

March 2023

An extra-long table was set up for this month's meeting as much business needed to be conducted. There was **Tammy Delforge** to collect membership dues for the next



garden club year and **Sandra McKeon** accepting final payment for Spring Fling expenses.

As a special event today, members of the 'Memorial Northwest Ladybugs' garden club sold vouchers for plants to be purchased at 'Plants For All Seasons'. Additionally, they exhibited handcrafted plant

ornaments made by their members. We liked the samples and asked them to return to our next meeting with more garden items for sale.



This unusually shaped and gorgeous flowering Loropetalum was grown by **Becky Bailey** and displayed for us to admire.

Hospitality

The hostesses, **Donna Stephens**, **Christine Kint**, **Pat Gauger** and **Pam Randall** presented a light and refreshing Spring time buffet arranged around a flowering centerpiece.



President **Harriett** and **Donna** are getting ready for the meeting to begin. Their table was colorful decorated with Spring flower arrangements.

Meditation



Mary Davis led us in a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lord God,

thank you that your mercies are new every morning.

We Thank You that we can claim this promise as we begin this new month of March. We leave behind the trials and troubles of the previous month and step into this new month with our eyes fixed on you.

Help us to glorify and honor you with this fresh start.

Father, thank you for carrying us through life's winter seasons and for bringing us into this new springtime seasons of hope.

Thank you for the lessons you teach us in the winter seasons:

lessons like endurance, rest, perseverance, and trust.

Thank you for the blessings you have prepared for the season ahead.

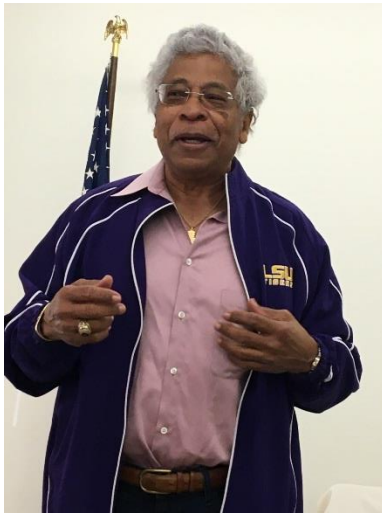
Just as you restore your creation in the springtime, thank you for your desire to restore our hearts, bodies, souls, and minds. We receive your restorative power and trust You to transform our hearts, bind up our wounds and breathe a newness of life into the dry parts of our spirits.

May we bloom into the beautiful person we created each of us to be just as you created the beautiful new life we see in our gardens.

Amen



Program



Back by popular demand, Dr. Albert L. Agard, or Dr. Al, as he likes to be called, returned to share his gardening knowledge and experiences with us. His botanical advisory work takes him to many countries across the globe. He just returned from Africa the day prior and was jet-lagged, but did not want to cancel his meeting with us.

Rather than a presentation on a specific subject, Dr. Al invited questions from our group. We all experienced some damage to our plants during the freeze and that became the main focus of the ensuing discussions.

We learned:

- Many classic gardening books are obsolete since they do not contain relevant information.
- Information must be evolving and specific to a given situation.
- Hot summers and cold winters are here to stay and we have to adjust our planting accordingly.
- Some plants we may have to forgo in the changing climate are **citrus varieties**.
 - Lemon or lime will do well when planted in a large container that can be sheltered during the winter months.
 - Prepare the growing medium with topsoil and compost and add perlite.
 - Fertilize well in spring and fall.
- The **Lawns** need our attention now as thatch has built up; brown and dead grass need to be removed.
- Use a plastic rake to detach and discard debris.
- Fertilize with a balanced product (not too much Nitrogen) and aerate to get oxygen to the root system.
- Buy fertilizer in bulk at feed stores to save money.
- Changing conditions require changes in planting.



- **Encore azaleas** do not thrive in our climate, plant traditional azalea specimens instead.
- Select plants for winter/frost hardiness:
- **Lantana** will come back after a frost. Cut dead, woody branches and spray insecticide if plant does not flower.
- **Dianthus** is a hardy plant that does well even in shade.

- **Plumbago, Esperanza, Durante, Loropetalum, and Hummingbird plant** can survive a frosty winter.
- Trim lightly and fertilize after flowering (same as azaleas)
- Use fertilizer specific for plant.
- **Crepe Myrtle** are tolerant in heat and frost
 - Trim back selectively; remove suckers and straight up shoots only.
 - Roots can be invasive, cut back as needed.
 - Dr. Al uses fertilizer stakes to feed many shrubs.
- **Knock-out roses** are a very hardy plant in heat and cold
 - They will do well with regular fertilization.



Again, we thanked Dr. Al for visiting with us and answering our many questions. There is much to do in our gardens as spring is at our door step. Let's start with buying fertilizer...lots of it!!



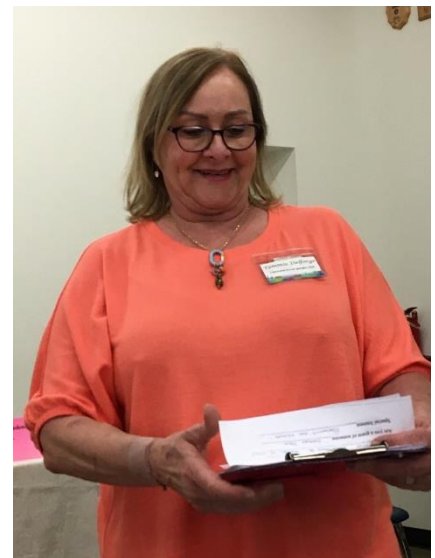
The meeting continued with announcements for the committee chairs:

Tammy was happy to report the attendance of 41 members and 6 guests, 3 of which became new members the same day.

We welcomed new members Sandy Vasek, Jane Wilson, Debbie Jones and Mary Windemiller.

Margo updated us on the HOA board election for Lakewood Forest. The four write in candidates Margo vetted and campaigned for did get the majority votes, but one candidate's win was contested due to some irregularity.

She also offered honey and suet from REACH for sale.





Spring is a busy time for the Brookwood Community and **Terry** is getting volunteers together for a day's activity in their garden center.

Members that visited Brookwood last month had a good enjoyed touring the facility and a lunch in their Café. Of course, the gift store and the nursery are also worth the trip.

For our next outing a bus trip to Nature's way in Conroe is in the planning stages. **Sandra** will give us the details when available.



Jean Robinson was busy sending cards to ailing members and circulated the 'Thank you' cards we received from various people and organizations.

Rica Brock was busy selling aprons and T-shirts she designed with the club's logo imprinted. She provided sample sizes for members to



try on and we hope to have the shirts ready to wear for the Spring Fling outings.



Eleese, no longer in charge, relaxed enjoys the program and activities.



