



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

August 2013

Volume 20, Number 12

Hello, Everyone!

Summertime, and the living is hot and dry. I am reminded with each season about the cycle of life, exemplified in the cycle of the seasons, and how as things repeat, they also are changed and modified. Last year when we did the August newsletter, it was not yet August (time was even harder to come by this year!), and yet we had picked all the grapes and were coasting toward Autumn. This year we have not yet picked our red grapes, but the harvest is scheduled for this coming Saturday. Different weather conditions change the harvest date by several weeks. And so it goes.

I hope as you enjoy another summer, you also find some different things to do and make some new memories. I am watching my garden grow and my grandchildren grow and change. (And myself grow older, too, but that is another story.)

The Pioneer Unit is getting ready to start another cycle as well. Our Yearbook is being prepared with a new list of programs, some revisiting ideas we have explored in the past, but most bringing new information for our members.

If you have some time to give to the Pioneer Unit, we could use your help. It is not too early to work on projects for Thyme Well Spent. The gardens need attention. We could use someone to serve as the Committee Chair for the Sensory Garden — to schedule the work days in the garden and relieve Henry Flowers of that responsibility. We could use your expertise for conducting a workshop. In addition, the Pioneer Unit is handling the raffle for the District Gathering. What do you have to raffle? What ideas do you have for conducting the raffle? I look forward to talking to you about all these things.

Enjoy the rest of the summer. Keep cool. See you in September.
Linda L. Rowlett, Unit Chair



August 11-12
Perseid Meteor
Shower

August 20
Green Corn Full Moon

September 12
Pioneer Unit Meeting

Summertime

Program News

I think everyone attending our July 11, 2013 meeting enjoyed themselves immensely! The actors from Winedale were in full costume and entertained us while Kay Scanapico presented Shakespeare's plants and meanings to a full house of interested gardeners. Kay, we all want to thank you again for a job beyond well done! Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

This is the time of year that all of the board members of our Pioneer Unit are very busy preparing for our upcoming year.

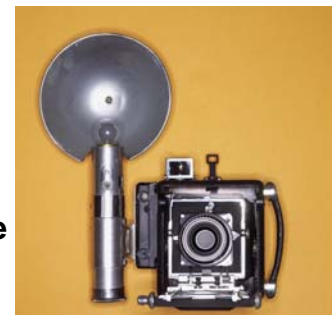
Thank you so much to Pat Cox for her efforts in obtaining hostesses and hosts for our monthly meetings. I appreciate your smarts in utilizing modern technology to fill in the gaps. It's often not possible for everyone to find the time to sign up at a meeting or we just forget to sign up. Thank you for handling all of this so promptly! Our speakers are always amazed at our wonderful luncheons and all of the friendly faces assisting in the kitchen.

We will be enjoying presentations from some very knowledgeable, versatile, and entertaining presenters in the upcoming year. We will begin in September with a history of Dilorio Farms including their growing of herbs. June Smith's daughter will teach us about cooking with herbs in October, and we will welcome Mary Mann and "A Pilgrim's Story" at our Thanksgiving luncheon and meeting. Our holiday lunch will be at Menke house after a presentation by Henry Flowers on artemisia.

In January, Dr. Lois Sutton will inform us about "Herbal Cooking: Here & There, Then & Now." February will get us ready for Spring with B. R. Koehler from Sealy, helping us survive critters, gophers, moles, and garden pests. March we will meet at Festival Hill for our forum readiness meeting and workshop. In April, Gayle Engels from the American Botanical Society will talk to us about hedgerow gardening for food, herbs, and wildlife. At the May gathering, we will learn about backyard birds by sight and sound with author Betsy Harwood. June of 2014, Sara Holland will present "Seasonal Salads from Around the World," and in July, Mary Doebbelinig will inform us about the history and making of pestos. Finally, in September 2014, we will welcome Kyle Harrell and learn about Texas red worms for composting and gardening. It should be a wonderful year of fun and informative programs.

