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# H A P P Y Thanksgiving

## Homer Garden Club

The next HGC meeting will be November 19 at the Aspen Hotel at 2:00 for both Zoom and in person.

# Newsletter

November 2023

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Dube, President—  
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kdube197@gmail.com

Jan Peyton—Vice President  
299-0153  
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Louise Ashmun—299-6360  
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Kendall Dellaesperanza—907-399-0870, kdella7@gmail.com

## At November 19 HGC Meeting Don Bladow will Discuss Creating a Food Pantry Garden

Don Bladow retired from the Anchorage School District in 2015 as the Technical Coordinator at Bartlett High School. Prior to that Don was a systems analyst for approximately 17 years. He spent 7+ years in the Air Force, then went back to school and earned a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Education.

Don's gardening experience began in 2015 when he started building the garden behind Lutheran Church of Hope in Anchorage. He enrolled in a Master Gardener class that summer as well. The garden started with 5 elevated beds totaling a little more than 100 square feet. They planted in the middle of July and had a harvest of 25 lbs. Since then, the



average harvest has been right around 4000 pounds a year. The garden is now more than 10,000 sq ft. and is, says Don, "A labor of love guided by the Holy Spirit."

With a zoom meeting on November 19th, Don will share his experience in becoming a master gardener and how he created a Food Pantry garden. He will also talk about senior gardening and creating raised beds.



Directions for November Zoom meeting are on page 2

# Treasurer's Report

by Kendall Dellaesperanza, Treasurer

## Homer Garden Club Treasurer's Report for October 2023 (FY 202324)

### Income

Membership	\$265.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b><u>\$265.00</u></b>

### Expenses

HGC Website charge	\$168.00	
Baycrest HGC sign	\$81.72	
Aspen Hotel Venue	\$200.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$449.72</u></b>

Checking Beginning Balance 10/01/2023	\$	5,866.84
Income	\$	265.00
Expenses	\$	449.72
Interest	\$	<u>0.24</u>
Ending Balance 10/31/2023	\$	5,682.36
Money Market Beginning Balance 10/01/2023	\$	6,113.32
Interest	\$	<u>1.04</u>
Money Market Ending Balance 10/31/2023	\$	6,114.36
CD Beginning Balance 10/01/2023	\$	15,000.00
Interest [received at maturity (02/19/2024)]	\$	<u>-</u>
CD Ending Balance 10/31/2023	\$	15,000.00
<b>Total Ending Balance 10/31/2023</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>26,796.72</u></b>

## Zoom Mtg & Notes from the HGC President By Kathy Dube'

### Winter Is Here!

Greetings everyone. It looks like winter here at my house with snow, frozen gardens, and snow tires. Fortunately I planted my last flower bulbs and did a little garden clean up yesterday when it was 20 degrees warmer – just in time!

Please join us for the November meeting – either in person at the Aspen Hotel or via Zoom:

Topic: Homer Garden Club November Meeting

Time: Nov 19, 2023 02:00 PM Alaska

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85095454230?pwd=NmJZwheX7bSa8ardVpNTIaifLzZatp.1>

Meeting ID: 850 9545 4230

Passcode: 249149

One tap mobile +12532050468,,85095454230#,,,,\*249149# US

## Homer Garden Club Meeting

### October 15 - Minutes

#### Announcements

The meeting was called to order at 2:10. President Kathy Dube announced that memberships should be renewed, and mail and email addresses should be updated. There is a form on the HGC website that can be printed out and mailed in, or anyone can renew or sign up at any Garden Club meeting.

Secretary's Report – nothing to report

Treasurer's Report – Kendall reported that the Garden Club has a balance of \$26,962.17

#### Committee Reports

Gardener's weekend will be July 21<sup>st</sup> and 4+ gardens are on the schedule. Still working on another smaller tour for members only at an earlier date.

Speaker's Committee – Jan reported that Reid Brewer, Monica Kopp, and Carey Restino would be presenting on the Kachemak Bay College High tunnel and agriculture program. November's program will be Don Blado - Master gardening, senior gardening and the food pantry.

Baycrest Garden has been

put to bed for the winter, thanks to everyone who helped keep it looking so nice.

Publicity – Astrid Friend volunteered to chair the website/publicity committee but won't be back till November. Jan moved to nominate Astrid, Ruth seconded and it passed unanimously.

Plant Sale – Sally Collman volunteered to organize the plant sale in the spring.

