At a recent membership meeting our upcoming board elections were being discussed and someone asked what it is that our AMGA board actually does. Somewhat taken aback since I hadn’t expected the question, I stumbled through with an answer that really didn’t seem an adequate response.

To those who have served or are currently on the board it is obvious to us what we do. To others, especially our newer members, it might not be so clear what our role is.

In the limited space here, I’ll give a brief overview of the board’s responsibilities.

There are typically 8 board members, 4 officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and 4 At-Large members. Board members serve two-year terms with a maximum of two terms. In addition, there are numerous committees headed by non-board members. The board and various committee chairs meet monthly and conduct the official business of the AMGA. Board members prepare the annual budget, keep records of meetings, finances, and organize our major activities for the upcoming year. This includes arranging speakers for our membership meetings, organizing our summer garden tours, arranging special events, liaison with UAF/CES, and outreach to the general public.

The board oversees numerous standing and special committees, each tasked with specific responsibilities. Some of these committees are chaired by board members but most are led by other volunteers. On the last page of our monthly newsletter there is a list of these committees. Each of these are important to our organization and require someone willing to volunteer their time in support of the AMGA mission.

Each year the makeup of the board and committee members changes somewhat. People term out of office or need a break after years of service. It’s important for the health and vitality of any organization that new talent and fresh perspectives are welcomed. At the December board meeting the old board will conclude its business and the new board will begin the task of organizing themselves, choosing new leadership, and assigning committee positions.

As they organize themselves and take on their new responsibilities the board will be reaching out to our membership for our help to ensure that we continue to provide great programs and value to the community.

In many groups and organizations, it seems that only a few people do most of the lifting but we are fortunate to have so many willing volunteers amongst our members. The new board will be depending on our continued support by helping out on the various committees or volunteering for special events. Whether you are new to AMGA or a long time member, you will find it to be a great way to become involved and to meet new gardening friends.

Above, October 9, bright fall colors of arctic kiwi, Actinidia spp, in ABG’s Herb Garden. Photo by Mary Contrary.
AMGA Board Meeting: October

Busy Board Meeting Includes
2019 Gardeners’ Conference, OLE Class

After months in limbo, Anchorage’s Cooperative Extension Service offices have relocated from their previous basement to a new home, an airy, open area with plenty of natural light on the fourth floor of the Z.J. Loussac Library. There’s a big reception counter, AMGA President Harry Deuber said at the Oct. 8 Alaska Master Gardeners, Anchorage monthly Board meeting, and an office that can be used for small-group classes. Library parking is plentiful but monthly Board and general meetings will continue for now at the BP Energy Center.

Free new Master Gardener name badges are available for MGs whose previous badges have vanished. A sign-up list will be set out at October’s general meeting; those who miss that list can contact Harry. The new badges are bright with flowers and attach magnetically instead of with sharp pins.

In the monthly Treasurer’s Report, Treasurer Cindy Walker noted that four aspiring Master Gardeners applied by the deadline for available $75 MG tuition grants, and all were approved. In other matters, she said, the proposed 2019 MG Budget must be approved in December, and those expecting to generate or spend funds should speedily submit their numbers. The group’s Biennial Report to the state falls due at year’s end; MG financial accounts must be audited by two members; and Cindy’s final month in office is December. To explain on our President’s letter on page 1, the treasurer’s duties include: Agent of Record, check-signer, and PayPal liaison.

November Board elections are upcoming, and potential candidates Elaine Hammes (07/08) and Susan Negus (15/16) introduced themselves to all current Board members. Other candidates also are in the running, Harry said, and all their biographies and photos are to be in this MG newsletter, with voting at the November general meeting.

Plans for the statewide 2019 Master Gardeners Conference, hosted by AMGA at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, are proceeding apace, Harry said, with most speakers and some topics confirmed. Catering and facilities are in place, and set-up is scheduled Friday evening (April 5) for Saturday’s April 6 event. Board members agreed that the conference’s goal was to be education, not fundraising, and all fees should be kept as low as possible while maintaining quality and breaking even. “This is a gift to ourselves, a treat to our members,” said Harry.

