



# GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 28 Issue 4 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association

April 2019



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### Message from:

**Sandy Rosamond**  
**CAMGA President**



SPRING! A season of new beginnings.

I hope all of you have new plans for your vegetable and flower gardens. The first hummingbird of the season came to my feeder yesterday. And I have seen a few swallow tailed butterflies flitting around my yard.

Sorry to say I don't have much blooming for them. Which makes me think of our Plant Sale May 4. In advance I want to say thanks to all of you for making our plant sale a success.

At our April 16 CAMGA meeting, our topic will be Native Azaleas by Patrick Thompson, Arboretum Specialist from Auburn.

See you there!  
**Sandy**

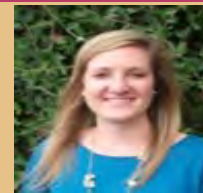


CAMGA Garden Buzzzz



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**Message from Mallory  
Mallory Kelley  
Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests**



## Time for Blueberries



Blueberry season is quickly approaching. I am currently counting down the days for the first crop to pick, which I think makes them grow slower. Blueberries are a great addition to any landscape not only for their fruit, but also for their beautiful fall color. Plant different varieties for better tasting fruit and to extend your harvesting season. With blueberries, there are few disease and insects to worry with and very little pruning. Your main concern is an acid soil, watering and weed control.

Some of the most popular rabbiteye blueberries available today are: (Early Varieties) Climax and Brightwell, (Mid to Late varieties) Tifblue and Powderblue, just to name a few. Generally blueberries need fertilizing twice a year, once in early spring and again as the berries fade away. Use a Urea based fertilizer or a fertilizer labeled for Azaleas/Camellias as this will help acidify the soil, blueberries like a low pH of 4.5-5.2. Have a soil test done if you have not had one in the past three years to know what nutrients are lacking and what the pH is.

Prune blueberries in February to remove dead and older canes to try to generate new cane growth from the ground. As your plants start to grow long straight canes, clip these to get branching. The more branches you have, the more fruit you will have next year.

Plant blueberries this fall in full sun with a moist, well-aerated, well-drained soil, high in organic matter. Incorporate organic matter such as peat moss, compost, or fine pine bark into the soil and mulch around the plant to help in retaining water and suppressing weeds. Plant them 5 feet apart in rows and always plant blueberries at the same depth they were in the container, planting too deep will kill the plant.



## **CAMGA Minutes**

### **March 19, 2019**

**By: Deann Stone, Secretary**



The meeting was called to order by Sandy Rosamond at 10:00 AM. She welcomed all members.

**Speaker:** Linda Edwards introduced our speaker, Susan O'Conner, Montgomery Master Gardener, who spoke to our group about African Violets. African Violets originated in Kenya and Tanzania. In their natural habitat, they grow in outcroppings of rocks. They don't need a lot of water, filtered water is best. They need a moderate, moist climate (65-75 degrees) and 12-13 hours of indirect light a day.

Mrs. O'Conner talked to the group about African Violet propagation by stem, blossom, and chimera. She shared standard care and potting information. The African Violet stalk should never be seen coming out of the pot. If you see this, they need to be repotted.

African Violets have many color variations and types, i.e., trailing, miniature, and standard.

Research in Russia has resulted in Violets with larger blooms. The U.S. has also conducted research. They have developed a violet in space that blooms all the time and has ruffled leaves. The flower has a white middle with purple edges.

**Presidents Report:** Sandy asked Rhonda Miles for wellness and good news info. She shared that Dee Turberville's mother passed away and that Dee is headed to Pennsylvania to make arrangements. Linda shared that we will have a speaker on native azaleas next week.

Linda shared that we will go to Petals from the Past in September. A list of topics were provided and members were asked to select a topic for the discussion. The most selected topic will be presented during our trip.

Charlotte Hall shared details regarding our trip to Aldridge Gardens. A tentative date of May 29 has been selected for our visit. Charlotte will confirm a date in late March and update the group at our next meeting.

