



April Meeting: 13th 6pm at the Arboretum.

Melba Catchings—Extension Office Secretary



Meet the new Extension Office Secretary Melba Catchings. Born in Austin, Melba grew up in the Manor area to the east of Austin. She attended public schools in Manor from the 3rd grade until she graduated from high school.

Melba and her husband Bubba have a “yours, mine and ours” family.

The couple will celebrate their 22nd anniversary in April. Melba’s son Brandon Archer lives in Lexington Texas with his wife and two daughters. Melba’s step-daughter Katrina Catchings lives in San Antonio and has two children. Step-son Austin Catchings lives in Cedar Park, an Austin suburban town. Melba and Bubba’s daughter Eliza, an MCC student, lives at home.

Melba’s parents live in Leander Texas, which is close enough for frequent visits. Bubba’s parents live in Kingsville, which is not as convenient. They manage to visit a couple of times each year. Her happiest moments are when Melba has all of her kids and grandkids together. Says Melba, “If I can’t have all of them together, I’ll settle for one or two at a time, especially if it involves the grandkids.”

In February of last year Bubba joined Progressive Waste Solutions as a district maintenance manager and the couple moved to Meridian. They previously lived in Winnie, northeast of Houston. Melba lived in the Austin-Manor-Elgin-Lexington area all her life until Bubba’s work required a move to Houston in 2010. “It sure was nice to be close to the beach, fresh seafood anytime and warm weather all year. It’s nice to be back close to family once again, but we do miss our northeast of Houston friends.”

Melba worked in administrative/executive assistant positions since high school in the public and private sectors. So far her favorite jobs were with Cap Rock Electric Cooperative’s Austin office and at UT Austin. She left UT when the couple’s two younger children were in middle school and involved in school activities and athletics. Melba and Bubba agreed that Melba would become a stay-at-home mom until they graduated. Says Melba, “That was a hard decision but one I will never regret.”

Her last couple of years in Winnie, Melba worked for the Liberty-Chambers Counties Adult Probation Department. When Bubba joined Progressive Waste Solutions, Melba had to leave that job, which she loved. While looking for a full-time job (which we’re delighted that she found as Extension Office Secretary) Melba was a substitute teacher at Meridian High School. She saw the Extension Office job notice, applied, and says “Here I am.”

Melba grows plants in containers and is pleased that some survived the move from Winnie to Meridian and are thriving. She prefers low maintenance plants but likes a pretty yard and works at it. Melba is looking for ideas for the “lazy gardener.” She enjoys reading, the outdoors, exploring new communities and meeting new people. “I am very excited to be here at the Extension Office and look forward to meeting each and every one of you.”

From Janet Schaffer

Notes from the President—It is officially spring, and exciting things are happening! We are getting closer to the 2016 Plant Sale and it will be held for the first time at Westview Center. We will be under cover and will be able to get set up the evening before. If we all work together we can repeat the outstanding success of the 2015 Plant Sale.

The MCMG 2016 Intern Class orientation for interested persons was held on March 17 at Whitehall Center. About 50 enthusiastic people came to the orientation and we noticed that many of them were busy filling out their application forms even before we started the orientation briefing. As of this writing we have 47 completed and signed applications for the intern class, and all applicants have paid their tuition.

The deadline for intern class applications is May 6 and a group of 11 MCMG volunteers will meet shortly after that to select the 2016 class. Social Director Della Setser will organize a meet and greet social event so we can all meet our 2016 class members and make them feel welcome and appreciated. When the date and time is announced, please make every effort to attend.

So many things are going on. If you plan to attend the state convention, be sure to make your reservation ASAP. And keep in mind that next year's state convention will be a Caribbean cruise! By the way, if you need to pick up some CE hours or are interested in a specific topic or two, you will be welcome to attend the intern class training sessions to be held Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 5 pm at Whitehall Center. We also have Lunch with the Masters on April 20. Jan Serface will be the host and the topic is "Landscapes in Transition; Basics of Landscape Design." CE credit is available for that session.

