



# Homer Garden Club

# Newsletter

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There will not be a meeting or newsletter in December. The next meeting will be a Zoom meeting January 17 at 2:00 pm.

**November 2021**

## Board of Directors

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**There will not be a meeting or newsletter in December. The next Zoom meeting will be January 17, 2022.**

Our co-vice-presidents Jan Peyton and Sally Coleman have been working to get us speakers for both January and February zoom meetings. One of the tentative programs would be a talk on developing a rock garden.



want to plant in their gardens with canning and preserving this produce in mind. This meeting will occur in April or May.

Remember that Jan and Sally always appreciate any suggestions for subjects or speakers that you feel would be something your fellow members would enjoy,

They also hope to set up a panel of locals to discuss preserving our produce so members can decide what they

# Treasurer Report

by Louise Ashmun, Treasurer

## October 2021

### Income

Membership	\$135.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b><u>\$135.00</u></b>

### Expenses

Speaker Honorarium	\$100.00	
Newsletter Printing	\$27.12	
Website host annual fee	\$168.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$295.12</u></b>

Checking Beginning Balance 10/01/2021	\$	6,744.90
Income	\$	135.00
Expenses	\$	295.12
Interest	\$	<u>0.29</u>
Ending Balance 10/31/2021	\$	6,585.07
Money Market Beginning Balance 10/01/2021	\$	15,068.01
Interest	\$	<u>1.28</u>
Money Market Ending Balance 10/31/2021	\$	15,069.29
<b>Total Ending Balance 10/31/2021</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>21,654.36</b>

## October Zoom Meeting

For those of you who weren't able to make the October Zoom meeting, you can click on the following links to see it at your convenience.

Topic: Garden Club October Member Meeting  
Date: Oct 17, 2021 01:56 PM Alaska

Meeting Recording:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/1wIzPcZ1czgkDnXP27-Fwbun3oPWLAu3y-yKJ37SbllqWQwmYkBxCRKXJrD-N1to.PXMmN70iXOqCcef2?startTime=1634508309000>

Speaker Recording:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/1wIzPcZ1czgkDnXP27-Fwbun3oPWLAu3y-yKJ37SbllqWQwmYkBxCRKXJrD-N1to.PXMmN70iXOqCcef2?startTime=1634510387000>



# The Sacred Nature of Trees

by Jessica Shepherd

*Trees are a bridge between the past and future."*

Arms expanded and twisted as if with arthritis, an ancient apricot tree shades a sinuous footpath alongside Colorado's Boulder Creek. It is a sentinel from an orchard that thrived at the turn of the last century. This generous tree grew a stone's throw from the long-gone white clapboard house where I was raised. When I was seven or eight, my grandfather hoisted me up to a lower branch and spotted me as I picked the tender fruits and dropped them into my grandmother's outstretched apron. Later we would savor apricot spread on fresh-baked bread. Each time I return to Boulder to visit family or attend a funeral, I visit that old tree, leaning my cheek against its rough bark as if greeting a family member after a long time away. It is a touchstone for me where little else remains.



Trees have always been the stage for the storyline of my life, from the ponderosa pines I climbed as a child, hands blackened with sap, to the spruce and birch that grace the Alaskan landscape where I now reside. I am most at home in a forest, finding comfort in the shelter

and screen they provide. I thrill in the birds and animals they harbor, delight in the way they present themselves according to the season, and am grateful for the house logs and heat they generate after they die. A landscape without trees is barren and foreign to my eyes.

Something about trees; their towering height, their longevity, the way they define a landscape, elevates them to the spiritual realm. A walk in an old-growth forest is akin to the hush and holiness one feels in a gothic cathedral. Among the trees, I experience the sanctity of nature, and anything, from ecological rebirth to harmonious human relations, seems possible.

Over the years I have planted aspen trees and apple, spruce and hemlock, cherry and chokecherry. I've transplanted trees from powerlines, dug them up from friends' yards, and received them as gifts.

Their metamorphosis from a delicate sapling to a stately presence within a decade is a marvel. Planting a tree is akin to a sacred pact – I choose a location, add a little compost and water, and Mother Earth does the rest.

Long ago, during my first trip to Alaska, I was lured into the Canadian woods by an enchanting, ascending melody I couldn't place. Like tales of a maiden seduced by a magical lute, I left our campsite hoping to catch sight of the singer. Farther and farther I walked, eyes upward, as the trees closed behind me and any suggestion of a path petered out. At last, I spotted him, a diminutive Swainson's thrush, perched atop a towering spruce. Tilting his head back with his beak open, his throat quivered and a liquid song poured forth. After he flew away, leaving a melancholy silence behind, I turned back toward camp. I have always had confidence in my ability to safely navigate woodlands, and before long I was back in the sunlit clearing, my heart forever bound to this avian minstrel and the boreal forest in which he lives. Nowadays, with the loss of a continuous canopy, Swainson's thrush are diminishingly rare.

