

Memories From the Gulf Coast Daylily Society of Southeast Texas, 1956 - 2011

by Mary Gage

(Reprinted from Region 6 Newsletter, Daylilies of the Southwest, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 2012)



**Last Meeting of the Gulf Coast Daylily Society of Southeast Texas
Logan's Roadhouse, Beaumont, Texas, November 5, 2011
(Photo by Mary Gage)**

The old saying, "All good things must come to an end" sadly has come true for us in the Gulf Coast Daylily Society (GCDS). On November 5, 2011, we had our farewell meeting at Logan's Roadhouse in Beaumont. Sadness was mixed together with the pleasure of seeing friends and reminiscing about the good times we had for 55 years. Of course, none of us present at this dinner meeting were actually there at the beginning in 1956, when the club was organized with 26 charter members, but we appreciate their work in laying the foundation and building the club we have enjoyed so much. Maymie Schulze was our first President and Deane Spradley our last.

Lucille Williamson, a charter member, used to say, "You have to toot your own horn." So tooting Gulf Coast Daylily Society's horn is the aim of this article. We were one of the very early clubs and our members contributed much to Region 6 and the American Hemerocallis Society.

GCDS membership covered a large area known as the Golden Triangle of Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange, then extending North to Nacogdoches, West to Houston, and East with many members in Louisiana. To name just a few: Farquhar's, Copenhaver's, Boudreaux's, Franklin's, Vincent's, and the very witty Marvin Granger. Likewise, some of our members also belong to

the Southwest Louisiana Daylily Club.

Daylilies are what this organization is all about, especially the improvement thereof, and that is what our early members set about doing.

Among our membership we had prominent, and some not so prominent, hybridizers. Lucille Williamson was our earliest hybridizer, with *Hemerocallis* 'Cedar Ruffles' (1955). In all, she registered 159 daylilies, and in 1978 was awarded the Bertrand Farr Silver Medal for hybridizing. Her *H.* 'Green Flutter' (1964) was awarded the Stout Silver Medal in 1976, and Lenington All American Award in 1980. Earnest Young registered

one daylily, **'Wagon Train'** (1962). J. L. Cruse registered 336 cultivars starting with **'Headmaster'** (1970), many with the prefix "Gypsy."

Edgar Brown, registered 110 cultivars, mostly large tetraploids, beginning with **'Pickledtink'** (1970). (No, that is not a typo, but it sounds as though Bobo Faggard may already have been working with Edgar.)

Betty Brown began in 1970, as well, mainly with doubles, but also large diploids and spiders. Her **'Double Blueberry Pie'** (1984) was among her most popular ones. Cora Hund registered twelve in all from 1976 to 1979, including the 9 inch **'Gulf Coast Affair'** (1977). Bobo Faggard's best known daylily is **'Little Orange Tex'** (1985) but his first was **'Kisselpoo'** (1977). His total to date is 95 cultivars, mostly doubles, smalls, and miniatures.

Eddie Gage registered **'Beaukiss'** (1981), a Jack Carpenter seedling. Jean Barnhart's first registration of her own hybrids was **'Neal Hayes'** (1984). From then until 2008 she registered 103 daylilies, including some from other hybridizers. Dr. Gene Orgeron registered 13 diploids since 1985, one of the first being **'Mockingbird Thrill'** (1985). Henry Crowell registered **'Bright Eyed'** (1985) but prior to that he registered a number of other hybridizers' seedlings bringing his list to 13. Allie Swafford registered one daylily, **'Gulf Coast Red'** (1987).

Since Mable Nelson's **'Pink Zinger'** (1989), the first winner of the Region 6 Edna Lankart Hybridizer Award in 1988, and **'Frances Ann Marks'** (1991),

the second Edna Lankart Award winner. She registered 18 cultivars. In 1981. Mable's entry of a seedling hybridized by J. L. Cruse won the AHS Achievement Medal and she registered it as **'Sweet Sensation'**. Margaret Jones registered **'Jenny Lynn'** (1990) and six total. Mary Gage registered four beginning in 1991. **'Color Me Happy'** (2000) was her best. **'Hello Darlin'** (1998), was one of Marie Dattalo's first registrations. In all, she named six cultivars. Scott Henry registered **'Tiger Sorbet'** (2006) and six more the same year.



H. **'Sweet Sensation'**
(Cruse-Nelson, 1981)
(Photo by Mary Gage)

Craig Hoyal hybridized many beautiful daylilies, but despite the urging of friends, he never registered any. However, Craig and his daylily garden are featured and pictured in landscape designer Jill Nokes' book, *Yard Art and Handmade Places*.

Bus trips to AHS Conventions, organized by Mable Nelson, were some of our most enjoyable times. Any vacant seats we had were usually filled with members of other Texas Daylily Clubs. There was never a dull moment as we sang songs and told jokes. I think we all remember Bobo's fictional cousin, "Juanita Rosita

Lolita Chicita Lopez." Dr. Orgeron often had games like Daylily Trivia and Daylily Crosswords. Besides his parrot jokes, W. D. Everett would lead devotionals on Sunday mornings and often asked of someone sitting quietly, "Are you having fun yet?"