From Janet at the Cardinal's Corner

THE SHAKER MOVEMENT AND ITS MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO GARDENING IN AMERICA

The Shaker movement was founded in northwest England in the 18th Century. Shakers were an offshoot of the Quaker movement. Known as Shaking Quakers, the movement began when Quakers adapted a more sedate form of worship. The term Shaking Quakers referred to the charismatic nature of their worship services. In May 1774 nine Shakers sailed for colonial America, where they found fertile ground for their form of worship. By 1792 Shaker communities were established in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York.

The Shakers were unique in requiring strict celibacy from members. All property was held in common and equality between the sexes was emphasized. The movement spread westward, with communities established in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. The Golden Age of the Shaker movement was in the period from 1820 to 1860. Shakers became known for the fine craftsmanship and simplicity of their furniture.



They built dwellings with exquisite attention to detail, yet simplicity was foremost and unnecessary adornment was discouraged. "Form follows function" describes the Shaker style. Shaker communities were largely self-sufficient, but they sold furniture and farm produce to the public, who were always welcomed. Some communities even produced their own bricks. So well-constructed were their buildings that many stand today, as sturdy as when they were built. Alas, the Shakers were doomed to extinction by their mandatory celibacy.

At the height of the Shaker movement, when putting up sufficient food for the winter meant survival to much of America, Shaker communities offered many advantages. Housing, food and clothing were provided, along with a secure existence surrounded by friends of both sexes. Every member was expected either to bring a needed skill upon joining the movement, or to develop such a skill under tutelage of a Shaker master of that craft. Members signed a covenant, which was a legal document in which the new member was expected to sign all his or her worldly goods over to the community. It was a form of communism, but there was no coercion to join. Again, there were powerful advantages to signing the covenant, but let's face it, celibacy was not one of them. The movement slowly declined following the Civil War, after which the Shakers could not compete with cheaper mass produced goods produced by Eastern factories. Shakers continued to offer finely crafted furniture and other items for sale, but prosperity gradually declined in Shaker communities. Due to their pacifist beliefs, Shakers were exempted from military service during the Civil War. These were the first American conscientious objectors.

The Shaker covenant was closed in 1957 and the movement died out. But oh, what Shakers accomplished during their time in the sun! Shaker herbs were renowned in a time when medicine was primitive and people relied on home remedies for their ailments. Local root and herb doctors emerged to provide treatments for various conditions. Shakers became known for the quality of their herbs, the way they were prepared, packaged and labeled for use in treating specific ailments. In good weather, Shaker women gathered wild herbs for sale or their own consumption. Shaker women maintained vegetable gardens.



All Shaker villages maintained farms. They adapted the latest scientific agricultural methods, raising most of their own food. Growing, preserving and storing food for themselves and their livestock for the winter months was a priority in Shaker villages. Everything was kept clean and sanitary. Efficiency was emphasized and their livestock were fat and healthy.



A major contribution to American gardening was Shaker seeds. Shaker garden seeds were sold throughout the U.S. The Shakers always saved the best seed from each harvest for use in the following year. This ensured gradual improvement in crop quality. Shakers came up with the innovative idea of putting seeds in small packets. They also sold bulk seed by weight and measure for commercial use. This was their most successful enterprise, providing the larger portion of their income. The Shaker Seed Company was the forerunner of the modern day packaged seed business. In many cases, Shaker seeds were the only seed source for rural Americans.

Their innovations included packaging, distribution and cataloging of seeds. Shakers are credited with creating the modern seed company business model. As mentioned in last month's story about lawns, it was Shaker seeds that helped create the early American lawn, now an essential element in suburbia.

While vegetable seeds were the main offering, flower, herb and grass seed was also sold. An 1800 seed catalog offered mangelwurtzel, blood beets and more familiar offerings.

Less Familiar Garden Plants

Master Gardeners are always looking for plants to add to their gardens. Most of these plants we know as old friends, but there are a few with which you may not be as familiar. We must thank Robert Powers for sharing some of his more unusual plants with us.

To the left is the bloom stalk of Mother of a Million" succulent. The bloom is so big Robert had trouble getting all of it into this photo. We have never seen this succulent bloom before, but apparently Robert's expertise was just what was needed to



accomplish this. Mother of a Million, or aka Mother of Millions or alligator plant is a kalanchoe that produces little leaves that can drop off and start new plants on the ground around the plant. The plant is poisonous.



