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<http://www.mensgardenclubofalbany.org/>

(Serving the greater capital region)

Celebrating 78 years of service to our community

(First Chartered 1936)

VOLUME 77 NO. 4

April, 2014

**APRIL DINNER**

**DATE & TIME:** Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm

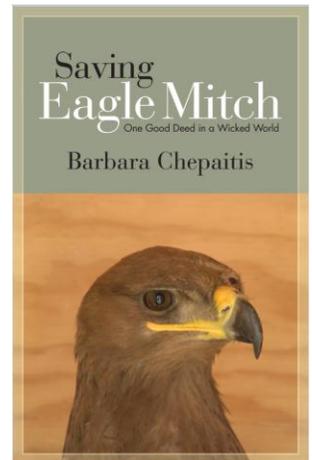
Ladies, we need you to join us - Please!

**PLACE:** Best Western Sovereign Hotel, 1228 Western Ave., Albany

**APPETIZER:** Garden Salad

**ENTREE:**  
 \* Chicken Marsala  
 \* Eggplant Parmigiana  
 \* Fish and Chips

**DESSERT:** Carrot Cake Dinner Price: \$ 20.00



**PROGRAM:** “All For the Birds” be presented by author **Barbara Chepaitis**

This talk is about **Berkshire Bird Paradise**, Eagle **Mitch**, and the human connection with birds

**BARBARA CHEPAITIS** is author of 7 published novels, including the critically acclaimed novel *These Dreams*. Her **nonfiction** books include *Feathers of Hope: Pete Dubacher*, *The Berkshire Bird Paradise*, and *the Human Connection with Birds*, and *Saving Eagle Mitch: One Good Deed in a Wicked World*.

Her short film, *All For the Birds*, premiered in January, 2014.

She is founder the **storytelling trio** *The Snickering Witches*, and concentration director in fiction for Western College of Colorado’s MFA in creative writing.

**RESERVATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL:**

A caller should reach you prior to the meeting for your dinner reservation and your choice of entree. If a caller leaves a message, please make every effort to return his call. If a caller does not reach you by Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, please call **Russ Greenman** at 477-8321 - Note: Callers – Please call Russ Greenman with your group’s reservations or email the dinner info to [MGCA1@verizon.net](mailto:MGCA1@verizon.net) (note: the character after MGCA in the email address is a Number “1”) You are reminded that if you make a reservation for dinner you will be expected to honor your commitment.

## Membership

We want to give a warm welcome to the two new members of our MGCA family. Both of these gentlemen joined after seeing our booth at the Capital District Garden and Flower show in March. **Vic Consiglio** actually won one of the bluebird houses that **Paul Zimmermann** built and after attending our March dinner meeting he joined.

**Bob Albern** also saw us at the show and decided to join. Please make a point to look for **Vic Consiglio** and **Bob Albern** at our April dinner and give them a nice warm welcome. Please add the following to your membership directories.

**VIC CONSIGLIO**  
47 OAKWOOD ST.  
ALBANY, NY 12208  
487-4769  
Vconsiglio1@yahoo.com

**ROBERT ALBERN**  
PO BOX 366  
KINDERHOOK, NY 12106-0366  
758-2400  
bobalbern@berk.com

## March Program

What a treat... We had a couple of big mucky mucks from National Grid as our guest speakers in March. **Brian Skinner** is the **Senior Arborist** – Central Division and he came all the way from Syracuse along with **Aric Dicruttalo** - ISA Certified Arborist and the **Supervisor of Forestry** for the Capital Region. They really know their stuff when it comes to trees and which ones belong under power wires and which ones DON'T. Did you know that National Grid spends over \$ 2,000,000,000 annually to protect us and their wires from trees that are improperly planted under their wires? That number doesn't even include the costs of storm damage. National Grid has developed a list of trees that won't grow up into the wires and I think they will even kick in money (\$50 / tree) to insure that the appropriate trees are planted under their wires. There is quite an art balancing the safety of kids that may be climbing in the trees, to the protection of the trees, visual appeal, and future protection of the wires.

Whats National Grid have to do with EABs and ALBs and what's that have to do with my electric bill? Apparently, the **Emerald Ash Borer** (EAB) and the larger **Asian Longhorn Beetle** (ALB) are a huge problem and have caused crews (in a nearby state) to come in and take down every tree on a city street. That not only looks bad and costs money... but now you need AC to stay cool and your electric bill goes up. I have seen the damage done by the EABs over by the Selkirk RR yards and it's only a matter of time before they infest other areas.

