

AFGC President's Report

October 25, 2023

Welcome to a new year with unlimited possibilities! I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to help guide our Arizona clubs in fulfilling and expanding the goals we have set for our organization for the next two years. AFGC has had a long line of very dedicated and organized presidents, and I will try my best to follow in their footsteps. I have always been impressed with the many activities our clubs are involved in. However, now that I've started looking at AFGC from a broader perspective and more in depth, I am even more amazed at the creativity and talents of our members.

Choosing a theme and a President's Project is an important decision for a new president. It can also be a little challenging. NGC President, Brenda Moore, has chosen three separate projects for her term: Plant America, Feed America; Plant America – Landscape for Wildlife; and Plant America – Plant for Pollinators. By promoting these projects on our website, I hope Arizona will support these programs over the next few years showing the impact that an individual gardener can make. We are already well on our way with Planting for Pollinators.

Based on an old saying "Sow – Grow – Show" and piggybacking on our previous theme of Seeding for the Future, we are now ready for *Growing Our Future*! When the Strategic Planning Committee identified eight initiatives to guide AFGC into the future, the seeds were planted. Now it is our task to develop, implement and nurture these proposals. To help accomplish this, there is a common thread throughout – and that is communication. If you remember, the key word to the future in the movie *The Graduate* was "plastics," now the key words, at least for AFGC, are "effective social media outreach"! To this end, the Technical Task Force has been meeting on a very regular basis for over a year defining content, design, messaging, and developing an implementation schedule. Our new Website 2.0 is in process, and you will see a preview of it today. This has been an extensive task, but hopefully with beneficial results by attracting new members, while providing better communication and greater resources for everyone.

An exciting and welcome consequence of designing a new website has been the updating of our state logo. Fuzzy and difficult to read after many years, we used the rug at NGC Headquarters in St. Louis with state logos as our guide. We feel it is a great representation of Arizona.

We are also looking at a new composition for garden clubs in the future. With the younger population working and not able to attend meetings during the week, many online clubs are forming. How these will fit together with our current structure has yet to be determined, but

we want to foster a connection. It would also be beneficial for us to have an affiliate relationship with other horticulture or environmentally related groups, such as botanic gardens and art museums.

A positive byproduct of the pandemic has been the ability to hold meetings online. We hope to take further advantage of this with training for various positions such as club presidents and treasurers. NGC is now offering courses like Environmental School online. I recently attended online zoom meetings for State Presidents and Regional Directors that were held by NGC and the Pacific Region Director. It was extremely valuable to learn what other states are doing. These meetings will continue on a quarterly basis. This may be something AFGC would like to adopt for Club Presidents and District Directors since we are such a large and spread-out state.

Arizona will be hosting the Pacific Region Convention in April 2025. An awesome, energetic, and enthusiastic team has been working on this for some time. They will be looking for participation from members in a variety of ways. AFGC is also looking for state fundraising ideas for next year. If you have some creative thoughts, let me know. Also, please let me know if you have other suggestions and/or concerns. Each club member is a key part of AFGC. We are a “grassroots” organization of like-minded individuals who believe in our vision statement:

*Empower people to beautify Arizona communities
while conserving our natural resources.*

Thank you for supporting AFGC and helping *Grow Our Future!*

Judy Kennedy
AFGC President