From the President

Marla White, Volunteer President

“Beauty surrounds us, but usually we need to be walking in a garden to know it”

—Rumi

While the garden sleeps in a quiet elongated summer senescence, there has been a lot of activity. Virtual Dormancy Tour with Grad Student Christina Varnava

The Forestry Pavilion site preparation is underway, but not without a few archaeological surprises unearthed in the process. These antiquities included a brick septic tank and a clay sewage pipe.

Thanks to the many Native Designers who created fabulous wreaths for all seasons and occasions: Winter scenes, both humorous and beautiful, Fall colors, Summer Canoe ride, and Spring flowers. This is the Volunteer Organization’s Annual Fund Raiser. Please check the website for more details and for purchasing. Large decorated wreaths are priced at $40, small decorated wreaths $20, and undecorated wreaths $3 to $7.50. Thanks to Carol Petty, Linda Prendergast, Wanda Ewing, and Susan Sprague for creating Cal “Boo!” Gee, our entry into the Claremont Chamber Scarecrow Contest. I hope you had a chance to sit by his side for a photo opportunity.

The Horticulture weekday work crew has been busy around the Garden and in the Native Designs cutting garden. The area has been weeded and beds prepped for new plantings, which will be surrounded by wire to keep most of the critters out. Except for this area, the Garden grounds look amazing in spite of the heat. Thanks to our Horticulture staff and the Volunteer work crews.

Public Relations has taken on a new mission—to assist Advancement in reaching out to lapsed members and new members to the Garden. Scores of phone calls and letters were made with positive results. Consistent membership is one of the most important financial support mechanisms to keep our Garden thriving. Much appreciation to Dorcia Bradley, Cindy Walkenbach, Lynn Miller, Hester Bell, Betsy MacLaren, Susan Starr, and Marlene Carney for their outreach efforts.
**November happenings:**

- AMOCA artists present the outdoor *Clayifornia* exhibit beginning November 6, with a kickoff reception by the Majestic Oak Society. Small pieces, some made by volunteers and staff, will be available for sale through our online Shopify site.

- Grow Native Nursery reopened as an online entity beginning with the Acorn and members sale in mid-October. The nursery opens to the public on Thursday, November 5 with the inventory accessible online.

- Enrichment series begins with volunteers Yvonne Wilson and John Bradley presenting *Susanna’s Wild Garden*, November 9 at noon via Zoom.

- Tuesday, November 17 from 6–7 p.m., Maria Jesus, M.S. student at Claremont Graduate University (and California Botanic Garden) discusses the Southern Inyo Mountains with CalBG Director of Conservation Programs, Naomi Fraga.

- As the holidays approach, consider giving a Garden membership to friends and family.

- Please consider designating CalBG with your Amazon account. To support CalBG, simply shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and the Garden will receive a small portion of your purchase price.

**Save the dates:**

- Virtual Volunteer Quarterly Business Zoom meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 9 at noon.

- Luminaria Reimagined is tentatively scheduled for December 15–23, with a members-only event on December 14.

Stay up to date with all CalBG happenings by checking our website frequently. Please record your hours on Volgistics

Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving with your loved ones, either virtually or in person.

Be well, stay safe, and thank you for your contributions and support for our California Botanic Garden.

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See you soon around the Garden.

