



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

August 2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

There's no doubt in my mind – it's blazing hot outside. I know some of you prefer this hot weather, but it's not for me. I'm a cold weather lover sort of person. It was great to have so much rain earlier this summer. My plants really benefited from it and seem to be better able to tolerate the heat and lack of rain now. I planted several drought tolerant plants in the Spring, like lantana, Pride of Barbados, purple coneflowers, and Turk's Cap. The butterflies, bumble bees, and dragonflies are having a great time. I have a couple of hummers fighting over the nectar from the Turk's Cap. When they arrive, it does make the summer heat more enjoyable.

July Board Meeting – July was a month full of activities. The Board held its first meeting of the new fiscal year on July 7th. Joanna will provide the details in her newsletter article. We're off to a great start. The Unit members approved the Board Officers for the 2026/2028 timeframe at the June Business Meeting. The Board then approved the Standing Committee Chairs for 2026-2028:

Archives/Rosemary
Education/Workshops
Field Trips
Scholarships
Festival Hill Pharmach Garden
Communications:
 Publicity/Website
 Newsletter/Listserv
Hospitality
Plant Sale
Thyme Well Spent
Forum

Susan Bame
Pat Cox
Irene Spurrier
Martha Neva
Julia Johnson

Ann Lugg
Linda Rowlett
Connie Gwyn and Cathy Nitsch
Julia Johnson and Madeline Johnson
Shawn Helm
Diana Sellers

Thanks to all the members who volunteered to chair these committees.

Phoebe Lake and Tory Farley will be co-Board Chairs of Programs for the coming two years. Phoebe has arranged a fantastic set of programs for the upcoming year, and Tory has secured the meeting spaces. I'm looking forward to hearing the presentations. The Board reviewed the budget from the last fiscal year and developed a budget for this coming year. We will present the budget to the members in October for approval.

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August 12-13
Perseid Meteor Shower
Peak Dates

August 28
Green Corn Full Moon



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR (CONTINUED)

Membership Renewal – Cammie Beierle collected renewal dues from our membership. She submitted our renewal report to HSA and will be distributing new membership cards in September. We are starting this fiscal year with 88 members. Sadly, we lost 3 members last fiscal year – Carol Edwards, Linda Hartson, and Tony Scanapico. While we will greatly miss them, we are grateful that they were a part of our lives.

Membership Directories – After completion of the renewal process, it was time to begin preparing the new directory. That has been accomplished, and the new directories will be distributed during the September meeting.

Native Bee House Building – About 35 members gathered on July 9th to learn how to build native bee houses. Tom Shaughnessey guided us through this endeavor. He is such a great teacher. We were quite a sight to see, all of us wielding our screwdrivers, constructing new homes for our native friends. Tom determined that we had made approximately 3,500 new nest sites for the native bees. Congratulations to us!!

March Event Planning Committee – On July 28th, the March Event Planning Committee held its first meeting to start preparing for the March 2027 Forum, Plant Sale, and Thyme Well Spent Sale. We identified a number of things to begin working on and discussed tentative ideas for the Forum theme. We will start active planning in September. It will be important for members to look for information each month as we will need to do things a little differently next year.

September Meeting – The Culinary Group will be presenting a tea party at the upcoming September meeting. It is going to be a lot of fun. Sadly, I will not be able to attend as I will be out of town. I know it is going to be a great meeting. Kindly, Tess Hartman will be leading the business part of the meeting for me. We will hold the Business Meeting first, then the Tea Party. Don't forget to wear your special tea party hat!

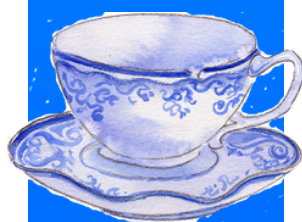
Have a great summer. See you in October.
Diana Sellers
Unit Chair, Pioneer Unit

CULINARY GROUP

The Culinary Group is steaming (in more ways than one) ahead with plans for the September program. We've had great fun learning about Tea Rooms, tea history, and trying out delicious food. I for one am straining the seams on all my clothes because of the wonderful food members bring to sample. Looking forward to serving you tea!

Belinda Weatherly

[Belinda wrote this text for the newsletter on July 30th. Today we are all thinking of her and praying for her and her family.]



FROM YOUR PROGRAMS CO-CHAIRS

We're excited about the upcoming year's lineup of speakers! Wondering what subjects they'll be talking about?

