

CENTRAL REGION GARDEN CLUBS, INC.



Theme: Tree Planting Extravaganza
July 2023 Issue



CENTRAL REGION DIRECTOR - Lynne Ehnert

Central Region Tree Planting Extravaganza - Central Region Project 2023-2025

Trees are a bit of a miracle in more ways than one! - Trees are good for our health. - Trees help sustain wild-life. - Trees help to fight the climate crisis. - Trees can lower your energy bills. - Trees purify the air. - Trees lower the air temperature. - Trees help prevent flooding. - Trees improve soil quality. - These are only a few reasons why we should plant trees. Why is our project like an “extravaganza”? If you look at the definition of “extravaganza”, it means a spectacle or display, typically an impressive one.



This means our project is an impressive display of trees we plant throughout our Central Region to help us and the environment. Each state is responsible for planting trees in their own state. There are no rules as to the type of tree that can be planted. We will track the number of trees planted in each state for the 2023-2025 term which began on 6/1/23. An award will be given for the state with the most trees planted per capita during the term. This means we need to know the total membership for the state on 6/1/23. We will track this annually. An additional point will be given for pictures submitted to the Central Region website of your tree planting. Because this is like an “extravaganza” maybe you would like recognition for the most unusual place/circumstance for your tree planting. What a great article for the newsletter! We hope to see some interesting stories.

Some of us are just destined to be in a garden club. The journey is what we make of it. When I was little, I did not say when I grow up: I want to follow in my mother’s footsteps and be a gardener and join a garden club. In fact, I was not happy weeding the vegetable garden, cutting the grass and did not have an appreciation for picking the wild flowers (weeds) that grew along the road. But I think it really was embedded in me because somehow, I ended up where I am today. Some of you may already know some of the things that have led me on the journey toward the decision to think about becoming Central Region Director.

My journey began by participating with attendance at National Convention in 1997. At that time, not being a garden club member, I went along to see what garden club was all about. Since that time, joining a garden club, holding several chairmanships and offices in that garden club, and participating on the NGC Youth Committee, NGC Awards Committee, and NGC Member of Honor Chairman strengthened my garden club interests. Meanwhile various chairmanships and officer roles in District, WGCF and Central Region reinforced the importance of protocol and parliamentary procedure on all levels. The interest in floral design was a new dimension in my garden club life and led to becoming a Master Judge. Meeting new people and bonding with them, attending a variety of workshops while traveling across the United States and some of the South American Countries for garden club activities, have served as momentum for furthering interest in the environment and instilling the importance of making this a better world for everyone.

I think the people are the reason I really got involved in garden club. With this new responsibility, I hope to help get a little spark back in garden club again. We have had a tough time in the organization the last few years with COVID and now that people are able to get out, people are less afraid of getting together but are comfortable staying home. We have lost some of the excitement. We did have to venture through new challenges.

IN THIS ISSUE:

<i>Director's Message</i>	1&3
<i>Scholarship Award</i>	3
<i>Diane Dawson - IL</i>	4
<i>Linda Harkleroad - IN</i>	5
<i>Linda Dingee - Garden Therapy</i>	5
<i>Jayne Kesler - IN</i>	6
<i>Schools - Lucy Valitchka</i>	6
<i>Nancy Ryan - MI</i>	7
<i>Beverly Wattenbarger - MO</i>	8
<i>Kerry Krokos - Awards</i>	8
<i>Linda McCafferty - WI</i>	9
<i>Chuck McCafferty - Blue/Gold Star</i>	10
<i>Joe Powelka - Treasurer</i>	11
<i>Birds & Butterflies - Marian McNabb</i>	11
<i>Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl</i>	12
<i>Photography - Lynn O'Shaughnessy</i>	12
<i>Invasive Plants - Jane Buck</i>	13

Lynne Ehnert
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Theme: Tree Planting Escapade!

