



**Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
February 11, 2009**

Attendees –

Board Members Present: James Buckley, Brenda Dresner, Glenn Dresner, Jodie Douglass, Cindy Fairbanks, Robert Goehring, Ginny Grant, Jane Gray, Nat Gruesen, Mary Beth McCaughey, Peg Turrentine, and Marilyn Almon.

Board Members Absent: Barbara Brannon and Susan Peacock.

AgriLife Extension Advisor Present:

Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell

AgriLife Extension Advisor:

CEA - Horticulture – Open position

Quorum Present? Yes

Call to Order – Nat Gruesen called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes – After a motion by Brenda Dresner and a second by Jodie Douglass, the minutes of the January 13, 2009, Board meeting were approved by all.

Officer and Committee Reports:

President – Nat Gruesen

- Nat thanked Marilyn and Margo for coordinating the lunch served at the February 7th workday.

Vice President – Glenn Dresner

- No report.

Secretary – Susan Peacock

- Susan was not present.

Treasurer – Peg Turrentine

- Peg reported that \$4,545 was collected for Fruit Tree Sale pre-orders.

Past President – Mary Beth McCaughey

- No report.

Awards – Jodie Douglass

- Jodie's report is attached to the minutes.

Communications – Robert Goehring

- Robert's report is attached to the minutes.
- Robert recommended that an emphasis be placed on providing the information that people are actually seeking rather than what FBCMG thinks they may want to see on the website. Glenn suggested that master gardeners who are unable to work in the gardens could develop information for the website.
- Robert stated that he has received photos and information for the website from Faith Bickley, Rose Garden Chair. Jane and Cindy have requested that garden chairs provide information to Robert about their gardens.
- Marilyn complimented Robert on his outstanding work on the website.

Community Relations – Brenda Dresner

- Vince Mannino will be the speaker for the February monthly program on Vegetable Gardening.
- Cathy Dominguez from the Brazos River Authority will speak on water conservation at the March 19th monthly program.
- Future monthly programs will begin at 7:00, thus completing item number 8 on the Unfinished Business List.

Fundraising – Barbara Brannon

- Barbara was not present.

Greenhouse – James Buckley and Glenn Dresner, co-chairs

- The greenhouse report is attached to the minutes.
- A thermal heat printer and 8,000 pot labels were purchased.

Landscape – Cindy Fairbanks and Jane Gray, co-chairs

- Cindy and Jane's report is attached to the minutes.
- Cindy and Jane reported that the budget meeting with the garden chairpersons went well and that the chairs understood the necessary financial restrictions placed on their budgets.
- Glenn's Irrigation 101 presentation was enjoyed by the garden chairs.

Member Relations – Marilyn Almon

- Marilyn's report is attached.

Youth Activities – Ginny Grant

- Ginny's report is attached.

Standing Committee Reports:

Governance Committee

- No report.

Extension Service Advisor Reports:

CEA – Horticulture – Open

Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell

- Margo reported that five people have registered for the Fall 2009 class. Robert has placed the registration information on the website.
- Margo and Barbara Buckley gave a presentation about FBCMG to the Katy Welcome Wagon in Cinco Ranch.
- The Fort Bend Area Council of Mayors has requested that Margo speak to their group.
- Vince Mannino has given his approval to allow Lynda Turrentine to pick up Treasurer-related business on behalf of Peg Turrentine upon presentation of a document signed by the executive committee specifying their approval of such action.
- Mary Beth reiterated the need for periodic financial reviews of the FBCMG records.
- A tentative recertification plan requiring 50 volunteer hours is being considered. Margo has the authority to establish recertification requirements and will explore any existing state guidelines.
- Margo has requested that Mary Ellen Twiss clip and maintain a record of all publicity articles.
- Mary Beth stated that she believes that individual contact by members is a most effective way of publicizing FBCMG activities.
- Ginny suggested utilizing the TMGA website to announce events.
- Margo has spoken to Joe Masabni about holding a Vegetable Specialist class in Fort Bend County, tentatively in July. Discussion was tabled until the March Board meeting.
- Discussion regarding placing a cap on specialist tuition fee reimbursements was tabled until the March Board meeting.
- Mary Beth suggested holding educational seminars at the Perennial Sale in preparation for seminars to be held at FTS 2010.

Old Business:

2008 Unfinished Business

- Nat distributed a table detailing the items of unfinished business so that they could be eventually marked as completed or determined to be irrelevant.

New Business:

TMGA Delegates

- A motion was made by Marilyn, seconded by Jodie and approved by all, to name Brenda as a TMGA delegate representing FBCMG. Sallie Bourgeois is the other FBCMG delegate and Nat will be the alternate delegate.

