



# LAUREL Letters

Laurel District Newsletter

SPRING 2023



## From Caroline Alford, Acting Director

Laurel District was saddened by the death of our District Director Susan Stephens. She was full of fun, energy, and enthusiasm for all things garden club. She will be truly missed by all who knew her. This Director will strive to fill her shoes for the remainder of this term of office.

Laurel District Fall Meeting was hosted by the Magnolia Garden Club of Cartersville. There were 106 attendees to this fabulous meeting. Our new Executive Board was elected at this meeting with Cheryl Briscoe nominated as the incoming Laurel District Director for 2023-2025.

Our District Board, hosted by Hoe'n In Euharlee Garden Club, met in Euharlee on February 16, 2023. A place was set in memory of Susan Stephens. Board members wrote cards of remembrance sharing a happy memory which were delivered to her family along with a vase of colorful flowers by our Laurel District Chaplain Mickey Carlton. Please send a list of your garden club's deceased members since the GCG Convention last April to Chaplain Mickey Carlton as well as to State Chaplain Diane Harbin, so they can be recognized at the State Convention Memorial service.

Laurel District has an overall increase in its membership of 20 members for 2022. We have a total of 58 clubs which includes – 5 disbanded clubs, one club that merged with another, two new clubs, and one reinstated club. There are a total of 1517 members including 17 Subscribing members at the end of 2022.

This director has received 38 President's reports which is a participation rate of 66%. Thirteen of these clubs will receive a Standard of Excellence for their work in 2022. Reading of all the various activities of the Laurels of Light has been inspiring. I am in the process of collating all of the information in these wonderful reports. Our clubs have been busy with holiday decorations, "Family Fun Days", youth activities, special projects, and more.

GCG Raffle ticket sales are ongoing with many clubs not reporting yet. To date 186 tickets have been sold. A reminder to purchase these tickets will be sent in the next week to all Laurel District Club Presidents. Laurel District needs to sell a minimum of 350 tickets to qualify for \$250 from the state.

Laurels of Light have many upcoming special events including plant sales, Pond and Garden Tour sponsored by Magnolia Garden Club on May 20, and Soque Garden Club's Garden Extravaganza on May 6.

This director is looking forward to the Annual Convention and the Awards Banquet when we celebrate the many achievements of our garden clubs.

Acting Director  
*Caroline Alford*

Recording Secretary  
*Cheryl Briscoe*

Corresponding Secretary  
*Sheelah Schreiber*

Treasurer  
*Dee Anne Wyse*

Chaplain  
*Mickey Carlton*

Parliamentarian  
*Edna McClellan*

Advisors  
John Barnett  
Edna McClellan  
Marie Purser

# Remembering Susan Stephens

## Our Own Super Sue

by The Magnolia Garden Club- Cartersville

You may have known Susan Stephens, our 2021-2023 Laurel District Director. We have heard many times people say: **“Love that Susan!”** We were so fortunate as a club to have had Susan as our very own club member. She brightened our world in so many ways. Some of our club members would like to share their experiences with you.

Theresa Barger said, “Susan was always friendly to everyone and helped in any way she could with any and everything! She had a beautiful smile and loved pearls!” From Jeanne Taylor: “I remember Susan as vivacious, competent, funny and busy.”

Lynn Frye shared that because Susan had an interior design business, she took pride in the fact that she wasn't much of a gardener but was “the queen of silk flowers”. She cracked us up referring to her technique of gardening. She said she was a pointer. She would point for her husband, Ron, where the flower or shrub should go.





# Remembering Susan 2 by Magnolia Garden Club



Judy Patterson remembers hearing Susan frequently say: ***“If we’re not having fun, why are we doing it?”*** Susan made everything fun. Her smile, humor, and twinkle in her eyes kept us working, accomplishing so much without burden. Kathleen Clark said, “She was always so willing to help me get the monthly hostess committees printed for the members and the year book. Through the years there were many things like printing the labels for all the books we gave away to the schools and libraries that she did for us.

She was always just so willing to help doing whatever she could to help out!!! She was one special lady that will be greatly missed!!!” If a club member needed something done, Susan was the one who knew how to do it and would do it with excellence and without a care. She was a dream!

When an honorary member, Hazel Stephenson, was interviewed about her favorite time in the club, she said, “My favorite memory is listening to Susan Stephens. I love how she is upbeat and involved in many things. She is a “go getter” with lots of stories.” Vicki Jones says about work on her committee that it will take ten people to do what Susan did.

