

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

Our fall garden sale returned after last year's hiatus and was once again a fantastic event. The morning's cloudy, cool weather was perfect for keeping everyone in town to buy plants!

Huge thanks to organizer Susan Negus, treasurer Jan van den Top, and all the volunteers and plant sellers. The plant sale is both an excellent fundraiser for our organization as well as a great opportunity for plant education in the community.

The rainy days of August have me looking forward to fall and the end of our Alaskan gardening season. There was even one particularly slug-full day when I yearned for frost, just to put an end to the suffering. For the sake of the tomatoes, though, I'm hoping for a bit longer summer. After that, I will be motivated to accomplish some AMGA tasks! Here's some ideas that need feedback and advice:

1. Integrating Membership Functions

Can we streamline our membership sign-ups, email lists, and records in one system? Now that we have Google for Nonprofits, we think it's possible, we just need to find out more.

2. Strengthening University Relations

As a program of the University Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, AMGA depends on our relationship with university staff and personnel. How can we improve and bolster our relationship with UA, and can we develop a relationship with the Anchorage campus?

3. Volunteer Recruitment

AMGA is a service organization. What kinds of projects appeal to our membership, and how can we better advertise volunteer opportunities and connect projects and volunteers?

4. Continuing Education

We're planning an Advanced Master Gardener class in spring 2022, with the topic still TBA. And it's time to start planning the spring 2023 state conference!

Please step forward if you have any feedback or are interested in helping with any of these projects! In addition, please let me or any of the other AMGA Board members know of anything you think needs to be on our list.

As you may have heard, the BP Energy Center remains closed. Our September membership meeting will convene through Zoom, so watch your email for the link.

Speaking of this, some members have mentioned they prefer Zoom for educational meetings, Covid or not. Let me know what you think. Wish you all a safe end of summer. 🌱

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SEEN IN OUR SUMMER 2021 GARDENS....



Whether one has been working hard in a garden or harvesting its bounty, we can certainly understand the desire for a delightful, lazy afternoon nap! Prose and photo from Barbara Simkins.



Elaine Hammes put in a new flower bed (with cherry saplings in the middle) in the spot where she had to remove a dying spruce.



Shirley Kelly is willing to share seeds from her "tough as nails" heirloom delphiniums, pictured here. The flower heads are smaller than the modern ones and the plants are about 5' tall. Contact Shirley at shirleyalaska@hotmail.com.



Susan Negus has grown red-veined sorrel for decoration the past couple summers. "I have treated it like an annual and mostly had it in pots. I have it all over my garden this year. We will see if it overwinters ..."

JULY 2021 AMGA TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances on 07/01/2021

Checking S-88	\$18,692.01
Savings S-1	\$5.25
Savings S-19	\$16,916.72
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$10,714.47

Total Assets \$46,328.45

Interest/Dividends \$2.87

This month's revenue

Membership	\$172.66
Donations	\$-
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$-

Total revenue \$172.66

This month's expenses

Grants	\$-
Operations	\$97.00
Website	\$52.99
Plant sale	\$-
Pioneer Home plants	\$208.84

Total Expenses this month \$358.83

BALANCES ON 5/31/2021

Checking S-88	\$18,505.84
Savings S-1	\$5.25
Savings S-19	\$16,919.59
CD General 2 Year 1.95%, (1/23)	\$10,714.47

Total Assets on 5/31/2021 \$46,145.15

Prepared by Jan van den Top on
07/12/2021

LATE SEASON PLANT SALE HIGHLIGHTS by Susan Negus

I just wanted to thank everyone who helped with the plant sale. It was a lot to coordinate, but fortunately I had a lot of help.

Alexis St. Juliana made the flyer. Fran Pekar set up the SignUpGenius. We had a lot of volunteers for setup on Friday, August 13, the day before the sale.

Charles Baker and myself spent the night in separate vehicles to watch over the plants. I thought it was a quiet night, but Charles said about three cars drove through the parking lot. I guess Charles is more alert.

