



The Polar Vortex Issue

**NEWSLETTER**



*Best in Show: Gail Davidson*



# Greenhouse Views





### President's Message

Greetings from the great indoors. Here's hoping that we have all gotten some quality "down time" to rest and refresh. This will be a fun spring and summer, as we work the greenhouse and plan changes large and small for our home gardens. Get your dreaming caps on! Spread out all those catalogs!

Hope you took notes, and can decipher yours better than I can mine!!

Gail



## Features

### **GCA Scholarship Program**

#### **Why GCBB might like to be more involved**

Did you know that two women many of us have had the opportunity to meet recently, through the Mini Zone meeting at Tower Hill this past November, and our monthly meeting in January featuring the Trustees of Reservations' development of the Allen C. Haskell Park have something in common?



Both Catherine Abbott (left), the new Director of Tower Hill Botanical Gardens, and Kristin DeSousa (below right), the newly appointed Superintendent, of the Allen C. Haskell Park are GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA SCHOLARS!

While I'm sure we are all aware of the GCA Scholarship Program through reading the annual June/July Bulletin Scholarship issue, isn't it impressive to have had a more personal contact with successful scholars who have benefitted from this program?

As you are aware, I have had a personal immersion into the program this past year, serving as the Zone 1 Scholarship Representative. Thus far, it has involved a meeting this past October at the GCA Headquarters in NYC, where I had the opportunity to hear reports from all the scholars presently studying and their emphasizing how important GCA support has been to the pursuit in their chosen fields. It was awesome.

In November, I led the Zone 1 Scholarship Workshop at Tower Hill, and heard what many of our fellow Zone 1 clubs are doing to promote their member's interest in contributing to the GCA General Scholarship Fund.

Our past Zone 1 Scholarship Rep and now Vice-Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, Ingrid Barrett, gave us an interesting look at annual Summer Study Scholarships, and how the recipients are selected.

This February, I will be traveling to the headquarters to join Ingrid and her committee in selecting this year's recipients to the summer study awards. In March, I have been asked to be a part of the Selection Committee for the Royal Horticulture Interchange Award. Needless to say, I have been given a great look inside the workings of this committee. I am impressed.



Some interesting facts about this past year's GCA Scholarship Program: The GCA awarded 79 scholarships, distributing \$273,000 in scholarship funding and has sent scholars to 20 countries to study. Disciplines being studied include Botany, Coastal Wetlands, Conservation & Ecological Restoration, Desert Studies, Garden History & Design, Horticultural & Related Fields, International Work & Study, Landscape & Design, Natural Bird Habitat, Pollinator Conservation, Public Horticulture, Summer Environmental Study and Urban Forestry. The committee works with over 400 colleges, universities and horticultural institutions to seek out and select the scholars!

Each year, our club contributes between \$100 and \$150 to the GCA General Scholarship Fund. Having gotten an appreciation of how highly regarded this program is by our fellow GCA clubs and the 400 partners that work with us, I would like to suggest that we go a bit deeper into our pockets to assist the GCA in offering these important scholarships to future leaders in the fields of "gardening", some of whom we have come to know! Would you agree?

Your GCBB Buddy,  
Mary Schubert



## **History of the Woodland Walk at the RJD**

By Gertrude Burr

In 1981 WHALE, in order to prevent it from becoming commercial property, purchased the Duff House and its one square block of gardens. In 1982 John Bullard, Executive Director of WHALE, knowing we were no longer able to make our home in the Knowles greenhouse in Nonquitt, asked GCBB if we would be willing to take over the greenhouse and some of the gardens. After much discussion we agreed. Thus began the planning of restoring the greenhouse, renewing the Duff's wildflower walk and planning for the boxwood and perennial gardens.

In 1983 GCBB applied to the GCA Founders' Fund for monies for the greenhouse, the wildflower walk and the boxwood garden. Although we were a finalist we did not win, but we learned a lot! A proposal for the Founders' Fund should be of conservational, educational, historical and horticultural interest. The Zone I Founders' Fund chairman suggested we reapply but for only one of those projects. It was decided to put in a proposal for the wildflower walk. This one worked! In 1985 the Club won \$15,000. Eureka!

It was felt we needed some design help so we lured a wildflower landscaper from Garden



in the Woods to come have a look. She came twice and was a tremendous help – giving us many ideas about the four habitats. (She returned two years later and gave GCBB many kudos – but I still can't remember her name!) Meanwhile, with the help of Jim Perry, the debris of the area had been cleared and the path laid out.

