



February 2024
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www.baldwinmastergardeners.com

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- Vice-President:
Ed Pickle
- Treasurer:
Cassandra Rabren
- Recording Secretary:
Pat Greer
- Corresponding Secretary:
Lydia Chan
- Members at Large:
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2024 Appointed Board Members:

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Anita O'Connor
- Outreach Coordinator:
Eileen Huisman
- Finance Committee Chair:
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President's Notes by Don Richerson

As a child growing up in Mobile in the 1950's during Mardi Gras season, we would ride our bikes with a towel around our necks. Using a clothespin to hold it in place and draping it carefully over the rear tire, we pretended we were the Marshals on horseback, elegantly dressed with flowing capes and leading each float in the parades. It was a wonderful time for children, and as I have learned, even more so for adults. Mardi Gras in French translates into "Fat Tuesday". On the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, all of Europe would eat all of the fat in the home and prepare for the Lenten season of fasting and atonement. In Mobilian, Mardi Gras translates into, "it's fixing' to rain" and in Baldwincountian it means, "it's fixing' to get warm." What started as a French Catholic celebration of life in the New World on Massacre Island in 1702 and in 1868 into a protest of the harsh post-war occupation, has morphed into a glorious to most, and to some exasperating, three week period of pure celebration. It's in our blood. With Mardi Gras day being celebrated on February 13, 2024, you have noticed that the "locals" have become different. I mean, it's Mardi Gras for goodness sake! Here's to you surviving this most treasured of local celebrations.



"If as a child, you saw, every Mardi Gras, the figure of Folly chasing Death around the broken column of life, beating him on the back with a fool's scepter from which dangled two gilded pig bladders, wouldn't you see the world in different terms, too?"
—Eugene Walter

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I also hope you survived our official winter a couple of weeks ago. Our two weeks of Yankee weather are hopefully over, and I trust you and your chlorophyll filled friends faired well. And, I hope

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President's Notes by Don Richerson (continued)

you found some new seeds in those glorious seed catalogs. BCMG is gearing up for Arbor Day activities, and several Volunteer opportunities are available. More on those opportunities and others in this issue of *Grass Roots*. The Spring plant sale committee is busy preparing for this year's sale and the Tuesdays With Master Gardener series is ready for March to arrive. The AMGA Conference that we are hosting in April is a hit with our fellow Alabama Master Gardeners! We have much to look forward to. Be sure to register. And don't forget your roses on February 14.

So, have a moon pie and take a breather, it's about to get busy!



Arbor Days by Eileen Huisman

In Baldwin County Arbor Day is celebrated in February and early March. Baldwin County Master Gardeners help with these celebrations in six different locations: Bay Minette, Daphne, Fairhope, Foley, Magnolia Springs, and Silverhill. There will be volunteer sign-up sheets at the monthly meeting on February 14. If you need more information, please text Eileen Huisman, Arbor Day Coordinator (251) 215-2651. Arbor Day is always held, "RAIN OR SHINE"!

1. Saturday, February 24- Bay Minette (City Hall), 301 D'Olive St.— Volunteers needed at 7:00 a.m.
Coordinator: Fran Posey-Eversole (386) 299-4995 <posevent@bellsouth.net>
2. Saturday, February 24- Fairhope (Coastal College) — Volunteers needed at 9:30 a.m.
Coordinator: Tanys Waldron (251) 550-6464 <tanyswaldron@yahoo.com>
3. Saturday, February 24- Foley (Foley Farmers Market), 20733 Miffin Rd., County Rd. 20 — Volunteers needed at 12:30 p.m., Coordinator: Eileen Huisman (251) 215-2651 <confederaterose1946@gmail.com>
4. Saturday, March 2- Magnolia Springs (Fire House), 14809 Gates Ave. — Volunteers needed at 8:30 a.m.
Coordinator: Gina Blakeman (985)381-2881 <andreablakeman@gmail.com>
5. Saturday, March 2- Silverhill, On 104 turn at Vets. Office — Volunteers needed at 9:30 a.m.
Coordinator: Carolyn Koch (251)232-8238 <tootsiekoch@hotmail.com>
6. Saturday, March 9– Daphne (Daphne Library) Hwy. 98 at Whispering Pines — Volunteers time TBA
Coordinator: Gary Wallace- (251) 604-0415 <walnutpig1@bellsouth.net>

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now.

