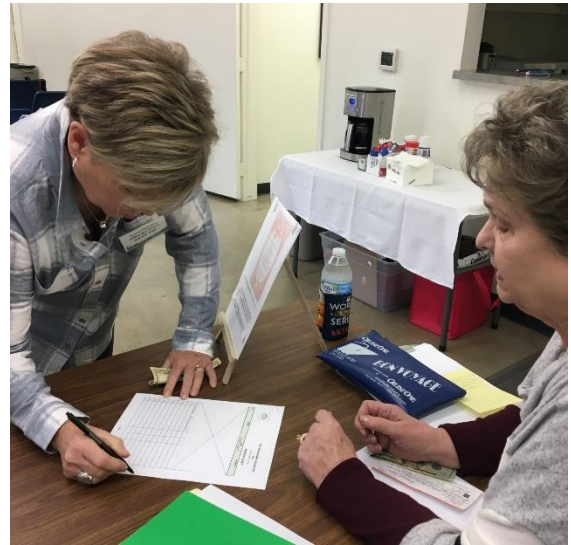


January 2024

On this cold and sunny first LF garden club meeting of the year, members trickled in the Scout building where a hot cup of coffee was already waiting for them. The hospitality committee was busy setting up the buffet table. At the registration area members picked up their name tags and information on upcoming events.



Barbara prepared the AV equipment for our speaker.



Harriett collected nominations for the 2024 "Garden Angel".

Margo sold honey from REACH as well as bird houses crafted by their residents.



Hospitality



The hospitality committee reminded us of an early Mardi Gras this year with the colorful table decorations. Tasty treats soon filled the table as members arrived to sample the treats.



Debbie Jones was heading the hospitality committee with the help of **Yvonne** Newsome, **Barbara** Davidson, **Sue** Collins, **Christine** Kint and **Julie** Shusko.

A bouquet of fresh flowers from a member's garden decorated the presidents table.

Harriett called the meeting to order and **Mary** Davis started us off with a prayer and the 'Pledge of Allegiance'.



*Lord, we gather before You today,
seeking Your blessings upon our beloved garden club
for this new year of 2024.*

*We thank You for the opportunity to come together, to share
our love for gardening, and to nurture the beauty of nature.*

Bless our club with unity, inspiration, and a flourishing spirit.

*May each meeting be filled with joy, friendship, and fruitful
discussions.*

*Grant us wisdom as we exchange ideas, explore new techniques,
and cultivate the earth's gifts.*

*Bless our endeavors, both in our personal gardens and in our
shared projects, so that they may blossom with abundance and
grace.*

In Your holy name, we pray.

Amen.



Program



Our speaker was Irmi Willcockson from the **Coastal Prairie Conservancy (CPC)**. In a very interesting presentation, she shared with us the goal of the organization to preserve the remaining natural habitat of the coastal area.

Historic mammals such as bison and mammoth grazed the land all the way to the coast. Now only about 1% of the grasslands remains and of that 95% is privately owned. The CPC works with landowners and land trusts to preserve these natural areas. Increased development has decreased the prairie to the detriment of many animal species and humans as well.

Established grasslands and wetlands provides protection against floods as the natural grasses have deep root systems that allow water to be absorbed and stored.

The ~31,000-acre area of the CPC includes the Katy Prairie Preserves, historic farms and cattle grazing areas. Accessible to the public, migrating birds and unusual insects can be observed. A wide variety of native plants and grasses provide plentiful resources for food and shelter for animal life. Another fascinating project in the works at the Katy Prairie area is the establishments of 'Natural' or 'Green' burial plots. Irmi encouraged us to help protect the land by including wildflowers and prairie grasses in our landscapes and even utilize the easements to plant native plants.

Planting a prairie garden:

- Designate a sunny area of the yard.
- Put up a sign to inform neighbors (HOA?) about your wild flower project.
- Start with planting Blue Bonnets!
- It is best to use gallon size grasses or native plants since prairie plants take many months to mature.
- Consider that plants/grasses will be tall.
- If seed mixes are used start sowing in October through March.
- Define the space that will not be mowed.
- Some plants to consider:
 - Purple Muhly accent grass
 - Little blue stem
 - Spotflower
 - Frog fruit
 - Common Yarrow
 - Texas sage
- Check with the '*Native Plant Society*' for more information.



During the break we gathered at the buffet area to celebrate **Carolyn** Calvert's big Birthday. After we sang the birthday song and congratulated her, she cut the fancy pink cake; a piece for everyone.



Happy Birthday, Carolyn !!

The meeting continued with reports from committee chairs. We had 47 members at the meeting and 2 guests. Margo introduces us to Anke Rittenhouse and Barbara Durr brought her neighbor, Sharon, along.



Judy Beckham reported that we collected a total of \$1,200.00 for **CAM** this year.

'Wreaths across America' received a donation of \$1,800.00 from members and the club. The wreath laying ceremony is usually well attended but volunteers are needed to pick up the wreaths in January.

Mary Davis updated us on the development at the Lakewood Forest HOA since the contract with Graham management was cancelled. Now the board is accepting application for the position of General Manager of the HOA.



As **Harolene** informed us, the plans for our 50th anniversary are coming together nicely. With the date and place set, a few more details will have to be worked out. A total of 60 guests can be accommodated and she accepted reservations today.

Sheila reported on news from the Federation. Pam Randall and Eleese Lester-Baier will be the speakers at the upcoming monthly

meetings. Our participation was encouraged. The annual convention will be held on March 27th at Lone Star, Montgomery. More information can be found at our website.



Margo announced that she still had a few bird houses left, but the honey was gone. REACH is busily growing vegetable seedlings which will be available to purchase soon.

Horticulture



Bette presented to us the 'Coreopsis' flower, also called Tickseed. She experimentally propagated baby plants from her own garden. She had equal success with rooting a cutting in water and in soil. She encouraged us to plant this versatile, daisy like, colorful native flower as it has a long blooming season and attracts many pollinators.

The plant comes in different colors, is easy to maintain, is drought and pest resistant. This plant will do well in different types of soils and looks good in flower beds, as borders, rock gardens and in containers. Coreopsis is said to be deer and rabbit resistant.



Ways and Means



Rica reported on the results of our last fundraiser. We sold over 200 flats of bedding flowers, as well as mulch and fertilizer for a total of \$2,346.00. As promised, she awarded prizes for individual sales achievements. The items to be given away were displayed for us to wonder about the recipients.



Maggie White and Becky Bailey sold the most vouchers and Marlo increased her sales the most from the year prior. **Maggie's** prize was a 3-tiered wooden corner shelf.



Becky received a painted birdhouse.



A hand painted gourd went to **Marlo**.



A wreath decorated with colored Wood shavings, was presented to **Jean Robinson**.

At the end, Rica posed a question to the membership: is the fundraiser in its current form cost effective? Do changes have to be considered? Each member voted on their preference and the results will be shared and discussed at the next meeting.