

POINSETTIA HISTORY

Our first poinsettia sale was held during the 1996-1997 club year when I was president. At that time, the Ways and Means chairman had to be recruited by the president herself as this was not an elected position or board position. That year I asked Joan Fleming to serve as my chairman. She had moved here from Vermont where she was a businesswoman who owned her own store featuring Linens, Window Treatments, and Curtains.

Her suggestion was to try a Poinsettia Sale which was something we have never done before. We thought it was worth a try at least for one year for the following reasons:

We had a chairman who had actually run a large scale poinsettia sale in Vermont to help the high school students raise funds for a trip to France. She did this for 2 years.

She had a personal friend who owned a greenhouse business from which we could order our plants.

With her business background she knew what information, forms, tracking systems etc. we needed to run the sale so we would be starting out with a great deal of "know how" and an organized system.

At that time a Ways and Means project had to be approved by a vote at the board and general meetings. Much to our surprise that first year we made a profit of \$10,500 and decided to repeat the sale the next year.

Highlight of the 1997-1998 poinsettia sale was the fact that our chairman Joan Fleming fell off a chair installing a window treatment for a customer the day before our plants were to be delivered. Trooper that she was she appeared on Poinsettia Day seated in a wheelchair with her broken ankle in a cast and ran the entire operation with a smile. Our profit that year was \$13,970 which increased the amount in our Philanthropic Fund to such an extent that we voted to increase our scholarship awards to \$1000 each instead of the \$500 we had been giving for years.

Over the years we have changed our delivery location from St. James Church, to Hatters Park and finally to the PAL building. We have changed growers several times and we have refined about every aspect of paperwork etc. due to the outstanding chairmen who have run this sale. Although we have changed and improved many things from our first try at this sale...one thing has always remained the same...it is being supported by enthusiastic and talented members each year and this sale has made it possible for our club to be well known in the community for our philanthropic giving.

I have always thought it was a great project because we did not need to rely on selling something only to our friends each year, but could escalate our sales by selling to the businesses in town. We did not need to spend hundreds of dollars on a fancy black tie event but just buy a plant. Congratulations to all of our past chairmen who have made this a project for which we are well known not only in the GFWC/CT but in Danbury and the surrounding area.

Anita McCord