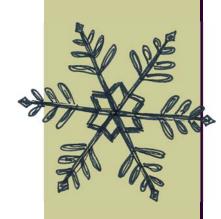


PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America Pioneer Unit

December 3 Long Nights Full Moon

December 21
Winter Solstice



December 2017

Volume 25, Number 4

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date:

December 14, 2017

Time:

9:30 a.m.

Meet and Greet

10:00 a.m.

Presentation and Meeting

Location:

Herzstein and Old Chapels

Festival Hill, Round Top

Directions:

Exit Highway 290 at Texas 237 (Round Top exit). Travel south on 237 and turn right onto Jaster Road and then left into the Festival Hill parking lot. Drive

past the concert hall to the chapels.

Program:

Bible Plants: History and Mystery

Speaker:

Phoebe Lake

Angel:

Lori Yeats

Hosts:

Betty Pior, Cheryl Easley, Kay Robbins, Kay Scanapico,

Tony Scanapico, and Bob Sowers

Lunch:

Menke House



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Holiday Greetings!

It has been mostly sunny and pleasant outside lately, and I hope to get back out there this afternoon. It is a perfect day for working in the garden. Having grown up in Michigan, I am always grateful to know that I won't have to battle snow and ice for the next 4-5 months before seeing green grass again. Unfortunately, the trade-off is that the battle against weeds is longer. Considering the alternative, I much prefer more sunshine even if waging weed-war is a bit longer down here. I do like a bit of cold, but not too much.

I'm looking forward to Phoebe Lake's presentation this month, Bible Plants History and Mystery, followed by our traditional, and always wonderful, December Thank You Members Holiday Lunch at the Menke House Dining Room in Festival Hill, Round Top. Hope to see you there.

As we work on the holiday traditions that have meaning for our own friends and families, we need to set aside some time to work on things for our Pioneer Unit Herbal Forum, which will be coming up soon after the New Year. I hope you are working on a project for Thyme Well Spent (either the shop or the garden). If you have any ideas for items not sold in the past, please get with Pat Cox or Jane Press. They are always pleased to have suggestions, and I know there are many great new ideas out there.

This month is a time of festivity for many of us, with religious holidays, the solstice, the Long Nights Full Moon, and the end of the year. This is a time that reminds us of traditions, of endings (the darkness of the longest night, the end of the year), and also of beginnings as we start a new year with the days growing longer. I hope that you have the opportunity to spend meaningful time with family and friends and that you experience the peace and wonder of each new day.

Karen Cornwell Unit Chair



FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

Last month's program by John Dromgoole of The Natural Gardener nursery in Austin was certainly thought provoking! I found the story of the Treaty Oak and its rescue fascinating. For those of you not at our meeting, the Treaty Oak is the last remaining of the fourteen "Council Oaks." A Native American legend holds that the Council Oaks were a location for the launching of war and peace parties.

In 1989 this venerable tree was subject to vandalism of the worst kind — poisoning the ground around it. Thanks to many arborists, the input of John Dromgoole, and the financial support of Ross Perot, the tree was saved and still stands. It's on my list to see next time I'm in Austin!

Next month we will hear about more historic plants, those found in the Bible. I will be presenting the history and legends surrounding many of these plants.

For those new members and visitors, the presentation is in the chapel at Festival Hill, but our meet and greet is in the ground floor under the chapel.

Phoebe Lake Programs Chair

Did you know...

The Austin Treaty Oak is thought to be 600 years old!



Remember: Our December 14th meal at Festival Hill is \$5.00 for active members and \$25 for associate members and guests. **The deadline to sign up and pay is December 9th.**

Pam Traylor pamtraylor@ymail.com

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MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT November 9, 2017

Karen Cornwell, Chair, welcomed everyone to the Thanksgiving meeting at the Round Top Retreat.

Phoebe Lake, Vice Chair Programs, introduced speaker John Dromgoole, founder of The Natural Gardener in Austin and an early pioneer in organic gardening. His presentation was entitled "Spirit of Nature or the Nature of Spirit."

