



2008
ANNUAL REPORT

*THE AUXILIARY OF
ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS*

February 12th, 2009

A Publication of the Auxiliary of
Royal Botanical Gardens

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The Auxiliary is an independent corporation governed by a Board of Directors whose mission is:

“To promote the objects and interests of Royal Botanical Gardens through volunteer service”.

THE AUXILIARY OF ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

Honorary President: **Dr. Leslie Laking**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008

Officers

Past President	Cathy Rideout
<i>(Nominating Committee, Paterson Bowl Committee)</i>	
President.....	Rob Simpson
Vice President.....	Shirley Jordan
<i>(Policies and Procedures)</i>	
Secretary.....	Carol Jenkins
<i>(Auxiliary Archives)</i>	
Treasurer	Rod Saunders
<i>(Finance Committee)</i>	

Directors

Membership & Placement.....	Anne Campbell / Mary Lyn Brown
<i>(Telephone, Social Correspondent)</i>	
Auxiliary Workshop.....	Jan Stoddart
<i>(Auxiliary Garden, Christmas Sale, Evergreen Design Workshops, Flower Arrangers)</i>	
Children's Programming.....	Joyce Leslie
<i>(Children's Activities, Children's Gardening Program, Nature Interpretive Centre)</i>	
Education and Information Services	
Docent Training/Staffing.....	Gabrielle Adams
Information Desk.....	Brenda Deacoff
<i>(Gardening Information, Trail Watchers)</i>	
Tour Guides	Pat Barton
Plant Sale.....	Lee Burroughs
<i>(Bulb Sale, RoyalSelect)</i>	
Publicity.....	Norman Madill
<i>(Newsletter, Photographer, Special Gardens Tours, Special Projects)</i>	
Support Services.....	Syja Hughes
<i>(Computer Manager, Library, Social Committee, Volunteer Gardeners)</i>	

(Committees in parentheses are represented on the Board by the Director under whose name they appear)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Archivist.....Marie Minaker	Newsletter.....Lyn Robinson
Auxiliary Garden.....Antje George	Photographer.....Margaret Barnes
Auxiliary Workshop.....Jan Stoddart	Plant Sale.....Lee Burroughs
Bulb Sale.....Pat Harrison	Policies and Procedures.....Janet Hutton
Children's Activities.....Joyce Leslie	Publicity.....Norman Madill
Children's Gardening.....Joyce Leslie	RoyalSelect.....David Reed
Christmas Sale.....Betty Dockray	Shop @ The GardensMarg McAdam
CommunicationsCathy Rideout	Social Committee.....Marion Little
DocentsGabrielle Adams	Social Correspondent.....Ruth Walker
Evergreen Design Workshops.....Claire Jennings & Wanda Sinclair	Special Events.....Ann Pallant
Flower Arrangers.....Elizabeth Crozier	Special Gardens Tours.....Jeanne Robertson
Gardening Information.....Joan Leigh-Bell	Support Services.....Syja Hughes
Information Desk.....Brenda Deacoff	Tour Guides.....Pat Barton
Library.....Anne Simpson	Trail Watchers.....Doris Southwell
Membership and Placement.....Anne Campbell Mary Lyn Brown	Volunteer Gardeners.....Toni Carson

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair.....Rod Saunders
President.....Rob Simpson
Vice President.....Shirley Jordan
Members-at-large.....Syja Hughes
David Reed

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Chair/Past President.....Cathy Rideout
Members-at-large.....Pat Barton
Jill McDougall
Carol Jenkins

POLICIES & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

Chair.....Janet Hutton
Vice President.....Shirley Jordan
Members-at-large.....David Reed
Mary Hopkins
Patricia Arndt
Ann Pallant

Serving as President was an honour and a privilege in a year that has sped by. Your Auxiliary Executive made a tremendous team and together we strove to be pro-active in coordinating the activities of Auxiliary members with those of RBG staff and management. Thank you all for your support.

New volunteers and seasoned veterans were involved in our traditional areas of activity as well as some new ones, both in fundraising and using our expertise as a service to Royal Botanical Gardens, all extremely important. The Auxiliary and Royal Botanical Gardens really appreciate your efforts, and thank you.

Auxiliary General Meetings

The guest speakers at the three main Auxiliary meetings dealt with a variety of horticultural topics:

- an overview of the new Helen M. Kippax Garden by its designer Martin Wade, of Martin Wade Landscape Architects, at the 2008 Annual General Meeting in February;
- an educational and humorous presentation by Belinda Gallagher, now RBG's Acting Head of Horticulture, entitled "*The Daisy Family - you won't believe the relatives*" at the Spring General Meeting in May; and
- a presentation on "Native Plants" by well-known expert Lorraine Johnson at the Fall General Meeting in September, which happened to be the day after the official opening of the Kippax Garden, for which she acted as plant consultant.

Fund-raising Activities

The Auxiliary should be proud of its donation to Royal Botanical Gardens of \$150,000 for the second elevator in the Camilla and Peter Dalglish Atrium. One of the principal goals for the construction of the Atrium is the removal of barriers for people with mobility difficulties, and those with strollers and small children, allowing unimpeded access to Hendrie Park. At the Spring General Meeting we presented a cheque for \$75,000 to Mark Runci-man, as the first half of this contribution. A cheque for the second half will be presented to Mark at the upcoming Annual General Meeting in February.

Money is raised mainly through the activities of the Plant Sale volunteers (including Bulb Sale and RoyalSelect) and Auxiliary Workshop volunteers (including Christmas Sale, Evergreen Design Workshops, and Flower Arrangers, as well as ongoing sale of their designs, custom and otherwise, throughout the year), as described in their reports. Smaller amounts accrue from Tour Guide fees and Special Gardens Tours, and membership fees go towards the administrative costs of the Auxiliary.

