

# Herb Society of America - South Texas Unit

## Annual Meeting

### Agenda

May 21, 2025

Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion

- I. **Opening / Call to Order**  
*Dena Yanowski Gaydos – Unit Chair*
- II. **Approval of Proposed Agenda**
- III. **Approval of Previous Minutes: June 12, 2024**
- IV. **Officer and Committee Chair Report Highlights**
- V. **Financial Report: 2024-2025**  
*Maria Treviño – Treasurer*
- VI. **A. Proposed Budget: 2025-2026**  
*Maria Treviño – Treasurer*  
**B. Presentation, Discussion, and Voting on Proposals for Financial Commitments**
- VII. **Approval of 2025-2026 Proposed Budget**
- VIII. **Election of Officers**
- IX. **New Business**
- X. **Announcements**
- XI. **Adjournment**

## II. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AGENDA

## III. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

### ***The Herb Society of America - South Texas Unit Annual Meeting***

*June 12, 2024*

The meeting was called to order at 7:18pm by Dena Yanowski Gaydos, Unit Chair in person at Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion. She announced that the September meeting would be her last before Baby Gaydos arrives in October. Her plan is to be back by the January meeting.

Attendance was recorded by Unit Secretary Tricia Bradbury. A quorum (20% of active membership) was present.

Members present (29) : Laura Boston, Tricia Bradbury, Nicole Buergers, Stephanie Calloway, Karen Cottingham, Benée Curtis, Janice Dana, Yvette Darnell, Jeanie Dunnihoo, Julie Fordes, Janice Freeman, Dena Yanowski Gaydos, Debbie Gordon, Rochelle Jones, Lucinda Kontos, Jane Littell, Laura Mullen, Beth Murphy, Catherine O'Brien, Angela Roth, Palma Sales, Janice Stuff, Maria Treviño, Steven van Heeckeren, Linda van Heeckeren, Donna Wheeler, Rose Wherry, Susan Wood, Donna Yanowski.

### **Approval of Proposed Agenda**

### **Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from the May 17, 2023 Annual Meeting were distributed by email 2 weeks prior to the meeting. Tricia Bradbury moved to accept minutes as amended. The motion was seconded and passed.

### **Reports:**

Vice Chair (Programming) - Karen Cottingham

Day Group - Janice Stuff

Membership - Carolyn Kosclskey

Education - Catherine O'Brien

Publications (Newsletter and MailChimp) - Janice Freeman

Website - Benée Curtis

Social Media - Virginia Camerlo

Herb Fair - Catherine O'Brien

Herb Day - Virginia Camerlo

Chair - Dena Gaydos

Treasurer - Maria Treviño

Reports were sent via email 2 weeks before the meeting and will also be available on the unit's website.

In person highlights included:

Karen Cottingham noted that there is traditionally no meeting in July, but we did meet via ZOOM for a couple of years. This year we will gather for a special meal at a restaurant. Susan Wood noted that usually August was a month off.

Janice Stuff announced that Benée Curtis is now chair of the day group.

Catherine O'Brien announced that the scholarship committee selected 3 students who will each receive \$1000.

Catherine O'Brien highlighted some of the speaking engagements our members presented to various organizations and encouraged all to consider being part of the Speakers Bureau.

There was an announcement that District meetings would be every other year with the next being 2025. Laura Mullen clarified that EDCON will be every other year and District gatherings may be anytime.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Maria Treviño presented the 2023-2024 Treasurer's Report. Floor was opened and discussions followed on particular budget line items. Janice Freeman asked whether Vanguard combined scholarship should be a separate account. Susan Wood asked about dividend interest. Maria Treviño clarified that there would be no advantage since dividends generated were not enough to fund scholarships. Maria Treviño presented the proposed 2024-2025 budget. Susan Wood made a motion that the budget be accepted. There was a second. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Presentation, Discussion and Voting on Proposals for Financial Commitments:**

#### **Proposal 1:**

I move we donate \$1000 to the Nature Discovery Center at Russ Pittman Park in Bellaire to be used for improvement of the Sensory Garden (which is 90% herbs), supplies for growing plants, plants, and educational materials to enhance the learning experiences.

