



Seeds for Thought

November 2013

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*A newsletter from the
Master Gardener
Foundation of
Washington State*

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- Jane Billinghamurst, Skagit County
- Dianne Elledge & Richelle Taylor, Snohomish County
- George Frey & Virginia Ferguson, Pierce County

*Nameplate photo by
Mary Shane, Grays Harbor County*

Visit our website:

MGFWS

The Fall Season

~~Chris Bailey, MGFWS President

I must admit that Halloween is not my favorite holiday, because of the witches, skeletons and tombstones, but I love the fall season. The weather turns crisp, the leaves change color, and pumpkins, gourds and colorful mums make beautiful decorations. We put our gardens to bed and lovingly wrap the last of our tomatoes, hoping they'll ripen over the next few weeks. Time for a cup of warm cider and a good book!



I'm happy to report that the State Foundation has two new vice presidents. Kathy Brenberger of Benton-Franklin Counties is the new Vice President of the Eastern Region, and MaryJo Christensen, of Lewis County, was elected Vice President of the Southwest Region. Also, Jane Billinghamurst, of Skagit County, was re-elected to serve another term as Vice President of the Northwest Region. We are very fortunate to have these talented Master Gardeners serve on our Executive Committee.

The 40th anniversary of the Master Gardener Program in Washington State was celebrated at the annual conference in Everett in September. The Snohomish County Master Gardener Foundation is to be congratulated for hosting a spectacular event. A big thank-you to all of your volunteers.

(Chris, continued on page 8)



Hello Master Gardeners!

~~Nicole Martini, WSU Interim Master Gardener Program Leader



It was so great to see--and meet--many of you at the state Advanced-Education Conference. It was also great to see Tonie Fitzgerald and to enjoy Ed Hume as the keynote speaker at the banquet. Of course, I'd be remiss not to mention Sharon Collman. Wasn't she fun to watch and listen to? I always enjoy her presentations.

I think, most importantly, that the Snohomish County Master Gardener Foundation and membership deserve a huge "thank you" for putting on an incredible conference. The hard work that went into it was very evident. The event was very well-organized, and the speakers and topics were great. I already look forward to the conference in Pierce County in 2014. I hope to see many of you there.

Speaking of education, I'd like to spend a little time letting you know my plans for advanced-education opportunities that will be available to you locally and/or regionally. Some feedback I've received in my six years with the Master Gardener Program is that you'd like to see more of these educational opportunities.

My question to you: in which topics do you need that education? I would really like to hear from you, which is why I'll be sending you a volunteer satisfaction survey. Please do take the time to fill it out, as it will serve as a plan of work for the program at the state and local levels.

(Nicole, continued on page 7)

Marcia Nelson

2013 Washington State
Master Gardener of the Year



The Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State is delighted to announce that Marcia Nelson, Island County Master Gardener, was honored as the 2013 Master Gardener of the Year for at the WSU Master Gardener Advanced-Education Conference in September. The foundation is privileged to recognize Marcia for this outstanding achievement and for the positive impact she has had upon both the Master Gardener Program and the Island County community.

Seeds for Thought shares below excerpts from the Island County nomination.

Marcia Nelson became a Master Gardener on Whidbey Island in Island County in 2003, after retiring as an executive in the telecommunications industry and while working full-time at a local nursery. During her Master Gardener internship, Marcia led a team that designed and constructed a display pergola garden at the Master Gardener Education Display Garden at Greenbank Farm, a Port Authority property on Whidbey Island. She continues her involvement with that garden as a member of its steering committee. She also designed the rose garden at Greenbank Farm, a two-year project to completion. As the Garden Committee chairperson, Marcia helps oversee its maintenance and plans for the garden's future. She sets up educational seminars for the public, utilizing the garden as a teaching tool.

While still an intern, Marcia actively promoted the Master Gardener Children's Garden at the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station Youth Center. The purpose of this garden is to teach children and youth—elementary through high school—how to grow different vegetables, fruits, and flowers.