At 8 a.m. on Saturday, the volunteers started rolling in to help set up more plants.

The plant sale started at 10 a.m., and so did the rain. We had three classes. Thank you to our instructors, Gina Dionne, Paul Marmora and Debbie Hinchey. Did not seem like we had great attendance, I blame the rain. The people who attended seemed more interested and kept the speakers engaged.

Volunteer activities during the day included cashier support, which was pulling tags and giving the total spent to the customer who then went to the cashier. We also had a plant corral for people to hold their plants, so they could shop for more plants or go to the classes.

Ruthe Rasmussen manned the volunteer refreshment tent with the very important coffee, snacks and drinks. I also wanted to thank the Master Gardeners who stayed through the rain and answered questions and helped customers decide on which plant to buy.

At 3 p.m., it was close up time. More volunteers got to work, taking down the tents and tables. Leftover plants were sorted by the vendors and by 4 p.m., the parking lot was empty, except for one lone comfrey plant no one wanted. Maybe I took it home.

If I had to give a prize to the best volunteer it would be Beth Norris, who did everything I asked for two days.

Nancy Grant came in a close second for diligently collecting all the yellow tags and making sure they were cataloged properly. Looks like many plants were sold and there was not a lot to sort out at the end.

The total nominal revenue was \$8,480. This will be divided amongst the vendors, PayPal, hospitality, etc. AMGA may get approximately \$2,000 for our sale. I think the vendors were pretty happy with the number of plants they sold.

This is a great event and gave many Master Gardeners a chance to interact with each other.

There were a lot of masks worn, but I know there were smiles under those masks. Thank you to all who volunteered. 🌱



Scenes from the Late Season Plant Sale held on August 14, 2021.

THE AMGA NEWSLETTER NEEDS EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES THIS FALL! IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT A SHORT ARTICLE, PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR AT NEWSLETTERAMGA@GMAIL.COM.

HERB STUDY: CALENDULA by Elaine Hammes

What herb would be interesting to read about for the next newsletter? Looking back in newsletters for several years and comparing with the many varieties of herbs in ABG's Herb Garden, there is now a draft list! And what a find it is—one of the easiest flowers to grow! That is *Calendula officinalis*.

If you already know all about calendula, well then, read no further and get back out to enjoy your garden. This was the first year for my patch of calendula and

bracts. The wild plants have a single ring of ray florets surrounding the central disc florets. The flowers are typically bright orange or yellow but some white and bi-colored cultivars have been developed. The monoecious flowers (individual flowers are either male or female, but both sexes can be found on the same plant) are 2-3" across with both ray florets and disc florets. The fruit is a wild-looking thorny curved achene (a small, dry, one-seeded fruit in which the seed sits free inside the hollow fruit, attached only by the stem of the ovule. Achenes are



Orange and yellow calendula. Photo courtesy Mary Contrary.

won't be the last. At least one local gardener friend has calendula, a perennial growing as an annual that self-sows every year in her garden. It also provides color in ABG's Herb Garden.

Calendula officinalis, also known as pot marigold, common marigold, ruddles or Scotch marigold, is a short-lived aromatic herbaceous perennial in the daisy family Asteraceae. It is native to southern Europe, though its long history of cultivation makes its precise origin unknown. It is also widely naturalized farther north in Europe and in other warm temperate regions. It has been used for many centuries for a range of culinary and medicinal purposes. This species should not be confused with other marigolds in the genus *Tagetes*. A related *Calendula arvensis*, from southern Europe is a branched annual species with 1" yellow or orange single daisy-like flowers.

The *Calendula officinalis* plants generally grow to 24-30" tall, with sparsely branched lax or erect stems. The leaves are oblong-lanceolate, hairy on both sides, sticky and scented. The inflorescences are comprised of a thick flowerhead surrounded by two rows of hairy

indehiscent (they do not split open when ripe).

