Mrs. Robert Hackman and her Committee for three months, was taken to New York and captured a blue ribbon for our Club.

In the fall of 1984 the Club supplied flower arrangements for five houses for the Plainfield House Tour sponsored by the Historical Society.

Much in demand throughout the Zone are our three accredited judges, Mmes. Frost, Sheble and Kroll.

**PROGRAM**

Our programs continued to be diversified and stimulating. Speakers at our general meetings were experts in their respective fields. They informed us on the topics of horticulture, conservation, flower arranging (conventional and abstract), involvement in community projects and various other topics of interest.

We heard Mrs. Bush Brown, horticultural educator and author from Philadelphia, the Don Smiths of the Wathong Nursery, Mr. Gordon Foster, the fern expert, Dr. William Steere, President of the New York Botanical Garden, Dr. Richard Sullivan, the former Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of E.P.A. who discussed the environmental prospects in New Jersey, and many
others. Mrs. Sheila McQueen and the program on the energy crisis in 1974 have been previously mentioned.

Most memorable are programs presented by our own talented members. Mrs. Fred Acomb showed us some of her watercolors of Himalayan wild flowers and told us of her trips to their locale. The book of her paintings will be published shortly. Mrs. Eric Pfefferkorn and Mrs. Noah Barnhart demonstrated their successful skill in "Growing Under Lights" and "Hydroponics". Mrs. Alden de Hart and Mrs. William Elliott presented "Nostalgia", a slideshow with comments on past achievements of the Plainfield Garden Club. Mrs. Webster Sandford, who has been dedicated to the Plainfield Beautification Committee since its inception in 1966 and is now its president, showed slides of various areas in the city landscaped and maintained by the Committee. We also had speakers from other garden clubs.

Field trips took us to the New York Botanical and Brooklyn Botanic Gardens and we held a couple of our monthly meetings at the GCA headquarters. We visited Pennsbury Manor, Skyland Botanical Garden, the Duke Gardens and others. All --- excellent sources of education as well as pleasure.

WAYS AND MEANS

Since a garden club does not live by plants alone, Ways and Means, in order to keep the treasury filled, must always be on the alert.

To fulfill our yearly commitments and meet other obligations we have sold everything from containers to cookbooks - and from pocketbooks to potpourri. To raise the funds for scholarships, membership in national organizations, civic plantings, sending delegates to represent the Club, etc., money had to be raised. And it was - in small ways with in-Club sales, but also with more elaborate fund raisers such as house and garden tours.

A most successful Spring Potpourri, which involved everyone in the Club, took place in May, 1974. It featured a boutique, a plant sale, luncheon, a raffle and "choice areas" in seven houses of Club members (i.e.: only one room in a given home was shown).

1976 sprouted another "Raffle". After months of ticket selling and creating the prizes, the drawing was feted with a gala dinner at which the
husbands were most helpful as "raffleteers" ($1,660 was realized). Chances were sold for two trapunto pillows, two framed watercolors and the piece de resistance, a 4' x 6' needlepoint rug (designed with flowers from the thirteen original colonies). All items were laboriously and charmingly created by our Club members.

In addition to our major areas of activity, we have continued with the following ongoing commitments and added occasional special programs:

On a number of scheduled days during the year several members make bedside flower arrangements for patients at Lyons Veterans Hospital. We also help with their Christmas decorating and donate attractively packaged candy.

We support the GCA's project "Interchange Fellowship" (which is done in conjunction with the English-Speaking Union) and were particularly involved when, in 1974-5, Zone IV was sponsoring the program and we had the English student, John Hacker, here at Rutgers University.

Our representative on the New Jersey Roadside Council, which is now part of the Coalition for Scenic Beauty, keeps us up to date on highway engineering, Department of Transportation matters and billboard control.

We are proud to continue having members serve on committees of the GCA, Zone IV and the Garden Club of New Jersey. From time to time talented members have had their prose and poetry published in the GCA "Bulletin".

In 1976 in honor of our country's bicentennial celebration, we sponsored the landscaping at the Cannonball House Museum in Scotch Plains. That same year five members produced twenty-four small wreaths (in one weekend!) to decorate Washington's White House Christmas tree.

