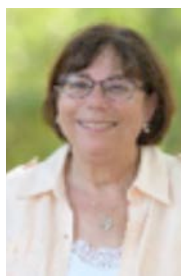


Oak Notes

Volume 39
Number 4
January 2021

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Marla White, Volunteer President

“Gardens are not made by sitting in the shade.”

—Rudyard Kipling. This quotation is in honor of
CalBG’s wonderful Horticulture Staff!

During this time while we are physically separated, we still have opportunities to stay connected with the Garden through walking with family members or friends in our “pod,” Zoom meetings, digital content (Volunteer Enrichment, webinars, classes, and podcasts) on the website, and planting natives from Grow Native Nursery. If we could only get some rain!

There is a promise of better things to come in 2021 with two COVID-19 vaccines becoming available, bringing an end to the pandemic sooner rather than later. I appreciate Lucinda’s determination to keep us all safe and move towards whatever the “new normal” becomes.

The Winter Quarterly Business Meeting took place via Zoom with attendees unanimously approving the 2020 Volunteer Handbook and Appendices. In case you missed the meeting, here’s the link to the PowerPoint. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lxtwIuw3a_q1Z7srUTkX8IkY1Ro3aLpf/view?usp=sharing Sales of jewelry sets (pendant, earrings and an ID fob) were launched and they still may be purchased for gift giving or accessorizing for yourself. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wq4K7vltU9QyMh_5FHtdnVduEZOWWnzb?usp=sharing

Members and guests were treated to the three-night Winter Stroll (Luminaria Reimagined) with lighted paths and musicians. Four uniquely sculpted snowmen were handcrafted by Native Designs group leaders Linda Prendergast and Carol Petty, ably assisted by Shaunna Gygli and Judy Moffett Whale.

The Grapevine Harvest and Wreath Making will take place on Monday, January 18 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day). We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Horticulture Complex. Bring your own pruners, gloves, and a refillable water bottle. Light refreshments will be provided. Regrettably, COVID restrictions prevent us from serving lunch. Look for an email notice from Native Designs with the wreath-making schedule and additional details.

The deadline for articles to be submitted for the February 2021 issue of OAK NOTES is **Friday, January 15**. Thank you for your prompt submission!

Volgistics reminder:
Please submit your monthly volunteer hours to Volgistics. Every volunteer minute counts.

Great visible strides are being made on the Forest Pavilion. The restroom slab was poured and the walls are going up. The Pavilion verticals are a new and prominent feature. Welders have been busy adding the tops. The gabion walls were poured and will provide an interesting organic texture to the structure's exterior. Gabion is an inexpensive retaining-wall system constructed with rocks.

I would like to encourage everyone to reach out to Committee chairs and see how you might be able to contribute to our organization on a larger scale. The Board is seeking new members as several people's terms are up this spring. See your handbook for descriptions of the Volunteer Organization Committees. Seek out the chairs listed on the front page of this *Oak Notes* issue.

In this unique moment in time, may you find many reasons for happiness, peace, rejuvenation, and sanctuary as you walk the garden paths. Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and healthy New Year. Be like The Sticklers and please wear your mask.



See you soon in our Garden

—Marla



FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Lucinda McDade, CalBG
Executive Director**

Forest Pavilion Up-Date: It has walls! It has roof lines and a poured concrete wall!

The first describes the support building (aka restrooms) which is really taking form now as you can see in the images. You can now understand

where the restrooms will be and also the green room. Watch for the building to take form in other ways each time you visit. As for the Pavilion itself, you can now fully see the roof lines! One thing to note is that the floor will be at least 18" higher than the level of the soil at present would lead you to expect. Thus it is not going to be quite so tall at the western end. Also, the poured in place concrete wall is now present and it looks great! It will be flanked on both sides by the gabion walls. It is taking shape. Yay!

Winter Stroll: Some of you were able to come to Winter Stroll but, for those of you who were not, I wanted to provide a bit of a report. First of course is that this took the place of our much loved *Luminaria* event. We just could not do anything that complicated this year in significant part because we need most of you volunteers to avoid anything that even seems like a group activity. Just a few more weeks! We also did not want to offer anything that could be construed as an event because such are prohibited under our latest stay at home orders. However, walking outdoors is permitted and that is basically what we invited our guests to do. We lit the string lights around the mesa and 'connected' them with luminaria — using all of our solar lanterns and then real candles for the rest. We uplit a number of the *Clayifornia* sculptures, including the funny multi-headed 'Lucindas' at the entrance, the glaciers in Fay's Meadow, and 'Gathering' at the entrance to the Cultivar Garden. They looked great! Just four or five staff set up the whole thing on Thursday night and then, with a little bit of help, four or five staff managed the stroll each night.

