

Goshen Garden Club

The Goshen Garden Club was chartered on March 20, 1933 by ten of Goshen's leading citizens.

Mrs. Josephine Jenks organized the Club and the first meeting was held in the Congregational Church parlor. Meetings for a number of years were held in the homes of the respective members until the membership grew too large, after which they met at the Goshen Academy.

We now meet at the Church of Christ Congregational Parish House and enjoy a membership of 72 from Goshen and surrounding towns.

And now in 2008 we are celebrating our 75th year!

Today, June 5th, 2008, we honor the 10 original Charter Members of the Goshen Garden Club

Mrs. Josephine Jenks, President

Mrs. John Malahan, First Secretary

Miss May Malahan, Asst. Secretary

Mrs. Will Griswold, Historian

Mrs. Grace Johnson

Mrs. Frank Seaton

Mrs. K.K. Kimberly

Miss May Lucas

Mrs. Samuel Bartholomew

Mrs. James Brown

We also applaud and gratefully acknowledge all of the past presidents, officers and members of the Goshen Garden, who have contributed so much to our community, our gardens and our friendships.

The following is a brief overview of some highlights of the past 75 years.

In 1933, at the first Garden Club meeting held on March 20, 1933, it was decided that four meetings would be scheduled for the upcoming year. The following year, 1934, attendance at the club's meeting indicated sufficient interest to warrant a monthly meeting. Membership had doubled from the previous year, from 10 to 20 members! The first Thursday of each month was selected for the meeting date for monthly meetings. Membership dues were 50 cents.

The Goshen Fair exhibit that year netted the treasury \$5.00.

Over the years the Garden Club has been involved in various civic projects. In 1935, cash prizes were awarded to schoolchildren for collecting tent caterpillar eggs masses, in an effort to control the infestation problem in the area.

There were yearly flower shows and competitions. Admission charge was 25 cents, which included

tea and refreshments. The admission charge was discontinued in 1949.

During the war years, there were special competitions for arrangements showcasing patriotic red, white and blue flowers. In 1943, the first Christmas wreaths were made by members and donated to 'the hospital'. The treasury balance for the club was \$6.87 in 1944 and plummeted to \$6.27 in 1946.

In 1952, Mrs. Jenks suggested purchasing street signs for the town. Several months of studying old town records to find the original names of roads and streets throughout Goshen followed. In 1954, with cooperative efforts of the town, the Garden Club supplied signs and the town workmen installed them. Many of these signs are still in evidence today.

Over the years the Garden Club has planted trees at Goshen town offices, provided landscaping at the historical society, planted flowers in window boxes at the post office, geraniums around the flag pole on East Street North and flowers at the base of the Veterans Memorial at Town Hall. These are only some of the means that Goshen Garden Club members have used to enhance the beauty of their town, in addition to keeping attractive gardens around their homes.

Goshen's 250th Anniversary - 1989

In October of 1989 the Goshen Garden Club participated in the 'Goshen Quadrimillennium'. Six members of the Garden Club volunteered to be the last marchers. The parade included seven bands, twelve color guards, half a dozen floats and approximately 500 marchers. The following is a wonderful excerpt from The Register Citizen, dated October 7, 1989.

"The last of the marchers, six members of the Goshen Garden Club, provided some laughs. Each of the members, wearing either a hat with plastic flowers on it, or a net gardener's mask, took turns pushing a cart with flowers and vegetables in it.

Each of the six members also took turns shoveling manure produced by the horses pulling the floats in front of them.

Marifran Hiltz, one Garden Club member, said she and other garden members decided to be the last to march so they would be able to get most of the horse manure. Hiltz said she and fellow club member, Kate Flower, were going to use the droppings for fertilizer. "After going through that, we are going to use it" Hiltz said.

What a committee! Would you have volunteered? This is funny, but it just illustrates that members of our garden club are committed to going natural, as well as providing needed services for the community!

Hats off, gloves on, and shovels lifted, to this brave and dedicated committee:

Kate Flower, Beth Mitchell, Elizabeth Riddle, Mellisa Ostraw, Geraldine Sanger, Beth Carlson and Marifran Hiltz.

A thank you note from then First Selectman, Richard Kobylenski stated, "Your theme was very unusual, especially your clean up efforts which were very much appreciated. The parade was enjoyed by one and all and will go down in history!" Indeed it did and so did our club's unique participation!

The Goshen Garden Club has initiated and participates in many community services. Our members are unified in their desire and commitment to continue to enhance and enrich our lovely town. Our volunteers generously contribute their time, expertise and energy in maintaining and beautifying our local community gardens and public areas. We use several methods of fundraising to enable us to accomplish this.

Fundraising - The Garden Club has one major fund-raiser each year, in November. In past years, there have been flower shows and bazaars. In recent years, a luncheon with guest speakers, raffles and prizes has been most popular and successful. A plant sale in the spring has become a favorite, with beautiful plants and vegetables from wholesalers, as well as special plants from

members' gardens. Dues collection is another way that the club raises money to support club activities and fund community projects.

