Master Moments: Categories of Service by Janet Carson

Length of Service Awards are given to Arkansas Master Gardeners to honor their years of service as an Arkansas Master Gardener program. Pins are given to 5 year and 10 year members. Lifetime members get a new name badge and are not required to pay dues or repay any hours. We encourage lifetime members to continue to work and report hours in their county. Lifetime members who volunteer a minimum of 10 hours towards sanctioned projects in their county, keep accruing hours for 20, 25, and 30 and beyond years of service. Length of service awards are based on a calendar year, not the actual month a volunteer trains. Volunteer service as a MG in another state also does not count towards years of service in Arkansas. Time off for leave of absence or sustainer time, also does not count towards years of service. Sustainer status may be requested by a volunteer once they complete a minimum of seven years as an active Master Gardener. Sustainers still pay dues, but are not required to pay back hours. They may participate in Master Gardener events. They may register for the state MG Conference, after the initial opening registration for active only MG’s has passed. They may not participate in Advanced Master Gardener classes, which are only open to Master Gardeners who are active from their third year on. If a volunteer decides to become an active MG again, and report hours, they may change their status.

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Master Moments, a new blog from Janet Carson with pointers for Master Gardeners in addition to her “In the Garden” daily blog, will be available several times a month, along with “I Dig Extension” with garden tips. These new blogs will be in a video format that is still in development, so look for more information soon.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.
President’s Message: Leaving behind the old ..... 

Spring has finally arrived. This is a busy time of the year for master gardeners. We are preparing for plant sales, working projects, taking care of our personal gardens, and looking forward to enjoying time with fellow gardeners at state convention in Benton or gardening events throughout the state.

I hope that many of you are planning to join us at our next quarterly County 76 meeting on Tuesday, April 28th from 10-3 at the State Extension Office. Mary Wells, County 76 Training Committee Co-chair, will be presenting our program this month on Advanced Training. Mary will share the “how to” for sponsoring an AT program, as well as, be available to answer questions about AT. Janet will update us about local, national and international events and programs. Break-out sessions for all of our projects will occur after lunch. Please join us in our efforts to “strengthen and support the Arkansas Master Gardener program statewide” by providing your input for one or more of our projects – Communications, Fundraising, PNG Leadership, RRR, and Training.

Thanks for all that you do to make the Arkansas Master Gardener Program great,

Jane Burrow,
County 76 President

County 76 meeting of set for April 28

The April County 76 General Membership Meeting will be held on April 28, 2015, at the State Extension Office Auditorium in Little Rock, AR.

If you plan to attend this meeting, please email Linda Soffer at lfsoffer@gmail.com by April 22, 2015.

Lunch will be provided so please let Linda know you will be attending by the deadline for meal planning purposes. You have to option to bring your own lunch.

In addition to project work sessions, the program for the meeting will be presented by Mary Wells, co-chair for the Training Project. She will speak on hosting an Advanced Training Class. Also on the program will be money management issues presented by Janet Carson.

The April 28 meeting starts at 10 a.m. and concludes by 3 p.m. This schedule is designed to allow MGs outside central Arkansas to make the trip in one day. The meeting is held at the state office in Little Rock.

WHAT: County 76 General Meeting
WHEN: April 28, 2015
WHERE: State Extension Office Auditorium, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock
RSVP: By April 22, 2015, to Linda Soffer at lfsoffer@gmail.com

County 76.
You all make my life so much easier with all you do for the MG Program. Thank you so much for your donation honoring my father. Your love and support have made this difficult time easier!

Thanks for everything!

Janet Carson

Did You Know....
If you would like to have County 76 merchandise sold at your county events, let Marcella Grimmett know the date as soon as it’s scheduled. She’ll work with you to get the product to your event, and you’ll have information on how to record sales at your events.

Contact Marcella at Route003@hotmail.com.
Extension Aids the World War II Effort

Editor’s Note: The USCES celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2014, and the Garden Voice continues to mark this significant occasion with excerpts from “Farther Down the Road,” an e-book on the history of the UAEX by Richard Maples.

Just as it had done during World War I, through droughts, floods and the Great Depression, the Extension Service stepped up to help during World War II.

C.A. Vines, who was a cotton specialist during the war years, said the federal government considered county agents’ work helping farmers boost food, feed and fiber production so important to the war effort that they had the option of serving on the home front.

The centerpiece of Extension work during World War II was the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food for Victory program. County agriculture and home demonstration agents were asked to help farm families expand production to meet wartime needs.

Assistant Extension Director Aubrey D. Gates said, “It is essential that Arkansas families produce their own food and feed needs, not only to maintain and improve nutritional and health standards and reduce expenses, but also to relieve the pressure on the commercial market and thereby release more vital food items for the use of American armed forces and the armed forces of our allies.”

Agents also helped rural families repair and preserve farm equipment and improve living conditions by making home and farm facility repairs.

The agents knew the only way to reach all of the state’s farm families was to tap into the legions of volunteers. At the beginning of the war, there were more than 44,000 community leaders—about one for every six farm families—well trained in Extension practices.