We were of course not able to offer food or drink (as I read the guidelines, providing refreshments is not allowed) but we did three special things. First, the wonderful Native Designs team made four snowmen (snow people? I have been calling them snow boys and girls)—each entirely different from all the others! They were installed at the entrance, in Fay's at the beginning of the snake path, in front of the Admin building, and in the pavilion in the Cultivar Garden. They are wonderful! Come see them! They will be on duty through the holidays!

We had one musical act each night. The musicians were set up in Johnson's Oval and access was blocked



for everyone else. Our musicians felt safe as did we! On Friday night, Windsong Canyon played; they are the couple who set up a real installation as their stage and then play Ren Fair music and similar. On Saturday night, it was Steve Ruiz aka the Rushingwind Project, whom many of you will remember from previous years when he has most often been in the Outdoor Gallery: Native American woodwind music — hauntingly beautiful! Lastly, on Sunday night, it was Mason Hensley on solo guitar providing beautiful, often holiday themed music to stroll by. No chairs, no heaters, please keep strolling! No one has heard live music since early 2020: the musicians were thrilled, our guests were thrilled, we were thrilled!

AND we had snow!—from a snow machine that uses basically a soap solution to make actually quite realistic snow. It was on top of the admin building and it snowed on the front porch. QUITE a hit, especially with the kids. It was a bit zany on Friday night but we reacted quickly and implemented a system to reduce numbers on the porch and have families take turns playing in the snow. We will probably do that again although I wish that the “snow juice” were not quite so expensive (\$300/5 gallon pail AND we went through nearly three such pails over the course of the three nights although part of the zaniness of Friday night was that we generated real blizzard conditions and used too much).

We implemented a one-way in (up the ramp by Fay’s) and one-way out (driveway) pattern of traffic flow which worked well. Of course, it is mainly the ramp that is too narrow for two way traffic under the

present circumstances. We encouraged guests to walk counter-clockwise around the mesa but the main trail is quite wide such that it was not essential to insist on that pattern. We lit only the main trail but did not prohibit people from going elsewhere. For people who know our Garden, it is a real treat to be here after dark: just sitting on a bench that is off a lit path and listening to the night is regenerative.

Oh! and we arranged for a little thing called a celestial confluence between Jupiter and Saturn! It was marvelously visible from the NE section of the loop near the Native Designs cutting garden. Great viewing from the little porch behind the outdoor classroom! No extra charge to our guests! I wish that we could have set up a telescope but of course that is not possible at this time.

There was one real ‘hole’ in the entire event, which was the absence of our volunteers. We missed you! I hope you understand that, as much as we want you

“It was impossible to get a conversation going, everybody was talking too much.”

—Yogi Berra



here, even more do we want you to be healthy and safe when it is your turn to roll up your sleeve. I DO hope that vaccine time will come soon for some of you and I would love to hear from you when it is your turn. I will feel better once I know that our precious volunteers are beginning to get inoculated against this horrible thing.

Happy New Year! And on into 2021! It will be a monumental year here at California Botanic Garden with the Forest Pavilion coming online in the spring and also the Courtyard if all goes well. AND I very much hope that our wonderful volunteer program will be able to return to full force and effectiveness before the year is out!



**COMMUNITY
EDUCATION**
Kristen Barker, Coordinator

With the year coming to a close, it's natural to reflect. Looking back at this tumultuous year, I of course see the pain, but I also see bright flickers of hope. Communities are coming together, neighbors offering what they can, and the innovation of so many are bringing some semblance of normalcy and comfort to as many as they can. It gives me hope for the year to come. Like good ole Mr. Rogers says, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." So that is what I will continue to do as we step into 2021.

