

# WASHINGTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

October 7, 2025 Held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Members Present: 93

Alfi Anderson, President, was unable to attend the meeting. Vice President Pam Bulter called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

## Business Meeting

Co-Chairs Kathy Launder and Dolores Stamps of the Endowment Committee organized a presentation for the Scholarship Award. Kathy Launder introduced Mary C. Savin, PhD, QEP, Department Head of Horticulture at the University of Arkansas, to recognize this year's recipient, Vanessa Parker Patton. Dr. Savin stated that the Horticulture Department has 60 undergraduate students and 21 graduate students currently in the program and is engaged in encouraging more students to study horticulture. Out of 23 applicants for scholarships, all 23 were awarded financial assistance ranging from \$500 to \$5000.

Vanessa Parker Patton gave a heartwarming presentation about her journey from working as a registered nurse to applying to the horticulture program at the University of Arkansas. She is now set to graduate in December. Vanessa expressed her gratitude to WCMG for their generous support of her educational goals.

Dr. Savin introduced Sarah Paschal, a Department of Horticulture new faculty member and current Scholarship Chair, to the membership.

Co-Chair of the Washington County Fair, Kathy Launder, gave an overview of the August 2025 Fair as follows:

- The White Elephant Sale sold \$1400 worth of donated items. The money was used to provide awards for the junior exhibitors.
- 58 volunteers worked 918 hrs.
- Congratulations to 4 Grand Champions from WCMG:
  - Kristi Campbell Knitting
  - Teresa Sullivan Painted Pot
  - Joanne Olszewski Vegetable Basket
  - Doris Cassidy Adult Flower Arrangement

Kathy recognized Co-Chair Doris Cassidy for her contributions, and Co-Chairs Dawn Didier and Beverly Didier for handling all the paperwork involved in the event.

The September meeting minutes were approved unanimously by the membership and will be sent to Archivist Kimberly Hosey by Carole Ball, Secretary.

The August Treasurer's report was approved unanimously by the membership and will be sent to the Archives by Julie Murray, Treasurer.

Paul Roundtree made a motion to accept the updated Bylaws as presented for members to review in the October issue of the Garden Thyme newsletter. Carrie Gamble seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Sanctioned Project Reports

##### Ask-A-Master

Jim Sposato presented a slide of received calls for the year to date. The number of calls has been decreasing – possibly due to information being readily available on the internet. Jim reported that Chair, Laura Wilkins, is working on minor changes to make the process more accessible.

##### Headquarters House Historic Garden

Jan Lefler, Co-Chair of Headquarters House, gave a slide presentation of this 30-year-old sanctioned project. The Washington County Historical Society is the owner of the house and gardens. The house was built in 1857 by the Judge Jonas Tebett's family on 4 acres of land. The property is currently one acre in size and is divided into 15 sections: woodland/sun/shade/herbs/roses/annuals/perennials/and vegetables, among others. Historical events are celebrated annually at the house and garden. At the Annual Ice Cream Social, WCMG set up an education table and hand out garden plant lists to visitors.

About 15 volunteer crew members come every Tuesday workday and have totaled about 1300 recorded hours this year.

In addition to Jan Lefler, Co-Chairs for Headquarters House Sanctioned Project include Janice Walker, Krisit Campbell, Geri Alvis, and Betty Nichols.

Jan Lefler gave a reminder of the October 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for submitting award nominations.

Ozark Veterans' Healing Harvest Garden (formerly known as the VA Gardens.)

Steve Brizzi, Chair, gave an update on the renovated VA garden project as follows:

- 2016 – the VA Garden project became a WCMG Sanctioned Project.
- 2022 – an anonymous benefactor donated \$130,000 to the project.
- The current garden covers 5200 sq. ft. – has 16 raised beds and 1200 sq. ft. of growable space. Pavers have been laid with space between raised beds for wheelchair access. An irrigation system has been installed.
- 900 lbs. of produce have been harvested thus far with an anticipated harvest greater than 1,000 pounds.
- Since July 2024 more than 2000 volunteer hours have been recorded plus 200 hours from community volunteers.
- Garden workdays are Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays. WCMG volunteers will find a project to-do-list and shopping list posted on site.
- A community sampling bed allows visitors to have a taste of what is being grown.
- Pollinator ornamentals and vegetable beds have plant labels for education of visitors and volunteers.
- Goals for the project are as follows:
  - To provide fresh produce for food insecure veterans.
  - To provide a place for veterans to work and to heal – spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

Two groups of visitors from the VA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., working on food insecurity among veterans, recently toured the newly renovated garden. This project has received recognition from the VA Headquarters and is on the VA national website.

### **In the News**

Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette featured a photo of Alfi Anderson, Kristi Campbell, and Rhonda Lovell at the WCMG education table in August at the Headquarters House Annual Ice Cream Social.

In September the Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette published an article on the renovated Ozark Healing Harvest Veterans' Garden, formerly known as the VA Garden, featuring a photo of Annie Moore and Brad Neidecker.

In the Arkansas Democrat Gazette September 28<sup>th</sup> edition, Martha Haguewood and Kelly Chaney were featured in a photo for their work as lifetime members of the University of Arkansas Women's Giving Circle.

Awards Co-Chairs Jan Lefler and Geri Alvis presented third quarter Busy Bee Awards to 33 members who were recognized for recording 50 volunteer hours on sanctioned projects as follows:

**July** – Marguerite Abowitz, John Ball, Lynne Bell, Robert Callier, Darielle James, Michael Mohler, Linda Morrow, Donilyn Rutherford, Chuck Rutherford, Joyce Starr, Adriana Treadway, Phyllis Wilkins, Laura Winburn.

**August** – Steve Brizzi, Sharon Daniel, Sonja Everitt, Caleb Israel, Peggy Konert, Carolyn Newbern, Kitty Sanders, Sally Schoen, Patty Stith, Teresa Sullivan, Julie Torseth, Jan Van Tuyl, Mari Walters-Ford.

**September** - Dawn Fisher, Joyce Hardin, Terry Hedden, Gari James, Jayne Laster, Rhonda Lovell, Dale Thomas.

Patsy Louk and Kathy Launder, Co-Chairs of the New Master Gardener Training & Mentoring Committee, made another appeal for members to step up and become mentors for the 2026 Trainees.

Photo contest winners were announced. The theme for October is “Birds, Bees, and Butterflies.” The submission deadline is October 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Announcements**

Kathy Launder set up a table to show MG merchandize that will be available to order online October 7<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>.

Jim Sposato arranged a table along the side wall for a free seed swap of donated seeds.

Karen Hanna-Towne gave a brief explanation of the Carbon Chicken fertilizer and soil amendment benefits and where to purchase it. Ruth Cohoon had the winning ticket number drawn by Karen and received a bag of Carbon Chicken fertilizer and soil amendment as the door prize give away.

A thank you was given to the Headquarters House Sanctioned Project for setting up the meeting room. Next month the West Fork Sanctioned Project will be on set up duty.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Ball, Secretary.

