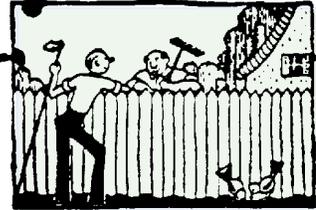




# The Garden Spray

Bulletin of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc  
2003, Volume 61, Number 12



## This Month at MGCM

**"Jingle Bell Ball"!**

**MGCM's Annual Holiday Dinner Party**

**December 2, 2003 starting at 6 PM**

Location: Lake Harriet United Methodist; 49th and Chowen Avenue South

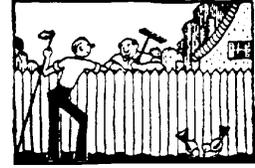
**Advanced reservations required**

Fellowship, Silent Auction, Dinner, Awards, Entertainment

Bring something for the food shelf



**Remember the Reason for the Season**



# From The President

By Nancy Bjerke

Like my predecessors I too appreciate the effort all the members of the board have put in during the year to help make this club a rewarding experience. The chairs again proved to be leaders within their chosen committees. The variety of activities the club supports gives every member an opportunity to pick a favorite one to enjoy. If you have the chance to join the board or chair a committee, I know that you will enjoy the experience while learning more about how the club operates.

The talent of the members is awesome and if we were a for profit organization we would be rich in monetary wealth as well as personal pleasure.

What is my favorite activity? Over the past two years, I have tried to participate in or attend every event and my favorite activity varies as the season changes. In March the flower show is such a treat after months of frozen soil and barren scenery. May brings me new plants from the Plant Auction and gardening at the Perennial Garden conjures up moist, earthy aromas amid the shoots of returning perennials. The summer garden tours are the highlight of my gardening season as is the show that is on display at the Perennial Garden. After the tour season has ended, there is a chance I may win a ribbon at the FFF show. The dinner meetings feature speakers who are always interesting but what I like is the opportunity the meetings provide to visit with the other gardeners. Being President is very rewarding and it is nice to have a staff of willing workers. Choosing favorite activities is easy but picking one over another is impossible.

Next year we will be looking for an editor of The Spray to replace Chuck Carlson

who is leaving that position. Chuck will continue to be a member and I am sure he will be snapping photos of us at the various events. He has been a great resource to me over the past year and I thank him for his support.

I hope to see everyone at the Holiday Party and the January 2004 meeting.

# Comments From The Editor

By Chuck Carlson



## Thanks to your writers

We have again come to the end of another year. We have been fortunate to have some of you write copy for the newsletter, without that we would have had a much smaller newsletter. Not only that, you would have had to put up with more of my writing. So first of all I want to thank those of you who have given your time to write for the club. This year the following have provided copy; Mary Maynard, Phil Smith, Ada Hegion, Howard Berg, Kay Wolfe, Jerry Olson, Larry Larson, Doug Whitney, Jerry Shannon, Lloyd Wittstock, Bob Olson, Dave Moehnke, David McKeen, Anne Buchanan and Tim McCauley. Thanks to each of you from the club and especially from me. I also thank our secretary, Mary Oelke, and our president, Nancy Bjerke, for providing their inputs on a timely basis.

## My resignation

I have been the editor since 1998 and have decided that it is time to let the computer take a rest from its monthly task. I have told the board that I would continue during 2004 but if there is someone who will take over as editor anytime during 2004 it would be great. I believe there are many in the club that could step in and do a wonderful job and enjoy the task. Consider being the editor, you will receive more than you give.

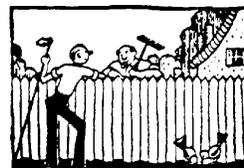
# Last Month's Program

By Bob Olson

Botanical art is a rarified plane where two distinct disciplines, science and art, must come together. It demands absolute scientific accuracy in its expression. This is different from "floral art" which is more commonly seen in galleries. But Marilyn Garber, our speaker, said it is not that simple. She described it as a form of art requiring "a sophisticated sense of esthetics, keen observation and scientific accuracy."

Marilyn Garber is the founder of The Minnesota School of Botanical Art whose exquisite depictions of flora and fauna have been displayed at numerous international art forums, including the prestigious competition at the Royal Horticulture Society in London. She gave a delightful presentation of the history and evolution of botanical art from the times of the Egyptians to the present day. This was no mean feat in the forty-five minutes allotted her in the program.

