

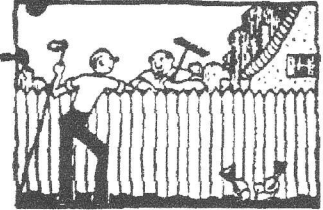


The Garden Spray

Bulletin of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc.

Affiliated with Gardeners of America and the Minnesota State Horticultural Society

December 1998, Special Issue



Special Issue

This issue contains **Opinions on the upcoming vote on disaffiliation from TGOA/MGCA.**
Vote to take place at the January 12, meeting.

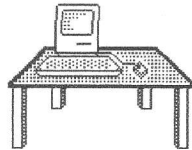
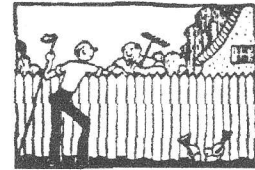


The regular issue of the *Spray* will be out first week in January or before

Date Tuesday, January 12, 1999
Place Lake Harriet United Methodist Church
49th and Chowen Avenue South
Dinner 6:30 PM
Business 7:00 PM
Program 7:30 PM
Cost \$7.50 if reserved in advance
\$8.50 at the door if extra meals are available

Important Note about Reservations

The 1998 permanent reservation list will remain in effect for this meeting. Check your mailing label. If it has a "p" or "pp" (one or two reservations) you are on the permanent list. If there is no "p" on your label, you are not on the permanent reservation list and must notify Kay Wolfe by Friday, January 8, to be assured a place at dinner. If you are on the permanent list and will not attend, you must notify Kay by the same deadline or risk being responsible for the cost of your dinner. Kay can be reached at 922-0762. Leave a message on her voice mail if you can't reach her in person or send her an e-mail at opperwolfe@worldnet.att.net. If you have reserved a dinner and on Monday or Tuesday you have an emergency where you find you can't attend, call Howard Berg. If the reservation can be sold to late-comers or drop-ins, you will not be billed.



The Editor's Desk

Chuck Carlson
Managing Editor

I will make my notes short to have more space for those wanting to make their position known on the vote to disaffiliate. Whatever happens in the election, I hope that the members of the club will not take it as a personal affront and continue their membership in our club. I consider MGCM one of the better clubs in the area so I would hate to see it affected by this issue.

If you are not sure of which way to vote, be sure you ask questions and read the opinion in this issue of the *Spray*.

It is too bad that two opportunities in our area in 1999 (The Mid-America region meeting in Iowa and the national convention in Green Bay) didn't come before the vote. Our attendance at these could be a learning experience about the national organization and it's value.

Our by-laws state that for this vote to be legal, a quorum of 40% of the membership is required. The 1999 membership totals 126, thus we must have 51 members present to vote on the issue. It also states that a proposal to disaffiliate requires a two thirds vote for passage.

In case abbreviations are not clear to some, here are a few;

- MGCM—Mens Garden Club of Minneapolis
- MGCA— Mens Garden Clubs of America (the original name)
- TGOA/MGCA—The Gardeners of America/ Men's Garden Club of America (the present name but sometimes either acronym is used separately)

Again I ask you to read the opinions, ask questions and vote at the January meeting

Coming Attractions

Tuesday, January 5, 7:30 p.m.

Board of Directors meeting
Eldon Hugelen's house

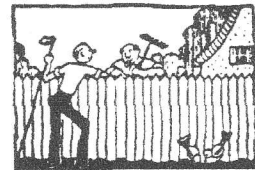
Tuesday, January 12, 6:30 p.m.

MSCM Dinner Meeting

- Vote on disaffiliation
- Induction of officers
- Program on Herbs
- Club Awards

Lake Harriet United Methodist Church
49th & Chowen Ave South

This is a special issue of the *Spray* provided to the membership for their information on the upcoming vote on disaffiliation.