Mishaps were rare on our Convention trips, but Dr. Orgeron suffered a heart attack in Mississippi and had to remain in Biloxi for a few weeks. On the 1983 trip to Birmingham, Alabama, the bus was filled so completely that Mary and Eddie Gage followed in one car, with Nell Crandall and Mildred Schlumpf following behind in another. It was one rather hairy ride for the Gage's, trying to keep in sight of both the Greyhound bus ahead, and Nell and Mildred behind, and do it without a map or directions for the trip. They did get lost in Mobile and found themselves following another Greyhound bus. They reconnected fairly soon and after that they made sure to sign up early for bus seats. Joe Boudreaux described the trip as "Mama Greyhound and her pups."

As we walk through our gardens today we see daylilies and all sorts of plants brought home years ago from Conventions and gardens visited along the way. On one trip, nearly everyone bought an Oak Leaf Hydrangea. Mable found a wonderful reseeding white Verbena, name unknown, that some of us have kept growing. **'Double Daffy'** from Marie Warren's garden has been a show winner. Japanese Painted Fern from Alabama is a favorite. And always, we loaded up with Vidalia onions when we went to Georgia. One plant we

did not bring to Texas, thanks to Mable and our bus driver, Carol Gates, who both refused to allow it on the bus, was “Kudzu” that nasty vine that covers fences, light poles, trees, barns, and literally everything it can, all along southern highways.

On one memorable visit to Earnest Yearwood’s garden, we had a special treat of Nita’s “Weed Killer Punch” which was Scuppernong wine. Notice Bobo and Mable’s happy faces as they relax on Yearwood’s front porch. Nita sent several gallons along with us and every time Bobo went to the cooler in the back of the bus, all hands were raised, wrapped around Styrofoam cups. That was a happy time.



**Bobo Faggard and Mable Nelson
enjoying Nita Yearwood’s
“Weed Killer Punch”
(Photo by Mary Gage)**

Visits to “Aunt” Ethel Smith’s No Mistake Plantation, home of the “Yazoo” daylilies, in Satartia, Mississippi, were like being in another time and place. As guests, we were graciously treated to elegant luncheons on white linen tablecloths, china, and silver, served under Magnolia trees by maids in white, starched aprons. The plantation home (think Scarlett O’Hara’s Tara), dated from before the Civil War and Ethel told how her family buried their silver and china to save them from the Yankees. Her ancestor, searching for suitable land for a

new home, wrote to his father saying, “it would be no mistake” to purchase this land on the Yazoo River, hence the name.

The Dinner Bell in McComb, Mississippi, was a favorite restaurant, set in an old home with large rooms and one large round table in each that would seat about 15 folks. Diners did not have a menu from which to order, but simply paid their \$6, found an empty chair, sat down, and helped themselves from the huge lazy susan in the middle of the table, laden with various meats, vegetables, and desserts. The restaurant in back of the old Stanton Hall in Vicksburg had some of the best fried chicken, desserts, and little bitty biscuits. Dorothy’s Front Porch in Nederland, was another favorite restaurant, not on trips, but frequently for meetings.

In addition to the annual Daylily Flower Show in May, the club held two days of visits in members’ gardens and voted on GCDS Hybridizers’ Awards. The Fuqua Award was for the best seedling of a particular color, chosen each year. The Allie Swafford Award was for the best overall seedling.

GCDS hosted AHS Region 6 Meetings in 1962, 1971, 1978, 1985, 1991, 1997, and in 2006, our Fiftieth Anniversary year we hosted the Regional for the seventh time. The 1985 Regional Meeting is remembered as being a “Mini National” for we drew a goodly number of folks from other Regions.

Four of our members have served as Regional Vice Presidents: Mable Nelson, Dr. Eugene Orgeron, Sue Jackson, and Jean Consford. Mary Gage

represented Region 6 on the AHS Board of Directors. We had our share of Regional Service Awards: Bobo Faggard, Mable Nelson, Dr. Orgeron, Eddie and Mary Gage, Jean Barnhart, and Jean Consford. In 1991, Dr. Orgeron received the AHS Newsletter Award.

In 2011, we lost four long-time, dedicated members. Virga “Red” Lusignan died on March 5th and is survived by his wife, Kathryn, their four children, Philip, Laura, Janie, and Tina, fourteen grandchildren, and four great-grand-children. Craig Hoyal died on March 26th and is survived by his wife, Millie, their four children, Roxanne, Howard, Dale and Julia and seven grand-children. Genevieve Smith died on August 29th and is survived by her three children, Laura, David, and Stephen, two grand-children and two great-grand-children. Ann Marks died on September 19th, and is survived by two children, Sheri and Scott, and four grand-children.

The remaining funds in our treasury are being donated to Region 6 in memory of those who have passed from this life to a better place. And so, the last chapter is written in our book filled with memories of flowers, friends, food, and fun.

We were the Gulf Coast Daylily Society of Southeast Texas.