

# *CLUB EWR KIWI CHAPTER APRIL 2026*

## Vice President

Sherri King Grossman  
[skgrossman@yahoo.com](mailto:skgrossman@yahoo.com)

## Secretary

Nancy Waller  
[kiwinancywaller@aol.com](mailto:kiwinancywaller@aol.com)

## Treasurer

Gloria McGowan  
[Gmcgowan2000@aol.com](mailto:Gmcgowan2000@aol.com)

## Newsletter Editor

Sam Gooch  
[Kiwisam.gooch@gmail.com](mailto:Kiwisam.gooch@gmail.com)

## Photographer

Kathy Brodrick  
[Kmb524@aol.com](mailto:Kmb524@aol.com)

## Charities

Wings Foundation &  
Local Food Pantries

National Award Winner  
of "The Memorial Award"  
at the 2024  
Kiwi Convention



🌍 A LITTLE LOVE FOR OUR BIG, BEAUTIFUL HOME 🌿

DID YOU KNOW THAT EARTH DAY IS CELEBRATED EVERY YEAR ON APRIL 22—AND HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE 1970? WHAT STARTED AS A GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT HAS GROWN INTO A WORLDWIDE CELEBRATION, WITH OVER A BILLION PEOPLE PARTICIPATING EACH YEAR. NOT BAD FOR A DAY THAT BEGAN BEFORE MOST OF US WERE EVEN THINKING ABOUT RECYCLING OUR SODA CANS!

HERE'S A FUN LITTLE TWIST: THE VERY FIRST EARTH DAY HELPED SPARK MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS IN THE U.S., INCLUDING THE CREATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY. WHO KNEW ONE DAY COULD MAKE SUCH A LASTING IMPACT?

BUT EARTH DAY DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ALL BIG GESTURES AND GRAND PLANS. SOMETIMES IT'S THE SMALL THINGS THAT COUNT:

PLANTING A FEW FLOWERS (BONUS POINTS IF THE DEER DON'T GET THEM FIRST! 🌸)

TAKING A WALK AND NOTICING THE BEAUTY AROUND US

SWAPPING A PLASTIC BAG FOR A REUSABLE ONE

OR SIMPLY ENJOYING LUNCH WITH FRIENDS AND BEING GRATEFUL FOR THE WORLD WE SHARE

AFTER ALL, AS SEASONED TRAVELERS OF THE SKIES, WE'VE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO SEE THIS PLANET FROM A PERSPECTIVE MOST PEOPLE ONLY DREAM ABOUT. FROM 30,000 FEET, IT REALLY DOES LOOK LIKE ONE INCREDIBLE, INTERCONNECTED HOME.

SO, THIS APRIL 22, LET'S CELEBRATE IN TRUE KIWI FASHION—WITH FRIENDSHIP, APPRECIATION, AND MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE FRESH AIR.

KIWI CAPERS – FUN MAY TRADITION 🌸

AS MAY ROLLS IN, BRINGING SUNSHINE, BLOSSOMS, AND A LITTLE EXTRA SPRING IN OUR STEP, IT SEEMS ONLY FITTING TO GIVE A NOD TO ONE OF THE SEASON'S MOST CHEERFUL TRADITIONS—THE MAYPOLE DANCE!

DATING BACK TO ANCIENT CELEBRATIONS OF MAY DAY, THE MAYPOLE DANCE WAS A WAY TO WELCOME WARMER DAYS, FERTILE FIELDS, AND A SENSE OF RENEWAL. VILLAGERS WOULD GATHER AROUND A TALL, RIBBON-ADORNED POLE, WEAVING COLORFUL STRANDS IN AND OUT AS THEY DANCED—CREATING A BEAUTIFUL PATTERN THAT WAS EQUAL PARTS ART AND COORDINATION (AND OCCASIONALLY A BIT OF GOOD-NATURED CHAOS!).

#### FUN FACTS TO IMPRESS YOUR FELLOW KIWIS:

THE RIBBONS SYMBOLIZE THE WEAVING TOGETHER OF COMMUNITY—SOMETHING WE DO QUITE WELL OURSELVES.