**Secretary's Report:** Last month's minutes were shared in the news letter. They were approved by acclamation.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bill Quaille's presented the Financial Report for February 2019. The beginning balance was \$7,328, a revenue of \$101, expenses of \$1,858.50, leaving an ending balance of \$5,570.50. The report was approved by acclamation.

## **CAMGA Minutes (Continued)**

### **March 2019**

**By: Deann Stone, Secretary**



Projects Reports: Terry Chambliss shared that there was a sign up sheet on the table for the Learning Gardens Thursday, March 21, from 9 - 12. They will redo the border around the blueberry bushes, fix the leak in the water feature, transplant some items, weeding, pruning, etc. Bring gloves, pruners.

Lanark Work Day is April 17 from 9-12. Projects include digging, dividing, potting, pruning and weeding, Wear gloves, bring clippers and enjoy the work day. April 11 is the next fairy garden make day.

Lunch & Learn - There were 45 attendees at the hummingbird workshop this month.

Plant Sale - We need to know what you will bring so we will know that we have a good variety of plants. Please sign up today if you plan to participate. The plant sale will be May 4 at Trinity Episcopal.

Awards - Alabama Master Gardener Reach for the Stars awards were presented by Leigh Ann Marona. The Robin Award was presented to Amanda Borden.

The following awards will be awarded at the State Convention in May:

Mary Lou McNabb Master Gardener of the Year (1997) — CAMGA member Fred Evans was the 2008 Recipient of this award. Gary Murray Outstanding Service & Dedication Award — Extension Agent Rick Beauchamp won this award in 2012. Mallory Kelley won this award in 2018.

Our organization makes an annual recommendation for the following state awards:

Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award (2003) - Mother of Alabama MG's - CAMGA nominated Lee Borden for this award in 2019. 3,165 hours Top Hours of the Year Award (2002) - our nominee for this year is Terry Chambliss.

Reach for the Stars Award Program (1999) - our nominees for this year are:

Gold Badges - Jesse Miles, Terry Chambliss, Janet Lewis Platinum Badges - Johan Beamer, Nancy Trimble, Lois Pribulick Fred Evans Intern of the Year Award - won by Charlotte the first year.

The meeting concluded at 12:00 noon.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Deann Stone, Secretary*



## March 2019 Lunch and Learn By: Charlotte Hall

### “Hummingbirds – Fred Bassett”

The hummers are coming! The hummers are coming! Or so Fred Bassett, licensed hummingbird bander, decried with the exciting news that hummingbirds had officially been reported in the Dauphin Island area and seen in Troy already. But to his and everyone else’s delight, he was particularly thrilled with the news that two people in attendance for the March Learn and Learn program had already spied these fascinating little birds – and just that very morning of the presentation. So, hold on to your gardening hats for some intriguing information about some intriguing creatures.

The attentive audience was entertained and informed about this tiny but magnificent bird. It is so cute and enchanting that it is often easy to forget that it is actually a bird, as it is the smallest of all birds. Its name is derived from the delightful buzz or “hum” it produces when rapidly flapping its wings while flying or hovering – which may vary from 12 beats per second to an excess of 80 beats per second for some of the smallest varieties. Per second, y’all! One reason everyone is so intrigued with hummingbirds is that the hummer is the only bird that interacts with humans. Just let a hungry hummingbird see an empty feeder and if you walk out to check on it, you will usually experience some frantic interaction with the hungry bird. Fred had a treasure of photographs that he had taken over the years while banding these little flyers and recording important information of their lives.

The most common hummingbird for our area is the ruby-throated hummingbird. Other varieties that are seen at various times in this area include Rufous, Allen’s, Black-chinned, Broad-tailed, Broad-billed, Anna’s, Costa’s, and Calliope. Hummingbirds are capable of flying between 1000-3000 miles on their own power. WOW!!! The most common of all hummingbirds is the Rufous. The buff-bellied hummer migrates backwards from Mexico and comes up the Gulf Coast in winter. Fred has banded hummingbirds over 3600 miles – all the way to Alaska. Hummingbirds can survive in cold, freezing weather, if they have sugar water.

