

La Yerba Buena

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY

NUMBER 183, JUNE 2005

SAHS Welcomes Susan Wittig Albert



National best-selling author Susan Wittig Albert will present "Magic, Medicine, and Mystery: Herbs Through Human History" at this month's meeting. Her latest book, **Dead Man's Bones**, the thirteenth book in her herbal mystery series will be available for signing as well as others in the series. Meet Susan Wittig Albert in person as she discusses writing, herbs, and her journey from earning her PhD at Berkeley to becoming a full-time mystery writer. She and her writing partner/husband Bill make their home in the Texas Hill country with their herb gardens and their animals.

The meeting is Thursday, June 9th at 7:00 p.m. at the San Antonio Garden Center, corner of Funston and N. New Braunfels. Join us for social time at 6:30 p.m. and get to know other members. For more information call the SAHS Hotline at 641-8166 and leave a message. An officer will return your call.

Notices and Announcements

Refreshments - Members with last names beginning **M - S** are asked to bring refreshments to the meeting. Please arrive by 6:30 p.m. so all can enjoy your dish. And don't forget to bring your recipe for anything homemade so it can be included in the next newsletter.

May Banquet Thanks - Many thanks to the following people for their contributions to the success of our banquet: Lorraine Jennings - lovely piano music; Rosemary Kotrich - beautiful table decorations on the serving tables and banquet planning; Elvia Ripley - beautiful paper fiesta flowers/door prizes decorating the stage; Adrienne Hacker & Cindy Brown (Hospitality Team) - delicious tea & other banquet details; Anita Baldwin of the SA Garden Center - scheduling room set up and opening early; Syeira Budd's mother - sent Meyer lemons, fresh from her trees in California for our salmon; and the cooks & food coordinators, who brought all of the delicious dishes to round out our meal.

Banquet table decorators & hostesses:

Syeira Budd & Erica Lizarraga; Jean Dukes & Yoli Huron; Cynthia Hodas; Joe-Beth Kirkpatrick; Rosemary Kotrich; Diane Lewis; Janet Miller; Marcia Scalf; and Georgia Zugay.

Thank you all!

Diane Lewis

VP Programs- May Banquet Chair 2005

Membership News - All sorts of membership materials are available to you. Please contact Syeira Budd at the monthly meetings to pick up your 2005 membership discount card (good for a 10% discount at selected local nurseries), current membership contact lists (\$1.00 each), or new member welcome packets.

Newsletter Deadline - Don't hesitate to share news, ideas, recipes, remedies, or stories in our monthly newsletter. Email your July newsletter submissions to Syeira Budd at syeiraq@yahoo.com by June 19.

June Board Meeting - This month's board meeting will be held on June 16th at 7:00 p.m. at Lyn Belisle's home. If you would like to add anything to the June agenda, please contact Jane McDaniel in advance at janesirish@earthlink.net or 930-1026.

Welcome New Members!

A big welcome from all of us to the following members who recently joined SAHS:

Gilma Alverson

Rosa A. Luna

Tussie-Mussies To:

The amazing **Joe-Beth Kirkpatrick** and **all of the volunteers** who made the SAHS booth and plant sales at Viva Botanica such a smashing success!

The talented **Lyn Belisle** for redesigning our website (check it out at www.sanantonioherbs.org) and arranging for regular updates. It looks terrific!

Inside this issue:

Habitat for Humanity Update	2	June To-Do List	4
May Meeting Report	2	Calendar	6
Non-Profit Status	2	Treasurer's Report	7
May Banquet Recipes	2	SAHS Contact List	7

Habitat for Humanity Update

Our commitment to do the landscaping for the Habitat houses is yet to happen this year. Upcoming dates are as follows:

July 16 (9 houses at Van De Walle site)
 August 20 (2 houses at Van De Walle site)
 November 5 (17 houses at Palo Alto site)

Volunteer sign-up sheets will be available at this month's meeting. Some other ideas being tossed around are the donation of an herb for each house and giving a pair of gardening gloves or a kneeling pad with the tools. Rosemary Kotrich has again volunteered to do the gift tags accompanying the tools. She could use two members to help her assemble them. Let's get organized and watch the compliments surely to follow. It's such a nice feeling to hear the feedback for our efforts. This happened just last week at Viva Botanica when two homeowners came to our booth and told Adrienne Hacker that our members had inspired them at last fall's Habitat planting to visit the San Antonio Botanical Garden and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center this spring!

Report on the May General Meeting of the SAHS

Report of the San Antonio Herb Society Meeting on Thursday, May 12th, 2005 at the Garden Center, submitted by Veronica Gard, Secretary.

