

VOL. 19



GROWING & GIVING

Laguna Beach Garden Club Weeder's Digest



Education in the Garden

DECEMBER 2023

MEMBER NEWS

*"The best part of this time of year is the memories we make.
Happy Holidays!"*

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR • DALYNN MALEK

Southern California winters are different than most other parts of the country. We don our puffy coats when the thermometer dips to 60° and head to the beach to catch a spectacular sunset. We have had some spectacular ones



lately, almost like having our own Aurora Borealis. Take time from your busy schedule to stop and find *Delight* in all that is around us. I wish you very Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year of gardening ahead!

COME JOIN IN
THE FUN

Events This Month

General Meeting Dec. 8



Lisa D. Foster

Bag Lady: How I made a difference in the world & you can too

Laguna Presbyterian Church
(see page 3)

- 9:30 am social
- 10:00 am meeting

Trips & Tours Dec. 8

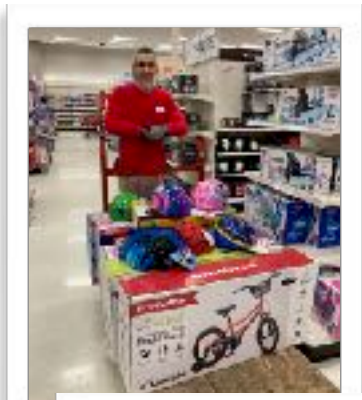
Annual Holiday Member Tour



Holiday Delights Abound

At this time of year when we focus on the Holidays, I've been reflecting on what I'm grateful for. Certainly, one thing is you, the members of the Laguna Beach Garden Club!

At the November meeting I asked if anyone wanted to go in with me to purchase a bike and wow, 16 of you said yes! Because of your generosity we can provide 7 kids with 7 bikes and 7 helmets.



I've no doubt that at the December 8 meeting many of you, our members, will bring unwrapped toys for the **Spark of Love** toy drive – I'll warn the LBFD to bring a **really big truck**. Often the older kids are overlooked so consider sports equipment like soccer balls, footballs, basketballs, baseball

gloves; games like Clue, Sorry, Monopoly and Legos are all great ideas. And science kits! And art kits! Let's go a little crazy this year and bring delight to as many families as we can.

Let's delight our local merchants by shopping local this holiday season to help the merchants who support us all year long. **Laguna Coast Pottery** is always incredibly generous donating gift cards for our raffles. They never say no! So say YES to Laguna Coast Pottery at the corner of N. Coast Highway and Jasmine and check out the beautiful pots, plants, wall art, fountains and metal sculptures they have for sale. If you show them your California Garden Club membership card they will give you a 10% discount. It doesn't get any better than that!

This past month many of you shared your delights with me. Thank you to **Mary Koebler** for sharing photos she took at the Mary Hurlbut Green Thumb photo class. And to **Linda Richardson** for sharing the article about a young woman in Iowa who grew over 7,000 lbs of fresh produce in her garden to donate to her local food pantry. (See related article in this month's Weeder's Digest

about our generosity to the Laguna Food Pantry).

I was delighted to spend time with so many of you along with residents of Glenwood House (now that's *definitely* a delight!) helping remove some of the invasive English ivy at the Doheny butterfly garden. It was fun to get to know the Doheny park staff and make a dent in this very big project. One ivy root was about 4 inches in diameter! Scott Tibbey, State Park Superintendent III Orange Coast District, was there working right along with us. No doubt they will need our help again and I'm sure many of you will answer the call. The fun will really begin when the ivy is removed and the pollinator plants can be planted and the Monarchs begin to appear.

Cheers to each of you from me as you finish out 2023 with family and friends. Enjoy your time together and remember to look for delights and share them with others (including me) every day.

-Janet Leary

December Speaker

Lisa D. Foster - Saving Our World One Bag at a Time

In 2005, the U.S. was throwing away a billion plastic bags a day. That was when Lisa Foster discovered the impact of all those bags on the environment and the health of all people. Suddenly she became obsessed with getting America to switch to reusable bags. For the next 12 years, she dedicated herself to becoming the bag lady, an entrepreneur whose mission was to save the world, one bag at a time.



