Kindnesses. On September 9th, the Volunteer Board met around the fountain in the Cultivar Garden, and we saw each other for the first time in over a year. It’s a good walk from the kiosk, and I had a bit to carry, so I hitched a ride with Michael, one of our maintenance workers. After we arrived, Michael saw that the fountain catch pool needed cleaning. The next thing I knew, he’d found a skimmer and was busily cleaning the pool. I didn’t ask him to do this. He saw a need and wanted the pool to be just right for the Board meeting. It touched me, because this act of kindness reminded me of the generous spirit we all enjoy at CalBG.

Before I share more about upcoming news, I want to say how sad it is that Lee Boss passed away—she will be missed. Lee was a doer, and we all thank her for giving so much to the Garden. Thank you, Linda Prendergast, for writing a lovely tribute for Lee.

Good news. Plans are underway to open the Grow Native Nursery for sales the weekend of October 16th. Volunteer positions will be announced. The Volunteer Education Committee has explored ways to bring back school tours while remaining COVID-compliant (e.g., no touching the props). Katy Douglass, Ann Morgan, Elene Kallimanis, Marla White, and Kristen Barker spent several months revamping the tours. Their informative Zoom webinar for the Garden Guides was helpful, and a follow-up walk will take place on September 22nd.

In addition, the P.R. volunteers continue to make follow-up phone calls to our growing number of new CalBG members. Volunteers can also help by joining the work crews in the field on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and the Native Designs will be making wreaths for the plant sale from September 20–28. Currently, the Volunteer Library Committee is considering opening the library. We will keep you posted about volunteering at the Garden as positions become available.

Be well, and I will see you on the pathways.

—Lynn
Greetings faithful volunteers!
The staff began today’s All Garden Meeting with taking a moment of silence to reflect on all of the people we have lost in the past year and a half, including too many volunteers. My thoughts were especially strongly with Lee Boss and, of course, Herb. I and all of our staff who knew Lee join Herb in grief. Lee sprang back from so much in the years that I have known her that I cannot really believe that she is gone. Recently, too, I had the honor to attend Susan Gregory’s Celebration of Michael’s life. Such wonderful people! As are you all! PLEASE take care of yourselves in this challenging time.

This is my column for October’s Oak Notes during which we will re-open the Grow Native Nursery as an in-person store. We are making plans that will emphasize safety and will be modifying those plans as needs be, going forward.

The current plan is for Saturday the 16th of October to be ‘members only’ all day so that we can accommodate our members in hourly increments of 50 (that will be 50 member households per hour). If we need to, we will modify that plan over the next weeks, and in real time during the day.

We will open on Sunday the 17th for the public, almost certainly with a gate monitor who will be in charge of assessing crowding. If it gets too crowded, we will have newly arriving customers wait until someone leaves. If any customer does not understand this and complains, we will invite them to take their virus-encouraging behavior somewhere else.

As you know, we will not do a volunteer bake sale on that day, partly because you have decided that it is better held at a winter event. Also, in the time of COVID, we just cannot have home baked/handled products on offer to customers, as I am sure you will appreciate.

As of now, I have authorized the Native Designs group to sell wreaths. The plan is to station them at the entryway. Imagine glorious wreaths on the stone walls on either side of the entrance and all in the shade of the lovely coast live oak. I think it will work well, as does Linda Prendergast.

I will be requiring that all staff and volunteers working in public facing roles on these first two days wear both masks and a face shield (which we will provide). Given the dynamics of the event, it seems best to take your own private ‘spit screen’ with you. Also, any staff and volunteers working that day must be fully vaccinated.

I am looking forward to it — mostly! It will be an interesting pair of days. BUT do not etch the plan laid out above in stone, please, as we will rapidly generate and move to Plan B (and C) if needs be.

