

June 2017  
Volume 15, Issue 6

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### HCMG will meet on June 7, 2017

**Location: AgriLife Building Classroom**

**Noon - Networking/  
Open Forum**

**1:00 - Meeting**

**2:00- Program:**

**Mountain Cedar**

**Elizabeth McGreevy,  
Certified Permaculture Designer**



**TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION**

*The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.*



**Jackie Skinner  
President**

### President's Message

I don't know why we humans bother placing timelines on plants. After all, as my friend Jack Aulis frequently says, "Plants don't do what you tell 'em."

When I first spied a lovely green and white striped grass-like plant at my local nursery, I reached for the label to learn more. "Fortnight Lily," it announced, right below a photo of splendid foliage and luxuriant sprays of white racemes. Such an imaginative name foretold of blooms lasting at least two weeks, and those two weeks would surely appear in waves!" Golly, I could have blooms for a month at the very LEAST! I purchased several, but as the season passed, I learned that it would be a fortnight "down below" before I would have any blooms, especially luxuriant sprays of white racemes lasting a fortnight.

Just don't trust a name that specifies flowering parameters. The Southern Living Garden Book tells us Fall Aster (*Aster oblongifolius*) blooms "into late fall, unperturbed by heavy frosts." The book doesn't mention anything about Fall Aster perturbing us when it makes a surprise appearance in late spring and subsequently demands spa time if we want it to make an appearance at its scheduled autumn show. Not that I'm complaining. I'm just saying...

Christmas cactus, *Schlumbergera x buckleyi*, which can reach 2' high and 3' wide, is an old favorite, particularly with old people like me. It can be confused with Thanksgiving cactus, *S. truncata*, which is similar in appearance but only about half the size. Adding another complication is Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*) a diminutive version of the first two. Like little brown birds, they're difficult to tell apart, but their bloom cycle gives them away. Thanksgiving cactuses are lined up on the Home Depot shelves a couple of weeks before Christmas which is when they actually flower. Christmas cactuses sleep late; they rarely rise and shine  
*continued on page 5*

### **HCMG 2017, Calendar of Events**

*Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional. We list events for those wishing to attend other educational offerings. We try to limit the listed events to those that would earn our members CEUs, but not all will be eligible. Be sure to call the sponsor and confirm event.*

**May 19, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**, 12:10-12:50 p.m. Barb Banks, HCMG, will present "Bad Bugs, Bad Bugs; What You Gonna Do? See other topics, cost and registration details on the HCMG website homepage. Gillespie County TAMU AgriLife Extension Office.

**May 23, NPSOT Fredericksburg**, 6:30 p.m. social followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Ben Hutchins, TPWD, State Invertebrate Biologist will present "Managing Private Lands for Pollinators.". Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

**June 7, Hill Country Master Gardeners**, 1:00 p.m., monthly meeting. Elizabeth McGreevy, certified permaculture designer and founder of Droplet Ecological Land Planning & Design will present a program to dispel the popular belief that all mountain cedars (Ashe junipers) are bad. Also, she will discuss how you can work with the mountain cedar and adopt better land management strategies that are sustainable. Hill Country Youth Event Center.

**June 20, Kerr County Cactus & Succulent Society**, 7:00 p.m. Program to be announced, Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library. Always confirm date, time and location online in latest newsletter at <http://home.windstream.net/wildfong/KCCSS.html>. Visitors welcome.

**June 16, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**, 12:10-12:50 p.m. Chris Seifert, HCMG, will present "Composting." See other topics, cost and registration details on the HCMG website homepage. Gillespie County TAMU AgriLife Extension Office.