Line items added to financial statement and budget approvals

- Robert made a motion, seconded by Cindy and approved by all, to add a line item for landscape gardens irrigation expense to the P&L for budget purposes.
- Glenn made a motion, seconded by Cindy and approved by all, to allocate \$500 for landscape gardens irrigation.
- Robert made another motion, seconded by Brenda and approved by all, to add a line item for fire ant control expense to the P&L for budget purposes.
- Robert made a motion to allocate \$700 for fire ant control. The motion was seconded by Jodie and approved unanimously.

Wagons loaned to MNS

- James stated that the Museum of Natural Science would like to borrow 20 FBCMG wagons to use at their plant sale on April 4th. Board members agreed to loan the wagons.

Gift for Heidi Sheesley

- Mary Beth proposed that the Board thank Heidi for her donation of trees for the grounds with either a gift or dinner. Discussion was tabled until the March Board meeting.

Debit card request

- Peg made a motion, seconded by Brenda and approved by all, to apply for a bank debit card to be used to pay for web hosting and domain fees. Robert would maintain possession of the card.

Closet shelving

- Jodie commented that the master gardener storage closet is in need of new shelving. Glenn and Cliff Bergman will handle the project.

Nat adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17th, at 6:30 p.m. in the annex kitchen.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Almon, Member Relations Director
Substituting for Susan Peacock, Secretary, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners,
Inc.

3/16/2009

AWARDS CHAIRMAN REPORT

February 5, 2009

After reading last year's winners' applications for State awards I decided we had so much more going on than anyone else and this was our year to brag. The following applications were sent to the judging committee for consideration:

Project Award: "From Idea to Reality – The Outdoor Classroom"

Individual Master Gardener Award: Cliff Bergman with 1,172.75 volunteer hours

Educational Program Award: "Protecting Honeybees, Butterflies & Our Native Pollinators" by Pam Tatge

Publication Award: "Garden Insect Field Guide...getting to know what "bugs" you!"

Newsletter Award: "The Grapevine", May-June 2008 issue

Graphic Award: "Developing a Butterfly Habitat" a Green Thumb Seminar by Pam Tatge

Association Award: (See submission below because I'm certain the volume of projects and our impact on our community will surprise you.)

All of these awards are considered for their educational value to our members and to our community.

Jodie Douglass



**Texas Master Gardener Association
2008 ASSOCIATION AWARD**

Association Membership/Size: Med.Large (Small, Medium, Med.Large or Large)

Number of Members: 189

County: Fort Bend

Address: 1402 Band Road, Suite 100

City: Rosenberg, TX Zip 77471

Phone: 281-341-7068 Agents e-mail: _____

Association Title: Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.

Nat Gruesen ngruesen@yahoo.com
Name(s) of person(s) submitting the nomination e-mail

Margo "Mac" McDowell; County Program Coordinator; mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu
Name of County Extension Agent or County Program Coordinator

THIS SUBMISSION SHALL NOT EXCEED FOUR (4) PAGES TOTAL.

**I. DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION (10 pts)
In 150 words or less please describe the association.**

Fort Bend County Master Gardeners (165 certified members, 24 Associates) consisting of a large diversity of property owners with a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds who live in residential to 5+ acre urban ranchettes, or even larger farms. Because of our diversity, these backgrounds allow us opportunities to accept challenges and opportunities to educate our residents in many venues. Having thirteen Master Gardener Specialists in all areas and many retired teachers only expands our educational outreach utilizing all these talents. Along with our gardens as teaching tools, our new "Outdoor Classroom" has provided another area in which to

teach. We had 14 members who volunteered well over 200 hours; including one volunteer who obtained over 1,000 hours for a total of 16,743.25 volunteer hours in 2008. We feel privileged with our members' gifts and talents and willingness to share these talents with their neighbors.

**Please answer the following questions as they relate to the 2008 entry year.
10 points each**

1. What is the leadership structure? How is it selected?

FBCMG is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) elected by the membership for 2-year terms, the immediate Past President, Directors of standing committees (currently eight) created to accomplish the objectives of the organization. The Fort Bend County staff member responsible for coordination of the county's master volunteer programs (the Master Volunteer Coordinator) and the County Extension Agent – Horticulture serve as advisors and are non-voting members of the Board.

2. How do leaders solicit input/ideas from members and Texas AgriLife?

Phone calls, e-mails and membership requests for our services have allowed us the opportunity to select projects with the most beneficial educational impact on our community. Our "open-ear" policy has promoted creativity and inspiration. At our monthly programs, weekly and monthly work days members are solicited and encouraged to provide pointers and comments concerning our projects and the organization and regularly do provide feedback to Board Members. Just by having casual conversations over lunch, ideas are born and most come into realization.

