



# *KEY WEST GARDEN CLUB*

## *Spring Newsletter*

### *2019*

#### **Message from the President**

Summer has arrived in Key West! Long hot, hot, hot days, and strong winds without the usual summer rains (so far) mean the gardens need additional watering and care to prevent the plants from drying out!

Our weekly volunteer troop is diminished with all of our Snowbirds now returned to the North; but our small group is doing a valiant job of ensuring that the orchid collection, Butterfly Garden and Courtyards still look (and smell) glorious for all our visitors.

This Summer the County will be managing a massive restoration project on the Fort's brick walls, all of which need repointing and stabilizing in many areas where their crumbling has made parts of the Fort unsafe. The County received a very large grant from the Tourist Development Council (TDC) to pay for this much-needed and very expensive project.

Whilst the work is taking place (July through October), we will have to accommodate the workers as best we can, whilst keeping the Gardens open. Luckily, we have an excellent Project Manager to work with, who will be working around any events taking place in the gardens during this time, and helping us to keep the garden open 7 days a week!

The new Board of Directors participated in a Strategic Workshop in April to discuss long-term goals and plans for the Key West Garden Club, and agreeing on an action plan to continue to update and improve the Club and the gardens for our members and for the public....watch this space for some exciting news before the end of the year!

Wherever you are this Summer, travel safely and enjoy the Nature around you.

I look forward to welcoming you all back in the Fall, to a newly restored Fort and beautiful gardens!

Yours,  
Rosi  
President



## Key West Garden Club Board 2019- 2020

### Who's Who:

Director/President and Garden

Chair: Rosi Ware

Director/VP/Fort Chair: Hazel  
Hans

Director/VP/Propagation  
Chair: Kitty Somerville

Director/Recording Secretary:  
Lynne Bentley-Kemp

Director/Corresponding &  
Communications Secretary:  
Sue Sullivan

Director/Treasurer: Sharon  
Lieberman

Director/Garden Tours: Mary  
Olson

Director/Plant Sale: Mary  
Brady

Director/Events and  
Receptionists: Lou Ann  
Steely

Director/Programs: Cathie  
Gottshalk

Director/Membership: Christa  
Varacalli

Director/Planning: Sharon  
Thomas

Director/Orchid Chair and  
Luncheon: Sharon Jones

Director/ Luncheon and orchid  
fertilizer balls: Pam Van Soest



Front row: (left to right) Rosi Ware, Kitty Somerville, Cathie Gottshalk, Sharon Thomas, Sharon Lieberman, Lynne Bentley-Kemp. Second row: Sharon Jones, Christa Varacalli, Sue Sullivan, Mary Olson, Mary Brady, PamVan Soest, Lou Ann Steely, Jane Tiedeman, Hazel Hans



**New Receptionists.** One of our excellent receptionists, Elaine Belanger, has left for the summer so we are welcoming new additions to our crew. Michael Perkinson and Kristy Luberdia are now covering the desk. Michael (on left) works Sunday, Monday and Tuesday and Kristy alternates Saturdays with Jan Blackman, a longtime member. Make sure you introduce yourself if visiting the Fort and say thanks. Along with Kathleen Gillis, we have a wonderful group to be the representatives of the Club. We would also like to thank Sherry Read and her husband Larry Nolt for helping out with wedding events. Sherry and Larry were recently “hitched” in our Gardens. Congrats to them!!





## Homer Herrick



Homer occasionally comes to visit the Fort. He is a real font of knowledge about the history of the Keys, the Fort and plants! When visitors come in, Homer will accompany them on their tour and it is so appreciated. There are many comments on Trip Advisor about his help.

Homer was born in 1935 in Key West at the South Beach Clinic. He is a fifth generation Conch. His Dad was a Civil Engineer for the Navy and his Mom was a homemaker. Homer went to Division St. School and then to Key West High School, which was then located on White St. Homer met Sarah, his future wife, in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Sarah graduated from Penn State. Her father was on the faculty there. He also worked on Sonar Research in the Keys. Sarah went on to teach 4<sup>th</sup> Grade in the Keys.

Homer went to Georgia Tech for 2 years and then to Stetson U. He graduated with a Bachelor's in Biology and went on to be a teacher in the Keys. He started at the Marathon School in 1953 which was the first year it was integrated. Homer was the entire Science Department for 7 years in Marathon and then moved to Key West and taught for another 24 years.

