



**Newsletter of the
North Coast Hosta
Society
Volume 7 Issue 6
October 2023**



2023 CALENDAR

October 21 <i>Saturday</i> <i>11:00 AM</i> <i>Clubhouse</i>	Jon Soucek/Bob Kuk Annual Memorial Meeting Costume Halloween Party <i>NCHS will supply meat; members sides & dessert</i>
November	No Meeting
December	No Meeting

Editor's Note

As I have confessed before, I am fortunate to be able to tap into the articles written by very knowledgeable people for other hosta societies. Included in this issue is a detailed discussion of garden markers and ways to label our beloved hostas.

I have also included descriptions and information about the 3D plant labels offered by our members, David and Mary Bibby.

Jim Spuhler has added his hints and I have shared mine. **If anyone would like to add comments to include in the next issue, please contact me.**

Cindy Hughes, Newsletter Editor

President's Message

Hello Hosta Friends,

It is a crisp fall day, 59 degrees and windy as I put together this message. There was a 30 percent chance of rain, but that never occurred. It is important that we get a sufficient amount of rain going into the winter so that the plants, trees and shrubs especially can withstand winter's drying winds. Be sure that your gardens are moist before the ground freezes.

Our board met to plan our 2024 season. We will again have some nice events to enjoy. Our annual auction and another poker run are scheduled as well as other events. Keep an eye on the website and future emails for all the details. As always, we will be fed well.



Our group enjoyed the Plant Swap in July at the beautiful Century homestead and gardens of Marianne Woodside in Doylestown. Our members are becoming more comfortable with "stealing" plants when it comes to choosing a wrapped plant or taking one that is already opened and comfortable with its new owner. No hard feelings. I hope! It is obvious that Marianne loves her home and gardens. And, of course, our members brought delicious food to share.

Our annual end of the year Memorial Meeting will take place on Saturday, October 21 at the Pine Lakes Clubhouse. This will be a Costume Party so put on your thinking caps and come up with a winning costume. There will be prizes.

The club will supply the meat, the members will bring a side dish or dessert. This is a very well attended event, so you may want to double your recipe if it only makes a small amount. I hope to see many of you there.

Barb Rauckhorst, President NCHS



Jon Soucek/Bob Kuk Annual Memorial Dinner
Saturday October 21 11:00 AM
The Pine Lakes Clubhouse*

This meeting has a Halloween theme, so get into the spirit and wear your spookiest, funniest costume - or maybe be a Super Hero or super Fan?

The club will provide Sloppy Joes, chicken tenders, coffee, tea & water.

Members A-L are requested to bring sides and M-Z bring desserts.

An RSVP to Joyce Spuhler by October 19 would be appreciated.

440-846-2634 or jlsjjs@att.net

*10949 Woodrun, Strongsville, 44136 directions below right corner



Oh my, what will I wear?

Don't worry. This is a group dedicated to the "Hospitality Plant". We want you to share a meal with people who love hostas no matter what. Our last Halloween costume meeting was great fun and the creativity of our members was amazing. So come, bring a friend and enjoy!



Thanks to Midland Hosta Society for inviting us to their Ice Cream Social on August 19. Attendees had an opportunity to make Fairy Sticks, two types of dragonflies or decoupage a clay pot.



And, of course, there was delicious ice cream.

It was a beautiful day at the 50 Shades of Green Nursery in Southington, Ohio. Leslie has a good assortment of plants, many of which came from Van Wade.



2024 Hosta of the Year
'Mini Skirt'

(Walters Gardens, Inc. 2013)

Color - Variegated

Size - Mini (7"ht x 14"w)

Habit - Mounding

Bloom - Purple

Parentage - sport of 'Mighty Mouse'
 Wavy, thick, blue-green leaves with creamy yellow margins in spring turning to creamy white by summer. Pale purple flowers on short scapes in mid-

Directions:

Going NORTH on West 130th Street cross Turnpike Bridge to the first Street on your left Burlwood Drive. Turn left and follow signs to Club House.

Going SOUTH on West 130th Street cross Albion Road(Maria's Garden Center is on your left) The first street on the right is Burlwood Drive Turn right and follow signs to the Club House.