Dates to Remember

On October 15-17, 2023, Iowa will be hosting the Central Region Convention at the restored historic Hotel Fort Des Moines in downtown Des Moines, Iowa. National Garden Club President Brenda Moore will be with us as we embark on tours of area interest, participate in a botanical arts show, hear dynamic speakers, and enjoy good food and fellowship. The theme of the event will be "Hats Off to Iowa." Hope to see you in October!"



Hats Off to Iowa!



Continued from page 1

We are still getting things done and finding new ways (i.e. meeting virtually), but with a little less socialization. We have worked hard on our change management skills which isn't always easy the older we get. But we are surviving! We now have to find a balance with the changes we made by staying home and getting back to socialization.

Some of the things we are planning on looking at for the next term are:

- Redesign of the Central Region Website
- Adding additional information to the Central Region Website
- Improving our Facebook presence
- Collaboration of information of Judges' Councils across the Region
- Improving our Award applications across the Region
- Having a Central Tree Planting Escapade (our Central Region Project)

In order to do this, we need interest and commitment from the members. We can find people to update the website and post things to Facebook, but we need people to submit articles, pictures, and information. When you are having fun and submitting this information, this is one of the best advertisements for getting new members. When you tell us what you want to see, how you would use the website, what interests you, chances are, that is what interests someone else. When people get awards, how does it make them feel?

When you are talking about garden club, are you talking about it with a smile on your face? When you are touring gardens, planting flowers, vegetables and trees, enjoying the environment, describing a great landscape or making a design, does it make you smile? Think about what makes you smile. Let's smile a little more. It is more important than just sowing a seed or planting a tree; it is improving the life of everyone while sharing and caring. It does not just exist; it is helping everyone to live a fruitful life. Let's get excited!

Lynne Ehnert
Central Region Director

Nan McCabe **CRGC Scholarship Chairman 2021-2025**

I am honored to share that we have a winner of the CRGC Scholarship Award for 2023! Colton Bragg, from Michigan, was one of three applications that I received. The others, one from Missouri and one from Iowa. They were all excellent students. Colton's scholarship application outshined the others with a 3.98 Cumulative GPA. All three have bright futures ahead of them.

Colton Bragg is a Junior at Saginaw Valley State University. His Major is in Biology-Ecology, Evolution and Organism Biology with a Minor in Professional & Technical Writing. He graduates May 2024. Colton plans on attending graduate school for field study in ecology or conservation genetics.

We have SEVEN STATES in CENTRAL REGION! If your state is involved with scholarships, please send your students scholarship applications to me next year to be considered for the Central Region Scholarship Award. Please visit the CRGC web-site for more information. Also remember that you can send your students' applications to National Garden Clubs to be considered for the NGC Scholarship. In Missouri we send the two top students applications that we receive on to the Central Region and one to National Garden Clubs.

Truly, one of the greatest things that we can do as a gardening organization is to support those who have a heart like ours, a love of plants, to obtain their education in the Plant Sciences.

I look forward to receiving your student applications next year by March 15, 2024! Please contact me for more information. njkm55@gmail.com.

Diane Dawson - President of the Garden Clubs of Illinois 2023-2025

Theme: "Let's Grow Together Illinois: Plant America"



Diane Dawson is a member of The Elmhurst Garden Club, and a new member of the Oak Park River Forest Garden Club. She also serves on the NGC Board on the Membership and Organizational Studies committees.

Her interest in garden clubs began as a Junior gardener with the Elmhurst Garden Club. Her mother encouraged her to enter flower shows as a junior, and Diane still enjoys flower shows, and floral design. Over the years, Diane's business life became the primary focus, but she continued to join her mother in her garden club adventures, especially after the death of her father. Her mother, Violet, served many garden club organizations, at all levels, including the presidency of the National Garden Clubs.

Diane has served under three state presidents on the GCI board and many NGC presidents over the course of 2 decades. Most recently, she served as a member of the NGC membership committee, and being a part of a team that produced the Membership Mondays for NGC. She will continue her work on the NGC board.