Lisa D. Foster, Ph.D, ACC offers coaching and group training to help managers become more effective leaders by using emotional intelligence to create the best conditions for high performance. In 2005 she founded 1 Bag at a Time, Inc., the first-to-market reusable grocery

bag company. A former English teacher, she became a pioneer in the fight against single use plastic and a top supplier of reusable bags in the US. She sold her business in 2017. As a coach, she shares her expertise in leadership and emotional intelligence with her clients and inspires others to



make a difference in their communities and organizations. In addition to coaching, Lisa speaks, leads workshops, and writes about emotional intelligence, leadership, and storytelling.

Please join us on Friday, December 8th at 9:30-10:00 am for social time and refreshments, the meeting begins promptly at 10:00 am.

Lisa's book is available for presale using this link : <https://lisadfostercoach.com/bag-lady-book-presales/>



Gate & Garden Tour and Winter Raffle



Susan Denton and I had the pleasure of going to the New Member Luncheon in October. We were both astounded at the pool of collective talent that lie within our new crop of members! We both felt that we had fallen into a “bucket of lucky” to have an opportunity to meet some of these incredible people and hopefully call them friends as this garden club year progresses.

Once we have aged past the time when we have school aged children that help round out our cadre of friends, it becomes much more challenging to meet and establish deep friendships with new people that we have commonality. When we had school aged kids, that was the common denominator in those friendships, now we have the

time and opportunity to seek friendships with people that have interests in other than our children.

Jaime Zuckerman, PhD., recommends joining a club or sports league (or both) to expand your social circle! While a deep friendship cannot be established on ceramics or pickle ball alone, it is a wonderful start to have an activity in common.

Volunteering for an organization or projects helps each other to know each other on a much deeper level rather than just coming to our great speaker meetings and running out the door as soon as it is over. As we say all the time, many of us are lousy gardeners, but we have found many incredible people to bond with inside this club and learned a bit about gardening.

So full circle and back to my favorite bees, get to know the “scent of your hive” by hanging out with some of our new members. Check out their bios in this issue of Weeder’s Digest and seek out a new member, introduce yourself, invite them to join you for lunch after the meeting or for a walk through a park or garden. Find out what task they want to volunteer for on the tour and do it together! Susan is happy to schedule friends together on their tour assignments!

“The bee is more honored than other animals, not because she labors, but because she labors for others.” -St John Chrysostom
- Karen Nelson



We have another exiting Raffle planned to welcome in the Holiday Season at the December 8 meeting. A big thank you to all who donated items for our December raffle. Definitely, I will be buying tickets. Some of the prizes so far include:

- Flight of 6 Wines (perfect for wine tasting with that special someone) from ElizaBeth Chapel
- Laguna Trolley Ornament from Lynn Jax
- Talavera Bird House from Laguna Iguana
- Succulent Wreath by Jeanne Yale
- *The Life of the Bee* Tote & Explorations Journal – 100 pages from Topher Delaney
- Two Holiday Baskets curated by Mae Ho
- Holiday Tree-shaped Wood hanging fashioned by Ora Sterling
- 18K Gold Vermeil necklace from Patty Gaffney

Come prepared with Cash, Check or Credit Card (credit card sales are available at the Treasurer’s Table near the back of Tankersley Hall).

Several Garden Club members will be selling tickets before the meeting. Be sure to purchase your tickets early because the drawing will be held just **PRIOR** to the speaker’s presentation. That way your winnings will be ready for pick up when the meeting finishes. Wishing good luck to all of you.

- Lynn Jax, Raffle Administrator

Tis the Season For Giving to Others

The Garden Club will be collecting donations for Spark of Love Toy Drive. At the December 8 meeting, there will be a table inside Tankersley Hall for you to drop off new, unwrapped toys or sports equipment. We will drop off the toys at the Fire Station after the meeting.

The Laguna Beach Fire Department, in partnership with Southern California Firefighters and ABC7, is again taking part in the annual “Spark of Love” Toy Drive. The campaign collects new, unwrapped toys and sports equipment for underserved children and teens in Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Riverside counties. Toys collected in the respective counties are distributed locally.

This year marks the 31st anniversary of the Firefighters’ “Spark of Love” campaign, which will run through December 24. The Laguna Beach Fire Department has been involved since the program’s inception.

Any new, unwrapped toy must be in its original packaging or box. Sports equipment (balls, tennis racquets, baseball bats, etc.) is not required to have a box or package. The fire department cannot distribute clothing, personal care items, blankets, etc. The toy drive cannot accept clothing, personal care items, or blankets.

