



Sandra Mazur, Nominated for 2nd Vice President

I have been nominated by the Dryden Horticultural Society and accepted the nomination for the position of 2nd Vice President of the Ontario Horticultural Association.

This August marks 50 years of my volunteering within my community. I began volunteering as a Teen-Aid at McKellar Hospital in Thunder Bay. It was the start of a long volunteering career where I met so many wonderful individuals from all over the World. My volunteering continued over the years even when I worked full time and had children at home to transport to their many activities. Volunteering becomes a way of life when you enjoy meeting people and always answer the call for "help needed" from within your community, your children's school or with organizations that you have a passion for. In many instances my family joined in on volunteering opportunities over the years.



I joined the Thunder Bay Horticultural Society in 2004 after attending as a guest hearing speakers and attending plant auctions. I began volunteering as a cashier at plant auctions and my volunteering increased from then on. I have held a position on the Executive of the Thunder Bay Board for many years helping to organize and plan events. I sat as the Outreach Chair and loved attending events in the public to promote the society. For 6 years I held the District 14 Directors Position. Like everything else in the world, it was a difficult path to navigate through the Covid pandemic, but we made it. As with many societies and aging members, the challenging task has been to get the younger generation interested in joining. That is one thing that Covid gave us a boost with, as so many of the younger generation began to garden due to food shortages, empty shelves and price increases. We are now working on targeting those new gardeners to join our organization. All societies need to be reaching out to these younger gardeners. They are the future for ensuring our societies continue to thrive.

After living in Rural Thunder Bay most of my life, I moved from Kakabeka Falls to Dryden, a few years ago. There I joined the Dryden Horticultural Society where I enjoyed my time visiting gorgeous gardens and listening to fascinating new speakers. I continue to be a member of Dryden Horticultural Society but have now made a move to the small town of Atikokan, Ontario. Atikokan is known as the Canoeing Capital of Canada. It is the gateway to outdoor adventures in Quetico Provincial Park and the White Otter Wilderness Area. I am surrounded by beautiful lakes no matter what direction you travel. In 2.5 hours, I can travel to Dryden or to Thunder Bay or even to Fort Frances for a Horticultural Society meeting. Thunder Bay just started a brand-new Gardening Group called Superior Gardening Club. With it being located on the beautiful shores of Lake Superior the name is very appropriate. I plan to attend a meeting and join this group as well.

I am the Past District 14 Director and I have held a variety of committee positions on the Provincial Board. For 7 years I have sat on the Competitions Committee and held the Chair of Creative Writing. I enjoy reading everyone's submissions before I pass them on to be judged. I also sit on the Corporate Sponsorship and Fundraising Committee and in the past, I chaired the Conservation and Environment Committee and sat as the North-East Representative on the

Officers and Finance Committee. This past year as the 2nd Vice-President I have participated in Officer and Finance Committee meetings and the Awards Committee Meetings. Life has been extremely busy this spring as Officers meet regularly with the Convention Committee in preparing for a great Convention within their budget. With many other committee meetings, it can sometimes be a week of 3 or 4 conference calls. Even though I sat as a member of the Officers, I did not envision how much work takes place behind the scenes when I took on the position of 2nd Vice President. Members of societies/clubs should truly be grateful to those that keep the everyday running of the OHA continuing as it provides so much to societies/clubs, that many of us take for granted.

I have been married for 45 years to my husband Fred and we have a daughter and two sons. We have three biological grandchildren but our grandchildren number "is many" as we gained quite a few in over 18 years of fostering. I advocated for every child in my care to receive proper medical attention and fair treatment and assisted many of these families in transitioning their children home successfully. We still have wonderful relationships with many children and their families today. During the years our children were growing up, I supported and advocated for them and their interests as well. I sat on Parent-Teacher Committees at school along with the Parent Fundraising Committee for school play structures, class trips and other ventures. I also assisted with Hockey Tournament Committees along with other various groups throughout the years. Additionally, I spent 23 years with Girl Guides of Canada as a leader in Sparks, Brownies, Guides and travelling and partnering with our Path Finder Unit. I also held positions at all levels and finished a term as the Guides Canada Public Relations Chairwoman for Ontario. I met many girls and leaders across Canada who I have remained friends with over the many years. My volunteering also extended to the Hymers Agricultural Society where I held many positions but was so proud to accomplish the "restructuring" of a Volunteer Lounge for our workers to take their breaks out of the hot sunshine. I became President for 3 years, chairing the board and organizing their fall fair until a health issue forced me to give it up. During all those years I managed the fair PR with the media and attended schools to promote the fair with our seed handouts encouraging children to enter contests at the fair. I have been a member of The Royal Canadian Legion Branch #225 for over 20 years and spent many years volunteering in various positions within the legion and on the board. I continue to sit as a Director with the Legion Seniors Apartment Complex in Kakabeka Falls, assisting in running a smooth operation as well as ensuring that someone hears their voice and brings it forward at a meeting. Since I was just a child, I have had a passion for gardening, but only recently have I found more time to really be out in my garden whenever I desire. In addition to my flower beds, I grow and preserve our vegetables, berries, and fruit. I have a small pond but seldom find enough time to sit to enjoy all my surroundings as summer goes so quickly. I have shared my love of camping, fishing and being out in nature with my own children and those I cared for over the years. I hope to enjoy the new lakes in my community this summer.

I'm excited about the "New" Family scholarship we are introducing for members and/or their family members beginning in 2025 and I also look forward to positive results from the work we have done to create the opportunity for our members, the societies/clubs, and the OHA to benefit from the agreement we have made with Dubois Agrinovation. I look forward to assisting the OHA in rebranding as GardenOntario and moving our organization into the future with a stronger, more youthful membership. It is going to take work and assistance from all our members, but I know we CAN DO IT! So, let us create a goal to *grab those new gardeners and welcome them* into our GardenOntario Societies/Clubs.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Mazur, OHA
2nd Vice-President