

South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America Annual Report 2019-2020

Chairman's Report

This has been a busy year. During the fall we had an extremely successful Herb Fair with lots of first-time visitors and more young gardeners than ever. All of our evening meetings at the Cherie Flores Pavilion were very well attended with a high of 75 people and an average attendance of 50. We had to get extra seating at more than once. We have increased our outreach electronically with more than 1,000 subscribers on Mailchimp. We have a nice following on Facebook and our newsletter has expanded its number of articles. We are in the second year of our Back to Our Roots initiative focusing on educating members as well as growing, harvesting and drying herbs for our products instead of buying herbs. Since the virus, we have cancelled several meetings and our beloved Herb Day. We have used Zoom for our Board meeting and Annual meeting and are exploring how to maintain interest in our group despite social distancing and other restrictions.

Treasurer's Report

During the past year as Treasurer, I completed the administrative and business tasks required to support the South Texas Unit. These tasks included filing the non-profit tax reports required for the IRS, Texas State Sales Tax and submission of the membership reports and dues payments to The Herb Society of America. Major contracts were secured, scheduled and paid during the year, including rentals of Cherie Flores Pavilion, Big Tex Storage, and U.S. postal box. Meeting and event Insurance was paid through The Herb Society of America; our Unit's Directors and Officers Insurance was paid directly to Cincinnati Insurance Co.; Certificates of Insurance documenting insurance coverage were obtained for every meeting and major event.

Income was collected from our major income streams: Membership Dues, Investment Dividends, Herb Fair, and Herb Day. Expenses were paid: major expenses as outlined above, all donations, as approved by the South Texas Herb Society, including scholarships, Garden donations, and the National Herb Garden Intern fund donation; miscellaneous expenses related to Herb Fair, Herb Day, meetings and events were also paid. All income and expenses are summarized in the financial report for 2019-2020.

Draft Budgets for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 were prepared, presented to the Board for their input, review and approval, and next they were presented to the Unit membership for input, review, and approval.

Reports prepared during the year included the Annual Financial Report, Quarterly Financial Reports, Herb Fair Financial Report, Herb Day Financial Report, and Membership and Dues Report.

As Treasurer, I monitored daily transactions, monthly and quarterly reports from our Chase Checking Account and Vanguard Investment Funds.

As Treasurer, I shared membership data with membership chairs and coordinated the review of membership data for the 2019-2020 Membership Directory; shared financial data collected prior to Herb Fair with appropriate Co-chairs (i.e. Preorder items ordered) and Herb Day registration. Finally, I frequently collected all the mail delivered to our Unit's PO Box and processed/transmitted mail to appropriate persons; I monitored, answered, and forwarded all email received by the Southtexasunit @Gmail.com account.

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding support of Benne Curtis who completes the setup allowing online credit card charges for Herb Fair Pre-orders, Herb Day Registration, and Membership Dues payment. Thanks to members and spouses who served as cashiers at Fair and Herb Day: Linda Alderman, Chris Ankney, Carol and Calvin Cobb, Bill and Janice Dana, John Dunning, Mike Jensvold, Pam Uschak, Jenna Wallis, and Mary Wood.

Overview Status and Trends: The South Texas Unit, HSA currently has a satisfactory financial status. However, last year our general operating expenses exceeded income by \$3500. This year the Scholarship Fund had a \$1831 deficit. Due to uncertainty how current economic trends might impact our Unit's fundraising and activities, careful monitoring of planned spending will be needed

Membership

For the 2019-2020 year we had 60 total members and 50 active. Total Active: 52 and 6 Life Members.

Sustaining: 5, Affiliate: 2, Honorary: 1.

This year we had 8 members resign and 6 new members join.

We had 3 applications submitted, but dues never paid.

This year we have had 2 members pass away, Thelma Rowe, Vivian Scallan.

Publications

The South Texas Unit newsletter is a monthly publication distributed to an on-line audience of 946 readers with a 56% open rate as of today. In addition we have 4 off-line mail readers. Two editors share responsibilities of composing the monthly newsletter and distributing it through the communication platform, Mail Chimp.

The primary author submits monthly articles and other articles are submitted by voluntary authors throughout the year. Several new sections were added to the newsletter and are listed below.

- Back to Our Roots
- The Book Corner
- Slow Down and Savor Each Day
- Every Garden Needs a Protector. Who's Keeping Watch in Yours?