The first known drawings of plant materials are seen on the walls of 4000-year-old Egyptian ruins, but they are only abstractions. True (somewhat) representational floral drawings begin to appear 1000 years later and can be seen in the tomb of Thutmose II at Karnak. There is not much advance in this artistic genre until the Middle Ages when books on medicinal herbs are written, and they call for reasonably accurate pictures of the plants—at least those parts of the plants that are medicinally important. But this is an improvement, because the only other floral art being produced in the secular world is the decoration on prayer books made by craftsmen for wealthy patrons. These are charming



pictures but could not be called faithful reproductions.

In the 16th Century, however, there is a breakthrough of sorts. Tapestries are woven with accurate representations of well-known plants—an excellent one on permanent display at the New York Museum of Art shows a unicorn in a garden among pomegranate and numerous other fruits that are easily recognizable.

With the Renaissance comes the true emergence of botanical art. Masters like

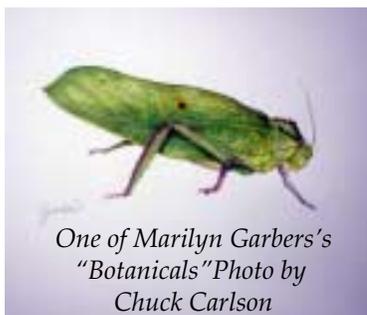
Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo Da Vinci are not only artists, they are superb draftsmen and create marvelous true-to-life drawings of common plants.

The voyages of Columbus lead to widespread exploration into heretofore-unknown parts of the world, and this together with invention of the microscope and the printing press sparks an

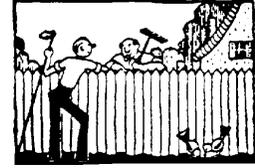
explosion of interest in botany. By the 17th and 18th Centuries, botanists are receiving plants from all over the world and demanding faithfully reproduced pictures of the specimens. Eventually the artists, some of them quite bold, went with the expeditions and illustrated them first hand. One such famous artist, Sydney Parkinson, sailed with Captain Cook to the South Pacific where he made a series of marvelous watercolors of the diverse flora—but tragically his work and his life were cut short when he contracted dysentery on the island of Java.

Progress was being made in Europe in many countries. In England, George Ehret (famous for his color pictures of tulips) illustrated botanical books using the new naming system devised by Linnaeus—the nomenclature system that became the standard for scientific names of plants and animals. Pierre Redoute, France's best known and perhaps most prolific water color botanical

*(Continued on page 4)*



*One of Marilyn Garber's  
"Botanicals" Photo by  
Chuck Carlson*



## Last Month's Program

*(Continued From page 3)*

artist, was first sponsored by Marie Antoinette and then showing remarkable survival skills maintained his position after the French Revolution as the favorite of Napoleon's wife, the Empress Josephine.

But the continued support of botanical art by Kew Gardens in England was pivotal not only to the establishment of botanical art as a valued and needed marriage of art and science, but in survival of the discipline. Kew maintained this art/science form during a period in the early 20th Century when non-representational art supplanted realism and threatened to cause the extinction of botanical art. The rich Kew tradition started with Franz Bauer who came from Germany and spent his life painting the collection at Kew. He was followed by Robert Thornton whose works became widely distributed thanks to the development of high quality printing in the late 18th Century. Marilyn Garber shared a story with us about the Minneapolis Women's Club. She was giving a talk there not so long ago and noticed what appeared to be two original Thornton prints on the wall. On close inspection, they were Thornton prints! When asked where it was found, the embarrassed club manager confessed it had recently been rescued from the dumpster by someone who "needed something to put on the bare wall in the room upstairs." The prints are said to be worth \$20,000 each.

There are other famous English botanical artists, but the best known is undoubtedly Beatrix Potter of Peter Rabbit fame. Ms. Potter illustrated her famous stories with remark-

ably accurate representations of mushrooms.

The Kew garden and its Kew Garden Magazine maintained the traditions of the highest quality art and science in its publications all during the dark days of the

early 20th Century when realism was out of vogue. It did so largely due to the efforts of two remarkable artists: Lillian Snelling, who for decades produced the highest quality botanical art for Kew Magazine, and the astounding Margaret Mee.

