

## **Jefferson County Master Gardener Committees**

### **Audit Committee**

The bylaws of local associations may vary on the requirement for an audit of the financial records. If this requirement is not contained in your bylaws, it is suggested that the bylaws be amended to include this requirement, as a prudent business practice. Listed below is an excerpt from the AMGA bylaws that may help in writing your local bylaws:

Excerpt from AMGA bylaws:

"Article VII, Section 6:

A special Auditing Committee of three (3) members, none of whom are on the Board, shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board at least ninety (90) days prior to the end of the fiscal year. The Auditing Committee shall examine the Treasurer's accounts of the fiscal year and, at the annual meeting, submit, in writing, a report signed by all members of the committee."

The Audit Committee shall:

- Review all financial records maintained by the Treasurer including verification of expenditures.
- Prepare a report to the local President and Board of Directors, giving the results of the audit, and signed by all members of the audit committee.
- Present this report at the general membership meeting at the end of the reporting period.

### **Awards Committee**

Although some local associations may not have an awards program, it is an excellent means of recognizing those individuals who have given to your mission and goals. Hopefully, your local association does submit a nomination for the State's Mary Lou McNabb Alabama Master Gardener of the Year Award. (Requirements for this award are contained in a separate section of this handbook.)

The responsibilities of the Awards Committee include:

- Determining the types of awards to be given to deserving Master Gardeners.
- Soliciting nominations for the awards from the local membership, in writing, along with rationale for the nomination. Local associations will receive a formal request from the State Awards Committee for nominations, along with criteria and deadlines for submissions.
- Selecting award recipients and presenting awards at the time designated by the local association.
- Preparing the nomination package (notebook) for the local association's nominee for the State Awards. This notebook should contain detail descriptions of the nominee's activities, preferably with photographs along with letters of recommendation from local officials, county agent and fellow Master Gardeners.

State Awards include:

1. Mary Lou McNabb Alabama Master Gardener of the Year Award
2. Award for Outstanding Service and Dedication to the Alabama Master Gardener Program
3. Lifetime Hours Award
4. Top Hours for the Year Award
5. Reach for the Stars Program

Criteria and descriptions of these awards are contained in the Awards Section of this handbook.

### **Communications Committee**

Although local associations may not have a Communications Committee, it would be helpful to appoint a person who would be responsible for collecting the questions that come before the membership and contacting the State Communications Committee for answers. For your information, the responsibilities of the State Communications Committee are listed below:

The responsibilities of the AMGA Communications Committee include:

- Serving as a pipeline for questions that are raised by Master Gardeners regarding policies and procedures, at both the local and state levels.

- Writing a column in the Garden Pathways, the State MG newsletter, to answer commonly-asked questions or a specific question regarding MG's.
- Preparing and maintaining a Board Manual for new Board Members as well as current Board Members.
- Preparing and maintaining a Local Association's Handbook for use by the local associations in understanding the Master Gardener organizational structure and to aid them in operating in an efficient and effective manner.
- Determining if a specific question requires some action on the part of the State Board of Directors and presenting that question to the Board for review.

Membership of this Committee may contain Master Gardeners from local associations, past presidents and past Board Members who have a broad knowledge of the Master Gardener Program.

### **Finance Committee**

Although local associations may not need a Finance Committee because these responsibilities are carried out by the Treasurer, the responsibilities of the AMGA's Finance Committee are included for your local association's information:

Excerpt from AMGA bylaws:

"Article VII, Section 3:

The Finance Committee, composed of the Treasurer and a representative from each standing committee, shall prepare and submit a budget to the Board of Directors at each Annual Meeting."

The responsibilities of the Finance Committee include:

- Ensuring that all programs/projects that require financial support are included in the Annual Budget submitted to the Board of Directors and the AMGA membership at large.
- Compiling this data and presenting the budget at the Annual AMGA Meeting.
- Working on all other financial issues that need to be addressed by the AMGA Board of Directors.

The Treasurer shall serve as Chairperson of this Committee.

### **Fund Raising Committee**

Most local associations find it necessary to raise funds to support their community projects and may use a number of different fund raising projects. For your information, listed below are the responsibilities of the AMGA Fund Raising Committee:

Excerpt from AMGA bylaws:

"Article VII, Section 4:

The Fund Raising Committee, composed of at least three (3) members, shall investigate fund raising ideas and activities, and coordinate them with the approval of the Board."

At the present time, this Committee is not functioning. AMGA relies on membership dues and profits from the Annual Conferences as its sources of revenue.

### **Membership Committee**

Depending on the organizational structure of your local association, it may not be necessary to have a membership committee and these responsibilities may be assigned to your Treasurer. However, if your goal is to increase your membership, appointing a separate committee with responsibilities for recruiting and mentoring new members may prove beneficial. Listed below, for your information, are the responsibilities of the State's Membership Committee:

Excerpt from AMGA bylaws:

"Article VII, Section 7:

The Membership Committee, composed of at least three (3) members shall have primary responsibility for maintaining and increasing membership."

