

# OAK NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT Shaunna Gygli, Volunteer President

After leaving a meeting at the Garden, I decided to postpone some other pressing responsibilities and walk out to the Communities. A few early bird ceanothus and manzanitas were about to bloom. As I was enjoying the aromatherapy, a large, beautiful and healthy coyote stepped into a small clearing. We just stared at each other for a few moments before he drifted back into the trees. As I was trying to understand my thoughts and emotions, I remembered a poem that a dear friend had written.

### Re-creation

To sit still beneath a northern pine  
A tree so tall that wind stirs its crown  
Sighing and singing, while far down  
Below the branches are still.

To see the sun glint on patches of needles  
Woven like fabric with frail spider webs  
To look into the forest where sunshine paints shadows  
Profiling new green against darker boughs.

To lean into a fragrant mound  
Of brown needles cushioning rocky ground  
To inhale pungent pitch oozing in the sun  
Heightens my senses like Greek wine.

To listen to squirrels chattering high in the tree  
To start when one drops a half-chewed cone  
To laugh at a jay darting down for the nuts  
To hush suddenly, hardly daring to move.

continued on page 2

As an old buck returns to the shelter he's found  
Where a low-hanging branch nearly touches the ground  
To hear him snuffle as he comfortably settles down  
To enjoy his afternoon nap.

To be with the tree in sunlight and shade  
To feel safe, like the buck, in the shelter it's made  
To absorb its strength and vitality  
Recreates life force in me.

Elaine Harper (1925 – 2008)

We are so fortunate to have this refuge, this oasis, this Garden, in our backyard. Our life force can be recreated as often as we need.



**FROM THE  
INTERIM  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR  
Lucinda McDade**

Greetings, Valued Volunteers of RSABG:

I recently returned from a week of fieldwork through the northwestern part of Windhoek, Namibia (country just northwest of South Africa; in fact, it was formerly part of South Africa but is now independent). It was quite warm there (humid, too)—an austral summer with lightning on the horizon.

I was looking for plants (mostly Acanthaceae, a few others) all day, sleeping in a tent and waking to the sound of birds—so no complaints! I think I forgot to mention seeing herds of springbok, the occasional oryx, giraffe, baboons and vervet monkeys (but I mostly focused on plants—I promise!).

I had intended to write about the great work underway in the communities for this month's Oak Notes piece but my work in Namibia makes me realize that I should save "Gateway to the Communities" for next month (when it will be closer to ready for you to visit) and talk a bit about the research *portfolio* at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic

Garden, which is a long way of saying that I should explain why I was in Namibia for research.

All of you know well that RSABG is the largest botanic garden dedicated to the remarkable plants of California. This is what sets us apart and makes us entirely different from other gardens: we collect, display, preserve, conserve and advance knowledge regarding the native plants of California. Faithful volunteers: review last month's column if you think this is a limited portfolio, it most assuredly is not.

In this context, why were postdoc Erin Tripp and I in Africa conducting research, as other RSABG research scientists likewise have done in the last year? That is, why does our research reach extend beyond California native plants whereas our horticulture and conservation programs do not?

As I see it, there are two kinds of explanations for this. The first is a scientific one. A major focus of the RSABG Research Department is to understand the evolutionary *sources* of the flora of California. To use a human metaphor for this research objective, we do very much the same when we ask about the family genealogies of people who now live in California. For the vast majority of us, this means including people who have lived or do live outside of the state—often *far* outside the state. Tracing the stories of those people helps you to understand how you turned up here. Similarly, many of California native plants have relatives elsewhere on Earth and understanding how California plants are related to plants elsewhere clarifies how California flora was *assembled*.

In this context, I like to give the example of the silverswords of Hawaii. (If you are not familiar with these spectacular plants, just do an internet search for silverswords and Hawaii). Based on geological history data, we understand the Hawaiian Islands to be mostly less than 10 million years old. This means that the plants that occur there now came from somewhere else and fairly recently. It turns out that the closest living relative of the Hawaiian silverswords is a common California tarweed in the sunflower family (some are growing in front of the seed house and likely also in Fay's Wildflower Meadow). What does this mean? It means that in the last several

million years, at least one tarweed seed dispersed from the mainland of North America to Hawaii and there set off the remarkable species radiation that is the Hawaiian silverswords today. As humans, part of our mission as a *sapient* species is to understand the rest of life on Earth: this piece of knowledge, I would argue, greatly advances that mission.

