

2021 NEGC ANNUAL MEETING TO BE ON THE COAST OF MAINE IN OCTOBER

The Garden Club Federation of Maine (GCFM) is rolling out the red carpet to the rest of the New England states as they prepare to host the New England Garden Clubs, Inc. 4th Annual Meeting, October 12-13, 2021. Last year's meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic but plans are now being finalized to hold the meeting this year in Wells, Maine along the southern coast. National Garden Clubs (NGC) President Mary Warshauer has accepted an invitation to attend.

Maine has seen their COVID-19 infection rates plummet in the last month and is second in the country only to Vermont for the largest percentage of their population who are fully vaccinated. With this in mind, Maine has decided to go ahead with this year's meeting. The venue will be slightly different than previous years – **Village by the Sea** is a Condominium Conference Center, so attendees will be able to stay at very reasonable prices in condos that have full kitchens. In fact, Maine's Federation has negotiated a special deal whereby if you stay one night at the contract price, you can stay for a second night at HALF PRICE! Former Region Director Suzanne Bushnell is the Chairman for this event, and notes these prices are unprecedented for the coast of Maine during peak fall foliage season! Rates are \$149/night for a two-bedroom, two-bath unit, \$119/night for what's called a half suite unit (a two-bedroom, two-bath unit in which one bedroom would be locked to get the half suite price), and \$99/night for a one bedroom, one bath unit. Reservations are now available by contacting **Village by the Sea at 1-800-444-8862**. Their website, if you'd like to check out the venue, is www.vbts.com. When making a reservation be sure to tell the agent you're with the **New England Garden Clubs**. If you decide you want to stay two nights, the package plan is called the "S Deal". Be advised there are no elevators within the condo buildings. With this in mind, when making a reservation, the "A" and "B" units are one flight down from the main entry level and have a patio off the back. The "C" and "D" units are on the main level and should be asked for if you have mobility issues. The "E" and "F" units are one flight upstairs, and the "G" and "H" units are two flights upstairs and have the best views of the distant ocean. Condos "C" through "H" have balconies. Village by the Sea sits adjacent to the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge. Don't wait too long to make a reservation as tourists are flocking to Maine now that COVID restrictions have been lifted! We expect area hotels as well as the Conference Center will sell out for foliage season.

The final details of the Schedule of Events are still being completed. Highlights will include a cocktail reception to honor NGC President Mary Warshauer and NEGC Region Director Suzanne McCance. Also highlighting the first night will be a Small Standard Flower Show being coordinated by Maine Judges Council. When plans are finalized, they'll let other state floral designers know if they'll be accepting designs from other states. The keynote dinner speaker will be Drew Dumsch, the 2021 National Nature Center Administrator of the Year. He is the Founder and President/CEO of one of the premier nature centers in the Northeast -- The Ecology School in Saco, Maine. Since its inception The Ecology School has had 187,000 people go through its program which focuses on ecology, the environment, the local food movement and how to live more sustainably in harmony with nature. Its participants range from school

age children, to families to single adults who can attend overnight retreats as well as weeklong programs at the school. The second day will feature a photography program led by New Hampshire photographer Arabella Dane. Arabella is the former Chairman of the NGC's Photography Committee and is well-known as a wonderful photographer and judge for many photography competitions. Details are still being finalized on the program she'll be presenting. NEGC Region Director Suzanne McCance will preside over the Annual Meeting and Luncheon on the second day of the event. For those who decide to stay a second night, there will be opportunities to tour the quaint towns of Kennebunkport, Ogunquit, and York. There may also be another workshop for those who decide to stay a second night. And finally, we're told a **"Scarecrows on Parade"** competition will be held! Anyone who'd like to construct a scarecrow and donate it to the competition will be eligible for a cash prize determined by popular vote of attendees. All scarecrows will be used in a silent auction to raise money to benefit the NEGC. Any member from the New England states is eligible to compete for the prize. If you have questions, please contact **Suzanne Bushnell** at smbushnell@comcast.net. Registration Forms will be available sometime in July and will be sent to State Federation Presidents to pass on to interested members. The **Registration Form** and **Schedule of Events** will ALSO be posted on the NEGC website under the **MEETINGS tab** as soon as they're finalized. The website is www.newenglandgc.org.