—Marla

**Oak Notes thanks you, Marla, for all the photos you submitted for this issue.**

**FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Lucinda McDade, CalBG Executive Director

**So much going on at California Botanic Garden!**

I miss you! Of course, I miss you, our volunteers, every day but I was especially thinking about you yesterday when we did the Great California Botanic Garden Shakeout (yes, its real name is the Great California Shakeout but adding the rest of our own name seemed highly appropriate). In all other years that I’ve been Executive Director (since 2013), we have made sure that the staff leader in each area connects with all volunteers so that those who are with us know what to do on the day in question. I remember interacting with wonderful volunteer Ruth Henzie over multiple years because she had the Thursday morning shift at the gift shop (the shakeouts are always on Thursdays). We would look at the space available, consider the hazards, talk about one’s abilities as they inevitably change with time, and then how best to be safe. Herbarium volunteers would always stream out of the building with the rest of the herbarium staff—same for library volunteers—and down in the horticulture complex, same for nursery volunteers—you are all in this with us and keeping you safe along with staff is top priority! It always reminded me—tangible evidence as we would stand about in our meeting places and compare notes on how best to keep each other safe—of how thoroughly integrated the volunteer corps is into all that we do here! And then there was this year—October 15th in the year 2020: just we staff! And not even all of us for a number of reasons including that some staff are still working from home, some are part-time, some were away for one reason or the other. I missed you!
There is so much going on here! First, thanks to a small group of volunteers who worked with Kristen today to assemble the Things that Go Bump boxes. They worked safely distanced and masked and, in short order, a good sized batch of boxes was assembled and ready to go. These will be picked up by purchasers beginning tomorrow. And be sure to help us get the word out about these very nice educational and fun boxes — suitable for Halloween jollity, play and learning. As one volunteer pointed out, each box is filled with very nice, quality items including the entirely original production from CalBG of an activities/coloring booklet. Designed by education coordinator Kristen Barker and written by grad student Christina Varnava, the booklet is beautiful, educational and fun! Every child in your life deserves a Bump box! And also bring all of those children here for the scavenger hunt (again co-designed by Kristen and Christina).

And speaking of Christina: Christina is the Community Education graduate teaching assistant this semester. Christina turns out to have a number of talents of which I was not fully aware, one of which is serious writing chops (including poetry for the scavenger hunt). The other is that she is a natural on camera. If you have not seen the new video on dormancy, please do! It is short and very informative: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=344312500209737. I have long wanted us to have information available on dormancy, which becomes especially obvious at this time of year—and now we do!

Next, the new gift shop is open! What do you think of the Poppy Shop for its name? Feel free to vote and to offer alternatives (please remember that next to no one can spell or pronounce matilija). We are still working on stocking the shop (ideas welcome!) and still working on some aspects of logistics including being able to lock it (mystery solved! D-rings along the bottom of it having been discovered, it now locks up nicely). Also, frankly, we are dealing with the heat that this week — the teen dates of October — has

A Very Happy Birthday to:

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brought us. Not all merchandise should be outside in 95 degree heat. We also need to get a refrigerated display case for drinks and snacks installed down there. Complicating that issue is that it needs to be lockable and not very portable. You will likely be as surprised as we were to learn that the bollards stand for cash contributions was recently stolen from right there by the kiosk (either it was stolen or it acquired a degree of self-mobility that inanimate objects are generally not thought to be capable of!). Hence, the small one that is in the indoor former gift shop cannot go down there as it is both unlockable and pretty darned portable. In any case, stop and shop soon!

Vanessa Ortega is in charge of the gift shop and the kiosk attendants are being trained to handle sales. They are all doing a terrific job!

The Forest Pavilion is beginning to look like a construction site and not just a destruction site. I am sending, with my Oak Notes submission that you are reading, an image of the support building (aka restrooms + green room) in its early development. The electricity and plumbing are being installed as we ‘speak.’ Concrete is coming soon for the foundations of both the Forest Pavilion itself and the support building. Exciting to see it beginning to take shape!

We have had some considerable fun with it thus far including making some interesting discoveries. Who knew that the first ‘run’ of the septic system from Rat House SE to intersect with the main sewer line that runs down the maintenance road was of clay pipe that was totally clogged with tree roots? Who knew that there was a massive brick structure just to the south of the old stone house? It was estimated to be 25 feet deep and completely walled with brick. Many of us wondered how on earth it was constructed and why (Ideas? Let me know, please!). This giant underground vault had to get filled with concrete (it now has been). In sum, it has been a bit harrowing down there thus far and will continue to be so for another few months but it will be well worth it! On the positive side, I am thrilled to report that the water feature that will be installed at the Forest Pavilion will honor volunteer Vicki Geary. We talked with her daughters about the idea and they were immediately won over: the life affirming nature of water is just so very suitable to honor Vicki! I miss her!