You got the memo about the Forest Pavilion restroom facility being open! There was a slight glitch a few hours after I wrote that memo, when those restrooms were suddenly and inexplicably without water (an ironic ‘yay!’ from me!). However, all was back in order by about 9 a.m. the next day. The 4th graders from the Bonita Unified School District are here for about two weeks for their “Hands-on History” lesson. It is a source of great happiness to see them racing to the restrooms (versus — well, you know — you all know what the other options would be!).

Regarding the Forest Pavilion as a whole, we now have a list of items that the contractor must complete in order for the Forest Pavilion project to be handed over to California Botanic Garden. Of course, the largest item is the replacement of the cracked concrete. If we are very lucky, we will take full possession of the Pavilion in the next month or so.

Meanwhile, staff are actively engaged in a Strategic Planning process that is going very well and
generating a lot of enthusiasm. Of course, we will share drafts with the volunteer group in whatever way your leadership indicates is best. Stay tuned!

Thank you, volunteers, for all that you do! Each and every one of you strengthens our Garden!

**Visitor Experience Coordinator**

Danielle Wildasin

**Grow Native Nursery Opening!**

With fall approaching, we are gearing up for the Grow Native Nursery opening! It is important this year because it will be the first time GNN has been open for in-person shopping since the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to close in March 2020. Many Garden staff members helped us sell plants online last year and schedule plant pick-ups. We are grateful you showed up, purchased plants, and supported us during that difficult time—now we are excited to open again for in-person shopping!

We are not yet finished with the pandemic, but have some plans for the nursery opening. GNN is currently planning to open for members on Saturday, October 16, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Timed reservations will be required on this day to enter GNN and shop for plants. Walk-ins will not be able to enter as we expect a high volume of shoppers. Watch for timed reservations on our website as they will be available soon. GNN is planning to open to the public on Sunday, October 17, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Acorn members will receive a special invitation to the Acorn Member Pre-Sale, currently planned for Thursday, October 14, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. It will include a reception and the option of a personal shopper to assist with your plant selection. This event will require an RSVP. Please contact the Advancement Department at advancement@calbg.org with any questions concerning your membership, or call 909-625-8767 x 258. The pandemic may change our plans, so please visit our website for current information.

A tentative inventory list, subject to change, will be available on our website on Friday, October 1. Following the opening weekend, Grow Native Nursery plans to open Thursdays through Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Masks will be required when interacting with the GNN staff and volunteers. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in keeping us all safe (and open)!

**What is Happening to the Benches in the Garden?**

When looking at a bench in the Garden, it is often difficult to guess its age. Sometimes older benches actually look better maintained due to the materials used when they were built. About twelve benches were recently refurbished by the families who originally donated them. Some benches have been removed due to their age. When a bench is removed, the plaque is either sent to the family or maintained at the Garden to be part of a future display.

Recently, Win Aldrich and Tom Shelley have been volunteering their time to revitalize...
benches less than 20 years old. To date, they have completed three benches: the benches on the ramp, honoring Peter and Doris Drucker, and the bench in the Johnson Memorial Oval, honoring Don and Helen Ketchum. Win is currently refurbishing the bench honoring Goldy and Ralph Lewis/Jeannne and Harold Thornton, and Tom is refurbishing the bench in honor of Candice Elizabeth Fredrick. Our thanks to Win and Tom for caring about the appearance of the benches, those that are being honored, and making a difference.

**CalBG Volunteer Organization Fall Fundraisers by Marla White**

Ceramic artist and volunteer Katy Douglass is creating special pieces with the CalBG logo for purchase. The six-inch-round medallion mounted on a metal stake is offered for $25. Four-inch-square coasters are two for $20. This size may also be mounted on a pot stake for $15.

These pieces will be available for purchase beginning December 1st. To place an order, contact marlawhite1975@gmail.com

Volunteer Barbara Nakaoka is generously donating a poppy quilt she acquired for a raffle to benefit the Volunteer Organization. This beautiful handmade wall hanging measures 25” x 27”. If needed, there is a pocket on the back to insert a rod for hanging. The quilt will be on view during the GNN Fall Plant Sale and available until mid-December. Tickets for the raffle are $10 each or three for $25.