The second reason that the research reach of RSABG extends beyond the flora of California is related to the mission of the entire organization. My understanding is that when RSABG moved from Orange County to our present site, a major part of the reason was to affiliate with The Claremont Colleges and thus to develop a strong research and academic profile for the organization. In the academic model of science, the focus of research is rarely limited in scope; instead, researchers are challenged to take on the most exciting problems and issues within their disciplines and to advance knowledge in these areas. By the way, this is not true just of science but rather extends to scholarly research in general. For example, my two closest colleagues at Claremont Graduate University (beyond botany!) study early English literature and archaeology of the Middle East.

An important goal and also result of following this model in research is that we have a national and international profile in research and graduate education which we would not have if we were limited to research on California plants. To put a pecuniary polish on this last: we would not have 10 of the 11 grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation that we have at present were we limited to research on California plants. That simply is not how modern research that can compete for external funding works.

Are you curious about the grant that *is* limited to California plants? It is the five-year grant that we have to advance the work on digitizing RSABG specimens of California plants which is part of the overall project of the Consortium of California Herbaria ([ucjeps.berkeley.edu/consortium/](http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/consortium/)).

Digitizing involves databasing plant descriptions and georeferencing locations (*e.g.*, turning location

labels such as Icehouse Canyon, Mt. Baldy, Angeles National Forest into latitude and longitude that can then be readily mapped by computer assisted methods). In truth, we were able to make the argument for that project as scientifically valid only because most of California is a scientifically valid floristic entity almost unto itself: the California Floristic Province, characterized by the strange Mediterranean climate that I wrote about last month. As such, it is sort of the exception that proves the rule that when we seek external funding, we must justify our projects in a scientific context.

I hope that this will help you understand, and explain to others (we are all ambassadors for the Garden), how research works at RSABG. It is my hope that just as we all share in our achievements in collecting, displaying and conserving the native plants of California; we can all take pride in our research achievements that extend beyond our state to advance knowledge of plants on Earth.

*Lucinda*



## NOTES FROM TIFFANY Tiffany Chandler, Manager of Volunteer Programs

It's that time again! Sign-up sheets are posted for the Family Bird Fest scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 17 from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. We could really use your help! Event orientation for volunteers will be held Friday, Feb.15 at 1 p.m. If you would like to sign up to help with this event, please email me at [tchandler@rsabg.org](mailto:tchandler@rsabg.org) or call me at 909-625-8767 ext. 256.

If you have any questions regarding these positions, please let me know. Thank you for all you do for RSABG!

Volunteer positions that do *not* require nature interpreter or previous experience:

**Set-up:** 8–10:30 a.m. (3 volunteers needed)

**Orientation:** 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
(1 volunteer needed)

**Migration Station:** record bird band numbers, measure and record visitors' wingspan.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 Volunteers needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 volunteers needed)

**Migration Challenge Game:** participants toss dice and move along a marked migratory trail. Explain the game and record results.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 volunteers needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 volunteers needed)

**Build a Quail craft:** involves tape and construction paper.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 volunteers needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 volunteers needed)

**Button/badge Making craft:** four steps to learn.  
10 a.m. —1 p.m. (2 volunteers needed)  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 volunteers needed)

**Pinecone bird feeder craft:** drizzle a cone with peanut butter and sprinkle with seeds.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 volunteers needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 volunteers needed)

**Pack up:** 3–4 p.m. (2 volunteers needed)

Volunteer positions that *require* nature interpreter or birding experience:

**The Great Backyard Bird Count:** bird ID experience necessary.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (4 volunteers needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (5 volunteers needed)

**Discovery Cart:** hummingbird theme.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (1 nature interpreter needed)

**Feathers and Bones:** what makes a bird a bird?  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (1 nature interpreter needed)

**Condor Soar:** share condor info. Measure up against a life-sized condor banner. Fold and fly a

paper condor airplane.  
10 a.m.–1p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed)

**Hoot's who?** seeing and hearing the differences between bird calls.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed)