- Chinese Proverb



2024 AMGA State Conference by Terri Wallace

We hope by now you have all received your edition of *Pathways* and have taken advantage of the 2024 conference registration link. <http://c.planetreg.com/AMGA2024CONF> You may also go to the BCMG website and register that way. (A registration form is also included in this issue of *Grass Roots*.)

This year will be an easy way to get both CEUs and service hours without the cost of hotel meals, dining out expenses, and gasoline costs for a long trip. Come be a part of your organization as it shines brightly during this fabulous conference.



Snack Needs for 2024 AMGA State Conference by Deborah Marriott

Hospitality Committee for Master Gardener Conference—April 22, 23, 24

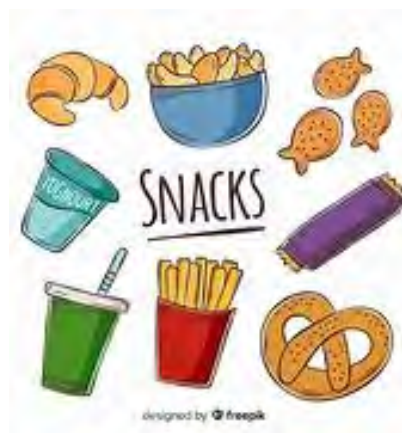
Judi Smith, Hospitality Committee, Snacks/Refreshments
Deborah Marriott, Hospitality Committee

As you are aware, we are gearing up to host the AMGA State Conference on April 22-24 in Daphne. In order to provide attendees with snacks and refreshments during the meetings, we could use your assistance. One way you might assist is to donate snack items from the list provided below. Please bring your donation to one of the next three monthly meetings—February, March, and/or April. We will have a storage tub clearly labeled for you to place your snack donation.

PREPACKAGED BULK SNACK ITEMS

****Be sure to check the expiration dates****

- Cheese Crackers
- Peanut Butter Crackers
- Single Serving Chips
- Granola/Breakfast Bars
- Fruit Bars/Dried Fruit
- Single Serving Nuts
- Single Serving Cookies
- Single Serving Trail Mix



The April meeting items could include refrigerated cheese/string cheese sticks.

Thank you in advance for helping provide snacks and refreshments.



**2024 AMGA STATE CONFERENCE
and ANNUAL MEETING**

"Paradise Found"
 April 22-24
 Daphne Civic Center
 2603 US Hwy 98
 Daphne, Alabama

REGISTRATION OPENS 1/15/2024

- Please complete a separate form for each person attending or register online
- Guests of attendee, who will not be attending the conference but will attend the meal events, are to be included on this form.

1. Registrant Information

Last Name _____ First Name: _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Cell () _____ Local MGA Assoc. _____

Please check one: MG _____ MG Intern _____ ACES _____ Speaker _____ Vendor _____ Other _____

Preferred name on badge (please print) _____

- **Registration fee includes welcome reception, Tuesday lunch, dinner and break refreshments. Breakfast is NOT included. (See hotel information)**
- **Preconference workshops, T-shirts and guest meals are additional pay items.**

_____ Early Bird Registration January 15-31	\$175	\$ _____
_____ Regular Registration February 1-Mar. 22	\$180	\$ _____
_____ Late Registration March 23-April 5 (Guest meals and tee shirts not available.)	\$185	\$ _____

2. Registrant Meal Information and Selection

Monday Welcome Social: Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres

Please check one: I will _____ I will not _____ be attending the Monday Welcome Social

Tuesday boxed lunch (select one). Includes chips, cookie and beverage.

_____ Chicken Salad Croissant _____ BBQ Sandwich _____ Veggie Sandwich

Tuesday Dinner Buffet: Farm salad, beef tenderloin, Gulf shrimp and grits, vegetables, dessert and tea.

3. Guest Meals and Fees. Please check each meal requested. Not available with late registration.

____ Monday Welcome Social \$20 \$ _____
____ Tuesday Boxed Lunch (select one) \$25 \$ _____
____ Chicken Salad Croissant ____ BBQ Sandwich ____ Veggie Sandwich
____ Tuesday Reception and Dinner \$40 \$ _____

Name of Guest (please print)

First Name: _____ Last name: _____

Total Guest Meal Fees \$ _____

4. Conference Logo T-shirts. Must be pre-paid with registration. Not available with late registration.

Please indicate the size and number of each:

S ____ M ____ L ____ XL ____ \$20 each \$ _____
2XL ____ 3XL ____ \$25 each \$ _____

Total Tee Shirt Fees \$ _____

5. Preconference Tours-Monday, April 22. Note that start times vary. A complete description of each tour follows the registration information. There is no charge for any tour, but all attendees must be pre-registered. Directions and additional tour information will be available when you sign-in for the conference. CHECK the time of the tour session you wish to attend.