Garden Pens: Which ones Work Best

By Don Rawson reprinted from Michigan Hosta Society
Hosta Happenings April and July 2023

For the devoted, hard-working gardener, nothing is more frustrating than losing garden markers along with the correct identification of their horticultural treasures. The chaos and confusion that ensues in such a circumstance can be quite traumatizing, particularly if no maps have been drawn up for each flowerbed beforehand. Through the years, I've personally heard many a story about animals, children, unappreciated "friends," and hired workers who have pulled out or destroyed plant stakes which were strategically placed throughout the landscape. Even unusual weather events can create havoc. The effort to re-identify hostas and other plants can be painstakingly time consuming and difficult.

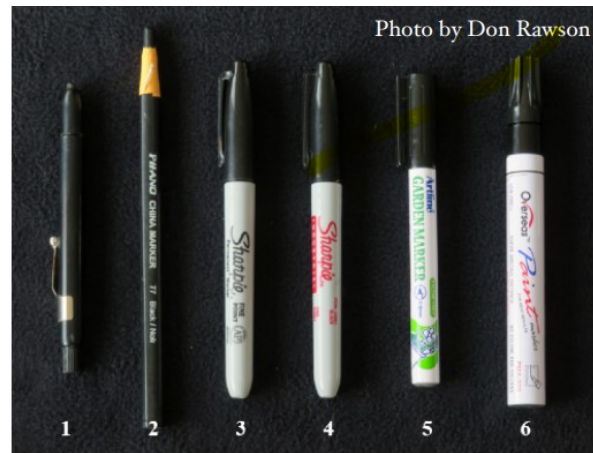
Likewise, plant stakes with writing or labels that gradually fade or peel off are quite troublesome. Some of the writing instruments employed by amateur gardeners are not designed for outdoor use where rain, snow, ice, and UV light can rapidly render them illegible. UV radiation is not only damaging to humans – causing wrinkles and premature aging – but it discolors and degrades plastics, paper, clothes, furniture, wood labels, and other commodities. Excessive UV light even inhibits the growth processes of almost all green plants.

So then, just what types and brands of pens and markers work best in the garden? Today, any well-stocked office supply store has a gamut of writing instruments, ranging from pencils and crayons to ballpoint pens, gel tip markers, felt tip pens, paint pens, and a host of others. Unfortunately, most markers and pens do not disclose if they are rated for outdoor use (and sadly, most are not!). Purchasing a variety of markers to find out by trial and error which ones are well-suited for labeling plants can be avoided by learning from the experience of other seasoned gardeners. They can often provide helpful advice!

An Array of Garden Pens

Being the inquisitive person that I am, during the summer of 2022 I went about setting up a study to compare different options for writing on garden stakes. The material the plant stake is constructed of – steel, aluminum, plastic, or stone – can make a difference, I assume. Throughout my gardens, all of my stakes are aluminum. I was interested in finding out not only which markers write the best, but most importantly, which hold up the longest outdoors.

Here are the markers and pens which I acquired:



Listo Grease Pen

As the inventor of grease marking pencils, Listo has been manufacturing this type of writing instrument as well as others since 1921, establishing a good reputation in the market. The Listo black grease marker, sold in a set of 12, comes in the form of a refillable pencil that is easy to use; there's no need to peel away a layer of paper to expose a waxy core. The marker is nontoxic, it can write on wet or damp surfaces, and it can be wiped off of nonporous surfaces with a cloth. However, in my experience, the print can be smeared somewhat easily if you are not careful to avoid doing so. Otherwise, a Listo Grease Pen appears to be a viable option for writing on plant stakes.

Markers for Plant Stakes

Item	Description	Amazon.com	Price per Unit
1	Listo 1620 Grease Pencil	\$12.99 / box of 12	\$1.08
2	Dixon Phano China Marker, 77 Black	\$13.31 / box of 12	\$1.11
3	Sharpie Permanent Marker 30001, Fine Black	\$7.78 / box of 12	\$.65
4	Sharpie Pro Industrial 13601, Fine Black	\$15.75 / box of 12	\$1.31
5	Artline Garden Marker, Black	\$15.75 / box of 12	\$1.31
6	Overseas Paint Marker, Oil-base PMA 520	\$13.99 / box of 12	\$1.17

