



## Upcoming Events

### June 3

Hammond-Harwood House Secret Garden Tour, Annapolis

### June 6 & 7

Nature's Tapestries, One Stitch at a Time Standard Petite Flower Show at the Shops at Kenilworth  
Towson, MD

### June 9

Talbot County Garden Club Home and Garden Tour  
10am-4pm  
Easton, MD

### June 14

Flag Day Dedication of District II Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker  
Pasadena, MD

### November 10

Moonflower Garden Club's There's no Place Like Home for the Holidays

# The Latest Dirt

LaPlata Community Garden Club

May 2007

## President's Message

When I awoke this morning, I heard the birds madly singing to each other. I got up, and although it wasn't quite light yet, I looked out the window and saw my viburnum in full bloom. Its white blossoms were saying to me, "spring is here". I love spring, everything is so fresh and green and lush. The dogwoods and azaleas are in full bloom; spring is a wonderful season.

It was a beautiful day for the Star Memorial Courtyard Garden dedication. After a morning rain shower, the sun came out. We had approximately 300 guests, and I was quite pleased. Judy Ruth and her team did a wonderful job planning the entire day from start to finish. The newly installed pots, planted by Barbie Walter and her team, looked great. A extra special thanks to co-chairs, Mary Beth Chandler and Sherie Zimmer because without their dedication and perseverance, the garden would not have become a reality. Thanks so much to all of you who helped make this day special.

Now that the dedication is over, we need to maintain the garden. Barbie Walter is in charge of scheduling maintenance teams, and I hope you have signed up. If you haven't, please get in touch with Barbie. If everyone takes a turn, it won't be a burden on anyone. Thanks for helping.

We received another \$1,000 grant from the Chaney Foundation for the garden. This will be used to put a trellis over the entrance to the garden.

I hope you are taking advantage of the artistic design classes being taught by Mary Beth Chandler. Our first lesson was on line and line mass. Mary Beth makes flower arranging look so easy. I tried to imitate her, but soon realized that it will take lots of practice to master flower arranging. Come out and try it.

See you at Waverly Creek Flower Farm May 23rd!

**Dianne Shisler**

## Our Next Meeting

**May 23, 6:30 pm, A Visit to Waverly Creek Flower Farm**

**DIRECTIONS:** 301 South, left on Rock Point Road (MD 257), right onto Morgantown Road, left on Waverly Point Road. Nursery is on the left.

## Save the Dates!

There's lots of fun flower and gardening information to look forward to in our upcoming meetings. Remember to write these dates on your calendars so you don't miss any of them!

May 23\*\* - Visit to Waverly Creek Farms in Newburg  
June 28 - Creating a Butterfly Habitat (Judy Slaughter)  
July 26 - Azalea Propagation (Carol Flowers)  
August 23 - Ornamental Grasses (Joe Clements)

\*\* Date Change

## Treasurer's Report

For the period February 28, 2007 thru May 3, 2007

Balance from previous month	\$11,262.82
Income	
Reimburse fire hall rental	78.00
Tour tickets	41.00
Design workshop	105.00
Membership 2007	50.00
Star Garden	1,150.00
Expenses	
Miscellaneous	110.00
Fire Hall Rental	25.00
Pin Holders for design workshop	100.20
FCG Meeting	99.00
Star Garden	2,904.45
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>\$9,448.17</b>

**Melissa Leitner, Treasurer**

## Membership Information

We are happy to welcome the following new member:

Marcia Poling  
208 Williamsburg Circle  
La Plata, MD 20646  
(301) 392-5856  
[marpol007@comcast.net](mailto:marpol007@comcast.net)

In addition, please make the following corrections in your yearbooks:

Mary Paesch's e-mail -  
[mpaesch@comcast.net](mailto:mpaesch@comcast.net)

Dianne Shisler's e-mail -  
[dshisler@comcast.net](mailto:dshisler@comcast.net)

## Garden Update

### Star Memorial Courtyard Garden Dedication

The dedication of the garden was held on Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. It is hard to believe it is over. Seems like I have too much time on my hands now. Meetings to coordinate the activities between the town and garden club have been going on since the beginning of the year and the dedication went off without a hitch.