Monday Morning Birding at Village Point Park. Meet in parking lot at 27710 Main St., in Daphne.

____ 7:00 am _____ 9:00 am

Weeks Bay Boat Tour

Allow 30- minute drive time from Daphne Civic Center to tour site. You must arrive 15 minutes early for this tour. Limit 25 per tour.

____ 1:30 pm _____ 3:00 pm

Pitcher Plant Bog at Graham Creek Nature Preserve

Allow 50- minute drive time from Daphne Civic Center to tour site.

____ 12:00 pm _____ 2:30 pm

The Barn at Hope Farms "Farm to Table"

____ 12:00 pm _____ 1:30 pm _____ 3:00 pm

Pavilion at the Nest (Fairhope)

_____ 12:00 pm

_____ 1:30 pm

_____ 3:00 pm

Self- Guided Tours. Tour at your leisure anytime between 12:30 and 4:30 pm.

Branch Home Garden-*Giving Garden*

Turner Home Garden-*Historical Home and Gardens*

Check if attending _____

6. Preconference Workshops. Note that start times vary.

All workshops will be held at the Daphne Civic Center Complex. You must be pre-registered and pre-paid to attend. Sessions are limited to 25 attendees per session on a first come basis. **Please CHECK the time of the session you wish to attend.**

***Kokedama* by Devonne Ellis and Judy Gobble**

Literally meaning “moss ball” in English, you will discover and learn the Japanese art of *Kokedama* and create your very own arrangement.

_____ 12:00 pm

_____ 1:30 pm

\$30

\$ _____

Build a Greenhouse Before Your Eyes

Our own BCMG team will show you how easy it is to build a small backyard greenhouse.

_____ 1:00 pm

_____ 2:30 pm

\$25

\$ _____

Hands-on DIY Drip Irrigation by Jack LeCroy

Jack is the Mobile County extension agent and he will lead you through a hands-on activity to assemble drip irrigation in your own garden.

_____ 1:00 pm

_____ 2:30 pm

\$25

\$ _____

Build a Bee Box by Becky Estes

Attract non-aggressive, solitary bees to your garden with this simple-build habitat.

_____ 3:00 pm

_____ 4:30 pm

\$25

\$ _____

Native Alabama Milkweed Project and Migratory Gardens by Baldwin County

extension agent Carmen Flammini who leads on this research project. She will discuss the project, milkweed propagation and culture as well as building a butterfly garden.

_____ 3:30 pm

No charge

\$__NC____

Total Workshop Fees

\$ _____

7. Total Conference Fees

Registration

\$ _____

Tee-shirt

\$ _____

Guest meals

\$ _____

Workshop fees

\$ _____

Total Fees Due

\$ _____

8. To Register On-line registration is preferred. To register and pay on-line by credit card, click on link: <http://c.planetreg.com/AMGA2024CONF>

NOTE: A personal PayPal account is NOT required to register on-line. PayPal is the credit card processing service and will accept VISA and MasterCard.

To register and pay by check, please make checks payable to AMGA and mail along with this completed form to:

AMGA
c/o Z. Bauer
465 W 23rd. Avenue
Gulf Shores, Alabama 36542

Please allow two weeks to receive an email confirmation of your registration. It is your responsibility to confirm receipt of your registration. Please email AMGA2024@baldwinmastergardeners.com or phone/text 251.752.7755 if you feel you have been overlooked.

9. Hotel Accommodations

The following hotels have reserved blocks of rooms for conference attendees. All hotels are conveniently located 1 mile from the Daphne Civic Center. Conference rate is available until **March 23, 2024**. The reservation code is **AMG** and you may make a reservation by calling the number provided or by clicking on this link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/amgaconferencedaphne2024/>

Hampton Inn 251.626.2220

Complimentary hot breakfast; all rooms equipped with a microwave and mini fridge.

1 King/2 Queen city view \$135

1 King/2 Queen bay view \$145

Hilton Garden Inn 251.625.0020

Full on site restaurant. All rooms equipped with a microwave and mini fridge.