“No one goes there nowadays, it’s too crowded.”

—Yogi Berra

Next: Clayfornia will begin to take shape in about ten days or so. About 40 large format ceramic works of art will be joining us on the grounds at CalBG for an exhibit opening on the 8th of November and extending into the spring. Contributed by 14 ceramicists, these are going to be a great deal of fun! This is a collaborative exhibit with AMOCA-Studio and, of course, the artists themselves. I am really looking forward to it! Those of you who are Majestic Oak circle members will be invited shortly to the opening of the exhibit on the 7th of November. This will be a distanced, strolling event with excellent food and drink: your chance to experience the exhibit and to visit with friends—outdoors and from a safe distance. With this article, you will see an image of graduate student Nina House working to make signs for the ceramic pieces.
Also involved is postdoc Carrie Kiel who is providing backup for Danielle Wildasinn to bring this off. A lot of coordination is necessary among all of those artists and our maintenance and horticulture teams! Nature Interpreters/Garden Guides may remember Carrie from when she led NICE walks while she was a grad student.

The Grow Native Nursery is returning! The nursery will be virtual for the fall. By early December, we will be contemplating whether, when and how we can open a physical store. I don’t think that we will be doing anything of that nature until there is a vaccine but time will tell. For logistics reasons—to avoid becoming overwhelmed with a giant back-log of orders causing customers extended wait times—we are opening the GNN in a stately fashion: Acorn members are third week of October, all members will have the next ‘turn’ the week after that and then, on Nov 5th, we will open for the public. We have some terrific plants and will be adding to the stock over the course of the season.

Lastly, for now, by the time you get this, you may seem some progress on the landscaping down at Foothill and College around the new sign. Personally, I am very much looking forward to seeing this project accomplished. The gorgeous new sign deserves a better “neighborhood” than it has at present!

Volunteers: please take care of yourselves! We — and everyone else in your lives — need you to emerge safe and sane on the other side of this ordeal. Get your flu shots!

PS: I am sharing with you a few images from the Garden. I can’t resist adding a shot of a quite amazing touring bike that was left at the kiosk one hot afternoon in October. The bike’s owner was riding from Chicago to San Diego: almost there!

Hello everyone! I miss the days when activities were normal; but what is normal, anyways? Prior to David Bryant’s departure, he revived the sculpture exhibition that was originally to open in April of this year. CalBG research scientist Carrie Kiel has joined me to execute the exhibition. The Visitor Experience department is excited to announce our upcoming exhibit, Clayfornia: Ceramic Sculpture in the California Sunshine!

Clay and California go together. Clay has been part of California’s history through every sun-dappled chapter and continues to find beautiful expressions in the hands of contemporary artists who call the Golden State home. The AMOCA Ceramics Studio (American Museum of Ceramic Art) in Pomona enshrines this important legacy and continues the tradition through studio programs that support ceramic artists and their artistic practice.

Clayfornia will showcase fourteen AMOCA Ceramics Studio artists and their work at our Garden. We have invited these artists to explore and express California’s identity in the quintessential California medium of clay, set amidst the native plants that make our home state superlatively special.

The exhibit will be open from November 8, 2020 through April 18, 2021.

Thank you,

—Danielle
As I write this, the Grow Native Nursery Pre-Sale is in full swing. One of the favorite benefits of Acorn Members is the opportunity to consult with horticulture and botany experts on their gardening needs.

On Saturday, November 7, the Garden will host The Majestic Oak stroll. This is normally a dinner event, but to keep attendees safe has been reimagined as a stroll to preview Clayifornia, an exhibit starting November 8. The event is for donors who have donated at least $1,000 to the Garden during the last fiscal year and/or members of the Susanna Bixby Bryant Society.