I am inspired by what the staff here has been able to do under the circumstances. Offering classes, workshops, and lectures that have reached people from our neighboring communities and up into the Bay Area, all the way to Jalisco, Mexico, and Alaska! Our geographic classroom reaches far and wide! I am looking forward to more classes and talks on the horizon taught by the amazing staff at the Garden like Naomi Fraga, Steven Valdez, Ashlee Armstrong,

Chip Grubbs, and Mare Nazaire. So, as always, keep an eye out for future offerings.



A highlight during this past month was our *Arrange Wild: Winter Edition* workshop. Linda Prendergast virtually led 53 people through a terrific demonstration on how to make a holiday centerpiece.

I received many photos from class participants that I would like to share with you. Below you will find pictures of a couple of the centerpieces made by Jean Collinsworth (top left), Joann De La Ossa (right), and the nature journal entry from Pat Kuenning (bottom left), who took both *Arrange Wild* and the Nature Journaling class back in August.



On that note, wishing you all a happy and healthy new year! Take care!

OAK NOTES SNOWMEN

**Linda Prendergast, Chair, Native Designs,
Photos by Marla White**

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow...!

If you attended the Winter Walk, you might have encountered a snowman or two. Native Designs constructed four of these imaginative creatures at the request of the Advancement Office for the winter celebration that replaced Luminarias this year. There was a snow-lady made of cardboard boxes on display

across from the kiosk and a chicken wire snowman in Faye's Meadow. In the large gazebo in the Cultivar Garden was a snowman made of spray-painted nursery pots, and in front of the Administration Building was one made of (wait for it) yoga balls. (Hey! It's not easy making snowmen when there is no snow!)



Thanks to Judy Whale, Shaunna Gygli, Marla White, Carol Petty, Peter Evans, and Linda Prendergast for these fanciful creations.



NATIVE DESIGNS by Linda Prendergast

Grapevine Harvest



Dan White pruning grapevines.

Martin Luther King Day is Monday, January 18th. This is the day volunteers and staff traditionally prune back the grapevines at CalBG and use the trimmings to make wreaths. At this

writing, **the grapevine**

harvest is a GO! We may have to limit the number of participants, but we can go forward with the vine pruning and the wreath-making. Everyone will be working outdoors and we won't be able to have our usual "potato feed," but at least we can share some camaraderie.

Please watch your e-mail for further details as we get closer to January 18th. If you **know** you want to help with the pruning, please send an e-mail to

NativeDesigns@CalBG.org and we will sign you up. Harvesting will start at 8:00 a.m. under the supervision of Peter Evans and the Hort Staff.

If you would like to make wreaths, please sign up for one of these shifts: 8:30–10:30 a.m., 10:30–12:30 p.m.

No experience is necessary! Veteran wreath-makers will be on hand to coach you through the process. We love to have new volunteers and friends join in this event. As you might be aware, Native Designs sold this year's wreaths online on the Garden's website. We were surprised (and delighted!) that all the wreaths sold in just a few days! The funds generated by the wreath sales go to the Volunteer Organization and we would like to construct more wreaths in January to beef up our treasury!

Everyone will need garden gloves, and please bring your own pruners. A sun hat, old clothes, and a bottle of water are recommended. A mask is **REQUIRED!** Hope to see you at the Garden on Martin Luther King Day. Rain cancels.

MEET THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN HORTICULTURE STAFF: PART 2

by Marla White

Staff photos by Marla White

The Horticulture staff has been described as “a quirky, dedicated group of professionals.” Having briefly interviewed this happy, unique crew, I wholeheartedly agree. Their dedication ranges from spirited descriptions of favorite plants to building curatorial relationships with the plantings based on seasonal changes. Each of the staff provides careful maintenance of their areas and visibly demonstrates their passion, down to the tattoos of serene woodland settings.



Jared Nokturne has been chief caretaker of the South Mesa since 2017, an area that includes both Upper and Benjamin Ponds. Jared shares a strong spiritual connection to nature. He holds a Certificate in Natural

Resources and Forestry from Citrus

College, volunteered with the Forest Service, and dabbles in creative writing. His favorite plant is the



Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) featuring orange bark, delicious berries, and beautiful wood. The most tedious part of the job is dealing with fallen sycamore leaves in his areas.



