Master Gardener State Advisory Committee Minutes
May 15, 2013

PRESENT: Monica David, Harry Clayton, Brenda Dahlfors, Joy Gulotta, Rodger Harfst, Pat Kosmach, Shey Lowman, Corinna Walker, Sonya Lallemand, Russella Nave, MaryAnne Spinner, Lisa Valle

Via Telnet: Rachelle Hollinshead, Kari Houle, Nancy Kuhajda, Tracy Mulliken, Mary Jo Novak, Kelly Stelmach

Call to Order: by President Harry Clayton, 10:03 a.m.

Reports:
Monica reported that Linda Smith has moved to Indiana from the East Central region and has left the committee. Linda was recognized and thanked for her many years of service.

Future Meetings via Microsoft Lync Meeting-
Monica announced that all future meetings will be held via Lync which is a replacement for the current teleconference telnet. Lync is both a phone call-in and an internet meeting system. Below is a link that provides a description of how it works. Microsoft states, “Most of the time joining a Lync Meeting is as simple as clicking the meeting link in a meeting request and then selecting an audio option.”


2013 MG Conference-
Monica reported that the conference website will be up next week. All the tours and programs are setup. The riverboat cruise will be Thursday night with a buffet and cash bar. Lee County will be hosting a photo ID contest. The total cost for the conference fees will be $225-$230 plus hotel costs.

The next MG Advisory Committee meeting will be held the Wednesday prior to the conference and will be held at the Extension Office in the conference room. It’s about 10 minutes from the hotel.

Harry, Roger and MaryAnne are nearing the end of their appointments and will be leaving the committee at the end of December.

There was a discussion about the future of the committee in the event of a change in administration. Monica feels that we should continue to meet as a committee at least by using the Lync system. She will ask Mike Gray about the status of the committee in the future.

Manual Reprint for 2014 training
Monica reported that the manual is being updated and reprinted, and a designer has been hired. Rich Tobias is writing a new chapter on organic gardening. All edited chapters are due in July. Also the quizzes are being redone, she has asked educators to send her questions. Monica is holding a photo contest with a $500 award for a cover photo of MGs at work in a vertical format.
There are about 200 old 2009 manuals left to sell, there was a discussion about how best to sell them. Some recommendations were to offer them to MGs at a discount, the price is $95 and the cost to current MGs could be $40; to sell them at the conference; to offer them on the MG website.

The new manuals will be used for the 2014 training. It was suggested that a discounted “combo” price be offered for the hardcopy manual and the CD version. Also manuals should be offered to MGs at a discounted price as many MGs like to have the current version and purchasing a new one every four years gets expensive for a volunteer.

Monica said this year’s on-line class was the best ever. There were 130 trainees, only 3 dropped and another 3 didn’t finish. There were a few bugs with the new Compass system that will be fixed for 2014.

We discussed the first chapter. Recommendations included defining the 60 hours on page 1 so the wording is the same as the brochure, 60 hours within two years; page 3 under “Illinois Master Gardener Program Structure” first paragraph define regions, we previously decided to stay with the original 5 regions; third paragraph also on page 3, in red, the last sentence change “his designee” to “their designee”; also in the same line change “county director” to “unit director”. Discussion about whether or not some of this information should be in the manual as it is in the MG policies, it was pointed out that the manual is the one printed resource that MGs have to refer to when they may lose or forget about their copy of the policies. Monica asked us to send her any other recommendations we have.

Discussion about “beautification”, some MGs continue to do, but education is the goal. Weeding and maintenance are not MG goals. If a garden project includes working alongside at least 2 non-MGs and teaching them, it’s educational.

Monica passed around a copy of Notable Trees Around Campus illustrated by Jean Burgess who will be illustrating a disease book for the Plant Clinic. She asked if there was a market for the book.

**Coordinators Lunch n Learns-**
Monica reported that she has been conducting Lunch n Learns with the MG Coordinators on the 3rd Thursday of the month. The last one was on mentoring, tomorrow’s will be on how to measure impact and the June one will be on how to start a Master Naturalist program. Past sessions have been about resources, fiscal issues, volunteer management, screening. Future topics were suggested: help desk/hotline strategies, customer service.

**IPM Modules-**
There are 7 or 8 on the MG website. Getting ready to put up the Boxwood Blight module. Spotted Winged Drosophila and Dogwood Anthracnose will be added in the near future. The grant is up, but they will continue to be produced. So far over 600 people have taken the modules.

**Discussion Items:**
**MG Award Judging Sign Up-**
So far 17 team, 9 sustained, 25 outstanding, but expects more as today is the deadline. She will divide us into teams for judging and will send us the nominations by the end of the week. We have until June 17 to turn in our scoring sheets.

Discussion about problem nominations, specifically two nominations for people who were hired by Extension. It is Extension policy that paid staff cannot be volunteers, once an MG is hired as staff, they become “alumni”. The award criteria state that a nominee must be an “active” MG. The decision made was that the person who became staff in 2012, the same year they were nominated for an award as an MG, is not eligible for the award and the person who was an MG in 2012 and was not hired by Extension until 2013 is eligible.