3. How does the association inspire support and participation in projects and programs?

FBCMG has three vehicles for showcasing programs and projects with the intent of inspiring members to participate. The bi-monthly newsletter, *The Grapevine*, contains feature articles regarding the demonstration gardens, their progress and objectives. Weekly e-mails to members ("APBeeee's") where they are informed of upcoming advanced training events, volunteer service opportunities and encouragement to participate. Our members and the public can review upcoming educational events and members can view volunteer service opportunities on our web site (fbmg.com), which also includes an up-to-date calendar of events.

4. How are volunteer hours reported and recorded?

At each Master Gardener event an Attendance Sheet for sign-in/sign-out is available for on-sight participation evaluation and hours volunteered. FBMG makes available to its members an Excel workbook for each 12-month reporting period. Members record their volunteer hours and advanced training hours. The workbook is designed to calculate monthly and year-to-date totals. Members are encouraged to submit their hours to the Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator monthly. For those members who do not use computers or Excel software, paper forms are available for them to manually record and submit hours.

5. Describe the multi-year plan for goals and objectives.

Our Extension gardens will be expanded to include and emphasize native plants. An orchard consisting of fruit and citrus trees grown in our area is also planned for this coming year. A rainwater harvesting system is planned for installation before June 2009. The entire irrigation system is also planned for renovation in the upcoming year. Another goal is the new Junior Master Gardener Day Camp being planned for June 2009. The completion of all these programs is dependent on our fund-raising events (a Fruit and Nut Tree Sale in February and a Perennial and Vegetable Plant Sale in March).

6. How, when and by who are the plans made?

The Board Members gather for round table discussions at Board meetings where ideas and suggestions are brought forth from the Board and Directors. Other suggestions come from our Texas AgriLife Extension Agents, staff, as well as members. These suggestions are gleaned by our Board of Directors as to land-usage possibilities and educational impact on our community.

7. How are specific portions of the community targeted?

(i.e. children, seniors, disabled, minorities etc.)

We have flyers, handouts and other publications which explain who Master Gardeners are and what services and projects we have. Several copies of these are with Master Gardeners who regularly attend various events, and we have all types of information at all our functions. We rely on word-of-mouth opportunities from our members to others, but also we hear from the public that they heard of our events. Our publicity chairperson advertises our events and programs in every media avenue as well. Our website is a heavily used avenue which the public continues to obtain information.

8. Describe how the Association responds to seasonal or emerging educational needs of the community.

During the past four years our county has increased substantially with new subdivisions consisting of many first-time homeowners and families transferring for better job opportunities. Our "Green Thumb Seminars" held monthly, year-round includes 2-hour programs on horticultural subjects of interest to these new residents. These programs are compiled and given by FBCMG allowing question and answer periods. We are in our 5th year of providing these programs, moving from one section of our county to another annually, taking the programs to the homeowners' area of residence. Reviewing their evaluations has allowed us the opportunity to continuously update our programs in order to meet their explicit needs. At this same venue the guests are invited to contact our Hotline personnel for specific questions/problems, visit our Extension gardens for examples of plants and their usage, as well as visit our web site for more available programs they may attend to meet their interests or needs.

9. Describe how individual talents and resources of Master Gardeners are used.

One of the questions on the Master Gardener application is what area of expertise they possess. So we have the capability of tapping into their resource. We are also constantly seeking members' help on a variety of projects in which members usually will step up and let us know how they can help. For instance, creating publications, we have several members who like to work on desktop publishing, or perhaps they are a graphic designer. We have people who love to do detective work so they offer to help on our hotline researching gardening questions for the public. We have retired teachers and principals who still have the heart to teach youth so they help with our youth activities.

10. List partnerships and how utilized.

Texas A & M System – various Professors and Assistant Professors and Specialists in their fields
Texas AgriLife Extension Services – our Agents' support and Ag-Expo (ag-literacy program)
TreeSearch Farms – speaking engagements, plant materials for various events
City of Sugar Land – community garden, and free-planting event
Keep Sugar Land Beautiful – composting classes, tree-planting event, and recycling
Urban Harvest, Houston – sharing of equipment and information, and speakers
Sugar Land Garden Club – sharing of equipment, educational opportunities, and speakers
Enchanted Nurseries, Richmond – sharing of educational opportunities, garden materials, and expertise
Caldwell Nursery, Rosenberg – sharing of garden materials and expertise
Fort Bend Independent School District – educational programming for teachers
Fort Bend County Fair Association – Fort Bend County Fair – AGtivity Barn
City of Missouri City – reforestation of trees, prairie restoration, and butterfly garden installation
First Colony Association, Sugar Land – speaking engagements
Garden Clubs throughout County – speaking engagements
Texas Rose Rustlers – speaker engagements, plant rescues.
Greenleaf Nurseries – speaker engagements
Harris County Texas AgriLife Extension Services – agent speaker engagements
Montgomery County Texas AgriLife Extension Service – agent speaker engagements, tours

11. Describe how programs and projects are evaluated.

A membership survey form is requested to be completed by members with ideas --- Are we meeting your needs? Program evaluation forms are requested to be completed by guests to each of our programs.