The Illinois theme is: **Let's Grow Together Illinois: Plant America**. She's encouraging clubs to invite guests to their meetings. The state project will be aligned with goals to increase membership and a contest is being planned.

An ongoing project for the state is supporting the Lincoln Memorial Garden in Springfield, IL. In the 1930s, Springfield was in the midst of a major building project around a lake. Civic leader Harriet Knudson envisioned a garden to honor the 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, a garden composed of native plants of Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky, the three states in which Lincoln had lived. She persuaded the Garden Clubs of Illinois to take on the creation of a garden as a special project. Jens Jensen, of the nation's foremost landscape architects, designed the unusual living tribute. Today, GCI continues to fund the Garden and the Children's Woodland Garden, which will be completed in Spring, 2024.

Illinois will also be working on the following:

- Host CR Convention in 2024/Support CR Theme
- Review/Revise Illinois bylaws
- Leadership Development/Officer Succession
- Improve Social Media presence
- Align Awards with NGC

Diane is a graduate of Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) and has an MBA from the University of Chicago, Booth School of Business. She worked for IBM Corp. before joining the family company, where she continues to work full-time. She enjoys floral design, golf, and learning French.

Diane Dawson
Illinois President

Linda Harkleroad Outgoing Indiana President

Although our geographical location along with climate change make Indiana one of the states in our region less susceptible to the ravages of winter's ice and snow, many garden clubs in the state take a break from meeting for few months at the start of a new year. After the holiday parties of December, a few months with no meetings allow for officers to meet and plan programs for the coming year.

On the state level, there is much to look forward to—

“Bees, Teas, and Pollinators, Please”—Not all of Indiana went into hibernation during the winter. On January 28th the members of the Sullivan County Garden Club hosted a garden fest complete with speakers, vendors, and a tea tasting.

“Pieces of the Past”—Our state convention was held April 25-26 in Montgomery, Indiana. TGCI business will be completed, but it will also be a chance to learn about southern Indiana's history along with reconnecting with friends.

“Almost Heaven”—A chance to stay at the Greenbrier? The NGC convention was May 1st through 5th and days were filled with meetings, speakers, and a tour of the bunker!

“Water Is Essential for Life”—The North Central District will host TGCI's semi-annual September Seminar on September 15th on Lake Wawasee in Syracuse, Indiana. From the scientific to the artistic, speakers will highlight not only the methods in place to keep our lakes and streams clean, but also the paintings that highlight their beauty.

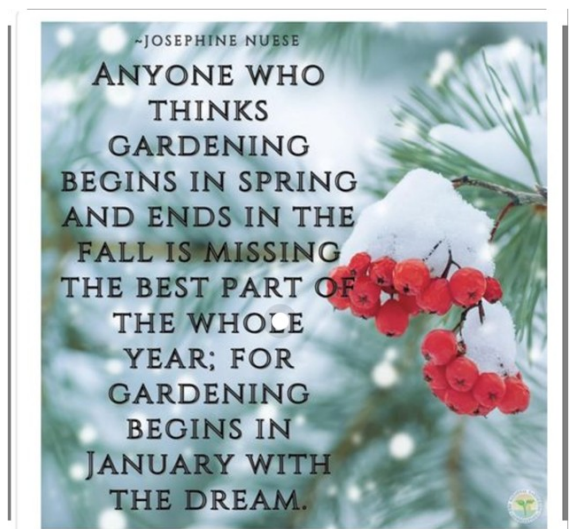
I cannot resist the chance to celebrate the statistic that was revealed at the January Membership Monday meeting. Indiana was named 4th in the nation in total new members and 2nd in the nation when calculating the percentage increase considering total membership. Along with every other state we are struggling with issues of members aging out and recruitment of younger members. However, we continue to focus on attracting new members with interesting programs and beautiful civic plantings.

Garden Therapy Linda Dingee Chairman

During the winter months, when inclement weather keeps many of us indoors, it is especially beneficial to stay connected to the more verdant seasons and their associated activities, while respecting the natural cycle of nature's more restful state.