Georgia Sowers, Vice Chair Membership, welcomed visitors Cathy Nitsch, Keelia Ritch, Diana Sellers, Beverly Elam, Connie Gwynn, Marcella Ausmus, and Madeline Johnson. Georgia also welcomed new active member Johnnie Pitts.

Pam Traylor, Hospitality, thanked lunch hostesses Carla Lessard, Jane Press, Louise Rice, Kay Scanapico, Georgetta Welch, and Mary Sockwell, and especially Euphanel Goad for again welcoming us to the Round Top Retreat. Pam reminded those who have not yet done so to sign up for the December Christmas lunch at Festival Hill.

Door prizes were won by Patti Mills, Bonnie Lout, Susan Yancey, Mary Reeves, and Kathe Forrest.

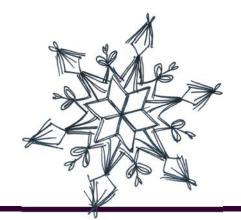
Susan Bame requested anyone with artistic interests who would like to help create a sign for the Sensory Garden at Brenham ISD to contact her.

Jane Press, co-chair of the Thyme Well Spent Shop, asked for the following for Forum 2018:

- 1. Help with making jams and jellies which can be done at a workshop or at the member's home. Those interested should contact Jane or Carla Lessard.
- 2. Recipes containing ginger, herb of the year for 2018.
- 3. Help with making craft items for the shop. Those interested should contact Jane or Ginger Heath and if there is sufficient interest Ginger will lead a workshop.
- 4. Dried flowers or plants of all kinds to be used in making arrangements to sell in the shop.

After a prayer led by Euphanel, the meeting adjourned for a delicious Thanksgiving lunch.

Respectfully submitted, Pat Cox, Secretary



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Our Thanksgiving meeting and luncheon at member Euphanel Goad's beautiful Round Top Retreat was very well represented, with most of our active members present and the following guests and prospective active members: Connie Gwyn and Madeline Johnson were attending for their third visits with member Royceanna Kendall; Beverly Elam was present for her fourth visit with Joyce Caddell; Marcella Ausmus was here for her third visit with Kathe Forrest; Diana Sellers was with us for her second visit with Pat Cox, who also had her daughter-in-law Keelia Ritch with her; and Cathy Nitsch was with us for her sixth time with Phoebe Lake. We also introduced and welcomed Johnnie Pitts, our newest member in October 2017, referred to our Unit by Phoebe Lake. It was good to see affiliate member Marijane Lipscomb today and Mary Sockwell, who always helps Euphanel with these events. Thank you, Euphanel, for providing your lovely venue for this holiday meeting; we are grateful.

Our forces are growing rapidly, as four of these guests are on board this month, with their memberships effective November 2017.

Several workshops are being planned for Forum Prep, and these are always a great way to earn your volunteer hours, in addition to interaction and camaraderie with the membership. Henry Flowers and Susan Bame may be contacted for information about helping out in the gardens at Festival Hill and the Sensory Garden at Brenham Independent School District. I appreciate all the hours being reported. Questions or comments may be emailed to me at gzsowers@att.net or phone number g79-836-8228.

Thank you to all of you, and I look forward to seeing you at our meeting December 14th at Festival Hill in the Herzstein and Old Chapels with luncheon at Menke House in Round Top.

Herbal Christmas, Georgia Sowers



December 2 — Lynn Ehler December 8 — Dolores Rowlett

December 13 — Cathy Comiskey
December 19 — Linda Rowlett

December 31 — Phoebe Lake

December 31 — Gwen Barclay



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MEMBERSHIP NEW ACTIVE MEMBERS

Bev Elam is one of our new active members effective November 2017. Bev was introduced to our Unit by active member Joyce Caddell. She enjoys a fulfilling and spiritual relationship with her gardening life, as I'm sure so many of us also experience. Bev is a retired teacher living in Fayette County with her husband Frank for over 30 years. Her educational background has served her well, being on the forefront of learning about plants and gardening. Bev's address is 1200 Rek Hill Road, Fayetteville, Texas 78940, cell phone is 979-966-3810, and email bjfwe86@gmail.com. Her birthday is November 24th. She will be a great asset to us, and we look forward to a great deal of interaction with her! Welcome, Bev, we are happy you are with us!