While the volunteer presence is slowly increasing at the *Shop @ The Gardens*, additional volunteers are always welcome, to provide "added value" to visitors and increase sales. Starting in June, Auxiliary Plant Sale plants were sold in the courtyard of the shop, made possible by proactive planning on the part of *Shop @ The Gardens* staff and the Auxiliary. We feel strongly that a botanical garden should sell plants, and plan to continue to make this opportunity available for our visitors.

Non-fundraising activities

As well as our traditional areas reported on in the following pages, a diverse range of new activities was available to volunteers. These included:

- recording weather information in preparation for the controlled burns on RBG's natural lands;
- assisting conservation staff collect data showing the extent of the Gypsy Moth presence amongst certain tree populations;
- collecting cattail seeds from Cootes Paradise, and planting them in water tanks, to be used, when grown, in the continued restoration of Cootes Paradise.
- assisting RBG staff with processing registrations for educational programs;
- cataloguing herbarium specimens;
- assisting with administrative details for RBG's wonderful video-conferencing educational programs;
- helping behind the scenes in RBG's development and membership departments; and
- assisting in the inventory of plant material in the gardens areas and at the Arboretum, to be cross-referenced with herbarium specimens and with the plant documentation database. An ambitious venture of staff and volunteers, which focuses on RBG's core mandate - science, horticulture, education and conservation.

Sadly, an area that has seen a decrease in volunteer activity is the Nature Interpretive Centre. The issues are complex but we hope in the future that these can be surmounted.

A special thanks to all the volunteers who helped with RBG's Special Events: the *Wollemi Pine* exhibit; *Glass Under Glass*; *Canada Blooms*; the 'Mum' show at Hamilton's Gage Park; and all festivals, events and children's seasonal activities - your volunteerism is truly appreciated. Volunteers participated at RBG's Spring and Fall Members' Nights, with floral designs, plants and membership displays for RBG members' viewing.

The six hundred corsages made in the Auxiliary Workshop for Mother's Day were a great success, as were the silk orchids for the Orchid Show and Sale, flower arrangements for several weddings, and table arrangements and floral designs for many Auxiliary and RBG functions.

Helen M. Kippax Garden

The highlight of the summer for many volunteers was the planting of the Helen M. Kippax Garden, a true labour of love. Eighty-six volunteers - Auxiliary members, master gardeners, members of community garden clubs and horticultural societies, many returning again and again - tolerated the heat and humidity, the cold and the rain, to sort, document, move and finally plant 15,000 plants. RBG staff planted the bog and water plants. The use of eleven new Plant Sale pull-carts was invaluable to move the many trays of plants.

(continued on next page)

The planting was completed by noon on the Monday before the Wednesday opening, except for a few areas to be planted with perennial material next spring. The weather was great for the opening, the mood of the large crowd in attendance upbeat. Mary Stedman, the benefactor of the Helen M. Kippax Garden, the RBG Board and staff recognize the effort and dedication of all the volunteers who contributed so much. In appreciation, Mary Stedman donated a much-needed thermal printer to the Auxiliary, to be used to produce Plant Sale labels. To all of the volunteers, a great big thank you.

Just in case anyone was wondering what happened to the thousands of plant pots and hundreds of plant pot trays, have no fear. A dedicated group of fifteen Plant Sale volunteers spent many days cleaning them for future plant sales. This eco-friendly re-use, and subsequent savings in Plant Sale expenses, will allow the Auxiliary to give RBG approximately \$2,000 more in financial support.

Thank you to all involved - your dedication is really appreciated.

Auxiliary administration

In 2008, the Auxiliary Office expanded its hours: in addition to Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., it was open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. A new computer and database software were purchased, to replace the old failed hard drive, and upgrades were implemented on the other Auxiliary computers.

As the Auxiliary prepares for 2009, our volunteer efforts must focus on evaluating our fund-raising events. Recognizing our successes, we must explore and be willing to pursue new options and opportunities at this challenging time.

VICE PRESIDENT*Shirley Jordan*

My year 'in training' has flown by. I always knew that the Auxiliary members were an awesome group of multi-talented individuals, but I have gained an even greater respect for their dedication and contribution to RBG in so many ways during this past year.

In 2008, the Barbara Laking Memorial Fund contributed \$10,000.00 to hire a student gardener to assist at the Laking Garden, and an additional \$10,000.00 towards the cost of the October Floral Symposium, which featured Rob Platell, the internationally recognized artist and floral designer from the Netherlands. Although registrations were fewer than expected, Mr. Platell was an inspirational demonstrator, and his focus on using natural materials (many gathered from RBG gardens) was a natural fit with the Earth Art exhibit taking place during that time.

Changes in the membership of the Auxiliary Board of Directors were approved at the Auxiliary Fall General Meeting in September.

Under *Children's Programming Director*, a director can now be any one of the Chairs of the Nature Interpretive Centre, Children's Activities Program and Children's Gardening Program, instead of always being the Chair of the Nature Interpretive Centre. Under *Education & Information Services Directors*, the Chair of Special Events was added.

The Christmas Sale was successful in spite of the economic downturn that affected sales of the more expensive arrangements. In addition to the fashion show, entertainment provided by the *Geritol Follies*, a gourmet food demonstration by *chef Crystal Asher* from the Steven and Chris TV show, the *Ontario Heartland Women's Choir*, and our own *Auxiliary Christmas Carolers* provided a festive atmosphere.

I am looking forward with anticipation to the challenges and achievements to come in 2009.

PAST PRESIDENT*Cathy Rideout*

The Past President has two major responsibilities - to Chair the Paterson Bowl and the Nominating Committees.

I want to thank the Paterson Bowl Committee for helping with the very difficult task of reviewing all of the deserving nominees for this award. It was a great pleasure to select Diana McCallum as the 2007 recipient, and at the Spring General Meeting it was an honour to recognize all of the past winners of this prestigious award.

