

GRASS ROOTS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALDWIN COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, INC.

January 2007

Volume XV Issue I



Meet Your Board Members

By Tanys Waldron

This is the seventh in our series of monthly articles on the various positions within the Baldwin County Master Gardener Organization.

Monthly Programs—Michelle Patton

Michelle Patton and Ann McAdams shared the position of Monthly Program Coordinator for the year of 2006. These two Master Gardeners used team work to find and schedule speakers for our monthly Master Gardener meetings. This first issue of 2007 features Michelle Patton. The past December 2006 issue featured Ann McAdams.

Michelle and Ann worked on this position together as it allowed them the flexibility to travel with their husbands and at the same time give quality volunteer time to Master Gardeners. Both Ann and Michelle have officially retired at the end of December 2006. To ensure that there was a seamless transition for the new team, Michelle arranged speakers for the first two meetings in 2007. "Butterfly Gardens" is the topic in January, and February's topic is "Propagation" which will be presented by our very own MG,

Carol Griffin.

The new team of Monthly Program Coordinators are Rosemarie Morgan and Rebecca Trosclair with back-up assistance from Michelle Patton and Henry Postma—an all star line up!

Michelle has been a Master Gardener since 2000 when she joined the Shelby County Master Gardeners in Memphis, Tennessee. Michelle worked in Risk Management and Insurance for Fortune 100 companies for thirty years. In 1998 she accepted a position to handle a hotel merger which moved her from Northern California to Memphis. Michelle had enjoyed gardening while living in the temperate climate of Berkeley. Planting a garden and pulling weeds after a busy work day helped reduce her stress levels. Moving to Memphis with it's hot, humid summers and cold, icy winters necessitated a change on how to garden. She signed up for the Shelby County (Memphis) Master Gardener program. She was so committed to finishing her Intern training she used her vacation days from work to put in her hours answering calls on the

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Michelle Patton



President's Corner

by Sam Andrews

The New Year has begun presenting wonderful new opportunities for Baldwin Master Gardeners to volunteer, educate, and share friendships. Please let us all commit to fulfill our group's mission with enthusiasm and effectiveness.

Following our December election, a new group of leaders has formed to lead our group through the opportunities and challenges

that 2007 will present. Elsewhere in this *Grass Roots*, you will be able to meet the people who will lead us. Each position represents a substantial commitment, and we are fortunate to have so much talent available. For each of them, we owe a great "thank you".

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Meeting Minutes

by Ronnie Zak

The BCMG monthly meeting and Christmas Awards Luncheon held at the PZK Hall in Robertsedale, Alabama, was called to order by our President, Linda O'Rear, at 11:30 a.m.

Linda opened our meeting with a couple of noteworthy items: Congratulations to Caterina Kenworthy on her 60th wedding anniversary; and, John Groseclose is resuming treatment for cancer. Linda asked everyone to sign the get well card on their way out after our luncheon.

Our Treasurer, Jane Wright, reiterated the fact that our yearly membership dues of \$20.00 are due by December 31, 2006. Late payments will be \$25.00.

Jan Sanders told us she has just 10 copies of "Jill's Book" left for sale at \$6.00 each.

Mike McQueen, our Extension Advisor, then presented Stars and Badges to those members who have earned them.

Jim Huggins, a member of our nominating committee, named the

nominees for our new officers for 2007, and asked if there were any other nominees. With no other suggestions, a motion was made and seconded to close the nominations and accept Sam Andrews as President; Tom Dukes as Vice President; Ann Pierce as Secretary; and Jane Wright as Treasurer. All attendees voted in Favor.

Mike McQueen thanked everyone for all their time and efforts in supporting the Baldwin County Master Gardeners organization. He has decided to do something different to show his appreciation, by presenting a Master Gardener Star Volunteer Award certificate to all volunteers who have accumulated at least 200 hours in the current year. Mike read the names of several members who have achieved this during this current year, and will present their certificates at the January 2007 meeting.

He also mentioned that Frieda Romanchuk, who interned this year, reported the most hours for an intern.

Harry Anderson announced several items: The lanyard badges that were

given to the current interns will be replaced with a badge like what has been given in past years; there will be a new plaque made listing all past presidents; and there will be a plaque made for all the past Wayne de la Rua awardees, including this year's winner.

