

# PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America  
Pioneer Unit

January 2024

Volume 31, Number 5



January 1  
New Year's Day

—  
January 5  
Twelfth Night

—  
January 8  
Board Meeting  
10:00 on Zoom



January 25  
Wolf Full Moon

## MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date: January 11, 2024
- Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet  
10:00 a.m. Presentation and Meeting
- Location: Brenham Presbyterian Church  
900 South Jackson Street
- Directions: Exit Highway 290 to Business 36 North (Day Street) into Brenham. Continue north to College Street. Turn left to Jackson Street, and the church will be on your left.
- Program: Plant Trivia Fun
- Speaker: Horticulture Study Group of the Pioneer Unit
- Hosts: Deb Meschwitz, Royceanna Kendall, Joann Reichle, and Patty Royal
- Lunch: Winter Warm-Ups



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2024 is here! What does it hold for us all? Less war and more peace, I hope. My family shared their resolutions or wishes for this year, and my one granddaughter who is eight spoke of peace and love.

I am optimistic that there will not be a snowstorm or terrific freeze this winter, and I feel that way because there is still so much green in my garden. The herb of the year, Yarrow, is sending out flowers and new growth.

The Herb Sale and Forum 2024 will be upon us in a couple of months so we urge all of you to sign up at this meeting for all the work to be done. Julia Johnson will head up the gathering of all the many parts to the sale with Irene Spurrier and Jana Rinehart leading the set-up the week of March 10th.

Maybe, by the time you read this, there will have been a Board meeting. Items to talk about will be the Forum and sale as well as new member orientation. Anyone interested in attending this meeting, please contact me. Otherwise see you next Thursday for a fun meeting and surprises.

I will also be able to let everyone know who the Forum presenters will be!

Best,  
Kathe Forrest  
Unit Chair



## FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

Wishing all a hopeful and peaceful 2024! I am celebrating my camellias -- they have not bloomed in a couple of years due to the freezes, but are spectacular this year. I can't see them without thinking of New Orleans. Did you know that the flowers are edible (but rather tasteless) and the buds have been used to make tea?

We are looking forward to our January meeting at the Brenham Presbyterian Church! I hope to see you there. There has been a change in the program, and Phoebe Lake provided the following information on behalf of the Horticulture Study Group:

Our January program will still be sponsored by the Horticulture Study Group, but our subject matter has changed. We will be having Plant Trivia Fun!

In this light-hearted competition, tables (not individuals, so don't be intimidated!) will vie against other tables on plant knowledge. We even have prizes for the winning table!

Here are a few sample questions:

\*The national flower of Brazil is what?  
(the orchid)

\*Which herb, known for its anti-inflammatory properties, is a main ingredient in the golden milk latte?  
(turmeric)

In addition we will have a close look at some members' favorite plants. Can you guess the member who submitted their favorite plant?

Tess Hartman  
Programs Chair



## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Happy New Year to All!! A cold front blew in during the night, and it is really chilly out this morning. Great day to stay inside and write a newsletter article.

Our Christmas meeting included a behind-the-scenes tour of Festival Hill. It was all fascinating, but I especially enjoyed the tour of their Library. So many incredible treasures are stored there. I hope to visit it soon and do a little research regarding the beginning days of the Pioneer Unit.

**December Meeting Attendance** - Forty-seven members attended the December meeting, along with five guests. Due to the activities of the meeting, I was unfortunately unable to obtain all the names of our guests. I can tell you our guests did include Leslie Conrads, David Kieke (Courtney Kieke), and Mary Sockwell (Euphanel Goad). The Hostesses served a delicious array of Christmasy breakfast items. Thank you, Hostesses!!

**March Forum, Plant Sale, and Thyme Well Spent Shoppe** – March will be here before you know it, and there is much to be done to prepare. Seed packets were in high demand at this past year's sale. They sold out quickly, and we had over 200 packets to sell. Several members have already brought me packets of seeds. Keep them coming. Also, start bringing any books and magazines that you would like to donate to the sale. We would like any books and/or magazines having to do with herbs, plants, gardening in general, and cooking. Shoppers were interested in fiction books that had something to do with herbs. Also needed are jams, lotions, dried herb packets, and handmade items. You earn volunteer hours while preparing any of these items. You need 20 hours of volunteer hours to maintain your active membership status, and this is a **perfect** way to obtain those hours. Contact Cathy Nitsch for more information.

**Celebrating Our Members** – The Pioneer Unit will celebrate two of our Super-Star members during our upcoming January meeting. Mary Reeves joined the Herb Society of America in 1974. That's a 50-year tenure, and Mary has accomplished much during this time. Mary will be receiving the Golden Sage Recognition Pin this year. Please read the article in this newsletter highlighting one story about Mary. In addition, another Super-Star is Euphanel Goad. She will be celebrating her 30-year membership with HSA. Please plan to attend the January meeting and join us in congratulating Mary and Euphanel.