In May of 1987 the Wildflower Walk committee held its first program for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. We were novices but the teachers were enthusiastic – thus the program has been held every spring since. In the beginning we held four or five one-hour sessions on three mornings, including students from the whole area. One year we had more than 700 students. Now we offer three one-hour sessions on four mornings with students only from New Bedford. The overall program has evolved tremendously, giving more than 13,000 kids a broader view of the botanical aspect of plants. Most members of GCBB participate in this program one way or another.

In 2004 the Wildflower Walk became the Woodland Walk as the wildflowers were diminishing and various, non-native plants replacing them. In 2013, as part of the Rotch Jones Duff House plan to return the gardens to the 1885 time frame, the upper portion of the garden was replaced with a small gentleman's orchard (our GCA Centennial Tree Project). We expanded activities, adding bean plant projects and greenhouse experiments.



## The Haskell Legacy

By Laura McLean

Allen C. Haskell, the late horticulturist whose imprint on the local landscape is visible today and whose horticultural talents and innovations earned him international acclaim, gave us the seeds to perfect our craft. He gave us a way to observe, to combine plant material, to perceive color and depth, to find excitement in rare specimens and so much more.

It has been a decade since our favorite garden guru died, but through the all-encompassing vision of the Trustees of Reservations, his work and inspiration will be perpetuated to future generations of gardeners.

John Vasconcellos, Southeast Regional Director of the Trustees, in a recent talk to GCBB members, discussed the projects and work underway at the former nursery and gardens Haskell created, explaining how the trustees are mapping out the future of this “iconic



property.” The 787 Shawmut Avenue site consists of three separate lots over six acres with a dozen greenhouses, two historic residences, bird coops that were used to house a collection of dazzling and rare birds as well as potting sheds and offices. “This wasn’t just acres to be purchased in an urban area -- but conservation that matters for people,” he said explaining their intent to “protect, steward, excite and grow.”

The acquisition was long in the execution, against mounting fears in the community and within the Haskell family that it might fall to the fate of bulldozers erasing and replacing the compound with “nothing like the spirit and beauty and energy that exists there.” Noting how Allen’s widow Ellena Haskell and their son David were amenable to working with the trustees, this outcome was averted and a plan was put into motion to retain the ‘spirit of place.’



“His legacy, while expressed through horticulture -- is that of excellence in one’s chosen field,” said Vasconcellos, explaining how Haskell’s legacy speaks powerfully to New Bedford in the unique landscapes and gardens he created. “Through horticulture, he found his own personal excellence. He grew up here and never left but found his niche here much to the benefit of local people. Under the new stewards’ care, the park will have community relevance,” noted Vasconcellos.

As a densely populated, mature garden of considerable size, the property is a “demanding mistress,” he added, emphasizing the need to keep it all maintained. “If you don’t care for a garden or a home it will deteriorate before your eyes,” he said, reporting that crews are working to revitalize some of the trees, vines and hedges there with vigorous pruning work, that is also open to the interested public.

An impressive array of events including a holiday lighting ceremony, a lesson on tying trees and shrubs for winter, a tree-identification workshop as well as a walk/discussion of landscape design in winter marked the Trustees first year of ownership, with plans to expand these in the future.



Vasconcellos emphasized the excitement they hope to generate through horticultural lessons for youngsters and high school student internship possibilities as well as grander plans that will convert the former nursery space to a park suitable for events, such as weddings. “But public and private access will be balanced,” he said. Other possible uses might be using the greenhouses to propagate plants and for community service projects and designating a certain area for “unprescribed play” where it’s okay to get dirty,” not to mention artistic and musical endeavors in the park, possibly yoga too.

“This will never look as good as when Allen was here,” he conceded, adding, “You can’t hold us to that standard.” Retaining the flavor of the houses on the property is a major priority as is having a presence. The old Hathaway House will become a residence for superintendent Kristin DeSouza – and another farmhouse will be stabilized for some future purpose. Meanwhile the glass shop will become a visitor’s center and a way to honor Allen, said Vasconcellos. Although the classic glass greenhouses where Allen’s prized stock – from begonias to orchids and other exotics – are not viable to operate, they are foreseen as locations for holding private events and workshops. “Its story has yet to be told.”

“Of course the garden horticultural projects will be ongoing,” said Ms. DeSouza, a senior horticulturist. So far that has included the hornbeam hedge pleached allée being cut to five feet, relocation of an evergreen border along the lawn and a much needed pruning of an espaliered pear tree by volunteer Fred Perry of Blithwold as well as pollarding of a trumpet vine. Such necessary “brutal” work is being done now with the anticipation of having the park operational this summer and be a valuable part of the community.