Board member Marilyn Barker’s announcement that AMGA has been asked to present a gardening series for OLE (Opportunities for Lifelong Education, affiliated with UAA) in January and/or February met an enthusiastic response. Brief brainstorming produced topics from raised beds to seed starting, hydroponics, herbs, houseplants, orchids and gardening for birds and wildlife.

–Cheryl Chapman, Board Secretary

Volunteer Opportunities

Master Gardener Annual Conference 2019
Do you love to organize? The 2019 conference committee can still use some help in several areas of the planning process: help with data base/registration, publicity, and other planning tasks. Contact Harry Deuber: denali542@yahoo.com, or 907-440-6372
Other areas of expertise you have to offer? When you fill out our Google Form, it will be sent to the Volunteer Committee and you will be contacted when needed.

https://goo.gl/forms/FutOWGNye9KPWkd3

Golden feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium* ‘Aureum’ a late bloomer in the Herb Garden at ABG. Photo by Ginger Hudson.

Treasurer’s Report

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Due to the continued warm weather, the Herb Study Group (HSG) has still been working in Alaska Botanical Garden’s (ABG’s) Herb Garden into mid-October and has also begun regularly scheduled monthly meetings for winter. As of this writing, Yarrow, Golden Feverfew, Goldenrod and Anise Hyssop are still blooming while most of the mints still look as vigorous as if it were midsummer.

However, the Nasturtium vines and flowers that had completely covered the obelisks have fallen limply and are now put away in the compost pile along with the Perilla, Elecampane and most of the Angelica. Kiwi vines are nearly bare. The Parsley and Sorrel looked well-chewed by some unknown apparent critter, so the plants’ remains are also in the compost pile.

End of season clean up has been a gradual process so far, and hopefully will be completed when it is time to mulch.

Herb Study volunteers and Will Criner, ABG Gardens and Facilities Manager, will work together to mulch the beds this year. Several bales of straw are ready to go when the temperature drops sufficiently. Row cover may be used to contain the mulch so that removal in the spring will be easier.

The HSG thanks ABG for providing the Greenhouse space for a great transition from garden to indoor meeting, the first of the season. The HSG discussed how the Herb Garden grew this past summer, and what may be changed in upcoming plans for next year. The Golden Feverfew had many compliments this summer so it is hoped that some of this year’s plants from the spring seedlings can be overwintered for next year.

This season’s HSG meetings will continue to be 12:00-1:30 p.m. on the first Friday of each month. Emails will be sent out to confirm locations. This year’s discussion topics will include the following:
November: Lady’s Mantle, *Alchemilla mollis*, and Sage, *Salvia officinalis*
December: Goldenrod, *Solidago* sp.
2019 Herb of the Year
February: St John’s Wort, *Hypericum perforatum*
March: Feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium*
April: Garden Angelica, *Angelica archangelica*
May: Plans for 2019 Herb Garden

There are no membership requirements or dues to join the HSG. All who are interested are welcome.

For questions regarding the Herb Study Group or if you would like to be included in updates, send an email to anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com or call Mary at 907-345-1562.
It’s official. A done deed. After 45 years, Sutton’s Brown Thumb Greenhouse and Garden Center is history. Reached at their snowbird escape in Yuma, Arizona, Anna and Patti confirmed they have sold BC’s favorite plant place to the nearby Gospel Rescue Mission. Anna said Mission officials told her they might use the nursery as a rehab center to teach greenhouse and other skills to their clientele. Plus they plan to open a coffee shop.

Anna said she and Patti have offered to help them get started next spring but nothing is firmed up.

As for the Sutton ladies, they have a home in the Valley and a boat in Seward and are looking for a place in Anchorage, so they’re still Alaskans. But they are definitely enjoying winter retirement in Yuma. BC made a typical snotty Alaskan remark about the horrors of 100-degree heat. Anna laughed.

“Oh, 78 degrees,” she said. The beans she planted two days ago have already germinated. The peas take four.

EXPERTS AT WORK... The two Double Advanced Master Gardeners stood in the Airport Heights backyard, studiously examining a leafy plant of unknown species. It was in a container and the time had come to decide if it needed to be wintered over indoors or was, in fact, an annual and doomed to death as the season changed. The experts had been summoned. BC was one. The other has threatened an ugly death if her name is revealed.