The color in the ruby-throated hummer comes from iridescence and the sunlight shining on their feathers. There are no black hummingbirds. The female does not show red under her throat, and males in the shade do not appear to have a ruby-colored throat. No sunshine, no more beautiful red iridescence. The female has a creamy white throat, but she has a longer beak than the male which she uses in feeding the young. The tongue is the same length as the bill, and hummingbirds eat similarly to a cat lapping milk and not like sucking liquids through a straw.



## **March 2019 Lunch and Learn (Continued) By: Charlotte Hall**



Attracting migratory hummingbirds consist of providing a source of food for them. Many natural flowering plants entice hummingbirds into your yard, and feeders with sugar water can also provide nourishment for the voracious birds. Hummingbirds while in flight have the highest metabolism of all animals – a necessity to support the rapid beating of their wings during hovering and flight. The heartbeat can reach as high as 1,260 beats per minute. However, even with such a high metabolism, hummingbirds can have a long-life span. If they survive the first year, hummingbirds can live a decade or more. Some of the banded birds have been recorded coming back to the same nest for many, many years with one example in Goodwater, Alabama returning for six years.

Simple sugar water made in a one to four part ratio is the best food source for the hummingbird feeders – one part of sugar with four equal parts of water. If you forget the recipe, simply look at your hand and remember the proportions. You have one thumb (sugar) and four fingers (water) for the perfect reminder. Table sugar is best – do not use natural sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar or honey. Raw sugar has iron which is harmful to the hummers. If you buy a feeder and it comes with a package to make red colored water, Fred advises to take the package with the red dye and promptly deposit it in the trash! The red dye is probably red dye #5 which is harmful to the hummers and, also, is not approved - even for humans. Fred also recommends using the non-expensive feeders which normally work the best. The fancy feeders, though they are more attractive to humans and probably cost quite a bit more, usually leak after a short period of use. Fred thinks the proportion of success with a feeder is directly inverse or opposite to the amount of money you spend on feeders. The less spent, the more success you will probably have.

Feeders need to be cleaned on a regular basis. In the summer time or whenever it is hot, this should be at least once a week. His recommended method is to place the feeder in hot water with some chlorine bleach, leave it for about 10-15 minutes, rinse and refill. In the winter time, this schedule changes to about once per month. The water does not need to be boiled - only warm enough to dissolve the sugar completely. Fred also recommends using an ant moat since ants are naturally attracted to the sugar water. Ants are acidic and if they get into the nectar, they change the formula of the nectar which is not advantageous to the hummers.

Another true and amazing fact about the hummingbirds is that they do fly non-stop 18 hours across the Gulf of Mexico to live in the Tropics and return on another non-stop flight back to the United States. Usually by March 15<sup>th</sup>, we begin to see both males and females return to our area – beginning in the Dauphin Island area. The males go back to where they originally hatched. Males, after following the female around for about two weeks, breed and leave. However, hummingbirds can nest three (3) times per season. Only the females build the nest. It is always located in trees about 15-40 feet high and looks like a knot on a limb. It is never built in a bush. She uses soft plant material and spider webs, and then puts moss and lichens on the outside for the perfect camouflage. Here she lays her two (2) eggs which are the size of a tic tac. She lays one egg and then two or three days later, she lays the second egg. When the eggs hatch, the chicks first develop pins, not feathers, which eventually grow out and disintegrate. The mother hummer feeds mixtures of nectar - that 1 to 4 parts sugar water that you furnished – and insects to the young. She passes antibiotics from her to the babies. When the birds come out of the nest, they are fully grown.



## **March 2019 Lunch and Learn (Continued) By: Charlotte Hall**

Their beak or bill gets to full length size about 7-10 days after they are fully grown. After the hummers raise their young, they leave and migrate to the Tropics, taking that long non-stop flight once again. So goes the Circle of Life for the amazing hummingbirds.

Since hummingbirds are migratory, Fred encourages everyone to leave at least one feeder out during the winter months to provide nourishment for those passing through, or at least two (2) weeks after your last sighting of a hummer. July 4<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of fall migration for some hummingbirds, and there are a lot coming South. The height or peak time for us is in September. So, please show your sweet Southern hospitality and leave a feeder available for those hummers who migrate through our area.