Cathy Nitsch is another new active member with us effective November 2017, introduced to our Unit by active member Phoebe Lake. She enjoys cooking with herbs and observing their myriad uses. Cathy and her husband Charles live at 7703 Horak Road, Brenham, Texas 77833, home phone 979-421-9980, cell 281-235-5078, and her email is cathy.nitsch@gmail.com. Her birthday is October 28th. With her interests, Cathy is going to be a great asset to us, and many of our organization have already been interacting with her. We welcome you, Cathy!

Johnnie Pitts is yet another of our new active members effective November 2017, also introduced to our Unit by active member Phoebe Lake. She recently moved to Burton after life in the Hill Country for many years and looks forward to meeting with us and volunteering as needed. Johnnie has been retired for a while after working in management capacities with the VA Hospital, the US Attorney's Office, and the Court Systems in Houston, Texas. Her address is PO Box 132 (12400 E Cedar Street), Burton, Texas 77835-0132, cell phone 512-940-7035, and email is johnniepitts45@gmail.com. Her birthday is October 30th. Gardening and the world of herbs may be a relaxing respite from these careers. Let's get to know and interact with her. Welcome to you, Johnnie!

Marcella Ausmus is yet another of our new active members effective November 2017. She was introduced to our Unit by active member Kathe Forrest. She and her husband Robert live at 47898 Track Road W, New Ulm, Texas 78950, cell phone is 281-352-2333, and her email is greenfields129@hotmail.com. Marcella's birthday is July 9th. Having a 38-year career in the therapeutic industry will probably serve Marcella well when it comes to growing and nurturing herbs. Let's get to know and interact with her. We welcome you, Marcella!

Connie Gwyn is another new active member effective November 2017, introduced to our Unit by active member Royceanna Kendall. She and her husband Ken live between Carmine and Burton on their prairie land at 3500 Hercules Road, Carmine, Texas 78932, phone 979-278-3003, cell phone 979-203-0524, and email is conniegwyn@gmail.com. Connie's birthday is September 27th. She also enjoyed a career in therapy and now volunteers leading a yoga class in Burton at UCC on Wednesday mornings. Connie's passion includes gardening flowers, vegetables and native grasses, as well as grandchildren being high on her priority list. She will be a great asset to us, and we welcome you, Connie!

Continued on next page

Madeline Johnson is another new active member effective November 2017, also introduced to our Unit by active member Royceanna Kendall. She and her husband Wes Anderson's address is PO Box 407, Carmine, Texas 78932-0407, phone 979-278-3220, cell phone 979-249-6211, and email is madeline@industryinet.com. Madeline's birthday is March 31. She and her husband are Master Naturalists seriously involved in a sustainable living environment with solar panels and geothermal for heating and cooling on their small wildlife management ranch. With gardening her most enduring hobby, Madeline has attended most all the herb forums since being in Carmine in 2003. Her knowledge is likely to be beneficial in our Unit, and the interaction will be great! A hearty welcome to you, Madeline!



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

Botanical Name/Etymology: Leonotis leonurus

Family Name: Lamiaceae

Common Name: Wild dagga, lion's tail, lion's ear, lebake (Sotho) umunyane

(Sulu)

Origin: South Africa

Growth Habit: Shrub of 3-6 feet tall with woody, thick branches. Leaves are opposite, long and narrow, toothed in the upper half and hairy. Hairy orange flowers growing in tiers resemble lions' ears or tails. Blooms late summer, early fall. Member of mint family and grown as a perennial shrub.



Growth/Cultural Requirements: Drought tolerant grown in subtropical and Mediterranean climates.

<u>Propagation</u>: Seeds, cuttings or divisions.