I moved to Homer in 2009 and settled on a small plot of land east of town. The property had previously been forested in mature Lutz spruce (a hybrid of white and Sitka spruce) until the massive bark beetle infestation of the late 1990s which killed upwards of 95% of the spruce trees on the Kenai Peninsula. Now our land is home to a few stands of young spruce amid a graveyard of tree stumps. These remnant trees grow mostly alongside creeks or on hillsides where springs offer the moisture needed for sap to flow, choking off the beetle larva before they girdle the trees. I stand atop a stump the size of my dining room table and imagine a dark woodland of giant trees filled with the songs of forest birds, but without the view of a sparkling Kachemak Bay we currently enjoy.

According to [Global Forest Watch](#),

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Alaska lost 11% of its tree cover between 2001 and 2020, due primarily to fires in the interior. Closer to home, the Swan Lake Fire burned 170,000 acres between Cooper Landing and Sterling during the summer and fall of 2019. Caused by lightning strike – once a rarity in this part of the state, the fire gained momentum amid the vast stands of beetle-killed trees. Firefighters hit it hard and early and had it largely contained when, on August 17<sup>th</sup>, high winds in combination with an exceptionally hot, dry summer whipped it back to life.

Hal and I were camping in the little town of Hope that weekend and I remember commenting on the preponderance of crispy ferns and brown-edged aspens and birch leaves. We woke in the night to howling winds and wondered aloud about the fire, just a tendril of smoke in the hills when we drove by it the day before. On our attempt to return home, we were turned back at Cooper Landing and camped a second night while the fire jumped the Sterling Highway and burned south to the shores of Skilak Lake. We were allowed through the next day and drove past a blackened landscape, fire flaring on either side of the road.

I know we should create a buffer between our house and the spruce trees that shade the east side of our lot. But I can't bring myself to sacrifice them. We have so few trees on our land if you don't count the scrubby alders, and I think about how each tree breathes in excess carbon dioxide and exhales precious oxygen. Globally, forests absorb 30% of the CO<sub>2</sub> released by burning fossil fuels. Deforestation, driven by impoverished farmers in the third world, is responsible for the greatest share of forest loss. If anything, we should plant more trees.

We are witnessing a crisis. The

world's forests, once forming a continuous canopy from coast to sapphire coast, are under attack due to a warmer, generally dryer climate and resulting insect infestations. Woodlands are timbered and scraped down to bare soil, replaced with houses, shopping centers, and soybean fields. The trees that do remain are often no longer suited for the rapidly changing environment in which they find themselves. Unlike birds and animals who, in just a few generations, are expanding their range northward or upward in elevation, trees can't evolve quickly enough to accommodate such rapid ecological change. We have to help them.

By planting fire-resistant trees like ponderosa pine and western larch, along with deciduous trees like aspen and birch, we can add diversity and boost resiliency for our own pleasure and as habitat for wildlife.

As for fruit trees, climate change could work to our advantage. Apple trees now thrive in Fairbanks on



southern slopes with permafrost-free soils. Here in Homer, numerous apple orchards are producing, and even cherry trees, which are less cold-tolerant, yield fruit during warmer, longer summers. In time, plum, pear, and other trees suited for zone 4 and above will surely flourish in our northern climate.

I have in mind to plant a copse of

experimental trees on a sunny slope down by our ponds. For the sake of nostalgia, I could include a pair of apricot trees. While I may not live long enough to harvest their plump, tender fruit, I like to imagine some future child standing among the lower branches, dropping the golden orbs one by one into their grandmother's apron.

If trees are a bridge between the past and future, let the trees we plant be a gift to those who follow.

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*(October Meeting Minutes  
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10. Newsletter – Paula: If you run into an interesting article or would like to write one yourself, please send in for the newsletter. Articles due by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month.

11. Plant Sale – Nothing to report at this time.

12. Scholarship Committee – Louise and Francie communicating with school counselors. The scholarship is also available to adults. The amount has been raised to \$1,000 so it could cover Master Gardener's Class. Brenda: Class is online; we need more master gardeners. Scholarship intended to benefit gardening community. A committee would be formed to choose who would receive the scholarship.

Guest Speaker: Angela Pullen Smith – Transforming a front lawn into a Japanese Garden. Angela has been doing this for 15 years; 8 years in her current home. She presented elements of a Japanese garden and showed trees, fish pond, pathways, many plants and much more. The link to see her presentation will be in the newsletter. Big thank you to Angela for sharing.

Meeting adjourned by President Kathy Dube'

# October 17 Zoom Meeting Minutes

by Connie Cavasos, Secretary

Meeting called to order by President Kathy Dube'.

