

# District III Texas Garden Clubs, Inc

Issue 3  
Winter

**Kathi Sivess, Director**



Kathi Sivess

## From the Director...

Dear District III Club Members,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a great Christmas and New Year with family and friends.

Thank you Tyler Area Council of Garden Clubs for a wonderful Fall Convention. The tables were beautiful and the food was great. Thank you Arp Garden Club for your help with the Ways & Means. We had one of the highest attendances for a fall convention in a long time. Thank you all for coming.

Congratulations to Carol Moore for being the Garden Club Member of the Year. This year we will be electing a Garden Club Member of the Year. Please start thinking of a member who is a stand out in our District to nominate. This should be someone who is very active in your club, community, district and state.

Your President's Reports are due to your Zone Directors. Thank you Linda Goller, Charla Martin and Belinda Lum for your help in judging these reports.

Congratulations to the incoming Zone Directors who will be installed in Jefferson: Sandy Brent, Southern Zone; Charla Martin, Central Zone; and Belinda Lum, Northern Zone. I couldn't get along without you.

The District Spring Convention will be held March 8 - 9, 2018, in Jefferson, Texas. The Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club will be the hostess, and I'm looking forward to a great convention. Please make plans to attend. The registration information is in this newsletter.

Thank you Carol McMillian for all your hard work on our newsletters.

It is an honor to serve District III and I'm happy to help you in any way possible. Please don't hesitate to call me if you need help; I am willing to travel to your clubs if invited. I would love to get to know you and your towns.

Sincerely,

*Kathi Sivess*

**Plant America ... The East Texas Way**

District III Officers  
2017-2019

**District Director**

Kathi Sivess, Director  
4711 Michelle Dr.  
Arlington, TX 76016  
817-313-3271  
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**1st Vice Director (Life Membership)**

Christine Fincher  
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**3rd Vice Director (Scholarship)**

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**Recording Secretary**

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**Corresponding Secretary**

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**Treasurer**

Nita Beale  
610 Town Oaks Cr.  
Kilgore, TX 75662  
903.984.5090  
poppytl@cablelynx.com

## Important Dates

### January

- 20-21 Environmental Study School  
Old Fort Parker  
Pam Grotts, chair
- 30-1 Flower Show School I  
The Buckingham on Woodway, Houston  
Mary Vacek, co-chair

### March

- 8-9 District III Spring Convention  
Jefferson, Texas  
Carol Harrell, chair  
See pages 8 & 9

### April

- 9-12 TGC Spring Convention  
Ft Worth, Texas  
"A Garden's Path...That an Take You Anywhere"  
Jodi Zambino, chair  
See page 8 and *Lone Star Gardener* for details  
Deadline March 17, 2018

### May

- 21-24 NGC Spring Convention  
Lowe' Hotel, Philadelphia, PA  
"Love Blooms in Philadelphia"  
See [www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org) for details  
Deadline April 20, 2018

# 90th TGC, Inc. Spring Convention - April 9-12, 2018

## A Garden's Path...That Can Take You Anywhere

Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.

90th Spring Convention- April 9-12, 2018

Hilton Garden Alnn-Forth Worth Medical Center 912 Northton Street Fort Worth,Texas



**NAME ON BADGE (PLEASE PRINT)** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**CLUB** \_\_\_\_\_ **DISTRICT** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Credentials**

- |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TGC President     | <input type="checkbox"/> SCR Chairman        | <input type="checkbox"/> District Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Member         | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Design Con |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fmr TGC President | <input type="checkbox"/> State Chairman      | <input type="checkbox"/> Council President | <input type="checkbox"/> Guest Speaker       | <input type="checkbox"/> Texas Design Con     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fmr NGC President | <input type="checkbox"/> State Officer       | <input type="checkbox"/> Club President    | <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Time Attendee   | <input type="checkbox"/> NGC Life Member      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NGC Chairman      | <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate President | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Delegate     | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening Study Con | <input type="checkbox"/> SCR Life Member      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SCR Director      | <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Member    | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Alternate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Con   | <input type="checkbox"/> TGC Life Member      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fmr SCR Director  | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustee             | <input type="checkbox"/> Judge: —>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Student             | <input type="checkbox"/> Acredited            |
|  |  |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Master              | <input type="checkbox"/> Life                 |
|  |  |  |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Emeritus             |