Bottom line: It was very interesting to hear about the many challenges these guys face as they try to maintain human safety and reliability of thousands of miles of feeders (wires). They explained the importance of knowing how various trees grow, fall apart and die. For example, an old dead Elm tree may stand solid –good firewood, if you can split it – while an Ash tree hit by an EAB may rot off 18" from the ground causing havoc with the power lines.

If National Grid (or is it us?) would stop planting those little Maples under their power wires, our electric bills could look much better.

**Thanks so much to Brian Skinner and Aric Dicruttalo for a very informative and enjoyable evening out.**

**Thank You Becker's Farm** <http://www.beckersfarm.com/>

Thanks to the great folks at **Becker's Farm** we have lots of flower and vegetable seeds that they have again donated to our club. Some of these seeds will be used at our **Gardening From The Heart** program at the **Center For Disability Services**. There are plenty of seeds that we would like distributed to youth – in schools or 4H programs. We will have the seeds at our next dinner meeting and you are all welcome to browse through them and take as many as you wish. Just keep **Becker's Farm** in mind next time you are out in East Greenbush.



## **Thank You Marilou!**

Something is wrong with this picture – but we aren't complaining. At the March dinner meeting **Mairlou Town** handed us a card (and a very generous donation) thanking us for all we do. I think we should be thanking **Marilou** and for all she has done for us. **Bill Town** was an amazing guy that lived to improve the lives of others. He was very active in the MGCA and in particular the **Gardening From The Heart** program at the **Center for Disability Services**. He was a handy guy that could build anything from a work stand for our greenhouse, to a grow light stand or even the gunpowder to blow up those projects he wasn't completely satisfied with. If he wasn't at the Center he was out planting trees around the community or taking us on tours to teach us about trees. **Bill Town** was a Master Gardener and now **Marilou** is also a Master Gardener that shares her knowledge with fellow and future gardeners. She has coordinated the construction of many raised beds at a local school and taught the students how to garden – and as a teacher – she knows how to keep the kids and adults interested.

## **Thank you Marilou!**

### **Feature Article - Spring Lawn Care**

#### **Written by our very own Paul Zimmermann**

Finally, here's some good news. Despite the advertising you might hear/see, there's very little need to work on your lawn in the spring with one possible exception. Here's the inside scoop:

No need to fertilize – Mother Nature will take care of greening up your lawn. Father Scotts can rest in his hammock until fall. Why? The addition of significant amounts of nitrogen is not only unneeded, but actually results in extra luxuriant growth of the grass stalks at the expense of root growth. Come summer, grass with a smaller root system is much more susceptible to burn-out and insect damage. Not only that, but you'll be cutting the lawn every 3 days. Wait until after Labor Day to apply fertilizer.

No need to lime unless you've tested the lawn for pH and the results show that the soil is acidic. Much of the soil in our area is either neutral or slightly alkaline, and adding lime will damage your lawn's health. The optimal pH for grass lies between 6.0 and 6.8 (slightly acidic).

The spring is not the optimal time to reseed – wait until fall if you can. If you reseed in the spring, your emergent grass will be competing with all sorts of summer annual weeds. Better to wait until late August/early September when there are far fewer weeds to contend with.

Despite the temptation, do not put down broadleaf herbicides in the spring – delay this satisfying task until the fall. Broadleaf herbicides (which kill perennial weeds) are less effective in the spring because the weed plants are living off the energy stored in their prodigious roots (which means that the flow of nutrients is from the roots to leaves). The broadleaf herbicide will likely kill the above ground portion of the weed, but the root system will survive. Come summer/fall – surprise! They're back! By applying the killing potion in the fall, the weed root will draw the lethal herbicide compounds down into the roots along with nutrients being stored for winter. This way you kill the roots and you'll end up with far fewer dandelions and other delights come next spring.

Thinking of dethatching or aerating your lawn? Not surprisingly, the advice of lawn experts is to wait for fall. However, if you had a crabgrass problem the previous year and you want to address the issue this year, then about the time the forsythia blooms begin to fade, put down some preemergence herbicide (follow the directions on the bag).

Look at that – saved you a bunch of unnecessary work and expense. With the time saved you can pay more attention to your flowers, vegetables and shrubs (or just perhaps, your significant other).



