



**Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
September 12, 2007**

Attendees –

Board Members Present: James Buckley, Brenda Dresner, Glenn Dresner, Ginny Grant, Mike Greenwood, Mary Beth McCaughey, Carolyn McDaniel, Marilyn Almon, and via phone, Nat Gruesen.

Board Members Absent: Sallie Bourgeois, Barbara Brannon, and Peg d'Hemecourt.

Cooperative Extension Staff Present: None

Cooperative Extension Staff Absent: CEA, Horticulture – Mark Countryman and Master Volunteer Coordinator – Margo McDowell.

Quorum Present? Yes

Call to Order – Mary Beth McCaughey called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Officer and Committee Reports:

President – Mary Beth McCaughey

- Mary Beth announced that many important dates, such as Spring 2007 graduation, the fruit tree sale, and the perennial sale were on the website calendar.

Vice President - Peg d'Hemecourt

- Peg was not present.

Secretary – Marilyn Almon

- Marilyn thanked Peg for recording the August Board meeting minutes in her absence.

Treasurer – Mike Greenwood

- Mike announced that she will not attend the October Board meeting, but will report the September income and expenses through September 25th.
- Mary Beth addressed the need for creating a separate Youth Activities Expense category under Community Relations to consolidate program expenses for youth and distinguish them from adult program expenses. Mike will update the budget and financial statements to reflect the change in reporting and re-route them to Board members.

Awards – Carolyn McDaniel

- Carolyn stated that she would convene a group to plan the Awards Banquet which will be held on December 5th. The format will probably be the same as last year: potluck with the Board providing meat for the dinner. Mary Beth suggested that Carolyn contact Lynn McKillop for possible help with decorating.
- Mary Beth posed the concept of FBCMG making a donation in lieu of spending money on small giveaways distributed at the Awards Banquet. Board members favored the idea and there was also discussion about offering a few door prizes purchased from vendors who have supported FBCMG in the past.

Communications – Open position

- Mary Beth reported that Mary Ellen Twiss is moving forward on publicity.
- Robert Goehring, webmaster, has suggested posting future editions of The Grapevine on the website and having Margo McDowell send the link to members when each issue is available.

Community Relations – Brenda Dresner

- Brenda announced that Herman Auer, a master gardener since 1983 who works with Dr. William Johnson, Horticulture agent in Galveston County, will be the January monthly program speaker, presenting a 1 ½ hour program plus Q&A on fruit trees. Mary Beth asked Brenda to ensure that he will talk about varieties that will be sold by FBCMG as opposed to varieties that are not being sold at the fruit tree sale. Mary Beth also commented on the need to have the sale book ready to distribute at the January meeting.
- Marilyn questioned the need for starting the fruit tree sale an hour earlier than the perennial sale opens. Mary Beth answered that buyers are accustomed to the early starting time.
- Mary Beth stated that she will contact Barbara Brannon about organizing a planning meeting for the fruit tree sale before the end of the year.
- Mary Beth asked Brenda to contact the Entomology Group concerning their guidelines and vision for the future. Their work could provide useful information for the website.

Fundraising – Barbara Brannon

- Barbara was not present.

Greenhouse – Glenn Dresner and James Buckley, co-chairs

- Glenn's report is attached to the minutes.
- Glenn and James will attend the Greenhouse Specialist training which will be held in Fort Worth, October 24th to 26th.
- Ginny Grant will donate a white dry-erase board for use in the greenhouse.
- Mary Beth inquired if the bromeliads will be used for specific purposes. James responded that they would make excellent door prizes.
- Glenn questioned the possibility of Gene Powers writing an article about his recent trip to Brazil for The Grapevine or showing his pictures to the group. Mary Beth suggested that it could be a potential topic for a Saturday advanced training.

Member Relations – Sallie Bourgeois

- Sallie was not present.

