

Lakewood Forest Garden Club

Spring Fling -2023



Date: *March 28-30, 2023*

Destination: *Tyler, Tx*

Organized by: *Sandra McKeon*
Yvonne Newsome
Donna Stephens

The Spring Fling Committee



Sandra, Yvonne, Donna

Day 1

After months of preparation and excitement building in the Lakewood Forest Garden Club, the long-awaited day was finally here!

On March 28, 2023, a group of 30 gardeners met at the parking lot of the Methodist Church Scout House to start our adventure. Sandra organized the carpooling and had assigned passengers to the vehicles of eight volunteer drivers. As people found their ride and loaded the suitcases, the committee members distributed water bottles and gift bags with pertinent trip information. A special treat was a large cookie in a custom designed wrapper displaying the LF garden club Spring Fling logo.



Besides the itinerary, a gift bag contained various pamphlets about Tyler and its many attractions. Also included were wildflower seeds and a brochure depicting the different wildflowers we were expected to see along the way. To make sure we will not go hungry, a breakfast bar and candy was provided. A small cross would keep us safe on our journey.



After a lunch stop at the 'Cotton Patch' restaurant we

arrived at our first designation in Tyler, the historic McClendon House.

McClendon House

Designated a historic landmark in 1984, this home was built on land purchased by judge M.H. Bonner, a Texas Supreme Court judge at the time. The judge's oldest daughter Mattie married attorney Harrison Whittaker. The couple built the house in 1878 on 2 acres of her father's land. Most fixtures and furnishings still in the home were purchased during their many shopping trips to New York.



At the time, this nine-bedroom, two-storied home was the elegant gathering and party place for Tyler's high society.

After Mattie's early death the home was sold to her sister and her husband, Sidney McClendon. The youngest of their nine children, Sarah, born in this house in 1910, would become the noted Washington D.C. news journalist.

Today the house is open to the public for tours and events. <https://mcclendonhouse.net/>



The shaded front porch was a perfect place to rest a while and take a group picture.



After a long day of driving, exploration and a relaxing evening meal at a fine restaurant, we gathered at the hotel lobby with game boards, cards games, adult beverages and snacks. At one table people built a "Mexican Train" while others played Bridge. Harolene Hatley and Susan Busler had baked a traditional LF garden club treat, Lavender cookies, and they were enjoyed by all.



The bridge table was very popular with seasoned as well as novice players.



Day 2



After a good night's rest, all Spring Flingers gradually gathered in the hotel lobby for a cup of coffee and a selection from the breakfast bar.

Most of us decided to wear our 'LF garden club' short-sleeved T-shirts, even though the temperature had dropped over night and a light drizzling rain had started the day.

Jean Robinson had a good idea; wearing a long-sleeved shirt under the T-shirt will keep her warm and good-looking.



We enjoyed a leisurely breakfast hoping the weather will improve once we got on the road. Our first stop as a tour of the historic Goodman-LeGrand Home.



The Historic Goodman-LeGrand Home



On a sprawling, nine acre property, Samule Gatlin Smith built his original one-story, four-bedroom home in 1859.

It was sold to a local teacher at the beginning of the civil war in 1861.



In 1866 Dr. Samuel Adams Goodman purchased the property and sold it to his son Dr. William Jeffries Goodman a year later.

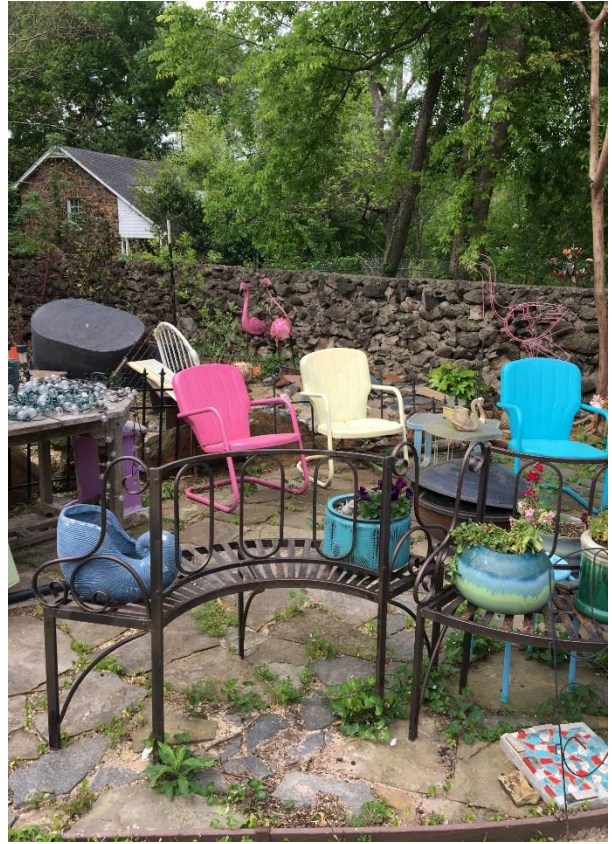
Years later their oldest daughter Sally acquired the mansion and lived there with her husband James H. LeGrand. Upon Sally's death in 1939, the city of Tyler inherited the Goodman-LeGrand estate, including the land, home and furnishings.



Too early for lunch, we decided to visit **Dory's Gardens** nursery next.

What a rare find this was!!! Within a well kept residential neighborhood, Dory maintain's a large nursery in her back yard. The amount of plants and flowers was overwhelming.

Everywhere we looked we spotted discarded household items, pots, furnitings, tools, bags, etc. re-purposed to make the most attractive displays for many types of plants.