Robert also has a rock rose. I have included this as a less familiar plant since it is so hard to find at nurseries..

Also known as a Brazilian Rock rose, it is a perennial, growing up to 4 to 5 ft tall, evergreen, drought hardy, low water needs, full sun, blooms cover plant all summer.

The Leopard plant, Farfugium Japonicum, 'aureo Maculata' is a wonderful plant for shade. It can endure freezing weather as well as hot summers. Its beautiful yellow spots cover the plant. This photo shows the sun flower style blooms that rarely appear on the plant. This plant prefers shade.



Approved Volunteer Opportunities

April 2016

| Date and Time | Activity | Contact Person |
|---------------|---|--|
| April 2 | Arboretum work day, 8:30-12 | Janet Schaffer |
| April 8 | Woodway Elementary Garden Classroom, 8:15-3pm | Myrt Fauver Edie Norman Ann Sefcik |
| April 9 | Farmers Market/Veggie Gardening, 8:15-1pm | Penny Gifford |
| April 10 | Gardener's Gathering, 1-4 | Pat Dillard |
| April 20 | Cedar Ridge workday, 9am | Sandy Katz Nelda Cooper |

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|----------|--|----------------------------|
| April 22 | Extension Office workday, 9am | Catherine Cole |
| April 21 | Cedar Ridge Day in the Garden, 8:15-3pm | Sandy Katz Nelda Cooper |
| April 23 | Party for the Planet/Zoo | Jeanette Kelly |
| April 25 | Superstar/Trailside Gardens workday, 9am | Jeanette Kelly |

McLennan County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting Minutes March 9, 2016

Special note regarding Rapport Academy JMG program:

Every Wednesday from 1:40-2:55 with Sherry Henson. Contact Jeanette Kelly to volunteer with this project.

Go to www.signupgenius.com Log in or set up new account Select "Groups" and look for Master Gardeners Extension Office Then select date and click to sign in. Or, email Carol Reinking at sscarol.24@gmail.com Thank you and Happy Spring!!!

March 2016 Speaker's Report

March 8 - Barry Vokes presented his program on Square-foot Gardening to the Waco Herb Society. Eighteen people enjoyed his program.

March 10 - Ila Jean Carothers talked about Bucket Gardening at the Brown Bag Garden Club. Fourteen people attended.

March 12 - Jeanette Kelly, Ann Sefcik and Janet Schaffer answered questions from the public at the Waco Farmer's Market about Texas SuperStars. They had 106 contacts.

March 15 - Sandy Katz spoke about Shade Perennials at the Four Seasons Garden Club. Twenty-eight people attended.

March 18 - Jeanette Kelly spoke about the Texas Super Stars at the McGregor Garden Club. Twenty-one attended.

March 20 - Jeanette Kelly presented her program on Butterflies/Pollinators at the Hallsburg 4-H Club meeting. Eighteen children and adults enjoyed her talk.

Nelda Cooper

Speaker's Bureau Coordinator

If you are a certified MG and would like to be a speaker or have questions about becoming a speaker to area clubs/organizations, please contact Nelda Cooper at 822-1629, coopernelda53@yahoo.com. We have prepared programs on the MG laptop that can be checked out from the Agri-Life Office. Current MG speakers are willing to act as mentors.

The regular meeting of the McLennan County Master Gardener Association was held at the Carleen Bright Arboretum, Whitehall Center on March 9, 2016. President, Janet Schaffer, called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M. Betty Tawwater, Secretary, recorded minutes of the meeting.

President Schaffer announced that the Directories and Membership Cards are on the table for members who have not, yet, received them.

A motion to approve the minutes as written in the February 2016 newsletter was made and seconded. There was no opposition and the motion carried.

Ann Sefcik reviewed the Treasurer's Report and asked for questions. Since there were no questions, President Schaffer, announced that the Report would be filed for audit.

Tom Burr gave an update on the Master Gardener's Publicity Team. He reported that all publicity materials have been consolidated at the Master Gardener's Office, and announced that a short meeting of the Team and interested members will be held after the General Meeting to discuss the expandable banner.