Mostly, Susan loved us and we loved her. We are grateful for our time with her. We will all remember Susan who was like no other. She was Super Sue!



Always working, enjoying others, and getting it done: that was Sue.

# AMICALOLA GARDEN CLUB

The Amicalola Garden Club held regular meeting on February 21, 2023 at the Tate Community Room. A lunch of Mexican cuisine was enjoyed. Appropriate Mexican decorations adorned the room. The luncheon was hosted by Barbara Walters, Lou Charland, and Fran Cathey.

Mr. George Kimberly of the Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia gave a most interesting presentation on the Mountain Trust and the impact on Pickens County. Mr. Kimberly talked about the mission of the MCT and encouraged members to volunteer or join the group. The Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia is an accredited land trust dedicated to the permanent conservation of the natural resources and scenic beauty of the North Georgia foothills and mountains. There are 7500 acres of protected lands in North Georgia.

President Linda Allred conducted the business meeting starting with a special birthday wish for our oldest member, Ms. Jo Wood, who was celebrating her 98th birthday. Penny Davis presented an interesting background of Ms. Wood. Susan Armstrong read the minutes of the January meeting and Anita Poole gave a financial report. Barbara Walters presented the horticulture tip prepared by Peggy Andrews on getting our gardens ready for spring.

President Allred announced that all state reports and obligations had been submitted and filed in a timely manner. Fran Cathey spoke of the Awards Program and what awards the club would be applying for. There was discussion on the March meeting and the meeting was adjourned with a prayer.





## Amicalola Garden Club 2

### **AGC Plans Exciting 2023**



Members of the **Amicalola Garden Club** held regular meeting on January 17, 2023 at the Tate Community Room. Mrs. Susan Armstrong gave an inspirational blessing and a wonderful lunch was served and hosted by Susan Armstrong and Glenda Thompson.

A horticulture tip on how winter cold affects Georgia crops and landscape plants was given by Fran Cathey. Information was obtained from the CAES Newswire from the University of Georgia. According to the article, some crops need a certain amount of chilling hours to break dormancy.

On the home landscape many of our plants are showing signs of cold damage. We are finding that some of our perennials are not proving to be hardy during the extreme cold temperatures.

A business meeting was conducted by President Linda Allred detailing plans and programs for the upcoming year. The yearbook that is prepared by Treasurer, Anita Poole was updated with new programs and information on the members. "Plant America - Nurture the Garden Thru Beautification, Socialization and Education" was decided on for the theme for the new year.

Monthly speakers, horticulture tips, chairmen, and hostesses for each month were selected. It looks like it going to be an exciting year for the garden club.

**Submitted by: Fran Cathey, Vice President  
Amicalola Garden Club  
Laurel District of Georgia**

# Ball Ground Garden Club

## Creating a Blue Bird Paradise: Lloyd Shares Expertise



Mike Lloyd, the newest Ball Ground Garden Club member, presented “Creating a Bluebird Paradise” at the February meeting. Bluebirds are known as the harbingers of happiness. Interestingly, their feathers are not pigmented blue, but their color is created by the diffraction of light striking their feathers. They eat crawling insects - great organic pest control in your garden. They mate for life – the male selects their territory; the female builds the nest and after the babies are born both parents feed them. Each year a pair of bluebirds raises 3 clutches of babies.

The Eastern Bluebird in Georgia is a small thrush and remains in Georgia year-round. Their preferred habitats are open woodlands with little understory and open grassland. They like high lookout points, like tree branches, to perch on where they can spot a bug from 60 feet away! In the summer they eat insects; in the winter, when insects are not available, they switch to berries (they are not particularly fond of sunflower seeds).

The Cherokee County Bluebird Trail system was started in 2019 as a UGA Extension project with 10 bluebird boxes in Heritage Park and 8 in Etowah River Park; both parks are in Canton and both are ideal bluebird habitat. In 2021 the trail was expanded by 8 more nest boxes placed on the Reinhardt University campus in Waleska. In 2022, 3 bluebird boxes were placed in Ball Ground parks and 12 in Veterans Park. In 2023, 1 nest box was placed in Brown Park in Canton, 2 more in Ball Ground, 3 on the Cherokee High School campus, and 7 on the CORE Community School farm and campus in Woodstock. Most of these nest boxes will be monitored during the breeding season. Mike has taken a lead role in expanding the bluebird trails and trains anyone interested in monitoring these nest boxes. These boxes not only help to increase our bluebird population, but they serve as valuable educational tools for our citizens, especially our youth, to better understand nature around us. Mike is working on placing bluebird nest boxes in more schools and parks next year.