1 King \$139/2 Queen \$149

Homewood Suite 251.621.0100

Complimentary hot breakfast, full kitchen in all suites.

1 King Studio Suite (sleeps 4) \$144

1 King 1 Bedroom Suite (sleeps 4) \$144

Room rates subject to all applicable state and local taxes and fees. Hotel check-in time is 3 pm and checkout is 12 noon. Parking is FREE at the above hotels and at the Daphne Civic Center.

10. RV Accommodations

There is no over-night parking in the Daphne Civic Center parking lot. Reservations may be made at the following local RV parks: Meaher State Park, Fairhope Landing Resort, and Fairhope Motor Coach Resort.

11. Breakfast Options

Waffle House Open 24 Hours, locations at 6781 US 90 and 29100 US 98

StarBucks Opens 5 am, 6830 US 90

Dunkin Donuts Opens 5 am, 29160 US 98

East Shore Café Opens 7 am, 1506 Main St. Daphne

Sugar Kettle Café Opens 7 am, 1015 Daphne Ave. (CR 64)

Chick-fil-A Opens 6:30 am, 1682 US 98

Cracker Barrel Opens 7 am, 30227 Eastern Shore Center in Spanish Fort, I-10 Exit 38

Soul Caffeine Opens 6 am 2004 US 98 Daphne 2004 US-98, Daphne

12. Conference Tour Description

Village Point Park and Birding Tour-Monday morning

This birding hotspot is a beautiful natural wildlife habitat with well-maintained pathways for easy walking. A local Audubon member will lead the tours at 7 and 9 a.m. for best viewing of Mobile Bay shore birds. Bring binoculars and walking shoes. **Meet in parking lot at 27710 Main Street, Daphne, AL**

The Giving Garden

Enjoy this neat and orderly raised community garden created by Beth Branch to provide fresh produce for the Ecumenical Ministries of Fairhope food pantry. A team of neighbors and friends assist in tending this garden built 2 years ago with input from a landscape architect and Master Gardeners. It is a peaceful garden that incorporates a fountain, wooden shed, irrigation system and drainage control.

Historic Register Home

This historic Spanish-style home built in 1923 is a wonderful example of co-mingling the practical with the artistic, incorporating several varieties of citrus, banana, and even an olive tree with all time southern favorites like azaleas, gingers, perennials, and two koi ponds. The owners Camille and Rex Turner have also extended their love of art and antiques into this lovely garden where you will be sure to enjoy them.

Weeks Bay Reserve Pontoon Boat Tour

One of our nation's Estuarine Research Reserves is offering a one-hour pontoon boat tour of the Weeks Bay watershed, comprised of 9,317 acres containing upland and bottomland hardwood forests, salt and freshwater marshes, and submerged aquatic vegetation where osprey, brown pelican, and water fowl abound. The boat features bench seating and a restroom. **Minimum of 10 needed with a maximum of 25 per tour. Allow 50-minute drive time from Daphne Civic Center. Must arrive 15-minutes early.**

Pitcher Plant Bog at Graham Creek Nature Preserve

Situated on over 600 acres owned by the city of Foley, this preserve is dedicated to the preservation of native plants and wildlife. As a naturalist narrates, a wagon tour will take you on the loop trail to the pitcher plant bog. Enjoy the breathtaking beauty of this rare plant and other endangered plants up close. Board wagons at the visitor center. Maximum of 60/tour. **Tour is located 50 minutes from the Civic Center. Plan accordingly as this tour will require approximately 2.5 - 3 hours for travel time and tour.**

The Pavilion at the Nest

The Pavilion is an outdoor classroom created to expand STEAM learning opportunities on the campus of an old elementary school, featuring an Alabama Wildlife Outdoor-certified Garden and an award-winning science lab. The Pavilion was built with sustainable design and features bioswales for water runoff control, cisterns for collection of rainwater, and filtration of "gray water." The landscape was designed for habitat restoration and the enhancement of this "biodiversity hotspot" by using native and adaptive plants, oyster shells for filtration, and pervious pavers. Located in Fairhope.

Hope Farms

Tour the grounds of a local farm-to-table restaurant in downtown Fairhope. The Hope Farm uses greenhouses, farm, hydroponic containers, raised beds, and an orchard to supply the culinary and bar teams with fresh ingredients. The farm uses sustainable farming techniques in every aspect to maximize output and minimize the negative impact of traditional methods. It is a father and son's "fair hope" for a sustainable future.