IN SOME TRADITIONS, THE TALLER THE MAYPOLE, THE MORE PROSPEROUS THE COMING YEAR (SO MAYBE WE SHOULD AIM HIGH!).

AND YES... IF YOU'VE EVER GOTTEN TANGLED IN HOLIDAY LIGHTS, YOU ALREADY HAVE THE BASIC SKILL SET FOR A MAYPOLE DANCE.

WHILE WE MAY NOT BE CIRCLING AN ACTUAL POLE THIS MONTH (UNLESS SOMEONE VOLUNTEERS!), THE SPIRIT OF THE MAYPOLE LIVES ON IN LAUGHTER, FRIENDSHIP, AND THE COLORFUL CONNECTIONS WE CONTINUE TO WEAVE TOGETHER AT EACH GATHERING.

HERE'S TO A BRIGHT, BLOOMING MAY—AND TO ALL OF US, DANCING THROUGH IT WITH JOY.

WITH SPRINGTIME SMILES AND HEALING HUGS,

**SHERRI KING GROSSMAN** 🌸 -- CEK VICE PRESIDENT



### ***FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY***

HELLO KIWIS!

AT LONG LAST... SPRING HAS ARRIVED! AFTER A WINTER THAT FELT LIKE IT OVERSTAYED ITS WELCOME (AS WINTERS TEND TO DO), WE CAN FINALLY OPEN THE WINDOWS, FEEL THAT FRESH AIR, AND WATCH OUR GARDENS COME BACK TO LIFE. THERE'S SOMETHING SO UPLIFTING ABOUT THOSE FIRST BRAVE BLOOMS PUSHING THROUGH THE SOIL... IT NEVER GETS OLD.

OF COURSE, ALONG WITH THE SUNSHINE AND BUDDING FLOWERS COMES A FAMILIAR CHALLENGE FOR MANY OF US... OUR FOUR LEGGED "GARDEN GUESTS." YES, THE DEER ARE BACK, AND THEY ARE JUST AS HUNGRY AS EVER!

IF YOU'VE EVER STEPPED OUTSIDE, ONLY TO FIND YOUR BEAUTIFUL PLANTS, MYSTERIOUSLY NIBBLED DOWN OVERNIGHT, YOU'RE NOT ALONE. BUT DON'T HANG UP

YOUR GARDENING GLOVES JUST YET... THERE ARE PLENTY OF GORGEOUS PLANTS THAT DEER TEND TO PASS BY.

**HERE ARE THE FEW TRIED AND TRUE FAVORITES TO CONSIDER THIS SEASON.**

- LAVENDER – NOT ONLY DOES IT SMELL HEAVILY TO US, BUT THEY USUALLY AVOID IT STRONG FRAGRANCE. A WIN-WIN!
- DAFFODILS – CHEERFUL, BRIGHT, AND ONE OF THE BEST DEER RESISTANT BULBS OUT THERE.
- BLACK EYED SUSANS – HARDY, SUNNY, AND TYPICALLY NOT ON THE DEER MENU.
- BOXWOOD SHRUBS – GREAT FOR STRUCTURE AND BORDERS, AND NOT PARTICULARLY APPEALING TO DEER.
- SALVIA – ADDS BEAUTIFUL COLOR AND ATTRACTS POLLINATORS – BUT DEER TEND TO STEER CLEAR.
- FERNS – PERFECT FOR SHADY SPOTS, AND GENERALLY LEFT ALONE BY DEER.

GARDENING IS ALWAYS A BIT OF A DANCE WITH NATURE, BUT THAT'S PART OF THE JOY. WITH A LITTLE PLANNING AND PERHAPS A SENSE OF HUMOR, WE CAN STILL CREATE BEAUTIFUL SPACES TO ENJOY ALL SEASON LONG.

SO, WHETHER YOU'RE PLANTING A FULL GARDEN, REFRESHING A FEW POTS, OR SIMPLY ENJOYING THE VIEW FROM YOUR WINDOW, HERE'S TO A SEASON OF GROWTH, COLOR, AND MAYBE -- JUST MAYBE -- OUTSMARTING THE DEER!

