



## President's Year in Review

by Jim Fratrack Past President

After two years of remote meetings SEWMG members gathered in person at Mitchell Park in Brookfield for our annual picnic on August 12. We had a very pleasant evening seeing old friends and renewing friendships. Dinner was excellent. Thanks to all who brought dishes to pass. Thanks to all who volunteered for this year's picnic.

Our first in-person member meeting on September 23 found us all in masks at the New Berlin library. It was good to see us together but a little strange looking out at all those masked gardeners.

On November 13 we met again in person at Retzer Nature Center for our annual meeting. We also were able to offer a virtual component for this meeting, providing members the option to attend in person or connect online.

The Holiday Party brought one hundred members and guests together at Alioto's restaurant on December 1. During the party, long time member John Hahn was given a Lifetime Achievement Award. John has been a master gardener for over 28 years. Because of John's generosity with his time, talents and experience the Board wanted to honor him with a Lifetime Achievement Award. It is my understanding that this is the first Lifetime Achievement Award given by SEWMG Association to one of our own members.

### John Hahn, Lifetime Award Recipient

John grew up in Madison, Wisconsin. His mother had a vegetable garden and John caught the gardening bug from her. John helped his mother with various gardening chores including cutting the grass. He used an old reel type push mower - there was no engine - he provided the power.



In 1957 John enlisted in the Marine Corps. John spent four years in the Corps and for some of that time he was stationed in Okinawa, Japan. Upon returning home John took electrical engineering courses. After moving to Milwaukee, he spent eight years going to night classes at UWM earning a bachelor's degree in economics. John's education led him to a career at AT&T. John worked in several areas in the company including engineering, marketing, and accounting.

John trained to be a master gardener in 1992. In the 1990s graduate master gardeners shared in the teaching burden with Extension staff. Master gardeners would provide "specialized" training during these sessions. John was a regular volunteer taking time to teach. One session included dividing Hostas. John's favorite plants are Hostas. John said they were his favorite plant because "they are hard to kill."

In the early years of our Association John spoke to legislators, lobbying and promoting the concept of master gardener training associated with the University.

One of John's favorite activities has been the plant sales. He was at Ann Olmsted's house in Wauwatosa for the first plant sale in 1996, where they took in \$3,000. John has served on the SEWMG Board in all capacities: Director, Treasurer, Vice-President, and President.

John's last assignment with the Association was WIMGA Representative. He held this post for many years; his final year was 2020.

Here are a few comments from some of John's master gardener peers:

"John is very kind and lighthearted"  
"He is a clever problem solver"  
"Always present with a story and a smile"  
"John is a true diplomat maybe in spite of or because of his humor"  
"He was a driving force for plant sales. He was there for the first one in 1996"  
"He was a wizard at dividing plants with his trusty machete"

Thank you, John, for your many, many contributions and dedicated service to the Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardener Association.

# From the Board

by MGV Mary Wolverton, Chair of the Board (Retired)



I've been asked by the newsletter committee to sum up the year's accomplishments. Well, if you'd told me three years ago when I joined the board that my second board year would be spent wondering if anything would ever go back to normal and my third board year as chair spent still wondering and trying to hold Zoom board meetings and accomplish something without a clue as to what was going to be possible, I wouldn't be here now writing an article about my third year on the board.

Having said that, as I look back on 2021, I'm pleased with what we were able to do amid chaos. The glimmer of an idea of strategic planning from 2020 blossomed into a determined committee that took us through initial planning and into a member survey. At year end the board is ready to identify specific goals. This planning became even more critical in the face of Extension's major changes to the MGV program. Cut loose from Extension management SEWMG is positioned to create programs and activities needed by its members.

The deadline for this article is December 1, a couple of weeks before the bylaws vote closes. Eighteen months of bylaw drafting created a 21st century framework for the organization. I am optimistic the bylaws will be adopted and pleased they will provide the board needed structure.

The 2021 board started with six new members - a president-elect, secretary, treasurer and three directors. As November ends we have met in person only once, at a board retreat in July to work

on strategic planning. Nonetheless, this group became a team focused on SEWMG members. With three new (and fabulous) directors the 2022 board is in good shape to guide the organization through a year of dramatic changes at the Extension level.

Unlike some years when Finance met only to draft a budget, this year the Finance Committee began early. Issues included the best format for treasurer's reports, guidelines for expense reimbursement and how to deal with potential budget issues in the face of uncertain plant sale revenue. This early work put us in a good position to deal with the problems of a 2022 budget without plant sale support.