What is the Susanna Bixby Bryant Society? It is the Garden’s Planned Giving Society—those who have remembered the Garden in their will. If you have an interest in learning more, please join us via Zoom on Thursday, November 12. To learn more, email me at abehnke@calbg.org or call 909.625.8767, x. 222.

At the present time, I am also serving as the Volunteer Manager. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to let me know.

Volunteers: Please enter your hours each month on Volgistics.

Volunteer Spotlight:
Dorcia Bradley

Board members of the newly formed Claremont Garden Club, Dorcia Bradley and her friend Sharron Neyer, thought they’d better see what this botanic garden of California native plants was all about. They signed up to volunteer during the 2014 season, loved it, became part of the Class of 2015 along with Dorcia’s husband John, and never looked back.

This is Dorcia’s 4th year on the Volunteer Board, co-chairing the Public Relations Team with Bev Jack. PR volunteers enjoy working not only onsite at the Garden’s many public functions, but also out in the community, representing the Garden and providing assistance at Village events. Dorcia volunteers at most of the Garden’s events, and particularly enjoys being a part of the Native Designs group, where she learns so much from Linda Prendergast. She also looks forward to the return of the Butterfly Pavilion. In the meantime, she is enjoying being a part of the new Membership Committee, from which she and some of her PR Team members are now making friendly checking-in phone calls to new members.

When asked what her favorite things are about being a volunteer, Dorcia quickly replied, “Engaging with the people, whether with visitors, staff, or out in the community. I’m so proud to represent the treasure that is this Garden. And I love hearing their comments, even if it’s a criticism, because I know there will be follow-up. It’s as much about the character of this place, as it is the surroundings, that makes it joyful to be a part of.”

Dorcia is a retired MSW, having worked in the medical realm throughout her career. Her last seventeen years were with Hospice of Lancaster County, PA, where her focus was working with grieving families and facilitating caregiver groups. She also held Board positions with the Schenectady NY American Red Cross, as well as the Sertoma Club and the MS Society of Lancaster, PA.
Volunteer Enrichment
Yvonne Wilson, Enrichment Committee

Enrichment Speakers: John Bradley and Yvonne Wilson. Monday, November 9, webinar at noon via Zoom, ID: 824 3932 6994, Passcode: 154426

Yes, Volunteer Enrichment is going to be on Zoom. We hope you can enjoy it while you are eating lunch or view it later on the CalBG website. There will be three Volunteer Enrichments during 2020–2021.

We hope you can join us to for a review of the past that is leading us to the development of the future.

Community Education
Kristen Barker, Coordinator

Hello Everyone!

Yes, Volunteer Enrichment is going to be on Zoom. We hope you can enjoy it while you are eating lunch or view it later on the CalBG website. There will be three Volunteer Enrichments during 2020–2021.

In October we installed our Things That Go Bump in the Night scavenger hunt that was up for the entire month. Families could pick up a copy of the clues at the kiosk and be on their way in search of the posters stationed throughout the Garden. I saw some families during their search and was happy to see them enjoying themselves. As of mid-October, when I am writing this, we have had nearly 300 copies picked up! We also began selling our Bump Activity Box online and in the Poppy Shop which included owl pellet dissection activities, a coloring activity book written by graduate student Christina Varnava, imaginative play items, native seeds to attract night moths, and other crafts. Christina also created some wonderful Bump-related videos that were posted on both the Garden’s social media pages and the digital content page of the website.

We also continued our “Conservation Stories” virtual lecture series as Sophie Winitsky discussed her work in the Adobe Valley on October 20. Join us on
November 17, with Maria Jesus when she will discuss her conservation work in the Conglomerate Mesa.

Steven Valdez, Lead Nursery Technician here at the Garden, taught a virtual horticulture class called Planting with Natives. The class discussed tried and true native plant selections, getting your garden ready for planting, watering, and basic care as your new native plants become established. We hope to offer more virtual horticulture classes in the near future.

