The mission of the Tampa Garden Club is to build relationships through education, beautification, and preservation of our community.

2016-18 Executive Officers

President: Sherry Leffers, Rose
2nd VP: Missy Weiner, Rose
3rd VP: Paula Meckley, Amaryllis
C. Secy: Nootchie Smith, Founders
C. Secy: Casie Holloway, Moonlight
Treasurer: Ada Pyles, Old Fashioned

MEMBERSHIP ALERT: If you have not been receiving your Florida Gardener, the FFGC magazine, sent quarterly to all members, please go to www.ffgc.wildapricot.org and make sure your profile information is accurate. All new members must set up their initial profile on the website to be officially listed as members. We are a part of District VIII.

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The way things have been humming around the Tampa Garden Club since January 1, you would think we were the bees, but the honey produced is from fund-raisers and flower shows. I want to cover both shortly in this article. Spring is definitely here!

January is always a busy month of Gasparrilla events. Thanks to Maria Johnson and Linda Day for coordinating this year’s Beer Tent and to all the potty pass helpers. This has been a fundraiser for us for several years, and we can only hope to have the opportunity to do this again.

Thanks to Ideal Design Events, Inc., the annual February fundraiser (For the Love of a Garden) was able to make a sizable profit. With the ‘Over the Rainbow’ theme, one was met at the door by Dorothy and Toto (AKA Mary Jo Shenk’s granddaughter Sydney with my dog). The yellow brick road took one into the silent auction, made fabulous looking by the many generous donations and our fabulous set-up team of Lynne Billing, Elizabeth Kurz, Teri Willis, Anne DePury and add a special thank you to Cheryl Isele for helping in many areas. In the ballroom with the Wicked Witch, monkeys, and a tornado, many enjoyed the photo booth which provided an opportunity to get into character with lots of props. Others danced to the DJ or dined on the Kansas-style brisket and corn fritters. My thanks goes especially to the many patrons and volunteers who make this fund-raiser successful.

Mark your calendars for February 23, 2018 when we will celebrate Tampa Garden Club’s 90th birthday.

We had our first full flower show in several years (Paradise Found), using all our interior space. How Pam Slagg, Kathy Echevarria, and Kitty Wallace put this together annually is beyond me. Thanks to the Floral Design classes, new interest, perspectives, and energetic volunteers have developed from the attendees as well as from new members of our Circles. At one time this competition was a hallmark of federated clubs, but fewer of our members take time to learn and truly enjoy the art of floral design, although I know a great many appreciate it. The number willing to become judges is an even smaller number, but one member is headed that way and we encourage others. I hope you all were able to at least see the competition and will consider entering yourself in design or horticulture next year. This year some of the arrangements for our foyer (shared by all the Circles) have been amazing and show that interest/talent in floral design.

In conjunction with the flower show this year, Rose Circle had its annual south Tampa garden tour, Earthly Paradise (celebrating its 25th year in honor of the creator Beverly Rogers). It is our hope that this timing works well for both the flower show and the garden tour to bring in community interest.

We are 400 strong and interest in joining the Tampa Federation grows. Take time to meet other members at our combined meetings and events; there are many new faces. Our strength and survival going forward depends on sharing information both ways, good communication informing and listening, and jointly working on TGC’s large projects. There are many volunteer opportunities to meet members of other circles, such as our fund-raisers, the flower show, Kids in the Garden youth camp, TGC grounds care-taking and various Federation committees. I am so grateful for all you do and for the ways you continue to show your support.

Don’t miss reading about our summer camp (Kids In the Garden) and the FFGC camp Wekiva in the next edition.

Sherry Leffers
TGC President
Member of Rose Circle
The Tampa Garden Club was again awarded the opportunity to sell beer during the Gasparilla Parade. The weather was fantastic this year which bode well for a very profitable day of fun, comradery and work for over 60 volunteers. While the chairmen Linda Day and Maria Johnson, both of Rose Circle, worked many hours up to and after the event, most of our volunteers can call it a “Done in a Day” volunteer job. We will know by the end of August, 2017, if we are fortunate enough to be among less than 10 charities granted the ability to sell beer at the 2018 Gasparilla Parade of Pirates. Watch this space because you’ll certainly want to be a part of our volunteer crew if TGC will be selling again!
Chaired by our President, Sherry Leffers, Tampa Garden Club’s annual fundraiser proved to be a great success! Much of the cost of this year’s event was underwritten by Ideal Design Events, a party planning company whose clients often use our facility. The theme of “Over the Rainbow” was chosen by Ideal Design as was all of the décor for the evening. The silent auction items were fantastic and that made a big difference to the bottom line of the evening.
More photos from
Over the Rainbow
In honor of one of The Earthly Paradise’s founders, Beverly Rogers, Rose Circle held its 25th annual tour of South Tampa gardens on April 9. Five lovely gardens were readied by their owners and simply shined on the day of the tour. Chairwomen Nancy Blake and Ginny Collier began working on securing gardens last spring then stayed very busy this fall through spring meeting with the committee involved in putting on the big day. Advertising was sold to pay for the ticket booklets, publicity was secured, retailers were brought on as sales partners, and plans for the Musical Tea Party in the Park were finalized to name a few of the tasks to be completed. The weather was spectacular and the tour was a wonderful success. Rose Circle is able to support the Tampa Garden Club, Fred Ball Park, and other community projects with proceeds from The Earthly Paradise.
A few camper spots remain for Kids in the Garden 2017, Tampa Garden Club – Youth Camp.

