

*"I love **spring** anywhere, but if I could choose, I would always greet it in a garden."*

*...Ruth Stout*

# SAGE LEAVES

## **The Herb Society of America – Wisconsin Unit**

Mar/Apr 2020 – Vol XXXXI #2

### **Unit Meetings**

#### **Saturday, March 28, 9:30 Social & Brunch, 10 Meeting, 11:00 Speaker**

*(please note that this is a **Saturday** meeting/brunch potluck)*

**Program:** Speaker: Erin Dentice, Milwaukee Parkside School for Arts - recipient of an HSA-WI Unit \$300 Grant. It was recently featured in the August issue of [Edible Milwaukee](https://ediblemilwaukee.ediblecommunities.com/food-thought/mental-harvest-teaching-kids-grow-food) <https://ediblemilwaukee.ediblecommunities.com/food-thought/mental-harvest-teaching-kids-grow-food> This presentation will be of special interest to all of us who have grandchildren and those Master Gardeners who volunteer in schools.

**Location:** St Christopher's Church, 7845 N River Road, River Hills

**Brunch Pot Luck – Hostess:** Joanne Ruggieri

Members may if they wish, bring a brunch/lunch dish to share. Suggestions: fresh fruits and vegetables, egg casseroles and bakery items, juices (tea and coffee are provided). Warming trays will be available. Please use your prettiest plates and a serving utensil. We need 6 centerpiece creations for this meeting. If you would like to create one, please email or call Mary Kay McDevitt

#### **Tuesday, April 21, 9:30 Social, 10 Meeting, 12 noon Luncheon**

**Program:** Election of HSA-WI Unit Secretary and Treasurer  
"Thyme to Decorate a Cake" with member Tricia Hallam

**Location:** St Christopher's Church, 7845 N River Road, River Hills

**Luncheon:** Hostess:

Soup:	Lore Borth
Salad:	Marji Bell
Bread/Spread:	Jan Tyler
Beverage:	
Dessert:	Tricia Hallam

### **Please mark your calendars for the above dates and locations**

Editor: Diane Kescenovitz, [kescenovitz.diane@groupon.com](mailto:kescenovitz.diane@groupon.com) – if you will be going out of town for an extended period of time, please notify Diane of change of address or request e-mail copy – thanks!

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Wisconsin Unit Web: [Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org](http://Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org) (Editor: Diane Kescenovitz)

Herb Society Office: [herbs@herbsociety.org](mailto:herbs@herbsociety.org)

Herb Society of America web: [www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org)

# NEWSBUDS...

## **Herb Symposium in March and Herb Fair in May – Melody Orban**

Planning for our two HSA WI Unit public events is well underway. Please visit our facebook page to like and comment to your contacts. This will be a great source of publicity for us. The Herb Symposium is a full day with continental breakfast, the herb tastings, vendors, speaker, raffle baskets and the gourmet lunch. It truly is a fantastic event! Our Herb Fair is another opportunity to enjoy a day with your herbie friends: herbs and other plants for sale, booths of artisans and vendors, Tea Room, Herbal Ladies Heirlooms and educational sessions presented by our own members. It is also Public Garden Day, so Wisconsin weather permitting, enjoy being outdoors!  
<https://www.facebook.com/HerbSocietyofAmericaWIUnit/>

## **Message from the Treasurer – Denise Nelson**

It will soon be time to renew your HSA-WI Unit membership. We look forward to having you as a continuing part of our Society. Your friendship, support and generosity toward the Unit are greatly appreciated.

At the March unit meeting, I will be handing out envelopes with HSA-WI Unit membership dues renewal forms. If you are not able to attend the meeting, I will mail your envelope to you. Please send your renewals to my home address listed on the form by the deadline of May 12, 2020. You may also give your form and check to me at the March, April or May unit meetings. If you have any questions, call me at (262) 376-0482. Thank you in advance for paying your dues promptly.

## **Grants & Scholarship News**

The Grants and Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that its recommendations for the awarding of grants for 2020 were heartily approved at the January 21 meeting, and are as follows::

The Herb Garden at Boerner Botanical Gardens will receive monies to purchase plants, seeds and shrubs as well as soil and a special fertilizer to combat the dreaded jumping worms. The Herb Garden theme for 2020, "Edible Flowers", sounds delicious!