Calendulas tolerate most soils although they do best if planted in sunny locations with rich, well-drained soil. In temperate climates, seeds are sown in spring for blooms that last throughout the summer and well into the fall. Calendulas typically bloom quickly from seed (in under two months). Deadhead the plants regularly to continue blossom production and leave some to seed for the next year.

Numerous cultivars have been selected for variation in the flowers, from pale yellow to orange-red, and with 'double' or 'semi-double' flowerheads with ray florets replacing some or all of the disc florets. A dwarf cultivar group 'Fiesta Gitana' flowers earlier than most other varieties. Calendula is more commonly grown in the flower or medicinal garden rather than as a culinary herb. It is suitable for borders, beds, cut flower gardens and containers. They look particularly good in masses and in the cottage garden.

Calendula petals are added to salads, soups, custards,

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SOIL TESTING 101 adapted from UAF Cooperative Extension Service

Autumn is the ideal time of year to take soil samples in the garden to get ahead for the next gardening season.

Understanding what nutrients are available in your soil for your plants is needed in order to supply your garden with the building blocks to promote healthy and vigorous growth. Taking a soil sample and analyzing a soil test is the only way to know what nutrients are in your soil and how much fertilizer to apply to your garden.

Preparing your Soil Samples

Here are some step-by-step instructions for collecting soil samples from your garden.

[Soil Sampling](#) by Steve Brown (2-page PDF)

Choosing a Testing Lab

Many Alaska Master Gardeners go with Brookside Laboratories but [here is a longer list](#).

Sample Forms for Submitting Soil Test

The Cooperative Extension Service has a [PDF with common forms](#) with the “Standard Alaska Soil Test”

Herb Study, continued from previous page

rice, cookies and vinegars as garnish or seasoning, and traditionally as a yellow cheese colorant. The leaves are edible but are often not palatable but have a history of use as a potherb and as tea. Flowers have a slightly bitter, tangy, peppery flavor.

The flowers were used in ancient Greek, Roman, and continue to be used today in Middle Eastern, and Indian cultures as a medicinal herb, as well as a dye for fabrics, foods, and cosmetics. People who grow calendula for medicinal purposes select the varieties with high resin content in the flowering bracts, such as *Calendula officinalis* or the “Resina” cultivar. Calendula leaves can be made into a poultice that is believed to help scratches and shallow cuts to heal faster, and to help prevent infection. Plant pharmacological studies have suggested that Calendula extracts may have anti-viral, anti-genotoxic, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antifungal properties.

Check with ABG this coming winter for possible

information that you will need to mail with your soil sample.

Interactive Soil Test Calculators

These interactive calculators are intended as an exploratory tool to help you interpret your soil test results for a single soil sample.

Calculations are based on a generalized model of soil variable for Alaska soils.

	BELOW	YOUR SAMPLE	RANGE	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	ON A SQUARE FOOT	
Specific Gravity	24.08	OK	> 5	If CEC is low, adding organic matter can increase nutrient and moisture holding ability	100	1000
pH	7.3	OK	*	Lime needed to raise soil pH to 6.5 in the upper six inches of soil *	None	None
	6.9	Optimum	6.5 to 7.0	Lime needed to raise soil pH to 7.0 in the upper six inches of soil *	None	None
Organic Matter (%)	24.37	OK	> 7%	When soils exceed 20% organic matter, liming is generally not recommended	100	1000
Ammonia Nitrogen (lb/ft)	2.32					
Ammonia Nitrogen (ppm)	20	Optimum	15 to 25 ppm	Sulfur (S) fertilizer to broadcast =	None	None
Phosphorus (ppm)	400	Above Optimum	100 to 170 ppm	Phosphorus (P) fertilizer to broadcast =	0.11	1.1
Calcium (ppm)	4026	Above Optimum	> 250 ppm	Calcium (Ca) fertilizer to broadcast =	None	None

Excerpt from DIY soil test calculator

- [Garden Bed Soil Calculator](#)
- [Tree/Shrub Soil Calculator](#)
- [Peony Soil Calculator](#)

Request CES Soil Sample Interpretation

Don't want to use the interactive calculator? Once you've received your soil test report, [use this form](#) to request a free soil test interpretation. Interpretations are on a first-come, first-served basis.

workshops this coming winter to prepare salves or creams with calendula.