Gardening is one life-affirming activity that can provide us with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual gifts as we await springtime.

No matter the season and no matter the ability, gardening is therapeutic in all its forms. The connection to nature, the soil, and the sun can enrich our lives with mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional blessings, if we only give it a chance.



(Shared from Leigh Anne Starling)

Jayne Kesler - President of The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. 2023-2025 Theme: "Plant Trees for Hope"



My husband and I retired from teaching and decided to move back to Peru, IN to the farm and home my grandparents had built in the 20s. I was very close to my grandparents and the farm had always been my happy place. Little did I know that an invitation from my best friend's mother to attend a Peru Garden Club meeting in 2004 would be the perfect fit for new friendships and an opportunity to learn how to beautify the land I loved.

The move was after a 40-year absence which was filled with an undergraduate degree from Purdue University in literature and speech education and a master's degree from Indiana State University in communication theory. All of this was used in 28 years of teaching high school and middle school students. Teaching still brings me happiness as I work with youngsters in the elementary school teaching a plant program from Purdue University. Seeing young people apply their hands-on experiences is a joy.

I have served as president several times in Peru Garden Club as well as other offices and committee chairmen. Serving two terms as North Central District Director gave me the opportunity to visit other clubs and make statewide friendships. In The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc., I served as the Blue Star Memorial chairman for seven years. Recording Secretary, Second Vice President, and First Vice President positions lead me to the office of the President where I will serve 2023-2025.

Living on the family farm with trees planted by my grandparents and added to by my family is a joy. I am an unabashed tree hugger, and so it was a natural move to make my President's Project one of planting trees. The clubs in Indiana have a challenge to impact their communities by using the President's Project "Plant Trees for Hope" Grant Program. We can increase the benefits to our climate, our ecosystem and our health with our tree plantings. I am looking forward to meeting and working with others in Central Region as well as National Garden Clubs. The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. will learn with me as I share my experiences and ideas gained from those groups with Indiana.

Jayne Kesler
Indiana President

SCHOOL LISTINGS

Environmental

Course 1

Sept. 27-28, 2023 - Bowling Green, KY (In-person)

Oct. 20-21, 2023 - Sheboygan, WI (In-person Classroom)

Course 2

Sept. 21-22, 2023 - Derby, CT (Zoom)

Nov. 7-8, 2023 - Tampa Bay, FL (Hybrid)

Course 3

Nov. 16-17, 2023 - Ft. Myers, FL (Zoom)

Gardening School

None Scheduled in Central Region area

Landscape Design School

Course 1

Sept. 13-15, 2023 - Falmouth, ME (Hybrid)

Oct. 25-27, 2023 - Waltham, MA (Zoom)

Course 3

Sept. 20-22, 2023 - New Smyrna Beach, FL (Zoom)

Go to our NGC website Schools section to register for any of the above classes.

<https://www.gardenclub.org/our-schools>

Lucy Valitchka
Central Region Schools Chairman

Nancy Ryan - President of The Garden Club of Michigan 2023-2025 Theme: **Grow, Share, Connect Michigan!**



On June 7, 2023 the 2023-2025 Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. (MGC) Board of Directors was installed by former MGC President Carol Brodbeck (2017-2019) at the MGC Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Nancy J. Ryan is the 91st state president. Before becoming president, Nancy served on the state board through four previous presidents and also served as president of her garden club. She has extensive experience serving on and leading volunteer non-profit organizations. Her professional career began with Cadillac Motor Car and after a successful plant launch with an innovative work culture she left GM to join a start up organizational change consulting firm. This gave her the opportunity to also provide pro bono consulting services to many community non-profit organizations.

She is a Master Gardener, has moved her perennials through four different growing zones and is a member of the American Tree Farm system, managing 100 acres of woodlands on the Pere Marquette River in Michigan.