Harry announced that Sherry Eubanks was the winner of the 2006 Wayne de la Rua Award. Sherry came forward and thanked everyone.

Sandra Walton, who is the Administrative Assistant at the Extension Office in Bay Minette, was called forward by Linda, and given a fruit basket to thank her for her tremendous help with our organization.

Linda also presented Mike McQueen with a small gift to thank him for his hard work and support to all of us.

Linda then passed the President's gavel to Sam Andrews, who is our new President. Mary Burns, Linda's predecessor as President, presented Linda with a gift of appreciation.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 Noon.



Mark Your Calendar!

January 11, 2007	—	Monthly Meeting 9:30 am—Research Station Hwy. 104
February 7, 2007	—	Intern Class Orientation, 10:00 am-12:00 pm
February 8, 2007	—	Monthly Meeting 9:30 am—Research Station Hwy. 104
February 14, 2007	—	Intern Class—Plant Physiology, 9:00 am-3:00 pm
February 21, 2007	—	Intern Class—Soil Science, 9:00 am-3:00 pm
February 24, 2007	—	Fairhope Arbor Day— 10:00 am-1:00 pm—Dahlgren Hall, Fairhope
February 28, 2007	—	Intern Class—Plant Pathology, 9:00 am—12:00 pm and Other Problems, 1:00 pm—3:00 pm
March 7, 2007	—	Intern Class—Entomology, 9:00 am—12:00 pm and Pesticide Safety, 1:00 pm—3:00 pm
March 8, 2007	—	Monthly Meeting 9:30 am—Research Station Hwy. 104
March 14, 2007	—	Intern Class—Propagation, 9:00 am—12:00 pm—Ornamental Research Station, Mobile; and Plant Selection, 1:00 pm—3:00 pm—Mobile Botanical Gardens
March 16-17, 2007	—	BCMG Plant Sale—Weeks Bay
March 21-25, 2007	—	Festival of Flowers—Providence Hospital, Mobile
March 24, 2007	—	Foley Arbor Day— Foley Heritage Park
March 31, 2007	—	"Spring in the Forward City"—Dedication of Foley Rose Trail, Heritage Park, Foley
March 31, 2007	—	Wolf Bay Plant Sale





Projects Report

By Marilyn Mannhard

Lillian Recreational Park

Jan Sanders said her group of volunteers spent a morning at the park planting a screen of Atlantic White Cedar in back of the Bill and Mary Dodd Native Azalea Garden as well as adding additional plants to the garden. We were grateful to have plenty of volunteers. We would like to thank Liz Tew especially for her donation of a Reverse Millie Mac native azalea which was lacking in the collection as well as all her help with the planting. Maintenance of the park gardens

continues. We can always use additional volunteers.

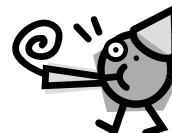
Upcoming Events

Please remember that with the month of February, we go into high gear with projects. Our primary project is the plant sale. It is the source of all our income, so please put that on your priority list for volunteering. The sale will be the weekend of March 16-17 with the preceding days being set up days which also require a lot of help. There will also be the various Arbor Days,

the Festival of Flowers, the Wolf Bay Plant Sale, and the dedication of the Foley Rose Trail. You will receive more information as these events draw nearer.

Please send me project reports before the 20th of each month so I can get them to Lynn. Pictures are also appreciated.

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and will have a great 2007.



Tom Dodd and volunteers at Lillian Recreational Park



Program Notes

By Michelle Patton

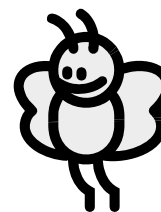
Thursday, January 11, 2007

- 9:30 A.M.—Social
- 10:00 A.M.—Meeting
- 10:30 A.M.—Program—Butterfly Gardens

Guest Speaker: Susan Hess

Susan Hess, owner of Colorsclapes Nursery, will discuss design and plant selection for butterfly gardens.

This is a great way to start 2007!



