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| Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association  President’s Letter  March 13, 2019 |  |

Dear Local Representatives and Board Members,

What a winter it has been in Wisconsin! The official start of spring is only days away, but there’s a lot of snow and ice to rid ourselves of before we’ll feel like it’s really spring. In my family we have a saying “early Easter, early spring; late Easter, late spring.” I think that will be the case this year.

I want to update you on several important items of WIMGA business. Please put these dates in your calendar:

1. Spring face-to-face meeting: **Saturday, April 27**: **Face-to-face Board meeting with Local Representatives,** 10 am – 3 pm, Hancock Ag Research Station (confirmed)
2. **Thursday June 6**: Board meeting, 4:30 – 6 pm, teleconference
3. **Thursday August 22**: Board meeting, 4:30 – 6 pm, teleconference
4. **Saturday, October 26**: WIMGA Annual Meeting in conjunction with fall face-to-face and Board meeting; all day, location TBD
5. **Thursday, December 5**: Board meeting, 4:30 – 6 pm, teleconference

Please remind your members that the **WIMGA website** should be the first place to look for WIMGA information, such as where to send dues, when are grant applications available, or where is a past newsletter? Two areas we need help from you and your associations:

* Please post your **local events on the WIMGA website**, and look there to find other MG events to attend. <https://www.wimga.org/> (Use the Contact Form to send information.)
* Encourage your members to be part of the **Speakers Bureau**! We KNOW many of you are speaking at local events; let other know if you are willing to do this more. <https://www.wimga.org/speakers-bureau-sign-up>

By now you have read that the ***WIMGA Newsletter*** will no longer be mailed to members. Changes in the Program Office, plus increased printing and mailing costs have made email the best option. If you have members who do not use email, please delegate someone to copy the newsletter for them. The ***WIMGA Newsletter*** is published six times a year and will focus on member information and association news. The ***Volunteer Vibe*** contains news from the MG Program Office. Both are important to read!

Since there were no offers to host the WIMGA Conference this year, the Executive Committee has decided to hold the **Annual Meeting** (a requirement of our Bylaws, as well as being a non-profit organization) in conjunction with our fall face-to-face meeting. This will be a Saturday (Oct. 26) and we will look for a central location to hold the meeting. The Committee has some ideas for making this a useful and informative day; for those of you who need or wish to come the night before because of distance, we’ll make sure there are hotel accommodations available—and there could be some social networking time arranged on Friday evening! I’ll host!

The WIMGA Board is reviewing the **Bylaws**, and anticipates some changes to membership categories; these will need to be approved at the Annual Meeting before going into effect. This in turn will probably necessitate bylaw changes for most local associations. Some groups have asked for a template to model their bylaws after, but we have several different types of local group structures in Wisconsin; it would be hard to create one template that fits all. WIMGA’s bylaws state that all local groups must use the same membership categories as WIMGA. We do ask that **whenever you update your bylaws, you need to send a copy to us**. That can go either to the Secretary, Diane Kachel [wimga.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:wimga.secretary@gmail.com) or to me. **Please send your list of officers**, along with their contact information each year after your elections.

I have had the privilege for the last two years of being a judge for the Texas Master Gardener Association’s **Search for Excellence Awards**. WIMGA would like to begin an award program here to recognize the outstanding work you are all doing! We have information from Minnesota and Indiana on their award programs as well. Board members Marilyn Gorham, Nancy Jahnel-Barnes, local representative Deanna Stirmel, and I are on a committee to develop this program. If you would like to help with this effort, please let me know.

**Leadership!** Does that word excite you? Scare you? Bore you? From serving as a committee chair, to leading a children’s garden project, or presenting at a library program, MGVs “lead” in many ways. Almost all of us have opportunities to share our MG knowledge and promote the MG program’s benefits to our communities; leadership isn’t just being an officer. WIMGA is going to be holding three “leadership” workshops across the state this fall in a joint effort with the MG Program. I prefer to think of these as ***Super Star Skills—***you are the Super Stars, and we want to help you build your skills!! Look for more information on topics, dates and locations soon.

Thank you, Board Members and Local Representatives, for all you do to support WIMGA in connecting members and associations to UW-Extension’s community horticultural education!

Sincerely,

Becky Gutzman

WIMGA President

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