Please consider these opportunities to help support our Garden. Make checks payable to the CalBG Volunteer Organization.

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**A Very Happy October Birthday to:**

Benjamin Mercier  Haley Jensen
Bonnie Shimmin  Linda Lee Worlow
Kathy Henkins  Paul Mailhot-Singer
Alec Bryson  Valerie Cressy
Gordon Olson  Bob Muns
Jeremiah Sailor  Benjamin Segura
DENTALIUM
by Shaunna Gygli

About forty years ago, I was at a yard sale in Northern California where I bought a beautiful necklace of long tusk-like shells and blue glass beads. The elderly Indian woman said she remembered her mother wearing it. Later, I saw one very much like it at the Southwest Museum. I became intrigued. I did some research.

I found that these tusked or tooth-like shells, called dentalia, are the coverings of snails (Dentalium neohexagonum) that live in the sands of oceans worldwide. They look like miniature elephant tusks and may grow to six inches long. The Northwest Coast Indians harvested and traded them extensively as far east as the Great Lakes and south to at least Baja California. They became a standard of monetary exchange and a sign of wealth, known (to non-Indians) as Indian money.

I marvel at the ingenuity required to harvest these mollusks from the sand in water up to fifty feet deep. Harvesters would work from ocean-going canoes, extending specially constructed poles with large brushes at their ends. The poles were pushed into the dentalium beds, ensnaring the snails in the process. The snails were sometimes boiled to remove the animal, and then clean, fine sand was used to polish them.

They were used as jewelry, ornamentation on clothing, and as a show of wealth. The pointed ends of the mollusk shells were broken off so they could be strung. Some men tattooed calibration marks on their arms to show the length of the shells. Of course, the longer the shell, the greater its value.

The Northern California tribes, mainly the Yurok, Karok, and the Hupa, wore strings of dentalia to show off their wealth. A person almost never traded these shells for food or basic needs. They didn’t “spend” their wealth, but kept it within the family because wealth alone conferred status and social prestige.

My necklace has shells six inches long. Although I don’t wear it to show my social status, I wouldn’t trade it either.

CALIFORNIA’S FABULOUS FABS—SHRUBS
by Steve Bryant

The plants below require little or no supplemental water when grown in SoCal gardens. Most are native to the deserts. Plants are noted as “easy” or “fussy” to grow, based on my experience.

*Senegalia greggii* (Catclaw, Devil’s Claw). Very well armed with recurved prickles; can be over 6 m high; attracts bees. Can be used as a fairly impenetrable hedge, but I finally removed my specimen after getting bloody too many times. Easy.

*Senna armata* (Spiny Senna), *S. covesii* (Coue’s Senna), and *S. purpusii* (Baja Senna). Yellow flowers spring to summer. About 1 m tall and wide. *S. armata* is fussy; *S. covesii* and *S. purpusii* are easy. *S. covesii* seeds profusely. Hosts for *Phoebis sennae* (Cloudless Sulfur butterfly).
Psorothamnus schottii and *P. arborescens/fremontii* (Indigo Bush). Profuse indigo flowers in spring or summer; 2–3 m tall and wide. Foliage strongly scented. Attract bees. *P. schottii* is fussy, *P. arborescens/fremontii* less so.

*Calliandra californica* (Red or Baja Fairy Duster) and *C. eriophylla* (Pink Fairy Duster). *C. californica* from Baja, 3–4 m tall, 2–3 m wide. Bright red “fairy duster” flowers much of the year (flowers look like miniature old-fashioned feather dusters); volunteers. Easy. *C. eriophylla* <1 m, pinkish flowers. Less easy. *Calliandra* means “beautiful male” because the bright red stamens form the most noticeable part of the flower. Attracts hummingbirds and the Marine Blue butterfly.