Opinions ON DISAFFILIATION

Against the proposal

*From Russ Smith MGCM member
and Director of the Mid America Region*

Under the heading discussion in the proposal to disaffiliate the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis (MGCM) from The Gardeners of America / Men's Garden Clubs of America (TGOA/MGCA) formerly MGCA) states, "The club survey shows six times as many negative comments as positive comments about membership in TGOA". That statement is technically correct but quite misleading.

It should be noted that from the 135 club members, 49 survey forms were returned. This means that 36% of the membership returned the survey. Viewing the results from another direction, and assuming that those that didn't vote are satisfied with the operation of the club and saw no need to change our membership position, the 25 members of our club expressing negative concerns about belonging to TGOA/MGCA totaled 1 negative comment to five favorable or no comment.

Concerns

By category, the concerns of those who made negative comments were in general four areas:

- Not sure as to why we belong to TGOA/MGCA
- What do we get for our \$15.00 dues
- Dues to TGOA/MGCA are too high and a waste of money
- Would rather support the Arboretum or MSHS.

In answer to the first concern— why do we belong to TGOA/ MGCA?

As a member of a national organization the club has a better chance of surviving for the long pull. A local club without a glue created by a national organization like TGOA/MGCA will survive for a while but eventually fail due to attrition, old age of members or just lack of interest. The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis was initially formed as a member of MGCA over 50 years ago and still is a strong club.

In answer to the second concern — "what do we get from our \$15.00 dues?"

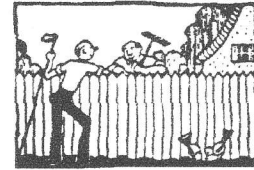
In addition to recognition as a part of a national organization, there is an annual national convention where local members can meet gardeners in and from other parts of the country and share friendship, gardening and other educational experiences. Our club sponsored the 1988 convention and most of the club's membership participated. We had a profit of about \$5,000 to our club.

We receive a magazine, *The Gardener* plus a Newsletter. This is a form of communication with the national organization and other gardeners and clubs.

A lending library is maintained at the national office and is available to all members. In addition to gardening books, the library has several slide shows available for use by our club or for purchase. Several of the slide show programs are currently being used as a fund-raiser for our club by our members showing the programs to other groups.

Each year a slide contest is held. Several of our members have participated in it and have won awards. A VCR tape is made of the winning slides and provided

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*Against the proposa lContinued
from page 3*

to each region for use at club meetings. Each year a calendar is published, using photos from the slide contest. Several of our members have had their photos used in the calendar. The calendar is also a fund-raiser for our club.

There is a Newsletter competition for the local clubs. Our editors have entered this competition and have been recognized for their publications.

Several other direct or indirect benefits accrue to members and to the clubs like ours if we choose to use them.

Programs such as:

- The Giant Sunflower and Pumpkin programs
- Youth Gardening,
- Gardening From the Heart

These are all national programs designed to involve local clubs with the general public.

There are national and regional award eligibility to affiliated clubs plus local awards.

National scholarships are available for those recommended by our club if the recipient has the credentials necessary to be one of those selected.

In answer to the third area of negative comments—"the \$15.00 dues is a waste of money and everyone wishing to belong to MGCM is forced to pay it."

The \$15.00 dues to belong to TGOA/MGCA is part of the dues structure of MGCM as is the \$17.00 dues to belong to the Minnesota State Horticultural Society and the \$10.00 dues to belong to the local club. It is noted that \$17.00 dues to MSHS is higher than the TGOA/MGCA dues. For the \$17.00, MSHS provides a magazine, A semiannual educational meeting and perhaps some other benefits but not as many benefits as does TGOA/MGCA.

In answer to the fourth concern—"a preference to participate more heavily in the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum or MSHS."

Many of our members already belong to the arboretum and all the members of the club belong to MSHS. If more participation is wanted, let's work together as a club and do it but I don't think dropping TGOA/MGCM will help. More participation could be realized by individuals pushing the cause and not by leaving TGOA/MGCA

In Summary

The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis has been a gardening organization for over 50 years. It was formed as a garden club as a part of the Men's Garden Club of America (now TGOA/MGCA). It has remained a part of that organization since inception and there is no reason why this tradition should be changed at this date.