John Kitch— The Man and His Legacy by Dooley Berry

So, newer Baldwin County Master Gardeners may wonder just who was this John Kitch, a Pennsylvania native who has tomatoes around here named after him. As a garden writer, I must say that it has been one of my life's greatest pleasures to have the opportunity to become acquainted with some of the finest gardeners who choose to call Baldwin County home. John Kitch was one such gardener.

I met John several years back when he was a brand new Master Gardener, but he certainly was not new to gardening. He once told me that he was “born into gardening” on his parents' truck farm in his native Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where they grew “everything that would grow—from strawberries to sweet corn and asparagus.” They would load all of that produce onto the truck and sell it.



He later taught high school biology and pursued an ornamental horticulture degree and taught landscape design classes. A born teacher, even after retirement. Many years later, when he and wife, Dottie, chose to retire in Fairhope, he wanted to become the student and learn what would grow well here in coastal Alabama, just as all of us transplants do when we move here. After becoming a Baldwin County Master Gardener, John was sought out by fellow master gardeners and the public to teach classes on his specialty—how to grow practically anything—annuals, perennials, herbs, fruits, and vegetables in containers. His gorgeous and varied containers worked beautifully with his colorful combinations of flowers, fruits, and vegetables lined up along his patio.

John believed and taught that even the smallest patio or porch could successfully host a garden full of flowers or a crop of vegetables grown in containers.

John willingly shared his knowledge through seminars and classes throughout Baldwin County. He was challenged to experiment with growing tasty tomatoes in his containers and found success. Later, as he became a mentor to a new Master Gardener intern, Elmer Vick, he shared that tomatoes grown in the ground can easily be grown in containers. Horticulturalist John had been working on developing a perfect tomato that was both delicious and suited to grow in the coastal Alabama climate.

Sadly, John was suffering with cancer, but he shared a small packet of tomato seeds with intern Elmer. As Elmer explained, “John wanted me to grow these seeds into tomatoes and share them with everybody.” And thus began the John Kitch tomato. Elmer has faithfully honored his friend and mentor by putting those seeds into containers and lining them up along his driveway, and they have done beautifully.

Though John left us in 2017, his legacy lives on through his versatile tomato variety. In fact, among Master Gardeners, the John Kitch tomato is much sought after for both its taste and ease of growing in containers. Elmer continues to sell these coveted plants at Master Gardener functions and plant sales. As an added bonus and to honor John, all proceeds from sales of the John Kitch tomato go to the Mitchell Cancer Center for cancer research in John's honor. Last year, the proceeds totaled \$1,650.00, and this year, sales are hoped to top \$2,000.00.

John always loved being outdoors with his plants. “You have to develop a close relationship with your plants,” he once told me. “They are really neat life forms—they grow all over the world and reward us with both beauty and food.” Thank you, John, for your benevolent nature and for developing and sharing the John Kitch tomato with us all.



2024 Intern/Mentor Breakfast by Anita O'Connor

Master Gardener's culinary skills were again on full display Thursday, January 11, 2024.

Kay Smith and Liz Wojtaszek arranged a display of homemade bread stuffed with sausage, potato casseroles, quiches, assorted breakfast breads and creatively arranged fruit on a beautiful flower filled table. Many people commented on the amazing variety of delicious food available. Covid rules are definitely behind us.

The Kitchen crew consisting of Beth Robinson, Maria Curow, Karon Pennington, and Judi Smith are the BEST! On that crisp morning, hot fresh brewed coffee waited to welcome the Mentors and their enthusiastic Interns. Loree Hadley and Linda Bizzell were on site to capture their beautiful smiles.

Anita O'Connor, Intern Class Coordinator, welcomed the present MG Board, Mentors, and Katie Shepard from Extension, as well as the very enthusiastic Intern class.

Each mentor was given the opportunity to share their story and introduce their intern. The mentors gave a brief history of their experiences with the BCMG organization. They were asked to describe one of their most memorable volunteering experiences. There were bursts of laughter from the responses. The one consistent phrase was "our class was the best"! It was a fabulous message for the 2024 Interns.

Humor seemed to be the theme of the day. Fortunately, the intern stories will be captured in a short narrative to be published at a later date in *Grass Roots*. Susan Mattingly and Terry Delker will collaborate and prepare them for printing.

