

intracoastal

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living

Harbor Way Gardens



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March 1.....	April
April 1.....	May
May 1.....	June
June 1.....	July
July 1.....	August
August 1.....	September
September 1.....	October
October 1.....	November
November 1.....	December

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COVER PHOTO CAPTION:

A Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from Harbor Island Garden Club members in Harbor Way Gardens.
Back Row Left to Right: Melinda Walker (black dress,) Vicki Dull, Heidi Lee, Francine Streich, Ashley Miller, DeLaine Ferrell, Wylene McDonald, Zeke Partin, Cindy Jupp. Front Row Left to Right: Elise Running (in green), Beth Golder, Laura Kay Berry, Leigh Kelly.

We wish you and your families a happy, healthy and joyous holiday season with friends and loved ones, filled with many fond memories to treasure into the New Year. Whether you are celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or simply the joy of the season, we hope that you have a holiday full of cheer.

Our December Cover Story features a group of civic-minded women who spearheaded a project with the Town of Wrightsville Beach to install a Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker on Harbor Island as a tribute to our nation's military men and women. Harbor Island Garden Club member Kim Wilt, the club's Blue Star Committee Chair, described members having goosebumps at the dedication ceremony just prior to Veterans Day on November 9. Special thanks are due to HIGC members Cindy Jupp, Zeke Partin, and Kim Wilt, Leigh Kelly, Elise Running, Sheila McCuiston, Dot Balkcum and Kathy Gresham.

Intracoastal Living covered a number of worthy causes and non-profits in the December issue, including the sellout success of the Taste of Wrightsville Beach fundraiser for Weekend Meals on Wheels, the 2023 Waterman Hall of Fame fundraiser for the Wrightsville Beach Museum, and the Landfall Foundation's Grant Awards Ceremony. Our communities need our nonprofits and they need our support more than ever. Thanks to all those who help to make this a "Season of Giving."

We are pleased to welcome several new sponsors to *Intracoastal Living* and encourage our readers to patronize these business owners and all of our advertisers who help us to bring neighbors together. Welcome to Colleen Kochanek, co-owner of Blue Surf Arboretum West restaurant, a conveniently-located neighborhood gem with a full bar, great food and table service, and the best firepit and outdoor ambience around, as well as the original Blue Surf Café on Racine Drive. Both restaurants serve modern American cuisine. Welcome to Candice Vivian, the owner of OsteoStrong Wrightsville on College Road. Her new Wellness Center is dedicated to helping people improve their bone health. Thank you to Captain Ryan Saporito and his Sea Tow Wrightsville Beach crew for becoming a new content sponsor. December's column in *Intracoastal Living* has cold weather boating safety tips.

We welcome readers' story ideas, photographs, article submissions, or comments. Let us hear from you!

Best wishes for the Holidays!



George Clarke

PUBLISHER, *Intracoastal Living*

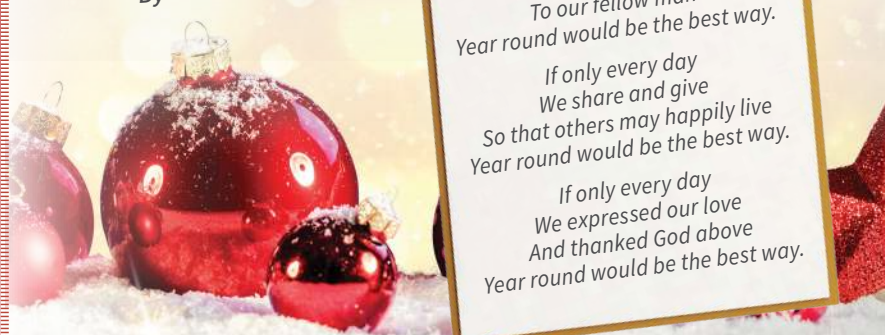
If Only

By Catherine Pulsifer

If only every day
Held the spirit of Christmas day
To capture that feeling always
Year round would be the best way
If only every day
We would be so kind
To our fellow man
Year round would be the best way.

If only every day
We share and give
So that others may happily live
Year round would be the best way.

If only every day
We expressed our love
And thanked God above
Year round would be the best way.





Garden Club Leaves Lasting Legacy

BY BETH KLAHRE AND GEORGE CLARKE, PHOTOS BY JACKIE WHITAKER PHOTOGRAPHY

Harbor Island Garden Club (HIGC) President Ashley Miller and Town of Wrightsville Beach Mayor Daryl Mills stand with U.S. Coast Guard members and HIGC's Leigh Kelly beside the newly installed Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker at the intersection of Keeler Street and Causeway Drive.



The Blue Star Highway Memorial Marker is shown here in Harbor Way Gardens prior to its installation on November 9, 2023.

The Harbor Island Garden Club (HIGC) in cooperation with the Town of Wrightsville Beach dedicated a Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker on November 9 to honor the men and women serving in our nation's armed forces. The dedication and unveiling of the Blue Star Memorial Marker on Harbor Island was attended by scores of residents, garden club members and town officials and was held at the intersection of Keel Street and Causeway Drive.

"It's difficult to describe how special the dedication was," says Kim Wilt, Blue Star chair for the Harbor Island Garden Club. "We all had goose bumps. It reminded us how important it is to take time to remember and honor our military and their families for their sacrifices."

As residents and visitors enter Wrightsville Beach, they'll now be able to see the Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker on the right side of the road after crossing the Heide Trask drawbridge. It serves as a daily reminder to give thanks to our nation's military who defend our freedoms.