After Margaret Mee moved from England to Brazil she

sent back scores of stunning pictures accurately depicting rare or previously little appreciated plants from the Amazon River Basin. On more than one occasion she was abandoned and left for "lost and presumed dead" by her guides, only to emerge from the wilderness and make her own way back to civilization. Ironically, after surviving numerous close calls in the rain forests of South America, she died in an automobile accident shortly after returning to England.

Today there is a revival of botanical art in the world, strongest in Europe but rapidly gaining favor in America. For the more scientific journals the favored medium is black and white. Taxonomists (scientists

who deal with naming plants and animals) feel that color is a distraction; the important elements in describing an animal or plant are centered about its structure—not its color. The artists dealing with black and white use pencil, graphite, or ink.

Watercolor is the preferred medium for the more artistic centered aspects of botanical art. Watercolor can portray the transparency of the leaves and also create the solidity of the stems and fruits.



*Looking at botanicals  
Photo By Lloyd Wittstock*



*A portion of one of M. Garber's  
"Botanicals" Photo by Chuck*

# Board Meeting Summary



Summarized from  
*Mary Oelke's Secretary's Report*

Tuesday, November 4, 2003  
Board Members Present: Rudy Allebach, Nancy Bjerke, Lynda Carlson, Ellyn Hosch, Dave Johnson, Warren Nordley, Mary Oelke, Jackie Overom. Guest: Don Stuewe. Absent: Dave McKeen

The meeting was called to order by President Nancy Bjerke. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

## President's Report

The Club received a thank you from Mary Lerman, Minneapolis Park Board, for the Perennial Garden.

A list of this year's rookies was presented to the Board. The candidate for Rookie of the Year will be decided at the next meeting.

At the October 24 dinner meeting, the membership voted to join Minneapolis Parks Legacy Society).

## Vice President's Report

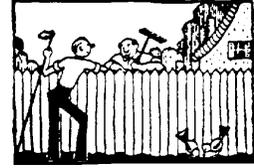
Ellyn Hosch reported that she is still looking for a January program.

A tentative schedule for MGCM 2004 Meetings was distributed.

## Membership Secretary's Report

Jackie Overom presented Elizabeth Johnson as a candidate for membership in MGCM. A motion to accept Elizabeth as a member was passed. Eighty six membership renewals have been returned. Jackie is in the process of phoning the 36 members who have not renewed their membership yet.

Don Stuewe, nominee for Membership



Secretary in 2004, was introduced.

## Treasurer's Report

Dave Johnson reported that he has sent donations to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Horticultural Research and Minneapolis Parks Legacy Society.

Membership dues are in the process of being collected.

The CD maturing in November will be renewed.

The Treasurer's Report was approved.

An amended federal tax return has been filed for the year 2000. In that year the club paid \$1200 in federal and state taxes.

## Old Business

Warren Nordley, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers for 2004. Two vacancies are still not filled. The possibility of changing the board meeting night to accommodate a possible candidate was discussed.

The question of how and when to vote for the name change was discussed. It was decided that a representative of the Name Change Committee be asked to make a presentation at the January meeting.

The Memorial Committee has suggested purchasing a bench for \$3000 or a plaque for an existing bench for \$1000. Since the amount in the Memorial Fund is only \$332, these suggestions are not affordable. The committee continues to look for suggestions.

## New Business

More auction items are needed for the Christmas Party.

Chuck Carlson has announced his future retirement as Garden Spray Editor. A new editor is being sought for the year 2005.

A motion to adjourn was passed. The next board meeting will be held Tuesday, December 9 at 7 PM at the home of Nancy Bjerke.



# Confessions of a Lazy Gardener

By Mary Maynard



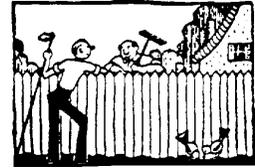
I used to think that we should fill our gardens with perennials, since it's probably cheaper in the long run and arguably less work. But I have come to believe that we're missing a lot of fun if we don't balance our perennials with annuals to add more color and interest in the garden.

There are times, though, that I wish I didn't know about places like Avant Gardens ([www.avantgardensne.com](http://www.avantgardensne.com)) or Singing Springs Nursery ([www.singspringsnursery.com](http://www.singspringsnursery.com)), where one can find unusual plants, but at a noticeable price. Fortunately, we can usually get some very cool things locally — like at our own sale in May.