The grant to the Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens (FGGB) will aid in its K-12 student plant science education classes for Milwaukee area public school students. Specifically, the HSA support will allow FBBG to sponsor 30+ students in four consecutive lessons. These lessons allow the students to learn about plant biology, soil, vermiculture, healthy nutrition choices, how to plant and harvest vegetables, and small space container gardening.

The Old World Wisconsin grant will allow OWW to replant the landscape and gardens at the 1870's Hessian Immigrant Farm (Schottler Farm), which were damaged due to nearby barn construction. OWW plans to replace the ornamental beds adjacent to the main house as well as replace some of the heirloom roses that were damaged.

As is tradition, all three 2019 grant winners were present at the January 21 meeting to share the outcomes of their work. Ellen Hayward represented BFF, Peggy Zautke the Herb Garden at Boerner Botanical Gardens, and Gwen Griffith and Jeanne Christensen OWW. Jeanne is OWW's recently hired Historic Gardner and replaces long-time Historic Gardner Marcia Carmichael.

Also present at the January 21 meeting was our 2019 Scholarship winner, Nathan Mannes. Nathan, who is from Watertown, WI, is finishing up his degree in Culinary Management at Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) and working full-time at Lagniappe Brasserie in New Berlin.

At Lagniappe, Nathan was responsible this summer for several of the restaurant's raised beds of vegetables and herbs, and shared with us his love of gardening, and the joys of cooking with fresh vegetables and herbs. Nathan is a smart, talented and enthusiastic young chef/gardener---and you'll have a chance to meet him at our March 7 Symposium. Take a moment to congratulate him.

Members of the Grants and Scholarship Committee are: Nancy Kelly, Karen Klimczak, DonnaRae Knop, Denise Nelson, Nell Schneider, Susan Williams, and Lore Borth, Chair.

## **Elections**

Candidates will be voted on at the April meeting. This year at our April meeting we will be voting to fill the positions of Secretary and Treasurer. An absentee ballot may be requested before April 1 from Diane Kescenovitz (kescenovitz.diane@att.net) and must be returned to her ten days before the April meeting. The ballots will be opened and counted by the Nominating committee at the April meeting. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present and the returned absentee ballots at the April meeting. Please see below the bios of the two candidates.

Submitted by the Nominating Committee,  
Melody Orban, Chair  
Diane Kescenovitz  
Joanne Ruggieri

### **Secretary Candidate – Tricia Hallam**

I became interested in herbs by attending the lectures at the Cedarburg fairgrounds for many years. I became a Master Gardener last year, thinking I was joining the knowledgeable ladies who knew all about herbs. When last year's lecture schedule didn't come out, I searched for an old flyer and contacted Denise Nelson to find out why! She invited me to come to an Herb Society meeting, which I did, and immediately fell in love with the group.

I've learned so much this past year and hope to continue to contribute much to this organization.

I am trained as an elementary school teacher, but I have had years of secretarial experience, as well as bookkeeping and retail. I have had much experience with taking minutes as secretary in many volunteer organizations, including Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, VFW Auxiliary, as a deaconess at our church, and the Waukesha Co. Sheriff's Reserve. I will do my best to be a good secretary for the HSA-WI Unit.

### **Treasurer Candidate – Denise Nelson**

Having over a decade of Private Banking experience has given me a well-rounded background for serving as your Treasurer for the past seven years. My detailed records have been reviewed and found to be accurate. I have promptly paid the Unit bills, which include: building use and locker rentals, insurance policies, filing our tax return, renewing our Tax-Exempt permit and reimbursing members and businesses for approved expenses.

As Treasurer I have been responsible for collecting membership dues, H.S.A. event reservations, cash box tabulations, proceeds from and payments due for the Symposium and our Herb Fair. This has always been handled in a timely and efficient manner.

I computerized our budget and committee expense reports. I am responsible for helping to formulate the Unit budget and present it at the Annual Meeting.

I have the best interest of the Unit in mind as I take care of our financial records and business administration. I would like to continue to serve for another term.

### **National Conference (Melody Orban)**

The HSA 2020 Annual Meeting of Members will be in gorgeous Charleston, South Carolina on April 16-17. History buffs, foodies, and garden lovers alike will want to use the annual meeting as an excuse to visit historic Charleston. The event will kick off on Thursday, April 16th with a preconference reception giving an opportunity to socialize with members from across the country.