Bright and early on Saturday morning the staging committee began setting up tables and chairs, filling coolers with beverages, placing tablecloths, plates and napkins all around. Soon delicious platters of food began arriving. Before we knew it guests were mingling in the garden and the crowd kept growing. One person who has knowledge of crowd estimates thought there were as many as 300 people in attendance.

The program began with President Shisler welcoming everyone. Tom O'Farrell recalled the spirit of La Plata during the rebuilding and shared some of his personal experiences after the tornado; Mary Beth Chandler gave an overview of how the garden began as an idea that popped into her head and how it became a reality; Gary Echols, Jr. gave a brief history of the Fire Museum; Commissioner Reuben Collins presented a proclamation from the County Commissioners; Bobbie Baldus spoke about the star; Sherie Zimmer acknowledged the people and businesses who contributed to the garden; Rev. Chimiak blessed the garden and museum and Mayor Ambrogio and council members cut the ribbon to officially dedicate the garden.

No one seemed in a hurry to leave after the dedication. Many people were still in the garden hours later enjoying the food and soaking up the warm sunny weather. This was a wonderful experience for me and I enjoyed working with everyone to make the day a success.

### Judy Ruth

PS Joyce Rose and I have all of the dishes you brought your food on. Please contact us we'll see that you get them back.

# In the Garden

There were multiple committees established in the process of getting our wonderful garden off the ground, or at least out of the ground. The least among them was the "Pot Committee". Eventually, we asked ourselves how we felt about being called "The Pot Committee". We tried to rename ourselves to "containers and or planters" but we were already stuck with "pots".

The garden has good bones with a modest selection of interesting plants, but the up and coming event of all events, as far as gardens go (the dedication), was so early in the season we knew the color in the few tulips was not going to carry the day. The pot committee immersed themselves into "thrillers, fillers and spillers". We sifted through old issues of Southern Living, Fine Gardening, Cottage Gardening, clippings, articles, etc. We zeroed in on lovely thrillers. First, we all fell in love with the Australian Tree Fern and we actually found one, and only one, at Homestead Gardens in Davidsonville. We were thinking Australian Outback equal to HOT and sunny. We totally erased the word FERN. We were ready to plunk \$49.00 down when one of the helpful staff asked, if the FERN would be in the shade? Our hearts sank as we realized that Australia has seasons, and they must have some shade. Next we thought of Sumac. Oh, yes, perfect and it is a native plant at that. Well, sumac was so nestled in the ground, after its winter sleep, that it certainly wasn't yet a thriller. The gods were against us. The extended cold front sent the nurseries into apoplexy. The usually organized larger nurseries had to remove acres of plants and place them under cover due to plummeting temperatures and strong winds therefore loosing control. If they had a certain plant they didn't know where it was on their property. The "pot ladies" bundled up and forged onward. At this point all previous plans were out the window. Now it was down to what was available, and what was not. Time was of the essence. Using some gardening principles, we created some fun pots. For the most part, we duplicated color, not plants. Come and see the garden.

- Entrance Urn: Thriller and Filler: Pyramidal Boxwood – Ed's Plant World
- Spiller: Million bells – Patuxent Nursery
- Creeping Jenny, Chartreuse – Heaven's Garden
  
- Large Pot (Wall) T Thriller: Irish yew – Ed's Plant World
- Pennisetum, purple – Patuxent Nursery
- Russian sage – Heaven's Garden
- Filler: Gayfeather, Wand Flower, Persian Shield - Patuxent Nursery
- Spiller: Potato vine, Chartreuse – Longwood Gardens
- Million Bells, purple – Patuxent Nursery
- Vinca – Judy's yard
  
- Large Pot – Walk Thriller: Rose Bush, Red Mr. Lincoln – Lowes
- Russian Sage – Heaven's Garden
- Australian Red Star Cordyline – Lowes
- Filler: Coleus' Pele, chartreuse – Longwood Gardens
- Coleus, purple – Longwood Gardens
- Spiller: Asparagus fern – Longwood
- Potato vine, burgundy – Longwood
- Verbena, red – Longwood
- Variegated Ivy – Safeway