The Center provides programs for children and adults, to connect them with nature through experiential learning with local native plants, animals and ecosystems as demonstrated through the Sensory Garden, Pocket Prairie, Discovery Rooms, Wetlands and Bog ecosystems. Schools from all over Harris County come on field trips to learn via the Scientific method to become citizen scientists and connect with nature. They recently added the sale of "homegrown" native plants to their annual free community event, Spring Fling. This encourages people all over the area to grow more Native and Herb Plants. The Sensory Garden contains herbs and teaches adults and children to identify and learn the purposes of the different plants.

Debbie Lancaster, presented by Dena Yanowski Gaydos. Susan Wood second. Passed unanimously.

#### **Proposal 2:**

I move we donate \$1000 to the Lucille Plane State Jail in Dayton, Texas to be used to support the woman's program by providing financial support for supplies for growing plants, plants, seeds and materials to enhance their learning experiences.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has partnered with Lee College since 2007. The Earth Behind Bars program provides a gardening/horticulture program for incarcerated women, to connect them with horticulture and career opportunities through hands-on learning. The

offenders use herbs to “spice up their food.” They gain marketable skills in designing, producing and maintaining herb gardens, and the program benefits taxpayers by reducing their food costs. It has been shown that education while incarcerated reduces the rate of recidivism.

Catherine O’Brien, 2024 Garden Proposal Committee. Second Laura Mullen. Passed unanimously.

### **Proposal 3:**

I move we support Shamba Ya Amani with a \$1,000 donation to be used for their herb and flower programs.

The \$1,000 donation would go towards a dehydrator, packaging, and a stipend for labor for dried herbs to be sold at the Urban Harvest Mobile Markets, which go into food deserts to sell at wholesale prices. The donation would also contribute to herbs and their flower bouquets which feature herbs, sold as part of their [Shamba Shares Community Supported Agriculture program](#). The costs include labor for harvesting, paper sleeves and rubber bands, flower buckets, flower snips and other growing supplies.

Nicole Buergers, 2024 Garden Proposal Committee. Susan Wood second. Passed unanimously.

### **Proposal 4:**

I move that the South Texas Unit donate \$1,000 to the Pioneer Unit to be used for repairs on the Greenhouse at Festival Hill.

The greenhouse is located near the Pharmacy Garden and was such a wonderful space for our Pioneer Unit’s botany group and to help keep a fresh supply of cuttings to use in the herb gardens at Festival Hill, until a windstorm put it into disrepair. We have a local group of volunteers that meet up bimonthly, or around 5-6 Saturdays a year, to help us with projects like this. Our next volunteer event will be May 4th and I hope to make the greenhouse our focus project. -Julia Johnson, Site Horticulturist and Pioneer Unit Volunteer Coordinator

Julie Fordes. Catherine O’Brien second. Passed unanimously.

### **Proposal 5:**

I move we support The Westbury Community Garden’s D2 Medicinal Herb bed, managed by STU, with the purchase of two (2) convertible bench/tables plus security devices for up to \$600. The table surface could be used for plants, tools, water/tea, etc. It could also be useful when herb classes are held at the Medicinal Bed site. When converted into a bench, they will be a welcome close-by place to rest during workdays.

These bench/tables are maintenance free because the slats are faux wood—a plastic material. The frame is a steel alloy, so very sturdy. The benches are heavy enough to not “walk away”, but are light enough that one person could move the units together for form a 4.5’ square table if needed.

Debbie Gordon. Nicole Buergers second. Passed unanimously.

### **Proposal 6:**

I move the South Texas Unit provides expenses for up to \$2,000 per year by reimbursing in person meeting travel supporting our members willing to serve on The Herb Society of America Board of Directors as executive officers, district delegate, and national committee chairs.