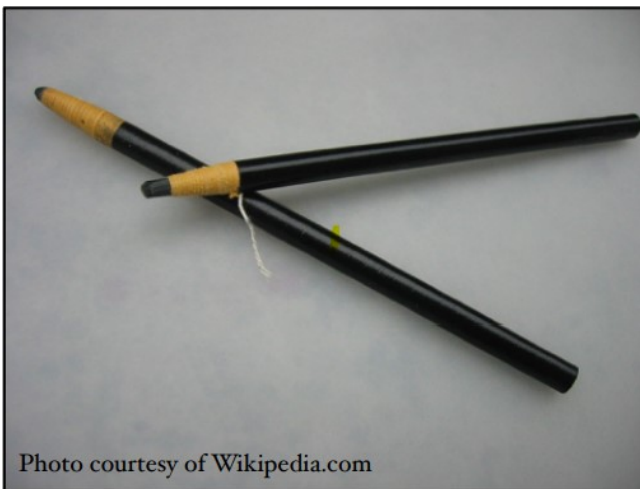
Dixon Phano China Marker

What about the Dixon Phano China Marker? Let me begin by saying that Dixon has been around for a very long time – over 200 years!

The son of a ship captain, Joseph Dixon had a curious mind and an entrepreneurial spirit. As a lad, he enjoyed experimenting with various uses for graphite found on his father's sailing vessels. He mixed the mineral with clay and water, rolled it into strips and baked it in his mother's oven. He then pressed the mixture into grooved cedar wood and presto – the first Dixon pencil was created, way back in 1812.

The Classic Yellow No. 2 pencil (with which we are all so familiar) was introduced by Dixon in 1913. The yellow pencil was originally manufactured with a brass ferrule, but was temporarily changed to green plastic due to a metal shortage during World War II. The now-iconic color scheme (yellow pencil with green ferrule to hold the eraser) continued after the war, but with a metal ferrule.

Dixon also manufactures a peel-off China marker, somewhat similar to a pencil, but with a waxy core. Like a grease pen, a China marker is an excellent option for writing on surfaces both indoors and outdoors, creating a thick, bold line that stands out. The waxy core is exposed by using a pull-string to peel away a paper wrapping. Great for creating lasting marks on a wide variety of materials, both porous or non-porous, and the marks can be easily removed.



There is no need for a sharpener since a China pencil is wrapped in paper with a tear string for easy sharpening.

China markers are available in black as well as a selection of bright, brilliant colors. They are non-toxic, so they are safe for all ages. Formulated to work well on film, glass, metal and plastics. China markers are water resistant and colorfast, but still removable from nonporous finishes.

Sharpie Marker

For many folks, the word Sharpie is synonymous with marker. As one of the most popular brands of felt-tip markers manufactured and sold worldwide, the Sharpie is well-suited for a variety of day-to-day applications. In fact, Sharpies are the writing utensils of choice for astronauts aboard the International Space Station because of their usability in zero-gravity situations. According to Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, who commanded the International Space Station in 2012–2013, “you can hold it any which way and it still works.”



“Sharpie” was originally a name designating a permanent marker launched in 1964 by the Sanford Ink Company, but in the last few decades, the name has been widely expanded to include a variety of previously unrelated permanent and non-permanent pens and markers formerly marketed under other brands.

In my search to find writing instruments which are well-suited for outdoor use, I acquired the very popular Sharpie Fine Point Permanent Marker as well as the Sharpie Pro Industrial Permanent Marker. I am somewhat skeptical that either will last very long outdoors without fading, but that will be determined over the next several months. More recently, I have read about Sharpie Extreme Permanent Markers which the manufacturer claims can fight the extremes with its fade-resistant formula.

Artline Garden Marker

Next on the list is the Artline Garden Marker. The manufacturer swears that this writing instrument is ideal for marking on plant labels because it is UV light resistant, water resistant, and quick drying. The Artline Garden Marker is designed for marking on plant

labels, flower pots, and other gardening tools, and is suitable for both indoor and outdoor use.

The reviews I've perused rate the Artline Garden Marker high (4.5 out of 5 stars). In fact, one independent study staunchly asserted that, "you win half the battle of creating beautiful and long-lasting plant labels when you have in hand the Artline Garden Markers. These models might be the magic marker pens you have always been looking for. Not many markers can leave clear and smooth lines on porcelain or stainless-steel surfaces. Luckily, this Artline pen is among the few, as it is ideal for writing directly on flowerpots and plant buckets."