On Friday the HSA Annual Meeting of Members leads off the business activities where you will hear updates from the Board of Directors and have opportunities to take advantage of committee meetings to further learn about the activities of The Society. Of course, the day wouldn't be complete without fascinating speakers who will share with you the deep culture of Charleston and the low country. There is still time to register!

## **District Gathering (Melody Orban)**

HSA schedules area meetings of the districts called Gatherings. They are a more local affordable way to connect with your fellow herb enthusiasts. Each is unique and offers wonderful learning opportunities that can include presentations, workshops, tours and great food.

We are in the Central District that includes Wisconsin, Indiana and Kentucky. The 2020 Summer Central Gathering will be in Green Bay on Friday, June 5 and Saturday June 6th hosted by the Northeast WI Unit. Their plans are in process and include programs on Holistic Stress Relief, Herbal cocktails and muddling, a garden tour and tea pairing and tasting. I plan on attending and hope many of you join me there. It will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with our Wisconsin "sister" unit.

### **OUT & ABOUT**

(Louise Block)

**March 11, 2020, Wednesday, 1:00 PM** – *Ebert's Greenhouse Production Tour*

*The annual "Behind the Scenes" Production Tour is a great opportunity for you to see what goes on behind the scenes in Ebert's Greenhouses as they prepare for the upcoming season. At this free event, you'll learn about how our beautiful hanging baskets and planters, perennials, annuals and other plants get their start and how they care for them to ensure that you have the most beautiful, healthy plants to take home with you. You will hear about the other fun events they host throughout the year. They will also share some of Ebert's history and what exciting changes they are planning for the future.*

*There are two tours that day. The first one starts 10:00 am and the afternoon session begins at 1:00 pm. There are limited spaces for this awesome event so RSVP early! Call 920-261-5645 or e-mail Anne at: [anneadams@ebertsgreenhouse.com](mailto:anneadams@ebertsgreenhouse.com). Or see Louise (4 Reserved).*

**Sunday, August 2, 2020 - 1860's tea in the Afternoon** *The Elmbrook Historical Society will present an Old Fashioned Tea in the Historic Dining Room of the Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum, 1075 Pilgrim Parkway, Brookfield on Sunday, August 2 at 1:00. Tea includes a selection of teas, tea sandwiches, a selection of scones, biscuits, or fruit breads, fresh fruit, cookies, tarts, pies or cake, tea or lemonade. A docent led tour of the Inn is also included. Menu reflects foods of the period. Cost is \$20 per person. Contact [elmbrookhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:elmbrookhistoricalsociety@gmail.com) pre-registration and pre-payment are required. To date eight members have registered.*

**Waukesha County Technical College** *will be starting their international menus in March. As soon as we know date, we will send an email notifying members. You will need to respond quickly to be included in this always memorable lunch.*

## **Chicago Tea Festival Oct.31, Nov 1-2 (Melody Orban)**

The Tea Sippers News has just announced the date of the 2020 Tea Festival in Chicago. <https://teasippersociety.com/> Last year the Friday was for the vendors and Sat.-Sun. for participants. <https://www.citfest.com/>

What is a tea festival? Well, in short, it is a day all about tea. Learning about tea, tea preparation, tea culture and history and of course, tons of tea tastings! The main event, so to speak, is a tea market. All gathered together will be lots of tea merchants. There will be local Chicago area merchants as well as vendors from all around the world who will have tea samples for tasting. Also, there will be some craftspeople who create tea-related art! All of the vendors on the floor will have at least a 50% focus on tea or tea-related items.

## **A Plain Vanilla Murder**

Our second Book Club gathering will be on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 p.m., at Diane Kescenovitz's house. We will be reading the new 27<sup>th</sup> book by Susan Whittig-Albert, "A Plain Vanilla Murder". Please call Diane (262-777-1672) by April 24<sup>th</sup> latest if you plan to attend – she will email you her address/directions before we meet. The Unit owns several of Susan Wittig Albert's mysteries, and you may check them out from our library cart. <https://www.bookseriesinorder.com/susan-wittig-albert/>

In "A Plain Vanilla Murder", China and Ruby Wilcox are presenting their annual "Not Just Plain Vanilla Workshop," always a huge hit with customers at Thyme & Seasons Herb Shop. But someone involved with the workshop is driven by a deadly motive, and China soon finds herself teaming up with the very pregnant Pecan Springs police chief Sheila Dawson to solve a vanilla-flavored murder. Come discuss the book, maybe compare it to some of the other mysteries and enjoy some baked items featuring vanilla, herb of the month for January 2020.

