

THE 114TH CONVENTION OF THE ONTARIO HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH
KATHARINE SMYTH



Some may not believe this,
but I have been happy to have been
your president since July 2018.

What a time it has been!

We started off doing normal things,
having monthly Officer's Meetings
by phone;



Our last board meeting at
Kempfenfelt in Innisfil Fall
2018 and having to try out a
few new places to host our
board meetings.

The Ivey Spencer Leadership
Centre in London was chosen.

Visiting Districts at their spring
AGM's was a highlight.



21/10/2016

Youth Group
at
Bracebridge
Horticultural
Society AGM.



Visiting District 12 at their AGM in Thunder Bay as Vice-President and meeting wonderful people who came to learn how to make wrist corsages and have a great weekend.



Visiting Societies/Clubs
and seeing their
hanging baskets as in
downtown
Amherstburg.



To be able to honor Past Presidents in an In Memoriam Service at Guelph Arboretum, OHA Oak Grove



To honor Ridgetown's 100th Anniversary as a Society by presenting the certificate to Harry Wyma, President of Ridgetown along with Margaret Laman, Director of District 11.



Watford-Warwick Horticultural Society AGM and Workshop



To have a potluck
meal with the
Bobcaygeon
Horticultural
Society



- **Answered countless emails and phone calls**
 - I wish I could have solved all the problems that came across my computer.
- **Visiting and speaking with members of different Societies/Clubs will always be the highlight of my presidency**
 - The greetings and graciousness I received in areas across this province will always be remembered.
- **OHA Awards given out each year brings honours to members who have done so much in their Societies/Clubs and Communities and I am humbled by their accomplishments**
- **Planning for the 2019 OHA Convention in Windsor**
 - It took up a lot of my time in working with committee chairs from my district.
 - Hottest day of the year had to be the Saturday of the convention

Head table at 2019 OHA Convention



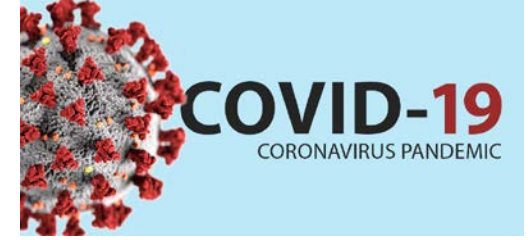
- Floral and other competitions were excellent.
- Speakers brought their varied expertise.
- We all learned a lot and were able to connect with friends from other parts of the province that we had come to know at other conventions.
- Who would have guessed it would be our last in person convention for awhile. And yet here we are in 2021 at a virtual convention.



GardenOntario™ Trademark

- After many years I received the report from Carter's Law Firm on July 9th that the Canadian Intellectual Property Office has now approved the OHA Trademark application.
- GardenOntario has been approved for advertisement
- There will be 2 more stages before final registration

And then it happened... A Pandemic and Lockdowns.



- Meetings were cancelled, speakers were cancelled, meeting places were cancelled, and everybody stayed home.
- No dinners out, no family trips, no school, no handshakes, or hugs
- No garden tours, no plant sales, no flower shows, no membership drives, no meetings with friends or families.
- Everyone, except those who lived through the Pandemic in 1919, thought it won't last long. How quickly things changed.
- OHA worked extensively with OMAFRA to ensure Societies/Clubs received their Grants early and advocated for relief funding in 2021.
- OHA was in constant communication with OMAFRA related to COVID-19 provincial government protocols, closures and the latest information from Local Public Health Authorities related to the work of Districts, Societies and Clubs.

- Then, our members heard about Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, and meetings started happening virtually.
- Speakers from around the world were giving presentations at meetings.
- Free webinars were being held. YouTube videos were being watched and anything to do with gardening was booming.
- “Garden” is at the top of the list on Google.
- Sixty per cent of the population support gardening products in one way or another.
- New people wanted to grow flowers or their own vegetables, anything to be outside and enjoy their back yards.
- Resiliency and determination to continue on a Society/Club’s work has been the norm during this time.
- Thank you, for all your hard work and continued success.

I have been blessed to work with such a fine team of people, those who are the Officers of the association and the Directors who make up the board and keep in touch with all the Societies/Clubs in their Districts.
Thank you all. I am only as good as the people I have worked with.



I would like to thank District 10 Shelley MacKenzie for all the work she did in getting this virtual convention started.

Thank you to Dian Chute, the current Director, Joyce Schlegal and Jim Mabee for stepping up to continue what Shelley started.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped make this a memorable convention.



OHA District 10
Thames Valley

Thank you for
*Keeping
Ontario
Beautiful™*



Charles Schultz once said.

“May your days be filled with blessings of love, peace and joy.”

“Take time to stop and smell the roses.”



Katharine Smyth

Ontario Horticultural Association President 2018-2021



MOTION TO APPROVE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MOTION: That the 2019 and 2020
President's Report be accepted,
as presented. Katharine Smyth,
District 11/Bob Heil, District 6.
Carried.