<u>Chemistry (If known-especially active essential oils)</u>: The main active component leonurine has both antioxidant and cardioprotective properties and has been shown to significantly improve myocardial function.

Plant Parts Used: Leaves, stems, and sometimes roots.

<u>Medicinal Uses</u>: Smoked as a substitute for dagga as it is mildly narcotic. Smoked for relief of epilepsy. Leaves and roots used as remedy for snake bite, stings. Decoctions are put on boils, eczema, skin diseases, itching, and cramps. Internally decoctions are taken for colds, coughs, influenza, bronchitis, high blood pressure, and headaches. Leaf infusions have been used for asthma and viral hepatitis.

<u>Other Uses</u>: Nectar source for birds and butterflies. The dried leaves and flowers have a mild calming effect when smoked. In some users, the effects have been noted to be similar to the cannabinoid THC found in Cannabis except that it has a much less potent high. It has also been reported to cause mild euphoria, visual changes, dizziness, nausea, sweating, sedation, and lightheadedness.

This plant is mentioned in Sir Joseph Banks diary 1769 to 1771 while he was a Botanist on Endeavour on Cooks 1st Voyage of Discovery. While visiting The Cape of Good Hope he writes of the locals: "Smoaking is a custom most generaly usd among them, in doing which they do not as the Europeans admit the smoak no farther than their mouths but like the Chinese suck it into their Lungs, where they keep it for near a minute before they expire it. They commonly mix with their Tobacco the leaves of Hemp which they cultivate for that purpose or *Phlomis leonurus* which they call Dacha."

<u>Sources for Seed or Plants</u>: Herbal Forum_Amazon, ebay

Miscellaneous Information: The plant is banned in Latvia and Poland.

Bibliography:

Van Wyk, Ben-Erik; Bosch van Oudtshoorn; and Nigel Gericke. 2009. <u>Medicinal Plants of South Africa</u>. Pertoria. South Africa: Briza Publications.

Wikipedia

A Colorful Little Bit of Latin—Red and Pink

In continuing with our look at Latin used in botanical names, here are more words that are used to describe the color of plants (especially of flowers). Here we'll take a look at vivid reds and paler pinks:

Red:

coccineus scarlet erubescens turning red ferrugineus rust red flammeus flame red flame red Igneus porphyreus warm red puniceus carmine red rubens red ruber red

rubescens turning red
rubiginosus rusty-red
rufus reddish brown
rutilans bright red
sanguineus blood red,

sanguine

scarlatinus scarlet, bright red vinosus wine red

Pink:

carneus flesh colored corallinus coral pink incarnatus flesh pink roseus rosy pink

Red is a color which advances, so use it to draw the eye to make focal areas in the garden.

Best wishes for great holidays! Henry Flowers Garden Chair



Gladiolus carneus—Sword Lily



Centranthus ruber—Jupiter's Beard



Salvia coccinea—Scarlet Sage



Catharanthus roseus — Madagascar Periwinkle



Geranium sanguineum—Bloody Cranesbill



Hibiscus coccineu—Texas Star Hibiscus



Cuphea ignea—Cigar Plant



Clianthus puniceus—Kaka Bean

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Herb of the Month of December - Bay Laurel

Bay Laurel is a venerable herb of much history and of great use. Because it is an evergreen shrub it can be used at any time of the year, but its use during the end-of-the-year holidays is especially fitting.

Bay Laurel is also commonly known by the names of sweet bay and simply just "bay" and botanically it is known as *Laurus nobilis*, which can simply be translated as 'noble bay." It is a member of the laurel family, the Lauraceae, to which this plant lends its name.