January is the quietest month in the garden. ... But just because it looks quiet doesn't mean that nothing is happening. The soil, open to the sky, absorbs the pure rainfall while microorganisms convert tilled-under fodder into usable nutrients for the next crop of plants. The feasting earthworms tunnel along, aerating the soil and preparing it to welcome the seeds and bare roots to come.

- Rosalie Muller Wright, Editor of *Sunset Magazine*, 1/99



Plant of the Month—Soil

By Tanys Waldron

How? Why ? When ? Where ?

These are the four questions English class teachers told us to commit to memory so we would be able to think logically when writing an essay. These questions also work well for gardening. Let's start with **How**.

How do you start turning dirt into good soil ?

First Step: A soil test. Soil pH is a major key to having healthy plants. If the pH of your soil is not the right range, the healthy growth of many plants will be limited. Ex: Most vegetables need a pH in the range of 5.5 to 6.5 to grow well. Garden plants can do well with a wider range of pH. Your soil should be tested every three years.

Second Step: To improve your soil, start by aerating it (double digging if you are feeling like the Energizer Bunny). Just loosening the existing soil provides great benefits to plant growth, health and drought tolerance. Also, remember to core aerate the soil under lawns regularly.

Be sure to have plenty of paths in your garden, so you do not walk on - and compact - soil where you are trying to grow things.

Why do you want better soil ?

Hey, of course you know the answer to this question. Soil rich in organic matter grows the best plants.

The best soil for successful gardening contains balanced amounts of sand (for good drainage), clay (for nutrient-holding capacity), and decomposed organic matter (for moisture retention).

When do you start adding compost and amendments to your soil ?

The best time to prepare soil for a spring garden is in the fall. The soil is warm and workable then. Fall preparation also allows plenty of time for the new organic matter you have added to do their work.

The next best time is in the spring, once your soil has warmed up. Every spring and fall, sprinkle a 2 to 3 inch

layer of compost on top of your soil. Add a 2 to 3 inch blanket of organic mulch (shredded leaves, pine bark, pine straw, grass clippings mixed with something else so that it does not mat and smother) on top of that. The mulch will slowly decompose, enriching the soil with nutrients.

Where do you find good compost and amendments ?

Here are some of the successful compost and amendment recipes collected from a number of Baldwin County Master Gardeners. A disclaimer is necessary at this point. Master Gardeners are not supposed to recommend specific brand names. So the following mentioned brand names are NOT recommendations, they are for your information only.

1) **Magnolia Land Fill** - When Master Gardeners were asked where they go for good compost, this was always the answer. Phone: (251) 972-6878. They are in the telephone book in the White Pages under Baldwin County and sub heading is Solid Waste Department.

The compost is made up of trees and yard clippings. Cost is \$25.00 per ton--the equivalent of a 1500 size pick up truck bed. The landfill staff will fill up your truck bed using a back hoe. You can split a load with another gardener for no extra charge. They are open Monday through Saturday. Phone ahead to confirm the hours of operation.

Note: A comment from Carol Griffin on how to use your compost for the best results. *"When we were going to fix up our gardens we went down to the Magnolia Land Fill and got several truck loads of compost. We covered all of our flower beds with about 2 or 3 inches of it and talk about grow. I still use very little fertilizer in my yard. Of course I do compost a lot in my yard--under my layers of pine straw."*

2) **Raised Garden Beds** - Soil Amendment Recipe - Thank you Marilyn Mannhard.

- Compost
- Peat Moss

- Composted Cow Manure

Important Points: Keep soil porous. Do not let it get too heavy. Put in earthworms. You can order earthworms from gardening catalogs or go online to www.wormyworms.com. You want red worms (*Eisenia foetida*) which are the worms of choice for fishing and composting. These worms are prolific, producing up to seven egg capsules per week. They also grow rapidly reaching maturity in 45 – 90 days. This means that you can produce a large number of worms in a short period of time.

3) **SBCT Soil Recipe** - Thank you Carol Griffin for passing on this soil recipe developed by Terry Underwood. Terry is an Honorary Baldwin County Master Gardener and is retired from his position as head horticultural instructor at the South Baldwin Center for Technology (SBCT) in Robertsdale. The SBCT greenhouse uses this soil mix to grow all of their plants.