Our Community Projects:

- *Horticultural therapy - Each month dedicated members visit area nursing homes to visit the residents and help them make small flower arrangements to take back and enjoy in their rooms. These include:
Marathon Healthcare
Haven Healthcare
Litchfield Woods
Rose Haven
Valerie Manor
Wolcott Hall*
- *Scholarships -A yearly scholarship is awarded to a Wamogo High School graduate, or members' child or grandchild, who is interested in horticulture and /or allied subjects.
This year a scholarship was donated to the Goshen's Center School to enable three sixth grade students to attend the Nature's Classroom Program at White Memorial Park.*
- *Flower Planting and Care:
War Memorial-Town Hall
Public Works Building
Firehouse
Memorial Garden.*

- *Library Arrangements - Members of the garden club donate a floral arrangements or a lovely plant to the Goshen Public Library, where it provides much enjoyment for all the patrons and employees.*
- *Support for Federation Projects*
- *Support for the Goshen Land Trust*
- *Participation in the LARC Festival*

Monthly meetings - Meetings continue to be held on the first Thursday of each month. Members provide hospitality and refreshments. There are a variety of interesting demonstrations and speakers, by invited guests, as well as our own master gardeners. New members are warmly welcomed at our monthly meetings. Our dues have been raised to \$25 a year. Our treasury has also grown, along with today's inflation.

We continue to move forward with updated technology to provide our members with the latest news, and schedules of events on our website: goshengardenclub.org.

Over the past 75 years, members have contributed and enriched the club with their participation and generosity of time, expertise and commitment to the town of Goshen.

A few words about the past...

Marjorie Wadhams joined the Garden Club in the early 1950's. Her sister Ruth, Mrs. Frank Birmingham, was club president from 1952-53. Marge's mother, Anna, Mrs. Alfred Wright, was a co-president in 1956. Mrs. Wadhams said that she felt that over the years the Goshen Garden Club has been an asset to the town. She remembers the many plantings around town that the club did and the juried flower shows held years ago. There was a lot of excitement with the competitions, the preparations, and entertaining the judges! At one time, she recalls, in the mid-sixties, three Goshen Garden Club members, took courses and became qualified judges, serving as judges at standard flower shows and fairs in the area. Marjorie remembers the club as being smaller, with fewer members, about 20 or 25. They got to know each other quite well and made lasting friendships. Now, she says, the membership is much larger, but yet, everyone is so friendly. Mrs. Wadhams is an Honorary Member of the Garden Club and still enjoys some of the lectures and functions that are available monthly.

Ronnie Lockwood, a Garden Club member since 1988, shared some thoughts. "There are a lot of new and interesting ideas and programs in the past few years. What I enjoy about the club is that there's a lot of support and cooperation among the members in all of our projects and functions. There was a craft group (which Ronnie headed for many years) that was a lot of fun. I

enjoy the mixture of people in the club. There are older and younger members and we work well together. It's nice. We all have different and varied skills and we learn so much from each other."

Kate Flower - I remember when we started horticultural therapy. We hardly had any plants. We knew the Craig family, who had a farm right off Route 63. I asked if we could use a plot of land to grow flowers to cut for the horticultural therapy, and they said 'yes'. We planted three long rows, about 100 feet each, of fast growing flowers. The Craig family was wonderful. They cleared the land for us and let us use their water and supplies. We had more than enough flowers.

I remember the first time we went to the Federated Meeting and Show. Marifran Hiltz and Cindy Barrett decided we should attend. Eight of us went and we won a silver platter, first prize for Horticulture Therapy. It was quite an honor! It was always a fun club. I must mention that when we started our plant sales in the 1980's, we had little or no money. We sold whatever we could raise in our gardens.

Marifran Hiltz started most of the plants herself in her home with growlights, mostly annuals. She always tried to find something a little different and interesting. Without her help it would have been quite a struggle. It was Marifran who decided that we should have bylaws for the club.

*And some words for the future from
Marilyn Shull, Garden Club President, 2008*

Members are as one in their desire to continue to enhance the charm of the beautiful big sky country setting that describes all the square miles of Goshen. Our efforts may be modest, but they demand much of our physical resources.

We are so very pleased to have substantially increased our membership in recent months. This is both inspiring and invigorating. And, too, we will be encouraging more men to join. Yes, we do have male members already.

This year we were pleased to work for the first time with Goshen Center School on the Nature's Classroom project and hope to continue to do so. Participation in the LARC Festival is another recent project that we will continue.

In commemoration of this our 75th Anniversary, plans are being drawn up to install a requested water fountain and appropriate natural landscaping alongside the track and playing fields at Camp Cochipianee, Town of Goshen Recreation Center. This is our gift to the community and its visitors, to be used and enjoyed for many years to come.

Special thanks and acknowledgements to the following for information used in this document.

Quadrimillennium Editorial Committee, Goshen Connecticut, a town above all others, 1990.

Goshen Garden Club, Minutes of meetings, scrapbooks, programs from 1933- 2008.

Mrs. Henrietta Horvay -The Goshen Historical Society.

Register Citizen Newspaper.

Interviews - Mrs. Ronnie Lockwood, Mrs. Marjorie Wadhams, Mrs. Susanna Shirlock, Mrs. Kate Flower.

Prepared by Dolores Raimo, June 2008.

Goshen Garden Club
Goshen, Connecticut

75th Anniversary, 1933-2008

June 5, 2008