Pot Ladies: **Barbie Walters, Judy Ruth and Joyce Rose**

PHOTOS FROM THE GARDEN DEDICATION



## Update on Whooping Crane Population

In my studies of recent articles, I was excited to read that biologists had spotted the hatching of two bald eagles in the wild on Santa Catalina Island, California. This is the first occurrence, without the help of man, since the island was contaminated by chemical dumping of DDT and PCB, the last time being in the 1940s. More than 30 years after the dumping stopped, 20 bald eagles are regularly spotted on Santa Catalina, including five nesting pairs. Another nest has been spotted which contains eggs that are expected to hatch, so perhaps there will be more good news soon. Even here, in Charles County, there are more and more sightings of the bald eagle flying, so, it appears that mankind came to its senses in time for us to enjoy the memorable sight of such a regal and elegant bird on the wing. Who would want the symbol of our country, and of our County, to be a bird that had become extinct due to our ignorance?

The documentary "Planet Earth" is a must-see for all ages. On the Discovery Channel on Sunday evenings it has been five years in the making and is mind-boggling in its scope. One scene shows the quelea, a weaver-bird, that has several ranges across the continent of Africa, and is the most numerous bird in the world, with the total population estimated at ten billion individuals. It is said that it takes five hours for a flock of these birds to pass! They are often referred to as feathered locusts as they wreak havoc on crops of millet and other seeds. About a billion of them a year are killed which hardly puts a dent in their numbers, as they are so prolific in their reproduction.

Starlings, too, are numerous but not to that degree. Did you know that all the starlings in North America are descended from the 60 brought from England in 1890 and let loose in New York's Central Park? A further 40 were released there the following year. These releases were part of an unfulfilled plan to introduce all the birds described in the works of William Shakespeare to North America. Perhaps we should think about that when we shoo them away from our bird feeders!

A reminder - hummingbird season is almost upon us so don't forget to fill up your feeders with nectar so that you can enjoy these amazing little creatures, as I am sure they will need a lot of sustenance after their very long migration. The solution should be 4 parts water to 1 of sugar. Preferably, the water should be boiled first and cooled. Personally, I use bottled spring water. You do not have to use any red dye, as they are attracted to the red of the feeder, not to the red of the fluid.

Enjoy the delights of the summer!

**Gloria Groeger**  
**Chair, Bird Committee**



Speaking of whooping, above are several of our members whooping it up at the March 9th District II meeting. From left: Jane Grove's beautiful hair, Linda Lockhart, Sharyn "Whoopie" Suiter and Mary Beth Chandler. Thanks for the photo Marge!



Casey's Chef Gary at our February meeting, instructing us on the use of culinary herbs.



Oh, what fun a house tour is!

## Keeping Bambi Away

Deer are beautiful creatures and a joy to watch, but we all know how destructive they can be in a garden. Recently a friend sent me this little cartoon because I enjoy vegetable gardening and wildlife. The very next day, as I was reading the March 2007 issue of MARTHA STEWART LIVING magazine ( Special Garden Issue), I came across an interesting article entitled "Keeping Deer at Bay". In the article Martha gave three homemade deer repellents which I thought some of you may want to try, as your tulips and hostas emerge. Be warned- your kitchen may smell like a high school chemistry lab.

**Scent Spray** - mix 2 eggs, 1 cup skim milk, 1 cup water, and 2 T. liquid dish soap. Pour into a spray bottle. Spray mixture on leaves, stems and bark.

**Taste Spray** - Mix 1 gallon of water, 2-4 T. of finely ground cayenne or habanero pepper, 2-4 T. of hot sauce, and 2-4 T. of white glue. Blend together, and spray or sprinkle on the foliage of vulnerable plants.

**Scent and Taste Spray** - Mix 3 eggs, 3T. hot sauce, and 3 T. minced garlic in blender. Stir mixture into enough water to yield 1 gallon. Add 12 ounces Wilt-Pruf evergreen antidesiccant (available at garden centers), to increase resistance to rain or snow. Spray on plants. My favorite commercial deer repellent is Deer-Off concentrate, available at garden centers. Its advantages are that it really works and it is not affected by rain. Its disadvantages are its cost, the white residue that it leaves on dark green foliage and that it tends to clog the sprayer.

I have recently resorted to one more way to deter deer and so far it is working--a fence, seven feet high!! My lettuce, spinach and peas are up and so far the salad bar is only open for people!

See list below for some planting suggestions. Happy Spring Gardening!