The role of Chair of the Nominating Committee was a little more challenging, working with the committee members to find Auxiliary members willing to serve on the Board and to be Chairs of Committees. The future of the Auxiliary depends on our members making a commitment to support it and to be involved. We

want to thank those who agreed to stand as nominees for the Board and Committee Chairs for making this commitment. Very special thanks to the Committee Chairs who have agreed to stay on in their roles.

I also accepted the position of Chair of the organizing committee of the new *Laking Sustaining Society*. Our team had the honour to work directly with Dr. Laking, and to meet with RBG members and friends who care deeply about RBG, to talk about the Gardens. We ask them to consider remembering Royal Botanical Gardens in their estate planning and emphasize how increased endowment funds, generated through the Society over the long-term, will result in a much more financially sustainable institution. If you would like a visit or to join this team please contact me at cathyrideout@sympatico.ca

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Paterson Bowl Diana McCallum

Recognition of Auxiliary Service:

35 years: Teresa Kubilis

30 years: Lil Haworth
Carmen Litt
Norene Macphail

20 years: Evan Bingley
Doris Finlayson
Tina Seale
Elinor Smith
Brenda White

Ontario Government Service Awards:

20 year Mary Doering

15 year David Cummins
Sally Wilson

5 year Lee Burroughs
Christine Lee
Pat Webber

THE PATERSON BOWL

A flower designer and arranger of extraordinary talent and creativity, Diana McCallum joined RBG Auxiliary in 1976. In the years since then she has been involved in many areas of the Auxiliary, serving a term as President, a member of several committees including Plant Sale, Christmas Sale and the Policies & Procedures Committees, as well as being considered a cornerstone of the Auxiliary Workshop. She received a Provincial Volunteer Service Award in 1991, her 20-year Auxiliary service pin in 1996, and 30-year service pin in 2006.

Amongst her colleagues, Diana is known for her talent, sense of humour, positive attitude, and willingness to share her expertise, as well as teaching classes for RBG. She was recognized with several awards for her work, and maintains the highest standard of quality in everything she does. She accepts all tasks and challenges with humour and a positive attitude, and always with a beautiful smile.

Congratulations to Diana, a worthy recipient of the Paterson Bowl for 2007.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Administrative Volunteer	154
Archives	1541
Auxiliary Garden	898
Auxiliary General Meetings	504
Auxiliary Workshop	8701
Children's Activities	261
Children's Gardening	112
Christmas Sale	637
Communications	27
Development Department	239
Docents	3314
Evergreen Design Workshops	544
Finance Committee	32
Flower Arrangers	247
Gardening Information	805
Herbarium	69
Information Desk	2574
Library	1044
Membership & Placement	742
Nature Interpretive Centre	84
Newsletter	325
Nominating Committee	40
Past President	124
Photographer	545
Plant Documentation	306
Plant Sale (includes Bulb Sale)	13113
Policies & Procedures	21
President	1066
Publicity	163
RBG Committees	45
RoyalSelect	135
Secretary	248
Shop @ The Gardens	1235
Social Committee	416
Social Correspondent	30
Special Events	1150
Special Gardens Tours	329
Support Services	40
Tour Guides	557
Trail Watchers	530
Treasurer	1210
Vice President	739
Volunteer Gardeners	2203

Total hours for 2008 47,075

Congratulations to
Dr. LESLIE LAKING
named to the

2008
ALDRSHOT COMMUNITY
HONOUR ROLL

TREASURER

Rod Saunders

For a third consecutive year, 2008 was very good for the Auxiliary from a financial viewpoint. This achievement was made in spite of the onset of the current economic recession impacting receipts at the Christmas Sale. Indeed, our profit for 2008 was the highest in three years by some \$4,400. Ever-increasing commercial competition, increasing costs everywhere, and increasing requests for volunteer help in RBG projects further underscore the significance of this accomplishment.

Financial results for 2008 clearly demonstrate that careful, controlled spending and judicious use of inventory, combined with the usual dedicated hard work of our volunteers, can yield excellent financial results - even with moderately reduced sales.

Financial contribution to RBG in 2008 totalled \$79,147: \$75,000 for the first instalment for second Dalglish Pavilion elevator, and \$4,147 from Tour Guide fees into general funds.

At December 31, 2008, the Auxiliary's financial position (unaudited) was:

Cash	\$ 37,428
GIC's Invested (variable rate, cashable)	\$143,783
Accounts Receivable	\$ 5,776
Pre-Paid Expenses (for 2009)	\$ 9,501
Accrued Year-End Liabilities	\$ 7,779
Donation to RBG for Dalglish Pavilion 2 nd Elevator	\$ 75,000

Summary of Revenue & Expenses (unaudited)

GROUP or ITEM	REVENUE	EXPENSES	SURPLUS
Plant Sales	97,193	41,701	55,492
Auxiliary Workshop	60,446	30,764	29,682
Membership, Meetings, & Social	9,363	5,270	4,093
Special Gardens Tours	12,894	11,508	1,386
Tour Guiding for RBG Visitors	4,147	0	4,147
Library & Archives	0	800	(800)
"Laking Book" Sales	720	0	720
Interest Earned	3,794	0	3,794
Donations Received	1,864	0	1,864
Office, Financial, & Misc.	550	11,274	(10,724)
TOTAL	190,971	101,317	89,654

Note: A more detailed breakdown of Revenue & Expenses for the larger categories is provided in a separate report dealing with the '2009 Budget'

SECRETARY

Carol Jenkins

As the activities of the Auxiliary within Royal Botanical Gardens have evolved, so has the role of the Secretary. Thus the past year has brought some changes to the Auxiliary's administration office.