Applications for campers will be accepted as long as space is available. The fee is $65. Scholarships are available; for more information call the Tampa Garden Club office at 813-251-5059.

The members of Town N Country Garden Circle gather every week to tend plants that they raise for their twice-yearly plant sale. This fundraiser is a hit within their community and provides funds for all the activities sponsored by the circle throughout the year. The most recent plant sale was Saturday, April 8th.
The 2017 Flower Show, “Paradise Found” provided a real educational treat to the community on April 8th and 9th. The logo for the show was created by Bev Owen, Old Fashioned Garden Circle, and recreated in 3D on the stage.

Displays of top quality plants were found in every corner of the room. Blue ribbons were everywhere! The Horticulture section was chaired by Pam Slagg, OF. Several Old Fashioned Garden Circle members earned an Award of Merit: Ginger King, Dancing Lady orchid; Bev Owen, Dendrobium orchid; Kathy Echevarria, Alligator Fern; Diane Warholic, Village Garden Circle, earned an Award of Merit for her Ficus elastica (rubber tree) cutting; Linda Cameron of Old Fashioned Garden Circle, won the Grower’s Choice Award for her Rattlesnake plant. Kathy Echevarria and Bev Owen each entered a collection of plants that earned a Collector’s Showcase award. Betty Morris, Town N Country Garden Circle, earned the Grower’s Choice Award for her charming fairy garden nestled in a broken pot.

The youth division had several entries which are noteworthy. Gabrielle, camper in the Kids in the Garden program, took top honors for her design in a triangular container. Lola, also a camper in the Kids in the Garden, created her own terrarium in a peanut butter jar.

The youth gardeners at the Tampa Heights Junior Civic Association displayed their excellent skills by exhibiting the vegetables from their garden.

There were 60 floral designs bringing drama and vibrant color to each room. Kathy Echevarria chaired the Designs. Visitors to the Flower Show repeatedly expressed awe at the creativity of these designs. Rose Circle, Izabell Dobrov, chaired the card table designs. Patty Italiano, Rose Circle, won the blue ribbon for her “table for two” design. Mary Jo Shenk, Amaryllis Garden Circle, won the blue in the capsule table design. Brand new designers who had studied floral design at the recent TGC classes won blues in their classes: Steffi Hoff & Diane Patterson, Old Fashioned Garden Circle. Laura Moynahan, Old Fashioned Garden Circle, won the Award of Design Excellence for her stretch design using a piece of writhing driftwood.

Martha Cooper, Village Garden Circle, took top honors in the Artistic Craft section for her creative interpretation of Pandora’s Box. The educational exhibit on Gesneriads by Bev Owen won top honors. This type of flower show provides an opportunity for our members to receive recognition for their excellent horticulture and for their creative expression in the use of floral material in design. Co chairs, Pam Slagg and Kitty Wallace, Old Fashioned Garden Circle, were thrilled to welcome the flamingo topiaries on loan from Busch Gardens. Visitors were charmed by their presence.

We appreciate Area garden clubs who participated with entries and their designers and growers shared in the honors. We appreciated the 21 Judges who judged the show, chaired by Karen Flaacke, OF and Diane Patterson, OF, who chaired the judges luncheon. We couldn’t have done it without the clerks, chaired by Dianne Sullivan, Town N Country Garden Circle! Moonlight Garden Circle assisted with the judges’ and clerks’ refreshments before the show. Azalea Garden Circle provided lunch to those members who were doing the show together early in the week. Calliandra Garden Circle coordinated the hostesses for the flower show, with participation from Amaryllis Garden Circle members. We appreciate the support of our president, Sherry Leffers, throughout the planning process. Most of all we appreciate the group who helped throughout! This is our gift to the community and we can be proud of what we produced.
More Flower Show photos

TGC Stage decorated with Bev Owens’ artwork
Tampa Heights Community Garden has been sponsored by the Tampa Garden Club from its inception. Planning began in 2010, ground broke in 2011 with 17 individual gardens and several larger gardens. The garden continues to grow adding more gardens each year and now adding a greenhouse with an aquaponic garden utilizing funds from the Aetna Foundation.

The brand newest addition is the mobile solar power plant which powers the pumps and fans in the greenhouse. The fifth annual Earth Day Celebration is co-sponsored by the Tampa Garden Club and the Columbia Restaurant Group. This event brings the community gardeners together for an afternoon of fun and fundraising to continue adding new features to the community garden. Next up is a rain collection system to be added to the greenhouse.
Celebrating Earth Day at the Tampa Heights Community Garden

Master Gardener Bob Dickey gives lessons in the garden.

Fun for kids.

Homemade veggie dishes

Celebrating Earth Day with music

Homemade veggie dishes