

# Homer Garden Club

# Newsletter

March 2011

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**The March meeting will be held at 2:00 the 27th at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.**

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## Fran Durner to Discuss Vertical Yard Design at March 27 Meeting

Fran Durner has advised her talk will cover everything from a discussion about color and the eye to using hardscape and sculpture, to vines, tall plants, trees and shrubs. She has numerous beautiful photos to show, plus many photos from Homer gardens too.

Fran is an Advanced Master Gardener and a member of the Homer Garden Club. She, with Elaine Grabowski, has been selling tickets for the Homer Garden Tour for three years straight so far. She also wrote a popular weekly garden column for the Anchorage Daily News and Talk



Photo by Fran Durner

Dirt blog for several years before retiring last year.



Garden Club Plant Sale .... June 4th

## President's Report—Preparing to Garden at Baycrest and Pioneer Avenue Gardens

by President Jack Regan

The garden club season is advancing and soon the snow drifts will give way to the vernal surge.

Many of the members have signed up to participate in the Baycrest and Pioneer Ave. garden projects. At the March garden club meeting there will be an additional opportunity to add your name to the sign-up list. The Baycrest Garden has a new sign that will be installed this

season. The club offers a venue that allows experienced and novice gardeners to work side by side on our two garden sites. This year I would like to invite all who are interested in working on these two gardens to a planning session that will be held in April. I will make the announcement at the March meeting for those who are interested in attending.



## Treasurer's Report – February 2011

by Treasurer Peggy Craig

Income		Expenses	
Membership	\$45.00	Gardener's Weekend Lecture	\$ 491.21
Book	<u>30.00</u>	501 (c) (3)	<u>850.00</u>
Total Income	\$75.00	Total Expenses	\$1,341.21
Beginning Balance 02-01-11		\$13,203.66	
Income		75.00	
Expenses		<u>(1,341.21)</u>	
Ending Balance 02-28-11		\$11,937.45	

## Gardeners' Weekend (August 6 & 7)

by Roni Overway

One of the most difficult tasks the Summer Gardeners' Weekend committee faces each year is selecting six unique, well-maintained and attractive gardens to put on tour; gardens whose owners would enjoy having like-minded gardening enthusiasts visit. Recognizing that some extra work will surely be involved, the owners who open their gardens are more appreciated than they can know and a special mini-tour and luncheon is planned for them as the club's way

of saying "Thanks"!

Having begun the process of finding those gardens for our 2011 event last fall, the committee has already selected five. Now, they are looking for your suggestions for a sixth!

If you or any of your gardening friends know of special gardens that might be included, please get in touch with one of the committee members. Qualifications would

include those mentioned above: unique, well-maintained, attractive. Whether perennials, annuals, shrubs, trees, vegetables or fruit trees are featured, each deserves its time in the sun. So, think about it, talk it over, and let us know who you feel would be a good fit. You may call Roni Overway, 226-3404, Barb Landi, 235-1809, Saraphine Bailey, 235-1402, or Brenda Adams at 235-3763. Thank you!!

Thanks to a donation from the Homer Garden Club, the Paul Banks Elementary School will now have a larger 12 X 24 foot greenhouse. Benny Abraham, the principal there, said this larger size will allow for more educational experiments with more children and, even more important logistically, each whole class will be able to fit into the greenhouse at one time.

Meeting with the Paul Banks Greenhouse committee and coordinator Shere Baechler and Ben Zimmerman (local food VISTA) last week, we planned out some logistics and the interior plant benches for their soon-to-be-built greenhouse. We then put together a "wish list" of what would be needed to complete it. Al Pointdexter of Anchor Point Greenhouse has already generously agreed to supply the potting soil.

If you have any items on the wish list and want to donate them, you can contact Ben at [VISTABen@homerfarmersmarket.org](mailto:VISTABen@homerfarmersmarket.org).

Note: Please contact us about your donations before the end of March. Thanks.

This greenhouse agricultural education for children is a good project for the Homer Garden Club to support. Many, if not most of us, grew up where our families had gardens. We learned early on the magic and excitement of the first plant shoots coming up in spring. We were taught responsibility in taking care of the gardens and reaped the reward by eating delicious, nutritious vegetables and fruit. It was fun and part of the greater cycle of nature to plant, care for, then harvest and eat what we planted. We grew up with good

appetites, eating and liking everything. Innately we also grew up connected with the natural world and learned if we took care of it, it would take care of us. The physical, spiritual and emotional health benefits of gardening are well documented.

In one generation we have lost that. Children today usually spend their "outdoor time" in traversing to their next inside destination, hopefully without having to walk. Being



outside in the natural world and getting exercise, unless it's on a team, is unnatural for most. A lot do not know the names of vegetables or have any clue where they come from. Worse, they probably prefer junk food and do not want to eat vegetables.

