

# Newsletter

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The next Homer Garden Club meeting will be held at 2:00 pm January 20 at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.



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## January 20 Meeting will Feature Brenda Adams on the History and Beauty of HGC Baycrest Garden



Warm season visitors to Homer are enthralled by the garden the Homer Garden Club created and maintains at the Baycrest Overlook. Its eye-catching beauty, lush plantings, and non-stop color never cease to amaze them. One of the many pleasures of tending this lovely garden is all the kudos you hear from the folks who stop to see the view and then admire “our” garden.

At the January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, Brenda Adams will share a bit of the history of this garden and lots of information about the plants in it. While the ground is covered in white outside, come enjoy wonderful photos of the vivid blooms, interesting foliage, and well-balanced structure of our garden. You'll see the way the garden changes throughout the season, understand how we *all* have a role in maintaining it, and learn about some very cool plants!

Brenda is a long-time member of our club, was president for six years, and is the author of two books: *Cool Plants for Cold Climates*, winner of the Garden Writers' Association's 2018 Silver Award, and a well-loved design guide for Alaska gardeners, *There's a Moose in My Garden*. She is founder and owner of Gardens By Design and teaches at the Kachemack Campus of UAA KPC. This spring she'll teach three seminars at the college: *Cool Plants for Cold Climates* (March 26<sup>th</sup>), *Create a Haven for Birds, Bees, and other Pollinators* (April 2<sup>nd</sup>) and *Truly Compelling Combinations* (April 9<sup>th</sup>.) Register at <https://kbcnoncredit.asapconnected.com/> or call 235-7743.



# Treasurer's Report - November-December 2018

by Louise Ashmum, Treasurer

## Income

Membership	375.00	
Newsletter donation	6.00	
Apron Sales	25.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b><u>\$ 406.00</u></b>

## Expenses

Venue (Nov)	150.00	
Program (Nov)	50.00	
Newsletter (copying/postage)	35.99	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$ 235.99</u></b>

Checking Beginning Balance 11/1/18	<b>\$ 18,078.15</b>
Income	406.00
Transfer to Money Market	15,000.00
Expenses	235.99
Interest	<u>0.66</u>
Ending Balance 12/31/18	<b>\$ 3,248.82</b>
Money Market Beginning Balance 11/1/18	<b>\$ -</b>
Transfer from Checking	15,000.00
Interest	<u>3.04</u>
Ending Balance 12/31/18	<b>\$ 15,003.04</b>
Total Ending Balance 12/31/18	<b>\$ 18,251.86</b>

## Gardening in Our Schools

Do you start your plants indoors? Would you would like to share your experience with the next generation? There are different classes at different schools with different teachers who would love to embark on indoor growing projects but would also love the support of someone with that experience.

Homer Soil and Water gets to see lots of opportunities to work with schools and would love to pair up gardeners with teachers who are starting projects. Please contact Francie Roberts with the Homer Garden Club (235-1068) or the Homer Soil and Water office (235-8177, Ext. 5) if you would be interested in joining a committee to match up that gardening know-how with projects for our youth.

**THANKS** —I would like to thank Julie Parizek for publishing the October and November newsletters when I had to be gone due to a family emergency. - Paula Riley

The fresh snow and full moon which brightened the holidays have given way to stark rain. But as the days grow longer I take courage. I can almost smell the earth warming and spruce sap flowing, such is my need for Spring's optimism.

Sometimes I have strong premonitions, as I did in early November when I wrote what follows. Intending this piece for the November issue of the Homer Garden Club Newsletter, I missed Paula's deadline, and the next edition wasn't due out until January. That window of time allowed me the opportunity to see how my forebodings played out.

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[November 26<sup>th</sup>]

Thanks to an unusually warm fall, I didn't harvest the carrots until late October. When I finally pulled them from the ground they were as long as English cucumbers, but still crisp and sweet. As is often the case, some of them emerged with two-legs, or spiraled around one another companionably.

We're enjoying an abundance of cabbage and broccoli, fist-sized turnips from what were supposed to be radish seeds, and more kale

than we'll ever use. I gave away produce to all the non-gardeners at work and still have plenty. I suppose gardeners do that; err on the side of abundance. This generosity of spirit is one of the things I love about my fellow gardeners. No matter our country of origin or political affiliation, we're eager to share what we grow.

Years ago, on the Mexico side of the wall, I experienced this same generosity. I was on a work trip with other researchers and educators observing local efforts to reduce soil erosion in the Tijuana River. After a speech by the town mayor and a tour of a successful road surfacing project, we were turned loose for an hour to explore. A handful of us,

mostly women, walked down a quiet side street and stopped to admire a small, tidy garden. The gardener, an older gentleman, ceased watering to chat with us. He asked where we were from and we answered, as best we could, in our pidgin Spanish. As we prepared to move on, he bent and pulled slender orange carrots from the ground, rinsed them with the hose, and signaled for us to take them. In this way, he overcame the wall separating us as strangers by offering a tangible gift of friendship. This cross

boundary generosity is what we need now more than ever.