Bay (as I will continue to refer to it) is an upright evergreen shrub to small tree that is native to the eastern Mediterranean. Its leaves are ovate and are richly aromatic. The leaf margins are usually



entire and are often undulate (wavy, as seen in the accompanying picture). Once mature, it may produce clusters of small pale yellow flowers which are followed by small, somewhat olive-shaped, berries which are green when immature and turn a rich purple-black at maturity. If there is any pest of bay, it would be soft scale. These insects love to attach themselves to the underside of bay leaves and, like aphids, if there is a large population they will secrete a noticeable amount of honeydew which will support the growth of sooty mold, a black fungus which thrives on sugary liquids and will cause lower parts of the plant and anything underneath it to turn black. The best way to treat such an infection is to remove as many leaves as possible and to spray the plant in the cool season with a dormant oil. If you catch an infection early you may be able to stop or slow it with a summer oil spray. Mulching the plant well and feeding it yearly with a good compost and/or organic fertilizer also helps to keep it healthy and may possibly stave off such a problem.

In ancient mythology the bay tree is dedicated to the god Apollo. Legend tells us that he fell in love with the nymph Daphne and as she fled from his embraces she was turned into the bay tree. Thereafter Apollo wore a wreath of bay leaves upon his head and also exhorted his followers to do the same. This wreath became symbolic as an emblem that would protect the wearer from the powers of evil. A temple to Apollo was built at Delphi and it was surrounded by bay trees and every ninth year it was the custom to erect a bower of bay branches in the forecourt.

The ancient Greeks held a festival called the Feast of the Laurel-bearing in order to celebrate peace and victory. During the procession maidens crowned with bay wreaths would sing songs of praise to Apollo. This herb is also associated with prophecy; the oracles of Delphi, consulters of the gods, would chew on bay leaves and shake bay trees before going into a trance in order to be inspired with the gift of prophecy.

Where is there in the universal Earth More lovely than a wreath from the bay tree? John Keats, To the Ladies who Saw Me Crowned, 1817

In ancient times bay was used as a crown for distinguished scholars, poets, athletes and warriors. It was wrapped around letters telling of great victories. After the battle of Waterloo it was used to decorate mail coaches sent around to tell of the English victory over Napoleon. Today the bay is a symbol of excellence in literature and the arts. "To look to one's laurels" means that success in any field has to be maintained and "to rest on one's laurels" implies that one is satisfied with what one has achieved. Bay was especially in use at the Roman celebration of Saturnalia in December, which was supplanted in the

Continued on next page

Christian era by the celebration of Christmas, and thus it is understandable that it is an herb that is much used in Christmas decorations, even to this day.

There are also a few other terms associated with bay. From its use to crown great poets comes the term "Poet Laureate." At one time newly qualified doctors were also crowned with bay wreaths, a practice that was known as *bacca laureus* (laurel berry), which in time became the term baccalaureate, which can simply be translated as "university degree." The word "Bachelor of the Arts" is similarly derived and has over time been shortened simply to "bachelor."

Bay has long been believed to provide protection, especially from thunder and lightning. Because of this, and also because it is great to cook with and you really only need one plant to do so, I think of it as a great housewarming gift. It is suitable for planting in the ground or for keeping in a container, so it can be grown just about anywhere. When I moved into my new home (a year ago this month), the first plant placed in our yard was a topiary-form bay tree—easily within reach of the kitchen.

I have seen the wicked in great power And spreading himself like a green bay tree. The Holy Bible, Psalms 37:35

Bay has also long been associated with green witchcraft and is believed to banish evil spirits. Branches of bay were hung in churches in Medieval times in order to attract fairies and elves. It was believed that bay branches were favored by witches for making their magical flying broomsticks.

'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay. The bay trees in our country are all wither'd. Richard II, Act II, Scene IV

If a bay tree were to wither and die it was thought of as an omen of death in the family or of a natural disaster. According to records, all the bay trees in Rome withered before the death of the emperor Nero.

Also, according to legend, if one were to write the name of the focus of a wish on a bay leaf and then burn it, that wish would come true.

Bay is the birthday flower for June 14. In the language of flowers the leaves represent "unchanging affection" and the tree represents "glory." According to Culpepper it is a tree of the sun and thus under the influence of Leo.