Ms. Nelson's community involvement is evidenced by her role in the Island County Master Gardener plant clinics. Not only does she work at clinics, Marcia has also created the "Clinic of Clinics," an annual training session, for Master Gardener trainees and veterans. She leads an annual "Clinic FAQs" at the Master Gardener spring meeting and she conducts "Home Hort" visits when they are requested. One of these calls resulted in a public seminar on the cherry bark tortrix infestation in Oak Harbor.

Beginning in 2009, Marcia researched and planned a new and important project on Whidbey Island, where 72 percent of the island's home sites rely on septic systems with drain fields. Marcia is the founder of the Drainfield Landscape Project on Whidbey Island. This project's mission is to demonstrate what plants are appropriate for planting in a septic drainfield. It is the first of its kind in the country, promoting environmental safety and soundness. (More about this project can be found in the [August 2010](#) and the [February 2013](#) issues of *Seeds for Thought*.)

Marcia Nelson's lasting legacy to the Master Gardener Program and the Island County community is her commitment, dedication and her guidance during her ten years as a Master Gardener.

Carol Barany

2013 MG Foundation of Washington State
Media Award Winner

The state foundation Media Award recognizes journalists throughout our state who have been exemplary in their coverage of the WSU Master Gardener program. The 2013 Media Award was presented at the Awards Banquet during the statewide Master Gardener Advanced-Education Conference, in September. It was presented to Carol Barany, a Yakima County Master Gardener who contributes articles to both the *Yakima Herald-Republic* and *Yakima Magazine*.

Whether you are reading an article that Carol wrote or listening to a class she teaches, she will keep your attention from the very first words with her enthusiasm for all things growing, sponsors of Carol's nomination wrote. Carol moved to the Pacific Northwest 31 years ago and began to make it a more beautiful place right away. She became a Yakima County Master Gardener in 2007, along with her husband, John. Both are active throughout the community, and Carol provides interesting and educational classes for Yakima County Master Gardeners, for garden clubs and others.

A regular columnist for both the Yakima County Master Gardener "Weekly Dirt" and the program's monthly newsletter, Carol writes entertaining and informative lessons. She is also a regular Master Gardener Program teacher, leading a class or two each year during intern training. She has also been a favorite presenter at Yakima County's public "Spring Symposium," an annual series of four evening lectures for the community.

Carol contributes to a biweekly Master Gardener column in the *Yakima Herald-Republic*. It didn't take long for the publishers of the *Yakima Magazine*, the area's bimonthly "lifestyle" magazine, to also recognize Carol's writing talents. She now writes a gardening article for each issue of that publication.

The state foundation was pleased to give the 2013 Media Award to Carol Barany, and thanked her at the conference for her work publicizing the WSU Master Gardener program.



Carol Barany

Yakima County Photo

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MG Conference Breaks Sound Barrier!

Well not exactly, but we've been told it did set a record for attendance at a WSU Master Gardener Advanced-Education Conference. More than 400 people registered for the 40 sessions and another 50 attended the evening programs. With our theme of "40 Years of Growing . . . Together," we were thrilled that so many wanted to participate. People tried to register up until the last minute, but we had to cut off registrations earlier than expected. We were full-- a nice problem to have!

Wednesday tours were very popular, especially the trip to Chihuly Garden and Glass at Seattle Center. In addition to the fantastic glass displays, seen both during daylight and after dark when the glass gardens are afire with light, the group was able to attend a special function that played sounds made by plants. Don't ask me how that's done!

The other tours were to the WSU Research Center at Mt. Vernon and the Hibulb Cultural Center and Natural History Preserve on the Tulalip Tribe's reservation. Each excursion included a visit to different Snohomish County demonstration garden.

The Sharing Success exhibits were done differently this year. With Jane Billingham, from Skagit County, organizing and Martha Clatterbaugh, from Snohomish County, assisting, a "Sharing Success Gallery Walk" was the focus of Thursday night's program. Attendees enjoyed gourmet hors d'oeuvres while viewing 24 excellent displays from 12 counties. Volunteers from each county stayed with their displays to answer questions. The displays truly were outstanding, informative and inspiring!