The Herb Society of America currently needs volunteers to step up for many positions. By supporting our members willing to serve we can support the mission of the Society. Funds from our general operations are available for budgeting this endeavor.

As a reminder, the net proceeds from our annual Herb Day marketplace are used for scholarships. Profits from Herb Day registration and our annual Herb Fair go into our operating fund. We already support travel expenses for STU Chair to attend HSA in person yearly meeting. If the current HSA plan to hold national in person meetings every other year instead of yearly stands, we will not need to support travel expenses on odd numbered years.

Susan Wood. Debbie Gordon second. Passed with one abstention.

From the floor:

1. Laura Mullen: I move that for every donation a recap of work be required and a template sent to show how money was spent. Janice Freeman second. Vote by show of hands: 16 YES; 7 NO; 6 ABSTAIN. Motion passed.

2. Susan Wood: I move that STU continue support of The Houston Botanic Garden at the Cultivator level of \$1500. Julie Fordes second. Vote by show of hands: 22 YES; 3 NO; 4 ABSTAIN. Motion passed.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Slate of Candidates: Treasurer

Term of Office: 2 years, July 1, 2024 – July 30, 2026

Janice Freeman made a motion to elect Maria Treviño to serve as treasurer for 2024-2026 term.

Susan Wood seconded. Motion passed unanimously

There was discussion about suggested operational changes for monthly meeting hospitality.

The Annual Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Tricia Bradbury

Unit Secretary

South Texas Unit, The Herb Society of America

## **IV. OFFICER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS**

*Detailed reports will be posted on our website following the meeting. In person, Officers and Chairs will have the opportunity to state highlights from the year.*

**Chair - Dena Gaydos**

**Vice Chair (Programming) - Karen Cottingham**

**Secretary - Tricia Bradbury**

**Treasurer - Maria Treviño**

**Day Group - Benée Curtis**

**Development, Herb Fair - Stephanie Calloway**

**Education - Angela Roth, Cynthia Card**

**Herb Day - Virginia Camerlo, Benée Curtis**

**Membership - Janice Freeman**

**Publications (Newsletter and MailChimp) - Janice Freeman**

**Website - Benée Curtis**

## **V. FINANCIAL REPORT 2024-2025**

*Financial Report 7/1/2024 - 4/30/2025 and Narrative as supporting documents.*

## **VI. A. PROPOSED BUDGET 2025-2026**

## **VI. B. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND VOTING ON PROPOSALS FOR FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS**

### **Proposal 1:**

***I move to include an internship as part of The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit's educational support.***

Background:

The scholarship has been awarded to students who study agribusiness, agricultural sciences, horticulture, ecology, or environmental science with a focus on botany. Students majoring in other disciplines have been eligible if their focus is plant-related. Consideration has been given to undergraduates and to graduate students enrolled in an approved graduate program and engaged in plant-related research.

After several years of reviewing applications, transcripts, letters of recommendation, and personal goal statements, I have observed that more graduate students than undergraduates apply for the scholarship. Students are often disqualified from consideration for not submitting all of the required documents—that is, transcripts and/or letters of recommendation are lacking.

The National Arboretum Herb Garden in Washington, D.C., has an internship supported by The Herb Society of America. Instead of providing a scholarship directly to a college student, I am proposing that the funds be used to support an intern with a Houston-area garden or university.

(Source: <https://www.usna.usda.gov/about/jobs-and-internships/>)

One to three thousand dollars (\$1,000-\$3,000) annually would be provided to a local garden to supplement their internship. Possible gardens for consideration include, but are not limited to, Houston Botanic Garden, Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, McGovern Centennial Gardens,

Hermann Park Japanese Garden, Mercer Botanic Gardens, Blackwood Garden at The Post, and the Houston Arboretum. Other recommendations can be made to the Scholarship Committee, henceforth called the Scholarship/Internship Committee.