- 7 to 8 gallons - bulk soil
- 1 scoop Perlite (use 10 inch white hanging basket for scoop)
- 1 scoop peat moss (if not mixed with bulk soil)
- 1 cup - fertilizer-- controlled release (Osmocote)
- 1/8 cup Talstar Nursery Granules (for ants)
- 1/8 cup micronutrients - Scotts Granular Micromax
- 1/4 cup dolomite lime
- 6 cups ground bark—fine—IF the bulk soil does NOT contain it.

4) **Fish Fertilizer Recipe** - Thank you Elizabeth Mundine.

Use on a monthly basis. In a two gallon watering can mix:

- 3 T. Alaska Fish Fertilizer (5-1-1)
- 1 T. Maxicrop Liquefied Seaweed
- 1 drop SUPERthrive Vitamins - Hormones

The Gourd Garden & Curiosity Shop

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Meet Your Board

(Continued from Page 1)

Horticultural Infolines.

Michelle and her husband, Mike, liked living in Tennessee and were planning to retire to Asheville, North Carolina. A cold and icy December 31, 2000 morning changed their minds. While going out to retrieve the newspaper, Michelle slipped and fell, landing face first on the concrete driveway and in the local ER. The next day, January 1, 2001, they decided to retire to a place where the winters were without snow and ice. Michelle's sister discovered Fairhope later that spring, and after one visit, Michelle and Mike decided to move to the Gulf Coast of Alabama.

The move to the Eastern Shore gave Michelle new gardening challenges. Her Daphne garden had lots of sand and clay. She composted and amended the soil. Once again she committed to learning what to do with a new climate and new soil conditions. In 2005, Michelle joined the Baldwin County Master Gardeners. She jumped right into being a part of her new Master Gardener group. She worked at the SBCT greenhouse, helped at the spring and fall plant sales, answered calls at the Horticultural Infoline, plus spent many more hours of volunteering at other events. After her immersion in our Baldwin County MG events, she volunteered to take on the responsibility of a Board position. She became the Co-Coordinator of Monthly Programs for 2006.

One of the Monthly Program highlights for Michelle was planning the April trip to Bellingrath Gardens. The turnout was impressive. Fifty-nine

Master Gardeners toured the gardens. The surprise part of the day was when we were shown the greenhouses and the behind the scenes plant growing areas. These places are rarely shown to the public. We were allowed to see them as a result of Michelle's organization.

Michelle and her husband, Mike, will be treating themselves to some traveling adventures this year. In their plans are a trip to Italy and some road trips to Nova Scotia and Vermont in their RV. The book Michelle is using as a travel guide to keep her in touch with gardening is *"The Great Public Gardens of the Eastern United States; a Guide to their Beauty and Botany"* by Doris M. Stone. It features thirty-four different public gardens in the Eastern Seaboard area. Michelle plans on visiting as many as she can.

With each new member who joins the Baldwin County Master Gardener group, we are all enriched by their enthusiasm and life experiences. When a Master Gardener from another area joins us, we receive the additional gifts of fresh perspectives and potential new ways of doing things. Our group gets cross pollinated which leads us to becoming a stronger and healthier organization. Michelle's move from Memphis to Daphne has been a bonus for us. She is a committed and enthusiastic member of our Baldwin County group. She puts her heart and soul into everything she does.

Many thanks to Michelle Patton from the Baldwin County Master Gardeners for your commitment to giving us the best in Monthly Programs. Thank you Michelle for being a great Volunteer.

President's Corner

(Continued from Page 1)

However, these leaders are only as good as the Team. Your own MG job is to supply the ideas, team work, and time to help make their leadership efforts successful. Leaders need followers. Followers need leaders. Together, we make 2007 a huge success!

There are many activities happening the next five months. Please volunteer, please educate, and please be a friend.

See you at our meeting January 11...



Ed Wirgowski in rare form at the Christmas Luncheon!

**This bright new year is given me
To live each day with zest ...
To daily grow and try to be
My highest and my best!**

**I have the opportunity
Once more to right some wrongs,
To pray for peace, to plant a tree,
And sing more joyful songs!**

- William Arthur Ward



Home Grounds and Garden Infoline

Time has a way of getting away from us. In no time at all we will have to start manning the Home Grounds and Garden Infoline for another season. This volunteer activity is perhaps one of our most important because it provides very specific assistance to a large number of people.