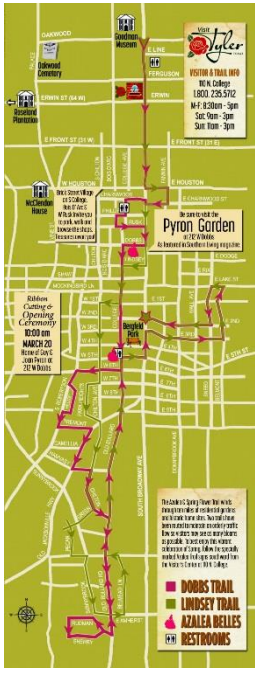




We made yard art with colorful beads and petted chickens that are kept in the garden.







After a BBQ lunch at Stanley's Famous Pit BBQ, we followed the map to an upscale neighborhood.

The Azalea Trail

Every spring the city of Tyler celebrates the season with more than 10 miles of residential gardens covered with azaleas, tulips, wisteria, dogwood and many other spring flowers.

<https://visitt Tyler.com/azaleatrail/>

In 1929 Maurice Shamburger planted the first azalea at his home in Tyler. Neighbors admired the blooms and started to plant azaleas as well. Soon the area became known for its springtime splendor. Word spread beyond the city and in 1960 the first tour routes were established to help guide visitors. Every year thousands of visitors enjoy the historic homes and gardens along the route.

As we drove

along the trail we marveled at the colorful displays.

Our first stop was the **PYRON HOUSE**, noted as one of the most spectacular gardens. This meticulously maintained private back yard was a gardener's dream.



An abundance of plants clustered in defined and secluded areas invited visitors to meander, explore, rest a while and contemplate.





That night, back at the hotel, Eleese and her troupe of actors had a special treat for us. During our time together we were advised to listen for clues that would help us solve a crime that was about to occur. The anticipation was palpable as we gathered in the hotel lobby.



We did not have to wait long for the: **Spring Fling Murder Mystery; “Recipe for Murder”** tragedy. By now we all had our suspicions regarding the crime that was to unfold. It seemed that many ladies were upset with Eleese and her shady money-making schemes. Terri had

developed a recipe for a potent fertilizer which promised to be a great business idea. Eleese stole her idea and cheated her out of potential profits. Other ladies, like Susan Hanson, Donna, Patty and Susan Busler were also victims of a scam perpetrated by Eleese.



With loud wailing and screaming Becky burst into our gathering, a bloodied trowel in her hand, sobbing that she discovered Eleese, her roommate was stabbed to death in her bed.



After that, she fainted and Pam, remaining cool, calm and collected narrated the story and invited us to examine the clues we had gathered over

the last two days and help the police solve the murder Mystery.



Shortly thereafter, detective Julia Child, (J.C.) smartly accessorized with an apron and a kitchen towel slung over her shoulder, arrived on the scene. Her lieutenant Barbara, aka “Mad Dog on a Bone”, Crum quickly handed her a glass of red wine to steady her nerves.



Becky, the most likely perpetrator, was interrogated first. Next to be grilled were all ladies that had a good reason to see Eleese rubbed out.



Through astute cross-examination by detective J.C. the truth was finally revealed and Terri confessed: “Yes, I did it! Eleese stole my idea, my recipe and my money! Horse Dukey, How stupid! I will call it exactly what it is, nothing but a bunch of horse s*%t”



Lt. Mad Dog, recovered from her shock and made Terri sit in ‘Time Out’. With her job done and the suspect apprehended, detective J.C. took the last swig of her wine and passed out! Our lively group enjoyed the interactive play with laughter and applause.

Day 3



To give everyone a chance to sleep in, our committee deliberately scheduled the last excursion for mid-morning. Now well rested, we gathered in the lobby for a leisurely breakfast. Even Terri showed up for breakfast. Did she make bail or did she escape from Jail? We treated her with suspicion from now on. 😊

The famous **TYLER ROSE MUSEUM** and **ROSE GARDEN** was the next and final stop on the Spring Fling escapade. We gathered around our tour guide to learn about the start of the rose industry in Tyler and the subsequent annual rose parade held in the city. The museum has a collection of Rose Queen attire from the many years of celebrating the fame and fortune that rose growing has brought to the community.





The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden



The **Rose Garden** started as a project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1938 and was mostly completed in 1941. Delayed by WW II, the center opened to the public in 1952. A few years later, as part of the annual Rose Festival, elegant and popular 'Queens Tea' events, were hosted on the lawn of the Rose Garden.

Today the grounds encompass 14 acres and grow over 38,000 rose bushes of 500 or more varieties. It is the largest public collection of roses in the U.S. Unfortunately, not too many roses were in bloom at this time of the year. Nevertheless, the display was impressive.

<https://tylertexasonline.com/tyler-texas-rose-garden.htm>





We explored the garden in small groups and excitedly pointed out certain exquisite specimens, either for their color, abundance of bloom or their strong and pleasant fragrance.

It was difficult to leave the garden, but this was the end of our Spring Fling adventure to beautiful Tyler, Tx.



Before we made our trip home, we decided to have lunch in town and received several recommendations from the friendly employees of the Rose Garden.

A quick Google search indicated the route to the agreed upon restaurant.

An enjoyable drive home through the backroads of the Piney Woods of East Texas brought us back to the Scout House, where we started few days ago.

THE END



For a more detailed account of the trip check out the Spring Fling book available from the librarian.

GK