Maybe the Artline Garden Marker is well worth the cost (as the most expensive of the six markers I purchased). As a side note, the ink can be removed with a cloth and a bit of acetone; it will wipe completely clean. You can also use fingernail polish remover as long as it has acetone in it. The tags will look like new!



Photo courtesy of artlineworld.com

Overseas Paint Marker

My final test subject is the oil-based paint marker made by Overseas (an appropriate name for a product manufactured in China).

Paint pens, including those made by Overseas, come in all colors of the rainbow. This manufacturer maintains that their oil based paint markers are chemically stable, light-fast, quick-dry, odorless, non-toxic, xylene-free, acid-free, and environmentally friendly, and furthermore, that if you are not satisfied with the Overseas Paint Pens, they will refund your money. To me, that sounds like a good product!

A paint pen writes on just about everything and the ink dries in a few minutes. Shake the pen well, hold the pen with the tip up and press with your thumb (to let all the air out for even distribution of ink), then point the pen downward and press to let the ink flow to the tip.

These pens seem to be the ultimate choice for durability. One drawback may be the wide tip (2 to 3 mm diameter) and the drying time required. On the other

hand, the aluminum barrels can be recycled once the ink is spent!

Summary

My test study of six writing instruments seeks to determine which products are easy to use, which are suitable for writing on plant stakes, and most importantly, which are capable of withstanding the conditions found outdoors throughout our gardens. My test subjects – aluminum plant stakes – were placed outdoors in the garden (in full sun) and will be evaluated over the next several months and years. Updates will be published periodically in future editions of the newsletter.

...Knowing that the Artline Garden Marker is specifically designed for my application makes me hopeful that this will be an ideal fit. Plant stakes, showcasing a variety of writing instruments in an effort to determine which ones are best for the gardener.

Garden Pens: Part II

The No. 2 Pencil – an Alternative to Garden Pens and Markers?

After the previous newsletter, I received feedback from several readers who shared their preference for using a common pencil on garden stakes and tags. This piqued my interest, particularly because I too have grabbed a pencil to write on plant tags when a garden pen was not conveniently available.

Using Pencil on Garden Labels

Plastic and metal garden labels are often used in the nursery trade. In addition, plant labels made from plastic window blinds are a thrifty way to mark plants in the landscape. Gardeners sometimes bury a label under a plant in the event that the plant stake is lost or destroyed.

Even underground for years, pencil marks on plastic and metal blinds show up well against the white background.

Cheryl Proctor of Sherwood, MI wrote, "I have had good luck (unexpectedly) writing with lead pencil on pieces of window blinds. I hastily used this method one summer to identify plants until I had time to create a better marker. The next year, I was surprised when I looked at several of these markers and found they were still clearly legible. Some of the markers had been pushed down into the dirt, but when I pulled them up, I could read them just fine. The window blinds I use are plastic. I use a plain No. 2 lead, although I like Ticonderoga pencils. Attached are pictures. The marker for 'Frozen Margarita' I made last year. The remainder are a few years old. Some were in the ground next to the plant, others pushed com-



Photo courtesy of Cheryl Proctor



Garden labels are marked with a No. 2 pencil by Cheryl Proctor in her Michigan garden. Some are still clearly legible years later.

pletely down in the soil. Although some markers are light in color, they are completely legible.”

Removing pencil from plastic tags is a bit easier. Penciled writing on plant tags can be erased. Or, simply dampen a sponge with warm water and liquid dish soap and work the area in a circular motion. A mild abrasive such as Soft Scrub or baking soda will speed the cleaning process. Rinse with water.

Another gardening friend, Mike Greanya of Jackson MI, wrote “My personal favorite? Good ole No. 2 pencil, I use No 2 all the time and I always have one behind my ear when I am in the garden I use them on the plastic widow blinds that I cut to the size of the plant I am marking and put the date and source on top and the plant name along the length of the blind. The metal blinds do not keep the pencil for very long though, so I stay away from them unless it is a very temporary tag. A pointed end makes it easier to slide into the ground and I use a shovel or my trowel to slice open a slit to slide the marker deep into the ground. If too high, frost heaving and wind can dis-

lodge them. I don't use them for permanent markers. I usually replace them when I get my Brother label maker out and make a lot of permanent labels all at the same time. You can even use tooth paste to clean pencil off the labels!”