We are so fortunate to be able to welcome this very talented group who appear outstanding and anxious to become a part of our larger membership. Please welcome them as they start to attend our meetings and volunteering opportunities.

Smiling faces and encouraging stories were the best part of the morning. Fresh coffee and friends sharing time together is always a refreshing day.



A warm welcome...



2024 Baldwin County Master Gardener Interns



Lynn Barnes



Sueann Barnwell



Ed Bradshaw



Jim Faulkner



Tom Fortner



Vicky Franks



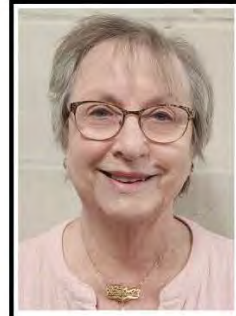
Margie Grace



Ann Lemis



Deb Mallon



Mary Meyer



Beth Murray



Robin Newell



Tiffany Ramey



Diana Rodgers



Shannon Russell



Kim Scasny



Nancy Schlack



Sara Semmes



Gilda Underwood

February Birthdays



2-7	Lydia Chan
2-7	Gretchen Coats
2-8	Connie Gillespie
2-8	Loree Hadley
2-9	Don Richerson
2-10	Gina Blakeman
2-11	Gail Hand
2-13	Brenda Montgomery
2-14	Maureen (Moe) Nation
2-14	Lynn Saye
2-15	Fran Ables
2-15	Susan Palmer
2-18	Mary Ann Underwood
2-19	Patsy Conner
2-21	Eileen Huisman
2-25	Leslie Wojciechowski
2-26	Beverly Villafana

Life...is all about the Journey.



It's On My Bucket List by Brenda Montgomery

One of my favorite past times is to sit on my back porch and marvel at the magical hummingbirds zipping around the feeder, the vibrant *Odontonema strictum* (firespike), and then on to the *Justicia brandegeana*, or shrimp plant. They seldom seem to run low on energy, expending the human equivalent of 150,000 calories and receiving nourishment from as many as 1000 flowers daily. These small creatures are native to the Americas and comprise the Trochilidae family, encompassing over 350 hummingbird species. Their iridescent bodies are able to maneuver similar to a helicopter hovering and darting, with wings flapping up to 80 beats per second. Typical life expectancy is 3-5 years, but some have been documented to live in excess of ten years.

With these and many more fascinating facts and stories to share, Baldwin County Master Gardeners will have the pleasure of hearing a presentation by acclaimed Fred Bassett. He is a certified master bird bander and will be speaking to our group during the monthly membership meeting scheduled on February 14 at 8300 Hwy. 104 in Fairhope. His intriguing topic will explore Southeastern hummingbirds based on his vast multi decades personal experience. For some lucky Baldwin County inhabitant, the opportunity to watch Fred in action as he offers to come to their home, band the hummers, and ultimately place the bird in the palm of their hand is exhilarating. My hope is to someday have him, or one of his team members, successfully band one of the small visitors in my yard and allow me to connect with the heartbeat that is pulsing over 1200 beats per minute!



Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer

Don Richerson opened the meeting at 9:00 AM, and asked us all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 70 Master Gardeners and Guests in attendance today.

Don then asked if there were any guests. Robin Newell who is a new Intern for this year was in attendance. He then asked that all the prior presidents of the Baldwin County Master Gardeners please stand up. The past presidents who are present today are Mary Calvin, Gordon Cooper, Joni Euler, Myra Lassere, Paula Pritchett, Tanys Waldron, and Julian Walthall. He then asked all the Wayne de la Rua recipients to stand. They are Lynn Andrews, Pat Greer, Loree Hadley, Marilyn Mannhard, Judi Smith, Tanys Waldron, Moe Nation, Julian Walthall, Paula Pritchett, Myra Lassere, and Jimmie Van Valkenburgh. Lastly, Don asked all those present who had Birthdays this month to stand, and he then announced that in honor of Jim Greer turning 86 this year, there would be a Birthday Cake on the “goodies” table.



Two of our members lost their husbands recently – Diane Roberson-Hill and Gretchen Coats.

Don asked if there were any corrections or additions to the December minutes as published in the *Grass Roots*. Anita O'Connor reported that Patty Rowland's name was misspelled in the 100 hours section. Don then moved that the Minutes of the December Awards meeting be approved. Gail Hand offered a second to these Minutes; the motion passed.