**Thanks to Paul Zimmermann!!!** Is there anything that man can't do?

## Garden Tips – contributed by Bill Danish

### Rotate Your Crops

One of the things to keep in mind when sketching out ideas for the upcoming season's vegetable garden is where in your plot the crops you grew last year were cultivated.

Why does this matter?



#### Why Rotate?

Some pests and diseases can carry over in the soil; switching the spots where particular crops are grown can help foil their attacks. For example, all members of the cabbage family are susceptible to many of the same fungal diseases. The spores that spread these diseases can survive in the soil, often for several years. So making sure to plant your broccoli, cabbage, kale and other cold crops in a new spot for three years reduces the likelihood that your plants will become infected. The spores that cause the fungal disease early blight on tomatoes can survive in the soil for at

least a year. Setting out tomatoes in a new location will help you grow a healthier crop.

Different plants take different amounts of nutrients from the soil. Leafy greens like spinach need lots of nitrogen, while legumes like peas and beans actually add nitrogen. Members of the squash clan, including cucumbers, melons and pumpkins, have a higher phosphorus requirement than tomatoes, eggplants and peppers. Rotating crops can also help to keep soil in good tilth. If shallow-rooted crops like cabbage are followed by deeper rooted crops like tomatoes, soil compaction can be lessened. The repeated hilling of the soil needed for corn and potatoes helps to reduce the number of annual weeds in that section of the garden. So try to put your veggies in a new spot within the garden in the coming year. It may not be possible to have an "ideal" rotation plan in a small backyard garden -- just do the best you can. If you can only site your tomatoes in a new location for two years rather than three, that's better than setting them in the same spot year after year.

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### Harris Memorial Centerpiece

Thanks to the **Harris** kids!

Each month, the **Harris family, Phil, Dave** and their sister **Diane** design and create a beautiful centerpiece to honor their parents. We normally raffle it off to raise money for our memorial fund. The more I think about it, the more amazed I am at how much time, talent and money goes into each one of the centerpieces that Phil has been bringing, to every meeting, for more years than I can remember. What talent and generosity that family has. We can't begin to thank all of you for all you have done for us over the years.

**Harris Memorial Centerpiece**

3/27/2014

**Thanks again to the Harris kids!**



## History - 25 years ago

### MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF ALBANY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MONTHLY MEETING APRIL 6, 1989

The Regular Monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Men's Garden Club of Albany was held Thursday evening April 6, 1989 in the Cerebral Palsy Center for the Disabled.

In the absence of President, **Don Lewis**, **Wally Dillenbeck**, First Vice President opened the meeting at 7:37.

The Minutes of the March 2 meeting were approved as emended by our club Secretary, **Tom Baker**.

The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented by our Assistant Treasurer, **Don Stevens**. As of March 31, 1989 there was a balance on hand of \$1,360.50 in the General Account, in the Memorial Fund there was a balance of \$328.91 and in the Key Advantage Account there was \$5,185.95.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership: **Al Miller** reported that the previously announced unpaid members have sent in their dues. With one new member our roster adds up to 114.

Awards: **Don Stevens** reported that he has several application forms for those members who have prospective candidates in mind. **Ferd Johnson** is considering Albany Felt.

Program: Chairman **Wally Dillenbeck** reported that the April 27 dinner meeting will be held at Veeders. The guest speaker will be **Ronald McLean** from the Albany College of Pharmacy with Plants and Medicine as his subject.

- Ladies Night, May 25 at the Turnpike will have **Evelyn Sturdevan** as guest speaker.

- June 20, **Richard Anderson** will host the meeting in his back yard at 7:00.

- **Don Stevens** reported that the Club had to pay \$38.00 over our initial total cost because a number of reservations were not honored.

- **Bob Ireland** suggested that something besides a picnic might be considered this summer. **Joe Huth** suggested that the Club could visit the Flower Gardens of the Cooperative Extension.

- **Joe Raggio** reported that a number of our new members would like to hear about gardening problems. Suggestions:

1. A table with gardening information might be set up.

2. **Al Miller** said that he would publish any questions sent into the Dirt with the answers coming the following month.

3. A question and answer period might be conducted at each meeting.

Youth Gardening: **Joe Huth** reported that 78 Junior Grange youths are interested in participating in the Sunflower and Pumpkin growing contest. The total is 210 in all. Tomato plants will be available this year.