**Mary Ann Wade**, Horticulture

Plants Deer Don't Like

**SPRING BLOOMING PERENNIALS** - Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoide hispanica*), Crocus (*Crocus sp.*), Daffodil (*Narccissus sp.*), Fritillari (Fritillaria imperialis).

**SUMMER BLOOMING PERENIALS**- Bluebeard (*Caryopteris*), Catmint (*Nepeta faassenii*), Hyssop (*Hyssopus officianalis*), Lavender (*Lavandula*), Monkshood (*Aconitum*), Mullein (*Verbascum*).

**GROUNDCOVERS** - Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*), Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*), Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), Spotted deadnettle (*Lamium*).

**SHRUBS**- Aralia (*Araliaceae*), Andromeda (*Pieris japonica*), Boxwood (*Buxus*), Bush cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticose*), Oleander (*Nerium*), Russian olive (*elaegnus augustifolia*).

**Mary Ann Wade**

**Chair, Horticulture Committee**



## Recording Secretary's Minutes

The March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the La Plata Community Garden Club was called to order by President Dianne Shisler at 7:10 P.M. The meeting took place in the La Plata Firehouse.

Dianne announced that during the meeting we would be selling raffle tickets at a cost of \$1.00 for the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage. There would also be a drawing of 8 free tickets for the London Town Daffodil Show. She asked members to contribute \$1.00 toward the rental of the firehouse meeting room. Dianne introduced and welcomed several guests to the meeting.

The minutes of the February meeting were approved. There was a positive response by the members to receiving the minutes of the meeting by E-Mail. The treasurer's report was also approved.

Dianne called attention to the following dates:

April 21<sup>st</sup> Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage in Charles County

April 6<sup>th</sup> London Town Daffodil Show in Edgewater, M.D.

April 27<sup>th</sup> Towson Gardens Day

June 3<sup>rd</sup> Hammond-Harwood House Secret Garden Tour in Annapolis, M.D.

November 10<sup>th</sup> There's No Place Like Home, a program presented by the Moonflower Garden Club

Special Projects. Judy Ruth reminded members that the dedication of the Star Memorial Garden would be April 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 A.M.. Set up will be at 9:30 A.M. Eighty-five invitations will be sent out. She asked for more potted plants to decorate the staging area. The final meeting of the staging committee will be on Friday.

Hospitality. Elaine Miller asked all members to sign up to bring finger food to the dedication. If it rains that day, refreshments will be served at the Town Hall.

Ways and Means. The May 5<sup>th</sup> Plant and Yard Sale which will be held along with the Charles County Garden Club will be located at the old Safeway on route 301 in La Plata. Members are to watch their E-Mail for up dates.

Star Memorial Garden. Sharon Zimmer announced that the benches are in place in the garden. One of the benches needs some adjustment to fit properly. The memorial plaque will be set in black granite. Mr. Raymond will order the granite for us. The club will be asked to help defray the cost of the granite. The contributor's plaque is on order. Barbie Walter asked members to sign a garden maintenance sheet. A choice of dates was offered.

Dianne reminded members to pick up the new yearbook pages. She also asked for a volunteer to plan a bus trip for the club.

Polly Zimmerman invited the members to come to Middleton Elementary School on May 7<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup> to help plant 1,200 wetland plants. Planting will go on from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. every day.

Melissa Leitner informed the members of a donation to the club that was given in memory of Mary Beth Chandler's mother-in-law. It was suggested that a tree be purchased for the Star Memorial Garden.

Dianne conducted a drawing for the ticket to the Maryland Home and Garden Pilgrimage and the London Town Daffodil Show.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

Joyce Rose introduced Rhonda Goldman, a Master Gardener who presented an interesting program entitled Bay-Wise. She informed us of the problems concerning the Chesapeake Bay and what we can do to help improve the health of the Bay. She reminded us that the Bay begins in our own backyard. Rhonda urged homeowners to use the following environmentally sound approaches: fertilize wisely, manage yard pests with integrated management, water efficiently, control stormwater runoff, plant wisely, mulch appropriately, encourage wildlife, recycle yard waste and protect the waterfront.