**PLEASE SELECT AND FILL IN AMOUNT FOR EACH EVENT YOU PLAN TO ATTEND**

**Registration Fee**

\$15.00 for one day/\$30.00 for 2 or more days.....(15.00 or \$30.00)..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Monday, April 9**

Meet President Betty Edwards (reception with cash bar and hors'oeuvres) please RSVP ..... yes | no

**Tuesday, April 10**

Luncheon - Local Farm to Fork Business, Program.....\$26.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Design Banquet - Ikibana, Program .....\$35.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Wednesday, April 11**

Luncheon - "Irdaceae - The Iris Family" Program by Rodney Barton.....\$26.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Honoring President Betty Edwards - Time Capsule, Silver Tea and Tours of HQ .....\$40.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dinner - Hanna Isul, Med Spa owner Myong Chong, Program .....\$40.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Thursday, April 12**

Youth Awards Luncheon – "Monarchs to Mexico" Program by Steven Chamblee.....\$26.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Workshop – "Just Like That!" Canning with Barbara Munn .....\$10.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dinner – Adult Awards Ceremony .....\$40.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special Dietary Needs (circle one)? You will be contacted for a specific menu: yes | no

Hotel Reservations and Convention Registration **DEADLINE** – March 17, 2018

Make checks payable to

**Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. Spring Convention 2018**

Mail payment and registration form to:

Pam Braak, 520 Briarcroft Drive, Grapevine, TX 76051, (817) 488-5665 or (817) 235-9174, [pbraak@verizon.net](mailto:pbraak@verizon.net)

For more information see Winter 2017 Lone Star Gardener

# Money approved to maintain Tridens Prairie

During the business meeting at the District III Fall Convention in Tyler, Texas, Johanna Taylor introduced a motion to give \$2000 from the Life Membership Fund to the Texas Nature Conservatory for the maintenance of Tridens Prairie near Paris. She explained that the historical marker on the property says that the prairie is being preserved by the Texas Nature Conservancy and Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. Taylor felt that District III should give money to help with a control burn to help revitalize the prairie. The motion passed.

## Blackland Prairies endangered ecosystem

As pioneers first encountered the Blackland Prairies of Texas, they described them as one of the most beautiful landscapes they had ever seen with the gently rolling hills of grasses and wildflowers that seem to be wide open and boundless.

Within the great diversity of grasses and flowers that they saw was a very complex ecosystem. The plants help build the soil through decay, and their roots, extending ten feet below the surface, held the soil in place through rain and wind. The deep roots also allowed the plants to continue to grow through the dry summers to provide a food supply for bison and other grazing animals. The bison in turn was food for wolves and Native Americans.

The large herds of bison continually migrated to find new food. They ate the leaves of the plants and moved on to new areas. As they foraged for new food sources, they trampled any woody plants that might begin to take over the area and create shade that would kill the grasses and flowers. Because most of the plants were below ground, they quickly recovered after a migration.



<http://www.texasstateofwater.org>

Lightening caused occasional fires that were also important to keeping the ecosystem healthy. Small trees and thatch were burned, and the plants grew back healthier and thicker. Insects, birds and small animals benefited from the renewal of the cover of the grasses and flowers of the prairie.

Over thousands of years the prairie organisms built some of the richest soil in the world, and it became deeper and deeper as the years passed. These fertile soils were ultimately the cause of the destruction of prairies as farmers discovered their promise. Continued plowing for crop production, overgrazing of cattle, lack of fire, and construction of cities, towns and roads never allowed the ecosystem of some prairie lands to recover naturally. More than 99% of the Blackland Prairie has been destroyed, making it one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States.