**Don Otterness** reported that the Brooklyn Botanical Garden Society is looking for people who would be interested in writing and presenting papers on Youth Gardening. See **Don** for further information

Publicity: Chairman **Tom Baker** reported that he had press releases published in the following papers: The Times Union, Troy Record, Schenectady Gazette, Altamont Enterprise, and the Spotlight. As a result, two men joined us at the dinner meeting.

Memorial: Chairman **Don Otterness** is getting prepared to plant four trees in the near future.

Transportation and Dirt: No reports.

Plant Sale: **Joe Raggio** reported that Gladiola and Lilly bulbs have been ordered for the Sale. They will be sold loosely instead of being prepackaged.

**Don Otterness** would like to have us set up a second selling operation, on the same day, preferably in the Guilderland area.

**Joe Huth** would rather have any left over plants sold at the Delmar Methodist Church Farmer's Market on May 20, for our own benefit with a percentage going to the Church.

State Museum: Our Club will once again have the month of July to provide a Floral Exhibit in the Main Lobby.

Budget and Finance: Chairman **Paul Hughes** reported that we are back to square one in regard to our State Tax Exemption Number.

Scholarship: **Don Otterness** and **Joe Huth** presented a well-organized prospectus, patterned after the National Scholarship program. Notices will be given the general membership in the Dirt. A Committee will study the possible sources of monies for this project. The Board will study the feasibility and desirability of the project in the first place.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

George Landus Arboretum. **Don Otterness** would like to have our Club become active in the Arboretum functions. They are thinking of putting on a Fall Festival on the order of the Berkshire Harvest Festival but on a much smaller scale, at least for the first time.

- **Joe Huth** made the motion which was carried to have some representatives from the Club attend the planning committee at the Arboretum.

Local Constitution By-laws. As was reported in the March 2 Board of Directors minutes, **Al Miller** and **Bob Ireland** are looking into the possibility of a double life Membership for our club. **Bob** Presented a well written and organized proposal to amend our Constitution and By-laws which will be necessary since the dues structure will of necessity be changed.

- **Joe Huth** made the motion which was carried to present the above proposal (Which is attached) to the general membership. This should appear in the Dirt which in turn will be taken up at the next general meeting. There being no further business of significance, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30. Respectfully submitted by, **Tom Baker**, Secretary

Editor's note: **Tom Baker** has been faithfully documenting our minutes since way before he had personal computer - but somehow he has managed to digitize all of the minutes he has taken over the years and we now include them in our newsletter under the heading "History - 25 years ago"

**Thanks, Tom Baker!!!**

## CLUB ACTIVITIES

### .Gardening from the Heart At the Center for Disability Services



Volunteers during March included: **Tom Baker, Maria Greenman, Russ Greenman, Joe Herman, Greg Shields, and Bruce Wilcox.** Even though Spring doesn't feel like it is here in upstate NY yet... The plants that the consumers planted from cuttings are really looking great. In fact, they looked so good that we took dozens of them and a homebrew grow light stand to use at the Capital District Garden and Flower show that was held at

Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY. It was a huge show and the beautiful plants attracted many people to our booth between March 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>. These plants were grown by the best group of consumers that you could ever ask to work with. This is such a rewarding program... It makes you feel great seeing all their faces light up like a Christmas tree when we're planting or harvesting things they grew. Plus, from fellow MGCA members can be Get involved – We should be you haven't seen it yet you should. around 30 raised beds and whiskey can park right next to and work their nice looking gardens with both



3/26/2014 **Joe Herman** preparing Coleus cuttings for the consumers

many of the things we learn applied to our home gardens. moving outside soon and if We have a greenhouse and barrels that the consumers magic to make some real flowers and vegetables.



3/26/2014 We're runnin' out of room and are overdue for warm weather so we can move out to the greenhouse

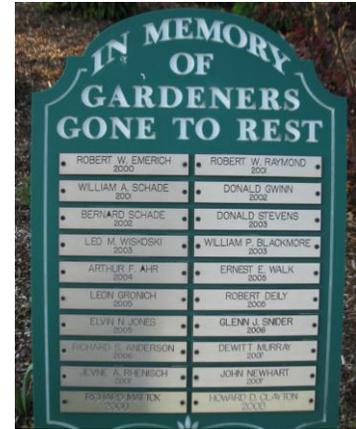
**Please support research for ALS** (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis - Lou Gehrig's disease) in memory of one of our most active members - **Mr. Bill Town**

Click on this link to read his story:

<http://community.als.net/teamtown>

**Memorial Garden**  
**At the Albany County Cooperative Extension**

**Joe Huth / Chuck Scott**  
**Memorial Garden Chairmen**



**Adopt-a-Highway**



**Greg Shields – Gardner / engine rebuilder**

**Albany International Airport**  
**Don Wrieden – Chairman**



**Plant Sale May 10<sup>th</sup> 2014**

**Don Wrieden - Chairman**

We need your help... Every year the MGCA holds its biggest – and only fundraiser of the year. We strongly encourage our members to prepare items that can be sold on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 at our sale. Some members like **Gill O'Brien** bring awesome tomatoes, others veggies, and **John O'Grady** has often brought raspberry bushes. There is talk of digging up some Rose of Sharon, planting basil, etc. You get the idea. If you grow it we don't have to buy it from a grower which helps tremendously, especially if we get stuck with items that didn't sell due to bad weather. We are losing about \$2000 per year supporting all of our great projects – please help us by planting something that we can sell the day before Mother's Day – Saturday, May 10, 2014. Thanks!!!!

**Youth Gardening**

Someone owes me a call – you can do it...

**For a good time**

Click this:

<http://www.mensgardenclubofalbany.org/>

## Garden & Flower Show at HVCC – Bill Danish chairman

The theme this year was: Storybook Gardens

Thanks to the following members that helped staff our Educational Booth: **Bill Danish, Dave Harris, Phil Harris, Gil O'Brien, Greg and Mimi Shields, Greg Goutos, Russ Greenman, Joe Herman, Tom Baker, Paul Zimmermann**. Special thanks goes to **Bill Danish** for chairing this event and to **Paul Zimmermann** for putting on the most miles transporting materials (and people) to and from the show. **Paul** also stepped up to the plate and made a handful of bluebird houses to give away at the show. His hard work paid off – we already have two new members from the show. **Greg Shields** gets extra credit for engineering a method to insure that the grow light stand could be reassembled with little effort and no confusion. Very nice!

As we have for many many years, we had an Educational booth at the Capital District Garden & Flower Show that was held March 21 – 23 at Hudson Valley Community College. This was a great opportunity to let the community know how much we do and how rewarding it would be if they joined the MGCA. **Thanks again to that helped make this so successful!**



**Greg Shields, Bill Danish and Greg Goutos**



**Paul Zimmermann's bluebird houses**



**Bill Danish and Paul Zimmermann**



### **MEN'S GARDEN CLUB of ALBANY** Scholarships



**Seeking Candidates for Scholarship**

Do you know a deserving college student who could benefit from receiving a \$500 Scholarship from our club? Candidates may be male or female, and pursuing studies in any horticultural-related field. For more information, please contact **Greg Goutos**, [ggoutos@nycap.rr.com](mailto:ggoutos@nycap.rr.com) Scholarship Chair at 861-6052.

#### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

April 3 <sup>rd</sup> @ 7:30 pm	Director's meeting – all members invited
May 1 <sup>st</sup> @ 7:30 pm	Center for Disability Services – 314 Manning Blvd
Every Wednesday : @ 9:00 am	Gardening from the Heart Center for Disability Services 700 South Pearl St. Albany, NY
April 24 <sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 pm May 22 <sup>nd</sup> @ 6:30 pm	Dinner Meetings Best Western Sovereign Hotel 1228 Western Ave Albany, NY
May 10 <sup>th</sup> 8:00am – 2:00pm	MGCA Plant Sale – Delmar, NY

Russ Greenman and Jack Meagher, Editors

Special thanks to **Paul Zimmermann** for our terrific website <http://www.mensgardenclubofalbany.org/>

*In Memory*  
*Of My*  
*Loving Wife, Jessie*  
*Jerry Flax*

*In Memory of*  
*Louis Meo*  
*&*  
*Richard Stankus*

*In Memory of*  
*Ed Tompkins*  
*Jerry Flax*

*In Memory of*  
*Avrom Koblenz*  
*Jerry Flax*

*In Memory of*  
*Christian and Mildred*  
*Lebrecht*

*In Memory of*  
*Al and Barbara*  
*Miller*

*In Memory of*  
  
**Bill Town**  
*Joe Herman*

*In Memory of*  
*my Dad*  
  
**Carroll W. Greenman**  
*Bob*

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*In Memory of*



*Grandpa & Great Grandpa*

*Carroll W. Greenman*

*Russ, Maria, and Carl*

*In Memory of my parents*



*John and Carrie Meagher*

*They both loved Plants and Flowers*

*Jack Meagher*