

# The Latest Dirt

August 2010

Volume 12/No. 8

## Jan's Notes

Our Master Gardeners are amazing people and our networking is incredible.

Over a year ago a friend of Ila Jean Carothers asked if the Master Gardeners could help with a gardening project at the VA Hospital. She told them to call back when they got the project further along but she didn't hear anything else from them.



Last year at our December meeting, we asked our members where they wanted our group to go and what they wanted for new projects. One of the suggestions was to do something with the VA.

This month an amazing set of events occurred. Perhaps it started with Judy Tye and her neighbors, Henry and Kathy Smith. They needed 800 pots to start some new plants. Judy sent him to Julia Khoury. Julia inquired as to why he needed these pots. When she found out she asked what the Master Gardeners could do to help.

Why did he need 800 pots? Henry and Kathy used the 800 donated pots to plant chrysanthemums to use in a new volunteer group to help patients at the VA Hospital. As a veteran himself, Henry understood the need of returning soldiers suffering from post traumatic stress syndrome, brain injuries and missing limbs. He did his homework, received a grant and he and Kathy helped start "Vets Helping Vets" in Waco. They currently have 8-10 regular volunteers, 2 large greenhouses and plans to build raised beds for the handicapped.

Shane McLellan and Steven Lovecky went out to the VA Hospital to evaluate the project. Shane got excited about the educational possibilities this project holds for our Master Gardeners.

Their first request is for some Master Gardeners to teach their volunteers basic gardening including soil preparation, plant propagation and landscape design. This is an opportunity for the specialist to share what



**Future Landscape and Golf Course Managers. These TSTC students received our textbook scholarships. See page 3 for the story.**

they have learned and for others of us to assist them in these classes.

We don't know how far this will go but it could be a huge on-going project.

They have 490 veterans there as patients with more coming every day who need therapy while they are in the process of healing, physically, mentally and spiritually. As we all know, gardening is therapeutic.

Louie McDaniel has volunteered to chair this project. Louie is a veteran who understands the needs of these people. But Louie needs a strong support team with at least one person who has good organizational skills to be a co-chair. Do you want to be part of this team?

Interns and members, if you are interested in being part of the support team, please contact:

Louie McDaniel Home 836-4937 Mobile 405-4019  
[louiemcdaniel@yahoo.com](mailto:louiemcdaniel@yahoo.com)

If you know someone who may want to be a part of Vets Helping Vets, please contact Henry and Kathy Smith @ 498-5526.

Jan

## MCMG Minutes July 14, 2010

The McLennan County Master Gardeners met on July 14, 2010 at 11:30 am at the Arboretum. President, Jan Serface called the meeting to order.

**Treasurer's Report:** The ending balance as of June 30, 2010 is \$17,885.46.

**Volunteer Opportunities:** A clean-up day will be held July 22 at 8 am in the Trailside Garden at the Arboretum. Barbara Vance is the chairman.

Jan has discussed with the extension agent, Shane McClellan, additional places for MG's and interns to volunteer so that all may meet the volunteer requirements. Information will be available soon.

Friends for Life, 5000 Lakewood in Waco, has asked for help in preparing beds for their clients to work. A work day has been scheduled for Monday, July 19th. Ila Jean Carothers reported that MHMR needs help preparing raised beds for clients to learn to grow vegetables.

The docent training session will be postponed until Sept. or Oct.

The new HOT Demonstration Rose Garden chairman is Penny Gifford.

Volunteers are needed on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the "Ask a Master Gardener". Hours are 1-4 pm.

Members can sign up by contacting Carol Reinking at 399-0927 or [sscarol.24@gmail.com](mailto:sscarol.24@gmail.com).

**Old Business:** Julia Khoury needs members to turn in volunteer and education hours to her monthly. Writers are needed for the Waco Tribune Herald gardening column. Contact Carol Wood to submit an article.