On Friday morning before classes began, Sharon Collman, Snohomish County Extension Educator, gave a detailed history of how the Master Gardener program began 40 years ago. Tonie Fitzgerald, WSU Master Gardener Program Coordinator, now retired, summarized the changes made in the five years she listened and acted on the needs of county Master Gardener programs and coordinators.

Ending the morning general session was the introduction of Nicole Martini, Pierce County Master Gardener Coordinator who is currently serving as the Interim Master Gardener Program Coordinator. Nicole outlined some of the programs that she'll be working on with input from county Master gardeners and Coordinators.

Ed Hume was the keynote speaker at Friday night's awards banquet. His views of "The Master Gardener Program and Its Place in the World" included very complimentary



*Dianne Elledge & Patty Kerston
2013 Conference Co-Chairs*

descriptions of what you all have accomplished in the last 40 years. Having visited it several times over the years and again that day, Mr. Hume gave the highest praise for Snohomish County's largest demonstration garden, at Jennings Memorial Park in Marysville. Never having heard him speak in person before, I was so impressed with his warmth and personal approach to everyone.

At our invitation, many VIPs attended this 40th anniversary celebration. At the Thursday night reception, we met Susie Pinyuh, widow of the late George Pinyuh, who was a former King County Horticulture Agent from 1976 to 1994, and Mary Robson, who worked with George and held the position of Area Extension Faculty from 1994 to 2004. Mary was also one of our most popular presenters at the conference.

Present at Friday night's awards banquet were Bill and Judy Scheer. Bill was a Pierce County Extension Agent and one of the people responsible for first organizing the MG program. Having worked in Germany and familiar with the German "Gartenmeister" term, the title of "Master Gardener" was bestowed on people who took the training program that he and Dave Gibby began in 1973.

Also present at the banquet was Nancy Davidson Short, an editor at *Sunset Magazine* for over 40 years and promoter of the Master Gardener program. Nancy recently celebrated her 101st birthday! Van Bobbitt was introduced, too. He was the first to hold the position of volunteer state coordinator for urban horticulture, from 1989 to 1998.

Peg Tillery, now retired from Kitsap County Extension, and Sharon Wesenberg, widow of Bernie Wesenberg, former Extension Ornamental Horticulture Specialist and nationwide promoter of the Master Gardener program, attended as well.

After morning sessions on Saturday, we closed the conference with a presentation from Pierce County, hosts of the 2014 conference, September 18-20, in Tacoma.

We in Snohomish County are so grateful, and blown away, by the attendance at our conference and the many kudos we heard. Our program coordinator did some research and calculated that our county's volunteers spent 4,000 to 5,000 hours over the last three years to make this event what it was. Thank you, to all who attended and to all of our Snohomish County Master Gardeners who used their time and talents so generously.

~by Dianne Elledge, Co-Chair, 2013 Conference

Conference Memories



Photographs by *Richelle Taylor*

Flowers, Fjords, and Friends, the 2013 International Master Gardener Conference

~~Jane Billinghamurst, Master Gardener, Skagit County

This year, for the first time, I attended the International Master Gardener Conference. The organizers of our 2013 Master Gardener Advanced Education Conference changed the dates of our conference in Washington state so I—along with 20-plus other MGs from Washington—could attend both events. Thank you, Snohomish!

The International Master Gardener Conference is much like our Advanced Education Conference, except the international conference is held once every couple of years around the United States. I've been interested for a while, but it's always been held somewhere far away like Tennessee or Arkansas. This year, however, it was on a cruise ship from Seattle. Right on my doorstep, as it were. How could I not go?



Over 1000 Master Gardeners boarded the ship in Seattle. They were mostly from the United States, but there were also representatives from Canada, the UK, and even a couple from South Korea. As the ship held 1900 passengers, Master Gardeners were in the majority, which made for a nice quiet ship for the other passengers when we were in session and was fodder for jokes for some of the on-board entertainers. Two horticultural agents even made it to the finals of the ship's onboard Dancing with the Entertainers show. Way to go Extension faculty!