Della Setser announced that there is a sign-up sheet on the table for members interested in providing cookies for the Commissioners Meeting.

President Schaffer announced that Sandra Bigham, office manager at the Extension Office, is retiring and money will be collected for her retirement gift.

Barry Vokes gave an Intern Class update. He reported that we have 60 expressions of interests, the Orientation Session will be held March 17, 2016 at 2:00 PM, and the deadline for applications is May 6, 2016. Mr. Vokes said a Selection Team of 12 members who volunteered to be on the Team will review the applications. He stressed the importance of the role of mentors.

Barbara Vance announced a sign-up sheet for members interested in being mentors for the new intern class is on the table.

Margaret Henson gave an update on the plant sale. She announced that a sign-up sheet for members to volunteer and Plant Sale flyers are on the table. She said garage sale items related to gardening will be included at the Sale.

Louis McDaniel announced that a formal Texas Water Star Dedication will be held on March 30 at 2:00 PM and urged members to attend. He reminded members that volunteers are needed for workdays on March 11 and 12,

President Schaffer announced that volunteers are still needed for the Arboretum workday.

President Schaffer announced that the Executive Committee approved the purchase of insurance to protect members who are working with the public such as the Plant Sale.

Melody High and Pat Marlin gave an update on the Home Garden Tour. They informed members that handouts with information are available on the table. They suggested bringing binoculars to observe wildlife and asked members to contact them if they had mobility concerns to find out about accommodation. Mrs. High announced that members who wanted to tour the homes as a group could meet at her home at 9:15 AM.

Denise Kinnison reviewed the March/April 2016 Volunteer Opportunity Calendar.

Della Setser gave an update on the Veterans' One Stop Center. She stressed that the project will be educational, and for those interested, a sign-up sheet is on the table.

Carol Reinking reminded members to sign up for Ask a Master Gardener by using the Sign Up Genius or to sign up on the sheet being passed around.

Sherry Henson gave an update on the LGEG Program. She announced that she is making plans for the next school year, thank-you letters from her students are on the table, and that her school has submitted an application for a \$1000 grant to enhance the program.

The following educational opportunities were included in the agenda:

Vegetable Specialist Training – Tarrant County- March 10-12

Irrigation Specialist Training – Bexar County - March 21-23

Plant Propagation Specialist Training – Fort Worth – April 21- 23, 2016

2016 Texas Master Gardener State Conference – McKinney TX- May 17-19

Cost: Sign-up January 1 through April 2016 - \$200.00

Sign-up April 16 through May 17, 2016 - \$225.00

There will be an Earthkind Specialist training available at this conference

President Schaffer mentioned the following cares and concerns: Pat Goalie had hip surgery, and Carol Wood had knee surgery.

Ann Sefcik reminded members to return their background forms and fee to her.

Since there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Tawwater. Secretary

Attendance—March 9, 2016 Meeting

Beets, Barbara; Belanger, Dick; Burchfield, Billy; Burchfield, Linda; Burr, Tom; Calhoon, Ralph; Carothers, Ila Jean; Cole, Catherine; Cooper, Nelda; Curtis, Virgil; Daniel, David; Davidson, Emily; DeMuyneck, Lynn; FitzGerald, Eva; Ford, Kris; Geletzke, Cindy; Haller, Judy; Hamilton, Wayne; Henson, Margaret; Henson, Sherry; Hering, Jene; High, Melody; Holcomb, Peggy; Kelly, Taddie; Khoury, Julia; Kinder, Missy; Kinnison, Denise; Kruse, Linda Deal; Marlin, Patricia; McDaniel, Louie; Mersinger, Barbara; Milam, Elizabeth; Milnor, Gerry; Moore, Andrea; Petru, Ernie; Powers, Robert; Reinking, Art; Reinking, Carol; Rich, Jennifer; Romano, Sharon; Saladin, Diane Kay; Schaffer, Janet; Seale, James Jr.; Sefcik, Ann; Setser, Della; Tawwater, Betty; Tindell, Patsy; Vance, Barbara; Vokes, Barry; vonRosenberg, Jo; Waldrop, Melba; Warriner, Sonia; Watson, Ramona

MCMG Volunteer Hours

MCMG Hours 2/26/16—3/25/16

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Volunteer Hours | 352.25 |
| Continuing Education Hours | 33.50 |
| Miles Traveled | 1202 |
| Contacts | 3142 |

PROJECT HOURS

(The hours listed below are included in the above summary.)

