

# Garden Club cultivates 40 years of history

by Polly Feuer  
FCO Guest Writer

The Country Hills Garden Club will donate eight volumes of photo albums and scrapbooks to the Fairfax Museum on July 8. The presentation will be made to Daryl Humrichouser, executive director of the museum.

The albums will be displayed in the museum's scrapbook room. Ms. Humrichouser says such donations provide insight into the contributions that service-oriented groups have made to the City of Fairfax.

The club, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, was organized by Frances Hobbs and Rosalyn Work. Its first meeting was held in January 1957. The 15 charter members lived in Country Club Hills, a suburban development of 300 homes, recently built on farmland pastures. They landscaped and gardened their own properties and worked with the Country Club Hills Civic Association to plant trees in the subdivision and to obtain signs for its three entrances.

Club members also quickly applied their talents to the larger Fairfax community. By mid-1957 they were helping plant trees and

boxwood on the grounds of Layton Hall Elementary School.

In September 1958 the school was the scene of the first of many flower and garden shows the club produced. The shows recognized the creative efforts of individuals in the community and displayed educational exhibits on a variety of garden club-related subjects and projects.

Some of the other projects the club engaged in over the years included dogwood and tulip plantings at John C. Wood Elementary School, perennial flower beds at the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute, trees and shrubs at Fairfax High School, and daylilies along the Layton Hall bicycle path, at the Country Club Hills recreation center, and the Fairfax Cemetery.

The club helped establish a walk-through garden at Commonwealth Doctors' Hospital, contributed benches and landscaping plants to Fair Oaks Hospital, and helped with the installation of a butterfly garden at Fairfax Nursing Home.

As a special Bicentennial project, the group renovated the grounds of the Truro Episcopal Church rectory. Also in 1976, club past-presidents Lois Marbert and Arlene Desmarais served on the Fairfax City



A vintage scrapbook photo from 1957: the club's boxwood and dogwood plantings at Layton Hall Elementary School.

Appearance Committee. They sponsored contests, implemented an environmental improvement program, ran a booth promoting recycling during the city's annual Fall Festival, and decorated the entrance signs to the city, which received the thanks of Mayor Frederick Silverthorne for "a wonderful gift for all to enjoy!"

Now in its fourth decade, the club continues to fulfil its motto of "meet and reap." It remains committed to recognize and promote beautiful lawns and flower beds in Country Club Hills through the award of its Beauty Spot of the Month. The club's meetings combine educational and social events. Experts are invited to talk on a variety of topics, and the members make field trips to places such as Oatlands plantation and the National Arboretum.

This spring a group from the club took the Walking Tour of Fairfax City with Fairfax Museum staff. Recently the members chose an October Glory maple to plant at the museum as a memorial to club past-president Jean Magnusson.

Four women from the membership in the 1950s are in the club in 1997: Kitty Arone, Mary Means, Jan Parrott, and Wendy Tierney. Betty Crawford, immediate past-president of the club, said that



Members of the Country Hills Garden Club display some of the 40 years of historical scrapbooks to be donated to the Fairfax Museum. Left, top row: Kathy Keitt, Jean Dair, Jean Soho, Pat Bonnes, Arlene Desmarais, Lois Marbert, Betty Crawford, June Hemphill. Bottom: Wendy Tierney, Nadine Hickey, Polly Feuer

it was the hope of the group in planning the album donation to the Fairfax Museum to share the memories of the many women who have been part of the Country Hills Garden Club projects.

The club's meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month. Anyone interested in attending may contact the president of the club, Nadine Hickey, at 273-3299.