I have been asked to coordinate the volunteers for the Information Line this season. **If I am to succeed, I must have your help!** At our January meeting, Infoline sign-up sheets will be available. I ask that you bring your planning calendars so you will know the specific days you want to volunteer during the months of February, March, and April.

The Infoline will kick off on February 5th and the phones will be manned every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The morning tour of duty runs from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and the afternoon tour from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Additionally, there will be a sign-up sheet for “on call” volunteers. These are people who are willing to step in and cover for someone that has an unforeseen circumstance arise that must take precedence over working their scheduled Infoline hours. The list of “on call” volunteers will be made available to all Infoline volunteers so they will know who to call should they have an unforeseen circumstance arise and need to arrange for a replacement.

If you have any suggestions on how to improve the operation of the Home Grounds and Garden Infoline, please pass them to me as soon as possible.

Harry Kohler
kohlerharry@earthlink.net
 (251) 929-2619



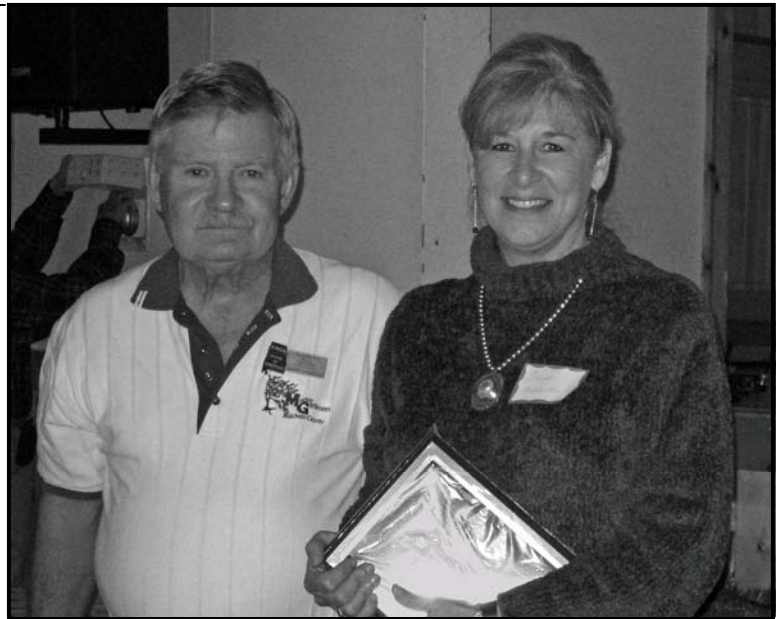
Thank You from Sherry Eubanks

I wanted to thank each and every one of you for this award, especially Tany's for the nomination. I am deeply honored to be given one of the highest awards of service to a Baldwin County Master Gardener. I have learned so much about gardening and enjoyed the many potpourri of friends I made along the way during my last five years of membership. The more I gardened, the more I learned; the more I learned, the more I realized how much I did not know. A gardener's education is never completed. The problem is so much to learn, and so little time in which to learn it.

I always believed that what you put into something is how much you will get back. To have a harvest, you must first sow a seed. I am so grateful for the many blessings that I received back. Working in the garden has always given me something beyond just enjoyment, but a feeling of inner peace. Being a Master Gardener enabled me to share that passion and love with others. After moving away from my home in Louisiana, I was so excited to be accepted into the program, and I needed to bloom where I had been planted. Gardening was my biggest connection to Alabama. As I move back to Louisiana, I will take with me every new experience I have had and also half my yard. My plants are samples of my many friends; they must be divided and split. Everything in life is changing and nothing remains the same. I guess gardening is a lot like that. One thing that I have learned is that happiness is the greatest harvest of all.

Thanks again so much from the bottom of my Cajun heart.