Herbally yours,  
Diana Sellers  
Membership Chair



## CULINARY GROUP



The Culinary Group mustards are made! Be ready to purchase your favorites from the Thyme Well Spent Shop during Forum. Whew!

Belinda Weatherly

## HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

### Who are we and what do we do?

Our purposes are as follows:

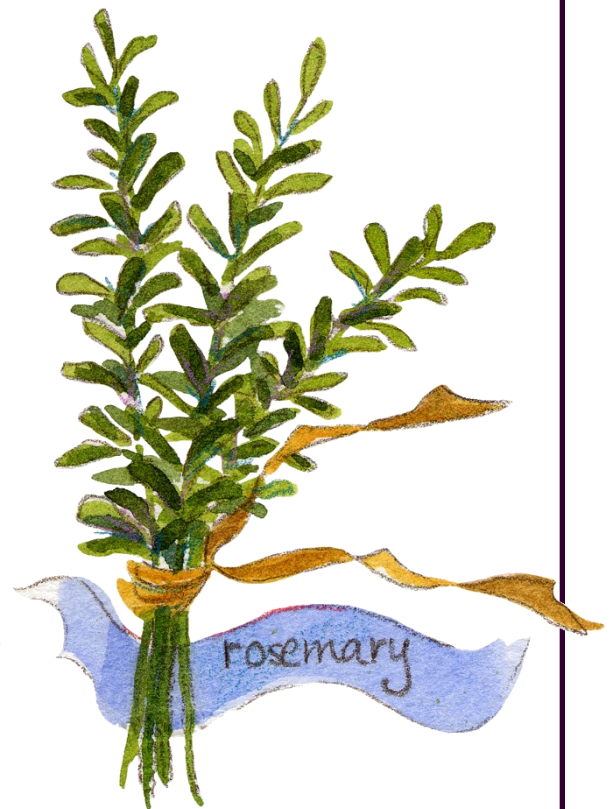
1. Improve our knowledge and skills in the cultivation of herbs.
2. Learn how different varieties of the same herb perform in our geographic area under different growing conditions.
3. Build fellowship within the Pioneer Unit by sharing the love of herb cultivation.

Our monthly meetings on the 4th Thursdays from 10-noon include an educational program followed by a round robin discussion of how our study herbs are growing. In past years, we studied oregano, basil, thyme, and mint. In 2024, we will be growing and studying rosemary.

If you like gardening and love talking about gardening, then you will enjoy this special interest group. Our first meeting is **January 25, 10 – noon at the home of Phoebe Lake.**

**Check it out!** By the way, Madeline Johnson's article about our study of thymes during 2022 is in the January/February 2024 issue of Texas Gardener currently available.

Phoebe Lake



## MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING PIONEER UNIT DECEMBER 14, 2023

The Unit meeting was held at Festival Hill in Round Top, Texas. Tess Hartman, Vice Chair Programs, introduced Pat Johnson, Associate Curator of Collections at Festival Hill. Pat explained the logistics of our tour of the Galleries and Library. Lamar Lentz, Associate Managing Director & Library and Museum Collections Curator, and Pat Johnson led the tour of the library while Festival Hill docents Gary Pior, Karen Dormois, and Diane Tovey spoke about the galleries and the auditorium.

After the tours, Kathe Forrest, Chair, opened the Unit meeting and asked for a Plant Sale Leader for the March Plant Sale. Julie Johnson will be helping with the second half of the sale process but will not be able to help with the first half. Someone is needed for the set-up Monday through Thursday of the Forum week. There is a map for set-up of the plants which will make set-up easier. Irene Spurrier and Jana Rinehart volunteered to be Plant Sale Leaders and oversee set-up. This will be the last year Henry Flowers will order plants, and the Unit will need to find someone to take on this job next year. Susan Wood suggested someone should assist Henry this year to learn the process of ordering plants. Julie Johnson volunteered to work with Henry to order plants and will possibly take on that responsibility. A discussion followed about whether a nursery license is needed to order plants wholesale. Susan Wood noted a non-profit does not need a nursery license. We can have two sales a year without having to charge sales tax.

Kathe has two speakers lined up for the 2024 Herbal Forum. One is a woman gardener from Austin (Cristen Andrew from Small Town Farm) who will speak on yarrow and a woman weaver (Penny Nelson) from Cat Spring to speak on dyeing with plants. Kathe will talk to someone today on giving a culinary talk.

Round Top Junior Master Gardeners need someone to speak to about ten 4th, 5th, and 6th graders about herbs. Cindy Nash offered to help, and anyone else interested should contact Kathe Forrest. Pat Cox has cleared the Round Top Library for the Unit to do a presentation from the Pioneer Unit. The library is having a Wellness Day in February 2024, and we can have a table there. Kathe also mentioned that the Brenham Library is fine with us doing some kind of workshop or demonstration there as well, and she added that she would be looking for volunteers.