Maintaining the Blackland Prairies that are left and restoring others is important. Management teams and volunteer groups walk the prairies checking for invasive plants, deciding whether a mowing schedule is helping or hurting the plants, counting the types of insects, birds and animals who are active on the prairie at a given time, looking for diversity in plants and wildflowers, and determining the time for a controlled burn to clean and invigorate the area. Restoring a prairie takes the same dedication and much more time. First, invasive plants must be removed by burning, manually digging or using mechanical methods. Then plants must be introduced either by finding healthy plants to transplant or by broadcasting seed. Next comes the waiting. Will the seeds germinate? Will the birds eat the seeds? If the seeding is unsuccessful, the process begins again as does the watch for invasive species. The Blackland Prairies' rich soils and diverse plants and wildlife took thousands of years to form, inhabit and become a self sustaining environment. Restored prairies can't be reproduced in a couple of years. Restoration of the ecosystem takes many, many years. With patience and care, prairies can be restored.

# Tridens Prairie: TCG, Inc.'s gift to America

Marshall Nichols was a soil conservationist in Lamar County who saw something special in 97 acres of land which had never been plowed, cultivated or fenced. He brought it to the attention of the Nature Conservancy in Arlington, Virginia. The Nature Conservancy investigated, agreed and purchased Tridens Prairie in 1972.

During the United States bicentennial celebration in 1976, the American Land Trust was formed with the intent to preserve \$200 million worth of environmentally and ecologically unique lands with at least one property in each of the 50 states. To carry out its program, the American Land Trust enlisted the assistance of the Nature Conservancy and the National Council of State Garden Clubs (currently the National Garden Clubs.) The Nature Conservancy's role was to acquire and manage areas identified for preservation, and the National Council of State Garden Clubs' role was to raise awareness of the project among citizens and to raise money to acquire the designated lands.



Margaret Coil of Lubbock was president of Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and Francis Ellis of Paris was publicity chair. After Tridens Prairie was chosen as the Texas project, Francis Ellis prepared slide shows, exhibits and news releases. She did such an outstanding job promoting the prairie that she was honored as the 1976 "Garden Club Woman of the Year" at the State Fair of Texas, earned the 1978 Clarion Award from Women in Communications, Inc., and at the Texas Wildflower Day activities at Texas Woman's University received the 1984 conservation-club women award for promotion of Tridens Prairie.

For the American Land Trust project, Texas Garden Club, Inc members raised \$7,742.89 during the 1976-1977 participation window. Perhaps this amount reflects an observation by Hazel McCoy, Texas Garden Club president 1981-1983, that there was less enthusiasm around the state in general than there was in District III for the project. At the next state convention, members voted to extend the "birthday present to American" project for another year. Ellis continued her promotion of the prairie land. Eventually donors stepped forward to contribute a total of \$40,000 for the preservation of Tridens Prairie as a National Land Trust.

Tridens Prairie retains the natural vegetation originally covering the Texas Blackland Prairies, plus long spiked tridens which integrated with the true or tall grass prairie during the warming period beginning about 10,000 B.C. to the Christian era. Over 150 grasses and wildflowers were identified in Tridens Prairie with the dominant grasses of the prairie being Silveanus Dropseed, long -Spiked Tridens, Loria Paspalum and Eastern Gama. The prairie is one of the few remaining native grasslands in the state and was once part of a large hay-producing region.



After the American Land Trust project was completed, Francis Ellis continued to champion Tridens Prairie. She was on a management committee to oversee the health of the prairie. She collaborated on the historical marker. She wrote articles for the *Paris News* that kept the public informed of the activities on the prairie, including the yearly Wildflower Days when the public was invited to tour the prairie. According to those who knew Ellis, she was connected in the conservation community and made sure that Tridens Prairie was cared for properly. While it was never a beautiful piece of property to admire, those who walked into it to experience the ecosystem were amazed at the diversity of life that abounded in the maintained prairie. Concern over the prairie seem to decline after Ellis' death. Observers who pass by the prairie today notice woody plants taking over.