12. List any awards or recognitions received from local and/or state organizations.

None for 2008

13. List on-going programs and projects.

“Green Thumb Seminars”; “Plants in the Classroom”, Monthly Programs for the public, Workday Saturdays where the public is invited to come talk with us; Speakers Bureau; Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens; Master Gardener Hotline; CEMAP program; two community gardens Home and Garden Shop participation.

14. List any programs or projects that are new this award year.

Two community gardens; Outdoor Classroom completion; Native Garden Expansion; two Greenhouse Specialists; program on “Chemicals vs. Organics; and the “EQ Field Use”; FBMG Entomology Group new butterfly cards project.

15. Describe any special training programs developed in 2008.

We have workdays every first Saturday of the month when we utilize our Green Thumb speakers, Plants in the Classroom speakers, and our Master Gardener Specialists for 1-hour advance training opportunities.

16. How many new members and interns integrated into programs and projects in 2008?

24 Newly graduated Master Gardeners

4 New Members who transferred from other Texas Master Gardener groups.

17. Describe the best educational program or project of 2008 (external).

AGtivity Barn is one of the larger exhibits for the Fort Bend County Annual Fair, which is open for 10 days. This Exhibit focuses on educating the youth of our county (and adults too?) about the various Agriculture still grown in our county and the Horticulture resources that are available. In 2008, we demonstrated a Rain Water Harvesting exhibit, Square Foot Vegetable Gardening, and an exhibit explaining the American Indian concept of “Three Sisters”. It was such a delight to explain to visitors about the variety of the plants, which plants were butterfly attractors, and also the plants gave us a chance to talk about a variety of topics, including the Master Gardener program. During the week school groups are bused to the Fair, and the classes tour the AGtivity Barn which includes – corn, cotton, rice, chicks, bees and the MG exhibit, along with the live small animals (cattle, sheep & goats). We had 1,133 school children, and 276 adults visited our booth during the “school days”, and approximately 82,500 people actually visited the AGtivity Barn.

18. Describe the best program or project for Master Gardeners (internal).

For several years, Master Gardeners had the dream of planting a “forest” at the back of our property. Since the completion of the Outdoor Classroom, the “forest” dream came into fruition. One of the reasons we wanted these trees planted was (1) to demonstrate to the public that so many more trees can grow beautifully here, (2) there was alternative to planting only Live Oaks, and (3) we wanted to screen off the Fairgrounds Rodeo Arena. We solicited the help of 3 Master Gardeners, who were very knowledgeable about trees, and they went to town researching trees, then developing several landscape plans where they suggested trees should be planted. We had over 50 trees, including pines in 10 – 15 gallon pots. During our November Saturday work day, one of our Master Gardeners, who is also a Certified Arborist, gave an advanced training program at the Outdoor Classroom on proper tree planting and care. We had 48 Master Gardeners attend – it was such a sight to see! Within 4 hours, all the trees were planted, watered, staked (if necessary) and Blue Bell Ice Cream was the topping!

Communications Director Report February 4, 2009

1. Barbara Buckley and I met at the Annex to discuss the technical details and operation of the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners web site. During this meeting, we reviewed the Javascript and HTML coding procedures and the process for uploading changes to web pages. Additionally, we reviewed the Administrative process of the web server. Please direct any changes or additions or deletions of web site content to both Barbara and me. I will coordinate with Barbara before any of my numerous absences.
2. In order for our web site to be of more use to our visitors, we will be creating a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. I have spoken with our Hotline coordinator, Terry Douglass, about some basic content for these pages. We will be having a meeting with the Hotline volunteers to determine some of the basic questions and to make a recommendation of the format of the FAQ pages. All information listed on the FAQ pages will be reviewed for accuracy and relevance by Margo and Vince.
3. After reviewing the searches on the web site, I determined a number of items that our visitors were trying to find. Margo McDowell asked that these subjects be class research projects. Once the answers are provided, they will be reviewed for accuracy by Margo and Vince Mannino. These items will become part of our FAQ pages.
4. The Fruit Tree Sale information was added to the web site and a new link to that page was placed on our Home page. The link will be removed after the sale.
5. During a re-indexing of the search engine for our website, I noticed that we are approaching the upper limit of allowable pages for this free search engine. I have been researching alternative search engines and have determined that Google search may be the solution. However, a free Google search places advertisements on the results page. A business solution is available for \$100/year but we may be able to get an ad-free Google search if we can successfully prove to Google that we are a tax-exempt, charitable organization. More to follow.
6. Last, but not least, the Unfinished Business Item #1 has been completed with the addition of a Privacy Policy page on the web site.