The most dramatic change was in the office hours. The traditional Tuesday and Thursday mornings continued to be the times of most activity, when the Secretary assisted the President in his duties, including the planning of Board and General Meetings, writing up minutes etc., as well as the day-to-day running of the office. However the Board decided at the beginning of 2008 to open the office five days a week, with at least one person present to answer phones and emails and to conduct administration duties. In this

way, we tried to provide more service to our members.

As the need arose, the Secretary assumed extra duties. To increase the visibility and identification of our Auxiliary members, we researched and ordered new golf shirts and aprons with RBG logos and volunteer labels, so that when assisting at RBG functions our volunteers could be easily identified by the public. These are available for purchase in the Auxiliary Office.

We all worked together to make 2008 a very successful year, and look forward to all the new projects and opportunities that 2009 will bring.

ARCHIVES

Marie Minaker

As archivist, I continue to preserve and process archival material of interest to Royal Botanical Gardens and the Auxiliary. A new volunteer this year organized and preserved the Auxiliary's collection of photographs and will be entering them into an electronic finding-aid.

On Thursday mornings, several volunteers organized and preserved Canadian, American and International seed catalogues in acid-free containers and then catalogued them electronically. Anyone interested in volunteering in this area would be most welcome. We reorganized their storage room to provide more space and better access to the nursery catalogues. The collection is not yet ready for public use.

The volunteer who looked after RBG's acid-free scrap book of

newspaper clippings retired during the year. She trained the incoming volunteer and things continued to operate smoothly.

Apart from processing the archive documents themselves, I attended meetings, wrote numerous reports, answered telephone and e-mail queries, assisted staff and volunteers with various projects, as well as provided assistance to researchers. Again, as it has always done since I began working on the archives in 1992, the Auxiliary generously paid for most of the specialized supplies we use. We appreciated Dr. David Galbraith's direction and encouragement; he is the only staff person in our area.

I am available in the Archives Office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 10 o'clock until noon. Please contact me at 905-527-1158 x 531

AUXILIARY GARDEN

Antje George

Work in the Auxiliary Garden started in early March, with the planting of seeds for our annuals. April found us pruning trees and shrubs, and preparing the land for planting.

We planted 55 flats, but not without a lot of anxiety. There was no water available to us due to the construction and changes taking place in the Hendrie Garden. We watered by hand for two weeks, from eight garbage cans filled with water brought in by tractor and tank. In spite of our labours, we thought we were going to lose our plants, but rain finally came. Water became available in early July.

Our good harvest filled the drying room, with the overflow hanging in the Workshop. We sold over 300 bunches of dyed yarrow, as well as contorted willow, at the Christmas Show and Sale. Cedar, boxwood and juniper were harvested for the Evergreen Design Workshops. Our dried bouquets sold well, and

are now available in the store. We sold over \$3000 worth of dried material - a new record!

Our continuing success is due to the skill and effort of our small group of volunteers, who continue to dedicate their time and energy to this demanding work. Thank you to all the volunteers who supported us in the Garden and the Workshop, as well as RBG staff for their assistance.

We were saddened by the death of our good friend and fellow volunteer Filomena Delvecchio. Filomena's dedication to the Auxiliary Workshop, and especially to the Auxiliary Garden was amazing. She took pleasure in the work, and in the company of her friends, and it was reciprocated with affection. We already miss her deeply, and feel that having known her enriched our lives.

AUXILIARY WORKSHOP

Jan Stoddart

Throughout 2008, a committed group participated in Workshop activities, including several new volunteers who offered their ideas and pitched in with enthusiasm. Our various projects included wedding flowers, corsages for Mother's Day, table decorations for RBG functions, flower arrangements for sale in *Shop @ The Gardens* and at the Christmas Sale, and the Evergreen Design Workshops.

While we were disappointed in sales from the Christmas Sale, which we think were affected by the economic downturn, we

did generate steady sales of flower arrangements throughout the year. Registrations fees for the popular Evergreen Design Workshops were a significant source of income, added to by participants purchasing accessories at the events.

In addition to the funds we raise, our work draws many people to RBG, introducing them to its extensive facilities and activities, with the added benefit of encouraging them to become RBG members.

BULB SALE

Pat Harrison / Lee Burroughs

2008 proved to be a very successful year. We were well organized and ready for the bulbs when they were dug up and delivered to us, so that, with the help of many volunteers, they were dried and cleaned more quickly than usual. The display area was well organized and worked very efficiently on Bulb Sale day, and our customers appeared pleased with the selection we offered and how we functioned. Attendance figures and

sales were up, making this our largest profit in many years.

Remaining bulbs were available for sale all summer, and then at half-price at the Fall Plant Sale. We donated any leftover bulbs to several organizations and church groups, so that very few were left to be composted.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Joyce Leslie

The Children's Activities volunteers were very busy in 2008. We assisted staff with the children's crafts table at many events during the year. The activities began in February with a four-week art class and ended with Holiday Traditions in December.

Seven more Auxiliary members joined the existing group, giving us a total of thirteen. Many thanks to them and to the long-time volunteers.

CHILDREN'S GARDENING

Joyce Leslie

The 2008 Children's Gardening Program ran from mid-May to mid-August, with sixty-four children participating. Student staff taught the program assisted by Auxiliary volunteers.

The program is an introduction to gardening for children from 3 to 13. There are three groups: 'Cockleshells and Silverbells' for 3 to 5 year olds, 'Sow and Grow' for ages 5 to 7 and 'Junior Gardeners Club' for those from 7 to 13 years. Children in the

latter group may take part in RBG summer camp in the afternoon. Each child has a plot in the Children's Garden in Hendrie Park and learns the basics of gardening, and participates in crafts and nature studies.

Thank you to the Auxiliary members who volunteered their time this past year.