Her theme builds on the tradition begun in 2017 by MGC Presidents to continue the state theme thus providing consistency in direction to member clubs. **Grow, Share, Connect Michigan!** is a continuation of the Grow and Share theme from 2017.

Her goals for the 2023-2025 term are:

- Implement a successful Standing Committee structure to support a smaller Board while increasing committee member involvement in the MGC, Inc. mission.
- Collaborate with other mission similar organizations to develop partnerships and Associate Members in the organization.
- Develop and communicate the next five-year MGC Strategic Plan to assure the continued success of the organization's mission.

MGC will continue its partnership with *Homegrown National Park*. Extensive work on the state website to improve the member club user experience is already underway along with the effort to move legislation forward to establish the Black Swallowtail butterfly as the state butterfly. Nancy plans to use her President's Award fund to recognize and reward "best practices" by clubs to fill leadership positions, diversify/increase membership and develop community networks with other organizations.

She is honored to work with a wonderful group of volunteers who serve on the MGC Board of Directors. Their experience and skills will help MGC continue to meet its mission.

Nancy Ryan
Michigan President

Check out the CR website:
www.ngccentralregion.com

Beverly Wattenbarger, President of the Garden Clubs of Missouri, Inc. 2023-2025
Theme: “Plant America: Leading the Way for a Greener Missouri”



I joined garden club in 2003 after my youngest son started collage. I have always enjoyed gardening. When I was little I would help my grandmother in her flower beds and at home with the vegetable garden.

I have served in many offices from garden club, district and state levels, and have always enjoyed serving and meeting people all over the state of Missouri.

The theme I have chosen for 2023-2025 is **“Plant America: Leading the Way for a Greener Missouri.”**

For my project, I have decided to concentrate on water conservation. The name of my project is “Let’s Talk About Water.” It was created to make our members and the public more aware of the importance of conserving water as it is not an unlimited resource. I will be asking our clubs to present educational programs focusing on water conservation. I also have set a goal of a 10% increase in membership.

The Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri, Inc. just held our 90th Annual State Convention in St. Louis, Missouri on April 17-20, 2023. Our Immediate Past President, Mary Warshauer, installed our incoming officers for 2023-2024. The East Central District held a beautiful flower show, “Show Me St. Louis” and invited everyone in the state to participate. There were wonderful tours, workshops, speakers and a beautiful Design Program. Our Past President, Linda Houston, conducted the business of the federation.

Spring is such a busy time with Blue Star Memorial dedications. Missouri will have three in April and May. Many clubs are having plant sales and spring district meetings. Our state had four Past State Presidents and one Present State President along with nine FGCM members attend our NGC Convention in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. What a wonderful convention and a beautiful location.

I am looking forward to meeting everyone in Iowa this fall for the Central Region Convention.

Beverly Wattenbarger
Missouri President

HELLO CENTRAL REGION MEMBERS!

I am Kerry Krokos, the new Awards Chairman and I am so excited to be involved in the awards for Central Region. I belong to Wisconsin Garden Clubs Federation in the Milwaukee District. I have experience with District Awards, but am not as familiar with the awards for Central region. I am a fast learner and hope you will all bear with me as I “learn the ropes” from the previous chairman, Susan Cooney. (She has been very helpful-thanks Susan)

I can be reached at: Email: krokos.L4030@sbcglobal.net - Phone 414-628-4545

I look forward to the upcoming term and can’t wait to start to know everyone a little better.

Kerry Krokos
Awards Chairman

Linda McCafferty, President of the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation 2023-2025 Honoring Veterans and Gold Star Families



Six months after joining Sun Prairie Garden Club in 1991, I was elected treasurer. Six years later, Diane Powelka wanted to be Wisconsin Garden Club Federation Madison District Director and asked me to be her Vice-Director. Since then, I have served all positions on SPGC's Board, currently secretary, and continue to chair "Blooming of Sun Prairie" (civic beautification) and co-chair "Garden of the Month" (honoring residential gardening), and serve as a member of the Yearbook, and Garden Walk Committees.