A highlight was the Search for Excellence, along the lines of our Sharing Success. Master Gardeners around the country have initiated some very worthwhile projects to support and educate their local communities. I would love to see counties from Washington participate in future years. As was made clear at Sharing Success at our conference this year, we have many innovative projects we could showcase.

The conference included not one but four impressive keynote addresses, including one by David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth, who are probably known to MGs from Jefferson, Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties as they often participate in MG training. Another standout was "Heirloom Gardening in a Modern World" by Diane Ott Whealy, who co-founded Seed Savers Exchange with Kent Whealy in 1975. What a beautiful garden she has.

We got to choose 8 presentations to attend—many of them repeated for the maximum chance of being able to sign up for those you wanted. I have ideas to bring back to my home county on how to make plant clinic training fun, using QR codes in demonstration landscapes, what we know about GMOs, and the importance of balanced plantings to attract beneficial insects. All the PowerPoints and handouts were given to conference participants on flash drives to take home.

The presenters were top-notch, and included horticultural agents and Extension researchers. Wow, did I feel lucky to be able to get all this information as glaciers glided by outside, humpbacks breached, and orcas rode the ship's bow wake. Free time off the ship was worked into the schedule, with some shore excursions specifically catering to Master Gardeners, including nature walks and garden tours. I opted for one of the regular excursions—a snorkeling trip in Ketchikan to see nature from a different perspective.

The International Master Gardener Conference is organized through eXtension (www.extension.org), an Internet-based collaborative environment for land grant universities. The next conference will be held in Omaha/Nebraska, September 22-25, 2015, and the one in 2017 will be in Portland, definitely doable if you prefer to attend conferences closer to home.

To find out more about 2015, visit <http://mastergardener.unl.edu/imgc2015> and at <https://www.facebook.com/2015InternationalMasterGardenerConference> if you do Facebook. For the Portland event in 2017, visit <http://horticulture.oregonstate.edu/imgc> when the site gets up and running.

I had no idea what the international conference would be like. It's fascinating how similar our goals and challenges are, and inspiring to see the different ways Master Gardener programs work to achieve our common purpose--and just so much fun to hang out with so many Master Gardeners. I can't wait to learn which city in Canada will host the event in 2019.

(Nicole, continued from page 1)

Once I hear from you about your choices for the most important subjects for advanced education, I'll begin, with the help of a committee, to develop modules that will include webinars, other distance-learning methodologies and readings. Using these modules, you will be able to earn a certificate in a focused area. As I mentioned at the conference, I think I have some ideas of what your educational needs are based on my experience with Extension, but I look forward to hearing from you.

Some of the emerging issues I've seen include community gardens, youth gardening, diagnostics, and water quality. I also think opportunities exist for Master Gardeners to get involved in citizen science. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see research done by Master Gardeners become publishable work that contributes toward the bank of knowledge at WSU?

So many opportunities exist for Master Gardeners to address community needs. You are the frontline of the university. You bring the knowledge of WSU--and your passion for volunteering--to your communities, and for that you can be very proud! At the conference I was asked to write up my thoughts about the Master Gardener Program and its synergistic relationships with WSU and our communities, so I'll end with that.

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program is like a garden of its own, a living, thriving community of diverse plants. The plants are like the people in our communities, too—diverse and powerful, capable of growing from a tiny seed into a large plant that bears fruit. This community (or garden) changes with each season, and, as the seasons change and each year before passes, the gardener learns more and more.

In our communities (or gardens) WSU is like the foundation, or the soil. WSU provides the research, like the nutrients in the soil, which is the foundation of the Master Gardener Program. The soil's physical properties are like the history of the program, providing it with its structure and high standards.

You? You are the rain that provides the water (or knowledge) necessary to start the seeds and to grow the plants (our communities) to maturity. Each of you is a single rain drop, but together you are a force that waters (or educates) entire gardens (or communities of people).