Diana Reed
Programs Chair

Don't forget to go on-line at herbsociety.org and vote for the photos for the HSA 2014 calendar. Voting begins on August 6th.



MEMBER INFORMATION

We enjoyed a great number of guests at the July Unit meeting for the fantastic Shakespeare Program presented by Kay Scanapico. Kay actually had three guests with her: Maxine Lain, Betty Pior, both from Round Top, and Irene Quirnbach from Chicago, and she brought her always helpful husband, Member-at-Large Tony Scanapico. Peggy Richardson from Round Top also visited us and said that a friend of hers from Kerrville, Beth Patterson, HSA Member-at-Large, suggested that she come visit us. Peggy and Betty both expressed an interest in joining our Unit. Carolyn Thomas's friend Cindy Nash from Chappell Hill attended our meeting this month, and it was a pleasure to see her again (she also is looking forward to membership.) Our past president of HSA and South Texas Unit member Linda Lain visited us and gave a comprehensive report from EdCon among other items. Other affiliates present were Peggy Cook, Mary Doebbeling, Joan Jordan, and Marijane Lipscomb. And it was a real delight for our affiliate member Charlotte Land to bring her husband Ev with her; Ev has been ill for a few months but is looking good and getting around well. Active members Diana Reed and Louise Rice both brought their husbands as well, Mike Reed and Ed Rice.

We started our new year 2013-2014 with new sign-in sheets with lots of room for members to fill in their volunteer and attendance records. Thank you to all of you for being so timely last year with your reporting.

And we have a new active member effective July 2013! Our Chair Linda Rowlett brought in Beverly Green, who will be formally introduced and welcomed in September. Beverly has been involved with growing herbs for over 20 years and is a Master Gardener. She lives in Industry, and her phone number is 979-830-1716, with an email address of beverlygr67@yahoo.com. Her birthday is December 9 and her complete contact information will be in the new yearbook. Beverly is Henry Flowers' new Mint-it-Maid for all the mints out at Festival Hill and will be a great asset to our Unit. Please get to know her and make her feel welcome!

Questions about membership and dues may be emailed to gzsowers@att.net or phoned to 979-836-8228. Until September, enjoy the rest of summer and look forward to a good fall for herbs.

Georgia Sowers
Membership Chair



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 6 — Kay Von Minden

August 13 — Johanna Hoiseth

July 2, 2013, PIONEER UNIT BOARD MEETING

held at 8544 Bermuda, Industry, Texas

Attendees: Linda L. Rowlett, Diana Reed, Georgia Sowers, Janie S. Plummer, Karen Cornwell, Lynn Ehler, Henry Flowers, Susan Lake, Carla Lessard, and Carolyn Thomas.

Programs Report – Diana Reed presented 2013-14 Programs. Additional ideas, not used for the coming year, will be made available to the 2014-2015 Programs Chair.

Membership Report – Georgia Sowers provided the Membership Report 2012-2013.

Motion: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to ratify previous informal membership approval.

Treasurer's Report – Janie Plummer presented 2012-2013 quarterly income and budget information. Following committee review, initial budget figures for 2013-2014 were established.

Motion: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2013-2014 PU Budget as discussed.

Education-Special Events /Scholarship – Carolyn Thomas

Carolyn Thomas discussed planned potential workshops (wreathmaking, herbal vinegars, propagation, hypertufa, tool maintenance). Potential road trips were also discussed.

Gardens – Henry Flowers

Sensory Garden. Henry reported that he does the maintenance, but doesn't have the time to coordinate volunteer workdays. He has edging to go around the butterfly garden but no plans to install as yet.

Festival Hill. The Botany Club has been maintaining the Pharmacy Garden. Watering is a primary activity.

Communications/PU website – June Smith/Susan Lake

Susan Lake reported website activity, suggesting that Facebook was an excellent format for sharing information about events and activities.

Ways and Means – Henry Flowers

Carla Lessard has agreed to serve as the Ways and Means Chair.