**June 27, NPSOT Fredericksburg**, 6:30 p.m. social followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Rufus Stephens, TPWD Biologist, will present "Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country: A Guide to Land Stewardship." Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

**Submitted by Raeann Reid**

### **Addresses for Events Listed Above**

Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville  
Gillespie County TAMU AgriLife Extension Office, 95 Frederick Road, Fredericksburg  
Hill Country Youth Event Center, 3785 Highway 27, Kerrville  
Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg

### **Websites and credits from "Cool Gardens for Hot Climates"**

*From Article on pages 4 and 7*

<http://www.aquascapeinc.com/blogs/water-gardening/healing-power-of-water-features>

<http://www.garden-fountains.com/>

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/124919935/garden-art-glass-plate-flower-hand>

<https://thehomesteadsurvival.com/recycled-wine-bottle-glass-diy-projects/>

<https://creativeclaycafe.wordpress.com/category/vintage-glassware-towers/>

Nichols, Wallace J.: Blue Mind: The Surprising Science That Shows How Being Near, In, On, or Under Water Can Make You Happier, Healthier, More Connected, and Better at What You Do; published by Back Bay Books; Reprint 2015



## Hill Country Master Gardeners Monthly Program and Business Meeting May 3, 2017

The Monthly business meeting was held at the Kerr County Youth Event Center classroom.

52 members were present.

President, Jackie Skinner, called the meeting to order at 1 pm. Connie Townsend led the members with the pledge of Allegiance.

Quorum was verified.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved. Debra Foley moved to accept the minutes and Kathy Lewis seconded and the motion carried.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Jackie Connelly provided the April Treasurer's Report which was approved.

### OLD BUSINESS

Update on B&B Revenue: Blooms and Barrels grossed \$13,453.00 in sales with \$5,304.17 in expenses which brings the total profits to \$8,208.33.

Badges: A one time bulk order for membership name badges will be placed for the membership. A updated badge is not required. Each badge will be paid for with our Master Gardener treasury funds. However, if a member chooses not to have a membership badge made now they may order an updated replacement badge at their cost of \$12.50.

Logo Wear: Order forms will be sent out via email with the color selections, shirt style (long sleeve or short sleeve options) and cost for each style shirt (\$10.00 for short sleeve, \$13.00 for long sleeve). Each shirt will have the Texas Hill Country Master Gardener logo on the shirt.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Greenhouse Update: Blooms and Barrels sales went well! The greenhouse has been delivered in full and is ready for installation. Ron Richerson will supervising the erection of the greenhouse. The new greenhouse will be 6 feet longer than our present greenhouse. Volunteers will be needed to help put the greenhouse up.

Market Days: Saturday, May 6th will be our first Market Day's sale for the summer. Hours of operation will be from 7am until 11:30 am for the first shift and then 11:30 am until 3:00 pm for the afternoon shift. Set up will be at 1:00 pm on Friday, May 5th. Approximately 90 plants will be available for purchase at the Market Days sale. Depending upon the kind of reception we get from the sale will determine if we participate in the June and September Market Days sale.

Committee Chair Meeting: June 7th at 12:00 just before the regular business meeting of the membership.

Public Relations Chairman: Dee Dutton will be our Master Gardener public relations chairman. A correction to the Daily Kerrville Times article was read by Vickie Killeen to reflect that the demonstration garden was maintained by the Master Gardeners rather than the Master Naturalists.

Public Classes Chairman: a volunteer is still needed to head up that program (job description is attached).

Volunteer Hours for Networking: After today's meeting, volunteer hours for networking will only apply when we have our quarterly pot luck luncheon during our regular business meeting. July will be the next pot luck luncheon when the 1 hour networking volunteer hour can be applied again.

Total To-Date Intern Volunteer Hours: 651.5 total hours have been recorded by our 2017 interns. 497 hours have been recorded as regular volunteer hours and 154.5 recorded for research desk duty. As the interns finished with their required volunteer hours for certification, they will be recognized at the next general meetings with their badges and certificates.

June CEU program: Elizabeth McGreevy will speak to us about the benefits of Mountain Cedar and help us with information about better land management strategies. She will help us dispel old myths about Mountain Cedar trees.

Propagation Committee Class: Propagation Specialist classes will be held on October 30-31; Tom LeRoy will be the trainer for the class. Classes will be able to host 30-35 people and will cost between \$225 to \$250.

