

**Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs
Board Meeting, Annual Meeting, and Awards Luncheon
Quonset O Club
April 23, 2026**

President Kathleen Damiani called the **board meeting** to order at:10:20 AM.

- **Kathleen welcomed** all to the Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon and thanked the club presidents for helping spread the word about this fun annual event. There were 95 members attending, and Kathleen gave a special thank you to everyone who wore fascinators.
- The **March Board Meeting minutes** were sent out electronically. Kathleen asked for any corrections or edits. The minutes stand as approved.
- The **Roll Call** was not called; the reservation list will stand for club attendance.

President's Report:

- **Kathleen** began by extending a sincere and huge thank you to **Deb Clickner**, the Annual Meeting Chair from the Hameho Garden Club. She did an outstanding job organizing the luncheon and helping make this such a wonderful day.
- She also thanked to our Corresponding Secretary, **Heather Fraga**, for chairing the raffle, and to all the clubs that donated the outstanding baskets.
- Thank you as well to **Sally Troup** for collecting and managing the registrations.
- Thank you **Sally Troup** and **Eileen Dennis** for the beautiful centerpieces.

Announcements

- The **NGC specialty design flower show**, “Dearly Beloved...” was fabulous! Chair **Judy Gray** once again did an outstanding job, pulling off another award-winning show, along with **Blakely Szosz** for her excellent work on the schedule. We earned enough points to apply for the NGC Flower Show Award. Congratulations to everyone who participated, and a heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers whose efforts made this show such a success.
- **RIFGC Judges Council Horticulture Show** – The show will be held at Hattie Ide Chaffee on June 4. A brief meeting will take place prior to the show. The schedule has been shared in recent email communications.
- **Plant-A-Tree** - A shout out to those clubs that contributed \$50 or more to Plant-A-Tree this year: Barrington, Bristol, Edgewood, Gentian, Hameho, Portsmouth, Rehoboth, Wantaknow, and Western Cranston. What fantastic participation! There are surely other clubs who sent in money under the \$50.00 minimum. These donations will be sent to NGC as well.

- **Hostess Clubs:** We need 6 clubs to volunteer to hostess for the next year. The months are September, October, January, February, March, and June. Please contact **Kathy LaRiviera** (knlariv@outlook.com) to sign up.
- **Kathleen** explained **voting** for your favorite fascinator and also the request that members submit **suggestions** for monthly programs and venues for the Annual RIFGC meeting.
- Reminder that your club **dues** are due to **Sally Troup** by May 1st.

Life Member Group Report

- **Paul Nunes** announced the Life Member Group (LMG) **Scholarships recipients**.
- LMG has awarded two scholarships. The first recipient, Taylor Sirois, is a returning applicant from last year. She was awarded \$3,000, and her application has been forwarded to the NGC. The second recipient, Liam Cotter, volunteered at the Home Show during his high school years. He was awarded \$1,000. Congratulations to both candidates!
- **Paul** also spoke on the LMG and how important it is to continue to **support this committee** to ensure we can continue to give out scholarships.

Fundraiser Trip

- **Kathleen** reminded all that one of our biggest fundraisers is next year's Holland and Belgium **trip**. Brochures are located on the registration table. If you have any questions, please see **Sandi Tinyk** (sandi.tinyk7@gmail.com).

Kathleen made a motion to **end the board meeting**. Linda Alves seconded the motion. The RIFGC Board Meeting ended at 10:30 AM.

Annual Meeting

Kathleen called the **RIFGC Annual Meeting** to order at 10:30 AM.

Opening Remarks by President Kathleen:

- Her first year is officially over; it feels like yesterday she was a blushing bride!
- Her theme, **Cultivate Your Strengths...Share Your Knowledge**, was inspired by our new bylaws. Under these bylaws, we are now expected to include **a program at each monthly membership meeting**. We launched this initiative in January with **Eileen Moser's** presentation on jumping worms, followed by a February program featuring a speaker from the **Kinney Azalea Gardens**. In March, we held an **open discussion on membership and fundraising**, and **Carol Horta** did an excellent job compiling the meeting notes.

- **Kathleen** asked for ideas to continue sharing everyone’s strengths by using the index cards at the tables to write down **suggestions** for future monthly programs, and ideas for next year’s annual meeting location—even if you would prefer to keep it at the Quonset O Club.
- So, after the first-year anniversary, we will move on from the bridal theme, but boy was it fun!

2026-2027 RIFGC Budget

Paul Nunes took the podium to present the **budget**. **Kathy LaRiviera** motioned to vote on the budget and **Sandi Tinyk** seconded it. All members were in favor. Budget was passed.

Kathleen made a motion to **close the 2026 RIFGC Annual Meeting** Seconded by **Deb Clickner**. The 2026 RIFGC Annual Meeting was closed.

Awards

- **Kathleen** introduced the Awards Co-Chairs, **Cheryl Celeste** and herself. Cheryl read out the awards and winners came forward to receive their certificate and take pictures. Winners are documented in the separate brochure.
- **Kathleen** also presented two **President’s Commendations:** to **Judy Gray**, Chairman of the Flower Show and **Blakely Szosz**, Flower Show Coordinator.
- **Kathleen** announced the **RIFGC Community Project Award** recipients. Two clubs received \$500.00 for their projects. They will present their reports at a board meeting next spring. Congratulations to:

Bristol Garden Club, Bristol, RI – They are requesting \$500 to support the Bristol Garden Club’s maintenance and redesign of Mrs. Perry’s Garden on Hope Street, along the Fourth of July parade route within Thomas Park. Planned improvements include enhancing the entryway, adding pollinator gardens, and eventually installing a bench and picnic area. A key goal is to install two storyboards—one highlighting Mrs. Perry, the club’s founder, and another detailing the history of the garden and the club. They aim to complete the project by October in time for a celebration as part of Bristol’s 250th anniversary.

The **Gentian Garden Club**, Scituate, RI, is requesting \$500 to rehabilitate the Wildflower garden which is located next to the community gazebo in the village square. This is also the location of the Farmers' Market so many people wander through the garden after shopping at the market. It has a bench for people to sit and enjoy the serenity. Unfortunately, invasive plants have overtaken, and the club will be actively removing these species and planting new flowers and shrubs. They also

need to amend the soil, complete a dry riverbed, and add new crushed stones on the walkway.

Meal Break

Kathleen introduced **De Feldman** who offered a reading before the meal.

Floral Design Presentation

During dessert, **Kathleen** introduced **Dennis DelSignore**, the floral designer, who demonstrated three+ designs. Dennis was informative and entertaining, and his presentation was well-received by the members.

Dismissal

- **Eileen Dennis** spoke on how to win centerpieces. **Kathleen** announced the winner of the fascinator contest.
- **Carol Horta** and **Sally Troup** called the winners for the raffle prizes.
- The meeting was dismissed at 2:30 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Carol Horta
Recording Secretary*