The Vote

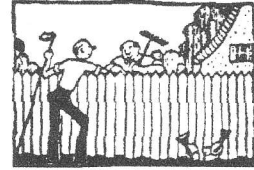
Duane Reynolds MGCM member

The question of our affiliation with MGCA has been talked about for a number of years. Areas of dissatisfaction have been raised and brought to national leadership. If change is slow or nonexistent, we need to recognize MGCM is one voice of many. What we believe to be in our best interest may not be suitable for the majority.

MGCM is a remarkable group of people. The voluntarism, dedication and ability to work for the common good and the future has been a hallmark of our club.

We have been selected to host the 2001 convention. This will take the effort

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*The Vote continued
from page 4*

of the entire group to be successful. Not successful in terms of attendees, money made or member gardens open for tour, but successful in terms of beneficial for our club. Working together, strengthening relationships and working for the common good.

Some progress has been made on the convention planning. More could have been done, but the question of our continued relationship with MGCA was raised. A vote to disaffiliate could place us in a position of canceling our hosting agreement. Contracts were signed with attention paid to escape clauses which would not result in penalties. The continuing discussion to disaffiliate could shift our commitment and resolve to work on the 2001 convention as a club. This, I believe, is one reason a decision was made to allow the members to decide what's best for the club.

In Summary

The Convention, the MGCA, the headquarters in Des Moines or for that matter the Arboretum or MSHS are not what's important. The MGCM and members are important and our continuing to work for our common good.

Wider Service

Clyde Thompson MGCM member

I have looked at other like clubs and discover in the American Rose Society and the North American Lily Society that the local clubs encourage membership in the national usually the founding organization. They mostly do this by collecting and forwarding dues to the national group. In the service clubs like the VFW and the 8th AAF Historical Society the locals continue to be part of a national group but differ on

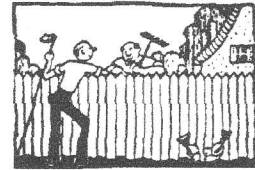
how the support works. Everybody has an opinion on how their church is related to a main body of administration to provide for larger world projects than a local body can support alone. One way is to provide for a budgeted amount from general funds, collect as part of the local club dues for the national or have a separate dues on a voluntary basis for members to elect.

The life memberships the local club provides for ex-presidents confuses the issue by using general funds to pay their dues. The concept of having a more interactive relationship with the national group through a regional group of all officers of the area garden clubs will help to bring the value of the parent organization more in focus. This has worked very well in the southwest and western USA. We have at MGCM a commitment to the national MGCA/TGOA to host the 2001 convention and our gardening friends in the regional area will help.

In Summary

My recommendation would be to carry out our commitment with a new reactivated regional group and work to make the national group more responsive to our interests and needs. After all, we have a proud history of 56 years of partnership with the MGCA/TGOA and some of our club's continued success is due to the ideas, helps, and materials furnished by our parent body. The gardeners of Minnesota are a hearty bunch and have accomplished many great things by working together on both a local and national level.

More opinions continued on page 6



On the Fence

Mary Maynard

We have an important vote coming up in January — on a proposal to end our affiliation with TGOA/MGCA. Right now, I don't know how I'll vote. I can see both sides of the issue, and here's what I see :

Reasons to stay with the National:

- Tradition. MGCM was originally chartered under the auspices of MGCA back in 1942. We have a long history with the national organization, and some of our members have been very active. Bill Hull has been President of the National, and there is a national award named in Bill's honor. As many of you know, I like tradition and history. *It tells us where we came from. It isn't something that I'd do away with lightly.*
- The 2001 convention. We have agreed to put on the 2001 convention. I feel like we have an obligation to do this, since we said we would. Once again, not something to throw over without careful consideration.
- The region is just getting activated. It would be nice if we could foster a closer relationship with other clubs in the region. It seems like a shame to bail out when this is just getting going.
- I like the calendars, especially when our club members are featured. The price is right, too.
- *Some of our members do participate in National activities and events — like the National conventions, seed trials, photography contests, etc.*
- The National does have other services — like a lending library, that we do not avail ourselves of.