The Nature Conservancy of Texas is the overseer of the prairie. The North Texas Preserves Manager is located on the Clymer Meadow Preserve in Hunt county. A science team with a monitoring ecologist visits Tridens Prairie quarterly making recommendations based on priorities, weather and funding. A prairie is a disturbance based system. The last hay cutting was in 2013; the land is ready for a controlled burn. Rough fire breaks have been made and some smaller brush and invasive plants have been manually cut back. After a county burn ban is lifted and the burn is completed, native plants will return with less competition. The prairie should be ready for a hay contract in 2019. Part of the hay will be spread for erosion control and seed hay. The cycle of preservation never ends.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

## Cedar Creek lantern creations

“Taking Back the Night,” the garden club program for November allowed the members of the Cedar Creek Lake Garden Club to follow in the long shadows cast by two strong 16th Century French women--Diane de Poitiers(mistress to King Henry II) and Catherine de Medici(regent, queen, and wife of Henry).They not only fought over Henry’s favors but also the beautiful Chateau de Chenonceau and its moon gardens. Garden lanterns were an important design element in their landscapes, and Diane is credited by Andre Le Note, an early garden landscaper and architect, with being one of the first European personalities to use ornamental gardening as an aesthetic expression of Western culture. After a brief presentation, all members of the group created miniature tablescap gardens using lanterns as their focal point.



(L-R): Hyta Sims, Rachel Beer, Noreen Vaughn, Joyce Alexander, Dee Dee Napoles, Faye Laycock, Judy Sullivan, Margaret Ann Trail, Susan Martin, Johnnie Sprinkle, Pam Dalton and Ruth Wilson.

Working on tablescapes

## Daisy Garden Club has small standard flower show



Daisy Garden Club of Texarkana, Texas, presented “Summer’s End”, a small standard flower show, on October 13, 2017, under the direction of general Chairman, Ruth Hesser. All Daisy members exhibited in the horticulture division with many first place ribbons being presented. The Award of Horticulture Excellence went to Wanda Ingram. In the Design Division, there were twelve entries placed in different locations throughout the home of Daisy member, Carolyn Folse. Best in Show Award went to Peggy Burson.

Top row is Peggy Burson, next row is Vickie Moore, next row is

Mary Young, the bottom picture is Irene Johnson.

## Gateway celebrates holidays

Gateway Garden Club members and guests gathered for the Annual Christmas Luncheon, held at Verona’s Italian



Restaurant on December 15. Members enjoyed the fellowship and musical entertainment provided by Jana Mayo, on guitar, and Robin Thomas, on piano.

## Rayburn Bloomers stay busy

Rayburn Bloomers Garden Club enjoyed a field trip to one of our local parks, Martin Dies Jr. State Park. Our favorite Park Ranger Amy Kocurek led a nature hike that included plant identification and bird watching. She shared some native seeds with us. We had a picnic overlooking the lake.



Maggie Sheppard had many challenges getting a recycling bin in the Rayburn Country subdivision. Rayburn Country residents have been filling the bin up from day one; it has been a huge success.

Local Master Gardener Sharon Kerr gave a hands-on presentation on succulents and terrariums. Rayburn Bloomers Garden Club members created their own terrariums to take home.



## Civic Garden Club designs with vintages vases

Civic Garden Club, Kilgore, enjoyed a program by member and esteemed floral designer, David Reeves. Incorporating his designs with an assortment of vintage containers plus a large pumpkin, the club learned tips and uses of various plant materials in flower design. Reeves is the owner of Flowers By Design in Kilgore and known for his distinctive arrangements.



## San Augustine holds auction



Tommie Thomas, Lois Lacy, Janice Mooore and Donna Carroll.

San Augustine Garden Club held its first dinner auction. Members and guests enjoyed a spaghetti dinner, followed by a live (and lively) auction featuring delicious homemade foods, seasonal decorative items and various services. The club raised \$4161.00 for its community activities.