In 1982 the Executive Board chose a "Rosemary Topiary" for the Club's official logo, adapted from an original drawing by Alex Seidel, staff artist for Steuben Glass. After considerable work done by Mrs. Bruce Reid, assisted by Mrs. A. D. Seybold and with the professional advice of Mr. Victor R. King, the Club became incorporated in March, 1983.
Last but not least - special events merit special mention:

In the fall of 1962 some of us experienced a rather unusual outing. It was to be a relaxing, effortless canoe trip through the Pine Barrens for the observation of plants and wildlife. Not so. Our guide had not been on the meandering stream for several years during which time changes had occurred. We spent more time hauling the canoes over a dried up riverbed than paddling them and were kept so busy there was nary a chance to observe anything. In addition, it took hours to fetch the craft from their storage place, lash them onto station wagons and finally get them into the water. Later we repeated the procedure in reverse. We were gone from home for fourteen hours and our families were quite ready to send out a search party. However, no one was the worse for wear and, in order to share our adventure, we re-enacted the unique outing at a membership meeting. It made a hilarious skit.

In October, 1965 the fiftieth anniversary of the Club was celebrated with a beautiful birthday party - a formal reception at the Monday Afternoon Club. Mrs. Edward Ladd, III, the general chairman, and her committees left no stone unturned to make the affair the great success it was. Several past presidents and two charter members were among the honored guests. A pictorial history of the Club's activities highlighted the evening. The slides showed the plantings of Moraine Locusts on Park Avenue around the YWCA, the Salvation Army building, the Drake House Museum and the planted window boxes on downtown structures. We saw pictures of the Cornus collection and the Shakespeare and Iris Gardens. The decorations carried out the anniversary theme with golden touches everywhere. For a grand finale curtains opened to reveal six husbands, bedecked with aprons, seated behind a long work table! At a given signal the Men's Challenge Class got under way and frantically dealt with weird mechanics, even more weird plant material, and coffee can containers. Time was called and, by audience acclamation, horrible prizes were awarded and photographers snapped flash pictures. With a toast to the future Mr. Webster Sandford extolled the Club ladies and offered condolences to the husbands who must survive all kinds of crucial moments. A splendid time was had by all.

In 1968 the Club sponsored a May-Time Garden Walk. I quote from the invitation: "We feel this will be an unusual event. Guests will have an opportunity to visit five open houses plus a playhouse and browse through
six gardens. From the initial starting point, the going is all downhill. Lunch under a marquee, an old barn, a potting shed, and for sale—decoupage, herbal delights, hanging baskets and a return shuttle service to you car”. Beautiful weather and a large attendance made the day a great success.

In October, 1970 Plainfield hosted the GCA Zone IV meeting. There were the customary meetings with emphasis on conservation. The delegates were taken on an extensive bus tour to view the Club’s civic projects and to visit private gardens and homes. The theme of the meeting was "Rosemary for Remembrance" and after the final luncheon in Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby Frost’s festively decorated barn, each guest was given a small rosemary topiary. Successful fundraisers were a Potpourri in May, 1974 and a Boutique in 1980.

A 'free to the public' flower and craft show in the spring of 1983 involved every member. Under the excellent chairmanship of Mrs. Robert Hackman nothing was neglected or overlooked. Anticipating the show, able-bodied members tackled the grounds of the Plainfield Public Library extracting accumulated trash from the shrubbery, pruning, planting and fertilizing. Attractive posters announcing "Welcome, Sweet Springtime" were distributed and other garden clubs solicited to participate. They did this handsomely in the artistic and horticulture classes. Abstracta and pedestals which Mrs. Hackman managed to obtain from the GCA were most effective with the modern decor of the Library. Special thanks were given to husbands whose assistance throughout the show was invaluable. The craft exhibit revealed great talents in various fields and the public's genuine interest and praise were justly deserved and gratefully accepted.

We had hardly caught our breath when we plunged into preparations for the "Christmas Cupboard" staged at the Plainfield Country Club in November, 1983. Under the watchful eye of Mrs. Alden Loosli, general chairman, plans crystallized and action was taken in all directions. Workshops were soon in full swing with amazing results and culinary delicacies as well as green thumb products accumulated. Raffle tickets promoted a completely furnished dollhouse, a hooked rug and a miniature Victorian Christmas scene under glass. Everything created by talented members for the great day! Out of town garden clubs competed in festive table settings which added to the beautifully
decorated room. All in all, the Christmas Cupboard was a tremendous success as well as a boost to the Club's treasury.

In the preceding pages I have tried to highlight activities and events of the past twenty years. All information was gleaned from minutes, reports, scrapbooks and Mrs. Gerald Furman's history, published in 1965, all of which has been my sole reading material for the past few months.

Vivat - Crescat - Floreat, Plainfield Garden Club!

Anne Marie v. G. Seybold

Winter, 1984-1985