

# Central Park gardener moving on to new digs

'Godmother' of garden hands over her trowel

BY GAIL GILMORE

Dianne Bleau, the Parker County Master Gardener whose vision graces the entry to Azle's Central Park, barely had the chance to say goodbye Monday, before she was on her way to Florida.

She and her husband Ron are moving there to be closer to their grandchildren.

But Bleau is leaving behind a different kind of child when she goes.

Bleau is the driving force behind a demonstration garden that was installed in 2008 at the then-new Central Park. The garden is filled with "Smartscape" landscape plants that require very little water.

It is also filled with the labor of love by dozens of Azle area volunteers who helped dig, plant and weed the area for the past 36 months or so.

The project took second place in a state-wide contest of similar Master Gardener efforts, Bleau's fellow Master Gardener Catherine Miller said Monday.

The park was built early in 2008, after years of work by a subcommittee of the city Park Board. The committee was headed up by lifelong Azle resi-

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"Kyle wasn't sure what to do with me," Dianne Bleau told a few well-wishers at her going-away luncheon this week. Bleau designed and installed – with the help of scores of volunteers – an entry garden for the city's then new Central Park as a community service project for the Parker County Master Gardeners. Kyle Culwell is parks superintendent for the City of Azle.

Photo by Jeri Field

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Dianne Bleau, center, is flanked by Catherine Miller, a Master Gardener who will oversee maintenance of the Central Park entry garden, and Lynda "Scottie" Scott, the Azle native who helped organize building Central Park. Bleau is relocating to Florida to be near her grandchildren and the volunteer gardeners who have helped her maintain the entry garden hosted a going-away luncheon for her this week at the library. Photo by Gail Gilmore

## Park garden passes on to new hands as Bleau leaves town

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dent Lynda "Scottie" Scott, and helped obtain a state parks grant to pay for most of the project.

The state grant was \$500,000, with the city matching that value in donated land and labor.

Most of the park lies behind a beautiful new library that was built and donated to the city by a local benefactor.

As Bleau described it during a luncheon in her honor this week, city employee Kyle Culwell (parks and streets superintendent) "wasn't sure what to do with me," when she first volunteered to install the entry garden.

Master Gardeners perform a community service project as part of their work to obtain the designation, and Bleau – a daily specialist who lived in un-

incorporated Parker County – targeted Azle's new park, which lies barely inside the Parker County line.

About one-third of the city is in Parker County.

Bleau's installation, and later a garden around the park's gazebo (funded by Azle Rotary Club), are maintained by volunteers who meet once a month for weeding and other maintenance projects.

The December workday, this Friday, Dec. 17, has been cancelled because of predicted cold temperatures.

Scott and Miller presented Bleau with a going away present, a monogrammed weeding tool.

Bleau's "babies," the Central Park entry and gazebo gardens, will be in good hands.



Dianne Bleau in 2008, during the installation of the entry garden at Central Park.

Azle News file photo