## Mt. Pleasant adopts angels

The Mount Pleasant Garden Club "adopted" 10 Christmas Angels for the CASA of Titus, Camp and Morris Counties this Christmas. For several years the club has been buying toys and other needed items for the children in foster care that come from homes in the area. It is especially fun to do the Christmas shopping for these children.



## TGC Fall Meeting High Tea

District III members attending the 96th TCG, Inc. Fall Meeting Oct 17-19, 2017, in Killeen included Kathi Sivess, District III Director; Judith Bussey, Trustee; Spring Holmes, Newtn GC delegate; Nita Beale, District Treasurer; Linda Jean Brown, VP Youth. They are joining other members at the High Tea honoring State President Betty Edwards and SCR President Iabell Olsen.



# January & February good months to propagate

Doniece Smith, *East Texas Gardening Guide*

January and February are good months to propagate trees, shrubs, roses and hardy perennials. Almost any hardwood cutting will root in light sandy loam or a mixture of peat moss and perlite. Prepare 6 inch pots with above media. Insert a straight stick or pencil into the dampened media. Remove. Set aside. Rinse several 2 liter plastic pop or juice bottles. Cut off bottoms. Using sterilized pruning shears, cut several pencil sized, year old "sticks" from the mother plant. Holding the stick with growth buds pointing upward (if roses, thorns must point downward), dip into Root-on or other anti-fungus hormone material, shake off excess and place in prepared pot. Water well. Place 2 liter plastic bottle over top of pot, wedging in to steady and place pot on east side of house or building. Do not allow to dry out. If severely cold (under 32 degrees), screw top of pop bottle on until weather warms. Transplant to bigger pots in about 10 weeks, using regular potting soil. Feed LIGHTLY with Miracle-Gro or Osmocote. Keep moist. Move to permanent location the following Spring.

## Growing campaign to stop use of straws



Going through the drive-thru at McDonalds, a worker hands the customer a drink with plastic lid to avoid spilling the drink and a straw to extract the liquid from the covered cup. Who hasn't experienced this American ritual? It is so ubiquitous that most Americans don't realize that they average using 1.6 straws a day. Well, that doesn't seem too bad until ... wait, Americans as a whole use 500 million straws a day. That's a lot — at least enough to go 2.5 times around the earth or enough to fill over 127 school buses. But they are recyclible, right? Wrong, they are so light that they fall off the recycling conveyor belts while being sorted and end up in landfills or never make it to a trash can and end up littering areas that others have to clean.

# Small idea becomes a big dream in Brookland

Steve Stewart/KJAS News, October 10, 2017

What began as a small idea to plant a garden to provide fresh vegetables to Brookland school students has turned into a large venture.

According to the organizer, Katie Willis-Acosta, the idea of the garden really began to grow as local residents and organizations began to volunteer, and now the project has major corporate sponsorship.

Katie says the idea came from her younger sister, Hannah, who was killed by a drunk driver on May 28th, 2015 in Beaumont. Hannah was only 24 and a senior at Lamar University, just a few days away from receiving a bachelor's degree in advertising.

Katie said "We had the idea after my little sister passed away. She was always interested in gardening; in fact she had worked on a farm for free and donated her pay to a non-profit garden".

According to Katie, her sister actually planted that seed of an idea to create a school garden. Katie said "Shortly before her death, she said 'You should plant a food forest'. So, that idea slowly grew over time, to build a school garden and place the vegetables in the school cafeteria".

The idea became reality after Katie said they spoke first to employees of the Brookland school cafeteria. They loved it. However, would the school board approve? They did, and the conception started to become reality.

According to Katie, two of the first volunteers to step up were Don Woods and Charlie Beckett, owners of Raybar Services in Brookland. Don Woods used his tractor to break the ground in a large field next to the school, and then Katie's mom, Joan Willis, came over from her home in Natchitoches and used a hoe to weed the freshly plowed earth.