I can't begin to share with you or describe the completely magnificent, colorful, amazing photos that Fred shared with the group. I can only tell you that Fred mesmerized a crowd of 45 for an hour, and most wanted it to be even longer. Hope you caught his presentation.

You can never tell what you will see, hear, and learn from these Lunch and Learn programs. The speakers are phenomenal, so next month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at noon, Peggy Thompson from the Jefferson County Master Gardeners, will speak on Native Plants for Our Area. Drinks will be provided. Don't forget it will be at our old venue on at 340 Queen Ann Road. Hope to see you then as we learn more about some plants that you may already have growing in your garden or, at least, somewhere close.



# Governor's Mansion Report March 2019 By: Amanda Borden



During the month of March, volunteers at the Governor's Mansion worked at Hill House, renewal pruning roses, trimming tea olives, and removing dead Japanese cleyera. In the herb garden they weeded, applied pine straw, repositioned the bird bath, cut the lemon grass, removed an ornamental grass (possible pest issue), and planted lettuce. They weeded and trimmed just inside the rolling gate and from the portico, under the dining room windows, and down to the camellias at the guest house. Work continued in the back yard with weeding the forsythia bed between the pool and the office, harvesting some air-layered forsythia plants, and completion of the Japanese maple pruning.

As the time has changed and the temps will increase, we are now aiming for a start time of 8:00 a.m.





# Scenes from the Fairy Gardening Training March 6, 2019



Rhona Watson was the presenter for the Fairy Garden Training





## SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

**March 2019**

**By: Judy May**

Attending the Pruning Techniques and Tools workshop by Robert Westerfield held at Grace Episcopal Church in Pike Road Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> were Ann Carr, Marie Updike, Linda Cates, Rhonda and Jesse Miles, Marjorie Hannah, Debbie Corn, Cheryl Fitzgerald, Sharon Kochik and Judy May.

Working at the Middle School Garden March 1<sup>st</sup> were Cecelia Ball, Lee Ann Marona, Terry Chambliss and Jane Mobley. Working in the Learning Garden March 21 were Jane Mobley, Candy Jones, Sandy Rosamond and Terry Chambliss.

Attending the Fairy Garden training Wednesday, March 6 were Johan Beumer, Iva Haynie, Betty Plaster, Cecelia Ball, Rhonda Miles, Jane Mobley, Anne Carr, Cheryl Fitzgerald, Robin Snyder, Candy Jones, Sharon Kochik, Sandy Rosamond, Jane McCarthy, Marie Updike, Terry Chambliss, Linda Jarzniecki, and Lynda Edwards.

The Lunch and Learn Program March 12 was Hummingbirds by Fred Bassett. There were 45 attendees, 26 of them Master Gardeners. Assisting were Sandi Adkison, Charlotte Hall, Cathy Whigham and Bill Quailles.

Attending the Projects Committee meeting were Terry Chambliss, Jane Mobley, Bill Quailles, Cecelia Ball, Johan Beumer, Candy Jones, Sandy Rosamond, Rhona Watson and John Barnes.

Camga members who brought refreshments to the monthly meeting were Janet Lewis, Robin Snyder, Carolyn Placeway, Jane Mobley, Rhonda Miles, Lois Pribulick, Marjorie Hannah, Bonnie McCormick, Judy May and a few others not signed up.

March 14 the CAMGA Advanced Master Gardener Committee met to hear Advanced MG Candidate Susan O'Conner's presentation. Those in attendance were: Amanda Borden, Debbie Boutelier, Glenn Houvinen, Candy Jones, Judy May and Rhona Watson.

Amanda Borden taught the Montgomery County Master Gardener intern class on "Landscape Design" on March 21.

The Master Gardeners who worked the Helpline during March were Pat Petro-Perryman, Dee Turberville, Robin Snyder, Ricky Hatcher, Sharon Potts, Gale Leonard Wheeler, Terry Chambliss, Cathy Whigham and Mary Ann Hatcher.