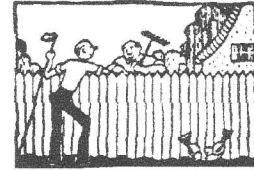
On the Other Hand:

- Many of the services that the National could offer us are already available from the Minnesota Horticultural Society or the Arboretum, both of which are local and much more convenient. We don't have to pay postage to borrow a book or video, for instance and we can browse through the catalog files.
- The Gardener magazine articles don't always apply to us northerners. It's understandable, since they need to cover the whole country, but it makes the magazine less useful to us. (I'm always proud, though, when one of our member's photographs is on the cover!)
- It's hard to get to a convention for me: I can't afford either the vacation time or the money to travel across the country. They sound like good events, but they benefit a very few people.
- When new members ask me, "What do I get for my \$15 dues?", it's hard to come up with a \$15 answer. The benefits, for a lot of people, are not obvious. On the other hand, it's easy to describe the benefits of a \$17 MSHS membership, or the \$10 local dues.

In Summary

So, I don't know how I'll vote in January. Maybe reading the other editorials will help. The only thing I know for sure is that our club is outstanding and I would feel very bad if any controversy arose out of this vote that would damage the fabric of our organization. I'm sure we're all mature enough to accept others' opinions without rancor. Be sure to come in January and vote.

More opinions continued on page 7



Don't be Myopic

Stanley Crist

The proposal to disaffiliate from our national organization strikes me as a bit like the idea of deciding not to send any more of our tax dollars to Washington – let's spend all of our money at home instead. It's very easy to become myopic in one's viewpoint, but we all know that we need to be concerned with what goes on beyond our immediate neighborhood.

So it is with gardening too. While we may feel very complacent about our own situation (i.e. we can get along without belonging to National!), there is *far more to gardening than what goes on in our own back yard*. We need to be encouraging and promoting gardening elsewhere, and at the same time, we learn from knowing what others are doing. Our national organization struggles because of inadequate funding, but instead of disaffiliating, let's do what we can to strengthen National. There are many people giving not only their time, but traveling at their own expense as well (including our own member Russ Smith) to attend meetings in various parts of the US to carry out the work of the National.

In Summary

Let's not be myopic and show our appreciation by strongly rejecting disaffiliation.

Gardeners, A National Community

Jan and Duane Johnson

The Men's Garden Club is a great organization. We have grown to be always over 100 members. We have many resources and experts within our club. Why, then, do we need to look to other re-

sources? We can remain an island unto ourselves. Wrong! In this era of instant communication, we are no longer isolated. We are an international gardening community. It's more interesting if we have knowledge of how other parts of the national world garden and TGOA can do that.

TGOA/MGCA provides many fine programs such as Gardening from the Heart and Youth Gardening which unfortunately MGCM has not taken part in recently.

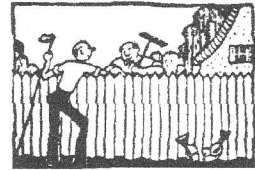
National conventions have given us a chance to see parts of the country we probably would not have traveled to and the workshops are most helpful. You get a chance to rub shoulders with the best gardening experts in the nation. It is unfortunate that more of us have not taken advantage of these conventions. They are usually held over a weekend so those of you who still work do not have to take much time off. Host clubs provide transportation from the airport and usually you don't need a car to get around. Perhaps since the next one is in Green Bay, more of us can take advantage of it.

MGCM is held in high regard by TGOA. We're always asked how Bill and Carol Hull are, he was the president of TGOA in 1964! Those who were at the 1988 convention in Minneapolis. tell us they can hardly wait to come back to Minnesota and see our members gardens. Many say it was one of the best conventions ever and that was the year or the terrible drought. It would be a huge insult to TGOA if we bailed out of the 2001 convention.