Programs

Evening Meeting

September 18 - "The Prickly Pear Cactus: Texas State Plant" presented by Liliana R. Cracraft, PhD, member Houston Cactus and Succulents Society Speaker was unable to come due to severe storms, so presentation was given by Program Chair, Karen Cottingham

October 16- "Holistic Animal Care - An Introduction to Veterinary Herbal Medicine" presented by Shana Buchanan, DVM, private practice

November 16 - Tour of The Betty and Jacob Friedman Holistic Garden, Rice University for Herb Society Members, Friends, and Guests

November 20 - "Holistic Gardening for Health and Happiness" presented by Joseph Novak, PhD, The Betty and Jacob Friedman Holistic Garden, Rice University

January 15 - "Ayurvedic Herbs for Vitality and Healthy Brain Function" presented by Karuna Diedericks, Ayurvedic Practitioner and Certified Food for Life Instructor

February 19 - "Old World Secrets of Skin Care" Vlada Z. Mitchell, owner Enchanted Formulae, Apothecary Grade Skin Care

March 11 - "The Seven Seens of Health, a Norooz Tradition" Asal Shokati, Ayurvedic Practitioner and Educator

April 15 - "Hildegard of Bingen - The Holy Healer" Adrian Melissinos, RN, PhD Cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions on public meetings Rescheduled to September, 2020

May 20 - Annual Meeting Rescheduled to June 10, 2020

June 17 - "From the Dragon's Lair" Bee, the Flower Chef of Flora Cocina Cancelled

Day Meeting

Sept. 10 -Thinking of you with this Tussie Mussie

Oct. 18 – Sharing Favorite Gardening Books

Nov. 12- The Allure of Black Flowers

Jan. 14- The Herb of the Year

Feb. 11- My New Passion- Begonia

Mar. 10- My Favorite Things from HSA Meetings

The rest of the meetings were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

2019 Herb Fair Report

Donna Wheeler and Donna Yanowski Herb Fair Co- Chairs

The 46th Annual South Texas Unit Herb Fair was held at the J. Robinson, Jr. Community Center Building. The event took place on Saturday, November 2, 2019. The Herb Fair Committee Chairs and their committee volunteers did a tremendous job marketing, planning, making crafts, baked goods, fragrance items and herb jelly. This year a new item was added; the husband of one of our members designed and built wooden herb drying racks and they were a beautiful addition. Other new items included hanging pottery flower containers, fragrance products, dry culinary herb blends and new bread recipes that sold out before the fair concluded. Color changing Butterfly Pea Flower and Tulsi hands-on activities were located on the Educational table and, to build on the connection, Tulsi tea and Butterfly Pea Flower Tea were sold at the Cafe. Flower pounding on prepared canvas bags was a popular activity for our younger participants. The herb jelly and live herbs once again were best sellers. We ran out of live plants before the fair ended. Fewer plants were ordered this year due to oversupply at the 2018 herb fair.

The marketing campaign was successful in connecting to participants who were likely unaware of the herb fair. We observed a broader mix in age and gender of participants attending the fair due to these new social media marketing strategies. Although several new commercial vendors requested the opportunity to have booths at the fair, due to space limitations only two vendors were accepted. The vendors were both members and their products supported the mission of the herb society. Revenues for the 2019 fair almost doubled that of the previous year. We felt that the fair was a financial and organizational success. Another highlight and goal fulfilled was to support and share our knowledge of herbs with others.

2020 Herb Day Report

This event almost completely planned when the virus hit. We had a great theme, Slow Down and Savor Each Day; and great speakers, Felder Rushing (Slow Gardening), Teresa Sabankaya (The Posy Book), and Kim McHugh (Tea). We will attempt to do the same program in April of 2021.

2019 Madalene Hill Scholarship Recipients

Three scholarships of \$1300 were awarded.

Jamie Pizano, Sam Houston State U

Kassidy McCabe, Texas A and M University

Rebekah Ortiz, Texas Tech U

In Memorium

Remembering Vivian Scallan 1928 -2019

Vivian Scallan, member of the South Texas Herb Society since 1990 passed away this past year. Vivian became a Rosemary Circle honoree in 2015. Being an avid gardener she was also a member of several plant societies. She was a tireless volunteer working many hours in the South Texas Unit's Fragrant Herb Garden at Hermann Park. A significant contribution Vivian made to the South Texas Unit was the crafting of beautiful wreaths to be sold at Herb Fair and Herb Days.

Remembering Thelma Rowe 1926 -2020

Thelma Rowe, a member of the South Texas Unit (STU), completed her life on Feb. 5, 2020. Thelma was most proud of the archival quality scrapbooks she created for our Unit's history ca. 1980-1990, as well as scrapbooks for Madalene Hill's tenure as HSA President. She held every major office in the South Texas Unit. Thelma's favorite event was the unit's Annual Herb Day. As a member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, she negotiated approval for the South Texas Unit to start holding Herb Day there since about 2015.