CHRISTMAS SALE

Betty Dockray

This year's Christmas Sale was very successful in many ways. We reintroduced the idea of 'Show' into the Sale by arranging for entertainment in addition to our usual Fashion Show, Food Demonstration and Designer Demonstrations. On Thursday night a small group from the Geritol Follies presented a hilarious show, and on Saturday the incredible Ontario Heartland Women's Choir from Mississauga entertained us. Since this was the first year for this type of entertainment we were very pleased with the turn out and hope to build on that interest next year. The Fashion Show hosted by Oakville's Silkeborg boutique was excellent and the food demonstration by Chef Crystal Asher was well attended and enjoyed by everyone.

Unfortunately sales were down compared to previous

years. The economic situation certainly hurt us and we found that more of our customers were 'do-it-yourselfers' this year, which increased sales in mechanics and other areas but reduced sales in designs. As usual the urn inserts were a huge success and we certainly need to look at increasing the number we make for next year's Sale.

Of course, the 30 volunteers in the Workshop could not possibly host an event of this size without the help of so many additional volunteers from the Auxiliary. Our thanks to everyone who assisted us before and during the Sale, as well as Christmas Sale Committee, who worked so very hard to make the Sale a success.

COMMUNICATIONS

Cathy Rideout

We presently have three forms of communications to keep everyone informed on upcoming events:

- the majority are contacted by email, the simplest and most cost effective method;
- those who have 'call answer' on their phone line are placed on an automatic distribution list - about seventy-five members. The automatic distribution list then calls and leaves a message directly in their 'call answer' mailbox;

- the last form of contact is to call members directly - a team of three people make personal calls to approximately twenty-five members.

Things are working very smoothly and I want to thank the team of callers for their commitment and personal touch.

DOCENTS

Gabrielle Adams

2008 was a good year for the Auxiliary and we had many new members join the organization. Attendance at the monthly Docent/Auxiliary meetings ranged from forty-six to seventy-eight (average of sixty-five), with the low being in September, the month when there was also a General Meeting. The presentations by speakers were very informative and well received. July and August were filled with all the varied outdoor volunteer activities that RBG has to offer.

The Auxiliary Picnic on August 14th, although cut a little short by the threat of rain, was again a big success with lots of wonderful food and good cheer.

It was very exciting for a great many members to take part in the planting of the Kippax Garden in September. We all look

forward to seeing the plants flourish when the snow melts and the weather gets warm.

At the last 2008 meeting at the end of November, eight RBG staff gave short presentations about their areas of responsibility. It was a welcome opportunity for our volunteers to meet these staff members, exchange ideas and get to know more about RBG and its future plans. The meeting was followed by the traditional coffee hour with RBG staff, where we enjoyed lots of holiday sweets provided by our members.

We look forward to an eventful new year with the opening of the new Atrium, new exhibits and new activities. There will certainly be many opportunities for Auxiliary members to continue to make valuable contributions to RBG.

EVERGREEN DESIGN WORKSHOPS

Claire Jennings & Wanda Sinclair

This event is now into its fourth decade, a testament to the fine designers who create the door and table designs and are such skilled instructors, imparting their love of design to the participants.

The 2008 Workshops were as successful as last year, with approximately the same number of participants. They enjoyed the opportunity to customize their designs with purchases of bows, ribbons and other adornments, which increased sales of these items by some 15% over last year.

Many thanks to the designer/instructors, and to all the volunteers who prepared the greens and worked during the events. The fruits of your labour were evident in the enthusiastic and smiling faces of the participants, who also enjoyed the refreshments set out by the Social Committee. We appreciate the contributions of RBG staff in helping to supply the greens and setting up our workspaces, and for setting up online ticket sales.

With the experience of three decades behind us, the Workshops look forward to many successful years ahead.

FLOWER ARRANGERS

Elizabeth Crozier

Our group created flower designs for the Annual Gala of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, the City of Burlington Civic Recognition Awards Gala and the Aldershot Community Awards Night at which Dr. Leslie Laking was honoured.

We produced flower designs for a large wedding in July and were pleased to provide table centrepieces and corsages for the opening celebration of the Helen Kippax Garden.

GARDENING INFORMATION

Joan Leigh-Bell

This year saw a reduction in the number of telephone calls but an increase in personal visits and e-mails.

Visitors brought in samples of treasured plants, either to have a condition diagnosed, or just to discuss their care and maybe to brag a little as they showed off pictures of beautiful blooms and foliage. There was the lady who discovered a grove of Osage Orange trees while hiking, another who had Lady's Slippers growing in his newly purchased suburban garden, and yet another who had a 'Corpse Plant'!

We shared enthusiasm, sympathized, and offered appropriate advice. Mostly, however, we provided helpful analysis and solutions to problems that sometimes overwhelm even the experienced gardener. In the process of finding the necessary information, we were privy to an ad hoc education by such consultants as Bill Szenasi, who was ever available

to share his expertise on bugs and their banishment. As organics replace chemical controls, even experienced gardeners need support in finding new ways of dealing with old problems.

There were ten to twelve regular members on duty most weeks in the summer and six in the fall and winter months. We communicated with each other to ensure that we responded to all requests for information, and sought help from experts when needed.

We thank the administrative staff for their patience in dealing with our occasional computer glitches and for their friendly acceptance of us, and are indebted to all the scientific staff for their reliable assistance as needed.

INFORMATION DESK

Brenda Deacoff

The wonderful volunteers on the Information Desk continued to provide excellent service to our visitors as 'ambassadors' for RBG.

For most of the year, starting in March, we worked during the week as well as on the weekend. However, since December 22nd this was interrupted, as work on the door for

the new Atrium blocked our access. A new desk will soon be constructed where we will work along with Admissions staff.

While two members left our group, we gained three new very enthusiastic ones, and would welcome more.

LIBRARY

Anne Simpson

The Library volunteers have unpacked all the 11,500 books that were sent to storage in May 2005, as well as many cartons of research documents. 75% of the books have been shelved but the remaining 25% had to be re-boxed when we ran out of shelf space. All the books have been put in order by call number and we can find any book when needed.