**Discovery Cart:** acorn woodpecker and granary.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed)

**Beaks and Feet:** specialized features for survival.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed)  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed)

**Nests:** examine nest building techniques and materials.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (1 nature interpreter needed)  
1–3:30 p.m. (2 nature interpreters needed)

**Migration:** display migration poster. Discuss purpose and perils of migration.  
10 a.m.–1 p.m. (1 nature interpreters needed),  
1–3:30 p.m. (1 nature interpreter needed)



## VISITOR SERVICES

**Eric Garton,**  
**Director of Visitor Services**

2013 is off to a racing start! Family Bird Fest, event and exhibit planning, volunteer activities and training, school tours and a myriad of opportunities to get involved at RSABG. Whether you're a seasoned volunteer or new to the Garden, you'll find there is something to suit your interests, skills and desire to support and further our mission.

Speaking of immediate opportunities, please see Tiffany's column for information on available opportunities at Family Bird Fest on Sunday, Feb. 17.

There are still plenty of openings to support this great event, particularly no experience required time slots.

I wanted to give a quick rundown of what the Office of Visitor Services is up to these early months of the year. As the *public face* of all Garden events and happenings, visitor services staff are linked in some way to most everything on the schedule, whether through marketing and public relations, educational and interpretive content, exhibit and event facilitation or staffing and volunteer support. That is to say, everything that happens at RSABG is a genuine team effort. The Offices of Development, Research, Horticulture, Visitor Services, Education and Finance all play a part in everything we do from the early idea stages through completion of an event.

Immediately following Family Bird Fest, we will shift focus to planning the annual Wildflower Show, March 30 through April 1, which will include a special exhibit this year—the RSABG on-site component of “When They Were Wild.” The RSABG exhibition will feature selected artworks not included in collaborative exhibition on view at The Huntington this spring. Additional presentations and field trips are scheduled in support of this exhibit.

Beginning March 23, we begin offering seasonal garden tours on Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. March 23 is also the Spring Open House and Member Appreciation Day—it will be sure to be a busy day.

Throw in a new exhibit experience, “Gateway to the Communities”, our ever-present touring programs, ongoing powerPLANT project activities, N.I.C.E. (Nature Interpreter Continuing Education) tours and planning for Mother’s Day, Butterfly Pavilion and Art in the Garden, and you’re able to get a snapshot of how your valuable volunteer efforts make the Garden go ‘round!

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of the Garden. Feel free to contact me with questions, suggestions or concerns.



## TOURING PROGRAMS

**Judy Hayami,**  
**Touring Programs Manager**

Four-and-twenty blackbirds, phainopeplas or phoebes? What are those birds, anyway? Come to the Family Bird Fest on Sunday, Feb.17 and we’ll help you figure it out!

Visitors flock to this family event in great numbers. We need volunteers at craft and activity stations. These assignments require no previous experience or bird knowledge. We need nature interpreters prepared to share information with visitors. If you have already signed up to help or are the least bit curious about what goes on at the Family Bird Fest, please attend the event orientation on Friday, Feb.15 at 1 p.m. We would like all event volunteers to arrive at the event knowing where to go and what to do.

Thank you, nature interpreters, for keeping school tours and programs running like a well-oiled machine! The new team roster begins Feb. 1. Please recycle the old roster to avoid confusion. If you have not yet received the spring roster or have any questions about your assignment, please email or call me at: [jhayami@rsabg.org](mailto:jhayami@rsabg.org) or 909-625-8767, ext. 206.

Team captains and team members—get to know each other and communicate, communicate, communicate. Since each team operates in a slightly different manner, team members need to know their captain’s management style and what is expected. Team captains need to be informed of any co-team arrangements, substitutions or issues that may impact your ability to keep your touring commitment.

Please make it your responsibility to check the Nature Interpreter Tour Calendar each month when Oak Notes is released. Make a note of your team’s school tours and programs and arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time. Call the monthly organizer if you see a sign up tour you can lead. Spring tour reservations are filling rapidly. Hang on to your hats, be prepared and have fun out there!