Youth Activities – Ginny Grant

- Ginny reported the following activities:
 - The Plants in the Classroom committee presented an in-service training for 42 FBISD teachers. Another in-service is scheduled for November 19th.
 - Calvary Episcopal School would like to have a garden.
 - A meeting will be held next week concerning the FBISD Head Start garden project.
 - A JMG meeting was held at Settlers Way.
 - JMG activity at Texian Market Days at George Ranch is scheduled for October 27th.
 - Volunteers are needed for readying the AgTivity Barn displays prior to the fair. Weekly work meetings are held on Mondays at 6 p.m.
 - Ginny has inquired about the availability of the three new JMG specialists to work with FBCMG.
 - Fair displays will encourage recycling in schools.
- Ginny made a motion, seconded by Brenda, and approved by all for \$300 to cover the costs of two recycling bottles and other miscellaneous expenses for the fair. The bottles will later be used in the annex kitchen and in the extension office break room.
- Burt Revels has secured gift cards donated by Home Depot and Lowe's to be used for AgTivity Barn expenditures.

Landscape – Nat Gruesen via phone

- Nat reported that Terry Williams, currently an associate, will serve as co-chair of the Water Garden until graduation.
- Susan Brodmerkel needs to step down as chair of the Vegetable Garden, but will remain in an advisory capacity. Nat will assume the temporary chair position.
- Mary Beth requested that Nat provide an updated list of garden chairs for the website.
- Yardwise chairs would like to have the large timbers and boards removed from their area by probationers. Ginny recommended moving them before the county fair.
- Mary Beth reported that the grass had been sprayed in the area designated for the EarthKind™ garden. Dr. Steve George's rose selections have not been received yet.
- Carolyn would like to have hay for the Vineyard. Nat recommended contacting Dell Keene, Berry Patch chair, to pool resources to obtain hay.

Executive Committee

- It was announced that via email, Mary Beth submitted the following nomination for a vote of the Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer). NOMINATION: Because the appointment of Peg d'Hemecourt to Chair the Nominating Committee is a violation of the FBMG Operations Manual specifications, she should be replaced in the position by another FBMG member (as per Operations Manual section 6.A.4.) Therefore, I nominate Ginny Grant to serve as the Chair of the Nominating Committee for the election of officers for 2008.
- The nomination was unanimously approved via e-vote of the executive committee on August 20, 2007.
- Mary Beth thanked Ginny for accepting the chair position.

Approval of Minutes – After a motion by Carolyn McDaniel and a second by Ginny Grant, the minutes of the August 8, 2007, Board Meeting were unanimously approved.

Standing Committee Reports:

Governance Committee

- Marilyn announced that the Operations Manual, revised July 11, 2007, would be posted on the website in PDF format, replacing the outdated version.

Cooperative Extension Advisor Reports:

CEA-Horticulture – Mark Countryman

- Mark was not present.

FBCMG Master Volunteer Coordinator – Margo McDowell

- Margo was not present.

Old Business:

Mentoring Program

- Nat reported on the mentoring program meeting held on August 4th that he attended along with Margo, Peg, and Ginny. The action plan report, submitted by Peg, is attached to the minutes. The program was developed to increase the retention rate of master gardeners and increase the graduation rate by fostering closer lasting relationships among members.
- Nat will initially take the lead to establish accountability to the Board.
- Mary Beth complimented the plan and stated the need to define the program's responsibilities as a standing committee.
- Ginny suggested that mentors receive badges and be recognized at the annual awards banquet.
- Glenn questioned whether the program would be copyrighted, since there would be no cost to copyright. Nat responded that it would not be copyrighted, but the feasibility could be studied.
- Ginny is currently working on retention numbers and stated that the program would be implemented during the next to last week of the Fall 2007 class.

New Business:

Budget

- Mary Beth made a motion, seconded by Brenda, and approved by all, to increase Communications Expense advertising by \$100.

Strategy for In the Garden

- Mary Beth's report of the meeting held August 14th is attached to the minutes.
- James inquired about holding Green Thumb seminars on Saturdays.
- Mike suggested spotlighting the gardens individually as part of the Saturday programs.

Other Business

- Mike read a thank you letter she received from MD Anderson Cancer Center in response to the contribution made in memory of Marge Powers. Mary Beth commented on the need for a historian component to record cards, letters, etc.
- Mary Beth requested permission for the Sugar Land Garden Club to borrow wagons and tables for their fall plant and garden art sale. Board members approved.
- Glenn announced that he has four hollow core doors to donate to the equipment inventory.