Between the soil, the water and the sunshine, our communities get a chance to grow and bear their own fruits of their own labor, literally and figuratively. When these plants go to seed, it is the seed of knowledge that is transferred from one gardener to another: seeds of wisdom that imbibe the water (or knowledge) that Master Gardeners shower onto their communities.

Most important, our youth are the flowers. They blossom under the watering and care of Master Gardeners. They grow into mature plants that reach for the sunshine and gain an understanding of nature in the meantime.



Thank you to each of you--each individual raindrop coming together to be the many necessary showers that continue to water our communities with knowledge gained from WSU.

Each of you raindrops makes a difference, and together you are a force to be reckoned with!

It really is an honor to serve each of you Master Gardeners, the Master Gardener Coordinators and Washington State University as the Interim State Master Gardener Program Leader.

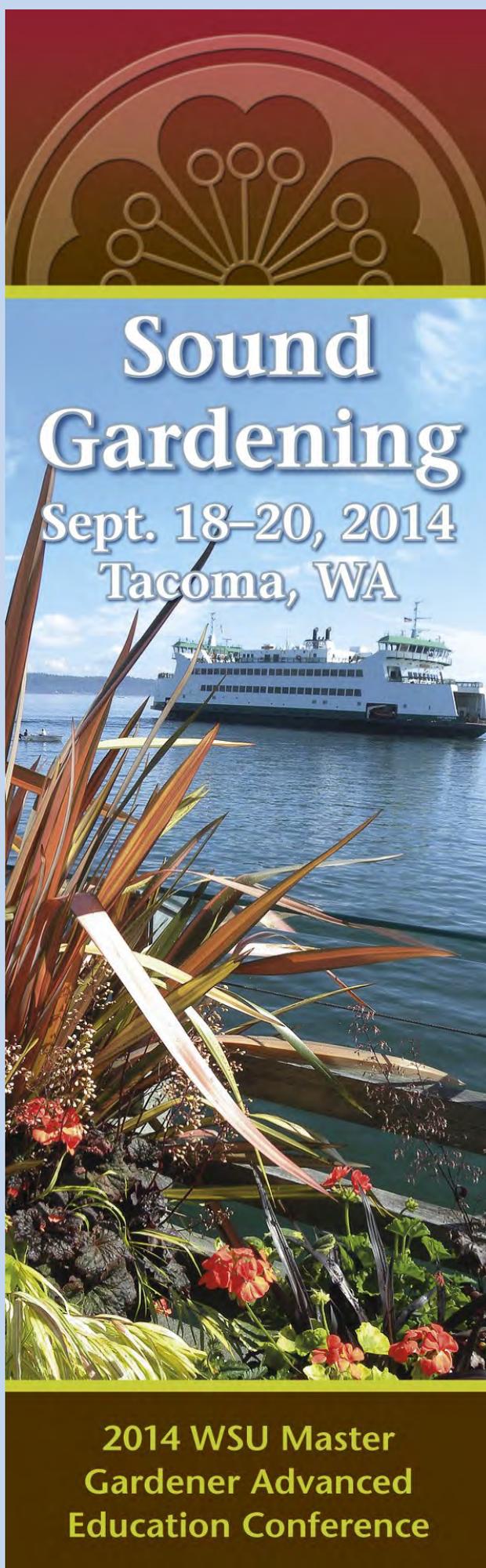
A Special Thank-You

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- ◆ *Donors from the Washington State Combined Fund Drive;*
- ◆ *Brock and Karen Loen and Joy Nicholson,*
In memory of Jerome Calvin Goldhaber.

(Chris, continued from page 1)

While the Master Gardeners in Snohomish County are resting up from their endeavors, Pierce County Master Gardeners are diligently working on plans for next year's conference in Tacoma. The State Foundation Board had the opportunity to tour the hotel and conference center selected for our annual event and we were very impressed. The Hotel Murano is a four-star hotel and is adjacent to the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center, where the seminars will be held. There's much to see and do in Tacoma, so we should all plan to make our visit a mini-vacation.



**Sound
Gardening**
Sept. 18-20, 2014
Tacoma, WA

**2014 WSU Master
Gardener Advanced
Education Conference**