Here are some of the plants I tried for the first time this year:

Proven Winner Colocasia 'Black Magic' (aka 'Jet Black Wonder'). These black elephant ears were available locally as Proven Winners this year — pretty small plants, but only \$4. They did well in containers with some other things. In my experience, the black elephant ears don't seem as vigorous as the plain green Colocasia esculenta, or the black and green Colocasia esculenta (or sometimes antiquorum) 'Illustris'. But these grew nicely, making a dramatic statement against gray-green eucalyptus foliage, or the hot chartruse of Golden Feverfew. I am going to try to keep these over the winter as some sort of houseplant to see how they do. It would be nice to start with a slightly larger version than the \$4 plant, but I'm happy with the results.

Coleus 'Wild Lime'. Wow! This is a fabulous coleus — with a yellow center and



lime green rim around very crinkly leaves. I believe I got this via mail-order from Singing Springs Nursery, and it's a winner. Hoping that it is easily propagated by cuttings so I can bring some to the sale next year.

Very eye-catching, in a gaudy kind of way!

Coleus 'Dark Star'. This is another striking coleus from Singing Springs. This is quite a bit larger than 'Wild Lime', and very, very dark purple. It is very dramatic in a dignified way. It looked great in a container.

Coleus 'Copper'. I got this as a bonus



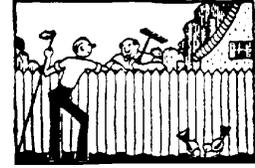
*Coleus 'Dark Star'*

(free) plant from Avant Gardens. When I first saw it, I thought it was kind of a ho-hum thing, but that was before it took off. And this coleus is poorly named, since it isn't really copper-colored at all. It's more of a full, rich light red that absolutely glows in the mixed borders. Highly recommended.

Eucalyptus. I got this at our plant sale in the spring, and it looked great in a container with Colocasia 'Black Magic' and Pink Crystals ruby grass (see below). Nice trailing habit, not a spectacular grower for me in part sun, but I liked it and I'd use it again in a container.

Lantana trifolia 'Lavender Popcorn'. I've tried to get this interesting annual a couple of times, but was stymied by crop failure. But this year, I got it from Singing Springs nursery, and it's been OK, but not a show stopper

*(Confessions Continued on page 7)*



## Confessions Continued

*Continued from page 6)*

in the garden. It has nice small lavender flowers, but the most interesting feature is supposed to be the seed heads, which look like little ears of corn with purple kernels. As of September, they're just starting to form, so I suspect they're more spectacular in gardens with a longer growing season. It has been a very good sport about our hot dry weather.



*Lantana Trifolia*

Rose 'Love and Peace'. An impulse purchase at the club sale, this has been a very good grower in my garden, with nice foliage and a lot of flowers. This is a release by Bailey Nursery here in Minnesota. While the pictures look great, I thought the blooms turned a little mottled and muddy in my garden. So, while I haven't been thrilled with the flowers, I'm going to give it at least another year. Maybe with less heat and a little more rain, I'll have flowers that look more like the pictures.

Rhynchelytrum nerviglume 'Pink Crystals' (Pink Crystals Ruby Grass). I got this annual grass at our club sale, too, and I like it very much in containers. The leaves are a little silvery or gray, and the flowers (which haven't shown up yet) are supposed to be pink/purple. (The pictures are stunning.) Even though I haven't seen any flower

plumes, I still recommend it for containers.

Petunias Blue Wave, Pink Wave, Rose Wave, Tidal Wave Silver. Sigh. I have never had very much luck with petunias, and this year has been no exception. I thought it would be different with Waves, but I have concluded that I lack the petunia gene. In my opinion, the best of the Waves is Tidal Wave Silver, which is white with a purple eye. It grew pretty well for me and showed up nicely in the garden, and I will definitely grow it again, even though I lost out to Marilyn Brummer's specimen of the same flower at the FFF.

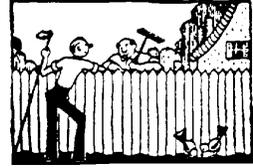
Tuhlbaghia Violaceum 'Variegata' (Society Garlic). This annual caught my eye this year for its near-white leaves that look great in containers. The pink-purple flowers are not really that conspicuous (or maybe I'm just not that good at growing this). It held up very well in our hot dry summer this year. I'm going to try to keep this over the winter some way. If it croaks, I'll no doubt replace it next year.