Jane McDaniel, our President opened the proceedings at 7pm by welcoming everyone to the May Banquet.

Janet Miller then introduced the new Board again so the membership could see who was who now that the new Board is complete.

As it was the Spring Banquet the business side of the meeting was kept to a minimum. The volunteer needs were explained and then Adrienne Hacker gave further information about the plan to become a Non-Profit organization. A number of questions showed that the members were not at all sure about what this change means or if it is necessary. The President decided to table the question until a later meeting so that the Board could explain more fully what is involved.

After which a great time was had by all in the beautifully decorated room that was filled with delicious food. Each of the tables had been decorated individually and all were fascinating to look at. How lucky we are to have such a talented group - table designers, and wonderful cooks - perfect combination for a delightful banquet.

Information about the proposed not-for-profit status of SAHS

The Board is presently working on a comprehensive information packet to cover the subject of forming a non profit corporation. This will include a clear listing of the proposed Constitution and by laws changes, a listing of our present Constitution and by laws, (for easy comparison) and an extensive listing of pros and cons on the subject of the San Antonio Herb Society need - or non-need - of tax exempt status. This will also include an analysis of the financial advantages and/or disadvantages to achieving a not-for-profit (IRS Code 501(c)(3)) qualification.

This information packet will be available through a number of sources: it will be published in the July and August "La Yerba Buena" newsletter, it will be posted on our web site, and we will set up an information table at the September general meeting to cover the subject in all its myriad facets. I recommend strongly that you use these opportunities to become informed about the subject. Then, ask questions, questions, questions! We plan on having an expert from the San Antonio Non-Profit Resource Center on hand to answer questions in September. In the meantime, please feel free to call Adrienne Hacker or me with questions and concerns.

The Board as a whole wants you to become as informed as possible as to the many ways in which the San Antonio Herb Society can use a non-profit status to its advantage. Our thinking in this matter is from a long-term view: gaining a non-profit qualification will allow us to avoid a great number of financial burdens for which we presently pay out of our fund-raising efforts and, to a much lesser extent, from member dues. There is a lot of good in the community that we can do with that money.

So, watch this space for information - it's coming!

Jane McDaniel

May Banquet Recipes

Special thanks to those of you who provided a printed recipe for your dish. We certainly enjoyed a feast!

Tomato Mozzarella Appetizer (*Jamie Jarosek Gonzalez*)

Mozzarella cheese, cut in bite-size cubes
 Small cherry or "grape" tomatoes
 Lemon basil, chopped
 Drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil
 Combine all ingredients and enjoy!

**Variations include: ricotta insalata or goat cheese, Genovese or big leaf basil*

Mint Pineapple Appetizer (*Veronica Gard*)

Take a ripe pineapple.

Take mint leaves from your garden.

Take a package of cream cheese.

Take a packet of cocktail sticks.

1) Cut the pineapple into small cubes.

2) After washing them, take the mint leaves off their stems. Put into a pile.

3) Cut the cold cream cheese up into small cubes.

4) Put a mint leaf onto a cocktail stick. Add a piece of cream cheese. Add a piece of pineapple. Finish it off with another mint leaf.

There - simple, refreshing, easy to make and eat. Many thanks to Carol-lee for helping me plan this totally original dish!

Herbed Walnuts (*chef unknown*)

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 pound walnut halves

1-1/2 tablespoons crushed dried rosemary

1 teaspoon paprika

1 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place butter and oil in a large pan and melt in oven. Scatter nuts in the pan, stir to coat. Scatter rosemary, paprika, and salt evenly over nuts. Bake for 20-25 minutes, stirring several times until nuts are golden brown.

Lentil Dip (*Margaret Field*)

2/3 to 1 cup dry lentils

1-3/4 to 2 cups chicken stock (I used Swanson's vegetarian vegetable broth)

2/3 cup plain yogurt

1 clove garlic

Salt & pepper to taste

Cook lentils in broth until done (20-30 minutes) and allow to cool.

Process with the other ingredients in food processor or blender.

June's Spinach Dip (*Cynthia Hodas*)

In Loving Memory of June Grosso

I called her my friend for 20+ years. Our children grew up together. She was a great cook; so much so that her family had an Italian restaurant in San Antonio. Anything she touched was as beautiful as herself. She is missed!

8 oz. sour cream

1 cup mayo

1/2 teaspoon each celery salt & dill weed

1/4 teaspoon onion salt

1/4 cup chopped green onions

10 oz. chopped, frozen spinach, thawed & drained

8 oz. can water chestnuts, finely chopped

Combine all above, chill & serve.