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Arboretum Superstar Bed | 31 |
| Waco Farmer's Market | 9 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Ask a Master Gardener Telephone Line | 16.75 |
| Cedar Ridge Elem. School Green Classroom | 72.5 |
| Woodway Elementary Green Classroom | 22.5 |
| Intern Class 2016 | 25.5 |
| MCMG Clerical/Administration | 25.5 |
| Newsletter, publications | 9 |
| Other Volunteer Hours | 35.75 |
| Plant Sale | 22.75 |
| Rapoport Academy, North Campus | 7.25 |
| Speaker's Bureau | 19.5 |
| Texas Water Star Project | 52.5 |

Education Opportunities - 2016

Lunch with the Masters—April 20, Landscape in Transition, Basics of Landscape Design, Water Saving Tips. 12-2, Jan Surface

The 2016 State Master Gardener Conference . . . BUDS & BARK: EARTH-KIND® IN THE PARK 2016 TEXAS MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE—May 17 – 19, 2016

Master Gardener - Water Efficient Landscape Design School-- Wednesday - Friday, August 31 - September 2, 2016. Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Dallas. Three-day program with Wednesday and Thursday evening optional design workshops. This workshop is only open to current Master Gardener volunteers. Registration: Only 10 Master Gardener participant spots are available for this training. Registration is first come/first served basis. Cost: \$250.00: (includes lunch, dinner and design materials).

The 3rd aquaponics construction workshop at Overton Research and Extension Center is on Saturday May 14, 2016. Dr. Masabni (Extension Small-Acreage Vegetable Specialist) is hosting a hands-on educational workshops on aquaponics system construction and maintenance.

To register for this workshop, go to <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/ProductID/2011/> and click on the green button to start registration.

The State Master Gardener Texas Superstar Training is scheduled September 20 – September 22

The State Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training is scheduled for November 9 – November 11.

MCMG Garden Tour

Here is the Schedule for our MCMG Garden Tour this year:

Date: Saturday, June 11, 2016

Schedule: Judy Schmeltekopf's garden: 10:00- 11:30 a.m. Located at: 1191 Brazos Bluff Dr., China Spring.

Judy Haller's garden: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. 3331 Northridge Drive, Waco. (MGs are encouraged to bring a sack lunch and join other MGs for lunch on Judy's patio.)

Robert Power's garden: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., 7100 Canterbury Drive, Waco.

Come see a picturesque view of the Brazos River, an overlook of Lake Waco, beautiful shade and sun plants, a cactus garden, birds at play, a water collection system, a terraced yard, fun yard art, and many more things!

For those interested in carpooling, we will meet at Melody High's house at 9:15 and leave from there at 9:30 that morning.

---Pat Marlin

SANDRA BIGHAM RETIREMENT RECEPTION



Long-time Extension Office Manager Sandra Bigham retires on April 30 after 22 years of service. We will all miss her, for she gave her unfailing support to us in every way. MCMG vice president Tom Burr presents her with a check as a gift from our members. Photo credit Brenda Golubski.

Master Gardeners About Town



Sherry L Henson was awarded the "Teacher of the Year" award at Rapoport Academy in Waco.



Cedar Ridge is beautiful with all the hard work of our volunteers.



Louie, Linda, and Tom at the Mammoths on the March



Jeanette teaching the children about butterflies at Cedar Ridge



Melody High with children at Mammoths on the March.



Now we know how Jeanette helped Superman get his start.

McLennan County Master Gardeners Association Officers 2016

President: Janet Schaffer, Vice-President: Tom Burr,
Secretary: Betty Tawwater, Treasurer: AnnSefcik

AgriLife Sponsor – Shane McLellan, County Agent

Our website: 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