# VOLUNTEER FIELD TRIP: BIOTREK—RAIN BIRD RAINFOREST LEARNING CENTER AND ETHNOBOTANY LEARNING CENTER

**Krista Von Stetten, Field Trip Committee Chair**

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

February's field trip will find you falling in love. First with the rainforest, and then with *Aasuingna*, the Tongva word for "place of the plants." Where can you explore these two amazing ecosystems so close together? At Biotrek located on the Cal Poly Pomona campus.

What do a tropical rainforest and a native California garden have in common? Both are biodiversity hotspots. Each of these ecosystems is home to a huge variety of native plant and animal species—many endangered, some yet to be discovered. Experience the amazing diversity and importance of each as we meet the plants and animals that populate them.

Mike Brown, Biotrek's director, will be our discovery guide to the sights, smells and sensations of its rainforest greenhouse and ethnobotany garden. Fascinating and informative, this tour is also great enrichment for nature interpreters.

Bring a lunch or snack to enjoy there, or join us at nearby Sushi Koyo for a Japanese feast after the tour. Family, friends and staff welcome as always.

Biotrek's regular public hours: Saturdays, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Check out the Biotrek website <http://www.csupomona.edu/~biotrek/index.html>

**Date:** Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2013

**Time/Transportation:** Meet at RSABG at 9:30 a.m. for casual carpooling, or meet us there.

**Tour start time:** Please be on time, the tour begins at 10 a.m.

**Return time:** Head home approx. 2 p.m. (or as desired by drivers and passengers)

**Cost:** Free admission (donations gladly accepted), carpool gas contribution. Eating at Sushi Koyo? Plan on \$12.

Happy trails,

Sign up on volunteer bulletin board, or email RSVP to: [tchandler@rsabg.org](mailto:tchandler@rsabg.org).

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## VOLUNTEER ENRICHMENT

**Donna Bedell, Volunteer Enrichment Committee Member**

Tommy Stoughton, a second year Ph.D. student at Claremont Graduate University, will take us on a special journey into the world of alpine plants on Monday, Feb. 25.

He is no stranger to Claremont, having grown up in Glendora, along with attending high school in La Verne, college in Redlands, and working for the Forest Service in Big Bear before coming to the Garden as an employee in March 2010. Stoughton worked for RSABG as the Seeds of Success Coordinator for almost two years, collecting seeds of common native plants for restoration purposes in the Mojave Desert, before embarking on his graduate school journey here at RSABG. Although it can be an extremely difficult trek, a

scramble to the highest peak in Southern California remains a treat for this local plant enthusiast.

The alpine flora of Mt. San Gorgonio in the San Bernardino Mountains is nothing short of unusual. Many plants at high elevation sites are generally low to the ground and tightly packed, but you will see that they seem to show little loss in complexity or beauty when it comes to their floral displays. Join Stoughton as he takes you on an adventure to see what is blooming above the trees in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Please meet us in the East Classroom at 12 p.m. Coffee, tea and cookies will be provided. Bring a sack lunch if you wish.

# OH THE TIME WE HAD!

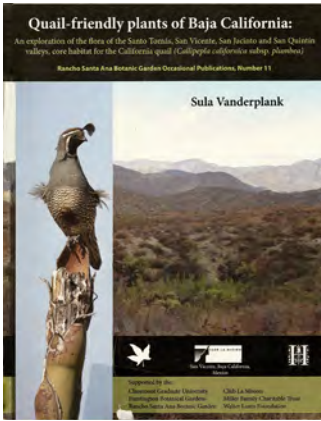
**Carol Lerew**

It was a reunion. It was a feast. It was making new friends. It was welcoming the holidays. It was a *very* short business meeting. And it was unlike any other quarterly luncheon we've ever had!

Almost 200 staff, volunteers and alumni gathered in the California Courtyard on Friday, Dec. 14, to greet each other, renew acquaintances and enjoy the fantastic food the hospitality committee and other helpers had prepared. Lucinda McDade, RSABG interim director, welcomed us. Marshall Taylor represented the Board of Trustees with a short talk. Volunteer Organization President Shaunna Gygli introduced our newest volunteers, then ended the meeting following a brief bit of business.

Folks lingered afterward, bundled up against the cold weather in coats, caps, gloves and scarves. Roaming the courtyard with cameras in hand, RSABG volunteers Ernie Pianalto and Cap Van Balgooy snapped a variety of pictures for us to enjoy as memories of the great time we had. Thanks, Ernie and Cap!