The leaves were variegated and seemed to be changing color as would be expected. The shape was sort of like Coleus — but not quite. A weird Heuchera? Nah. Ponder. Ponder. It seemed loosely set in the container so the experts carefully lifted it out to examine the roots, which necessitated touching it.


It was an artificial plant. A big fat fake.

“We will never speak of this again,” said the other Advanced Master Gardener. “Never,” said BC.

Well, almost never.

SPUDS... OK, ‘fess up. Were you able to leave your potatoes in the ground (or the container) until the first frost? BC loves digging for potatoes (and eating them), but wants to leave them growing as long as possible. That’s usually sort of near the end of September. But September 20th came, then the 30th and no sign of frost. The pressure built. October 7th, 15th, 18th — OMG! BC couldn’t wait any longer. Must dig!

It was still in the 40s as BC pulled beautiful spuds of many sizes from the lovely dirt. Still no frost.

The Yukon Golds are yummy.

LATE BLOOMERS... Remember all they hype around edible flowers? Well, the delayed winter brought buttery yellow broccolini blossoms to the October 27 market at Midtown Mall (formerly The Mall at Sears). A.D. Farms told BC he learned there was a market for them when his local restaurant clients kept asking for edible flowers. And, well, surprise! He started snacking on them himself while harvesting!

TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE... This from Gina Docherty: “I was watching the news coverage of the big flood in Llano, Texas. They were showing people leaving their flooded homes with their valuables. One woman caught my eye. I knew she must be a gardener: She was carrying out a blooming Amaryllis!”

stoomey@ymail.com

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The Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) with support from the Environmental Protection Agency’s Local Foods, Local Places initiative, is working to install raised bed gardens in downtown Anchorage. The Municipality of Anchorage issued a two-year permit to AFPC to develop gardens on a neglected parcel of land on 3rd Avenue near Ship Creek. The development is called the Downtown Urban Farm Project.

AFPC hit a milestone in fundraising for the project through their Kickstarter campaign. The goal is to raise about $2,000 to support the installation of raised beds, including materials. In just one day, about $600 was raised!

If you would like to help, AFPC is offering great prizes to donors! Visit their Kickstarter site: https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/alaskafarm/downtown-anchorage-urban-farm-project?ref=user_menu

Are you a garden bed builder? Help before winter sets in, the Raised Bed Working Group will set a couple of day/time options to install the beds and move soil. Please stay tuned for a call to action in the first half of November!

For more information:
Raised Bed Working Group, Micah Hahn, mbhahn@alaska.edu
Heritage Land Bank Plan Working Group, Liz Snyder, ehodges4@alaska.edu
General information: Elizabeth Hodges Snyder, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor of Public Health, 907-786-6541 ehodges4@alaska.edu
https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org
Marilyn Barker

Marilyn completed her doctorate in Botany with a minor in Plant Pathology from Washington State University, Pullman. She has a B.A. in botany from Miami University of Ohio. She taught biology and botany classes at ACC and UAA. She served as chair of the Biological Sciences Department for 2 1/2 years. She is known for her classes on the local spring flora.

Marilyn was a founding member of the Alaska Native Plant Society and continues to lead members on field trips throughout Alaska. She is an active member of the Alaska Botanical Garden, Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage and the Wildflower Garden Club; she maintains professional affiliation with the Arctic Institute of North America.

Barker has been involved with vegetation studies and floristic plant surveys, including Prince William Sound’s shoreline, Bering Land Bridge National Monument, Prudhoe Bay and the Bering Glacier Region.

She currently serves on the board of the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage, has served on the board of the Anchorage Weavers and Spinners Guild and plays flute in the Anchorage Community Concert Band.

Elaine Hammes

Since completing the MG class in 2008, I have participated in many of the MG programs such as the MG conferences, garden tours, meetings and especially the Herb Study Group. My personal gardening is now limited to a variety of easy-to-grow plants in my yard and house. In the past, I’ve had gardens in various places including the municipality’s C Street plots.

My introduction to gardening began by weeding my mother’s vegetable garden and picking beans, raspberries and strawberries.

The AMGA has provided me many enjoyable learning opportunities and camaraderie. If elected, I will do my best to help the MG organization continue the many worthwhile gardening activities and events and to promote these activities for others.