Members and interns can get volunteer hours by cleaning and sorting pots collected at the extension office. The small pots will be used at the Garden Fair in October. Contact Ila Jean Carothers if you have any questions.

Ila Jean is taking orders for the Texas Gardening Magazine. A 1 yr. subscription is \$29.95, 2-yrs \$42.95 and 3-yrs. \$53.95. The Master Gardeners receive 25% of the subscription price. Contact Ila Jean at 848-4321 or [ijcarothers@juno.com](mailto:ijcarothers@juno.com).

Jan reported that the Executive Committee is looking into purchasing a second computer.

**Announcements:** Sept. 13-14 Landscape Design School, College Station, TX, Cost \$150.

Sept. 27-29 MG Tree Stewardship Training, Palestine, TX, Cost \$150.

You must be a Master Gardener to attend Specialist Training. The meeting was adjourned.

Nelda Cooper  
Secretary

### July Attendance: 31

Mark Barnett, James Bays, Dick Belanger, Ila Jean Carothers, Jo Ann Clafferty, Nelda Cooper, Susan Crawford, Anita Dawson, Victor DuPart, Eva FitzGerald, Melody Fitzgerald, Norma Folse, Kris Ford, Xan Foulks, Renee Garrett, Cindy Geletzke, Brenda Golubski, Thad Hairston, Jeanette Kelly, Julia Khoury, Barbara Mersinger, Andrea Moore, Sarah Ortiz, Georgia Peterson, Anne Plasek, Sharon Richardson, Laurie Sappington, Jan Serface, Della Setser, Mary Lou Trice, Barbara Vance.

### Semi-annual Hours Report - Jan to July 2010

Volunteer hours	1,875
Education hours	335
Contacts	11,124
Media contacts, newspaper	784,880
Meeting attendance	270
Arboretum hours (included in above figures)	
Trailside garden	42
Superstar bed	59 3/4
Miscellaneous: clerical	35
Docent	0
McGregor garden	6 1/2

Note: Of 121 members/interns, 49 have not reported

### McLennan County Master Gardeners Association Officers 2010

President - Jan Serface • Vice President - Jene Hering • Secretary - Nelda Cooper  
Treasurer - Irene Dauphin • Sponsor - Shane McLellan • Newsletter - Sonia Warriner

Send volunteer hours to Julia Khoury, 8512 Bosque Blvd., Waco 76712 or [tkhoury@hot.rr.com](mailto:tkhoury@hot.rr.com)  
[www.mclennanmastergardeners.org](http://www.mclennanmastergardeners.org)

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

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## Textbook gifts “surprise, motivate” TSTC students

**O**ur donations to the Texas State Technical College landscape students were recently awarded. Three students were given \$500 each to purchase textbooks in the Landscape/Golf Course Management program. We have received these thank you notes from the students who were selected by Terry Ehrhardt, department chairman.

Ila Jean Carothers

From Bryan Klekar:

*"I just wanted to take the time and tell you how much I appreciate your organization for choosing me for your scholarship award. The money will come in great use for buying books and any other school supplies that I require. I understand that you could have chosen anybody for this award but decided on me and for that I am very grateful. With the help of your scholarship I will be able to further my education, graduate and pursue a career in the landscaping field. Once again, thank you for your selection of me."*

From Keith Rainosek:

*"Master Gardeners, I want to express my deepest thanks for selecting me as a scholarship recipient. This scholarship is helping me to further my education, so I can have a successful future. I am a landscape design major, and my hope is to one day own and operate my own lawn and landscape maintenance company. The horticulture industry is very fortunate to have a program such as the Master Gardeners that is involved in the industry in so many ways. Your generous donation will help me to accomplish my career goals, and for that I am very thankful to your organization. Thank you once again."*

### Fall courses for members

Landscape Design Course 1  
1st in 4-part series, 9/13 -14, College Station, fee \$100. Contact Jan Serface

Tree Stewardship Specialist, landscape and shade tree care, Palestine, 9/27-29, fee \$150, deadline 9/13, Tx AgriLife Extension

from Danny Bancroft:

*"I greatly appreciate the scholarship that you have chosen to give me. I was pleasantly surprised and excited to have received such an amazing scholarship. It will go a long way in helping me to get my associates degree. This scholarship has also given me even more motivation to not only complete my education, but to keep striving to do better. I am going to TSTC to achieve my degree in Golf Course Management. When I graduate from TSTC I plan on getting a job in or around Huntsville."*

*"I cannot thank you enough for this is truly an honor for me to have received this gift. Thank you."*

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### Intern Training Session Schedule

Training for the 2010 Intern Class began June 2. Classes are at the arboretum from 1 to 5 p.m unless noted.

**8/4 - Rainwater Harvesting**, Steven Lovecky; Dorothy and MJ Whitehead, coordinators.

**8/11 - Propagation**, Ila Jean Carothers; Carol Wood, Sharon Richardson, coordinators, **MG meeting**.

**8/18 - Lawn Care**, Jim McAfee; Sarah Ortiz, Judy Schmeltekopf, coordinators.

**8/25 - Plant Growth & Development**, Lisa Whittlesey; Ila Jean Carothers, Judy Schmeltekopf, coordinators.

**9/1 - Native Plants**, Mark Barnett; Steven Lovecky, Mark Barnett, coordinators.

**9/8 - Composting/Wetlands Class and trip**; Jeanette Kelly, Kris Ford. **MG meeting**.

**9/15 - Homestead Heritage**; Kris Ford, Terry Irvine, coordinators - **Day Trip**.

**9/22 - EarthKind Field Trip**; Elizabeth Milam, Jan Serface - **Bus Trip**.

### NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, August 11, 2010  
Carleen Bright Arboretum, 12 noon

## **“Master Gardeners increase the human capacity of extension by 17 percent per year “ ....**

....So claims the Texas Master Gardeners Association in describing the impact we make to our communities and to AgriLife Extension.

This was evident when nine members and interns started to make vegetable beds at Friends for Life on Lakewood Dr. in July.

The 20-year-old agency requested assistance and we responded by agreeing to support a special project above and beyond our ongoing commitments. The non-profit agency is an adult day care center as well as a training center for elderly people with disabilities.

The horticultural therapy project fits in with their goal of teaching skills for every day living. The vegetable gardens (10 raised beds) will become the perfect teaching experience. August 2 is the next tentative work day when volunteers are asked to bring shovels, rakes, hand tools, newspapers and wheel barrows at 8 am.

**T**o eliminate confusion between our permanent projects and special ones such as Friends For Life, President Jan Serface explained that we often get requests to help an organization get started. We have the skills and manpower and if members show an interest, the project takes off.

We also have a request from Sherry Prather to help build a flower bed at Spring Valley Elementary School. Contact her at [jprat13247@aol.com](mailto:jprat13247@aol.com).

New gardens behind the downtown MHMR facility are another example of a special, but not permanent MG site.

Our on-going “MG family” sites are the Texas Superstar bed, Trailside garden and pond at the Carleen Bright Arboretum, Woodway and Cedar Ridge Elementary Schools, the McGregor City demonstration garden and Habitat for Humanity. The HOT Rose Garden has also been approved, but is presently on hold.

Then there is the annual Children’s Garden Fair and the docent program at the Arboretum, the annual plant sale fundraiser, the Ask A Master Gardener phone line, our biannual Intern Recruitment/Training Program, the speakers’ bureau and more.



***MG members and interns worked the beds at the Friends For Life headquarters one hot day in July. The group included Andrea Moore, chairman, Jan Serface, Ila Jean Carothers, Mary Lou Trice, Sherry Henson, Margaret Henson, John Buchanan, Robert Powers, and Sujatha Reddy.***

*Photo by Ila Jean Carothers*

**A**t a time when community non-profit groups find it’s tough to attract and keep volunteers, the success of the master gardener program in Texas and elsewhere is exceptionally remarkable.