Carex buchananii (Leatherleaf sedge). This is a fun annual grass, because it always looks dead. Its natural color is kind of a rusty brown, and it grows to about 2 ft. I have this in a container with canna 'Tropicanna' and an orange-leaved geranium and Coleus 'Watercolor'. It's been a very good sport in these dry conditions, considering that it really prefers moist conditions and is supposed to thrive near ponds and bogs.

Lotus berthelotii. This is a cool trailing plant with lacy, needle-like foliage that really grows and forms a big silvery presence. It's also supposed to have orange or coral flowers, but I didn't have any (and wouldn't want orange ones). A good grower and a very nice accent in a large container. I got this at the MGCM sale (did Dave McKeen bring this in?), but I see it is also available from Avant Gardens in Massachusetts. Annual.

Verbena 'Heirloom Mango'. I picked up

*(Confessions Continued on page 8)*



# Bells

By Chuck Carlson

Do you remember the song “I heard the Bells on Christmas Day”? A lot of you do, but did you know ( I didn’t) it was rearranged from a poem written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow on December 25th 1864 during the Civil War. The song eliminated some of the words about the war. Below is the full text of the poem.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along  
The unbroken song  
of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way,  
The world revolved from night to day,  
A voice, a chime  
A chant sublime  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black accursed mouth  
The cannon thundered in the South.  
And with the sound  
The carols drowned  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

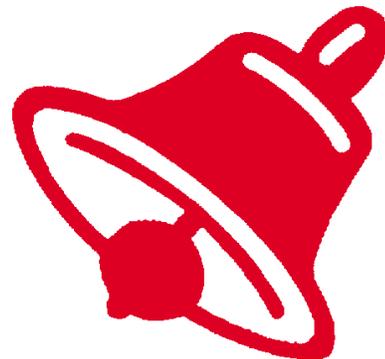
It was as if an earthquake rent  
The hearth-stones of a continent,  
And made forlorn  
The households born  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;  
“There is no peace on earth,” I said;  
“For hate is strong,  
And mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep;  
“God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!  
The Wrong shall fail.  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good-will to men!”

After reading this, I thought, Isn’t this a poem for today as well as for the Civil War and all I could think to pray is, Peace on earth and good will to men!

Thanks Anne B. for sending me the website address.

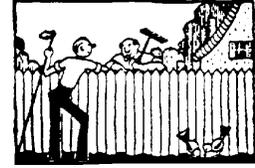


## Confessions Continued

*(Continued from page 7)*

a few packs of this little verbena to fill in the holes in the garden that I only care about when the garden is on tour. And I found a new favorite. ‘Heirloom Mango’ proved to be a very nice low filler that thrived in our hot dry conditions. The flower color is a nice light, warm peach. I’ll definitely get it again if I can find it next year. Even if my garden isn’t on a tour!

Another year is almost done, and we can look forward to searching through the catalogs to find next year’s winners. Isn’t gardening great?



# The Christmas Tree

By Chuck Carlson

The Druids in ancient England and Gaul and the Romans in Europe both used evergreen branches to decorate for the Winter Solstice. This was the shortest day of the year and they thought that by bringing the greens into the house that the sun god would get well. This was over the years adopted by the Christians as part of their Christmas holiday celebrations.



It was thought that the Christmas tree was started in Germany circa mid 700's. The tree represented life and became known as the "Christ Tree". When the celebration became known as Christmas it became the Christmas Tree. This was mentioned in history of the early 1600's in Germany. They would bring the tree into the house and decorate it with paper, small toys food etc.

Martin Luther is said to decorate it with candles to show the children what stars looked like at night in the forest. I remember to my amazement as a child we had a tree with candles and my father and mother watching us and the tree very intently. Many fires resulted and electric lights replaced the candles about three years after Edison demonstrated the electric light in 1879. Now we see every kind of decoration on the tree and outside our homes. You can see that the practice turned from pagan to Christian and now I believe to commercialism. We need to remember the Reason for the Season.

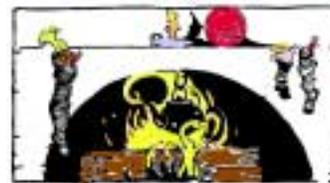
Data collected from the internet, my thoughts and a website given to me by Anne Buchanan.