In Summary

If there are specific concerns about the national, perhaps you could speak to

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*Gardeners, A National community
continues from page 7*

those of us who have had some good experiences. Surely, it isn't the paltry sum of \$15 a year people object to - we spend more than that to take 2 people to a movie! Let us consider carefully the idea of isolating ourselves from gardeners all over the country who love gardening as much as we do.

Delay the Vote

Bob Voigt

I am writing this letter in response to the proposal presented at the November 10, 1998 meeting of the club. The proposal was for the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis (MGCM) to disaffiliate itself with the Gardeners of America (TGOA), national association.

I believe the issue needs more discussion before jumping to a vote at the next meeting. We need a presentation of facts on both sides of the issue. We need to learn about the benefits of affiliation and the downside of disaffiliation before we make a decision,

The proposal was based on a survey last spring of club membership. Only 36% of the members responded. Only 24 negative comments were received indicating a dissatisfaction with TGOA membership and its lack of benefits. While many acknowledged a lack of involvement, it is significant to note that 73% said they would help with the convention in 2001. It seems to me the conclusions were based on a very small sample and the survey needs to be reconsidered.

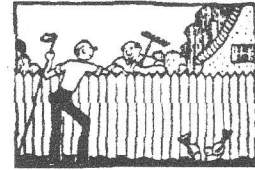
Several members have raised related questions with me and there must be similar issues from others:

- What do we get for our \$15 annual membership?
- What does TGOA do for me?
- Why should I support a national organization that appears to be more involved with other garden clubs in other parts of the country?
- Why don't we support local organizations more?
- What more could I be doing to benefit from membership?

Answers to these questions, and many others, will provide the information we need as a basis for the decision we will make.

In Summary

I hope we will all be open for a presentation, discussion and evaluation of both sides of the issue. Our decision should be based on what is best for the club as well as individual members. I believe considering both sides of the issue will lead to the right decision. We need to be fully informed by people who have a greater understanding of the issues. Let's not rush to a vote. There is too much to be learned and too much at stake if we make the wrong decision.



Tradition—Spurring— Sharing and Identity

Andy Marlow

I am strongly opposed to disaffiliating from The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America TGOA/MGCA. Several other people have written about this issue and I'll try not to be repetitive, but here are some of my reasons for wanting to stay part of TGOA/MGCA:

Tradition

MGCA chartered our club and, according to the guys who were old timers when I joined, helped guide the early days of MGCM. Over the years not only has Bill Hull served as MGCA President, but a number of MGCM members have played prominent rolls in the National. I think of Sherm Pinkham, who originated the idea for the endowment fund that provides for the upkeep of the national headquarters and served of the chair of the Endowment Committee for many years. Russ Smith currently serves on this committee. I also think of all the fine fellow gardeners I met at the 1988 National Convention, which we hosted, and the ones I am likely to meet at the 2001 Convention.

Spurring us on

TGOA/MGCA has led the way in many areas that have had an impact on MGCM. One is the giant pumpkin and giant sunflower contests, which MGCM enjoys and has much fun with. These have been going on at affiliated clubs across the country for many years, spurred on by TGOA/MGCA. The Bronze Medal is another TGOA/MGCA idea we have chosen to adopt. I am very honored to be one of the many Bronze medal winners across the nation. But the biggest change

promoted by TGOA/MGCA was the addition of women members to our club. We would very likely not have done this (at least not as soon as we did) if the National had not decided to admit women and pressure affiliated clubs to do the same.

Sharing of information

This doesn't affect MGCM members directly, but when I was editing the *Garden Spray* I learned a great deal about how to improve the publication by participating in the newsletter exchange with other MGC editors. This would not have been possible had TGOA/MGCA not existed. I'm sure many of our other club officials benefit in the same way in their respective jobs.

National identity

I like being part of a national organization. The fact that there are members in Ohio and Colorado and South Carolina who have similar interests and are willing to share ideas is very satisfying to me. Actually meeting these folks at conventions is just a bonus. I would not like us to become an island, isolated from our peers. I fear that disaffiliation would be the first step in withering away as a recognized and vital organization.

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MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.

1999

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