Items for older children are in high demand.

Or if you so choose you can drop off your new, unwrapped toys or sports equipment to any of Laguna Beach’s four fire stations through December 24.

Drop off toys or sports items at these four Laguna Beach Fire Stations:

Fire Station 1: 501 Forest Ave

Fire Station 2: 285 Agate St

Fire Station 3: 2900 Alta Laguna Blvd

Fire Station 4: 31646 2nd Ave



TRIPS & TOURS

Descanso Gardens October 27

In perfect fall weather, eighteen club members made good time, in an hour and a half, to La Canada Flintridge for a self-guided tour of Descanso Gardens. Transitioning in bloom seasons, the Rose Garden still had fragrant, colorful roses interplanted with blooming iris, lilac-like buddleia, sages and native plants, while the camellias were beginning to bud and even bloom in the Camellia Forest. Clearly the camellias enjoy the cooler microclimate in the La Canada foothills, displaying notable height with plentiful buds and flowers already.



Without the distraction of spring color, the mature trees showed to advantage and provided a dappled canopy for the pumpkin wonderland of creative Halloween vignettes. As part of the "Carved" event, there was also a hay bale maze for children and a tiny house lined with pumpkins, some showing wildlife nibbles.



A beautiful use of the outdoor stage was the Día de los Muertos altars arranged in circular tiers, festooned with marigold garlands, and capped with radiating, colorful bunting banners.

Lunch was al fresco at the garden cafe with salads, wraps and unique drinks where at least one club member enjoyed a neon green, pickle juice soda. While there was considerable traffic on the rush-hour drive home, this was more than compensated by great conversations and camaraderie with fellow members.



Members That Make Our Club Special

Name Tag Wearer

New member **Teresa Henson**'s name was draw by **Lynn Jax** as the lucky name tag wearer in November. Her prize was a Laguna Beach themed plate. Make sure you have your tag on at the next meeting to be eligible for a fun gift.



Volunteer of the Month

We are truly lucky to have this Volunteer of the Month in our midst. **Mini Griffin**, a new member this year obviously has jumped in & became involved with the club. Co-Vice President **Blair Contratto** presented Mini with a gift as a token of our appreciation for her continuing efforts.



Fall Decor Graces the Treat Table in November

Krisanna Barbernell's creativity got us in the autumn spirit with her wonderful table scape for the treat table at our November. We look forward to see what is in store for us at our December meeting. Thank you Krisanna!



Your empty egg cartoons are making a difference in the lives of families with food insecurity!

At the November meeting we collected 80 empty egg cartons for the Laguna Food Pantry thanks to you, our generous members, and member **Gayle Waite**, who collects them from the local realtors and brings that week's collection to our general meeting. So far since September we've delivered 387 egg cartons!

Thanks to **Casey Hensel** (son of Garden Club member Tom Hensel) those egg cartons and 215 lbs of food donated by you, our generous members, were delivered to the Pantry to help families in need this holiday season.

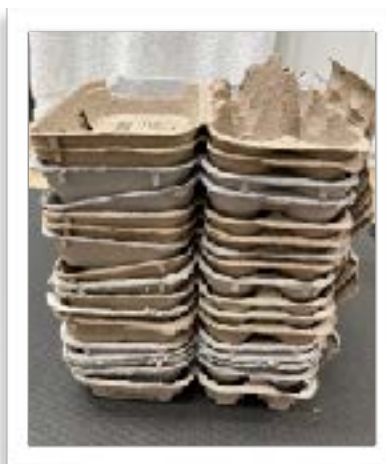
I stopped by the Pantry on Friday, Friday, November 17 and personally delivered cash and checks donated by you totaling \$225. I met Maurice Baz, Program Manager and he was all smiles and so grateful for our Club's support.

Please continue to bring your empty egg cartons each month stacked like the photo. This simple gesture of kindness from you, our members, saves the Pantry 45 cents per carton which they can use for nutritious food for their clients.

Way to go, LBGC!!

Let's fill up my "little red pony" on December 8!

- Jane Leary



REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE THE CONTENTS TO A
FOOD BANK.