## BOOK OF THE MONTH Jim and Kathleen Ritchie

### “QUAIL-FRIENDLY PLANTS OF BAJA CALIFORNIA” by Sula Vanderplank

Jim and I wanted to add this publication by Sula Vanderplank to the volunteer library because so many of the volunteers will find this field guide useful. This publication is an exploration of the flora of the Santo Tomas, San Vicente, San Jacinto and San Quintin valleys in Baja California, core habitat for the San Quintin quail (*Callipepla californica* subsp. *plumbea*).

Sula Vanderplank, formerly the administrative curator of the RSABG Herbarium received her masters degree in botany from Claremont Graduate University in 2010 and is now at UCR pursuing her Ph.D., where she focuses on the flora of San Quintín. She has taken more than 20 trips to this area during the course of her research and works in collaboration with various researchers and conservation agencies in Baja California.

The first page lists all the contributors to text and images (after field work). Wow, what a team! We loved how the publication was organized into sections that include trees and tall shrubs, low shrubs, succulent and rosette plants, forbs, bulbs and grasses. The How to Use the Guide and the Key to Symbols were helpful for use out in the field. The introduction to the Baja and the habitats was essential.

Bart O'Brien, director of special projects at RSABG praised this field guide:

“This delightfully written and well-illustrated field guide to a variety of common and unusual plants

from northwestern Baja California will be a most welcome addition to the Baja aficionado's backpack, vehicle and bookshelf. Yes, you will need at least two copies—one to take to Baja and one for your library. Multiple images of different aspects of each plant in its natural habitat will enable you to quickly identify most of the plants that are of interest to quail in the region, while revealing facts and observations about each plant fill the brief text.”

Bart is correct. We put this book in our car so we could try to identify the plants in our area and found we were always going out to the car to look at the book again. Many may want to go on one of Sula's field trips after reading her publication.



### CATCHING A FEW Z'S Carol Lerew, Nature Interpreter

Wouldn't it be great to curl up for a long winter's nap and awaken when the spring flowers are blooming? Not humanly possible, of course, but there are animals who do take advantage of such abilities.

Hibernation is a resting state in which the mammal's body temperature has dropped, and breathing, heart rate and metabolism have all slowed. This occurs during hostile seasons when the animal is less able to find adequate food to maintain energy. When this type of condition happens during the summer it is called estivation. Both are survival adaptations.

We know the story about bears snoozing in their dens while snow covers the countryside. Just what exactly happens to produce this state? Beginning in the early summer bears begins to eat heavily, chowing down great amounts of vegetable matter like ripe berries, insects, small rodents



and fish. Thick layers of body fat accumulate in preparation for winter. At some point, perhaps coinciding with colder weather, precipitation, declining daylight length and the animal's internal rhythm, its body signals it's time to sleep.

In the den, the bear's metabolism, breathing and heart rate slows, and its body temperature drops slightly. Proteins and urine are recycled allowing it to remain in torpor for most of the winter as it lives on body fat. Cubs are born in January while the mother is hibernating, suckling and nestling against her warm body as she remains dormant. Occasionally the mother rouses to check on her cubs. Some authorities assert that bears do not really hibernate because their body temperatures do not drop as low as that of the environment, one of the guidelines to determining hibernation.

Hibernation among rodents has been studied for decades, particularly for the golden-mantled ground squirrel (*Spermophilus lateralis*). Curled in its underground nest, its breathing, heart rate and metabolism slow. Its body temperature drops to a point just slightly above that of the surrounding air. Periodically it will rouse briefly but, like the bear, does not eat until it emerges from hibernation in the early spring. The chipmunk, however, stores large amounts of food in its nest and does eat during periodic arousals.

Many small mammals lose body mass during the winter thus lowering metabolic needs and reducing the need for hibernation. Some species of shrews and voles actually lose brain mass causing significantly fewer metabolic requirements, for the brain needs a large amount of energy. This shrinkage is thought to be controlled by the declining length of daylight.

Among closely related groups of California mammals there are both hibernating and non-hibernating species. Why this occurs is not known. For example, kangaroo rats are not known to hibernate, but several species of pocket mice are. Most species of ground squirrels and chipmunks hibernate, but tree squirrels do not. Some carnivores, such as the black bear, have a deep winter sleep, but various kinds of weasels do not.