After a motion by Brenda, seconded by James, and approved by all, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 10, 2007, possibly in the evening.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Almon
Secretary, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
10/04/2007

Monthly Greenhouse Report – August/September, 2007

- We assisted in preparing for the Ft. Bend County Fair by planting seeds for cotton, maize, and soybeans. These plants will be used to show the visitors what these crops look like.
- We extended an invitation to Gene Powers to help us with the upkeep and care of the bromeliads in the Greenhouse. Gene came two weeks ago and shared his expertise on how we should go forward with the bromeliads. He showed us the ones we needed to repot and the ones we needed to separate the “pups” on. He is going to send us his recommendation on soil mixture to use in the repotting and planting. He said he would try and come more later on and help us to learn and monitor the health and progress of the bromeliads.
- We continue to monitor the watering of the timer for the mist tent. We have gone from 2 seconds every twenty minutes to 2 seconds every hour. Seems like getting a good grasp of how, when, etc to watering of the various tables is an on-going challenge. We hope to find out more on this subject and also the best types of soils to use when we attend the Greenhouse specialist training in October.

Submitted by Glenn Dresner, Sept. 9, 2007

Discussion items and outcome of the meeting to discuss the “In the Garden” Seminar – held 8/14/07

Attendees: Barbara Brannon, Brenda Dresner, Peg d’Hemecourt, Margo McDowell and MB McCaughey

The meeting started with unanimous agreement that while the initial “In the Garden Seminar” held in 2006 was a positive step for FBMG, the full-day seminar format needed to be simplified.

Our discussion included the possibility of holding half-day In the Garden seminars on a seasonal basis, perhaps 2 or more times a year. The format could include 45 minute presentations on 2 or 3 topics each time, along with tours of the Demonstration Gardens. We felt that the benefits of this format would be:

- a. Enabling members of the public to attend some or all of the presentations and having a chance to visit the gardens in the space of 3 or 4 hours at most. This time frame is easier for people to commit to than a full day seminar – and hopefully the change would result in increased participation.
- b. Offering the seminar more frequently would allow FBMG to present both “classic” topics (such as bed preparation/composting techniques) as well as subjects of seasonal interest (such as veggies to plant in the fall) each time. Offering a wider variety of topics in the course of the year would allow FBMG to expand outreach efforts.
- c. Shortening the length and simplifying the agenda so that presentations are just held once in the course of the seminar makes it much more straightforward for participants to understand (and for FBMG to publicize). It also simplifies planning and setup to a great degree.
- d. Shortening the format eliminates the complication of making arrangements for lunch.

We envisioned a setup where the presentations would be held in one building (if visual aids such as a PowerPoint were included) or conducted in the Greenhouse or our proposed Gazebo. This focuses activity to the grounds and just one of the TCE buildings – which is easier for participants. Light refreshments could be provided without much expense.

There was agreement that a revised approach to “In the Garden” would complement our invitation to visit the Demonstration Gardens and chat with FBMG members on workdays – our “Saturday with the Master Gardeners” initiative started earlier this year. We discussed the possibility of holding one In the Garden seminar in late April or early May (preparations for spring) of next year and another in late summer (getting ready for fall). Possible topics discussed (though by no means a complete list) included vegetable gardening, gardening with natives, butterfly gardening, common plant diseases, insects, bed preparation, composting and rain water harvesting.

We talked about the possibility of holding the seminars on one of the regular workdays but felt that our Landscape and Greenhouse Directors should be consulted before any specific dates were considered. We also felt that it was too late this year to try to put together a seminar for 2007 – especially with Ag’ivity Barn efforts gearing up for early October.