Board members worked with Ann Wied on the reorganization of the Speaker's Bureau. Another committee created a new SEWMG website which you should have had an opportunity to explore by the time this newsletter appears. This will be our space, managed by our members.

Small behind-the-scenes steps included creating and implementing a process to invite new onboarded MGVs to join SEWMG, recognizing donations formally with a written thank you (on new letterhead), and creating an SEWMG member-only mailing list. We were able to navigate the complexities of holding social events despite the pandemic.

All in all, it was a satisfying year of laying a foundation for the work that will be needed in 2022.

## Meet Erin Napier, 2022 President

by MGV Erin Napier

Gardening is a place where I find myself when I need to lose myself. I'm a "late bloomer" as they say, so, it is fitting that it took me so long to discover the Master Gardener Volunteer program and SEWMG in 2019. Since then, I've enjoyed volunteering at Boerner and Wil-O-Way as well as chairing the SEWMG Audit Committee, co-chairing the Strategic Planning Committee, and serving on the Finance Committee.

I am honored to be SEWMG's 2022 President, and I know that I have very big shoes to fill following our past president, Jim Fratrack, and a solid roster of Presidents, Board members, and Committee Chairs before me. I will serve alongside a strong slate of Officers and Committee Chairs in the coming year to support and guide the association and to balance the needs of the mission, the communities we serve, and our passionate members. I look forward to navigating our "new normal" with all of you as we continue to transition through the pandemic, respond to UW-Madison Extension changes, and focus on new initiatives of the SEWMG strategic plan in 2022 as we celebrate our 40th year. This organization has a proud past and promising future!

I bring practical leadership experience to SEWMG through professional roles in corporations, academia, consulting, and nonprofit management. Outside of SEWMG, I have a day job and proudly serve as the Director of the Business Process Office for the Center for Creative Leadership, a top-ranked leadership development organization. I am so grateful to my loving husband Michael who strongly supports my passion for family, travel, gardening, Irish heritage, and involvement in SEWMG. I also appreciate all the patience and giving SEWMG members that have shown me the ropes over the last many months and helped support my transition to President. I am overwhelmed by your kindness, friendship, and knowledge.

# SEWMG 2021 Holiday Party

by MGV Laurie Baker



*Thank you to Judy Williamson and Patty Witt for organizing the Holiday Party.*



# News from the County Extension Offices

by Ann Wied, UW-Madison Extension Waukesha County Outreach Specialist

## Updates to the Master Gardener Program

Changes and updates are on the horizon for the Master Gardener Program in 2022 and it is important for you to be aware and understand the changes. Not all details have been finalized yet. More information will be shared when it is available. Several e-mails and links have been sent to you from the Master Gardener Program sharing updates. I hope you are reading this information and clicking on the links for additional information.

Watch for e-mails (and look for past e-mails) from the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program. If you have not had a chance to read these, look for e-mails from this address ([wimastergardener@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:wimastergardener@extension.wisc.edu)). Also be sure to read the monthly Volunteer Vibe from this address too. The Volunteer Vibe is the official Wisconsin master gardener (MG) newsletter.

Go to the state MG website to see copies of the communications which have been emailed to Master Gardeners. Direct Link to this site is:  
<https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/2021/12/08/changes-to-wisconsin-master-gardener-programs/>

The SEWMG newsletter you are currently reading is the local association's newsletter (the SEWMG newsletter). The Volunteer Vibe focuses on the statewide Wisconsin Master Gardener Program. As you continue to be a MG, it is important for you to understand what is going on in the statewide program led by UW-Madison Extension. The SEWMG association and the statewide MG Program are not the same thing. If you are unclear what the difference is between the local association and the statewide MG Program, reach out to me and I would be happy to answer your questions.

## Budget Updates

In case you are curious on how our two Extension offices have fared regarding 2022 budget, I have included the 2022 budget update for both the Milwaukee and Waukesha County Extension offices.

## Milwaukee County UW-Madison Extension Budget Update -

The 2022 county budget tax levy for the UW Extension Department in Milwaukee County is \$344,693. This was approved by the Milwaukee County Board on a 11 to 6 vote and signed by David Crowley, County Executive. The tax levy amount is a \$1,235 increase from the 2021 county budget.

## Waukesha County UW-Madison Extension Budget Update -

The 2022 county budget tax levy for the UW Extension Department in Waukesha County is \$360,763. This was approved by the Waukesha County Board on a 22 to 0 vote and signed by Paul Farrow, County Executive. The tax levy amount is a \$10,000 increase from the 2021 county budget.