Almost all California bats hibernate, usually moving into caves or mine shafts in the fall. Their seasonally acquired layer of fat enables the bat's body temperature to drop close to the ambient temperature of the cave in a complex metabolic action not fully understood. During hibernation the fat serves as an energy supply and their bodies seem to lose body water. They feel cold to the touch and are sometimes covered in frozen dew droplets. Upon their periodic arousals they frequently ingest these droplets from their fur.

Hibernation as a survival adaptation is one of the wonders of evolution in the natural world. Researchers continue to study this phenomenon trying to find human applications. Perhaps induced hibernation in people with diseases or injuries could be a key to the healing process. Would periodic torpor help to lengthen human life? The questions are many, and significant discoveries may be just around the corner.



## ***CEANOTHUS CRASSIFOLIUS*** **HOARY-LEAVED CEANOTHUS** **Cliff Hutson, Nature Interpreter**

There are at least 52 species of ceanothus in the world. California is home to 43 species, sometimes known as California lilac, and 13 of these are native to the chaparral of Southern California. One of these is this month's plant—*Ceanothus crassifolius* or the hoary-leaved ceanothus.

Plants of the buckthorn family (Rhamnaceae) in the genus *Ceanothus* are divided into two groups. The subgenus *Ceanothus* and the subgenus

*Cerastes*. The latter is actually the larger of the two. I think that most of us, thanks to the showy displays in the Garden, seemingly in 50 shades of blue, are more familiar with the former that is characterized by thin leaves that have three main veins, arrayed alternately on the stems. The leaves of *Cerastes* are leathery with a single main vein, and generally opposite in arrangement.

Hoary-leaved ceanothus is in the subgenus *Cerastes*. It is a large evergreen shrub, which can grow to 12 feet in height. The tough-looking olive green leaves have white fuzzy undersides, which makes them hoary. The field guides I use describe the leaves as being small, which seems a bit vague. An Internet gardening catalog stated that they are 1/4" to 1/2" long. However, I took some measurements on a specimen in the Garden and found them to be closer to 1" to 1 1/2". The small (truly about a quarter of an inch), rounded flowers are white with the inflorescences borne on short stalks.

Hoary-leaved ceanothus is distributed through the Outer South Coast Range, Transverse Range, Peninsular Range and northern Baja on dry ridges or slopes below 3,700 feet, so locally we can find it in the Verdugo, San Gabriel, Santa Monica and San Bernardino Mountains. The plant I used for my observation in the Garden is on the path starting opposite the Lantz Outdoor Classroom leading west toward the Thorne Council Ring. The bush is on the right-hand side; if you pass the palo blanco (*Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia*) on the left, you have gone too far.

## GROUNDS NEWS

### Joan McGuire, Grounds Manager

The RSABG horticulturists who care for the California Plant Communities are in the process of creating a new trail through the Communities. Part of the Garden's Master Plan, the "Gateway to the Communities" is scheduled to open April 2013. It will give RSABG visitors a chance to explore the area from inside the beds. Richard,

Dago and Joshua have cleared masses of brush, designated the trail path and are finishing the trail.

It is already looking spectacular and will be wonderful when we have interpretation in place. The entire Garden staff will be working on this, as we want to include real stories about what Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden does: conservation and research, and of course, the plants themselves. There will also be several art projects developed by the Communities horticulturists. Keep an eye open for this terrific addition to the Garden.

The Indian Hill Mesa gardens horticulturists have also been busy—reclaiming pathways, pruning for aesthetics, visitor safety and plant health and putting in automated irrigation systems. It has been a lot of work with more to be done over time, but it is giving Fred, Cecil, Patisu and Tom more time to detail the gardens.

On the horizon are: replacing the waterfall and replanting in the Percy C. Everett Garden; planning and planting the Communities Baja area; and refurbishing the Cultivar and Container Gardens.

We are always looking for volunteers to help us in our endeavors, and we have two ways that you can get involved. On Wednesday Work Days (8–11:30 a.m.), the horticulturists and volunteers work as a group on projects. In 2012, the Wednesday volunteers helped to clear two Communities beds of brush and weeds and cleared paths in the Communities and on the Mesa. It's good solid work, but it's a great group of people and we always wind up laughing.