~ Sherry



*Harry Anderson presents Sherry Eubanks with
Wayne de la Rúa Award*



**Congratulations to our
2007 Leaders!**

- President**—Sam Andrews*
 - Vice President** – Tom Dukes*
 - Secretary** – Ann Pierce*
 - Treasurer** – Jane Wright*
 - Ex Officio** – Linda O’Rear*
 - Continuing Education** – Pat Libby*
 - Historian** – Joe Harrell*
 - Hospitality Coordinators** – Betty Harrell* and Joe Harrell
 - Infoline Coordinator** – Harry Kohler
 - Intern Training** – Joyce Mudrak*
 - Internal Communication** – Margie Harner*
 - Internet Development/Maintenance** - Sherry Cook, Carollee Grindel* and Selena Vaughn
 - Librarian** – Anita Worch*
 - Facility/Meeting Coordinator** – Rod Chappelle*
 - Monthly Programs** – Rosemarie Morgan* and Rebecca Troclair (Assisting: Michelle Patton and Henry Postma)
 - Newsletter** – Lynn Andrews*
 - Outreach** – Brenda Davis and Tanys Waldron*
 - Plant Sale** - Linda O’Rear, Chair; Selena Vaughn*, Co-Chair
 - Projects** – Marilyn Mannhard*
 - Publicity** – Tonya Harang*
 - Service Records** – Tom Dukes
 - Speakers Bureau Coordinator** – Lulu Null*
 - State Advisory** - OPEN
 - State Board** – Harry Anderson*
 - Grant Committee** - Sarrah Rankin*, Ron Hayes, Marilyn Mannhard
 - Festival of Flowers** – Ann McAdams*
 - Memorial Committee** – Mary Burns*, Mary Gibson, Judy Thompson
 - Budget Committee** – Sam Andrews, Nancy Gaines, Jane Wright
 - Extension Advisor** – Mike McQueen*
- *Serves on Board of Directors



Pat Smith receives her Intern Badge



Awards Presented at Christmas Luncheon

Congratulations to the following who were awarded Badges or Stars at the Christmas Luncheon on December 14, 2006:

INTERN BADGE

Pat Smith

GOLD STAR

Jeff Doherty, Sherry Eubanks

BRONZE STAR

Carolyn Koch, Alice Kohler, Pat Libby, Ann Pierce

GOLD BADGE

Jessica Mahoney, Thomas Schubert

SILVER STAR

Ronnie Zak, Ann McAdams, Joyce Mudrak

STAR AWARD WINNERS

Presented by Mike McQueen for 200 or more service hours during the past year:

Harry Anderson
Lynn Andrews
Sam Andrews
Alice Brown
Ottie Dailey
Tom Dukes
Sherry Eubanks
Mary Gibson
Carol Griffin
Carma Gronback
Jessica Mahoney
Ann McAdams

Joyce Mudrak
Linda O’Rear
Michelle Patton
Ann Pierce
Frieda Romanchuk
Kazuko Russell
Jan Sanders
Tom Schubert
Ed Wirgowski
Jane Wright
Ronnie Zak

Plant of the Month—Soil *(Continued from Page 4)*

owners in Seagrove Beach Florida developed this recipe and gave it out to their gardening customers. In her words, Elizabeth says “I have used it for several years with good luck. The fish fertilizer smells to high heaven, but it works so well.”

5) Potting Soil - Thank you to an unnamed MG who works at the Daphne Greenhouse.

For easy use, she finds Miracle Grow potting soil works well. In her words “I have tried many types of bagged garden soils. The Miracle Grow potting soil is a bit more expensive, but it seems to have better drainage and better moisture retention.”

6) Gardening Soil Tip - Thank you Pat Libby for passing on this tip from James Miles, Mobile County Extension Agent.

If you pull a tree or shrub out of the ground, DO NOT fill the hole with new bagged gardening soil. Fill the hole with a mixture of compost and the original soil. This will keep the soil quality similar to the surrounding area.

Now that your dirt has become good fertile soil, it is time for the fun part of gardening. Picking the plants to put in your garden.

Carol Griffin, our very own Baldwin County Master Gardener will be giving the presentation at our February 8, 2007 meeting. The topic is “Propagation”. This will be a good beginning on how to start some new plants for spring.



Grass Roots

The BALDWIN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER newsletter is published monthly. The publishing date is the first Monday of each month. The deadline for submitting items to the editor for publication is the **20th** of the month preceding publication.

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Next Meeting: 9:30 A.M.—January 11, 2007
Guest Speaker: Susan Hess