Katie said the idea is actually very familiar to her mom. She explained that her mom owns a restaurant in Natchitoches, and she maintains a large garden which supplies all fresh vegetables to the eatery.

Now, this is where the story really takes off.

After plowing a small patch of land about 100 feet square, more volunteers came forward, and then corporate sponsors came onboard, and Katie says the little garden is growing without the first seed planted.



Katie said Farmer's Feed & Seed in Jasper donated a large amount of vegetable seed, and then a large company in Alabama heard about the project and they donated over 500 vegetable plants which are ready to go into the ground. Lowe's Home Improvement is also now involved, Katie said Lowe's wants to donate and install a water irrigation system and also fencing around the garden.

According to Katie, on Wednesday the members of Rayburn Bloomers Garden Club will gather to plant the 500 vegetable plants, and Don Woods will be returning with his tractor to plow more ground to create enough space for the donated plants and seed.



Katie summed it up by saying "It's really exciting, it's just movin' along".

Meanwhile, it's very evident that Hannah Willis would have had a successful career in advertising. Two and-a-half years after her death, her idea, and the way that she pitched that idea, is turning into a very big and very successful venture.



# District III Fall Convention Tyler Texas



Upon arrival at the arrival in Tyler, members immediately began shopping.

Dottie thanks everyone for supporting her during her treatment and for celebrating her birthday with her.



Dottie Sivess, Chaplin & Kathi Sivess, District Director



Annette Eby, Jolyn Smith & Susan Sutton  
Linden Garden Club



Carla Martin, Fannie Marchman;  
Linda Bordelon,  
Recording Secretary



Nita Beale, Treasurer



San Augustine Garden Club members in Tyler



Johanna Taylor,  
Parliaentarian



Christine Fincher, 1st Vice  
Director & Pat Baggett  
Jacksonville



Linda Jean Bown,  
2nd Vice Director



Carol Moore,  
Garden Club  
Member-of-the-  
Year



Melva Holmes & Sandy Pannett  
Green Acres

## Greg Grant featured speaker at Fall Convention

Greg Grant was the featured speaker at the District III Fall Convention in Tyler. He entertained the 135 members in attendance by examining Africa's horticultural and landscape contributions to the South.



Greg Grant, Texas  
A&M AgriLife  
Extension Service

Among foods, peas, okra, sweet potatoes and watermelon have their roots in Africa. Plants that owe their existence to Africa include periwinkles, gladiolus, montbretia, crinum lilies, cape honeysuckle, and plumbago.

The bottle tree, which is sometimes used as yard art, was a concept originated in Africa as a way to trap evil spirits before they entered the home.

This topic is covered in *Heirloom Gardening for the South* (Texas A&M Press.)



One of Grant's bottle trees.

**OFFICIAL CALL - ANNUAL SPRING CONVENTION  
DISTRICT III - TEXAS GARDEN CLUBS, INC.  
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION – MARCH 1, 2018**

**THEME: "Boquets on the Bayou"**

Date: March 8 - 9, 2018  
Place: Cypress Valley Education Center 120 East Austin St. Jefferson, Texas  
Hostess: Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club

Thursday, March 8, 2018	3:00 - 5:30 P.M. 7:00 P.M.	Registration: Excelsior House, 211 W. Austin St. Dinner and Board Meeting: Excelsior House
Friday, March 9, 2018	7:00 A.M. 8:15 A.M. 9:30 A.M.  1:00 P.M. 2:00 P.M.  2:30 P.M.	District III Life Membership Breakfast: Excelsior House Open to All Members Registration, Coffee, Ways & Means Cypress Valley Education Center, 120 E. Austin Official Opening - General Assembly Awards Presentation Credentials Report Courtesy Resolution Door Prizes Luncheon Program – "A Placement Show" Jessie Allen Wise GC Flower Show - Excelsior House Adjournment