In the kitchen, bay is an essential herb. It has long been associated as a flavoring for soups and stews, but we should really do so much more with it. Most of us have likely used dried bay leaves at one time or another. I urge you to use fresh one instead. I find that they have a greater depth of flavor and if you have a fresh bay tree at hand there is no need to use dried ones. Save those instead for placing on pantry or other kitchen shelves to help keep away silverfish, weevils, roaches and other nasty pests. Bay is an essential ingredient in a bouquet garni, a bundle of herbs used as flavoring for soups, stews, stocks, meats, desserts and more. Historically the bark was used as a spice and the berries are still used today in the Italian liqueur fioravanti.

One of my favorite ways to use bay is in sauces, custards and desserts. You can infuse the leaves in a liquid and then remove them before continuing on with the dish. I learned from Susan Belsinger that bay pairs especially well with chocolate, but it also works great with vanilla. Try infusing some bay leaves in milk when you make hot chocolate or chocolate pudding. It is a wonderful flavoring in ice

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cream (a personal favorite). and I learned from Billi Parus that it makes a wonderfully flavored liqueur. One way that you can safely use the leaves as a solid addition to a dessert is to place a few stemless leaves in a food processor with the sugar used in a dish and blend it until the leaves are in very fine bits. In this way I have added bay to cookies, cakes and other sweet dishes. I've never tried it, but think it would be a great flavoring in a pumpkin or sweet potato pie.

<u>Warning</u>: Always remove whole bay leaves from dishes before serving. They have sharp edges and, especially if used dry, can damage the throat and esophagus. Quite frankly they are, for the most part, inedible. When adding dried leaves to dishes make sure not to crush them as the smaller bits are hard to remove later on. If using fresh leaves I usually crush them gently before adding to the dish as this helps to release more of the flavorful oils and fresh leaves will hold together.

For medicinal purposes, bay, like most herbs, has notable antibacterial properties in its essential oils and has a history of use as a remedy for flu and other respiratory ailments. It also has a mildly narcotic power in its chemistry and perhaps this is why it is associated with clairvoyance and the oracles.

Propagation of bay is slow and not usually greatly successful unless one has a great understanding and knack for such things. Thus small bay trees are apt to be more expensive than most other herbs. Thankfully, as I mentioned before, you really only need one as they can get quite large. A simpler way to produce just a few new plants is to detach root suckers with a bit of root and pot them up. Since the bay tree is naturally more like a clumping, multi-trunked shrub, this usually poses little difficulty.

In the landscape, plants of bay can be trimmed to a variety of heights and can be formed into topiary shapes. If left alone they can reach about 20 or more feet in height and can thus be quite large for the average landscape. They are quite adaptable and can be kept for a long time in containers, especially if kept trimmed back as a topiary in order to limit top growth.

In addition to a great housewarming gift a bay plant would be a fabulous Christmas gift. If you have a large bay in your yard and it needs some trimming, then consider making some bay wreaths for the holidays—they make great gifts as well. I'm giving a webinar for HSA on December 5th and will be talking about how to make such a wreath, along with a few other fresh herbal arrangements. It is free and all you need to do is go to the HSA website to sign up.

(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.)

Have a wonderful holiday season! Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Garden Chair



December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
BSG = Botany Study Group CG = Culinary Group	SG = Sensory				1	2		
3	4	5 Henry's Webinar FH Workday 8:30 to noon	6 Culinary Group 11:00 to 1:00 Menke House	7 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	8	9 Deadline to pay for Meeting meal		
10	11	12 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	13	14 Pioneer Unit Meeting	15	16		
17	18	19 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	20	21 BSG Festival Hill	22	23		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
31								

January 2018

FH Workday 8:30 to noon	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	3 Culinary Group 11:00 to 1:00 Menke House	4 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	5	6
	8	9 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	10	11 Pioneer Unit Meeting	12	13
4	15	16 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	17	18 BSG Festival Hill	19	20
11	22	23 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	24	25 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	26	27
28 O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O	29 5 *	30 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	31	BSG = Botany Study Group CG = Culinary Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	



PIONEER PATHS

Volume 25

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."

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Vice Chair Programs—Phoebe Lake Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers Secretary—Pat Cox Treasurer—Lucy Nehrkorn