I ENCOURAGE ANYONE WHO TRULY ENJOYS GARDENING TO FIND YOUR LOCAL MASTER GARDENING PROGRAM IN YOUR COUNTY. YOU WILL EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS WITH THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BLOOMS. YOU WILL ATTRACT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLIES AND ENJOY BEING OUTDOORS WITH THE BEST OF MOTHER NATURE. YOU WILL ALSO MEET SOME OF THE MOST LOVELY PEOPLE FROM YOUR AREA WHO SHARE YOUR INTERESTS.

ONE MORE THING! TAKE OFF YOUR SOCKS AND SHOES AND WALK ON OUR BEAUTIFUL EARTH. IT'S CALLED GROUNDING AND IT IS SUPPOSED TO MAKE YOU FEEL EXTREMELY HEALTHY.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR GARDENING AS MUCH AS I DO.

**HUGS,**

**NANCY WALLER, SECRETARY**

## *From the office of the Treasurer*

I am eagerly looking forward to our upcoming Convention in SAT, TX at the end of April. Touring the Alamo is at the top of my sight-seeing list. I hope to see all of my friends that I have flown with over my career with American Airlines.

May will be our first meeting after the passing of Ginny and Lee. Yes, it will feel empty, but we will all pull together to keep this chapter together.

On a lighter note, after business is completed, we can look ahead to planning new adventures for our club. Looking ahead to the Holidays I suggest a Play and dinner in the city and a tour of Rockefeller Center to see the Christmas Tree.

Any and all suggestions are welcome.

*Gloria*

Gloria McGowan -- Treasurer and Sunshine Lady



## **April 2026**

April 03 – Cyndie Melville Van Pelt

April 12 – Lynda Overfelt

April 13 – S. Joy Arbaugh Hauptman

April 16 – Beth Waldron Billington

## **May 2026**

May 07 – Diane Griswold Palmer

May 09 – Mardi Swisshelm

May 22 – Gloria McGowan

May 27 – Kathy Brodrick

May 29 – Lynn Konkoski Jordan

## FLOWN WEST

### *We remember...*

It has been a very sad year already for Club EWR Kiwi Chapter with the passing of two of our members.



Leokadia Gougeon, 75, of Freehold Township, passed away on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at CentraState Medical Center in Freehold Township. Born in Munich, Germany, she immigrated to the United States in 1951, initially settling in Fords, and then raising her family in Edison before moving to Freehold Township in 1993.

Lee had a distinguished 42-year career in the airline industry, serving as a flight attendant for Eastern Air Lines and later American Airlines until her retirement in 2014. Her career allowed her to travel the world extensively. In her retirement, she remained active in the aviation community as a member of the Kiwi Club, a social and charitable organization for flight attendants. Prior to becoming a flight attendant, Lee was one of the first Clinique Girls at Bamberger's in the Menlo Park Mall. She also enjoyed visiting Atlantic City and found great joy in "retail therapy."

She was predeceased by her husband, Joseph Gougeon and her parents, Alex and Nadzieda Niepiejn. Lee is survived by her son, Anthony Balletta of Freehold Township, daughter, Nadine Brescher and her husband, Scott of Colonia; her sisters, Taisa Niepiejn and Regina Kayla and her husband, Thomas; her nieces and nephews; and her faithful feline companion, Smokey.



Virginia Lee ( nee Derr) Hardie, "Ginny", of Wall, New Jersey, passed away on March 9, 2026, in Ludlow, Vermont.

Ginny will be remembered as a truly generous person, full of life, humor, and spirit. Her quick wit and warm laughter brought joy and comfort to those around her, and she had a remarkable way of making everyone feel welcome and valued. She leaves behind countless cherished memories for her family and friends, who will forever hold her in their hearts. She has been deeply loved and will be profoundly missed.

Ginny loved to travel and took great joy in exploring special places with her husband, daughters, and friends. She especially cherished time at the beach and at their second home in Ludlow, Vermont. Her adventurous spirit took her all over the world, and to any place she could cheer on her beloved Philadelphia Eagles (Go Birds!).

One of the defining chapters of Ginny's life was her career as a flight attendant for American Airlines, where she proudly served for 37 years. After retiring, she remained deeply connected to the aviation community and quickly became President of the Kiwi Club - Club Newark. She was especially proud of this work, which brought her deep fulfillment in her retirement years.