Evan Green joined the Garden in August 2019 and is responsible for the North Garden and East Plant Communities, which include the Channel Islands and Old Baja areas. Evan is a graduate of the Merritt College and Cal Poly Pomona

Regenerative Studies Graduate Program (a unique cross-discipline degree). His appreciation of plants

stems from growing food, gardening, and his background in environmental science. A favorite



plant of his at CalBG is the Boojum (*Fouquieria columnaris*) but he is also an admirer of the chaparral plant, Baja Bird Bush (*Ornithostaphylos*).



Patisu Lambert is the longest continuously serving horticulture staff member. She began her tenure in 2011 working with former Director of Special Projects Bart O'Brien. The South Plant Communities is her quiet domain. Patisu came to CalBG from

the Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary in Orange County's rural Modjeska Canyon. Working in the California



labor of love for her. The new Saguaro cactus plantings in her area were transplanted from the only remaining patch, located on a California military base. She likes the buckwheat

(*Eriogonum spp.*) in the fall when their flowers turn golden brown,

and the unique beauty of the Joshua (*Yucca brevifolia*) trees.



Richard Rojo stewards the North Plant Communities. Richard is also a long-serving horticulturalist, taking a break, and then returning full time in 2016. He is pictured with the drought-tolerant fan palm (*Brahea armata*), native to Baja California and adapted

to our dry, warm climate. A favorite plant is the



Bigpod Ceanothus (*Ceanothus megacarpus*).

Richard is a former professional architect but has always been a gardener and happiest outside with plants. He has taken

classes at Cal Poly Pomona and has a depth of knowledge from his nine years of experience at CalBG.

NINA HOUSE, MS STUDENT, CALBG

My name is Nina House, and I am currently a second year Botany Master's student. I grew up in Central New York, in a small town called Phoenix. In 2017, I graduated from the State University of New York (SUNY) Oswego with my Bachelor's in Biology, and then promptly moved to southern California. I was lucky to have met Dr. Jinyan Guo, an alum of the RSABG/CGU graduate program who was applying for a faculty position at SUNY Oswego. We



Me (Nina House) with a stream of Alpine shooting stars (*Primula tetrandia*).

discussed my interest in plants and my upcoming move to southern California, and she recommended I check out what was then Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. She offered to put me in touch with her friend Dr. Naomi Fraga. I was in Los Angeles County for three months, working as an unpaid restoration intern with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land



Pinewoods fritillary (*Fritillaria pinetorum*) is ranked by the California Native Plant Society as a 4.3, meaning that it has a limited distribution in California. Coming across it at the edge of Big Meadow in my study site, was such a surprise!

Conservancy, when I recalled our conversation and decided to take Dr. Guo up on her offer. Through this connection, I was able to start work as a Seed Conservation Intern in the California Seed Bank in February of 2018. About a year and half later, having learned an enormous amount about the Garden, seeds, and the plants of my new home state, I started in the graduate program at CalBG.

As a M.S. student at CalBG, I am doing a floristic inventory of the Manter and Salmon Creek watersheds, located in the southern Sierra Nevada,



Foxtail pines (*Pinus balfouriana*) are endemic to California, found only in the Sierra Nevada and Klamath mountains. Their southernmost population is found in my study site, at Siretta Peak!

Tulare County. Floristic work involves the thorough documentation of plant life in a region, work that is vital to our understanding of plant diversity, species ranges, and potential threats to plant life. A 51-square-mile section of the Kern Plateau, my study site represents a wide range of elevations (3,300 to 9,900 ft.) and habitat types (riparian, montane meadows, granitic outcrops, coniferous forests, montane chaparral, etc.). This, combined with a lack of prior plant documentation in the area, provides an opportunity for important botanical discoveries, including new county records.

I was ecstatic to get out in the field this summer. It was such a joy to spend time in green meadows, next to lush streams, and among the Jeffrey pines. While



Cattle are present in Horse Meadow (pictured) and in other meadows throughout the Sierra Nevada throughout the summer months.

COVID limited the number of people I could have in the field with me, the time I spent learning from other botanists and professionals was so valuable. For example, through the Botanical Advocacy and Leadership Award, jointly conferred by the Botanical Society of America and the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, I am collaborating with Laura Cunningham from the Western Watershed Project to document the effects of cattle grazing on the montane meadows of my study site. We are working to publish a detailed report to the Forest Service that will include our observations and recommendations for the management of grazing. I am so proud that, through this work, and through the detailed documentation of plant life, I will have a lasting impact on the conservation of an area that I love.