Advantages:

The decision about who would receive the financial benefit would shift from the South Texas Unit to the institution that hires the intern as would the review of any required documentation. It is recommended that the interns meet learning outcomes that the receiving garden could report back to the South Texas Unit.

Examples:

1. Intern would be able to identify plants.
2. Intern would be able to propagate plants.
3. Intern would be able to develop an understanding of soil types.

Therefore, I move to include an internship as part of the South Texas Unit's educational support.

*Catherine O'Brien*

## **Proposal 2:**

***I move to change the name and purview of our current Scholarship to The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit Madalene Hill Education Fund.***

This allows STU to offer either scholarships, grants or internship support as determined by the Education & Scholarship Committees each year to be the best use of our funds.

Susan Wood

## **Proposal 3:**

***I move that The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit continues to support Houston Botanic Garden with a \$1,500 donation for Cultivator Giving Circle membership for 2025-26.***

Houston Botanic Garden, opened in 2019, provides many educational events each month for all ages to enjoy the benefits of gardening. The world class collection of plants shows the diversity of what can be grown in our climate. To support this garden supports our mission with The Herb Society of America. [www.hbg.org](http://www.hbg.org)

Susan Wood

## **Proposal 4:**

***I move that The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit continues to support the gardens created by our founder, Madalene Hill, in Round Top, TX at Festival Institute with a donation of \$1,000. The donation should be earmarked for Madalene's gardens in honor of Madalene Hill.***

The McAshan gardens, including Mediterranean Garden, Mary Garden and Pharmacy Garden, are partially maintained by Pioneer Unit members with a memo of understanding with Festival Institute which gives them access to facilities for meetings and to hold the Pioneer Unit annual plant sale. This garden is truly worth our continuing support, only 90 miles from Houston.

[www.festivalhill.org](http://www.festivalhill.org)

Susan Wood

### **Proposal 5:**

***I move that we donate \$1000 to the Nature Discovery Center in Russ Pitman Park to support their ongoing native plant and herb projects.***

Background:

The Herb Society South Texas Unit generously donated \$1000 to the Nature Discovery Center in Russ Pitman Park in 2024. The money was used to remove the old rotted raised beds. Two new raised stone beds have been built in their place. These beds will contain herbs and plants that the children can smell, touch and taste in the Sensory Garden. (See attached pictures)

In 2025, NDC will build a greenhouse behind the stone beds. Native plants and herbs will be propagated there and sold to the public as part of the ongoing education of the importance of Native plants and herbs to the health of our habitat. I am proposing we once again donate \$1000 in 2025 to the Nature Discovery Center to help with this ongoing project. Russ Pitman Park is a jewel in the middle of the City of Bellaire/Houston. The pocket prairie is home to many native plants that attract all wildlife to our local area. All through the park you can find Native flora and fauna and learn how to incorporate it into your yard. As habitats shrink, we must support these special places that teach us how to preserve our planet. I appreciate your consideration and would be happy to answer any questions about the Park. If I don't know the answer, I will do my best to find it.

Debbie Lancaster

### **Proposal 6:**

***I move that the South Texas Unit fund a speaker for 2026 The Herb Society of America Educational Conference in the amount of \$2,000.***

Janice Stuff

## **VII. APPROVAL OF 2025 - 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET**



## VIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Slate of Candidates: **Chair:** Angela Roth

Term of Office: 2 years, July 2025 – July 2027

Slate of Candidates: **Vice Co-Chairs:** Karen Cottingham and Ro Jones

Term of Office: 2 years, July 2025 – July 2027

Slate of Candidates: **Secretary:** Stephanie Calloway

Term of Office: 2 years, July 2025 – July 2027

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

## X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Membership Renewal: Maria Treviño
- Submit Volunteer Hours by 7/15: Janice Freeman
- EdCon 2026 Announcement: Karen Cottingham
- Herb Fair Announcements: Stephanie Calloway

## XI. ADJOURNMENT