Refreshments were provided by the Host Committee, Maureen Chiariza, Gingie Winkler, Leesa Myers, Jessica Milstead, and Diana Kasic.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Jane E. O'Farrell, Recording Secretary**

# Star Memorial Courtyard Garden

## Guidelines for maintenance

In order to keep our garden looking loved and lovely all season we will have to all help with the maintenance. Although this first year maintenance will be minimal, it is also extremely important that we give it a healthy start, and take good care of the new plants.

Below are guidelines for what needs to be done on a regular basis, and what to look for that might need to be done. All of you must have an interest in gardening, and know something about what is involved in caring for a garden, or you wouldn't be members of a "garden club". Therefore, don't hesitate to use your own knowledge and common sense when it is your week to do garden maintenance.

Mowing, spin trimming, and edging will be done under separate contract, so you don't have to do that.

Three or four members are assigned to be responsible each week. It will be up to each of them to contact each other to work out their schedule for their week, and what needs to be done. We have wonderful resources in our club, so if you are not sure about what needs to be done, do not hesitate to call another member who might know.

If you are not able to fulfill your week it is your responsibility to find someone else. You might want to exchange weeks with someone else.

Bring your own garden tools, such as a trowel, rake, hoe, clippers, etc.  
Also, bring a plastic trash bag for weeds and debris which you will take home for disposal.

There is a garden hose with an adjustable nozzle hooked up at the garden.

Maintenance is not complicated. Following are the guidelines for weekly care of the garden.

1. Regular maintenance for weekly workers includes the following:
  - a. Water planters! Very important since the sprinklers don't reach them, and they can dry out quickly in the summer sun. Always check their soil for dryness.
  - b. Weed, weed, and weed. The weeds are going to grow, so get them out of there.
  - c. Dead head flowers, and trim dead foliage if any.
  - d. Look for anything that needs to be done, or for anything amiss. This is where your garden knowledge and common sense are especially important.
  - e. For any problem, contact a member of the maintenance committee listed below. That would include letting one of us know if a plant is not doing well.
2. Fertilizing will be handled by the Maintenance Committee.
3. Throughout the season there may be additional plants to be put in. This will be decided by the Maintenance Committee, and workers will be notified.

**Barbie Walter, 301-934-3704**

**Judy Ruth, 301-934-5717**

**Joyce Rose, 301-274-3220**

**Carole Raucheisen, 301-392-9736**

**Rake it Easy** A few aches and pains shouldn't make you quit gardening -- in fact, they can be all the more reason for working with and enjoying flowers and plants. The key is to alter your methods --and expectations -- to accommodate any physical limitations you may have.

"No matter how big or small your home or apartment, there's always room for a garden" says Joel Flagler, a horticultural therapist in New Jersey. "All you really need is a windowsill or an indoor grow light. The main thing is staying connected to nature and the earth."

Here are a few ideas well-suited to older gardeners.

**Stand up** Purchase or build raised beds that can be tended standing up or from a sitting position. Trellises also create vertical gardens that are easier to care for.

**Use containers** Plant flowers or vegetables in individual, lightweight pots, which are accessible and easy to move. Plastic pots also retain moisture.

**Keep it simple** Select varieties that are specifically intended for small-space gardening and require little care. Gardening does not need to be difficult to be beneficial.

**Choose the right tools** Purchase easy-to-grip, lightweight tools. Telescoping and long-handled gardening tools can help with reaching plants, decreasing the need for long stretches or kneeling.

**Team up** Host a planting party, or share duties with friends and neighbors. Joining a gardening club can connect you with others who have the same interests. (From *AARP*, Nov/Dec 2006, submitted by Mary Beth Chandler.)

The **Latest Dirt** is published in February, May & August by the La Plata Community Garden Club, La Plata, Maryland for its members. For more information on the club, see [www.laplatagardenclub.org](http://www.laplatagardenclub.org)

La Plata Community Garden Club  
PO Box 214  
La Plata, MD 20646

Established 2002  
Member of the Federated Garden Clubs  
of Maryland, District II

## It's Beautiful, but It Chokes the Landscape

While I was trying to decide which conservation topic to write about this month, I happened to visit a friend who lives in a beautiful wooded area of Accokeek. And there was my topic, in full flower about 40 feet up in the trees (those it hadn't already pulled down) – and sprouting all over the forest floor to boot. Then I started paying attention as I drove around the county and I saw many more trees draped in lavender.