The responsibilities of the AMGA Membership Committee include:

- Maintaining an up-to-date database of dues-paying members, including name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and the year of graduation from the MG course.

- Working closely with the AMGA Treasurer to ensure continuity of records.
- Providing an up-to-date membership list to the Newsletter Editor for the quarterly newsletter, Garden Pathways.
- Providing membership information to the AMGA Board of Directors, when requested.
- Developing plans for contacting Master Gardeners who do not renew their membership to encourage renewals.
- Developing a plan for recruitment and retention of Master Gardeners.

### **Nominating Committee**

One of the most important committees of the local association is the Nominating Committee. Time should be devoted to selecting a nominating committee that is familiar with the members of the group and their capabilities and talents, as well as familiar with the responsibilities of each of the officer positions.

The Nominating Committee shall:

1. Determine the vacancies that exist within the local association.
2. If the incumbent can succeed himself/herself and he/she has performed the duties in an acceptable manner, discuss the possibility of serving another term with this individual.
3. Identify the candidates for each vacancy and place the candidates in a priority order. Approach each candidate with a job description of the vacancy and be prepared to answer questions that they may have. This process will continue until all vacancies are filled.
4. Based on the bylaws, present the slate of officers to the Board of Directors and subsequently present the slate to the general membership. Adequate time must be allowed to accept nominations from the floor.
5. Oversee the election process, counting ballots and verifying the election results.

The responsibilities of the nominating committee at the State level are listed below:

Excerpt from AMGA bylaws:

"Article IV, Section 2 (c) and (d):

The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three (3) members. One of these shall be elected by the Board of Directors and the other two (2) shall be elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting. Of the two elected members, one is to be elected for a two year term in 2002 and one is to be elected for a one year term in 2002. Thereafter, upon expiration of their terms, members of the Nominating Committee are to be elected for two year terms. The Nominating Committee shall report at least thirty (30) days prior to the date for the Annual Meeting and shall prepare a ballot for the election of officers, board members and nominating committee."

The AMGA Nominating Committee's responsibilities include:

- Working with the State Advisory Council to obtain nominations of qualified candidates for officers/board/committee positions. Nominees must be members of the local and state associations, and in good standing.
- Publishing the slate of candidates and their resumes, in the State Newsletter, Garden Pathways, for the general membership's review.
- Preparing the ballot and conducting the election of the slate of candidates during the Business Session at the Annual Master Gardener Meeting and Conference.
- Identifying potential candidates to the AMGA Board of Directors, if vacancies occur during the year. Vacancies shall be filled by the Board of Directors, subject to the approval of the general membership at the next Annual Meeting.

### **Program Committee**

In most cases, the responsibilities of the Program Committee are handled, either totally or in part, by the Vice President of the local association. Responsibilities include:

1. Determine the number of the meetings and secure qualified and interesting speakers for the coming year based on the interests of the membership. Provide program information to

Membership Chair for inclusion in the Annual Directory and to the Newsletter Editor for use in the newsletter

2. Make arrangements for any equipment that may be needed by the speakers.
3. Follow up with the speaker as their speaking date approaches, to ensure that the arrangements are still in place and determine any last minute requirements.
4. Introduce the speaker, or appoint someone to do so.
5. Obtain an appropriate gift for the speaker, if this is the policy of the local association.
6. Follow up with a thank you letter to the speaker from the local association.
7. In addition, keep the membership informed of workshops, seminars, regional conferences that might be of interest to the group. Local field trips can also be very successful and well received by the group.

For your information, the responsibilities of the State Program Committee are as follows:

Excerpt from AMGA bylaws:

"Article VII, Section 2:

The Program Committee shall consist of at least three (3) members and shall plan and coordinate the educational and social activities of the Association in accordance with the interests of the membership."

The Program Committee is chaired by the Vice President of AMGA. Other members include:

- State Master Gardener Program Coordinator (ACES)
- A member of AMGA who has experience in conference planning

Responsibilities include:

- Updating the AMGA Conference Manual to reflect the latest conference reports and the answers to any questions raised by the hosting association.
- Working with the local associations to organize Annual Conferences. This includes discussions of expectations for the hosting association, as well as, AMGA's responsibilities. Hosts for conferences need a minimum of two years to plan for facilities and speakers.
- Working with AMGA to promote the Annual Conferences, through State Newsletter, Garden Pathways, the State Web-Site and the media.
- Scheduling time on the agenda of AMGA Board of Directors meetings for briefing by local "hosting" association(s).
- Promoting local associations' activities, including field trips, field days, special workshops and conferences.