## Questions About Your MG Status or the MG Program?

If you have any questions or concerns about your status in the master gardener program or about the master gardener program in general, feel free to reach out to me. I am happy to answer your questions. Whether you live in Waukesha County or Milwaukee County, I am your "go to" person for MG questions. Contact me at 262-548-7788 or [ann.wied@wisc.edu](mailto:ann.wied@wisc.edu)

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# Our New Website

Compiled by MGV Janet Wintersberger

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Two incredibly talented master gardeners were key to developing SEWMG's new website. Both are experienced website creators. Victoria Robison led the committee and Susan McDonell, with her vast computer-skills, created it. We are now able to update the site on our own, without needing Extension staff assistance. Please keep in mind that this is SEWMG Association's site and not UW-Extension's. Please visit the site at: [sewmg.org](http://sewmg.org)

We hope you enjoy the new site and welcome your feedback. If you have comments or suggestions related to the new website, please e-mail Susan and Victoria at the following e-mails: Susan at [sdmcdonell@mac.com](mailto:sdmcdonell@mac.com) Victoria at [verobison@gmail.com](mailto:verobison@gmail.com)

There is also a "members only" page which includes the member directory and other members-only information. You can view the site without a password; however, for "members only" information you must set your own password, which you control. In addition, if you are not a dues-paying member of the association, you will not receive an invite. If you do not receive an invite by December 2 and have verified with Patty Witt that your dues were paid, please contact Susan at [sdmcdonell@mac.com](mailto:sdmcdonell@mac.com)

Those who viewed the website when it went live and then again recently may have already noticed changes. These changes are being made to adhere with Extension requests and new policies being put into place.

- A few changes made include removal of UW-Madison Extension's logo and the Education and Hours tabs for 2022.
- In addition, Approved Education and Garden Projects has been renamed Activities/Organizations to better coincide with the latest e-mail sent to us by Extension.

As more information becomes available for these items as well as the Co-Chairs/Garden Support page, we will provide updates. With what little we know at this time; those may be the most affected pages. Our website will also be updated as UW-Madison Extension provides changes for the 2022.

The new Board will be working through these changes with Extension, and the Website Committee will do its best to provide you with easily accessible, up-to-date information as soon as it becomes known to us. Please keep in mind that this is SEWMG Association's site and not UW-Extension's; so, there will be links to take you to information that they are responsible for. We have no control over when Extension updates its website.

## About the key website members

**Victoria Robison** has been a Master Gardener since 2017. In addition to leading the Website Committee, she has been involved with the SEWMG newsletter and Havenwoods Heritage Vegetable Garden. She grows a 1000 sq ft garden at Alice's Garden Urban Farm in Milwaukee and is also the Assistant Director of the UW-Milwaukee Planetarium, where she also manages the website in addition to other tasks.

**Susan McDonell** joined Master Gardeners in 2012. She has created the extensive material for the Lifelong Gardening Committee. She assists other SEWMG projects with signage and brochures. Susan has served on the Board of Directors, Audit, and Finance Committees. After retiring from administration in Milwaukee Public Schools, she began working for the Milwaukee County Clerk and continues to work there.

## 2022 SEWMG Board of Directors

Elected on November 13, 2021

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Past President	Jim Fratrack
President	Erin Napier
VP/President-Elect	Mary Holtz
Secretary	Betsy Vokac
Treasurer	Ellen Grissom
3d Year Director	Carolyn Colwell
2d Year Director	Valorie Sangsland
1st Year Director	Eileen Quinlan
Director at Large	Janet Barthel
Director at Large	Mercedes Vega



## SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners 2022 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Name (First, Last): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate below any skills/special talents  
you might be willing to share with the organization:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics/Displays      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry              | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting       | <input type="checkbox"/> GoDaddy                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising     | <input type="checkbox"/> MS Excel                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Editing        | <input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning   | <input type="checkbox"/> MS PowerPoint               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media           | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Surveys      | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography/<br>Videography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____           |   |  |

**Annual dues are \$20.00** and include membership in SEWMG and WIMGA.

Please make check payable to **SEWMG** and mail to:

Patty Witt  
16508 West Melody Court  
New Berlin, WI 53151-9243

We welcome all certified MGVs who volunteer in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

UW-Madison Extension Waukesha County  
Waukesha County Administration Center  
515 W. Moreland Road, Room AC-G22  
Waukesha, WI 53188

### SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners

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Laurie Baker | Seasonal Photography

**Grow with us**



## Contact Information

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For more information:

On the Web

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### *Our Mission Statement*

*To support and assist UW-Extension in community horticulture programs through volunteerism, education and environmental stewardship.*