### ADJOURNMENT

1:55 pm.

### PROGRAM

Beginning at 2:15 p.m., Benefits of Snakes in the Garden. Presented by Jared Holmes.

Hours Earned: 1 hour Monthly meeting, 1.5 hours CEU

Respectfully submitted,  
Lydia Jones, Secretary



## Cool Gardens for Hot Climates

by Caryl Hartman

Many of us have read about the benefits of the "Healing Garden" and as gardeners we know that time spent in our garden is beneficial to our body, spirit, and emotional well-being. While many would contend that all gardens are healing gardens, water is one feature that is often included in a healing garden and one that deserves more consideration in our hot Texas climate. I'm sure we can all agree that we Texans need some comfort and healing in mid-August.

Water. People just seem happier when they are around it. Oceans, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, these are the places folks go to unwind and rejuvenate. There is a scientific reason for this. Falling water releases negative ions into the atmosphere and these ions have a profound effect on our physical well-being. It's not surprising that water features lower our blood pressure and de-stress us - but they also make us feel cooler just by looking at them. Many homes here in the Hill Country have beautiful in-ground pools but you can get a wonderful, watery boost in other ways with less maintenance and expense.

**WATER FEATURES** - Ancient desert gardens (think Persia) relied on a series of canals, channels, and basins to move water through the space creating an oasis which provided relief from the extreme temperatures. While you may not have the treasure of a Shah, installing a water feature in your own garden may be easier and less expensive than you think. A recirculating waterfall or a waterfall without the presence of a pond, provides the sound and ambiance of water without the upkeep of a pond or pool. It's also possible to recirculate water on a large bolder or in a garden pot. One of the best examples I've seen of this is in the Fredericksburg United Methodist Church Biblical Garden. A small, pocket garden on busy Llano Road might not seem like a place for serene meditation with the cooling sound of bubbling water but this garden is a joy to be in.

Another water feature that is low in cost but high in coolness factor is a water bowl. Any low, wide garden pot or saucer will turn into a magical, rippling, stress reliever. The water will have to be changed out every few days and mosquito dunks added if they are a problem in your garden but shopping for the perfect vessel would be fun and the bowl could be moved around in the garden to suit your mood. Adding rocks or a small concrete animal would add some whimsy and perhaps a perch for pollinators to get a drink.

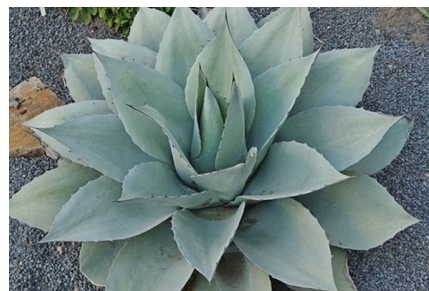
**COOLING PLANTS** - Our connection and need for water



Fredericksburg United Methodist Church Biblical Gardens



Water Bowls



Agave "Frosty Blue"

can also be satisfied by using blue plants in the garden. We are naturally drawn to the color that refreshes and calms us. In his book, "Blue Mind", Wallace Nichols speaks about how we are hard-

wired to react to water and aquatic hues and many of us do have a strong preference for the color blue. When adding water colors to your garden don't forget the stormy, gray-blue color of Dusty Miller or Lamb's Ear. One of the most beautiful agaves is the variety "Frosty Blue", a native of Mexico, it is perfect for our area. If sculptural plants work well for you there is also a beautiful blue yucca, Yucca rostrata, "Sapphire Skies" which MG Mike Muskopf introduced me to and it does well for him in his garden.

*Continued on page 7*

## Photo of poster inviting guests to HCMG's first public CEU program

*Poster made by Jackie Connelly*

The first continuing education program offered to the community was a great success! Over twenty visitors joined the master gardeners for the program “Why Snakes Can Make Your Garden a Better Ecosystem” Hopefully our next program, on the beneficial aspects of Ashe Juniper, will also have community interest.



