

January 2015

Dearest Members,

I am honored to be the next President of the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club. Our organization dates from 1924 and is the oldest conservation organization on the island. We have a history and a responsibility to this Island. I promise you that I will work hard to fulfill our purpose.

Let us all extend a thank you to the 2015 MVGC Executive Board and to all of the members who volunteered at our events that made the year such a success. Through their hard work we raised significant funds to support both our Old Mill and Scholarship Funds. We also addressed some thorny issues, and we have put our house in order. Our Treasurer, the invaluable Vito Palermo, has reported we are financially strong. The future looks bright!

As we look forward to 2016, let's refer to our Club's purpose.

*The purpose of the Club shall be to protect and enhance the beauty and natural assets of the Island of Martha's Vineyard by providing educational programs in conservation and horticulture; by encouraging community interest in and understanding of environmental problems; by supporting community efforts to protect our Island's environment and by taking a position on legislation affecting the environment.*

I propose we set forth the following initiatives to continue to support our purpose:

- \* Increase membership
- \* Encourage community awareness and support (individual & businesses) through our events via exposure and publicity
- \* Increase fundraising
- \* Continue to strengthen our reputation as the island's original conservation organization
- \* Work along with other island conservation groups to protect and enhance our island's natural beauty and educate the community

How are we going to accomplish these goals? *With your help!*

As the saying goes, it takes a village. As a current member you can help us increase our membership and fundraising by seeking your family, friends, neighbors and associates to join and/or support the Club. Another way you can help is to volunteer. In joining the Club we all agree to commit to volunteer for at least two Club activities a year. Examples include, Greenhouse, Windemere, Garden Tour, Blooming Art and other such committees and activities. If you are unsure how you can help support us with our efforts, our newly formed Membership Committee can help find a perfect fit for you.

We have a stellar incoming Executive Board to lead us. (See the Leadership section on our website for names and contact information.) We are truly fortunate that several 'experienced' members of our leadership team are continuing in their positions. I am also excited to welcome and introduce to you our new Board members.

Karen Kolb has stepped up to the plate as our First Vice President. Karen is a fellow Oak Bluff's resident. She is a person of action and has already been working hard in her new role. She and I have met several times over the last months and have collaborated on the initiatives set forth.

Gay Smith joins the Board as the new Vice President of Vineyard Haven. Gay is looking forward to getting to know more of her Vineyard Haven neighbors. Pat Adler, the former Vice President of Vineyard Haven (and also a former president of the MVGC) will be Gay's guide. We are grateful to Pat for her knowledge of the Club's

history, her understanding of our challenges, and for keeping us focused on our purpose.

The newly formed Membership Committee will be co-chaired by MaryAnn Palermo and Kathy Kitsock, both of Edgartown. Ever so delightful and engaging they, along with their committee members, will welcome our new members and introduce them to fellow peers. They will also be active in helping us achieve our goals of increasing membership. We praise Katherine Long for her years serving as our Membership Chair and more! Katherine's outstanding technology skills and systematic practices have kept our Club's membership affairs well organized and accessible.

The Program Committee has assembled an outstanding roster of monthly programs for 2016. (See the 2016 calendar in the Programs & More section of our website.) Kudos to Angela Egerton and Anda Woodward along with their committee members for their research, development and follow-through. Our programs are the foundation of our Club's success. They support our purpose by providing us with education in conservation and horticulture, and they also promote understanding of environmental issues.

In addition to our monthly programs we have more to look forward to in the coming year!

I am thrilled to announce that we will be presenting Blooming Art 2016 this spring! Last year's event was such a great success we have decided to make the show an annual affair. In addition to the funds raised, this is a great opportunity for our Club to be more active in the island community. By inviting the general public it allows for greater exposure and publicity which will in turn help us increase our membership and donations. Event planning will commence in March, and Karen Kolb and I will be looking for volunteers to assist with activities.

For those of you who are wary about making a floral arrangement for this event - have no fear! Our April program is a flower arranging workshop! You will be able to make your own arrangement guided by a brilliantly creative florist. Stay tuned for more information.

The Worker Bees of our greenhouse have been busy tending to the plants that will be sold at the annual Memorial Day weekend plant sale. I encourage you to stop into our greenhouse at the Wakeman Center on any Monday between 9:30am and 11am. There is nothing like stepping into a warm, light-filled glass house in the middle of winter, and be engulfed by the smell of flowers and warm soil. Don't be shy of lacking the knowledge of what to do; the greenhouse 'legends' will show you. I have learned so much from the devoted folks that work so hard for our Club year after year.

In early summer our Vineyard Haven members will be opening their garden gates as they host our biennial Garden Tour. We will have the chance to view gorgeous gardens of all different types of designs. It is also a wonderful way to get to know our club friends more by admiring and learning of their works flourishing in their personal environment.

The residents of Windermere Nursing & Rehabilitation Center are delighted with our visits to their home. I urge you to volunteer to spend some time brightening the lives of the lovely people who reside here. The facility director and staff have praised our efforts and commitment. It is truly heart warming to observe how the simplest flower can bring such joy to someone. Our dear Secretary, Joan Eville, has very graciously offered to help organize our visits and activities. Please contact Joan to offer an hour or so of your time in the next year.

Our Old Mill celebrates 168 years of 'life' this year. The current structure was constructed in 1848. *'Oh, if those walls could talk...'* In 1984, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This past year we made some safety improvements required by the town of West Tisbury. This coming year we plan to continue with such required improvements and upgrades. Next on our to-do list is to address the lighting systems. Our fundraising events and your donations make these improvements and maintenance possible. We tip our cap to

Charlie Lopresti, our Buildings & Grounds Chair, for helping us maintain our treasured property.

I urge to check this website regularly for news and information. Our Communications Chair/Webmaster, Linda Chapman, created the site, and she works diligently to update it with upcoming Club activities and to showcase our recent events. Here you will also find our Club membership list (an updated copy will be posted soon). It is located under the 'Members Only' page. If you need the password, please contact me at [tracie\\_clark@yahoo.com](mailto:tracie_clark@yahoo.com). You can also find us and 'Like' us on *Facebook*; just search for Martha's Vineyard Garden Club, or click the 'f' button on the top right corner of our website.

We must thank our outgoing President, DiAnn Ray. DiAnn has been instrumental in spearheading our efforts in growing the community's awareness of our Club and in increasing our fundraising efforts. She is a dynamo, a tough act to follow; we will do our best to see her vision through.

I look forward to seeing you on January 19<sup>th</sup> at our first program of the New Year. Adam Moore, Executive Director of the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation (a fellow nonprofit also headquartered at the Wakeman Center) will be leading a program on *Native and Invasive Plants* along with his colleague, Kristen Fateaux. They will also present an overview of our island's cherished conserved spaces and trails.

I am so very thankful for all your support. Happiest of New Years to you and yours!

Sincerely,

Tracie Clark, President Elect

~ *"The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies."* - Gertrude Jekyll ~