Past Chair – Carolyn Thomas

Carolyn Thomas reminded everyone to think about who should be on the nomination committee for Board/committee appointments.

Old Business

Sensory Garden – Pioneer Unit commitments. A brief discussion was held but clarification of the extent of commitment was left unresolved.

Oversight of Forum 2014 Plant Sale. Diana Reed will serve as volunteer coordinator but declined to assume oversight. Sue Edmundson will be an information resource to the next Plant Sale Coordinator.

Changes to application form for the Pioneer Unit. A subcommittee will be formed to review and update the application/renewal form and will bring changes back to the Board for approval.

New Business

Changes in committee chairs for approval. Potential changes to the membership of Communications Committee structure was discussed. The need for Sensory Garden oversight was also discussed. (continued on next page)

Participation in District Gathering. The District Gathering will be September 27-28 in Huntsville.
Consideration of dues proration change for partial year memberships. HSA dues are currently submitted based on month of joining and it was suggested that we coordinate HSA/PU proration schedules.

Motion: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to approve that membership dues will be prorated based on the number of months remaining in the year.

EdCon report. Henry Flowers described several interesting EdCon programs. His report was in the July Newsletter and he will present a summary at the July meeting.

Set dates for Board meetings for 2013-2014. Board meetings for 2013-2014 were set for October 23, 2013; January 22, 2014; April 2, 2014; and July 2, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen S. Cornwell, Secretary



Application for Member Scholarship
Amount: \$125

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Proposed Use of Funds _____

One requirement: You must agree to present the results of your studies or project to the unit.

Deadline for submitting Application: September 12, 2013.

Applications should be submitted to Kay Scanapico, Scholarship Chair, or to Ann Allen or Karen Springer.



Garden-fresh Herbs Spark Summer Meals



If your enthusiasm for cooking has hit the summer doldrums, it's time to wake up and smell the rosemary – or the basil – or the oregano.

In short, take the fresh approach, for nothing awakens the senses more than fresh-picked herbs. Walk through your garden and pick an herb leaf. Rub it with your fingers. Those aromatic oils that magically perfume the air can do wonders for a sluggish sauté or that blah green salad you have been tossing, advises famed New Orleans chef Emeril Lagasse.

Basil, the No. 1 gardening herb, should be at its summer peak right now. Incidentally, did you know that there are more than 30 varieties of basil? Among newer discoveries is *Genovese Nufer FI*, a big hit with pesto makers due to its unusual pungency and resistance to wilting.

It does get exotic in the wonderful world of herbs. Get a whiff of some of these: lemon thyme bursts with citrus flavor, perking up fish or chicken dishes. Oregano thyme tops any pizza. Showy pineapple sage blossoms punch up jellies and tropical drinks, as does chocolate mint which turns a ho-hum glass of iced coffee into a summer sensation, Lagasse has suggested. Red apple mint brightens tuna salads and homemade salad vinaigrettes.

In more familiar ethnic cooking, Vietnamese coriander, a mild cilantro-like leaf, adds peppery green authenticity to soups and salads, while the kaffir lime leaf, used in Thai cuisine, contributes a sweet exotic perfume with spice. For Mexican dishes, pick sharp epazote, which deepens the flavor of pork, chili, and vegetables. Caution – this wild herb is an acquired taste to some.

Award-winning Monica Pope of Houston restaurant fame grows herbs year-round outside her restaurant door. She sprinkles beautiful, edible nasturtium flowers in salads for a peppery watercress-like accent. Sorrel, lemon verbena, lemon grass, and garlic chives are just a handful of the other herbs she uses to add fresh, sweet, and savory notes to her eclectic cooking.

So do as the experts do – perk up summer meals with fresh-picked herbs.

June Smith

SUMMER RECIPES

Fresh Herb Salad

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
½ cup white onion, diced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup fresh basil leaves, torn into bite-size pieces
1 cup fresh mint, torn into bite-size pieces
2 cups washed, ready-to-eat baby spinach leaves
1 ripe pear, cored and thinly sliced

Place the olive oil and vinegar in a salad bowl and mix with a whisk. Add onion and salt and pepper to taste. Just before serving, add the basil, mint, spinach and pear. Toss well and serve. Serves 2.