Using Pencil on Metal Plant Stakes

While pencil works sufficiently for writing on plastic and metal blinds, in my experience it does not work well for writing on metal plant stakes. First of all, a metal plant stake has a smooth surface and the pencil lead does not leave a good mark. Furthermore, plant stakes written on with pencil are difficult to read because the plant names do not show up against a gray or silver background. The color of the lead and the color of the metal is just too close to the same.

Secondly, the pencil lead gradually oxidizes over a fairly short period of time when exposed to the elements. After a few months, the writing is nearly illegible. Perhaps a pencil could be used if a plant stake is spray painted a light color beforehand with a matte finish.

My testing involved a No. 2 pencil on aluminum, stainless steel, and galvanized stakes. The plant names were hard to read initially and became nearly impossible to make out six months later. My conclusion is that garden pens, engraver pens, and label makers are a much better option for plant stakes in the garden. While a pencil is fine for writing on



Plant stakes constructed of different materials (aluminum, stainless steel, and galvanized) were marked with a No. 2 pencil, then placed in the garden. The plant names were difficult to read because the pencil lead is so close to the same color as the metal.

blinds to bury under the plant and for labels inside pots, these other options are much easier to read and are more professional in appearance.

Tips for Cleaning Plant Tags

Want to clean marking pen or pencil off plastic name tags?

The good news is that there are a few household items that can work in many circumstances. Your options for removing marking pen from plastic-like plant tags depends both on the type of marking pen and the type of plastic. Marking pens fall into two basic groups: water-based and oil-based. Keep in mind that some solvents could alter the plastic, creating buff marks or alter the color of the plastic, so trial them on a small area beforehand. The nice part is that once you find what works, you can get a lot of life out of the same plastic tags instead of tossing them into the waste basket.

Two products that work well for removing marker are methyl hydrate (methanol) and mineral spirits (paint thinner). If you have a lot of plant tags, it's best

to dispense the product (methyl hydrate or mineral spirits) into a container, dip the plastic plant tag in, and then rub with a rag, sponge, or swab. Once your tags are marker-free, wash them thoroughly in dish soap until any trace of the other products is gone.

Harsher chemicals such as acetone and lacquer thinner can damage the plastic's surface, softening it, smearing it, or even dissolving the plastic. For further information, refer to "How to Remove Marker From Plastic".

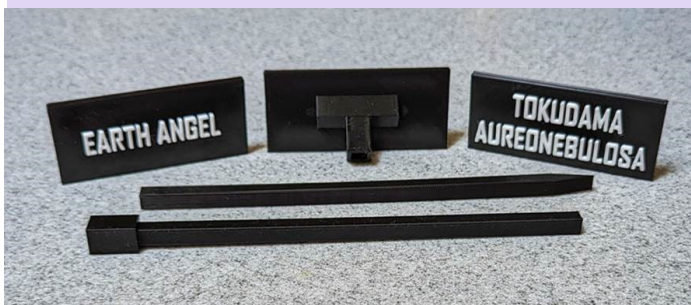
Removing pencil from plastic tags is a bit easier. Simply dampen a sponge with warm water and liquid dish soap and work the area in a circular motion. A mild abrasive such as Soft Scrub or baking soda will speed the cleaning process. Rinse with water.

In the next newsletter, we will assess the results, one year after being placed in the garden.

End of Reprinted material,

3D Printing is the newest idea

David Bibby has introduced the club members to the world of 3D printed garden item. He has developed name plant stakes that are perfect in a hosta garden.



The basic stake is 8 inches and with 8 inch extensions can be built to any height you need.

Custom printed labels can be used to identify any plant (or items used in other hobbies like railroading),

Labels can be printed with 2 lines and up to 16 characters per line.

The labels are very durable, will not rust, and feature adjustable height. There are no sharp edges to cut/scratch as you walk by.

The 3D raised letters have much better visibility and will not fade or wash away like ink.

David and Mary are available at our meetings to discuss details and pricing.

Our Experience with Labels and Plant Tags

- Cindy and Ed Hughes

Experience has taught us three things regarding labels for over 700 different plants grown in pots in the ground.

1. One label goes way down in the pot (hidden from digging squirrels and chipmunks.)

2. A second (maybe fancier) label is for everyone to see. A sturdy marker is placed in the pot or close by to be moved out if the leaves cover it too much. In the fall I make sure these are back in the pot and below the edge. So many are not then disturbed by the landscapers collecting the leaves.