Mini Meatballs with Creamy Dill Dip (*Syeira Budd*)

Meatballs:

1 cup finely chopped onion

1/4 cup dry bread crumbs

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon dill seeds

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 pound ground round

1 large egg white, lightly beaten

Dip:

2/3 cup fat-free sour cream

1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill

2 teaspoons minced garlic

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

To prepare meatballs, combine first seven ingredients in a bowl; shape mixture into 32 (1-inch) meatballs) Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add half of meatballs to pan; cook 8 minutes or until done, browning on all sides. Remove from pan; drain well on paper towels. Repeat with remaining meatballs. Cover and chill.

To prepare dip, combine sour cream and remaining ingredients, stirring with a whisk. Cover and chill. Serve meatballs with dip.

Greek Orzo Salad (*Maryellen McCormick*)

1-1/4 cups dried orzo

8 oz. feta cheese, cubed or coarsely crumbled

1 cup chopped Roma tomatoes

1/2 cup chopped pitted Kalamata olives

1 tablespoon snipped fresh basil

1 tablespoon snipped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1/3 cup olive oil

3 tablespoons lemon juice

1 small clove garlic, minced

1/2 teaspoon snipped fresh oregano

Salt and ground pepper

Cook pasta to package directions, drain. Rinse with cold water, drain again. Transfer pasta to large bowl. Cover, chill in refrigerator for 1 to 2 hours. Add feta, tomatoes, olive, basil and parsley to chilled pasta, stir to combine.

In a jar with a screw top lid, place olive oil, lemon juice, garlic and oregano. Shake vigorously to combine. Pour dressing over pasta mixture, toss to coat, salt and pepper to taste. Cover and chill in refrigerator for 2 to 24 hours.

Couscous Pilaf with Mint (*Kathy Bruce*)

6 med. carrots, quartered lengthwise & sliced 1/8-inch thick

1 cup uncooked couscous

1/2 cup slivered almonds

1/2 cup raisins

1/4 cup chopped fresh mint

1 tablespoon olive oil

1-1/2 teaspoon coarse salt

1/4 teaspoon ground pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix all ingredients in a casserole dish with 1-1/4 cups of water. Tightly cover with foil or lid and bake 15 to 20 minutes.

Unusual Cole Slaw (*Jinnie Perkins*)

1 package angel hair coleslaw (10 oz.)

3 tablespoons sunflower seeds

1/4 cup sliced almonds

1 package beef Ramen

1 small onion, finely chopped (optional)

Dressing:

1/2 cup oil

3 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

Salt & pepper to taste

Crumble Ramen noodles. Sprinkle on seasoning packet and mix well. Add remaining ingredients, cabbage last. Mix dressing ingredients and add to slaw. Mix thoroughly and chill. Keeps well in fridge.

(Recipes cont'd on page 5)

June To-Do List

by Brian Townsend

1ST WEEK:

- Spider mites can be controlled with insecticidal soap or kelthane (or a strong spray of water) applied under the leaves. The first signs of damage from spider mites will be tiny tan mottling on the leaves. Eventually, the leaves will turn entirely tan, then brown and dead. You may even see webbing, but only once the pests are out of control. To know if spider mites are plaguing your garden, thump a suspected twig over a sheet of white paper. If you see tiny paprika-colored specks that move, you've discovered spider mites!
- Remove spent flower spikes from all salvias.
- Blue salvias, zinnias, vinca and esperanza are good summer blooming plants that the deer do not eat.
- Consider Mexican dwarf petunia (*Ruellia brittoniana* "Katie") as a ground cover for the shade. The flowers are violet-blue. "Bonita" is a pink version of the mounding plant with dark green foliage.
- Plant iris, spider lilies, gloriosa lilies and caladiums.
- Divide and replant Mexican mint marigold (*Tagetes lucida*) and chrysanthemums so you will have more flowers in fall.
- Prune actively growing shrubs, such as elaeagnus and pyracantha, frequently.
- Mulch around trees and shrubs to save water and protect plants roots from the drying sun. Replenish as needed to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.
- There's still time to plant okra. This vegetable loves the heat and will do well planted even into June.
- Plant summer annuals for color. Good candidates for sunny areas are moss rose, firebush, copper plant, celosia and lantana.
- Remove flower buds from caladiums, coleus, mums and santolina to keep the plants growing vigorously.
- Keep tomatoes evenly moist to prevent blossom-end rot. Mulch with 2 to 3 inches of organic material, being careful not to put mulch against the stem of the plant.
- Fertilize container plants and hanging baskets regularly with water-soluble fertilizer.