Teddy's Tea

Developed by President Theodore Roosevelt

½ cup water
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon black tea
¼ cup chopped mint leaves, fresh or dried
1 quart boiling water
½ cup lemon juice

Boil ½ cup water and ½ cup sugar together for 5 minutes.
Add tea and mint. Steep for 10 to 15 minutes. Strain.
Pour mixture into 1 quart boiling water. Add ½ cup lemon juice to the boiling water, and bring mixture to a boil again. Serve either hot or cold. Serve with garnish of fresh mint leaves.

Submitted by June Smith



Herb of the Month of July - Lemon Verbena



Lemon verbena is one of my favorite herbs—just smelling a leaf is an invigorating “pick me up” and it is always a joy to have around and sorely missed when it is not.

The botanical name of lemon verbena is *Aloysia citriodora*, with the generic name being pronounced “ä-lō-īs-ē-a”. Even though it is not in the genus *Verbena*, it does belong to the Verbena family — the Verbenaceae — and has individual flowers that are similar to those of the verbena, but not the large showy flower clusters that we associate with that plant. Instead we grow this plant for the delicious lemony scent of its foliage.

Lemon verbena is native to Chile and Argentina and was introduced to the rest of the world in the late 1700s. Its generic name is in honor of Maria Luisa, Princess of Parma and then wife of King Charles IV of Spain. The specific epithet obviously refers to its lemony odor. The plant has undergone a variety of botanical name changes. It was introduced as *Aloysia citrodora* and has been changed to *Lippia citriodora*, *Aloysia triphylla* (in observance that it often has three leaves at each node), and is currently *Aloysia citriodora* until some botanist decides otherwise.

During the Victorian era this plant was one of the most sought, prized, and utilized. Its oils were extracted and used to make a variety of perfumes; the leaves dry extremely well (and fast) and were used in potpourris and sachets; it was commonly tucked into hankies and tussy mussies, rubbed directly on the body as a perfume, and floated in bowls of water known as “finger bowls.” A perfume known as *eau de verveine* was popular, but the oil of lemon verbena can cause photosensitivity in some and has fallen out of favor and its use in common everyday products such as soaps and other cleaners has mostly been substituted by the much cheaper oils of plants in the genus *Cymbopogon* (lemongrass, citronella, palmarosa, and such).

Today lemon verbena is cultivated to a great extent in France, Algeria, and Morocco for its essential oil, concrète, and absolute. The leaves (most commonly dried) are a common flavoring in teas and a variety of foods—especially in desserts. It is quite fitting that this herb is being honored in August because it loves heat and is abundant at present and because one of my favorite ways to use it is in ice creams and sorbets. To use it in ice cream, sorbet, or tea one simply needs to infuse the leaves (fresh or dried) in hot water or milk and then strain them out. The leaves can be quite tough so it is not advisable to eat them unless they are finely chopped. It is best to use the younger, more tender leaves for eating, but if you only have older, tougher leaves you can also use those. With older leaves, I normally remove the tough central vein and then finely chop or if using it in a dessert the simplest thing is to put the sugar used in a food process and process it with the leaves until they are very fine.

As far as cultivation goes, lemon verbena loves heat and sun with average watering. It does not grow as well in the shade and pouts or dies if its soil is kept too wet. Its soil preference is a fairly neutral loose loam. It can be easily grown in a container, which makes it easier to protect in the winter. It is root hardy in zone 8, so it normally freezes back to the ground in winter and may be slow to emerge in the spring. A container specimen can be kept in a warm spot in winter and its leaves are a wonderful reminder of summer. If kept too cool in a container, it may go dormant and drop its leaves and should only be watered enough to keep its roots from drying out. Come spring it will put on new growth and should be fertilized to give it a boost.