**Jackie Connelly, Jackie Skinner, Wil Rolfe**

### *President's message continued*

before Valentine's Day. Easter cactuses bloom sporadically throughout the year but almost never at Easter. Got that?

Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*) blooms most times of the year, especially if you give it a good dose of tough love every few months. Belying its common name though, it kicks into gear in early spring and may or may not bloom by the time autumn burns its way onto the Texas calendar.

Lenten Roses (*Helleborus orientalis*) like to celebrate way before Lent. They figure they may as well gobble up a full banquet of nutrients and party hardy before the fasting begins. I have seen them in bloom just after Christmas, which means they should have been named “Resolution Roses” or “Rose Parade Roses.”

And finally, we must be wary of any flowering plant, a Christmas poinsettia for instance, that's running on time. Frequently such a phenomenon occurs only when the plant has been forced. No plant likes being forced, and if compelled to perform before it is good and ready to, it will very often get even by refusing to bloom again...EVER! It's possible to keep these curmudgeons around until the following Christmas in the hope that they will offer a fresh batch of blooms, but they probably won't. Their lethal pout has been duly served.

Charles Dudley Warner stated in *My Summer in a Garden*, “The principal value of a private garden is not understood. It is not to give the possessor vegetables and fruit (that can be better and cheaper done by the market-gardeners), but to teach him patience and philosophy, and the higher virtues, - hope deferred, and expectations blighted, leading directly to resignation and sometimes to alienation. The garden thus becomes an agent, a test of character, as it was in the beginning.” I don't believe that, in the beginning, plants were handed a deadline.



## Work starts on the new greenhouse



**The long anticipated new greenhouse is going up!**

Special thanks to Anne Brown and Sandy Lewis, Greenhouse Committee, for their coordination.

Also, special thanks to these men for the “man power”



**Lydia Jones** grew up in California but has been in Texas for over 30 years, so she considers herself a Texan. She joined Master Gardeners in 2016 and loves vegetable gardening and native plants. She recently completed the vegetable specialist training. Lydia also loves cake decorating, baking, and conservative politics. Her first love is God and bible study, ask her anytime about either.

### Meet the Mentors and Interns



**Donna Guthrie** lives in Kerrville. She retired from the telephone company and decided to join the Hill Country Master Gardeners to broaden her education and to be a part of a group that shares her love of gardening. She currently works in the Glory Community Garden. Donna enjoys square foot organic gardening (veggies) or compact gardening (flowers and bushes). She wants to study

and learn the secrets of gardening in the Texas Hill County.





Hosta "Pewterware"

**Continued from page 4**  
If softer plants that don't bite you are more your comfort zone you might try Hosta "Pewterware". It's stunning! It will need shade of course and it's zone specs are 3b-8b so depending on the micro climate in your garden it may just work out.

selves the colors evoke water but imagine the cobalt blue pot between the turquoise pots. The effect becomes much more pronounced. The two colors combine to create an illusion of sea depth with it's many different shades of blue. Adding still



Silver Ponyfoot

Conifers (Arizona Cypress) and sedums ("Frosty Morn") both have some interesting blue varieties, but a plant I have had great luck with is a native - silver ponyfoot. Not only is the color amazing but



the way it grows makes it look like a stream or a waterfall cascading over rocks.

The blue in the two photos above is another suggestion for bringing the cooling effect of water into your garden. By them-



more shades of blue will give an even greater richness. The two pots above also add a textual element that appears to "drip" down the pot - just like water would. And these pots look like water flowing down the steps.



Another option is to use garden art that turns your space into an oasis. The glass flower plate above is from the vendor Sasafrasflowers on Etsy. And the one, to the left, from an internet DIY blogger, is made from used blue wine bottles. How clever is that!

There are several books on crafting garden art of your own and going to yard sales and flea markets always provides inspiration & reasonably priced acquisitions. This summer why not capture some of water's benefits for your own garden?