As we considered ideas for this type of outreach, we also brainstormed the possibility of eventually enhancing our Saturday with the Master Gardeners outreach by adding or highlighting a specific activity each some months. Perhaps highlighting the workday when grapes will be harvested (and having a member ready to talk with visitors about techniques for growing/harvesting grapes), having a berry or veggie tasting opportunity when the berries or veggies are ripening, tips on harvesting and using herbs (when we harvest herbs), demonstration of bed preparation techniques when veggies are planted, propagation techniques to enable sharing favorite plants from our Cottage Garden, Butterfly Garden and or Circle Gardens. There are lots of possibilities for tying our gardens directly into education and outreach opportunities. The real challenge could be laying out a plan to hold just one such activity at each workday if we want to pursue this idea.

The meeting concluded with the plan to submit these ideas to the Board for their consideration of a new strategy for In the Garden. If the Board is in agreement with a new approach, more detailed planning efforts can be organized by Directors interested in shaping the plan.

-Submitted by Mary Beth McCaughey

**FBMG Mentoring Program
Action Plan
8/4/07 (Updated 8/30/07)**

Task Force Members: Margo McDowell, Nat Gruesen, Ginny Grant, Peggy d'Hemecourt

	Task	Responsibility	Target Completion	Status
1	Initiate program development	Task Force	8/3/07	Complete
2	Articulate need and gather data to support	Task Force; Ginny - data	8/17	In process
3	Define role of Mentor & establish minimum requirements	Task Force	8/17	Complete
4	Define role of Associate	Task Force	8/24	Complete
5	Recommend duration of relationship & other ground rules	Task Force	8/24	Complete
6	Create recognition and/or reward for Mentors	Margo & Nat	8/31	In process
7	Develop program "branding" & marketing materials	Margo	9/7	In process
8	Establish program accountability at board level	Peggy through Board President	9/12	
9	Convene a focus group comprising Associates of the Spring 2007 class to obtain feedback on proposed program		9/19	
10	Recruit Mentors		9/19 – 10/19	
11	Train Mentors		10/25	
12	Pair Mentors & Associates of Fall 2007 Class		11/1/07	
13	Train Associates		11/3	
14	Measure success a) Class Retention Rate b) FBMG Member Retention Rate		2008 Grad Each 1 st Qtr	

Program Development Notes as of August 30, 2007

Task #2 - Articulate need and gather data to support

Need:

- Improve first year certification rate
- More involvement in FBMG by class members
- Method for certified Members to be involved with new class members
- Better Member retention
- Higher level of commitment by all Members
- Foster closer and longer-lasting relationships among Members

Two data sets may be sufficient to support need and to measure success over time:

- 1) A measure of class retention
- 2) A measure of Member retention

Task #3 – Define role of Mentor & establish minimum requirements

Role of Mentor

- Be the first volunteer contact that a new Associate has with the Ft. Bend County Master Gardener Program
- Provide encouragement
- Help Associate discover areas of interest and how their talents and skills can be used
- Enable and encourage Associate to want to be come more involved
- In general, act as informal advisor to all new Associates when approached (does not require a contact record be kept)
- Help the Associate find ways to contribute to FBMG's mission of public education and outreach

Duties of Mentor

- A week or more before class starts, telephone Associate
 - welcome Associate
 - learn about interests/background
 - answer questions about the class
 - offer to act as a liaison during training
 - provide your phone number and e-mail address
 - encourage Associate to feel free to contact you
- Attend the first garden workday following the start of class to meet the Associate and participate in a training session
- During class period, contact weekly
 - Help guide Associate to volunteer and advanced training opportunities
 - Encourage attendance at monthly programs and Member meetings, and offer to meet there
 - Assist Associate in obtaining answers to technical questions
 - Provide suggestions on how to maximize the FBMG experience
 - Provide operational advice
- When class ends, follow-up at least once a month during the mentoring period. If Associate is not yet active
 - suggest opportunities
 - invite Associate to go with you or meet you at volunteer activities or other events
 - connect Associate with Members who share similar interests
- Attend with the Associate a minimum of two volunteer work days
- Contact Master Volunteer Coordinator if you encounter any problems with the Mentoring relationship

- Attend the Associate's graduation event

Minimum Requirements

- Certified FBMG Member for 2+ years
- Active in FBMG
- Interested and enthusiastic
- Comfortable calling and talking to someone whom they don't know on the phone
- Agree to attend a Mentor basic training class
- Agree to attend the first garden workday following the start of class for an Associate training session
- Agree to attend at least two volunteer work days
- Agree to attend the graduation event