Most of you have probably guessed what I'm referring to – wisteria. They look so beautiful out in our yards or climbing on a pergola (before they pull it down), but in our environment they are evil. The roots of the infestation in my friend's forest spread over 100 feet, and sprout suckers everywhere. There's nothing else on the forest floor where this plant has invaded, and the trees overhead are being choked to death.


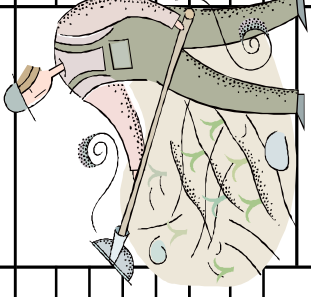
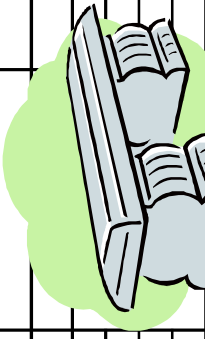
The Asian (Japanese and Chinese) wisterias are particularly nasty villains, but many plants are equally dangerous once they get loose. Ironically, like many other invasive plants, wisteria got here because it was desirable as an ornamental. Also ironically, there is a perfectly good native, American Wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*), which according to Cullina's *Native Trees, Shrubs & Vines* has a longer blooming period than the Asian wisterias.

So what do we do? I can hear you, because I've said it myself: "I'm keeping it under control, so my plant isn't a danger to the environment." Unfortunately, we don't control the birds, who obviously plant the wisteria in many places where a human garden never was. Nor do we control what will happen when we leave the plant behind, along with its myriad roots just waiting to sprout suckers.

If you can stand to do it, get rid of this one and prepare to use Roundup on its suckers for several years. Meanwhile you can plant an American Wisteria in its place and know that you had a positive impact on the environment. (No – I don't expect that everyone who reads this far will go out and cut down their wisteria. I do hope that some of us will have been sort of waiting for a nudge, and will go out there and get rid of our own thug.)

**Jessica Milstead**  
**Chair, Conservation Committee**

# Memorial Star Patio Garden Maintenance Schedule

											NOTES
April	4/23 -4/ 29										
	Barbie, and others involved in getting the garden ready for dedication										
May	4/30 - 5/6	5/7 - 5/13	5/14 - 5/20	5/21 - 5/27	5/28 - 6/3						
	Sharon Suiter	Debra Jones	Cheri Brady	Leesa Meyers	Mary Beth Chandler						
	Jane O'Farrell	Cindi Barnhart	Judith Natham	Judy Ruth	Linda Sackie						
	Sandy Mitchell	Diana Long	Carole Raucheisen	Mauren Chianzia	Ginger Winkler						
June	6/4 - 6/10	6/11 - 6/17	6/18 - 6/24	6/25 - 7/1							
	Linda Lockhart	Mary Vance	Mary Reeves	Joyce Rose							
	Elaire Miller	Mary Grant	Millie Havrilla	Mike Rose							
	Melissa Leitner	Shuster Vance	Ann Morgan	Nan Stout							
July	7/2 - 7/8	7/9 - 7/15	7/16 - 7/22	7/23 - 7/29							
	Jessi Thibault	Gloria Carpenter	Irene Poole	Carole Raucheisen							
	Jessica Milstead	Helen Vanasse	Maggie Mahaffey	Pat Caroleo							
	Mary Ann Wade	Diana Kasic	Sherrie Zimmer								
August	7/30 - 8/5	8/6 - 8/12	8/13 - 8/19	8/20 - 8/26	8/27 - 9/2						
	Ron Bush	Mary Ann Wade	Joyce Rose	Patrick McGary	Jean Middleton						
	Brenda Bush	Sandy Mitchell	Mike Rose	Mary McGary	Carolyn Graham						
	Elizabeth Shifflett	Angie Booker	Gloria Gröger	Barbara Buchanan	Nancy Gasparovic						
September	9/3 - 9/9	9/10 - 9/16	9/17-9/23	9/24- 9/30							
	Millie Head	David Gardiner	Cathy Cornetto	Jane Grove							
	Marge LaMar	Ann Gardiner	Nan Stout	Walter Grove							
	Jennie Lewis	Mandy Edwards	Leesa Myers	Daniel Webber							