Don commented that the seating arrangement is different today because the American Forage and Grassland Council will be meeting in this room for lunch today, and we need to be out of the building by 11:00 AM. He is sorry for any inconvenience. He also reported that our program for today has been moved to March, therefore, there will be no education hours earned today. However, we have a lot of opportunities coming up for education hours.

Charlotte Hamm reported that Fred Bassett will be our speaker in February. He has banded hummingbirds for decades; having banded over 35,000 hummingbirds in 17 states. He will talk to us on the secretive life and migration patterns of hummingbirds. In March, we will have Elmer Vick demonstrating how to build a backyard Greenhouse. Elmer will also be doing this demonstration during the State Conference, with a chance to win his Greenhouse in the Silent Auction.

Wanda Martin reminded us we are the face of Baldwin County as our Speaker Bureau volunteers travel from Lillian to Monroeville with their programs. There is no charge for hosting one of the speakers on our list. Daphne High School has requested we have some of our speakers go to classes with their topics. There were 26 class sessions in 2023. Wanda was their first Speaker and was received with several rowdy boys in the class. The second time she taught her class, it was quite different. All students diligently took notes. In 2023 we had 108 opportunities for our Speakers Bureau volunteers. One member commented she had gained a lot of knowledge from various volunteers from the Speakers Bureau.



Speakers Bureau Members
L-R: Wanda Martin, Marilyn Mannhard, Charlotte Hamm, Linda “Honey” Ennis, and Loree Hadley

Cassandra Rabren is not present today; she was in New Orleans with a sick dog. Therefore, Gail Hand

(Continued on page 14)



Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer (continued)

gave the Treasurer's Report. We have \$28,435.71 in our checking account and a CD in the amount of \$20,000.00. Gail will take any dues and/or reimbursement requests.

Anita O'Connor reported that the new Interns will be at 104 tomorrow for their welcome breakfast. There are 19 new Interns, however, two of them will not be at the breakfast tomorrow – one is having foot surgery, and the other will be with her husband at an event. Classes will begin on January 18 at Bay Minette. This gives the Interns the opportunity to see how the Extension personnel relate to the BCMG club.

Eileen Huisman has a sign-up sheet for those who want to volunteer at the Plant and Seed Swap at the Gulf Shores Zoo on January 27th. Volunteer hours for this event are 8:00 AM until 11:00 AM, and 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Arbor Days begin on February 24th. Eileen will have sign-up sheets and all dates at the February meeting. She does not have all her dates yet, but Fairhope will be on February 24th and Silverhill will be on March 1st.

Mary Calvin showed a Power Point demonstration regarding the new hours reporting system. Don commented this system is different, but not hard. The Power Point was titled *A Better Report Helps Tell a Better Story*. We have two weeks to report any 2023 hours. In the new report there are six categories, i.e. Growing Ornamental Plants, Growing Food Plants, Create and Share Information with the Public, Community Partner Events, Other Extension Activities, and EMG Program Support. She pulled down the EMG Program Support category and went over the portion for recording time for meetings and time for CEUs. Under the CEU section is the option for drive time - the time we left home and the time we arrived home from a meeting. The new mantra is 25/10 – 25 Volunteer Hours and 10 CEU hours each year. There will be more training after the February, March, April, and May meetings. Myra Lassere commented there will be a 2-3 page Memo of Understanding Form to sign that will come out in a couple of weeks. This should be easy to understand. Sam Andrews is not present today, but he suggests we all keep a journal of our hours to use when we fully understand the new reporting system. Don again reminded us that this new reporting system is different, but not that different. We will have available following every General meeting Technical Support Volunteers from our membership to teach and assist all members in the new system. They will be available after every meeting through May.

Don wishes to congratulate all of us as we lead the State in hours – over 24,090 hours. This is not the first time we have led the State in hours reported. We have 113 members in BCMG who have reported these hours, with approximately 80 members who either have not put in their hours, or who have not contributed.