3. I also maintain a map of all garden areas with each hosta penciled in its place. (For those markers that get moved, misplaced or, in the case of the mini labels, stolen by unknown critters!)

We have used the sturdy, but expensive, tags supplied by Wild Rose Distributors in the past (can't find them now.) But they last forever. Since then we use the tags supplied by NCHS. We use outdoor label tape on a label maker.

The trick I just learned to more easily remove the label: Fill your sink with warm water, add around 1/2 cup of washing soda and stir, then soak the item for 30 minutes.

Jim Spuhler's Hints for labeling each plant

When I use metal markers like the ones the club purchases, I print a label from a Brothers Label Maker and place that label on the front. On the back of the marker using a No.2 Lead pencil

I write the hosta name. The name will stay on the back in pencil for a very long time and even if it becomes tough to read, all you need to do is wet the metal and you can read the name should the label become faded.



WELCOME TO ALL OF THE NEW MEMBERS.

We are pleased to welcome Noreen Molek to the Board of Directors as one of our representatives to the Great Lakes Region Hosta Society. Our thanks to Diane Morris for the great job she did for NCHS as she retires from GLR and I am sure they will miss her. We do still need another representative to serve with Noreen. The size of our club entitles us to have two members on the GLR board. If interested, please contact Barb. If you have any questions, you can also contact Diane or Noreen.

Club Co-Op Supplies

As in previous years, we are again offering our members Co-Op items. We have the following items available at meetings.

Liquid Fence **Once our current supply is gone, we will no longer handle this product**

Plant Markers

Garden Gloves in small, medium, large and XL
Handbook on Troughs

Please contact Sue Gold (216-382-9848) to pre-order any items to be brought to the next meeting.

Note: NCHS could use one other person to help Sue with the Co-op Supplies. Please volunteer!

Membership in NCHS gives the following benefits:

- * Member prices on supplies, etc.
- * Preferential registration and reduced registration fee for Hosta College
- * The club provides meat and beverages at all of our "Potluck" picnics and meetings.
- * The opportunity to learn and share information about hosta culture.
- * Developing friendships with other people who love hostas .

And Much, much more!

2024 North Coast Hosta Society Membership

Family Membership \$10.00 for one year - Calendar year Jan 1 - Dec 31

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

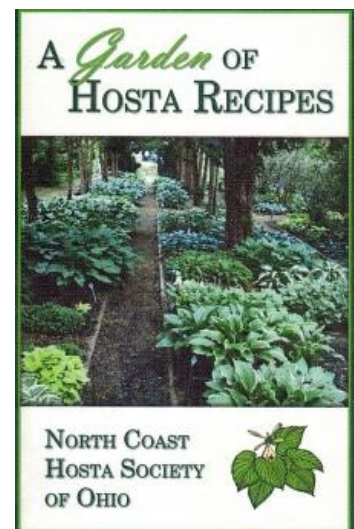
E-MAIL _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____ ()Renewal ()New ()1 year ()2 year

Please list names as you wish on your card: _____

Please send your check made payable to: NORTH COAST HOSTA SOCIETY
Attn: Jim Spuhler
13586 Bridgecreek Circle
Strongsville, OH 44136

**FOR SALE GOOD EATS DO
YOU HAVE YOURS?
MAKES A GREAT GIFT**



Invite Other Plant Lovers to Join the Club

Check out our Website (northcoasthostasociety.weebly.com)
and Facebook page (North Coast Hosta Society).

INVITE A FRIEND



H. 'Candy Dish'

Photo courtesy Land of Giants Hosta Farm

FIRST CLASS



8241 Starburst Rd.
Mentor, OH 44060

Officers:

President: Barb Rauckhorst

phone: 440-237-6709

Vice President: Mike Kovach

email: majk2@cox.net

Phone: 216-642-7895

Treasurer: Jim Spuhler

email: jjsjs@att.net

phone: 440-846-2634

Secretary: Bonnie Erickson

email: bcerickson@att.net

phone: 440-835-0726

Newsletter Editor: Cindy Hughes

email: hughce337@sbcglobal.net

phone: 440-257-2443

Directors:

Sue Gold

email: SueGold@aol.com

phone: 216-382-9848

Diane Morris

email: adlanemorris@gmail.com

phone: 440-892-4646

Becky Salamon

email: cabin4me26@aol.com

Phone: 440-212-6023