

Central East District Director  
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convention hotel  
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Central East District is in the P-P-P-P stage. We are ready for planting as the planning and program books are being published. I have been privileged to be their director for 22 years and am now retiring.

When I first began, I sent newsletters to all clubs while pretending to be an editor and a paper boy delivering the news from the state and national boards. I had to learn how to use a desktop computer, use clip art etc. I would call from my landline all 11 presidents in order to share their progress, new accomplishments, and who had new grandbabies. Then I would translate that information into a 3 minute quarterly report given at the Board Meeting and saved in their archives.

My garden club life was updated when we got a bag-phone, then a flip phone, and now most communication is via text on my apple phone; or if it is lengthy information in an email. The reports are still fun and interesting to write on a laptop and share.

Summitville Garden Club federated in 2010 is a night time club with 8 members and that number has increased to 10. I don't have time to share all they accomplish in the community. One of the projects they are most proud of is the Veteran's Memorial Park that they landscaped 5 years ago before it's dedication and still maintain. Their speaker in February was Jake Wyatt. Jake and his 12-year-old son shared so much knowledge that both he and the members lost track of time.

Small Town was federated in 2003 because of a grocery store parking lot plant exchange. Their much-needed fund raiser was the raffling of tickets to do 6 hours of yard work for one winner. Meetings are held of an evening with a carry in meal, hold their business meeting followed by great programs.

Twin City, originally named Gas City Garden club federated in 2018. They hold programs, collected monies for the tree project and play in the dirt while working in two cities on beautification projects.

During my term Garden Club of Marion has dedicated a blue star memorial at the National Cemetery located in Marion, have a National Award winning Butterfly Garden at Matter Park, planted trees in that park during my term of office and other noteworthy projects

Pendleton has planted tulips in the park every year and still does. They have held a flower show or horticulture show every year until 2024. Annually hold plant sales with incomes over \$1000, most of which is sent to state projects.

Petal & Stem have increased their membership almost continuously, work in the Arboritum, the Environmental Center, the Rose Garden. They have held auctions, plant sales, and selling mums to raise money for the Scholarship fund and other state projects.

Creative Hands plays with flowers, watches power points about flower arranging, has guest designers and gives money to state projects. We have had or now have members who are men, a grandmother, mother and daughter family, members born in different countries, young and old, wealthy and not so wealthy. All members arrive at meetings carrying buckets of greenery, flowers and tired faces. They leave with empty buckets, having used and shared materials, but at least one fresh flower arrangement, refreshed souls and smiles on their faces.

Only two clubs meet in the daytime now, all bring food but Creative Hands, they just bring buckets. Some clubs are casual in their dress, others are less casual. All have great, and sometimes not so great, programs. They all put in the work, play nice together most of the time, and keep paying membership dues.

Being director of this district has brought me pleasure beyond words. Installations given, programs presented or attended, gifts received and given with joy and sincerity. The sadness of losing members who were friends and the joy of meeting, knowing and having great experiences together with members defies description. I am what you see, and what you see is a person

who was intimidated and fairly shy, become someone who is no longer shy, has become a full-time cheerleader sharing the excitement and offering encouragement to all “my” clubs. I retire with pride and memories of wonders, accomplishments and a wider understanding of people and nature.

We have had three presidents from our district during my term, Ruth Moorhead, Ellen Elliott and myself. Central East District is a small part of being a Force for Good and I am a tiny part of this district. Thanks for your attention, hugs, giggling at my silliness and being a part of my memory basket. It is your turn now, Kathy Vermilion! May your adventures be wonderful and your challenges be few.

Just Joyce signing off.