Safety and contraindications: Be sure to consult your healthcare professional before using calendula. Do not use calendula internally during pregnancy since it has traditionally been used to bring on menses. Calendula also may cause a reaction for those who are highly sensitive to plants like ragweed (*Ambrosia spp.*) and chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*). 🌿



Contact the Herb Study Group

If you want to volunteer, have questions or you want to be added to the Herb Study Group email list, please email us at anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com or call Elaine at 276-4295 and leave her a message.

AUGUST 2021 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, September 1 *or* Wednesday September 14, 12 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: Handling the Harvest. Two sessions available. Explore the good, the bad and the need to know information for food preservation techniques like freezing, dehydrating and canning. We will also discuss how to choose the best food preservation technique for your needs and where to find resources and equipment you need. Via Zoom. [Register for the first session](#) or the [second session](#).

Thursday, September 2, 12 pm

Mat-Su Experimental Farm & Extension Center: Dehydrating Fruits and Vegetables (including Herbs). Methods of dehydration, steps in drying fruits and vegetables, fruit leather, equipment, storage, rehydration and use of dried foods. Making jerky and smoking fish will be reviewed. Safety and storage of non-preserved foods will also be discussed. Via Zoom. [Register here](#).

Thursday, September 2, 7-9 pm

Anchorage Garden Club: Making Sauerkraut. Learn how to make sauerkraut from the cabbage you have grown. Location: Pioneer Schoolhouse 437 E 3rd Avenue.

Tuesday, August 3, 12 pm

Mat-Su Experimental Farm & Extension Center: Canning Vegetables and Legumes. Heat processing low acid produce, vegetables and legumes, in jars, botulism prevention, use and care of a pressure canner, methods of preparing the vegetables and legumes. Via Zoom. [Register here](#).

Wednesday, September 8, 12 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: In the Virtual Pantry: An Introduction to Home Canning. Grab your lunch and join this bi-weekly series designed for people interested in learning how to preserve their harvest, including canning, dehydrating, and freezing for extended storage. Via Zoom. [Register here](#).