**New Marketing Materials**
Lindsey has been working on printed materials for marketing purposes. Examples for a brochure and bookmark were passed around for comments. The brochure will be available to counties as an editable PDF file so they can add their own information.

- Recommendations for bookmark: change photo with planters.
- Recommendations for brochure: add sign up panel to brochure and make the brochure legal sized, 14” x 8.5” with a double parallel fold.

Monica has money available for MG promotional items. This is from the college of ACES for Farm Progress displays. There was a discussion about displays. It was suggested that pull-up banners be purchased one for each unit as they are portable and easy. And then units can then purchase additional ones as they need them. There was a second discussion about foam board displays. Since many units already have displays, it was suggested that a banner for the top of a display with the MG logo and the slogan “Helping Others Learn to Grow” would help the existing displays stand out. Other recommendations were to have a standard template for MG business cards and to have magnets promoting MG help desks/hotlines.

**Redo of Training Quizzes**
Monica asked if MGs on the committee would be willing to review the quizzes for clarity. Quizzes will continue to be a mixture of true/false, multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank. The fill-in-the-blank require going to a resource to find the answer.

**2014 MG Conference**
Due to restrictions for signing contracts, it was suggested that rather than skipping the 2014 conference and the awards banquet, that a mini-conference be held on campus in June 2014 using a campus caterer, which doesn’t require a contract. The conference would be one day and include a keynote speaker, an awards luncheon and afternoon tours. The committee strongly felt that it is important to hold a conference and to continue the award recognitions. The committee volunteered to do whatever needs to be done to help.

**Policy Changes with U of I Legal**
Monica reported that after a year she still has not received the policies from the campus attorney. The photo release is in perpetuity and if people don’t want to sign it, just have them mark it off and initial. The university is looking at a policy for screening and working with minors for the protection of minors. Anyone working with minors is a mandated reporter and is required to take
the on-line training. Usually Extension is an exception to university policy, but they want to make all staff and volunteers mandatory reporters. Monica is working to get volunteers exempted as mandatory reporters, but any volunteers working with minors may be required to take the on-line training for child protection. There was discussion about how volunteers would not be comfortable being responsible for reporting sexual abuse.

**Review of Training in Units 15 & 18 via Blackboard-**
Rhonda Ferree is writing the final report for a pilot program using distance learning in Units 15 and 18. They had 5 locations in 2 units to train 37 people, the 15 person minimum requirement was still applicable. Locations were hooked up via Blackboard with a live speaker at one of the locations which moved around every week. The live location was broadcast to the other 4 locations. This process does not replace the current 15-16 on-site trainings.

There were issues with instructors not being familiar with the technology that need to be addressed. Also the lack of samples for plant disease, insect ID is a problem. This process is a way to provide training to Units and counties that have low populations and otherwise would not be able to provide on-site training.

There was a lengthy discussion about the pros and cons of distance learning, on-site and on-line training culminating in a decision to try cluster training or a central location for the whole state. Monica said she would investigate using a central location. It was agreed that the cost for centralized distance learning should continue to be the same as the on-site training, which is determined by each county.

**Advanced Training for MGs-**
Ellen Phillips, Local Foods Educator in Unit 2, has developed a standardized curriculum for Local Food Advanced Training. Will be doing as a pilot in Unit 2, alternating classroom instruction with tours every other week. She will be developing all the teaching materials for other counties to use, counties would be responsible for setting up their own tours. Also considering developing as a webinar, either Lync or Blackboard, or as on-line modules.

Discussion about importance of not including livestock as part of MG training, chicken questions shouldn’t be part of a MG help desk/hotline.

Julia and Ellen are working on a GAPS for gardeners specifically for MGs.

Julia Govis, Illinois Farm to School Educator, is interested in developing a curriculum to teach MGs about Kids School Gardens. See websites on agenda. Challenges are a water source, getting the community involved, vandalism, summer maintenance, grant writing. Broaden to include community gardens. Training for MGs, teachers and the public, use MGs to train others or train the trainers. Consensus was to pursue.

Community Gardening, another category for MG Advanced Training with a pin.

**Liability for Donated Food-**
Monica said according to university legal, food donations by MGs to food pantries are covered by the 1996 Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act 42 USC§1791 (http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/1791), so MGs are not liable for food borne illness.
MG Strategic Plan-
Mentoring update, Monica reported that she did a staff training on developing county mentoring programs.
Marketing update, in addition to Lindsay working on the bookmark and brochure there was a discussion about having a statewide proclamation coordinated with a volunteer week at the capital.
Monica asked the committee to think about future, strategic plans for the next meeting.

Election of New Officers-
   Pat Kosmach was unanimously elected President.
   Brenda Dahlfors was unanimously elected Secretary.
       Shey Lowman volunteered to be a backup in Brenda’s absence.

Decide Future Meeting Dates-
   Dates are listed below.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:53 p.m.

Future Meetings:
2013-
   September 18, Wednesday in Moline or Lync
   November 19, Tuesday in Champaign or Lync
2014-
   February 24, Monday 10 a.m.-12 p.m. via Lync
   June TBA with mini conference in Champaign or Lync

Respectfully submitted:
Shey Lowman
University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, Stephenson County