On other days we have a few volunteers who work under the direction of an assigned horticulturist to help maintain an assigned area. As we move forward with our projects, we would love to have additional volunteer assistance.

So, please give it some thought. If you have questions, please let me or Tiffany know. My extension is 273 and my email address is [jmcguire@rsabg.org](mailto:jmcguire@rsabg.org). Thanks!

# FEBRUARY 2013 TOUR CALENDAR

## **Wednesday, Feb. 6**

10 a.m. Sensational Walk: grades 1–4, 18 students, 18 adults, 2 teachers, visually impaired and mobility issues, using wheelchairs and walkers, 4–6 NIs, please.

## **Thursday, Feb. 7**

9:30 a.m. Native Partners: grade 3, 48 students, 6 adults, 2 teachers, entering Abiline Gate.

## **Friday, Feb. 8**

9:30 a.m. Native Partners: grade 3, 48 students, 3 adults, 2 teachers, entering Indian Hill Gate.

## **Thursday, Feb. 14**

10 a.m. Native Partners: grade 4, 50 students, 4 adults, 2 teachers, coming from Los Angeles.

## **Friday, Feb. 15**

1 p.m. Bird Fest event orientation for volunteers, East Classroom

## **Sunday, Feb. 17**

10 a.m.–3 p.m. Family Bird Fest

## **Wednesday, Feb. 20**

9:30 a.m. Web of Life: grade 3, 10 students, needs 1 NI AND from same school:

9:30 a.m. Sensational Walk grades 1 & 2, 23 students, need 2 NIs.

One hour guided tour followed by one hour self-led tour with Scavenger Hunt

Total 33 students, 1 adult, 3 teachers, coming from Riverside.

## **Thursday, Feb. 21**

10 a.m. Web of Life: grade 5, 50 students, 5 adults, 1 teacher, coming from Los Angeles.

## **Friday, Feb. 22**

9:30 a.m. Native Partners: grade 3, 48 students, 3 adults, 2 teachers, entering Indian Hill Gate.

## **Wednesday, Feb. 27**

2 p.m. Sign Up Tour, one hour, 12–15 adults. Begin at Corral and end in Garden Shop at 3 p.m., 2 NIs needed.

## **Thursday, Feb. 28**

9:30 a.m. Native Partners: grade 3, 60 students, 6 teachers, coming from Los Angeles.

**Monthly organizer: John Biddle**  
**(Please contact for Sign Up Tours)**



## **SAVE THE DATE**

The Volunteer Organization Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon is scheduled for Friday, March 15, 11:30 a.m. Watch for details in the next edition of the Oak Notes.

# VOLUNTEER BIOGRAPHY

## Lee Waggener, Volunteer Board Secretary and Oak Notes Editor

Volunteering in a garden of California native plants seems like a good fit for a California native who has always lived within 40 miles of where I grew up in South Gate. My mother was a skilled gardener who could beautify any surroundings with plants. My earliest memories were of a small victory garden, then of camellias and azaleas, then of a rose garden.

My own interest in plants didn't happen until I was a student at Pomona College and took a plant classification class for a science requirement. Professor Lyman Benson was a wonderful teacher who could inspire anyone to love finding a plant, identifying it and creating a pressed plant collection. Many of our class meetings were in the wash to the east of the college that was still wild and undeveloped at the time. What a refreshing break from sitting in a classroom on

a beautiful Southern California day! I remember my first visit to the RSABG Herbarium and being quite surprised at finding a garden at the end of College Avenue. Maybe if I had taken his class my first year, I would have been a botany major instead of a music major. Who knows?

After graduation, teaching elementary school in Ontario and being a musician at the Claremont United Church of Christ took up most of my time and I visited the Garden only occasionally. After retirement I brought my grandson to a special event and ran into a long-time friend, Judy Whale, from school days in South Gate. Her words, "This is the best place in town to volunteer. You should try it!" stuck with me, and now I am a nature interpreter as well as a member of the Volunteer Board.

My grandchildren *help* me volunteer when possible, and I'm hoping they develop a love of the Garden and an appreciation of the richness, variety and uniqueness of California native plants.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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NEWSLETTER OF THE RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS



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