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beans

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New Member Luncheon 2023

Our New Member Luncheon was a huge success. On Friday, October 20 twenty-six new members and sixteen others, including Board members and Special Administrators, attended the luncheon, held at Tankersley Hall, where each table was adorned with a fish-shaped plate created by a local artist that six lucky new members were fortunate to take home. The board provided a delicious buffet lunch. The new members had the opportunity to learn about the Club and those in attendance. Each new member received a goodie bag and mingled with the rest of the attendees. Thank you to all who made this a fantastic fun event. Laguna Beach Garden Club now boasts of 217 members as of November 14, 2023.

Introducing the New Members

In an effort to acquaint all Garden Club members with our newest members, I asked the new members to complete a short questionnaire to enable me to write a mini-biography and Mary Jones, our Co-Financial Secretary, agreed to take photos. Please roll out the Garden Club Welcome Mat when you see our new members at meetings and outings. I truly enjoyed reading about and writing about each one. I know you will also. I'm sure you will notice a familiar refrain of many of our new members as being invited by other members. That being said, if you have a friend, neighbor, or colleague who might be interested, please feel free to invite them to attend. *Lynn Jax, Director of Membership*

Elaine Beno - is interested the club because she grew up in a gardening family. Her yard was filled with flowers (roses) that her mother grew and with vegetables that her father grew. All of the kids helped. Her house was on the Gate & Garden Tour at one time. Elaine recently retired, after 40+ years, from working with multiple public agencies and in a corporation as a full-time writer. Seven years ago, she made many renovations to a run-down home to restore it to its former beauty. Elaine is looking forward to meeting new fellow gardeners, learn new things from the monthly speakers, and take in some of the field trips as part of this group. When Elaine was a teenager, her family won a car in a church raffle, which became her first car for this Orange County native.



Carole Burlingham – has been longing to learn about plants that exist in this amazing world, and wanted to join a garden club that teaches and gives back to the community. Growing up in a suburb of Los Angeles near Glendale, she attended Art Center of Pasadena after high school and then attended junior college in Pasadena. She then went on a journey to become a florist and open her own business. Soon her business expanded, and she began to create commercial installations for Edison, Ritz Carlton, Marbella and others. At age 38, she returned to college while having a new baby at home and studied interior design, of which she continues to do today. Carole hopes to meet new friends by sharing her love of gardening and wants to help with various giving opportunities in the community. She loves sharing funny but silly pranks; so beware.



Stephanie Bush – was asked to join by Susan Denton, co-director of the Gate & Garden Tour; they worked together for ten years. Stephanie loves to garden so joining seemed like a perfect fit. She was born in Pasadena, but moved around during her younger years from San Diego, to Minnesota, to Texas, Utah, and to California in Lake Forest in 2000, where she has stayed since. She is a mother of four: three boys ages 27, 36, and 17 and a daughter aged 25. Her home is also full with 2 American Labradors, a 3 year old female named Sadie and 1 year old male, Winston, who is truly the “king of the



house”, plus her 13 year old Main Coon cat, Kiwi, rounds out the pet parade. Stephanie loves being in the dirt although she is not very good at it yet. By joining the club, she looks forward to learning more about gardening, nurturing new friendships, and getting lost in new places. Stephanie claims to suffer from “DIY-itis.” Her thinking of “How hard can it be” continues years later. She has learned how to stucco, install siding, and is currently working on her roof. She loves all her new tools.

Hedy Carpenter – has recently moved from Los Angeles and wants to get involved in the local



community. As an avid gardener, she hopes to find new friends with similar interests. Hedy was born in Canada, raised in Michigan, and at age 23 moved to Marin County, in Northern California. She has lived in Washington DC, the Caribbean, Georgia, and Los Angeles. All of her moves were for schooling, either for her husband or herself. They spent 10 years in the Virgin Islands (St. Croix), where they conducted marine research and lived on their small sailboat. They have spent hundreds of hours diving in the water of Hawaii, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, French Polynesia, Catalina Island, and Mexico. Her career has been multi-faceted due to the many moves.

However, for the last 32 years she was the Director of Graduate Programs at CSU, Northridge. While there she assisted hundreds of under-represented students gain entry into a master’s or PhD. program to assure them a brighter future. Because she noted that a master’s degree in Sustainability didn’t exist, as director she was able to advocate for a master’s degree in Sustainability to be instituted. Finally, Hedy was a founding member of CSUN Institute of Sustainability, which is one of the most successful Sustainability Institutes in California. Hedy loves to dig in the dirt where she hopes to meet new friends who love that also. She is happiest when walking in the forest, loves cold days and pots of homemade soup. Hedy loves to cook.