I am also a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary and American Legion Auxiliary where I currently serve as Second Vice President, Parliamentarian, and Americanism and Sunshine chairs, and as coordinator of quarterly blood drives.

In 2009, WGCF President Judy Pitcher appointed my Vietnam Veteran husband and me Chairs of Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers; we hold a similar position with Madison District. This is a perfect fit for this military family. I also hold life memberships in NGC, CR and WGCF. At the 2019 WGCF Convention in Madison, Kitty Larkin asked me to serve as Second Vice President. After consideration and discussion with Chuck, I agreed I would serve if so elected and the rest is history. When not involved in the above, I devote the rest of my time to primarily vegetable gardening, canning the produce of my labors, baking, and spending as much time as I can with my two granddaughters attending their marching band competitions, dance recitals, band concerts, and all other activities in which they are involved.

I am looking forward to an exciting term promoting education, resources and opportunities for WGCF members and encouraging them to share the love of gardening, floral design and environmental responsibilities. I am sure I will also learn considerably more myself about this great organization.

Linda McCafferty Wisconsin President

NGC Awards and Award of Excellence #SR2 National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Illinois was one of two states to receive the prestigious NGC Award of Excellence at the NGC Annual Meeting and Convention, in May, 2023. Each year this annual award recognizes exceptional individuals, organizations or institutions that advance NGC's goals and purposes. (Illinois represented state garden clubs with 3,000 to 7,999 members).

Outgoing state of Illinois president, Marilyn Krueger, (2021-2023) accepted this Award from Donna Marie Donnelly, Chairman of the Award of Excellence Committee. Krueger states: "This award reflects the commitment of many of our clubs to provide food to local food pantries. Seventeen clubs donated a combined total of 8,600 pounds of home-grown fruits, vegetable and herbs; 1,384 cans of food- such as tuna, soup, vegetables and fruit; 369 packages of food- such as boxes of cereal and bags of rice and dried vegetables." Illinois truly did ***Plant America: Starting at home with food.***

Central Region Blue Star and Gold Star Families

Chuck McCafferty - Chairman



In 2009, Wisconsin Garden Club Federation President Judy Pitcher appointed my wife and me co-chairs of Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers Committee; we hold a similar position with WGCF-Madison District. This is a perfect fit for us because I am a Vietnam Veteran involved with numerous Veteran organizations including American Legion (former Commander), 40&8 La Société des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux, VFW Auxiliary, Polish American Legion, Disabled Veterans of America, and Sons of the American Revolution, to name a few.

My wife was eligible to join American Legion Auxiliary through my military service and VFW Auxiliary through the service of her father, a WWII and Korean War Veteran. She is very involved with the American Legion Auxiliary and serves in many capacities. Now you can see our involvement with everything military.

The very first task we accomplished as Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers Committee co-chairs was to travel the entire State of Wisconsin searching for the 12 Blue Star Memorial Markers we were told existed. We found all of them with the exception of one that was dedicated in 1953 in Superior, Wisconsin. It was obvious to us that the road site identified for the Marker's placement had undergone considerable reconstruction. We stopped at the Superior Chamber of Commerce to try to determine where the Marker might be and were introduced to a Gold Star Sister who was excited to assist us. We exchanged contact information and shortly thereafter received an email providing us with the name of a local garden club member who for years had expressed concern about the Marker's loss and wanted to see it re-established.

On October 22, 2011, with the persistence and dedication of garden club members belonging to WGCF-Indianhead District, the Marker was rededicated at the Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center in Superior. Since that time, seven more Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers have been dedicated. There are several more that are currently coming down the pike; however, they do not get counted until we receive an order and accompanying check. I was appointed to chair this committee alone because my wife was recently installed as WGCF President so she needs to step aside until her term is completed. I am certain we will then become co-chairs again.