# BALLGROUND GARDEN CLUB 2

## Andrews Presents Going Native with Azaleas of North GA

Charles Andrews presented the Ball Ground Garden Club January program on Native Azaleas. He is a member of the American Rhododendron Society and the Azalea Society of America. He is currently serving as president of the Azalea Chapter, ARS. He spends much time looking for and photographing these plants in the wild and has hundreds of native azaleas in his Forsyth County, GA garden. Charles will be a speaker at the Ball Ground Plant Sale & Festival on May 13, 2023 at the Botanical Garden in Ball Ground near City Hall.



*Rhododendron calendulaceum*



Flowers close-up  
dogtooth77  
CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

**First things first.** Azaleas are part of the rhododendron/blueberry family. Their growing requirements include acid soil, organic matter, continuous moisture, oxygen and sunlight. Their roots will extend 12 feet from the plant but only go 6 inches deep. Therefore the saying “Don’t put a \$20 plant in a 12-cent hole.” Dig a hula-hoop sized hole, add some pine bark nuggets and micronutrients. The native plants like to be started in a raised bed for a year before being transplanted. There are at least 12 species of native azaleas found in Georgia. Native azaleas are deciduous while most Asian azaleas in our yards are not. Azaleas are Georgia’s official state wildflower.

In northern Georgia the most common species of native azaleas is the *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, or the Flame Azalea. It gets up to 15 feet tall. This is the yellow-orange-reddish azalea found in the mountains of north Georgia. Its flower is open with a flat face, there is no smell and it is a tetraploid (2x chromosomes). There are 17 species of azaleas in America, only 4 species are tetraploids the others are all diploid. So that makes the Flame Azalea special.

Another common azalea in north Georgia is the Plum leaf (*R. prunifolium*) azalea. This is found in the watersheds of the Chattahoochee River and made Callaway Gardens (central west Georgia) famous. It is a late blooming azalea.





# HONEYSUCKLE GARDEN CLUB

## *Honeysuckle GC Members Express Themselves: Creatively, That Is*



The Honeysuckle Garden Club has stayed busy during the renovation of the Marietta Educational Garden Center. At the February meeting members showed their artistic **creativity**.

Hostesses Peggy Sue Benson and Kathy Kelly transformed Peggy Sue's den into an art studio. A lovely teacher led the group through artistic techniques, color palettes, and encouraged creative expression. Of course, the gardening subject chosen to paint was Honeysuckle. The result was a room of Michelangelos! After The program, a beautiful and tasty lunch was served.

Kathy Benson  
Honeysuckle  
Garden Club

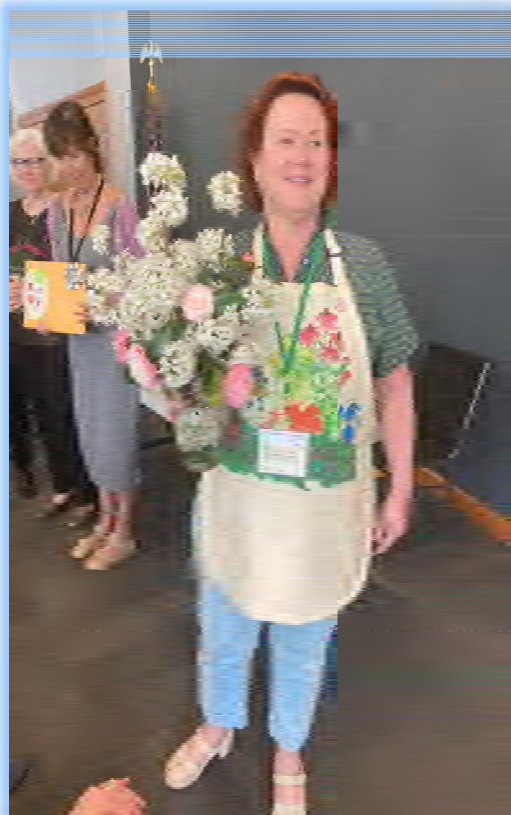


# JONQUIL GARDEN CLUB

## Jonquil Garden Club Installs New Officers, Honors Lorelei Clapper



Heidi Hunt, Melissa Powell, Michele Cox, Debbie Deluca, Paula Cahill and Lorelei Clapper



The Jonquil Garden Club installed new officers at the February meeting held at the Smyrna Library. **Officers installed were Paula Cahill, President; Heidi Hunt, First Vice-President; Debbie Deluca, Second Vice-President; Michelle Cox, Treasurer, and Melissa Powell, Secretary.**

Refreshments were served and a gift was presented to **the outgoing president, Lorelei Clapper.** All new officers were presented with individual flowering plants.