2ND WEEK:

- It is time to compost squash, brussels sprouts and other vegetable plants that are at the end of their productive life and infected with powdery mildew.
- If you had a good season with flowering sweet pea, inspect and pull dried seed pods and save for sharing and fall sowing.
- Plant Southern peas (black eye, purple hull, crowder, etc.) for a summer harvest and soil improvement.
- If you're looking for a different summer plant, consider basil for the summer garden. Many colors, shapes and fragrances (and flavors) are available.
- Bougainvillea don't like to be pampered. Let them get rootbound and let them dry out to 1 inch below the soil line

between waterings. Fertilize every 4 weeks with hibiscus food for bountiful bloom.

- Soak coleus, caladiums and geraniums to a depth of 8" to help them cope with summer heat.
- Maintain mulches at a depth of 2 to 6 inches, depending on the material used.
- Pinching back the tips of vigorously growing foliage plants will stimulate new growth and make plants fuller.
- Plant crape myrtles while they are in bloom so you can be sure of the color you want.
- Look for small white leaf hoppers, which form cottony masses on plants. Use insecticidal soap or neem oil for control.

3RD WEEK:

- Fall webworms are making their homes in pecan and mulberry trees. Open the webs with a cane pole so wasps can feed on the worms. Other options are to spray Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), carbaryl or Malathion on the foliage where they are feeding or to let them run their course without treatment.
- Start tomato and pepper seeds now so you can be ready for fall planting.
- If container plants such as geraniums are declining despite regular watering, move them to a less sunny spot. Be careful to gradually decrease the amount of light they receive.
- For dry, sunny beds now is the time to plant vinca for summer bloom. Water in the mornings or use drip irrigation (sprinkling over the top causes fungal dieback). Mulch beds.
- If your trees are raining sticky sap onto the patio, driveway and your car, the trees are filled with aphids. They're small, pear-shaped insects that create sticky messes on all surfaces beneath pecans, oaks, crape myrtles and others. You'll see the varnish-like residue on leaves initially. Spray at that point to stop their quick population surges. Left unchecked, a black sooty mold will grow in the sticky honeydew.
- The white, frothy material deposited along stems and leaves may be caused by spittlebugs. Spittlebugs suck the juices from plants but do not usually require spraying.
- To encourage more flowers on annuals and perennials, remove faded flowers before plants set seed (light application of fertilizer will help also, be sure to water in).
- Pinch back chrysanthemums, Mexican mint marigold, autumn asters and other late summer and fall-blooming annuals to increase their flowering capability.
- Plant heat-loving shade plants such as coleus, caladiums and begonias.
- June is the month to select daylily varieties as they peak bloom.

• Dig and divide crowded spring bulbs. Once bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them out and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every 3 to 4 years. Replant immediately in prepared soil.

4TH WEEK:

- Remove faded flowers from zinnias and roses for a longer bloom season. Get the same effect on verbena and lantana by skimming the plants with a string mower every four weeks.
- Place firebush in a container to attract hummingbirds to the patio. The plant needs full sun. If you have a shady patio, use firespike instead.
- Periodically prune reblooming salvias, such as cherry sage (*Salvia greggii*) and mealy blue sage (*Salvia farinacea*), for continued blooms.
- Fall-blooming perennials such as Mexican mint marigold, chrysanthemums and Mexican bush sage should be pruned during summer to keep them compact and reduce the need for staking.
- Finish pruning spring-flowering shrubs, vines and climbing roses.

IN OUR HERB GARDEN:

- Shape plants by pruning gently, pinch back blossoms to save plants from going to seed and cross-pollinating, and mulch. Maintaining 2" of mulch is the key to saving water, discouraging weeds, and cooling the soil.
 - Check watering system(s). Drip irrigation is ideal. Water early in the morning and deeply, check on a regular basis.
- Caution:** do not over-water, keep water-thirsty plants separate from more tolerant plants (this makes watering chores much easier). It is easy to kill sage or rosemary by being too kind with water.
- During periods of high heat and humidity, check and apply "earth-kind" treatments for pests, such as spider mites, white flies, aphids, and mealy bugs.

Thanks to Brian Townsend for this monthly article. Brian has culled this information from the wisdom of a number of local and regional gardening experts, plus our own *HERBS: A Resource Guide for San Antonio*.

Lavender Lemonade

Try this recipe from the Hill Country Lavender Farm in Blanco. It's a refreshing antidote to the summer heat.