Rachel Daniels – heard about the club from her good friend, who is a horticulturist; plus, she has seen



many of the impressive events sponsored or hosted by the Garden Club. She loves plants, soil, and the majesty of life that brings beauty and health to our lives. Rachel has lived in Laguna Beach since the late 1960s. Prior to that she studied agriculture in Puerto Rico and returned to finish my undergraduate and master’s degree in Agricultural Science from Cal Poly Pomona. Rachel returned to the family home here in Laguna Beach and worked for the State of California for 33 years. She and her husband have a home in Keaau, Big Island of Hawai’i and spend approximately one week a month there. The magic of Hawai’i is that everything grows abundantly,

which enables them to grow pineapples, avocados, jaboticaba, lychee, rambutan and more. Their two-acre property has lots of everything, but Rachel is drawn to fruit production rather than flowers and ferns. The speakers and programs that the club brings to the community impress her; she is fascinated by the successes of others who grow many varieties, drought-resistant plants and who use organics for pest control. She and her husband have been together for decades, second marriage for both. Due to their blended families, they have two daughters and one son living in Thailand along with 7 grandchildren. Here in California, they have two daughters and one son and 6 grandchildren. Her husband speaks Thai fluently after living there for 20 years. They visit Thailand once a year. This year one daughter, her husband and two grandchildren from Thailand will be here to ski in December and stay for three weeks. According to Rachel, “Aside from having the best grandchildren (and children) in the world, we have 3 large dogs. One was a gift from a son-in-law, two are 80 lbs. each, one is 50 lbs. We are amused by our struggles to be the pack leaders.”

Irina Ensminger – started her most recent gardening during COVID by removing the turf and researching what to replace it with. Her family in Russia were farmers for generations. Gardening makes her feel closer to them. She was born in Russia and emigrated to the U.S. in 1997. She has two grown children, ages 22 and 24. She was an Interior Designer for 13 years until she decided to become a teacher but is now semi-retired which enables her to spend more time with her grandchildren. She wants to meet like-minded people, attend field trips, and listen to topics on pollinator gardens, composting and how to spread her love of native plants and bees. She once confused a signpost as an UFO. To be fair, it was very dark, and the post was shining brightly and seemed to be floating in the air.



Judy Flanders – met Sue Field, club member, through a mutual friend who told her about the club. She loves nature and meeting new friends, so she decided it would be a good idea to join. She is retired from the wholesale wine industry, and now enjoys an ever-fulfilling life of volunteering for many groups in Laguna Beach: the Visitors Center, Pacific Marine Mammal Center, Pageant of the Master (for 30 years) and many more. She owns her own skin care business. Knowing that she volunteers for many public events, it would be hard to believe that she is actually very shy.



Deb Foster – loves succulents and enjoys plants and gardens. There is something so beautiful about plants thriving; it is the simple things that bring people so much happiness. Jane Leary invited her to the garden club, and she enjoys the great speakers and friendly people. Deb has been retired for several years. In her previous life she was in the Safety & Environmental areas for large corporations and consulting firms. In retirement her hope is to give back to the community. As empty nesters, she and her husband are now able to get involved in community events that were not possible when working. Because there are so many knowledgeable people in the club, she hopes to bring home ideas of adding native plants to her garden. She looks forward to meeting new people and making new friendships. Deb's favorite food is tacos.



Diane Glick – was invited to join the club by Linda Richardson, club member, because the only garden club in her area met on days she wasn't available. Meetings on Fridays are perfect for her, and she found this club has a rich history. Diane is a retired landscape architect, is passionate about gardening, and owns an historic home in Fullerton. She was born on the island of Okinawa but has lived her entire life in Southern California. She hopes to make new friends, learn something new, and have fun by being a member. Another passion is standard poodles, of which she owns three: Marley, the white quiet lovey; Jazz, the black hunter; and Indie the grey giant.



Susan Goldberg – was invited by her friends Grace Balen and Cookie Lee, both club members, because they have always talked about how much fun they have in Garden Club. She finally decided to join to meet new people and hopefully learn more about plants too. She lives in San Antonio, Texas part of the year, and the other half of the year is fortunate to live in Dana Point. She has held many creative positions in her life from advertising at McCann Erickson at the beginning of her career to a writer at the *Dallas Times Herald* to a Marketing Director at USAA when she moved to San Antonio. She currently works part-time in interior design and loves to design pots and decorate for



parties. Susan hopes to make some new CA friends and of course improve her gardening skills, and maybe be able to name a plant or two. As a native Texan, she doesn't own a pair of cowboy boots, a cowboy hat, nor does she ride a horse either.