Submitted by Robert Goehring

Greenhouse Report for FEB 09

We have had a very busy month!!!

1. The new 30% shade cloth was ordered and has been received. We are waiting until after all the vegetables are out of the greenhouse to install.
2. The new evaporative cooler elements are in - we will straighten and make repairs to the back wall before we start using them.
3. Approximately 1800 seeds have been started for our first vegetable/herb sale. 13 types of tomatoes, 5 types of peppers, 4 types of eggplant plus 5 types of herbs
4. Everything except for the tomatoes (which are still in the mist tent) and the herbs have been bumped up to 4" pots.
5. Six flats of wild flower seeds have been started for the circle garden.
6. The vegetable garden group is growing tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, eggplants and cucumbers in the greenhouse.
7. Five flats of vegetables have been started for the community garden.
8. Cliff and Glenn built 2 potting tables and 4 stools. These have really been used with all the activity that's been going on.
9. Watering adjustments have been made to the mist tent and several tables.
10. All this could not have been accomplished without ALL the help from our fellow master gardeners.

Submitted by James Buckley

Member Relations Report

February 10, 2009

Renewals

- As of February 9, 2009, FBCMG has 160 certified and renewed members.
- Only four (4) members who re-certified have not yet renewed their memberships.
- Ten master gardeners did not meet the hours requirement for re-certification in 2008, which represents about 6% of last year's membership.

Survey Forms

- To date, 57 Member Opinion Surveys have been received representing 36% of the renewed membership. Look for survey results to be reported at a future date.

Rosters

- Updated membership rosters, which contain only name, class year, email address, and home phone number, are being sent to Robert for posting on the Members Only page as changes are made. A message at the top of each roster page requests that any changes to the information be sent to the Member Relations Director.
- The 2008 committee listing has been removed from the website. It has been replaced with a newly expanded listing of Who's Who in the FBCMG Program which also contains contact information.
- Individual contact lists were sent to all of the garden chairs last week to enable them to initiate and maintain communication with members who volunteered to work in their gardens.
- Chairs in other areas of responsibility will receive the same kind of information regarding volunteers.
- A 2009 Board contact list has been routed to Board members.
- Board members have received the more comprehensive membership roster which is to be considered confidential information. It will be re-routed as necessary.

Committees

- A telephone committee has been formed to ensure that the six (6) members who do not use email are apprised of electronic communications to the membership. Delores Reeves and Marsha Sachs have agreed to disseminate the information contained in the APBeees so that these master gardeners are kept updated.
- Look for the Plant Swap to return, but rather than on garden workdays, it will be held at the monthly meetings. Hester Hackstedt has agreed to help coordinate the exchange and new rules will be implemented. Volunteers will be needed to assist Hester.
- A Field Trip committee will be organized soon in hopes of offering a field trip opportunity approximately once per quarter.

Password change

- The user name and password on the Members Only page of the website was changed at the end of January and all certified and renewed members have been notified of the change. Margo has notified members of the Fall 2008 class.

Membership Cards

- Master Gardener membership cards will be distributed at the February monthly meeting to all who have renewed their memberships for 2009.

Submitted by Marilyn Almon
February 10, 2009

Youth Activities Report

February 9, 2009

- January 13, 2009 Jan Schiff Elementary Garden Committee – Missouri City
Met to discuss garden plans; provided soil amendment calculations.
School is submitting grant request to Fort Bend Education Foundation.
- January 24, 2009 Briar Chase Baptist Church – Missouri City
Met with committee to discuss children’s vegetable garden and JMG
program
- January 24-25, 2009 Katy Home & Garden Show, Merrill Center – Katy
JMG activity - about 150 children made newspaper starter pots and
planted green bean and bell pepper seeds
- March 28, 2009 Fort Bend Museum, Children’s Day – Richmond
JMG activity planned. Estimating 300 children.
- June 8-12, 2009 JMG Day Camp – Earth-kind Kids Kamp - Rosenberg
Committee has met several times, planning underway.

Submitted by Ginny Grant