"As a Harbor Island Garden Club member and a Wrightsville Beach resident, it's an honor to be a part of a community committed to leaving this lasting legacy," Wilt shares. The inscription on the Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker reads, "A Tribute to the Armed Forces who have defended the United States of America."

The Blue Star program first began with the planting of 8,000 Dogwood trees by the New Jersey Council of State Garden Clubs as a living memorial honoring men and women serving in the Armed Forces during World War II. The iconic blue star was chosen to symbolize the memorial



Harbor Island Garden Club members proudly gathered for the Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker dedication on Wrightsville Beach.

because it was used during the Second World War on service flags displayed in homes and businesses of families who had a son or daughter in the service. In 1945, the National Council of State Garden Clubs (now NGC Inc.) adopted this program and began a Blue Star Highway system that covers thousands of miles across the Continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. Blue Star Memorial Highway Markers have been placed along the way in states and municipalities ever since.

“The club was very pleased to bring this memorial to the Town of Wrightsville Beach,” says Wilt.

The Harbor Island Garden Club was organized in 1952. The present membership - 49 active members, 13 honorary members, two lifetime members, and four emeritus members - is comprised of beach residents, children of current members, and members who lived at Wrightsville Beach when they joined the club but later moved inland.



Harbor Way Gardens is the only public garden in North Carolina to have Witherspoon Roses.

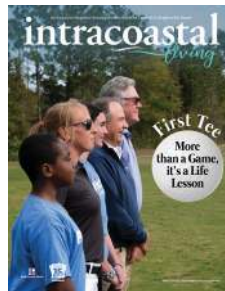
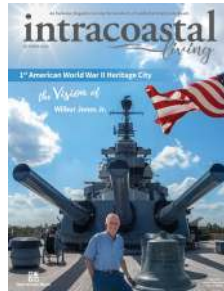
The garden club has a reputation for being an exemplary organization, winning many awards over the years and recognition for public service and beautification programs on Wrightsville Beach. Actively involved in local beautification, club members have worked closely with various community programs for environmental improvements. Each year, members donate hundreds of volunteer hours to maintaining the island gardens, supporting junior gardening programs, raising funds, and preserving our coast.

Harbor Way Gardens: A Beauty Spot

Harbor Way Gardens is an ongoing signature project of the Harbor Island Garden Club. The one-acre garden, known for being a popular destination for the island’s joggers, walkers, dogwalkers, and others seeking respite from the heat, also provides quiet places for visitors to reflect and enjoy native plants and flowers. As one of only three public gardens in New

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discovers and shares stories that build a stronger community.

Hanover County (the Arboretum and Airlie Gardens are the other two), Harbor Way Gardens also features a butterfly garden with plants that attract them and a children's fountain which also serves to cool off pets and people who wander in while walking the Loop. Harbor Way is also the only public garden in North Carolina to have Witherspoon Roses, thanks to a generous donation from a local resident.

The Harbor Way Gardens hosts a Plant It Pink Garden in October which is filled with blooming pink blossoms to honor breast cancer survivors and celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Club members also have adopted an official club flower, the Gaillardia, commonly known as the Beach Daisy, and the HIGC has planted plenty of them. Notably, Harbor Way Gardens has twice been selected by the Cape Fear Garden Club to be a stop on the Azalea Home Garden Tour thanks to tireless efforts of the Harbor Way Gardens Committee chaired by Elise Running. "We're proud of the garden and it's open for everyone to come visit," she says.



Members of the Harbor Island Garden Club placed pink ribbons on the pergola in Harbor Way Gardens to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



More commonly called a Beach Daisy, the Gaillardia is the official flower of the garden club.

Located on the west end of the Wrightsville Beach Park, Harbor Way Gardens began in the summer of 2003 when several members of the garden club approached the Township of Wrightsville Beach officials about an acre of town property located between West Salisbury Street and Causeway Drive. In previous years, the area had been used as a dumping ground for storm debris, but the ladies had another idea and went to the town's Board of Aldermen with a plan to design and plant a garden for public enjoyment. The Board of Aldermen agreed, and work began by the Wrightsville Beach Parks and Recreation staff as well the Town's Public Works employees to clear out the area and create pathways to border varieties of potential gardens.

In June 2019, the Cape Fear Garden Club (CFGC) presented its annual Beauty Spot award for outstanding neighborhood landscaping to the Harbor Island Garden Club for its Harbor Way Gardens. Cathy Poulos, then chair of the CFGC Civics Improvements Committee, explained that annual Beauty Spot Awards recognized both public and private properties in New Hanover County with outstanding landscapes in three separate categories: Neighborhoods, Business, and Residential. "We give these awards to not only recognize people who put forth the effort to beautiful our community but also to inspire others to do the same," says Poulos.

Four years later, the hardworking members of the Harbor Island Garden Club continue to beautify the community by volunteering countless hours to maintain several gardens around town. Their efforts are daily reminders of what a special place Wrightsville Beach is to live, work, and play. The members of this venerable 71-year-old club also continue to inspire others by championing civic projects like the Town's recent Blue Star Memorial tribute to our nation's Armed Forces.

Help Their Gardens Grow

To cover expenses incurred, the Harbor Island Garden Club has a fundraising project, Help Our Garden Grow, selling memorial bricks and blue stone pavers so that you can commemorate family members, pets and special occasions. *Intracoastal Living's* readers can support their work by purchasing a brick or paver for placement in Harbor Way Gardens with an engraved special saying to honor a loved one. All proceeds support the Harbor Island Garden Club, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and are tax deductible. The club's mailing address is P.O. Box 42, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480 and website is www.harborislandgardenclub.com.

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