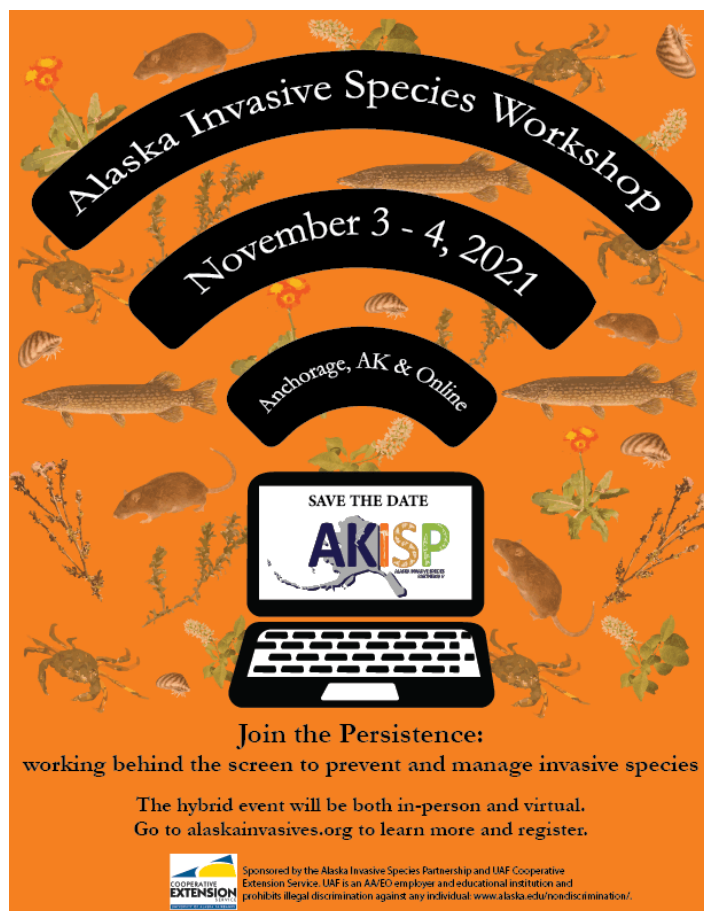
Tuesday, September 14, 12 pm

Mat-Su Experimental Farm & Extension Center: Putting Your Garden Tools to Bed + Lawn Mower Maintenance. As the season is coming to a close, Jim Ericksen will demonstrate how to put your garden tools to bed, what types of things to do to your lawn, and what maintenance your lawn mower and other tools need before being put away for the winter. [Join on Facebook live](#).

Wednesday, September 15 *or* Wednesday September 29, 12 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: An Alaska Gardener's Fall & Winter To-Do List. With fall approaching, it will soon be time to put our gardens to bed for the winter. In this free virtual class, learn how to organize your fall and winter to-do list and give your garden a great start for next spring. [Register for the first session](#) or the [second session](#).

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The poster for the Alaska Invasive Species Workshop features an orange background with illustrations of various invasive species including mice, crabs, fish, and plants. A large black banner at the top reads "Alaska Invasive Species Workshop". Below it, another black banner says "November 3 - 4, 2021". A third, smaller black banner indicates the location: "Anchorage, AK & Online". In the center, a laptop screen displays "SAVE THE DATE" and the "AKISP" logo. Below the laptop, the text "Join the Persistence: working behind the screen to prevent and manage invasive species" is written. Further down, it states "The hybrid event will be both in-person and virtual. Go to alaskainvasives.org to learn more and register." At the bottom left is the Cooperative Extension logo, and at the bottom right is a small text block: "Sponsored by the Alaska Invasive Species Partnership and UAF Cooperative Extension Service. UAF is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual. www.alaska.edu/no-discrimination/".

BIRD CHATTER

Wednesday, September 22, 12 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: In the Virtual Pantry: Shelf-Stable Jams, Jellies and Preserves. Via Zoom. [Register here](#).

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Thursday, September 9, 7-9 pm

Wildflower Garden Club: Regular Meeting and Program. Featuring a presentation, "Fungus Among Us - Alaska Mushrooms" by Christin Swearingen. Presented via Zoom. [Get details](#).

Thursday, September 20, 7-9 pm

AMGA Member Meeting: Nick Riordan, Keenan Plate and Nick Bachman present "Urban Gardening in Anchorage with Yarducopia and Grow North Farm. Via Zoom.

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

The Grow North farmstand along Mountain View Drive is open 4-7 pm, Mondays to Fridays. selling fresh produce picked onsite that day. Food trucks on site 4-7 pm on Thursdays. Contact Nick Bachman for more info at 865-5213 or nbachman@anchorageandtrust.org.

AMGA is seeking program topics for future monthly member meetings. Most of the spaces are filled for 2021 but we are looking for 2022 topics. If you have ideas, please contact AMGA vice president Troy Weiss at troydweiss@gmail.com.

Check out a wide range of volunteer opportunities with local garden projects at [Volunteers 4 Anchorage Gardens](#), a list compiled by AMGA and the Alaska School Garden Network.

Did you miss Brenda Adams' "Mastering Garden Design" class? AMGA will offer it again in the fall. Most likely starting in early October. [Sign up here](#) to make sure you get the first notice. Please note that this class will not be offered for an Advanced Certificate and will be open to all gardeners.

AMGA is surveying members on topics for the next Advanced MG class. Give your input by filling out [our online survey](#).

Master Gardener class updates If you hadn't already heard the news, there will be no in-person Master Gardener class in Anchorage this year, and the fall online class is full. Guess we will have a smaller crop of new Master Gardeners in 2022.