The next meeting will be March 28, with a presentation on vegetable gardening by Meg Perry.



# ***STONEHEDGE GARDEN CLUB***

## ***SGC Members Sparkle with Holiday Spirit, Generosity to Community***



The Stonehedge Garden Club Annual Christmas Decorating at a local Buford and Lanier Nursing Home Facility. On December 9 the members visited the residents, helped Santa distribute blankets, socks, stuffed animals and other gifts, and sang Christmas carols. The residents also enjoyed having their pictures taken with Santa.

Done annually, the Club also put together large baskets of fruits, nuts, and healthy snacks for two local Buford Fire Stations.

The Club also collected cash donations and gift cards from local grocery stores for the North Gwinnett Coop, a faith-based organization that provides assistance to the needy.





## *Stonehedge Garden Club 2*



**Sixteen of its Club members** took a field trip to the Tate's Marble House and Gardens during Christmas. The four members pictured represent the larger group in attendance.

**The Stonehedge Garden Club** held a potluck Christmas Luncheon where they played games, talked about the Club's past and future activities, and previewed their family Holidays activities.



# MARSHALL FOREST REPORT

Land Trust Marshall Forest  
Caroline Alford, Chairman

Marshall Forest has been the scene of much activity this fall and winter. The parking lot is full most nice days as many are using the trails as a means of getting out in nature and away from the crowds with Covid still an issue.

- The Nature Conservancy Fire Crew will be reinstalling the Braille signs that have fallen off the stands using longer bolts, lock washers and nuts.
- Tours of the forest were given in October with over 50 participants.
- A Garden club member's son replaced the remaining guide rope posts as his Eagle Scout project. Pressure treated lumber was used for the posts as the composite posts are on backorder for 26 months or more due to supply chain issues.
- Some of the guide ropes have been replaced, but more rope has been requested from the climbing gym in Kennesaw.
- Several clubs have scheduled tours of the Forest during the spring.
- The Robert Weed Memorial Walk was held in October.
- PDF files were sent to Emma Wells of the city of Rome to create the QR codes for the trail maps and other Forest information. Katie Owens from the Nature Conservancy will have them posted in the Kiosk at the beginning of the Braille and Dorsey Trails.
- This chairman met with the new Trails Coordinator Julien Smith and the Project manager Mary Hardin Thornton for the City of Rome to discuss options for grants that will help improve the Big Pine Braille Trail.
- A program on the Marshall Forest was given on March first to Three Rivers garden Club as the trail has been washed out due to the winter rains.

Marshall Forest still has many things that need to be done to keep the trail well maintained and accessible to the physically impaired.

- The Fire Crew is scheduled to replace rotten boards on the wet weather creek bridge next year.
- Installation of the remaining guide ropes with climbing rope donated by a climbing gym in Kennesaw.
- Redesigning the water flow to prevent the washing out of the gravel on the trail. An Hydrologist will need to be consulted.
- Installation of crusher run gravel along the Braille Trail to provide more accessibility to the physically impaired.



## MARSHALL FOREST REPORT 2

The Nature Conservancy is working on a partnership with Berry College and Shorter University to create learning centers in the Pecan field and over to the Coosa River. The goal is to make the Marshall Forest a destination for student field trips. In addition, TNC is working to establish

a working relationship with the City of Rome and TRED to apply for a GOSA grant to upgrade the trails and make other improvements close to the river.

This chairman contacted Katie Owens, Lisa Smith, Mary Hardin Thornton, Ansley Saville, and Julie Smith to set up a planning meeting for the grant.

A list of the donors to Marshall Forest will be listed by District in Board Briefs and Garden Gateways after the Convention. Deed of Gratitude Certificates will be printed for those contributing \$25 before March 1st and will be given to the District Directors at the State Convention in April. Your contributions are important to the Forest as there is no endowment for this property. The improvements made to the forest come from your donations. Your contributions help us keep the Marshall Forest in good condition for visitors. Please don't forget to add Marshall Forest to your club's list of contributions.

Contact Caroline Alford to schedule a tour of the forest via e-mail at [caroboone@aol.com](mailto:caroboone@aol.com) or by cell phone 706 346-5886.