RBG members have been asking how soon they can come to the Library and borrow books. The answer for the moment has to be "not yet". Although we can help RBG staff

to find books needed for their projects, we are still not able to offer borrowing or browsing privileges to members. Hopefully, we will be able to do this soon.

Before the Christmas break, Library and Archives volunteers joined the Auxiliary Office staff for lunch at Louie's West Side Grill. Twenty-three of us enjoyed good food and great company. There is nothing like the camaraderie of RBG volunteers for raising spirits at the start of the holidays or, for that matter, anytime!

MEMBERSHIP & PLACEMENT

Anne Campbell & Mary Lyn Brown

Change of Committee Chair

In August 2008, Anne Campbell resigned from the role due to personal and family obligations. Mary Lyn Brown, past Chair of Membership and Placement, took over the position for the duration of the 2008 term.

New Volunteer Orientation

To officially welcome all new members, the spring orientation meeting on May 8th provided the forty volunteers who had joined since the previous meeting with a thorough, informative and enjoyable orientation to RBG and the Auxiliary.

This was an opportunity for new volunteers to meet each other and some of our Auxiliary Directors, who spoke about their role in supporting volunteers. We were also delighted to have the expertise of Marie Minaker, long time member, past president, and Auxiliary and RBG archivist, who gave a brief overview of the Auxiliary and the important contribution that volunteers have made to RBG over the past forty years; and Harry Jongerden, then RBG Director of Horticulture, who provided a snapshot of the plans for the Gardens over the next few years.

Following this meeting, we scheduled two wonderful tours of RBG gardens on May 13th and May 20th, led by Pat Barton, Tour Guides Chair. The new volunteers were delighted with the Gardens in their spring beauty and appreciated all the knowledge of RBG that Pat and the other tour leaders shared with them, making these tours interesting and worthwhile.

Membership and Placement Team

The team approach, instigated in response to the 'Volunteer Vitality' meeting held two years ago, relieved the interviewing and placement load previously born solely by the Membership Chair, and improved efficiency.

The Committee expanded to include five members, who interviewed prospective volunteers, recorded notes for data entry, and gave a tour of RBG Centre to each new volunteer. Auxiliary fees were collected, opportunities for appropriate placement suggested, and mentorship and follow-up feedback arranged.

The Volunteer database was transferred to a new updated and user-friendly 'Volunteer Software' system, which was an enormous help in keeping accurate and easily accessible data for the Auxiliary.

The total membership on December 31st, 2008, was three hundred and forty-one. Sixty-two new volunteers were interviewed and placed during the year, while thirty-three resigned for various reasons, including moving away, obligations elsewhere, and ill health. Sadly, three of our members died: Filomena Delvecchio, Jim Fraser and Ray Jenkins.

Our thanks to all the members of the Membership and Placement Committee for their invaluable assistance during the year.

NEWSLETTER

Lyn Robinson

The Newsletter Committee was responsible for producing three publications during the year, which were posted on RBG's webpage and printed for those members without internet access:

- Annual Report in February
- Spring Newsletter in April
- Fall Newsletter in October

All Officers and Committee Chairs are required to submit a report for the Annual Report. While they are also invited to submit reports for the Newsletters, the decision to do so

may depend on seasonal volunteer activities in their area of responsibility. Articles by Auxiliary members on garden-related topics, human-interest stories about members, and photos taken of volunteer activities, are all welcome.

Four members of the Committee were responsible for editing the submissions, which were then prepared for layout and printing. 'Thank-you' to all concerned for your great support. We owe a special thank-you to Barbara Butler, a returning member, for stepping into the breach in October while I was on vacation, to prepare the layout for the Fall Newsletter.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Margaret Barnes

My predecessor was very helpful getting me started on the Auxiliary photography work. She was with me at the Annual Meeting when we took individual photographs of the Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs.

Auxiliary activities were captured throughout the year:

- in the Auxiliary Workshop, photos of flower arrangements and corsages as well as individuals and groups at work were taken;
- with the coming of spring, volunteers were captured hard at

work in the greenhouse preparing for the Plant Sale. Annual plants for the Auxiliary Garden were also started in the greenhouse to be ready for Planting Day on May twentieth. The beautiful array of plants and flowers were picture perfect;

- the Plant Sale and the Auxiliary Garden provided many opportunities for interesting pictures; social occasions and the artistic installations in the gardens were also photographed.

Thanks to other volunteers who also provided pictures for our files.

PLANT SALE

Lee Burroughs

The year began with a very successful 'kick-off' meeting in January, now planned to be an annual event. Potting began in earnest in February and quickly filled the greenhouses with plants. The team working on annuals covered a seven-days-a-week schedule, initiated last year; they became well organized and produced a beautiful display of product to sell. Overall there were no surprises in production and everything progressed as planned. We also offered our help in propagation to RBG staff and in return they provided us with classes in successful seeding and propagation. This was definitely a 'win-win' proposition for both sides and we hope to expand the efforts next year.

The Spring Plant Sale took place in cold wet weather, affecting attendance, but sales were acceptable even under these circumstances. While we continued to have problems with long lines at checkout, we added two extra electronic checkouts and provided free coffee and cookies to our customers, both of which proved popular. We hope to implement more new ideas next year.

The Lilac Festival weekends were very busy and our sales made up the shortfall from the Spring Plant Sale. The Bulb Sale in June was a big success. Both attendance and sales were the best in a long time.

In early June we reintroduced plants for sale in *Shop @ The Gardens*; we took care of the plants, stocking and maintaining them with some help from the Shop staff, and continued until Thanksgiving weekend. All parties involved in the project were happy with the successful outcome.