#### Other

Tech person – Karen Howorth volunteered to set up tech for the beginning of meetings.

Proposed changes to constitution/by-laws – An edited version of the by-laws will be in the November newsletter and will be voted on by the membership at the November meeting.

#### Presentation:

Reid Brewer, Director of Kachemak Bay College spoke about a new Sustainable Agriculture program they are working to get started. They have a 30'X40' high tunnel and space for raised beds and compost bins. They got some infrastructure going this summer and have been offering free lectures, short workshops and plan to have

both credit and non-credit classes. They want to offer classes for new and experienced farmers as well as new and experienced backyard gardeners. They were able to send over 300 lbs. of produce to the Homer Food Pantry this summer, as well as giving produce to college staff on occasion. Reid introduced Monica Kopp and Carey Restino who together are heading up the Sustainable Agriculture program. Monica also works her own farm, Tilted Hills, in Nikolaevsk, as well as working for Homer Soil and Water Conservation District. Carey Restino owns Hilltop Farm and enjoys teaching interns and volunteers about working the farm. She will guide the planting and production in the high tunnel and outdoor garden space. Both Monica and Carey have worked to develop workshops that have been held this year such as seed starting, funding your farm, composting and an end of season garden journaling class. They also held "Ask a grower" labs for the interested public. They are looking to develop partnerships with people or organizations that can offer workshops. They want to know what workshops the community wants. KBCGrows has a website to find workshop events and happenings. Members brought up subjects they would like to see and learn about such as how to control pests and diseases.

The meeting ended about 3:25.

**There will not be a newsletter or meeting in December.**

**Have a wonderful holiday!**

## HGC Board Member Titles

by Louise Ashmun

Office	Name	E-mail	Phone (cell)
President	Kathy Dubé	<a href="mailto:kdube@watershedgeodynamics.com">kdube@watershedgeodynamics.com</a>	425-241-1045
Vice President	Jan Peyton	<a href="mailto:janpeyton73@gmail.com">janpeyton73@gmail.com</a>	907-299-0153
Secretary	Tina Seaton	<a href="mailto:tinaseaton@gmail.com">tinaseaton@gmail.com</a>	907-399-1353
Co-Treasurer	Louise Ashmun	<a href="mailto:leashmun@gmail.com">leashmun@gmail.com</a>	907-299-6360
Co-Treasurer	Kendall DellaSperanza	<a href="mailto:kdella7@gmail.com">kdella7@gmail.com</a>	907-399-0870
Social Coordinator	Michael Murray	<a href="mailto:murmurart66@gmail.com">murmurart66@gmail.com</a>	907-435-7333
Historian	Elaine Burgess	<a href="mailto:eburgess216@gmail.com">eburgess216@gmail.com</a>	907-299-2325
Newsletter Editor	Paula Riley	<a href="mailto:pauril@yahoo.com">pauril@yahoo.com</a>	907-399-4738
Communication Manager	Barbara Kennedy	<a href="mailto:barbara_e_kennedy@msn.com">barbara_e_kennedy@msn.com</a>	907-299-0007
Website/Publicity	Astrid Friend	<a href="mailto:akphoto@gmx.com">akphoto@gmx.com</a>	907-398-1207
Past President	Francie Roberts	<a href="mailto:francie.roberts@gmail.com">francie.roberts@gmail.com</a>	907-299-5050

## Cultivating Hope—Gardening for Greater Climate Resiliency

by Jessica Shepherd

In some of my earliest memories, I kneel beside my grandmother on a soft spring morning, poking green bean seeds into a garden bed with a chubby finger. The garden, with its tidy rows of fresh-tilled soil, flourishes between a dense row of black raspberries and the ally that runs beside our house. Goldfinch sing above the low hum of traffic on Ninth Street in small town Boulder, Colorado, while Amber, our yellow tabby, rolls in a dry patch of dirt, then lies in lazy contemplation. I recall the warmth of Grandma's hand atop mine, as together we smooth moist soil over the row of bean seeds.

Each summer we put up the bounty from this small wonderland, and I learned to make jam, blanch beans for the freezer, and can tomatoes, peaches, and pickles. During the winter months, when the garden was blanketed in snow, we enjoyed a steady diet of buttery potatoes, green bean casseroles, and raspberry pies from the food we amassed. We didn't have

money to spare, but we never went hungry.

We knew nothing about climate change back then. My grandparents were simply passing along the gardening knowledge they learned from their parents a half-century before. Fast forward another half-century, and now I'm the one tending a garden, but with the uneasy knowledge that food systems around the globe are on unstable ground.