Thank you for your continued support of this special place.

**Land Trust Marshall Forest  
Caroline Alford, Chairman**

# Upcoming *SPRING* Events

## Save The Date



### **The Soque Garden Club's 6th Annual Garden Extravaganza *A Plant and Garden Sale***

**Saturday, May 6, 2023  
8am - 4pm**

White County Agri-Science Center  
Hwy 129 North at Claud Sims Road, Cleveland, GA 30528  
Free Admission, Raffle, Food Available

*Cleveland is located just South of  
Helen and Sautee Nacoochee, GA.  
Plan to make a day trip and enjoy  
our lovely mountain towns.*

## **SPALDING GARDEN CLUB will hold**

### **A GARDEN FAIRE**

Saturday, April 15, 2023

9:00 AM -3:00PM at  
All Saints Catholic Church  
2443 Mt. Vernon Rd.  
Dunwoody, GA



Plants, Garden Art, Bird Houses and More



## **LAUREL DISTRICT OFFICERS INSTALLATION IN APRIL**

Laurel District officers-elect will be installed at the GCG Convention before the first banquet on Tuesday night, April 18, 2023. Cheryl Briscoe will be installed as Laurel District Director during the Life Member Luncheon on Thursday, April 20 along with the state officers.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR	Cheryl Briscoe
DISTRICT CO-DIRECTOR	Merrell Holden
RECORDING SECRETARY	Kathy Shiner
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	Maye Suddath
TREASURER	Dee Anne Wyse
CHAPLAIN	Rene Lanier
PARLIAMENTARIAN	Edna McClellan
ADVISOR	Caroline Alford
ADVISOR	Marie Purser
ADVISOR	John Barnett
ADVISOR	Edna McClellan



## **Garden Club of Ga Special Events through June 10**

March 29, 2023 – GCG Awards Committee Meeting, Perry Welcome Center, 10:00 am

March 29, 2023 – Blooming Celebration Stroll – 4-5 pm – Pendleton King Park, Augusta

April 10, 2023 – F& E Meeting 1:30 pm – Zoom

April 14-15, 2023 – NOGS Tour of Hidden Gardens, Savannah

**April 16-22, 2023 – Garden Week in Georgia**

**April 18, 2023 – Spring GCG Board Meeting Luncheon – Stone Mountain**

April 22-23, 2023 – Flower Extravaganza, Pineola Farm, Fort Valley

**April 23-26, 2023 – Flower Show Judges School, Course II, Marietta Educational Garden Center**

May 2-5, 2023 – National Garden Club Convention – White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

**June 4-10, 2023 – National Garden Week**

# 6th Annual Ball Ground Garden Club Plant Sale and Festival

**Saturday May 13th - 9:00 to 3:00pm**



***Free Event***

The Festival is located at the famous Ball Ground Botanical Garden:

- Large supply and selection of plants
- Speakers
- Guided tours of our Botanical Garden
- Raffles
- 30 local vendors (food, drink, shopping)

**215 Valley Street, Ball Ground, GA**



## From the Editor

Thanks to all of you who have contributed photos and information about the activities of your garden clubs. I always see good projects or programs that I would want to do!

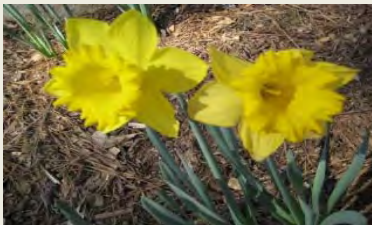
Thanks especially to Merrell Holden for writing such a beautiful memorial to Susan Stephens using the many words of tribute spoken by Magnolia Garden Club members. How fitting that article is.

One of Susan's many talents was compiling and designing *Laurel Letters* as well as other publications for our district and the Garden Club of Georgia. We can always appreciate one who takes those tasks and enjoys the work as Susan did.

Please remember to have your garden club news and photos submitted by deadline---that's a big help!

Have a lovely springtime!

*Shirley*



## **Laurel Letters Newsletter**

### **Summer Issue**

**Deadline - May 15**

**Emailed - June 1**

### **Fall Issue**

**Deadline - August 25**

**Emailed - September 15**

### **Winter Issue**

**Deadline - November 19**

**Emailed - December 15**

### **Spring Issue**

**Deadline -**

**February 25**

**Emailed - March**

**15**

**Send information to Laurel  
Letters Editor:**

**Shirley Priest**