Homer lives in the "Rock House" on

Reynolds and South. What a cool house! It was built in 1906 by a photographer who also had his business there. Homer's grandfather bought the house in 1925 for real estate taxes and gave the home to Homer's Mom. She then gave it to Homer in the 1960s. Homer and Sarah lived there from then on. They were married for 60 years.

He retired from teaching in 1990 and devoted much of his time to working with the Boy Scouts.

Both of Homer's grandmothers, from the Sawyer and Knight families, were into gardening and he says that is where he got his love for plants.



## Around the Gardens

The Portlandia by the orchid arbor is blooming profusely and the white fragrant garden is full of luscious blooms with wonderful aromas. The jasmine and the almond bush are flowering like crazy, as are the gardenias and the Radermachera. The Stephanotis vine on the fence by the Colonel's garden really popped this year.







Cathie, Sandy and Donna

Synda Patten rules the  
Colonel's Garden

The Butterfly Group is headed by Donna  
Farrow and supported by Cathie Gottshalk,  
Laurie Tifts, Sandy Bergin, among others.

## April General Meeting

John and Isabella David began caring for bees on a birthday whim in 2010.



Nine years later they harvested 127,000 pounds of honey. A single hive produces around 25 pounds of honey a week.

Once a hive begins to get nectar from a source, it becomes their single source. Raw unpasteurized honey will last more than three thousand years, as it was found in an Egyptian tomb, still viable! Female worker-bees live from four to six weeks. Their wings begin to fray along the edges as they age. A hive holds around 70,000 worker bees in the summer. In the winter months they are reduced to 20,000 in number and hibernate in a cluster in the center of the hive. They maintain the temperature at a constant 94 degrees. To keep it that warm bees generate heat by vibrating their wing muscles, but not their wings. Keez Beez transports more than 600 hives to 15 different locations leaving 50 to 60 hives at each place. Bees travel in a three-mile radius around the location of their hive. The earth needs bees!



### **“Rasta Roosterz” is back in the garden**

Bounce Margil, a local artist and performer, created this fanciful creature for Sculpture Key West in 2006. He has been kind enough to have “Rasta” on display at the Fort. Bounce recently took his creation home and cleaned and spruced it up. It is such a colorful, whimsical piece and is now livening up the Dinosaur Garden.

Bounce and his wife, “Ooo La La”, used to perform at Mallory Square. They have taught juggling, unicycling and acrobatics to kids in the Keys and around the country.

Another generous, colorful Key West character.



### **Floral Design for the summer**

Norma Jean joins us for dinner.

Thanks to the floral design crew for coming up with interesting arrangements that will last during the hot summer months.



## Wedding Appreciations:

Our receptionist, Elaine forwarded this lovely letter so we could share it with all our members.

“My wife and I were married at the Club in November of 2014. It was a small, family-only ceremony but we were excited to have such a nice backdrop for our event. We left on cloud 9 but did recall later that the property looked as if it could use some repairs and touching up. We were saddened to hear that it was in the path of the hurricane and wondered how it had fared. Just this past weekend for the first time since 2014 we returned to Key West for some R&R. Shortly after checking into our hotel we drove over to the Club. We were thrilled to see how the place looked. The masonry repairs, the restored vegetation and the lush panorama in full bloom was just amazing. Who could have thought that the pounding Mother Nature dished out could result in such a wonderful transformation. We can only imagine the massive amount of work and effort that has been put into rebuilding and repairing the site, but it certainly shows in every brick, every tree and every flower. Please pass on to the incredible people responsible for the recovery our heartfelt thanks for a spectacular “job well done”!

Thank you.

Tammy and Jim Reiss”

And, this couple from Jacksonville were married here in 2010 (they are in the pirate wedding picture that has graced our walls) and they were happy that we still are a vibrant garden.



And baby makes three... This little one got to see the brick commemorating her parents' wedding.







Kitty Somerville, Sharon Jones and Pam Van Soest made the trek to the Orchid Festival at the Redlands to add some new plants to our orchid collection.



Ellen Engleson and Sharon Jones put together a new stand for the display of orchids in the arbor.

### Memorium:

Jill Cass passed in April. She was a longtime member of the Garden Club and a fixture of the island. She taught at the elementary school of her beloved church, St. Mary's Star of the Sea, was a member of the choir there for decades and later worked at Waldenbooks.

Thank you for photo contributions from Kitty Somerville, Lynne Bentley-Kemp, Hazel Hans, Robin Robinson, Rosi Ware and Sue Sullivan.

Thank you to Christa Varacalli for proofreading.

Sue Sullivan, Editor