Thanks to the one-two punch of climate change and a strong El Nino, 2023 is shaping up to be the hottest year on record, nudging us ever closer to the 1.5°C tipping point climate researchers warn us about. Not only did the planet set new temperature records during June, July, and August, but September reached an unprecedented 2.59°F (1.44°C) above the long-term average. According to NOAA Chief Scientist Dr. Sarah Kapnick, "Not only was it the warmest September on record, it was far and

away the most atypically warm month of *any* in NOAA's 174 years of climate keeping. To put it another way, September 2023 was warmer than the average July from 2001-2010."

Here in south-central Alaska, it was a different story. We were one of the only places in North America with below-average temperatures. Cool, rainy days made it easy to forget that the rest of the world was undergoing blistering heat, smoke from out-of-control fires, and crop loss due to drought, fire, heat, flooding, and, of course, war. Where we do feel it is at the grocery store, where inflation has affected the cost of everything from Granny Smith apples to Butter Ball turkeys. We are witnessing record levels of acute food insecurity on a global scale. In the U.S. 12% of households with children are food insecure (USDA 2022). Here in Homer, 1 in 10 families visit the Homer Food Pantry at least once per year.

(Continued on page 5)

*(Cultivating Hope  
Continued from page 4)*

Couple that with the news that the U.S. has lost more than 400,000 family farms in the past 40 years, which equates to 140 million acres of farmland, equivalent to the size of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota combined, and you have good reason to worry about food security. In addition, we are losing key pollinators, like bees, to what some are calling an insect apocalypse. Bees account for 35% of all crop pollination, including fruit, berries, nuts, and alfalfa, which translates to beef and sheep production.

Alaska imports approximately 95% of our food, and, as most people know, our grocery stores only carry three to four days' worth of food at any given time. We're acutely vulnerable to a dock strike or a natural disaster when it comes to food shipments.

The good news is that we, as humble gardeners, can increase our local food security one backyard at a time. Climate change will favor Alaskans with a longer growing season, and a wider range of crops we can grow. Many of us have already figured out how to make the most of our colder soils and midnight sun through row covers, heat coils, and cool-weather crops like broccoli,



Winter Lynn watering the carrots—photo by Jessica Shepherd

brussel sprouts, and potatoes. With federal assistance through the high tunnel program, we can nudge our growing season out another two to four weeks on either end.

Like the victory gardens during World War II, which more than equaled the amount of commercial produce grown in the US and Europe, we can increase our food production as a way to offset inflation, reduce the carbon footprint of shipping food north, and set the stage

for greater climate resilience.

But that's not all. By interplanting flowers and shrubs that appeal to pollinators, or including them in our landscaping, we can attract and nourish pollinators. You might also try planting medicinal plants like lavender, echinacea, and feverfew, or let a portion of your yard go wild for the sake of wildlife. Space limited? Try growing a container garden.

If gardening is a passion of yours, share it with your kids, grandkids, or the kids next door. My grandparents believed that including young children in the art of gardening was an important part of their education.

Even toddlers can harvest carrots and potatoes. Kids who grow up with dirt under their nails gain an appreciation for where their food comes from. Gardens are an ark towards greater climate resilience. Together, we can tend these arks, and make a difference.

"There's too much bad news to justify complacency. There's too much good news to justify despair"

*Jessica Shepherd  
shepherdinthegarden@icloud.com*



\*\*\*\*\*Our Membership Year is October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>\*\*\*\*\*

## THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date:\_\_\_\_\_Membership Type: Basic(\$10)\_\_\_Supporting (\$15)\_\_\_Business (\$25)\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_Phone #\_\_\_\_\_

You will receive the newsletter by E-Mail. This saves us printing and postage costs.  
Plus, the E-mailed version is in fabulous color!

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

**How would you like to participate in the Garden Club *this Membership Year?***  
(please check any activities in which you would like to help)

\_\_\_ Meeting Refreshments \_\_\_ Board of Directors \_\_\_ Nominating Committee \_\_\_ Newsletter  
\_\_\_ Spring Plant Sale \_\_\_ Harvest Dinner \_\_\_ Baycrest Garden \_\_\_ Gardener Tour

**Suggestions for future Topics or Speakers** \_\_\_\_\_

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

HGC is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. EIN 92-0133642

Homer Garden Club  
P.O. Box 2833  
Homer, Alaska 99603