"When despair for the world grows in me...  
I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light.  
For a time I rest in the grace of the world,  
And am free."  
Wendell Berry, *Environmentalist and Poet*



## LOVE CREEK BUTTERFLY COUNT June 1, 2017

The Great Love Creek Butterfly Count will be June 1. For the past few years this has been one of the top counts in Texas and was 3rd in the United States two years ago. The count circle includes the TNC Love Creek Preserve, Medina Native Plant Nursery and many ranches that we have been granted access. You don't have to know anything about butterflies as we need spotters as well and you will begin to learn species in the field with knowledgeable butterfly folks.

There is a \$3 fee to participate unless we find a sponsor this year.

We meet at 8 a.m. in the Core Coffee Shop in Medina Texas for a free breakfast and divide into teams, departing around 8:30 a.m. The count will end around 2:30 p.m. We will gather at the Apple Store for lunch and to conduct an initial count of species seen. We need folks who like to do nature

photography. Photos help confirm difficult species to identify.

If you are interested, contact either:

Tom Collins [towhee@hctc.net](mailto:towhee@hctc.net)

Or Rebecca L. Neill [rebecca.neill@TNC.ORG](mailto:rebecca.neill@TNC.ORG)

**This does not qualify for MG volunteer hours  
but promises to be a lot of fun.**



© Rob McCorkle / TPWD

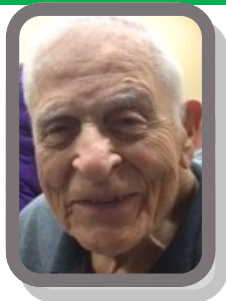


## Riverside Nature Center Spring Festival

HCMGs Anne Brown, Debbie Bass and Intern Brenda Heinsohn braved the elements at the Spring Festival on April 22nd passing out information to the booth visitors. Jane Rackley (not shown) took the afternoon shift.

*Photo courtesy Booth Chairman,  
Frank Dunlap*





## BUILDING AN ORNAMENTAL GARDEN

### ISLANDS OF LIFE

By Bob O'Connor

**Introduction:** This month I'm back to my garden and feel almost as if I'm Jehovah on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel transmitting the spark of life to Adam. I'm just now beginning the garden's foundation planting, the transmission of life into a presently, mostly inanimate hardscape. Edith's and my original concept was and still is to have a central focus, a birdbath-fountain, for example, surrounded by a ring of island gardens, each initially characterized by the degree of sunlight penetrating the overhead tree canopy. As each is brought to life, I want it to have a name.

**The Garden Room**, in my fondest memories, was a place of great warmth that always smelled of flowers and earthiness, where a small boy could escape to and feel totally loved and protected from the yolk of parental demands, where Alice, his grandmother, presided. What else to name a conservatory island?

**Innisfail** is the garden island just beyond the Garden Room, lying in partial shade under a large *Quercus Virginiana*. Innisfail, which means home in Gaelic, was just up the hill from Hauxhurst, where Alice lived. It's where I grew up. In those days the roads were dirt and the countryside wild. When not in school, I could roam, fish, trap mice, build boats and generally live immersed in the natural world I constantly read about. It was safe and I was free. I want this island to be as wild and free as I once was.

**Yucca Rocks**, traversing clockwise, is the next garden island, clearly inspired by the southwest desert landscape to the west. Here, the plants are so different from those I grew up with that I live in constant amazement. What were the predators and pollinators that, over evolutionary time, caused so many of them to develop such fierce armament and yet retain such beauty? I want to know their stories.

**The Shadows:** This island garden is next in the circuit. Because it lies in deep shade most of the day, I'm reminded of New Iberia's antebellum home of the same name, a place that was for years a deep mystery to me. Its history, as I have since learned, like that of so many slave-built mansions of the deep south, is tragic, but, today, what attracts me is how beautiful a deep shade garden can be.

**Room with a View** is the name I've given the Patio which overlooks almost all the rest of the garden, the name being taken from the title of E. M. Forester's entrancing period novel. In this island, designed to be an outside room of the house, I can imagine formal Victorian tea parties in full regalia and comportment.