Make lemonade either from scratch or concentrate. Separately, make a lavender tea, using dried lavender in a cheesecloth bag. Let the tea steep for about 15 minutes; remove the lavender. Pour the tea into the lemonade. Use about 1 cup of lavender tea for every gallon of lemonade. Add plenty of ice, and a lavender sprig in each glass for a garnish.

May Banquet Recipes *(cont'd from page 3)*

Heloise's Chinese Beets *(Bertha Meier)*

- 6 cups cooked, sliced beets or 3 (16 oz.) cans sliced beets
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 12 whole cloves
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Dash of salt

Drain the beets, reserving 1-1/2 cups of the beet liquid. Place the beets in a medium saucepan with the reserved liquid and the remaining ingredients. Mix well. Cook well for 3 minutes over medium heat or until mixture thickens. Cool and store in refrigerator.

Blazing Sweet Potatoes *(Jackie Compere)*

- 1 can (29 oz.) sweet potatoes, drained, reserve 1 tablespoon juice
 - 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 - 1/4 teaspoon powdered ginger
 - 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
 - 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
 - Marshmallows for topping
- Puree sweet potatoes, reserved juice, spices and butter in food processor or mixer. Heat in 350 degrees oven until heated through. Top with marshmallows and broil until marshmallows are browned. **I make the spice mix times four and keep a jar of the spice mixture handy. It's great on fresh sweet potatoes (add some salt) or to glorify mixed nuts.*

Zucchini & Cheese with Tarragon *(Lorna Peters Dressler)*

- 3 cups zucchini, washed (not peeled) & grated
 - 1 cup soda cracker crumbs
 - 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
 - 2 eggs, beaten
 - 2 tablespoons onions, finely chopped
 - 1 teaspoon French tarragon, finely chopped
- Combine all ingredients and place in a buttered 2-quart baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 60 minutes.

Asparagus Casserole with Pecans *(Mike and Lyn Belisle)*

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup grated cheese (we used Jack and Smoked Gouda)
- 1-1/2 cups cracker crumbs
- 1 cup pecans
- 2 cups asparagus

In a saucepan over medium low heat, melt butter; stir in salt and flour. Cook for about 4 minutes, then add milk gradually, stirring. Add grated cheese and cook, stirring, until thickened. Remove from heat.

Combine cracker crumbs with the pecans. Reserve a few tablespoons for topping.

In a buttered casserole, place a layer of asparagus, a layer of cracker mixture, then a layer of sauce. Repeat the layers, ending with the reserved crumbs. Bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes, or until top is browned.

June 2005

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4 Lavender Fields Trip	5
6	7	8	9 SAHS Meeting	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 SAHS Board Meeting	17	18	19 Father's Day Newsletter Deadline
20	21 Summer Begins	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

July 2005

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1	2	3
4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 SAHS Meeting	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 SAHS Board Meeting	22	23	24 Newsletter Deadline
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SAHS Treasurer's Report**April 2005**Submitted by **Mary Lee Estess, Treasurer**

03/31/05 Beginning Balance			\$3,509.99
INCOME			
Membership		\$190.00	
Membership Lists sold		\$6.00	
Cookbooks		\$778.14	
T-shirts		\$45.00	
Tea sales		\$15.55	
Other Books		\$7.00	
EXPENSES			
Garden Center Rent	\$85.00		
Garden Center Personnel	\$25.00		
Speaker Honorarium	\$50.00		
Newsletter Printing - April	\$51.84		
Newsletter Supplies - April	\$37.79		
Newsletter Postage - April	\$46.62		
Voicemail	\$37.17		
Membership Forms Printing	\$68.17		
Membership Prizes	\$40.24		
Nametag Mailing & Postage	\$32.67		
King William Parade Supplies	\$10.66		
Meat for May Banquet	\$195.86		
TOTALS	\$681.02	\$1,041.69	
04/30/05 Ending Balance			\$3,870.66
OTHER ITEMS			
Petty Cash Balance (cash & receipts held by President)			\$50.00
Regular Savings			\$1,000.00
2-Year Certificate of Deposit			\$1,000.00
04/30/05 TOTAL ASSETS			\$5,920.66
COOKBOOK REPORT			
Prior Cookbook Account Balance			+\$1,506.06
Cookbook sales posted 04/05		\$778.14	
New Cookbook Account Balance			+\$2,284.20

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Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, or replace the advice of a health professional.

Business Members

We thank our Business Members for their support. When you patronize their businesses, be sure to mention that you are a member of the SAHS.

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**Check out our new website address and note the updates in progress at:
www.sanantonioherbs.org**