We purchased excellent stock from a new supplier in Michigan in the summer, and have since ordered more for delivery in February. While we enjoyed the high value of the Canadian dollar in our first order, in future we will make very careful choices to benefit from the quality and diversity of stock from this company despite the increased cost.

One of our members seeded perennials for us this summer, a very economical way to provide new stock, to be sold at the next Spring Plant Sale. The tendency to grow too much gave us the chance to offer the excess for sale at the Fall Plant Sale, where this was the only new stock we carried. All other plants remaining at the end of the summer sold well at half price, which greatly

reduced the quantity to be over-wintered. Unfortunately, attendance and sales at the Fall Plant Sale were also hurt by bad weather.

In other successful projects in 2008, we:

- renovated and renewed our pull carts;
- seeded about 1500 pots of cattails for the Conservation Department, and cared for them all season, as well as other pots of marsh plants that the Conservation Department were growing;
- continued the reorganization of High Hill Garden, giving us a much better understanding of our space, and ways to make better use it. This allowed us to harvest a large amount of stock to be potted up this winter, helping to keep costs lower;
- heavily mulched High Hill Garden to reduce the number of weeds and conserve water;
- finished building the High Hill Garden shed, stocking it with equipment needed to work in the nearby garden;
- made large donations of plants to several local organizations including retirement homes, Interval House and churches. It is always good to share our good fortune with the community;
- washed and bleached the 15,000 pots and trays left over from the Kippax Garden planting. A very dedicated crew of volunteers continued well into December on the monumental task, before we finally put the operation to bed for the season.

As we review the year, our largest obstacle to profitability is the increasing cost of doing business, including electronic checkout, tents, labelling, soil, display items, and imported plant material etc. We have the expertise to care for plants very well and to sell them to the public. Our production costs will be the focus in the future, re-evaluating all choices to make us as effective as possible in our ultimate purpose, which is supporting RBG. As well as fundraising, we are also exploring ways in which we can help RBG physically with propagation and plant care.

In general, 2008 was a very productive season for the group, and plans are well underway for next season. My thanks to all who helped make this such a good year.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Janet Hutton

Our Committee reviewed all eight Auxiliary Policies and associated Procedures.

In April 2008 the Auxiliary Board requested Policy No. 2, Procedure 3, concerning the work of the Nominating Committee, be updated and amended. The recommendations of our Committee were approved by the Board of Directors at their August meeting, and ratified by the membership at the Fall General Meeting in September.

An updated Index was compiled and distributed as of December 2008.

Thank you to members of our 2008 Committee for their attendance and interest in the work of this Committee. This is my fourth Annual Report as Chair of the Policies and Procedures Committee; it has been my pleasure to serve you in this capacity.

PUBLICITY

Norm Madill

Our responsibilities were primarily publicizing the Spring Plant Sales, RoyalSelect, Bulb Sale, Christmas Sale, and Evergreen Design Workshops. We also oversaw the Special Gardens Tours and assisted RBG Staff with the Auxiliary Ambassadors' program.

We were once again fortunate to have the opportunity to work with RBG's professional marketing staff, which gave us more media exposure in a variety of local and area newspapers for the Christmas Sale. The Spring Plant Sale received coverage on *CHCH TV's Morning Live Show with Leslie Stewart*, in *The Hamilton Spectator* and on the Public Service Billboard of

Mackesy Smye LLP in Hamilton. Media Releases, letters to Garden Clubs and Horticultural Societies, information on the RBG website, sandwich boards, two large vinyl banners, and flyers were all methods used to promote our events. From a number of customer impact surveys it was found that the most effective advertising is *Now @ The Gardens* and *The Hamilton Spectator*.

Thanks to the Newsletter Committee, Special Gardens Tours Committee, Auxiliary members who acted as Ambassadors, and RBG Communication and Marketing staff for their help this past year.

ROYALSELECT

Despite some unforeseen difficulties, we achieved our sales targets and had a very successful year.

The Committee chose the plants in late 2007, after much research and discussion, and arranged delivery of the perennials in time to pot and grow them to a good size for the Sale. Unfortunately there was a delay in the delivery of one choice, *Amsonia hubrichtii*, which turned out to be a very late starter (some plants took until the end of July to start), and it quickly became apparent that it was very difficult to satisfy customers

with a pot filled with soil and a dormant plant!

A formal apology was published in *Now@ The Gardens*, along with an offer to rectify the problem for the purchasers. All who called were very gracious about it and most people accepted a credit for either the Plant Sale or for next year's RoyalSelect. This was a problem we did not foresee but will try to not repeat it in the future when making our selections. The rest of the plants and shrubs were very popular.

SHOP @ THE GARDENS

Marg McAdam,

2008 was a year of change for volunteers at *Shop @ The Gardens*, with a new RBG management team assuming responsibility for its operations. New ventures included a separate display and sales area for 'Glass under Glass' in the Library Reading Room, and the sale of Auxiliary plants in the courtyard beside the shop. Volunteer hours contributed to *Shop @ The Gardens* increased by 100% and the number of Shop volunteers by 50%.

RBG staff and volunteers met during the first half of the year to discuss matters of mutual concern that would contribute to the Shop's success. Any number of hours contributed is appreciated, but volunteers have to realize their responsibility, when participating in the operation of a business, to accept a regular commitment to support that operation in an effective manner. A regular volunteer schedule would enhance volunteers' training and confidence levels, and increase the profitability of *Shop @ The Gardens*.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Marion Little

In 2008 our Committee consisted of eight very enthusiastic and creative members who arranged the provision of refreshments at many Auxiliary events:

- a catered lunch at the Annual Meeting in February, which was delicious, but to our great disappointment the quantity of food was insufficient to serve all attendees. We will remedy this problem in the coming year;
- a healthy continental breakfast at the General Meetings in May and September;
- sustenance for volunteers at the Plant Sales;
- refreshments at the monthly Auxiliary/Docent meetings;

- coffee, tea and goodies at the Docent Picnic, for the volunteers on Christmas Sale days, and at the Evergreen Design Workshops.

