

District VIII has 5 very busy clubs and growing clubs. We currently have 276

members up from 185 last year! I have been able to attend club meetings for all our clubs with exception of Spanish Fort which is Kathy's club-they have the top dog at most of their meetings anyway. All our clubs have GCA Board members with exception of newest club Magnolia Springs-they do have several Baldwin County Master Gardeners and I am sure will join GCA positions when asked. All of our clubs have Facebook pages and post meetings and share from GCA and National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Magnolia Springs our newest club with 60 members helps with so many things like Redbird Christmas, Arbor Day, and is working with their city to clean up the 'Springs' that give them their name. The arboretum is being renovated and re-landscaping is in progress by the club in collaboration with their city. They are also planning on adding a Blue Star Memorial on the site. They have meetings in their historic community hall built in 1894 and the club is as impressive as their hall. So happy to have them join GCA after being an independent club since 1957.

Spanish Fort Garden Club 31 members had a plant sale at the Centennial Park along with several interesting meetings and field trips including Festival of Flowers and Gulf Shores Floral Seminar supporting another district club. They donate to the William F Green Veterans Home and during COVID got a Blue Star Memorial placed at the USS Alabama-this will finally be dedicated this May after several attempts! Very proud of this achievement!

Orange Beach Garden Club 53 members is very involved and works in conjunction with their city on many projects. They have an Annual Game Day that funds so many wonderful projects for them every year and the Salad luncheon made by the members is amazing! They have been cleaning up their historic cemetery and place flags on Veterans graves at Memorial Day along with annual cleanup prior. They sponsor Light Up Orange Beach and Commercial and Residential Yard of the Month programs every year keeping folks in their city excited to see who will win. Their monthly meetings include a full lunch and delicious dessert social before the meeting too.

Fairhope Garden Club 35 members has been busy this year with meetings and outside club activities like Birdfest where they have been promoting their club for many years. They have wonderful speakers and have been adding new members this year as well. The meeting I attended they made 100 coffee mug Christmas centerpieces to deliver to the area nursing homes-such a wonderful project for the holidays. They have a progressive garden tour planned of members gardens and a plant swap. They had members attend ' EVERY LIGHT A PRAYER FOR PEACE' and also members on GCA Board positions (Joey Skaff-Hortensia Editors in this club). They also apply for awards and donate to GCA scholarships honoring speakers with a donation in their name.

Gulf Shores Garden Club has 97 official members on roster, but as of last meeting 101. They do lots of things to help in the community. My favorite this year is working with the 2nd and 3rd grade club kids from Gulf Shores Elementary School! They

donate to the High School Environmental and Sustainability Academy, visit with Veteran's giving them gift bags, treats and a special large gift for their community room. They help the city at Coastal Cleanup and Community Christmas Event at park. They have a table at Arbor Day with the city and Earth Day at our Community Schools. They decorate the Swift Cole's Historic home at Christmas and make up poinsettias from Lowe's with beautiful bows added for the Meals on Wheels recipients and another local nursing home. They have members on the Beautification Board and take several field trips throughout the year on non meeting days. Their annual Floral Seminar has over 350 attendees every year and supports their high school scholarships as well as all the other club activities and events. At our meeting/ field trip last month the Graham Creek Nature Director made mention of having received their scholarship years ago, and then introduced a staff member that had received one. She also mentioned the very first donation they received was the beautiful bench outside of their Nature Center from Gulf Shores. On that same note when I was looking for Beans for our Jr group teepee I called the Elberta Coop, Deena McMullen donated the plants to me because she also won our scholarship several years ago! Told me she is currently working to get her Masters in Horticulture thanks to our help! Talk about things coming full circle!

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Edgerton  
District VIII Director  
April 15, 2024