As a plant lemon verbena is a lanky shrub and has an awkward growth habit. In a tropical situation it may reach 6 or more feet in size, but that is not likely here and it normally only gets 2-3 feet in height. In the summer if it gets somewhat leggy and rangy, give it a trim and it will thicken up a bit. If you don’t use the leaves you cut off, then definitely dry them for later use or for addition to potpourris. To put them in the compost would be an abominable act as far as I’m concerned. To propagate the plant, take cuttings in the late summer or fall or simply layer a few long stems. Its main pests tend to be spider mites and aphids, which are easily controlled by water sprays and insecticidal soap. If grasshoppers find it they will dine on it as well.

Grow it and use it often and perhaps keep a pot of it near a door or path so that you can routinely rub its leaves and enjoy its fabulous aroma. In the language of herbs it signifies “sensibility,” but in my book it stands for “bliss.”

Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Garden Chairman

The Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit Botany Study Group Data Sheet



Botanical Name/Etymology: *Umbellularia californica* (formerly *Oreodaphne californica*) -sole species in the genus

Family Name: Lauraceae (Laurel)

Common Name(s): California bay, Cal. laurel, Cal. pepper, headache tree, pepperwood tree, peppernut tree, mountain laurel, balm of heaven, cinnamon bush, spice bush, and in Oregon – Oregon myrtle (they say you should never refer to it as Cal. bay there).

Origin: Native to southern California around San Diego and north along the coast and central valley into southern Oregon

Growth Habit: Evergreen tree of about 60-80 feet in height and 40 feet in width when mature. Leaves are glossy, dark green, and elliptic to oblong with a smooth margin and around 4 inches in length. They are alternate on the stem and have a very short petiole. They also have a pungent camphoraceous aroma. The flowers are tiny, pale green, and borne in umbels in the spring. Fruits are about 1 inch in length, pear-shaped and a dark purplish-brown in coloration.

Growth (Cultural) Requirements: Said to be hardy in zones 9-10, but it has grown fine here in zone 8. Needs moist, but not wet, soil and can withstand drought. In its native habitat it tends to grow in areas that may temporarily flood on a seasonal basis.

Propagation: Cuttings or seed.

Chemistry: The principle constituent is umbellulone, which has been shown to be toxic to the central nervous system when it is eaten. It can also cause convulsive sneezing, headaches, and sinus irritation if inhaled deeply.

Plant Part(s) Used: Leaves.

GRAS? (generally regarded as safe): No. Art Tucker indicates that it is not recommended for culinary use and is potentially toxic.

Culinary Uses: Leaves are often used as a substitute for bay laurel in soups, stews, and such. It is often even sold in the place of bay laurel in the dried form as the two are hard to tell apart and taste somewhat similar. One US spice company markets this plant and many Californians insist that "this is the only bay." Art Tucker strongly recommends that it not be used and if it is, only in small amounts on occasion. Michael Moore says, "Bay laurel has a sweet, rich scent, California bay a harsh and acrid one; to me they are two completely different seasonings."

The flesh of the fruit can be eaten, but when not fully mature it is very pungent and when it does mature it bruises easily, somewhat like an avocado. A more common method is to remove the flesh and then to roast the seeds, which are said to taste similar to coffee, dark chocolate, or burnt popcorn, depending upon how much they are roasted. They can be eaten whole or ground into a powder.

Medicinal Uses: Traditionally used internally for headaches, intestinal cramping, gastroenteritis, and neuralgia. Used externally as a poultice for headaches, joint pain, fungal infections, and fainting. Leaves can be cracked or crushed and used as a "smelling salt" as the camphoraceous scent is very stimulating. Excess inhalation for headaches may actually end up causing or intensifying one.

Other Uses: Dried boughs were often used by Native Americans to fumigate houses against sickness. Leaves also simmered in water and steam and inhaled for respiratory problems.

Makes a beautiful evergreen ornamental tree for the landscape and can be trimmed in topiary form as are bay laurels. The wood is dense and highly suitable for lathe work. It is also considered a "tone wood" – used to construct the back and sides of guitars.