# The Yule Log

By Chuck Carlson

A tradition of "Bringing in the Yule Log" is about 1000 years old. It began in England and spread through Europe. On Christmas Eve, the entire family would bring a large tree trunk into the house to burn for Christmas. Among some it became a superstition when they said that it must take one match to light it or your house would have a bad spell attached. Others would say you had to start it with coals and ashes from the year before to ensure safety for the house. In Spain it became the log to drive away evil spirits. Many today still light a small yule log but people are now celebrating with a yule log cake or a table decoration.

Data from the internet



# Annual Meeting

The annual meeting was held during the November meeting The following were elected to the board by acclamation

President: Ellyn Hosch; Vice President: Peter Olin; Membership Sect.: Don Stuewe; Recording Sect.: Mary Oelke; Treasurer: Dave Johnson Past President: Nancy Bjerke; Directors: Rudy Allebach, Dave McKeen and LeRoy Cech. Those present were introduced to the group.

We thank those leaving the board for their efforts to make this a viable club. Those members leaving are: Jackie Overom, Warren Nordley, and Lynda Carlson. Thank you for your service as board members.

# Getting To Know Our Past Presidents

*Data collected by our Historian Howard Berg edited by Chuck Carlson*

*Editors note: This is a series of past presidents in the club who are still members. Get your bio sketches to Howard so yours can be included. This is an attempt to make the club a bit more personable by getting to know our members better.*

## Mary Maynard President in 1998

Mary J. Maynard born in Watertown, South Dakota in the year 1952. After being brought up and receiving her early education in South Dakota, she came to Minnesota. She must have had a Norwegian upbringing since she was allowed to attend St. Olaf where she received a BA in History in 1974, after which she obtained a MBA at the University of Minnesota in 1986.

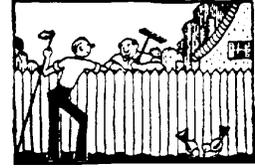
Her present work life is at Health Partners and serves in Information systems as a Manager / Project Manager.

Mary wears many hats, but her interest lies in gardening. This is shown by her membership in the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the Minnesota State Horticultural Society, and the Browndale Neighborhood Association.

She joined our club in 1989 and to a lot of us she is known as "The Lazy Gardener".

This is a fictitious name she acquired giving talks and as a constant writer for this newsletter. If you know her work habits, you know she isn't a lazy gardener.

Mary has held many positions in the Men's Garden Club. She has been; Director, Secretary, Vice-president, President, Past



President, Chair of Holiday Party, Chair of the FFF, 2001 Convention "Tour Queen", Chair of Tours, Valley Fair, has taken dinner reservations, and been on the Hospitality and Perennial Garden committees. All this led her to receiving the Bronze Medal in 2001. She was I believe the second women member of the club and the first women president.

Her primary interest in gardening is flowers - mainly perennials, trying out new things and unusual annuals. Dahlias, Cannas, etc.

Mary joined the club after being invited to speak. I did not really know anything about the club but was intrigued. She said "Kent Petterson invited her to join - which I will always be grateful."

Her most gratifying experience in the club is getting to know so many great people. Very different personalities who all have an interest in gardening. Also getting the First time Exhibitor Award at MGCM FFF show, In 1997 Winning Sweepstakes Award and winning the Bronze Award 2001.

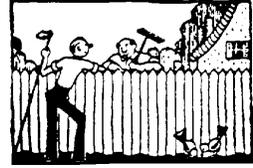
She also enjoyed the many awards and money received at the Minnesota State Fair flower show.

She also said that "I will never be able to give back as much as I have gotten from this club.

Her garden is in St. Louis Park where she lives with her husband Phil Erwin.



Mary in 1957



## The Last 2003 Event

**MGCM Holiday Party  
"Jingle Bell Ball"  
December 2, 6 PM**

**By previous reservation only.  
New reservations are only available if  
there is a cancellation**

**Choose your table when you arrive!  
No assigned seats**

**Contact person:  
Lynda Carlson**





# MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.



## CLUB OFFICERS:

President: Nancy Bjerke  
 1035 Heritage Lane, Orono, MN 55391-9342  
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 5745 Duncan Lane  
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 Membership Secretary: Jackie Overom  
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## THE SPRAY

*The Garden Spray* is published monthly by the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc. for its members. The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis is a not-for-profit, equal opportunity organization.

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# The Garden Spray

Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc.  
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**December 2003**

20th Hanukkah  
 21st Winter Solstice  
 25th Christmas Day  
 31st New Years Eve