*Lupinus excubitus* (Grape Soda Lupine) and *L. albifrons* (Silver Bush Lupine). Flowers generally purplish, fragrant in *L. excubitus*. Seeds available. Perhaps 1–2 m tall and wide. Attractive in and out of flower if deadheaded. Both easy, but subject to defoliation by *Uresiphta reversalis* (Genista Broom Moth) in summer.

Cultivation and acquisition: Most will look better with occasional water in the dry season but don’t overwater. *Calliandra* and *Senegalia* can be pruned ad lib.; use good pruners, as they have very hard wood. Lightly and carefully prune the others. Soil type generally not a problem. *C. californica* reasonably available; others only from specialists or as seed.

**Kim Schaefer, CalBG Graduate Student**

Hello, I’m Kim Schaefer, a former employee and brand-new graduate student here at CalBG! Not originally a Californian, I grew up in western Washington state, near the Olympic rainforest and Cascade Mountains. That is where I first became infatuated with nature and plants, but also very sick and tired of rainy weather. Seeking sunshine and adventure, I came down to Cal Poly Pomona for my undergraduate degree in Biology (Botany emphasis). By assisting with various research projects there, I fell in love with the rugged landscapes and resilient plants that are native here in Southern California.

After graduating in 2018, I began working here at the Garden as a Field Botany Technician on the Invasive Plant Crew, eradicating noxious weeds in the Angeles National Forest. Next, I sought out the Seed Conservation Internship and worked as a technician in the seed bank, collecting and processing native seeds. As part of that position, I assisted with other conservation projects, including Dr. Naomi Fraga’s research on the rare Amargosa niterwort, Hidden...
Lake bluecurls, and Tiehm’s buckwheat plant species. I had such an amazing experience as an employee for three years; I knew I wanted to keep working with the staff here as I pursue my master’s degree in Botany.

For my thesis, I will be conducting a floristic study of the Sacatar Trail Wilderness area in the Southeast Sierra Nevada Mountains. This wilderness area has a very diverse landscape, ranging from Mojave Desert creosote scrub at around 3,000 ft elevation, up to montane meadows and pine forests above 8,000 ft. The area was actually named after a nineteenth-century wagon trail that ran up from Owens Valley to Kennedy Meadows and Walker Pass. The wagon tracks from the old Sacatar Trail can still be seen today, and I plan to hike on them during some of my expeditions. The plants at my site are not in the best condition due to the current drought, so despite my past aversion to rain, I am hoping for lots of precipitation this winter!

What’s growing on that remote ridge? Is that plant population sampled decades ago still there? What pollinates plants of this species? These are questions frequently asked by CalBG’s botanists, and answers are only possible by getting out into the field. Since the Garden’s inception nearly a century ago, fieldwork has been a constant, central activity. It has not only built our significant plant collections—living, seeds, herbarium—but is the ultimate basis for our knowledge of plants.

What do botanists do in the field? Although reasons for going to the field vary widely, all activities involve locating, observing, documenting, and/or sampling plants. Finding populations of a particular species may be straightforward (widely distributed, easily accessed from roads, plants large) or challenging (restricted distribution, remote areas, plants tiny). If the plants are annuals and do not appear in a dry year, we must wait until conditions are favorable, which may be a year or longer.

What is observed and documented in the field are dependent on the study or project. We may want to assess the status of a population by counting individuals and age classes (sometimes over multiple years), or, more often, we search for undocumented...
populations of species, frequently in poorly known areas. Documenting plants includes recording information such as precise location, habitat, population size, and flower visitors (potential pollinators). It also usually involves pressing plants to be added to the herbarium. We refer to such specimens as vouchers.

Sampling plant populations is frequently required for our projects. For molecular studies we collect a small amount of material (usually leaves) from 1–30 plants per population. When collecting seeds (often for long-term storage) up to 50 plants may be sampled.

Fieldwork by CalBG botanists in California and other parts of the world has not only built our substantial collections, but is the basis for the many scientific publications and plant cultivars produced over the years. Because of human population growth and its significant impacts, fieldwork is as important now as ever to document plants—including species new to science—and to inform conservation efforts.