"Myrtlewood" is the only wood still in use as a base "metal" for legal tender. During the 1933 "interregnum of despair" between Franklin Roosevelt's election and his inauguration, the only bank in the town of North Bend, Oregon—the First National—was forced to temporarily close its doors, precipitating a cash-flow crisis for the City of North Bend. The city solved this problem by minting its own currency, using myrtlewood discs printed on a newspaper press. These coins, in denominations from 25 cents to \$10, were used to pay employees, with the city promising to redeem them for cash as soon as it became available.

However, when the bank reopened and the city appealed for people to bring their myrtlewood money in to redeem it, many opted to keep their tokens as collector's items. After several appeals, the city announced that the tokens would remain legal tender in the city of North Bend in perpetuity. The unredeemed tokens have become very valuable, because of scarcity and historical interest. Fewer than 10 full sets are believed to exist. (Wikipedia)

Bibliography: Bown, Deni 2001 New Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses London: DK Publishing; Moerman, Daniel 2009 Native American Medicinal Plants Portland: Timber Press; Moore, Michael 2003 Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West Santa Fe, NM: Museum of New Mexico Press; Tucker, Arthur O. and Thomas DeBaggio 2009 The Encyclopedia of Herbs Portland: Timber Press; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umbellularia> accessed 6-27-2013

It is the policy of The Herb Society of America not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment.

-Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Garden Chair

September Workshop: Sign up now for the Hypertufa Workshop on September 5 (Thursday) 9 a.m. at Festival Hill.

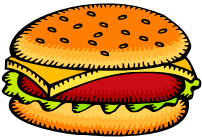
Henry Flowers and Carolyn Thomas will work with eight participants to create one container and one or two mushrooms each to take home. You will also learn the process and techniques for hand molding and sand casting hypertufa material. Refreshments will be served.

To sign up for this workshop please contact Carolyn Thomas at cthomas1138@aol.com or 979-251-8386. It will be first come, first served, but there will be a back up list in case someone drops out. Please send your request with phone number or email address. Active members are given preference and only if there are spaces left will Affiliate and prospective members be admitted.

We are working on other possible workshops, but if you have any specific ideas, please let me know.

Carolyn Thomas

Another Summer Recipe: 40-Minute Hamburger Buns



You can actually start these buns when you start the coals for your barbecue, and they will be ready when the burgers are done. Make them plain, or add herbs to the recipe to compliment your meal.



- 2 tablespoons active dry yeast
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons warm water (110 to 115 degrees)
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 to 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in the warm water. Add the oil and sugar and let stand for 5 minutes. Add the egg, salt, and enough flour to form a soft dough.

Turn onto a floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic (3-5 minutes). Do not let rise. Divide into 12 pieces and shape each into a bun. Place 3 inches apart on greased baking sheets.

Cover and let rest 10 minutes. Bake at 425 degrees for 8 to 12 minute or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks and cool.

Linda Rowlett

August 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden			1 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	2	3
4	5	6 FH Workday 8:30 to noon Voting for calendar photos begins	7	8 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	9	10
11	12	13 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	14	15 BSG	16	17
18	19	20 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	21	22 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	23	24
25	26	27 FH Workday 8:30 to noon Voting for calendar photos closes	28	29 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	30	31

September 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	4	5 Hypertufa workshop 9 a.m.	6	7
8	9	10 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	11	12 Pioneer Unit Meeting Scholarship application deadline	13	14
15	16	17 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	18	19 BSG	20	21
22	23	24 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	25	26 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	27 District Gathering Huntsville	28 District Gathering Huntsville
29	30				BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden



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Volume 20

Editor: Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.

Pioneer Paths is a publication of The Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$10.00 per year.

The Mission Statement of The Herb Society of America: "To promote the knowledge, use, and delight of herbs through educational programs, research, and sharing the experience of its members with the community."

Chair—Linda L. Rowlett Vice Chair Programs—Dianna Reed Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers
Secretary—Karen Cornwell Treasurer—Janie Plummer

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