Mimi Griffin – was talking to her friend, Elaine Davis, club member, about wanting to fix up her yard.



Elaine recommended the garden club as a great resource. She grew up in Jordan and moved to Orange County 45 years ago. She has worked as a paralegal and realtor. Mimi wants to build friendships and learn more about gardening. She has played Bunco monthly with the same group for 20 years and usually hosts a “Spring Themes” night each April for the group.

Ken Hanzlik – was told about the Garden Club by Jeff Whittiker, club member; it sounded interesting to him, and he wanted to see what other people have done to their gardens in Laguna Beach.



Ken is a Native Californian and lived in Laguna and South Orange County since the 1980s. He currently lives in South Laguna, working as a realtor in Compass in Laguna Beach. Prior to that he was with AT&T for 20 years and has sold commercial insurance. Ken would like to learn which types of plants do well in the micro-climate along the coast. He has a green thumb for outdoor plants; however, the same can't be said about his indoor plants that don't seem to survive a long time.

Teresa Henson – was invited by Nancy Englund and Synthia Scofield, both club members, to attend a meeting and decided to join. They work together at the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter.



Teresa is from London, and recently retired from a career in healthcare leadership. She joined to learn more about the natural surroundings; the role of fungi & mycelium, natural ways to decrease pests and harmful chemicals; and understand more about climate change. She wants to plant a vegetable garden and possibly get tips on best practices. Teresa says, “I have citizenship and passports for three countries; just ask me which ones.”

India Hynes – attended the meeting where Mary Hurlbut taught a photography class and ended up



joining. At the same time, she entered the decorative Watering Can painting competition that the Water District offered, and the club picked her design. Since she doesn't believe in coincidences, she decided it was meant to be. She owned a manufacturing business (Vinotemp – wine storage cellars) and sold it in 2021. Now that she is retired, she teaches boot camp class at Art of Fitness in Laguna and was just selected to create a Christmas pallet for the city. India fills the rest of her time traveling with her husband of 30 years. Retirement is busy and wonderful with exercise, art, and travel.

She hopes to grow a green thumb by joining, which will better her gardening skills. Because she and her husband Tony like to work in the yard, improving their skills in the garden would be helpful. At the few meetings she has attended, she has met some people she knows and others she enjoyed meeting. India was on a soap opera when she was in her 20s.



Carole Kim – was a previous member but quit because she was traveling a lot and needed more time for her grandkids. Because she loved the speakers, she returned now that she has time. She also decided to invite her husband to join her. Carole was born in Chicago, lived in Boston, San Francisco, and in Laguna Beach for 43 years. She was a registered dietitian. She finds the members of the club to be very friendly and the speakers to be fantastic.



Ed Kim – says that he and his wife Carole love plants and gardening but are far from being experts. With Carole, they noticed that some of the excursions and lectures that the club organized looked great. Ed was born in Korea, grew up in Japan, and is a nearly retired ophthalmologist. Ed hopes to learn about everything.



Cort Kloke – tells us that his wife, Diane Kloke, has been an active member for many years, and he has participated in many of the club events, projects, various outings, and even been a docent and worked security at several Gate & Garden Tours. Because of this, he has gotten to know quite a few members and decided it was time to join. He does basic gardening in their front patio and various planters. As a native Southern Californian, he has lived in Corona del Mar and finished high school there before attending UC Berkeley and then joining the Peace Corps. Cort & Diane have lived in Laguna Beach for 40 years. He met Diane in Laguna Beach in 1972 when they both had roommates and lived in the same apartment building on Ledroit Street. They became friends and a few years later, he was lucky enough to marry her.



Mary Koebler – decided to join because she wanted to meet friends who like her favorite things: flowers, arboretums, and landscapes. She has lived in Pasadena, La Canada, Santa Barbara, Dana Point, and now Laguna Niguel. Mary has held various nursing positions (including a school nurse) and is retired from UCI Medical Center. She has lived in California her entire life. She is a mother of three children, including twin boys.