Kathe announced the December birthdays. Diana Sellers, Membership Chair, announced we had 49 members attend and several visitors.

Cathy Nitsch announced she has jelly jars with her today for those wanting to make jellies or jams. Cathy is also willing to bring jars to your home. The Thyme Well Spent Shop will need a Committee Chair in 2025, and anyone interested may shadow her as she works on the TWSS next year. Kathe said that goes for all the positions for June 2024.

Susan woods announced the South Texas Unit will have its 38th sale Saturday, April 27, 2024, titled "Roots, Shoots and Rhizomes." She also reminded everyone about the EdCon in June 2024 in Pennsylvania.

Patty Mills, Hospitality Chair, thanked the hostess team Cathy Nitsch, Noreen Barker, Joanna Hagler, Betty Pior, and Jill Wilson. Cathy Kietlinski was the Angel.

Julie Johnson asked for a show of hands for those who prefer mornings or evenings to work in the Pharmacy Garden. All preferred the morning shift. Kathe said that the volunteer survey was successful in that we have a list of people – those who want to work at the Sensory Garden and those at the Pharmacy Garden.

A discussion followed on whether to have members responsible for a specific section of the Pharmacy Garden or have a specific workday once a month. Kathe said that we have a list of volunteers from 2 years ago, and she will send that out to see if those people still want to volunteer to work in the same beds. Belinda Weatherly asked if anyone wants to help her with her bed as Susan Yancey has moved. It was noted that Link, the Festival Hill chef, is willing to bring food and water to those who work in the gardens.

The meeting adjourned, and lunch was served at the Menke House.

Respectfully submitted,  
Louise Rice, Secretary  
Edited by Kathe Forrest

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Several members stepped up after the December meeting to help with the youngsters at the Round Top library. Thank you

Now we need two or three members to host a fun herb talk at the Brenham Library - making something that those who come can take away with them and providing information on joining the unit. This would be in February.

Ideas on make-and-take items:

- \*Tussie mussies
- \*Dried flower and herb swag
- \*Lavender wand
- \*Pomander ball of orange studded with cloves
- \*Dream pillow bag of herbs (talk on folklore of putting various herbs under your pillow)
- \*Basil good luck charm
- \*Smudge sticks
- \*Mulling spice or dried herb tea bags
- \*Small wreaths of herbs (no wire needed — artemisia is great for this)
- \*Herb bundles for dropping in stews, etc.

Kathe Forrest

We will assemble tea bags for distribution at the Round Top Health Fair for a short time after the January meeting. We will have mints (and other herbs) and teabags. We need 3-4 people to stay after to help fill and package the bags.

Patty Mills

## Mary Reeves A True Golden Sage

In January 1974, Mary Reeves joined the Herb Society of America South Texas Unit. Mary and her husband eventually moved to Round Top, Texas. Mary and other herb enthusiasts from the Round Top area worked with Madalene Hill to establish the HSA Pioneer Unit in 1994. Did you know - in approximately 1997, Mary was the Unit Chair. Along with Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay, Mary worked to hold the first ever Herb Festival and Plant Sale.

The Herb Society of America recognizes those members who have served for 50 years with the Golden Sage Award. According to HSA, "In our gardens we grow many kinds of sages. We have culinary sages and ornamentals. We have Old World Sages and New World Sages. We have fall bloomers and those that add to the spring flower parade. But The Herb Society of America has another unique type of sage – members who have shared their wisdom and experience! Those extra special people who have been guiding lights to fellow members for fifty years or more are our most treasured group of sages – OUR GOLDEN SAGES." Mary is surely a Pioneer Unit treasure. Thank you, Mary, for all you have done and continue to do.

Diane Sellers

Susan Wood sent this great story about Mary Reeves and the White House.

### Mary Reeves at the White House

Mary arranged an exciting private tour of the White House for South Texas Unit members attending the dedication of our National Herb Garden, June 12, 1980. A group of us had just enjoyed the three-day annual meeting in Spring Lake, New Jersey. Our hotel was just steps away from the Atlantic Ocean boardwalk in this seaside resort. In those days we toured public and private gardens each day rather than sitting in hotel rooms for educational presentations.

One of the highlights was at our annual banquet when the lights were dimmed before elegantly attired waiters entered the dining room with our desert of flaming baked Alaska.

After the annual meeting, those wishing to add an optional trip to the dedication of our National Herb Garden at the National Arboretum boarded buses for the short trip to Washington D.C. There was an official ceremony with the Vice President's wife, Mrs. Walter





Mondale, cutting the ribbon to open our new garden. The Marine Corps band entertained us while we toured the herb garden, and a lavish buffet al fresco capped off the celebration.