**Home Stretch** is the name I've given this island garden that ties the garden to the house. It's quite small but, with the right plants for fragrance, it could greet a visitor entering the garden from the house with a presence that would greatly belie its size.

**Etollie's Gift:** The central birdbath-fountain island I've named in memory of Edith, my love and companion for 65 years. When she was a very little girl, just learning to talk, "Etollie" was as close as she could come to saying, Edith Olive, her full name. Without her, this garden would never have been.





## Hill Country Veggies

June 2017

By Allen Mace

For the past few years I've been buying yellow squash and zucchini plants at a local nursery instead of starting my own from seed. Squash are generally



**Crowded bed**

an easy vegetable to grow from seed, you just have to be careful of the weather. They are sensitive to temperature and frost. They die off quickly if the temperature dips below freezing. Generally one should wait later into the season and let the soil temperatures get up above 60 degrees before you plant your seeds. The rule of thumb is to plant them on hills in your garden, with 2 to 3 feet between the hills. Squash are highly vulnerable to mold, so they need space and height so they can dry off quickly after they get wet. I generally don't like to water squash in the evening. You also have to watch your plants for pests. The leaf eaters usually aren't too bad, but if a vine bore gets in, the plant will die in a week or two.

For the last few years, I've been working with a few raised beds off the side porch of the house. I have future plans for a much bigger garden below the house. That area still needs to be fenced in order to keep the deer out. Until I have time to build the fence, I'm utilizing the smaller beds. Because I'm working in a smaller space, I tend to over crowd my plantings. This is what has happened this year. I tried to squeeze 6 plants into a space better suited for 2 or 3. Because of the overcrowding, I'm not getting much production from these plants.

Squash will produce both male and female flowers on the same plant.

You can tell the difference even before the flowers open up. The male flower will have a skinny stalk with a flower at the end. The female flower will have the beginnings of the fruit just below the flower. When all is working well the two flowers will open within a day or two of each other, the insects will crawl around passing the pollen from the male flower to the female flower and the fruit will start to grow. In a week or so, it's time to harvest your squash. This year I noticed that I had a disproportional number of female flowers early on. The



**Small Fruit**

plantings had produced lots of plant growth and had covered the raised bed making it difficult to see any of the flowers. I suspect that the crowded foliage and the lack of male flowers were the cause of the fruit being stunted. The fruits grew to about 2 inches, then turned the darker yellow or started to rot. When a squash fruit

is growing, they will be a pale yellow, turning to a darker yellow once they have matured.

You want to pick the fruit while it is still pale yellow, before it matures, turning a darker yellow, because the flesh of the fruit will begin to become fibrous and not that great to eat.

I'm starting to see an even distribution of male and female flow-

ers. I have thinned out some of the plants. Hopefully, this will solve the problems, and I'll start to get fruit developing better.



**Female/Male**



**Thinned Bed**



**Hill Country Master  
Gardeners 2017**

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Committee**

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Wil Rolfe  
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listed on our  
website**

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Caryl Hartmen

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*Webmaster - Debra Rosario*  
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Diane Boerner

Submissions to  
patwolters2865@hotmail.com

or **New email**

Newsletter.editor.hcmg@  
gmail.com

**Scrub-A-Dub-Dub!!!**

It was a fun day on a chilly March 25th when HCMGs and soon-to-be-Interns met to clean and make rain barrels for the Blooms and Barrels Sale.



Those working were Anne Brown, Chair of the Rain Barrel Committee, VP Wil Rolfe, Melayne Arnold, Debbie Bacon and soon to be Interns, Kim Courtright, Chuck Fitzsimmons, Rachel Garrison, Lloyd Kneese, Joan Morgan, Shawn Richard and Patti Schlessiger.

*Photos by Jackie Connelly*



**2017 Texas Master Gardener Cruise Conference**



*Photo credit:*  
*Jim Latham*



Back row: Leigh Thomas, Sue Hall, Jim Latham, Pam Umstead, Kathy Lewis  
Front row: Carol Hageimeier, Duane Robinson, Cindy Anderson