

2017 Executive & Directors



From left to right, back row: Janet Crowe, Cindy Kisser and Cathy Belfry
Left to right, front row: Verna Kelso, Lorraine Gallant, Lana Wightman, Penny Lyle and Carol Corbet
Missing are: Nattanya Wardel, Sharon O'Brien, Christi Blackman and Ruth Rodgers

President: Cathy Belfry

After 25 years of working at the North Vancouver District Library and being a summer "cottager" on the Sunshine Coast, Cathy and her husband Frank retired to Halfmoon Bay in 2011. They built their home on a lot filled with rock, blackberries and not much soil. Having very little gardening experience Cathy joined the Sechelt Garden Club and enjoyed the meetings, speakers and information she learned from the other members. In 2016, she took a big leap and became President of the Club. Cathy is looking forward to another year as President and hopes 2017 brings the Club new members, new ideas and happy gardening for all.

Vice President: Janet Crowe

After studying finance for 2 years, Janet's interests soon turned to adult education and leadership development. Early in her career Janet became a certified fitness leader and level 3 first aid instructor through the Canadian Red Cross where she also volunteered as a leader in call centre crisis management.

Working many years within various human resources areas, her energy and passion became the catalyst for the development of a synergized health and wellness program at TELUS Communications Inc. As National Director of Health and Wellness, Janet led a national team delivering an award winning wellness strategy. She completed her executive coaching diploma with Simon Fraser University in 2013.

Having a career spanning 3 decades with TELUS Communications, Janet decided to step away from corporate life and currently lives in Halfmoon Bay, BC. She continues to support the health and wellness industry in her new community as a director for the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation. SGC is very pleased Janet has volunteered to join our Board.

Treasurer: Lorraine Gallant

Lorraine has been a member of the Garden Club for 9 years. She has helped with plant sales, hosting the Strawberry Tea (the only year it rained), and garden tours. When Lorraine joined the club her knowledge of plants was extremely limited, but through planting her flower gardens and learning from other members and our speakers, her horizon has greatly expanded. Thirty years of her working career was spent as a Plan Administrator for a Union employee benefits plan. Lorraine's knowledge of numbers and her efficiency has greatly benefited our garden club as Lorraine has been our Treasurer for the past 3 years. Lorraine retired in 2004 to move from New Westminster to Sechelt where she and her husband built a new home. Lorraine's gardening knowledge keeps expanding as in 2016 the house was sold and now Lorraine is beautifying her new townhouse employing container gardening.

Secretary: Christi Blackman

Christi has stepped down as the Secretary of the Sechelt Garden Club. We thank Christi for all her hard work and dedication to making precise notes for our minutes from the General meetings and our Executive meetings. Her smile, humour and gentle ways will be greatly missed! Christi gives the best hugs!

Christi has been a member of the Garden Club since 2009. She has previously served as Secretary and Co- President on the Sechelt Garden Club executive. Christi was with the Social Committee as well, and did the plant sale for a couple of years. She loves to landscape and has transformed her half acre blank canvas into the garden of her dreams, which has become her year- round playground. Christi's professional past includes working as a public health nurse on the Sunshine Coast. She loves working with people, and feels nurtured by the comradery and support that the club has given her.

Interim Secretary: Lana Wightman

We say a huge THANK-YOU to Lana for stepping in to be our interim secretary during the first part of 2017!

Lana has been involved in the Vancouver Gardening community for many years. She has also attended Hardy Plant study weekends, both in BC, Washington and Oregon. Over the years, Lana has held positions in various garden clubs and she continues to be the Membership Chair for the Vancouver Hardy Plant group. Sechelt Garden Club is very happy that Lana has offered to be our Interim Secretary. Lana is doing a fabulous job; she would be amenable to sharing this position with another individual.

Interim Secretary: Terry Rolfe (Oct-Dec)

Terry is a new member of the Sechelt Garden Club. She is retired and has lived on the Sunshine Coast for six years, leaving behind a research and finance career spanning four decades. Her early pursuits were in risk management, investments and capital finance, followed by work in international food security, water scarcity under climate change, and trans-border trade. Her continuing interests include bio-invasion control and ecological restoration. She has supported the Rotary network on the coast, but is shifting gears now to pursue a life-long passion for gardening, enjoying wildlife and learning from fellow enthusiasts. Terry and Wayne live in Halfmoon Bay and are delighted to support local clubs and initiatives.

Communications: Carol Corbet

Carol joined the garden club over 3 years ago and last year took on the role of Communications Director. She has enjoyed producing SGC's newsletters and has found she has learned so much over the year, both in creating the newsletters but also about gardening on the Coast. She moved from the Yukon so has been finding it quite exciting to be able to garden more than 3 months of the year! Carol has worked in public service positions and brings skills in communications from her position as an Employment Counsellor and as Manager of Employment Central in Whitehorse. Carol very much enjoys the Garden Club's activities, speakers, and also meeting such enthusiastic gardeners from whom she has learned so much about gardening on the West Coast. She is looking forward to participating in our Club's 50th Anniversary year.