Another 15,363 Arkansans—8,149 farm men and 7,214 farm women—enlisted as Minutemen and spearheaded campaigns to sell war bonds and stamps and collect scrap metal and rubber. The Minutemen also pitched in to help repair farm equipment, to teach landowners how to prevent forest fires and to explain to farmers how the government’s rationing and price control programs worked.

The county agents and volunteers reached farm families with specially prepared publications, letters, radio programs and community meetings.

The state’s 75,000 4-H club members, 65,000 home demonstration club members and allied agencies such as the Arkansas Farm Bureau also played a vital role in spreading the Extension message.

Home demonstration clubs adopted families that did not have poultry flocks or home gardens and helped them acquire the resources they needed to feed themselves. Many club leaders allowed their homes and appliances to be used for cooking and canning demonstrations.

Local farm organizations helped arrange community purchases of garden and crop seed, seed treaters, harvesters and combines. They also worked with the U.S. Employment Service to overcome labor shortages.

In the 1942 growing season, Arkansas cotton farmers were able to overcome a heavy infestation of boll weevils and a shortage of calcium arsenate, widely used as an insecticide, by following their agents’ advice and dusting localized areas of fields with small amounts of poison early in the season. This single practice enabled more than 46,000 cotton farmers in 65 counties to add an estimated $15 million to the value of their crop.

To provide vegetables for table use and canning, farm families set a new record, aver- aging more than one garden per farm. They used 25 percent more acreage than the previous year to produce home supplies of garden products. Over 30 million quarts of vegetables, fruits and meat were canned by families taking part in the Extension programs, and 11,907 families used Extension plans for storing conserved, home-produced foods.

During the second full year of the
war, 1943, Arkansas farmers were hard pressed to meet their wartime responsibilities. In January, frigid weather killed large acreages of fall-planted small grains and destroyed much of the state’s peach crop. On March 1, another freeze killed more small grains and early clovers. A severe drought from early April into May reduced pasture and small grain yields and prevented winter legumes from setting seed.

The drought was broken in May, but by one of the worst floods in the state’s history. Flood waters destroyed thousands of acres of spring-planted crops in the Arkansas and White River valleys and, to a lesser extent, along the St. Francis River. Then before the floods could subside, a drought set in that was as severe as the one that triggered the Dust Bowl in 1930. The 1943 drought lasted through the summer into September and slashed yields of major crops such as cotton and soybeans.

The lack of pasture grass and hay crops such as lespedeza forced dairy farmers to send some of their milk cows to slaughter and made beef producers cull their herds.

Farm men were not the only rural Arkansans asked to make the best possible use of their resources. Farm women had obligations, too. Bernice Larkin, home demonstration agent in Cleburne County, noted that Mrs. Dewey Stair, a member of the Devonshire Home Demonstration Club, did not have to worry about government food rationing.

Larkin said, “Following a live-at-home program, the Stairs have plenty of canned fruits and vegetables, dried beans and peas, sweet and Irish potatoes, canned and cured meat, butter and milk, poultry products and lard.”

The agent said the Stairs were able to sell enough surplus cream, poultry products and canned goods to provide music lessons to their two children.

Maeda Asbell, home demonstration agent for Drew County, reported that one of her club members, Mrs. E.V. Jones, set aside money from the sale of eggs and butter to buy war bonds. “In a short while, she had saved money for her first $25 bond,” said Asbell. “Within a month she had almost enough money to purchase a second bond.”

The farm wife told Asbell, “This is one way I can feel that I am helping my boys in the service.”

4-H girls and boys also invested their money in war stamps and bonds. Craighead County Home Demonstration agent Mary Britzman said one of her 4-H’ers, Joan Copeland, started with a 50-cent war stamp awarded to her for her champion dairy calf project. Within a year, the girl had saved her earnings and allowance and had enough stamps in her book to buy a $50 war bond.

Extension economists urged that national programs be initiated to make sure farmers did not face another economic “dead fall” after World War II. More immediately, farmers faced rising expenses such as feed, seed and, when you could find it, labor.

Perhaps the most critical problem for farmers during the war was the lack of labor. By mid-1944, Arkansas had lost an estimated 76,000 farm workers, mostly to the military services and wartime industries.

Farmers revived old-fashioned swap-work arrangement. The labor pools usually consisted of three or four farmers pooling their skills and equipment, augmented by their wives and children as well as outside help. The state’s single largest source of farm labor in 1944 was 175,000 older school children, including about 40,000 city kids.

Many of the state’s farm workers were 4-H’ers. As part of the government’s Feed-a-Fighter Program, which specified how much of various foods would have to be produced to feed a fighter for a year, more than 62,000 of the state’s 79,515 4-H boys and girls, black and white, pledged to produce food for U.S. and allied troops.

At the beginning of 1945, as the fighting raged on, Americans were optimistic that the war would be over soon, especially in Europe. The cover article of the January 1945 Arkansas Extension Service Review revealed that administrators were looking ahead to the post-war years. What the administrators could not foresee were the rapid, dramatic changes that occurred when G.I. Joe and Rosie the Riveter came home.