Maria says for the past two months CAMGA members helping her were Carla McCune, Leslie Bingham, Dee Turberville, Sandra Gilley, and Sue Brasel who helped transplant 1000 spider lilies, 1000 paperwhites, 1000 Roman Hyacinths and are working on relocating 2000 daffodils. We have cleaned out forsythias, baby's breath, cut back 30 different Heirloom roses, and rooted 5 of them, started working on upgrading the Heirloom garden, started preparing plants for the plant sale, and had a whole lot of fun while we did it! Everyone worked hard and we accomplished a lot! Please join us either Wednesday from 8 – 11ish or call and see if another day works. Maria asks you call her at 334-657- 9414. She looks forward to hearing from you and working with you. Don't miss out on a chance to see Lanark in all its springtime glory!

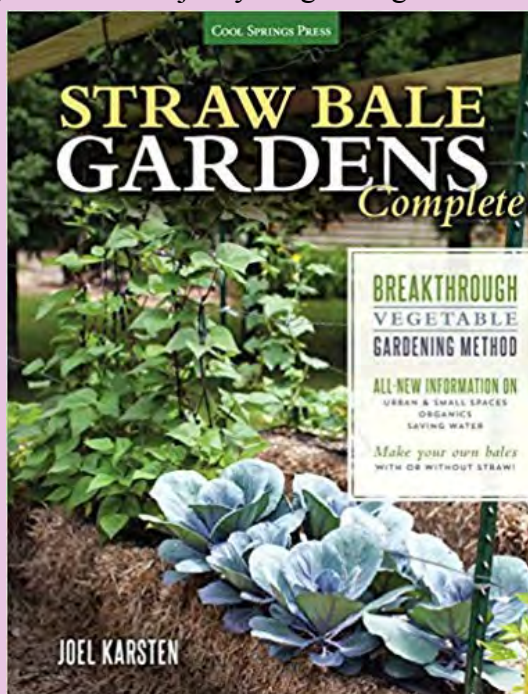


## CAMGA Library News

### By: Dee Turberville

### Straw Bale Gardens Complete by Joel Karsten

Straw Bale Gardens Complete (2015) is an updated version of the original title that swept the gardening world by storm in 2013. Joel Karsten's breakthrough vegetable gardening method has new information on urban and small space gardening that includes organics and water preservation. The enthusiasm for straw bale gardening has proved to be revolutionary – grow vegetables anywhere, earlier in the year, with no weeding. Those with limited mobility can access their plants more easily, since most bales are 18” above the ground -- saves the back and knees. If you struggle with dry, rocky, or heavy clay soil, straw bale gardening may be the solution you need to adjust your growing environment.



You can grow your vegetables on patios, balconies, driveways or on poor soil, even on the tundra in Alaska. The book includes several pages of illustrations, planting diagrams, and colorful photos with step-by-step “how to...” grow plants above ground. What if I can't find straw bales? Can I make an organic SBG? What's the most efficient way to water? These questions and others are addressed in this creative approach to gardening. Minnesota is the epicenter for SBG; you might like to give it a try in our home state of Alabama.

## Helpline News

### March 2019

By: **Mary Ann Hatcher**



The Helpline has gotten off to a great start with the donation of a monitor from Robin Snyder and a new computer tower from Mallory Kelley.

Master Gardeners who worked the Helpline during March were: Pat Petro-Perryman, Terry Chambliss, Dee Turberville, Robin Snyder, Gale Leonard-Wheeler, and Ricky Hatcher. Cathy Whigham and Mary Ann Hatcher served as Advisors. Sharon Potts served as Appointments Reminder.



**Robin Snyder and Dee Turberville assisting a client.**





## April Gardening Tips By: Jane H. McCarthy

### What I try to do in April...

Thankfully, winter is over and spring is in full swing. Mowing has begun at our house, which thankfully is not my job. Mow turf to the correct height (Common Bermuda 2", Hybrid Bermuda 1-1 ½", Centipede 1 ½-2", St. Augustine 2-2 ½", and Zoysia 1-2"), mulch or bag your clippings, core aerate when your turf is actively growing, fertilize if you see fit, and don't stress...there is always next year.