## **Drawer Freshener and Moth Repellent**

(Susan Wittig Albert "All About Thyme" 2/20)

Blend together some or all of the following dried herbs, in equal amounts: wormwood, tansy, lavender, thyme, rosemary, mint. Cut six-inch squares of loose-weave fabric. Lay wrong-side up and place 2-3 tablespoons of dried herbs in the center. Gather up the edges and tie securely with a pretty ribbon.

### **Treat headaches with herbs:**

You're shopping, traveling, wrapping, cooking—and whoomf! a headache happens. For ordinary headaches caused by the stresses and strains of daily life, a calming cup of herbal tea may be all you need to restore your equilibrium. Use these dried headache herbs, brewed with 1 cup boiling water and sweetened with honey:

- Lavender, lemon balm, meadowsweet, ½ teaspoon each
- Sage, rosemary, mint, ½ teaspoon each
- Rosemary, marjoram, peppermint, ½ teaspoon each

A cool lavender compress for the temples and a quiet rest in a dark room may also give you the relief you need.



## **Recipes**

### **Cream of Mushroom Soup**

(Joanne Ruggieri – January 2020 Meeting)

5 cups	sliced, fresh mushrooms
1-1/2 cups	chicken broth
1/2 cup	chopped onion
1 clove	garlic
3T	butter
3T	all purpose flour
1/4 tsp	salt
1/4 tsp	pepper
1 cup	1/2 & 1/2
1 T	Sherry wine (or your choice)
1/8 tsp	thyme
1/8 tsp	parsley

Cook mushrooms in broth with onions, garlic, thyme and parsley for 10 minutes. Then puree in blender. Melt butter in sauce pan, whisk in flour until smooth. Add salt, pepper, 1/2 & 1/2 and pureed ingredients. Stir constantly and bring to a boil. Cook until thickened. Adjust seasonings to taste, (I added much more broth.) Add wine. Enjoy!



## Raspberry Almond Scones

two peasandtheirpod.com/raspberry-almond-scones/  
(Pat Greathead, November 2019 Research Mtg)

For the Scones:

2 c all purpose flour  
1 T baking soda  
3 T granulated sugar  
½ t salt  
6 T cold unsalted butter (cut into 1/4" cubes)  
1 c heavy cream plus 1 T divided  
¼ t almond extract  
1/3 c sliced almonds  
1 c raspberries

For the Almond glaze:

1 c powdered sugar  
4-5 T heavy cream or milk  
½ t almond milk  
¼ c sliced almonds for garnish

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a Silpat and set aside. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, sugar and salt. Quickly cut in the butter, using your hands, two knives, or a pastry blender. Mix until mixture resembles coarse meal, with a few larger butter lumps. Pour 1 c of heavy cream and almond extract over the ingredients and stir with a spatula until dough begins to form. Don't over mix. Gently fold in sliced almonds and raspberries. The raspberries will get a little smashed, but that is ok. The scones will be pretty.

Transfer dough to a floured countertop and knead dough by hand just until it forms a ball. Form scones by patting the dough into a 3/4" thick circle. Cut the scones into even triangles. We got 8 scones. Place scones on prepared baking sheet. Using a pastry brush, brush scones lightly with the additional heavy cream.

Bake scones for 15-18 minutes or until scones are light brown. Cool scones on a wire cooling rack. While the scones are cooling, make the almond glaze. In a small bowl, whisk together powdered sugar, heavy cream or milk, and almond extract. Whisk until you reach desired consistency. Drizzle glaze over the scones. Top with additional sliced almonds. Serve. Scones will keep in an air-tight container for up to 2-3 days, but they really are best eaten the day they are made.

## TIPSY HISTORY

### Leonardo da Vinci's *Aquarosa* Drink

Hopefully we all have poison free gardens. Our herbs grow happily with roses (grown as an herb for medicinal purposes since time began), and they keep each other healthy. As the rose season begins, it is the time to collect rose petals to make this delicious cool drink that comes to us from none other than Leonardo da Vinci. Dry them in the shade on a tea towel.

2019 marked the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this amazing man's death; many European museums had special showings dedicated to him, and there was a renewed interest in his writing and notebooks. Truly Leonardo da Vinci was one of the most eclectic and genial men in history, who was also interested in plants and herbs. In his *Codice Atlantico, foglio 482*, he left the following recipe.