When not involved in the above, I devote the rest of my time performing interior, exterior and vehicular maintenance, dabble in photography and attend car shows with my 1964 Ford Galaxie 500 (all original) and Ride the Drag with my classic car owner friends. I also spend as much time as I can with my two granddaughters attending their marching band competitions, dance recitals, band concerts, and all other activities in which they are involved. I look forward to taking on this assignment and will follow through in the best manner possible to prove to Lynne that she chose the right guy for this job.

Chuck McCafferty
Blue Star and Gold Star Chairman

Central Region Treasurer Joe Powelka, WGCF

Lynne Ehnert, our new Central Region Director, has asked CR Chairman to write something to excite our membership about garden clubs. The role of Treasurer is not necessarily a “Pump-it-up” role in the scheme of garden clubs but without sound, accurate financial data, the “downer” of financial issues can quickly do just the opposite.

I will be assuming the role of Central Region Treasurer. As such, I will be responsible for the financial activities of the Central Region. The whole goal of a treasurer is to keep accurate records of all financial activities and make sure those records are transparent to the membership. That will be my goal!

While I currently serve as treasurer for my local garden club (Sun Prairie Garden Club) and am the 1st VP/ President-elect for WGCF, I currently have little knowledge of Central Region financial activities. By the time you read this, I hope to have corrected that deficiency by meeting with the outgoing CR Treasurer and our incoming CR Director to affect a transfer of responsibilities.

Historically, I have a fairly sound basis of financial responsibility requirements having operated my own architectural business for twelve years (retired now) and previously have served as National Treasurer for Wild Ones Natural Landscapers (who promotes the use of native plants in our landscapes). I also served as National President of Wild Ones for seven years. Hopefully this background can serve me well in meeting the responsibilities of Treasurer, Central Region. Under Lynne Ehnert’s leadership, I hope to provide competent service to the Central Region in regard to financial record keeping.

Birds and Butterflies Marian McNabb

We had numerous Orioles this year. I counted 21 at one time around the feeders. I always feed them oranges and grape jelly. They have left our area now but we still have a lot of birds. Just to name a few that visit every day, Cat Bird, Cardinals, Rose Breasted Gross Beak, Gold Finches, Woodpeckers, Purple Finches, Hummingbirds, Blue Jays, Chickadees, Nut Hatches, and of course a variety of sparrows. We cleaned a man’s yard in the spring for him some years back and he had a lot of sparrows. He said he fed them because he thought if he came back as a sparrow he’d like someone to put feed out for him. So just in case, all birds are welcome at our home even the sparrows.

Our Central Region Bird is the Chickadee. I’m often asked about Hummingbird feed, yes you can make your own, it’s 1 cup of water to 1/4 cup of sugar. I make it every 3 days even if it’s not all eaten, I clean the feeder out and put new in. No you don’t have to add food coloring, they find it and they’ll take control of the feeder.

The butterflies have arrived here in NW Iowa. I’ve seen Monarch’s, Cabbage Whites, Sulfurs, Swallowtails, and a lot of Painted Ladies; a note about the Monarch. If the Monarch has a black spot on the bottom of its wings, it’s a boy, girl Monarch’s don’t have spots.



Please remember not to use chemicals on your gardens if you want butterflies. Those little worms that are eating away at the Dill or Milkweed is what will be your butterflies. It’s okay to have an area where you have Dill and Milkweed just to attract butterflies. Living in a farm state I know many people don’t care to have Milkweed but it’s the host plant for the Monarch and if we get rid of the Milkweed we contribute to the extinction of the Monarch. Help protect our wild life, plant **Milkweed**. *Do you know the Central Region butterfly is the Painted Lady? Enjoy your summer, protect our birds and butterflies.*

Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest

As usual, it was very difficult to pick just one poster from each age group to send on to National for the final round of judging. I can't imagine how difficult it must be at the National level. All students who had a poster sent to the Region level for judging, received a certificate. First place winners were:

- 1st Grade – Allison Malter, Illinois
- 2nd Grade – Willow Fox, Michigan
- 3rd Grade – Karly Giasomini, Wisconsin
- 4th Grade – AJ Vosters, Wisconsin
- 5th Grade – Madyson Southworth, Missouri



Next year, Smokey Bear will be 80 years old so the contest will only be posters of Smokey – no Woodsy Owl. Information should be out in August and I will forward all information to state chairman once I have received it. State Presidents – if your chairman changed for the current year, could you send the new contact info to me at doncyn@hotmail.com? Thank you.