Virginia was born on June 10, 1958, in Easton, Pennsylvania, to her loving parents, Mary and Charles Derr, and was raised in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She is survived by her loving husband of 10 years, Richard Hardie, and his son, Ryan; her daughters, Abygayl DiOrio (Jeff) and Madyson Dietrich Cohen (Howard); her siblings, Judy Foster (Robert), James Derr (Ginny), and Janet Johnson (Bill); as well as her nieces and nephews and many great-nieces and great-nephews, whom

she cherished and loved as her own. She was preceded in death by her parents and her big brother, Robert Derr (Melinda Thompson).

A Memorial Service will be held on May 8th, 2026 at 10 am at The Chapel at Allaire State Park, 4263 Atlantic Ave, Wall Township (Farmingdale), NJ 07727.

Immediately following the Memorial, Mr. Hardie would like to invite everyone to join the family at the Belmar Fishing Club, 100 Ocean Ave. N, Belmar, NJ 07719

Please remember to keep their family and friends in your prayers. We are all hurting from these passing and as a retiree or a line flight attendant the APFA is available for counseling,

Sharron Dunn and I are working together to gather thoughts and memories as the APFA wants to do a tribute to Ginny. Ginny was a fighter for Flight Attendants specifically regarding the toxic uniforms issues.

If you would like to write a paragraph or two, regarding your memories of Ginny, please put pen to paper (or text or email) and send it to me. I would love to have hundreds of memories to submit to the APFA for this tribute. My email is [kiwisam.gooch@gmail.com](mailto:kiwisam.gooch@gmail.com)



*From the CEK Advisor, Sam Gooch*

**Follow me to The Kiwi Club Convention in San Antonio. Come by the Boutique and say hello.**

*Sam*



*Convention Schedule - Fiesta Flight Royale 2026*

*Main Events: April 30 - May 1, 2026*

*Pre-Events begin April 28, 2026*

*Tuesday, April 28 - Pre-Convention*

*All Day: National Board Meeting – ON THE MOOOOVE*

*Evening: Early Registration*

*Wednesday, April 29 - Pre-Events & Opening*

*Morning TBD: Kiwi Fiesta Crew Meeting – BUENA SUERTE*

*10:00 AM - 6:00 PM: Registration Open – HOT TAMALE JUNCTION*

*11:30 AM: Past Presidents' Luncheon – CROWN JEWELS & CHANDELIERS*

*12 PM - 6:00 PM: Boutique & Silent Auction, Hospitality – MERCADO & KANTINA*

*4:30 - 6:00 PM: Delegates & Officers Reception – BOOTS, BLING, BIGOTES & BLUE*

*Thursday, April 30 - Convention Day 1*

*8 AM - 11 AM: Registration continues – HOT TAMALE JUNCTION*

*9 AM Boutique & Hospitality Open before & after Luncheon, until 6:00 PM*

9 AM: National Officer Candidates Meeting – LAS CANDIDATES SESSION  
10 AM: Members-at-Large Caucus – MEMBERS AL GRANDE  
11 AM - 12 PM: Reception – Photo Opportunities  
12 PM - 3 PM: Opening Luncheon & Awards – ROYAL FIESTA DE FLORES  
Optional Evening Excursion – NOCHE DEL RIO  
5:15 PM: Photo Opportunities  
6 PM: Board Go Rio Riverboats (private dock at Hotel Contessa)  
6:45 - 8:45 PM: Dinner at Casa Rio

## *Friday, May 1 - Convention Day 2*

8 AM - 11 AM: Boutique & Hospitality Open – KIWI MERCADO & KIWI KANTINA  
9 AM - 12 PM: Delegates Meeting & Election of Officers – KIWI ASSEMBLY  
Evening Banquet – SOMBRERO SERENADE - OLÉ!  
6 PM - 7 PM: Reception  
7 PM - 10 PM: Banquet - Installation of Officers, Prize Drawing, Dinner & Music

## *Saturday, May 2 - Farewell*



**ADIOS Y MUCHAS GRACIAS!**

*Fiesta Flight Royale*

*at the  
Hotel Contessa  
Suites on the Riverwalk  
306 W. Market Street  
San Antonio, TX 78205  
(210) 229-9222*