Task #4 – Define role of Associate

Role of Associate

- Cultivate a relationship with Mentor
- Gain knowledge of policy and procedures
- Become aware of available resources
- Increase general knowledge
- Be able to discuss ideas and release frustrations
- Shorten the time it takes to become a productive master gardener volunteer, advancing the organization's mission of public education and outreach

Duties of Associate

- Accept the call from the Mentor before the start of class
 - Exchange phone number and e-mail address
 - Encourage Mentor to feel free to contact you
- Attend the first garden workday following the start of class to meet the Mentor and participate in a training session
- During class period, expect weekly contact from Mentor
 - Learn about and participate in volunteer and advanced training opportunities
 - Plan to attend monthly programs and Member meetings, and meet Mentor there
 - Ask any questions
 - Find out how to maximize the FBMG experience
 - Seek operational advice
- When class ends, expect follow-up at least once a month during the mentoring period. If you are not yet active
 - Ask about opportunities
 - Plan to go with your Mentor or meet Mentor at volunteer activities or other events
 - Ask Mentor about Members who share similar interests to your own
- Attend with the Mentor a minimum of two volunteer work days
- Contact Master Volunteer Coordinator if you encounter any problems with the Mentoring relationship
- Attend graduation event

Task #5 – Recommend duration of relationship & other ground rules

- Relationship should begin prior to start of class, continue through master gardener classes, and continue after the Associate completes class. The duration of the formal mentoring period will be one year from the start of class.
- Requirement that pair meet (set frequency) and document progress (define how)
 - Contact should occur at least monthly (weekly during class period)

- FBMG will provide a “contact sheet” on which Mentors will record contacts with assigned Associates
- Anticipate bad matches, and how they will be resolved “without fault” or fallout
 - The responsible Board member and the Master Volunteer Coordinator will assess the mentoring program’s effectiveness on an ongoing basis and make changes to Mentor/Associate matches, as needed
 - At any time that the Mentor or Associate feels that the match is not beneficial for the Associate, either party should contact the Master Volunteer Coordinator, who will provide a new Mentor for the Associate
- Mentors are not required to settle conflicts or answer legal questions. When these situations arise, they are to be turned over to the Master Volunteer Coordinator.

Task #6 – Create recognition and/or reward for Mentors

Ideas for distinguishing Mentors from other Master Gardeners:

- Pin (Nat can further define this suggestion)
- Special (e.g. “gold inscribed”) name tag
- Attachment to standard name tag
- “Mentor” pin

Task force is not proposing tangible rewards for Mentors

Task #7 – Develop program “branding” & marketing materials

- Early idea: “The Seedling Program”; “The Seedling Corps”

Task #8 – Establish program accountability at board level

- Nat has interest in being accountable for program
- Might also be attached to Vice President’s role
- The greatest success will be where the “owner” has energy and interest for this
- Wherever accountability rests, the program should be perceived as being broad in scope relative to FBMG’s efforts

Task #9 – Recruit Mentors

- Master Volunteer Coordinator will initially recommend Members who meet the basic requirements of tenure, being active, and being enthusiastic

Task #10 – Train Mentors

- As a group, without Associates, prior to their first telephone contact with the Associate
- Present and discuss Mentor Duties, as listed in Task #3

Task #11 – Pair Mentors and Associates

- Try to make matches of people who live in the same area to facilitate carpooling opportunities
- Associate couples should be assigned separate Mentors so that each has their own contact
- Mentors will not be assigned to Associates they already know. This will help class members meet more members and provide an alternate source of information. It is recognized that the need for a Mentor may not be as great when the Associate knows other FBMG Members, so the Mentor’s work may be less intense.
- Mentors should be paired with no more than two Associates at one time

Task #12 – Train Associates

- As a group, with the Mentors, on the first garden workday after the start of class

- Present and Associate's role and duties in the Mentoring relationship, as described in Task #4

Submitted by Peg d'Hemecourt