Cynthia Wright
Central Region Chairman

Calling All Central Region Photographers!

Are you the photographer for your garden club? Do you want to improve your photography? Would you like to share some of your really cool photos with other gardeners in Central Region? Then continue reading.

Central Region would like to start a CR photographers Facebook group, but we need to know if there is interest. Please e-mail Lynn O'Shaughnessy at freepirit@pleurothallids.com with your thoughts/choices for the following:

I am interested in being on a committee to head up this CR Photographers Facebook group. The most important thing we are in need of is a few additional people to be on a committee to help keep this Facebook group active.

I would be interested in joining this CR Photographers Facebook group AND participating as much as I can.

Things I would like to see the CR Photographers Facebook group do are (check as many as you like):

- share tips and tricks for photography.
- have assignments/themes to get me out practicing what I learned.
- share photo competition opportunities for me to enter.
- give me feedback on my photos if asked.
- let me share some of my really cool photos. Remember that this would NOT be the place to share what your garden club is doing, but is a place to share an interesting/creative photo or two you might have taken.
- something else not listed above (please include your thoughts).

Lynn O'Shaughnessy
Photography Education

Invasive Plants

Jane Buck

Driving down the road you may notice invasive plants in ditches or other areas and wonder to yourself, “I wish something could be done about this, but I am just one person—what could I do that would help make a difference?” I am writing today to encourage you to action. Yes! You can make a difference.

I made my neighborhood association aware of the purple loosestrife that was invading a ditch bordering our development. Later on, one of my neighbors let me know that the high school honor society, of which her son was a member, was looking for a project. We hatched a plan and, with some preparation work, we were able to arrange a project for the students.

On Saturday morning, April 29th, 2023, the Westosha Central National Honor Society students worked on a community service project to remove purple loosestrife plant along the south ditch of Kenosha County Road AH. The student volunteers dug out the overwintering roots of these stubborn plants along a quarter mile of ditch.



The twenty-nine students also removed other invasive weeds and cleaned up garbage along the side of the road. The weather turned cold and rainy but they were all troopers and finished the cleanup. The students were eager to learn and were a joy with which to work.

This project helped the students learn stewardship of our natural resources, but it did require some planning. I contacted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and spoke with [Jeanne Scherer](#), AIS Outreach Specialist and Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Statewide Coordinator. As it turned out she was coming to my area and we met and walked the ditch and she gave me sound advice. The advice was not limited to details on plant removal either.

Jeanne also gave advice on what services the local government might be able to provide and how to avoid unintentional violation of wetland preservation laws.

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is a wetland perennial plant; three to seven feet tall, found in a range of wet soil habitats. It can grow in water as deep as a couple feet of water or on dry shore near the water line. It is commonly found in roadside ditches. Purple loosestrife spreads primarily by seeds. A plant may have up to 50 stems topped with purple flower spikes. Each mature plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds annually. Originally introduced in the early 1800's to the east coast through shipping, this plant has spread along canals and waterways into Wisconsin as late as the 1920's. Sterile varieties sold in nurseries as ornamental plants possess the ability to cross-pollinate with wild populations, producing fertile hybrids. This plant is listed on all the Central Region States invasive species list.



I hope this story encourages you to find connections in your network of friends and neighbors where you might suggest projects related to invasive plant control. You might be surprised at the opportunities that exist! I am just one person, but making connections with neighbors found a crew of 29 students eager to restore our environment and eager to learn about steps we can take to restore our natural environment. I look forward to hearing your stories about the actions you discover to control invasives!