We had great success with very creative raffles this past year and thank all those who contributed; we would gladly accept any suitable items for future raffles.

Thank you Social Committee members for making 2008 so successful.

SOCIAL CORRESPONDENT

Ruth Walker

2008 was a busy year, with thirty cards expressing best wishes or condolences sent to Auxiliary members.

We were saddened this year at the death of three members:

Jim Fraser, Ray Jenkins, and Filomena Delvecchio, a long-time and much loved member, and a Paterson Bowl recipient.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Ann Pallant

We started the year welcoming visitors to the *Glass Under Glass* exhibit in the Mediterranean Garden. In March we attended *Canada Blooms* in Toronto and in April the *Ontario Garden Show* at RBG. The latter is one of the best events for the sale of memberships. Despite a cool, wet summer Special Events volunteers attended all the outdoor festivals, from the *Tulip* to the *Rose*, and those in between. Unfortunately, due to the poor weather, visitors were not so plentiful, but we did our

best to sell memberships and promote all that RBG has to offer. As autumn approached, many members represented the Gardens at the *Mum Show* in Hamilton.

As always I must thank the very willing Auxiliary members who helped out at Special Events with such enthusiasm. I have enjoyed my two years in this position and wish the new Chair all the best.

SPECIAL GARDENS TOURS

Jeanne Robertson

This year our Committee organized two tours for Auxiliary members - one to the Port Credit area and the other to the Bruce Peninsula. Both tours sold well with fifty-five people on the Port Credit Tour and forty-two attending the Bruce Peninsula Tour.

The Port Credit Tour included the garden of Liz Primeau, the former editor of Canadian Gardening magazine. Abandoning a lawn a number of years ago, Liz chose plants that take care of themselves, creating a truly inspiring, innovative and environmentally-friendly garden. Also enjoyed on this tour was the authentic Japanese garden of artist Susan Collacott, inspired by her visit to Japan in 1985. The 'engawa' or deck of Susan's studio is the viewing room, a good place to sit and observe the

garden, to take in the beautiful plantings and pond.

The two-day visit to the Bruce Peninsula, the first overnight tour in a number of years, was immensely successful. We visited seven gardens, including the world-famous Larkwhistle, where, undaunted by the rain that started on our arrival, we donned rain gear and umbrellas to enjoy this unique garden. Also particularly memorable for many was Bill and Dawn Loney's Keppel Croft Farm and Garden, a magnificent three-acre landscape that warranted three hours to fully appreciate it.

A big thank-you to our committee members, past and present, who worked so hard in the planning of these tours.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Syja Hughes

All of our five computers and printers worked without problems this year. The Auxiliary Workshop as well as the Treasurer/Finance area are now connected to the Internet and have full e-mail capabilities.

We were able to purchase a new labelling machine for the Plant Sale through a wonderful donation from Mary Stedman of Brantford, and the Workshop received a new colour printer from Elizabeth Avery. We are very grateful for these donations.

TOUR GUIDES

Pat Barton

There were more tours booked for the main touring season in 2008 than last year but the rebuilding of guided tour numbers is slow. However, Pamela Bowen, RBG staff responsible for booking tours, attended travel seminars etc. during the year to advertise RBG as a travel destination, and to promote the benefit of guided tours. With our new garden areas and attractions, we hope that 2009 will be busier.

At present we have twenty active guides, including three very enthusiastic new recruits, who are able to work varying numbers of hours.

We have begun to revise the Tour Guide manual to reflect the many changes in our garden areas. Trying to update the outreach program has been quite a challenge, as the changes in the availability of new AV equipment affects both our audiences and us. At present we are continuing our slide presentation.

Off-season tours of the Mediterranean Garden are few but steady as in previous years.

Plans are in place for some 'in the field' further education for all of us in the spring.

TRAIL WATCHERS

Doris Southwell

Trail Watchers report regularly to the Head of Horticulture about the condition of selected portions of the thirty kilometres of RBG hiking trails. The reports identify which trails are in good condition and where work crews are needed. This past year we enjoyed monthly educational walks with Ian Hendry, Manager of the Nature Interpretive Centre, during which he identified examples of safety and maintenance issues that we should report. There are plans to close some trails that are im-

possible to maintain and improve others to make the walks more interesting. With Ian's guidance we were also able to increase our nature interpretation skills.

If you enjoy walking in the woods and would like to help keep RBG trails safe please join us by contacting the Auxiliary Office at 905 577 7777.

VOLUNTEER GARDENERS

Toni Carson

The season started in the merry month of May, with volunteer gardeners clearing garlic mustard in many of the garden areas, often for several consecutive days.

Our volunteers worked throughout the season around the Nature Interpretive Centre and the rhododendron beds at the Arboretum, at the Laking Garden, Hendrie Park, and Spicer Court at RBG Centre. It was especially challenging for volunteers, staff and students at Hendrie Park as they toiled amidst the construction of the ponds, the Helen M. Kippax Garden and the Camilla and Peter Dalglish Atrium. Of particular note was the time spent staging and planting the Kippax Garden in September, in weather both fair and foul. A magnificent effort.

Several volunteer gardeners assisted staff with iris verification at the Laking Garden and with plant identification in various

gardens. They also helped the staff make the temporary labels for the Helen Kippax Garden.

Work in the gardens finished in early November with a weeding blitz at Hendrie Park.

Forty-five volunteers recorded hours this past season, twenty-four of whom were regular gardeners, some working in more than one garden. This is an increase of twelve gardeners over last year.

Congratulations and thanks to all those volunteers who assisted with their labour, refreshments, patience and sense of humour. I look forward to working with you and welcoming new volunteer gardeners in May. There will be plenty of work for all.