**Support District III Ways and Means with Your Marked Items and Shopping**

**Hotel Reservations – Excelsior House, 211 W. Austin St., Jefferson, TX 800-490-7270 or 903-665-2513**  
Rate: \$90 - \$108+ tax Double Occupancy  
Please state that you are with District III Garden Clubs - Rates will be honored until February 15, 2018

Registration Form for District III Spring Convention  
(Please complete a separate form for each person attending - Deadline March 1, 2018)

Board Dinner (open to all)	\$35.00 _____
Life Membership Breakfast (open to all)	\$16.50 _____
Convention Luncheon	\$20.00 _____
<b>TOTAL</b>	_____

**Note: Each Club is required to send a \$5.00 Registration Whether attending or not.**  
**Make checks payable to: Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club**  
**Mail to: Mary Alice Oatman, Registration Chair, JAWGC**  
**P.O. Box 301, Jefferson, TX 75657**

Special Instructions: Advise dietary restrictions or handicapped provisions needed

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_ Garden Club \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Credentials Report Information – Please Check All Classifications**

\_\_\_ National Board \_\_\_ SCR Director \_\_\_ SCR Officer \_\_\_ SCR Chairman \_\_\_ TGC State President \_\_\_ TGC Former State President  
\_\_\_ State Officer \_\_\_ State Chairman \_\_\_ Affiliate President \_\_\_ Affiliate Member \_\_\_ District Director \_\_\_ District Officer  
\_\_\_ District Chairman \_\_\_ Garden Club President \_\_\_ Gardening Consultant \_\_\_ TGC Design Consultant  
\_\_\_ Landscape Design Consultant \_\_\_ Environmental Consultant  
\_\_\_ Flower Show Judge: \_\_\_ Master \_\_\_ Life \_\_\_ National \_\_\_ Emeritus \_\_\_ Student  
\_\_\_ Life Member \_\_\_ District \_\_\_ State \_\_\_ SCR \_\_\_ NGC

# Excelsior Hotel offers glimpse into past

The Excelsior Hotel has been proudly situated on Austin Street in Jefferson, Texas continuously serving the public, since it was built in 1858. It is the oldest hotel in the state of Texas that has been in continuous operation. During its early days, the Excelsior was host to President Rutherford B. Hays, John Jacob Astor and Ulysses S. Grant after his presidency. In 1936, the hotel was honored to be placed on the federal government's Historic American Building Survey for the Library of Congress.

After having a number of owners, the hotel was bought in 1961 by the ladies of the Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club. This Club, founded in 1939, was a thriving civic club in Jefferson. Because of the historic significance of Jefferson and many of its structures, the Club began to add an interest in historical preservation to their premier interest in gardening. Beautifying old structures and their gardens had become a goal of the club, and when the Excelsior House went up for sale in 1961, the ladies wanted to purchase it. After negotiating a loan from a bank which was reluctant to lend to a club of women who knew nothing about running a hotel business, the ladies were successful in their effort to get a loan and purchase the hotel from the owner who had been a member of their club. The lovely courtyard of the hotel had been admired and used by the Garden Club for several years because the owner, their friend and a fellow gardener, had improved the back yard of the hotel by adding an antique fountain and brick walkways. The Garden Club ladies were inspired to continue what had been started and to continue to beautify and preserve this landmark structure of their town.



Courtyard and fountain at the Excelsior House Hotel today

It was a very large job for the Club whose main activities had been having an annual flower show and planting trees in Jefferson. But they were up to the task, and they started a massive volunteer effort which stretched



Exterior of Excelsior Hotel, Jefferson, Texas

beyond the boundaries of club members and became, in many ways, a project for the whole town. It was at this time that some major structural improvements were made to the hotel. Each room was eventually given a private bathroom, and a commercial kitchen was added. The footprint of the hotel is the same as when it was built; now it has more amenities for the modern traveler. The Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club has now been the owner of the hotel for much longer than any previous owner—for 57 years. From time to time repairs are needed for a building that is over one hundred fifty years old. Still, many of the furnishings, primarily American-made furniture, are those very pieces that were in the hotel from its

origins as a frontier hotel. The Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club lovingly maintains the hotel which was a vital part of the history of Jefferson when it was a premier city in the brand new state of Texas.