Membership: Sharon O'Brien

Before retiring to Sechelt in 2004, Sharon worked at Children's and Women's Hospital in Vancouver for 15 years as a Manager of one of the large specialty laboratories. Sharon had done gardening before that and certainly had an interest in growing plants but it wasn't until she bought her little house in West Sechelt that she really started to get her hands dirty. She inherited a big mature garden that needed TLC. With the help of a local landscaper, Sharon has been able to turn it into a relaxing and enjoyable garden. Sharon joined the Sechelt Garden Club shortly after moving to the Coast. She volunteered for various jobs and last year took on the Membership position.

Webmaster: Cindy Kisser

Cindy and her husband moved from New Westminster to the Coast in October 2014. Their retirement plan was to move to Naramata, near Penticton, but those plans not only changed location, the plans also moved forward a few years. The Sunshine Coast seemed the better fit with family being only a short ferry ride away rather than the long drive. Cindy has been 'playing' in the garden for many years and has been successful for the most part. After creating a beautiful garden oasis in a very busy New West neighbourhood, which took 11 years, she now faces another 'blank slate' challenge in Halfmoon Bay. Although Cindy has no formal gardening education/training, her garden and landscaping has worked by 'trial and error' and a lot of hard work. She may not know names of certain plants, shrubs and flowers but her passion for creating a beautiful garden is deep rooted (lol...pun intended). Cindy joined the Garden Club in January 2017 and shortly after volunteered for the Webmaster position. Cindy looks forward to many years with the Club and dreams that one day her garden will be worthy of a Tour.

Guest Speakers: Ruth Rodger

Ruth has been an avid gardener for more than 35 years in many different locations ranging from a 12-acre country property to a tiny condo garden. She completed her Ontario Diploma in Horticulture from the University of Guelph via seven years of "correspondence" studies (when that meant big binders coming in the post, in the pre-computer days!). Her thesis project in 2006 was an online illustrated blog exploring the application of British colonial garden styles to South Pacific gardens in New Zealand. This can be viewed at <http://odhproject.blogspot.ca/>. Ruth, who had a more than 30-year career in post-secondary education, has delivered a number of workshops on different aspects of gardening to community groups, including several to the Sechelt Garden Club in the past several years. She continues to teach an online History of Gardens course

through Durham College in Oshawa, Ontario, the college she retired from in 2013 to move to the Sunshine Coast. During the years when she and her husband Frank were raising five children on a large country property, Ruth had large vegetable gardens; these days she shops for local and organic veggies instead and devotes her 1/3 acre steeply sloping property to all the trees, shrubs, flowers and vines she can cram in.

Community Development: Penny Lyle

Penny hails from Tsawwassen where she spent 20 years as a realtor. Gardening did not seem to be on her radar, but her sellers competed for her to hold their open houses.

Laughingly, she learned they not only wanted their homes sold, but loved that subconsciously she would deadhead and weed their hanging baskets and garden beds while showing their properties. In Penny's extensive travels she is always very curious about plant life, so, upon retiring she joined garden clubs in South Surrey and then Sechelt. She enjoys learning from our wonderful speakers, presenters and our own members, which has always been a joy for her.

As Director of our Community Development committee, Penny is spearheading a project to design and plant a small memorial park on the Rimrock Road end this year. In 2016, planting the rock wall surrounding the Sechelt Aquatic Centre, (after ridding it of weeds), was a great accomplishment for the SGC. For future projects, Penny always reminds our Garden Club members to keep their eyes open for little untended spots we may beautify in Sechelt.

Director: Verna Kelso

After Verna retired from the Vancouver School Board, she and her husband moved from a Coastal climate to very dry conditions in the North Okanagan. The soil was mainly clay and there were a lot of rocks. Verna joined the Vernon and District Garden club and served on the Executive where she helped with the yearly plant sales and flower shows. In addition, Verna has taken a number of Floral Design Courses and does enjoy arranging flowers. Verna brings her knowledge, commitment and creativity to the Sechelt Garden Club. She presently lives in the Davis Bay area, which is also a gardening challenge and her garden areas are a work in progress. Verna is looking forward to another year of serving on the Executive, learning more about coastal plants and meeting new people.

Director: Nattanya Wardel

Nattanya has stepped down as a Director of the Sechelt Garden Club. We are so very grateful for all her help, enthusiasm and tremendous amount of volunteer hours she gave to our club. Nattanya....you will be missed!

Nattanya has worked with the Club Executive since 2002. She is skilled at doing floral art and has volunteered her time and talent to the Garden Club for many occasions. Nattanya has been a speaker at Garden club meetings showing how she creates her Christmas decorations and driftwood bird houses plus other projects. She has looked after the plants destined for the plant sale in May for 3 years in a row and made extra flower baskets and other creations for sale. Nattanya has had her own garden on tour many times and has organized trips and tours, the Strawberry Tea and Christmas luncheons. Nattanya has taken a break for a couple of years, and now is back to help out where she can. She is hoping to help people with new gardens and also those just starting out.