For November and December, we are working on some classes related to the Clayifornia exhibition, another Arrange Wild class, and a Saging the Wild class. Keep your eye on our website and email blasts for more information on these classes and other activities.

Take care!

Native Designs
Garden Renovation

Native Designs and Horticulture’s Weekday work crew spruced up the Native Designs cutting garden in preparation for fall planting.

Lizards
by Fred Brooks, Garden Guide
Photos Debbie Woo and Patricia Brooks

Lizards intrigue me. When we meet on a path, why do they stop and stare instead of running? Why do they do push-ups? Is it true that if they lose their tails, they grow back? Findings from those who study reptiles may be based on observation and speculation, or controlled studies. You, however, may have your own opinions.

There are about 6,000 species of lizards worldwide, of which 60 or so are found in California. The latter include common western fence lizards (blue bellies), side-blotched and alligator lizards, plus geckos, skinks, Gila monsters, iguanas, and more.

Most are active during the day but some desert species shelter until dark.

Native Designs
by Linda Prendergast

Have you met Cal “Boo!” Gee?
There is a new temporary employee to greet you at the kiosk! Meet the Garden’s entry for the City of Claremont’s Scarecrow Contest, our very own Cal “Boo!” Gee. He sits on a bale of straw, just across from the kiosk and next to the Stickler family. Cal is posed for a photo op with his arm extended to embrace whomever sits down on the bale. He is a pumpkin head—complete with a fresh flower arrangement protruding from his noggin! Native Designs volunteers Carol Petty, Susan Spradley, and Linda Prendergast constructed this fanciful scarecrow. He has a PVC “skeleton” and is fashionably attired in thrift store jeans and shirt. Cal is prepared to mask-up, with a bandana around his neck and wearing garden gloves. He is ready for his close-up and will be on display through October.
Many lizards are sit-and-wait predators. They remain still, except for their eyes, and then use quick movements to catch their prey. Staying still also helps them identify potential threats and can intimidate predators or other lizards. When a lizard cannot escape our cat, it “plays dead.” I have rescued a number of these lizards and taken them outside, only to find them gone a few hours later.

Push-up-like movements may scare predators, be part of a mating ritual, or used to define territory. Unlike mammals, reptiles are exotherms (cold-blooded) and cannot rely on the heat they generate internally to warm them. This makes them slower when the weather is cold and more susceptible to predators. Basking in the sun is a way of raising their body temperature, as are physical activities like push-ups.

The tails of some lizard species are weakly attached and may break loose during rough handling or when grabbed by a predator. Certain species can purposely detach their tails as a defense mechanism: while the wriggling tail distracts the predator, the lizard slips away. Tails usually grow back, but are often shorter and slightly deformed. As in many societies, others, including the opposite sex, may shun a slightly mutilated lizard. Survival often comes at a cost.

Since nature definitely influences me, it is a major focus for the designs on my ceramics. Many of the natural subjects on my sgraffito art have been inspired from my time as a volunteer at CalBG. As a Garden Guide, it has been such a joy sharing with visitors the Garden’s beautiful nesting horned owls, or pointing out the elusive California quail as they scurry by. Perhaps my favorite Garden resident to watch is the crafty gray squirrel gathering acorns for its winter meals. The native flora at the Garden, especially the matilija poppy, has also been a huge focus of design on my pieces. The poppy’s delicate quality and paper-thin petals continually intrigue me.

I feel so fortunate that when I retired from teaching, I was smart enough to become a CalBG volunteer. Not only does the Garden get me out into the nature I love, it has also become a huge inspiration and outlet for my ceramic art, which I enjoy sharing with others.

A Garden Full of Inspiration
by Katy Douglass

Nature has always been an important part of my life, so it’s no wonder that I am in my happy place when I’m outdoors enjoying the natural world. The beauty, wonder, and mystery of nature not only captivate my imagination, they fuel my creativity as a ceramic artist.