Liz Wojtaszek is looking for donations for the Silent Auction that will be at the 2024 AMGA Conference. You are welcome to get a group together or donate something individually. She suggested decorative baskets, irrigation system, garden books... Also, it would be okay for the area Garden Clubs to donate something. There is storage, and Liz would like to know what is coming in so she knows what will be available. Marilyn Mannhard asked that everyone volunteer in one capacity or another. Monday of the Conference, a lot of volunteers will be needed for such areas as the parking lot, lobby lizards, class room attendants. She will also need on Monday docents for the 16 tours; volunteers on the property with water and snacks, and someone with balloons and signs at each tour location. Zetty Bauer also needs volunteers for registration. On Tuesday there will be five speakers in five different areas. She needs one person in each room and volunteers to direct people to the correct classroom.



Arbor Day Coordinators

L-R: Fran Posey-Eversole, Tanys Waldron, Gary Wallace, Eileen Huisman, Gina Blakeman, and Carolyn Koch

(Continued on page 15)



Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer (continued)

Marilyn has a list of potential volunteers that is about two years old, so she will send out an email asking for all to pick volunteer times and let her know. Anita O'Connor commented that the new Interns will be giving their end of class presentations the week before the Conference. She would like someone on the Conference Committee to come into the class about two weeks prior to the Conference to bring a sign-up sheet to volunteer. Marilyn would like each Committee Chair of the 2024 Conference to give her an approximate number of volunteers they will need each day. Wanda Martin reminded us that the more volunteers we have, the less work we will have each day. Marilyn would like to make sure we have everything covered and asked us all to sign up. You can be a volunteer without paying for the Conference, but that would preclude you from actually attending the events. However, she feels you do not want to miss what is going on.

On January 15th the 2024 AMGA Conference registration form will be on our Web Site and that is also the day *PATHWAYS* will be published. The regular entrance price for the Conference is \$180.00 (\$175.00 for early registration, and \$185.00 for late registration). There will be great speakers and great vendors. Gail Hand reminded us that if you have not paid your dues, you cannot be a volunteer. Sheryl Bly commented that we have 70 members who have not yet paid their dues for 2024.

Elmer Vick has a sign-up sheet on the back table for those wishing to order John Kitch tomatoes. He will be planting seeds for these tomatoes next week. You can sign up today or send him an email. Every penny made on this sale will go to Cancer Research. Last year we sent a total of \$1,650.00, and Elmer's goal for this year is \$2,000.00. Elmer would like to have a good idea of just how many plants to produce. Checks for these plants are to be made out to BCMG. Dolores Hammack asked Elmer to explain the meaning of "John Kitch tomatoes." John was a Master Gardener and Horticulturist from Pennsylvania. He was Mentor to Elmer Vick and shared a couple of his tomato seeds with Elmer at the Intern Luncheon. Elmer gives thanks to Julian Walthall for securing approval to sell these tomato plants to BCMG members. Elmer will also have plants to sell at the Tuesday Nights With Master Gardeners which begins in March. Ed Pickle commented that he was in the 2012 class with John Kitch and remembers that John grew all his vegetables in pots, and these tomatoes will grow in pots also. Ed also joked that even though John was a Yankee, he was a good guy. Jim Greer asked if we remember that John Kitch also had a good recipe for soil. Per Elmer, John said that you just purchase a good quality bag of soil at any big box store and mix it with pine bark. Elmer also commented that you can grow anything in a pot or other container that you can grow in the ground.

Loree Hadley replayed the end of year video. Don reminded us the items for the food drive to benefit both the Prodissee Pantry and the Gulf Shores Ecumenical Ministries is going on at the back of the room. Cash and checks are also welcome. Paula Pritchett and Joni Euler will deliver the food and cash on Thursday, January 11th.

Dolores Hammack would like us to look at her Facebook ad concerning the upcoming Spring Plant Sale. She is looking for someone to coordinate the raffle table.

Don advised that Lynn Andrews has some stars available today for those who did not receive them at our December Awards meeting. Lynn gave a bronze star to Patty Rowland and a silver star to Kim Musson. Carolyn Koch picked up a silver star to deliver to Shirley Stephens. Kay Smith received her Amber Star, and Mary Hamilton received her Sapphire star. Lynn still has a plastic badge for Lori White and bronze stars for Diane Roberson-Hill, Lisa Vinson, and Tiffany Griffin, and a silver star for Charlotte "Charly" Croft.

Wanda Martin moved that we adjourn this meeting. There was a second from Gail Hand. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 AM.

*Baldwin County
Master Gardeners*

*2024 Spring Plant
Sale*

*April 4, 5, & 6
Thurs-Fri-Sat 9-4*