Prune your spring blooming shrubs (azaleas, camellias, forsythia) with thinning cuts after they are done blooming, and apply Azalea, Camellia, and Rhododendron fertilizer (ACR).

Do not trim narcissus foliage until the leaves have turned limp and brown. Give the leaves a light tug and if they separate from the buried bulb, they have done their work of providing energy for next year's bloom.

Scout for pests! Leaf miners on boxwoods and hollies, scale on camellias, lace bugs on azaleas, spider mites on the citrus, and the list goes on. So what's the smart way to handle the pests?  
Follow these steps:

Identify the pest, and decide if you can live with it's damage. If you can, then do nothing.

Next step is to let the beneficial insects control the pest.

Plant more disease resistant varieties.

Introduce biologic control (ex. *Baccillus thurengiensis* (Bt) for soft worms).

Utilize traps (ex. Japanese Beetle traps).

Chemicals, but start with the natural substances first. Read and follow all the directions.

As for planting things like tomatoes, peppers, and caladiums, wait until the soil is warm and the night temps are consistently above 55 degrees. To decide if the soil is warm enough, take off your shoes and socks and walk on the soil. If you shiver, you are too early. I wait until mid-April...which means plants are usually in the ground by Memorial Day.

Think about adding native plants to your landscape for our pollinators. Native plants are often not stunning specimen plants, but they are important to our environment...and they will last far longer than that fancy begonia you ordered from Michigan.



**Reach for the Stars**  
**By: Lee Ann Marona**  
**Reach for the Stars Program Coordinator**

**Congratulations to the following Master Gardeners for Reach for the Stars Awards presented at the March 2019 CAMA Meeting!**



**Deborah Kelso - Gold Star for 500+ Hours**  
**Left-Right Lee Ann Marona and Deborah Kelso**



**Terry Chambliss - CAMGA Top Hours of the Year - 2018 and Nominee for AMGA Top Hours of the Year Award**  
**Left -Right Terry Chambliss and Lee Ann Marona**



**Lee Borden - CAMGA Top Lifetime Hours - 2018 and Nominee for AMGA Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award**



# Reach for the Stars

By: Lee Ann Marona  
Reach for the Stars Program Coordinator



**Janet Lewis, Terry Chambliss, and Jesse Miles - 1000+ Hours - Gold Badges to be awarded at AMGA**



**Johan Beumer, Lois Pribulick, Nancy Tribble - 2000+ Hours - Platinum Badges to be awarded at AMGA Conference**



**Amanda Borden - The Robin Award for Top Hours in February**

# Master Gardeners At Work March 2019

## Learning Gardens Workday Photos



**Rhona Watson made a presentation on miniature gardens to the Millbrook Garden Club in March.**



**Cecilia Ball and Lee Ann Marona working at Wetumpka Middle School Work Day in March.**



# Calendar of Events

## April 2019

Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat

	<p><b>1</b> Governor's Mansion Work Day 9-12 noon</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b> Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</p>	<p><b>4</b> Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon  <i>Master Gardener Helpline</i></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>8</b> Governor's Mansion Work Day 9-12 noon</p>	<p><b>9</b> Lunch &amp; Learn 12-1 p.m. Elmore Co. Extension Office</p>	<p><b>10</b> Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</p>	<p><b>11</b> Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon  <i>Master Gardener Helpline</i></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>
<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>15</b> Governor's Mansion Work Day 9-12 noon</p>	<p><b>16</b> CAMGA Meeting 10-12 noon Elmore Co. Extension Office</p>	<p><b>17</b> Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</p>	<p><b>18</b> Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon  <i>Master Gardener Helpline</i></p>	<p><b>19</b>  <i>Good Friday</i></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>21</b> <i>Easter</i> </p>	<p><b>22</b> Governor's Mansion Work Day 9-12 noon</p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b> Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</p>	<p><b>25</b> Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon  <i>Master Gardener Helpline</i></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>
<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b> Governor's Mansion Work Day 9-12 noon</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>				