With its once profound collections of plants and a landscape that was one man’s crowning achievement, the former Haskell property, with the help of thoughtful preservation and reinvention, will continue to foster a love of nature, to perpetuate, just as Allen hoped.

*The Trustees are the oldest organization in the country emphasizing that  
“conservation is for people.”*



## Provisionals

### **Sallie Ayers Barker**

After many years of working in independent schools in Maryland, Washington, DC, and Charlotte, NC, I moved here when my husband became the head of Friends Academy 2 years ago. A children's librarian by trade, I am a children's book lover and am fortunate to maintain that focus as a volunteer at Friends Academy and at Alma del Mar in New Bedford. My interests also include birding and the outdoors, membership in The Handicraft Club in Providence, tending my perennial garden in New London, NH, and, mostly, spending time with our daughter Nina, our son Nick and his wife Katie, and our little granddaughter. A Washington, DC native, I spent many a Friday afternoon at The National Cathedral with my grandmother and my aunt, who were both flower arrangers on the altar guild.



Because we have moved frequently in these more recent years (thanks to some wonderful 'interim head of school' posts for my husband), I regrettably had to resign from my job and from the Greenspring Valley Garden Club in Baltimore four years ago. However, thanks to those moves, I have learned to jump into my new locations and find my niches in many rewarding ways. I am most grateful to Nonnie Hood for her encouragement, I am delighted to dig into Zone I and all that this beautiful part of the world has to offer.

### **Heather Campbell**

I have been gardening since I was a young girl. My mother enjoyed growing roses and my father really liked growing vegetables. It wasn't until after my father retired from the US Army and we settled in Cold Spring Harbor, NY that we could really garden.

I have lived in Tiverton since 2008, but before that, I lived on the Eastside in Providence for about 18 years. I currently serve as Secretary on the Women & Infant Hospital's Development Foundation Board, and my professional career was in real estate – property management. My hobbies include needlepoint and weaving Nantucket lightship baskets.



During the years in Providence, I tended an acre of gardens, which had started many years before my arrival. It was exciting to have formal beds, English



beds, very large old trees such as Blue Atlas Cedar, Linden, varieties of cherry trees, just to name a few. I had fun installing vegetable and rose garden – there was lots of experimenting especially with roses and hydrangeas.

In 2007, I took the University of Rhode Island's master gardener program, which added a lot to my education. Prior to that, I did a great deal of reading on snowy winter days over the years.

I still have lots to learn about everything. The knowledge and the kindred spirit of the GCBB is such a great environment in which to learn and contribute.



### **Christine Dole**

My husband and I moved to Marion when he retired in 2005. We have had our boat in Marion harbor since 1978, and we feel there is no better sailing anywhere in this country. I continued my interior design business until three years ago when we took our sailboat Pinnacle south on the Intra Coastal Waterway and to the Bahamas for the winter. We were gone for nine months and it was truly a trip of a lifetime.

I decided to close my business when I returned and spend my time doing things I enjoy. My friend Holly McDonough suggested GCBB, and I have been digging in the dirt ever since. I am also on the board of the RJD and a member of the Sippican Woman's Club. I put my interior design skills to good use this past holiday season helping decorate a house for the SWC Holiday House Tour. I also helped decorate the RJD Christmas tree and worked on the committee for Celebrate. We are members of the Beverly Yacht Club and will enjoy another cruise to Maine this summer with other members of the club. Since I retired I'm much busier than when I worked!!

### **Elizabeth K. (Beth) Ladd**

I was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts and attended Friends Academy before going away to boarding school. I attended Middlebury College and finished with the college course at Katharine Gibbs School in Boston.

After graduation I worked in Boston for a short time before my marriage to Jeff Williams in 1966. We raised three children in Dover, MA. After their father died in 1986, the children and I moved to Milton, MA as I was working in the Admissions Office at Milton Academy.



In 1993 I married Rob Ladd and moved to Ft. Collins, Colorado and lived there for 20 years. I became active volunteering in the Denver area for the Denver Symphony, Colorado Children's Chorale and mostly for Central City Opera where I served as President of the Guild for a year and served on the board for about five years until we bought our house in South Dartmouth and started splitting our time between CO and MA.



Recently I joined the board of the RJD not only to help preserve the history of the Museum, but also because I have fond memories of the time spent in both the museum and boxwood garden with my mother. I am especially pleased to now be a member of the GCBB as my mother was a long time member, and I had previously learned from her all the wonderful things the Garden Club did and has continued to do for the community.

### **Barbara Purdy**

I was trained in architecture and had a design firm. I then took an MBA and worked in business. I ran a small venture capital consulting and research firm. After several moves between Switzerland and California, we moved back to the east coast where I bought some land to build a house.