I am forever grateful for the chance interaction with Dr. Jinyan Guo that brought me to CalBG. It's hard to imagine what my life would be like without this community of people in it. I hope one day to join my interests of botanical field work, conservation, public policy, and science communication to protect our native plant life and educate the public on botanical issues. I know that my project, the classwork, and the talented, kind people at CalBG are preparing me for whatever comes next!

VOLUNTEER ENRICHMENT

Yvonne Wilson, Enrichment Committee

Enrichment Speaker: Peggy Perry; webinar at noon Monday, 25 January 2020, via Zoom, ID: 828 8526 5225, Passcode WINTER

As promised, we are going to have a noon Enrichment about women in the California plant world. *Dames in the Garden: Women Who Shaped California's Landscape*, will be presented by Peggy Perry. Her talk will be a survey of women horticulturists, designers, botanist, and conservationists who left a legacy still seen in California today.

In case you don't know her, Peggy Perry is a professor emeritus in the Department of Plant Sciences at Cal Poly Pomona. Among the courses she taught over her 42-year career were California Native Plant Materials

and History of Garden Art. These subjects merge in her research on women in California's landscape history. Peggy serves on the Board Trustees at CalBG. She is also a member of the Susanna Bixby Bryant Legacy Garden Project.



I am sure you will find this a fascinating subject that will enhance your knowledge of California's place in the plant world and in women's history.



A Very Happy January Birthday to:

Adrian Arceniega

Alina Bacha

Shawal Bhalli

John Bradley

Laura Burt

Susan Gregory

Patricia Hoppe

Jenny Knauf

Christine Langteau

Beverly Pemberton

Fraser Pemberton

Linda Prendergast

Melissa Smith

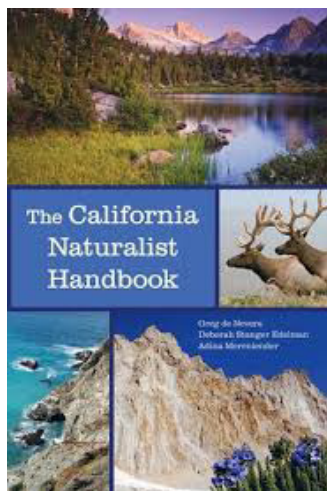
Katina Vlastos

Miles Wentworth

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Julie Scheuermann

Volunteer Library Committee



The California Naturalist Handbook by Greg de Nevers, Deborah Stanger Edelman and Adina Merenlender. 261 pages. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 2013

The California Naturalist Handbook was written in conjunction with the University of California Cooperative Extension's California Naturalist Program. It is required reading for participants in the program but anyone may purchase and benefit from the knowledge in the book.

California's unique climate and diversity of habitats make it a biodiversity hotspot. The population of California is growing. It is difficult to support both the growing population and protect the natural world. The California Naturalist Program was created to develop a constituency of volunteer naturalists and citizen scientists. It is hoped that they will carry their information into the world to help communities make pro-environmental decisions.

The book is an in-depth look at California's natural history, geology, climate, soils, water resources, plant morphology, plant communities, forest management, wildfires, animals, and energy sources and usage. Each chapter covers a wealth of information.

The final chapter is about how to be an effective nature interpreter and become involved in citizen-science projects.

It amazed me how much information was packed onto every page. The book provides a concise

explanation of topics from many different college courses; It is a valuable resource. There is also a 20-page glossary of scientific terms.

The section on being a nature interpreter mentions many things to consider in making one's presentation meaningful to their audience. The suggestions can be applied to audiences of all ages.

I recommend this book to anyone looking for a brief, comprehensive guide to the natural world of California.

CALIFORNIA IN A VASE PUBLICATION



Carol Petty, Linda Prendergast, Lucinda McDade, and Lilli Colton celebrate the publishing of *California in a Vase*. The 120-page coffee table book is expected to be available in late January. Volunteers Petty and Prendergast designed the native plant arrangements for the book written by David Bryant (now with California Native Plant Society).



WINTER STROLL

Photos by Marla White

Right: View of the night sky during the Stroll.

Below top: One of the many lovely pieces on display for "Clay in the Garden."

Some of the many creative snowmen encountered on the stroll: Below left, outside the Administration Building; below right, in the California Cultivar Garden.