### **State Advisory Council (AC) Representative**

Each local association shall elect from its membership, a representative to serve on the State Advisory Council. The Council meets on a quarterly basis in Clanton, AL at 10:00 a.m. Meetings usually last two hours and provide a forum for bringing issues that the local associations may have to the State level. A Chairperson for this Council is selected by the representatives and the Chairperson attends the quarterly meetings of the AMGA Board of Directors.

The guidelines for the State Advisory Council are stated below:

### **State Advisory Council (AC)**

The Advisory Council (AC) shall consist of not more than one Master Gardener representative from each Extension office which offers the MG Program, or which cooperates with other offices in offering the Program. The AC shall meet on a quarterly basis at a location determined by the representatives. The representatives shall elect a Chairperson from the group. The Chairperson shall attend AMGA Board Meetings and report on AC activities.

The AC representative for each Extension office shall be elected by the voting members of that local association.

Members of the Advisory Council shall:

- Serve as a link to local Master Gardener Programs, and keep the Master Gardeners in their respective associations informed about the activities of their State Association. This group's

responsibility includes identifying problem areas or areas that need clarifying, as well as offering solutions.

- Provide a list of qualified candidates for officers, board members, and nominating committee members to the AMGA Nominating Committee.
- Work and/or assist in identification of volunteers for the Association's standing and special committees.
- Advise the Board and Extension System as to whether the Program is responsive to the needs of Master Gardeners.

If an Advisory Council member is elected as a State Association Officer or Board member, that member's position on the Advisory Council shall be considered vacant and a new Council member shall be elected by the local membership of that association.

The Representative shall be responsible for any travel expenses associated with these responsibilities, unless the local association approves travel expenses.

### **Newsletter Editor**

One of the most important means of communicating with your local membership is through a newsletter, published monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly.

The Newsletter Editor will:

- Establish deadlines outlining when newsletter articles are due based on the schedule established by your local association.
- Send a reminder to individuals responsible for regular columns at least two weeks prior to the deadline for submission. A second reminder will be sent approximately a week later if needed.
- Set parameters regarding recommended length of article based on the size of the newsletter.
- Have freedom to edit all submissions as needed.
- Make arrangements for printing and mailing of newsletters.
- Include other newsletter editors in the State in your distribution. This is an excellent means of sharing information and newsletter content.
- Provide the newsletter on computer-generated media to the webmaster if you have a local website.

Some possible columns to be included in each issue:

- News/Notes/??? from the President ...
- Report from your County Agent
- Report from your Advisory Council Representative
- Reports from your local committees and project leaders
- Meet an Alabama Master Gardener (feature one of your MG's)
- State Conference Updates (as appropriate)
- Around the State ... (information relating to what is happening with other local associations-- conferences, field trips, workshops, fund raisers, recognitions, etc.)
- Information on state/regional Gardening Conferences that might be of interest to MGs
- Field Days and other upcoming Extension events

### **Webmaster**

A web site is a powerful tool to share information within the local association and to promote the local association to the general public.

The webmaster's primary responsibility is to build and maintain the local association's web site. The content and complexity of the site will vary, depending on the experience and skill level of the webmaster.

The webmaster will:

- Build and maintain the local association's web site.
- Acquire a domain name for the web site.
- Locate a web site hosting company to host the site.

- Coordinate with project leaders to maintain current information on each project.
- Acquire photographs of association events to post on the web site.
- Post a list of contacts to include association officers and project leaders.
- Coordinate with the County Extension Agent to post information about future Master Gardener classes and Extension related information.
- Report the status of the web site at association meetings.

### **Volunteer Hours Coordinator**

A critical element in the Master Gardener Program is the recording and reporting of volunteer hours within the local association. It is important that an individual be appointed to develop a plan for reporting of volunteer hours.

For reporting purposes, the Master Gardener Volunteer Hours reporting period is January 1 through December 31.

The Volunteer Hours Coordinator will:

- Outline a plan for members to record and report their volunteer hours.
- Using the Administrative Manual (published by the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator at Auburn) as a guide, communicate to the members the rules regarding "what qualifies as volunteer hours."
- Report on volunteer hours at the monthly meetings.
- Ensure that members have copies of the Alabama Master Gardener Volunteer Service Report Book (ANR-985), which includes forms that will help the MG get organized. These books may be obtained from your County Agent.
- Provide a consolidated report to the local County Agent, by January 31 of the following year. The County Agent is required to submit a report to the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator by February 28th.

### **Scrapbook/Historian**

The local associations are encouraged to maintain a scrapbook of activities/events. The book should also serve as a pictorial and written history that can be enjoyed by members in future years. The scrapbook should include:

- Photographs of Officers and Board Members (Identify by name)
- Coverage of Special Projects and Work Days (Identify all members in the photographs)
- Copies of Newsletters
- Copies of Agendas of Meetings
- Photographs of speakers or special guests
- Newspaper articles covering members and/or community projects.
- Thank you letters and letters of recognition for the local association's efforts.

It is recommended that your budget for your association include costs of film, film processing and scrapbook materials, as a line item.