Susan Negus

I started gardening when I was in my twenties. I remember how amazing it was to grow vegetables for the first time. Everywhere I have lived I have always made room for a garden. Taking the Master Gardening Class has given me more science to my methods, although I still have a lot to learn.

I have worked as a Registered Nurse since I was 21 years old. Grew up in Wisconsin and moved away when I was 18 and moved to Salt Lake City. Relocated to Anchorage in 1991.

I have been semi-retired for the last three years and will completely retire May 2019. I feel because of nursing I am a much more organized person in many ways. Now that I have more time I would like to be a more active member of the AMGA community and their projects. It would be an honor to be on the AMGA’s Board.

F.X. Nolan

F.X. is a 50 year resident of Alaska who, along with his spouse Susan Reilly, has experienced many of the joys and frustrations of gardening in the Last Frontier in both the Fairbanks and Anchorage areas. Retired from a career in public safety, F.X. became a Master Gardener in the Anchorage class of 2013 and is currently an Advanced Alaska Master Gardener and a student of the many aspects of permaculture.

He is an avid proponent of the educational aspects of the Master Gardener program. F.X. is especially interested in exploring ways to assure the continuance of the core basic and advanced classes.

Nancy Grant

Born January 14, 1956 in Anchorage, Alaska. Married to Dennis Grant. I have lived here in Anchorage my entire life and raised seven children on the South side. I have 16 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

I was a baker/pastry chef for 16 years after which I stayed home for a few years. Once my children where all in school I went into retail management. I spent the next 17 years there until retiring in 2016.

I volunteered with the Susitna Girl Scout Council for 10 years. I served as a troop leader for several age groups, neighborhood coordinator, neighborhood cookie chair, camp counselor, leader trainer and special event committee planning events and activities for the council.

I have been gardening since childhood and currently tend to my 4 flower beds, 3 berry plots, 2 herb gardens and 9 raised vegetable beds. I can the majority of what I grow. I take over more of my husbands green space every chance I get.

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MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Thursday, November 1

Friday, November 2
Herb Study Group meeting: Lady’s Mantle & Sage, Lynn Hansen leading discussion; Noon. Meeting place TBA.

Monday, November 5
Alaska Native Plant Society: “Alaska’s Invasive Weeds” Speaker Tim Stallard; Mini Botany - “What a Plant Knows” Chapter 1: “What a plant Sees” with Tom Choate. Campbell Creek Science Center 7pm - 5600 Science Center Drive http://aknps.org/Pages/Meetings.php


Thursday, November 8
Alaska Wildflower Club Regular Meeting and Program: Building Power House Soil Fertility, presented by Ellen Vande Visse. 10a, Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova St, Anchorage. www.alaskagardenclubs.org

Tuesday, November 13
Eagle River Garden Club meeting: “Growing Nutritious Micro Greens for fresh salad year round” Speaker Chris Wood. 7p at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 18444 Old Glenn Hwy, Chugiak

Tuesday/Wednesday, November 13-14
Anchorage Garden Club’s 58th Annual Holiday Flower Show: “Polar Holiday Express” November 13th, 1p-6p; November 14th, 10a-5p Wells Fargo Bank, 301 W Northern Lights Blvd. https://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorageclub.htm

Saturday, November 17
Alaska Rock Garden Society Meeting: Pechakucha: four talks, each lasting less than than ten minutes on different topics–fast and fun! Profile: Pulsatilla. Election of Officers. 2 p, Elks Lodge in Eagle River, 17111 N. Eagle River Loop Rd [PechaKucha - Japanese for chit-chat - is a presentation style in which 20 slides are shown for 20 seconds each.] Enter through the side door on the left side of the building. Volunteers are needed to arrive at 1:30p to help set up tables and chairs. www.akrockgardensociety.org

Homer Garden Club meets the 3rd Sunday of the Month.

Monday, November 19
Alaska Master Gardener Program: “Why be thankful for insects” with Jesse Moan, 7p, BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage. *Note: Last meeting of the year!* AMGA Board Election

2019 AMGA Board election will be at the November monthly meeting. Since there is one nominee per open position, there will be a vote by voice at the meeting. We look forward to you attending this meeting to show your support to these dedicated volunteers who will steer AMGA over the next two years.