1. Board of Directors election results:

Kathy Dube' – President, Jan Peyton – Co-Vice President, Sally Coleman – Co-Vice President, Louise Ashmun – Treasurer, Elaine Burgess – Historian, Connie Cavasos – Secretary, Barbara Kennedy – (Primarily) Data Base, Michael Murray – Social Secretary, Julie Parizek – Website, Paula Riley – Newsletter, Francie Roberts – Past President. Big thank you to Ruth Dickerson for her service as past Secretary. President Dube' gives thanks to all Officers.

No new announcements.

2. Proposal to amend Constitution Sections 1 and 4 (sent in the newsletter to membership):

**Original Section 1:**

The President shall preside at the meetings of the Club and the Board, and shall perform such duties as regularly pertain to the office. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees of the Club with the exception of the Nominating Committee. ~~The President shall co-sign all checks with the Treasurer and shall select one additional co-signer from among the Board members.~~

**Proposed Section 1:**

The President shall preside at the meetings of the Club and the Board and shall perform such duties as regularly pertain to the office. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees of the Club with the exception of the Nominating Committee.

**Original Section 4:**

The Treasurer shall collect and distribute all Club funds and keep accurate financial records. ~~The Treasurer shall also co-sign all checks and disburse such funds as needed, with approval of the board.~~ The Treasurer shall make a financial report at each Membership and Board meeting, and have the books closed and ready for annual audit by October 31st.

**Proposed Section 4:**

The Treasurer shall collect and distribute all Club funds and keep accurate financial records. ~~To this end, the Treasurer will be the main contact for the financial institution that holds the Club funds and will ensure that three to five Board members (always to include the President and the Treasurer) are current signatories on the account. The Treasurer will ensure that the Board approves an annual budget prior to the start of each fiscal year. Expenditures not included in the budget or in excess of the budgeted amount must be approved by the Board prior to disbursement. The Treasurer shall disburse funds for approved expenditures as needed~~

~~by issuing written checks or using the Club's debit card. Expenditures in excess of \$500 must be signed by two signatories or, in the case of online purchases using the debit card, witnessed by at least two account signatories at time of purchase.~~ The Treasurer shall make a financial report at each Membership and Board meeting, prepare Treasurer's Reports for the Newsletters, and have the books closed and ready for annual audit by October 31st.

Treasurer Louise:

This proposal was driven by computer based banking and ordering. Debit card very useful. Bank does not require 2 signatures. Motion to approve the changes as proposed, seconded. All in favor by majority of the membership; motion passes.

3. Secretary's Report – Connie out of town with wifi issues, hence the recording of the meeting so minutes can be written at later date.

4. Treasurer's Report – Louise: The end of FY was Sept. 30. Financials as reported in the newsletter – balance of all accounts \$21,812.91. Now looking at next year's budget. Club brought in more money in the last FY.

5. Gardener' Weekend – Francie along with Angela, Patty and Annie are looking at July 17. Waiting to see what COVID does to finalize plans. This year a success, limited to 75 tickets (all sold), 4 gardens in Homer and 2 weeks later, 3 gardens in Kachemak City. Nice to be able to see gardens where parking was limited, received good feedback; thank you to all 7 members for opening up your gardens.

Brenda: Would like to see garden tours on the weekend so working folks can make the tours.

6. Speaker's Committee – Sally (among others) would like presentations on preserving their harvest in different ways. Seems all are onboard with the idea of preserving. Note: chat from Bill Bell: Takshanuk Water Council in Haines presented an excellent forum with local preservation and fermentation presenters – very interesting. Brenda: have been in many meetings via zoom, seems everyone is getting used to it.

7. Baycrest Garden Committee – Brenda: garden did well. Managed to recruit 2 volunteers from Facebook page to help and had people every week.

8. Social Committee – No comment from Michael.

9. Membership – Barb: 128 members now. Time to renew memberships by January.

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**REMEMBER:** Dues are now due October 1<sup>st</sup>.

## THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Type: Basic (\$10) \_\_\_ Supporting (\$15) \_\_\_ Business (\$25) \_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in vegetable gardening \_\_\_\_\_ ? flower gardening \_\_\_\_\_ ?

### How would you like to participate in the Garden Club?

(please check any activities you may be interested in)

\_\_\_ Meeting Refreshments \_\_\_ Board of Directors \_\_\_ Nominating Committee \_\_\_ Newsletter  
\_\_\_ Programs/Speakers \_\_\_ Spring Plant Sale \_\_\_ Harvest Dinner \_\_\_ Baycrest Garden  
\_\_\_ Gardeners' Weekend

Please make check payable to "Homer Garden Club" and mail, along with form, to:  
Homer Garden Club, P.O. Box 2833 Homer, AK 99603

Homer Garden Club  
P.O. Box 2833  
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