This all will change as our world does. Purchasing inexpensive healthy food is a thing of the past. Reading another report on the rapidly declining world oil supply and the ramifications of these disrupting world economies brings it home for me. As written before, it takes about 10 calories of energy (oil) to get 1 calorie of food on our table in the US. It's easy to see how rising energy prices will di-

rectly raise the price and availability of food. We are also entering a time when Climate Change will begin playing an increasing disruptive role in our food supply. It's already happening.

That's our future and also the future for all those young Paul Banks Elementary school children. They will be seeing a lot more of these changes than us. Of all these predictions, consensus is that one of the best solutions is local food production. It fits well with the independent Alaskan spirit and is wise too considering our position at the end of the food/energy chain.

It's also something the Homer Garden Club should think about. Helping fund a local greenhouse for education is a great first step. In the next few transitional years a lot more people will start looking to grow food in their backyards or community garden. Our HGC gardening manual is a great resource for growing vegetables here. In the future I hope

we take a lead in this education. If you have any thoughts, ideas or comments on this please contact me.

I'm taking a motorcycle trip around the lower 48 over the next month and a half. It'll be part fun and adventure while looking for solutions with ample time to think. I'll be visiting a permaculture teacher and hope to visit several other permaculture centers. I know thoughtful permaculture design can help provide some sustainable food growing answers. Yes, I'll be on a motorcycle and yes, it's red and yes, I'm middle aged...but is it crazy?

## Paul Banks Elementary School Says Thanks to the Homer Garden Club

March 4, 2011

Dear Homer Garden Club,

Thank you for your support of our plan to build a greenhouse at Paul Banks Elementary School here in Homer.

This is a drawing of the greenhouse envisioned by one of our second grade students who is excited about our project to build the greenhouse and then start growing.

Sincerely,

The Staff at Paul Banks Elementary School

### Paul Banks Elementary Greenhouse Wish List:

- Seed Trays (20 or so)
- Tub for mixing soil/compost
- Hand trowels/forks and cultivators
- Space heater
- Grow lights
- Watering cans
- Harvest baskets
- Safety scissors for harvesting greens
- 4 and 6 inch pots
- 5 gallon buckets



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marion Nelson of the South Central Kenai Peninsula Garden Club stated the Western Tour speaker from the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) will be presenting a program Sunday, April 3rd, 2:00 pm at Christ Lutheran Church, located near the Y in Soldotna. While the Peninsula does not have a Rock Garden Society, NARGS recognizes that there are a few paid members, so they are kindly including us in this western region tour to Alaska. She hopes many from Homer will take a Sunday drive and take in this program. His topic will be "Western Alpines" which, for us, means plants that would do OK in Alaska.

ALPLAINS was started in 1989 by Alan D. Bradshaw, partly out of his frustration in trying to find certain rare plant seeds. Originally employed as a software engineer, he found himself devoting more and more time to the collection of seeds, first grown in his gardens on the eastern plains of Colorado and then from wild flora of the western United States. Small seed lists in the early 1990s were followed by his first color catalog in 1994. From then his business steadily grew until widespread drought in the early 2000s nearly forced him into bankruptcy. By 2005, the business had recovered enough to allow Alan to again issue color catalogs. Growth has been steady ever since and his 2009 catalog contains seeds of over 1000 different rare and unusual plant species, including a large selection of cactus seed from the collection of Jeff Thompson. Alan also traveled to the Chilean Andes in 2001 and brought back seeds of several rosulate violet species and many other Andean gems. Today, Alan still remains "Dedicated to the Preservation of Wild Flora and Dissemination of the Harvest."

Anyone interested in getting together to set up a group order to buy high tunnels, please contact Robbie Coffey at 235-6647.

### Alaska Botanical Garden's summer schedule:

Plant Sale / Season Reopening	May 21
Midsummer Gala	June 9
Garden Fair & Art Show	June 11 & 12
Lighthouse Gardens Tea	July 9
Secret Garden Series	Thursdays, July & August

For more information about any of these events, contact **Alaska Botanical Garden**, P.O.Box 202202, Anchorage, AK 99520, (phone) 907-770-3692 (fax) 907-770-0555 (e-mail) [garden@alaskabg.org](mailto:garden@alaskabg.org)

The Homer Garden Club Gardener's Weekend is scheduled for August 6 and 7.

The Homer Farmers' Market is looking for a new design for its t-shirt and is now accepting submissions.

Designs should draw on the wonderful celebration of food and art that is the Homer Farmers' Market.

-Needs to clearly say "Homer Farmers' Market"

-Designs should be clear enough if printed around 7"x 10"

Submissions can be mailed to: HFM  
P.O. Box 3271, Homer AK 99603

or submitted electronically to [vista-ben@homerfarmersmarket.org](mailto:vista-ben@homerfarmersmarket.org) by Friday, March 18

Selected designer will receive one free shirt, basket of market goodies and the pleasure of seeing their design on the best shirts around.

More info on the contest and photos and information about Homer Farmer's Market can be found online at:

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



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