

Great Village Garden Club Notes



Wendy Pratt and her mother, Linda Hurst, show a couple of decorated gourds. Wendy recently shared her gardening expertise with the Great Village Garden Club. (Shears Photo)

By Linda Shears

Members of the Great Village Garden Club met on April 27 at Faith Baptist Church. The evening began with a presentation by Wendy Pratt, daughter of our club member Linda Hurst. She provided a slide presentation and information on growing and decorating gourds.

Wendy has been cultivating and working creatively with gourds for 8 years and belongs to the Canadian Gourd Society. She enthusiastically shared her growing and decorating secrets with us. Since the blossoms of the gourds open during the night,

rather than the daytime when pollinating insects are at work, Wendy does the pollinating with a brush, after nightfall.

Another trick to growing gourds is to place the developing gourds on styrofoam plates to prevent insects from boring holes in them. She displayed several colorfully decorated gourds of all sizes. She also brought along a variety of seedlings and invited us to each take a couple home to try our hand at growing gourds.

Wendy's presentation gave us a new appreciation of gourds. If you see any of us out in our gardens with flashlights

late at night, you'll know that we're pollinating our gourds! To further challenge our creativity, Tony and Sandra Phillips provided our club with three bags of seasoned gourds to take home to decorate.

About ten of our club members attended the Annual Central District meeting hosted by the Bible Hill Garden Club on May 8. We listened to reports of the activities of the other garden clubs, won prizes, listened with interest to guest speaker Jodi de Long and enjoyed lunch.

Our club's annual fundraiser, the plant sale held on May 15, was very successful and well attended by eager gardeners. Most buyers came early to view the plants, then lined up to patiently wait for the opening time of 10:00 p.m. By 10:30 all but a tableful of plants had found new homes.

A work day was held on May 6 to build the frames for the flower beds on the Cenotaph grounds. Two members of our club are planning to attend the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs Convention in North Sydney on June 4 - 5.

Plans are being made for our end-of-the-year garden tour in June. Meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of the month. New members are always welcome.

Family Fights To Have Drugs Included in Pharmacare Coverage



Betty Jennings (right) and some of her siblings went to Province House to try and change the NDP Government's decision to not fund a drug that could help their parent's medical condition and that of many Nova Scotians. They were invited to Halifax by MLA Karen Casey. Left to right- Larry Giddens, MLA Karen Casey, Barb Reid, Gwen Davis and Betty Jennings. (submitted)

By Linda Harrington

Betty Jennings was not about to sit by and watch her parents suffer needlessly from a serious eye disease. She recently took her concerns all the way to Province House in Halifax.

Betty's 73-year-old mother, Eva Giddens, is legally blind due to wet Macular Degeneration. Her father, Jack, has dry in one eye and wet in the other, with both of her parents already affected, it doubles the already high risk that Betty and her five siblings may contract the disease.

A drug called Lucentis is the only approved medication to actually slow the progression of wet macular degeneration and in over 40% of the cases, actually reverse the affects of visual loss. This drug is funded in all other Canadian Provinces but the NDP Government in Nova Scotia recently voted to not add Lucentis to its Pharmacare Program.

Betty Jennings decided to take action to try and reverse this decision. She wrote numerous letters to the media, MLA's and to whoever else she felt might be able to help. Colchester North MLA Karen Casey was sympathetic to Betty's appeal and invited her to the Assembly in Halifax on May 6th.

Karen Casey introduced the family during the session and arranged a meeting with the Premier and Minister of Health. "They didn't want our MLA to come into the meeting with us", says Betty. "I can see why, all they did was tell us what the previous Government didn't do, not what they were going

to do instead. It was difficult and emotional. Basically they didn't want to answer our questions."

The Liberals and Conservatives have said they support funding Lucentis. The Tories did not pay for the treatments while they were in power but Conservative Leader Karen Casey now believes it should be covered and has been very supportive to the Giddens' family. "When the Tories hadn't passed Lucentis 2 years ago, there weren't very many provinces on board with it yet, as it was newly released and there were not very many statistics available," explains Betty.