## Jefferson provides visitor information



### Marion County Chamber of Commerce

115 N. Polk Street  
Jefferson, Texas 75657  
Phone: 903-665-2672  
Email [jeffersontx1@att.net](mailto:jeffersontx1@att.net)



### City of Jefferson Tourism Department

305 E. Austin St  
Jefferson, TX 75657  
Phone: 903-665-3733  
Email: [tourism@cityhallofjefferson.com](mailto:tourism@cityhallofjefferson.com)

# Seed banks or gene banks preserve biodiversity

The population of the world is increasing and the amount of land under cultivation is decreasing. A one degree rise in temperature in some places causes a 2% decrease in crop yield. Whether climate change is real or not, the shrinking food supply is. One solution is finding plants that are adaptable to temperature changes, disease, drought and insect tolerant and produce a high yield per plant. That will mean having access to a large group of biodiverse plants. With enough variation in a group, there will always be plants naturally suited to survive and thrive under changing conditions. Where is such a large group located?

For years, genetic scientists have been systematically assembling and managing large collections of seeds in seed banks. Seed bank collections could range from seeds kept locally to share with farmers and gardeners, to specific seeds such as maize which are shared around the world, to seed frozen in the permafrost in Norway to regenerate crops in countries that own the seeds.

The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center collects and preserves wildflower seeds in Texas. These seeds are housed in Austin and in the Millennium Seed Bank in Sussex England. Millennium is the largest seed bank in the world. It distributes seeds to locations around the world and does germination tests on each species every 10 years.

An example of the process of seed preservation happens at the National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation (NCGAP) in Colorado, a backup to other Agriculture Research banks. When seeds are received, they are catalogued, checked for moisture content, cleaned, tested for viability, evaluated for vulnerability, sealed and stored in vaults.

Redundancy in seed preservation is important. Many governmental seed banks from around the world send their seeds to Svalbard in Norway. This site is on the side of a mountain which increases security and isolation. It is well above sea level and the arctic permafrost provides natural freezing. Seeds shipped to Norway are x-rayed at the airport and then taken directly to the seed vault. No one opens the boxes; no one examines the seeds. The Norwegian government does not allow drug seeds or organically modified seeds. Only the specific government depositing the seeds may remove

the seeds. Syria is the only country to remove any seeds. Its research center was destroyed by war, and Syria reclaimed 1/3 of its seeds to regenerate them.



Svalbard, Norway

Before genetically modified organisms, farmers took seeds from the best yielding crop and planted them the following year. Gradually they develop plants that flourished in a particular location and climate. That is basically the idea behind Svalbard and other seed banks. The value of the seeds lies in their being a genetic resource in plant breeding. They are ultimately intended to serve plant breeders and other scientists who are involved in developing new crop varieties for farmers. If a new disease or pest were to wipe out a strain of wheat, for example, it's probable that the germ plasm at Svalbard could be used to breed in resistance.

## Naomi Marksbury had passion for gardening



Naomi Marksbury  
1937-2017

A long time member of garden clubs, Naomi Marksbury passed away on October 5, 2017. After retirement, she developed a passion for gardening and became a Master Gardener. Naomi was a member of National Garden Clubs, former member of AAUW Garden Club, Azalea Garden Club, present member and former president of Green Acres Garden Club and a member of District III Flower Show Judges Council. She held many offices in all these organizations. Naomi started Flower Show School with School V and had never seen an NGC Flower Show. She entered many flower shows including a NGC National Flower Show in Buffalo, New York, where she won third place. She was a talented and knowledgeable Flower Show Judge and traveled many miles to judge including a flower show in Peru. She also exhibited many horticulture specimens and was asked to give design and horticulture

programs. Naomi had hundreds of orchids and was an active member of the Orchid Society. Naomi was a vibrant and active participant in all garden club activities and will be very very missed.