I spent most of the ’70’s and ’80’s in volunteer management jobs in three states. I was trained at state government and university levels and paid to help agencies start or improve volunteer programs and keep those volunteers coming. It wasn’t always easy. Volunteerism is very trendy and fickle.

But when you put out a call for people to pay \$150, commit to sitting, listening, observing half a day a week for an entire summer, add another 50 hrs. often doing hard labor in the broiling sun, and 42 men and women of all ages, talents and experiences mail in their checks, we really have a good thing going here.

First lesson in volunteer management: there must be a payback. I have heard “to meet a man,” but it is usually “to help someone.” What it really is is “to satisfy a need.” Wow, does MG know how to do that!

So here we are highly trained, passionate gardeners brought together with a thirst for knowledge, a quest for the camaraderie and friendship of others who share those interests plus the “feel good” reward that comes with giving to and taking pride in our community!

Now go read about us at [www.txmg.org](http://www.txmg.org).

Sonia Warriner, LD editor

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## Chamblee captures spirit of CB arboretum on native plant trip to Woodway

On his road trip to Waco for his talk on Great Gardens July 14, Steven Chamblee embraced the people, the gardens and the spirit of Woodway's "beautiful oasis."

His article is featured in Neil Sperry's August e-newsletter and excerpts are printed here with his permission. [www.neilsperry.com/e-gardens](http://www.neilsperry.com/e-gardens).

Traveling from the northwest over the Rt. 6 Lake Waco bridge he said, "I'm not sure if it was intentionally designed to gently rock your truck when crossing it, but I felt like a baby in a bassinet. I walked into the Bright Arboretum auditorium all warm and fuzzy to be greeted by the friendliest folks in Texas."

"My personal favorite aspect to the plantings (at the arboretum) is one of the most impressive cactus/yucca/agave collections I've seen in the Lone Star State," he wrote. ....Comparing Woodway to some of the large and famous gardens, he wrote "This garden isn't Dolly Parton; it's more like Kelly Clarkson."



*"This is a place with a blue jean spirit, and you feel right at home the minute you enter the gate."*



Ila Jean and Jon Carothers also gave Chamblee a tour of their gardens featuring a huge Malabar spinach arch and Ila Jean's pillow propagation babies. Of the arch, Chamblee wrote, "I'd say it's easily the best one in Texas!"



*About the author: Steven Chamblee is the chief horticulturist for Chandor Gardens in Weatherford and a regular contributor to Neil Sperry's GARDENS magazine and e-gardens newsletter. [www.chandorgardens.com](http://www.chandorgardens.com)*

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### Post Scripts . . .

Dr. Chuck Garner, new Woodway City Council member, has been appointed to the Arboretum Board. He writes a very informative blog about city hall meetings and other related topics of interest. Coming up: how the council will fund a new events building at the arboretum. [www.hellowoodway.blogspot.com](http://www.hellowoodway.blogspot.com)

Thinking of building a stone patio? Read Barbara Elmore's email newsletter, Dig and Let Dig. Funny, realistic and full of information. Elmore now lives in Fredericksburg, but is a former staff writer for the Trib and member of our MG bunch. [www.digandletdig.com](http://www.digandletdig.com) or [barbara@digandletdig.com](mailto:barbara@digandletdig.com)

### Help is needed, please

August 20, 8 am, Trailside & SuperStar gardens, bring tools, Tidy Up Day. Contact Anne Plasek, 772-4422, [eplasek@grandecom.net](mailto:eplasek@grandecom.net)

August 21, Woodway Elementary, 7:30 am, prepare garden for fall planting, bring tools to trim, move soil, Kim Dougherty, [kiminind@yahoo.com](mailto:kiminind@yahoo.com)

Ask A MG, Aug. 5, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31, single and double spots open; 1-4 Tues/Thurs. Carol Reinking, [sscarol.24@gmail.com](mailto:sscarol.24@gmail.com)