Health Minister Maureen MacDonald says the NDP government does not currently have the money to pay the estimated \$4.5 million dollars, which could rise as high as \$10 million, but suggests they will look at ways to make Lucentis available.

Betty Jennings gets frustrated when she hears there is no money to fund this medication. "I explained to them that it was really a no-brainer, the money will come from what they don't have to pay

in Medicare for falls and resulting fractures, ER visits, hospital stays, VON, Home Care, early admissions to nursing home facilities, etc. Not to mention the depression and physical illnesses that come with that, it's exponential, they'll be saving money in the long run but Nova Scotia is the only province that can't figure that out," she says.

Petitions were circulated throughout the region over the weekend of May 7th to 10th. Hundreds of signatures were received in support of covering the costs of the Lucentis injections. These petitions were delivered to MLA Karen Casey and presented in the House on May 11th. "Our petition was presented in the House but they adjourned on Tuesday, so we'll have to present more petitions in the fall. In the meantime, we'll step up our letter writing campaign," says Betty. "We will continue on with our petitions, writing letters to government officials, and letters to the Editors. It's not over yet, it's only just begun."

Eva Giddens was interviewed on Global news on May 13th. "They interviewed my mother at their house and told us they had discovered that the MLA's have Lucentis covered under their government health care plan," says a frustrated Betty. "Nice eh? Another thing I just found out is that New Brunswick pays for their patients to come to Halifax to get their injections because they can't get them or not soon enough, at least in their own province. Now isn't that special!"

The Giddens' family is hoping to keep the awareness going and keep spreading the word so the government will feel the pressure and make what they feel is the right decision.

Erskine Refundable Drive RESCHEDULED TO JUNE 5

By Chris Urquhart

In our last issue I told you that our Refundable Drive would be on May 22nd but as it turns out this was the long weekend so we changed the date to June 5th. Fliers have been put in to mail boxes in our community to pass this information along. I hope you have been saving your refundables for our Church, we need the money! Remember that refundables are items that you have paid a deposit on such as liquor, pop and juice but NOT milk! I do wish we could get money back for our milk containers but at least they are recyclable. All money raised will go towards Church repairs or Church bills.

The Debert UCW has invited both the Masstown and

Glenholme UCW's to join them at the Glengarry Restaurant in Truro at 12 noon on Wednesday June 2nd which should be lots of fun! Masstown UCW, because all of our members can't make a day time event, we are going to go to Irene Gratto's cottage for a bar-b-que on Thursday June 3rd, 6pm for our final closing meeting for the summer. Irene says that anyone who wishes to come down earlier will be welcome as she will be down there by 2pm.

I would like to express special "Thanks" to everyone who helped out in any way with our recent Variety Concert, especially the members of Butch's Barbershop who donated a large sum of money to us, as well as to all the performers who did such a splen-

did job. We raised over \$1000.

Church services for part of the month of June will be: Sunday's at Erskine United in Glenholme at 9am and rotating services between Masstown and Debert at 10:15am until the 20th when we will have a combined service in Debert at 10am starting our summer services with just one service each Sunday on the charge. June 6th is in Debert and June 13th is in Masstown. Then we will have a service on June 20th, 10am in Debert, and June 27th, 10am in Masstown with the first service in July in Glenholme (at least that is the plan right now!)

Please remember that if you are away on Sundays during the summer month that the Church is still there and still needs your financial support. I am sure that our treasurer Betty Yorsten would be very glad if you dropped off a check to cover any missed Sundays!



The Lower Onslow Community Centre Society held their fund raising prize draw at the Masstown Market on May 15th. Making the draw were (left to right) Tilmon Martin, Keiana Llewellyn, David Fiddes and Shelley Llewellyn. Winning tickets were Warren Scott (Outdoor Patio Set- supported by Halifax Seed), Cindy Doiron (Furnace Oil- donated by Wilson's Fuel), Kaye MacMillan (Silver Detail Package- doanted by Upham's Carstar Collision) and Kelly Currie (Silver Detail Package- doanted by Upham's Carstar Collision). (Harrington Photo)

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