Here's a hint of the lineup:

- Incorporating native plants into your herb garden.
- Bugs: Good ones and Bad ones.
- Tomato or Tomahto?
- How one gardener transformed her urban garden into a native oasis.
- Tea with friends!
- What was EdCon anyway?
- All thing lemony.
- Bringing butterflies home.
- The grande dame of herbs, Madalene Hill.
- Treasures from Thyme Well Spent Shoppe.
- Honey, I bought a nursery!

Phoebe Lake and Tory Farley



Ann Lugg, Website Chair, wrote: For a list of the complete lineup of speakers, see <https://www.herbsocietypioneer.org/programs-2026-2027/>



PIONEER UNIT BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

July 7, 2026

Present: Diana Sellers, Cammie Beierle, Royceanna Kendall, Joanna Hagler, Susan Bame, Pat Cox, Connie Gwyn, Cathy Nitsch, Linda Rowlett, Martha Neva, Phoebe Lake, Julia Johnson, Ann Lugg, and Tess Hartman.

Minutes: The minutes of the April 7, 2026, meeting were approved

A motion was approved to install 2026-2028 Standing Committee Chairs.

Membership Report - Robin Greer, Jeannie Schilling, Galin Morgan, Margie O'Brien, Keelia Ritch, Sylvia Forbes, Sherrie Tolbert, and Pamela Austin were approved as new members. Currently, Pioneer Unit has 85 members. Cammie Bierele, Membership Chair, is searching for a co-chair.

Treasurer Report - Royceanna Kendall reported our bank balance as of 6/30/2026 is \$82,892.62. CD balances are \$25,804.99 and \$17,637.30.

Standing Committee Reports

Rosemary/Archives - A motion was approved to send flowers to Tony Scanapico's funeral.

Education - Pat Cox gave an overview of planned workshops including felting, candle making, tallow making, pear mince, faux bois, hypertufa, and mosaics. Irene Spurrier is planning field trips.

Scholarship - Martha Neva will make suggestions for discretionary spending as she steps into her role as Scholarships Chair.

Hospitality - Co-Chairs Connie Gwyn and Cathy Nitsch added hostesses for the July 2026 meeting.

Programs - Co-Chairs Phoebe Lake and Tory Farley have removed the speaker angel position as they found a more streamlined process.

Pharmacy Garden - Julia Johnson updated progress on the greenhouse. Julia would like a co-chair to partner with when making decisions regarding the greenhouse. A motion was approved to form an Ad Hoc Committee to bring the greenhouse to completion.

Communications Publicity/Website - Ann Lugg has placed a half page advertisement for PU in the Herbarist. PU will also sponsor an article.

Thyme Well Spent Shoppe - Shawn Helms is collecting ideas for TWSS as she steps into her role as TWSS Chair.

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BOARD MEETING SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

Unfinished Business

The Mary Reeves Memorial Bench is in progress. Memorial scholarships in her name continue at Blinn College.

An AdHoc Committee will meet to complete the Festival Hill-Pioneer Unit Memorandum of Understanding.

New Business

Diana Sellers provided an overview of the budget process. Board Members and Chairs reviewed and revised their individual budgets for the upcoming fiscal year.

Our Plant Sale/TWSS will be held March 12 and 13, 2027. Forum will be on March 13th. Because of a piano recital at Festival Hill, we will not have our March meeting on the usual date. The TWSS workday is planned for March 8th. Grounds cleanup for the Plant Sale is planned for March 5th. Information typically dispersed at the March meeting will be included in the PU February meeting. The herb of year for PU will be lemon verbena.

The meeting was adjourned.
Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dear Herbies!

I hope you have had a great summer! I get less tolerant of the heat every year but can't resist wanting to eat food from my garden!

We have a new member to introduce you to: Pamela Austin. Her information will be listed in the new directory.

We have many new members. Please look for them and introduce yourself!! Thank you for helping them to feel a part of the group!!

We don't meet in July and August, though I am looking forward to seeing you in September! I'll have the 2026-2027 directories at the welcome table. Please come by and pick yours up!

See you soon!!
Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair
HSA, Pioneer Unit

HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

Cooking with Lemon Herbs in July

We drank Lemon Catnip Lemonade and Lemon Rose Geranium Tea. We had Lemon Balm Deviled Eggs, Lemon Verbena Blueberry Muffins, and Lemon Thyme Cookies as appetizers. Then we enjoyed Vietnamese Lemongrass Chicken and Lemon Savory Butter Beans. There were more dishes and drinks. The photos show some of the dishes not listed previously. What an amazing and inspiring selection provided by Shawn Helms, Jana Rinehart, and Diana Sellers! We were surprised and grateful for this culinary extravaganza.

