

## *The History of the Coupeville Garden Club Greenhouse*

The Garden Club Greenhouse was a joint project of teachers at Coupeville School District's science department and the Coupeville Garden Club. Built in 2002, it provides the club a central place to start seeds and cuttings and do other activities for the annual plant sale, is a place for community projects, as well as lessons and projects for school kids' science classes.

Terry Welch, a science teacher at Coupeville Middle School, enjoyed doing proactive studies and projects with her science classes. She was not able to carry out the type of gardening projects that she envisioned because of a lack of proper environment and growing space. Roberta Piercy, garden club member and school volunteer, joined Terry tackling the problem and they decided that some type of greenhouse or a set of raised beds were required.

Roberta and Terry made many forays to other schools with greenhouse projects and to greenhouse supply stores to research suitable gardens and structures. Roberta reported back to the garden club at the April 5, 2001 meeting and it was decided to build two raised beds and also take a harder look at fencing and also a possible small greenhouse. Gordon Burton was contacted by Roberta to assist in placing a fence around the raised beds to prevent damage by playing children. In the meantime, Terry decided that a purchase of a greenhouse would have to wait due to lack of funds.

The raised beds were built but still did not extend the growing season sufficiently for the students to carry out truly useful projects. It was also concluded that a long-term commitment by the garden club would be required if any growing area was to be maintained during the summer months. A number of meetings between Roberta Piercy, Terry Welch, Faye Gordon, Gordon Burton, Jim Short and a representative from the Master Gardeners concluded that some type of greenhouse was required to meet the needs of the science classes. Our initial thought was to build a lean-to next to the school, but this presented a number of challenges that we were not prepared to address. Additionally, the greenhouse needed to be large enough to meet the needs of the students as well as the needs of the garden club, so that the club would have a reason to make such a long-term commitment.

At the May 3, 2001 meeting, Gordon Burton presented a plan to the club which included a financial commitment by the club of \$5,000 toward the purchase and construction of a greenhouse, which would meet the combined needs of the school district and the Coupeville Garden Club. The membership unanimously approved this investment and the project was on the road. Rod Grant joined the greenhouse group at this time and he and Gordon traveled to many northwest locations to look at greenhouses, becoming experts in the process. Initially deciding on a standard double skin greenhouse, the club eventually purchased a used display greenhouse that Mary and Ken Petry had for \$2,000. This also required purchasing a new skin, and foundation materials. Fundraising throughout the community helped fund the purchase of the greenhouse. In 2002 this 24 x 48 greenhouse was erected behind the Coupeville High School.

The school district and the garden club have an ongoing agreement which is revisited every couple of years so that we all can use, care for and enjoy this resource. The club maintains the greenhouse and pays for the heat. The school provides water and electricity for the lights and fans.

Since the greenhouse is on school property, all members who work at the greenhouse are required to complete and sign a Coupeville School District No. 204 Application to Volunteer form.