WORKSHOPS

November 15, Wreath Making, Alaska Botanical Garden. 6p-7:30p, materials supplied. $45 members, $55 non-members. alaskabg.org

November 20, Family Wreath Making, Alaska Botanical Garden, 6p-7:30p, materials supplied. $45 one adult+one child, $20 additional child. alaskabg.org

CONFERENCES

November 4-8
14th Annual Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference: “Farming Alaska from Peak to Coast” The Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference brings farmers, ranchers, researchers, Extension agents and others together to learn from one another and to find ways to continue to develop and improve the agriculture industry in Alaska. Sponsored by Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (WSARE).

Sunday, Nov. 4, Pre-conference workshop on Produce Safety Training, hosted in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

This year’s conference will feature statewide updates and technical sessions the first day, Monday, and special topics and technical sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday. Topics covered range from climate updates and seaweed farming, to livestock production and growing rhodiola.

Thursday, Nov. 8, Post-conference workshop: Ag in the Classroom. Participants can select how many days of the conference they would like to attend and whether or not they would like to attend a pre- or post-conference workshop. BP Energy Center and SpringHill Suites, Anchorage, Alaska https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/sare/conference/
Farming Alaska from Peak to Coast

This conference provides opportunities for members of the agricultural community to learn about key sustainability challenges and opportunities.

For more information, visit http://bit.ly/AKSareconf!

WILLOW GARDEN CLUB
MAKE and TAKE
HOLIDAY TABLE ARRANGEMENTS
with TONYA HALL of AURORA FLOWERS
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15
1:30pm - Willow Community Center

the fine print
Participants limited to 30. Members have first priority.

$18 members
Pre-pay with reservation, no refunds
mail payment with name, phone & email
to:
WGC   % PO Box 947, Willow, AK 99688
reservation will be confirmed via email
reservation must be received no later than 11/13
will open to non-members 11/14 - 11/20

$23 non-members
AMGA 2019 Winter Meetings

January 17: How to Lighten Garden Maintenance, with Shirley Ryan
February 18: Water Features in the Garden, by Ben Brown
April 15: Butterflies, Birds and Spring, with Rick Sinnott
May 20: Strange Things Done Under the Midnight Sun: Gardening oddities, eccentricities and bizarre facts of nature, with Julie Riley

Jessie Moan
UAF CES Statewide
Integrated Pest Management Technician

Monday, November 19. AMGA Monthly meeting
7p, BP Energy Center, Anchorage

The Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Ginger Hudson, at:

Mail: AMGA, Newsletter
P.O. Box 221403
Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

Email: newsletteramga@gmail.com

The deadline for submitting an item for publication in the following month’s edition of the AMGA newsletter is the 20th of every month. Items arriving after this date may or may not be included.

Educational or garden related articles, Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome.

AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org
Facebook: facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage
AMGA Google Group: https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA

To send concerns or information to the AMGA directly, mail to:
AMGA
P.O. Box 221403
Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Jane Baldwin at: ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:
Harry Deuber, President
denali542@yahoo.com
907-440-6372

AMGA Board of Directors

Harry Deuber                President
Marilyn Barker        Vice President
Cindy Walker                Treasurer
Cheryl Chapman        Secretary
Fran Pekar        At Large
Marjorie Williams        At Large
Don Bladow        At Large

Committee Chairs, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

CES Liaison:  Harry Deuber
Broadcast Email:     Fran Pekar
Calendar of Events: Gina Docherty, Interim
Advanced MG:  Ginny Moore
Directory Editor: Janice Berry
Programs:  Marilyn Barker
Field Trips:  Marilyn Barker, Interim
Google Group: Mary Rydesky
Hospitality:  Marjorie Williams
Volunteer Coordinator:  Harry Deuber
Membership & Database: Jane Baldwin
Newsletter: Ginger Hudson
Website: Gina Docherty
Lifetime Achievement: Lynne Opstad
Grants: Erma MacMillan (design)
Pioneer Home: Lynne Opstad, Ginger Hudson
Volunteer Coordinators: Julie Ginder, Joyce Smith, Lynne Opstad