As I write this, a caravan of some five thousand refugees from Central America marches across Mexico toward the U.S. border, hoping for entry. Most are families. Moms with infants in strollers. Fathers with children riding on their shoulders. Grandparents limping north on blistered feet. They have

walked away from everything they knew, fleeing food shortages on basics like corn and beans, roaming gangs that target the poor, and governments in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala that bring no measurable change. They gathered all they could carry into duffle bags and backpacks and set out in hopes of securing what we all want for our children – enough food on the table, a chance at a good education, and an opportunity to live in a safe, friendly neighborhood.

Now they journey through dust storms and monsoon rains with little more than hope to sustain them. Yet, along the way, local people reach into their own bags to hand out bottles of water and still-warm tamales, or carrots pulled from the garden. I find this generosity is so admirable.

I fear for these refugees. I imagine them at the U.S. border, imploring the guards, with their crisp uniforms and shiny badges, to let them through and allow them the opportunity to prove they can work hard and pull their own weight.

What will we do when they arrive? Fire off teargas and rubber bullets? Bludgeon them with police batons



to drive them back? If we do, parents will die, and children will die. And if we repel them, safeguarding

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## *Cultivating Generosity*

(Continued from page 3)

our border and demonstrating our strength against the unarmed, what becomes of them? Are we supposed to accept their desperation as somehow not our problem, and look away?

What would happen if we were to open the gates and let the people pour in? We could hand out ID cards that also provision them for six months and permit them to disperse to whatever corner of North America offers opportunity for them. Allow them to seek out a welcoming community in which to raise the little children they hold in their arms. Children who are the age of my own granddaughter.

I know that won't happen. I know if

our border were truly porous, we would be overwhelmed by the surge of people who are starving for a new chance at life. I know the need for sanctuary won't end with this caravan, or the next. There will always be people who find themselves in a desperate state, looking north with fear and hope. But, as a gardener, I feel compelled to offer carrots, still dripping from the hose, as a sort of apology for all I have and all they do not.

I remind myself that we have

hungry people here too, and a local foodbank that is happy to take any extras. So, I will continue to garden, planting an extra row here and more cabbage there. It is the only sane and helpful thing I can think to do.



## November HGC Minutes

by Roni Overway, Recording Secretary

The November meeting of the Homer Garden Club was called to order at 2:00 PM on November 18, 2018 by President Kathy Dube'. The well-attended meeting was held in the upper meeting room of the Bidarka. The next general meeting will be held on January 20 as there is no December meeting.

Visitors, Carolyn Raikis, Ole Anderson and Jinkie Handy were introduced. No special announcements by the membership were made.

Secretary's report: Roni Overway thanked Sharon Wilson for taking minutes for her in October during Roni's absence.

Treasurer's report: Louise Ashmun reported a current treasury balance of \$18,022.16.

Jan Peyton, who, with Renee Patten, are co-vice presidents, announced that the January speaker will be Brenda Adams. Her topic will be the Baycrest Garden from its inception until the present.

There were no other committee reports. A report on Gardeners'

Weekend 2019 and sign up sheets for volunteers will be available at the January meeting.

Barb Kennedy, data base manager, reminded people that their annual dues were due the first of October. About 1/2 of the membership have paid. She will be sending out reminders. She also advised the gardening aprons were available at the front of the room.

Kathy reported on the progress of the gardening book, *Kachemak Cultivating, from Seaside to Summit*. The book is almost complete and she's hoping that by the end of the day it would be ready for the publisher. It is hoped that it will be in the bookstore and available to members in time for Christmas.

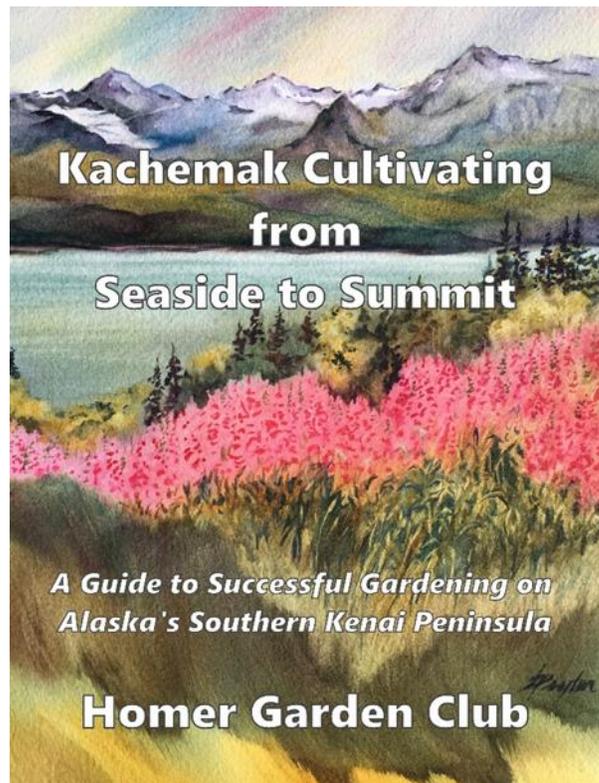
Kathy then introduced Beau Burgess, the day's guest speaker, whose topic was pond building. Beau is CEO of two companies, Blood Sweat and Food Farms ([www.bloodsweatfood.com](http://www.bloodsweatfood.com)) as well as Southern Exposure, LLC ([www.southernexposurellc.com](http://www.southernexposurellc.com)).