I began farming in 2000. I started out as a fruit farmer, bringing small fruit to farmers markets and selling at Lees market and a few other places. I broadened my scope to include cut flowers and veggies.

Next I began the first community supported agriculture format on the southcoast. We had about 90 families who belonged to the farm and received produce weekly. We took the CSA further into something we called year round, as we offered frozen and prepared foods from the summer's bounty. I no longer offer the CSA but continue to run the farm on a smaller scale. Recently, I have taken up glass art and am making jewelry and other forms in glass.

### **Cathy Stone**

Having been an elementary science teacher, I have always been interested in nature, the out-of-doors, plants and animals. My love of horticulture was stimulated by my grandfather, a great naturalist and gardener. Tagging behind as he inspected and oversaw the



greenhouse and garden operation in the 1960's at Great Hill, I learned the joy of watching plants grow, propagation and transplanting. My grandmother also invited me to see her night blooming cereus at midnight and taught me the delicacies of caring for African violets.

I first had a vegetable garden in Cambridge. When I moved to Virginia in 1981, I joined the Warrenton Garden Club, one of the founding clubs of the GCA. I held the jobs of treasurer, head of daffodil test collection and chairman of horticulture. I moved many bulbs and plants obtained in plant exchanges to Sharon, Ct. and on my next move, moved them again to Marion in 2004.

I help care for the formal beds my great grandfather designed on Great Hill in Marion and have received great knowledge from fellow gardeners in the Massachusetts Master Gardeners program, which I completed in 2012. As an active member of the MMGA, I am on the Education Committee planning events and doing registration. Always looking for new ways to learn about gardening and horticulture, I am looking forward to becoming more active in the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay in the coming years.

## Ellie Vasta

Phlox, bleeding heart, iris, myrtle, and peonies – just some of the perennials in my father's garden. I learned their names and identity at an early age, and my love of gardening was born. My favorite was the fragrant white and deep rose of the peonies, which lined the side of our house. I still have two clumps of those childhood favorites in my current garden – transplanted at least five times each time we moved.

My husband and I have been residents of Dartmouth for nearly forty years, with a three-year hiatus in The Berkshires, returning to start our business, Alphagrahics New Bedford, in 1986. Much of my time has been spent running the business, but my love of gardening has never waned. I am looking forward to spending more time and effort in my garden and have already been inspired since coming to GCBB greenhouse.

I am in my sixth year as a SMILES mentor to a boy in the New Bedford School system. I was a Big Sister to a teenage girl some years ago. I have volunteered for the Lloyd Center (Simply the Best!) "Clambake and Schwartz Center for Children Fishing For A Cause."





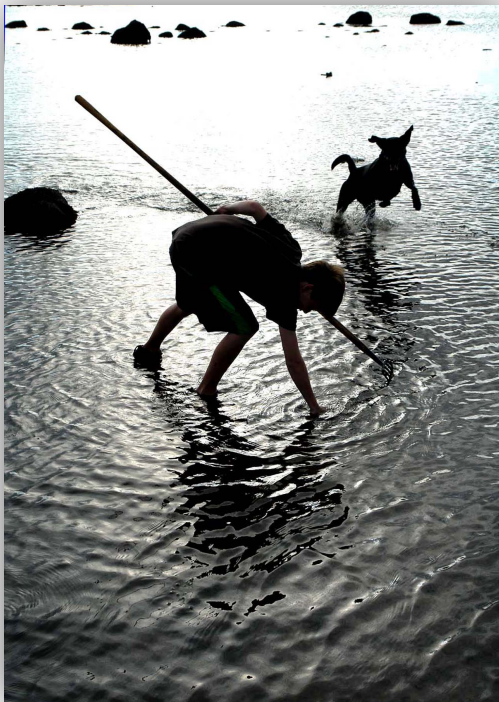
## Photo Show

A Photo show held at the RJD at our Holiday Party illustrated the remarkable talent of our members. The winners appear below and the ribbons went to:

**Class 1 & Best in Show: *Changing of the Seasons -- Transition (See Cover)***  
Gail Davidson (The back cover is also Gail's)

**Class 2: *Celebrate the Seasons --  
Natures Best***

**Margaret Forbush**



**Class 3: *Details close up -- monochrome***

**Laura McLean**



**Class 4: *Details close up -- color***

**Christine Dole**

**Class 5: *Altered Seasons -- Manipulated photos***

**Heather Campbell**





**Class 6: *Open Seasons --  
Anything goes***

**Laura Mclean**



**Novice Award: Chris Dole**





# And, Finally, Drive the Vortex Away