Mindy Lange – was invited to join by Kim Hall, club member, to come to a meeting. She was born and raised in Orange County and currently lives in Laguna Niguel, with her husband, Russ. Her daughter moved to Denver last year for her career and loves it. Mary has been in sales for far too many years to recall: RJ Reynolds, Warner Lambert, Shiseido Cosmetics, and DuPont. She is currently a realtor and was past president with the National Charity League. Mindy looks forward to connecting with others in the community and attending some of the tours. She loves dogs, as evidenced by her husband, daughter, and herself being involved with the Laguna Niguel Puppy Raisers for Guide Dogs for the Blind.



Mary Lewis – decided to join the club because her dear friend of 35 years, ElizaBeth Chapel, club member, invited her. The joy and enthusiasm drew her in. She was born in Santa Monica and lived in the LA area for 40 years. She then moved to Lake Oswego, Oregon for 27 years and loved the Pacific Northwest. She and her husband moved back to Southern California to be near their two children. Her grandmother and mother gave her a love for all things “Flowers.” While living in Oregon, Mary was part of the “Bloom Project” in Portland for 8 years until COVID shut it down permanently. The group repurposed flowers that were not quite up to par to sell but were still beautiful. Donations came from the Flower Mart, Trader Joe’s, and other markets. During that time, they made over 300,000 bouquets and delivered them to hospice and palliative care patients.



Julie Maison – was invited by Cookie Lee, club member, and because of the great line-up of speakers and topics of that are of interest to her, she decided to join. She was born at South Coast Medical Center, which is now Mission Hospital of Laguna, and grew up in Capistrano Beach. Her mother was an amazing gardener. She hopes to learn more about sustainable practices, and native plants that support pollinators and the environment. Julie is a tap dancer and owns a pet bunny.



Kathryn McClelland – was invited by Harriette Craig, club member, because she has been searching for a garden club to join and LBGC was already on her radar. Her background is journalism, which she loved, but when that industry started to collapse, she took a job as a senior editor at a high-tech research and consulting company in Silicon Valley. She has since retired, which allows her to devote herself and main love – gardening. Kathryn specializes in California natives and drought-tolerant plantings. Her garden has been on several garden tours and is scheduled for the 2024 Orange County native Plant Society Tour, on May 4. Learning things from the monthly speakers and fellow members appeals to her, even if that information doesn’t apply to her particular type of gardening. Kathryn is a former runner, avid reader and plays mahjong weekly. In the 2006 Boston Marathon, she finished in the top 45% of all runners and in the top 3% in her age division.



Carol Menconi – has been a “pot gardener” for many years (AKA: plants in container pots) and just recently started again. She joined to become current with what’s going on in the gardening world, current techniques, and practices, and to make new friends. She has lived in Laguna Beach for 43 years; 30 years in Emerald Bay and 13 in North Laguna. Carol has been a realtor for 28 years and loves her job. She is looking forward to giving back to the community. Carol lived in Guam for two years.



Laurie Nassif – attended Gate & Garden Tours over the past several years and became interested in joining. She looks forward to the lectures. Her neighbor is Rousara Ulvested is another reason she joined. She and her husband moved to Laguna Beach almost 3 years ago after living in Denver for 20 years. Their son graduated from Chapman University last May and now lives and works in Munich, Germany. She looks forward to learning about gardening, speakers, and access to some local Laguna gardens. Laurie and her cousins own Cousins Photo Tours and for the past 12 years have taken clients around the world to off-the-beaten path destinations to immerse themselves in the culture through photography. She is also starting a subsidiary company, Laguna Tastes & Tours, and plans to offer a range of personalized and small-group experiences that showcase Laguna Beach.



Thomas Robison – was invited by Brian and Mary Jones, co-Financial Secretaries, to join. He was attracted to the speaker subjects. Tom is a retired real estate broker. He is a gardener and grows orchids. He joined with his wife, Nancy Wessel. According to Brian, Tom has a huge collection of electric guitars and is an accomplished guitar player.



Marcella Rosene – joined in November 2022 with her husband but this year has decided to just have one of them as a club member. Their neighbors Vicki and Bob Borthwick, club members, suggested they join. She and her husband, Harvey, have lived in and out of Laguna since 1971. For the past 30 years, they have lived part time in Seattle, where they had a business, and part time on Brooks Street, that they used as a getaway. They finally moved to Laguna full-time in 2022. Marcella is especially interested in tips as to how to better sustain their garden.