Pond building is just one of the

services offered by Southern Exposure which was founded in 2006. Also included are topsoil, compost, mulch, woodchips, gravel and rock.

Beau began by explaining that there can be both inside and outside ponds. Inside the "pond" might take the form of an aquaponics growing environment while outside ponds can serve many purposes including fire suppression, irrigation, and aesthetics. It is possible to begin by designing a pond that will fulfil the former purposes and then address the latter. One of the questions that needs to be answered is how much water is needed and then whether the pond will need a liner or not. Another is how the water will get to the pond. A *large* pond is defined as over .5 acres and is best for a 3 acre or larger site. *Medium* would be about 1000 sq. for a .5 acre lot. Then, a *small* pond would be under 1000 sq. feet for lots smaller than 1/2 acre. The size of the property and, thus, the size of the pond, should be adequate for its intended use. Is that aquaculture, animal habitat for animals and birds, irrigation, fire

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## **Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit is in Print!!!!**

Our latest (4<sup>th</sup>) edition of Kachemak Cultivating is now in print! It is the culmination of several years' effort by many contributors and is a beautiful paperback book with over 250 pages full of great ideas and resources for gardening on the Kenai Peninsula. Chapters are all updated, with several new additions and include:

- Local Climate and Soils
- Improving and Caring for Garden Soil
- Starting Seeds
- Perennials including Bulbs, Ferns, and Grasses
- Annuals including Container Gardening and Tips for Cut Flowers
- Native Plants
- Herbs
- Vegetables
- Trees and Shrubs with Tips on Attracting Birds
- Season Extenders
- Preserving the Harvest
- Pests, Weeds, and Other Problems
- Lawn
- High Tunnels
- Resources

We will have copies available at all Garden Club meetings and functions this Spring and Summer for \$25. It is a wonderful addition to your gardening library and makes a great gift for friends and neighbors who enjoy gardening not only on the Kenai Peninsula, but in other cool climates (I got a copy for my Dad who lives in Seattle and is trying to figure out gardening now that my Mom is gone, and he was thrilled). Get your copy(ies) at the next meeting! The book will also be available at the Homer Bookstore and the Wag-on Wheel, as well as on Amazon.com, but our club will profit most if you purchase it directly from us.

**HGC November Minutes**

*(Continued from page 4)*

suppression (large), aquaponics, high tunnel use, thermal ballasting, storm runoff retention (medium) or irrigation, storm runoff retention, indoor aquaponics, or a central landscape feature (small)? It might also serve as part of a stream system.

Soils and geology play a part in helping to determine if the pond can be created by digging or damming. Most ponds at lower elevations will hit the water table at 4 to 5 feet, and with Homer's clay soils should not require a liner. Water quality should be tested as arsenic and iron are found in Homer water that hasn't been filtered. City water should have chlorine filtered out as well. Water testing can be done through NRCS with kits they provide but are then mailed off for testing.

Other considerations would include what the effect the pond might have on down-slope properties. Permitting might be required and, if in doubt, people should check with the borough or the state. No more than 25% of stream water should be diverted and no streams with salmon should be disturbed. Fish and Game should be consulted.

Pond resources include: USDA handbook 590 on planning, design and construction and the USDA Soils tool on line.

If a liner is employed, there are cautions. A 45-mil food-safe EPDM material over felt or typar is optimal and is available at Alaska Mill and Feed. Water running off a metal roof into a catchment system of some sort would be safe for animals and plant life, but not off shingles although a sand filter can be built. Fire suppression kits are

available for use in large ponds. They include a gas driven pump (electricity may be out in a large fire), a hose 2" in diameter and a nozzle.

Another subject covered by Beau was proper aeration of the pond since water should move and not become stagnant. A fountain which sends water into the air provides a better form of aeration than a bubbler.

Beau's presentation was extremely detailed, and the necessary considerations are numerous. He strongly recommends that those considering building a pond of any size and for any use should consult a professional.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

*Homer Garden Club  
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