Most of my pottery is wheel thrown, though I do a little hand building as well. Once a vessel is created, I decorate it using a variety of methods. One decorating technique I have become particularly excited about is called sgraffito. This process involves painting a layer of underglaze on an unfired piece that is leather hard. Once the underglaze is dry, a design is carved into it. This can be a bit tricky depending on how elaborate the design is. It is like making a negative and positive block print, only with clay. Once the design is carved and the piece has dried, it goes into a bisque fire, followed by a second and final glaze fire. This process can take from several days to weeks.
Book of the Month
Chris Ilgen, Volunteer Library Committee


Timely Read

John McPhee, familiar author of articles in The New Yorker and an abundance of nonfiction, in 1989 published The Control of Nature. As students of the natural world know, introducing man into the natural world creates an oxymoron: man vs. nature. In his familiar style, McPhee portrays areas of interest through dialogues with experts and nature enthusiasts.

A summer in which the Northwest has burned furiously, from California to British Columbia, has created air deemed “unhealthy.” The causes of these fires include the power grid, lightening, and man’s activities. Currently, several California vineyards are in flames, whereas in the Southeastern U. S., the hurricane season comes earlier each year, bringing floods and tornados. Climate change, for which man bears considerable responsibility, may well be at the root of such environmental disasters.

Today’s disasters are reminiscent of the devastation created earlier by man: The Control of Nature considers three examples. First, the Mississippi River once meandered, merged with tributaries, and sometimes spilled over its banks to create natural flood plains. To adjust the river’s changing course, the Army Corps of Engineers built dams and other structures upstream so the river’s water could continue directly to New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Along the Gulf Coast today there are no flood plains for the waters of hurricanes such as Katrina and Lucy.

Instead, the existing cities and suburban housing developments are vulnerable to flooding.

A second example concerns the San Gabriel Mountains, one of the fastest disintegrating examples among the world’s mountain ranges. Fires started in these mountains leave inimical, barren slopes, allowing winter rains to carry boulders, trees, and homes downhill to the city’s debris basins. It appears man has not learned that fires and floods are inherent risks of living in fire-prone areas.

McPhee’s third example discusses the consequences of lava fields in Iceland: interesting, but less relevant to Southern California.

Children’s Book of the Month
Amy Baumann
Volunteer Library Committee

The Hike, by Alison Farrell, 56 pp. Chronicle Books 2019

The Hike tells the story of three friends as they take a delightful romp through the forest. Their excitement as they prepare for the hike and the discoveries made on the journey will serve as motivation for any young explorer to get outside and enjoy nature. One of the characters carries a sketchpad with additional information about things seen in the woods. The sketchpad serves as a good introduction to nature journaling. The Hike includes beautiful, well-labeled illustrations useful for identify plants and animals found along the way. The focus of this book is on plants native to the West Coast, including invasive plants and the problems they can cause. The Hike will be greatly enjoyed by budding scientists and environmentalists. It is also a wonderful gift that parents or grandparents can give kids who just like to explore and get dirty outside. It will definitely be included on my holiday gift-giving list.
Kiosk and Poppy Shop
by Marla White

Meet the staff that welcomes members and guests at the entry
Vanessa Ortega (below), Retail Operations Coordinator, manages the Poppy Shop next to the Kiosk. The shop is open Thursday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and sells logo wear and gift items. Plans are being made to offer a small selection of beverages and snacks in a location to be determined. Vanessa is also in charge of the on-line gift shop and Shopify online sales.

The kiosk staff (right, top to bottom) has had a few changes recently. Veteran Michelle Fraley is helping to train new staff that include Jenna Carpenter, Emily Frisan, and Noelle Stewart. Our Kiosk staff provide a warm welcome to CalBG visitors Tuesday through Sunday.
WREATHS FOR ALL SEASONS
NATIVE DESIGNS
ANNUAL VOLUNTEER FUND RAISER
Photos by Marla White
Linda Prenderghast (left), Carol Petty (middle left), Susan Sprague (middle right), Judy Whale (below)