Mary Kate Saunders – loves to garden and now finally has Fridays off from work. Her dear friends, Carolyn Bent and Janet Chance, both club members, invited her to join. She was born in New York then moved to Louisiana, where she attended LSU and LSU Medical Center. She is physical therapist in practice for 38 years. Mary Kate has been married to the love of her life, Kirk Saunders, for 33 years. She loved the first speaker she heard about the bees and is looking forward to more speakers and helping out in the community. Mary Kate came from a huge family with 6 siblings and lots of nieces and nephews. She loves watching football, especially LSU. She loves to cook and entertain. Twice she has hiked parts of Camino de Compostela in Spain.



Josephine Torbensen – joined because of her love of gardening, her interest in learning more about plants and horticulture, and to connect with like-minded people. She is a local realtor, specializing in architectural and historic Laguna homes and shares photos and history of the homes on her Instagram account. She is currently writing a book about the charm houses of Laguna. Her nickname is Phina. She is married with two sons, who were born in 2018 and 2021. She was a ballet dancer and speaks Danish.



Joanne Trejo-Magee – learned about the LBGC from members at the Friends of Hortense Miller



Garden. She has enjoyed the speakers she has heard. She is from San Diego and has lived in Orange County for 35 years. Joanne is a Master Gardener and has worked as a horticulturist at the “Happiest Place on Earth”, Disneyland, and at Rogers Gardens. Besides gardening, she enjoys traveling, hiking, floral design, and spending time with friends and family. She hopes to make new friends and share gardening tips and knowledge. She also looks forward to participating and contributing to the various projects in service of the community. Joanne met her husband during a garden maintenance (AKA: weeding) projects at Hortense Miller

Garden; thus, Laguna Beach will always be special to her.

Leah Vasquez – has always been interested and involved in community organizations that support sustainability, environmental, and cultural preservation. She is a past board member of Hortense Miller Garden. Nancy Englund is her neighbor, who introduced her to Jane Leary, who participated with her in a radio broadcast about Laguna, which inspired her to join. Leah is also on the board of Laguna Beach Beautification Council. She arrived in California from Massachusetts and eventually moved to Laguna in 1964, digging water wells and getting involved in local issues. As an artist, she was a publicist for the Laguna Art Museum, administrator for UCI Studio Art and adjunct professor. Leah has also worked with UCI Medical Center to produce illustrations. For the past 20 years she has been a self-employed artist. She shares, “I grew up in a cemetery.”



Andrea Verdugo – tells us that her mother was an avid gardener and that she is not; she is hoping to learn tips, pointers, and to gain inspiration. She grew up in Laguna and has had many different jobs in the community. She loves the outdoors and all things nature. Andrea would love to learn more about native plants, drought-tolerant plantings, and pollinator gardening. She shares, “I am like an onion with many layers.”



Nancy Wessel – enjoys playing in the backyard, so gardens are fun for her for many hours. She thanks her neighbor, Mary Jones, a club member, for inviting her to join. Nancy grew up in Colorado Springs but moved to Laguna Beach long ago. She was a letter carrier in Laguna Beach for 30 years. She loves to walk. She loves meeting new friends and having new experiences. Mary Jones shared that Nancy and her husband, Tom Robison, planted an orchard on Wendt Terrace.



Jeff Whittiker – decided to join the Garden Club at the urging of his husband to get more involved with our local community. Jeff is retired and performs with three local community choruses (Laguna Beach Chamber Singers, Lagunatunes, and MenAlive). He has lived in Orange County since the age of two. He loves to travel and has been to 6 of the world’s continents, and Jeff challenges you to guess which one he hasn’t been to yet. His real goal in joining the Garden Club was just to participate. However, Jeff



serves a co-treasurer on the board of the club. He doesn't actually garden, "never been a fan." But he appreciates all the hard work that goes into planning, planting, maintaining, and nurturing a plot of land. Jeff believes it's a noble endeavor and wants to support people who do. As a child, he always loved watching movies, and television shows where the character either discovered or were given some special ability or power and how they learned to use that ability for good.

A great gift to give to your friends and family! Share the experience and make it a day of fun. Give tickets to our fabulous 2024 Gate & Garden Tour. Tickets are on sale at Eventbrite, there is a link on the LBGC website.



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