

Garden Club of Alabama District II Director's Report, October 10, 2022

Fall Meeting

New Beginnings is our theme. Most of you finally began meetings anew in September. I thank all of you for your faithfulness in continuing to hold together and to continue your work especially in Beautification. During COVID, we found meaning and purpose in the great outdoors and in our gardening efforts. Donna Blackwell shared that The Amaryllis Club was recognized this summer by the City of Oneonta for their efforts in beautification. I know that Cherokee Rose continued to work beautiful magic in Center and the list goes on. You will get highlights later in the program from each Club.

I am sorry to report that Arab has decided to no longer be a member of the Garden Club of Alabama. There is value in being a part of a larger organization. When you pay your \$6 dues to GCA, you are also joining the Deep South regional group and the National Garden Club. The National Garden Club offers a great many opportunities to all of us. I hope you will make use of the study courses in Flower Judging, Environmental, Garden Study and Landscape Design Schools. Now much of the coursework is online. You are spared the expense of hotels and travel to take all of the courses. Please make it a habit to go to the websites of GCA and NGC to find out what is happening and what you might want to pursue. Do not forget the program resources that GCA offers you.

Garden Clubs are not dinosaurs as some would have the public believe. We are not telling our story as well as we should. We must work on outreach to attract new members. I remember hearing about a club in Charleston, SC that limited their membership so that they could continue meeting in homes. What a travesty! My club, Rhododendron, has made cards to distribute as we set up a table at festivals and events. Do not be afraid to invite the public to your meetings through social media. On a more personal level, invite your new neighbor, church member or newcomer. People are looking for ways to contribute to their community and you have the perfect vehicle. This is my third state garden club organization and I have stuck with it because I experience the value of friendships, learning and doing.

As your District II Director, I am asked to communicate GCA business to each club through your presidents. I will do my best to keep you informed and feel free to call me with questions and ideas.

Now is the time to go forth with renewal and enthusiasm. Our time of confinement should have left all of us with an appreciation of what we missed and what we look forward to. The new normal, I hope, will result in New Beginnings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marsha Merrell, District II Director