

1977 through 1982

Article II of the Mount Airy Clay Breakers by-laws states our purpose as a Club is "to enlarge our knowledge, to promote interest in better gardens, to participate and promote activities and projects of the Club, and to beautify our community."

It's hard to believe that the beginning shy, retiring, tongue-tied group that President Sellers had such difficulty in getting to speak up or express an opinion has evolved into the present lively, talkative membership which, thankfully seems to have an opinion on everything.

In these past five years the Clay Breakers have been very active and have many accomplishments to be proud of. Lest we forget, the following are some of the highlights.

For four years, 1977 through 1980 we participated in Craft Days at the Mary Surratt House in Clinton, Maryland, at which each year, we sold fresh herb bread, herb jellies and vinegars, spices and herbs, dried flower arrangements and various small hand crafted items pertaining to herbs and spices. Also, in 1980 our Club was responsible for the flower arrangements in the Surratt House when it was on the Prince Georges County Garden Tour.

The Club programs have been interesting, informative and varied. We've learned about flower arranging - both fresh and dried - in various styles, traditional and Japanese; landscape design; World Gardening; conservation; programs on birds - encouraging the blue birds to come back to our part of the country, and the benefits of having purple martins in our gardens; and a program about the history, preservation and restoration of Mt Airy, our local, historical, pre-Revolutionary home from which we adopted our name. Mt. Airy is presently under the protection of the Maryland Historical Trust.

There have been programs on soils, propagation, specific flowers and plants- namely, azaleas, chrysanthemums, day lilies, and herbs. We visited the Chelsea Flower Show in England via Jimmy Nell Finley's slides and commentary; we experienced a Williamsburg Christmas, courtesy of Earline Rawe; and had demonstrations of the construction of Christmas decorations from cones, nuts, fresh greens and other materials. Each year we have had one or more plant exchanges, which has been a great way to add to our garden plant material.

There have been many memorable field trips. They include: a hike and boat ride at Jug Bay Natural Area at Patuxent River Park; a guided wildflower and nature hike at Cost Park; a visit to Brookside Gardens and Conservatory; a meeting at the National Arboretum where the emphasis was on the Gotelli Conifer Collection. We've visited the National Colonial Farm at Accokeek, Maryland; the William Paca House and Gardens in Annapolis, Maryland; went on a tree identification hike through one of the hardwood forests of Maryland at the Cedarville Natural Resources Management Area. We've also had "walk - throughs" of several private gardens in our area. Our field trips have been very educational and a lot of fun - nearly always followed by a nice luncheon.

Since joining the National Capital Area Federation of Garden Clubs in 1978, we've seen it reorganized from one large unwieldy organization, now subdivided into four more manageable districts, of which we are a member of District I. In May of 1980 we participated in District I's Flower and Flea Mart and our table did very well under the able chairmanship of Betty Abercrombie.

Clay Breakers have staffed the Gift Shop at the Arboretum one day a month ever since our affiliation with the Federation. We have also furnished refreshments for Federation and District I meetings when called upon.

For three successive years our Club received an Outstanding Achievement Award in our category of small clubs (24 members or under). We also received a National Gardener Citation for 100% participation in subscribing to the National Gardener Magazine.

Over the years, Club members have entered a number of flower shows in the area. Ribbons from Third place to Tri Color have been won by Joyce Meyers, Peggy Martin, Anne DeBoeser, Jan Munsee and Ann Williams in both horticulture and flower design.

In 1980 the Club's treasury was increased by \$25.00 when the flower arrangement by Anne DeBoeser tied for first place in a contest sponsored by Garfinkel's Department Store.

For several years our members have served as hostesses at the Christmas Greens Show, as well as contributing wreaths and helping with other displays at this spectacular event. Members have also worked with the Roblee Civic Association in judging the outdoor Christmas decorations of that area.

Annual monetary donations have been made to the Van Dorsal Scholarship Fund and World Gardening. This year we have also contributed to Melwood Training Center to benefit their camp program and to the Nature Conservancy for the Nassawango Creek Project.

Individual members have taken advantage of opportunities to enrich their knowledge, and to contribute time and effort to other projects. Three members have attended Horticulture School, two members are Master Gardeners after completing the Master Gardeners Course; two members belong to the Landscape Design Critics Council, and three members are currently taking the Landscape Design School courses; three members are attending the Flower Show School with the goal of becoming Flower Show Judges; two members have served on the Federation Board and one member has been a Federation Representative to the CCCC - Concerned Citizens for a Cleaner County. In addition to all of these serious activities, there have also been two memorable Christmas parties, and the annual picnic in August is always looked forward to with much pleasure.

In the spring of 1982 a committee composed of Peggy Martin, Betty Abercrombie, and Anne DeBoeser was appointed for an on-going endeavor - the beautification of Holloway Park. It seems this project is finally going to get off the ground. After meeting with Mr. Thompson of Maryland Park and Planning and getting the green light from them, it was decided to postpone all planting until fall.