The rose he referred to was probably the wonderfully perfumed Damask Rose, *R. damascena*, the same rose that Botticelli painted in his 'Birth of Venus', in 1486. You can use the petals from any fragrant rose, such as the Rugosa roses, 'Fire Fighter', etc.

The ingredients you will need to make a quart of **Leonardo da Vinci's *Aquarosa***:

- 1 quart of water
- 2 lemons
- 4 Tablespoons sugar
- 4 Tablespoons dried fragrant rose petals
- 1 cup 90 percent grain alcohol (or you could use vodka)

Squeeze the lemons and put the juice and water in a large pitcher. Add the sugar, the rose petals, and the alcohol. Stir well until the sugar is dissolved. Cover the pitcher tightly and place it in a cool place (da Vinci didn't have a refrigerator...but that is best for us...) for at least 3 hours. Strain through gauze (or a coffee filter), and serve cold.

And ...ahem...Leonardo thought this drink was Aphrodisiac!

Enjoy it in good company! Helene Pizzi

# AN HERB GARDENER'S SECRET DIGESTIVE LIQUOR

Early summer is the time to make this amazingly digestive (and delicious besides) liquor, that was made in abbeys and convents centuries ago.

Of course, this recipe is 'top secret', so once you have received compliments after an excellent dinner, as your guests sip this liquor in tiny glasses, you can sit back and enjoy all the accolades, never revealing your secret.

You will need:

- 35 leaves of lemon verbena (*Aloysia citrodora*)
- 5 fresh mint leaves
- A few sprigs of catmint (*nepitella*)
- 2 bay leaves
- A few sprigs of thyme
- A tablespoon of fresh marjoram leaves
- 2 sprigs of rosemary
- 2 myrtle leaves
- A whole cinnamon stick
- 6 whole cloves
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 vanilla bean slit lengthwise, including the seeds that you have scraped free
- 2 cups 90 proof grain alcohol

Place in a large canning jar and cover tightly. Put it in a dark cupboard for two weeks, giving it a shake morning and evening.

- 2 cups water
- 1-3/4 cups sugar

Place in a sauce pan and boil to dissolve the sugar and form a syrup. Cool completely.

Strain the herb/spice liquid through a coffee filter. Mix well with the sugar syrup. Pour into small pretty bottles that have tight fitting caps. Place in a dark cupboard for 3 months...and whoopee...it is ready! Serve room temperature in tiny glasses, to be slowly sipped after dinner as a digestive. In the summer put the bottle in the freezer and serve it icy cold.

You will enjoy these moments as you are sure to receive no end of compliments for your Herb Gardener's Secret liquor.

Helene Pizzi

## Off With Their Heads!

(Southwest Gardening, 1/22/20)

When starting herb seeds in pots or soil we often sow more than necessary. After they emerge and sprout leaves you'll need to do a bit of thinning to remove the excess seedlings. It can be tough to get rid of those babies but overcrowding results in weak plants.

Instead of pulling up excess seedlings and endangering the roots of the ones you want to keep, try lopping off their heads. Using manicure scissors, clip off the unwanted seedlings at the base of the plant. The root will soon die without the sustaining power of the leaves. You'll accomplish your goal without disturbing the soil or the roots of the tender plants you want to keep.

**Diane Kescenovitz**  
2427 W Plum Tree Court  
Mequon, WI 53092  
(Return Service Requested)



*ONCE IN A BLUE MOON*

*Once in a blue moon an unusual beam  
Forces nature awake early from winter's dream.  
Then grass carpets suck snow's blanket weave  
Frost and ice heave, getting ready to leave;  
Surprises press up from bulbs stored below  
Primrose and snowdrops and violets show;  
Tumbling creeks spill out winter debris  
Trees empty branches come alive with glee;  
Tiny eggs snuggle in fresh feathered nest,  
Winds caress creatures awakened from rest;  
Sun radiates warmth with satisfied mirth  
Old Mother Earth will again give birth!*

(Joan Janssen "Under the Leaf")



If you have an event, article, recipe, etc. in which you feel members might be interested, please send to Diane at [kescenovitz.diane@att.net](mailto:kescenovitz.diane@att.net) and I will try to put it in the next issue of SAGE LEAVES if there is room.

Future SAGE LEAVES will be mailed out to arrive by 5/1/20 and 7/1/20.