Are slugs beer snobs? Your newsletter editor recently purchased a six-pack of Alaska Brewery White to split with her slugs, but they mainly ignored it. Some unofficial crowdsourcing on the Alaska Master Gardener Facebook page indicated that slugs prefer cheap, malty brews. One Pabst Blue Ribbon tall boy later, and her slugs were lost in the sauce.

Better than beer? The Mat-Su Cooperative Extension Service recently shared [a science article](#) on new research from the Oregon State University Extension Service which found slugs and snails are attracted to bread dough. The research indicated bread dough was effective for at least eight days in the field and more attractive to slugs than beer, hostas or strawberries. "We gave them a choice of food and they consistently went for the bread dough," one researcher said. "They really, really like it. They went bonkers for it. Bread dough outperformed everything."

Don Bladow for the win As of August 24, the Harvest of Hope Memorial Garden had harvested more than 1,830 pounds of produce for a local food pantry and rescue mission, with at least that much or more still in the ground. The bulk of the harvest has been zucchini and turnips. Still looking forward to digging potatoes and carrots in September and October.

If that wasn't enough winning, Don also brought home several Alaska State Fair blue ribbons for produce he grew at the Hope Memorial Garden this year. Congrats!

What's new, interesting, confounding and delightful? Send your bits of interesting garden news to birdchatter@alaskamastergardeners.org.





Bonus photo: AMGA members enjoyed Faye Stiehm's perennials during the August 9th garden tour. Photo courtesy Troy Weiss.

AMGA Board of Directors

Emily Becker	President
Troy Weiss	Vice President
Jan van den Top	Treasurer
Beth Norris	Secretary
Kathleen Kaiser	At Large
Keenan Plate	At Large
Nick Riordan	At Large
Faye Stiehm	At Large

Committee Chairs, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

Emily Becker	CES Liason
Steve Brown, Gina Dionne	CES Master Gardener Program Liaison
Faye Stiehm	Broadcast Email
Vacant	Calendar of Events
Don Bladow, Troy Weiss, Emily Becker, Fran Pekar, Gina Dionne	Advanced MG Course
Janice Berry	Directory Editor
Kathy Liska, Cindy Walker	Facebook
Troy Weiss	Meetings & Educational Programs
Troy Weiss	Garden Tours
Mary Rydesky, Gina Docherty, Jane Baldwin	Google Group Managers
Troy Weiss, Jan van den Top, Beth Norris	Grants Program
Lynn Hansen, Ruthe Rasmussen, Sharon Schlicht, Wendy Willie	Hospitality
Alexis St. Juliana	Membership Database
Elizabeth Bluemink	Newsletter Editor
Gina Docherty	Website
Lynne Opstad	Lifetime Achievement
Lynne Opstad, Julie Ginder	Pioneer Home Garden
Emily Becker, Keenan Plate	Volunteer Coordinators

Become a Member

AMGA memberships are based on calendar year. If you have not renewed, [you can pay online](#) or you can print and mail [the form on our website](#).

Questions? Contact Alexis St. Juliana at astjuliana@hotmail.com

Next AMGA Meeting via Zoom!

September 20, 2021

Urban Gardening in Anchorage

Nick Riordan, Keenan Plate & Nick Bachman

Check your email, our website or Facebook page for connection instructions.

Member Meetings: 7 pm every 3rd Monday of the month, September through May (except December). Meetings are at the BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, accessed through the BP tower parking lot. The Energy Center is just south of the main building. **2021 meetings are currently being held online.** These monthly educational programs are free and open to the public. **Visitors and guests are welcomed and encouraged.**

Board Meetings: 2nd Monday of the month, 6-7 pm, anyone is welcome to observe. Send an email to president@alaskamastergardeners.org for the meeting link.

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

newsletteramga@gmail.com

AMGA, Newsletter

P.O. Box 221403

Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

Newsletter Submission Deadline

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 (400-600 words ideal), Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome.

Connect with AMGA

Website: www.alaskamastergardeners.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage](https://www.facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage)

Youtube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ

Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/!fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA>

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

If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Alexis St. Juliana at astjuliana@hotmail.com