Diana, Shawn, and Jana also provided tips on cooking and baking with the different lemony herbs included in the study. Most are prepped for culinary uses in much the same way as other herbs – clean and chop the leaves of the herbs or in the case of lemon mist thyme, cleaning is all that is needed. Lemongrass requires more patience and preparation. You use only the white base of the leaves. This requires separating a section from the base of the plant, which can be challenging because lemongrass is tough and hard to separate. However, if you manage to get some divided off, then you cut off the roots and the green tops and start working with the white leaf base. Shawn did an excellent show-and-tell presentation on how to handle lemongrass in cooking.

Madeline Johnson



JULY GATHERING

Thirty members gathered in Fayetteville on Thursday, July 9th, for lunch at Orsak's Cafe followed by a Native Bee Nest Box building workshop at the ARTS Annex. Tom Shaughnessy, local native bee expert, led the well organized workshop. He had previously cut and pre-drilled all necessary pieces for box construction, printed easy to follow instruction sheets, and counted out the screws. All we had to bring was a screwdriver, manual or electric. With Tom's guidance, the drills started buzzing and the nest boxes began taking shape. Considering that most of us are carpentry novices, the learning curve was scaled with a few second tries. The shared experience of helping each brought smiles and laughter.

Many thanks to Diana Sellers, Tory Farley, and Linda Rowlett for all you did to gather us together. My hope is that all participants enjoyed themselves, learned something new, and that the nest boxes attract native bees so their numbers may flourish.

Irene Spurrier
Field Trips Chair



Editor's Challenge: Be the first to send me a photo of your bee house with a tenant!

FELTING WORKSHOP

On July 29th, Cammie Beierle hosted a felting workshop with seven members participating. We all had fun creating our designs and turning them into felted artwork (see pictures). Cammie is a very patient and helpful teacher. The felting process is fascinating, and we plan to meet again to make items for Thyme Well Spent Shoppe.

Pat Cox
Education and Workshops Chair





AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Jill Quimby	August 9
Leona Marshall	August 11
Serena Speaker	August 11
Kathy Carter	August 13
Susan Yancey	August 14
Vicki Wiste	August 17
Sharon Fotherfill	August 18



Leona Marshall (August 11) sent the above photo and captioned it: "Shawn Helm and I celebrating the birthday of the United States of America in New Ulm."

Serena Speaker (August 11) wrote: I will have my 73rd birthday on August 11. I am so pleased to be a member of this wonderful group with lots of activities to engage in. I want to thank members for all the support and prayers that have lifted me up during my health issues. God is on my side and I know he will get me through this issue.

"Blessings to all-Serena"



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Editor: Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.
Pioneer Paths is a publication of
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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 – Diana Sellers Vice Chair Programs – Tory Farley and Phoebe Lake

Vice Chair Membership – Cammie Beierle

Secretary – Joanna Hagler Treasurer – Royceanna Kendall and Debi Thomas

BOOK REVIEW

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Braiding Sweetgrass is another book I read as a member of one of the book clubs sponsored by the Herb Society of America. In this case, the club had read Kimmerer's book months before I joined, but the members talked about it so much that I had to read it to be "in the know." I loved the book so much that I sent copies to my sisters and my sister-in-law, and I heartily recommend it to you. This is a book that can be enjoyed over months, allowing time to think about and appreciate each chapter.

Kimmerer called her book "a braid of stories meant to heal our relationship with the world." She defined the three strands of her braid as Indigenous knowledge, scientific knowledge, and "the story of an Anishinabekwe scientist [herself!] trying to bring them together." There are several chapters in this book that I have marked to read often.

One of Kimmerer's most prevalent themes is the idea of reciprocity: when we take something – from another person, from a plant, a tree, nature – we owe something back, including, of course, our thankfulness. Relying on nature comes with responsibilities to care for her, to protect her.

Writing of learning from nature, the author noted that what we need as students is mindfulness. She stated that paying attention was "a form of reciprocity with the living world."

There is no way for my few paragraphs to summarize the richness of this book. I learned about the beliefs of Indigenous peoples. I was awakened to some of the ways we could help to overcome the damage that has been done to our planet. I experienced the author's profound caring for the people and the world we share.

At one point in the book, Kimmerer tells of thanking someone for sharing a story with her. The story teller responded that the story was a gift to be shared. In Braiding Sweetgrass, Kimmerer gifts her readers with many stories that provide a rich view of life.

Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.