The next day Mary had arranged the tour of the White House with her cousin, Hamilton Jordan, who was President Jimmy Carter’s Chief of Staff. We bypassed crowds of people waiting in line and entered a side door to see areas not on the general tour. As VIPs and horticulturists, we even got to see the famous rose garden! Corlas Huitt and I stepped off the path to more closely admire a beautiful rose bush. Imagine my surprise when several dark suited men with ear wires jumped out of nowhere to advise us to stay on the path. We were right outside President Carter’s office while he was inside!

Mary was an outstanding member of The South Texas Unit since 1974. Our loss was Pioneer Unit’s gain when she and Charles moved to Round Top and she became a founding member of your unit. Congratulations to Mary on becoming a Golden Sage!!

Susan Wood

**THYME WELL SPENT SHOP**  
**JAMS, JELLIES & CHUTNEY**

: Happiest of 2024 to all! Thyme Well Spent is ramping up our jam/jelly skills. Please  
: consider making something for our shop. We have plenty of recipes and experts to  
: help you gain another skill. See Cathy Kietlinski or Cathy Nitsch. We will have jars  
: at our January meeting. In addition, we are still looking for new leadership for  
: TWSS in 2025. Shadow us this year and learn all the fun tips. It's a lot of fun and  
: you meet the BEST people!

: Cathy Nitsch  
: 979-421-9980 home or 281-235-5078 cell

: Happy New Year to everyone! Please consider making some jams, jellies and/or  
: chutney for our 2024 THYME WELL SPENT SHOP. Your help will make this year  
: successful. Kindly email me at [cathy.kietlinski@gmail.com](mailto:cathy.kietlinski@gmail.com) with the name of your  
: product(s) and the quantity you plan to prepare. Additionally, let me know if you  
: need jars. Your help is sincerely appreciated.

: Cathy Kietlinski  
: 979-203-7433

: In February we will schedule workshops to make herbal lotions for the Shop for  
: Forum. In addition to the old favorites, we’re always looking for new ideas. Please  
: contact me if you have any suggestions for new lotion recipes or if you’d like more  
: information about the items we sell.

: Thanks for your interest and help.  
: Pat Cox - [bmerlynne@cvctx.com](mailto:bmerlynne@cvctx.com)

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 1 — Carolyn Thomas  
January 7 — Mary Doebbeling  
January 9 — Erica Menconi  
January 17 — Cathy Kietlinski  
January 19 — Kathe Forrest  
Oscar Hillegeist  
January 20 — Cammie Beierle  
January 21 — JoAnn Reichle  
January 26 — Georgia Sowers  
January 27 — Cindy Nash  
January 28 — Euphanel Goad



**Kathe Forrest** (January 19) sent the photo below and wrote the following: "Life continues with all its ups and downs. New Year's began well with everyone enjoying each other. I continue to grow through my girls (daughter and granddaughters) and continue to learn through the Pioneer Unit."




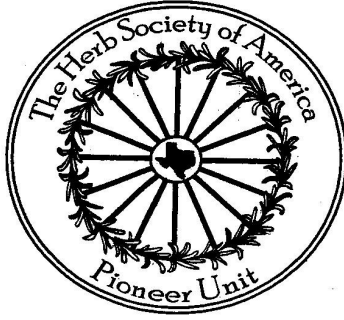
# January 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 CG 10:00 Menke House	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Pioneer Unit Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 HSG 10:00	26	27
28	29	30	31		CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group HB = Herbal Blends

# February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group HB = Herbal Blends			1	2	3
4	5	6	7 CG 10:00 Menke House	8 Pioneer Unit Meeting	9	10
11	12	13	14 	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 HSG 10:00	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		



## PIONEER PATHS

Volume 31

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—Kathe Forrest

Vice Chair Programs—Tess Hartman

Vice Chair Membership—Diana Sellers

Secretary—Louise Rice

Treasurer—Debi Thomas

### IN MEMORIAM

John Wesley Davenport, 82, died peacefully in his home in Carmine, Texas, on December 28, 2023, surrounded by his wife, Madeline Johnson, his daughters, and several close family members.

Celebration of life services will be held for family and friends at 11:00 a.m. on January 13, 2024, at St. Johns UCC church in Burton, Texas, with military honors. Reception to follow at St. John's UCC Fellowship Hall.

Pioneer Unit Affiliate Member Sue Edmundson remembered that in 2007, "Wes and I presented a rainwater collection program to the Pioneer Unit after which Wes and Madeline invited everyone to their home to see their rainwater harvest system. It was one of our most well attended meetings. The next spring we made the same presentation at Herbal Forum. We were very fortunate to have Wes share his research and experiences with us."

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember . . ."

William Shakespeare, Hamlet