**Book of the Month**

**Gene Baumann, Volunteer Library Committee**

*We Are the Land: A History of Native California* by Damon B. Akins and William J. Bauer Jr.

Akins and Bauer begin this comprehensive history of the Indigenous People of what is now known as California from a perspective of ethnogenesis. They devote considerable space to indigenous life before contact with Europeans and the early sporadic contacts with European explorers. Likewise, the naming of indigenous groups by the groups themselves is traced from their origin through various European changes to present naming. The authors have dedicated specific chapters to large sections of California in an effort to demonstrate that indigenous life was considerably different throughout California. Contact with outsiders was unique to each area and the results of such contact developed in unique ways.

Some of the more prominent chapters include: Beach Encounters, 1540–1769; Our Country before the Fernandino Arrived Was a Forest, 1769–1810; The White Man Would Spoil Everything, 1846–1873; Friends and Enemies; Reframing Progress, and Fighting for Sovereignty, 1905–1928; Becoming the Indians of California: Reorganization and Justice, 1928–1954; and Returning to the Land: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and Revitalization since 1985.

Akins and Bauer have written a well-balanced and documented book. Views are often expressed from the perspective of Indigenous People. Theirs is a unique addition to the history of what is now California and the people who previously and currently populate its boundaries. This book is strongly recommended for anyone interested in a comprehensive view of California history and its people.
Lee Boss’s mother lived to be 101 years old, and I was sure that Lee would, too. Lee’s unexpected death on September 2nd after a brief bout of pneumonia shook all of us. Lee and Herb had just returned from a road trip to Washington state where they visited their son Corey and his wife. Lee adored her kids, her grandkids and her great-grandkids. Twins, to be born in November, were already named Leona (Lee) and Herbert (Herb) in honor of Great Grandma and Grandpa.

Just before her Washington trip, several of us enjoyed a few days at the Boss beach house in Dana Point. The air was cool and we spent hours in animated conversation, exploring local nurseries, and watching the Olympics. We took so many excursions together that Lee’s daughter christened us “The Floral Four.”

Lee told great stories, such as a two-month family camping trip across the U.S. and her early married life on a dairy in San Luis Obispo. She never met a stranger—Lee started conversations with all she met and made friends everywhere. Hosting a foreign exchange student from Finland turned in to a worldwide family that is still in touch today.

Lee was also wise! Call it the wisdom of age and experience, she thought deeply and imparted her sentiments candidly yet graciously. And laugh—what a great infectious laugh Lee had! Even though she battled type I diabetes, she was always upbeat, optimistic and joyful. Her warm heart and generous spirit drew people to her.

Tiny in stature, Lee was a dynamo volunteer. You have seen her picking up trash along College Avenue and the front parking lot using her 99 Cents Only Stores T-Rex picker. Her biggest complaint was the cigarette butts people dropped. Lee worked with us in the Native Designs Garden and was a first-class dead-header! She always stepped up, no matter what was needed. Lee was a greeter at the Kiosk and worked all of the special events. She encouraged fellow volunteers and staff and always had a kind word.

Lee worked as a dental hygienist for 45 years until her neck gave out. She also sang in her church choir for over 30 years and is in heaven now, probably directing a choir of angels.

I have lost more than a dear friend with Lee’s passing. I have lost a mentor, a counselor, a cheerleader and a mom, all-in-one. If you knew Lee Boss, you probably agree we are all better people for having this ray of sunshine in our lives. We miss you, Lee, and we always will.
AROUND THE GARDEN

Top right: First board meeting, Wanda Ewing, Paul Donatelli, Betsy Maclaren, Dorcia Bradley, Lynn Miller
Middle, left to right: Sara Simon, New bathrooms, Ili Lobaco, Leaf Brigade
Bottom, left to right: Sara Simon, water fountain, Forest Pavilion